

Saintly Priest N.Y. Missioner

(Continued from Page 1)

They built themselves log cabins and began life anew. These were the target of Father Neumann's zeal as a young priest — not only settlers of German stock but French Canadians and Irish too. He had field aptly for his gift of tongues. It was for just this that he studied them.

Immigrant Needs

In 1840 when he joined the Redemptorists, he found that their purpose was "the care of the most abandoned souls," and who in this New World was more abandoned than the immigrant? Germans came by the shipload from the petty tyrannies of Europe to make their way in free America. Unless they had priests to look after them spiritually, they would slip forever from the Church.

Yankee America could wait! At the moment there were more urgent matters: to see that the "abandoned" immigrant was saved to the Faith, that his children and grandchildren might be the backbone of the Catholic Church of tomorrow.

That was the ideal that Father John Neumann imbibed, and as a Redemptorist, missionary and superior and vice provincial applied in his apostolate. It was something akin to the Church's present concern for the Puerto Ricans flocking to the United States.

To many Catholics in the early 1850s, the choice of this plain-faced little religious for the ultra-Yankee See of Philadelphia — John Neumann, whose English was couched in the accent of Central Europe — came as an unpleasant affront.

The Bishop of Philadelphia ought to be a native-born American, they said. Particularly in the 1850s with the bigots of the Nativists and Know Nothings so flagrant. He ought to be a person who could saunter down Broad St. as much part of the picture as Benjamin Franklin, as native as the Liberty Bell!

But Philadelphia in the mid-nineteenth century was more than the Cradle of Liberty. It was one of the busiest ports of entry from Europe along with Boston and Baltimore and New York. Sailing packets by the hundreds poked their prows over Delaware Ave., disgorging immigrants from all over Europe. There were thin and threadbare families from the Irish Famine of '47, and from the German revolutions of the following year. There were Italians too, though not in such great numbers.

The immigrants poured into the slums. Others moved up to the Delaware and the Schuylkill into farmland and mining town. They needed a Bishop who could talk their language. They needed an immigrant like themselves. Plain little John Neumann from Bohemia was the man.

Aid for Italians

He went his pastoral rounds preaching in English and German, and when the need arose, he preached in Italian in Southwork where some five thousand

immigrants from Italy were living in 1852. He opened his episcopal chapel for their use on Sunday mornings, hearing their confessions himself with the aid of a professor from the nearby Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo. In 1853 he purchased a Methodist church on Montrose St. and dedicated the edifice to St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi — the first national parish for Italians in the United States.

The Irish Up-State

On his visits to the coal regions he discovered a new problem in the grimy shanty towns where Irish miners lived with their families. They had come from the mountains of Western Ireland where the English tongue had not as yet penetrated. When the potato crop failed in 1847, those that survived the journey overseas moved up into the Pennsylvania mountains and "had no English at all."

It pained the Bishop to find these good people hungering for confession, hungering for the word of God, and no one to care for them. "I must learn Irish," said the little Bohemian. He lost no time. Once he got back to Philadelphia he summoned one of his pastors, an Irishman who knew the Gaelic. "You must teach me to hear confessions in Irish, to be able to understand the common-place expressions of these good old people."

It is recorded of an old lady in Trevorton in the year 1856. She bobbed into the box and commenced her confession. "Beannaigh me, a Athair, de bri gur Pheacaiois..." — the Irish formula for confession — the Bishop Neumann heard her out. He gave her a penance and a little word of encouragement in his halting Irish.

The old woman walked out of the church with a smile like a field of Connemara primrose. "Moladh go deo le Dia," she murmured to the neighbors. "Easopg Eireannacha aia gairn ar deir!" (Praise be the good God, it's an Irish bishop we have at last!)

If Bishop John Nepomucene Neumann of Prachatitz in Bohemia had heard that remark, it would have been the sweetest compliment of his life!

Work for the immigrant was a glorious and a spade-work. It didn't look like much a century ago pruning and putting with a tender plant whose flower one never lived to see. But look at Philadelphia today. The great masses of miners, and barge men and bootblacks who know no tongue but their native German and Irish and Italian. Today they are the sturdy backbone of the Catholic Church in America.

