

Faith To Return To Greenland

Catholic Outpost In 10th Century

Copenhagen — (NC) — Danish and American Oblate missionaries will soon set up the first Catholic mission since the Middle Ages in Greenland, the world's largest and northernmost island.

To be welcomed by Bishop Johannes T. Suhr, O.S.B., of Copenhagen, in whose See the faraway Danish province is located, three U.S. priests will arrive here in the fall to make plans for the new mission.

They will be headed by Father John A. Taylor, superior of the Oblate scholasticate in Pine Hills, Pass Christian, Miss. Serving with him will be American Fathers Urban Figge and Michael Wolfe, and two Danish novices, Brother Ib Hjorth and Finn Lyng. The latter is of Eskimo descent and knows the language of Greenland.

IRISH NAVIGATORS and missionaries probably visited Greenland in the eighth century, and Christianity was known to the island's first colonists who went there from Iceland in about 982. But the colony's founder, Erik the Red, was a pagan Viking who gave the island its name. He called the barren Arctic wasteland "green" not to describe it truthfully, but as a ruse to attract more settlers.

In about the year 999 Erik sent his son, Lief Erikson, to Norway for schooling. While there Lief — later to be the first European to reach the North American continent — was converted to Christianity by King St. Olaf Trygvasson, who had been baptized in England and later worked to spread the Faith in Norway. Lief was accompanied on his return to Greenland by a priest who began the conversion of the colonies' thousand or so settlers.

By the early 12th century Greenland had a European population of about 3,000, virtually all of whom were Catholics. The so-called East Settlement had about 190 homesteads and 12 churches, according to an old description of the country. The West Settlement had some 90 homesteads and four churches. There were also a monastery and a convent of Benedictine nuns. In about 1112 a diocese was established in Gardar, the modern Igalko, and in 1121 Bishop Erik Gnutson joined an expedition to relocate the east coast of North America which had been discovered 100 years earlier.

For centuries a prosperous trade was maintained between the island and Europe, successive bishops were named to the Gardar diocese and in 1266 under the guidance of Catholic priests the first Arctic expedition was undertaken. From this expedition dates the first mention in early documents of the native population of Greenland, the Skrælings or Eskimos. While Bishop Arnes, head of the Gardar See (1314-1343), Greenland contribu-

ted its quota in natural products — walrus teeth — toward the expenses of the Crusades.

THE SETTLERS in Greenland either died out or were assimilated by the pagan native people.

The last mention of the Catholic colony is contained in a letter written in 1492 by Pope Alexander VI in which he stated that "no vessel had touched there (Greenland) during the past 50 years" and "no memory of the Christian religion is found except a corporal, which is shown to the people once a year, and on which it is said the last priest who officiated there consecrated the Body of Christ a 100 years ago."

The island was rediscovered by the English in 1576 and later came under the control of Denmark. In 1721 the Danish king appointed Hans Egede, a Lutheran, as a missionary. On his arrival in Greenland Egede found no trace of the old European colonists and set to work converting the native peoples.

During World War II the U.S. established military bases in Greenland and Catholic chaplains accompanied the troops stationed there. The bases have continued in operation since the war and have been visited by Cardinal Spellman of New York but the new mission program will be the first effort in over 600 years to bring the Catholic faith to the Greenland native people.

Munich Meet To Use World Language

Neuville, Quebec — (NC) — The world interlanguage, Esperanto, probably will be used at several meetings at the International Eucharistic Congress in Munich, Germany, in 1963, it was stated here at the 48th North American Esperanto Congress.

Esperanto is an artificial language whose vocabulary is based essentially on words common to the chief European languages.

Dr. William Solzbacher of Washington, D.C., said at the meeting here that Cardinal Wendel, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, had recently discussed with a Catholic Esperanto committee the details of plans for the use of Esperanto at the Eucharistic Congress.

Soviet Aid Said Threat To India

Chicago — (NC) — Archbishop Eugene D'Souza of Nagpur, India, warned here that the increased technical help given by Soviet Russia to his country poses a threat to its future.

The 40-year-old prelate, who is in this country seeking aid for an engineering school to be added to St. Francis de Sales College in Nagpur, expressed concern at the Western powers' lack of influence in his country while Soviet influence is increasing.

CALLING ATTENTION to the fact that in Bombay the Soviets are erecting one of the largest technological institutions in India, Archbishop D'Souza declared: "India is an underdeveloped country and it recognizes Soviet Russia's efforts to better conditions in India. But the people of India little realize the latent dangers of the Soviet policy."

