

Missioner Told He Confessed Murder Plot

Here is the fourth installment in the gripping story of the imprisonment of the Very Rev. Harold W. Rigney, S.V.D., presented here in the Courier-Journal through the courtesy of the Chicago Sun-Times Syndicate.

By The Very Rev. Harold W. Rigney, S.V.D.
Divine Word Missionary

While I was in prison in Peiping, I had a "helper" named Wang, a cellmate who was in contact with the judge hearing my case and with the prison authorities. His job was to "help" me confess that I was an American spy.

Assured Of Deportation After Confession

Once I made the confession, he assured me. I would soon be deported; he also hoped that his own efforts in the case would shorten his own term.

Wang's insistence that I admit I was an OSS agent very probably stemmed from instructions he received from the court. The court already knew from a confession made by a Chinese prisoner who had been employed by the OSS that:

- 1—I had made the acquaintance of OSS personnel, along with Army, Navy and other servicemen, after my arrival in Peiping in June, 1948.
- 2—I had investigated the Fu Jen Catholic University to learn whether a radio used by the Nazis during the war had been hidden on the grounds. I did that at the behest of the OSS. I found no evidence that such a radio had been planted in Fu Jen.
- 3—I had informed the OSS about rumors that Communist troops near Peiping were equipped with American sidearms and that Soviet technicians had been seen with the Chinese Communist forces near Jehol.

My acquaintance with OSS personnel began at the U. S. Army Air Base in Accra on the African Gold Coast when an Army officer asked me for help in preventing the marriage between an American and a suspected Nazi. No intelligence gathering was involved in that case.

But Wang insisted that my OSS connections in Peiping made me an OSS agent per se. According to Communist standards, he said, "formal enrollment and receiving of a salary are not needed for one to become a member of the OSS."

Hence, I agreed: "From this point of view, I am an OSS man."

In a subsequent court session, the judge asked me where I joined. How I applied for membership, what kind of training I got. etc. I replied:

"Well, Judge, if you mean that being an OSS man involves all this, then I am not an OSS man. I never joined the OSS or received training from them, but that was all the connection I had with them."

That elucidation infuriated the judge who cursed me as a gutter-snipe, a shameless cunning spy, etc.

But I stuck to my denial. As my 60-day court ordeal came to a close, my physical reserves were at an end. I was exhausted by lack of sleep, tortured by hunger and covered with weeks of dirt and sweat.

My clothes were falling to shreds and were infested with lice. My ankles and wrists were sore and bleeding from fetters and handcuffs, and I had been subjected to endless humiliations and insults.



HAPPIER DAYS — This picture was taken at Peiping, China, in the summer of 1946 when Cardinal Spellman paid a visit to Fu Jen Catholic University. Father Rigney (first on left in photo) was rector of this university at the time of his arrest by the Chinese Communists. When this photo was taken Father Rigney weighed 186 pounds. Soon after his arrest by the Reds he weighed less than 100 pounds.

Parish Starts School After Legal Battle

Piedmont, Calif. — (NC) — Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new \$250,000 Corpus Christi parochial school here climaxed a long and bitter legal battle in which the city of Piedmont attempted to prevent the construction.

Father Edwin J. Keller, pastor of Corpus Christi Church, who led the fight for his parish's right to construct the school, announced it will be a two-story building of reinforced concrete and structural steel capable of accommodating 400 students.

THE LEGAL battle over the school started a few years ago when Father Keller filed a petition for a building permit. The permit was refused on the ground that the Piedmont City Council had passed an ordinance banning construction of any private or parochial school not under direct jurisdiction of the city's board of education.

With the Roman Catholic Welfare Corporation of the San Francisco archdiocese, Father Keller fought the case through the various city departments, into the courts and up to the California Supreme Court, which last October rendered its decision holding that the city ordinance was "unconstitutional and void because of its arbitrary and unreasonable discrimination" against all except public schools.



College Gets Kennedy Gift

Purchase, N. Y. — (RNS) — A \$300,000 gift from the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation was made to the development fund of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart here. It was presented by Mrs. Rose F. Kennedy, wife of Joseph P. Kennedy, former U. S. Ambassador to London (right) and accepted by Richard P. Loftus, chairman of the college's development fund. Looking on in center is Mother Eleanor M. O'Byrne, president of Manhattanville. Taking a photograph of the presentation is Mother Ruth Dowd, assistant professor of philosophy at the college.

What About Geneva Pact? Red Prison Term Prolonged, U. S. Priest Writes Mother

Los Angeles — (NC) — A prison sentence tantamount to 16 more months in prison has been imposed by a communist "high court" in Shanghai, China, on Father John Houle, S.J., his mother, who resides in suburban Glendale, has learned.

