

# Ignoring Vatican Nazis Grab Church Bells In Belgium

VATICAN CITY (NC-Radio)—The Holy See has striven, but without success, to halt the Nazi confiscation of church bells in Belgium and to obtain the revocation or mitigation of the orders compelling Belgians to transport them to Germany. It is reported in a joint Pastoral Letter of the Belgian Hierarchy, the text of which has been printed in the Liberator of Brussels, Wallonia (Jan 27).

The Belgian Bishops, in this vigorous document, bearing false witness of the Belgian Catholic churches, say: "We now solemnly declare that we oppose with all our episcopal authority the measure which has no other purpose but that of transforming our bells into machines of war and instruments of death."

The Belgian Hierarchy warns that collaboration by the faithful in the Nazi program of church bell confiscation or in the conscription of Belgian workers for forced labor in Germany is "gravely illicit in conscience."

## Belgian Bishops Flay Nazi Grab of Church Bells, Forced Labor

VATICAN CITY—Following is the text of the joint Pastoral Letter of the Belgian Hierarchy protesting against the various measures of the invading German Nazi authorities:

"Deeply beloved brethren! To your present sufferings we must now add another which will be extremely painful for you, the usurping authorities inform us that they are going to proceed to the requisitioning of our church bells. Some months ago, in the face of the first measures, we protested to the German authority an energetic protest and demanded the return of the bells. On its part the Holy See intervened with the Government of the Reich. We had hoped that, thanks to these interventions, the decision would not be put into execution. But now we learn with dismay that orders have been given to take the bells from our parishes."

In the face of this unbelievable measure, it is impossible for us as Catholic Bishops responsible for the religious patrimony of our country not to raise our voice in public reproach and condemnation of this proposal. We reprove and condemn the seizure of our bells in the name of religion. The church bells are not merely so many objects of bronze. They have an exclusively religious purpose. They must not be used except in praise of God and to invite the faithful to divine services. They have been consecrated and sanctified by ritual benediction and, hence, are destined irrevocably to divine worship. They cannot be destined to profane use, nor taken without the consent of responsible ecclesiastical authorities.

We now solemnly declare that we oppose with all our episcopal authority a measure which has no other purpose but that transforming our bells into machines of war and instruments of death. It may be that in Germany and Italy the Bishops submit without protest to measures which they regard as necessary in their internal forum, just as we do, perhaps in their eyes patriotism excuses the tolerance of an evil which they cannot ignore. For us, however, as the country's patriotic duty coincides with religious duty and our solemnity would constitute laxity and treason. Furthermore, the seizure of our bells constitutes a flagrant violation of international law stipulated by the Hague Convention and sanctioned by all civilized nations.

Article 14 imposes upon the occupying authority the obligation of respecting the free exercise of worship; but the bells serve for the exercise of Catholic worship. Article 22 limits the requisitioning of property to the needs of the army of occupation. Now it is evident that the bells which will be seized will not be used by the troops of occupation. Finally, Article 26 consecrates the complete immunity of consecrated places of worship and prohibits all seizure to their detriment. Thus, therefore, the written law of the nations prohibits the seizure of church bells by the occupying authority.

**FIRST IN CENTURIES**  
If the announced decision is carried out, history will say that it is the first time in the course of the centuries that this profanation, contrary to the manifest and recognized rights of religion, has been perpetrated in Belgium. Our Episcopate...

copied duty obliges us to declare that all collaboration in the seizure of the church bells is gravely illicit in conscience. We ask that all priests and laymen maintain a calm, passively attitude. In the meanwhile there goes on what is called the "mobilization of Belgian labor," that is, the conscription of our population for forced labor in service of a Germany at war. We Bishops have protested to the occupying authority against these iniquitous measures. The high judicial authorities of the country likewise have intervened. The King has multiplied his efforts to obtain withdrawal or mitigation of these ordinances. The Holy See has taken an interest in the question. But all without avail and without effect.

The measures for the requisitioning of manpower are absolutely unjustifiable. They violate natural law, international law and Christian morality. They fail to take into account either the essential dignity and freedom of human person or the welfare and honor of families, or the supreme good of society, which will suffer indirectly from these sentiments of anger and hatred sown in thousands and thousands of oppressed hearts.

The constraint imposed upon bodies and wills is serious, but the violence inflicted upon consciences is still more serious. Belgian citizens are obliged to cooperate, directly or indirectly, with the military operations of a foreign power which has unjustly imposed on their country a very severe occupational regime without giving them the slightest assurance for the future. Male workers, and especially female workers, are often placed in gravely harmful moral and religious conditions. Finally, despite their reiterated protests, your Bishops have not succeeded in obtaining an authorization to send chaplains to their exiled dioceses to assist them with their sacerdotal ministry.

We are told that these measures are necessary to protect European civilization. But is this application of measures which violate the essential principles of all civilization to defend, or is it not rather to destroy civilization? Human reason and Christian morality condemn and castigate these iniquitous and barbarous measures. All collaboration in the execution of these measures is gravely illicit in conscience.

Civilized nations, if they are informed of them, cannot fail to express their profound reprobation. At any rate, the Christian faith tells us the Almighty, who is sovereign justice, is witness to what is happening. And it is before His tribunal that the acts of all human beings, without exception, will be judged in accordance with eternal laws.

### Papal Aide Dies

VATICAN CITY.—Monsignor Luigi Capotosti, Papal Master of Ceremonies since 1906, died Mar. 16, in Rome. As a student at Capranica College he was a contemporary of His Holiness Pope Pius XII.

