

Hong Kong Catholic Works of Mercy

(Eleventh in a Series)

Bee-Hive of Activity

By Richard Core

The Salesian institute at the end of the tram-line on a hill above Shaukiwan is literally a bee-hive. The place has more personnel and activities than a bee-hive has cells and it swarms with busy occupants.

A Passion Play being staged here during this Easter period under the direction of Father Ferdinand Rossetto has an originality that makes it worthy of a wider audience. With the interplay of projected coloured slides simulating Holy Land scenery on three tableaux, the youthful performers portray their roles with feeling, against a choral background by seminarians and subdued orchestral recordings lending solemnity to this impressive story in Cantonese, based on an Italian translation.

It is a slightly extravagant exaggeration in stating, however, the architectural view at a distance is suggestive of a bee-hive, but the visitor is soon impressed with the many-sided bee-like operations going on.

Built in 1930, the edifice before the War principally housed a large group of young philosophers and theologians making their spiritual novitiate prior to final studies before major orders.

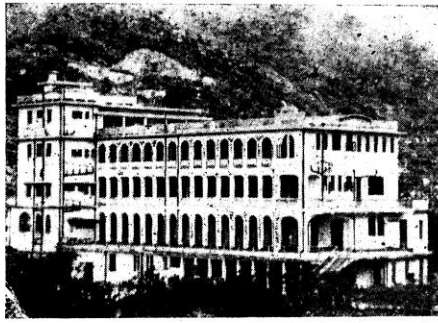
About 90 youngsters from the age of 10 to 15 are being raised and trained by the Salesians. They are from the Colony's poor and refugee families. Only about 20 of the boys are out-and-out orphans. They receive six years of basic education. They are sent by social welfare groups, parish priests and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Still another school-within-a-school is conducted on the premises. Nearly 100 boys in the early evening study with the Salesians. Too poor to provide even minimum tuition, they are refugees for the most part living across the street from the Salesian building in one of the many Shantytowns of Shaukiwan.

Nearly 35 seminarians for the priesthood reside and are engaged in various stages of philosophical and theological studies. These do not include a separate unit of clerics making their novitiate year preparatory to further studies for the priesthood.

Dean of novices is Brother Alexander Ma of Shanghai. On Sundays and holy-days, he may be found in charge of the "Festive Oratory." This was founded by St. Don Bosco in Italy in the last century.

House of Many Activities



times' looks like the 5 o'clock subway rush in London or New York, with about five different games intermixed on the small field.

Stubby, rugged Po-wan is also Brother Alexander's right hand man in recruiting the 150 boys from the street to surge round for games and community functions.

According to the saintly Don Bosco, the main idea of the "Festive Oratory" is to pull off the streets vibrantly active boys who otherwise might turn into first class ragamuffins and street urchins. They produce plays, go on picnics, play games. Each evening they assemble for communal prayers.

Under consideration at present is the purchase of property nearby designed for a new school-building calling for accommodations for about 200 pupils. Among the leading contributors to the building-fund is Mr. Aw Boon-haw, the well known philanthropist. Mr. Aw also follows the work here with keen interest and contributions. The Hong Kong Government grants an annual subsidy. Material aid is also offered by the China Bishops' Catholic Welfare Bureau. The St. Vincent de Paul Society provided an offering last year when four boys they sent were accepted by the Salesians.

DON BOSCO'S BOYS



Tall, striking-looking Father Vincent Ricaldone directs the whole institute that is strictly a man's world. The boys were originally brought during the War. When Father Anthony Perkumas was dehospitalized following shrapnel wounds, he wanted to put to use the vacant building by starting a small school. He noticed the streets were filled around North Point with kids running wild.

Father Parkumas immediately rounded up a 100 candidates. Boys will be boys the world over and they are as unpredictable as a whistle in the wind. A number of the good priest's selectees who weren't closely "screened," after their first night in residence legged off in the morning, relieving the establishment of no small amount of blankets and household appurtenances!

After the War, the project was continued. A total of four Salesian priests and brothers with 13 lay-teachers also conduct a day-school in two sections here. 570 boys come to school, paying a nominal monthly tuition fee. Mostly from deserving poor and refugee homes, some of the boys travel from as far off as Western Market to attend classes.

The first American cruiser to sail into Hong Kong harbour at the end of the War picked up a youngster in a small boat drifting out to sea. Four crew members brought Hsiu Wei-lum, now age 12, to the Salesians. Every month they unfailingly send a cheque from the United States towards his continued support.

The bee-hive at Shaukiwan is rendering a lasting service to Society. It is blessed by God, doing a worthy work of mercy.

COME ON!



Threat to English Catholic Schools

London (N.C.W.C.) — Two Catholic schools in the Nottingham diocese are threatened with seizure by the state, Bishop Edward Ellis of Nottingham said in an address.

The Bishop disclosed that recently he has had to sign as guarantor many copies of "Form 18," in which Catholic schools managers have to state that they are able and willing to meet the cost of reorganization demanded in the 1944 Education Act.

Two of these forms, Bishop Ellis asserted, "have been returned by the Minister of Education because he is not satisfied that we are able to meet the debt."

He added: "I don't think there is an immediate threat to the schools concerned, but it exists. If we can't raise the money, these schools in two quite large parishes could become non-Catholic schools—controlled schools' as they are called."

"There cannot be tranquility either for the individuals, groups or for nations unless everything be arranged in harmony with the order which arises from the Gospel precepts and which is confirmed and enlivened by divine grace.

"By bitter experience well do we know how many crimes, massacres and wars have been caused because men abandoned the royal road, which the Divine Redeemer pointed out by His shining example and enlivened by divine grace.

"Each and everyone must return to that path and be convinced of the fact that peace cannot come to society unless it inspires and guides the heart of each individual."

—Pope Pius XII

Legal Euthanasia Makes Doctor A Lethal Weapon?

HAVANA, Cuba (N.C.W.C.) — "The legalization of euthanasia would make the doctor a weapon in the hands of a would-be suicide, if it were practiced at the requests of patients," said Dr. Ramon Aixala, President of the Medical College of Cuba, in a magazine article here. "It could serve as a medium of legalized murder committed with perverse aims."

"To cure, if possible, and always to relieve pain, are the primary duties of a doctor," he pointed out, condemning the theory that a doctor, in the case of an incurable disease, could end the life of a human being whose suffering is intolerable, by the request of the patient or his relatives. The famous doctor said that medical opinions are subject to the changes brought about by evolution and progress. What we may believe today is incurable may have a specific remedy tomorrow.