

Church Faces Agonizing Dilemma in Biafra



Alhambra Honors Grid Standouts

Auxiliary-bishop elect John E. McCafferty presents one of the All Catholic High awards to Richard D'Etore, Aquinas end, at last week's Musa Caravan No. 25 awards dinner. Alhambra members in foreground are Grand Commander Daniel G. Tobin, left, and Philip Randazzo, general chairman of the dinner.

Innecity Gets Nearly \$250,000

Philadelphia — (NC) — Almost \$250,000 has been voluntarily contributed by parishes in the Philadelphia archdiocese to help needy inner city parishes. The donations were made in the first eight months of operation of the Interparochial Cooperation Commission.

Some 147 parishes (out of 314) contributed \$232,316 to help parishes in poor neighborhoods and operating expenses.

Thus far, 17 parishes — 15 of them in the city — have been aided by the interparochial fund. The funds have been used for such things as teacher salaries, roof repairs, and insurance premiums.

DEADLINE FOR NEWS MONDAY NOON

Ex-Nun Author Regrets "Leap"

New York — (RNS) — Monica Baldwin, the ex-nun who created a sensation with her book "I Leap Over the Wall," says she is sorry she left the convent.

"For 23 years I was not sure about it," she said in an interview with a British author, Neville Braybrooks, but "about two years ago God somehow made it clear to me."

Miss Baldwin left the religious life in 1942 after 38 years as an enclosed nun. Now, Mr. Braybrooks reported in *Commonweal*, lay-edited Catholic magazine, "she would like as many people as possible to know of her change of attitude."

"I left in 1942 because I had never really understood the true nature of religious obedience," Miss Baldwin told the interviewer. "Through the vows

(The author of this article, a member of the Rome bureau of NC News Service, recently returned from a visit to Biafra.)

By PATRICK RILEY
(NC News Service)

Not since Hitler moved to massacre Europe's Jews has the Church lived through such an agonizing dilemma as in the fledgling West African state of Biafra.

There the slaughter of hundreds of thousands or even millions of innocent people looms as a credible threat. There the Church is torn between two courses: crying out in protest and warning, or working behind the scenes to avert the tragedy.

To speak might throw away the Church's trump card in international diplomacy: her unquestioned impartiality.

To keep silence might discredit her in the eyes of millions of Biafrans who are convinced slaughter awaits them if they lose their war against the Federation of Nigeria. For most people, silence means consent.

The problem is complicated by so many religious and human considerations that men of good will can arrive at directly opposite conclusions.

About a million of the eight or nine million Ibos now in Biafra fled there from Nigeria's Northern Region after anti-Ibo riots had taken the lives of at least 30,000 of them in the autumn of 1966. At that time, and subsequently, another million Ibos fled from Nigeria's Western Region, Midwestern

Region and the Federal Territory of Lagos.

They have run as far as they can. With their backs to the sea, they have turned for a fight to the death.

The pursuers, troops of the federal government, are pressing in on four fronts. Their avowed purpose is to bring Biafra back into the Nigerian Federation, from which it seceded in May. They are under strict orders from the federal government in Lagos to observe the terms of the Geneva Convention on treatment of prisoners.

Despite this, they have slaughtered—unarmed Ibos, including women and children, where they have marched into Ibo territory. Every Ibo will tell you that when the federals took Asaba they murdered every male Ibo over the age of 12. This tale of horror has swept across Iboland, steeling the Ibo determination to resist to the death. Nothing can shake their conviction that if they lose the war, they die.

Yet few of them believe they have been captured. Their market at Onitsha, biggest in West Africa, has been destroyed by federal artillery. Of their two seaports, one has been captured and the other effectively blockaded. Their only line of supply is a tenuous thread of old transport planes that bring a trickle of arms from Europe.

Their major hope is negotiation. Biafran officials claim the federals spurn negotiations because they know their position is logically weak if militarily strong. They further predict that sooner or later the

Nigeria's internal squabbles probably hindered the efforts of the military ruler of Federal Nigeria, Maj. Gen. Yakubu Gowon, to keep Eastern Nigeria concessions he is able to offer the East were big enough to convince some of the best friends of the Ibos that they could save their lives and their liberty without seceding.

Some people feel that the Ibos pulled out of the federation to hold onto the vast oil and gas deposits lying beneath the Biafran soil and seas. By the same token, the rest of Nigeria would be anxious to keep Iboland in the federation.

These are only some of the elements of an already immense tragedy that threatens to become immeasurably greater. No wonder that churchmen, trying to sort out these and other factors of the problem, arrive at conclusions that clash in theory and in operation.

At a minor seminary in Biafra, all the seminarians are Ibos. Some of them fled to Biafra for their lives, and of these refugees some do not know whether their parents are alive. While Biafran soldiers battle the invaders with antiquated weapons, life proceeds normally in the seminary. Food is more expensive but plentiful.

