

Archdiocese Denies Church Censorship Of 'Luther' Telecast

Chicago — (NC) — Both the Chicago archdiocesan chancellor and a television station spokesman said here that the archdiocese did not take any official action to prevent telecasting by the station of the controversial film, "Martin Luther."

A group of Protestant clergymen had charged that WGN-TV's cancellation of the movie had been prompted by censorship by the Roman Catholic Church.

THE STATION was scheduled to present the first telecast of the complete movie. However, a few days before the film was to be seen, Ward L. Quall, vice president and general manager of WGN, INC., said it had been canceled.

Mr. Quall said it "became apparent that there was an emotional reaction" to plans for the showing. He continued that WGN-TV "has elected to cancel the showing, not wanting to be a party to the development of any misunderstanding or ill will among persons of the Christian faith in Chicago."

SEVEN PROTESTANT clergymen and a layman issued a statement charging that the cancellation of the film had "shocked the leadership and constituency of the Protestant churches in Chicago."

They asserted the dropping of the film from WGN-TV's schedule came from "pressures" mobilized by "the Roman Catholic Church."

The radio and television section of the Protestant Church Federation of Greater Chicago said it had sent a telegram to the Federal Communications Commission in Washington protesting "sectarian pressure" on the station.

MONSIGNOR EDWARD M. BURKE, chancellor of the Chicago archdiocese, said later that "we have not made any representation to WGN-TV in any way."

He added that "as far as the 1,800,000 Catholics here are concerned, it was an individual matter if they saw fit to protest against a film they considered historically inaccurate, if not downright insulting."

A ranking station official told the N.C.W.C. News Service that "the archdiocese of Chicago took no official action in this matter."

He said the "emotional reaction" referred to in the original statement came from telephone calls, telegrams, letters and some visits to the station by individuals.

WHEN THE FILM was released for presentation in movie theaters in 1953, the National Legion of Decency did not approve or disapprove it.

It put it in a rarely used "separate classification" which amounts to a warning against certain features other than moral content. The Legion said the film, as a sympathetic and approving representation of Luther's life, "contains theological and historical references and interpretations which are unacceptable to Catholics."

Film reviewers in many Catholic newspapers pointed out that the film pictured an age when "ecclesiastical abuses were prevalent." They said the movie's "strong emotional appeal" may lead audiences to confuse the acts of individual churchmen with the doctrine of the Church.

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It has been well understood all along that Marshall Tito, to gain more than the United States from any visit he might pay here. In fact, it has been hard to see how this country would profit by it at all. All indications were that the United States would lose prestige, while the communist dictator of Yugoslavia would gain in stature and bargaining power in a number of places.

With Moscow leveling verbal attacks on Tito, the State Department presumably hopes that a wedge can be driven between Yugoslavia and Soviet Russia. There has not been much hope of this in the past. There would seem to be nothing to indicate any great hope for its success now.

One reason the Administration has not invited Tito to this country before now is that it has not known just how the American people would react to such a visit. The Administration knew it would make a great many people very angry, and it feared there would be anti-Tito demonstrations. Now, seemingly, it is willing to risk those demonstrations and deep resentment on the part of many Americans.

Paris — (RNS) — An ambitious program of public works was announced by the town council of Lourdes in preparation for religious festivities in 1958 to mark the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes to St. Bernadette Soubirous.

The municipality plans to build a 1,200-seat meeting hall for official reception ceremonies. It will stand in the center of a wide esplanade on which a platform will be erected for open-air ceremonies.

It also plans to enlarge the municipal hospital of Sainte-Bernadette from 140 beds to 210, and to provide it with ultra-modern surgical equipment.

The program includes extensive modernization of the township roads and the introduction of fluorescent street lighting. Lourdes, which styles itself the "post-card capital of the world," is also to have a new post office in time for the centenary year.

Dulles 'Feeler' Gives Christmas Bid To Dictator

By J. J. GILBERT

Washington — (NC) — The Christmas season seems like a particularly poor time to lay the groundwork for a visit of Marshal Tito to this country.

Christmas is a holy season. The Yugoslav dictator, an avowed communist, is one of the world's foremost persecutors of religion.

BUT THAT is what has happened. The U. S. Secretary of State has thrown out what is known here as a "feeler" or "trial balloon," and it is the public anger and reaction is not too great, the tough communist from Belgrade will soon be invited to visit the White House.

Perhaps the Christmas season was chosen to put this plan into action because people have so many things to occupy their minds, and it may slip through.

At one of his press conferences just a week before Christmas, Secretary of State Dulles said that President Eisenhower was giving sympathetic consideration to the proposal to invite Marshal Tito to visit the United States. Belgrade has wanted for some time to get Tito invited to this country, but our President has said consistently that such a visit would serve no good purpose. Now Secretary Dulles says it would serve a useful purpose.

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New York — (NC) — Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, was heard by the countless persons who viewed the Midnight Mass as telecast over the NBC-TV network from St. Patrick's Cathedral here on Christmas Eve.

THE CARDINAL said "there have been written into history many dread days of infancy between December 7, 1941, and November 4, 1956, when Soviet men of violence invaded Hungary."

"Since that day of terror," he continued, "thousands of men, women and children have fled their homeland, their only possession their glorious, invulnerable faith in God and trust in the nations of the free world."

The Cardinal said the dangers of escape were as nothing compared to the more terrifying fear of torture and imprisonment they had left behind them in Hungary. These are the fears and terrors, he stated, "from which our souls in the great and barren North lands are protecting us—for only if our troops remain stationed in this strategic shadowland have we in America any chance to prevent a Soviet invasion of our great and blessed homeland."

