

Formosa Priests Taipei, Formosa—(NC)—The Church on this Chinese Nationalist island began the new year with one priest for every 120-odd Catholics. There are 244 priests working on Formosa. Catholics number 30,104.

No Deaths Of Cardinals During '53

Vatican City—(NC)—There has not been a death in the College of Cardinals for over a year. Eleven metropolitan sees were created during 1953.

These two facts highlight the statistical data contained in the 1954 Pontifical Yearbook (Annuario Pontificio) just off the presses here.

THE VATICAN Press released some of these statistics as the first issue of the Yearbook was presented to His Holiness Pope Pius XII. According to long-standing tradition, the copy was presented on the Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome. The presentation was made by Msgr. Giovanni B. Montini, Vatican Pro-Secretary of State.

The Pontifical Yearbook has been published in about its present form for the past 93 years, though it has not always borne the same title. Its origin goes back to 1716. Then it was known simply as "Notizie," an Italian word meaning news or information.

The Yearbook is now the work of the Vatican Secretariate of State and is printed by the Vatican Publishing Office.

The statistical data of the new Yearbook shows that the College of Cardinals has its full complement of 70—the same as last year.

THE VATICAN Press Office release states that the new Yearbook shows a notable increase in the number of prelates who are imprisoned or impeded in their duties behind the Iron Curtain. Among them the Yearbook lists His Eminence Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, Primate of Poland—the fourth Cardinal to suffer from the communists.

The others are Their Eminences Josef Cardinal Ministry, Primate of Hungary; Thomas Cardinal Men, Archbishop of Peking, China; and Aloysius Cardinal Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

Sales Tax Columbia, S. C.—(NC)—A bill to exempt from the South Carolina retail sales and use tax articles bought by churches exclusively for their own use was introduced in the General Assembly here.

Mary's Shrines

LOURDES

By Rev. Henry Atwell

(This is the second of a series of articles describing the great Marian Shrines of Europe. A diocesan pilgrimage now being organized by Father Joseph Cirrincione will visit these famous shrines next April and May.)

After observing Palm Sunday at Fatima, the Rochester Diocesan Pilgrimage will begin the journey to Lourdes in France. While traveling through Spain, they will stop at Saragosa's famous shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar. There our Lady is enthroned behind the main altar of a magnificent church. The statue shows our Lady seated as a Queen, holding the Christ Child.

So ancient is this statue that it has long since turned black with age. Tradition says that the Blessed Virgin appeared at this spot to St. James the Apostle and asked for the shrine—one of the very first apparitions reported about our Lady.

The Pilgrimage will next arrive at Mary's most famous shrine to spend Good Friday and Easter Sunday at Lourdes. From February 11th to July 16, 1858, Our Lady visited this little French village nineteen times. Bernadette Soubirous, child of the poorest family in Lourdes, had gone with her companions to gather fire-wood.

AS THEY PASSED the foul-smelling dumping area near the cave of Massabielle, Bernadette paused a moment and then saw the Lady beautiful beyond compare. "When the vision vanished," she explained, "I was astonished to find myself still on earth."

Bernadette was not sure who the "Lady" was but described her. "She had the looks of a girl of sixteen or seventeen. She was dressed in a white robe fastened at the waist with a blue sash. On her head she wore a veil which fell behind almost to her feet. Her feet were covered partly by her dress, partly by roses colored like the dawn. On her right arm was a Rosary of white beads and the golden chain shone like the roses on her feet. She was alert, young and surrounded by light."

As reports of the vision spread, the civil officials attempted to "forbid miracles" at Lourdes, even boarded up the cave to prevent any further visions. In a short time, however, the order was rescinded and the fence removed.

WHEN THE LADY appeared on February 25th, she asked of Bernadette an act of faith, an act that is always asked of those who are chosen to be instruments of God's will. She told Bernadette to "go and wash and drink in the spring." There was no spring—just dirt and rocks all over! Bernadette looked helplessly about for one, but to no avail. So she scratched the dry dirt; the witnesses thought her out of her wits. A little water oozed up, turned the dirt to mud.

"Wash and drink," the Lady said. And Bernadette scooped up the muddy water, smeared it across her face and gulped it down. Streaked and dripping with muddy water, she continued her conversation with the Lady. The crowd thought that this now proved her mad, that her "visions" were but the imagined dreams of poor demented fool. By the next day, the trickle of water had become a thin stream. Louis Bourriette, a blind stone-cutter, bathed his eyes in the spring-water, and his sight was restored. This was the first of the countless miracles which God has certainly worked at this holy spot.

Again that same day, another came with faith, with her dying baby and plunged him into the little stream. And the baby whom doctors had said was doomed to die was cured in that instant.

