

Faith Spans Chasm Of Divided Nation

(Continued from page 1)

days later, a captain from Virginia, who was stationed at Troy, New York, worked out a plan to seize the U.S. arsenal at Watervliet so as to commandeer, if possible, and ship off to Virginia, that arsenal's unique bullet-punching machine.

He believed he could find helpers among the workers in Troy factories: these recent immigrants, ignorant of the issues, and disaffected, could, he believed, easily be roused to a noble, which would help him to raid the arsenal.

As the events proved, there was some plausibility to his hopes. However, the city fathers got wind of the conspiracy at an early hour. Since the potential raiders were largely Irish Catholics, the officials turned for aid to Father Peter Havermans, pastor of St. Mary's Church in Troy.

Father Havermans thought he could help. That night—April 13th—he had a large American flag hung from the steeple of his church. The mob would have to pass by the church next day, and he planned to halt them and address them, standing beneath the banner of their adopted land.

Actually, the pastor did not have to give that speech. The Virginians had indeed succeeded in gathering his mob. The mob had indeed set out for the arsenal. But as soon as it reached a point on the road from which the steeple and the flag were visible, the chief factory-worker cried out: "The old man is in it!" The rioters paused and held a hasty consultation.

They might be spilling for a fight at that moment; but at their venerable pastor was in the opposition, there was no question about it: the fight was off. Then and there, the raiding party broke up.

St. Mary's, Troy, thus became what was probably the first Catholic church to fly the stars and stripes during the Civil War. As the issue was joined more clearly, many another northern steeple floated a flag beneath its cross, as a gesture of loyalty to the Union.

Irish-born Archbishop John Hughes of New York had one up on St. Patrick's Cathedral; Spanish-born Bishop Michael Domenec of Pittsburgh did the same at his cathedral; and the German-born Archbishop John Fremont of Milwaukee gave orders that every church in his archdiocese display the national banner.

In Buffalo—Rochester was then in the Buffalo Diocese—Bishop John Timon made a ceremony of setting up the flag on his episcopal residence. Then he addressed the crowd which had gathered before the house.

He was saddened, he said, by the prospect of the forthcoming struggle. "But the South," he told his audience, "began the War; the North cannot back out without forfeiting its manhood, its honor, and its glorious future."

If northern Catholics were convinced that the Union must be preserved, southern Catholics were equally ready to defend secession. The bishops of four of the eleven southern dioceses were particularly noted for their Confederate loyalty.

These were the French-born Archbishop John Odin of New Orleans, the French-born Bishop August Martin of Natchitoches, the Irish-born Bishop John Quinlan of Mobile, and the Irish-born Patrick Lynch of Charleston. And in Dixie the flag served as a rallying-point equal to Union colors in the North. Many a Louisiana military company, when ready to embark in its Mississippi River troop ships, first marched to the parish church to pray and

to request the pastor to bless its colors.

On April 15, 1861, Abraham Lincoln issued his call for 75,000 volunteers. The appeal brought a quick response from northern Americans, and particularly from Irish members of the militia. In the years before the war's outbreak, a number of companies of Irish-American guards had been organized. They had thus had the opportunity of learning the skills of war; and now they had the patriotism to put these skills at the service of the government.

As a matter of fact, it is quite likely that the very first group to reply to the call of "Father Abraham" was that led by Col. Michael Corcoran of New York's 69th Regiment.

Corcoran's volunteering had a rather amusing aspect. When Fort Sumter was attacked, Michael Corcoran was awaiting court martial, on the charge of disobeying orders. This sounds grave enough until we hear what the orders were: to parade his Hibernians in the procession which New York City staged on October 11, 1860 to welcome the British Prince of Wales. When Col. Corcoran stoutly refused to do this honor to "perfidious Albion," his trial was ordered.

Naturally, Irish-American opinion regarded Corcoran's stand as heroic rather than subversive; and in March, 1861, the New York Irish gave the culprit a magnificent reception, at which they presented him with a sword and a regimental flag, both inscribed "In commemoration of October 11, 1860."

Military common sense made short work of the projected trial once Corcoran had volunteered. In late April, Major General Sanford issued a special order, on instructions from general headquarters, dismissing the charge and dissolving the court martial. The army needed men like Michael Corcoran. He marched his regiment off to battle in the early days of May.

It is said that four thousand men had asked to join the 69th, but had to be refused. Most of those refused probably signed up with other units, for there were many bands of volunteers made up in whole or in part of Irish Catholics, in east and mid-west. Many German Catholics likewise volunteered, especially in Wisconsin and Missouri.

