

Government Official Quoted

Czech Eastern-Rite Church 'May Be Restored'

By PATRICK RILEY (NC News Service)

Prague, Czechoslovakia — The head of this country's religious affairs department has declared that its government is ready to hear all grievances of the country's believers and redress the most pressing.

Dr. Erika Kadlecova told NC News Service that the Catholic Eastern-rite church—which was forcibly destroyed by Czechoslovakia's Stalinist regime in 1950—"may be restored."

She said that her department had formally petitioned for the release of imprisoned priests whose activities had been motivated by religious convictions of religious obedience. As for those already out of jail, she said that rehabilitation proceedings would be begun in behalf of priests and laymen who had been imprisoned il-

legally or whose sentences were out of proportion to their offenses.

Bishop Frantisek Tomasek, apostolic administrator of Prague, told NC News Service that 16 priests were in prison. Another Catholic source said that as of the last week in March a total of 15 priests, nuns and lay persons were in prison for religious "crimes."

Dr. Kadlecova's formal title is head of the Czechoslovak Secretariat for Ecclesiastical Affairs.

She said that she fully realizes how undesirable it is that millions of Catholics be torn between their consciences as believers and their duties as citizens.

"We want to give Catholics elbow room for their religious needs," she declared.

"In the past the political regime here denied some Christians the basic needs of their religious life. We will examine all complaints of believers, and try to relieve what hurts them most." Nowhere in her interview did Dr. Kadlecova use rigid terminology or argumentation of Marxist orthodoxy. She, like both of her new assistants, is a sociologist of religion from the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences in Prague.

Dr. Kadlecova, petite and very feminine despite the severe coiffure of the woman academic, excused herself for not knowing the full details of the forced union of Eastern-rite Catholics with the Orthodox Church. "I have been here only 10 days and still have a lot of studying to do," she said.

She said that the question of the restoration of the Catholic Eastern-

rite had not yet been discussed in the government itself.

"But it will be discussed, and the Catholic Eastern-rite Church may be restored."

"I have discussed this with representatives of the Eastern-rite Catholics and the Orthodox. I have asked them to discuss this among themselves and to give us their conclusions. The new ecumenical spirit makes such discussion possible. The important thing is that Christians resolve their internal problems themselves."

When asked how there could be "representatives of the Eastern-rite Catholics" if the Catholic Eastern-rite had been suppressed, Dr. Kadlecova replied: "Some priests and believers do not regard the Orthodox Church as their church. They simply are not content with the present arrangement."

Religion Plays Role in War In Nigeria

(Religious News Service)

Religious tensions, which have always existed in the background of Nigeria's inner divisions, have become a major factor in the Nigerian-Biafran war.

As it moved closer to final victory over the State of Biafra the Nigerian military government grew increasingly critical of Christian missionaries and of foreign churchmen who have been seeking a cease-fire.

The missionaries have been accused by Nigeria of aiding Biafra, physically and through propaganda.

Those who seek a negotiated peace, including the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, have been called "one-sided" and "misinformed." The cease-fire urged by religious leaders would allegedly give Biafra time to "rearm and to prepare for a bloodier conflict."

Nigeria has forbidden the movement of missionaries and relief supplies into Biafra and has introduced measures which amount to government security checks on mission activities.

Historically, the political entity which has been known as Nigeria during this century is a creation of British colonial administration, which placed three African nations or national groups under a single rule.

The present Nigerian government gains its support chiefly from the North, home of most of the Moslems who constitute 42 per cent of Nigeria's population. Customs and social structures in the North follow largely North African, Islamic patterns.

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Priest Speaks Out, Spent 10 Years in Prison

By Religious News Service

Prague—The past ordeals and present hesitations of a Czech priest who spent 10 years in prison are revealed in an interview published here.

Dr. Antonin Dvorak, 59, a lawyer and—until his arrest in 1950—a canon of the Olmouc archdiocese, is now a telephone repairman in Prague.

He hesitates to return to the priesthood because he wonders whether the present liberalization process in Czechoslovakia will ultimately mean religious freedom "in fact or only in theory."

He thinks he is good in his new trade.

Dr. Dvorak was interviewed by editor Jan Kastan of Lidova Demokracie, a daily which nominally belongs to the People's Party but for almost two decades reflected the views of the Communist regime. The newspaper has changed notably since the sudden democratization of the Communist movement which started in January and led to the end of censorship and the ouster of President Antonin Novotny.

