

'Green Hell' Bishop Reports Natives' Joy At His Elevation

New York — (NC) — For three days bands played, people danced in the streets and baskets of exotic flowers overflowed the small Maryknoll rectory in the Bolivian jungle.

No, this wasn't a typical fiesta — but a spontaneous demonstration by the people of "Green Hell" at the news that their "gringo" priest had been named a bishop.

IN AN INTERVIEW here, while preparing to return to his Bolivian mission following his consecration on March 7 in his hometown of San Francisco, Bishop Thomas P. Collins, M.M., said of the celebration in his Bolivian mission:

"The people interpreted the announcement as a triumph for the home team, and they went all out to show their appreciation to the Holy Father for honoring their remote parish at the headwaters of the Amazon."

But the husky, 45-year-old Bishop was quick to recall a far more somber, depressing reception 19 years ago — marking the arrival of Maryknollers in the Vicariate Apostolic of Pando in northwestern Bolivia.

Complete indifference greeted the American missionaries in 1942, he said. Very few people attended weekly Mass, and less received the sacraments; men were openly hostile to the pres-

ence of the "gringo" priests; no couples were married in the Church; concubinage was commonplace.

"Although the majority of the people were Catholic by birth and baptism, few practiced their religion," explained Bishop Collins. "But actually, it's unfair to place the blame entirely on the people. The fact is that for generations there simply were not enough priests to care for their spiritual needs."

TO COMBAT this massive spiritual apathy based upon fear and ignorance, the Maryknollers established parish schools, adult education courses, clinics and a hospital. Priests were sent up the treacherous jungle rivers in power launches to administer to the forgotten rubbers-workers in remote outposts.

"Once our people realized we worked mainly among the poor, their attitude began to change," said Bishop Collins. "Hostility gave way to cooperation. Every person insisted we accept some form of payment for every service rendered. School children brought a few dozen eggs or a couple of shaggy chickens as tuition. Many a medical bill was paid for with a suckling pig. But the important thing was that in this way the people maintained their self-respect."

Today, the "gringo" padres are respected and loved, according to the bishop. Apathy and indifference have been replaced by enthusiasm for any parish project. The men are now the backbone of the parishes. Young couples insist upon the Nuptial Mass at their weddings, and regard concubinage as a spiritual and social stigma. The river parishes rank among the most generous in all Bolivia.

The Pando vicariate, a sprawling region along the Amazon headwaters, is about the size of Kentucky. As the Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Collins is responsible for the direction of 25 Maryknollers working in the jungle area of 40,000 square miles.

Pope Greet Swiss Guards

Vatican City — (RNS) — Twenty-four new members of the Swiss Guard were sworn in as Pope John watched the ceremony from a window of the Vatican Palace.

"BRAVO AND THANKS," the Pope said after the recruits had sworn to defend the person of the Pontiff with their lives, if necessary.

Established early in the 16th century, the Swiss Guard is made up of Swiss citizens, who must be Catholics and eligible for the army of their own country. Armed with swords and halberds, the Guards have a colorful parade uniform designed by Michelangelo.

'Idiot' Said Greater Fear Than Reds

Los Angeles — (NC) — Persons who do not understand communism are a greater menace to this nation than communism itself, a Jesuit theologian told a group of collegians here.

Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., theologian of Woodstock (Md.) College, speaking at a convocation of Loyola University students asserted: "The real enemy is not communism, it's the idiot."

THE JESUIT, scholar explained: "I use the word 'idiot' from its Greek meaning: a private man, a non-intellectual man, a non-debating man, a man who has a deficiency of understanding."

This "idiot" holds to theories which he believes consistent with the American way of life, but actually they are not, Father Murray said. As an example, he said there should be no state or civil religion in this country, but this type of "idiot" unwittingly holds the ideals of democracy as a sort of quasi-religious faith. A related misconception, he added, is that the public school is performing a type of ministry.

Father Murray said communism is an example of civil religion. All major countries of the world at one time have had a civil religion, he added, but the United States claims only a civil unity.

"Our civil unity," he explained, "is based on two factors: a constitutional consensus and a community of interests."

"THE AMERICAN historically stands for the rule of law, which, incidentally, has been infiltrated at home by such anti-intellectual doctrines as psychology, sociology, and a horde of other isms."

The function of a university is to search for the answers to three questions: What can a man know, what can a man do, what can a man hope?