Meanwhile, somewhere in the Federation of Nigeria, a bishop is writing to the general of his missionary congregation. Please, he writes, in effect, do what you can to stop missionaries from Biafra from saying anything that would make this mission's position more difficult than it is already.

The enemies of the Church will pounce on anything they say, however innocent, and use it to argue that the Church is against Nigeria. Missioners must stay out of politics, or Christians here will suffer.

But missioners ask, "Are we

bound to keep silent about the massacre at Asaba? millions of innocent people are about to be murdered?"



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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN	ANSWER
1. City in Turingia, Germany	1. One who stares in wonder	1. SPINACH
6. Perform	2. Ecclesiastical cape	2. WAGON
11. Arum plant	3. Bracer	3. FROM
12. God of thunder	4. Hasten	4. ROAD
13. Parts of windows	5. Part of notices	5. SPOON
14. As before	6. Old Norse works	6. WASTE
15. High priest	7. Waste fiber	7. SPINEL
16. Gal of song	8. Formfield	8. REED
17. You: It.	9. Reed mace	9. DIVISION
18. Regains	10. Bother	10. UNITED KINGDOM
21. Prate	16. Rigorous	16. SIMPLETONS
22. Ohio college town	19. Simpletons	19. SPINACH
23. Spiral of wire		20. Jap. salad plant
24. Sleazy		21. Mass
28. Hewing tools		22. Wagon
29. Craggy hill		24. From road
30. Cretan epiknard		25. Variety of sweet cherry
31. French painter		26. Spinel
35. Digraph		27. Little child
36. Brown, in the sun		27. Little child
37. Scotch ale		28. Division of the United Kingdom
38. Of the pope		32. Andous
40. Firm		33. Stand up
42. Goddess of peace		34. Beneath
45. Fat		36. River in Kenya
44. Spirit lamps		39. Enclosure
45. More exposed		40. Steel
		41. F.I. tree



Irish Theme for Fashion Show

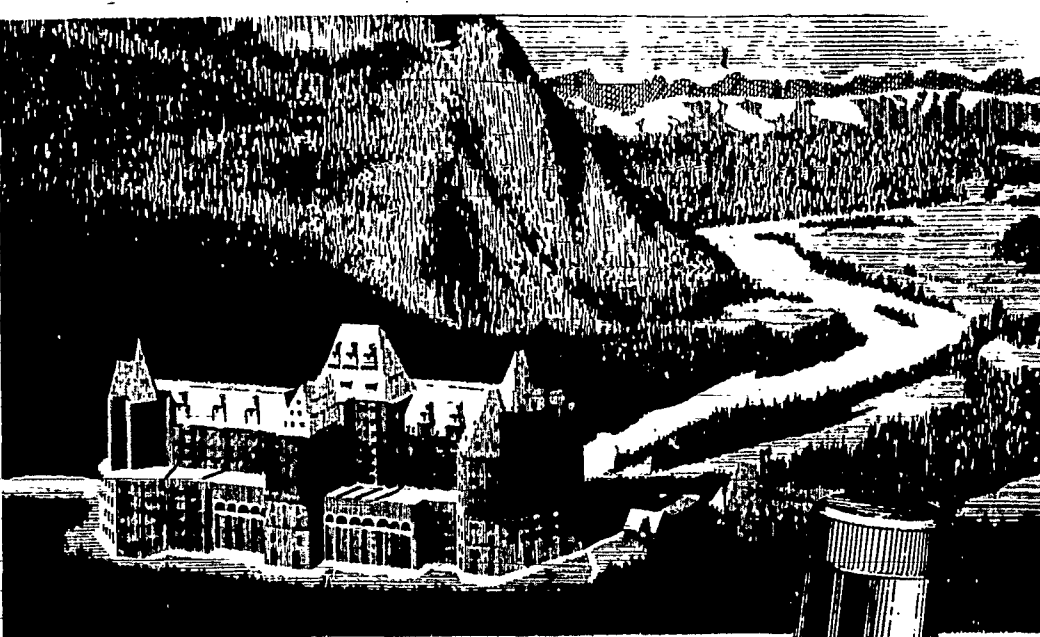
"O' Wee Bit of Ireland" sets the theme for the McQuaid Mothers' Club Fashion Show March 5 at eight p.m. at the school. Here Father Albert Bartlett, Rector of McQuaid, honorary chairman for the affair meets with cochairmen Mrs. Robert Eberhardt and Mrs. Frederick McGinn. Proceeds of the event will go to the Mothers' Club Scholarship Fund. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

Chardin Lectures Start at 1:30 p.m.

Dr. Eulalio Baltazar's talks on "The Thought of Teilhard de Chardin," scheduled for St. Bernard's Seminary on four Mondays (March 6, 13, 27 and April 3) will all begin at 1:30 p.m. It was announced this week.

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