

Checks Press Hints On Oath Taken By Spanish Bishops

WASHINGTON.—Insinuations in some secular news stories that the text of an oath taken by Spanish Bishops revealed an antipathy toward democracy and personal

allegiance to the regime of General Franco are indicated by the Rev. James G. Hannon, J.C.D., Associate Professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America.

In a prepared article for the N.W.S. News Service, Dr. Hannon points out that the wording of the oath contained no reference to Franco, and that the Holy See has entered into similar oaths with other nations and states.

The newly appointed Spanish Bishops have been pilloried in certain issues of our public press, for pledging allegiance to their country. Though an attempt has been made to stamp the action of the Bishops with the stigma of disloyalty, Dr. Hannon writes, "In the long view which history must inevitably take, that action cannot be other than a source of honor."

Whether unconsciously or maliciously, these reports, supposedly and professedly dedicated to the truth, have adopted the subtle trick of insinuating an impairment of the Bishops, and their spiritual colleagues, also charged by the same with a distaste for democracy. If the charge can be made to stick, neither they nor their colleagues throughout the world dare anticipate a hearing when they defend democracy against the hosts that wish it ill.

Of course, these hints do not reveal that Nazis employ the same technique to demonstrate the opposite contention. The loyalty of Bishops in democracies is regarded to insinuate their attitude for Nazism. Obviously, the Nazis could not help but make capital of the devotion of a Bishop, a man of such loyalty to his country that he spent his last vital spark, not merely in pledging allegiance to his country, but in placing himself in the very vanguard of its defenders.

These offending news accounts also conveniently ignored the anti-Nazi pronouncements of Bishops in Germany. They made no mention of the oath taken by the Bishops there in virtue of the Concordat of Sept. 10, 1933. They did not compare the formulas of the oaths taken in Spain and Germany to learn that they are word for word the same, embodying only the changes needed to indicate the State involved. That might have revealed that Bishops dare not hesitate to resist unjust laws, such laws, namely as are opposed to the law of nature and of God.

It was not merely for the sake of rhetoric that the oath includes the words, "in behalf of a Bishop." These words indicate, on the one hand, the high responsibility of a Bishop to the just laws of his country, but, on the other, they are surely point to his even higher responsibility to the law of nature and of God.

This higher duty was clearly recognized by the Plenipotentiary of Czarist Russia (July 22, 1847) in the course of negotiations looking toward a concordat which died aborning. The Plenipotentiary of the Holy See had protested against a Russian law which forbade the reception of converts into the Catholic Church. He argued that this provision was unjust as nullifying the law of Christ commanding the Church to teach all nations. He maintained that Bish-

ops could not take the oath of allegiance proposed by the Russian Government, since they could not obey the law on conversion. The Russian Plenipotentiary did not squarely meet the objection. He did reply, however, that the members of other religions had been forbidden on this same law. He took the oath, inasmuch as the law's intent was not to impose an obligation that would conflict with the laws of morality or with their conscience.

Formula for Oath

The oath taken by the Spanish Bishops is made according to the following formula:

"I swear and promise as Bishops, fidelity to the Spanish State."

"I swear to promise and respect and make my clergy respect the chief of the Spanish State and the Government established according to Spanish laws."

"I swear and promise moreover not to take part in any agreement nor to take part in any meeting which may prejudice the Spanish State and public order, and I will make my clergy observe similar conduct."

"Occupying myself with the welfare and interest of the Spanish State I will endeavor to avoid all evil which may threaten it."

"It should not be insinuated that beneath this oath there lies a sinister and singular bond of affection for an ideology."

"What then does the oath of the Spanish Bishops prove? It is but a solemn expression, to reassure secular authority, of an obligation to God and conscience that no Bishop can ignore. It proves, therefore, that Bishops are patriots. That is its message, distasteful as the opportunist journalist may try."

Highlights 10-Day Visit of Archbishop Spellman In England

LONDON.—(NC) —Here is a summary of the activities of the Most Rev. Francis J. Spellman, Archbishop of New York and Military Vicar of the U. S. Armed Forces, during his ten-day visit to England:

He stayed with the Apostolic Delegate at the Delegation at Wimbledon, suburb south of the Thames.

