

4 YEARS IN A RED HELL

Through the courtesy of the Chicago Sun-Times, the Courier-Journal presents the story of the imprisonment and torture of Father Harold W. Rigney, S.V.D.



Artist Milton Conitt depicts Father Rigney's arrest by Red police in Peiping, China. Handcuffed, the priest stands before the parish children with conflicting emotions: Fear of the Reds and love for Father Rigney. Some are crying, but some fearfully close their hands.

Father Rigney Tells Own Story

By THE VERY REV. HAROLD W. RIGNEY, S.V.D.
Diocese Word Missionary

"You are arrested as an American spy," said a woman member of the Sepo (security police of Communist China) who had accompanied the police to my living quarters where they had handcuffed me. As she spoke, she held up to my view a piece of paper with Chinese characters on it.

I was arrested as a spy—an American spy! For five years I had fought the Chinese Communists to protect the Fu Jen Catholic University of Peiping from their infiltrations and destructive tactics. I had tried to preserve this university as a citadel of learning and culture and to keep it from being taken over by the Communist government.

These were my "crimes," the real reasons for my arrest.

Day Of Arrest: July 25, 1951

It happened on July 25, 1951, the day when a decision was expected on whether the cease-fire talks at Kaesong, Korea, would resume.

I had felt unwell and had taken a long rest after my noon dinner. At 3:40 p.m., I arose, intending to listen to the 4 o'clock Voice of America broadcast for the latest news on the cease-fire talks.

As I started to dress, I was startled by the sound of many men running near my living quarters. Alarmed, I looked through a window and saw helmeted policemen with tommy-guns surrounding my residence.

Six of them formed in a line near the entrance to

my quarters, their rifles pointed at the doors and windows. I knew then that I was going to be arrested. I had been expecting this since the Communist armies had occupied Peiping on Feb. 1, 1949—and especially since the "People's" government of China had taken over Fu Jen University.

I was dressing as fast as I could when I heard a pounding on my door. I opened it and in a moment my modest quarters were filled with armed Sepo men.

Two men seized me by the arms while others searched my bedroom and toilet. One of the guards took from me a silver medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a gift of my brother, that I wore around my neck. As I didn't have a shirt on, they got down from my chest of drawers and gave it to me. I was then handcuffed with my hands behind my back.

Showing Cardlike Piece Of Paper
The policeman then showed me the cardlike piece of paper and spoke in Chinese and English.

"You are arrested as an American spy," she said. To this I could only smile wryly. Another policeman took my picture.

My brain was flooded with thoughts and conjectures. Perhaps the Korean cease-fire talks had been called off; perhaps a state of declared war existed between Red China and my country, and, as a consequence, I was being arrested by the Communists in retaliation against the United States.

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LAST WEEK PAID CIRCULATION 53,536

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Long Live Christ The King! Shanghai Bishop Subjected To Mock Trials, Red Torture

(NY)—Bishop Ignatius Kung of Shanghai has already undergone two communist "trials," according to an eye-witness account published here.

The account brings out the well known pattern of a courageous victim and his slow mental and physical breakdown under imprisonment and torture. A description of the "trials" is given in Fides, a missionary news agency published here. The Chinese communist press has so far not given any report on them.

BISHOP KUNG'S heroic conduct made the first "trial" a triumph for the Church and a failure for the Reds, the Fides account said.

After his arrest in September of last year, Fides stated, the bishop was taken to the college of Zikawei, near Shanghai, where a crowd of 4,000 persons had been gathered. The majority of them were Catholic students and Christians of the Zikawei area.

Bishop Kung was garbed in Chinese clothes and his hands were tied behind his back, the account continued. He was forced to mount a platform and listen to an interminable list of charges read by Red officials.

Then he was pushed to the microphone and ordered to confess his "crimes" and ask par-

Nuns Jailed In Shanghai

(NY)—The Mother Superior of Shanghai's municipal General Hospital and three other Franciscan Missionaries of Mary stationed at Sacred Heart Hospital in the same city have been arrested, it was learned here.

