

Honors Planned for Bishop Byrne

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outer lodge. As soon as Father Szymanski came out, Pat asked him eagerly if he had been able to do anything for the assassin. "Patty" replied Father Theophil, "priests don't talk about such things."

If young Byrne revealed a missionary spirit that day, at least he never gave any indication to his schoolmates that he had a missionary vocation. After graduating from Holy Family School, he attended Auburn High School for two years, 1903-1905. Then at 16, he returned to Washington and finished his secondary education at another public high school, Washington's Eastern High.

After high school Pat turned in the direction of the priesthood. He attended St. Charles College, the well-known preparatory seminary at Calonsville, Maryland, and then studied theology at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. He was ordained a priest in Washington on June 23, 1915.

But Father Byrne did not serve as a priest in the diocese of his birth. Seven days after his ordination he was admitted to the Maryknoll Fathers in Ossining, N.Y. This American foreign-mission society had been founded only four years before, and Patrick Byrne was the first, already-ordained man to be received into its growing ranks.

Father Byrne proved to be an ideal missionary. His rare combination of zeal and good humor adapted him well to the ups and downs of the missionary life.

His first assignment was to the post of superior of the Maryknoll junior seminary at Clark's Summit, Pa. Only in 1923, eight years later, was he sent into the mission field. His task was to pioneer a new missionary undertaking in northern Korea. His efforts were successful, and in 1927 the Holy See appointed him Prefect Apostolic of Poryang. (This title meant he was under direct authority of the Vatican in administering a mission area which had no bishop.)

But the Maryknoll society did not allow him to remain long in his prefecture. In 1929 he was elected assistant superior general of the Maryknoll Fathers. Three years later he was given the added burden of the rectorship of Maryknoll's major seminary at Ossining.

In 1935, his superior finally allowed him to return to the field. This time he was sent to Kyoto, Japan, to set up a new mission. Two years afterward, Pope Pius XI established Kyoto as a prefecture apostolic, and Father Patrick again found himself named a prefect.

As he had been happy in Korea, so Monsignor Byrne enjoyed his work in Japan. Towards the end of the decade, however, World War II loomed. The prefect of Kyoto decided would be prudent for him, as a foreigner, to resign his office so that a Japanese national might be named to succeed him.

But Byrne had meanwhile made a name for himself by reason of his many charitable works. Consequently, when he was caught in Japan at the outbreak of World War II in December, 1942, and listed as an enemy alien, he was not imprisoned as were most foreign missionaries, but held four years in a gentler house-detention on the grounds of his Catholic orphanage.

Still a captive when Japan fell before the Allies, Monsignor Byrne addressed the Japanese people over the radio, assuring them that the American troops arriving to occupy the cities after the surrender in Tokyo Bay, would not harm them. Allied military authorities credited this address as a major influence in the peaceful take over of Japan.

In the days that followed, while Gen. Douglas MacArthur was acknowledged to be "No. 1 American" in Japan, Monsignor Byrne was referred to as "No. 2 American." Of Byrne, the general later testified: "In the early days of the Japanese occupation when everything was in confusion, Bishop Byrne was of great help to us. He was resourceful and courageous. He was looked up to by everyone."

In 1947, Pope Pius XII named Monsignor Byrne apostolic visitor to the country of his first missionary effort, Korea. This was a gesture of recognition to the government of that newly-established independent republic. The Holy See made a further gesture of confidence on April 7, 1949, when Byrne was named titular bishop of Gazera and the first apostolic delegate ever sent to Korea.

The bishop-elect chose to be consecrated in the Korean capital, Seoul. Chief consecrator was Bishop Thomas J. McDonnell, national director for the United States of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Bishop McDonnell was assisted by Bishop Paul Ro, vicar apostolic of Seoul, and Bishop Adrian Larribeau, M.E.P. Bishop Ro's predecessor. The consecration was a civic as well as a religious event, and the new apostolic delegate intended that it be so. He was intensely loyal to the flock he served.

But war clouds were again descending. Bishop Byrne's first official act after his consecration was to denounce the Communists of northern

Korea for their recent seizure of the clergy. A bare 12 months later, on June 25, 1950, the Reds from northern Korea invaded the South, and the Korean War was on.

As soon as the invasion took place, the apostolic delegate ordered all foreign missionaries that he could contact to go south for safety's sake. He himself chose to remain at Seoul, accompanied only by Father William Booth, M.M., his secretary. As Bishop Byrne explained to the departing Americans, "If the shepherd flees, the sheep will easily be scattered."

Not long afterward, Communist invaders entered Seoul, and some of their number appeared at the door of the apostolic delegation. They ordered the delegate and Father Booth to pack their clothes and come with them: "Do as we say or we will kill you." A case could probably have been made against such an arrest on the basis of the bishop's quasi-diplomatic status as the representative of the Holy See. But the North Koreans were in no mood to let Bishop Byrne out of their grasp. They had earlier made the public announcement that he was their "No. 1 Enemy."

The bishop and his secretary were first taken by freight car to Poryang, once the hub of Byrne's prefecture and now the capital of North

Korea. Then, after two months, they were taken to Manpo on the Yalu River, along with some 700 other captives: prisoners of war, missionaries, diplomatic and commercial personnel, civilians from several countries — men, women, and children.

The earlier phases of the internment were uncomfortable enough, what with inadequate facilities and brain-washing interrogations. But cruelly reached its peak in late October and early November, when the whole crowd was forced to march 100 miles across rough and frigid country from Manpo to Jungkan.

