

Latin Americans Deny Charge Church There 'In Decline'

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (NC)—Conflicting opinions have been expressed by Latin American Catholic leaders concerning the assertion by an American priest that the Church is on the decline in Latin America.

The assertion is made in an article, "How Catholic is Latin America?" by Maryknoll Father Albert J. Nevins in the current issue of Sign magazine, published in Union City, N. J., by the Passionist Fathers.

ACCORDING TO Father Nevins, the Church is at best, just holding on in Latin America. "Facts do not warrant calling Latin America a Catholic continent," he writes. "By tradition it is Catholic, but in actual practice the Latin American people as a whole live in neglect of their Faith. The great body of people of Latin America live outside the Church, separated from its sacraments, ignorant of its doctrines, and unaware of the social teachings that could lift them from their wretched poverty."

Auxiliary Bishop Jose Tavora of Rio de Janeiro replied in an interview that the increasing evidence of Church expansion in Brazil is an effective refutation of Father Nevins' statements.

RE NOTED THAT 80 new dioceses have been created in Brazil in recent years, that the number of Brazilian bishops has been tripled, that the number of priests has been nearly doubled, and that within the past 50 years the number of seminarians has increased about 300 per cent.

"So intense has been the effort of the Brazilian clergy," the Bishop added, "that it succeeded in rousing the enthusiasm of the laity to perform many apostolic works in their different spheres of activity."

But Father Alvaro Negromonte, a catechetical leader in Brazil, agrees with the Maryknoll priest. He explained that the present decline of the Church is the effect of gradual abandonment of religious instruction of a proper kind. He describes the piety of the majority of Latin

Americans as "mere religious sentiment without doctrinal foundation."

FATHER NEGROMONTE said: "The only effective means to preserve Catholicism is to increase religious instruction in the parishes and schools according to the conclusive instructions of the Catholic Church. Without this, Latin America, Brazil included, will within two more generations no longer be a Catholic land."

A Brazilian Catholic Action leader, Hildebrando Leal, conceded that there is a lack of religious practice and too much sentimental piety in Brazil, but disagreed with Father Nevins' conclusion that this is evidence of a serious decline of the Church in Latin America.

Auxiliary Bishop Helder Camara of Rio de Janeiro said that Father Nevins erred in overstressing and exaggerating the real problems and difficulties of the Church in Latin America in order to impress North Americans and move them to a greater support of the Latin American missions.

Airlines Study Rates For Clergy

Washington, D.C. (RNS)—Joint action by commercial airlines to grant reduced fares to clergymen is expected at a meeting here Nov. 7 of the Air Transport Association's traffic and sales division.

Wittis-Playter, the association's vice-president for public relations, said that although some airlines are ready to offer reduced fares, none has yet proposed a definite working plan to the clergy.

President Eisenhower recently signed legislation authorizing airlines to grant special clergy rates on a space-available basis.

Although airlines are not required to lower plane fares, most domestic carriers have indicated they will.



Peaches For The Pope

Rome, Italy (NC)—Wearing colorful native costumes, little children present prize-winning peaches to His Holiness Pope Pius XII at Castelgandolfo, the Papal summer residence. Peaches came from the annual Castelgandolfo peach festival. Note rapt look in face of little girl in center of line, as she gazes up at the Pontiff.

Cardinal Griffin's Red Hat Hung Over Tomb

London (NC)—The Red Hat conferred on Bernard Cardinal Griffin in 1946 has been hung over his tomb in the crypt of Westminster Cathedral. Following tradition, it will remain suspended there until it

literally falls to pieces. Nearby the Red Hat of Cardinal Griffin are those of Cardinals Wiseman and Manning, whose bodies were reinterred in the crypt after the cathedral was built.

Asked how long it takes for the Red Hat of a Cardinal to disintegrate, Msgr. F. J. Row, 39th to be bestowed on an Englishman. The first was conferred on Robert Pullen in the 12th

years old, and it still looks as good as ever. Cardinal Griffin's may still be hanging there in 500 years' time.

Cardinal Griffin's is the fourth Red Hat to hang in Westminster Cathedral—the third being that of his immediate predecessor as Archbishop of Westminster, Arthur Cardinal Hinsley. It was the creation of the State of Israel.

Primate Rumor Draws Crowd In Hungary

Vienna (NC)—Rumors that Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary, might attend the centenary observance of his Cathedral at Esztergom had throngs of the faithful camping for days before the basilica hoping for a glimpse of him.

According to a participant who returned here, disappointment at not seeing the Cardinal increased the fervor of the thousands who attended the Pontifical High Mass offered by Archbishop Josef Groesz of Kalocsa.

