

# Scientists Identify Prince Of Apostles' Tomb In St. Peter's Basilica Crypt

## Pontiff Buried In Outside Grave In Rome

Vatican City (NC)—After his martyrdom, in the year 67 of the Christian era, St. Peter was buried in a common outside grave along the road leading up Vatican Hill.

The grave was not laid to rest in a sarcophagus or a mausoleum. It was located in exactly the same spot that has been indicated by Christian tradition through 19 centuries.

This spot has been held sacred and has been venerated without interruption, virtually since the time of St. Peter's martyr death. And this spot is today beneath the Papal altar of St. Peter's Basilica.

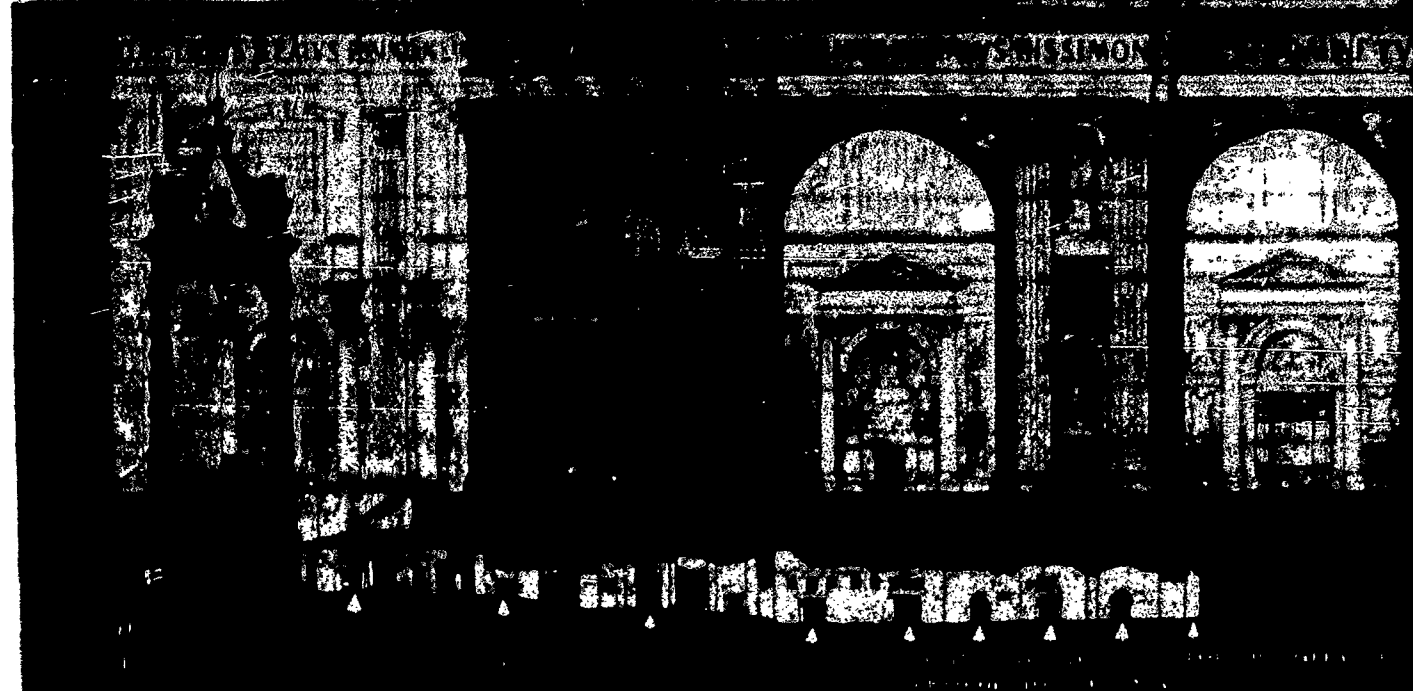
This information has been fully substantiated in two volumes just presented to His Holiness Pope Pius XII. They contain the illustrated record of the archaeological findings during the excavations of the past ten years beneath the crypt of St. Peter's.

