

French Nun Keeps up Care of Lepers in Vietnam

By ERNEST ZAUGG
Special Correspondent

Qui Nhon, South Vietnam — (RNS) — They say in the war zone that if you look hard enough you can find peace somewhere. I found it in a Roman Catholic leper colony.

And on a visit to a leprosy colony, situated ideally on a beautiful beach on the South China Sea, about seven miles from here, I met a remarkable woman, a French nun.

She is Mother Superior Marie Charles-Antoine, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary.

If one were medically-trained and could stand the gaff of watching some 900 men, women and children slowly die on the vine — with just enough successes or "leprosy arrests" to make it worth while — you might wind up a kind of efficient warder or supervisor or caretaker.

But not Mother Marie, or the French nuns who help her run the colony. They have something to give love, a product in short supply in this land of blood, war and terror. They are "her" people, "her" kids, "her" families.

On the day I visited her leprosy colony she had visitors — American servicemen looking for something to do and a Protestant chaplain who has called frequently to sound out the nuns on their needs. He seldom fails them.

I listened as Mother Marie and Chaplain Jack E. Sutherland, a Floridian who is with the 394th Transportation Battalion, talked with Nguyen Dung, a journalist and doctor of philosophy — and a leper.

What does a leper do when he has a mind that must work? Well, in Nguyen Dung's case, he studies — among the courses he pursues are French and English.

The conversation indicated that our journalist friend needed a tape-recorder quite badly to continue his work. Mother Marie nodded. She thought "somewhere" there must be an extra tape-recorder available for her friend. Chaplain Sutherland, standing nearby, smiled broadly. He was getting Mother Marie's "message."



Qui Nhon—(RNS)—A French nun, her Protestant friend and benefactor, and a Vietnamese leper discuss the war news amid the quiet surroundings of a leper colony. Mother Superior Marie Charles-Antoine of the Catholic colony near Qui Nhon, South Vietnam, is shown with Protestant Chaplain Jack E. Sutherland of Florida and the 394th Transportation Battalion, and Nguyen Dung, a leper who is a journalist and doctor of philosophy. Sister Marie's care of 900 lepers has drawn considerable help from Chaplain Sutherland's Army outfit in South Vietnam.

I'm not a betting man, mind you, but I'll wager that when you read this, Nguyen Dung will have his tape-recorder and some field-grade American officer will be stuck with a 30-words-a-minute stenographer, having been talked out of a recorder by a Protestant chaplain.

That's part of Mother Marie's story. A gentlewoman, she has the brass of a burglar when it comes to asking help for her lepers. She'd probably starve rather than ask for a crust of bread for herself. But she's entirely capable of asking Americans to produce Disneyland, lock stock and barrel, for her leper kids.

Before heading for her "oasis" — that's all I can call it — I

received a briefing of sorts from Mother Marie's American friends. She's quite a story.

Back in the 20's she was the pretty, vivacious daughter of a French Army officer. Friends said she was talented, loved to sing and never lacked for dates. But at 22 she went into the convent and by 1931 she had made up her mind — the mission field was for her.

She said goodbye to family and friends, and it was really goodbye forever. She was never left Asia. Her first assignment was near Kanting, China, near the Tibetan border, and it was so far from "civilization" that her trip from Central China took a month on muleback.

Bandages and medicines came at only great expense in funds and sheer waiting for deliveries. There, she saved lives in another way. Lepers were burnt alive or buried alive — that was the local custom. This French nun beat that custom, but it took a long time to convince the native population.

Suddenly China became Red China and work became more difficult. Arrests and harassment were followed by more arrests. Finally the Mao regime expelled her. At that point she came to Qui Nhon to work at the leprosy colony now — heads — People in South Vietnam say her colony is one of the best in Asia.

The community houses of the lepers are spotlessly clean, built

solidly, in good taste and well decorated. Craftsman lepers can make colored tile and Mother Marie uses it lavishly. She found funds for workshops and the lepers, as much as they can be, become somewhat self-supporting.

