

Mass Leagues' Denounced; Called 'Mail Order Mourners'

Peoria, Ill. (NC)—In one of the least public pronouncements since his death, Archbishop Joseph H. Schlarman of Peoria condemned certain so-called Mass Leagues which he called "mail order mourners" being contrary to the spirit of the Church and of the late Archbishop Schlarman.

The letter was read in all churches of the Peoria diocese Nov. 14. In the Archbishop said that in recent years there has sprung up in our country a novelty in the way of appeals for funds with a promise of remembrance in Masses, which is shocking and violative of the spirit of Church law.

He recalled that at the Bishop's meeting last year a committee was appointed to study "the ugly practice of certain groups of religious and imitations of appealing in public and through the mails for offerings of money and promising daily and perpetual remembrance in a large number of Holy Masses."

"Groups of religious and religious institutions have set up so-called Mass Associations, Mass Leagues, Puratorial Societies and so forth," the Archbishop's letter said, "in which they propose to enroll individuals and family groups on the payment of a fixed monetary contribution, ranging from \$5 to \$25 for individuals, and up to \$100 for family groups, and promise daily and perpetual remembrance in a large number of Masses."

"The promotional apparatus and advertising devices used in seeking to enroll members in the Mass Leagues cause painful surprise, inasmuch as they resembled the advertising of commercial products."

"MANY COMPLAINTS have been received regarding these appeals and the methods employed. Obviously the appeals which pour in on bereaved families at the time of the death of some dear one, create the impression that an effort is being made to exploit the grief of the survivors. By insinuation, at least, the 'mail order mourners' tell the bereaved that they will be failing in the remembrance of their deceased if they do not make a contribution for the enrollment of the deceased in some such association."

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Abp. Schlarman Dies Suddenly



Peoria, Ill. (NC)— Archbishop Joseph H. Schlarman, "the soul of the diocese of Peoria," died suddenly at his home in Peoria Nov. 14 at the age of 72. Two days earlier he had presided at a rural religious instruction session at the national congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Chicago.

He was sent through undertakers without any of the common courtesies, that the Mass Leagues maintain large office forces, that they organized the country according to States and carry on year-round campaigns.

"Besides appeals on the occasion of deaths," the Archbishop wrote, "they send like appeals far and near through the mails for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas, Easter, All Souls' Day, Memorial Day, name days, and on any occasion where promoters hope they may be able to exploit the filial devotion and tenderest sentiments of sons and daughters toward their parents and friends."

"THE CHURCH has given precise norms in regard to Mass offerings, he continued, and cited the following Canons: 'Canon 827: All negotiation or trading of any kind in connection with Mass stipends must be absolutely avoided.'

'Canon 828: So many Masses must be said and applied as Mass stipends (even though they were small) were offered and accepted.'

'Canon 831.3: All religious, even the exempt, are obliged to observe the law of the local Ordinary, or the custom of the diocese, concerning Mass stipends.'

THE ARCHBISHOP said that Mass Leagues appear to be endeavoring to circumvent Canon 828.

"With these facts in mind," the Archbishop went on, "to avoid every sort of misunderstanding in the future and to safeguard the sanctity and sacredness of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, I make and by this letter promulgate the following regulations, effective at once in this diocese:

"1) I condemn as contrary to the spirit of the Church, its legislation and consent practice these so-called Mass Associations or Mass Leagues, as they are circularized or advertised presently in our diocese.

"2) I ask all the faithful of the diocese to pay no attention to any such appeals which are made to them.

"3) There is another abuse: Christmas cards and other things are sent unsolicited through the mail. You have no obligation to accept or pay for such items."

A CATCH IN THIS

London (NC)—It's paradoxical but the Czech communist regime is pleading for vocations to the priesthood.

The plea is contained in a copy of the communist-controlled daily Lidova Demokracie, which has arrived here. The catch is that the plea is for students of the government-controlled "seminary" at Prague which Catholic youths are now studiously avoiding despite all blandishments.

The paper's appeal was made in connection with the opening of the school year at the Prague "seminary," which the regime calls the Roman Catholic Faculty of SS. Cyril and Methodius.

"THIS REPORT IS the last friendly invitation for those undecided youths who feel in their minds a longing for the ecclesiastical office but are still prevented from making their final decision by various prejudices and unsubstantiated doubts," the paper says.

