# A Nostalgic moment

# A NOSTALGIC MOMENT



*On this Rütli meadow on the shores of Lake Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden signed a pact of mutual defence in 1291, thus founding the alliance which was later to become the Swiss Confederation.*

One early August day in 1291 men from the valley communities of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden met and swore to help one another in warding off attacks and thwarting injustice. The pact — written in Latin and sealed — is still preserved in the Swiss archives at Schwyz. Since 1st August, 1891, the 600th anniversary of this event — the birth of the Swiss Confederation — has been a day of national celebration, though until a few years ago the ceremonies were confined to the evening hours. As night fell church bells rang out through the land and the people of town and city assembled in school grounds and, by the light of bengal flares listened to brass bands, watched the local gymnasts build human pyramids and paid attention to solemn addresses by a representative of the local government. And then, at about 10 pm, the party broke up and each and everyone went his own way to finish the evening.

Now, the evening event has grown into a day's holiday. The bells still ring, the fascination of the tall bonfires, and the windows decorated with glowing Chinese lanterns remains. The Swiss flag with its white cross on a red background decorates public buildings and many private houses. The speeches — including one from the Confederation's President to all the people — have become a platform for statements on current affairs.

In the founding cantons, in rural areas and among Swiss people overseas, 1st August still remains a celebration during which thoughts go back to the origins of the homeland. But for the country's children history takes second place to the lanterns and fireworks associated with Switzerland's National Day.

Pictures and story by courtesy of SNTO.



*The lighting of bonfires as night falls is one of the ceremonies attached to our National Day.*

the pious ones, the doctors of the law and of theology. This is a warning for me. He loved the sinners, the poor, those who asked for his help. He did not fight to defend his life and his property — but he defended his friends and everybody who was maltreated. He stood for the truth — and it cost his life. But he knew, it was not the end. That is how God thinks and acts — a God of great freedom.

This is how I feel and what I think and believe — and I wish you could do the same. In the Name of God — a Life worth living! whatever your Creed. May your God go with you.
Fr. Paul Bossard.