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Jesuits of Weston College

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THE BULLETIN

OF
AMERICAN JESUIT ACTIVITY for the DEAF

(For Ours Only.)

FEBRUARY 1948 A.M.D.G. VOLUME 16, NO.1

RENASCENCE . . .

To those whose memory is keen on Society history, this reappearance of THE BULLETIN marks the sixteenth year of publication. Unfortunately it has not been continued or unruffled progress from September 1931, when Brother Paul Rosenecker first edited it in Philadelphia. In 1935 the publication apparently died. In October of 1938, the Weston Dactylology Academy, always in contact with Brother Rosenecker, assumed the responsibility of renewing publication. In a succession of mimeographed issues from that date, Jesuits throughout the United States, Canada, and England have been kept informed of the activities of brother Jesuits for the spiritual needs of Christ's "Silent Flock." Continuing the tradition, Weston signers renew this important news-link among Ours.

LOS GATOS

From Mr. Edward Grady, S.J., of Los Gatos comes a letter with important news of the deaf-mute work at the Juniorate. We say important, for anyone familiar with the tremendous activity of the CRUSADERS' CLUB at Spokane knows that these signers prepare at Los Gatos. When Mr. Dempsey left for Mount St. Michael's last August, there remained at the Juniorate only three Oregon signers. Of these, Mr. Harry Olivier and Mr. Edmund Hogan became Beadle and Sub-beadle, respectively. Mr. Grady reports, however, that by September two more Juniors had joined in the work, and later eight more. At present sign work includes those fundamental lessons of every Academy: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the first few lessons of the Catechism. With the prophetic eye of a good newsman, our West Coast correspondent adds that he will soon have information on the dactylology work being done by the theologians at Alma College.

WESTON

With justifiable pride the Weston College Academy marks its sixteenth year of activity at the Boston College High School "Catholic Deaf Centre", which is now entering its fifty-first year of service. The layman-founder of the Centre, Mr. James P. Donahue, was able to attend the golden anniversary celebration. At present he is too infirm to attend the monthly meetings of the Centre. This year the Weston "Signers" are extremely fortunate in many ways: Mr. Stanley Bowe, past president of the Weston Academy is now stationed at the High School, -as is also the official Moderator of the Centre, Father Clarence Blais, former editor of THE BULLETIN. Add to this the presence of Fathers Joseph LaBran and Benedict Reilly, who are finishing their theological studies at Weston. Both are former Academy members and are a great inspiration to both the Boston deaf and the Weston "Signers".

To those who have been reading the newspapers about the weather conditions in New England, it must be a wonder that the Boston Centre has been able to function so smoothly in the recent months. Highlighting our December meeting was an illustrated lecture on the Mass by Mr. Maurice Feres, S.J., third year philosopher at Weston, (cf. Jan. '48 Ephpheta, news page). Unlike most lectures of this type the slides were of "optimum" quality. They were the modern kodachrome set issued by the Catechetical Guild, and were made available through the courtesy of Father Michael J. Ahern, S.J., the "Radio Priest of New England", and member of the Weston faculty.

On the fourth of January at the regular meeting of the Centre, in addition to the regular "signing" of the Gospel and sermon, there were movies of Father Hubbard's trip. These pictures are of perennial interest to the deaf.

At Wernersville, familiar to all as the Novitiate-Juniorate of the Maryland Province, there is great interest in dactylology. Brother Haig is in charge of the novice-group. Neuland's exercise book is the standard text.

Sparking the efforts of the Juniorate "Signers" is the very enthusiastic Mr. John R. McFarlin, S.J. Besides aiding the Novice academy, Mr. McFarlin is prodding on the efforts of the sixteen juniors who are keeping up their practise in the signs. As in so very many houses of study, the main obstacle to their work is the inability to meet deaf people and do apostolic work.

WERNERSVILLE Anyone who has been long in the work knows only too well how difficult it is to keep up the practice of learning the signs without the inspiration of actual contact with deaf people. As priests, those who have not yet learned the signs are unable to be of much practical assistance to these most abandoned of all unfortunate social groups. The deaf resent the indifference of so many priests who have never bothered to learn even the letters of the sign alphabet. In the immediate area of Wernersville the chief difficulty is that the children who are deaf attend the state school at Mount Airy, and are home only during the summer months. It is earnestly to be wished that Mr. McFarlin come to Weston for philosophy, where Wernersville "Signers", as Mr. John Deeney and Mr. Fred Canavan, have contributed so vitally to the work of the Weston Academy.

1931 was a banner year for Jesuit dactylology work. It was then that the St. Ignatius Circle was inaugurated at St. Andrew-on-Hudson, New York Province Juniorate. It has been thriving ever since. The foundation for this group was laid by Father Purcell, -a name that will be famous among Jesuits whenever Catholic deaf work is discussed. Fitting, too, is the fact that this great founder of New York deaf centres and of the ST. ANDREW'S CATHOLIC DEAF-MUTE (now EPHPHETA) should be buried at St. Andrew's where he did so much to foster love and interest for his special apostolate. The present director of the St. Ignatius Circle is Mr. Robert Canavan, S.J., who is carrying on the family tradition. (He is the brother of Mr. Fred Canavan, mentioned above.) He reports that on occasion, visits are made to Father Purcell's grave by members of his New York centres.

As at Wernersville, the text for beginners is Neuland and Father Higgins. On Thanksgiving Day the annual academy presented by the Circle for the Juniors and faculty was held in the Junior Aula. On the program was a "signing" quartet, and a "signing" play.

The grand tradition established at Mount St. Michael's, Spokane, -the CRUSADERS' CLUB, by Mr. George Porter (familiar to readers of EPHPHETA for his excellent series of articles on vocational psychology for the deaf) is being ably carried on by James F. Sullivan, S.J., present director of the CRUSADERS' CLUB. From a recent news-letter sent us from the Mount we learn that a day of recollection was held on January 18. The order of the day included Mass, breakfast, several signed talks, lunch, and a motion picture, "Dom Bosco", in the afternoon. This particular day of recollection was open only to men.

Speaking of Mr. George Porter, S.J., we recently received a letter from him commenting on the notice which appeared in the January number of EPHPHETA on the work of the Weston Academy. In the future issue of THE BULLETIN we are sure that we will have some items of interest from Mr. Porter's very capable pen.

...there, then, for our first sweeping view of the deaf-mute work being done by American Jesuits. Obviously we were able to cover only some of the work. In this issue of THE BULLETIN we have emphasized work being done in our scholasticates. Here at Weston College we are very anxious to hear from the many Jesuits throughout the country who are engaged in this field, -be their endeavors ever so small. The mutual knowledge of this great apostolate is an inspiration to us all.

Please address communications to the address below.

Devotedly in Christ,

THE WESTON DACTYLOLOGY ACADEMY

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