They were "ecumenical" victims, those who took this "death march." Bishop Byrne, Msgr. Thomas Quinlan, S.S.C., prefect apostolic of Chunchon, and several missionary priests and nuns; an Anglican bishop; the commissioner in Korea for the Salvation Army; a number of Methodist missionaries, both men and women; a Jewish physician; and a large number of American soldiers, foreign diplomatic and economic personnel, and other internees of European and Asiatic background and of diversified religious beliefs.

Bishop Byrne had been looked to as one of the bravest of the leaders, and as long as he was physically able

to, he did his best to advise and ease the lot of the rest of the prisoners. But before they reached Jungkan he came down with a cold that turned into pneumonia. When the marchers were moved once more, on Nov. 16, 1950, to Ha Chang Ri, he had to be transported in an ox-cart. On Nov. 25, while still at Ha Chang Ri, he died.

They buried him in the cassock of Monsignor Quinlan, hoping that its metal, red-cloth-covered buttons, would help some in the future to identify his remains. He was 62 at the time of his death. One of his fellow-marchers testified that all of their group, at his passing, had been seized by "a leaden sense of personal loss."

Just before his death, the falling prelate had told his companions: "After the privilege of my priesthood, I regard this privilege of having suffered for Christ with you as the greatest of my life."

Holy Family parish does well to set up, in Auburn, a memorial to its heroic former parishioner. We are still called upon to "seek first the kingdom of God," and to take up our cross and follow Christ. So it is good to be reminded, in an era of confused values, that the age of martyrs has not really ceased.



Bishop Byrne, a lover of all animals, wrote this poem in 1946 about his pet parrot in Korea:

POLL IN A MEDITATIVE MOOD

This Poll sits on a hump;
Reserved, sagacious, pious,
As sober as the raven bird
That used to feed Ellen.

But should the mood strike verdant Poll
She'll carry on fantastic;
For all her sober piety,
Is really quite elastic.

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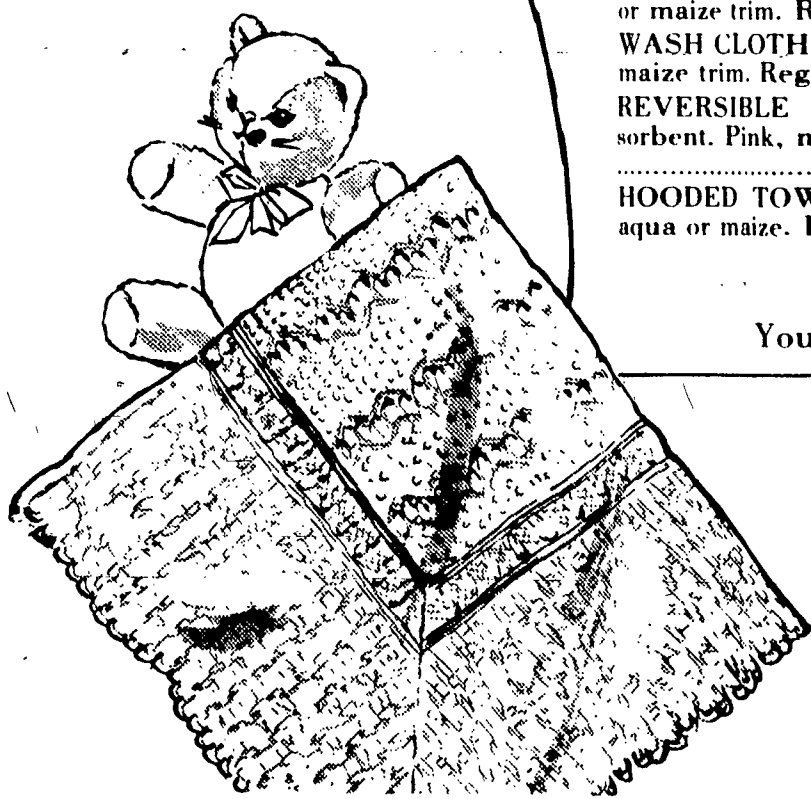


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UNICEF In Biafra Worsening

United Nations—(RNS)—UN estimates that between 3,000 and 10,000 people are dying daily in Biafra-controlled territory alone, that the situation is getting worse.

Although there has been a marked increase in the transportation and distribution of relief supplies, they are rising even faster, the UN said. The situation will remain critical for many months to come because of the large numbers of people displaced by the conflict, the spread destruction of crops and the very high density of the population in Biafra-controlled areas.

UNICEF also reported that:

- It has purchased and is forgoing by air 14 tons of drugs and medical equipment worth \$107,000 in response to a detailed request from Dr. Herman J. Middlekoop, a medical missionary who is director of all Protestant medical relief efforts in Biafra.

- It began operating a helicopter foodlift in late September to an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 refugees in the Calabar region of Nigeria under federal control. The foodlift, which is being expanded, will greatly speed up the distribution of supplies to accessible areas.

- It is transporting food regularly from the Red Cross food depot in Calabar, on the Cross River, to a feeding station at Uyo, 30 miles west and about 20 miles from the warfront. One helicopter can make about 10 lifts daily, carrying a load of 12 tons. Supplies are moved by parachute slung from a hook behind the copter's belly, and the sling is unloaded without the aircraft touching down.

- UNICEF's charter ship, the O. Exporter, arrived in early September with 5,000 tons of skim milk powder for children donated by the U.S. A second charter is scheduled to leave soon with another 5,000 tons of skim milk from the U.S. government. Two "bread ships" left Biafra in mid-September with a total of 3,000 tons of flour donated by the U.S.

For Biafra-controlled territory, supplies are airlifted from the shore island of Fernando Po by the International Red Cross and the island of Sao Tome by various churches. The airlift is supported with funds and supplies by the Council of Churches and Caritas Internationalis. The Sao Tome effort works through a joint steering committee of International Christian Relief Organizations currently headed by Father Anthony Byrne.