

GRETTA PALMER

"Nobody shoots Santa Claus," said Al Smith, predicting election results in the early (or WPA) phase of the New Deal. Well, nobody has actually suggested shooting Santa Claus this year, but the poor old man is in trouble just the same. There is a movement afoot to read Miss Whiskers, red suit and all, out of our holidays.

The Christmas pledge circulated by the National Council of Catholic Men is a much-needed reminder of the true, religious significance of Christmas.

Its ten promises are, every one of them, calculated to bring the world back to the knowledge that it is not "Xmas" that we celebrate on December 25th, but Christ's Mass, in honor of His Own Nativity.

It is a beautiful pledge, from the first words ("I promise to make my Christmas a holy day with Christ...") to the last ("I promise, on this and every day, to give 'Glory to God in the highest,' and to work and pray for 'Peace on earth—to men of good will.'")

But interesting among all the clear and Christian promises

There is a St. Nicholas how- ever — indeed, there are three Sts. Nicholas, two of them popes with highly edifying biographies in the Encyclopedia. (There are also several Blessed Nicholases, who need not detain us here but who make the job of research even more complicated.)

A GOOD CLUE to the Saint for whom we are searching is provided by the NCCM pledge itself, which tells us that St. Nicholas of Bari is our man. This ought to clear up everything — and perhaps it would, except for the fact that St. Nicholas of Bari is also (according to the Catholic Encyclopedia) in preference known as St. Nicholas of Myra.

It is as St. Nicholas of Myra that he is discussed in this paper; it is as Bishop of Myra that your Missal finds room for him. Under that name he has a saint's day, too: December 6.

"Come to know about St. Nicholas," says the Encyclopedia (a fact which must have dawned, by now, on anyone who has entered this page). He died on December 6 in either 345 or 352 — nobody knows which. He was killed under Diocletian. He may or may not have attended the Council of Nicea. In 1087 "Italian merchants paid his body at Myra, bringing it to Bari," says the Encyclopedia, boldly assuming that the laws of God will not

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Who Is Santa Claus?

there are slighting references to Santa Claus, which may well be willed the less liturgically learned of us. Promise 3 tells us that "the real symbols of Christmas are the Star, the Stable and the Crib — not Santa Claus and his reindeer."

Promise 4 speaks of teaching our children that "Santa Claus is the nickname of St. Nicholas, who gave to the poor in honor of Christ."

THE SEARCH for the story of Santa Claus — that unwilling interloper on the Feast of the Nativity — is not quite the cinch it ought to be.

You may search the Catholic Encyclopedia (its Index volume, its volume where Santa should appear and the one where, Claus might logically be found) without discovering a trace of the old man whose replies are ringing bells outside our windows, at every busy street-corner, during these weeks.

You may even begin to believe the words of the song of the 20's, which told us, cynically, that there is no Santa Claus.

No Santa Claus? But the New York Sun has been running the same editorial for 58 years, firmly asserting his young readers that there is a Santa Claus. Where did he come from, and why is he in hiding? For he is in hiding — your Missal will give you no help, no matter how carefully indexed it may be. There is no feast day in the Church dedicated to a certain Saint whose English name begins "Claus."

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invoked by those merchants at this late date.

IN GERMANY, Switzerland and the Netherlands St. Nicholas' feast day is celebrated at the proper time — December 6th — when gifts mysteriously reach all children.

"THIS IS in commemoration of the fact that the true, historic saint once threw, through an open window, the dowry that three young women needed in order to make an honorable marriage. Since then his name has been associated with gifts so secretly bestowed that the donor cannot be thanked.

But how did St. Nicholas turn into Santa Claus and how did December 6th become involved with Christmas? It is only in the United States, and to some extent in England, that this confusion ever has occurred — and this through the fault of no Catholic.

"Santa Claus," says Att-writer's Catholic Dictionary, "is a corruption of the Dutch Sint Klaas, St. Nicholas." The account then makes much of the enigma understandable: "This form of the cult of St. Nicholas of Bari, patron saint of children, was popularized in America by the Dutch puritans of New Amsterdam, who had disguised the popish saint as a nordic magician. It appears to have been introduced into England by Bret Harle."

So now we know: there is a Santa Claus, as the World Telegram and Sun will repeat to its readers again this year.

But, in his present disguise and accompanied by reindeer, he is a native New Yorker and a Protestant, only remotely connected with good St. Nicholas of Myra (a pious resident of Bari) whose proper feast day has already occurred 19 days before the great Feast known as Christmas.

Princess Presents Flowers To Nuns
 Aizu-Wakamatsu, Japan — (NC) — A Japanese princess has sent to the nuns of the Immaculate Conception here a bouquet of flowers "received from citizens on a visit to this city."

The Miss and chrysanthe-muses were placed in the convent church by the nuns. They came from Princess Sotomiko, wife of Prince Chichibu, the heir-apparent of Emperor Hirohito.