According to Kastan, the gray-haired Dr. Dvorak wanted to discuss his future against the backdrop of his past.

The author of the article says that a "moving and tragic fate" made Dr.

Dvorak a member of a Church Commission of an Action Committee in 1949. The commission was asked to regulate relations between the Communist state and the Catholic Church following the Communist take-over of Czechoslovakia in 1948.

As early as March 1950, Dr. Dvorak recalled, the Communist secret police advised him to "arrange" an agreement palatable to the regime or face the consequences of failure.

He declined offers of lucrative assignments within the Church which he said the authorities were not entitled to make in the first place, and refused to negotiate behind the backs of the bishops and the Vatican.

Dr. Dvorak was arrested soon afterwards. He recalls, without bitterness or anger, wrote Kastan, his days and nights before the actual trial and sentencing.

He was put in a small underground cell and given wooden shoes. A guard outside the cell issued the order to walk and keep on walking, without slowing down, for 24 hours—once even for 36 hours—with a few brief pauses to take miserable food.

Later, at another prison, "Scrubbing the floors was a relief because I could at least kneel for a while. Otherwise I had to walk, constantly walk, between six in the morning

and ten at night," Dr. Dvorak recalled.

He was questioned repeatedly about his alleged espionage activities against the Czechoslovak Republic. Only much later did he learn that he was accused of illegal contacts with the Apostolic Nuncio in Prague.

Finally, in January 1951, Dr. Dvorak was sentenced for high treason. His punishment for not collaborating with his police captors—13 years in prison, a fine of 10,000 crowns, the loss of all personal property, and the loss of all his citizen's rights. His captors could not tell him how this alleged treason had been committed.

After the sentence, said Dr. Dvorak, he was placed in various-prison and labor camps, seven altogether. He did not bother to avail himself of the legal machinery to have his sentence reviewed. He had never received the written sentence.

After ten years in jails, he was told in 1960 he was freed under the terms of a political amnesty. The condition was that he must not live in Prague, the capital. He could not, of course, return to the priesthood.

So he returned to his mother, now 83 years old, and found a job as a telephone repairman.

"I have worked so diligently that once I was even rewarded by being

allowed to go to Dresden, East Germany, with my trade union group."

What about the future?

"I am a priest even if I don't hold any clerical office. In my heart, there must be no room for hatred or revenge."

"Am I willing to return to the priesthood? I was offered such an opportunity by the Ministry of Education and Culture last year. My former position as canon with the Olmouc Archbishopric is still vacant. But I refused."

"I shall return only after relations between the Church and the state have been normalized. I don't object to state supervision of the Church. A priest too is a citizen of the state. But I shall not accept the state's right to interfere in the internal life of the Church."

Wrote editor Kastan:

"The interview ended, but thoughts remained. And burning questions, too. The question about true religious freedom, in reality, not just on paper. If it is not guaranteed, it is difficult to talk about true democracy."

"The faithful, who want to be loyal children of their country and contribute to its well-being with their strength and abilities, are waiting for this improvement."

'Holy Shroud' Indicates Christ Was Short

NC News Service

ROME—Two Italian experts have determined that the man who was wrapped in what is known as the "Holy Shroud" and believed by many to have been the shroud of Christ, was not much taller than 5 feet 3.

The Holy Shroud, a relic preserved in a church in Turin, is a long linen cloth bearing the marks of the likeness of a man who was scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified, and whose side was pierced by a lance. It has long been thought piously that this is the sheet in which the body of Christ was wrapped after He was taken from the Cross. However, other scholars have objected to its authenticity since it was not generally known until the 13th Century.

However, although it has been frequently the subject of

pro and con study, the shroud remains a center of interest and one of the most fascinating relics said to be connected with Christ and His Passion.

Msgr. Giulio Ricci, an architect of the Congregation for Bishops of the Vatican Curia, and Anatomy Professor Miani, of the Catholic University of Milan's medical school in Rome, recently concluded that the man whose imprint had been left on the cloth was about average height of his time, somewhere between 5 feet and 3 and 4 inches.

Their conclusion contradicts the general tradition which has long portrayed Christ as being exceptionally tall and also contradicts the conclusions of other scholars who had examined the shroud.

One of the latter, Prof. Lorenzo Ferri, concluded 35 years

ago that Christ, the man of the shroud, had been more than six feet. However, according to the most recent study, this is not so, because the earlier studies failed to take into account the position of the body within the shroud and the measurable distances between the various parts of the body.