The volumes were presented to the Pontiff by Magr. Ludwig Kaas, secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Basilica of St. Peter, and four archaeologists who carried out the work under his direction. The scientists were the Revs. Antonio Ferrua, S.J., and Engelbert Kirshbaum, S.J., Prof. Enrico Jost and Architect Bruno Apolloni-Quatt.

The "CONFESSION" of St. Peter — and in particular the bronze-grilled niche set into the base of the Papal altar—remains vindicated as a veritable marker over the spot of St. Peter's burial.

Beneath this niche is the grave of St. Peter. It was there, too, according to the official report, that "scattered and mixed with earth, some human bones were found which have been carefully collected." (It is recalled that a year ago the Pope, referring to this discovery of human bones at the side of the tomb, declared: "It is impossible to prove with certainty that they belong to the body of the Apostle.")

The Confession — known to every visitor to St. Peter's Bas-



This large cutaway drawing shows the upper and lower grottoes under St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, and gives an idea of the delicate task of excavating which the workmen encountered during the past ten years in their search for the bones of St. Peter, directly under the altar.

Traditional location of the bones of the Prince of the Apostles, buried there about A.D. 66. Immediately under the floor of the nave are the upper grottoes where the bones were buried, dating back to 16th century. Lower grottoes comprised the Roman pagan cemetery on Vatican Hill, the tombs of the ancient families. (from a Diagram by Mr. A. Leydenfrost) (NC Photos).

of the rather steep slope of a hill, facing southwards. The excavators did not find any sarcophagus or remains of a mausoleum containing the relics of St. Peter. This fact is explained by Osservatore Romano in his review of the official report. Few tombs have remained unopened throughout history, says the Vatican City daily — particularly the tombs of persons who left fame or infamy behind them.

"Yet," Osservatore continues, "their ruins remain inaccessibly. And that is what we see today — in a manner which is scientifically unquestionable — of the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles."

"The excavations reveal," Osservatore continues, "that right here under the Altar of the Confession, lie in the bare earth tombs and graves which . . . must be definitely dated as belonging to the second half of the first century. These tombs, and a small area before them, have remained remarkably intact when, from the beginning of the second century, a great number of pagan mausoleums . . . invaded the whole zone, lined along both

### British Catholics Gain 25,000

London — (RNS) — Roman Catholics in England and Wales increased by 25,000 to 2,837,700 during the past year, according to estimates in the Catholic Directory for 1952.

Largest Catholic increase was shown in the Westminster archdiocese, with 234,000 Catholics. Conversions to Catholicism numbered just over 11,000.

### Leftist Paper Raps Canada Nuns Fate

London — (NC) — The treatment of the Canadian nuns at Canton by the Chinese communists roused a general wave of indignation in Britain.

The Daily Mirror, mass-circulation picture paper with left wing views, printed a surprisingly frank leader on the subject on its back page under the heading, "So this is Communism."

"Not everyone, by any means, would have been prepared to label the communist regime in China as totally evil," it declared.

"But a sympathetic view is no longer possible. In every nation not sunken under communist barbarism there will be disgust at the shameful and cynical plotting of Christian women whose only crime is to have devoted themselves to relieving the misery of the Chinese people—the sort of duty that Chinese leaders traditionally do not bother about.

"CHILDREN MAY die in the street without awakening Chinese consciences. But when they are picked up by pitying foreigners and die instead in an orphanage the communist conscience is aroused to organize mobs and cry 'murder.' The Canadian nuns, sentenced by a howling rabble described as a People's Court in Canton, are victims of a campaign to spread hate against 'imperialists.' This technique of the mass trial as political propaganda is not a Chinese invention. It follows the pattern made familiar by the communists in Russia and Eastern Europe.

