

Priests Fight Atheism Among Students in Paris

Paris—(RNS)—Ten Catholic priests have moved into the student quarter here, on the Seine's famed Left Bank, in an effort to win back to religion young people who have yielded to atheistic philosophies of existentialism.

Eight of the group, members of the Augustinian Order, have taken quarters in an old hotel on the Rue Jacob, center of existentialist activity.

THE PRIESTS will frequent bars and cafes of the district which are crowded day and night with disillusioned students, followers of Jean-Paul Sartre. The students wear black only—from sweaters and trousers (or skirts) to shoes and hose—and sit for hours discussing the miseries of the world and the existentialist approach to them.

The eight priests were sent at the urgent request of Father Balm, 33-year-old Augustinian, who became chaplain of the Sorbonne University here last spring.

Father Balm was particularly concerned over the spread of existentialism among students raised as Christians. With a colleague, Father Nicodem, he studied the theories and tenets of Sartre's philosophy, seeking its weak points and most vulnerable arguments.

THEN THE two priests swung into action. Doffing their clerical robes, they donned the traditional student garb of blue jeans and sweater every night and went into the hotbeds of existentialism. There they sought out student converts to the movement, argued with them and offered the hope of religion.

The two clergymen have had notable success in re-converting student existentialists, and Father Balm is credited with having prevented at least four suicides in the past three months.

The success of this work and Father Balm's appeal, led the order to send the eight additional priests to Paris.

Nuns Help Fight Century's Worst Flood



Nuns help to fight the worst floods in 100 years in northern Italy's Po River valley. The sisters pictured above are filling sandbags for an emergency dike as the people of Adria, narrowed by floodwaters, try to stem the rising tide. Relief boats with supplies later brought temporary help to Adria, but heavy rains continued, adding new threats.

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Child, Mother Conflict At Birth Doesn't Happen, Says Doctor

Grand Rapids, Mich.—(NC)—An eminent Catholic physician here has asserted that situations in which an attending physician finds it necessary to choose between sacrificing the life of an unborn infant and his mother are "entirely theoretical and actually do not happen in modern medical practice."

He is Dr. James H. Beaton, chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at St. Mary's Hospital here. Widely known in his field, Dr. Beaton is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a Diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and a member of the International Academy of Medicine and Surgery.

DR. BEATON expresses his view in a signed article in the current edition of *The Western Michigan Catholic*, official newspaper of the Grand Rapids diocese. He relates that he wrote the article "as the viewpoint of a Catholic doctor to clarify some of the misrepresentations in many quarters of the Pope's recent address regarding marital obligations and rights.

Catholic writings emphasize the moral code whereby no doctor has the right "to destroy life to save a life." Dr. Beaton observes. He notes that some others "insist that it is wrong to sacrifice a living mother for an unborn child" and contend that "the woman should have the right to decide such a vital question."

TO THE AVERAGE reader,

GYNECOLOGIST SAYS:

Mother Or Child Dilemma In Childbirth Now 'Obsolete'

Montevideo, Uruguay—(NC)—The old dilemma in which either the mother or child must die no longer exists for modern gynecologists, Dr. Jose A. Aguerre Escardo, head of the maternity wards at two hospitals here, states.

IN HIS MANY years of obstetrical practice he has never been faced with "the obsolete dilemma," he says. Dr. Aguerre makes his comments in an article appearing in *El Bien Publico*, (Catholic daily here. He heads the maternity wards at the Luis P. Lengua hospital, a private institution, and Perera Rossell, a government hospital.

The gynecologist also refers to cases where mothers are

affected by pregnancy toxemia or cardiac and pulmonary ailments.

IN THE FIRST case, he says an advancement of the birth is generally feasible at the seventh month without risk for the mother and with benefit to the child, who is removed from a toxic environment.