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IN CHOW LINE

Leading the chow line at the Enlisted Men's Mess Hall, at the U. S. Naval Station, Subic Bay, P. I., is Archbishop Egidio Vagnoni, Papal Nuncio to the Philippines. His Excellency, who ate turkey with the sailors, was present to confer Confirmation on a group of personnel and dependents instructed by Chaplain Gabriel J. Naughton. (NC Photos).

Ransom Urged For Polish Mothers In Red Slavery
 Edinburgh, Scotland — (NC) — A proposal was made here to use a fund originally intended for a charitable project in Poland to purchase instead the release of Polish mothers and their children from slave camps in Soviet Russia.

The proposal was made by John J. Campbell, a Glasgow Catholic lawyer, at the annual general meeting of the Scottish Polish Society, of which he is president.

THE FUND in question was the Sikorski Memorial Fund which was started before Poland became communist and was intended to build a wing to a children's hospital in Warsaw. It now amounts to \$56,000.

"If I were the sole trustee and had sole discretion about the disposal of the fund," Mr. Campbell said, "I would realize the assets, go down to London and offer the whole sum to Mr. Andrei Gromyko, the Russian ambassador, on condition that he release an agreed number of Polish mothers and their children from the slave camps in Russia."

"The money could not be more usefully employed. It would be a gesture to the Polish nation that we have not forgotten their plight. The possibility of securing even a token release of slaves would be a beacon light of encouragement to the millions of captives existing in the darkness of communist iniquity."

Bad Employer Not Good Catholic Says Cardinal
 London — (NC) — His Eminence Cardinal Bernard Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, told a gathering of businessmen here that "a Catholic who is a bad employer cannot be regarded as a good Catholic."

The Cardinal spoke at the annual dinner of the Association of Catholic Managers and Employers.

"You must be filled with a love of God and to your neighbor," Cardinal Griffin told the group. "Your spiritual life must be strengthened by your frequentation of the Sacraments."

Reminding the businessmen that justice is both the right and the duty of all in industry, he declared:

"Your role is an integral part of Christian social justice. . . . Without a solid spiritual foundation you are wasting your time. Increase the fervour of your spiritual life. Increase your knowledge by study of the Church's social teaching."

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Parish Gains 112 Converts In One Year
 Notre Dame, Ind. — (NC) — 11 Catholic parishes from coast-to-coast would take their cue from St. Augustine's Church in Kalamazoo, the number of converts each year soon would pass the million mark, according to Father John A. O'Brien, of the University of Notre Dame. He helped instruct 27 converts who recently were received into the Kalamazoo parish.

"This new class of 27 brings St. Augustine's total for the year to a record-breaking 112," Father O'Brien said.

The formula for increasing notably the total of converts, according to Father O'Brien, is a fairly simple one: establish an Inquiry Forum in every parish and enlist the help of as many converts as possible. The number of converts is not only doubled or tripled, but the whole parish is imbued with apostolic zeal.

The group reception of 27 converts, culminated a total of 2,800 miles of commuting between South Bend and Kalamazoo by Father O'Brien during the past three months. Twice each week he traveled to the Michigan city where he assisted him in giving instructions in the Catholic Faith.

Holy Name Men
 Chicago — (NC) — His Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, told the Archdiocesan Union of Holy Name Societies that the force of organized Catholic lay action is capable of sanctifying modern society.

South Africa Archbishop Hits Segregation Status
 Cape Town, South Africa — (NC) — Segregation of the non-European races in South Africa has proved "a cruel and expensive failure," and "something constructive has got to be done to bring about any sort of social peace in this country."

So declared Archbishop Denis E. Hurley, O.M.I., of Durban in an address to the Durban Parents' Association in which he charged that white South Africans have been "behaving very much like children in their relations with other races."

HE STRESSED that the solution of the race problem did not depend primarily upon political means, but called for instilling a new public opinion that would look upon non-Europeans as human beings with basic rights.

"We have failed to consider the future, to foresee the consequences of developments taking place under our very noses," Archbishop Hurley said. "Now we are realizing that the days, so to speak, of our happy childhood are past. We can no longer neglect the future and the consequences of our taking non-Europeans into our employ and imparting some education to them."

THE DURBAN prelate insisted that conditions had reached a point where white South Africans had to choose between a solution calling for territorial separation of the races, or the gradual full integration of the Africans into the country's social and economic life.

Archbishop Hurley declared that segregation had meant, in general, "unskilled labor by non-Europeans in return for subsistence, no political rights and severely restricted economic opportunity, haphazard attempts at residential separation, and that inhuman institution, migratory labor, which rips to shreds the whole fabric of African family and social life."

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American Named Bolivian Bishop

Vallean City — (NC) — Father Thomas Joseph Dancy, M.M., United States-born Administrator of the Vicariate Apostolic of Pando, Bolivia, has been named Titular Bishop of Bita by Pope Pius XII, it was announced here.

Bishop-elect Dancy, who will retain his present post, was born at Fort Wayne, Ind., on May 19, 1914, and was ordained a Maryknoll priest at Rome in 1939. First assigned to the Gold Coast, Africa, he was sent to Bolivia in 1942, and became Administrator of Pando in 1945.

License — Half-way house between Liberty and Dictatorship.

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Christmas Dinner

Christmas Dinner
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