Mrs. John H. Houle received the news in a letter written by her missionary son and dated last Christmas day.

POINTING UP the irony of the situation, Mrs. Houle said she still wondered what the Chinese communists meant last September at Geneva when they agreed that the remaining Americans still imprisoned in Red China would be allowed to leave.

Father Houle is said to be one of the brightest and prettiest of Red jails. She added that the sentence was meted out to Father Houle just 50 days after the Chinese Reds made the Geneva agreement.

Actually, Father Houle was sentenced by the communist court to four years in prison. His letter said he was tried before the "high court" on October 30 and received a sentence of four years, which was made retroactive with the date of his arrest in June 1953.

"So there remain less than 18 months," Father Houle's letter said. "When you read these lines it will be less than 16."

Mrs. Houle commented: "You can imagine how happy we were to hear from him—but another 16 months in prison—it just can't be, surely something can be done."

But in his letter, Father Houle consoled his parents and said the remaining time in prison is "nothing to be impatient about."

24 Nations Honor Pope's Anniversary

Vatican City — (NC) — Twenty-four countries have announced they will send representatives to Rome to present their good wishes to His Holiness Pope, Pius XII on the occasion of his 80th birthday and the 17th anniversary of his coronation.

The countries are Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Chile, Nationalist China, France, Germany, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Spain, Syria, Uruguay and Venezuela.

German To Give Collection To Pope

Bonn, Germany — (NC) — German Catholics are contributing to a special collection, the proceeds of which will be presented to the Pope as a gift for his 80th birthday.

Attend Daily Mass

Warrent and compassion and humor find soft, shy expression in this man. From the hands of a pilgrim he may take a little skullcap offered for blessing, place it on his own head and give the pilgrim his cap—with instant ease and dignity.

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BOOK SHELF

Our Lady Of The Cloisters
By Sister Margaret Teresa Namoreth College

She was there waiting for us. I had known she would be, but I had not quite expected her glory, so queenly, so otherworldly, so eternally happy and gay, her Child frolicking in her arms, delighting in her.

Mary our Mother has taken one of the highest and proudest spots of Manhattan-on-the-Hudson for her Cloisters, and there she queens it day in and day out, for the loving schoolchildren and the cultured Henry Adams of today who come to find out the secret of her medieval triumph.

No Great Book opens a more fascinating "great conversation" than this one. Here the twelfth and thirteenth and fourteenth centuries serenely expound to the twentieth the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Here, as my colleague pointed out, Mary whispers in her tender maternity. "See what I have found!" Sometimes it is the laughing Child caressing the white Dove that has settled on her breast.

SOMETIMES IT IS a pitiful, worn wooden Man from the Cross, resting in death beneath the immense, controlled pathos of her gaze, mere battered Son of Man in His mother's capacious arms that embrace a world in His sacrifice.

The undertone to this redeeming World in the Queen's Cloisters is sometimes Gregorian chant, quiet, urgent, a "great confession" of praise—recorded, of course, and beyond price, silencing visitors without too much aid from the "Visitors-Are-Asked-To-Be-Silent" signs.

Or from the Cloister garden and the shining Hudson far below come vagrant breezes, or the swift or slow flight of birds, to emphasize the timelessness and the Creator's power that abide behind this true story of the Word made flesh.

Reds Seek To Win Irish In England

Dublin — (RNS) — British Communists have called a conference in London as a prelude to the biggest campaign they have yet conducted to win Irish workers in England to the Red cause.

This was reported by Douglas Hyde, convert to Catholicism who was formerly an editor of the Communist Daily Worker in London, during a lecture at St. Patrick's parochial hall in Armagh.

"This fresh tackling of work among the Irish comes as a result of a Communist belief that an economic crisis in Britain is not far away," Mr. Hyde said.

"In the event of such a crisis there would naturally follow mass unemployment and large numbers of Irish workers would then be returning to Ireland. The party wishes to ensure that among them will be a high proportion of Communists."

The strange magic of Pius XII

Warrent and compassion and humor find soft, shy expression in this man. From the hands of a pilgrim he may take a little skullcap offered for blessing, place it on his own head and give the pilgrim his cap—with instant ease and dignity.

March Reader's Digest brings you a portrait of the man who holds singular influence over everyone he meets... yet whose deepest yearning is only for solitude and prayer.

Get March Reader's Digest at your newsstand: 43 articles of lasting interest, including the best from leading magazines and current books, condensed to save your time.

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NEXT WEEK: How Father Rigney was forced to make confessions he later retracted.