

AN EASTER MESSAGE TO MY DEAR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Very seldom does a printed letter go out to dear ones without some kind of apology for its seeming impersonality. This letter shall contain no such apology. There should be no doubt to the love with which it is written. I think all have some idea of the great number of wonderful people. Our Lord has been kind enough to let me know. Certainly my family will have no cause for complaint. Perhaps it is the Italian blood which makes us so prolific: like the angels who were numbered as the sands of the seas. The old joke about the lazy Italian who married a pregnant woman, finds no here. My family has not been lazy by any means. I know that you will regard this letter as if it were tete-a-tete.

Recall that April of last year I was commissioned in the Naval Reserves and shortly thereafter began my Chaplain training, first at Norfolk, Virginia, and then, during the summer, at Newport, R. I. Words could not begin to tell the joy of working side-by-side with ministers of all denominations in preparing to bring servicemen to God, and God to servicemen. What a paradox: I would be serving my Lord (who gave up His life for me), by serving our men in the Navy (who are likewise willing, if necessary, to give up their lives for me). Our Motto, most appropriately in Chaplain School, is 'Cooperation without compromise'. It was indeed a great honor to be chosen as MC (Toastmaster) for our graduation ceremony, and to have so many relatives and friends present.

It was but a short time later that Orders assigned me to Key West, for nine months, in an effort to round out, in a practical way, my training for future, more arduous work. And what a lovely place to train it's been.

I have no way of making comparisons, but I can honestly say that the Chaplains that I have the pleasure of working with here are surely among the best. They've been more of a kind in passing on their experiences to me. It is a never-ending source of innocent humor when their children ask me 'whose Father' I am.

At present we are preparing to hold complete Holy Week services, however unsolemnly. It is most important that the people taste at least a bit of the richness of the church Liturgy. I have been privileged to offer Mass each evening during Lent (Mon. thru Sat.) I know that Easter will be a greater joy for those many souls who sacrificed so much of their time to come and receive the Lord.

Let me give you some idea of what a chaplain does. I am up by 6:30 each morning, and attempt, with bleary eyes, to read the "Morning Offering" on my bathroom mirror, as I perform the morning ablutions. My four room house (which

Thanks a million for your assistance!

used to be a morgue: how 'bout that) is situated on the Naval Base (about 10 miles from NAS). Breakfast is usually taken at the BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters) on the Air Station Annex (2 miles from the Base) or sometimes at the Naval Hospital (5 miles from the Base .. & from NAS). Usually I can get to work by 8:30 at the latest. Tuesday is usually spent at the Annex Chaplain's Office. Our work day goes thru to 4:30 (but never really ends there.) The work is just about the same as any parish, but with a certain Navy flavor: e.g., servicemen who have gotten into some trouble are sent to us prior to their going to "Mast (trial)" It is our duty to help find some extenuating or mitigating circumstances and thereby help the man...as also to bring him closer to God. I have 'Additional' duty at the Naval Hospital and Annex and visit them as frequently as possible. One duty I like especially is preparing adult entrance into the Church (I will baptize a few of them during the Easter Vigil.) One thing I especially DON'T like is filling out tons and tons of forms of all kinds (I think Navy is trying to support the paper industry all by itself.) Last week, the Episcopalian Chaplain and I held a joint Memorial service for two of our downed pilots. We had a visiting Bishop down here recently to Confirm our servicemen.

I have three Masses on Sunday, with Confessions 1/2 hour before each, with Baptisms at 1 p.m.: (8 at the Hospital.. 10 at the Annex...and noon at NAS).

Life is not without its leisure moments: e.g., a few days ago I flew to Jacksonville to get checked-out in the Low Pressure chamber and Ejection Seat in preparation for a flight in an F-4 Jet Fighter. The very first day out fishing, we caught 24 (10 pound) chicken dolphin.

I have already received new Orders to Subic Bay in the Philippines for early July (about 50 miles west of Manila). I will be attached to a Mobile Support Unit whose members are called "Circuit Riders" and am told that the position will stress mobility and flexibility. We will ride all of the Oilers, Ammo and Refrigerator ships, plus coverage of some in-country units (Vietnam) which lend support to our combat troops. My new address there will be: OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN - MOSUPPUDET "B" - BOX 18 - FPO, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF - ORMEA 96651.

You will be remembered in my Easter Masses. May it please God to bless you and yours abundantly with a renewed spiritual life and accompanying material blessings. Pray for me. In Christ, Our Risen Savior.

Ray Tenas