

Possible Air Attack On Rome Perturbs European Catholics

VATICAN CITY (NC)—Speculation and a certain anxiety continue among European Catholics regarding the eventual aerial bombardment of Rome. It is indicated by widely echoed comments in Catholic and non-Catholic publications.

Refute Japanese Radio Blurbs On Christians In Invaded Areas

WASHINGTON (NC)—A propaganda radio broadcast put out by the Japanese beamed for the whole world, gives a fulsome account of a supposed interview with a Japanese Catholic priest who is quoted as attesting to the "understanding and kind encouragement" which Japanese army authorities have evidenced toward the Christian religion in the lands they have invaded.

In one instance the Japanese propaganda broadcast contained this statement:

"Mass at the Manila Chapel was broadcast throughout the Philippines for the first time in the history of the Archipelago, the Father related with much pride and elation."

Any priest in the Orient would know that for years, previously to the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been broadcast throughout the islands on important Holy Days. Notable is the case of the great International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila in February, 1937, when all of the events of that impressive demonstration of faith, including the Solemn Masses celebrated daily, were broadcast by Station KZRM-Radio Manila. These broadcasts were heard not only throughout the Philippines but throughout the world.

An N.C.W.C. News Service dispatch dated Manila, Feb. 7, 1937, contained this paragraph:

"As usual the entire proceedings were carried over the perfectly controlled broadcast system of the Congress City. Both the Mass and the sermon were broadcast by remote control over Radio Manila, Station KZRM, thus enabling thousands and thousands of faithful, who were not able to be present, to follow the solemn religious proceedings via their radio sets. As if in a grand gesture, science and religion were firmly united at both the Midnight Mass and the Pontifical Mass to make Mass Day of the Thirty-third International Eucharistic Congress one of the most momentous days that Catholic Philippines has ever known."

At another point in the Japanese propaganda broadcast, it quoted the supposed Japanese priest as having pointed out that "for instance, every one person out of three in and around Peking are Catholics."

Any priest in the Orient would certainly know this to be grossly inaccurate. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. G. Barry O'Toole, formerly President of the Catholic University of Peking and now a member of the faculty of the Catholic University of America, points out that the Missions de Chine computes the number of Chinese Catholics in Peking, a city of more than a million inhabitants, at 11,370. "Hence," Monsignor O'Toole notes, "the correct ratio of Catholics to pagans in that city is one in every hundred, not one in every three, as the Tokyo radio falsely alleged."

Gasoline Shortage Deters Many Britons From Attending Mass

LONDON. Conservation of gasoline, which resulted in cancellation of bus service on Sundays, has deprived hundreds in the Diocese of Northampton opportunity to attend Sunday Mass.

The Most Rev. T. Leo Parker, Bishop of Northampton, in a pastoral letter dealing with the problem, urged his people to arrange to stay with friends over the weekend in localities where they can attend Mass.

Otherwise, the Bishop's letter continued those deprived of Mass on Sunday should try to repair their loss on week days.

Typical of the latest comment is the observation the Protestant Tribune of Lausanne, Switzerland, which says:

"An attack against Rome would have the profoundest repercussions among Catholics throughout the world. The Holy See, while not abandoning the neutrality imposed upon it by circumstances, would find more difficulty in maintaining the balance of its equilibrium in the midst of belligerent nations, as it has been able to do hitherto."

Catholics generally, recognizing the justice of the earlier concern manifested regarding Athens, with its important symbolic value in the history of human thought and regarding Cairo, center of Mohammedan culture, having high moral significance in the eyes of millions of followers of Islam, feel that Rome merits equal consideration. Rome embraces not only sovereign neutral Vatican City but the whole city is considered as the common heritage of Christians, sanctified by the blood of countless martyrs, and the center of their spiritual life.

In Vatican circles there is no confirmation of international press reports regarding alleged initiative on the part of the Holy See to have Rome recognized as an "open city."