What of the South? Here, too, the response was prompt and loyal. The majority of the volunteers were of French ancestry, and the members of Louisiana companies were sometimes all from the same parish. But there were Irish volunteers in Dixie, too. We read of the blessing of the banner of the Montgomery Guard of New Orleans, with a Mrs. Andrew Fitzpatrick acting as "godmother" of the flag. Virginia, too, had its Irish militia, the Montgomery and the Emmett Guards; and Bishop John McGill of Richmond publicly encouraged the faithful to volunteer for the cause.

Later on in the war, in both North and South, the governments issued further appeals for volunteers. Catholics responded to each of these appeals.

During the Civil War, the three largest units of Irish Catholic predominance were the

following: The Corcoran Legion (New York's 164th, 182nd, 155th, 170th, 175th); Meagher's New York Irish Brigade (New York's 63rd, 69th, and 88th; Massachusetts's 28th; and Pennsylvania's 116th); and Col. James Mulligan's Irish Brigade (23rd and 19th Illinois).

The three Confederate units in which Catholics predominated were: Hayes's 7th Louisiana Regiment; Taylor's Louisiana Brigade; and Wheat's Battalion, "The Irish Tartars."

When I point out the extensive number of Catholics in the ranks of both North and South, I do not mean to say that these servicemen were all heroes. Some deserted, some were troublemakers, some were presumably rascals. When the Federal Government, in 1863, had to turn from calling up volunteers to drafting its soldiery, the Irish in New York and some other cities were ready to riot rather than be conscripted.

There was, of course, some justification for their attitude, since the inequities of the draft law laid a special burden upon the poor. But Archbishop Hughes, and ailing man, in his last public appearance, warned the rioting New York immigrants that disorder was no way to protest their griefs.

And among the troops who put down the disorder, there were many loyal Catholic soldiers, including one Nelson Baker, who later on, as the philanthropic Father Baker of Lackawanna, N.Y., was to have a distinguished ecclesiastical career.

All I intend to maintain is that in most cases the Catholics who rallied to the sectional colors, were as loyal and as capable soldiers as their Non-Catholic fellow-Americans. Confederate Colonel Pickett, of Gettysburg fame, had special praise for the soldiering of General Meagher's Irish Brigade. "The brilliant assault of Marye's heights of their Irish Brigade," wrote the southern officer to his wife, "was beyond description. Why... we forgot that they were fighting us, and cheer after cheer went up all along our lines."

An even more important point is that, as it happened, the War Between the States was not only a war of brother against brother; it was a war of Irish, German, Creole, Polish and Catholic against his fellow Catholic. Nowhere was this brought out more dramatically than in the instance of this same Irish Brigade at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, on December 13, 1862.

General Meagher, as we have seen, commanded these dauntless soldiers. They entered the fray "wearing the green" as best they could: sprigs of green Virginia boxwood in their forage caps. But in the opposing Confederate ranks under General Cobb there were also a good number of Irish soldiers.

As the Confederates, poised for battle, saw the Federals moving towards them, a wave of grief passed over them. "On God!" they cried. "What a pity we have to fire on Meagher's men!"

It was a cry which epitomized the tragedy not only of that particular battle, but of all war. All men are fundamentally kinsmen and fellow-countrymen. Why can they not live together in brotherly peace?

NEXT WEEK
People and statistics



Half Way 'Round The World

Dr. Paul S. Lalonde, Rochester dentist, left Monday for his seventh six months one-man aid to Africa program. He left behind "a huge thank you" to individuals, groups and industrial firms which have contributed funds and supplies for his crusade against toothaches. He will spend most of the six months in Tanganyika at clinics operated by the Medical Missionaries of Mary, an order of nuns.

Faith 'Summit' Meet Hinted

Toronto — (RNS) — A meeting more historic than the recent one between Pope John XXIII and the Archbishop of Canterbury was hinted at here by the new Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Canada, Bishop Athenagoras of Toronto.

In an interview the bishop said the Pope, Anglican Archbishop Geoffrey Francis Fisher and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras (name's the same) of Istanbul may get together in the near future.

SUCH A MEETING could take place possibly late in 1961, the bishop said.

"And it would be even more historic than the forthcoming Vatican Council," Bishop Athenagoras added.

While visiting Ottawa recently, the bishop said with Communism gaining ground a re-organization of the Christian community was necessary. He suggested a federation comparable to the ancient ways of Church government. Such a form of government would give equal status to the Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican communions.

In the interview here, Bishop Athenagoras said a three-way meeting among the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox leaders would really be historic since the breach between the Orthodox and Rome had been sharper and had lasted longer than any other rift in Christendom.

Priest Wills \$90,000 To U.S. Government

Pittsburgh — (RNS) — The Federal Government has been named heir to approximately \$90,000 in a will by an Irish-born Roman Catholic priest who died in 1958 at the age of 82.

