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2-2-1945

The Bulletin of American Jesuit Activity for the Deaf, February 2, 1945

Jesuits of Weston College

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Jesuits of Weston College, "The Bulletin of American Jesuit Activity for the Deaf, February 2, 1945" (1945). *Bulletin of American Jesuit Activity for the Deaf, The*. 2.
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THE BULLETIN

NEWS OF THE DEAF-MUTE APOSTOLATE AMONG JESUITS

WESTON COLLEGE, MASS.

FEBRUARY 2, 1945

This issue of The Bulletin is dedicated to an inspiring Jesuit and a great lover of the deaf, Father Michael A. Purtell, S.J. On January 13 Father Purtell celebrated his eightieth birthday, and half of those four-score years have been spent working in behalf of the deaf. Father Purtell has worked for the deaf in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Trenton, and is now pastor of the deaf of greater New York and editor of Aphpheta.

He is in a sense the founder of the work for the deaf among Jesuits in the United States, for it was his encouragement that fostered the first sign academy at St. Andrews*, whence interest spread to Weston, Woodstock, and finally all over the country. May many more like Father Purtell come forth from our midst to succeed him as pastor of the deaf in some large city, or to help the deaf occasionally by a retreat or instruction, and thus carry on in bringing a little of the comfort of Our Lord to His afflicted ones.

To show the appreciation of both the deaf and Ours who are interested in the deaf for Father Purtell's Christlike example, Joseph LaBran, S.J., a Weston Theologian, succeeded in collecting spiritual bouquets from the deaf and Ours in all parts of the country, including among other offerings: 4, 016 Masses, 7, 027 Holy Communions, 4, 249 Rosaries and 6, 194 Visits. The individual bouquets were bound together into a very attractive folder and sent to Father Purtell. It was a grand tribute to a grand Jesuit.

* There is some evidence of a sign academy at Frederick way back in the nineties, but as yet we have not been able to get anything very definite about it. Any information would be appreciated.

By the way, you may have been wondering where The Bulletin has been for the past few months. The answer might well be - waiting for copy. Even this issue finds only two scholasticates represented. Of course, we could fill the Bulletin with information about Boston and Worcester, but then it would cease to be your Bulletin. So send in something and we will print it as soon as possible. What we want especially is news of any kind, novel slants on the work for the deaf, interesting and instructive experiences, the reactions of the deaf to different projects, interesting reading matter on the deaf you may have come across, etc.

As regards reading matter, there is a very interesting article on Father Landherr in the December, 1944 issue of the St. Anthony's Messenger. Father Landherr, a Redemptorist, is pastor of the deaf in Philadelphia. He was formerly stationed at Rosopus, New York, just across the river from St. Andrew's, and took great interest in the sign academy there.

On page 7 of the December issue of Aphpheta there is also an exceedingly interesting article on the value and necessity of the sign language in instructing the deaf.

BOSTON HIGHLIGHTS

The youngest hopes of the province lie in one score and five members in the senior and junior sign academies, respectively. The senior members are working on group signs, each week taking another set, according to the position from which they emanate. Copies of these group signs can be obtained from Weston. The junior class isn't bothering about linguistic difficulties. They just go to class, start talking, and the professor gives them the new words as occasion arises. Quite successful!

The Boston Mission is carrying on as best it can without the help of its Chaplain, now in the Army. When Fr. Curran left, he temporarily willed the Weston Academy all his materiel: a set of TQW Pamphlets, about forty books, numerous card party prizes, etc., all of which shows the long range plans Fr. had. We hope and pray for his safe return! Also included was an old yellow diary, that contained an account of only the first meeting, back in 1896. It was very humorously written up. "A scholastic in charge, after receiving five lessons in the sign language, gave the first instruction today. At 3:30 P. M., the time appointed, and for some time before, it was pouring rain upon the snow that had fallen in the morning, and things were very unpromising. 28 mutés nevertheless attended. The instruction began about 3:30, and was very short, as the excitement of first appearance with such a language made the instructor forget part of his discourse, and mix up some of the rest. But it succeeded fairly well, and was encouraging for the future... All had gone by 4:30. Two or three reporters were on hand to get an account of proceedings afterwards..."

Forty-nine years later, 1944-45, the highlights of the Mission were the enrollment of 43 mutés in the apostleship of prayer to celebrate

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NEWS FROM THE WEST

The following paragraphs are excerpts from a letter of Daniel J. O'Hanlon, S.J., director of the Crusaders Club, the signers' group at Mt. St. Michael's.