There is complete calm in Vatican City. No precautions have been taken for the protection of the artistic treasures of the Vatican and its various buildings scattered about Rome.

Plenary Indulgence Granted For Air Raids

VATICAN CITY (NC) Persons in cities, or in other places, which are actually undergoing air raids may gain a plenary indulgence if, being of contrite heart, they make a true act of love to God, and, being sorry for their sins, recite in any language "Jesu Misereere Me, My Jesus Have Mercy on Me."

That His Holiness Pope Pius XII has granted this indulgence is announced in a decree of the Sacred Penitentiary dated December 18, 1942.

Commenting on this decree, Osservatore Romano for December 24 says the ordinary condition of Confession and Communion is dispensed with for the gaining of this indulgence, that perfect contrition is necessary and sufficient. Osservatore also points out that it is possible to gain this indulgence only in time of actual bombardment, not in times of alarms and of passing planes, and that the validity is limited by the decree to the duration of the present war.

Attacks Church-State Domination Proposal

VATICAN CITY—Lecour Grandmaison, vice-president of the French National Catholic Federation, in an article in La France Catholique, reveals that a Paris newspaper very recently invited the Church to a new reform, "of which, however, the totalitarian State of tomorrow will assume everywhere the direction."

Grandmaison commented: "When we review our duties as men and as citizens, we cannot lose sight of the responsibility which we have in that regard. To allow the State to leave its field and attempt to make of the Church an instrument of domination is wrong. It is our duty to conserve the rights of God in public life and to guard the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal."

Seminary Class Gives Bishop Pectoral Cross

QUEBEC. — Members of the 1924-1925 Rhetoric Class of the Little Seminary here are presenting to the Most Rev. Georges Leon Pelletier, Auxiliary Bishop-Elect of Quebec, his pectoral cross. He was a member of this class.

ABSOLUTION ON THE SCENE OF BATTLE



Bearded and jungle-worn as the fighting men to whom he brings spiritual consolation, Father Stephen J. Dzelic (right), of Detroit, Army Chaplain, gives absolution to a group of United States troops before they went into battle in the Buna area of New Guinea. INP photo. (N.C.W.C.)

Marines Can Be Missionaries Too, Writes Captain From Pacific Isle

NEW YORK (NC) The Marines landed and found the situation somewhat out of hand. Priests and nuns had been slain by the Japanese, missions had been destroyed, native gardens and homes had been ruined and the natives forced to flee into the jungle. But it wasn't long before the Marines, having routed the invader, had things somewhat ship-shape again and the Catholics among them, by attendance at Mass and reception of Holy Communion, set such an example "that the news would spread throughout the tribes and islands and be talked of for months."

The locale of these happenings still is a military secret, but the details were contained in a letter from Capt. Eugene T. Schoenfelder, U. S. Marine Corps to Brother Aubert of Manhattan College. Capt. Schoenfelder was a member of the class of 1940 of the college.

"I am going to tell you a different side of this war," he wrote. "A side that is important to us, Brothers, as Catholics."

"Our chaplains, Fathers Fitzgerald, Reardon and Gehring—what men! Thank God the Navy saw fit to give these sailors to us Marines. They are a source of pride to me. They make me proud that I, too, am a Catholic. Everyone is inspired by the courage, faith and the devotion to the men these priests have displayed. There were many occasions when they were sorely needed by the men they never failed."

"It's Sunday down here. I've just returned from Mass, the only event that differentiates Sunday from any other day here. The sun is shining brightly; it's hot."

"This morning's Mass was celebrated by a local missionary, Father Wall, who has been here for ten years. Until just a few days ago, he had been hiding in the jungle to escape the 'Jap-man,' as the natives called them. This missionary and several others have been rescued by Marine patrols. The others have been evacuated because of poor health due to sickness and lack of food. There is still a nun up in the hills who will be brought down as soon as she is well enough to be moved. She is in very poor condition and probably quite old since she has been on this island for 33 years."

