

Report on Seattle's Maryknoll

April 1944

by James Y. Sakamoto

On the hillside topped by Providence Hospital nestles the Maryknoll buildings of Seattle's erstwhile Japanese parish. Set apart from the rest of the environs like an unwalled miniature compound the rising grounds from the street on which the buildings are situated are bounded on the South by the East Jefferson Street slope and running a quarter of a block north on 16th and 17th Avenues as the Western and Eastern extremities.

As the sun slants Westward, its warm golden rays invariably encompass the backyards of the Maryknoll Sisters' Convent and the Nursery next door, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church, Maryknoll Grade School, the Blessed Virgin's Grotto, a tennis court and combined Maryknoll Father's House, clubhouse and workshop. All told they represent an investment of almost \$150,000.

When Father Leopold Henry Tibesar took over the pastoral duties of the parish, there was still an indebtedness on the buildings which were constructed in 1930 of some \$60,000. By dint of hard work and figuring the loan now owed the bank amounts to only several thousand dollars.

Father came to Seattle in 1934. Maryknoll Fathers are usually transferred to another locality after a six year period. He was permitted to remain longer with his Seattle flock at their urgent request. Prior to his incumbency in Seattle he was in Manchuria and Japan for six years as a missionary. He knew the background of his parishioners well. He spoke their language and devoted his time from the outset toward stabilizing the foundation of their homes. This he did in various ways. He would first see to it that as many of his parishioners as possible owned his own home as a guarantee of security. As often as opportunity permitted he would be the bridge between his parish and other Catholic parishes to strengthen what might be termed that sense of "belonging" among his parishioners. At

the same time he would show the members of other parishes that his people were one with them in the establishment of a greater and better society and community life.

Father is one of those unusual men. As the possessor of two Masters' degrees and showing intense application to his vocation upon graduation from the Catholic University, he was made a priest by a special act of POPE PIUS XI before he had attained the age when priests are normally ordained.

Perhaps, the unusualness is not so strange when it is noted that of his four younger brothers, three are priests. He also has three sisters, one of whom is a Maryknoll nun.

His mother died after he had joined the priesthood. Dad Louis Nicholas Tibesar who became 86 this year, came as an immigrant youth from Luxembourg. Like many a hardy, serious-minded immigrant boy Dad Tibesar worked and studied to finally become a Professor of Science and History at Quincy College in Illinois. He had made his home here where all his children were born and to which he retired a relatively few years back.

In 1936 and 37, Father Tibesar served as national president of the Catholic Anthropological Society. Whether this gave him greater insight into human nature may never be told. It is certain however, that he knew his man when he saw him and talked accordingly. This is perhaps, one of Father's secrets of success with his Japanese parish.

Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, dawned bright and sunny. Mass was over and the congregation had gone home. Then the news suddenly broke over the radio and in the morning extras. Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japanese planes.

Gloom and darkness overtook the Japanese community.

Some couldn't believe it. To them it was just another dramatically imposed anti-Japanese propaganda concocted by over imaginative radio commentators and news correspondents. Soon the telephone wires kept up a busy hum. The receiver was in a continual

clamp on Father's ear. His voice was telling the callers to keep calm while in his heart a prayer vibrated the pulsations against the one news he had hoped never to hear.

The parishioners were calmed, at least, outwardly. Lips that had lapsed from prayers began laying importance to them. Maryknoll drew record attendance from all faiths.

Hectic days and weeks chronicled the prologue to evacuation. The sudden impact of war had left the Japanese population stunned and panicky. This was true throughout the nation as in Seattle.

Despite the outward calm that settled on the community there was confusion within. Father's advice was sought in the formation of a body to help the people and the authorities as a measure of cooperation with the government in its war effort. The Emergency Defense Council of the Seattle Japanese American Citizens' League Chapter sprang into being. It was formed by loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry. The body which cooperated with Federal and National Defense agencies included the following:

Civilian Defense Corps, Red Cross Corps, Defense Bonds and Stamps Sales Campaign Corps, Welfare and Relief Corps and an Intelligence unit cooperating with the Federal Bureau of Investigation whose members were not known even to the general chairman of the Council, who himself, had appointed its chief.

Father was consulted on countless occasions in the work of the Council.

December passed like the darkest moment of a bad nightmare.

With the early flush of 1942, talk of evacuating the Japanese, both citizens and aliens alike, from the coastal regions spread particularly throughout the western States. In January, Lieut. Gen. John L. Dewitt, Commandant of the 4th Army and the Western Defense Command was provided with special powers by President Roosevelt. Then February and the special Nolan Congressional Committee came to Seattle.

Father talked with Congressman Nolan. What he thought of evacuation and the Japanese residents on the coast is now a matter of record that threw down the gauntlet to the anti-Japanese elements of Congress and the Pacific Coast States.

Despite the outward calm, a sense of insecurity took root with fear. The newspapers began carrying stories of the impending evacuation of Japanese residents in British Columbia. It was portentous of what was to follow on this side of the border.

