

NOGUTZKY GETS THE LOWDOWN

II

Like I told ya las' week, Stooze, me an' the padre done some noggin-knockin' about this here vocation deal, an' las' night I gets pretty fed up with Intermediate Statistics, so I drops in on the pere for another session.

The padre's sittin' there between buzzes for shrivin' and he's readin' his Bible or Missal or whatch-ya-ma-call-it that these blackrobes read. He sets down the Good Book an says: "Mac, speaking of vocations, I just read a little story here about a parish priest back in Italy several hundred years ago. Padre Phillip, they called him back in those days. Today he's known as St. Phillip Neri. There was an all right guy, for you Mac."

So he tells me about this saint. He lived near a medieval university, an' one day a student knocks on this padre Phillip's door, an' puts the bee on the priest for a fin or whatever the Paisans called a fin in them days. This here student gets the touch okay, an' in the course o' the conversation the priest asks the student what profession he was preparing for.

"I'm going to be a lawyer", replied the student.

"And what then?" asked padre Phillip.

"Why then, I suppose after graduation I'll practice in some town and settle down."

"And what then?" said the saint.

"I suppose I'll make a lot o' dough, meet some nice gal, marry and raise a family."

"What then?" repeated Phillip.

At this point the young fellow's face clouded over and he replied: "I suppose in time I shall die, like everyone else."

"What then?" insisted the saint. Well, sir, the story goes that the student failed to answer and slowly walked away.

"Do you know, Mac," says the padre then, "the one thought that came to that medieval student must come from time to time to all of us...the thought of eternity. And it is eternity that is the answer to what folks call the riddle of life. A man might become the most brilliant lawyer of his time, the most skilled surgeon, the cleverest writer or the shrewdest financier, but if he loses sight of that word eternity he's just a bust. It is possible to reach the highest rung on the ladder of social, financial, political success, Mac, and yet to be a complete flop, like I told you the other night. It won't make a bit of difference a hundred years from now whether you died a pauper or a king, whether you were in this life the last or the first, but it will matter whether or not you saved your soul."

Well, Stooze right then an' there I decides I gotta become a Jesuit or Carthusian or Holy Crosser an' I says to the padre: "That's it padre; that's it; it never occurred to me before; I'm gonna chuck everything else and hie myself to a monastery.

Do you know what the padre says to that, Stooze? "Mac", says he, "I think you're in a state of obfuscation."

Does that mean I gotta vocation, Stooze, huh?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Prayers: (deceased) father of Ed Coffey (Cav); friend of Bob McKenna (Zahm); Ill: Joe (Corby) Gonz; friend of Joe McDade (Zahm); two thanksgivings; special intentions.