

ON GUARD

Apostle of Erin
Slane and Tara
Why Shamrocks?
By REV. P. J. FLYNN

We're brushing up our shamrocks for the Seventeenth of March. It's a day for wearing green and telling stories of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland.



THE FIRES OF SLANE. Here is one of the best stories in the amazing career of the famous Apostle who converted Ireland from paganism to Christianity. You have heard Irish poets sing of Slane and Tara. There is good reason for this. It was from the hills of Tara and Slane in County Meath that Bishop Patrick first launched his apostolate and called upon the Emerald Isle to embrace the Cross of Christ.

The year of 433 was an eventful year in the history of Ireland and the Christian world. It was March and time for Ireland's pagan ceremonial of the new fire of Spring. Laoghaire, High-King of Ireland, was at the royal Hill of Tara. With him were his court and the Druids, all prepared and awaiting the heathen rite. A decree went forth that throughout the kingdom all fires must be extinguished on the eve of the festival and remain out until the Druidical flames were first kindled on Tara's crest.

Across the Boyne River from Tara was the Hill of Slane. Here were encamped Patrick and his small band of Christians. This year, strangely enough, the heathen festival of fire coincided with Easter Sunday—the Feast of Christ's Resurrection.

For Laoghaire and his court on Tara it was the eve of the pagan rites of Spring. For Patrick and his converts on Slane it was Holy Saturday, the eve of Easter.

This coincidence of the Christian and pagan feasts challenged the bold Apostle who dreamed of conquering the Druid-ridden island for Christ. He would rout the pagan fire with the Paschal Fire.

The sacred fire, blessed by Patrick on the Hill of Slane, was the first beacon to pierce the March night cloaking the royal land of Meath. The light that rushed heavenward from Slane was the Light of Christ signaling the dawn of a new day for Ireland. For the first time a hushed and darkened Meath saw its fields illuminated not with the first flame of heathen Spring but with the fires of Faith.

The angry eyes of Laoghaire looked across from darkened Tara at the golden fire blazing on Slane. The white-robed Druids were enraged. Pointing to Patrick's mighty beacon lashing the northern sky, they warned the High-King: "Unless that fire is extinguished tonight, it will burn in Ireland forever!"

THE HIGH-KING summoned Bishop Patrick to appear at court. On Easter morning, therefore, the Apostle, arrayed in mitre and crozier, accompanied by a few followers, and preceded by a cross-bearer, set forth for Tara's Hill.

Boldly the little group marched into the royal banquet hall, chanting their prayers—the prayers that Patrick had taught them:

"Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
Christ in the fort,
Christ in the chariot-seat,
Christ in the poop;
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me."

BEFORE LAOGHAIRE and the assembled members of his court, who sat with the rims of their shields against their chests, Patrick explained his mission. He outlined simply the great truths of the Christian Faith and his listeners understood easily because he spoke in their own native tongue.

But the mystery of the Holy Trinity puzzled them and they asked for more explanation. Then it was, according to tradition, that he said:

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Corporations

Louis Budenz writes of their future in his article on page 5.

New Potent Charges Answered

Washington — (NC) — A group of Protestant leaders headed by Dr. Edwin McNeill Poteat, president of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School, have repeated their charges here that the Catholic Church seeks a Church-State union in the United States. This time their accusation is directed mainly against public aid for parochial schools.

The recent statement of Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati opposing Church-State union is contradicted, they stated, by employment of nuns as public school teachers in two states and the incorporation of a parochial school into the public school system in Ohio.

The charge, made by Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, drew prompt comment here from Msgr. Frederick G. Hochwalt, director of the Education Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, who said the Protestants told "only one side of the story" about a practice which is the exception rather than the rule in American Catholic education.

"ONE WOULD gather from the open letter's melodramatic report of the North College Hill incident and its statistics about the number of nuns teaching in New Mexico and North Dakota that the Catholic Church is depleting its teaching staff in the public schools," Monsignor Hochwalt said.

