

St. Paul Miki and the Martyrs of Japan

By RONALD J. PAPPERT

On Feb. 5 the Church will celebrate the feast of St. Paul Miki and the Holy Martyrs of Japan. Canonized in 1862, the placement of their feast in the new liturgical calendar resulted from the reforms of 1969.

In 1549 St. Francis Xavier arrived at Kagoshima to begin his last mission. This mission grew slowly at first, but as missionary activity increased the Church became more deeply rooted in the nation. The next generation numbered thousands of Christians.

This growth was due only in part to the zeal of the Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries because the new Japanese Catholics themselves played the most significant role by their catechetical preaching and exemplary lives.

By 1583 fear began to grip the political authorities. The European economy was lucrative but the imperial government found nothing desirable in the further spread of Christianity. It awaited an opportune moment to enforce its hostile policy toward the Christians.

The incidents surrounding the wreck of a richly laden Spanish vessel in 1596 finally forced the ruler of Japan to commit himself. Against a background of fear, greed, and bad counsel, the imperial government ordered the execution of a select group of 26 Christians — European and Japanese. The intent was to discourage conversions and to encourage apostasy.

The martyrs included men and boys, missionaries and teachers, a shoemaker, a page boy, a cook, a carpenter, several servants, a physician, and a merchant. Several were recent converts; others were Christian from infancy. Some were married with families; others were unmarried laymen and religious.

The Franciscans of Kyoto and Osaka led by St. Peter Baptist, together with their close associates, were arrested. St. Paul Miki and two other Jesuits from Osaka were added to the group. For maximum impact on the populace, and to expose the Church to ridicule, a 300-mile route was charted from the capital to the site of martyrdom, at Nagasaki. The actual result of this torturous march