Bank deposits of Japanese aliens had been frozen immediately at the outbreak of war to be gradually relaxed. Those who had their deposits in Japanese banks the Sumitomo and the Yokohama Specie Bank, were not benefited by this relaxation and are not to this day.

Confiscation of firearms, cameras, maps and all articles that were termed as contraband was ordered. Registration of all Japanese, Germans, and Italians as enemy aliens took place as did their property holdings.

In April the order for evacuation came from the headquarters of the Western Defense Command at (sic) President, (Presidio), California.

What to do now? In normal times the people went for their advice to the leaders of the Seattle Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Japanese Association and to other business men on various social and business problems. Now they began coming to Father, and to the Emergency Defense Council, which had undertaken cooperation in carrying out the various government orders and instructions. The one time first generation leaders had been taken into custody for investigation and probable internment by nightfall of Dec. 7.

"What's to happen to us now?," became uppermost in the minds of the people.

Despite the overburdening nature of Father's extra curricular work, the regular schedule of Church activities was continued. To say

the least it maintained the morale of his parishioners. It was boosted particularly by the associations Father had made with St. Vincent de Paul, Holy Name Society and other Catholic organizations. Members of those organizations, including well known Seattle lay leaders, had joined hands in Catholic loyalty and friendship with the St. Vincent de Paul and Holy Name Society members at the Maryknoll Church in February. Among the leaders present were:

Charles Albert, National Vice-President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Seattle

Charles Smith, In charge of the U.S.O.

Joseph Smith, Manager of the Telephone and Telegraph Service

L. J. Esterman

Dr. Dedonato

The visit of Bishop James E. Walsh, Superior General of Maryknoll, to his Seattle Japanese parish was an outstanding event during that hectic period. It had a quieting and peaceful effect on the parishioners to lift their spirits.

Still the paramount questions with which the Japanese residents were faced could not be dismissed from their minds.

What now to do about property holdings, bank accounts, children's schooling, employment, clothing, food, shelter, new-born babes, expectant mothers, sick in the hospitals, sanatoriums and asylums, parents separated from children in Japan and vice-versa, where to go, unpayable bills and sundry other problems of significant importance to the lives of every individual about to be evacuated? They became the panorama of problems with all their minor details for Father to click his camera for clear, correct, and snapshot solutions.

Taken ill in December, 1940 and through January, 1941, Father was not fully recovered when Pearl Harbor was bombed. There was no time for him to convalesce after his release from Providence Hospital. What little benefit he was able to get through spasmodic rests until Dec. 7, 1941, was undone by the worries and unremitting tax on his strength and energy that burdened him from that day on.

The work was more than overburdening to begin with for a single let alone sick priest. Headquarters from Maryknoll on the Hudson sent Father John F. Walsh, younger brother of Bishop Walsh, to assist him. Father Walsh, who could talk anyone's so-called lingo, was like a boon from Heaven to Father Tibesar as well as to the people of the parish.

More time and effort could now be given the people's troubles and more people could now be accommodated.

Up to that time, Brothers Adrian and Ambrose were Father's right hand men. The Maryknoll Sisters, thirteen in all at the time, headed by Sister Superior Consulata and Sister Denise, as assistant, bore their crosses with the people, silently ministering to uncounted families and persons. Hope and courage were not the least of the ministrations by the Brothers and Sisters to write a memorable chapter of human charity in the annals of the Maryknoll community.

The start of the evacuation fell on the final day of April to continue to May 16th, until Seattle's Japanese population had been temporarily settled at the Assembly Center, in the fair grounds of Puyallup, Washington, and adjoining lands.

The first contingent of evacuees were taken from the South and West sections of Seattle. The Emergency Defense Council headquarters, within one of the sections to be evacuated first, moved to the Maryknoll School building, in an area of final evacuation, together with the W.C.C.A. agents and Army officers supervising the movements. Moving inward toward the North and East the military order for their evacuation was carried out as humanely, kindly and courteously as possible by the Army officers headed by Lieut. Col. Paul B. Malone, Jr. and Capt. Michael Revisita, second in command. They were men as were their staff of officers and soldiers who understood and sympathized with the heartaches and sorrows that befell the alien and citizen evacuees.

Camp Harmony, as the Assembly Center was called, was divided into four areas, A, B, C, and D. It was supervised by the Wartime

Civilian Control Authority as the liaison body of the Army.

Daily Mass was seldom missed. It was held in one or another area and without fail. On July 25th, Bishop Gerald Shaughnessy and Father J. Dougherty, Secretary of the Seattle Diocese, were visitors. The Bishop had come to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to new converts.

Father could not reside within the center. He was the guest of Father Power, priest of the Puyallup Valley parish, who was also present at the Confirmation. Father Power is an elderly priest and whose sympathetic aid greatly helped the morale of the Maryknoll people.