"If the leaders of China object to foreigners trying to help the Chinese people they could politely expel the foreigners from their communist paradise. But that would be to miss the chance of making scapegoats for the deliberate manufacture of hatred.

Communism has asked the world to believe that it is the hope of progressive humanity. It has proved on the contrary that neither humanity, nor decency, nor the simple safety of any individual is respected where it holds power. Its deeds are evil historical and archeological and its mind reactionary. It is the death of any kind of civilization."

THE EXCAVATIONS have shown that — although veneration of the tomb continued without interruption — all the alterations of the Constantinian basilica, and the ultimate demolition and the construction of the present basilica took place without any examination into the historical and archeological content of the original Constantinian shrine.

AS A MATTER of fact, the place is so narrow that it has been found impossible to obtain a photograph that could give an overall idea of the grave's position. Only various particulars of component parts have been photographed.

It is regarded as certain here that this hallowed spot will never be open to the general public, because of the extremely difficult access, the tight space and the danger of irreparable damage to the precious relics.

The same goes, for the present at least, for the other excavations in the immediate vicinity. There, too, only very small groups of persons can be admitted. Public visits simply cannot be arranged safely and conveniently.

THROUGH 19 centuries, through most varied and radical structural changes, the veneration of the Apostle's tomb was perpetuated at this spot," writes Osservatore. "From the time when the body of St. Peter was buried by his faithful disciples in a humble tomb in the bare earth on Vatican Hill, until our own day.

"Such persistence, established as it is by the findings of the excavations, may, indeed, be regarded as a new proof for the indefeasible nature of the Redeemer's promise to St. Peter: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

The archaeological labors brought to light not only evidence of later Christian burials all around the site of the St. Peter's tomb, but also evidence of masonry and ornamental work undertaken by the early Christians to set apart and adorn the Apostle's tomb. At one time the place was faced with a small stone wall and provided with an ornamental niche to indicate the exact spot. Traces of carved columns were found to allow an imaginary reconstruction of the site.

### Holy See Issues Scientific Report On Peter's Tomb

Vatican City — (NC) — The reports on the excavations beneath St. Peter's Basilica which have been presented to His Holiness Pope Pius XII consist of two volumes bearing the title: "Explorations Under the Confession of St. Peter in the Vatican, Executed During the Years 1940-1949."

Identified as a publication of the Holy See itself — not one of the Vatican Publishing House — the two volumes were prepared in cooperation with the Italian government printing office, since the Vatican printing plant is not equipped for the difficult reproduction of the photographs and other illustrations. The first edition consists of 1,500 copies.

The first volume of the set contains 273 pages with an index and a nomenclature appendix, listing the great number of coins found during the excavations. The fact that the majority of these coins was found around and above the tomb of the Apostle is taken as added evidence for the long and uninterrupted veneration which has continued at this place from the days before Emperor Constantine down to modern times.

The second volume contains 169 tables of illustrations and photographs besides 17 pages of text.

### Space Prohibits Public From Apostle's Grave

Vatican City — (NC) — While the archeologists digging beneath St. Peter's basilica have succeeded in identifying the spot where the Prince of the Apostles was buried, only few will be able to see it.

The location of the Apostle's grave — surrounded by many veritable layers of ancient masonry — has made it impossible to arrange a suitable place for viewing it. It has been explained here.

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### RING IN THE NEW!

Near East friends made this child and many others, old and young, happy at Christmas time. So they wish you, from full hearts, a bright New Year of 1952. This picture tells a plain story, the short and simple annals of the poor. Our orphans, our old folk, our blind, our lepers, our missionaries were made happy in 1951 by you. Now they struggle on through another year. They know what those dollar-a-month Clubs mean — BASILIANS for their schools, MONICA GUILD for their humble chapels, MARY'S BANK for their Sisters, CHRYSTOSTOMS for their native priests, the DAMIEN LE PEPRE FUND and ORPHAN'S BREAD for them. They want 1952 to be bright for you. They know you will make it bright for them by joining one of these Clubs.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF ENROLLING A SOLDIER BOY IN KOREA, TO ASSURE HIM OF THE DAILY MASSES OF OUR NEAR EAST SISTERS? WE CAN SEND HIM OUR BEAUTIFUL GIFT CARD, SAYING YOU HAVE DONE SO. ANNUAL ENROLLMENT IS ONLY \$1. PERPETUAL IS \$20. 15,000 MASSES ARE OFFERED YEARLY FOR OUR MEMBERS.