Previous reports had said Hungarian Reds were putting pressure on Cardinal Mindszenty to leave the country before the centenary celebration. The Reds reportedly feared the Cardinal's absence from events commemorating the 100th anniversary would focus the eyes of Hungarian Catholics on the Cardinal's arrest.

Cardinal Mindszenty is said to be steadfastly opposed to leaving his country. The Hungarian Reds arrested the Cardinal on December 26, 1948, on charges of treason. He was given a limited release from prison in July, 1953, and is understood to be restricted to a residence in a small Hungarian village.

Forced Conversions In Israeli Denied

Jerusalem (RNS)—Msgr. Antonio Vergani, Latin Rite Patriarchal Vicar in Galilee, has asked the Israeli Ministries of Interior and Religion to investigate newspaper reports stating that the Catholic Church was responsible for the mass conversion and emigration of 17 Jewish families in Beerseba. He described the reports as defamatory and malicious.

The prelate said none of the alleged converts mentioned in the local press had ever contacted the Catholic Church. Nor, he added, does the Church aid emigration from Israel.

Msgr. Vergani said it was a matter of record that not a single resident of Beerseba had been converted to Catholicism since the creation of the State of Israel.

Young Gold Coast King Visiting U.S. Was Trained In Catholic Mission Schools

Chicago (NC)—He wanted to be a railroad technician but had to give up the job for another and more important one—King of Upper and Lower Denkyira States on Africa's Gold Coast.

He is Boa Amponsem III and he is in this country under the Foreign Leaders Exchange Program, studying American techniques, especially in the field of local government, for some ideas he plans to instill in his own country.

THE 24-YEAR-OLD monarch ascended his throne in February, 1955—the youngest active king in the Gold Coast and master of that region's largest palace. He is the scion of a dynasty which dates back 32 generations.

Boa Amponsem, who became popularly known as "Johnny" among others in the exchange program group, disclosed that Catholicity goes back several generations in his family. His parents and grandparents were Catholics, about 75 per cent of his people are members of the Faith and converts are increasing steadily in Denkyira.

"The Catholic missions have made a major contribution to progress, especially in the field of education," King Amponsem said discussing his homeland. "This is true not only in my state but in all the Gold Coast. From there he went to St. Augustine's College, where he was



KING BOA AMPONSEM

prepared for a career in science by Irish and English priests. He became a railroad technician and liked his work, but had to give up the job when his uncle abdicated as king in Denkyira. He succeeded to the throne, a process dictated partly by heredity and partly by election. The people of Denkyira vote for their choice among eligibles in the royal family. In the case of King Boa Amponsem, the people passed over his two older brothers to elect him.

THE YOUNG RULER of some 100,000 subjects arrived in the United States in mid-July to take part in the exchange program. He spent the first three weeks in Washington conferring with government officials and experts taking an orientation course in American customs, discussing with priests and laymen the work of the Church in this country.

Next he went to New York where he became interested in the work of the Catholic Interracial Council and addressed one of the organization's forums. Then he went to Auburn, N.Y. for a further study of the operation of American municipal governments. He said that he was impressed particularly by the city's recreational facilities and gained some ideas which he hoped to put into operation on his return home.

Five New Schools Empty — No Teachers!!

Sacramento, Calif. (NC)—Five new schools in the Diocese of Sacramento will stand empty this year because there are no teachers to operate them, Father James D. Poole, diocesan superintendent of schools, announced.

All five of the schools are in the Sacramento metropolitan area—West Sacramento, North Highlands, Citrus Heights, Fruitridge, and Hollywood Park. The school in Citrus Heights has been waiting for Sisters three years. The others were all completed this year.

Father Poole announced that a record enrollment of more than 11,000 students is expected in the

Lily Of Mohawks' Birthday Marked

Cole-Sainte-Catherine, Que (NC)—The third centenary of the birth of Kateri Tekakwitha, known as "the Lily of the Mohawks," was celebrated here by an outdoor Solemn Mass and a visit to her tomb.

Born three hundred years ago in the village of Ossernenon, now parishes with schools, but no Auriesville, in the diocese of Albany, N.Y., Kateri's mother was a Christian of the Algonquin tribe. Her father was a pagan. After her parents died the young girl was raised by a pagan uncle.

In 1667, at the age of 11, Kateri fled her uncle's home and sought sanctuary at a Jesuit mission in southern Canada. She lived the rest of her life a model of Christian holiness.

Lima, Peru (NC)—A basilica honoring St. Rose of Lima will be constructed here. The new edifice will honor the first native of the Americas to be canonized.

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