All in Camp Harmony were not from Seattle. There were evacuees from Alaska, Puyallup Valley, Eatonville, National, Olympia and a few from the outlying vicinity of Seattle.

American friends were constant visitors from the first to the last week of visiting permitted at the gates of Camp Harmony. They were neighbors, friends, sympathetic casual acquaintances and persons related in a direct or indirect manner in business with the evacuees. There were perhaps a few bill collectors but none that were too insistent on results.

On several occasions Maryknoll Sisters were visitors as were missionaries of other churches. They were given special permission to visit the children, parents, and friends of their church. Each time the Sisters concluded their visits large numbers of children and parents followed them to the gates, choked words whispering farewell.

The August sun poured hot. Orders came early in the month for the removal of Camp Harmony residents to their new home. On rolling (sic) stocks of past modernity, contingents of 600 evacuees were moved in short intervals throughout the month.

A large majority had never gone out of the State of Washington and for many another it was their first train ride. For 26 hours they rode on hard-backed day coaches. Hospital patients, however, were

transported in an up-to-date Pullman. The only other deluxe carrier was the air-conditioned diner. It afforded a menu-treat on the Army and relief from the close and sweltering heat of the coaches.

By early September the 7200 from Camp Harmony and 2100 from the Assembly Center at Portland, Oregon, filled the Minidoka War Relocation Center at Hunt, Idaho. The new home was under the supervision of the War Relocation Authority which later was placed under the Department of Interior. Hunt was a name adopted for reasons of the Twin Falls post-office after settlement of the center.

Laid out in crescent shape the barrack-lined, prairie community stretched out over rolling plains spotted luxuriantly by sagebrush and cactus. It was a settlement apart from the general stream of life. Twin Falls was some 25 miles southeast, Shoshone was 20 miles almost due north and Jerome making up the tripod, of civilization some 18 miles northeast.

The community proper covering an area a half a mile wide and 3 miles long occupies a portion of the 33,500 acres denoting the project grounds.

The community of barrack buildings is divided into two sections. Blocks one to nineteen make the North wing of the crescent. The south wing some quarter of a mile away over irrigation ditches and sagebrush runs slightly south and to the east with Blocks twenty-one to forty-four although actually there are only thirty-five blocks.

The back of the crescent joining the two wings is at the west. It is made up of the Administration Buildings, Fire Station, Warehouses, Water and Sanitation Departments, Recreational and Mess Halls, and one story Hospital that boasts of modern equipment, and extends slightly inward.

Each block has twelve rows of barracks, lined six each with even numbers on one side and the odd numbers on the other.

In the intervening space between are the mess hall and the building within which are the laundry, men and women's shower

rooms with a boiler room in between. Just outside of the block is the recreation hall for whatever entertainment or business purpose it may be used for by the block people.

A barrack row houses six families or groups of people. The two end apartments are sixteen by twenty feet accommodating two to three persons. The two inside apartments next to them are twenty by twenty-four feet accommodating five to seven persons. The two middle apartments are twenty by twenty feet for the accommodation of four to five persons.

There are three entrances to a barrack building with each one opening into a vestibule like hallway and two apartment doors facing each other.

When the people first arrived they trudged through sand ankle deep. What roads opened were tracks made by trucks and cars of the project.

On windy days the visibility was obscured by the flying dust and sand that became the bane of every person and apartment, as well. When it rained the mud sucked the rubbers from one's shoes into the slime.

Today, after a year and a half, the automobile tracks are like crude country roads. Where faint footprint paths once existed, between the blocks and barracks, dirt walks bordered with rough-edged rocks and an irrigation ditch beside it have now replaced them. Trees were planted not so long ago to break the monotony of the sagebrush and the sand hills.

Getting around in this community meant walking. Cars are available only for business as are ambulances for emergencies.

To this out of the way community on the Idaho prairie, Father Tibesar came driving the one ton Ford truck lending modern version to covered wagon days. The truck was given to his keeping by Tommy Kobayashi and his father who had used it as gardeners in Seattle. Tommy was one of Father's first altar boys as well as several times

president of the Holy Name Society. He joined the Army as a volunteer and is, perhaps, overseas by now.

When Father came, all the barracks were not ready for inhabitation. There were individuals and families who were quartered in recreation halls at first. Father made his residence in Jerome as the guest of Father Eric Schermanson, secular priest of the Parish there.

Every morning for (sic) night on two months he drove the eighteen miles to the center for Mass.

Finally his quarters were made ready for him in the center.

Father now resides in Apt. F, an end room in Block 22. The next apartment serves as the Chapel where Daily Mass is held weekdays at 6:50 A.M. On Sundays it is held in the Block recreation hall which has been improvised into the semblance of a church auditorium.

The chapel will long be remembered by all who knew it. It served not only as a Chapel, however. After Mass the curtain would be drawn around the Altar where the Blessed Sacrament was kept, and the Chapel would be turned into a library and clubroom for both adults and children.