The Cardinal called Soviet communists "avowed enemies of right and justice, and mercy" who will not rest "until they have tried to destroy that which they themselves most fear—the love of God in man."

"NOW," HE ASKED, "can Soviet terrorists shoot into crowds of helpless mothers trying to shelter their babies within the cradle of their arms, without wondering when their wives and mothers and babies will be shot down in cold blood by their very own countrymen who will rise up against them?"

"What man," he continued, "can trust another man who scorns God, whose faith is founded in forces of arms, and whose creed is hate and whose law of life is lust? What has caused men to become beasts of prey?"

"I can tell you," the Cardinal concluded, "what I myself believe: that when communists denied and defied God and enforced the laws that forbade the practice of religion, they drew the blueprint for the program that will, in time, ensure their own doom."

Paris — (RNS) — A midnight Mass for tramps was celebrated on the quays of the Seine River, for the third consecutive year. It was offered in an improvised "hobo's cathedral" consisting of a canvas shelter under one of the bridges.

Some 300 vagrants assembled under the turreted bridge, where a Christmas meal organized by the parishioners of Notre-Dame Cathedral and consisting of soup, sauerkraut, cheese, fruit and white wine was served before the Mass. Each tramp was given a parcel of food, fruit and cigarettes to take away with him.

The idea for the midnight Mass originated in 1954 when boy scouts sang carols along the quays for the tramps who sleep out under the bridges. The boys' caroling has since become a regular Christmas Eve practice.



Cardinal Signs Guest Book

Pearl Harbor — (NC) — Cardinal Spellman, New York signs the guest book during his visit at Pearl Harbor headquarters of Admiral Felix B. Stump, U.S.N., Commander in Chief, Pacific, and U.S. Pacific Fleet. Cardinal Spellman was enroute from the Far East to Greenland, where he celebrated Christmas Mass for American Servicemen stationed there.

Convert Dutch Writer Ordained To Priesthood

Coslegrouh, the Netherlands — (RNS) — Seventy-six year old Pieter Van de Meer de Walcheren, author and former newspaper correspondent, was ordained a priest of the Order of St. Benedict here in the convent where his daughter is a Benedictine nun.

Bishop James Maria Baeten of Breda officiated at the ordination in the convent chapel. A choir of Benedictine monks and nuns sang the musical setting of the Mass.

A CONVERT to Roman Catholicism, Father de Walcheren was born in 1880, the new priest was, in his youth, a keen Socialist. Through the French author, Leon Bloy, he became interested in the Catholic religion and was received into the Church, in 1911, with Mr. Bloy serving as godfather at his baptism.

DURING WORLD WAR I, he was a correspondent on the French front for Maastricht, leading Dutch Catholic daily. Then he began to devote himself to encouraging young writers.

His own books include "The White Paradise," a story of the Catharists, which has been translated into several languages, including English. He described his spiritual Odyssey in two books, "People and God" and "My Diary."

Montreal — (RNS) — The English Catholic weekly established here in 1948, has ceased publication. Reason given was the inability to transfer the publication to Toronto.

Last September, the paper switched to a fortnightly magazine format. It had been sold in every Canadian Catholic diocese except Toronto, and its peak circulation was about 50,000.

It was 10,000 below that mark when publication ceased.

Korea Welcomes Missioners

Seoul, Korea — (NC) — Dr. John M. Chang, vice-president of Korea, welcomes newly-arrived Columban Father John E. McLaughlin of North Weymouth, Mass., left, one of 11 young priests arriving from America, Ireland and Australia. "It is wonderful to see so many fine young men dedicating their lives to Korea and its people," Dr. Chang said.

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Priests Go To Antarctica On Operation Deepfreeze II

San Diego, Calif. — (NC) — Father (Lt.) Leon S. Darksowski, chaplain for Operation Deepfreeze II, left here with personnel of this naval expedition for McMurdo Sound, Antarctica.

About 353 men, a third of them Catholic, left on the U.S.S. Curtiss, a Navy seaplane tender.

AMONG THE 100 scientists on the expedition is Father Daniel Linehan, S.J., noted geophysicist from Boston, who acted as naval chaplain for a Navy expedition to Antarctica in 1955.

The primary purpose of Operation Deepfreeze II, Father Darksowski said, before he left is to establish five more bases in the Antarctic to enable scientists to conduct studies and experiments for the International Geophysical Year of 1957-58. There will be three Catholic doctors among the seven in the expedition, he added.

FATHER DARKOWSKI will relieve Father (Lt.) John C. Condit, Catholic chaplain now at McMurdo Sound. Operation Deepfreeze I began its work in Antarctica in November, 1955. The 166 men in the expedition established a base at McMurdo Sound and another at Little America.

Father Darksowski said he will stay in Antarctica until about March, 1958, when Operation Deepfreeze III will come there to conclude the studies for the Geophysical Year.

New German Diocese At Essen

Bad Godesberg, Germany — (RNS) — A new Roman Catholic Diocese of Essen will be established in Germany under a treaty signed between the Vatican and the West German State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The treaty supplements the concordat concluded between the Holy See and Prussia in 1929.

The new diocese will cover virtually the entire Ruhr area and comprise over 1,200,000 Catholic believers. It will embrace areas formerly belonging to the Archdioceses of Cologne and Paderborn and the Diocese of Munster.

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Cardinal Spellman 'Denial Of God Spells Reds' Doom'

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