

Brazil Releases 4 Priests

Rio de Janeiro (NC) — Four Assumptionists jailed in Belo Horizonte since Nov. 28 on charges of subversive activities have been released (Feb. 6).

The Assumptionists are three French priests, Fathers Michel Le Ven, Herve Guennec and Xavier Berthou, and Brother Jose Geraldo da Cruz, a Brazilian deacon, who was to have been ordained Dec. 20.

Judge Antonio de Aruda authorized their release because the legal limit for imprisonment without trial and sentencing, 60 days, had been passed.

The freed Assumptionists are now forbidden to leave Belo Horizonte without formal authorization by military authorities. No decision has been reached concerning their expulsion from Brazil.

Bishop McGrath to Head Panama See

Vatican City (NC) — Pope Paul VI has named Bishop Marcos G. McGrath, C.S.C., to be archbishop of Panama, to succeed Archbishop Tomas A. Clavel Mendez, whose resignation was announced Dec. 30.

Archbishop McGrath thus returns to the archdiocese he served as auxiliary bishop from October 1961 to March 1964, when he was named to head the diocese of Santiago de Veraguas.

The resignation of Archbishop Clavel stirred widespread expressions of protest and regret in Panama, including a public demonstration in the prelate's home town of Canazas, and formal statements by Catholic lay groups, civic organizations and Protestant churchmen.

The prelate had headed a civil-religious movement that worked for an impartial vote count in the presidential election last May. The military

Secret meetings are being held here of leaders of the Church, industry, the army and government.

An extraordinary meeting of the central committee of the bishops' conference has been called for Feb. 17 in Rio de Janeiro, after the presidency of the bishops' conference met in Sao Paulo for the past few years.



CARDINAL FRINGS

Cardinal Frings

Retires at 82,

Opposed Nazis

Catholic Population Rises in England

London (NC) — The official estimated Catholic population of England and Wales rose by nearly 56,000 last year to 4,143,854, according to the Catholic Directory issued here.

The previous year's figure was 4,087,949.

Active Catholics here are popularly estimated nowadays at over five million out of a total population of about 48,000,000.

Conversions in 1967, the last year on record, dropped to their lowest figure for some 20 years by 828 to a total of 3,293.

The number of clergy showed a slight increase from 7,721 to 7,756 due to religious orders bringing in priests from abroad as well as the usual inflow from Ireland.

Marriages during 1967 totalled 46,065 compared with 46,543 the previous year. Baptisms over the same period fell from 131,890 to 128,840.

The Catholic school population rose from 830,409 in 1967 to 851,235 in 1968.

The cardinal, 82 years old on Feb. 6, has been in poor health for several years and is almost totally blind despite several operations for removal of cataracts. His third request for permission to resign was submitted in December. He will be succeeded by Bishop Joseph Hoefner, 62, formerly of Munster, who was appointed his coadjutor with right of succession in December.

At the time of his consecration, June 21, 1942, Catholics in Germany were being subjected to increasing pressure from the Nazi government. At the same time, the Allied bombing effort on Cologne was being intensified to the point of "saturation bombing." He was seen frequently during air raids, protected only by a helmet, visiting and encouraging the people in dangerous areas. Twice he was in shelters that were buried under bomb debris and once a bomb hit a shelter he was in, killing two persons and wounding five.

At the same time he issued pastoral letters criticizing war crimes and other "evils perpetrated by the Nazis." These, however, were suppressed by the government, which even kept the announcement of his consecration out of the general communications media.

After the war, he was made a cardinal by Pope Pius XII in the consistory of Feb. 18, 1946. He was widely recognized as a spokesman for Germans who had not accepted Nazism and pleaded their cause in journeys to most nations of Western Europe, the United States and Canada.

BLACK HISTORY COURSE PLANNED

York, Pa. (NC) — The Harrisburg diocesan school system plans to introduce black history into the curriculum, Father Walter Shaul, superintendent, announced.