The nuns, all of them Chinese, had refused to bring charges against Bishop Ignatius Kung of Shanghai, whom the Reds jailed last fall.

don in the presence of his people, Fides said. Without a moment's hesitation Bishop Kung shouted three times into the microphone: "Long live Christ the King!"

THE BISHOP'S dramatic gesture electrified the crowd. They cried: "Long live our Bishop." They repeated the cry once and then the Red guard fell on the bishop, twisted his arms and silenced him. He was shoved into a waiting police car and rushed back to prison, Fides said.

The second "trial" took place in the first part of January, the report continued. However, this time the Reds had "conditioned" their victim and the "trial" came off as prearranged.

"I was on the point of fainting," the eye-witness wrote, "when I saw Christ during His Passion in the person of the Bishop. For three hours the Red-ruled rabble, clamored against the bishop. But I could not see the doctility of his expression. Not one word came from his mouth."

TOWARD THE end of his ordeal he put his hand to his heart.

"I trembled and prayed: 'Dear Lord, give him courage and strength.' He remained faithful to the end.

Five semangians and two Redguards had been forced to become his accusers. After a long and exhausting imprisonment their minds were deploded. The "trial" was a terrible thing."

Brazil Chief Attends Inaugural Mass

(Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)—(NC)—Before taking office as chief executive of the world's largest Catholic country, Brazil's new president, Juscelino Kubitschek, and his family attended Mass in Sao Joaquin Chapel here.

Celebrant of the Mass, which was attended by all members of the president's new cabinet, was His Eminence Jaime Cardinal de Barros Camara, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro.

A few hours later President Kubitschek, 53-year-old grandson of a Czech immigrant and a well-known surgeon before he entered politics, was inaugurated.

LAST MINUTE selections of Valentine Gil items that are sure to impress your sweetheart and not depress your check book, see at Wm. S. Thayer Jeweler, 312 E. Main Street, N.Y. 101—Adv.

Abbot Helmstetter Elevated In Solemn Cathedral Rites



Bishop James E. Kearney confers blessing on Abbot Walter Helmstetter "by the imposition of our hands" according to ancient church ritual at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Wednesday morning.



Abbot Helmstetter receives crozier from master of ceremonies to begin procession through cathedral at end of Mass to give his blessing to those attending. Abbots Chassagne and Futterer accompany him.

The Rt. Rev. Dom M. Walter Helmstetter, O.S.O., received an Abbot's blessing from His Excellency, Bishop James E. Kearney in solemn rites held Wednesday morning in Sacred Heart Cathedral.

The nearly three hour ceremony mixed monks garbed in medieval robes with modern radio and photograph equipment, as the rites were recorded for broadcast and press.

Abbot Helmstetter was elected head of the Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady of the Genesee at Fitzard, N. Y., to succeed the late Rt. Rev. Dom M. Gerard McGinley, O.S.O., founder and first Abbot of the Abbey. Abbot McGinley died Sept. 18, 1955.

DURING THE impressive ceremony conducted by Bishop Kearney, Abbot Helmstetter received the mitre, crozier, gloves, and ring, pontifical symbols of his high office.

Assisting Abbot Helmstetter were the Rt. Rev. Abbot Anthony Chassagne, O.S.O., of Our Lady of Meekin Abbey, South Carolina, and the Rt. Rev. Abbot Edmund Futterer, O.S.O., of St. Joseph's Abbey, Massachusetts.

His Excellency, Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence E. Casey was in the cathedral sanctuary for the blessing rite.

Also attending were three Trappist monks and a Benedictine archdeacon as also monastic and laymen of the Rochester diocese, religious communities, and from other dioceses.

Trappist monks who elected Abbot Helmstetter as their superior for life in October, 1955, came from the Fitzard Abbey to witness the blessing of their Abbot.

At the conclusion of the Mass, the 72 monks knelt before the new Abbot to pledge their homage to him.

FR. RUS BEMMOND, Bishop Kearney stated that the priest and people of the Rochester di-

ocese are "richer in our lives because of the unselfish lives of these monks."

"As the parish priests go their rounds, their work for the salvation of souls is fortified day and night by the sacrifice and prayers of these Trappists," he said.