In addition to conclusions regarding height, Msgr. Ricci said that study of the shroud reveals that the man in the shroud had been beaten by two men wielding whips—each with three thongs, each with two weights at their ends. Analysis according to Msgr. Ricci, showed that the man in the shroud had been struck by at least 98 blows—at least 39 because the shroud does not show the body's sides and hips, which may have been struck. This, he notes, exceeds the limit of 39 blows permitted by the Jews and argues that the victim was scourged by Roman soldiers.

The shroud also shows that the nails were driven through the hands and not through the wrists. This, according to Msgr. Ricci, was the cruellest form of crucifixion. The shroud shows no mark of the thumb of the left hand because the nail hammered through that hand injured the median nerve. This is a motor nerve which has a reflex action in the thumb. It is also a sensory nerve and if in-

TWO MILLION FOR N.D.

Notre Dame, Ind. — (RNS)—An increase of more than \$2 million, in the total amount of gifts and grants was reported by the University of Notre Dame for 1967. The \$12,035,000 total was the third highest in the institution's 125-year history.

LAYMEN PREACH

Berlin — (NC) — Two laymen, a physician and a teacher, and a housewife gave Lenten Sunday sermons in a West Berlin Catholic church, in experimental services approved by Alfred Cardinal Bengsch of Berlin.

Make Vocations Attractive, Religious Heads Urged

Milwaukee — (RNS) — Religious superiors should strive to make vocations more attractive to young people by eliminating an authoritarian atmosphere, assuring their personal identity and democracy, and developing more relevant roles and duties, a psychologist said here.

Anthony Kuchan, professor of psychology at Marquette University, said such steps are necessary to satisfy the basic needs of youth for personal identity, security, mastery and self-esteem.

Kuchan spoke at a communications seminar for vocation directors sponsored by the St. Bernardine Guild of Milwaukee. The third annual event of this type attracted about 200 religious order representatives from 20 states.

The speaker gave participants a psychological explanation of why religious orders have not been more attractive.

He described several "forces" which have been responsible for drawing youth away from religious vocations, and gave suggestions on how the situation might be improved.

Kuchan said religious superiors must ask themselves how they and others in key positions can create a sense of personal identity among their candidates.

Kuchan proposed other questions which religious superiors should consider: "How can I develop a trust in an eternal capacity for wisdom and choose to move away from authoritarianism?"

"How do I democratize this organization of mine? How do I allow each person to have his or her say so that the community is as much his or hers as any others?"

—"What must I do to dig out the most burning, relevant problems of men at the present time . . . to root out those things which endanger the order?"

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FRUSTRATION The following letter could have been written by any missionary for it reveals the cross common to every missionary, frustration. Actually, it was written by a missionary in Africa after making the rounds of his villages on a bicycle and seeing nothing but poverty, ignorance, suffering, ingratitude. He writes: "You enter your hut at night. The heat is terrific, but you hardly notice it. Your heart is heavy with what your eyes have seen during the day. You have done your best, but that was far from enough. You hope you will be able to do more the next time around. "The howl of the hyena keeps you awake. Your thoughts don't give you rest either. You begin your night prayers. You catch yourself thinking about a faster means of transportation. . . . You fight that thought as a distraction. You tell God you are sorry. . . . With a larger supply of medicines you could help more people. . . . If you only had a jeep. . . . Again you tell yourself that you are supposed to be saying your night prayers and not thinking about such trivial things as jeeps and medicine. . . . Somehow you can't convince yourself. "You ask God to be understanding with you. You know He is. You feel better, but not much. Tomorrow will be another day of frustrations, in which you will again uncover more and greater miseries that you can relieve. . . . The load gets heavier . . . heavier." The above was not written for your sympathy. The missionaries don't want your pity, they only want your help. It is spiritual assistance that they need, as well as material. Money alone won't relieve loneliness and homesickness, ingratitude and frustrations. But the spiritual power of your self-denials will win for the missionaries God's strengthening grace without which they will not persevere. The material power provided by your monetary sacrifices will encourage the missionaries with concrete proof that others care enough about their brothers to deny themselves. That is why everyone should sacrifice every day—EVERY DAY. God bless you. SALVATION AND SERVICE are the work of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Please cut this column and send your offering to Right Reverend Edward T. O'Meara, National Director, 368 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, or directly to your local Diocesan Director, Rt. Rev. Msgr. John F. Duffy, 50 Chestnut Street, Rochester, New York 14604.

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