These answers, Father Murray said, will effectively educate against the enemy, even though he has subversion and infiltration as weapons.

Storm Drives Sea Gypsies To Missioners

Jolo, The Philippines — (NC) — It took a typhoon to bring the Sea Gypsy children to read, under the wing of Catholic missionaries.

These primitive fishermen are born, live and die in tree-trunk canoes. They are considered subhuman outcasts by the predominantly Moslem population of Jolo and other islands in the Sulu archipelago, which trails off southwest from the Philippines like a bridge to Borneo. The Sea Gypsies shield away from the missionaries until a typhoon struck last year.

THE TYPHOON swept out of the Sulu Sea and forced a small band of the Sea Gypsies to beach their boats near the city of Jolo. Moslems of the neighborhood refused to help them. But the Oblates of Mary Immaculate did.

Some contact had been made. Oblates agreed to teach the children to read.



British Royalty Visits Pope

Vatican City — In a special audience at the Vatican, Pope John XXIII receives Britain's royal couple while they were on a state visit to Italy. Queen Elizabeth II is shown wearing a long black dress of satin and lace set off with a diamond tiara and necklace. Her husband, Prince Philip, is in the uniform of a British Admiral of the Fleet. Highlight of their visit to the Pope was an address in which the Pontiff, speaking in fluent French, spoke of the bonds between Britain and the Holy See which he said were "rich with comforting promises for the development of good understanding and mutual friendship." Pope John and the royal couple spent 25 minutes together in private conversation. The Queen was the third British monarch in history and the first in 38 years to meet a Pope. (RNS Photo)

Jews Aid Assisi Poor

Vatican City — (NC) — All they could not capture the Jews she had been hidden in a convent. The problem was solved by burying her under another name.

In 1943 Bishop Nicolini instructed the diocesan clergy and the members of Religious orders to accept all who applied to them for protection because of racial or political reasons.

Bishop Giuseppe Placido Nicolini of Assisi counts among his most treasured mementoes a parchment scroll signed by hundreds of Jews who escaped persecution, thanks to his intervention, during the war.

THESE FACTS were brought to light by L'Osservatore della Domenica, Vatican City weekly, which recalled that Assisi was among the most preferred asylums for Jewish people.

More than 300 Jews were given shelter and protection in the Bishop's house and in the houses of Religious communities and private persons at Bishop Nicolini's direction. One of his priests, Father Aldo Brunacci, was arrested and later released by the Germans because

SO CONCERNED with the safety of the Jews was Bishop Nicolini that he even lifted the severe provisions of cloister which surrounded the Poor Clare nuns so that they could take in women refugees.

At one time the death of a Jewish woman caused a problem. The woman died under natural circumstances but she could not be buried without disclosing to public authorities that

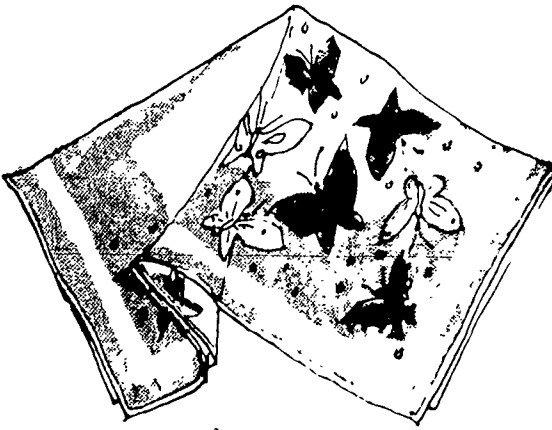
Slovak Convention
Lansford, Pa. — (NC) — The Slovak Catholic Federation, which has over 300,000 members, will hold its golden jubilee convention in Pittsburgh on May 16 and 17.

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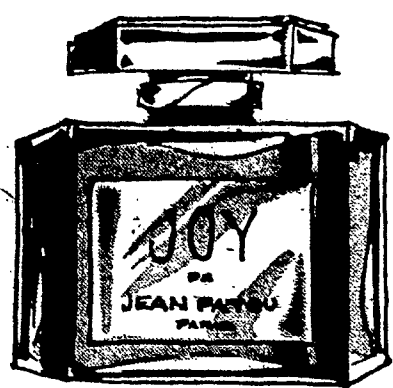
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