

# Yugoslavia Breaks Off With Vatican

## Tito Regime Seen Barring 'Red Hat' To Abp. Stepinac

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### 'All Wondered At Things Told By Shepherds'

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EVERYTHING WAS RIGHT AND everything was wrong on the night that Christ was born. All that happened at Bethlehem on the first Christmas happened the way God planned it. Nothing happened the way the world would have expected it, if it had known. All was right for God and all was wrong for the world.

The whole story of Christ's birth at Bethlehem was all God's own doing, even the least details. Scores of poets have dreamed stories of gods walking the earth but the maddest poets in their maddest hours never dreamed anything like what actually happened at Bethlehem.

NO SAGE HAS EVER spun a tale to match the story whispered by the Shepherds to their neighbors in the early darkness of the first Christmas morning. "This day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord."

If men had been allowed to arrange for the birth of God's Son into the world, we can suspect the event would have been rather commonplace in its circumstances.

No doubt men would have chosen a regal castle rather than a rude cave as the stage for Christ's advent. Men would have arrayed the new born infant in soft garments and cradled him in royal cushions. There would have been no Joseph who became a father without gaining fatherhood. There would have been no Virgin-Mother who gained motherhood without losing virginity.

If it had known, the world would have greeted the Babe of Bethlehem with all worldly pomp. There would have been the fanfare of trumpets and a gathering of the Lords of the earth. But there would have been no Shepherds. Certainly they would not have been the first on the scene to greet the Saviour of the world.

GOD, HOWEVER, PLANNED things differently. The Shepherds are almost the best part of the Christmas Story after, of course, the Mother and Child.

Crude, ignorant and ill-mannered were these herdsmen who lived a lonely, nomadic life on the plains with their flocks. They were despised as outcasts, even reputed as thieves, by the Scribes and Pharisees, the intellectual and social rulers of the day. Rough and self-reliant, these rustic plainmen were as ready to raise their clubs against a suspicious stranger as they were ready in repelling wolves from their sheep.

Who would choose these lowly, ill-reputed men for the honor of being the first to hear of the Saviour's birth. God did choose them for such a role. The Shepherds, outcasts from all polite company, were the first ones ushered into the secret-court of the Son of God.

KEEPING THE NIGHT WATCHES over their flocks, these forgotten men never suspected what was happening behind their backs in the little town of Bethlehem. Nothing much ever happened there.

But suddenly an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear.

And the angel said to them: "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger."

AND SUDDENLY THERE was the angel and a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the Shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us."

And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in the manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard wondered; and at those things told them by the Shepherds.

Here we see the divine humor of Christmas. On the night Christ was born all the sages and seers were fast asleep in their beds. Only the simple Shepherds were awake to what was going on in Bethlehem. Here is the best joke Heaven ever played on those whose minds are proud. The first to corner God in a cave were not scientists but simpletons. The men who smelled of sheep, not the men who smelled of intellectual snobbery, were the first to congratulate world's proudest Mother in her proudest hour.

THE GLOOMY FREETHINKERS and the angry atheists have never really recovered from the shock of the first Christmas. Modern skeptics still scream that Bethlehem is all wrong. Tired athletes still try to blot out the memory of Bethlehem with speeches and screeds. But how can they know about Bethlehem? They were all asleep on the first Christmas night.

Only the Shepherds entered Bethlehem's cave on the night Christ was born. And they came out to tell the neighbors everything. "And all wondered . . . at those things told them by the Shepherds."

It is easy to see why the Shepherds' story strikes both the Christian and the atheist, one with hope and the other with hate. In both cases it is the same thing—the scene of unkempt, ignorant outcasts stumbling into a cave to be the first to see the Divine Smile on the sacred Face of God!

## Can't Betray My Conscience, Jailed Chinese Girl Says To Mother's Plea To Apostatize

Hong Kong — (NC) — "I can't betray my conscience," a statement has been made and again to her mother Chinese convert girl, who is in a Red Jail for having active in the Legion of the Red Cross. The girl's story was related by two Dominican nuns at Foochow after 4 1/2 days they released their orphanage.

## A Joyous Christmas



(Original Cut-Out by Sister Mary Joan Dorcy, O.P.)

