

FIRST ICELAND-BORN BISHOP IN 400 YEARS



FIRST NATIVE ICELANDER raised to the Catholic episcopacy in 400 years, the Most Rev. Johannes Gunnarsson, was consecrated, in St. Patrick's Church, Washington, July 7, by Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Participants in historic ceremony shown are: Auxiliary Bishop John M. McNamara, of Baltimore and Washington, co-consecrator; Archbishop Cicognani, Bishop Gunnarsson, Co-adjutor Bishop Peter L. Irwin, of Richmond, co-consecrator.

Iceland's Envoy Terms Elevation Of First Native Bishop 'Historic'

WASHINGTON (NC)—The first native Bishop Iceland has known in almost four centuries was solemnly consecrated in the Capital of the United States last week. He is the Most Rev. Johannes Gunnarsson, who became Titular Bishop of Holar and Vicar Apostolic of Iceland. Bishop Gunnarsson was a far from home for this most solemn occasion, but the personal representative of His Holiness Pope Pius XII officiated at his consecration; the official representative of his homeland attended; and dignitaries asserted it was an historic occasion, which certainly would contribute to even closer ties between the United States and Iceland.

Assisting His Excellency the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, as co-consecrators in St. Patrick's Church, here, were the Most Rev. Peter L. Irwin, Co-adjutor Bishop of Richmond, and the Most Rev. John M. McNamara, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore and of Washington. The Most Rev. John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., Military Delegate, preached the sermon, and the Most Rev. Edmund J. Fitzmaurice, Bishop of Wilmington, was present in the sanctuary.

Representatives of both houses of Congress and other officials of the United States Government heard Bishop O'Hara, in his sermon reviewing the history of the Catholic Church in Iceland, call attention to the fact that a number of American troops are presently stationed in that country, and surround these men to the spiritual care of the newly-consecrated Bishop.

Thor Thore, Minister of Iceland to the United States, who was present, said that to the Government of Iceland and to the people of Iceland, this is a historic and most welcome event. He recalled that the last previous Icelandic Bishop, John Arason, suffered martyrdom in 1550 for his faith and for the independence of his country. "The name of John Arason," he said, "will always live in the hearts of Icelanders as that of one of our best and bravest defenders of our independence."

U. S.-Iceland ties Archbishop Cicognani, speaking at the luncheon, observed that the consecration of Bishop Gunnarsson would be a "joy to the Catholics of Iceland" and to the American soldiers who have been stationed there. It would cement the bonds of friendship between this country and Iceland.

The Minister of Iceland regretted the fact the Bishop Gunnarsson's consecration could not have taken place in Iceland. "The government of Iceland would have been most happy," he said, "to welcome to Iceland representatives of His Holiness the Pope and we would have liked to have present on this occasion a larger and more representative group of Icelanders."

The diplomat called attention to the belief that Iceland was first colonized by Irish monks.

Son of Convert

"There is rejoicing in Iceland today," said Bishop O'Hara, "in the honor that has come to one of her sons. But the greatest joy must be in the heart of the Bishop's aged father, one of Ireland's first converts in modern times. In 1871, the Bishop's father and a companion were on their way to France to resume studies interrupted by the Franco-Prussian

War, when they were delayed in Denmark. Their host in Copenhagen was the Prefect Apostolic.

Under his guidance the two young men entered the Catholic Church. The companion, Jon Swenson, became a Jesuit and a great literary figure. Gunnar Einarsson, the Bishop's father, helped to reestablish the Catholic Church in Iceland.

Quebec Marriages Can Be Dissolved By Death Only

MONTREAL (NC)—Justice Loranger, in a Superior Court action here, explained that in Quebec marriages may be dissolved only by the death of one of the parties, and where

annulments are asked the courts are not called upon to dissolve marriages but only to declare whether the marriage actually existed.

Setting aside an appeal for an annulment, the Justice said Quebec law recognizes that marriage is both a civil and a religious contract. The courts have jurisdiction only on the quality, celebration and civil effect of marriage but such matters as the marriage bond arises from the religious authority.

"Since marriage is a Divine institution, it follows that the Church alone has jurisdiction on the bond which it establishes between the parties," he said. "In our law there is no civil marriage, there is only one marriage and that is at the same time civil and religious. This contract bears a special character. It is regulated by the civil law as regards the qualities required for contracting marriage, as regards the formalities to be observed and the civil effects which it produces.

"The marriage bond, properly called, springs from the religious authority. The courts are concerned only with the civil side of

the contract, leaving to the religious authority the duty of judging the religious and moral aspect. It might be that a marriage is perfectly valid from a civil point of view and invalid from the religious point of view, or vice versa. That is why the courts should refuse to intervene unless in very special cases and on evidence absolutely conclusive."

15 Nuns To Observe Jubilees; Combined Service 525 Years

QUEBEC Fifteen nuns, all members of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd, will, on Aug. 4, mark anniversaries of their profession which will give them a combined service of 525 years. Six will mark their sixtieth anniversary, and nine will observe their twenty-fifth year of religious life.

We begin with studying how to learn, and end with learning how to study.

Archbishop Spellman Hears U. S. Religious Liberty Lauded In Cairo

CAIRO (Delayed) — The Most Rev. Francis J. Spellman, Archbishop of New York and Military Vicar of the United States Armed Forces, heard a newly-consecrated Melchite Archbishop praise the religious freedom and security from which thousands of emigrant members of the Oriental Rites have benefited in their new home across the Atlantic.

