

Msgr. Bosetti, Ex-Mountain Climber, Founder Of Boys' Camp, Makes His Dreams Materialize

By MARY FLYNN

Denver, Colo. (NEA) — Denver's "One-Man Opera," whose perennial wishes have a way of materializing, is going to see his latest dream come true.

With the summer opera season over and youthful campers back in school, Msgr. Joseph Bosetti, who is also a boys' camp founder, is looking forward to the erection of a huge statue of Christ on a rocky outcropping at the entrance to St. Malo camp, beside the South St. Vrain highway in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park.

While on a nocturnal tour 30 years ago, the Roman Catholic priest spotted the site at the foot of Mt. Meeker where St. Malo's camp, which he founded, now stands. A fiery meteor had attracted him to the place. Campers still search the mountain for the meteor's remains.

Msgr. Bosetti's first wish was made that night as he stood on the natural rock formation which now is the foundation of the \$50,000 St. Malo chapel.

"I fell desperately in love with the place," he recalls. "I never had any peace thereafter until funds were obtained for the organization of a boys' camp."

Born in Milan, Italy, Msgr. Bosetti was a mountain climber when 13, a Swiss mountain guide before he was 20. In his youth he climbed Mt. Matterhorn in 21 hours, a feat he later discussed with the late Pope Pius XI, who also scaled the peak. He studied music in Rome under Maestro Mattoni, organist of St. Peter's, and was ordained in 1908.

Lombard architecture influences the camp chapel. Built of native granite, it is an outstanding scenic attraction along the St. Vrain.

The camp grew out of mountain trips arranged by the vigorous prelate for boys of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Denver, where he then was assistant pastor. The first building of St. Malo's was donated 28 years ago by Will McFee, wealthy Denver lumberman.

The modern camp accommodates 150 boys of all faiths who come from every part of the United States and neighboring countries. The weekly fee for each boy is only \$15. Five laymen, trained by Msgr. Bosetti, and as many seminarians assist in staffing the camp.

Msgr. Bosetti founded the Denver Grand Opera Co. in 1930. He has continued as producer and director since. Proceeds go to Catholic charities, St. Malo's being one of the beneficiaries.

The energetic priest directs the orchestra, dramatics and singing in addition to handling administrative business. This summer's four-night opera, staged in Denver's main auditorium, was highly successful in the tradition of the past.

Opera leads are sung by stars of the Metropolitan and other outstanding artists, but the bulk of the cast is local talent, including members of the 100-voice men's and boys' choir of the Denver Cathedral which Msgr. Bosetti regularly directs. Francesco Valentino, of Metropolitan fame, is a former member of that choir.



In one role of his many activities, Denver's Msgr. Joseph Bosetti discusses a fine point of table tennis with a camper at the St. Malo boys' camp the prelate founded.



Chapel at St. Malo was built on a huge rock (foreground) that Msgr. Bosetti wrested away from highway engineers.

Msgr. Bosetti's costume usually consists of a colored sports shirt, blue slacks, and moccasins. A whistle dangles from a white cord around his neck. He always carries a zipper notebook "for 36 reasons" — representing just about that many activities.

When the South St. Vrain highway was being built to cross the

front of the camp site, engineers wanted to use the huge rock, which now is the chapel foundation, as a base for a section of the road. When Msgr. Bosetti's protests failed he went to Washington; officials finally ruled the churchman's plans be given priority. This incident is a good example of what makes his dreams come true.