

Vietnamese Risk Lives In Flight For Freedom

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his little family group was towered by three. His sons' wife and two children were lost in the perilous sea on the way to Tra-ly.

A YOUNG MAN holding a six-month-old baby stood in the sunlight outside a tent. This was his sister's child, now an orphan. The young mother had drowned struggling to reach Tra-ly in the dark of early morning. The father had died three months ago.

Another Tra-ly survivor told me in a Saigon refugee camp that he knew of two women drowned. They had tried to escape when the Vietnam attempt failed to halt an outgoing boat.

"We left our house about three on Sunday afternoon and walked three hours toward the shore," said Thomas Chihnh, aged 39. "After dark about six o'clock we started walking into the sea toward the island. We walked until the water came up here." He raised the level of his hand to the neck.

"Then we got on a raft that brought us the rest of the way. We reached the island at eleven that night. There were 17 of us. Four were children." Rafts which the Vietnam would not allow to leave from shore walked farther out and took many of the people over deep water.

"There were about 40 persons on each raft," said the refugee. "We were all sitting in water."

"These rafts usually carry only two or three fishermen."

Tra-ly is never really dry land. The sea covers it at high tide. Refugees picked up by French navy ships had told of people going out to Tra-ly where they were in danger of drowning. The sandbank is inside territorial waters, but any ship is legally entitled to go anywhere to save lives.

BRADY ADMIRAL Jean Marie Quierville promptly ordered his ship to go in and rescue the people. He informed the International Commission for Armistice Supervision what he was doing and why.

The ships came in as close as possible, played searchlights on the sandbank and sent in the launches. French sailors risked their lives rescuing people as the falling sea washed across dark Tra-ly.

After three nights they had picked up about 5,000. They continued until everybody within reach had been taken off.

Faced by overwhelming tasks, fearing that the people wanted to depart, the International Commission at length asked the Vietnam to allow French ships or trucks to carry out refugees from the Northern zone or at least to permit a mobile team of the Commission to go by French ship or helicopter to Tra-ly immediately.

THE VIETMINH refused, but they offered to allow the commission team—which ought to be free to go anywhere, any time—go by road to the coast near Tra-ly after a 24-hour delay for "preparations."

So far it is now known what, if anything, was left for the team to see by then.

Those refugees who escaped could not bring even the bundles and baskets that most other refugees carry from the homes they have sacrificed. It is still uncertain how many drowned between the coast and Tra-ly.

Bishops' Statement

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By His Sacrifice, we are redeemed from our sins. The Cross of Calvary stands for that great love which throughout the centuries has drawn men powerfully to Christ—that love by which He laid down His life for His friends.

THE MOST PERFECT revelation of God to man is made in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is Emmanuel, God with us. Just as the Creator brought light and order to the ancient chaos at the dawn of creation, so His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, restored light and order to a world sunk in error and evil. This mission and message of Christ complete the earlier, partial revelations of God, and launch the world on the Christian era.

The era of Christ! In the sign of the Cross, Christ conquers the paganism which had enslaved mankind, and He sets man's feet on the highroad of Faith, Hope, and Love; the highroad of happiness through harmony with God, with fellowman, and with himself. Jesus Christ restored meaning and purpose and love to human life; He warmed and illumined our life where before it had been cold and dark. He rescued man from the wild wandering and the black despair of the atheistic materialism of that day. In this day of the new paganism, we Christians can again triumph in the sign of the same Cross of Christ.

Christ is the Prophet and the Teacher, in whose doctrines are the truths which inspire and satisfy the souls of men. He speaks to us with power and authority. He has the words of life eternal.

Christ is the Priest, the Mediator. His is the great Atonement.

By His Sacrifice, we are redeemed from our sins. The Cross of Calvary stands for that great love which throughout the centuries has drawn men powerfully to Christ—that love by which He laid down His life for His friends.

And Christ is King, the Lord of Heaven and earth, whose Kingdom endures for ever and ever. He is the Lawgiver, laying down the code of conduct that binds the consciences of men. He is the Judge, merciful and just, Who rewards the good and punishes the evil. He is the Ruler Who reaches from end to end mightily and disposes all things well. From Him, alone do earthly magistrates receive their power of governance. He is the King of Kings, Worship and obedience, order and discipline, filial love—these He exacts from His subjects, but in return He gives them His Father's love and His Father's home, rich largesse of grace and abiding peace of soul. Truly, to serve Him is to reign.

This, then, is what we mean by the Faith: this is the truth about God and Jesus Christ. This is why we repeat without ceasing that God and His Christ afford the answer to all our problems, and provide the solution to all our difficulties. Those who have never known the Christian religion, or who have forgotten it in its fullest and truest teaching by the Catholic Church, should turn to it now, and examine its credentials. It is the answer to their quest.

THE WESTERN world, with its law of fraternal charity, and

the humane culture, was created by this Faith in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. At its best, our civilization was the fine flower of the Christian Faith. Now that the West has fallen from its former greatness, let us recognize that it is because so many have fallen away from the Faith, or have denatured it by dilution and compromise. We have fallen down before idols of flesh and of gold. It is not the True Faith that has failed us; it is we who have failed the Faith. A weak and vacillating Christianity, a partial, truncated Christianity, paying lip service to God and to the spirit, but devoted in practice to man and to matter, can never triumph in the battle with total, determined materialism.

Our nation, if it is to survive, must recover and renew its Christian Faith. Here alone can we find purpose and the present confusion; strength instead of weakness; a dynamic zeal to overcome the difficulties of life; an uplifting, soul-stirring motive for the fight to the death against the total materialist enemy. It is

the sign of Christ's Cross our ancestors in the Faith conquered the ancient paganism and gave mankind the golden ages of the Christian era. We in our day shall conquer the new paganism, atheistic materialism, in the same triumphant sign.

SIGNED BY the members of the Administrative Board, National Catholic Welfare Conference, in the name of the Bishops of the United States:

Edward Cardinal Mooney, Archbishop of Detroit; Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago; Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York; James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles; Earl J. Alter, Archbishop of Cincinnati; Patrick A. O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington; John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., Archbishop of Philadelphia; Joseph E. Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis; Francis P. McGuire, Archbishop of Baltimore; John J. Kelly, Archbishop of San Francisco; Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston; Michael J. Brady, Bishop of Columbus; Matthew F. Brady,

Cardinal Spellman's Father Beats Odds

Abington, Mass. (NC)—William S. Spellman, 66-year-old father of His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, has collected "several thousand dollars" after having defied 100,000 to 1 odds.

Mr. Spellman's mother had life insurance policy and collected full payment from the Union Central Life Insurance Company. The company states the odds that she would live in 194,000 to 1. She is the Cardinal's father. Mr. Spellman is in good health and remains here with his mother and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. George Goetz.

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