SPAIN

Bishops Schedule Emergency Meeting

(NC News Service)

Madrid—The Spanish bishops have called an emergency meeting for Feb. 26-28 to deal with critical issues regarding the state of the nation, now practically under martial law, and ways to guide their priests and lay leaders on such ticklish matters as student and labor unrest and political freedoms.

The bishops also announced their support of the government's "state of exception" on condition that it be lifted as soon as order returns.

The bishops also asked for social and economic reforms to improve the lot of the protesters.

The bishops stressed, however, these conditions for their support:

—That the state of siege be "within the measure of just defense."

—That freedoms be restored as soon as the causes for the measures change.

—That in the meantime there be a continued effort to use "these tools designed to foster economic and social progress of the people."

While the announcement of the emergency meeting omitted any mention of the agenda, reliable sources list the following:

• Revision of the concordat of 1953, seeking less government interference in the appointment of bishops and in other matters.

• Consideration of specific problems burdening clergy and the seminaries.

• The growing pressure by priests and laymen for legal guarantees for political prisoners.

• Aid to the Church in Latin America. Some bishops believe there is a need for a basic review of methods and results. A bishops' committee preparing for the celebration on Feb. 9 of the Latin-American Vocations Day in Spain stated that "we have decided to start a truly new trend" in this aid.

• The election of a new steering board for the bishops' conference which probably will include younger bishops.

The relationship of the bishops with the lay apostolate movements, particularly those dealing with students and workers, in which protest movements have developed, have caused marked concern to the government.

Catholic militants and churchmen have been involved in a series of clashes with government authorities in recent weeks over civil rights, including those of workers and of political prisoners. Now the Franco regime has clamped a three-month "state of exception" or semi-martial law on the country. The Catholic reaction has been mixed.

Church Dissension Described as 'Naive'

Rome (NC) — The review of the Rome Jesuits has attacked the "presumptuous and naive" manner of the current dissension in the Church, but warned that its substance should be sifted carefully for valid criticism.

The manner in which dissent is expressed "is certainly not acceptable," said the forthrightly review, Civiltà Cattolica.

"It is hard and violent and not in the least in keeping with Christian charity and humility. It is often partisan, intolerant and disrespectful."

The Jesuit review chided the current dissent for lacking a sense of history. The dissenters do not realize, it said, that "they are contesting things that have already been repeatedly contested in the past. They give the impression that they have at last found the recipe which after so many errors will set the Church once and for all on the path of fidelity to the

Gospel. They end by looking rather presumptuous and naive."

Turning to the substance of the dissent, Civiltà Cattolica rejected all doubts cast upon the Church's hierarchical constitution "where the authority to teach and govern — admittedly in the service of the people of God — is directly granted by Christ to the pope and the bishops."

On the plus side, Civiltà Cattolica viewed today's dissent "as an appeal for that continual renewal to which the Church is called," and a "sign of the times to be read with attention, humility and patience."

It asserted that "it is necessary that in the present ecclesial dissent all that is valid should be patiently and courageously distinguished from what is not. Above all there should be no panic, no backlash of wholesale condemnation of all dissent."

Launch Ecumenical Housing Project

Indianapolis (RNS) — A housing organization backed by 65 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups has launched its first project here.

Housing Opportunities Multiplied Ecumenically (HOME) Inc. started its \$379,000 project which will make 39 rental dwellings out of existing structures.

The project, known as Hometown I, is in a predominantly Negro neighborhood. HOME announced plans for several other projects costing more than \$1 million each, and said its goal is a minimum of 40 inner-city living units annually.

According to corporation officers, HOME seeks to provide decent homes and communities for inner-city families who earn too much to live in public housing but not enough for adequate private housing. It seeks not just to build buildings, but to construct viable "community atmospheres."

Hometown I's one- to four-bedroom apartments rent from \$125 to \$155, and tenants participate in the federal rent-supplement program.

Cleveland Priests

Backed by Council

Cleveland (NC) — The Council of Churches of Christ of Greater Cleveland issued a statement supporting two Catholic priests who conducted an unauthorized Mass in St. John's cathedral.

