

# Minidoka Sanctuary

by LEOPOLD H. TIBESAR

**W**E HAD four adult baptisms here at Camp Minidoka this 'month: Mr. Miura, who used to drop in at the church in Seattle years ago; Mr. Saito, our former grocer; Lil and Knuckles, two high-school girls who were in the habit of visiting our old office last fall to work out jigsaw puzzles and who later stayed to study the catechism very ardently. They, together with Nibi, make up the three feminine musketeers of Minidoka. We still have twenty-four coming for instructions regularly, and a few dozen more make sporadic visits. The former class is made up largely of folks we had known for years when they lived in Seattle — in the city; the latter are newcomers.

## Chapel and Library

**T**HEN there is the crowd of women who want us to help them

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American born —  
he is lonesome  
for America

get their husbands out of internment. They usually stay to ask a few questions about the little chapel we have next door. Yes, we have a "next door" to our layout now. We had to move from our old quarters to make room for the High School just next door.

We asked for larger accommodation and received two rooms. One is our very own private office and living room; in the other, we are privileged to reserve the Blessed Sacrament. When this room is not in use as a chapel, the tabernacle is curtained off; the rest of the space is taken up with stacks for the not-inconsiderable library we have been building up. We have also quite an array of games for the young folks, and they may be seen there at any time of the day working out puzzles, a very popular form of indoor sport here, or playing checkers or chess or any of a dozen other games.

Requests for job assignments in the Midwest have grown to sizable proportions, too, as it be-





comes more evident from day to day that the W.R.A. means business with its relocation policy, and that a return to the West Coast is becoming an impossibility, at least for the duration of the war. With the help of Maryknollers in various parts of the country, particularly of Father McCormick, in Detroit, we have succeeded in placing some of our families in such advantageous positions that many others look upon our Catholics with envy. As a result, no doubt, not a few non-Catholics have come to us to request a like service.

However, it is very difficult to assign families to the places offered. There may be persons willing to accept a position, but they have children and nothing has been said about children in the job offer. We sit down to write, or send a telegram and straighten that out, and then we still have the little chore of getting family release. This has been speeded up somewhat but is still much too cumbersome for any expeditious sending of people into new relocation areas.

#### **Schooling a Problem**

**T**O DATE the people whom we have resettled have been enthusiastic over their new homes. Their employers, too, we imagine, must find it a relief to have the help they sought in vain, back in the centers of war work where wages are high and personnel limited. Boys and girls are beginning to look for schools, these days, and this especially in the case of the girls, is a problem. There are very few girls' schools available or open to these victims of the

war. Somehow, after all these years of mission appeals, there must be some people somewhere in this broad land of ours who could be induced to take up this chore of Nisei education on a missionary basis.

**Father Tibesar is chaplain at Minidoka, a Japanese relocation camp, located at Twin Falls, Idaho. Maryknoll was asked by the local bishops to supply priests for Japanese camps in the United States because of their familiarity with the language. Eight of our priests, two Brothers and two Sisters serve in this apostolate.**

As a rule, nursing schools are the most difficult to enter, for the girls, and medical schools for the boys. The story seems to be in the case of the medical schools that we haven't too many of them and most are dominated by a firm policy. We've never had a Catholic student turned down to my knowledge, but what we need to have at a time like this is freedom to enter non-Catholics, too. This we haven't had. As a result, many of the boys who would be studying in

Catholic schools today have bunched into the few available non-Catholic schools. That will some day be considered a regrettable loss to the Church's missionary effort. Catholic doctors, or doctors with a Catholic training, among these people would spell an incalculable advantage to the Church.

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