Prelate Warns Against Superstitions As Vision Stories Sweep Quebec Village

Quebec — (NC) — Archbishop Maurice Roy of Quebec has issued a statement declaring that an inquiry into certain happenings at a home in the village of St. Sylvestre has shown that there is no verification of any miracle, and warning the faithful to abstain from superstitious practices.

THE ARCHBISHOP'S statement follows:

"For some months, children belonging to an honest family of St. Sylvestre believe they have on a number of occasions seen their little sisters, both dead, one at the age of three years and the other even younger; they claim also to know the maladies from which all those who present themselves may be suffering and promise to obtain their cure through the intercessor of the little 'saints'!

"We instituted an inquiry into this subject, including the examination of the children by specialists; we have not been able to verify any miraculous happening; on the contrary the superstitious character of this devotion is evident. Furthermore the numerous visitors prevent these children from doing their studies and keep them in a state of excitement which favors illusion and can cause serious nervous troubles.

"Conforming to the Code of Canon Law (canon 1261) we remind all the faithful that they must abstain from superstitious practices. We demand particularly that priests and Religious do nothing which might seem to encourage the so-called devotion."

The story behind the inquiry instituted by Archbishop Roy has to do with a family living in St. Sylvestre, Que., a village of 1,350 persons and which is reached only by a poor road.

FOR SOME TIME past, especially on Sundays this road has been clogged with many cars, up to 300 having been parked at a time in the vicinity of the home.

In January, 1946, the Belanger family mourned the death of a daughter, Lisette, three years of age who succumbed to meningitis. It was the second death in the family, an infant, Rita, having died in 1933, a few hours after birth and having been baptized.

According to reports, a strange meteor on February 1, 1946, descended on the farm of Amedee Belanger and cast a vaporous cloud about the buildings of his land, later lifting and directing itself toward the church four miles away.

FIVE DAYS later, while the Belanger family was asleep, a high wind whirled about the house awakening all. One of the children, Andre, 10, is stated to have declared then that he saw at the foot of his bed a vision of his two dead sisters, each holding a hand of the Blessed Virgin.

The next night another windstorm was reported to have taken place again arousing all the household.

But neighbors said they had not heard any windstorm during either of the two nights.

ANDRE, HOWEVER, is reported to have continued to see the so-called visions. Soon three other children of the family — Real, 10, Robert, nine, and Jeanne d'Arc, seven — also reported having similar visions.

These reports spread and also reports that the Blessed Virgin had told them to call in the sick and that she would obtain their cures.

Soon visitors were crowding into the home. One day recently there were 300. The telephone rang constantly, and up to 150 letters were received in a day.

ONE ROOM WAS set up as a little chapel with a rude altar. On the walls there were several canes and crutches from persons who claimed to have been cured.

When visitors entered the home they were received by one of the four children, who undertook to diagnose the illness if a visitor was unable to state what he or she was suffering from.

The advice is reported to have always been the same, a novena of the Rosary and a daily Act of Contrition.

Some of the visitors asked to enter the "miraculous room" where Lisette had died. There such ailing persons would stretch out on the death-bed while others would kneel and pray.

One woman, a widow, 77, who was reported to have been carried into the home as said to have been able to walk after lying on the bed for a while.

To Our Lady Of The Rosary Of Fatima

The month of October, dedicated to the Rosary, was opened by prayer to Our Lady of Fatima by these triplet children of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dolan, of Dubuque. They are shown praying before a copy of the painting of "Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima," from the brush of Sister Evelyn Marie, C.S.J., of Chicago, which was recently presented to the Holy Father. Michael, Maureen and Mary (kneeling), aged three years are pictured. They have two brothers, who will help them to pray — James 6, and Danny, one year. (NC Photos)

Prelate Hits Race Ban; Cancels Holy Name Rite

New Orleans — (RNS) — The Most Rev. Joseph F. Rummel, Archbishop of New Orleans, said here he had cancelled an annual Holy Hour observance because city park commissioners insisted on racial segregation.

The Archbishop said the Church wished to have members of Negro Holy Name societies in a procession "as an expression of the catholicity of our holy faith and the universality of the membership of our Church."

Meanwhile, Marcel Montreuil, manager of the City Park Commission, said that following last year's Holy Hour observance when there was no race segregation "we got quite a reaction and so this year we asked the archbishop to require segregation as soon as the procession or others enter the stadium."

