
"Old Rosey."

If heroic example still has power to shape your life, this inspiring account of Major General Rosencrans ought to turn the trick. It was written in a letter to Father Sorin by Father Peter Paul Cooney, C.S.C., (afterwards pro-tem Provincial of the Congregation of Holy Cross) while Father Cooney was chaplain to the famous Army of the Cumberland, then fighting under General Rosencrans in Tennessee. Read:

First of Generals. "How long we shall remain here* is not known, it will depend on circumstances. Rosencrans has to establish means to support his army and leave all in his rear secure before he advances farther. 'Prudence the best part of valor' is a virtue that he possesses to a high degree - consummate judgment also united unflinching courage - all of which qualities make him the first of our Generals and decidedly the most popular.

Model Leader. "His men and officers almost worship him. Joy involuntarily takes possession of the heart and is pictured on the countenance of every man of his command that either sees him or speaks of him. 'Old Rosey' is the joy of his army and the perfect model of the Christian hero. Solely on account of him soldiers consider it an honor to belong to the 'Army of the Cumberland'.

Fearless Catholic. "Had I time many are the edifying incidents that I could relate to show how well grounded is this universal esteem of his army for him and his title to the name of 'Christian Hero'. As all the churches were empty at Murfreesboro he selected the finest for Divine Service for 'Head Quarters'. In this he himself and his staff attended Mass every Sunday and himself often during the week, when business would allow. His staff, since the death of the immortal Garesche at the battle of 'Stone River' is all non-Catholic. Yet they attend Mass with him, every Sunday at 10:30 o'clock A.M.

Weekly Communicant (Long Before Pope Pius X). "He never broke his fast on Sunday until after Mass, as he is, when possible, a weekly communicant. What an edifying sight to behold the great leader of the army, humbly kneeling before God's altar among privates and in the presence of a crowded church of his own soldiers, to receive with profound reverence and deep devotion, the Sacred Body and Blood of our Divine Redeemer.

The Priest Gets A Thrill. "I had the honor to officiate in this Church on Pentecost Sunday and when I turned around at the 'Communion', to give the blessing, I was edified by a glance at the scene that was spread before me. The General and privates were kneeling together. The privates through respect, did not think themselves worthy of receiving on a level with their heroic leader and they went back and knelt on a lower step of the altar, but the quick eye of the General at once noticed it and he immediately beckoned to them to advance on a level with himself.....

The Power of His Example. "...By the power of his noble example he has been the principal cause, under God, of almost entirely dissipating the unreasonable prejudice against our holy religion which the men of his army brought from home with them. Like the sun before the morning mist, he shines and it is gone. Without force or interference, he has made Catholicity respected and the name Catholic honorable, solely by the persuasive influence of the light of his example, which causes infidels as well as non-Catholics to thus soliloquise, 'there must be something divine in Catholicity to form such a character. The Catholic religion cannot be what it is represented to be by its opponents; for if it was, a man of such mind would not adhere to it so firmly or practice it so sincerely'. This state of mind leaves it free to conviction; and clears the way for the labors of the Catholic Chaplains...."

*The letter, preserved in the University archives, is dated July 17, 1863 and was written at McMinnville, Tennessee.