There was a collection of religious, biographical, historical and fictional books in both English and Japanese proving of interest to both young and old. It was a collection that could bolster the pride of any library.

The Chapel transformed served also as a clubroom. Meetings were held there in the afternoons and evenings.

The children particularly found it a congenial place to indulge in games and play. On Saturday afternoons, especially the children make it their playroom while awaiting their turn to go to confession, in Father's quarters across the vestibule-like hallway.

In this barrack Chapel, clubroom and playground for children, Father has witnessed and experienced the emotions of people from

sorrow to gaiety, deaths to christenings, baptism, confirmation, weddings and comradeship in club activities to fond farewells. None who relocated has failed to reminisce about Mass in the barrack Chapel and the meetings with friends.

One convert, who and his family were relocated with the assistance of Father, wrote how he missed Mass in the barrack Chapel. The great Cathedrals and Churches in the East could not make him forget it, he professed.

Despite the hard weather by summer or winter, Father's congregation never failed him. Though it has dwindled considerably due to relocation, his flock still remains strong and fast.

At first Daily Mass was well attended. On Sundays, there was no difficulty in counting more than 300 noses present. Since the active institution of the relocation program, the number has come down to half with further decrease expected.

Slightly better than half now attending Sunday Mass are not Catholics. They are in the main people who have come to know Father's devotion to the community and the work of the Church.

Father picked up the threads of work where they were left off in Seattle and Camp Harmony. A seemingly New Year of sudden and overburdening activity descended on his lone shoulders as he first met with his flock in Minidoka. There were only a few remaining months in 1942.

Nothing seemed to deter him from setting immediately to task. The miles he drove each morning from Jerome until he was domiciled in the center and the miles he trudged over the sands of the prairie community to the barrack homes of his flock little waylaid his efforts to continue where he really left off in Seattle.

The initial meetings were held for the Holy Name and St. Vincent de Paul Societies, Legion of Mary, weekly Genko-Kai or Our Lady Queen of Martyrs meetings and the evening study clubs for old and young in Japanese and English. The Catechism lessons for the children

were taken over by the members of the Legion of Mary after Sunday Mass.

There was one important program missed, however. It was the education of the children as it was so diligently, efficiently and carefully accomplished at the Maryknoll School in Seattle by the Sisters.

The groundwork for continued activity was paved.

November's air was cool but a warm, benign sun helped welcome Bishop Edward J. Kelly of the Idaho Diocese from Boise one day. Accompanied by Monsignor O'Toole of Twin Falls, Father K. F. Rowe of Boise, and Father Schermanson of Jerome, the Bishop came as if to help Father formally launch an eventful program that was to help the stability, morale and spirit of the people.

Those in attendance were not all Catholics. All who heard the Bishop, however, left the hall inspired and heartened by the kindly words that betokened all sympathy, understanding and friendship were not lacking among Catholics and others in the American public outside.

The work moved on steadily. Father's presence seemed to be a genuine morale-builder. Catholic and other families were visited. Wives of husbands, who were interned and seeking parole, were among visitors that came for advice and comfort. Parents of sons and daughters desiring to attend schools and colleges outside or to find employment as did they who sought relocation of their families in the East, came to him for help and counsel.

Then Christmas approached to lend a fitting climax to the inauguration of his program at Minidoka.

Christmas was approached with nature's white blanket covering the landscape from the night before. It was celebrated with Midnight Mass. Some two hundred and a score more people, Catholics and others, (sic) wanded their way under a cold, bright moon to the Chapel. They filled the Chapel and Father's adjoining quarters to

smothering closeness.

Mass was beautiful. Excepting to a few, it was their first Midnight Mass.

Early on Christmas Day, Father again said Mass for the old and children who were not able to attend the Midnight Service.

New Year's Day and 1943 fairly rushed out the old year. The people were praying and hoping for a quick end to the war. It seemed their only chance for salvation from a confined and mentally arduous existence.

It was to be an eventful year, almost as much as the one preceding it, for the Minidoka residents as it was for all Japanese evacuees throughout the country. For Father the events came thick and fast. Each of them bore down directly or indirectly on him.

Father's main thought from as early as January the year before had been the relocation to the East of his flock as well as others who looked to the future and more secure existence in American life. The New Year was to see a fair degree of compensating fruition of his thoughts and plans. Early in 1942 he had sent out two members of his parish to St. Louis to study the feasibility of resettling families there and the sections nearby. Tommy Kobayashi and Francis Chiujo went to St. Louis and the vicinity along the Mississippi. They returned less hopeful than when they started.

His plans, however, were not cast aside.

Early in February the registration of all center residents took place. Then came the call for volunteers among the Americans of Japanese ancestry for the Special Combat team of the United States Army.