Lepers families live in individual cottages on which, inscribed in stone, are the names of contributors — an American army battalion, a bishop from the U.S. mid-West, a millionaire with a Riviera address.

Mother Marie cares for her 900 lepers with a staff of five French nuns, four Vietnamese nuns and a French priest, Father Rohmer. The priest is a member of the Missions Etrangères de Paris, the order of the colony's founder, Father Paul Mahen.

Her principal aide is Sister Marie Ozite, named for an 8th Century saint, who taught and nursed lepers for 20 years at Vinh in North Vietnam before the Communists forced her to head South.

Korean soldiers guard the roads near the colony, so Mother Marie's compound is comparatively safe from the Vietcong. They have "called" once or twice, but have never attacked the area.

Of the 900 lepers, 400 are Catholic, 500 are Buddhist. The Buddhists are under no constraint to adopt Catholicism.

Pain and grief and despair face every leper, but, says Mother Marie: "Some of them suffer with joy."

I talked to one leper, an educated man. His leprosy was once "arrested," but now he is here to live out his years. "At first," he said, "it was difficult to live apart in a colony, but now I would not wish to be outside. Outside the spiritual anguish of a being a burden to others is great."

I walked through the colony to find people who were happy, kids who played like your kids back in the states. It was like a nice small town in the U.S.A.

When I left, Mother Marie and the nuns were busy. Some soldiers were working around the place and Chaplain Sutherland had the look of a man trying to remember where he last saw a tape-recorder.



MEDICAL MISSIONARY . . . Dr. Thomas A. Dooley, the famed "jungle surgeon" of Southeast Asia, was among this century's most inspired, and inspiring, laymen. A native of St. Louis, he attended the St. Louis University School of Medicine ('53), served his internship in the Navy, and helped treat more than 600,000 escapees from communism in Viet Nam. For his heroic assistance to the sick and needy there, he became the youngest officer in the U.S. Medical Corps to receive the Legion of Merit. He also received Viet Nam's highest decoration, the National Order of Viet Nam, and the Lao Order of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol, as well as the Mutual of Omaha Criss-Award ('59) and honorary doctorates from the University of Scranton, Belmont Abbey, Loyola University, and Boston College. Author of the best-selling "Deliver Us from Evil" and other books, he was co-founder of MEDICO (Medical International Co-operation Organization), a world-wide relief program for the needy and ill to which he devoted himself in the last years of his life. "Dr. Tom" died in 1961 of cancer. Among his memorials is a portion of a stained-glass window in St. Camillus' church, Arlington, dedicated to MEDICO and the healing arts.

Who Moves First? A Wrong Question

Catholic lay people of the Rochester Diocese are increasingly articulate — as was demonstrated at the recent Interracial Council meeting at Sacred Heart Cathedral and, a week later, at the Catholic Educational Congress held at Nazareth College.

Discovery that free and open discussion is welcomed comes as a surprise to many but few if any seem ready for the logical sequel—free and responsible decision to act.

This was particularly evident at the Interracial Council meeting which saw both clergy and laity quite split on how current racial problems were to be faced. Clergy present said it's up to the lay people to take the initiative. The lay people repeated their pleas (or demands) that the hierarchy set the pace.

It should be obvious to all, as a preliminary to any discussion, that an "official" statement by an individual bishop or even a group of bishops no longer settles a public issue.

Such statements have been made, in some cases repeatedly, on such topics as for federal aid to pupils in Catholic schools or against federal aid to finance birth control programs, for school bus rides for Catholic pupils in New Jersey or against divorce law revision in New York State — and the decisions have been ultimately made, not on the basis of any pressure brought to bear by the bishops, but on the basis of what legislators agreed was most feasible for the majority at that particular time in that particular place.

The logic of the bishops' statements asking for equal aid for pupils in parochial schools as well as for those in public schools is obviously finding more and more agreement from the general U.S. public. Opinion polls indicate a clear trend in this direction. But the force that's convincing them is the logic of being fair, not the unquestioned authority of bishops.