In cases of cardiac, kidney or pulmonary ailments, "the humane and scientific thing is to save both," he states. "Women affected with a heart or pulmonary condition can endure pregnancy better than supposed. An intervention to interrupt pregnancy can be more dangerous than allowing it to develop naturally."

the whole problem sounds like a very grave situation confronting doctors and patients," Dr. Beaton writes. "In fact, one might even presume that the Catholic patient is often sacrificed and the Catholic doctor must have to throw up his hands in despair when confronted with a serious medical problem of life and death. Such a presumption is entirely theoretical and actually does not happen in modern medicine. Otherwise, non-Catholic doctors would avoid Catholic hospitals."

Dr. Beaton declares that "as a Catholic obstetrician, I have never seen a woman's life sacrificed to save the life of a baby. I have never seen good medical care withheld from a patient because she was in Catholic hospital."

Most of the present day arguments are based on old medical methods, Dr. Beaton contends.

"FOR EXAMPLE," he writes, "25 years ago a Caesarean section was very dangerous and frequently fatal. Consequently doctors sometimes had to choose a destructive operation on the baby rather than to risk the life of the mother. Now this is all changed. Caesarean section has been perfected as a very safe operation and destructive operations on living babies are obsolete."

"Before the discovery of sulfa and penicillin, a Caesarean could not be done if infection was present. Now an infected case can have a Caesarean safely for mother and baby, in place of the old, barbarous destructive operations. Until a few years ago a woman could only have a few Caesareans and then sterilization was advised (by non-Catholics) to prevent further operative risks. Now modern surgery allows a woman (Catholic or non-Catholic) to have as many Caesareans as she desires.

"FIFTEEN YEARS ago," he

continues, "many therapeutic abortions were done on pregnant women with heart disease, tuberculosis, kidney disease and toxic conditions. Some of these women died following the therapeutic abortion, especially in cases of severe heart disease. Now, with modern medical knowledge therapeutic abortion is practically extinct in all good hospitals. The modern doctor treats the disease skillfully and leaves the normal condition, pregnancy, alone."

Dr. Beaton quotes Dr. Samuel A. Cosgrove as stating in an address before the New York Obstetrical Society March 14, 1944, that at Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital there were but four therapeutic abortions in 67,000 deliveries from 1931 to 1943.

"THIS MEANS," Dr. Beaton observes, "only one in 16,750 at a non-Catholic hospital."

He adds that at the American College of Surgeons meeting in San Francisco last month, Dr. Cosgrove "further reported that no therapeutic abortions have been performed at Margaret Hague since his original report."

"In view of this fine record of actual cases at Margaret Hague, Dr. Cosgrove has given me permission to quote him as follows: 'There is no indication for a direct therapeutic abortion in the modern practice of obstetrics,'" Dr. Beaton writes.

Franciscans Plan Mission In Japan

Tokyo—(NC)—The Holy Name Province of the Franciscan Order has now definitely decided to undertake mission work in Japan according to information received from the Provincial Motherhouse in New York City. The district in which the new group will work has not yet been definitely decided upon.

'Bible Week' Will Replace 'Biblical Sunday' in '52

Washington—(NC)—A full-fledged "Bible Week" will replace "Biblical Sunday" next year according to plans announced here by the Rev. Louis Hartman, executive secretary for the Catholic National Association of America.

"A CATHOLIC will hear a lot more about the Bible in 1952," Father Hartman said in his announcement. Bible Week will be from February 19-25.

In cooperation with the National Center of the Contraternity of Christian Doctrine and seven Bible publisher firms, plans have been completed for observance in all U. S. churches, schools, colleges and universities. A special Bible Week packet containing posters, sermon outlines and ideas for assembly programs will be mailed to rectories and convents early in January.

FATHER HARTMAN stated that both press and radio circles plan to carry numerous Bible features during the week. The Rev. Eugene J. Murray, S. J., of St. Louis, Director of the National Hour Program, has arranged for 50 of the program's 100 outlets to carry a daily Bible talk during the week.

Lutherans Oppose Vatican Ambassador

New York—(NC)—Dissidence of a full-time U. S. Ambassador at the Holy See in Vatican City would be opposed by the National Lutheran Council, which says it represents 100 church bodies with a total membership of 4,000,000 persons, but stated.

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CATHOLIC HEADLINES ON WHAT IS TO BE

By Rev. Richard Tamm

for the COURIER-JOURNAL



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