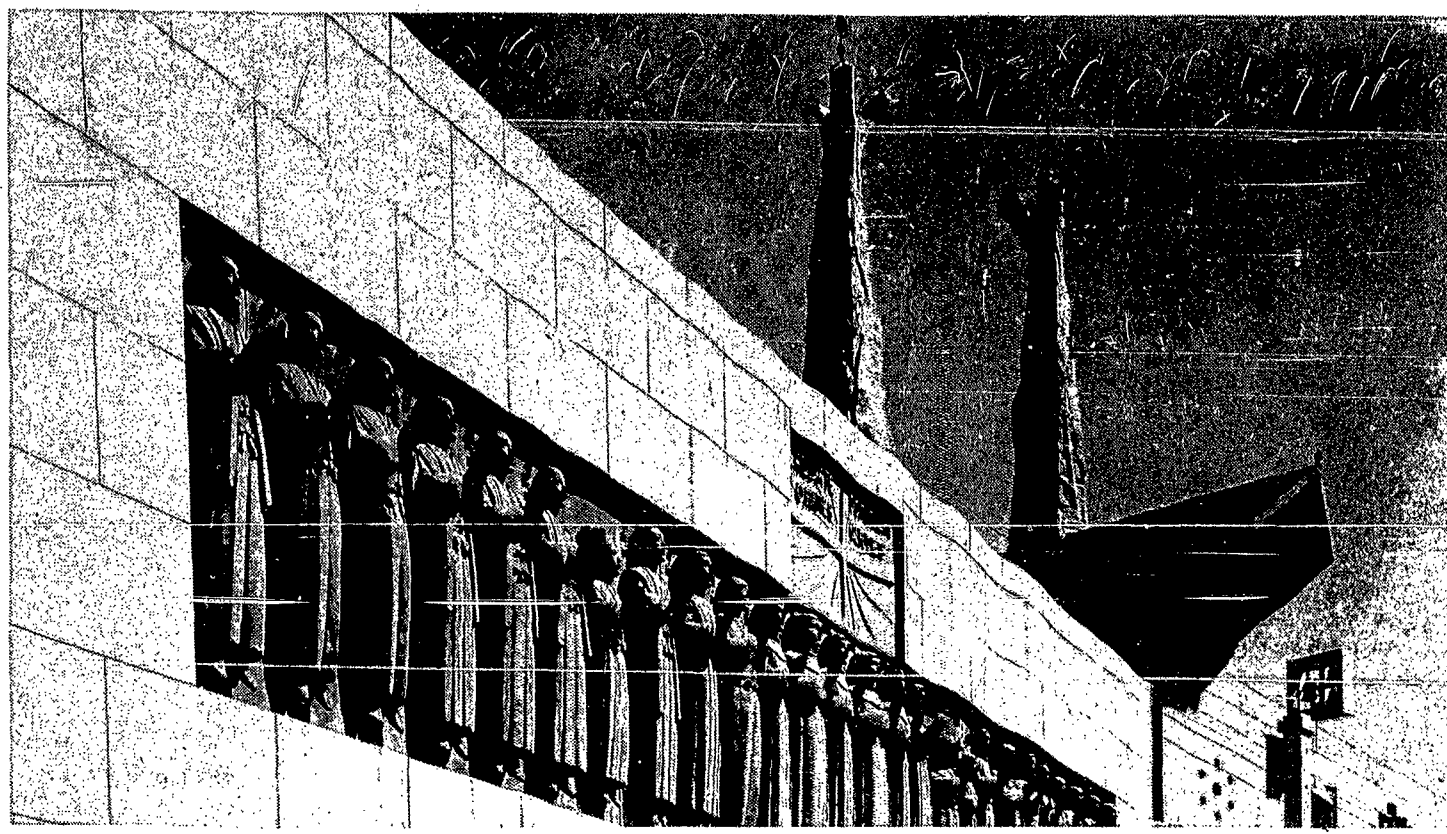


Photo by Japan Information Service

This monument to the 26 Holy Martyrs of Japan is in Nagasaki.

through the cold of winter was the display of Christian character and virtue to half the nation.

When the group arrived at a hill above Nagasaki they were tied to crosses and lifted into the air. Two by two they were executed with lances on the morning of Feb. 5, 1597.

Nagasaki was the chief harbor for European commerce and a center for Christian activity. While the bodies of the saints were hanging on the crosses for eight months, the story of their death was spreading throughout the world. The Franciscan mission was quickly re-established and the Christian life continued to grow in the hearts of the Japanese people.

Enforcing its edicts in the next century, however, the government persecuted the Church more extensively. Thousands of Japanese and many European missionaries were put to death. Many were forced into exile. Others were harassed and tor-

tured. Many lost their property. Of those who were executed clearly on religious convictions between 1617 and 1632, 205 have been declared Blessed.

The persecutions continued until Japan closed its doors to all foreigners. Without clergy the remnants of the Church continued underground for two centuries. After dramatically emerging in the last century the Japanese church has seen considerable growth. In 1962, on the anniversary of the canonization of the first martyrs, the Japanese bishops and people erected a magnificent monument to their saints overlooking the city of Nagasaki.

The honor paid to these saints in the new liturgical calendar is a beautiful statement of the Church's sanctifying power with God's people everywhere.

St. Paul Miki was a leading Japanese teacher of Christian doctrine in Osaka. Educated by the Jesuits, he

had been a professed member of their society since 1580. Best known

for his oratorical ability and his virtue, he was in his 30's when martyred at Nagasaki.

St. Philip of Jesus is one of the few canonized saints from the New World, having been born in Mexico. After spending a part of his life as a businessman in the Philippines, he was a Franciscan when shipwrecked in Japan and added to the group of condemned Christians.

St. Louis Ibaraki was a 12-year-old boy who spent his time helping the Franciscans in Kyoto. After the long journey to Nagasaki he was offered adoption by a high ranking official. Since apostasy was part of the agreement, St. Louis chose to stay with the other martyrs.

St. Anthony Deynan was a boy of thirteen from a part-Korean family in Nagasaki. His non-Christian parents were present at the execution where he asked them to be cheerful since he was happily dying for the faith.

