Ordination Gift Given By Kin Missing 27 Years

Crookston — (NC) — The Rev. Timothy Noah of Ada, Minn., has received a delayed ordination gift from his second cousin in Jerusalem, who had been missing for 27 years and long had been thought dead.

His cousin, Solomon Jacob, who had been out of contact with his family from 1914 to 1941, sent Father Noah rosaries made of olive stones from the trees of Mount Olivet and an inlaid crucifix with the stations of the cross painted on the back.

Just as World War I was getting underway, Father Noah's cousin, then living in the village of Bohairat-Touls in what is now the Republic of Lebanon, decided to seek work in Jerusalem because locusts had eaten the crops of the usually fertile soil of Mount Lebanon and brought famine to the land of the famous cedars.

TO ESCAPE detection as a Christian, the cousin changed his name from John to Solomon, or, as it is written in Syriac, "Salim," which means "saved." At that time both Lebanon and Syria were under Turkish control, and as anyone who has read Franz Werfel's "Forty Days of Musa Dagh" will recall the Armenians and Syrians were persecuted.

"Solomon" spent four years in his effort to reach the Holy Land dodging potential enemies, hiding and basket picking. If caught by the Turks he faced death, exile, or the possibility of being forced to fight against the Allies in the Turkish Army. Fighting against the Allies would have been distasteful because he had a brother, Charles Joseph, and a sister, Latifa Joseph, living here at Crookston.

When he did finally arrive safely at Jerusalem, he remembered his adopted name "Solomon" which means "saved" so, as he intimated in a recent letter to his relatives in Crookston, he kept the name as a reminder of his escape.

FOR SOME reason he could not establish contact with his relatives in the United States nor with his sister who remained in Bohairat-Touls so he was presumed dead.

His relatives in Crookston had Masses said for the repose of his soul and even sent money to Bohairat-Touls for a funeral service.

Twenty-three years later he attended a retreat in Jerusalem which was conducted by a priest who also came from Mount Lebanon.

Towards the close of the retreat Father George, the priest, asked if there were any present who came from Lebanon, and "Solomon" raised his hand.

"See me in the sacristy after services," the priest requested, and thus began the solution of the mystery of John Jacob, now "Solomon" Jacob.

Thus through the agency of Father George, a "missing person" finally made contact with his brother and sisters in 1941—and Father Noah received a very special gift in 1947 from "Solomon" Jacob.

Million Catholics In Arab-Ruled Areas

Cincinnati — (NC) — A timely map with accompanying statistics showing the numerical position of the Church in the Middle Eastern countries, Arab stronghold and a center of world interest in view of the recent United Nations decision to partition Palestine, has been released here at the Catholic Student Mission Crusade headquarters.

The statistics disclose that in ten countries, six of which are under control of the Arab League, there is a total population of 69,364,881 including a total of 1,112,500 Catholics.

St. Casimir's Club Elects

Walter Wightowski was reelected president of the St. Casimir Recreation Club at the annual meeting Sunday evening in the school hall, Elmira.

Other officers named were: Vicepresident, Edward Lepkowski; treasurer, Casmir Przymusiki; financial secretary, Joseph Barnowski; recording secretary, Joseph Krolak.

Bombed Czech Abbey Has 6th Centennial

Prague — (NC) — The ancient Emmaus Benedictine monastery here, which now stands in ruins from allied bombardment during the war, has marked the sixth centennial of its foundation. It was founded by King Charles IV in November, 1347.

At present, with the church and the greater part of the monastery in ruins, the Benedictine monks live in a small section of the structure not hit by bombs. Many Czech Catholics have joined the Society for the Reconstruction of the Emmaus Abbey.

Mission Anniversary

Nyakanjera, Uganda — (Special) — In the presence of more than 2,000 native Catholics, Sila Uganda Mission station celebrated its golden jubilee recently with the offering of Mass here. The mission was founded fifty years ago on a hill given by the local chief Nogumbo.

Overseas Destitute Their Concern

Busy packing goods that will clothe and feed unfortunate persons in France and Italy are these members of the Elmira Committee. From left are: Mrs. Giacomo Oandilo, Mrs. Amando F. Cesari, Mrs. Arthur Shodico and Mrs. James M. Frank.

Secularism in Schools Seen High Court Issue

(The author is a former associate editor of the weekly magazine America, and a student of matters pertaining to Church-State relations.)

By REV. JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J.
(Written for N.C.W.C. News Service)

The McCollum case, recently argued before the U. S. Supreme Court, merits wide public attention and concern; for it raises the vital issue of the relationship of religion to education and of government to religious education.

The essential facts of the case are simple. In 1940 the citizens of Champaign, Ill., alarmed by the rising tide of juvenile delinquency, determined to combat it by providing wider opportunities for religious education.

To this end, they formed the Champaign Council of Religious Education, made up of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish citizens. The local board of education agreed to cooperate by permitting use of public school rooms for classes in religion.

The teachers were selected and paid by the council. And the plan was effectively under the control of parents, not the school authorities; on invitation of the council, parents addressed cards to the schools, asking that their children be placed in the religion class of the parents' choice. Both the council and the schools practically fell over backwards to avoid any discrimination; parents of any faith or no faith might secure facilities for instruction in any manner of belief or unbelief.

FOR SEVEN YEARS, everybody has been happy about the plan. Everybody except a certain Mrs. Vashti McCollum. Daughter of a violently anti-religious "rationalist," Arthur G. Cromwell of Rochester, N. Y., she is devoted to her private family tradition of freedom from religion; citizen of the United States, she is devoted to the national tradition of separation of Church and State. She considered both these treasured traditions to be violated by the Champaign plan.

