

# Visit South U.S., Editor Asks Pope

Atlanta—(NC)—Ralph McGill, publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, has declared that it would be "helpful and socially therapeutic" for Pope Paul VI to visit the South if his proposed trip to the United Nations takes place.

McGill said in his nationally syndicated column that there would be opposition to the Pope's presence in the United States, and "some of it will be strident, some ugly."

"But these qualities of the dissent will identify it for what it is—unreasoning prejudice handed down and made more grotesque with each handing down," he said.

Noting the change in U.S. attitudes toward Catholicism in the past 40 years, McGill recalled that in the 1920s Atlanta was the site of an "imperial palace" of the Ku Klux Klan, a hub of anti-Catholic propaganda.

Today, he said, the former "palace" is the rectory of the Catholic cathedral, and the cathedral itself stands in part on land once owned by the KKK.

McGill said people today find it difficult to imagine the "ignorant bombast and religious bigotry" that flourished in this country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

"It was a prejudice stemming largely from organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan that linked anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism as their two best money and membership proposition rackets," he said.

He said "many pulpits" in those days "thundered against the Pope" although they knew

"the Pope" although they "knew little about the Pope or the Roman Catholic religion."

He noted that such anti-Catholicism reached a peak with the presidential candidacy of Al Smith, a Catholic, in 1928.

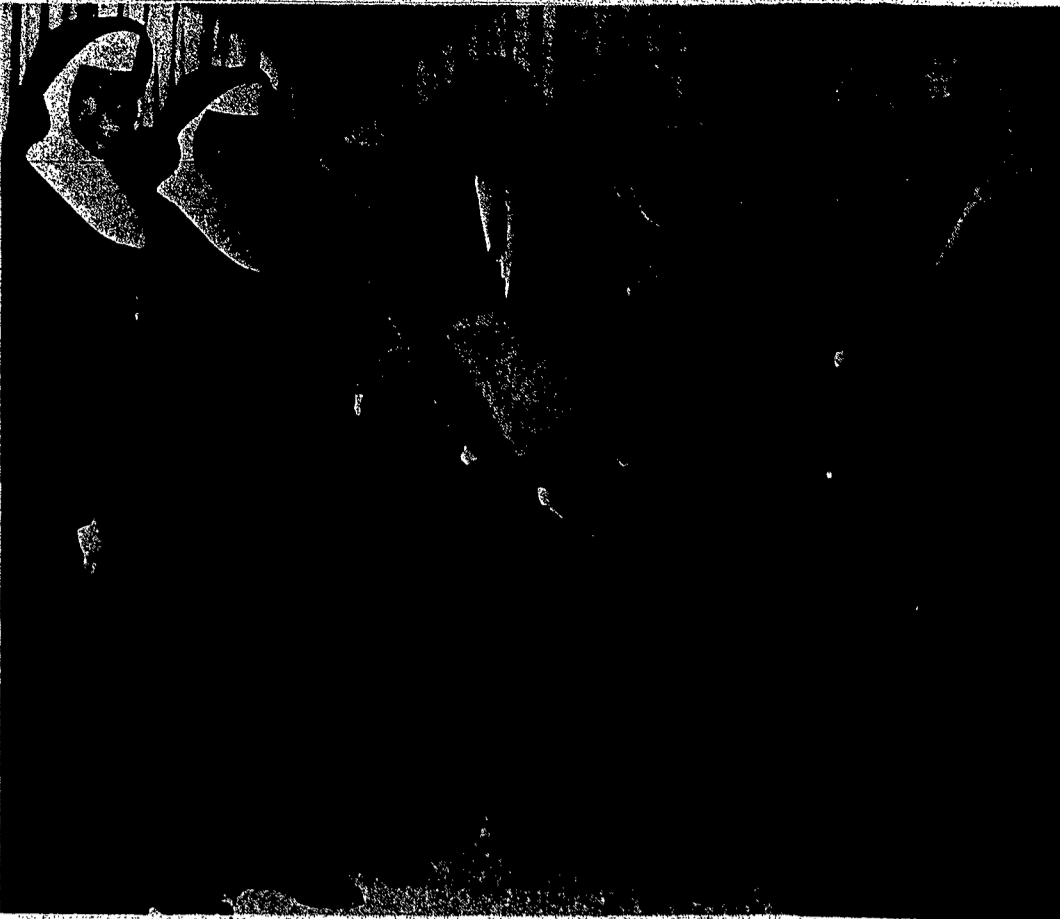
One of the religious slogans of that year, McGill said, was "A vote for Al Smith is a Vote for the Pope." Smith, he added, was "swamped" as eight southern states went Republican in protest against his religion.

