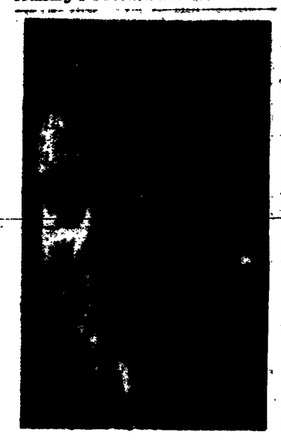
China Reds Arrest Pastor, Parishioners

Hong Kong —(RNS)— A Roman Catholic priest, Father Ying, and 27 of his male parishioners were recently arrested by Communist authorities in Weiyang, a Chinese paper here reported.

It said the arrests took place after the Catholic group had submitted a petition from local residents asking the authorities to postpone the dismantling of homes in the city. The group were charged with "violating the country's reconstruction."



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FOUR YEARS IN A RED HELL

Fr. Rigney Faces Madness

"Rui Ko Ni (my name in Chinese). Are you sleeping again? Wake up! What do you mean by disobeying the rules?"

So would a cellmate shout at me if I, weary and despairing, would get drowsy or fall asleep.

This is the tenth installment in the gripping story of the 50 months spent in Communist prisons in China by the Very Rev. Harold W. Rigney, S.V.D. His story appears in the Courier Journal through courtesy of the Chicago Sun-Times.

It was against the rules of the Ts'ao Lan Tzu Prison in Peiping, where I was interned, for an anti-Communist and unrepentant prisoner to get sleepy.

The pro-Communist cellmates, who hoped to get their own terms shortened by "persuading" an anti-Communist prisoner to confess his "crimes," would see to it that the unconfessed stayed awake.

Isolated, Persecuted

But it was fatiguing to sit in a corner of the cell hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year — isolated, shunned and persecuted by cellmates.

In their eyes, I was as a leper, an outcast, a despised and discredited individual, who had lost all face. They saw me, a bedraggled wreck who once had been influential and respected, but now a powerless, condemned criminal to be scorned, a vile reptile to be crushed.

To these cellmates of mine, I had become an object of contempt, but also an object of value as a scapegoat on which the opportunistic inmates could vent their hatred to prove to the Communist government how pro-Communist they had become.

Huddled in Corner

So, there I would sit, huddled in a corner, surrounded by hostile cellmates, an "imperialist" American, a Catholic priest and an "unreformed" prisoner.

Under the mental strain of prison life, I was drowsy day and night. I tried to fight off this lassitude, but my mental and nervous faculties weren't up to the struggle. More often than not, I succumbed to sleep.

So, he would jolt me awake with angry, screaming imprecations. The chu chang (cell leader) and other inmates would join in the persecution.

Subjected To Third Degree

At times, I was subjected to tou chengs because I fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. (A tou cheng is a kind of third degree used by pro-Communist prisoners against anti-Communist prisoners; the purpose was to badger the prisoner until his resistance broke down, after which he would confess "crimes" against the state to get some respite from persecution.)

In these tou chengs, my Communist inquisitors came up with a novel interpretation of why I fell asleep.

According to their unique views, I didn't fall asleep because I was nervously and physically tired, but because I was worrying over some unconfessed "crime." The worry, they reasoned, caused me to doze off. So, they demanded, what was I hiding?

Tells Truth But Is Badgered

Early in my prison career, when I was innocent enough to believe that truth would be heeded and respected, I explained that I was mentally exhausted. But such an explanation would only precipitate more vehement badgering.

I soon learned that the best thing to do was simply to say nothing, to weather the storm. But to the very end of my internment in the Ts'ao Lan Tzu Prison, and later in Tzu Hsing Lu Prison (where I had been transferred later), I suffered from this inability to stay awake.

This weakness that I developed for sleep generally showed itself during the so-called study periods, which consumed 10 hours each day. It also prevailed during the many and long kai hui (meetings) held by prison authorities on kai ts'ao (reformation).

My inability to keep awake was only one effect of the mental and nervous strain of enduring prison life in Red China. A second, more serious and frightening impairment of my mental faculties also developed.

I first noticed this new symtom after attending a court session one day.

Questioned About Students

A new judge, who spoke English, was siting on the bench, and he was questioning me about the Catholic students of Fu Jen University in Peiping, where I had been rector.