Took part in the reception of the late Cardinal Hinsley's body into Westminster Cathedral. The death of the Cardinal was the cause of Archbishop Spellman's unexpected visit to this country.

Gave Absolution at the Requiem Mass for the Cardinal.

Visited Westminster Cathedral to hear a sermon by the Very Rev. Robert J. Cannon, S.J., President of Fordham University, who is preaching a Lenten course there.

Paid a visit, in the company of Bishop Myers, to the bombed churches in the East-end London.

Visited the Headquarters of the U. S. Air Force.

Talked with every U. S. Army chaplain in this country.

Conferred with the Vicar General for the British Army, Monsignor Coghlan, and the Vicar General for the R. A. F., Monsignor Beauchamp.

Lunched with the Most Rev. William Lee, Bishop of Clifton, during a visit to Bristol.

Lunched with Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Lunched with the American Charge d'Affaires, who entertained him in the absence of the Ambassador.

Conferred with high ranking officers of the U. S. Army and Navy.

Met General Alersky, John McCormack, Brendan Bracken (Minister of Information), many other notables.

Visited many clubs for American soldiers.

Everywhere the Archbishop was accompanied by his aide, the Rev. John Foley, appointed by Gen. Frank Maxwell Andrews. Father Foley was a regular army chaplain before the war. He comes from the Diocese of Boise, Idaho.

Force Priest To Watch Church Burning

CINCINNATI.—(NC) —Reports of Japanese troops upon the Rev. Roche Knopke, a Franciscan priest of the Holy Name Parishes (New York), when he was captured by Japanese troops near Ssang, Hapsh, Pochon, China, have reached the national center here of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade. Letters were received by the Very Rev. Jerome Dawson, Provincial of Holy Name Parishes, in that Father Knopke was captured by the Japanese at Hapsh, Ssang.

Father Knopke was carrying on mission work in a small town near Ssang last November, when word was received that the Japanese had occupied Ssang two years before, were headed toward the mission. With a small party of townsfolk, the missionary fled into the country but was taken prisoner in a Japanese trap. He was returned to the town, where he was accused of being an officer of Chinese guerrillas. The reports stated

he was stripped to the waist and beat through the town and was forced to witness the burning of his church, school and mission. Word of the indignities reached a group of Belgian Franciscans, who intervened for him with Japanese authorities. A few days later, he was taken by truck to Harbin and since then nothing was heard of him until the present reports. A former resident of Chicago, Father Knopke was in China ten years ago.

French Cardinal Clarifies Statement Twisted By Nazis

VATICAN CITY (NC)

Certain remarks he made have been twisted and put to propaganda purposes, and by persons who knew full well that he would be unable to get his denial of the distortion published. His Eminence Achille Cardinal Liénart, Bishop of Lille, France, declared by an address to a diocesan youth meeting at Lille on Mar. 21.

Cardinal Liénart spoke in reply to a report by the Nazis Agency, which alleged that His Eminence had exhorted youths courageously to accept forced labor under the Nazis because it is just that all Frenchmen suffer for their fatherland and commonweal.

"In your presence," Cardinal Liénart said to the youths of the Diocese of Lille, "I want to protest with all possible force against the use that has been made of my words by the press knowing full well that I could not have my denial published."

"My opinion on forced labor was twisted by an attempt to summarize it in the following headlines: 'Accept It, To Resist Would Be Despicable.' I did not speak to create a flurry, nor to 'proclaim' forced labor service a patriotic duty against the Bolshevik menace. Nor did I cite the example of Jeanne d'Arc to 'galvanize' national sentiment against the English."

Personal Injury

"I deeply resent to the press the right to interpret my opinions and the intention of the Holy Father; and I took as a personal injury the insinuations directed to my clergy, from whom nothing can separate me."

