

Religion in World Spotlights Pope's Efforts

...problems before the statesmen of the world.

It is a matter of record that Pope Pius XII has been the most active of all the world's religious leaders in the effort to bring about a just and lasting peace. He has done this by his words, by his actions, and by his personal efforts. He has been the voice of the world's conscience, and he has been the voice of the world's hope.

Moreover, the Common Father has many times in the last seven years invited those outside the Catholic fold to join in praying and working for a just and lasting peace. In June, 1945, for instance, in an address to the Sacred College of Cardinals Pius issued an appeal "so all to save the peace"; made "an ardent appeal for prayer to our sons and daughters of the world"; and asked: "May I reach all those who recognize in God the Beloved Father of all men created to His image and likeness, to all who know that for the love of Christ there exists a Divine Heart that in every, deep and luminous fountain of all good and all love, of all peace and all reconciliation."

based on justice and charity. His Holiness has even warned that the present peace, if it can be called that, is "very fragile"; that it will require the "most continuous care" to keep it alive; that it imposes on all the Christian States that are "grave and very delicate."

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Pope Leader

POPE PIOUS XII

Independence of all nations; liberation of nations from the slavery of communism and the danger that material greed will violate their rights; creation of international institutions to guarantee the achievement of peace; and to invite them if necessary; statement that the just demands and needs of nations, peoples and individual nations will be met, and participation of all nations in the work of peace and justice.

In the Christmas Message of a year later, His Holiness gave five things to achieve; namely: triumph over hate and systems which breed it; over national mistrust, over national greed, over cold egotism, substituting for it international governmental and economic cooperation.

His Christmas Message of 1945 called upon nations to abolish national frontiers, national freedom, security and prosperity, cooperation of nations, the opening of the world's resources for the benefit of all; the end of the war and the race for armaments, and the persecution of religion and the Church.

The Furthest Message of 1945 declared the following also fundamental to the new order: The end of national things and private ownership for the welfare of the individual and of all mankind; self-governance of the industries so that the family to live well and its right to migrate and be protected in migration; The Christmas Message of 1945 outlined five national reforms within the individual nations that ought to be effected to support the new order in the world at large.

Pope Pius emphasized the necessary "new international" cooperation for the people of the world. In his 1944 Christmas Message, pointing out that "efficient government" must be voted in the people to prevent war. A year earlier, in his Christmas Message of 1943, the Sovereign Pontiff had called upon the leaders of peoples to "give mankind thinking for it, a peace that shall reanimate the human race in its own esteem and in that of history." Last year, in his Christmas Message, he said "the present hour calls for seriously for collaboration, good will, reciprocal confidence in all people," and that "the motives of hate, vengeance, rivalry, antagonism, selfish and dishonest competition must be kept out of political and economic debates" (N. C. W. C. News Service)

Russian Police Rule Keeps Poles Fearful

(This is the last of three articles written by Rosme Curtis, special correspondent of the CATHOLIC HERALD, British Catholic weekly, after her return from Poland, which she has visited under a previous position by Polish authorities that she should be free to live freely and to interview Poles. The articles are made available by N.C.W.C. News Service through special arrangement with the CATHOLIC HERALD.)

By ROSME CURTIS

Perhaps the best way to convey the essence of the situation in Poland today would be to say that it is characterized by a great faith and a great fear. "The religious faith of the people is of a depth and strength which has to be witnessed to be believed; the fear is political and is a new feeling for Poles. They hardly know the meaning of the word during the war."

The deepening of the Catholic faith in Poland has, I think, been brought about by the intense suffering of the war years. Before that, I am told, religion was far more a matter of sentiment. Now it is characterized by a desire for religious knowledge and a keenness to study the liturgy.

The extent to which Poles suffered under the German occupation must be always borne in mind if the Poland of today is to be understood. Remember, six million Poles lost their lives during those six years, about half of them Jews. For example, a Polish woman today about her family. Too often a husband was killed at Katyn, a son or a daughter in the Warsaw Rising, or a father in a concentration camp. I met so many of these cases. The result is a deep, unaccustomed mourning throughout the nation.

From such sufferings arose a religious faith for which, frankly, I was unprepared. In which I found far more profound than anything I had witnessed in other Catholic countries in the past. Only completely destroyed churches are not in use. At any hour of the day you will find a large number of people in any church.

Like Fish Head

Frequently, I asked the question: "Is the situation better or worse than under the Germans?" Invariably their reply was: "We are like a lot of fish in a pond. The Germans fished us out in large quantities, but we were prepared for it. Now the water is being steadily drained from the pond. We are being brought down to sea level; soon we shall begin to struggle."

When I did get a reply to my question, it was nearly always: "There is a strong force of security police, known as the U.K. The higher ranks are occupied by Russians. This force can arrest anyone without charge, hold them without trial, subsidiary to the law. The police force is very large. They supplement the U.K. in heavy work and number about 300,000."

Stories of arrests by the U.S. are not exaggerated. People disappear, usually at night. I was told of many such cases.

By such means an underground movement of terror is maintained. While no Pole ever feared a German, they nearly all fear the Russians and their methods. When a Pole was arrested by the Germans, it was only a matter of days before he managed to inform someone of his whereabouts, and food was very often smuggled through to him.

Now, the location of prisoners is never known. The arrested people vanish from sight and contact. They are seldom held in regular prisons; usually they are placed in cellars and moved to smaller quarters in other towns. This much can be elicited from the few who have been released. Some it is said, are deported into the interior of Russia. All requests by the Church that priests be allowed to visit prisoners are met with refusal.

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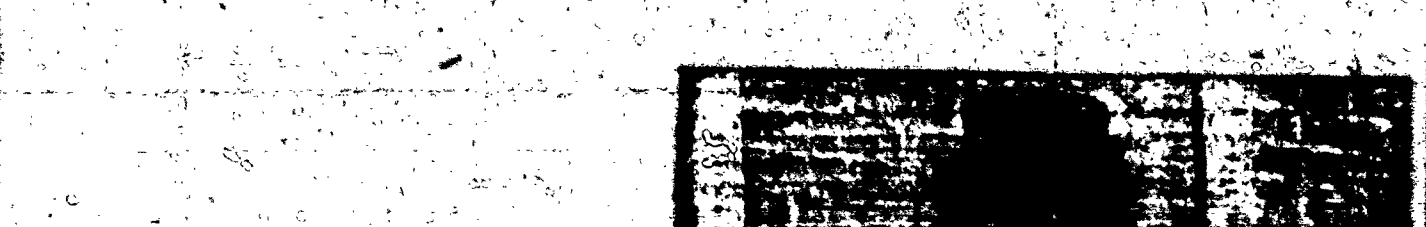
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