The Archbishop said the people of India are grateful for the assistance received from this country, but they "need more help from the United States."

'Most Catholic City' Munich Marks 800 Years

By FATHER PLACID JORDAN, O.S.B.

Munich — (NC) — Famed in the Middle Ages as "the most Catholic city north of the Alps," this capital of Bavaria, a metropolis of more than a million inhabitants, is today "a city of coffins." So said Msgr. Lorenz Frelberger, editor of the official weekly newspaper of this archdiocese, in an editorial on Munich's 800th birthday.

There is not even an average of one child to every marriage, Msgr. Frelberger pointed out, and barely one third of Munich's Catholics go to Mass on Sundays.

Yet there is reason to rejoice on this jubilee which will be celebrated all through the summer.

Munich, where the International Eucharistic Congress will be held in 1960, still is a city of magnificent churches which are crowded on Sundays and holidays.

The Frauenkirche, Our Lady's cathedral, completely rebuilt and redecored since

the war, when the city suffered heavily from Allied air raids, remains Bavaria's principal landmark. The Mariensäule, Mary's Column on City Hall Square, continues to attract worshippers and tourists as the symbol of the Catholic traditions of Bavaria.

GREAT NAMES stand out in the city's Catholic history. St. Peter Canisius labored here in the 16th century.

Maria Ward established her Teaching Institute of the English Ladies in the 17th.

Father Rupert Mayer, S.J., "the Apostle of Munich" whose tomb is visited here by at least 5,000 people every day, stood out as a martyr of the Faith during the days of Nazism.

GREAT BISHOPS such as Cardinal Franz Bettinger and Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber made this See one of the bulwarks of the Church in Europe.

Outstanding leaders of Catholic thought still teach at this city's university, now the largest in Germany with its 20,000 students, many of whom are

Americans and include members of all nations and races.

The department of Catholic theology boasts 12 regular professorships. In the department of philosophy world-famed Prof. Romano Guardini attracts crowds to his lectures that even the largest hall can barely hold.

Munich also treasures the memory of the days when Pope Pius XII was Nuncio here and initiated the negotiations which led to the German concordat with the Holy See in 1924.

Thus the words spoken by Cardinal Wendel, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, during the Mass inaugurating the anniversary festivities, found a deep echo in the hearts of the faithful when he said that this city is rightly called "the German Rome" because of its religious heritage.

Clearly, the Cardinal asserted, God's hands have been held over the city in its 800-year history. "May it never forget that the roots of its strength lie in its Christian faith," he concluded.



Twenty Years, Thirteen Children

Buffalo — (NC) — Clarence and Kathleen Enzier, 20 years married and parents of thirteen children, will be panelists at Catholic Conference on Family Life to be held July 17 in Buffalo.

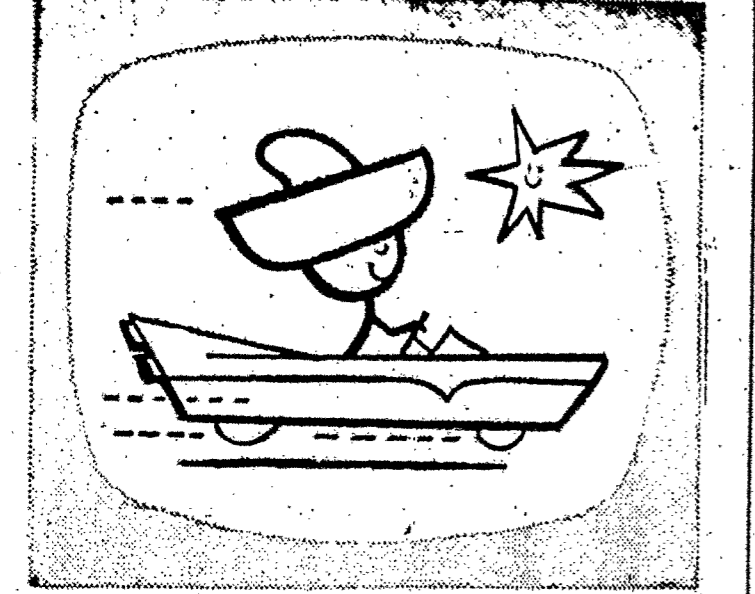
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