

God's World

# Free — Yes or No

By REV. LEO J. TRESE

God has endowed us with a free will. He did so in order that we might be capable of making a willing choice of Him. Only by being free could we make that act of love which is embodied in an act of self-surrender.

However, we know that our freedom can be limited by external factors. The human will is a blind faculty. It can act only when motives for action are presented to it by the intellect. When the mind forms the judgment, "This is a good thing to do," the will responds and the choice is made.

Consequently, any factor which affects the clarity of the mind's judgment necessarily affects the will's freedom. This factor is recognized both in civil and in moral law. A person cannot be convicted of first degree murder if he can prove that his crime was unpremeditated and was committed under a sudden access of passion. Neither will a person go to hell for a sin which, while objectively grave, is lacking in the deliberateness which would make it a real rejection of God.

It is the emotions and passions which play the most havoc with the will's freedom. By obscuring the faculty of the mind's judgment as to the goodness or badness of a particular action, such emotions as fear and anxiety and such passions as anger and sexual excitement can be particularly disturbing to freedom of decision.

For example, a woman may be so ridden by fear of another pregnancy that she uses contraceptives in spite of repeated good resolutions to the contrary. A man of otherwise blameless life may be so consumed with anxiety about family needs and unpaid debts that he steals from his employer. A teenager of good ideals may be so bedeviled by a sudden or prolonged sexual urge as to sin against chastity.

IT WOULD be folly for us, of course, to try to rationalize our sins and to try to escape responsibility by manufacturing excuses. It is only God, with His full view of the human heart, who can accurately assess the degree of culpability. It is enough for us to know that no one will ever lose heaven because, under unbearable stress, he lacked the freedom to make the right choice.

It is comforting to recall this. It is equally comforting to know that God can influence our freedom, too. Without entirely destroying our liberty, God can and undoubtedly does often make easy for us a course of action that will rebound to our good. If we have a responsible will and a sincere desire to do what is right, we can be sure that there have been many wavering moments when God has weighted the odds in our favor. By an infusion of extra grace or by a more favorable arrangement of circumstances, God has made easier our personal decision and our ultimate victory.

After going to the extreme of assisting our human fears and doubts upon a cross in order to bring us to Himself, God certainly is not overlooking such a simple and (for Him) easy technique as reinforcing our freedom in its pursuit of virtue.

This is a somewhat humbling thought to those of us who may be inclined to congratulate ourselves on a struggle won, a conquest achieved. As we bask in the warm glow of a hard decision bravely made, it is well for our souls that God does not suddenly reveal to us the fact that the power which never left left left, he said.

## Pope's Pavilion Hailed Success

New York—(NC)—The Vatican Pavilion at the New York World's Fair is closing Oct. 10 after having been visited by about 75,000 people each day. The fair for a total that may top 13,000,000 persons.

Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York is celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving in the pavilion's chapel to mark the closing. Officials of the pavilion which featured Michelangelo's famed "Pietà" on loan from St. Peter's—basilica—Rome, described the exhibition as "very successful." It attracted nearly 50 per cent of all visitors to the fair.

The World's Fair Corporation declared Oct. 10 as "Cardinal Spellman Day" at the fair. The prelate was to tour the fair grounds and be a guest at a special luncheon.

## Mass To Mark Uganda Martyrs

Washington—(NC)—Archbishop Edigo Vagozzi, Apostolic Delegate in the United States, will offer a solemn High Mass Oct. 18 in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception here marking the canonization in Rome the same day of the 22 Uganda Martyrs.

Members of the diplomatic corps, including the Ambassador of Uganda and Mrs. Solomon B. Aze, and representing the State Department will be among those attending the Mass. Father Harold Perry, S.V.D., provincial of the southern province of the Divine Word missionaries, will preach.

## Report from Red China

### Jailed Bishop 'Always Praying'

Hong Kong—(NC)—First hand news of the persecuted Church in communist China, including a report of the death of an imprisoned Chinese nun, was brought here by a layman expelled from Shanghai after seven years imprisonment.

Jacques Mattalos, 40, was imprisoned mainly for his Legion of Mary activity, he told the N.Y.W.C. News Service at St. Paul's hospital, where he has stayed since his arrival here Sept. 30. Suffering from ulcers, he was released from prison on June 8.

Mattalos was in the same Shanghai jail as 72-year-old Bishop James E. Walsh, M.M., American prelate who was released in 1956 as a 20-year term for "subversive activities," said Bishop Ignatius Kang Fia-Mei of Shanghai.

Born in Saigon to a Vietnamese mother and a Greek-born father who became a French citizen, Mattalos joined the French army, then went to China and stayed there after his discharge. He was imprisoned in 1937.

"He said, 'Bishop Walsh looked fairly well and maybe recognized me as I passed his cell in the Shanghai hospital jail on June 3. He did not smile at me, but they say he always looks as if he is praying.' Bishop Walsh is constantly visited by a Chinese holyguard, and is never left alone, he said."

African Diocese  
Vatican City—The Prefecture Apostolic of Mweka, Congo, has been elevated to a diocese and its Prefect Apostolic, Father Marcel Eryrie, Vic. Apost. named bishop.

# Our Nun in Singapore

By FATHER J.J. SHERIDAN, S.J. (N.C.W.C. News Service)



For Sister Mary Thomas Aquinas of Rochester, Singapore is different from the usual missionary territory.

