

SACRED HOSTS SMUGGLED INTO HELD PRIESTS

Night Communions Bring Joy To 400 In Nazi Prison

By George Barnard

LONDON.—(N. C.)—Four hundred Slovene priests in a Nazi concentration camp, many of them without Mass for two months, were electrified when a whisper ran round that the Blessed Sacrament had been brought among them.

Hosts had been carried in by a newly-arrested priest who had put the Sacred Hosts in a handbag. In the darkness of early morning, and by the light of an electric torch, all the despairing priests received Holy Communion in the stable of the Trappist monastery in which they were imprisoned.

The episode is one of the most thrilling spiritual experiences of the war. It is described in detail in a letter which has been made available to me here a letter written by one of the priests in the camp who ends it by saying "I hope this will be read all over the world and whilst showing the spirit of the Slovene clergy, raise the hearts of all those who are suffering to have confidence in the eternity of truth, which is God."

The letter begins by describing how the priests of the two dioceses of German-occupied Slovenia were rounded up by the Gestapo and taken to the concentration camp at Maribor. Of the 404 priests in the two dioceses the Germans left at liberty only 14, and they were old men. From Maribor the priests were taken to Rajhenburg, near Croatia, and were housed in the stables of the Trappist monastery. Mass forbidden.

Then the letter goes on: "For over two months we had not been allowed to say Mass nor could we receive Holy Communion nor visit a church."

"But as a memorable day Jesus Christ Himself came to visit us."

"For several days rumors had been circulating that we were to be moved to an unknown place. Every minute we expected the dreaded call."

"You can imagine how surprised we were when, instead, we heard the rumbling of many lorries pouring into our stable yard. We looked through the airholes in the stable walls, covered with barbed wire."

"Were they coming to fetch us?"

"No, they were bringing fresh loaves. They were priests, some in cassocks, some in civilian attire, some only superficially clad. Old and young."

"We recognized Capuchin Fathers from Celje, Lazarist Fathers from Celje, also, and other priests whom we had heard were in prison somewhere or other."

"They were told to jump down and line up in the stable yard. After being numbered and checked by name they were hurried to the stables."

Prisoners Aged 82

"Some were very old, too old and worn out to walk even with the aid of a stick. One priest, 82 years old, fell. A kind soldier helped him to his feet."

"There were laymen among the prisoners and onlookers. 'Scharde!'—'Shame!'—came from one of them at the awful sight."

"Behind our wired airholes others looked on silently, thinking about Northern Kultur."

"One of the Capuchin Fathers brought with him a handbag."

"It was very consecrated Hosts."

"That very morning, we were told later, the Gestapo had broken into the monastery in Celje and ordered the Fathers to clear out at once. There was no time to consume the Sacred Hosts in the church."

"What was to be done? They could not be left there. So many awful sacrileges had already been reported."

"One of the Fathers somehow managed to get into the church and put the Sacred Hosts into his handbag."

"Thus Our Lord came with His unfortunate priests into exile. He knew that there were in Rajhenburg many who longed for Him, to greet Him, to tell Him of their gratitude, to be united with Him in Holy Communion."

"Our Lord Is Here!"

"That is how, with the help of the Gestapo, Our Lord came to visit His faithful in a concentration camp."

"Soon, silently, from mouth to mouth, the glorious news spread through the stables."

"We have Our Lord in our midst! 'Our Lord is here!' Is it true? Where?"

"Over there—on the wall to the right of the entrance to the yard. In the brown handbag hanging on the wall."

"And so it was. I went there. Priests moved by in respectful file, bowing as they passed the humble tabernacle."

"Greetings . . . homage . . . thanks . . . prayers for our poor country. But no complaints. How happy we felt could only be told by Him Who sees the secrets of the heart."

"The yard became quiet, but not silent. We dared not be silent, the Gestapo would have noticed it, and this must be avoided until tomorrow at least, after Holy Communion. The yard had to look 'everyday' and so it looked, in order to protect the presence of our dear Guest. Only our hearts spoke, and eyes revealed the infinite joy which, once more in history, has filled a humble stable chosen by Our Lord for His residence. In a handbag, indeed! What a humble tabernacle, before which nearly 400 priests of the diocese of Maribor had their Holy Hour of watch and adoration. Confessions heard."

"In the evening, after community prayers, Monsignor X told everybody that tomorrow, early in the morning, Holy Communion could be given. We knew that, but it was nice to hear the news repeated in some sort of official way."

"All the evening you could have seen priests, two and two together, whispering—confessing and hearing confession."

"Then we retired for the night. How different it was from the other days. When the Gestapo man, as usual, came into the yard to wish us 'Good night' and turn out the light, he saw us all quietly on the straw."

"He wondered, greeted, turned out the light and left us."

"Yes, he was right. A good night, indeed. The first good night after two horrible months. A sweet, holy night. Our Lord was with us."

"We did not sleep. Who could? We heard whispers in the darkness. 'Ego to absolve.' 'I absolve thee' and so it went on and on in the two yards. I myself knelt down beside Father P. P. and he said over me the words 'Ego to absolve.'"

