

French Priest Rehabilitates Murderesses in Colony Project

By MARCELLE POIRIER
Paris — (RNS) — The French Minister of Justice confidently sat down to a meal prepared by a woman convicted of poisoning her entire family.

The Minister ate calmly, enjoying his food, for he was lunching at the Colony of St. Mary-Magdalene, south of Chartres, where a Dominican priest named Father Courtois has for nearly five years been successful in rehabilitating convicted murderesses. More than 100 women have thus far been "graduated" from the colony and have been returned to the world as honest and useful citizens.

ALL 99 OF the women now learning to live again at the unique colony have finished jail sentences of varying lengths imposed for poisoning, shooting, stabbing, strangling another. Now — their jail terms behind them — they live in absolute freedom at the colony, which includes a chateau and an estate once owned by the Duc de Saint Simon.

The women have their own rooms at the chateau, and they choose the kind of work they like to do. Some prefer housework, others do chores in the colony's model farm, or busy themselves in the gardens. A workshop where shirts are made provides still another occupation. All the women, incidentally, are paid at union rates.

FATHER COURTOIS' unusual experiment in moral salvation got started in 1944 when, as the superior of the Dominicans in Paris, he was asked to preach a Lenten sermon at the women's prison at Rennes. He was the first man to have entered the prison in 20 years.

The inmates, many of them brought from solitary confinement, listened to him first in silence, then in tears.

"Do something for us," they implored him before he departed. "Everyone hates us. Our families have abandoned us. Those who leave here have no place to turn."

Father Courtois was deeply moved by the plight of these unfortunates and soon carried their appeal to the Ministry of Justice where he persuaded officials to buy the chateau near Chartres and convert it into a rehabilitation center.

TEACHING THE women convicts how to live again in freedom, how to work and how to regain self-respect — these are

the aims of Father Courtois' colony.

At first the women have great difficulty in adapting themselves to the freedom and kindness. They are frightened and defiant. BUT AFTER they've been introduced and shown around a bit, Father Courtois breaks down the barriers they've thrown up. First, he provides them with neat, up-to-date clothes, and a

On Sick-Call



The problem of carrying sick-call necessities while traveling the hill country of Puerto Rico by horseback was solved for Father Edward J. Wolfe, Holy Ghost Father from Irwin, Pa., when Chief Petty Officer Genevieve Jones of Washington, supplied him with a shoulder-strap purse of the type used by the WAVES. Here he sets out to cover his mission territory in Jayuya.

Bishop Will Ride Army Milk Train

Maryknoll, N. Y. — (NC) — The daily Army milk plane from Japan to Korea will have Bishop Thomas J. McDonnell, Auxiliary of New York, as passenger next month. He will fly to Seoul, Korea, June 13 and will congratulate Bishop-elect Patrick J. Byrne, Korea's new Apostolic Delegate, the following day.

Bishop McDonnell, national director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, will go to Korea after attending ceremonies commemorating the 400th anniversary of St. Francis Xavier's entry into Japan. Due to the lack of commercial air service between Japan and Korea, military authorities offered him a seat on the plane which carries fresh milk to American troops in Korea.

Shrine of Martyrs Opens Pilgrimages

Aurietville, N. Y. — (NC) — The Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs, site of the martyrdom of three of the eight North American Martyrs by the Mohawk Indians in 1646, has opened its 64th annual season with many pilgrimages scheduled. It has been announced by the Rev. Thomas J. Coffey, S.J. who has been renamed shrine director for the ninth year.

The pilgrimages opened May 14 with a group from Baltimore. It was announced that the Catholic War Veterans of New York will hold their annual ceremonies at the shrine in September.

The shrine marks the site of martyrdom of SS. Isaac Jogues, Rene Goupil and John Lalande. The other five martyrs, who were killed in 1649, will be honored at ceremonies at the Midland, Ont. shrine marking the tercentenary of their deaths. They are SS. John de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Anthony Daniel, Noel Chabanel and Charles Garnier. All were Jesuits.

'Smear Drive' Aimed Against Jesuit College

Vienna — (RNS) — Polish Communist newspapers have started a "smear campaign" against the Jesuit College of Andrew Bobola in Struga, near Warsaw, where a thousand students are being prepared for the priesthood, according to a report received here.

The Communist press, the report states, is seeking to prove that the Jesuits are "secretly influencing" the students against the Communist-dominated Polish regime.

Meanwhile, the report added, Communist leaders are trying to have members of Communist youth organizations enrolled in the college in the hope of causing disturbances which may result in forcing the institution to close.

Tuitions Denied Parochial Pupils

Middletown, N. J. — (RNS) — A petition from 600 residents of this community seeking to have the town pay tuition costs for pupils attending private and parochial high schools was denied 4 to 1, by the Middletown School Board.

Middletown which has no high school of its own, pays tuition for its students at Rogers High School in Newport.

The petitioners asked that the town pay up to the \$175 annually now given for pupils attending Rogers High who might wish to attend any other private or parochial high school in Newport County approved by the State Department of Education.

School Enrollment Increases in Japan

Miyazaki — (NC) — Hyuga Middle School, conducted here by the Salesian Fathers has an enrollment of 465 compared to 260 in the last term.

Tokyo — (NC) — Tokyo Later Diocesan Seminary has an enrollment of 104 students, including two theologians of the Pious Society of St. Paul. It is affiliated with the Catholic University here so that students can obtain legally recognized degrees.

Dutch Medical School — (RNS) — nounced here by Jon Cardinal de Jong, Archbishop of Utrecht. It will be the first medical school in the Netherlands to be opened at a Catholic University next year was this country.

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