Some Catholic spokesmen may consider this as part of the alleged current breakdown in respect for all authority.

One writer, at least, views the trend as healthy rather than hazardous. He is Jesuit Father John L. McKenzie, well known U.S. Scripture scholar, who has authored a book titled "Authority in the Church."

It is his conviction that "authority in the Church will be more fully accepted if it is more fully understood."

When force or pressure or threats have to be resorted to, he says, then the authority has actually failed — not necessarily to be right, but to be understood.

Father McKenzie, echoing Pope Paul's encyclical "Ecclesiam Suam," calls for a far greater articulation of reasons as a necessary ingredient of any convincing exercise of authority.

This, it would seem, is precisely the area where both clergy and laity can be most helpful to each other. Racial, educational and so many other problems are so complex these days that no simple answer is going to be completely satisfactory to all. Answers and solutions will have to be temporary, always subject to scrutiny and revision. The laity can provide the clergy with the facts as they see them and the clergy can point out what moral factors are involved and the solutions, to be realistic, has to include both facts and moral factors.

The Vatican Council, in its decree on the Church, states emphatically that lay people are "permitted and sometimes even obliged" to voice their opinions on subjects which concern the good of the Church and the community in which they live and the clergy are instructed to allow lay people "freedom and room for action" in those fields where lay people are more experienced than the clergy.

The Council says "a great many benefits are to be hoped for from this dialogue" between clergy and laity where each better understands the other, where authority is respected and freedom is not jeopardized.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

Can a Bridge be Built to Communism?

Notre Dame, Ind. — (RNS) — Is there any real bridge between the gap between Christianity and Marxism? A Roman Catholic priest says "no." A Protestant theologian answers with a cautious "maybe."

The priest is Jesuit Father Gaston Fessard, a French Jesuit who is an authority on Marxism. The Protestant theologian is James E. Adams of Harvard University. The occasion was an international symposium on "Marxism and the Western World" held on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, featuring speakers from both sides of the Iron Curtain.

The symposium was devoted to an examination of Marxist thought and its impact on the Communist and non-Communist worlds.

Father Fessard declared that the application of atheistic doctrines by Karl Marx to his humanistic aims so perverted those aims that the very language for communication between Christians and Marxists has broken down.

But Prof. Adams said he sees no impassable barrier in Marxism. Indeed, he detects signs of a reevaluation of atheism by both Marxists and Protestants, he said.

The two speakers agreed that a great deal of Christian thought can be found in Marx's writings from a historical standpoint, but they differed over its evolving significance.

Prof. Adams said "the Marxist and the Christian share a common presupposition which is rooted in the Judeo-Christian doctrine of creation, namely the view that materiality in its essence is good. On the other

hand, the Christian and the Marxist differ with respect to another creation. The Christian emphasizes a doctrine of grace or of transcendence—man is a creature—and the Marxist is oriented to a philosophy of radical immanence."

Prof. Adams said Marxists and Christians can agree on certain ways of interpreting history, including the importance of history in philosophy and the value of scientific investigation. "The ideal of human fulfillment would find Marx and the Christian in significant agreement," he added. "Indeed, through Feuerbach, Marx adopted the idea that God the creator is really man whose essence is creativity."

But when it comes to the discussion of the nature and cause of alienation, profound differences appear. Prof. Adams continued, "From the Christian perspective alienation can never receive adequate explanation in terms of sociological structures alone, and certainly not in terms of property alone."

The most difficult problem between Marxists and Christians, he suggested, is the Christian insistence on "freedom of association" as absolutely essential to any true human freedom. "Freedom of association is the institutionalization of evolution and revolution," he said, and "Marxism as a movement could not have succeeded at all

if such freedom of association had been completely suppressed. Today, among the Marxists in certain countries we can observe an increasing concern for freedom of utterance. It will perhaps be a long time before they enjoy freedom of association. One swallow does not make a summer."

"For both Marxism and Christianity," Prof. Adams concluded, "the fundamental social problem is the combining of a radical concern for a just society and the freedom to organize differentiation."