Prior to this call, in November the War Dept., however, sought volunteers for specialist training in the Japanese language for the Army's intelligence unit at Camp Savage in Minnesota. A creditable showing was made. It seemed to presage the general call for the

volunteers to form the special Japanese American Combat Team now in training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Minidoka's response was the largest of any relocation center. Of the more than 300 volunteers almost twelve per cent were Maryknoll boys. This was a relatively large percentage since the entire Maryknoll membership in the center amounted to four per cent of the population.

The volunteering program about cleaned out the Holy Name Society of its American-born Japanese members. There was something akin to an undertone of objection to the volunteer program by an unknown alien element among whom were some younger generation people. The Maryknollers, however, were decidedly on one side of the fence in opposition to them.

Parents and young ones, Catholics and otherwise, had come to Father asking his opinion of the army's call. In a direct but simple and quiet way he told them where the plain duty of the Americans of Japanese ancestry lay. The great majority of them were satisfied.

Young Maryknollers and others didn't have to have the flag flown in their faces to follow the line of action that Father firmly believed should be taken. This Maryknoll unity cannot be considered other than as having had a salubrious effect on the campaign.

Each morning in Seattle at the Maryknoll School the boys had stood with the rest of the children before the flagpole on the corner of the grounds to pledge allegiance to and salute Old Glory. The significance of the practice had taken root with their souls and hearts.

Joining with their sons in the spirit of their actions, Catholic fathers and mothers accepted the volunteer program with good grace and not a little pride in their sons. There were parents, however, throughout the center who could not accept the actions of their sons as cheerfully or even resignedly. Evacuation was still smoldering under their skins. To them the questions was: "Why must our sons volunteer for the Army when they were ousted from their homes

though they were citizens of the United States?" This question and others that branched from it sounded reasonable enough but they failed to realize that a war was going on with Japan.

Little did the entire population realize, however, that through the volunteering of the boys the relocation of themselves into the general stream of American life and to more normal circumstances was to be helped considerably and speeded. The action of the volunteers while primarily out of loyalty to the United States was at the same time an act in defense of the honor of the American-born Japanese as loyal citizens and to cause the rightful recognition in the public of their rights as Americans.

There is no doubt that the volunteering paved the way for the active institution of the W.R.A. relocation program now being taken advantage of by a fair number of both aliens and citizens alike.

Today in the vestibule-like hallway that separates the Chapel from Father's quarter, there hangs Maryknoll's own service flag. It has 35 stars. One of them is gold. The luster of the yellow star shines more brilliantly than if it might have been woven there in threads of gold.

It is the star of a favorite son of Seattle's Maryknoll. Peter Fujiwara died in line of duty at Fort Riley in August, 1942. A military funeral was given him there. The Stars and Stripes that draped his coffin and belongings were brought to his parents in this center. Father conducted a memorial service for this first Maryknoll boy and the first from the state of Washington to die in the service of his country.

The flag hangs proudly across the wall of Papa Fujiwara's barrack apartment. He wears his fatigue cap as if to assure himself that his son is still with him, A Caucasian project truck driver once saw him moving the garbage cans from the mess halls with that same fatigue cap perched on his head. He asked a second generation beside him, "Where did he get that fatigue cap, was he in the Army?"

The young man turned to him and told him how Fujiwara's boy

had died in the service and that he would not part with that cap for all the money or comforts in the world. To him it represented his pride in his boy.

Father's relocation work sped on. It dovetailed conveniently with the W.R.A. relocation program.

From the time that he had sent Kobayashi and Chiujo to Missouri his connections with Eastern Catholic parishes and societies had expanded for the relocation of his membership and other Japanese families.

Father James McCormick of Detroit and other Catholic priests and laymen were vastly helpful to Father and his work. Catholic leaders in Seattle were also, constant in their efforts to aid Father and his flock. They relayed Father's relocation plans to Eastern friends as they did suggestions and leads for work from the East to him.

Letters offering positions came in numbers to Father from Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, New York, Indiana and other Mid-Western and Eastern States.

By the end of December, 1943, nearly forty Catholics and other families were relocated. This meant a total of more than 200 individuals with some unattached persons.

The large majority were resettled among Catholics in the Mid-West and East.

There were several considerations regarding relocation that Father was firm about. That relocation should be on a family basis to the best degree possible, was one of them. He was strong against the splitting up of families. This point of family unity had guided him in his recommendation for parole of internees whom he believed were guiltless of any subversive activity so that they may rejoin their families.

Other points that Father regarded as important were the ability of persons and families to adjust themselves to environment, their

proper acceptance in the community to which they were going and, of course, the means of livelihood which would not be insufficient for maintenance of self-respect, family welfare and morale.

A typical letter from a (sic) relocate expressed his appreciation and satisfaction. He was a gardener in Seattle with a liberal education in horticulture. After his son had joined the Army, he and his family of five others relocated to Illinois where he is now working as a janitor for a Catholic institution.

He declared that his relocation had opened up an avenue to help the education of his children and other opportunities for them and that he was satisfied to retain his present job for life.

While the large majority were in work new and strange to them, they were appreciative and quite satisfied under the conditions.