## Entire Orthodox Parish Joins Catholic Church

Akron, O. — (NC) — An entire Orthodox parish of nearly 100 families was received into the Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite here with Bishop Daniel Ivancho of the Pittsburgh Diocese of the Byzantine Rite offering a Solemn Pontifical Mass.

## Midnight Masses On Radio

Observance of the Feast of the Nativity in the Diocese of Rochester will open with Midnight Masses in churches throughout the diocese. Traditional music will be sung at the Masses and carols will be sung prior to the Masses.

Solemn Pontifical Mass will be celebrated Christmas Eve in Sacred Heart Cathedral by His Excellency at midnight. The Bishop will preach the traditional Christmas sermon.

THIS WILL mark the first Christmas Midnight Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Flower City Park since it was elevated by Pope Pius-XI to the dignity of a cathedral.

Assisting the Bishop will be the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Lawrence E. Casey, Cathedral rector, as Assistant Priest; the Rev. Mr. Robert Donovan of St. Bernard's Seminary student body as Deacon; and a Basilian priest as sub-deacon.

Two priests of the Basilian Congregation will serve as Deacons of Honor to the Bishop. The Rev. Francis J. Taylor, assistant pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral will handle arrangements.

Singing of carols prior to the Mass will be done by Sacred Heart Cathedral Men's Choir directed by Raymond J. Eisenauer with Vernon McArdle as organist. The choir will furnish music during the Mass.

WHAM, Rochester, will broadcast the Solemn Pontifical Midnight Mass with the Rev. Edward J. McAniff, assistant at the Cathedral as commentator.

WHAM-TV Christmas Day, Solemn High Mass from Our Lady of Mercy Motherhouse chapel, 9 to 10:15 a.m.

## Pope's Christmas Talk On Radio

Vatican City — (NC) — Following his annual custom, His Holiness Pope Pius XII will broadcast a Christmas Message to the world on the morning of December 24, an announcement by the Vatican said.

## Buffalo Plans Christmas Display

Buffalo, N. Y. — (RNS) — Religious and civic leaders dedicated a life-size Nativity scene in downtown Lafayette Square as part of the annual "Put Christ Back Into Christmas" observance.

## Nativity Scenes In Nine Hotels

Detroit — (RNS) — The Spiritual Development Committee of the Detroit Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women is helping put Christ back in Christmas again this year.

## Anglican Vicar

## Wants Euthanasia, Babies By Permit

London — (NC) — Nation-wide publicity was given to proposals of a Church of England (Anglican) clergyman urging euthanasia for men and women over 70, the sterilization of the "unfit," and babies by permit only.

## DEADLINE ADVANCED

With Christmas coming on Thursday, this year, the news deadline of the Courier Journal will be advanced two days.

## Christmas Tree Owes Debt To 'Great' Pope Gregory

Washington, D. C. — (RNS) — Children owe their beloved Christmas trees to Pope Gregory the Great, a sixth-century churchman who attained sainthood.

This opinion was expressed by the National Geographic Society here in reporting on a historical study it has made of the custom of having Christmas trees.

POPE GREGORY never heard of a Christmas tree during his lifetime (540-604), but he exhorted Christian missionaries not to destroy such pagan customs as were innocent and in accord with Church tenets. He stipulated that these customs were to be woven into the fabric of Christian ceremony where possible.

THE CHRISTMAS tree came to America only a little more than a century ago, the custom being unknown in this country earlier than 1840, the report stated.

Homesick German immigrants first brought their decorated "Tannenbaum" to America where their neighbors admired and copied it, although it was not until after 1850 that the custom really became universal in the northern states. Its spread was much slower in the south.

## 1,046 Missionaries Forced Out Of China In 1952

Hong Kong — (NC) — More than a thousand Catholic missionaries have been forced out of Red China in the first eleven months of 1952, Catholic officials here report.

The actual total is 1,046. It includes both those formally expelled and those who left China because Red restrictions made their presence useless.

The largest, monthly total for 1952 was in May when 167 missionaries were forced out. Only 29 came out of China in November. These included 18 priests, six nuns and five Brothers. Eleven of them were formally expelled.