Father Fessard told the symposium that "Marx presupposes a unity of man and nature which corresponds exactly with the unity of man and God

revalued by the incarnate word of Christianity."

"Anxious to explain why modern man is nevertheless enslaved and alienated, Marx makes the 'original sin' of private property responsible. Finally, to diminish the different human alienations and to reestablish the primitive unity of man and of nature, he counseled workers to form groups and to entrust the proletariat . . . the mission of achieving universal redemption by means of the 'class struggle.'"

Not satisfied with this, Father Fessard declared, Marxists decided that "atheism alone can give meaning and theoretical truth to the positive humanism of Marx, as communism alone can achieve it in practice."

The result was a series of basic contradictions, the priest said, since a "meaningless atheism" can give no real meaning to the humanistic goals of Marx.

Marxism has taken the form of an "atheistic church" which attempts to paper over such realities as a police state which does not withdraw away, inquisition and torture of heretics, and interference in artistic and scientific matters. The "cult of personality" exhibited in Stalinism is "natural and necessary" for Marxism, the French Jesuit suggested.

For the West, Father Fessard concluded, the development of Marxism has destroyed the common language by which some sort of common ground might be found. "Marx appropriated so well the structures of the incarnate word and his atheism so completely reversed and perverted them that the very bases of the human word and, therefore, of our common language have been destroyed."

"The communism we have to deal with is a current actuality," Father Rogers continued. "Let us not allow our textbook knowledge of it to mislead us into an intransigence which can only make for crusades against the infidel."

War, or Man, Obsolete

Cleveland — (NC) — Either war is obsolete or man is obsolete, a Jesuit priest told an interfaith convocation here, and if the world is to have peace it will not be by chance.

"As religious people I do not think we can long delay in making our choice and choosing for peace," Father Herbert Rogers of Fordham University's theology department told the meeting.

"Peace, if it is to be had, will not come about by chance," he continued. "It needs far reaching planning and widest possible cooperation. If we are not ready for such planning and cooperation,

then neither are we ready for peace.

"I am aware that these questions ask a great deal by way of sacrifice, personal and national, in the cause of peace," he said. "But why is it that we somehow always feel apologetic in asking sacrifices for peace and can feel honorable in requiring even the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of war? Does not the mere fact that we have to be urged into the matter indicate how little willing we are to prepare for peace?"

Father Rogers said that Pope John XXIII taught all that respect for every human being and trust among individuals and nations are indispen-

sable conditions for peace.

Pope John's encyclical Paces in Terris "cuts across all sectarian, ideological and cultural barriers and almost belittles differences which we had come to consider all important and even dearer than life itself," Father Rogers said.

In regard to communism, he maintained, Pope John asked men "to look at the facts, not at the textbooks."

"The communism we have to deal with is a current actuality," Father Rogers continued. "Let us not allow our textbook knowledge of it to mislead us into an intransigence which can only make for crusades against the infidel."

Spain in Ferment Following Council

By GARY McEON

Unrest in Spain briefly hit the headlines (and faded just as rapidly), when a Radcliffe junior, granddaughter of former U.S. Secretary of State Christian A. Herter, was one of several American students clubbed by police during a clash at the University of Madrid.

Students have been defying the regime over the issue of freedom to organize their own associations, and over general civil liberties. That is how the newspapers explained the incident, and they were correct as far as they went. But there are significant aspects to the situation which this summary left undisclosed.

Perhaps the most important is the part played by the Vatican Council. For everyone in Spain, and not only for the Catholic Church, the Council served to sharpen the vital issues. It has brought new questioning of the relationship between Church and state, between the state and the citizen, between the Church and the member.

A great ferment is evident from top to bottom. Cardinal Herrera of Malaga re-

cently sent three priests to Lyons, France, to study the worker-priest mission. Other members of the hierarchy have announced plans for elected councils in their dioceses. An institute of theology studies for the laity has opened in Madrid.