The general community had not noticed the part that Father was playing in relocation. It nevertheless caught the attention of Dillon S. Myer, W.R.A. Director in Washington D.C. One day in late summer Mr. Myer was a visitor in Minidoka on a hurried and busy trip around all relocation centers. A personal visit was paid to Father's quarters to thank him for his active part in forwarding the relocation work.

Relocation somehow became the principal theme of Father's Minidoka life and work. This was not, though, at the neglect of other Church activities which were fundamental.

The Holy Name membership narrowed down to a handful by June. Chiujo had succeeded Kobayashi as the president but he, too, relocated to Detroit by October.

Early in the year Father had taken some American-born Japanese and parent generation members to a monthly meeting of the Holy Name Society at Jerome, in the "covered wagon." The meeting was held at Father Schermanson's residence. It was probably the first time the visitors had been in a home since they left their own in Seattle. The overstuffed furniture, straight backed chairs,

tables, Father's bedroom set, bathroom, the kitchen with its sink and faucet and all, brought back nostalgic memories.

The cheerful atmosphere of Catholic fellowship recalled meetings of a past and happier day in Seattle.

Spontaneous acquiescence seemed to result from the meeting for a gathering of all Holy Name Society members of the entire district at Minidoka. The occasion arrived on Feb. 14th. Fully seventy priests, and members and friends from Jerome, Wendell, Twin Falls, Buhl and nearby vicinity, joined with the Minidoka Society.

The affair will remain long in the memory of those who attended. There was no festive board but following the usual business meeting, dinner was served in the administration area mess hall embellished and enjoyed by genuine comradeship.

Here was assembled Americans of Irish, English, Polish, Italian Scandinavian, German, Japanese and other stock ancestry with Japanese members, technically enemy aliens. There was, also, a lieutenant of the United States Army and several men of his staff who had come to register volunteers for the special combat team.

It was Democracy and Christian Fellowship in action.

The part played by Father Schermanson with Father Tibesar in the arrangement of this affair cannot be underestimated. He is today deep in the affection and respect of Minidoka's Maryknoll membership as are his Holy Name people.

This was not to be the last gathering. In November the Maryknollers were invited to a Holy Name meeting and banquet at Jerome. Father crowded fourteen members of His Holy Name Society into his truck to make the trip. The majority of his American-born Japanese members had already gone to Camp Shelby.

The gathering at Jerome's leading hostelry was equally memorable as the others that preceded it.

This had been followed later when the year passed into 1944, with preparations at Minidoka for a farewell dinner meeting before relocation of the relatively few remaining Maryknoll members.

The meeting and banquet was held on Sunday, March 12. Some thirty-four Jerome members attended the affair.

Preceded by a business meeting at the Chapel a native Japanese dish of Tendon claimed the attention of the diners in the mess hall of the high school area near the Chapel.

The Maryknoll ladies and some of the menfolk pitched in to help prepare the dish. The chopsticks and food proved a novelty to the visitors from Jerome and the half dozen project officials who had been specially invited.

The dinner meeting was probably the only one of the kind to be held in the United States and the world, for that matter, under the conditions.

Not many days after the November meeting at Jerome, Father took short leave of his flock for a well-earned and needed rest. He visited Seattle for a combined rest and to consult with Father Walsh regarding the Maryknoll property there.

During his absence, Father Hallissey, who had already met the Minidoka people, drove the some 35 miles from Wendell each Sunday during the latter half of November and the first week of December to say Mass. Father Hallissey said Mass at his Wendell Church early on Sunday mornings and then drove over frozen roads to Minidoka and would return immediately to Wendell for the third Mass of the morning.

The return of Father Tibesar saw the start of preparations for the second Midnight Christmas Mass to be held in Minidoka.

A drizzling rain and mud greeted the folks who stepped from their abodes to attend the service. The night seemed unusually dark. Footsteps (sic) cozing into the ground, finally made a pathway to the

recreation hall where Mass was held. The year before it was held in the Chapel and the adjoining quarters of Father's. This Christmas it was believed useless to attempt holding the expected attendance there, and was changed to the recreation hall.

Father's message was inspiring. It took the congregation out of the depths of moody thoughts, that went back to past Christmasses under brighter circumstances.

At 8:00 in the morning Father said Mass again. It was attended by the children and the old who were not present at the Midnight Mass.

Refreshments as at Midnight, followed to lend a touch of celebration to the Holiday.

Presents for the children made them happy. It wasn't like Christmas in Seattle. There, the Sisters were always present to help with the special program held on the Sunday before the Yule vacation.

The Sisters, were never forgotten by Maryknoll members. And the Sisters in Seattle and Maryknoll-on-the-Hudson never forgot them.

In June, Sisters Consulata and Rose Carmel came to Minidoka for a two weeks' visit. Their coming was looked forward to with high expectancy and especially by the children and their mothers.

During their two weeks' stay they visited every possible Catholic home as well as others which they had known in Seattle.