## Charity Fund Gets \$89,000 Gift

Boston — (NC) — Charitable bequests totaling \$128,684 include a bequest of \$89,023 to the Archbishop Cushing Charity Fund under the terms of the will of the late Mary L. Baker of Brookline filed in Dedham Probate Court.

A bequest of \$2,000 was given to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Boston.

Mrs. Baker was the widow of Benedict J. Baker, former chairman of the board of directors of the Gamewell Corp., the Moore Drop Forge of Springfield, Mass., and the Everlastic Corp.

According to the will, bequests of \$6,132 each go to the Home for Catholic Children, Boston; Catholic Guild for the Blind, Boston; Catholic Charitable Bureau, Boston; and the Holy Ghost Hospital for Incurables, Cambridge, Mass.

## Hong Kong Refugees Supplied Blankets

Hong Kong — (NC) — With the approach of freezing weather, more than 2,000 blankets have been distributed to shivering refugees here by the Catholic Welfare Committee for China.

Belgrade — (RNS) — The Yugoslav Communist regime has broken off diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

Belgrade Radio announced that Deputy Foreign Minister Ales Bebler had handed to Msgr. Silvio Oddi, charge d'affaires of the Papal Nunciature here, a note asking the Holy See to withdraw its diplomatic representative.

The Belgrade station said the reason for the diplomatic rupture was "the Vatican's interference in Church-State relations in Yugoslavia."

(Shortly after the announcement, the Rome Radio quoted a Vatican spokesman as saying "there is sorrow but no surprise in the Vatican at the Yugoslav government's decision.")

The Yugoslav move followed by less than 24 hours a speech by Premier Marshal Tito bitterly attacking the Holy See.

The speech, made at a meeting of railway workers at Smederevka Polanka, a Serbian village, climaxed an anti-Vatican campaign that has been in progress for several months.

ACCORDING TO Belgrade Radio reports of the speech, Marshal Tito accused the Holy See of stirring up British bias against his scheduled visit to England in March.

Tito charged that the Vatican, pursuing a pro-Western policy, was trying to weaken Yugoslavia's international position. And he denounced the elevation of Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac of Zagreb to the rank of Cardinal as "a heinous gesture toward Yugoslavia" and an "insult."

Marshal Tito said that during his English visit he would make "a personal appeal" to British, Canadian and American churchmen who have asked their governments to protect Yugoslavia's anti-Communist position.

The Premier vowed that Cardinal-archbishop Stepinac would never be "restored as Archbishop of Zagreb." He insisted that the Yugoslav Communist regime would not allow the Croat prince to receive the Red Hat of his princely office.

Cardinal-elect Stepinac was Archbishop of Zagreb in 1945 when he was tried on "political charges" by the Tito regime and sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment.

(He was released after serving five years, but now is confined to his native village of Krusko. The regime has prevented him from carrying out his duties, but he is still the Archbishop of Zagreb.)

ACCORDING TO THE Vatican of opposing anti-Yugoslav sentiment in England, Marshal Tito declared.

"The Vatican has moved all the priests and bishops and even the Anglican Church, and now a savage hue and cry is being conducted (in England) against my visit."

"Those circles know that I am coming as the representative of a Socialist country and they want to show their displeasure."

"They think they ought to ask for some concessions — that the sentenced priests should be set free, that they should be given full salaries, that the archbishop should be installed in Zagreb, that he should be given the Cardinal's hat."

"But I am not going to England to make any concessions to those circles. They will not live to see Stepinac installed as Archbishop in Zagreb, I can assure them."

MARSHAL TITO also charged that Archbishop Stepinac always had been a "political prelate." The Yugoslav Premier said that Archbishop's elevation was "an obvious political move" by the Vatican.

The Cardinal-elect has said he does not want to seek any favors of the Communist regime and also fears he would not be allowed back in Yugoslavia if he left the country.

Since Marshal Tito mentioned the Red Hat in the list of concessions he would not make, he may mean that his regime will not permit delivery of the symbol of office to the new Cardinal.

Last month's CBS broadcast from Tito's office mentioned that the Yugoslav Communist regime was planning to send a delegation to the Vatican to discuss the possibility of restoring Stepinac to his office.