"We have been witnessing for some time a strong campaign attempting through ancient and modern citations to elicit the solid support of the Church in a war against Bolshevism. I say war, though it is evident that the Church is abstaining with dignity from mixing in this bloody conflict. I don't intend in any way to lend support to such maneuvering. I have said and I repeat tonight that we find in none of the disputed opinions a French and Christian solution of the sad problem under debate. I subscribe neither to the anti-German propaganda telling us: it is wrong for Frenchmen to go to work for the Germans; nor to the anti-Bolshevik propaganda affirming: it is best to go because it is necessary to destroy Russian Bolshevism. Both are propaganda of hate and we are apostles of charity. I don't consider sufficiently French or Christian that patriotism which places its basis of honor on hatred, even against those using violence against us."

"Despite the certain danger which Bolshevism presents and

the threat of civil war, I cannot be hung over what is held secret, our Christian civilization, we have a spirit sufficiently noble not to hate any man, even those subject to Bolshevism, and to appraise fairly that a people, even a dangerous people, is defending the soil of its fatherland."

"We don't believe, on the other hand, that ideas can be destroyed by arms."

"At the same time, despite the yoke of labor imposed on us by the occupying authorities in despoiling our liberties and human personality, the rights of the family, and the just demands of our French patriotism, we have enough greatness of soul not to demand ourselves by hatred and the sowing of the seeds of revolt that some would thus arouse..."

Divorce Rise Causes Concern In Mexico

MEXICO CITY.—Divorces are on the increase in Mexico. Of all the decisions made in the civil courts of the Federal District, El Universal reports, 30 per cent represent legal separations. The alarming and constant increase in divorces since 1936, the Capital daily adds, for a long time has been a matter of concern among jurists, sociologists, priests and others interested in the social welfare of the country.

Judge Ignacio Villalobos, in whose court 700 divorces were granted in 1941, said that this rate of approximately two divorces a day, shows that the divorce law is being abused and that men and women are utilizing to excess the fact that divorce is authorized by law. The effect upon society of this situation, which Judge Villalobos calls "accidental," is aggravated by a decrease in marriages from 15,833 in the Federal District in 1940, to 11,533 last year. These facts, coupled with the further facts of children's marriages, produce problems of an economic as well as social order, El Universal notes.

23 Years As Reich Envoy To Vatican, Reported Retiring

VATICAN CITY.—Insistent reports are heard by usually very well informed quarters that the German Ambassador, Dr. James von Bergin, is retiring after a diplomatic mission of 23 years to the Holy See.

To succeed him in this important post, according to reports, the German Government is naming Herr von Weizsacker, former Secretary of State in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr. von Bergin presented his credentials at the Holy See on Apr. 30, 1920.

India Archdiocese Holds Third Synod

MADRAS, India.—The Most Rev. Ludwig Mathias, Archbishop of Madras, presided at the third Synod of the Archdiocese, here—the first such council held since 1901. The three-day meeting, at which numerous statutes of the Archdiocese were considered, concluded with the reading of a telegram from His Holiness Pope Pius XII, in which the Pontiff imparted his blessing to the Synod.

Those that lost thy soul: thou walkest on the earth, carrying thine own corpse. And thou dost not weep bitterly, or grieve continually.—St. Cyril.

WILL LAUNCH "QUINT FLEET"



When the famous *Rionne* Quintiplets arrive, May 8, at the yards of the Walter Butler Shipbuilders, Inc., at Superior, Wis., to christen the "Quint Victory Fleet," the line of scaffolding (upper photo) will have disappeared and in their place will be five trim cargo ships, like the one below, constructed under the lend-lease program, for duty with the English merchant fleet. Bishop William P. O'Connor, of Superior, is a member of the committee, in charge of the launching ceremonies. Walter Butler, head of the firm which built the ships, is a Catholic. (N.C.W.C.)

Cross-Tattooed Elephant Leads Blessed Sacrament Procession In India

CALCUTTA, India.—A huge elephant, with a Cross tattooed on his broad forehead and his body richly decorated with religious emblems led a procession in honor of the Kingship of Christ through the streets of Ranchi, seat city of the Diocese of Ranchi. Three men, clad in costumes to represent the Most Holy, rode the elephant. Another feature of the procession was a large chariot adorned at one end by a statue of the Sacred Heart and at the other end by a huge Crucifix. As the procession passed through the streets, cries of "Christ for India, India for Christ" were heard from the throngs who watched the spectacle.