The speaker was the Most Rev. Peter Kameh Medawar, Titular Archbishop of Pelusium and Auxiliary to His Beatitude Cyril IX Slaghaghah, Patriarch of Antioch for the Melchite Rite. He spoke at a breakfast following his consecration by the Patriarch in the Cairo Cathedral and addressed a portion of his "toast" to Archbishop Spellman. He also pre-

claimed the loyalty of the Melchites to the Holy See and paid tribute to His Excellency the Very Rev. Arthur W. Hughes, Acting Papal Delegate for Egypt and Palestine, who, Archbishop Medawar said, "fulfills so delicately among us the role of representing His Holiness."

Lauds American Prelate Referring to the official military status of Archbishop Spellman, the Melchite Prelate said, "You already have a right to our respectful and cordial regard because of the high ideal of international justice and liberty which the Army of your noble country represents. Your dignity as Archbishop of New York gives you another and more special right. All benefit greatly from the generous hospitality, religious liberty and tutelary secur-

President Assures Pope Vatican To Be Spared In Invasion

WASHINGTON (NC)—President Roosevelt on July 10, gave assurance to His Holiness Pope Pius XII that, in the invasion of Italy, the United Nations will respect the neutrality of Vatican Territory.

This was revealed when the White House made public the text of a message dispatched by the President to the Holy Father, and which apparently was delivered shortly after Allied forces launched their invasion of Sicily.

Informing the Sovereign Pontiff "our soldiers have come to rid Italy of Fascism and all its unhappy symbols," President Roosevelt stated:

Keep Neutral Status

"Church and religious institutions will, to the extent that it is within our power be spared the devastations of war during the struggle. Throughout the period of operations the neutral status of Vatican City as well as of the Papal domains throughout Italy will be respected."

The President tells the Holy Father "there is no need for me to reaffirm that respect for religious beliefs and for the free exercise of religious worship is fundamental to our ideas." He also says "I look forward as does Your Holiness, to that bright day when the peace of God returns to the world."

Text of the President's message to Pope Pius XII as made public by the White House is as follows:

"By the time this message reaches Your Holiness a landing in force by American and British troops will have taken place on Italian soil. Our soldiers have come to rid Italy of Fascism and all its unhappy symbols, and to drive out the Nazi oppressors who are infesting her soil.

"There is no need for me to reaffirm that respect for religious beliefs and for the free exercise of religious worship is fundamental to our ideas. Churches and religious institutions will, to the extent that it is within our power, be spared the devastations of war during the struggle ahead. Throughout the period of operations the neutral status of Vatican City as well as of the Papal domains throughout Italy will be respected.

"I look forward, as does Your Holiness, to that bright day when the peace of God returns to the world. We are convinced that this will occur only when the forces of evil which now hold vast areas of Europe and Asia enslaved have been utterly destroyed. On that day we will joyfully turn our energies from the grim duties of war to the fruitful tasks of reconstruction. In common with all other nations and forces imbued with the spirit of good will toward men, and with the help of Almighty God, we will turn our hearts and our minds to the exacting task of building a just and enduring peace on earth."

Leave For Haiti

Quebec — His Eminence Rodrigue Cardinal Villeneuve, O.M.I., Archbishop of Quebec, presided over a departure ceremony at Saint Sauveur Church here, held in honor of three Oblate Fathers who are going to the Haiti mission. They are Rev. Fathers Laurent Fortin, Rene Moreau and Bruno Letarte.

British Radio Asks Italians To Declare Rome An Open City

LONDON (NC)—An invitation to "the Italians to declare Rome an open city, and to discontinue military operations, close its war factories and remove its military centers," was issued in a statement made here by an I.A.F. commentator.

The commentator said, however, that the Allies are not necessarily nearer to bombing Rome today than they were two years ago.

Protection of Shrines Talking to press representatives the I. A. F. spokesman was discussing the question of the destruction of ancient monuments during aerial bombardments, and he said:

"The remedy for those in Italy or Germany, who wish to protect their shrines, is simple and straight-forward. They have only to insure that the area shall take no further part on their side in the war effort."

The Vatican City State, he said, is an independent sovereignty and no one has the least desire that any bomb should fall in its vicinity.

But in Rome, said the commentator, there are industrial, military and transport areas which are military objectives of interest to Britain in fighting the war.

"If war factories are built round cultural monuments," he said, "the latter are bound to be endangered. Would you tell the merchant navy that they must drown in greater numbers because we do not wish to harm monuments that happen to be next to a factory building parts for submarines?"

Pope Stresses Rome As Center of Church

VATICAN CITY (NC) — The sacred character of Rome as the vital center of the Universal Church was insisted upon by His Holiness Pope Pius XII in a discourse, Saturday, when he received in audience the Italian National Committee for the Episcopal Jubilee of Pope Pius XII.

The Committee came to present His Holiness with a large richly-bound volume containing the homage of outstanding representatives of Italian culture, paid on the occasion of the Pontiff's jubilee.

Addressing the Committee, the Holy Father emphasized the faith of Italy in the Church, and drew particular attention to Rome's character as the center of Christendom.

Gets Honor Rank

Chicago — Following the annual inspection by U. S. military authorities, Marmon Military Academy, here, conducted by the Benedictine Fathers, has been designated an honor school of the Sixth Service Command. It has been announced by Maj. Gen. H. S. Armand.

Find Catacombs In Old Syracuse As Air-Raid Shelters Are Made Ready

VATICAN CITY — Recent excavations in Syracuse (Syracuse) in connection with the preparation of air raid shelters have uncovered hitherto unknown catacombs. One of the discoveries is said to be near the known catacombs of Santa Lucia, but further details are not available.

Syracusa, or Syracuse, the capital of a province by the same name stands on the east coast of the island of Sicily. It is now under heavy attack from the United Nations landing forces.