

- BOOK REVIEWS -

THE CREED IN SLOW MOTION

Ronald Knox

New York

Sheed and Ward, 1949

(238 pp.)

The Creed was inserted in the Roman Mass in the eleventh century. It dates back to the fourth century and the First Oecumenical Council of the Church. It is a complete and clearly expressed profession of the Catholic faith.

The Creed in Slow Motion is a sequel to **The Mass in Slow Motion**. It is written with a view to helping us understand what we are saying when we repeat the words of the Creed. The author, Monsignor Knox, is the son of an Anglican Bishop. He became a convert to the Catholic Church in 1917, and for a time served as chaplain to the Roman Catholic students at Oxford. He became chaplain to the girls at Assumption Convent in Exton, England, during the past war, while they were evacuated to Aldenham Park, Bridgnorth. The book is composed of a series of sermons delivered to these girls by Monsignor Knox. They are written as delivered, in the first person. The Catechism version of the Creed (not the long one said in Mass) is taken clause by clause—practically word by word—and explained in great detail. Each clause is the title to a sermon, and each sermon is a chapter.

There is no question of the value of this book to every Catholic. The fact that in it Monsignor Knox is speaking to a group of convent girls should not make us wary of reading it. Because he is speaking to young girls, the author has very much simplified his language, and goes to great lengths to make each point clear. This great amount of detail makes the book a bit tiresome in places, but if, after reading it, you do not understand the Apostles' Creed, you will have great difficulty in finding a simpler and clearer treatment of the subject. The book contains a complete course on the Creed something which each and every Catholic should have, because the Creed is our faith.

The object of this book, or course on the Creed, could not be better expressed than by the words of Monsignor Knox himself: "The reason why I want to give you this course on the Credo is that I want each of you to say it intelligently, thinking what you are saying, meaning what you are saying, not just reciting a rigmarole

of words which must be all right, of course, or the Church wouldn't make you say it. No, you are to say the Credo as an expression of your own individual point of view, giving it the full homage of your intellect, prepared to explain it to other people; if necessary, to argue it with other people."

The book accomplishes very successfully the purpose for which it was written.

—FRED COYLE '52.

THE EDGE OF DOOM

Leo Brady

New York

E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1949 (247 pp.)

The deed The thought The word. Three divisions in Leo Brady's story . . . and three frightening scenes from the lonely life of one twenty year old Martin Lynn. Murdering the parish priest with a brass crucifix?? an ugly thought? Maybe. But that's what Martin Lynn had done . . . brutally . . . sinfully.

His mother had just died and he had come to Father Kirkman demanding that the wealthy Catholic Church, the Church from which he had fallen away, would provide a decent funeral. "I want her to go with dignity. Not to be crammed into a casket and sneaked off when no one's looking. I want a lot of flowers and a fine sermon, and a good plot of land . . ."

But all this wouldn't be so easy . . . and the old priest tried to persuade the boy that big funerals didn't matter. "What will it profit your mother? It isn't the flowers or where she lies that matters. I'll add her to my Mass."

But, to Martin, this wasn't enough. He wasn't going to allow this old priest to deprive his mother of her last honours.

And so, he murdered Father Kirkman . . . in cold blood. This was the Deed.

The burden of guilt settled on the boy's shoulders—the heavy . . horrible sins . . . of sacrilege . . . and murder. No, he hadn't been a practicing Catholic; he had persuaded himself that he didn't care about sin . . . sin as such . . . why should he?

But yet he knew . . . somehow . . . he could feel it . . . that there was more to fear now than the police . . . and the detectives . . . and the prison.

And he had only been trying to help his mother!

Her remains were resting at Murray's Funeral Home now . . . with the remains of old Father Kirkman . . . the priest he had murdered . . . murdered! Martin Lynn . . . a murderer!! The thought of it loomed up before him . . . an ugly mass of sinfulness. The crucifix—the crime—the bleeding corpse—the police—the funeral home—his dead mother the confessional. This was the Thought!

Father Roth . . . (he was the murdered priest's young curate) . . . he knew about Martin—what he had done; Rita Conroy . . . (she was the murdered priest's young neice) . . . she knew about Martin too—what he had done. Yes, both Father Roth and Rita knew . . . but both refrained from informing the police . . . and each for different reasons. What these reasons were . . . Well, let us keep the novel at least partly novel.

Perhaps it might be charged that the book is super-saturated with weirdness . . . blood . . . corpses . . . funeral homes murder. Maybe it is. But underneath the loud color of sensationalism, there is, nevertheless, a story—a story of a boy in the throes of fear. He fears himself . . . he fears his sin . . . he fears the law . . . he fears the confessional.

It is not a typical story about a typical boy. It is not typical at all . . . in any way. Because Martin Lynn had never walked on typical ground; he always seemed to trek . . . the Edge of Doom.

—LORNE MacDONALD '50.