"Guiding themselves by touching the wall, men moved round the pitch-dark yard towards the handbag . . . A glorious night, the like none had experienced."

"Outside we heard the tramping of the Gestapo guard."

"When all was finished, we 'dressed.' In the most perfect silence, for the guard must notice nothing."

Electric Torch Candles

"A Jesuit Father prepared a modest altar. Not very much of an altar. We had on white sheet among the 400 of us. It served to cover a wooden box. A single electric torch did well for the candles. We had no surplus, no stole. The white civilian clothes of the Jesuit Fathers were good instead."

"We wanted to do everything properly, you see, and with the best things at our disposal."

"And then came Holy Communion."

"One after the other the priests came through the darkness, silent shadows moving through the night, a long procession of souls with unseen bodies."

"They came to the corner of the yard, knelt, and received the Sacred Host."

"Received, I say, but with a respect and gratitude in their hearts as perhaps never before."

"How can I ever forget this feeding of the hungry in the stables of the Trappist monastery before we left for the uncertain future which we know awaited us!"

"It was 4:45 when we finished. The guard, when he entered a few minutes later, was most surprised to see us all up and 'dressed.' Did he smell revolt? No, there were only quiet, happy faces."

"But it was only just in time."

Aids War Victims



Rev. Robert Jacquinet, S. J., ex-armed French missionary in China, who has arrived in Hong Kong to take charge of relief work among civil and military prisoners. Father Jacquinet is remembered for his famed safety zone which he established in Shanghai to shelter thousands of refugees following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war. (N.C.W.C.)

Lifting Communist Ban Opposed In Canada

MONTREAL.—Made up of a representative group of English and French Canadian businessmen, lawyers, judges and army men, the Canadian Column has addressed a letter to all federal legislators urging careful study before there is any question of lifting the ban on the Communist Party in Canada.

The Canadian Column was founded as a patriotic movement to combat the Fifth Column, rumors and reports.

"The Communist Party of Canada is not composed of Russians and played no part in the heroic defense of Russia, nor can it, therefore, claim consideration on the grounds that Russia is now an ally," the letter says.

"Russian leaders have assured the world that they have no 'world-wide revolutionary aim.' The membership of the Communist Party of Canada, however, do not accept this leadership and continue their old disruptive policy as they pursue their present campaign to free leaders of the party that about a year ago published pamphlets tacking our war effort."

Father Y wanted to give us Holy Communion also on the following day and so he had divided the Sacred Hosts. This had delayed him.

"Another minute and we would have been discovered, and that would have meant sacrilege beatings, and so on."

"And so we had Our Blessed Lord another day and another night with us."

"I cannot describe our feelings when the last Sacred Host had been consumed and we had to take our leave of Our Lord. Now we were alone, but not forgotten. His visit left in our hearts fires of love and confidence. We felt strong to face the German orders again."

"I hope this will be read all over the world and whilst showing the spirit of the Slovene clergy, raise the hearts of all those who are suffering to have confidence in the eternity of Truth which is God."

Pontiff Names Three Bishops

VATICAN CITY.—Three new Bishops have been appointed for Colombia by His Holiness Pope Pius XII.

The Rev. Gerardo Martinez, a priest of the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Osos has been named Bishop of Garzon Colombia. The Rev. Julio Calceda, a Salesian priest, has been named Bishop of Barranquilla, Colombia. The Very Rev. Angel Maria Ocampo, Jesuit Provincial, has been appointed Titular Bishop of Ionopolis and Coadjutor Bishop of Socorro and San Gil, Colombia.

BUY WAR BONDS

Handbills, Secretly Circulated In France, Warn Of False Prophets

(This is the second of a series of articles based upon remarkable documents which have come out of France and are now in the possession of the N. C. W. C. News Service. It tells of pamphlets and leaflets, secretly circulated, which make known to Frenchmen the enormity of the offenses being committed by the Nazi invaders.)

"French Catholics! A particularly authoritative voice, since it is the voice of a revered Bishop, the Most Rev. Pierre Marie Theas, has just been raised against a French publication, Gringoire, which formerly dishonored our country and which, since the defeat, and subject to the orders of enemy propaganda, has not ceased to cover us with disgrace in the eyes of the entire world. . . . La Croix (French Catholic daily) was prohibited from publishing this (the Bishop's) note, short as it is, which indicates the astounding the ignominious sheet (Gringoire) has with the public powers."

This information about Gringoire, and its condemnation on moral grounds by the Bishop of Montauban, has been made known to French Catholics by means of a handbill circulated surreptitiously by patriotic Frenchmen who are fighting as best they can "for the cause of God, of Christianity, of morality, and of all civilization." Gringoire, the handbill states, has always been associated with the "systematic abasement and demoralization of our country," and so one knows the "extent of the evil this publication did us abroad even before the war."

"This periodical," the statement continues, "had two great means of penetration that assured its success: calumny and pornography. When the time came, it had only to add treason." The handbill then quotes Bishop Theas' terse statement: "We have received a copy of Gringoire. It contains depraved lines. This, apparently, is not exceptional. Conclusion: Those who are concerned about moral propriety do not read Gringoire." This seems harmless enough, the handbill notes, yet La Croix, the one Catholic daily of France previously published at Paris, but now moved to Limoges in unoccupied France, was officially forbidden to reproduce it.