"Our new Catholic theologian study does not differ substantially from the previous ones," the paper continues in an effort to remove the "unsubstantiated doubts." It adds: "No one of the young theologians who enrolls at the Prague Cyril and Methodius faculty has reason to entertain doubts about his study."

"The activity of the faculty and the training of the young priests are in full accord with Canon Law.

"THEREFORE, may an even larger number of candidates for the priesthood this year follow the voice of their Divine Master. Follow Me" (Matt. 8:22). Our good working people need worthy and holy priests. We firmly hope that his call will not be wasted."

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HE ALSO ATTACKED the three Allied High Commissioners as "Catholics who are the tools of the Americans and the Vatican." In fact, John J. McCloy, the American High Commissioner, as well as his wife are Protestants, while the British and French High Commissioners happen to be Catholics.

Mr. Schumacher, whose ambition it is to succeed Mr. Adenauer as the head of a German cabinet, not so long ago spoke of the Vatican as "the fifth occupational power," because of the alleged influence of Catholics in German governmental affairs. In reality Protestant influence is at least equal, if not much stronger, especially as far as the number of high officials in the Bonn administration and in Parliament is concerned.

After the talk, Miss Mizutani took the floor to say that it would be a good thing if everybody became Catholic, and so pleased was the Mayor that he asked Father Spae to give some doctrinal instructions in his town. Among those who attended the first instruction was the mayor of Mikazuki, also a friend of Miss Mizutani.

When this second Mayor was baptized last Christmas, Miss Mizutani suddenly realized how strange it was that he whom she had directed towards the Church was already baptized while she herself was still outside. She therefore had herself enrolled as a catechumen and was baptized on August 19.

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Famed Japanese Nurse Helps Start Missions, Becomes Convert Herself

Himeji, Japan (NC)—After 42 years of quiet work as a Red Cross nurse and eight as head of the Red Cross nursing school in which she trained 800 other nurses, Miss M. Mizutani, a convert of only a few months recently was catapulted into fame when Empress Nagako conferred the Florence Nightingale Award on her in Tokyo.

But there were other achievements which even nationwide publicity did not uncover and which were gleaned only from a quiet conversation with Miss Mizutani and her pastor, the Rev. Joseph Spae. He speaks Japanese, Chinese and at least six Western languages, and reads Sanskrit, Mongolian and Tibetan with ease, not to mention his achievements in Greek, Hebrew and Latin.

IT WAS ABOUT two years ago that Miss Mizutani, then 60 years old, revisited her home of Sajo and was asked by her friend, the Mayor, to recommend someone who could tell people what to do about the moral education of young people. Miss Mizutani had met Father Spae several times when he visited the Red Cross hospital in Himeji and promptly suggested that the Mayor ask him to give the desired talk.

After the talk, Miss Mizutani took the floor to say that it would be a good thing if everybody became Catholic, and so pleased was the Mayor that he asked Father Spae to give some doctrinal instructions in his town. Among those who attended the first instruction was the mayor of Mikazuki, also a friend of Miss Mizutani.

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Jewish Paper Hails Truman On Envoy

Montreal (NC)—The decision of President Truman "to accredit at long last an Ambassador to the Vatican must be hailed as a decision of courage, wisdom and decency," the Canadian Jewish Chronicle asserts.

The Chronicle said that a storm of protest over the decision was to be expected, but that by taking firm and responsible action Mr. Truman again shows himself to be of the stature of statesmanship.

"HAD IT NOT been for entrenched bigotry," the Chronicle continues, "the decision, we believe, would have been taken long ago. Only a narrow sectarianism could argue against it, for the Vatican, its spiritual role considered apart, is also a temporal entity. It sends and receives representatives from sovereignties all over the world."

"It was a sovereign state with a political history long before many of the newly arisen republics were proclaimed or even prophesied. It is true that it does not hold sway over far-flung territory, but since when has a state's real estate been a factor in its legal recognition?"

"IT IS ALSO true," the Chronicle reminds, "that Stalin is reported to have inquired, perhaps scoffingly, as to how many legions His Holiness commanded—an inquiry which could have for its answer only a reference to angels and heavenly ministers; yet that, too, is an irrelevancy in the argument touching ambassadorial representation."

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