"CHAPEL OF THE MONTH CLUB" We know that it will be hard to obtain \$2,000, which the poor people of HUALA, a little mountain town of Lebanon, beg for a modest chapel. Every little bit helps.

A DOLLAR FOR THE MISSIONS WILL BRING YOU OUR PAMPHLETS. HAVE YOU READ "SILVER THREADS" AND "A NATION IN EXILE." OUR LATEST?

Miracles never cease. Now the BASILIAN SISTERS of Lebanon call themselves "the flying missionaries." That they are. And they ask very little money to help them in their journeys.

to abandoned little hill towns. They go to these out of the way mountain villages to teach Christ. Can you help us to give them \$300, which they need so badly?

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY, JANUARY 6, IS THE FEAST OF THE THREE KINGS WHO BROUGHT SPRINGLESS GIFTS TO THE FEET OF THE BABE. WHEN YOU DO THIS, YOU MAKE EVERY DAY EPIPHANY FOR HIM AND FOR HIS PEOPLE.

STEPHEN MARTYRS We have just celebrated the Feast of St. Stephen, the first Martyr. Can you adopt Stephen Iseandar, in his first year at St. Cyril's Seminary at Gizeh, Egypt, in the shadow of the pyramids? You can pay \$600 in any installments over these years to come. He will be your own missionary priest.

HOLY HEARTS Sister Joan of Arc is in her first year of novitiate with the Sisters of the Holy Hearts at Bikfaya, Lebanon, and she will need \$150 for each of the two years of her preparation. Can you make her your adopted daughter in Christ?

"WHO GIVES TO THE POOR, MAKES A LOAN TO GOD"

Near East Missions Francis Cardinal Spellman, President  
Mgr. Thomas J. McMahon, Nat'l Sec'y  
Mgr. Joseph F. Connolly  
Vary Rev. Andrew Regash  
Rev. Wm. Keller Dunn

Send all communications to: Catholic Near East Welfare Association  
480 Lexington Ave. at 48th St. New York 17, N. Y.

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Hong Kong — missionaries join responsible Church. The list includes 18 Bishops and Arc of them American. The four Bishops American Missionaries. The list carries one Canadian-born other Canadian — also includes 22 It mans, 41 French n Belgians, three I two Irish priests, and one Polish nu

THE NAMES of Iowa and Canada and of the other I and Archbishops Americans: B. Cote of Suroh, Lawrence, Mass. Ford of Kaying Maryknoller, Ren of Wuchang, a Fri umet, Mich., and er of Chowsun, a Lindsay Nebr

Also Msgr. Eug Prefect Apostolic and native of San Revs. Paul (Lbi Pittsburgh; Ray M.M. of Miami Thornton, S.J. of Fulgence Gross, t ha; Sigfried S.J. of Santa Ba old Rigney, S.V and Brother ) S.V.D. of Waster Joan Marie Inulier of the B Canadian: B O'Gara of Yuar from Ottawa; Prevost, Prefec Lintung and ( Missioner from Reva. Arcneus of Montreal. O.F.M. of Three Lauzon, S.J. of Begin, S.J. of Philippe Que treat.

Also Sisters of Ste Marie Germaine Que; Victor o (with Canadian Fol of La Baie Alex and Ray Hannard.

Italian Archb ops: Archbisho chio, O.F.M. o Luke Capozzi, O. and Bishops O.F.M. of Sa