

Reds Take Leper Colony From Priest

Hong Kong.—(Special)—China's famous Gate of Heaven leper colony has been taken over by the Communists and the man known to thousands of Americans as "Big Joe" Sweeney has been dispossessed.

Red officials formally took over the operation of the colony, after refraining from interference for almost two years. For Father Joseph A. Sweeney, 56-year-old Maryknoll Missioner from New Britain, Conn., this means the closing down of his life work among "the numb ones" of South China. A local Communist has been placed in charge, and the Connecticut priest no longer has any control over the leper asylum he founded and twice rebuilt.

FATHER SWEENEY and his assistant, Father Carroll I. Quinn of Baltimore, Md., are still living at the colony informed circles in Hong Kong feel that the missionaries will only be allowed to remain at the colony as long as funds hold out. When the money is gone, it is felt that the priests will be expelled, and the colony shut down. There is apprehension for the safety of the lepers, and many believe that the colony patients will be put to death by the Reds.

IT WAS IN 1933 that Father Sweeney started to work among the lepers of the Kowloon section of South China. Already a veteran of twelve years in the missions of China, Korea and Manchuria, he had prepared for his new tasks by studies in Damien leper colony on Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands, in China's asylum at Shikung, and in the federal leprosy hospital in Louisiana. The first leper group he ministered to lived in a dark bamboo grove near the city of Toi Shan. "Sitting around in that jungle darkness were deformed creatures with only stumps where hands or feet should have been," he recalls. "Many had distorted faces. I saw one afflicted Chinese woman, hideous to behold, with a beautiful eight-month-old baby girl in her arms. The child, as is often the case with children of lepers, was spotless."

When his group grew too large for the bamboo grove, Father Sweeney moved to the hills north of Toi Shan, to the Sun Wui gravelands. After three years there the Chinese government recognized his work and granted him 300 acres for a new

leper colony at Gae Moon, 30 miles south of Sun Wui on an island in the mouth of the Kong-moon River.

FATHER SWEENEY cleared the ground himself and began to erect permanent buildings. On Sept. 2, 1937, when Gate of Heaven was but half completed, a typhoon struck the island. The wind reached a velocity of 154 miles per hour, the highest ever recorded in the region, and flattened every structure in the settlement.

Disaster again struck the colony, in the form of Japanese soldiers, on March 25, 1945. They drove out those lepers who could walk and killed the rest. They burned two of the 18 buildings, converted the chapel into a stable, and used the remaining structures as barracks until the war's end.

Couple Celebrate Jubilee in Jail

Stateville, Ill.—(NC)—An Illinois Catholic couple who have spent their entire wedded life in jail celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary here. Both their children have spent most of their lives in jail too.

The couple are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ragen. Mr. Ragen has been warden of Stateville prison for almost 20 years. Before that he was warden at Menard State prison and sheriff of Clinton County.

The Ragen children have spent their lives at the county jail at Carlyle, Ill., and the State prisons at Menard and Stateville except when attending school. William is now a student at St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa. Jane, a graduate of St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind., is society editor of the Joliet Herald-News.

Warden and Mrs. Ragen are members of the St. Raymond Catholic parish, Joliet.

Nazi Panzer Officer Tells How He Saved Monte Cassino Treasures From Destruction

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"OF WHAT GOOD would it be to the world if, after the building had been destroyed, the two sides began to accuse one another of having brought about the loss of Europe's most precious cultural heritage," he writes.

He first approached Abbot Gregorio Diamare, "a most venerable man over 80 years of age," on October 14, 1943.

"I could not reveal any military secrets to him and tell him that in a short while the front line would run through his abbey," the German officer relates. "To have done so would have meant a court-martial—all the more so as I had said nothing to my commanding general about my proposal."

HE TOOK HIS courage in both hands and saw the Abbot but could not impress him with the idea of any serious danger. He tried several times more as the Allied front line rolled nearer and the danger became more imminent and eventually had to tell him flatly that if the attackers launched a full-scale assault or succeeded in landing in the German's rear the monastery would be damaged. A German monk, Dom Emanuel Munding, and the prior, Gaetano Fornari, backed up his arguments.