The Metropolitan Affairs Commission of the organization, comprising major Protestant denominations, said: "The Protestant Church as well as the Catholic Church must address itself passionately, not superficially, to those issues that rob men of bread and justice. We praise these priests for their courageous act. We join them in challenging the church to hear the cries of the people."

Father John M. Garrity, director of the Cleveland diocese Social Service Office, defended diocesan officials against accusations of apathy to race and poverty problems made by the two priests and their lay supporters. He cited projects in which the diocese has been involved including:

• Better Homes for Cleveland Foundation, in which the diocese has guaranteed

half a million dollars in seed money in order to get \$5 million from federal funds to rebuild homes in the Hough area, a black ghetto.

• Project Peace, now in its fourth year, which has processed more than 1,000 men and women in its training and skills center.

• Nine diocesan-operated Head-Start centers.

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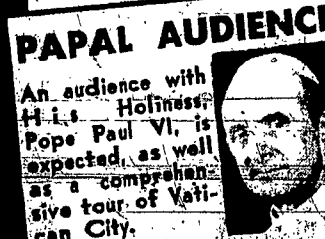
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ST. CYRIL PLANS

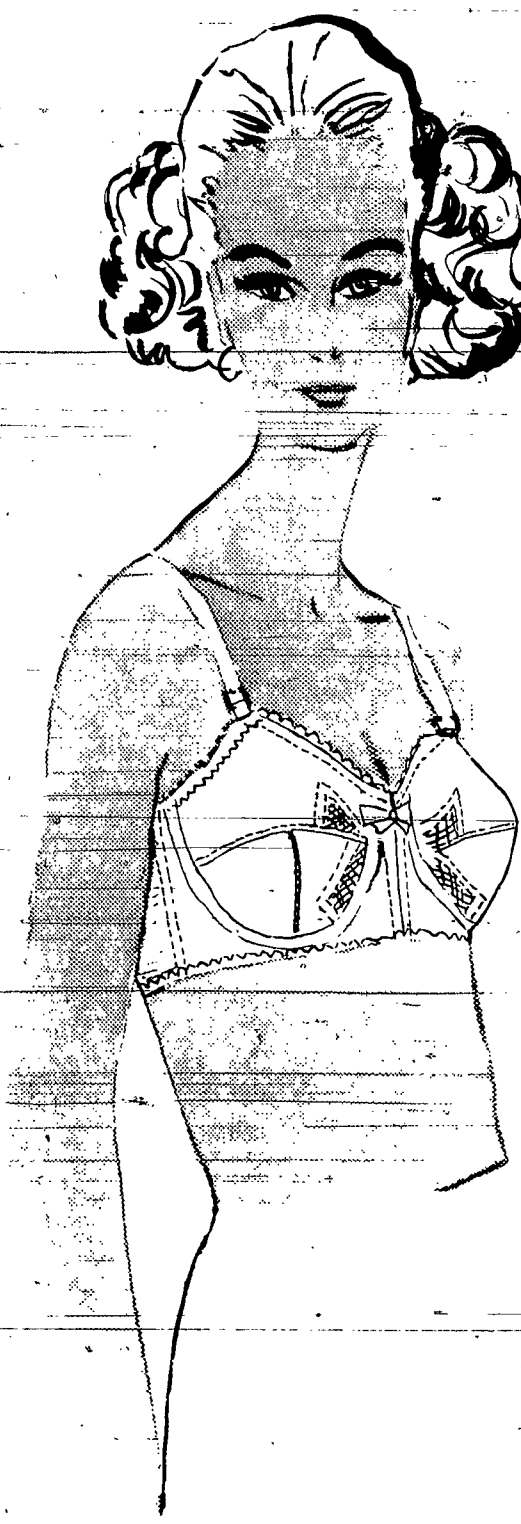
Prague (RNS) — Czech and Slovak bishops will leave for Rome soon to participate in celebrations marking the 1,100th anniversary of St. Cyril. A governmental broadcast said the prelates were invited by Pope Paul to come to Rome where the saint is buried in the basilica of St. Clement.

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