They were strange to the Minidoka scene but no stranger to the people. As they walked the crude roads from one destination to another, they were reminiscent of their errands of work and mercy in past.

In Seattle at evacuation time, it was the Sisters who had gone to the bedside of the sick who were being left behind for hospitalization when and after their loved ones were forced to depart for the bus

taking them to Camp Harmony. They were the ones who kept up the courage and spirits of the hospitalized by frequent visits.

Their stay at Minidoka was all too short-lived.

As though to soften the rough edge of camp life Sisters Rosaire and Thomas Marie, then came to spend July and August with their people. Theirs became the task of conducting daily catechism classes, Legion of Mary meetings, choir practices, as well as performing other functions. Those two months will probably stand out as the most normal period, mentally and spiritually, spent by the children and parents of Maryknoll in the Minidoka center.

Since evacuation Father Walsh had taken charge of Seattle's Maryknoll affairs. Between him and Brother Adrian they were the caretaker, janitor and general handyman around the grounds. According to reports, Brother Adrian was raising chickens in the backyard of the one time nursery. The Sisters were selling out the furniture and Father Walsh had disposed of the Maryknoll School equipment. The Church was now being used exclusively by the Filipino parish of which he was now the pastor and Father Confessor.

One day past mid-September Father Walsh was a visitor at Minidoka. He remained for two days filled with visits to the homes of the Maryknoll people and friends. His visit was like a touch of home and Seattle brought to the isolation of the center.

On a bleak October day, the sixteenth to be exact, as snow flakes spattered the muddied fields from an earlier rainfall, Bishop Kelly, accompanied by Father Walsh of Boise and Father Hallissey came to administer the Blessed Sacrament of Confirmation following Mass. Some ten first generation and second generation, who had been baptized by Father Tibesar, were confirmed. It was held in the Chapel with Bishop Kelly inserting a kindly note of encouragement and strength for all in attendance,

These were the contacts and associations with life outside that Father had shaped for his flock in the center.

Following the February Holy Name dinner-meeting in Minidoka, Father had departed on his first vacation since evacuation. He left for Quincy, Illinois, to visit Dad Tibesar and his sister and brother, one of whom was president of Quincy College nearby. Before returning to Minidoka again after six weeks he also visited Chicago and Seattle. While it was intended as a vacation trip, to Father it seemed like a lecture tour. In Quincy, Chicago and Seattle, he had been requested to tell of the life and conditions at Minidoka. There is no doubt that his lectures helped pave the way toward the relocation of many of his flock in the Mid-West and East.

During the interim his work was continued at Minidoka by Father John Morris. The latter had just returned on the first voyage of the Swedish exchange ship, Gripsholm, with American internees from Japan and the Philippines (sic) (?). He had been in Japan and Korea for more than twenty years as a Maryknoll missionary.

To him this was a new experience. He had ministered to Japanese and Koreans in the Far East but never to Japanese Catholics in his own country. Father was a gentle, soft-spoken man who soon claimed the intimate reverence of all who came in contact with him. His departure, too, on the day following the return of Father Tibesar was tinged with sadness as was occasioned when Father Walsh and the Sisters left for Seattle after their visits.

These acts of service, friendship and remembrance by Catholic priests, and people outside did not miss the hearts of appreciation that beat within the breasts of the Maryknollers at Minidoka.

Tokens of gratitude marked their appreciation. Once the Maryknoll ladies assembled whatever suitable material they could to make vestments for both Father Power at Puyallup and Father Schermanson at Jerome for the important part they had played in the orientation of the people to their new surroundings upon evacuation.

While Father Morris was still at Minidoka, the Legion of Mary joined hands with the young people of Twin Falls at the latter's Church. The visit outside by the Minidoka girls and boys proved both exhilarating and encouraging to them. It gave them the feeling of still

being a part of the general stream of American life.

While their numbers were also dwindling through relocation the group kept up its work helping at Mass, meetings and chiefly in putting out the biweekly, "Maryknoll Athletic Association" formerly put out by the boys.

Father returned seemingly refreshed from that first trip outside. He took up where Father Morris left off as well as to continue some of the skeins of the relation threads he had woven before leaving for his visit.

The St. Vincent de Paul kept on. It met each Monday evening. First the meetings were held at the Chapel, but later the few remaining members gathered weekly at the home of Thomas Tokuhisa Matsudaira. He was a recent convert although Mrs. Matsudaira has been one of the faithful members of the Church since her Baptism some 12 years ago. They are the parents of 10 Catholic children one of whom is now at Camp Shelby and the second about to enter the Army.

Chiujo had been President of the Society. Joseph Saito now took his place with Matsudaira as treasurer. Patrick Uyehara, who was Secretary, like Chiujo, had relocated.

Emphasis now was being placed on relocation in adherence to Father's policy. Relocation was now being pushed by finding persons for employment in the Mid-West and East as well as by giving financial assistance from the Society treasury whenever necessary.