The Abbot was at last persuaded to call a meeting of the monks. As a test of good faith a truck was loaded with treasures and sent to Rome accompanied by two monks. When the news of its safe arrival reached the Abbot, his suspicions finally vanished and he asked the German officer to help him all he could.

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Vatican Receives Finnish Minister

Rome.—(RNS)—Ake Henrik Gartz, new Finnish Minister to the Vatican, presented his credentials to Pope Pius XII at an audience in the Papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo.

A Finnish legation was established in Vatican City in 1942, but since 1947 only a charge d'affaires had been in authority there.

Mr. Gartz, formerly Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, also will represent his country in Switzerland, dividing his time between Rome and Bern.

Outside the Iron Curtain, the only European countries still unrepresented at the Vatican are Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece and Turkey. However, in process of establishing diplomatic relations with the Holy See

century, the Bible, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the Liber Moralium, with notes in the handwriting of St. Thomas Aquinas. Some of the other documents carried the seals of Robert Guiscard, Roger of Sicily, the Norman Duke of Apulia and many Popes and rulers.

"I SAID NOTHING to General Conrad of what I was doing until my task was far advanced. But when I did so, not without some trepidation, I was able to convince him of the importance of the work, and he not only gave orders that it should be continued but sent additional helpers."

This was very necessary because in addition to the abbey's own treasures the contents of several government-owned galleries had been deposited there for safe custody. Among the paintings were one by Leonardo da Vinci, two by Raphael, three by Titian, and several by Tintoretto, Ghirlandajo, Pieter Bruegel and others. There were also the precious vases from Pompeii and the armor of the Emperor Charles V.

The government-owned property was moved to a castle in Spoleto. At the Abbot's request the colonel also transported some 70 refugees nuns to the Vatican. The latter convoy was bombed, but without casualties.

"My work was consummated by the safe transference of the abbey's most sacred possessions—the bones of St. Benedict," says Colonel Schlegel. "These were reverently placed in a leather suit case and blessed by the Abbot before being put onto a truck."

Once all the treasures had been removed the Abbot celebrated a special High Mass and presented the panzer officer with a parchment of thanks written in Latin and bearing the seal of the Abbey of Monte Cassino. The Abbot also gave him an enamel and gold-plated medal.

'Come Unto Me'



This statue, "Come Unto Me," a bronze figure of Christ, was dedicated on the Feast of Christ the King, on the campus of the College of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio. It is the work of Richmond Burke, young Negro sculptor of New York. Burke was awarded Guggenheim Fellowship in 1940-41 and in 1945 received the James J. May Award for Interracial Justice.

Pioneer Maryknoller Marks Anniversary

Maryknoll, N. Y.—(Special)—A Negro lay brother from Havana, Cuba, Brother Aloysius Molner, will observe the 50th anniversary of his entrance into the Maryknoll foreign mission society on November 26 here. He is Maryknoll's senior Brother. When Brother Aloysius joined Maryknoll, in 1918, the society itself was only five years old. Then 17, he was one of the first young men to apply for admittance into the Brothers and today is the oldest Maryknoll Brother in point of service.

Foe Of Unborn Dodges Use Of 'Murder' Term

London.—(NC)—Britain's Catholic press continues to answer the mass of confused thinking and deliberate misrepresentation which followed the recent pronouncement of Pope Pius XII in the defense of the unborn child.

Answering those who accuse the Rev. William Lawson, a Jesuit priest of London's Maryknoll College, Father Lawson mentioned some of the main critics of the Holy Father's pronouncement, among them the Anglican Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Dr. Walter Matthews.

"TO HAVE a mother's sin, or her mental or physical health—that being a good end—you may kill an innocent child, these people say," the priest wrote in the Catholic Herald. "The child is a human being. Even the social worker would allow that. . . . It is innocent."

"It is kill it anyway—perhaps by puncturing the skull, and then decapitating, disemboweling and vivisectioning—because you must wait. And if you are squeamish about murder call it something else—an operation, the removal of a valuable personality—but don't call it murder. Or else deny that the life you are taking is the life of a person."

