

Story and Meaning of Easter

By LOUIS CASSELS
UPI Correspondent

Sometimes a man wins an imperishable place in history by a simple act of human decency.

Such a man was Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Jesus. Mark's gospel describes Joseph as "a respected member of the council." Luke says he was "a good and righteous man." Matthew says he was rich, and he must have been, for he owned what was a comparative luxury in those days, a private tomb, hewn out of rock. He had bought it as a burial place for himself and his family.

The Romans never bothered with burying men who had been crucified. They were content to leave a corpse hanging on the cross until the vultures came.

This practice was revolting to devout Jews, and it was considered a pious act for a wealthy man like Joseph to claim the body of an executed offender and give it decent burial.

Perhaps Joseph had secretly admired Jesus — Matthew suggests as much. Perhaps he was just the kind of man who does what he thinks right, even if it is likely to make him unpopular. In any event, as Mark relates succinctly, Joseph "took courage, and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus."

Pilate, ever willing to curry the favor of the rich and influential, granted the request. Joseph had to move fast. It was only a short time before Jewish Sabbath on which a Pharisee like himself could do no work, not even bury the dead.

Joseph hurried to a shop and bought a clean white linen shroud. With the help of someone—John's gospel says it was another Jewish leader named Nicodemus, who had also been a secret supporter of Jesus—Joseph took the body down from the cross, wrapped it in the shroud, and placed it in the tomb he had intended for himself. A great round stone was rolled into place to seal the entrance of the tomb. Another Detail.

Mathew and the apocryphal "Gospel according to Peter" add another detail, which is not mentioned anywhere else in early Christian writings, and which some biblical scholars regard as a legendary accretion.

They relate that some of the "chief priests and Pharisees" became concerned that Jesus' disciples might steal the body from the tomb, in order to claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. These leaders went to Pilate and asked that an armed guard be placed around the tomb, and Pilate agreed.

If such a guard was mounted over the tomb, it was,

from the disciples' viewpoint entirely unnecessary. They had fled into hiding when their master was seized. Even stalwart Peter, who had worked up enough courage to eavesdrop at Jesus' trial, took refuge in a craven denial when a maidservant spotted him as one who had associated with Jesus.

Peter and John at least remained in Jerusalem during the crucifixion. Some of the other disciples were so terrified for their own safety that they fled all the way home to Galilee.

Defied Persecution

It is hard to believe that these frightened men could have worked up the nerve to steal Jesus' body from the tomb, even if the idea had occurred to them. And it is quite certain that such a furtive act of deception would not have transformed them—as they shortly were transformed—into the recklessly bold band of apostles who defied persecution and death to become the founders of the Christian church.

That is why Biblical scholars—even the skeptics who discount or explain away all the other miracles reported in the New Testament—are convinced that something very extraordinary must have happened on the first Easter.

(Tomorrow: The Resurrection.)

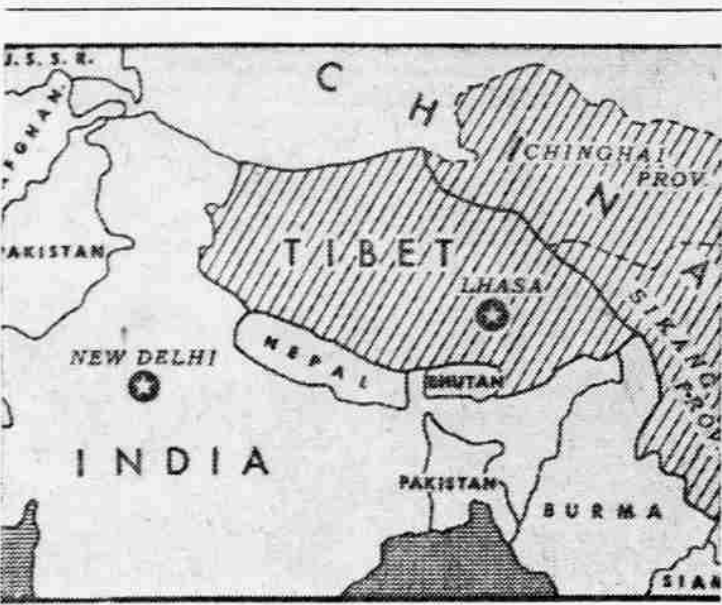
Good Friday Rites Practice Growing

Washington —UPI— Many business and industrial firms throughout the nation grant time-off with pay to employees who wish to attend worship services on Good Friday.

This practice has grown rapidly in recent years. It is encouraged by an inter-denominational national committee which seeks to have the three-hour period beginning at noon set aside for worship.

This period is observed in many churches as a period of meditation commemorating the time Christ hung on the cross. President Eisenhower annually issues an official statement commending to employers the practice of releasing workers for worship on Good Friday.

Astronomers began studying meteors in earnest after the night of Nov. 12, 1833, when the skies over North and South America were lighted up with thousands of shooting stars, convincing millions that the world was about to end.



TIBET REVOLT ERUPTS IN CHINA—News map shows geographical relationship of Tibet to India and China, with the Chinese provinces of Chinghai and Sikkim indicated in shading. The anti-Communist revolt in Tibet has spread to Communist China, a Nationalist Chinese cabinet member announced in Taipei, Formosa. He said the uprising has spread across the border to Chinghai and Sikkim Provinces. In New Delhi, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that street fighting had broken out in the streets of Lhasa, Tibet's capital.

