

Nun, Saved By Saint, Dies In Brazil

St. Louis - (NC) - Requiem Mass was offered in St. Charles Borromeo Church, here, for Mother Mary Gertrude Pieri, of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, whose life once was saved by St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, foundress of the community of nuns. Mother Mary Gertrude died in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

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A Poor Princess and a Throneless King Pope Pius Said 'No' To Princess Anne Because He Can-not Dispense God's Law

By REVEREND RICHARD T. TORNEY

Early in March two dignified noble women called on Pope Pius XII at the Vatican. They were Queen Helen of Romania and Princess Renee of Bourbon-Parma. They had come to the Holy Father to talk about the wedding of their children, Michael and Anne.

The much publicized royal romance was not moving smoothly for both families knew that a difference of religion was going to make the marriage a serious problem. Michael, as King-in-exile from Romania was a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. Princess Anne, of Spanish ancestry and related to the Danish royal family, was a Roman Catholic.

THE QUESTION WHICH the mothers put to Pope Pius was this: "Will the Catholic Church permit Anne to marry Michael?" As in the case of all mixed marriages when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, the families wanted to know, "What compromises of faith will be required, and what promises must be signed before the church will approve this wedding?"

A few days later the Vatican announced: "Princess Anne has been refused permission to marry King Michael." Michael demanded that the ceremonies of marriage must be held in the ritual of the Greek Orthodox Church and that all the children of the marriage must be brought up in the Orthodox faith. This marriage, the Vatican indicated, would gravely endanger the Catholic faith of the Princess and their future children.

Therefore, no approval could be given. For the Church insists on a Catholic wedding ceremony, a promise of protection for the faith of the Catholic spouse and Catholic baptism for all the children.

During the months which followed, the wedding was planned and postponed, announced and cancelled. It was evident that strong forces were pulling on both sides. Anne claimed she would never give up her Roman Catholic faith and leave her Church to marry a non-Catholic who would not meet the Church's minimum terms. King Michael made it very certain that because he wanted to protect his right to regain the throne of Romania some day, he would not leave his Church.

THE ROMANIAN people did not want a Catholic marriage for the Romanian constitution demands that the King and his heirs must be members of the Greek Orthodox Church. But on last Thursday, Princess



A wedding but no marriage. KING MICHAEL PRINCESS ANNE

Anne, sacrificing her Church and defying the law of God, followed the guidance of her heart. She stood with King Michael before a portable altar in the Greek Royal Palace and was married in the ritual of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The news reports say that Anne's parents did not attend the wedding. They remained in Denmark, perhaps as a public expression of their disapproval of this forbidden marriage. Only one uncle was present to represent the bride's relatives in the Danish royal family.

In the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church the wedding of King Michael and Princess Anne was no marriage at all. It was invalid because a Catholic may marry a non-Catholic without Church permission and no Catholic may be validly married in the cere-

mony of another Church. It makes no difference that this romantic young couple are royalty. A mixed marriage performed without the approval and dispensation of the Church is a sinful contract for the Catholic. The Church forbids such a union unless assurance is given that the faith of the Catholic party will not be injured and the future Catholic upbringing of the children will be protected.

There is no arrogance in the Church's claim that she has the power to control the conditions for a Catholic marriage. For Catholic marriage is more than a contract or a civil promise. Marriage is a Sacrament and has been committed by Christ Himself to the care of the Church. As the representative of Christ on earth she has the duty before God to declare who is fit and competent to receive this sacrament. She also has the right to safeguard her children and the faith from disastrous marriages.

INDEPENDENTLY of the state, the Church acts as the custodian of the religious side of the wedding. Thus she deserves the right to decide the form and the manner of the wedding ceremony. For a Catholic there is no valid marriage if the ceremony of the sacrament is not performed before an authorized Catholic priest and if the parties do not have the full approval of the Church to enter marriage.

The question may be asked, "Is it a Church law or a law of God which forbids a mixed marriage?" A mixed marriage is subject to both laws. For the law of God, aiming at the protection of the faith, forbids a Catholic to enter any marriage which would endanger his or her faith or would prohibit later the baptism and Catholic upbringing of the children. If there is no such danger, when the non-Catholic party agrees to respect the Catholic faith, then God's law does not forbid such a union.

But as the guardian of the sacrament, the Church still retains the duty of imposing prudent conditions in order to verify the good intentions of the young couple. That is why the bride and groom in a mixed marriage must agree in writing that there will be only the Catholic wedding ceremony, and that the faith of the Catholic party will be neither injured nor restricted in this marriage. In addition, both persons must sign the promise that all the children of the marriage will be baptized and reared in the Catholic faith.

Officially the Church regrets every mixed marriage. But she knows that if the promises are honestly made and kept by husband and wife, practically speaking, there is a good chance that no harm will come to the Catholic faith of the family. Because of King Michael's membership in the Orthodox Church of Romania, it would be impossible for him to guarantee that the Catholic faith of Princess Anne was not being endangered by her marriage. If she was to be his queen she would have to share his faith. And if he wished to fulfill the Romanian Constitution he would never promise that the children of the marriage would be reared as Roman Catholics.

In the face of this sincere objection to divorce and to Church law, the Pope was powerless to grant any dispensation. Unless he deliberately broke God's law, the Pope could do nothing else but forbid the royal wedding. JUST AS HE cannot permit a man to kill unjustly, or to steal or to commit adultery—because

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