

FRANCE DECORATES NUNS FOR HEROISM DISPLAYED DURING DUNKERQUE SIEGE

GENEVA. The Cross de Guerre with silver star, it has been learned here, has been conferred by General Dentz, president of the French committee charged with recognizing outstanding heroism in the war period of 1939-1940, upon four religious of the Holy Sisters of Charity who served as nurses with the British Army Corps.

Those cited are Mother Ignace Marie Georgette, Sister Isabelle

Marie Therese Grandjean, Sister Marie Françoise de Paule (Sister Gaudet), and Sister Paul Marie Chastie Dentz.

The award is in recognition of courage and the devotion to the sick of Dunkerque "with a courage and an abnegation worthy of high praise and deepest admiration." "Knowing only duty," the citation reads, "they remained beside the wounded on June 4, 1940, when Dunkerque was taken.

"They were made prisoners and yet a magnificent example of devotion, professional conscientiousness and forgiveness of self."

The Pope and Science



The Holy Father Pius XII, in this photo just received from Vatican City is pictured as he received members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, following the seventh meeting of the group, February 21. The Academicians were presented by their president, the Rev. Agostino Gemelli, O. P. M. (left), rector of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart at Milan. (N.C.W.C.)

Priests' Defense Of Confession Seal Cited By Canadian Cardinal

QUEBEC.—Speaking to the press here on the Sacrament of Penance, His Eminence Rodrigue Cardinal Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec, recalled several examples of how priests preferred death and human disgrace rather than divulge the secrets learned in the confessional.

In Paris, several years ago, a priest was called during the night to the bed of a dying man. He entered a carriage and there was confronted by two masked men, who put a bandage over the priest's eyes. By devious ways he was taken to a distant quarter. There he was led into a large house and through a series of rooms before being taken to the room where the sick man was.

At Point of View

After the priest had heard the man's confession he was taken to the cellar and there the two masked men stuck a gun into his side threatening to shoot when the priest had heard in confession.

"Give me two minutes to reconnoiter my soul to God. I am ready to die but never will I tell one word of what I heard in confession," the priest declared.

"Good," the masked man replied. "We have assured ourselves now that you will not betray us. You can go for we know that not even the threat of death will drag your secret from you." The masked men conducted the priest back home the way he had come.

Close Ukraine Case

Cardinal Villeneuve recalled another famous case.

In 1881 in the Ukraine, the parish priest of Oratow was deposed from his charge of his Bishop and solemnly stripped of his sacerdotal dignity, having been convicted by public law of murder and having been condemned to forced labor in Siberia.

Everyone had been astonished by the crime, for this priest was considered a pious and zealous pastor. But the Intendant of Oratow had been murdered, and a recently discharged gun, which belonged to the priest, had been found hidden behind the main altar. The priest's only defense had been the declaration: "I assure you that I am not guilty."

During the public ceremony of degradation, many of those taking part, even the Bishop himself, were seen to weep. The priest's head was shaved, he was clothed in the garb of the condemned, chained and led away with other prisoners.

Admits Guilt

Twenty years later, the organist of the parish, on his death bed, solemnly declared in the presence of a magistrate and a great number of villagers that he was the one who had killed the Intendant. His motive had been to marry the widow of the official. To throw suspicion on the priest he had hidden the gun behind the altar and directed the police in finding it. Then, overwhelmed with remorse, he had visited the priest in prison and had made a confession to the priest without having the courage to admit his guilt before the public court.

The priest had known through confession who was guilty but had preferred to pass as a criminal himself rather than break the secrecy of the confessional.

After the organist's admission to the public officials, an order was sent to Siberia for the immediate release of the priest. But it was too late. Worn out by his sufferings and hard labor the priest had died several weeks before, carrying his secret to the tomb with him.