"One have to choose. Christ or Hitler?" This is the heading of another handbill distributed by the same group, the text of which is as follows:

Disarmed and for the time being reduced to impotence, France daily endures the most hateful extortions. Not content with starving her and stealing all her natural wealth, her conqueror, under the sign of

COLLABORATION

would associate her in his enterprise of European and World domination. He would enroll her under the banner of the Swastika, and oblige her to participate in THE HITLERIAN NEW ORDER.

Among us Hitler makes use of an incessant propaganda which imparts, as the champion of imperilled civilization and the defend-

er of nations "oppressed by the demo-plutocracies."

Let's get ourselves straight on Hitlerian Germany and the countries under its yoke.

They suppress all political and labor union liberties.

They suppress the non-conformist press even, rather more especially, that of Christian inspiration.

They persecute the Jews.

They prevent the dissemination of Pontifical documents condemning Racism and Hitlerism.

They forbid the reading of messages from the Vatican Radio.

They stifle the voice of the Pope when raised in defense of the imprescriptible rights of the human person and the liberty of peoples.

On Guard! Christians! Catholics! French!

France unconsciously is being led along the road of capitulations. They would have her forfeit her traditions, her hope, her honor and her soul.

The moment has come to affirm that National Revolution shall begin only with National Liberation, and this will never be under the shadow of the Swastika, symbol of a racial arrogance that is neither human nor Christian, according to the words of Pius XI.

Catholics, Christians! Do not permit yourselves to be seduced by false prophets. Be prudent and clearly informed. Heed the authoritative warnings that are received in increasing numbers from all quarters.

The handbill then quotes, in the following order, from statements by Karl Barth, professor of theology at the University of Bale; Dr. Wurm, Protestant Bishop of Wurtemberg, Sept. 21, 1941, a German Religious; the 1941 Lenten Pastoral of Archbishop Groeber of Freiburg, the Fulda Pastoral, June 24, 1941. The burden of all the quotations is that there can be no compromise between Christianity and Hitlerism.

The time for equivocation and silence is ended.

For the defense of Christian civilization and humanity, Frenchmen, whatever be your Creed, Christians, Catholics, join together in a United Front of Combat and Spiritual Resistance for the Liberation of France.

God is good, and what He does is well done. Resign yourself to everything, even to happiness.

Impressive Reception Rite Held At Nazareth Convent

(Continued from Page 1)

Help, Rochester, Sister Mary Teresa, Miss Ida McCarthy, St. Patrick's, Victor, Sister Mary Edwards, Miss Arline De Roller, Holy Redeemer, Sister Jane Frances, Miss Constance McCaughey, St. Joseph's, Perry, Sister Marie Stephanie, Miss Angelina Coccia, St. Anthony's, Rochester, Sister Irma, Miss Dorothy Condline, Holy Rosary, Rochester, Sister Mary Karen, Miss Elizabeth Koenen, St. Alphonsus, Auburn, Sister Helen Therese, Miss Grace Gleichauf, St. Monica's, Rochester, Sister Frances Martina, Miss Rosemary Brian, SS. Peter & Paul, Rochester, Sister Anne Helene, Miss Margaret McStravick, Holy Rosary, Rochester, Sister Mary Noel.

The following Novices pronounced Perpetual Vows: Sister Mary Cecilia Cameron, Blessed Sacrament, Rochester; Sister Grace Clare Brewer, St. Mary's, Canandaigua; Sister Elizabeth Paul O'Brien, St. Patrick's, Rochester; Sister Mary Paschal Rous, St. James, Waverly; Sister Teresa

Miriam Hollerin, Corpus Christi, Rochester, Sister Mary Leon Davis, Sacred Heart, Rochester, Sister Francis Gerard Small, St. Augustine's, Rochester; Sister Mary Martoni Freida, Holy Redeemer, Rochester, Sister Helen Anne Barry, SS. Peter & Paul's, Rochester, Sister Teresa Martin Auburger, St. Michael's, Rochester, Sister Mary Vianney Schnitz, St. Pius, Cobocott; Sister Mary Alonzo Bulanda, St. Stephen's, Geneva.

Present in the Sanctuary were The Rt. Rev. Msgr. William F. Bergan, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles F. Shay, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph S. Cameron, Rt. Rev. Msgr. George V. Burns and the Rev. Fathers Lawrence B. Casey, Joseph H. Geffell, Richard K. Burns, John S. Randall, Arthur Ratigan, Joseph J. O'Connell, Joseph J. Sullivan, E. Joseph Esser, Paul G. Wohlrab, Donald E. Lux, Francis C. Waterstraat, L. Emmet Davis, Paul M. Ciaccio, Edward J. Lintz, Michael J. Tydings, Charles L. Sullivan, Michael C. Wall, Ignatius X. Cameron, John M. O'Beirne, Francis Cristantella.