The St. Vincent de Paul of St. Joseph's Parish in Seattle, made financial contributions to the Minidoka Society for its upkeep and to aid in its work.

The relocation work, however, was not at the risk of forgetting the functions of aid and assistance to the sick, old, families, where the gospel of Catholic faith had ready listeners.

Some who were helped never became known to the public. Yet the records show the wide sphere of Catholic action taken by a small

but staunch band of Maryknoll men in Minidoka.

Each Sunday some reading material was distributed to patients in the hospital who were constantly visited by the members seeking to help them. Publications were also distributed to Catholic members of the Military Police stationed at the Center. As much as 350 papers were distributed weekly.

Tobacco, candy, clothing, electric stoves and other necessities were distributed to persons and families in less fortunate circumstance than the majority. Actual work in maintaining morale within the center was being accomplished without fanfare or publicity.

The Lady Queen of Martyrs meetings at the Chapel on Monday afternoons were also helping both morale as well as keeping up the faith. When the weekly meetings were first started they were held in the homes of members. Due to the thinning membership and difficulty in moving around, they were changed to the Chapel. At these meetings Father would take up various problems after the regular prayers and spiritual conference. They would chiefly deal with relocation. Almost every week there would be some report of letters received from members who had been relocated.

The cheerful note struck in these letters encouraged many within to relocate. Those who could not due to family and financial circumstances were gladdened to learn that all was not against them on the outside.

The evening study clubs met regularly. On Friday evenings the young people gathered at the Chapel. Following his discourse, Father would listen to questions and ideas as they would arise in the minds of the young people. That the meetings were popular to those who attended and enjoyed by them is shown by the fact that since their inception the membership has not fallen and continued without let-up.

The adult meetings held forth on three different week-day evenings in as many convenient sections of the center at the homes

of members. At each, some seven to eight persons would be present. These meetings for the first generation, where Father talked in Japanese, were proving highly interesting to those who attended. This is attested to, by the attendance of a Protestant minister, once, for a period of several months. Another had visited Father regularly to carry on a private course of religious study and discussion and found to be in complete accord with Father on Catholic principles.

The Protestant ministers were obviously impressed for Catholic books and other literature on the Church were borrowed for further study.

Yet Father did not lay special emphasis on conversions in the center. Those who sought conversion he baptized. More than ordinary effort was not extended toward this end.

Since evacuation at Camp Harmony and Minidoka there were, however, some 41 who were baptized and more than 30 confirmed. On Sept. 8, while Sisters Rosaire and Thomas Marie were present the First Communion in Minidoka for ten children brought back memories of similar occasion in Seattle.

There were also christenings, and one Nuptial Mass which had taken place in Camp Harmony and several marriages where one of the principles was Catholic.

As a matter of record, Father had once left Minidoka in February of 1944 to officiate at the Nuptial Mass of Margaret Nakagawa and Harry Iwata, at the St. Aloysius Church in Spokane, Washington. Margaret had been a center resident. Her younger sister is now in the Novitiate at Maryknoll-on-the-Hudson. Incidentally her father, Stephen Fukuya Nakagawa, who with Mrs. Nakagawa are two of Seattle's oldest Japanese Catholics, was the first resident to receive an "indefinite leave" for permanent relocation.

Father had his ideas about conversions in the center where people lived under extraordinary circumstances and conditions. His thoughts ran more toward laying the foundation for future conversion among those whom he thought would develop into true Catholics.

Laying the foundation in the center and helping the people to relocate into Catholic communities wherever possible was believed a more advisable way of aiding the people in the center who came to him.

There are more than a few cases to prove Father was right. Letters from those who had been baptized, some of them one time Protestant Sunday school teachers, denote more than ordinary humility in their appreciation and gratitude at having been able to join the Church while still at Minidoka. Others from those who have not yet joined the Church, but who were helped by Father are as appreciative of the Catholic spirit and friendship being shown them by priests outside.

So the fortunes of evacuee life, as it were, flowed and ebbed with the times of optimism and pessimism on the (sic) shares of an uncertain future. Laughter at times turned to fears. Cheerfulness merely cloaked the poignancy of past history.

The one penetrating beam of thought and guidance lay in the active ministrations of Maryknoll Fathers, Sisters and Brothers to the needs of the people. The people of Seattle's Maryknoll parish, at least, drew strength from this and inspiration from the past.

Maryknoll on Seattle's East Jefferson slope is now a lonely monument of affection for her people at Minidoka. Maryknoll in Seattle as on the Hudson, is enshrined within the hearts and minds of her Minidoka members with a love and devotion for the unending work of the Almighty Father, exemplified by the Church.

At this Lenten Season in 1944, the story of evacuation is not finished. The story of Maryknoll, her priests, brothers and sisters striking the constant crescendo of devotion for the people of her Japanese parish whether it be that of Seattle, Los Angeles, or elsewhere, also continues "as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end."