

Faith Behind Barbed Wire

Soldiers Cite Missionaries' Courage During Red Death March In Which Scores Died

By FATHER PATRICK O'CONNOR
Seoul, Korea — (NC) — It was halfway through the death march, in the first week of November, 1950.

HAGGARD MEN whispered the act of contrition and waited. Bishop Byrne, tall and worn, rose to his feet and looked around. His lips moved.

For some American prisoners of war, that was the last absolution. According to survivors who have recently described the scene, men died along that march of nearly 400 miles at the rate of one a mile. Those who halted through sickness or collapsed were shot mercilessly.

When the Communists took Catholic foreign missionaries as captives into North Korea, they did not guess that they were bringing spiritual help for prisoners of war.

Red-Freed Nun Returning To Orient

Paris—(NC)—A French nun-surgeon who was released from a Chinese prison last year after successfully operating on a Communist official is returning to the Orient.

Sister Anne Marie Ravet, M.D., of the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis. She will be accompanied by a German nun, Sister Lina Hagele, a nurse who was expelled from China last year.

They will leave for Singapore December 1 and go to a mission in Malaya where they will specialize in medical missionary work among Malaya's large Chinese population.

They could have done far more for the prisoners of war, if the Communists had allowed them by refusing to allow the captive priests and ministers to give spiritual assistance to the prisoners.

Before the Communists put us on the train outside Pyongyang, three of our men died," said Major Nugent. "Monsignor Quinlan was allowed to officiate at the burial. But at no other time were the priests or ministers allowed to do anything for us."

In his group, 356 died of starvation, illness and lack of medical care, apart from those shot in cold blood.

In spite of Communist obstacles, however, the priests managed to minister secretly to the men. A repatriated Korean soldier told how Monsignor Quinlan heard his confession in captivity. It was especially consoling for both, as the man belonged to the monsignor's own flock, in the Columbian territory of Chunchon.

FATHER WILLIAM Booth, Maryknoller from Brooklyn, was caught once, when giving absolution to a prisoner.

"The guards wouldn't let the priests do anything for us, even though we were in the same compound," said Sgt. Edward G. Hays of Garden City, Kans.

Father Booth came in one day and gave me absolution. I was lying on the floor. I made the sign of the cross and the guard saw me. He took Father Booth and me away for questioning.

"The Communists asked me what the sign of the cross meant and why I made it. They hit me with a stick for doing it."

"They were a great inspiration to us," said Lieut. Wadie J. Rountree of Twin City, Ga.

"Monsignor Quinlan told us their average age was 65. What they did was a marvelous feat."

Texas Youth At Boston Meeting



Boston—The Very Rev. John F. Carroll, director of the Catholic Youth Organization for the Boston archdiocese, greets three youths from San Antonio, Tex., who were here for the 2nd National Federation of Diocesan Catholic Youth Councils.

Catholic Youth Condemn Discrimination On Race

Boston — (RNS) — Fifteen hundred delegates to the second National Catholic Youth Convention here condemned racial discrimination as un-Christian.

An adopted resolution said racial segregation and discrimination "are contrary to the Christian belief in the dignity of the human individual as the temple of the soul."

The delegates pledged efforts to eliminate racial discrimination "particularly in education, housing, health care, and in the access to places of public patronage."

KEYNOTE SPEAKER at the convention was Msgr. Joseph E. Schleder of Washington, director of youth work for the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Tito Seizes Food Parcels Sent Cardinal

Gratz, Austria — (NC) — Thousands of food parcels sent from all over Croatia to his Eminence Aloysius Cardinal Stepinac, semi-imprisoned Archbishop of Zagreb, when people heard last summer he was in poor health reportedly never reached him.

It is learned here that more than 3,000 parcels, addressed to Cardinal Stepinac at his parish house in Krasic, where he is confined by Tito, have been confiscated by the communists in the past three months.

The parcels are finding in the parcels moving letters written by country people to Cardinal Stepinac assuring him of their prayers for his recovery.

Pontiff To Open Marian Year In St. Mary Major

Vatican City — (NC) — His Holiness Pope Pius XII will himself observe the opening of the Marian Year by taking part in special ceremonies on Dec. 8 at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. It was authoritatively learned here.

The ceremonies in the world's greatest shrine honoring the Mother of God are expected to consist of a solemn papal blessing of the children of Rome, and the recitation by the Holy Father of a special Marian Year prayer which he himself has composed.

THIS MANNER of ushering in the great year-long observance is regarded as setting the theme of Marian Year and placing the emphasis where the Pontiff himself wants it—namely, on prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary rather than on great solemnities and ceremonies.

Founded in the year 352, and first called the Basilica Liberiana and then Santa Maria ad Nives (Our Lady of the Snows), the Basilica of St. Mary Major has become the largest of the 80 or more Roman Churches dedicated to the Virgin. It claims the distinction of being the most beautiful of the larger churches of Rome.

According to legend, St. Mary Major was founded by Pope Liberian to commemorate a miraculous fall of snow on the Esquiline Hill on August 5, 352. The Pope was said to have had a vision in which the Blessed Virgin revealed she had chosen the spot for her shrine.

THE COMING occasion will be the third on which Pius XII, as Pope, has visited the shrine, one of the four major basilicas which thousands of Holy Year pilgrims remember from their jubilee visits in 1950. It will also be the 14th anniversary of his first pontifical visit there.

On December 8, 1939, the Holy Father went to St. Mary Major to commemorate the 40th anniversary of his first Mass, offered there after his ordination in April, 1899. The Mass was offered in the famous Borgese Chapel, at an altar beneath the historic painting of the Roman Madonna known and venerated as "Salus Populi Romani." In

Half Of U.S. Ignores God, Says Priest

New York — (NC)—With over half the population of the U. S. ignoring God, this is no time "to eat, drink and be merry," a priest declared in a radio sermon.

Sixty million Americans "live as if God did not exist," Father Gerard N. Glynn declared in a Faith In Our Time address, first in a series called "Our Crumbling World." He warned that the world struggle between communism and Christianity calls for a return to the Christian foundations upon which America is based.

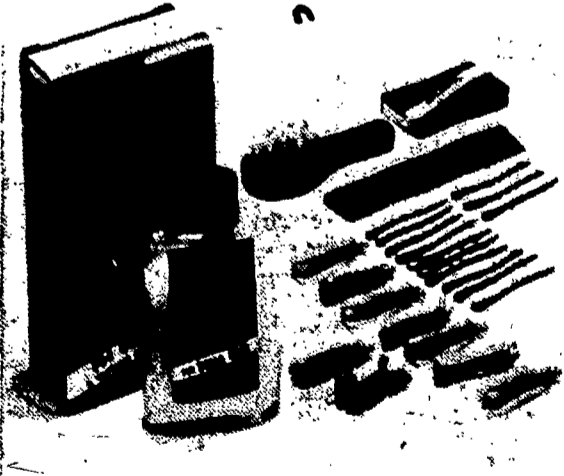
"What has happened to our Christian culture?" he asked. "In a land unquestionably blessed by God, as no other land has ever been, a land built upon the conviction of God's existence and His Providence over man and nations, over half our population is entirely ungrateful and forgetful of His goodness."

"It is imperative that thinking people analyze the situation today before our world crumbles about us," he said.

Father Glynn, director of the Newman Foundation at Washington University, St. Louis, will continue his talks on the Thursdays of November over the Mutual Broadcasting System.

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