As my reports on the activities of these students had nothing incriminating in them, the judge grew angry. He was less interested in facts and truth than he was in getting grounds, true or untrue, to use in a subsequent persecution.

After grilling me for two fruitless hours, he brusquely ordered me to sit down and write out a statement on the Fu Jen students.

I sat on a bench before a small tea table, dipped the steel pen in ink and started to write.

Finds It Difficult To Write

Suddenly, I found it difficult to write. My wits seemed scattered. "I must write," I told myself, but try as I would, I couldn't seem to get started.

"Write something," was the desperate order I gave my wandering mind. Trembling, my hand moved the pen, and I wrote. But as I did, I abbreviated many words not ordinarily abbreviated.

"Let me see what you have written," the judge said as I finished.

He glanced at the statement and shouted angrily: "I can't read this! Write this over and write clearly."

So I rewrote the statement. This time I exerted every ounce of energy to write clearly and without the abbreviations I had used before.

The judge scanned the rewritten document. Apparently satisfied, he tossed it back to me and said:

"Sign and fingerprint this."

I signed my name in Chinese and English, as usual.

Then I did a very strange thing. Raising my finger aloft, I went through the motions of rolling the tip of my right index finger as if the ink pad were suspended in air. But the pad wasn't so suspended.

Shrugging, I thought: "This will do. This is all make-believe anyway."

Returned To Judge

So, I pressed my uninked fingertip on the statement and returned it to the judge. Absorbed in some task, he hadn't observed my strange antics. He took one look at the document and hurled it back at me.

"Fingerprint this!" he shouted angrily, "I told you to fingerprint it!"

I was bewildered. I thought I had pressed my finger on the document. But I took the statement; this time, I properly inked my finger and put the required print on the paper.

As I walked back to my cell, mulling over my strange actions a fear came over me.

Panic-stricken, I asked myself: What was I doing, lifting my finger in the air and dolling it on an ink pad that wasn't there? A normal man doesn't act that way. Was I going mad?

But I was afraid to answer this question.

In that frightening era, my cellmates told me I babbled in my sleep. Then I, too, became aware of alarming symptoms.

I couldn't concentrate or make up my mind to do the simplest things, such as getting up from the corner where I sat to walk to the other end of the cell for my notebook. I would go to one of our infrequent baths and forget to take soap and a towel. I would write a statement for the court in a script so bad I couldn't even read it.

Resolves To Fight

I was aware of this mental deterioration and resolved to fight it. I begged God to help me and redoubled my prayers. In a few days, I got hold of myself. I had been reeling on the brink of madness, but with God's help, I pulled myself back to the level ground of sanity.

My cellmates said I no longer talked in my sleep.

I was saved.

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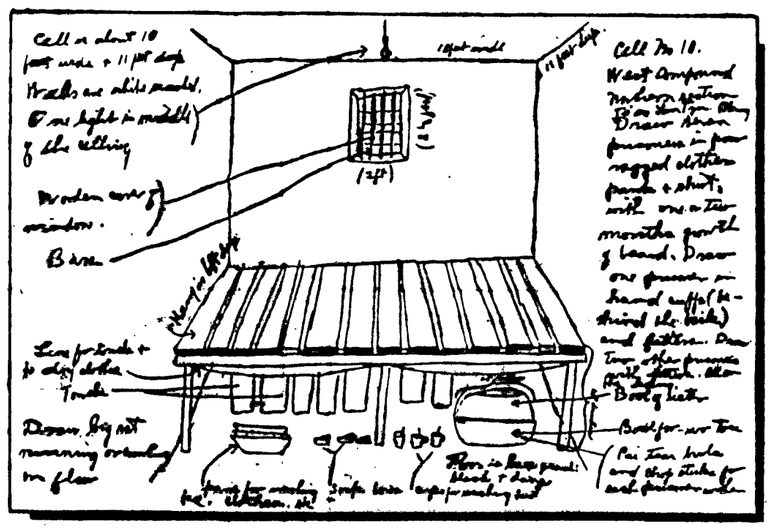
Next week Father Rigney speaks up to defend U. S. airmen who were charged with cowardice for having made confessions while prisoners of the Red Chinese.

