



## Fire Hazards Close Schools

Providence — (RNS) — The Touro Street parochial school of St. Joseph's Catholic church in Newport has been closed permanently as a result of fire hazard checks under way in nearly every Rhode Island community.

Father Edward P. Boland, pastor of the parish, who ordered the school shut, said the 177-year-old building will be razed and its 160 pupils transferred to the Hazard Memorial parochial school, a 24,000 sq. ft. parochial school, also operated by St. Joseph's.

Closed, too, as a fire safety measure was the third floor of St. Teresa's Catholic school here until more exits are provided. The Rev. Peter J. Gibbons, pastor of the church, said children attending classes on the third floor will be sent to another parish school building.

The fire hazard inspections are being made in the wake of the Chicago parochial school disaster which took the lives of 89 children and three nuns.

## New Rules For Safety

Cleveland — (RNS) — As a precaution against anything like the Chicago school fire in Catholic schools here, Archbishop Edward T. Hogan of Cleveland issued supplementary safety regulations for diocesan schools. They deal chiefly with fire drills and alarms, handling of waste materials, emergency escapes and fire-stop doors and wall inserts.

The regulations were drawn up by Msgr. Clarence E. Elwell, school superintendent, and the Cleveland Fire Prevention Bureau.

## Jail Jesuits

Berlin — (RNS) — Prison terms ranging from four years and four months to 15 months at hard labor were imposed by a Soviet Zone court at Frankfurt on Oder on four Jesuit priests found guilty of "anti-State activities."

## Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, Jan. 4 — The Holy Name of Jesus (white), Gloria, Creed, Christmas preface.

Monday, Jan. 5 — Mass as Jan. 1, 2nd prayer of St. Telesphorus, no Creed.

Tuesday, Jan. 6 — Epiphany (white), Gloria, Creed, Preface and canon prayers of Epiphany.

Wednesday through Friday, Jan. 7 through 9 — Mass as Tuesday except no Creed and ordinary canon prayers. Saturday, Jan. 10 — Saturday Mass of Our Lady (white), Gloria, Preface of the Blessed Virgin.

## Superstition Stalls Formosa Conversion

Taipei, Formosa — (RNS) — Superstition, especially among women, is still one of the biggest obstacles to conversions in this country, according to Father John Sullivan, pastor of Wu Feng parish in the Maryknoll-staffed Apostolic Prefecture of Fenching.

Father Sullivan cited as an example a family elder whom he had succeeded in converting. The elder wished to replace the picture of the pagan Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin, in his home with that of the Blessed Virgin.

"With my catechist," the priest said, "I went to change the pictures. But even as we were doing so, the women of the family were burning joss sticks and engaging in other superstitions practices before the ancestral tablets. When we remonstrated, they said that their ancestors know nothing about Catholic practices and therefore would be confused by any change."

Father Sullivan said he re-

frained from arguing with them, hoping that time would soften their attitudes and bring understanding.

One day, the priest went on, one of the children became ill.

Immediately the women folk blamed the Catholic picture and wanted to replace it with that of the Goddess of Mercy.

"My catechist told them not to change the picture but to call a doctor, should the child become worse," Father Sullivan said.

The women however did not call a doctor. Neither did they touch the Catholic picture. The boy moreover improved and regained his health.

"Now we are hoping to baptize the old man and pray that in time the rest of the family will enter the Church. But it's slow and difficult work," Father Sullivan commented.

The priest has been in Formosa since 1951. He formerly worked with North China Missions from 1933 until he was expelled by the Chinese Communists in 1950.

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## Priest Battles Delinquency On Bunker Hill

Boston — (RNS) — The equation "gang equals trouble" doesn't always hold true. In the shadow of the famous Bunker Hill monument in the Charlestown section of Boston, members of a "juvenile delinquency" gang called the Hawks chat with their mentor, Father Kenneth B. Murphy of St. Francis de Sales church here. Through a care-

fully-planned program of athletics and prayer, the youngsters are taught that self-mastery is based on self-discipline. "What youth needs most," Father Murphy says, "is not laws or courts or recreation centers or better schools or entertainment or discipline... but some one to believe in."