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, a newspaper editor, a women's editor and two writers. Each article is a summary of an actual report. The Family Council does not give advice; it merely reports on problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors.

Mr. L.R.—I want to get my own place.

May D.—We have done everything to make him comfortable.

Mr. L.R.—I am a retired widower past 70. I have been living with my daughter since my wife died ten years ago. Five years ago my daughter married and we all continued living together.

A few months ago my daughter gave birth to her first child. Ever since the child was born she has been very irritable with me, criticizing me for every little thing I do. I feel that she finds me in the way now that she is home all day with the baby. I try to help her in every way I can, but I seem to be more of a hindrance than a help.

My daughter says that we should get a larger apartment and we'll all be more comfortable together. But I think that won't help much. I want to get my own apartment. She seems to think I would feel she has turned me out, but that's not so. I just think it would be best that way.

May D.—I know my father and I know that he would just fall apart if he is not properly

taken care of. He wouldn't remember to get himself meals and he wouldn't bother keeping up his place or his clothes or making himself comfortable.

When I used to go to work, he used to do most of the cooking and shopping and seemed to enjoy it, but I know that he wouldn't do it for himself.

I am not really annoyed with my father. I love him very much. It's just being together all day in the small apartment that causes trouble. He does try to help me, but I like things done my way and when I'm around to do them I feel that I shouldn't have to depend upon him.

I feel quite hurt that my father should want to live apart from us when my husband and I have done everything possible to make him comfortable.

The Council: Lack of space must certainly be a factor in creating tension between this father and daughter, but we doubt that it is the main problem. In a larger apartment the two would be able to get away from one another occasionally, but the tensions would exist nevertheless.

The big factor here is simply that Mr. L.R. has had some of his functions taken away now that his daughter is at home. He no longer feels needed in this household in which he was once able to make a useful contribution. He tries to hold on to stray duties but finds himself constantly shoved away.

May, happy with her first child, is probably enjoying her home to the full for the first time. It is natural for her to want to come into complete possession of her home, establishing it as her special domain.

It is possible that Mr. L.R. could find a new lease on life by taking his own apartment or boarding with a different family. But we don't think this necessarily the best or only solution. It is more important for Mr. L.R. to find outside interests and activities for himself. This could be a part-time job, volunteer work or hobbies. Whatever it is, he should make it his business to be outside of the home for a large portion of the day, and he should cultivate friends of his own so that he won't depend on his daughter for sociability.

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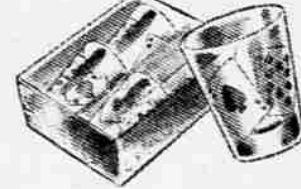


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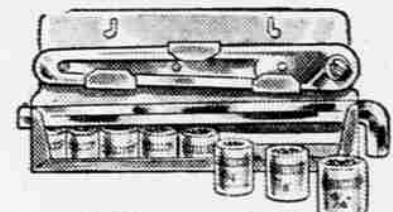
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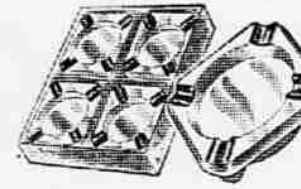
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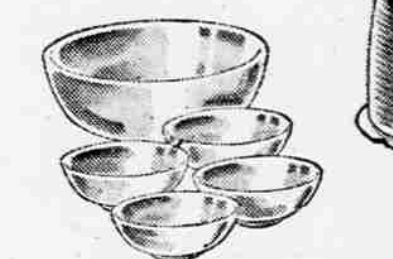
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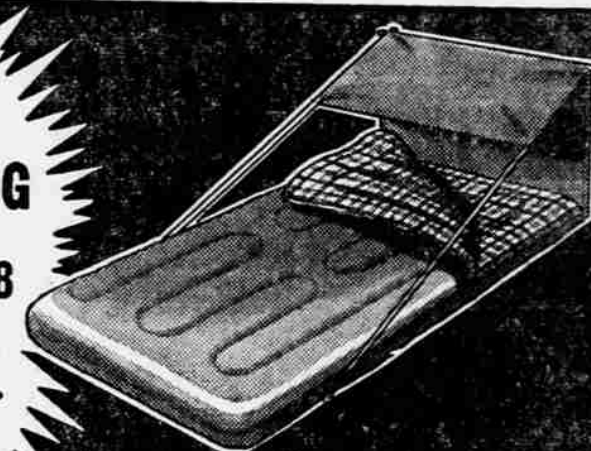
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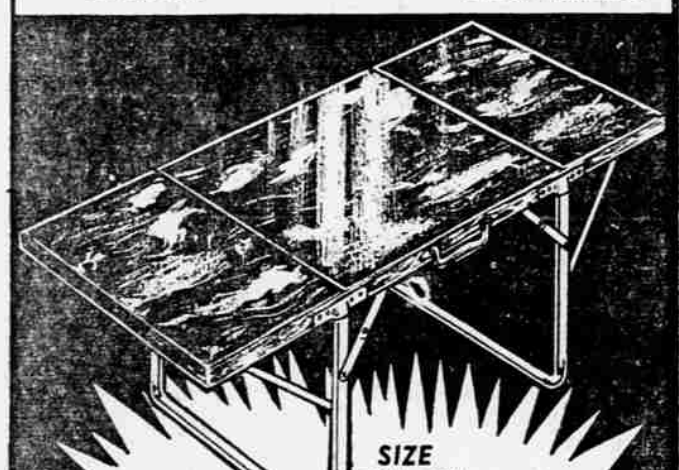
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