"Quite the contrary is true," the Monsignor continued. "In North College Hill and in other places where nuns are employed by local school boards, the arrangement has been initiated by the legally constituted school authorities of the community or the state and not by the Church. For example, in North College Hill, nuns were in and out of the public school as community sentiment varied from year to year. Church authorities merely tolerated the situation."

Monsignor Hochwalt pointed out that "in New Mexico, the state authorities want the nuns to teach in the public schools." He quoted the following testimony of a former New Mexico superintendent of public instruction before a House subcommittee on education: "In sparsely settled areas... it is very hard to get competent lay teachers... So we have to employ the sisters... They do not work from 9 to 5, their service is around the clock, through the day and night."

"WOULD YOU have these communities close their schools rather than use the services of nuns?" asked Monsignor Hochwalt.

He also stated, by way of correcting "certain inaccuracies in the POA's open letter," that "no federal bill proposing 'parity with public schools in the distribution of federal funds' has been introduced in Congress, no representative of the N.C.W.C. has asked that public funds be used to pay the salaries of parochial school teachers; the N.C.W.C. has neither inspired nor supported the Taft federal aid (to education) bill... and no spokesman of the N.C.W.C. has proposed that parochial schools be incorporated into the public school system."

Such incorporation is legally impossible. "It is to be hoped," Monsignor Hochwalt said in conclusion, "that these comments will indicate clearly how important it is that this question be examined objectively, dispassionately and with unfailing regard for facts." Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State was formed in January and began operations with a Manifesto demanding the recall of the Taylor mission at the Vatican and attacking Catholics for seeking to violate the First Amendment of the Constitution in the sphere of education. Besides Dr. Poteat, its leaders include Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, New York Area Bishop of the Methodist Church; Charles Clayton Morrison, former editor of The Christian Century; Louis D. Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; and Dr. J. M. Dawson, executive secretary of the Baptist Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations.

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SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Winners of scholarships to Nazareth College are these three Rochester students. Left to right are Miss Madeline Walsh Klee, of Our Lady of Mercy High School who was awarded a \$400 scholarship; Miss Anne Margaret Eldman of Nazareth Academy, who won a \$400 scholarship, and Miss Shirley M. Keenan, also of Nazareth, who received an \$800 scholarship. (Story on Page 6)

Document on Voting Given Italians in '45

Vatican City — (NC) — Unwarranted deductions drawn from the re-publication of a three-year-old document relating to the duties of Italian Catholics voters have caused considerable confusion in the United States. Sports received here indicate:

Spanish Gold Sent to Moscow
Zurich — (NC) — More than 500 million dollars worth of gold bullion, representing the entire gold reserve of the national bank of Spain, was taken to Moscow by red leaders on October 25, 1936, according to documented information now revealed for the first time in a book by Manuel Ibanez Quiles, just published by Thomasverlag in Zurich, under the title "Spain and the UNO."

The author says that Soviet agents were in charge of the shipment, which went out in 1,500 cases by way of the port of Odessa. Juan Negrin, Minister of Finance at the time, denied that the gold had ever left Spain. In the meantime, the shipment had reached Moscow and was used to organize the so-called Spanish government-in-exile and to finance subversive activities.

Christians Face Holy Land Peril
Bern, Switzerland — (NC) — Describing Palestine as "a land of confusion and bloody disorder," a priest of the Oriental Rite, who is stationed in Jerusalem, says in a letter received here that Christians in the Holy Land live "in constant danger of death." "In many families are seeking refuge in monasteries and convents and that many Christian schools have to be closed because of the danger to children from the rifle fire of the contending parties."

The priest's letter says in part: "There is no peace in the Holy Land. Some say rightly that war-time was a hundred times better than now. I can say that the persecution for the first Christians was ten times easier than the lot of the Christians in Palestine today. In fact, here we are in constant danger of death and not necessarily for the sake of Christ but because of the awful confusion which reigns day and night. "Hundreds of innocent people have been killed and wounded here in Jerusalem by several terrible explosions, caused by bombs. "Twice within the week I have administered General Absolution to all the Catholics in my vicinity, as we were in such danger of being killed by the terrible explosions that rocked our houses. This goes on day and night and we cannot even leave our homes to buy provisions. The number of killed and wounded far surpasses the numbers given in the reports. "The Partition plan has split Palestine into a thousand pieces, and terror and bloodshed are the order of the day. Schools are closed, as there is no security for children to leave their homes. Europeans and Americans are hurrying away from this land of confusion and bloody disorder."

