

Catholic Union and Echo

Established 1872

Vol. 87—No. 12

Buffalo, N. Y., Friday, March 20, 1959

16 Pages—10c

Holy Cross Parish Plans Tribute To Msgr. Gambino on 80th Birthday

EACH MORNING a spry and wiry octogenarian visits his little "grandsons" and "grandpas" as Fr. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gambino, P.A., lovingly refers to his kindergarten and lower grade school children.

He jests and banters with them and then leaves them some simple lessons on a religious truth such as prayer, obedience, and truthfulness.

Holy Cross School is the pride and joy of his old age. To a venerable priest who for more than 35 years has ascended "the altar of God, who gives joy too his youth," his personal interest in the children and young people has kept him young at heart and healthily modern.

Msgr. Gambino, pastor of Holy Cross Church for more than 45 years, has felt equally at home with the small and the lowly as well as the great and mighty of the Church and of the world.

Born near Torino, Italy, 80 years ago this March 23, Msgr. Gambino remembers having spoken to St. John Bosco twice and having seen him many times. On December 3, 1906, he had an audience with another saint, Pope Pius X.

CARDINAL DELLA CHIESA, Archbishop of Bologna, had a villa in Genoa next door to the seminary Msgr. Gambino attended. It happened on numerous occasions that the future Benedict XV conversed with the slender seminarian from the Piedmont.

In 1925 Msgr. Gambino made a pilgrimage to Rome and had an audience with Pope Pius XI.

He also recalls with great joy the 17 minutes he spent alone in Pius XII. Five years later, in conversation with our late Pope 1953, with one of his former assistants, the present Bishop of Ogdensburg, Most Rev. James J. Neavegh, D.D., another audience was granted.

Msgr. Gambino enjoyed a unique experience while serving as a soldier in the Italian army. In those days clerics were not exempted from conscription in the armed forces. The 21-year-old Giuseppe Gambino was a sergeant and was classified as a telegrapher in his assignment in Florence.

SECONDO GAMBINO, the octogenarian's father, was a close friend of Count Robilant, an outstanding Catholic layman of the Piedmont area. Count Robilant's father had a distinguished army career, having lost an arm in the war against Austria in 1849, and later was named as Italian ambassador to England. The famous Prince Zubof of Russia used to spend his winters in Florence. Count Robilant, the friend of the Gambino family, married the daughter of Prince Zubof. She was a convert from Russian Orthodoxy



RT. REV. MSGR. JOSEPH GAMBINO, P.A.

It was toward the end of January, 1901, that this young seminarian, whose studies were interrupted by military service, was invited to supper by his father's friends. Afterwards all the Robilants and Zubofs were guests at the Florentine villa of Queen Victoria of England, who wintered in northern Italy. The youthful sergeant was asked to accompany them.

ALL THE GUESTS were in the drawing room and Queen Victoria noticed the young soldier and beckoned him to come to her side. She spoke excellent Italian and said: "Parliamo, sono vecchia, vecchia, tu sei, giovane, giovane."—"Let us talk, I'm so old and you are so young."

Queen Victoria inquired about the Gambino family, his seminary studies, his plans for the priesthood and his life as a soldier. She discussed the Rosary, the Mass

and other religious subjects with the seminarian. This conversation lasted a half hour. The future priest was impressed by her graciousness.

THE PARISH THAT he founded 45 years ago will honor Msgr. Gambino on Palm Sunday, March 22, at 3 p.m. in the Catholic Theater.

His beloved school children will present a program commemorating his 80th birthday. Parishioners received Holy Communion on St. Joseph's Day and will again on Palm Sunday for his intentions. A spiritual bouquet, with thousands of prayers and good works, will be presented to him.

Parishioners and friends are invited to the commemorative events. Frank S. DiFiglia is master of ceremonies and will introduce Mayor Frank A. Sedita and other distinguished civic leaders.