## MINDANAO MISSIONARIES INTERNEED



Fourteen American Oblates have been interned by the Japanese at Cotabato, Mindanao Island, P. I., according to word just received in the United States. Among those pictured above are, left to right: front row, Fathers John Sheehan, Brockton, Mass.; Francis McElroy, Philadelphia, Pa.; Louis Lowell, Mass. (interned at Iloilo); Cathbert Williams, Milton, Mass. (Army chaplain); George Dion, Central Falls, R. I.; rear row, Fathers Paul Dwyer, Belleville, Ill.; Emil Michael Braun, St. Louis, Mo.; Joseph Quinn, Lowell, Mass.; Edward Gordon, Lowell, Mass.; Brother St. Louis, and Father George Boyne, Chicago. Photo courtesy of Oblate World (N.C.W.C.)

## Regardless of Race, Christian's Duty To Love All, Pope Avers

VATICAN CITY.—(NC)—Duty of the Christian not only to love his own country but to embrace the whole human family, regardless of race, in the divine love of Christ, is emphasized by His Holiness Pope Pius XII in a letter written to mark the seventeenth anniversary of the Association of Italian Catholic Youth.

In his letter, the Holy Father recommends reciprocal special regard between all members of the Association "to whatever class or condition of life they belong, whether they be manual laborers or in intellectual employment, whether they be of humble (smile) or of illustrious families and wealthy, let them love one another with Christian love as brothers."

Pope Pius XII's letter recommends love of country, but emphasizes that it is the duty of Christians "to embrace the universal human family in the divine love of Jesus Christ, whatever be their descent or race."

"Actually," His Holiness states, "love of fatherland does not exclude, or nullify, the fraternal community of all peoples, nor does this mutual love amongst all men lessen the love due to one's native land."

Vatican City.—Word has been received here of the death in Rio de Janeiro, on March 24 of Antonio Cardoso, who was a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

## Cardinal Brands Letter Backing Nazis As Forgery

LONDON (NC)—The forgery of a letter purportedly prepared by His Eminence Joseph Cardinal van Roey, Archbishop of Malines and Primate of Belgium, which called upon prayers for Bolshevism, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet Army, were refuted in a Vatican Radio broadcast.

The speaker pointed out that Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical Divini Redemptoris and Pope Pius XII in his Christmas Message of 1942 showed for the Russian people the same love and consideration evidenced for other nations and peoples, simultaneously repudiating unequivocally atheistic Communism. The speaker also quoted from a recent peace message of the present Pontiff which included a special reference to the Russian people and noted that the Pope had prayed for peace for the Russian people and their return to the Catholic Church.

The radio speaker asserted that Cardinal Hinsley had referred to Russia and the Russian people and set in Bolshevism and reminded that the Cardinal had opened his discourse by referring to the fact that Pius XI had offered prayers after Mass for Russia, that he for its internal peace and religious liberty.

## Denies Cardinal Asked Prayer For Bolshevism

VATICAN CITY (NC)—Charges made by a Munich, Germany, newspaper that the late Cardinal Hinsley, at the order of "highest religious authority in Rome," had "invoked

Belgians to support the Nazis in a crusade against Communism, has been exposed by Belgian authorities here, the British Ministry of Information has announced.

Cardinal van Roey has issued a "formal, stringent, biting denial" that he was the author of the letter, and Cassandre, principal Belgian newspaper, and the Belgian news agency, Inbel, have since reported the Cardinal's protest and contended the forgery was a hoax perpetrated on the Nazis.

The purported letter was timed to offset protests made in a pastoral dated February 21 by the Catholic Bishops of Holland against deporting Dutchmen to Germany for forced labor and against other Nazi injustices.

The forged letter, calling upon Belgians to aid Germany, was broadcast widely over the Hilversum and Paris radio and by the German Transoceanic News Agency. The Bremen radio, in addition, read excerpts from a letter the Cardinal was falsely reported to have written recently containing anti-Russian passages—but it was discovered the letter was written on Christmas Day, 1936. The Nazi controlled Belgian press made it appear Nazi authorities were victims of the hoax.

## U. S. Chaplain Held In Italy Finds Confinement 'Good For Humility'

NEW YORK.—(NC)—Father Stanley C. Brach, Army chaplain and a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, finds life as a prisoner of war in a camp in Italy is "good for our humility."

Writing to the Most Rev. John P. O'Hara, C.M.C., Military Delegate, Chaplain Brach says:

"The intervals between my letters seem long but we can always blame the service. I hope you received notice of my captivity. If you have, please try to notify my mother."

"I am well, in all I can say. I am trying to continue my priestly work. At present I am working on getting a suitable place for Our Lord. Fortunately, I have my Mass kit. That helps, as the majority here are English. The Catholics here have an inspiration to me. Will have a complete report when we get out. Here in Italy I am just an ordinary prisoner, looked upon with great suspicion. Makes life here uncomfortable. It is good for our humility. I have received a set of Breviaries from Rome. Otherwise can't contact Holy See."

### NUN IN TEMPLE

Maryknoll, N. Y.—For the first time in its century-old history, the walls of a pagan temple in South China recently reverberated to the strains of an Ave Maria chanted by a Maryknoll nun, while the rendition of the hymn aroused the interest of two disciples of Buddha in the true Faith.

## Forced Marriages Decried By Bishops In Germany

BERN, Switzerland.—A rising divorce rate, free love, adultery and marriages that are forced upon individuals for the purpose of building the race are vigorously condemned in Lenten pronouncements of German Bishops, according to KIPA, Catholic press agency here.

The Bishops, the agency says, strike out against an "un-Christian naturalism" which "denies a great deal of difference between men and animals." They attack compelled marriages as "the introduction of force into the most personal and delicate point of private life of human personality," and they denounce those who call virginity "a tree without fruit and a life without purpose." The Bishops say some persons have even so-called virginity "as a treason to the race." They point out that "the Church defends the right to virginity."