A bustling port city of nearly two million persons, Singapore has a high standard of education and it did not need catechists who could teach only the words of the catechism. It needed men and women who could apply the Gospel to the modern world.

When Sister Mary Thomas was assigned by the Franciscan missionaries of Mary to direct Singapore's downtown catechetical center, she set out to meet the needs of her city. And she did.

The center was a broken-down lecture hall on the first floor of an ancient building that served as Singapore's Catholic Club. There Sister Mary Thomas established bookstore-selling teachers' aid books, audio-visual aids and films.

Next she organized a library of reference books on Scripture and theology for her teachers. Although English is the principal language in schools here, she also trained a Chinese nun guide center empty center to assist teachers in that language.

The center was an immediate success, since it provided tools and instruction that could not be obtained elsewhere.

"In Singapore," explained Sister Mary Thomas, "we don't need professional catechists as they do in Africa and India. Here we need volunteers to help parish priests in the instruction of catechumens and children not attending Catholic schools."

Sister Mary Thomas Aquinas makes change for a customer in her Singapore bookstore.

To provide the necessary teachers, she organized three-year teacher training courses at the center and in neighboring parishes. The courses are under the supervision of the Franciscan Fathers who have a Biblical Institute in Singapore. Father Fulgence Gross, O.F.M., of Omaha, Nebraska, has played a major role in the planning.

The courses are very thorough. The first year provides a survey of Catholic doctrine in 20 lessons. More than 500 persons are now taking the first year instructions. The second year of 33 lessons is a survey of the Old Testament, the Mass and the Sacraments.

The final year gives the students a knowledge of apologetics, Catholic social doctrine and Church history. At the end of it all the students are given diplomas entitling them to teach religion.

"We might add," said Sister Mary Thomas, "that by this time they have certainly earned it."

## First Mass in Spanish in Puerto Rico

Arecibo, P.R.—(NC)—For the first time in the 453-year history of the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico, Mass in the Spanish language was offered by Bishop Alfred F. Mendez, C.S.C., of Arecibo in St. Philip's the Apostle cathedral here on Oct. 4.

On the historic occasion the Chicago-born prelate, also for the first time used Spanish in administration of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Although use of the Spanish vernacular in the Mass will not be island-wide until Nov. 29, Bishop Mendez said he will continue Masses in Spanish on occasions at his cathedral to prepare the people for the change over.

Priests, religious and members of the laity who assisted at the first Mass in Spanish said they were happy about the change. They said the use of Spanish gives more meaning to the Mass for the people and enables them to derive more spiritual benefit from the new arrangements.

Bishop Mendez said he will use the Spanish vernacular for the first time in the ordination of a priest on Oct. 25 when he administers the sacrament of Holy Order to Luis A. Ortiz in Naranjo.

In a pastoral letter regarding the liturgical changes, Bishop Mendez informed his people that all announcements in parish churches will be made before the Mass while the priest is vesting. He said laymen may serve to make the announcements.

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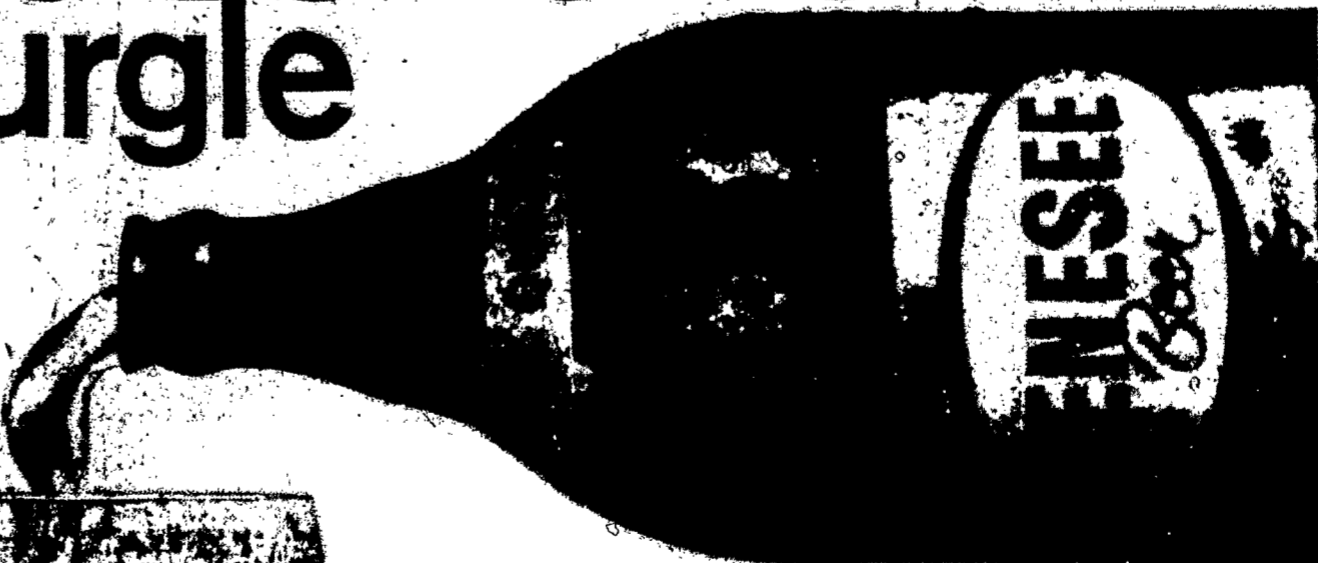
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