"I suppose the first thing to mention would be that we have two groups this year. One of them is for beginners and the other is for the more advanced signers. Mr. Sargent, with his flair for colorful titles, has christened the upper division group La Grande Academie.

First a few words about the beginners' group. This has been the general policy: Have one instructor for the group for the whole year. Inculcate a solid, steady, persevering interest, based on lasting motives. It has been our experience that mere interest in the signs as a pleasant diversion will not last. It is pleasant, but its first novelty wears off after a while. If the real basic apostolic motive isn't what lies at the base of the interest, the interest will fade away. Make it possible for the beginner to see as many of the signs as possible right away. Not too much repetition at the beginning. Short examinations at the beginning of each class keep them on the alert. Some practice in reading spelling at each class. It seems that a man who can read spelling will be able to get along in most any situation. Without this, he will always find himself in the hole. So it seems wise to insist on this and give constant practice from the very beginning. Make it possible for a man to keep up with the work without the least interference with his regular studies. Experience shows that if this is not done, almost all will gradually drop off as the school year begins to get well under way. After all, it would be foolish to pretend that the signs are any more than a side line. A STEADY INTEREST BEGINNING

(cont'd. p. 3, col. 2)

BOSTON (cont'd.)

its centenary; and a slide-lecture on the Madonnas. I'm sure you will all be interested in the details of this event.

Mr. Wm. Sullivan, S.J. was the "lecturer". His slides were 26 plates of the Christmas Madonnas. The screen and projector were set up as usual. The signer stood about three feet in front of the screen, and about five feet to the left of it. On the floor in front of him, was a goose-neck lamp containing a ten-watt clear bulb, to illumine his hands and his lips, yet not detracting from visibility on the screen.

Unfortunately, as in 1896, we also had a bad day. Half of an eight inch snow storm accompanied the lecture, and brought us only 19 mutes. The ones who were there though liked it immensely, so much so that they were sorry for the ones who couldn't get there to see it. As far as I know, a complete lecture of this type is rather unique in deaf circles. Can anyone gainsay me?

Several months ago we were requested for some things along the line of the St. Vincent De Paul Society. We wrote to the parish Society from which the mute came, and found they were very eager to fulfill the mute's wishes, but had known nothing of his case till we informed them. Doesn't this seem to be the best arrangement for us, a sort of liaison officer to inform the local parish of the status of its deaf, and let them go on from there?

And speaking of 1896, there is a letter concerning the deaf in the Woodstock Letters for 1897. It is Vol. II, p. 214, by Fr. Joseph Rockwell who was working in and around New York City at the time. You will find Fr. quite inexperienced (on his own admission), and very definitely subjective and extreme in his radical views. It is interesting though to see just what work was being done that far back.

-Norbert T. Kidd, S.J.

WORCESTER CENTER

The Worcester Deaf Center, begun only a few years ago under the direction of Father Leo Guay, S.J., is now carrying on without its former director and moving spirit. Father Guay is now in Iraq, teaching at Baghdad College there.

Two scholastics from Holy Cross Raymond Swords, S.J., and Paul Lucey, S.J., are carrying on in Father Guay's place. They are assisted at the monthly meetings for the deaf by Father Raymond Sullivan, S.J., a signer, who comes over from Boston College for the meetings. Thus the deaf are enabled to make their confessions in their own medium, the sign language.

THE WEST (cont'd.)

IN PHILOSOPHY AND CARRYING THROUGH UNTIL ORDINATION WILL PROVE FRUITFUL WITH A FRACTION OF TIME GIVEN AT REGULAR INTERVALS (SAY FIFTEEN MINUTES A WEEK).

Our Thursday visits to the three deaf families in the neighborhood continue. We had one family up for midnight mass (Confession, and Communion). But for the most part we have to work on long-range motives. Mr. Miback, first year regent now at Loyola High School in Los Angeles, writes of the possibility of organizing a Signers' Group among the Bodalists. Father Parrish, the Spiritual Father, is a Signer."

Ben. Sargent, S.J., adds a note to Mr. O'Hannon's stimulating letter to the effect that Father Arthur Green, former Chaplain of the Crusaders' Club has been transferred to the Indian Missions, and Father Duffy of Gonzaga is taking his place hearing the deaf's confessions, etc.

If you know any of Ours who would like to have a copy of The Bulletin when it comes out, please send us his name.