Father Rigney's Prison Cell



Thought Control 'Tyranny' Priest Tells Newsmen

Los Angeles — (NC) — Father Justin Garvey, C.P., four-year veteran of communist prisons, arrived here with a joyful embrace for his mother and a syllogism for newsmen.

After four years in a Red prison, Father Justin Garvey was expelled from China. He is shown above on his arrival at Hong Kong this past Feb. 13. (NC Photo).

"The communist state controls all activity," he told reporters at International Airport.

"Thought is an activity.

"Therefore the state controls thought.

"And that is a definition of tyranny for you," he told newsmen.

FATHER GARVEY'S arrival at the airport was a dramatic moment for his mother. When he stepped off the airline ramp it was the first time she had seen him in 10 years.

Mrs. Jenny Garvey, and her daughter Mrs. Claire Harrington, both of West Covina, said Father Justin had not changed much, "except for a receding hairline."

He has gained 40 pounds since his release from prison.

Also at the airport to greet him was a fellow China prisoner, Fr. William Westhoven, C. P., now retreat master at Mater Dolorosa Retreat House here.

They had been held in the same prison but had not been permitted to speak to each other. Fr. William said he had often noticed that Fr. Justin appeared to be waving to him from the prison yard. Yesterday he found out why.

"Fr. Justin was giving me absolution. I didn't know it at the time. And I was doing the same for him."

Cardinal Protector

Vatican City — (RNS) — Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, was named protector of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine if Siena at Kenosha, Wis., by Pope Pius XII.

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HE HATH DONE WONDERFUL THINGS IN HIS LIFE

MOTHER'S DAY—MAY 13th

"I remember my parents being always generous and sacrificing themselves for others, so this donation is so much on my part." We can express appreciation through our ARTISTIC GIFT CARD with FLOWERS from the HOLY LAND by having Mass offered by our poor Missionaries; by Enrolling in our Association; or by offering one of the following:

Medical Kit	$75	Confessional	$50	Crucifix	$25
Statue	30	Corner Bent	20	Candles Yrs' Sup.	20
Picture	15	Altar Stone	10	Sanctuary Bell	5

MY ADOPTED SON-DAUGHTER

"In our Rite we say: 'Bless my Mother and Father and all our Benefactors'; for this reason I always think of you especially in my Mass, because you helped me realize my sublime vocation." JOSEPH THEKKALAKATTIL or JOSEPH THEKKINEDATH in India, will also remember you daily at the Altar, if you help him become a Priest. A SPIRITUAL SON is yours for the price of tuition $600 in full or $100 a year in easy payments, over a six-year period. NOVICE-SISTERS YVONNE and YOLANDE with the Daughters of Charity in Lebanon will also serve God in your name. A SPIRITUAL DAUGHTER is yours for $300 in full or $150 a year, over a two-year period.

IS GOD IN YOUR WILL? THIS IS THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST.

EARTHQUAKE STRIKES

Lebanon was hit by earthquake, killing over 130 persons. A short time previously, floods caused great damage. These are problems added to an already tense situation. FATHER KENNEDY, Field Representative of our PONTIFICAL MISSION FOR PALESTINE, must come to the rescue. Please help us send him $10 FOOD PACKAGES to meet emergencies. A BEAUTIFUL FREE OLIVE-WOOD ROSARY from the Holy Land will be our grateful gift to you. $3 will CLOTHE AN ORPHAN.

A PAIR OF SHOES. "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, of those who bring glad tidings of good things": Could you put a pair of shoes on the worn feet of our poor struggling Missionaries? $7 will take care of one needy WARRIOR IN CHRIST'S ARMY.

BLAZE THE FLAME

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will call upon the name of the Lord Our God." A dynamic Missionary Movement called "The Flame" is working out of Zahle in Lebanon. Heroic Priests, Sisters and Catechists are striving to meet the supernatural needs of countless PALESTINIAN REFUGEES who are displaced physically and spiritually. If you met these valiant Apostles trudging along the road, you would never pass them by, you would most certainly give them a "lift." They have hailed us through an OFFICIAL APPEAL FROM ROME. They ask us to be "The feet with which Christ is to go about doing good." To give them a STATION WAGON costing $2,000. They have no means of transportation. YOUR SMALLEST GIVING WILL BE MOST PRECIOUS.

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