(Courtesy Philadelphia Standard and Times)

(Continued next week)

Envoy to Vatican

Vatican City, (NC) — Pope John XXIII has awarded the great cross of the Order of Pius IX to Edgard Sanabria, Ambassador of Venezuela to the Holy See.

Jepport Said Threat To 37 Institutions

Trenton — (NC) — A non-college president, charged with Catholic institutions, executive of parish churches, are threatened by the plans of the Port Pazzi — the first national parish for Italians in the United States.

Sister Hildegarde Marie, president of the College of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J., made the charge at a public hearing called here by Gov. Robert B. Meyner to help him decide whether or not to veto a bill which would prohibit the construction of a jetport in heavily populated North New Jersey.

Sister Hildegarde said she had been authorized to speak for most of the institutions. She said they include her own college, the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, two junior colleges for nuns, two diocesan high schools, 11 private schools and 20 parochial schools.

She pointed out that the motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity "is the place of formation for Sisters who staff 104 parochial schools, seven hospitals, five schools of nursing and other institutions."



Symbolic of two vastly differing outlooks are Soviet astronaut Yuri Gagarin and Cuba's papal nuncio Archbishop Luigi Centoz. They met at massive July 26 Castro anniversary celebration in Havana.

Pope's Envoy in Cuba

Havana — (RNS) — The Major Yuri Gagarin, the Soviet man who has perhaps the most trying task of any Roman Catholic prelate in the Americas — Archbishop Luigi Centoz, Papal Nuncio to Cuba — is shown as the Church as best he can in a nation where the Communist

dominated government is engaged in a drive of persecution against Catholic clergy.

Thus Archbishop Centoz can greet and congratulate Gagarin as a fellow man without implying recognition of the atheistic Soviet Union which claimed Gagarin's flight proved "God does not exist."

While Fidel Castro expropriated Church property and expelled priests, Archbishop Centoz met with Cuban officials in an effort to secure the release of a priest who served as chaplain to anti-Castro forces in the abortive rebellion and did what he could to ease the plight of priests, brothers and nuns who were forced to leave the country.

Kisielewski seems to get along at times with the Polish government, but he frequently reminds officials of the Church's strength, dignity and respect in Poland with addresses on the subject.

Kisielewski was one of the first writers for the now 16-year-old Catholic newspaper, Tygodnik Powszechny. It is here that he really made his name, rather than in composing or writing novels or debating.

Kisielewski's writings have added humor to the work of Tygodnik Powszechny, and Poland, under the yoke of communism, needs laughter. Often the laugh is on the Communists. The Gomulka government allows him to continue, some believe, because it realizes that he has a first-rate mind and that Poland would lose a great deal, especially in humor, if he were silenced.

"An atmosphere of humor, lessens everything," he once wrote, "and digs into every

"Digging into everything" is a pretty difficult job in Soviet-controlled Poland. But Mr. paramount need in Poland is Kiselewski and the editors of Tygodnik Powszechny seem to build up the country and aid its people even though he does not believe in communism, expected of them as they attempt to serve the interests of the Communist theory that make up 92.6 per cent of the nation.

Catholic Newspaper Behind Iron Curtain Jokes Rile Russians

Vienna — (RNS) — There is one man in Poland who can get away with almost anything even though he is not a Communist, attacks the Russians, and is a Catholic in the fullest sense of the word.

He is Stefan Kisielewski, 49, columnist for Tygodnik Powszechny, forthright and outspoken Catholic newspaper published in Cracow.

Most Poles look upon Kisielewski as a genius and, considering the wide scope of his activities, it is an estimate difficult to refute. He is a musician and music critic, a composer, a feature writer, a novelist, columnist and editor who, for the last four years, has been a politician and deputy in the Sejm, the Polish Parliament.