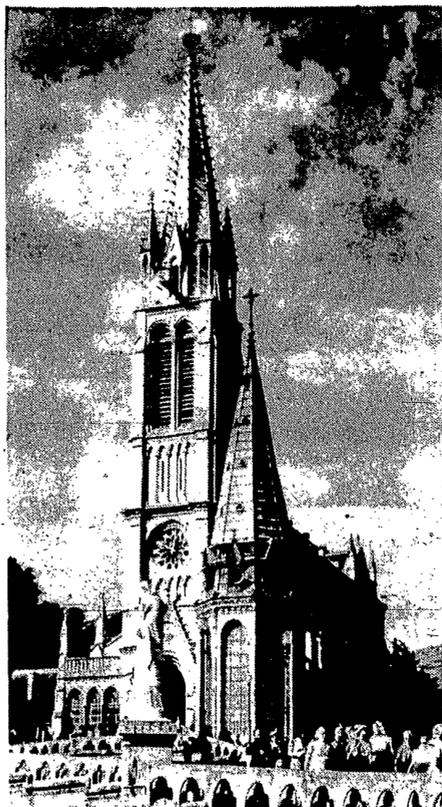
THAT STREAM HAS grown to a little creek as it runs down to the cave where the Lady stood. The wonderful water is now piped into the pools where pilgrims bathe today. There are two sections, one for men, another for women. You wait your turn. As you undress, you are given a white garment and then escorted by two attendants to the pool.

Ahead of you in the line are one of the most serious injured patients, the blind, diseases you never thought existed. As you step into the chilling water, you look up to the wall opposite you to say the prayers inscribed there in the languages of the world. You see the others scoop up this water and drink it; water in the pools is changed but once or twice a year.

THE FIREMEN recalled the "Black Thursday" on which 43 firefighters were injured. The firemen offered prayers of thanks that no men had been killed in the two disasters of a year ago when a train plunged through the floor of Union Station and an explosion shattered a tire warehouse.

Father Thomas B. Dale, Fire Department Chaplain, said the Mass was a spontaneous demonstration of thanksgiving on the part of the firemen.

Fire Chief Millard A. Sutton, one of the most seriously injured in the "Black Thursday" explosion, attended the Mass after six months of confinement in the hospital. Chief Sutton, a non-Catholic, said he hoped to make the thanksgiving Mass an annual event "in reverent recognition of the miracle that not a single life was lost."



The Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes, France, was erected as a memorial to the Blessed Virgin who appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous, a 14-year-old French peasant girl in 1858. Near the basilica is the grotto where many cures have taken place. The basilica and the shrine attract over a million persons annually. This year, Lourdes will be one of the main centers of devotion to the Blessed Virgin in honor of the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

As you leave the pool, you are given your clothes again, but no towel, no time for that, just put on your clothes right over your dripping wet body. But in all these years in which millions have bathed and drunk of this water, there has never been known a case of infection. And the miracles continue to this day for all the world to see just as clear as the print before your eyes.

EACH YEAR, over a million trek to Lourdes—the same as those who came to Christ; the sick and sad and crippled, the blind and deaf and discouraged.

Our Lady had told Bernadette: "I do not promise you happiness in this world, but in the next." That is the price and promise of faith; it is the story of Lourdes.

Hospital Gives Maternity Care Free After 5th Child

Pasadena, Cal.—(NC)—Free care for mother and baby on all maternity cases after the fifth child is a Marian Year maternity project at St. Luke's hospital here and at all hospitals conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange. Any mother who has a sixth child even though it's her first visit at St. Luke's, is a non-paying guest of the hospital. Mary and Harry Hurst, who recently had their seventh baby at St. Luke's said they were "flabbergasted" when hospital officials presented them with an itemized bill—room and board, bassinets for baby William, delivery room, medications—and everything marked Paid in Full!



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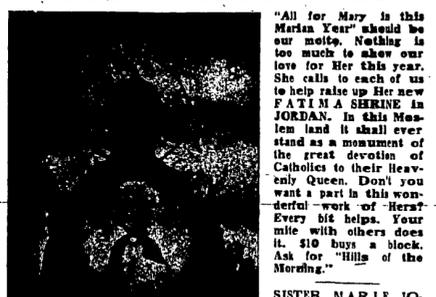
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ST. ANTHONY'S BREAD Always goes to help the poor wherever they may be. The poor Catholics in the village of Thavankary, India (most of them are converts) have no funds to help the priest replace their chapel, named after St. Anthony, which is crumbling under their feet and too small for their increased numbers. We need \$2,000 to do it. Your mite buys a brick; \$100, the altar.

FARES is a young Lebanese lad who has five years more of training for the priesthood at the Maronite Seminary at Mar Akba. It costs \$100 yearly to train him. Won't you help us find this sum for him? Give weekly \$2, monthly \$8.35, or all now.

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