The Supreme Court of Illinois disagreed with her. What the U. S. Supreme Court will decide remains to be seen.

What is the Catholic interest in the case? Directly interested of course, are some 30 Catholic children in Champaign County who are receiving instruction under the plan. Again, the Champaign plan is a form of "released-time" program; such programs, in various forms, are going on in over 7,000 school districts in some 46 states, and Catholics are participating in them.

If the Champaign plan is declared unconstitutional, the whole idea of "released time" will be brought into question. Here again is a direct Catholic interest. (A relatively small one in comparison with the Protestant interest; by far the chief beneficiaries of "released-time" programs are Protestant children.)

HOWEVER, THERE are broader grounds for Catholic interest in this case. First, there is Catholic concern over the problem of the public school in its relation to religion. This concern is real. Against its original intention, against the wishes of many of its present administrators, the public school has increasingly become an agent for the spread of secularism in American society; to leave God out of school is an invitation to leave Him out of life.

And a secularized society is a threat to Catholicism. Consequently, the problem of how the public school may somehow ally itself with religion rather than with secularism and somehow cooperate with parents toward the religious education of their children is one that concerns Catholics as well as citizens of other beliefs.

It is a thorny problem. The Champaign plan is an attempt at a solution. No one is sure of the best, universal solution. But serious people agree that a solution must be found. And it will not be found unless the American way of finding it is protected—the method of local control of education, by school boards in contact with parents, with freedom to experiment, in the spirit of the twofold American concern for freedom of religion and for religion itself.

THIS BASIC freedom of the American people to manage its own schools, and not have them managed by the Federal government, even in its judicial branch, is at stake in the McCollum case. The case does indeed involve certain democratic rights of individuals; more fundamentally it involves an element of the democratic process itself, whereby the rights of individuals may be balanced in harmony and the welfare of the community furthered. The operation of the process must indeed be subjected to exacting judicial scrutiny, lest individual rights be violated, but the protection of the process itself is a no-less necessary judicial function, lest a freedom of the American people perish. With its survival Catholics are as vitally concerned as anyone else.

Secondly, the difficult issue of separation of Church and State is raised in the case. A Protestant journal has recently said: "The Roman Church, naturally will view such a procedure (as the Champaign plan) with favor as in line with its purpose to blur the principle of separation of Church and State preliminary to its complete nullification as applied to education."

Actually, this "principle" has already been blurred to a point approaching nullification by the absurd breadth of meaning given to it in the field of education, but the blurring has not been done by Catholics. Our concern has rather been to sharpen the principle to the meaning it has as embodied in the First Amendment and American educational history, not as held in Protestant theology or secularist polemic. This concern dictates our major interest in the McCollum case. I shall return to it in another article.

New Year's Ball Mapped by K. C.

Corning—Plans for a stag supper, scheduled for Thursday of this week, and the New Year's ball were discussed at a recent meeting of Corning Council Knights of Columbus.

Michael Bonady and A. J. Patoni are cochairmen for the first event and are being assisted by Matt Richardson, Warren Bonnell, Robert Hallahan and Michael Gonta.

Reservations for the New Year's ball must be in by December 29, Francis Giblin, council program chairman, announced. Assisting Mr. Giblin with the program are J. Colton Marx, Joseph Sweet, A. J. Patoni, Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Shea, Elmo Cotter and John Smith.

Ciconni Heads CWV Of St. Anthony Post

Installation of Commander Lito Ciconni and his staff of St. Anthonys Post, Catholic War Veterans, will take place at the post's January meeting at their Elmira headquarters.

Elected with Commander Ciconni at a meeting Dec 8, were John Rich, vice commander, John Stefano, adjutant, and Joseph Troccia, treasurer.

Retiring officers are Frank Leach, commander; Philip Abruzzo, vice-commander, Leonardo Corsi, adjutant, and John Casciò, treasurer.

Mother General

Rome (Special) — Sister Valeria Bielak, who lived in St. Paul, Minn., during the war as secretary general of the Sodality of St. Peter Claver, has been elected Mother General of the community. She is the third general of the society.

Corning CDA Plan Gifts For Needy at Yule Party

Corning — Gifts for about 150 needy of the city were contributed by members of Court St. Joseph, Catholic Daughters of America, who attended the annual Christmas party of the Court Monday night in the CDA rooms.

The gifts were turned over to the Social Service Society for distribution.

Feature of the party was the presentation of the Christmas pageant "The Nativity." Group singing of Christmas carols was enjoyed with Mrs. E. Reynold Everett as accompanist. St. Mary's Church Boys' Choir, directed by Sister Mary Mercy, also sang.

Presiding at the tea table were Mrs. Edith Griffin, grand regent, and Mrs. Louis Hart, chairman of the house committee.

Mrs. Kelsey Carleton served as narrator for the pageant and Peter Golber, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Golber, gave a recitation. Three parochial school students, Margaret Donegan, Joan Demyan and Camille Buffomante, were the angels.

Others in the pageant, presented in three scenes, were Miss Marianne Keenan, Virgin Mary; Miss Ruth Warner, St. Joseph; Miss Mary O'Neil, angel; Miss Eleanor Dowd, Miss Elizabeth Alotto and Miss Ann Panyard, shepherds; Miss Evelyn Yost, Miss Eileen Hultzman and Miss Margaret Cragan, wise men.

The program was opened with a vocal solo, "Ave Maria," by Miss Mary Alice Dailey, Painted Post soprano. Miss Mary Arthur was chairman of the tea.

Members of St. Mary's Boys' Choir included Earl Whitney, Sam Costello, Reno Dortenzio, Gene Wenderlich, James Hogan, Waldo Castellana.

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