## Nehru Upheld As Man of Faith

Madras—(NC)—An article appearing in the Catholic New Leader of Madras has stated it is incorrect to hold that the late Indian Premier Jawaharlal Nehru did not believe in the existence of God.

Nehru, said author Ary Pereira, did believe in God, "only his way of serving God was different from what is generally expected. He did not take part in religious devotions; but his devotion to God was shown in his devotion to duty."

Pereira said Nehru "faithfully followed the Sermon on the Mount" and "practiced the highest form of human love taught by Christ." He said Nehru returned good for evil to the British after suffering for many years under British colonial rulers.



## Fordham Honors Baltimore Couple

New York—(RNS)—A happy day for the Price family of Baltimore. While five of their children who entered the religious life look on, Mr. and Mrs. George Price receive the Fordham University Vocation Citation. Making the presentation is Father John F. Gilson, director of the university's Institute of Religious and Sacramental Vocations. Mr. Price, a retired sugar refinery employee, is an active Methodist, attending the Ames Methodist church in Baltimore. Mrs. Price is a member of St. Peter Claver Catholic church, holds office in four women's societies. They have 14 children, are grandparents many times over.

## Rome Permission Asked

# Priests at Cremations

Brighton, England—(NC)—Three hundred delegates at the annual conference of the Cremation Society passed a resolution urging the Catholic Church to allow priests to attend crematorium services.

The absence of a priest causes concern and sorrow to relatives, said the resolution, and many Catholics have requested the presence of a minister of another denomination.

Earlier, the conference had been addressed by Father John F. McDonald, professor of moral theology at St. Edmund's College, the Westminster archdiocesan seminary. He had been deputed by Cardinal John Heenan to make the first official pronouncement in Britain on the Church's attitude to cremation since the Holy Office instruction relaxing the ban on it.

"The attitude of the Catholic Church," said Father McDonald, "is clearly stated in the instruction of May 8, 1943. This document of the Holy Office directs that every care must be taken to respect and retain the custom of Christian burial."

"The instruction of the Holy Office makes it clear that the Church has always realized that in itself cremation is not something intrinsically evil or of its very nature incompatible with the Christian religion, and that she is not opposed, nor has she ever been opposed to cremation when it is known that it is being done with a good motive and for serious reasons, particularly those of a public nature."

"The Holy Office also recognizes that many of those who advocate cremation today are clearly not influenced by hatred of the Church and the Christian way of life, but solely by considerations of hygiene, economics and other considerations of public and private nature," Father McDonald said.

"The Church has always taken the view that extraordinary circumstances may exist to justify cremation. The day may not be too far off when the shortage of ground for burial purposes will be so acute or the price of such land would be so exorbitant that cremation may become a public necessity for many people living in our rapidly expanding cities."

"In Japan for some years the Catholic Church has allowed Catholics to be cremated."

"The present instruction of the Holy Office recognizes that in choosing cremation a person may be influenced by considerations of a purely private nature. The Church has now modified its laws to the extent that Catholics who express a wish to be cremated based on serious reasons that are in no way hostile to religion or to the Church, are not to be deprived of the Last Sacrament or of the funeral service in the Church."

"It is left to the local bishop to issue whatever instructions he thinks fit for the guidance of his people in all that concerns this matter."

"One ruling of the present instruction of the Holy Office which has caused some surprise and even distress is that which forbids the priest to accompany the corpse to the crematorium and to conduct the committal there. All the prayers in the ritual must be said by the priest before the body leaves the church for the crematorium."

"In Japan, however, the bishops have instructed their priests to go to the crematorium wearing a cassock, surplice and stole and to say or sing all the prayers in the ritual, using holy water and incense as they would at the funeral service of the Holy Name of Jesus, will be held at the crematorium."

"On each Sunday members of other houses of worship will be invited to visit the host church or synagogue from 2 to 5 p.m. There will be refreshments and social activities."

The seven clergymen regard the operation as a pilot project. If it proves successful on Chicago's North Side, it may become a city-wide program in another year.