The Bishop said that there was a "spiritual relationship" between the priests he ordains each year in the sanctuary of the cathedral, and the new Abbot who received the solemn blessing in that same sanctuary.

Bishop Kearney concluded his talk by calling the rite "a privilege for me to bless this young priest who takes upon his shoulders the responsibility of the office of Abbot."

ABBOT HELMSTETTER is 33 years of age, one of the youngest Trappists ever elected to serve as an abbot.

Assisting Bishop Kearney as officers of the Mass were the Rt. Rev. Msgr. James C. McAniff, V.G., assistant priest; the Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Brinker, of St. Mary's, Ohio, and the Rev. John M. Salter, of Dayton, Ohio, deacons of honor.

Father Salter is pastor of St. Agnes Church, Dayton, Ohio, home parish of Abbot Helmstetter before he entered the Cistercian Order. Father Salter married the late parents of Abbot Helmstetter and baptized Dom Walter.

Deacon of the Mass was the Rev. Joseph A. Cirrindone and subdeacon was the Rev. Charles R. Reynolds.

The Rev. Edward McAniff was master of ceremonies.

St. Bernard's Seminary Choir, directed by the Rev. Charles J. McCarty, sang the Mass.

Minor officers of the Mass were students of St. Bernard's Seminary.

PRESENT IN THE sanctuary were the Rt. Rev. Arch-Abbot Dom M. Bonaventura, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad Abbey, Indiana, and the following Rt. Rev. Cistercian Abbots: Dom Phillip O'Connor of New Melleray, Dubuque, Iowa; Dom Pascoe Gaboury of Oca, Canada; and Dom Robert McGhan of Conyers, Georgia.

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles F. Shay, the Very Rev. Msgr. John E. Maney, Chancellor, and the Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph J. Sullivan were also in attendance in the sanctuary.

Relatives and friends of the new Abbot attended the ceremony.

First Reports Forecast C-J Circulation Increase

First reports in the Courier Journal's current circulation campaign indicate a seven percent increase in subscriptions over last year's record total of \$3,500.

Thirteen parishes have reported that they will either inaugurate or continue the "total coverage" plan of sending the Courier Journal to every family in those parishes.

The Rev. Theodore J. Winterroth, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church, Elmsford, adopted the "total coverage" plan at the start of this year, with 182 subscriptions.

The following twelve parishes will continue the 100 percent plan adopted by them in previous years. Many of these parishes report increased numbers in their subscription totals as a result of new families being enrolled in these parishes.

St. Peter and Paul, Elmsford; Rev. Robert A. Byles, pastor, has enrolled 474 subscribers; St. Mary, Corbin, Rev. Thomas F. 500; St. Gabriel, Hammondsport, Brennan, 538; St. Michael, Rochester.

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Student Wins \$100,000

New York—(NS)—Fourteen-year-old George L. Wright III, a scholarship student at St. Agnes' Catholic High School here, won \$100,000 on the NBC television quiz program, "The Big Surprise." In his photo the youthful winner of TV's largest prize shows a sample of money to his pet rabbit, George. Looking on are his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Wright Jr. Young George answered a six-part question which covered magic, current events, Bach, science, baseball and popular music of the 1950s. He won the jackpot when he answered the last part by identifying the song, "Me and My Shadow," singing a chorus while accompanying himself on his ukulele. Only one other person had won the \$100,000 prize on this program.

Woman Air Force Officer Quits Service For Convent

Philadelphia—(NS)—After ten years as an officer in the U.S. Air Force, Major Claire J. McDonald of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. has given up her career to enter a convent and become a nun.

Her exchange of a military uniform for a nun's garb was announced by the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, at suburban Wynocote, where she has begun her novitiate.

Miss McDonald served in the Army Air Force during World War II, and was recalled to active duty in 1948 to take an important administrative job.

First Negro Capuchin Takes Solemn Vows

Huntington, Ind.—(NC)—Brother Agathangelus Ashe became the first Negro to pronounce solemn vows in the Capuchin order in the United States at St. Felix friary here, it has been announced.

A convert, he is a graduate of St. Malachy High school, Chicago. He currently is filling a secretarial post at the local friary, where he has been stationed since joining the order in 1953.

Lenten Rules

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