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

Fr. Leonard Amrhein C.P.

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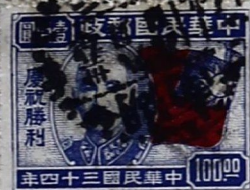
PAR AVION

航空
VIA AIR MAIL

Miss Catherine Amrhein,
2423 Elsie St.,
Mt. Oliver Bx.,
Pittsburgh (10) Pa.,
U. S. A.

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堂源
Franklin, Hunan, China

11 Oct



Mrs. Catherine Amrhein
2623 Elsie St.,
Pittsburgh (10) Pa.,

U. S. A.



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CATHOLIC MISSION

YÜANLING, HUNAN, CHINA.

June 9, 1946.

Dear Mom - Al - Tom,

I don't know how soon it will be before this letter gets in the mail. So don't depend on the date. I am up in the mountains, as I shall explain latter. I expect a priest through soon on his way to Chang Sha. If he comes, I'll give him this letter and it will make better time, - I hope, - than if I put it in the mail here. So don't judge this letter from its date.

Well a very unusual thing happened last week. So I'll tend that first. I received a letter from Tom. God bless her. Also a check from the "home front." Thanks lots everybody. But what do you mean - you have lots to catch up. Don't believe it. You have no catching up to do. Send lots of letters. That's a fine idea. But don't think you are under any obligations or anything like that to send anything else.

I'm good at guessing. I guessed Tom wasn't working for Sankey's anymore - although she never mentioned it in her letters. Now she comes out with the big secret that she is a banker. - Ahem! and uuh-umph! Treasures no less. I'll bet money passes through her hands like water.

I found an old magazine the other day and it had some pictures and descriptions of A. L. S. T.'s. It was the first close ups I ever saw of them. I was wondering if Al worked on this particular one. Did they build them any other place than Pittsburgh? I suppose they did. They needed so many.

It's good to hear that Mom can still climb Jacob's Ladder up at St. Henry's Church. It's too bad though that you have to climb them, Mom. I hope the new church - if they ever get it built - isn't so high. A climb like that is enough to make Tom puff.

We have a couple dahias in our back yard. Everytime I see them, I think of them as Mom's flowers. I remember when Mom used to have lots of them. You always seemed to like them best of all the flowers.

What's this Tom? The China Clipper #2 isn't getting filled? I sent home two or three envelopes full of junk and a bundle of old, interesting, war-time papers. Maybe they haven't arrived yet. I'll load up this envelope too.

Well I guess I had better tell you what's doing over here. I am now at a place called Nuki - about forty miles from Ywanling. I am here for a few weeks to give the local pastor a rest. He returned to Ywanling. There are two American Sisters of Charity here too. So I get a chance to practice my English once in a while. We have here an orphanage for girls, an old men's home, a school and the mission itself. Nuki is about five miles off the bus road into the mountains. You cross and recross a creek about 13 or 14 times on the way in. We are in a little valley - completely surrounded by mountains. There is one in our back yard. In front of the mission, there is a little brook and across that, another mountain. The most beautiful lilies grow in these mountains. They grow six or seven feet tall. The girls go out and bring them in for the church. The other day they brought one in with nine flowers in the form of a crown. Sister said one year they had one with thirteen flowers. It was a perfect crown. The Chinese say the lily stock gets one more flower every year.



CATHOLIC MISSION
YÜANLING, HUNAN, CHINA.

When it rains around here, it comes down in bucketfuls. One day it started to rain. It rained all that day and night without much of a rise in the creek. Then the bottom fell out of the bucket and in three hours our trickle of a brook was a raging torrent. The mountain in the back yard developed a waterfall. It was beautiful. I couldn't look at it enough.

Sometimes we get visitors from the mountains. Last year a tiger came and grabbed one of our dogs for lunch. Last Sunday evening the kids made an awful racket. I didn't see the visitor but some said it was a deer; others, a wild dog. Whatever it was, our dogs chased it straight up the mountain side. And believe me, it is a steep mountain.

The other night, the dogs were growling and barking and everything a dog does when he's after something. It sounded as though they had a bear at least. It was pitch dark. When the battle was over, the old men came out and were excited about the whole thing. I went over to see what it was all about. Some poor innocent ant-eater wandered into the yard. Before I saw the victim I admired the mutts for their courage. When I saw what they killed, I was ashamed of them.

And such is life in Wuki. I don't know how long I'll be here. When I came, the Bishop said two or three weeks. I am here over two now and still no word to return to Yuanling. Sometimes these "stays" go into months. Wuki is a nice place for a vacation but sometimes it gets quite lonely. The sisters

are fine. They realize I'm still in the beginners stage and so often invite me over to the orphanage. The kids are lots of fun.

By the way, I just happened to remember I didn't thank Tom for the package she is sending. It didn't arrive yet but thanks a lot - in advance. It's just recently that packages are starting to come in. So I suppose it is caught in the jam somewhere. Just a hint on packages. Don't put high valuations on them. It doesn't mean anything to the Chinese except to increase the duty. They soak up like a sponge as it is - without even opening the package. Books and printed matter seems to get through free. So if anyone asks what to send, tell them reading matter. We like old magazines and newspapers. They are just starting to come in too.

Another thing. If Frank sees that William Holica who gave him that \$5 for me, tell him thanks a lot. I'll drop him a line myself as soon as I can get a few extra minutes time. You would think I'm up to my nose in work, the way I talk. Well the best part of my week is spent in getting my Sunday sermon in shape.

I think that is all for now. All's feast day is coming soon. I'll offer Mass for him. I offer Mass for all of you on your feast day. Also every month I offer Mass for all of you. I offered Mass for all of you this morning - Pentecost Sunday.

So long everybody and God bless you

As ever, Leonard.

June 24. Priest not going to Changsha. So have to send it ordinary. Having to send it to Yunnan this P.M.