His columns in Tygodnik Powszechny are made up of humor, original thought on any topic under the sun, and a kind of double talk which, subjected to interpretation, leaves the Communists to wonder whether he has patted them on the back or stolen their skirts.

Kisielewski has made friends by the thousands in Poland, but enemies too, and he is sometimes charged with opportunism and selling himself to Moscow. This could stem from the fact that he took a trip to Moscow and at times backs Communist legislation, and that some Polish Catholics feel Catholics should not stand for election to the Communist-dominated Parliament.

That the Catholic voice, while weak, does make itself felt in Parliament, was admitted by the none other than the Warsaw

Radio, the propaganda vehicle of communism in Poland.

It reported disapprovingly in 1959 that only two deputies, Kisielewski and Stanislaw Stomma, both Catholics, had made speeches critical of the Communist government during a session of Parliament.

The station said Kisielewski made a lengthy speech criticizing other deputies for not speaking their minds, and rapping them for "accepting unquestioningly all government proposals." He then condemned state censorship of all publications, religious as well as secular, it said.

WARSAW RADIO went on to say that Stomma had delivered a speech criticizing the intolerance of religion shown by some local authorities.

Kisielewski and Stomma are both members of the Catholic Znak (Sign) organization, which includes the nine Catholic deputies in Parliament.

Members of Znak — it's official title is The Club of Catholic Intellectuals — believe that some degree of cooperation has to be given to the government for the nation's benefit, but warn Catholics must never forget their duty to the Church.

Kisielewski believes that the paramount need in Poland is to build up the country and aid its people even though he does not believe in communism, expected of them as they attempt to serve the interests of the Communist theory that make up 92.6 per cent of the nation.

Creation Secrets Wait 30 More Centuries of Study

Washington — (RNS) — Man is learning more and more about the nature of the universe, but it probably will take him a long time to solve the mystery of Creation, a prominent Catholic astronomer said here.

The Rev. Francis J. Heyden, S.J., director of the Georgetown University observatory, discussed the debate over the origin of matter at a summer conference for college teachers of physics and astronomy being held here at the university.

The universe may have been created all at once with a great cosmic explosion which sent matter flying in all directions. Father Heyden said, or the creation of matter may be a continuous process going on all degree of arc in their positions. The time in distant nebulae.

But it will probably take man at least 20 or 30 centuries of research and space exploration to determine the final answer, the priest suggested.

Galaxies, many of them hundreds of millions of light years away, appear to be receding from the Earth at speeds directly proportionate to their distance from us, Father Heyden pointed out. The most distant, estimated to be over two billion light years away, is moving away at half the speed of light, or better than 90,000 miles per second. This apparent speed is determined by a shift in the spectrum of the wave-length of the light.

Recently, said Father Heyden, it has been argued that the wave-length shift may be due only to "tired light" which over a period of millions of centuries gradually slows down in its wavelike energy.

Furthermore, light may not proceed in a straight line, through all centuries, but may curve in response to forces which it passes. Thus, the location of galaxies and their distance from the Earth can be determined only by where they seem to be, assuming light rays of constant speed and direction.

Because they are so far away,

it will require two or three thousand years of the closest sort of observation of the heavens, Father Heyden explained, in order to detect a shift of even a fraction of a continuous process going on all degree of arc in their positions. The time in distant nebulae.

When such shifts of position are detected and measured, we can deduce, he said, whether the galaxies are moving the way we think they are, and whether the universe is really exploding outward from one original central place as it seems to be. Meanwhile, it would also take that long for even the most ambitious space explorer to get far enough away from the earth to send home a light signal that might be measured to solve the mystery.

Astronomers in such observatories as Georgetown's are engaged in making precise measurements of the location, luminosity, and apparent direction of distant galaxies, Father Heyden explained, that will be useful to astronomers 3,000 years from now. They are confident in their faith that there will be someone to use them.

800 Years Since Priest

London — (NC) — Newly ordained Father Paul Tait, S.D.S., is the first native of the Hertfordshire town of Abbots Langley to become a priest since Pope Adrian IV, the only English pope, who reigned from 1154 to 1159.

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