## Moslems Drive To Convert Africa

(The following article was written by a veteran N.G.W.F.C. News Service correspondent after a trip to Africa that took him to the Sudan, Uganda, Belgian Congo, Angola, Ghana and Nigeria.)

By FATHER PATRICK O'CONNOR  
Society of St. Columban

A white-robed man spread a straw-mat on the riverbank, kicked off his shoes and stepped on the mat. He faced the setting sun — there lay Mecca — joined his hands reverently and began to pray. Then he went down on his knees and touched the ground with his forehead.

He was one of Africa's 60-odd millions of Moslems, fulfilling the Moslem duty of prayer five times a day.

One hot, blazing noon in Khartoum, a courteous young man in European clothes, driving a smart new car, gave me a lift. He had studied in Scotland, had visited Ireland, spoke English well. It was early in Ramadan, the Moslem month of strict fast. He had not taken food or drink, not even a drop of water, since sunrise, he told me. He would keep the fast until sundown.

He was another of Africa's Moslem millions.

Later on the other side of Africa, in Accra, Ghana, I watched thousands of Negro Moslems in festive garb gathering to celebrate the end of Ramadan.

Most of Africa's Moslems are of Arab or part-Arab stock. Some are Negro Africans; these are increasing in number. In western Nigeria I passed near a town where most of the population of 115,000 had become Moslem in the past 25 years. (The local king simply had no priests left there.)

The Moslem religion is not native to Africa. It came from Arabia, that is, from Asia, with the Arabs. The Arabs, who are Semites, originally came to Africa as invaders and "colonialists," but that was 10 and 12 centuries ago.

THE MOSLEMS in Africa today impress you with their religious observance, their strength politically and numerically and their expansion.

• One must stand respectfully in the presence of any man who prays to God as devoutly as some of the Moslems I have seen.

Reverence for God's will is constantly on Moslem lips. Their religion is called Islam, which means means submission to God's will. (Greatly though they called Mohammedans.) They revere Mohammed as their prophet, they do not like to be creed, though sadly incomplete and erroneous, recognizes one God, the immortality of the soul and man's subjection to God.

Their code of conduct is a mixture of Puritanism and laxity. A man who observes the rigorous fast all day during Ramadan may spend the night in licentiousness. Strong drink is forbidden—a rule I have seen broken publicly by Moslems—but a man may have four wives.

• In five of the 10 self-governing countries in Africa, the ruling power is in Moslem hands.

In Nigeria, to become independent in October, 1960, the Northern Region, where a strong Moslem party predominates, will have a majority in the federal

the Moslem religion. Where Moslems are in the majority, their religion is usually interlocked with local political, social and economic power.

And power, in the Moslem tradition, tends to be absolute. It's a brave man who tries to fight City Hall in those circumstances.

On the other hand, in western Nigeria I met an African priest whose parents were Moslem. In that region adult Moslems seldom if ever become Christians, but they will allow one or two of their children to join the church.

• Moslems seek converts. The Ahmadiyah Moslem sect, with headquarters in India, has maintained "foreign missions" in west Africa since 1921.

Most of the Moslem proselytizing is done by Africans. There is an active Moslem "lay apostolate." Moslems are said to be strongly represented in radio and on newspapers in Nigeria.

• Moslems help Moslems to establish themselves as farmers or traders in pagan districts. With their earnings the newcomers employ Moslem catechists, and in 10 years a whole village may have become Moslem.

Moslem doctrines are easy to learn. They allow believers to have four wives. Furthermore, the African peasant or laborer may feel that as a Moslem he will gain some prestige and security. Maybe the richest traders he knows are Moslems. He hears of foreign countries that are largely Moslem.

It is common knowledge that the British colonial government favored the Moslems for political reasons in Africa; so did the French.

Moslems do not make converts everywhere. Members of the Ibo tribe (five and a half millions), for instance, in Nigeria, may become Christians or remain pagans, but they won't become Moslems. Apart from occasional marriage cases, Catholics do not become Moslem.

Moslems in Africa work hard at converting and are hard to convert. But it is risky to generalize where many different racial, social and political factors enter.

One can safely say, however, that in Africa's Moslem millions there is a great fund of sincere religious sentiment and of good will towards non-Moslems.

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