

MOTHER KEVIN
Uganda Claims Her

'Holy War' Over Famed Nun Ends

ROCHESTER (CRNS) — Mother Kevin, famous missionary nun who died at Brighton, Mass., Oct. 17 and was later taken to her native Ireland for burial, is to be reinterred in Uganda, where she worked for over 50 years, it was learned here.

The petit 82-year-old nun, foundress of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa, died at the American motherhouse of her community. The expenses of flying the body to the sisterhood's headquarters in Dundalk, County Louth, were defrayed by Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston.

Meanwhile, the people of Uganda, who had known the nun affectionately as "Mama Kevin," began clamoring for the return of her body.

ARCHBISHOP CUSHING, who was a friend and benefactor of Mother Kevin for 30 years, termed the issue a "holy war" and offered to assist the people of Uganda. It has now been announced that the transferral of the nun's remains will take place in a matter of weeks.

Mother Kevin came to Rochester in 1955 to attend the Missionary Seminars held at the War Memorial. During the eight days of the Mission exhibition many Rochesterians met and talked with the veteran Irish missionary nun.

A native of County Wicklow, Mother Kevin, began her missionary work in Uganda in 1903. She founded both the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa and the Little Sisters of St. Francis for native Africans. The nuns staff 42 houses in England, Ireland, Scotland, Africa and the United States.

DURING WORLD WAR II, members of the British Royal Air Force from East Africa stranded in the wilderness of Burma dubbed parcels airlifted to them as "Mama Kevin's" because they came "from on high."

Queen Elizabeth in 1956 named Mother Kevin a Commander of the British Empire in recognition of her long service in Uganda. The decoration was conferred on her at the British Embassy in Washington with Archbishop Cushing attending.

DURING WORLD WAR I, King George V decorated the nun in tribute to the nursing service rendered by her sisterhood in the East Africa campaign. Pope Pius XII awarded her the "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" medal in recognition of her missionary work.

CARDINAL SPELLMAN, Archbishop of New York, met the old Irish nun when he was in Uganda during the last war and he mentioned her in his book "Action This Day." He recalled that when he administered Confirmation to 300 native children they all took Kevin as their Confirmation name.

The Cardinal wondered if Kevin was a saint of whom he had not heard but discovered that the natives were paying tribute to "an old Irish Sister with a heart as big as Africa."

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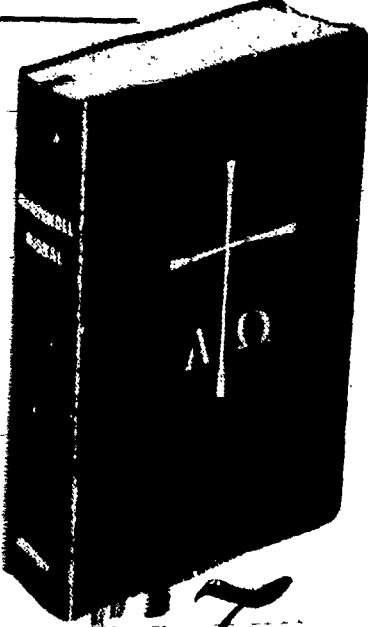
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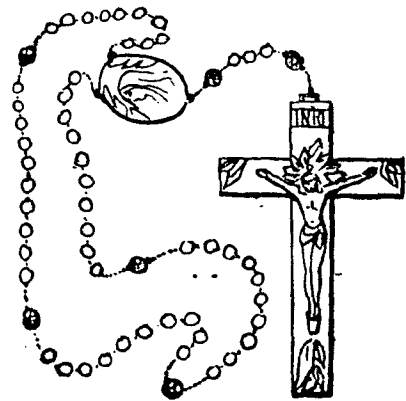
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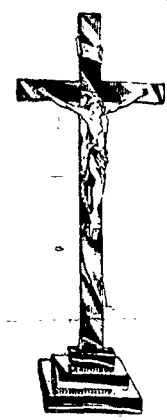
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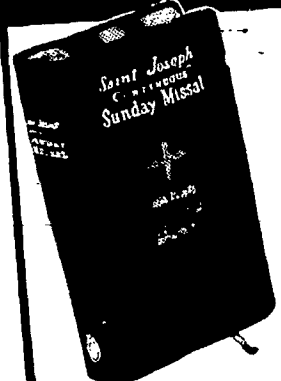
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