"These Matthews avoids the ambiguity of the word 'murder.' He says instead, according to the Daily Express, 'It is to me the death of a mother, the loss of a valuable personality and is certain to cause pain and misery. What if the woman is later in fact, in the Dean's judgment, a valuable personality? But she is right to die? Or, as priority in the Dean's program of life-saving?'"

"Even if the whole world were agreed that the woman had a valuable personality, the method of saving it which the Dean favors, but does not state, is deliberately and directly to kill an innocent child."

Without the international background of the Catholic faith, Catholics might be tempted to accept the "humanitarian and rational arguments" in such cases of childbirth, Michael de la Bevoise writes in the Catholic Herald, of which he is editor.

National Guard Seeks Chaplain

Washington, D.C.—(NC)—A call is being made to volunteer their services as National Guard chaplains.

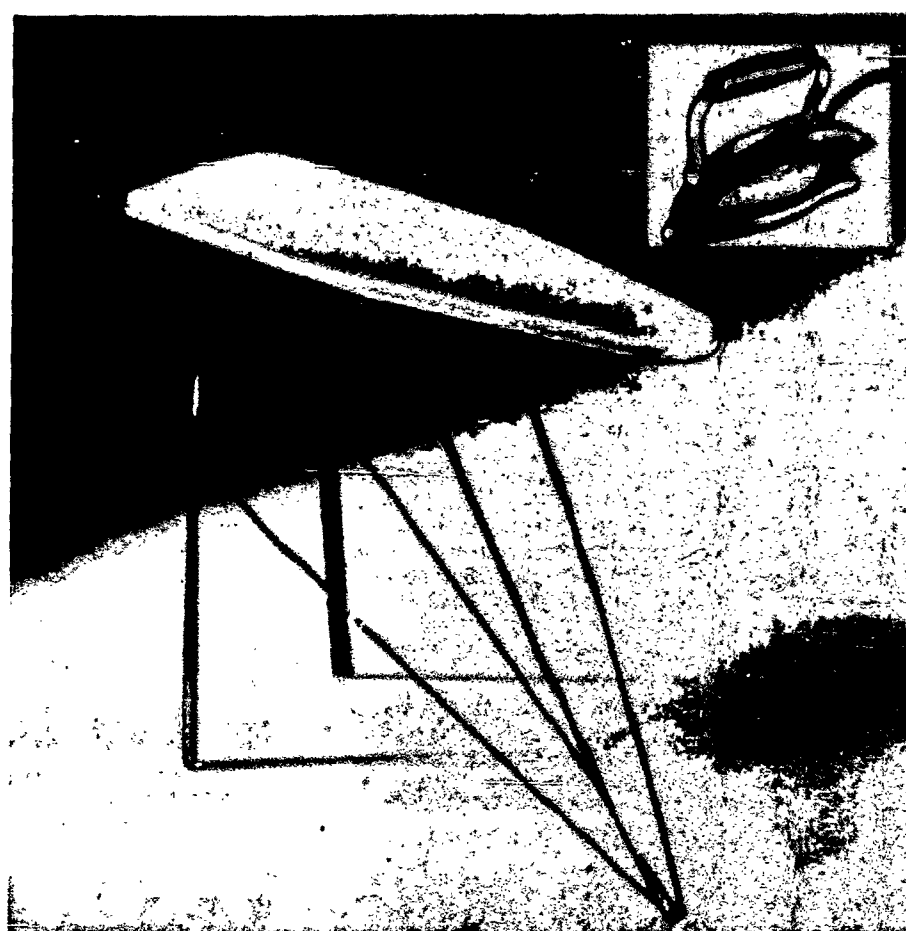
Major General Raymond M. Flanagan, chief of the National Guard Chaplain Department, of the War Department, said that chaplains were needed in the National Guard units for the purpose of providing spiritual aid to the troops.

Chaplaincy is one of the most important and useful of the military professions, and is open to all men, with a few exceptions in the ranks of officers and major available for older and more experienced clergy.

Danish Royal Couple Received by Pope

Vatican City.—(NC)—Pope Pius XII has received in private audience King Frederik IX of Denmark and his wife, Queen Ingrid. The royal couple, who have come to Italy on a vacation trip, later inspected the construction of the Basilica of St. Peter's, guided by Mons. Luigi Kain, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Rites of St. Peter's.

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