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Dear Miss McGlynn,

Just a line to let you know that I've finally had the opportunity to visit Rome - it was a trip I think I shall never forget. Time prevented us from doing all the things we would have liked to but we did get to see most of the more famous spots.

We managed to spend the better part of a day visiting St. Peters and seeing the Pope - when I say we could have easily spent the full time in the Vatican. I'm not joking - Saw only a part of the many paintings of all the ancients - I was able to obtain a copy of a book which describes in detail all the works that we saw - I thought you might like to have one - will give you some thing to use on the sophs [sophmores] - when you

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start them working on the famous paintings - most of the ones I remembered from our study of them - I made a paint to view - needless to say it was impossible to see them all.

Also viewed were the Colosseum, Pantheon - The Victor Emmanuel Memorial - (seems to be partially the tomb of an unknown soldier) - the famous Aqueduct - was shown through an ancient church by a Franciscan Frier whose order now uses the church - we saw little Romans playing hide and seek in the ruins of the prison where once were kept the Apostles Peter and Paul - we even saw the famous balcony from where the now infamous dictator used to hold sway. I might add the drabness of the balcony - struck me as being quite strange - not at all in keeping with the pomp and splendor that we associate with him.

The city of Rome is like no other Italian city I have seen so far - Chas [?] - modern in appearance - wide streets- fine looking shops - people with

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pleasant faces and moreover neatly groomed and pleasant of manner G.I.'s that have seen Rome are willing to bet that there are more or at least as many "belle signorines" [belle signorinas] as there are in any city of its size in the states - to all of which I say - amen -

The trip to and fro Rome was equally as interesting - we didn't use the same Roads both ways - so we were able to see a good bit of the country.

I think I saw some of the most beautiful countryside I have ever seen with rolling plains covered with huge orchards extending backs to the "piede di Montague." Here and there little villages nestled close against the slopes - sometimes having ancient castles looking down on the town - and everywhere the trees forming a green covering.

We passed through Cassino - and if ever a picture could be painted showing the wreck - ruin - devastation brought by bomb and shell in the hands of men at war here it was. The town bursts upon you - suddenly from an

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area seemingly lightly touched by the hand of Mars - you come upon the site of what used to be a town - Not a stone is left upon a stone - mere words can't describe the scene - Some of the natives peeked out at you from the rubble and you couldn't imagine any human being there - We saw the Monastery too - are what was left of it - I was glad when we left the town behind.

All along the way - were peasants some walking some riding on the backs of mules - if there was a man and a woman together - the man was riding and the wife walked dutifully behind. We saw old women with huge earthen jugs perched positively atop their heads looking at us with unrestrained interest as we passed - then too there were whole families heading back.

We saw other villages - some had been hit harder than others. In some people had started to rebuild - in others families had shoveled away some of the debris in the dwellings and set up housekeeping again.

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Throughout the whole trip - I couldn't help but get the picture of contrast which was here - Beauty and horror - a countryside untouched by the war -

and Cassino - war in Rome - the ancient and for all its age imposing Basilica - and the modern buildings which had sprung up amongst the ruins of what had once been the greatest city in the world.

One of the boys from our squadron wrote a poem about this strange situation of contrast - I think it about the finest thing of its sort I've ever read - it certainly presents you with a true G.I. view of Italy hope will like it.

Finally heard from Ledo - also received a fine letter from his wife - good hearing from them - no word from the other part of the triumvirate - Any news of the where about of Big Ed. The "Skeeters" are waging a tireless battle and are out to win by the sheer weight of numbers - Hope to hear from some of the gang soon -

Sincerely,
John