Msgr. Michael J. Macken, the late pastor of St. Clara's Church in Clarendon, Pa., made the award to express his gratitude for the opportunities offered him by America, the United States Attorney's office announced here.

The priest had amassed his funds through investments in government bonds and securities. He was a secular priest and was not bound by a vow of poverty.

In the will, Msgr. Macken explained that the Federal Government was the principal beneficiary "in grateful acknowledgement of the opportunity to prosper both spiritually and materially which this great country has afforded me and the members of my religion and nationality."

The monsignor was born near Castlebar, County Mayo, Ireland.

Swiss Monk's Cure Said Miraculous

Fribourg — (NC) — Bishop Francois Charriere of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg has officially recognized as miraculous the cure of a Swiss Benedictine at Lourdes.

Brother Leon Schwager was suddenly cured of multiple sclerosis during a procession of the Blessed Sacrament at the French shrine in 1952.

Brother Leon was born in 1924 and entered the Benedictine Order in Zurich in 1945. About 1950 the evident symptoms of his illness were: head-

aches, troubled vision, and paralysis that hindered his speech and walk.

In 1951 Dr. Zander of Zurich's neurological Polyclinic declared him incurably afflicted with multiple sclerosis.

In the spring of 1952 Brother Leon went to Lourdes with a Swiss pilgrimage. He could no longer walk. The day after his arrival he was taken to bathe in water from the spring discovered by St. Bernadette Soubirous, the visionary of Lourdes. Then during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, he felt himself cured. He was able to return to the hospital without aid.

The cure took place on the feast of the Solemnity of St. Joseph, which fell that year on April 30. The feast is no longer observed.

In 1950 the international medical committee at Lourdes declared the cure inexplicable by natural causes.

Since his cure, Brother Leon has returned every year to Lourdes, where he cooks for the sick.

Treatment For Castro

New York — (NC) — Cardinal Spellman, back from a 17-day Christmas tour of U.S. overseas bases, offered to pay for treatment for Cuba's Premier Fidel Castro.

Said New York's Archbishop: "I think he needs it."

Cardinal Spellman made this observation to reporters who talked with him at St. Patrick's cathedral after he flew here by jet from his tour of U.S. bases in the Arctic.

Nazi Foe At Vatican

Vatican City — (NC) — A diplomat jailed during World War II for anti-Nazi resistance has been named German ambassador to the Holy See.

He is Albert Hilger von Scherpenberg, now Germany's Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs. He will replace retiring Ambassador Rudolf Strachwitz in May, 1961.

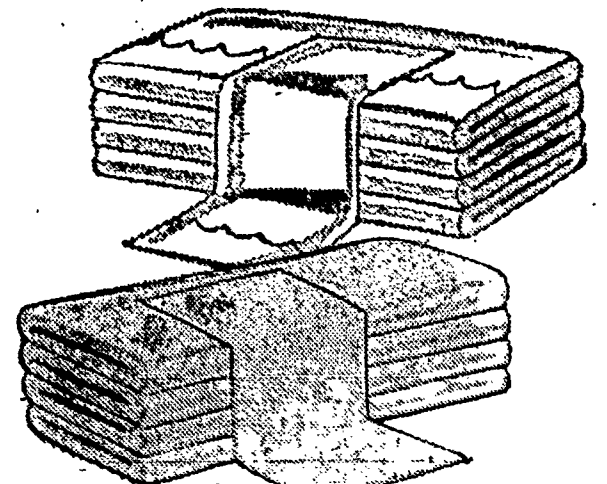
The new ambassador was born in Munich on October 4, 1899. A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, he is still 82 bishops of the Orthodox Church in Russia.

PARK IN THE NEW MIDTOWN GARAGE

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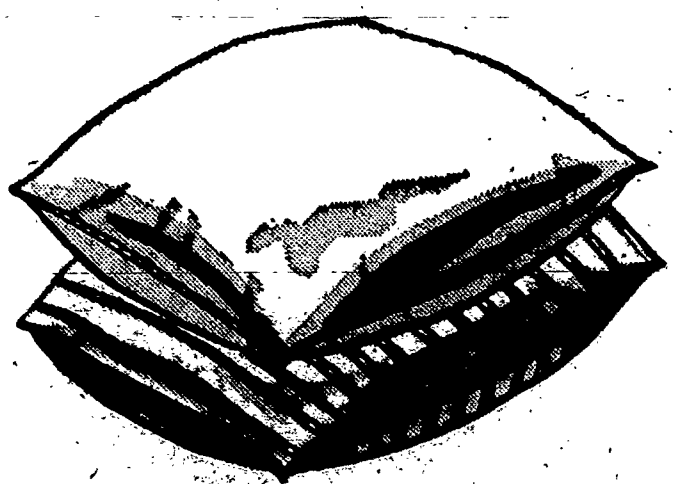
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