

9-1-2015

Letter from Fr. Leonard Amrhein to Catherine Amrhein.

Fr. Leonard Amrhein C.P.

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Preferred Citation

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Huki - Oct. 29, 1947.

Dear Mom,

A month from today - or rather from last Saturday and Sunday - will be your feast-day and birthday, and Tom's feast-day. And soon after comes Andy's feast-day. Lots of feast-days. I hope this letter gets home in time. If not, at least you will know that I did not forget you. I'll offer Mass for all of you for your feast-days.

I haven't heard from home in a long, long time. (Same for you, says Tom). I hope you are all well at home - everybody getting big and fat - or is Tom still cooking? I hope your arm is feeling better and as good as new, Mom.

Sorry I haven't any further news about my fuolaugh. It seems farther off now than the last time I wrote. We are hard up for men over here. And when one comes back from the States, there's always someone else waiting for the returned missionary to take his place. That's the way we are now - awaiting some priests to return. I don't think you can expect me this year any more. I suppose next year is

the year. But when — ? That's what I would like to know myself. In the meantime, just keep praying for me.

Nothing new or strange in Hukih besides myself. It is hard to buy supplies now. The Chinese money is gone completely hopeless. The people won't sell their rice, firewood, oil, etc. unless they actual need the money. The prices are going up everyday and if they sell today, they'll lose money tomorrow. Of course, I can't say I blame them for that. But it makes it kind of tough when you are trying to get supplies in for the winter. Rice is about \$32.00 a pound. The people don't like any currency less than a \$5.00 note. They absolutely refuse anything less than \$1.00. I hear that in a few days, \$5.00 notes (both) will be the smallest.

We had Confirmation in Hukih on the 19th of October. Thirty one orphans and seventeen other, including two of my old men were confirmed. There are about forty outsiders who should have been confirmed. But most of them "didn't have time." That is the excuse they always give around here — for ^{not} coming to Mass or anything. But this is a busy season for the people. But let more could have come, who didn't. Most of the Christians here are ^{just} baptized pagans.

One of my old men died recently. It is the first death in the mission since I'm here. Most of the old men are old and sickly. You would wonder how they can hang on. All but two are blind - and those two are almost blind. Well, last year they asked me to make some coffins for them. They are happy if they know they'll have a coffin when they die. I had two coffins made, and now I used one. This old man was a nice fellow. He died of dropsy. For the longest time he would just eat a little Chinese sugar and tea. But he never complained. I confined him before he died.

I said the old men were blind. But they do their own cooking and washing. They make straw sandals all day long, so they earn a little money that way. We support them fully. The money they get from their sandals, they keep for themselves. As long as they keep themselves busy, they keep out of trouble and there is peace in the compound.

Incidentally, that picture of Herki Mission that appeared in the sign is an old one. The place doesn't look like that now. - Just that big building on the right is the same. That is the orphanage. I'll explain the picture to you when I get home.

There aren't any secret ones around. After the war, I picked up two rolls of films for my camera in Yunnan. They were marked: "Develop before 1940" I took a chance on them but only two prints out of sixteen were any good. So that means - no pictures of Kuki for me to bring home with me.

Did Fathermain visit you at home yet? He told me he would. But I guess when you get home, there is so much you would like to do that you don't get half of it done. Some of the missionaries heard from Fr. Germain. He is homesick for China already. And he is gone only three months.

Well, everything comes to those who wait - if they wait long enough. So if you wait and I wait long enough, my furlough will also come. But don't expect me too soon. I'll let you know as soon as I hear something definite. Until then, remember Kuki and pastor in your prayers. I remember all of you in mine.

Best regards and God's blessings to all of you.

As ever,

Leonard.



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