"Patrols have found the bodies of two priests and two nuns who had been killed by the Japs."

"At this morning's Mass there were, in addition to sailors and Marines, about 15 natives. (More mail just arrived.) The natives are short stocky blacks with thick woolly hair. Some of them wore parts of Marine uniforms, one had on drawers, another an undershirt, a third was wearing a winter service hat. Their skirts varied in color, from a bright red through dirty white and black. All of them went to Communion. It was thrilling to see their eagerness to receive the Host."

Missions Destroyed

"During the sermon, Father Wall, while trying to control his emotions and hold back tears, explained the effect of our presence on the natives and the missions. Before we landed the Japanese had destroyed the missions, ruined the native gardens and homes and forced them to flee dispersed into the jungle. It was impossible for the priests and nuns to carry on their work effectively. They were as hunted animals. It was a terrible setback for them."

"Our landing gave them a new start. Priests were again able to resume their duties in the recaptured areas."

"Just as important as our reconquering the island, the missionary said was our attendance at Mass and Communion and our visits paid to the Padre. Before we came the few whites on the island, few of whom were Catholics, and even the Catholics, did not always set a good example for the natives."

"The whites seldom went to Mass as the natives did. The na-

tives sometimes wondered if their religion was practiced by people in the great outside world. When we came to fight their enemies the 'Jap-men' from the large, far away United States and attended Mass as they themselves did they knew our Church was catholic. It is the Church. Our actions did much, indirectly, to strengthen their faith. It takes plenty of gall for a white man to speak of strengthening the faith of a native."

Father Wall said the news would spread throughout the tribes and islands and be talked of for months. Marines little missionaries. Helping to conquer in the spiritual as well as in our mundane world. Yes it is true. Brothers impress this fact upon the boys before they leave for the services. Catholics are now being met by many people for the first time. Here is an opportunity to break down prejudice. We can show what we really are. And we don't have to preach we merely have to act properly."

Beveridge Plan Based On Church's Teachings Avers Argentine Paper Lauding Program

BUENOS AIRES—The conquests of social justice contained in the Beveridge plan now under consideration in England, and those principles advocated at the recent Inter-American Seminar on Social Studies at Washington may come in time El Pueblo, Argentine Catholic daily, says, but it must not be overlooked, it adds, that "the root of these legitimate and just conquests is in the social teaching of the Church."

"We are in the ranks of those who are convinced that the present war must signify a profound change in the social and economic order," El Pueblo says. "And in fact, each of the belligerent groups is now considering reforms which should be put into practice once the war is ended. That is why this morning we are discussing the matter, uncertain as to some aspects but convinced as to fundamental changes that should be hailed with joy and hope."

The Beveridge plan, "which has aroused great interest in England," El Pueblo thinks "cannot fail to be applauded for, if put into effect, it would be another landmark, and certainly an important one, in the field of the pacific conquests of social organization and legislation." But in praising the plan which "Mr. Beveridge, with the cooperation of his Government and public opinion, proposes to convert into reality in his country," El Pueblo notes that one should not lose sight of the fact that "these plausible conceptions of the social order are not

novelties discovered in the light of the realities of this tremendous hour for the world."

"Those who think so," the editorial says, "need read only one magisterial document the great Encyclical of the immortal Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum—to find the same formulations of principles in its pages, written more than a half century ago." The Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, reaffirmed these same principles and modernized their application, it adds.

For those who are seeking the betterment of the post-war world, El Pueblo believes it opportune to remember precisely what His Holiness Pope Pius XII, now reigning, has pointed out "with noonday clarity" on various occasions, and on such subjects as wealth and the distribution of wealth. "It is up to the men who rebuild our disordered world whether they take these into account or not but history records what happened with respect to the wise, humane and Catholic formulas proposed by Pope Benedict XV to end the former conflagration," it reminds. "What the world today suffers in unpredictable form, could have been spared to humanity solely by rebuilding human society, in accordance with what the Vicar of Christ teaches, through application of the law of God."