Dispensation For March 17
The Most Reverend Bishop grants to all the faithful of the diocese, a dispensation from the laws of fast and abstinence on St. Patrick's Day, Wednesday, March 17.

Capital Made Archdiocese
New York — (NC) — Canberra, the national capital of Australia, has been raised to the dignity of an archdiocese under the title of Canberra-Goulburn according to the Australian Catholic News-letter published here.

A Challenging Decision

Decision of the United States Supreme Court, prohibiting the use of public school buildings for religious study groups severely restricts the opportunities of thousands of American boys and girls to learn even the fundamental facts about the God Who made them.

Contrary to what some newspaper editors have concluded and what other individuals and groups may desire, the decision does not forbid the release of children from their classes to take religious instruction at a location other than the public school which they attend.

Justice Felix Frankfurter was quite specific on this point, declaring that this decision does not rule generally on all programs involving released time for religious instruction. It is heartening to note that Charles A. Brind, counsel for the New York State Education Department, has ruled that the existing released time practice will be continued unless the law permitting it is declared unconstitutional.

For a long time, American society has been drifting towards secularism. The Supreme Court decision marks a legal culmination of this dangerous trend.

The Court's 8-to-1 ruling upholds a self-professed atheist mother who charged that religious instruction in a public school is a violation of the American principle of the separation of church and state. Secularism, therefore, is now a constitutional necessity in our public schools.

This unfortunate development should not be too much of a surprise. The Catholic bishops have repeatedly warned us that divorce from God is one of the most serious dangers of our present day society. Many Protestant leaders have been dismayed also by the shocking inroads which secularism has made in the practical affairs of life in these United States.

While all supporters of religious instruction accept with regret the Court's decision it is a particularly severe blow to U. S. Protestantism. As a matter of fact, Dr. Roy G. Ross, general secretary of the International Council of Religious Education, official agency of forty Protestant denominations, describes the decision as "a great blow to weekday religious education and an indication of a changing government attitude toward religion."



BISHOP McQUAID

In dissenting from the majority opinion, Justice Reed has pointed to a studied inconsistency in our government's attitude which, on one hand provides for chaplains in Congress and the armed forces and compulsory chapel attendance at Annapolis and West Point and, on the other hand, condemns "the mere use of the school buildings by a non-sectarian group for religious education."

Here is an attitude which places a premium on atheism. You can use public school classrooms to preach Jupiter and Mount Olympus but you are barred from mentioning Christ and Mount Calvary. You can explain the pagan rites of jungle savages but cannot discuss the ceremonies of Christianity or Judaism. Stalin's name is thundered among the greats of history but God's Name is hidden behind an artificial Church-State barrier raised by the foes of religious education.

Confronted with this menace of secularism, Catholics stand ready to cooperate with moderate Protestants in an effort to salvage as much as possible of the released-time program of religious instruction for public school pupils.

There also is another duty incumbent upon us as the iron curtain of irreligion drops around our public educational institutions throughout the land. That duty is toward our own parochial schools which stand out as the last bastions of Christian democracy practicing in effect the real religious freedom guaranteed by our Constitution and sealed with the blood of many generations of real Americans.

As this new challenge rises we must strengthen the hand of our Catholic education system on every level. We must pour our strength, our efforts, our prayers, our money into making our schools the finest in the land so that they may be properly equipped for the arduous days which lie ahead.

And while we do all this we might offer a prayer of gratitude for the providential foresight of Bishop McQuaid, first Ordinary of the Rochester Diocese. In those pioneering days of a half-century ago when the moulders of our present parochial system of education planned for the education of the future, it was Bishop McQuaid who insisted that the church school, built and maintained by Catholics, must be the very cornerstone of any adequate system of education.