While such actions reflect a widespread will to advance, they also increase tension with those who stand pit. The immobilists are strong on their own account, but the belief is growing that they would cease to be important if the Church could free itself of state control, and especially of the control exercised in the appointment of bishops.

The Council struck an important blow in this sense, when it expressed its hope that states would voluntarily renounce such privileges, a hope echoed by Pope Paul at the closing ceremony. Bishop Ponty Gou of Segorbe referred explicitly to the matter in the pastoral letter on his return home, and statements by government spokesmen indicated a willingness to implement the wishes of the Council.

The disappointment was consequently bitter when a Castilian bishop was transferred to Barcelona as coadjutor with

right of succession. The action was seen as a double abuse on the part of the state. It was not only still choosing bishops; it was using its control to continue its discrimination against the language and culture of Catalonia.

Barcelona has had no Catalan bishop since 1930. The apostolic administrator in 1939 went so far as to make the priests pronounce Latin with a Castilian accent. The present 75-year-old archbishop is more moderate, but not to the point of ever having tried to learn the mother tongue of his priests and people.

Respectful but firm protests were voiced by 23 Catalan intellectuals in a letter to the nominee, and by 25 priests of Barcelona in a separate letter. The intellectuals urged him to withdraw. The priests simply asked him to take such measures as he thought appropriate. Soon, leaflets and posters began to appear in the streets. "We want Catalan bishops," was their simple message.

Simultaneously, other Catholic groups in Catalonia and elsewhere began to emphasize the gap which exists between the current practice of the Spanish state and

the rights of the individual as a human, as stressed by the Council. The lead was taken in this area by illegal trades unions affiliated to the International Federation of Christian Trades Unions, and by the chaplains of an important Christian social movement known as the Vanguardia social obrera.

The tense atmosphere was further heightened when the police in Barcelona forced their way into a monastery, in apparent violation of the Concordat, and seized the identification cards of 500 university students who had fled there for sanctuary after a demonstration for the right to elect their own leaders in the student associations. Twenty-five sympathizers were arrested.

The repercussions in Barcelona, both in the university and in the general community, were immediate. Protests spread to many parts of Spain, including Madrid. It is regrettable that Miss Herter got in the middle and felt the weight of a police club. I am sure, however, that both she and the State Department will be relieved that the gave accidental publicity, but to a Communist-led subversive plot, but to a Christian-inspired agitation for human rights.



SAN FRANCISCO — Cleveland, Ohio — Gucken of San Francisco de Sales in 1965-66 of the CPA. (RNS)

Press

San Francisco manager of American president of the United States and C convention here:

At this first meeting CPA since the Second Council ended last Dec 500 editors, publisher writers sought out the tunities and challenge the Catholic press in council era. The had to be that their death of either.

THE KEYNOTER, Sharper urged the press to "restore the position of operative, merely nominal importance. There will be no said, "of more deeply editorial and with a consequent in to pare away from able pages of the press much of the ecclesiastical doodling, prior to the council, seriously presented many sectors of the press."

The speaker at the tion awards banquet JOHN TRACY ELLI upon the Catholic press for a "rendezvous" clergy and laity "to meet to their mutual and to the lasting gain Church they both lov

The professor of Cl tory at the University Francisco said "the clerical-lay relations United States" has a "something of a modern Catholic world." But "a constant need" for and the clergy "to learn to understand other."

BISHOP RO DWYER of Reno, N it behooves the Catholicist to see with "eye."

"The problem of t lic journalist today," acute than yesterday, is that of restating th truths of faith in a which conveys meani modern mind and "i ner which will in vince that mind Church is quite in

Press and the Pa A panel outlining r tionship of the Catho

God's Word

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God, of course, is no take possession of O any such way. Our fr the essential tool wh we express our love If God substituted His for ours, and forced what He wants done, point of our existence lost. God might as well made us in the first

So, we have to be pray, "Please, God, gi light to know Your wi strength to do it." W of, our weakness and nitus for making co with self, we hope th not limit His help to