ARCHBISHOP RUMMEL issued the following statement in announcing cancellation of the observance:

"Certain forms of segregation, and we dislike the term, may be justifiable, but frankly we can see no necessity for the ruling when there is a question of a purely r e l i g i o u s observance under circumstances which offer every guarantee of orderliness and disciplinary control.

"Such an observance can in no way be compared with certain incidents that have occurred elsewhere as demonstrations emphasizing segregation in the use of recreational and social facilities or in protest against certain unfortunate incidents or transgressions."

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Australian Boys' Town

Brisbane, Australia (NC) — A tract of 400 acres has been purchased by the Rev. T. Dunlea for the site of a Queensland's Boys' Town. Father Dunlea is also founder of a successful Boys' Town at Engardine, New South Wales, conducted along the lines of the famous Boys' Town near Omaha, Neb.

Buy Homes, Not Autos, Priest Says

Pittsburgh — (RNS) — Parishioners of the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic church here have been asked by their pastor to "stop buying autos until they own homes."

The Very Rev. Thomas F. Coakley told his congregation that there would be no housing shortage today if people made down payments on homes instead of buying cars.

He said he believed "a house will tend to keep parents and children home, where they should spend most of their time anyway, whereas an automobile has a tendency to entice them away from home."

Priest Cites 'Amateurs In Persecution'

Washington (NC) — Charges that "amateurs in persecution" are trying to hamper the Church in the United States by spreading "slanders" and promoting "unfair" legislation were made in St. Matthew's Cathedral here by the Very Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P., dean of the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America here.

Father Smith preached at Solemn High Mass commemorating the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle, patron of the cathedral. Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle of Washington presided at the Mass.

THE THEME of Father Smith's sermon was that history proves that present attempts to cripple or detroy the Catholic Church will fail beause the Church is made even stronger by persecution.

"They are really amateurs in persecution in this country who attempt to hamper the growth of the Church by unfair legislation against its education and by smearing it with slanders about its alleged but unproven desire to get control of our government," the preacher said. "Such persecution, in the light of history is puerile in its ignorance.

"THE ROMAN government of the Ceasars was mighty. Its arenas were saturated with the blood of those whom it killed in its attempts to destroy the Church. It failed. The Church grew . . .

"Now it is communism that attacks the Church throughout the world and here in the United States. And in the world at large and here in our own nation, communism is not without its spectators who are opposed to its tenets but hopeful for its success in its efforts to exterminate the Catholic Faith. They are the delight of the godless Reds in this country and they share the ignorance and stupidity that have always characterized godless and anti-Catholic bigotry and fanaticism.

"We are inconvenienced by their unholy propaganda and lobbying. We pity their inability to share our determination to keep God in government, to contribute to the perpetuity of this Republic and the godliness without which it will collapse. The Church will live on. It cannot die."

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Lay Catholic Editor Gets Papal Award

Oklahoma City, Okla. — (NC) — Joseph J. Quinn, editor of The Southwest Courier, newspaper of the Oklahoma City and Tulsa diocese has been honored by His Holiness Pope Pius XII with designation as a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the great.

Mr. Quinn is one of the most widely known Catholic journalists in the United States and is a former president of the Catholic Press Association.

SERVES WORLD STUDENTS

Brother G. Paul, F.S.C., president of LaSalle College, Philadelphia, congratulates honor graduate James T. Harris upon his appointment as American senior secretary to the International Student Service at Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Harris was the first Negro to be so honored, and was graduated with honors from Lasalle in 1948.

Congressman Keating Hears Pope's Plea for Refugees

Vatican City (NC) Prompt action to end the "blight of peace-time detention camps" was urged by His Holiness Pope Pius XII as he received a group of United States congressmen in audience at Castelgandolfo papal summer villa.

The legislators headed by Rep. Francis E. Walter of Pennsylvania, are now completing a month-long fact-finding mission in Germany, Austria, and Italy. Mr. Walters is chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration.

Other congressmen at the audience were Reps. Frank Fellows of Maine, Chauncey W. Reed of Illinois, Michael A. Feighan of Ohio, William T. Byrne of New York, Kenneth B. Keating of Rochester, New York, and James J. Murphy of New York.

The Pope warned that the western world faces grave dangers unless the problem of refugees and expellees in Europe is quickly solved. The problem centers mainly about the estimated eight and one-half million persons, according to Representative Walter, of German ethnic origin who either fled or were driven out of Soviet-controlled territory since the war and have been superimposed on Germany's struggling economy.

