

Veni-Vidi

Rome - Pope John the XXIII made Vatican history, and broke two precedents this past week. First, he traveled 400 miles to Assisi - by rail. Since Garibaldi wrested the country from Papal rule in 1859, no pope had gone that far from the Vatican. The previous trip was in a carriage 100 years ago. So we witnessed church history also when we saw last evening, Sunday, October 7, Pope John ride past in a lighted automobile and descend at the church St. Giovanni in Laterano. He conducted Mass there.

I must say that it was a thrilling occasion. Evening had come, with one of Rome's deep, deep, blue skies; the star of the East loomed grand and clear, and a gold moon shone. All of this over the orange color which flooded the ancient, historic church. We stood with, I could not possibly guess how many thousands, and listened to the Mass sung and the words of the Pope. Inside the church were officials, archbishops and cardinals. All about the huge piazza are other churches of great age and beauty.

The drama was heightened for us because of an experience we had had in the afternoon. Returning from a trip to the catacombs the car we were in was stopped by a parade-miles of parading Socialists. Our four young people were unbelieving at first, and then, wildly indignant in their reactions to seeing the innumerable red flags with the hammer and sickle boldly embossed on them. "How can they be so stupid?" "Don't they know about our kind of government?" "It is all wrong, our just letting the Italians turn communist like this!" And so on.

Finally, having come to an impasse, we left the car to hurry out onto the avenue and march along with the crowds. We realized after a while that we were bucking a mass of people going in the opposite direction, and were bumping into priests, and nuns of all colors and nationalities, wearing robes of colorful reds, browns, white, blacks, and schools of children in blues and black.

So we turned, and tore along that way, with somewhat an Alice in Wonderland feverishness. With what little time I had to think, while jostling, hanging onto the six of us, and fighting my way, I realized that this was a good thing for the boys to see. Rome is a big city and everybody wasn't a Socialist. When we reached the Piazza they knew that there were more people of Rome there, than in all the avenues and parades. In fact I have never seen, or been in such a mob (excepting once in New York City on New Year's eve with the Frank Fairweathers) and claustrophobia almost got the better of me.

Our entire day had been more or less exceptional. At St. Paul's Episcopal church in the morning the two boys had started being acolytes - one of them carrying the cross, and the other, the always thrilling, American flag-and that is indeed a privilege in such a magnificent protestant catholic church, in a city of Roman Catholic magnificence. Our rector prayed for the coming Ecumenical congress, and for the unity of Christians.

This last Wednesday I saw also more church history. I saw the closing of the gates of St. Peter's to the public - for an indefinite period. We had gone over to see the Pope who blessed the new organ and there was the customary crowd of about 14,000 people. Only the 150 policemen, and guards seemed to make it a different occasion. We lingered on, outside, until sunset, and saw the closing of the gates. This is because of the danger of more bomb attempts in the face of the conference.

Saturday, returning from a trip to the Vatican, I walked over to St. Peter's. The vast square was almost deserted, and the gates locked. It must be a dreadful disappointment for those pilgrims who come to Rome anticipating seeing the greatest wonder of them all.

Zion Lutheran Circles To Meet

Women's Guild circles of the Zion Lutheran church have scheduled meetings during the week.

Mary circle will meet at the home of Mrs. Gaynor Huck, 2764 Orchard Home drive, Tuesday, October 16, at 8 p.m. Mrs. Harvey Coover will be hostess to Lydia circle at the parsonage, Wednesday, October 17, at 10 a.m.

Ruth and Esther circles both will meet in the Fireside room of the Parish Education unit on Thursday, October 18. Ruth circle will meet at 10 a.m. Hostess for the meeting will be Mrs. Roland Hollender.

Esther circle will meet at 1:30 p.m., with Mrs. John Ball and Mrs. William McKelrick, hostesses. Mrs. Wendell Mattson, will be hostess for Miriam circle at her home, 1424 South Ivy street, Thursday, October 18, at 8 p.m.

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