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Letter from Fr. Leonard Amrhein to Catherine Amrhein, Al, and Tom.

Fr. Leonard Amrhein C.P.

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湖南沅陵天主堂



CATHOLIC MISSION

YÜANLING, HUNAN, CHINA.

April 14, 1946.

Dear Mom - Al - Tom,

Received Tom's letter of Jan. 13 & Feb. 10 four days ago. It was such a special occasion that I thought it warranted an immediate answer. It has been so long since I heard from Mom, that I was beginning to think her letters were going astray. Maybe they have, Tom. Judging from two things you mentioned in this last letter, I think some of your letters have been lost or something.

First you mentioned having told me about Sgt. Nicholl. I never received that letter. Anyhow those pictures were taken in our Chikking Mission a few days after we arrived here. How do I look in S. I. 2?

Secondly, you mentioned walking home from Mt. Olive and "our office is open every Friday night" and you going to night school. I take it for granted you work in Mt. Olive. Someone told me you don't work for Sauney's anymore but you never mentioned it in the letters I received. So, am I right in thinking some of your letters have gone astray? I tell you what. I received two letters since the war; the 1st one written early in September and the second in January February. If you wrote any others, you had better repeat the news. I don't want to miss anything that's going on at home. At present the mail service is very uncertain. But it is gradually improving. For example: It took your letter two months

to reach me. Formerly, it took three or four months.

I tried something new yesterday and it worked. We didn't know whether we could send packages through the mail to the States. I sent a little box of tea and the P.O. accepted. This tea is grown in Huki, where we have a mission. When you prepare this tea, don't put milk in it. You can put sugar in it if you want. If you use milk it doesn't taste so good. That is the way we drink it. That is "red tea". We also have "green tea".

No Tom, we don't hear Charlie McCarthy anymore. I think I heard him once since 1941 (Death). We have a radio but we don't seem to be able to pick up the old time programs.

How's Al's business coming along? Hey Al, I'm still waiting for that letter telling me about yourself and your P.T.'s. Our Bishop was the first one to tell me that you worked on them during the war. Tell me all about them. I'm interested in things like that. I'm ^{100%} behind on everything that happened during the war, that it seems I'll never learn about things.

See Mom, it sure makes me happy to know you can still get around with the rheumatism and all. As Tom says, St. Henry's steps are a good test for anybody - rheumatism or no rheumatism. I sure am glad to hear that you are well. I hope and pray everyday that God will keep you in good health.

I'm glad that Francis and those Chinese Missionaries stopped in to see you. That was very considerate of them. This Francis is a good friend of ours. We were together before the war, in Wei Hsien and after the war, we traveled to K'un Ming together. He is a nice fellow.

So my "post-war letter" finally arrived at home. I was glad you mentioned it Tom. I was wondering if it arrived or not. I wouldn't want it to get lost.



CATHOLIC MISSION

YÜANLING, HUNAN, CHINA.

As regards things for the second section of the China Clipper, I have two packages ready to send. I am waiting for the package mail-service to open. But I think they are too big. To begin with, there are two albums, lots of newspapers with interesting articles - by the Japs and lots of other "junk". I think I'll try sending the little stuff through with my letters home. I'll start with this letter. The rest will have to wait for a favorable opportunity. - Which means, when I come home on furlough. Whenever that maybe.

Before I forget, I want to wish you a happy Mother's Day, Mom. God bless you! I said Mass for you every year during the war, on Mother's Day I shall do the same this year. This letter won't reach you before that day. But you will know anyhow that I did not forget you on that day. I should have sent my greetings in the last letter. Also best wishes to all the mothers at home. I shall remember each and all in my Mass on that day.

How am I? What am I doing? I ^{know} don't you'll want answers for these questions. Well, I am fine. I tipped the scale the other day at 190 lbs. - Most ever weighed. What am I doing? - I don't know where to start to answer that one. I am still chaplain to the hospital. I am also assistant pastor. These are just general headings. There are other assignments

under these. On the side, I am studying Chinese. This is my biggest job. Last week, I started in from the very beginning again. This time learning the local dialect. I don't like to break away from my Pekinese but very few people understand it down here. - Only the educated. And strange to say some of them don't. Just recently one of the missionaries told us this story. Some of the officials in his town crowded in one night to hear the radio news. He tuned in on Chungking which stations speaks pure Pekinese. The officials didn't understand what it was all about. The missionary had to tell them in their own lingo. Thank goodness the characters are all the same. There is no use using a dialect which they cannot understand. Might as well speak English. Such is China.

Today is Palm Sunday. I must have a busy week ahead of me. I have to train the altar boys. They are a like a bunch of wild Indians. Then I must prepare an Easter sermon, get the rubrics for Holy Week. I might even be sent to Lin Ling Sha for Easter. That is the place where I spent my Christmas. Well, I think the answer to all our difficulties here is a twenty-three hour working day. The one hour out for eating and sleeping. Well, here's hoping everybody had a nice Easter at home. I shall offer Mass for all of you on this day. Please remember me in your prayers all the time. So long and God bless all of you.

Leonard.

P.S. Tom you had better wait until all the "junk" gets home before you start arranging it in the Clipper. You might want it in a different order afterwards. Leonard