"POLITICAL, ECONOMIC and even social dangers are involved in a policy of further delay and exaggerated caution," the Pontiff said. "Prompt and responsible community action" is needed to end the blight of refugee camps and "the plight of millions who now must answer to the hedious appellation of 'expellee.'"

The Pontiff urged the American congressmen and the legislators of every nation to "deal vigorously with the last remaining obstacles to full human freedom for our beloved refugees."

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Air Mail Set For Leper Colony

Washington — (NC) — Air mail service for the leper colony on Molokai Island, Hawaii, has been promised here by the Post Office Department. Paul Aiken, Second Assistant Postmaster General, said steps already have been taken to put the service into operation but doubted whether it could begin before Christmas.

Textbooks 'Revised' For Polish Schools

Warsaw — (CIP) — Despite previous government complaints of a paper shortage, Polish children will learn from "revised" textbooks this year. The Ministry of Education has announced that nationalized printing shops have been ordered to print some 9 million copies.

THE "REVISED" texts are being issued in part to reflect changes in the official government attitude toward Yugoslavia which in 1947 editions of geography books had been listed among "friendly and progressive countries."

Polish history and civics books have also been changed to omit praises of former Vice-Premier and Communist Party Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka, now referred in to official pronouncements as a "traitor" and "national deviationist."

THE COMMUNIST-LED Warsaw Government had previously stated that a "paper shortage" made it impossible to increase the allocations of newsprint to the Catholic press. Only two Catholic weeklies are now published. Before the war, there were two major Catholic daily newspapers, a Catholic news agency and numerous diocesan weeklies. The censorship imposed on the two Catholic weeklies has popularized the statement that they can "report more on the religious situation in India than on the situation in Poland."

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UN Approves Prayer Proposal

Lake Success, N. Y. — (RNS) — The Legal Committee of the UN General Assembly voted 44 to 0, with seven abstentions, in favor of opening and closing the first plenary meeting of each Assembly session with a minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation. The approval is subject to action by the full assembly.

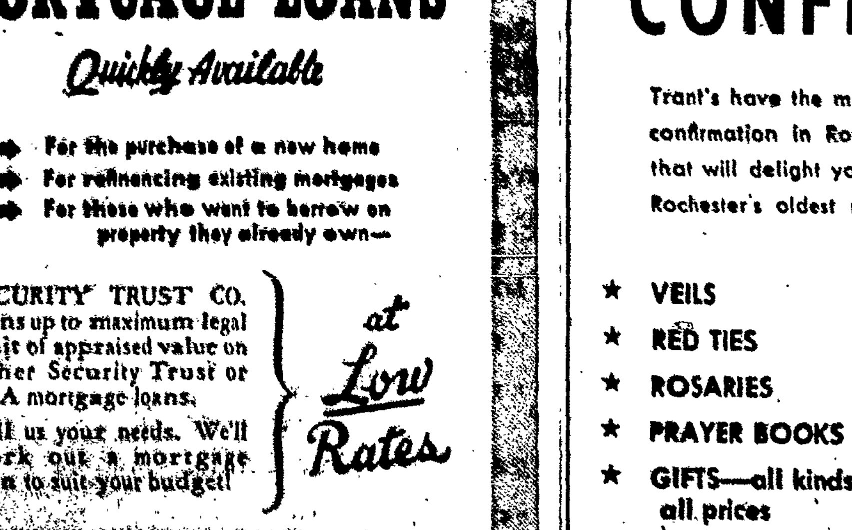
Committee members from Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia, abstained from voting.

The original proposal, urging that a moment of silence be observed at the beginning of each year's Assembly session was made by Secretary General Trygve Lie. It was amended by the Assembly's Special Committee so that such an interval would be observed at the closing plenary meeting of each session as well.

Before the vote, Dr. Ivan Kerno, Assistant Secretary General in charge of legal affairs, told the committe that many hundreds of letters had been received requesting the United Nations to pay some deference to religion.

HEAR IN SECRET

AD CENTER



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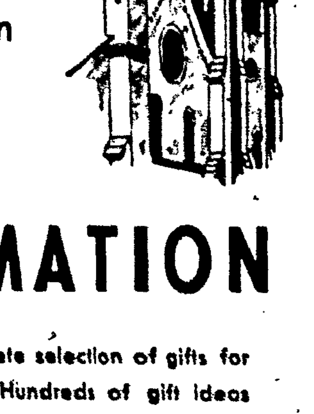

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