

Liberties Union Asks Prayer-Ban

Almighty God's Blessing 'Violates Constitution'

Mincola, N. Y.—(NC)—A New York State Supreme Court judge has reserved decision in a suit pressed by the New York Civil Liberties Union to enjoin the Herriks School Board from use of a prayer for opening of each day's classes in schools.

More than 250 persons crowded the Supreme Court chamber here for the opening round of the litigation.

Four policemen were on hand to keep order.

At the completion of proceedings, Judge Bernard S. Meyer reserved his decision, but gave the parties to the suit two weeks in which to file briefs.

Herriks is a town in Nassau County. The prayer, which was approved in July, 1958, is used in Herriks' public schools. Its use, on an optional basis, was recommended unanimously by the State Board of Regents in December, 1951, for all public schools.

The prayer, non-denominational, is: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee and we beg Thy blessings on us, our parents, our teachers and our country."

The action was brought by five residents of the area, who maintain that recitation of the short morning prayer violates the Constitutional principles of separation of church and state.

Bertram Dalker, attorney for the school board, and court reporter L. Chandler, who represented 16 residents favoring the prayer, asked that the petition be dismissed on the ground of improper judicial procedure and lack of sufficient facts.

Mr. Dalker denied that the prayer was in any way unconstitutional. He said both the Federal and State Constitutions recognize Almighty God as part of our national heritage, and noted that both houses of the U.S. Congress begin each day's sessions with a prayer.

William J. Butler, counsel for the Civil Liberties Union, requested a trial by jury to establish the facts.

He maintained that the prayer was "offensive" to a great many Herriks residents.

"We object both to the saying of the prayer and the manner in which it is said," he told the court. "We do not believe children should be compelled to pray."

Mr. Dalker denied that children are compelled to say the prayer. He noted that only one child in the 4,000-pupil school district had asked to be excused during recitation of the prayer.

Loyola Wins OK For TV

Washington — (NC) — The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review a lower court's decision upholding the right of Loyola University, New Orleans, to operate a television station.

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Son Ponders Dulles' Illness

Rome — (RNS) — Father Avery Dulles, S.J. (right) son of the ailing U.S. Secretary of State, walks with a colleague at the Gregorian University here shortly after receiving word of his father's second bout with cancer. Father Dulles, who is studying theology at the institution was converted to Catholicism in 1946 and was ordained in the Jesuit Order ten years later.

Paraguay

Dictator Tramples Freedom

By TESAIHI CHACON
(N.C.M.C. News Service)

Corinda, Argentina — Despite a strict censorship by the dictatorial regime in Paraguay, news of increasing arrests and reprisals in that Catholic country is reaching this city five miles across the border from the Paraguayan capital of Asuncion.

The tense situation caused by the current wave of arrests, reports state, is in large part the result of a strike by Paraguay's workers at the end of last year against low wages and rising living costs. Archbishop Juan Mens Porta of Asuncion played an important role at that time in preventing government retaliation against a number of the strikers. It has been learned here.

Since 1954 Paraguay's 1,638,000 people — 95 per cent of whom are Catholics — have been under the rule of Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, who seized power after ousting President Federico Chavez. Gen. Stroessner heads a tropical, landlocked country about the size of Montana which, despite mounting inflation, has the second lowest per capita income in Latin America — \$30 a year compared with \$2,027 in the U.S.

Discussing the nation's plight in a year-end pastoral letter, the Paraguayan Hierarchy warned:

"Many are the symptoms that foretell a serious state of crisis in our society — making us

though the strike's leaders were soon arrested, the strike continued, reports state, because of the worker's conviction that their claims were just and their indignation at their leaders' arrests.

Some of the workers on strike gathered for a time at the headquarters of the Maritime Labor League, but when police used tear gas bombs against them they moved at the suggestion of a Catholic union member to the Church of Mary Auxiliatrix and the Salesian College.

They were able to reach the church and college in spite of police efforts to prevent them from doing so. The police, however, then blockaded the buildings and for three days kept food from reaching the workers.

To government claims that the strikers were led by communists, the Asuncion publication of the Young Christian Workers' movement, Juventud Obrera, replied:

"At no time did the communists take hold of the situation. There was no preconcerted plan to occupy churches . . .

"Inside the patio of the college the communists tried to take the initiative by means of speeches and violence, but five Catholic trade unionists stopped them.

"The order that characterized those taking refuge, who were of all ideologies, was surpris-

ing. Although the police waged a war of nerves, there was never any discouragement. The workers started the recitation of the Rosary with mounting devotion as time went by, a wonderful thing to see.

"During the three days (the strikers) ate practically nothing and slept hardly at all."

As the police were preparing a final assault on the college with orders to level it, reports state, Archbishop Mens Porta intervened and obtained guarantees of freedom for the workers.

According to reports the country is still faced with the problems of severe food and housing shortages against which the Paraguayan YGW has waged a continuous campaign.

One of the country's most depressed areas is the Virgen del Carmen district which had as its assistant pastor Father Ramon Talavera, who opposed the Stroessner regime and is now in exile in Uruguay. Many of the district's 10,000 people live on lands promised them by the government in 1937 but to which they have never received titles of ownership.

The regime is now planning to cut a 45-yard-wide avenue through the area and has arrested a number of residents while soldiers destroyed their homes.

New Editor

Pueblo — (NC) — Father James H. Kane has been named editor and business manager of the Southern Colorado Register, Pueblo diocesan weekly newspaper.

the jacket story:

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