In New Orleans last year, 40,000 people participated in "Operation Understanding."

## Chicago Churches Plan 'Operation Understanding'

Chicago—(RNS)—"Operation Understanding," a program of exchange visits between members of different religions—inaugurated in New Orleans by Archbishop John P. Cody—will be launched in Chicago this fall.

For six successive Sundays, beginning Oct. 10, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Jewish houses of worship will be open to members of other beliefs.

Host clergymen will present basic tenets of each religion while lay men and women will greet, explain and serve as guides during open house visits.

The idea for the program in this city was advanced by Rabbi Louis Blinstock of Temple Shalom, who observed the project in New Orleans. It will begin here shortly after Archbishop Cody is installed as Archbishop of Chicago on Aug. 24 in Holy Name Cathedral.



## 75th Anniversary

Louisville, Ky.—(RNS)—Father Joseph T. Neeson, 98, oldest priest in the U.S. from the point of service, is escorted from the Sacred Heart Home's chapel in Louisville after concelebrating a Mass to mark the 75th anniversary of his ordination. With him is Father Bernard Hardage, a former assistant to Father Neeson. Concelebrant of the Mass was Archbishop John A. Floerak of Louisville. Also present were other priests and several longtime lay friends. Father Neeson, who retired at 90 in 1957, was born in Germany, ordained in Belgium and came to this country in 1890. During World War I he was a military chaplain in Germany. Living quietly now in the retirement home, Father Neeson usually spends his time in reading, prayer, meditation and "doing little things."



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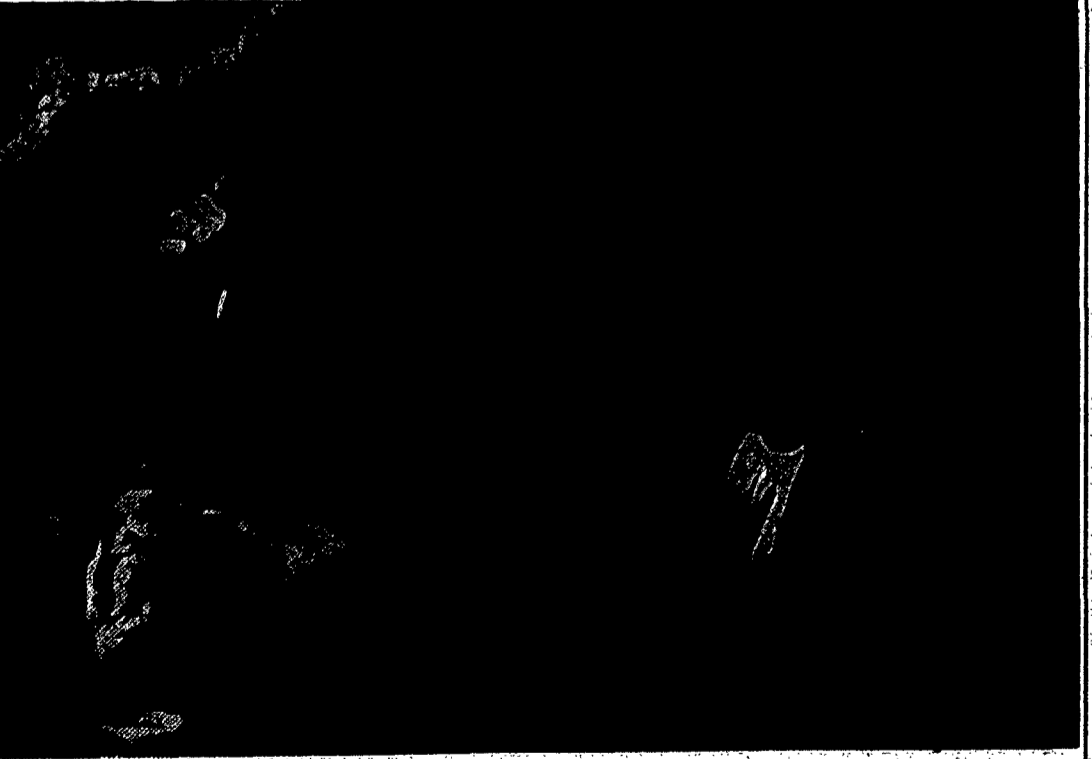
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