

Navy 'Sinks' Quonset Huts Priests Want To Buy for Churches

BY THE REV. PATRICK O'CONNOR, S.S.C.
(Special Correspondent, N.C.W.C. News Service)

Guam—(Delayed)—"I can't figure it out," muttered the Marine, looking past the palm trees of Guam to the ocean breakers.

He was thinking of the brand-new sections of a complete quonset hut that had been dumped into the sea as useless surplus property. And he knew that four overworked priests trying to serve 17,000 native Catholics had been begging for a chance to buy surplus quonset huts for chapels.

Out of 23 Catholic churches on Guam in peacetime, 20 had been destroyed during recapture of the island by U. S. Forces in 1944.

"I can't figure it out," repeated the Marine, as he recalled seeing island government workmen building a new church for five non-Catholic families in a place where 700 Catholic Guamanians had only a half-finished church that they themselves had to erect as best they could.

Guam is under the Navy Department, which conducts island affairs through a military government. All construction is under government control. Appealing for churches to replace those destroyed, the Capuchin Fathers have encountered heart-breaking delays. The government says that it is reluctant to go into construction of this kind, but the Marine has just seen it erecting two fine buildings for soft-drink concerns.

Jeeps Are Hoarding
Transportation, too, is virtually a government monopoly on Guam. The four priests pay 12 cents a mile each to ride in a jeep to the various villages for Sunday Masses. Waiting time costs 90 cents an hour. Thus one priest's Sunday morning journeys to celebrate three Masses for his people may mean a bill of five or six dollars. Just now Bishop Baumgartner is liable for a heavy bill chargeable for his priests' jeep rides to offer their Christmas and New Year Masses. He has tried in vain to buy surplus jeeps and trucks. Meanwhile, unused vehicles are rusting and some have been destroyed as unwanted surplus.

The Guamanians, of whom 97 per cent are Catholics, remained loyal to the United States throughout the Japanese occupation of their island. They are suffering now through lack of churches and through the difficulties hindering their too-few priests. Official permission has just been given for nine American Capuchins, veterans of the Guam missions, who were interned in Kobe during the war, to return to their flock. They have been ready since last November. They will return to find 90 per cent of their churches destroyed and no immediate prospect of replacing them.

"I can't figure it out," muttered the Marine, shaking his head.

NCWC Sends Belgium 4th Food Shipment

New York—(NC) — A consignment of 181,000 pounds of canned goods, destined for Belgium, left New York harbor aboard the SS Empire Pakete, the fourth shipment from supplies collected in the Food for the War Stricken campaign conducted by War Relief Services National Catholic Welfare Conference. It has been announced here.

War Relief Services also announced that contributions still are being received at the New York warehouse and that there has been no noticeable diminishing in amounts. An average of 350,000 pounds is being processed and facilitated daily, the announcement stated.

Catholic Press Circulation Hits 10,654,918

Washington—(NC) — The Catholic Press in the United States has augmented its circulation 14.6 per cent in the last three years, with an increase of 1,539,633 subscribers, now reaching a total circulation of 10,654,918, according to a statistical survey undertaken by the N.C.W.C. News Service.

The number of publications has increased by 25 in this same period, and now stands at 367, according to the 1945 Catholic Press Directory.

Of the 367 publications listed in the directory, 317 have given a total circulation of 8,841,916 and the remaining 50 have a combined circulation of 2,813,000 according to conservative estimates based on the survey of the field.

Together with circulation figures, the 1945 directory of 143 pages catalogs Catholic publications by States and also in alphabetical order.

Catholics Use Their Candles

By Rev. Richard Glaser

If you have ever been at a Catholic Benediction service, you must have noticed the altar blazing with candles. If you have ever come to Mass, you have seen the altar aglow with candlelight. In fact, if you have ever been in a Catholic church at any time, you must have noticed the steady glow of at least one candle burning some place before the altar.

It isn't that we need the light, although at first that was the very practical reason behind our use of candles. Divine services were often conducted at night, sometimes underground, in passages and caves dug out of the earth, catacombs; for, at times, these were the only places in which Catholics, with their Pope and his bishops, could hide from the menacing blades of their persecutors.

But there is a reason deeper than that. Our Church sees every possible means for raising our minds to heaven — statues, water, medals, candles. We love to look at a candle and see in its soft white wax the pure flesh of our Infant Savior; the wick, penetrating the wax, represents the soul of Christ, lighting His body with the flame of divinity.

Our Church blesses her candles each year on February 2, the day on which Mary and Joseph presented the Infant Jesus in the temple, when the Prophet Simeon joyfully held the Baby God in his arms: "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2, 32).

"Almighty, everlasting God," the Church prays, "Who didst command the pure oil to be prepared by Thy servant Moses to keep lamps continually before Thee; graciously pour forth the grace of Thy blessing upon these candles that they may so afford external light, that by Thy gift the light of Thy love may not fall within our hearts, through Christ, Our Lord, Amen."

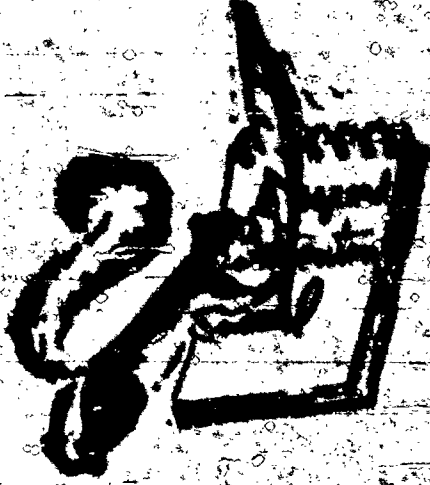
We burn these candles not only in church, but at home as well — during storms, in peril of body and soul, and especially at the bedside of the sick and dying — for we know that God has heard the prayer of His Church and that here we have a blessed symbol of Jesus Christ, that True Light which enlightens every man that cometh into this world.

Cardinal Boetto Dies

Rome—(NS) — Genoa dispatches reported today that Pietro Cardinal Boetto, Archbishop of Genoa, died during the night. He was 74.

Minor Spanish Theologian
Madrid—(RNS) — Church and state dignitaries joined here in religious celebrations honoring St. Raymond of Peñafort.

outstanding 13th century theologian and patron of the Spanish cultural Order that bears his name.



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