Graphic evidence of Bishop McQuaid's views on parochial schools is contained in a letter which he wrote to Pope Leo XIII in 1892 which reads in part:

"Although the chief mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel of Christ yet there is little likelihood of that Gospel reaching and abiding in the hearts of the children except through the instrumentality of the school house. Indeed, it will be useless to build churches that, in one or two generations hence, will be vacant because children or grandchildren of European parents no longer follow the religion of their ancestors. If the Church in the United States has already lost so many of her children, it is due, in large degree, to the want of Catholic schools."

Bishop McQuaid's thought prevailed and today's Catholic schools all over the country offer eloquent testimony that he was right. To us of another generation comes the challenge to spread the light of this system across a nation shrouded by the dark cloak of secularism and irreligion. We cannot fail.

Supreme Court Bars Religious Teaching In Public Schools

Washington — (NC) — The Champaign, Illinois, released-time plan of religious education, in which Catholic, Protestant and Jewish clergymen conducted religious classes in public schools, has been ruled unconstitutional here by the United States Supreme Court. Justice Stanley O. Reed was the lone dissenter to the Court's opinion.

Speaking for the majority, Justice Hugo Black declared: "The First Amendment rests upon the premise that both religion and government can best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other within its respective sphere."

Here, he said, "not only are the state's tax-supported public school buildings used for the dissemination of religious doctrines. The State also affords sectarian groups an invaluable aid in that it helps to provide pupils for their religious classes through use of the state's compulsory public school machinery. This is not separation of Church and State."

In his dissent, Justice Reed laid emphasis upon a number of traditional practices in the United States which would seem to indicate government aid to religion: the provision for chaplains in Congress and the Armed Forces, compulsory chapel attendance at Annapolis and West Point, and provision in the GI Bill for training of veterans at seminaries and schools for the ministry.

"When actual church services have always been permitted on government property," he continued, "the mere use of the school buildings by a non-sectarian group for religious education ought not to be condemned as an establishment of religion. For a non-sectarian organization to give the type of instruction here offered cannot be said to violate our rule as to the establishment of religion by the state. The prohibition of enactments respecting the establishment of religion does not bar away religiously motivated groups and state aid to religious groups."

"Devotion to the great principle of religious liberty should not lead us into a rigid interpretation of the constitutional guarantee that conflicts with the accepted habits of our people," Justice Reed concluded. "This is an instance where, for me, the history of past practices is determinative of the meaning of a constitutional clause, not a decorous introduction to the study of its text."

THE CASE WAS brought to the "high court" by Mrs. Vessie McCollum, self-styled atheist wife of a University of Illinois professor, who said the Champaign released-time program was unconstitutional and was a source of embarrassment to her grade school son, Terry, who did not attend any of the religion classes offered under it and was, she declared, ridiculed by his classmates. She lost her suits in the Champaign County Circuit Court and Illinois State Supreme Court to have the program voided.

The Champaign program was inaugurated in 1940 by a Jewish-Catholic-Protestant group known as the Champaign Council on Religious Education. They obtained permission from the Board of Education to conduct religious education classes for public school pupils of the fourth to ninth grades. Written sanction from parents was required of the children who attended; instructors from the various faiths were furnished without expense to the schools; classes were conducted in the regular school classrooms; students who did not attend the religion classes were not penalized.

Other developments here include the publication of an appeal by the strict Orthodox Jews that all Jerusalem be declared an open city. Both the former Polish consul in Jerusalem, Witold Hulanicki, and the Polish journalist, Stanislaw Arnold, who were "executed" by Jewish extremists for allegedly collaborating with the Arabs, were Catholics.

(Continued on Page 8)

Quebec Denies Polish Art to Warsaw Reds

Quebec — (NC) — To thwart the designs of Poland's present pro-Russian regime, the Quebec Government has impounded a collection of priceless Polish art treasures to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Reds. Included in the treasures are a number of valuable tapestries some of which for many years were used by Church authorities in Cracow. The treasures were brought to Canada for safekeeping when World War II broke out and Poland was invaded.

PRIESTS' DAY OF RECOLLECTION

To be conducted at Our Lady of the Lake Retreat House, Geneva, N. Y. Thursday, March 14, 1948