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'Return To Normalcy' Seen As Impossible In Post-War Readjustment

By Elmer Murphy

WASHINGTON (NC)—As the discussion of post-war problems goes on and the task ahead is more clearly outlined in the various formal and informal conferences on the part of representatives of the allied powers, it is becoming increasingly evident that a "return to normalcy" is a dead shibboleth. Peace will not mean a return to the conditions which prevailed before the war. Civilization will not be fitted to the old pattern. Countries which have been shattered by the impact of war will not go back to where they left off. As in the case of a city devastated by fire, the world will not be rebuilt along traditional lines.

There is no "normalcy" to go back to. The destruction has been too complete. Whole peoples have been uprooted. Countless millions have been set adrift. Refugees have fled from their native countries to escape persecution and within countries, rich and poor have been brought to a common level of poverty and privation. The wounds that have been inflicted upon many nations are too deep to be healed by the old remedies. As President Roosevelt said in a letter to Senator Luchins, "a very serious situation exists in many parts of this world because of the policy so viciously prosecuted by the Nazi Government to persecute religious, national and political groups who have incurred their wrath."

Former Governor Lehman has been discussing with British leaders the problem of relief, one of the first that will be encountered when the fighting ends.

No responsible official in Washington clings to the idea that this grave situation can be met by resorting to pre-war methods and getting the world back into its accustomed groove. A new pattern must be drawn to fit the new conditions. New ideals, moral as well as economic, must be evolved and applied at the peace table. New social relationships must be established. Some of the questions now being asked are: What is the responsibility of the victorious countries toward the Poles and the Greeks and the Jews? What rights of the small and backward nations are to be recognized? What place is organized labor to occupy in the reconstructed world? How are the stricken peoples to be fed until they are able to sustain themselves? What channels of trade must be opened to enable all countries to raise their standard of living? How is education to be revived and purged of the noxious growths of Nazi and Fascist teaching?

As Secretary Hull said, in his address to the Pan-American Union: "In this great drama, amid the clash of arms, it is more important than ever for us all to keep before mankind the principles to which we have dedicated ourselves. The success of the inter-American family of nations rests on observance of the principles of

sovereignty, equality, law, order, justice, morality, non-intervention, friendliness and cooperation. Only by this highway of freedom has the life of a free community been assured to the Americas. Only by cooperating in efforts along like lines can we hope effectively to contribute to the attainment of world peace and world security.

How the philosophy expressed by Secretary Hull in broad outline can be applied to conditions that will prevail at the close of the war and how the necessary cooperation can be brought about cannot be determined now, according to the views of Washington officials. At yet the surface of the stupendous task ahead has been only scratched. But the general conclusion appears to be that it cannot be met merely by resurrecting old ideas and following old precedents. In this respect the world that will finally emerge out of the maelstrom of war will, in fact, be a new world in which new or untried social, moral and economic ideas will have a recognized place.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION BILL INTRODUCED IN QUEBEC

QUEBEC.—The Quebec Government has introduced a compulsory education bill in the Quebec Legislature and all indications are that it will pass without serious opposition.

The bill requires that all children from the age of six to 14 years attend school. Tuition will be free for these children in all primary and elementary schools. At present school attendance is optional and parents must pay school fees and for textbooks.

Holy Sepulchre Basilica Once Consisted of Many Churches

(N.C.W.C. Easter Supplement)
JERUSALEM.—The Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, which is so prominently in Christian minds throughout the world with the approach of Holy Week, actually consisted in many churches early in its history, historians tell us.

The foundations of the Basilica may be said to have been laid down in the year 333. At that time, the Emperor Constantine ordered two churches to be built—one over the Tomb of Our Lord and the other at the place where his mother, St. Helena, had found the True Cross. In the course of time, these structures came to be destroyed by the Persians, Egyptians and Arabs, to be rebuilt by the Christians. It happened, though, that each time the churches were reconstructed, new ones were added. And so the total grew until the arrival in Jerusalem of the Crusaders, who put these separate edifices under one roof.

Following the Crusades, earthquakes and fires damaged the structure to varying degrees, and in the different restorations it became reduced in size. It has enjoyed for some time the proportions it has today, when its venerable walls are supported by beams of wood and steel.

Not only Catholics, but Armenians, Greeks, Copts and Syrians officiate in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.