St. Thomas Kosaki was the fifteen-year-old son of St. Michael Kosaki with whom he was arrested and martyred. During the long march to Nagasaki he wrote a letter to his mother in which he expressed concern for his two younger brothers, praying that they always remain true to the faith for which he and their father were dying.



Maryknoll Photo

St. Peter Kotaki founded the Franciscan mission in Japan in 1593 having already spent 15 years in Mexico and the Philippines.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Forewarned Is Forearmed

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Many who are over 50 and who went to public high schools recall the weekly student assembly. In my Alma Mater, Auburn Academic High School, it was patently called "Chapel." It was generally a program formed along a Low Church Protestant worship service. We had a Bible reading from the King James Version, usually read by the principal. There would be a talk; occasionally by a Protestant clergyman, or more often by a layman. The topic would be moral or educational. But the most dramatic part of the program was the assembly recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

In retrospect, I think the prayer was more frequently recited in the spirit of religious confrontation than as a simple act of adoration of the Lord of the assembled. As the beautiful prayer rolled on in rhythmic majesty, a dissonance often cracked as simultaneously Catholics emphasized "trespasses" and Protestants came out loud and clear on "debts." I doubt that it occurred either to Catholics or Protestants to look up the versions of the Lord's Prayer in Mt. 6 or Luke 11, neither of which conforms exactly to the commonly recited prayer.

Reformation and Counter-Reformation spirits built up to a climax as the prayer rolled along to the end of "deliver us from evil." Catholic youngsters came to a challenging silence. Protestants raised their

volume and proclaimed "for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen." I suspect that neither group was concerned about deliverance from evil or God's glory as they were about their denominational loyalties.

Because of emotions which flow from history there will probably be a little uneasiness on the part of some diehard Catholics when the latest revision of the Mass comes to us on Palm Sunday, March 22. I have heard rumblings of spiritual distress at the rumor that "the Protestant ending is going to be tacked on the end of the Lord's Prayer in the 'new' Mass."

Now, the alleged "Protestant ending," i.e. "for Thine is the kingdom," is called a minor doxology. A doxology is a liturgical expression of praise of God. The major Christian doxology is the "Gloria in Excelsis" of the Mass. Minor doxologies are many and the one under discussion is common and beautiful.

Forewarned is forearmed. In the first place this minor doxology will not come immediately after the Lord's Prayer in the Mass, but after the prayer, "Deliver us, O Lord, from evil." In the second place, the wording has been modernized to: "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever." I think the modernization is not an esthetic improvement.

In the third place, this minor dox-

ology is 1900 years old. Since Protestantism came into history somewhat over 400 years ago, it's unreasonable to be hard on our separated brothers for what happened in the first century. Since Catholic historians assert that all the first century Church is the historical root of the present unique, one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church (cf. Decree on "The Church"), the minor doxology logically must be part of early Catholic liturgical practice.

It is first found in a book called The Didache, or The Teachings of the Apostles. Historians say this book was written between 70 and 90 A.D. No reputable Biblical expert claims the doxology, "for Thine is the kingdom" is part of the words of Our Lord as He gave His Prayer. But all Biblical experts note that the expression was commonly interpolated in scriptural texts after the Prayer as an expression of piety.

Thank the Lord that the overt and covert antagonisms between faiths have been softened by Pope John, Vatican II, and the good hearts of sincere Protestants. And come Palm Sunday may all of us give the doxological acclamation "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever," the continuing devout applause which flows through Catholic tradition from the century of the Apostles to their successors, our Bishops united with Christ's Vicar, Pope Paul VI.

COMMENTARY

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

Do Your Kid's Like 'Tune-Cars'?

By Sarah Child

I've read the baby expert books along with everybody else. And I'm very much aware that the wise parent does not copy his child's baby talk when he is conversing with his offspring.

But it's a hard thing to do — particularly when the toddler comes up with a version that not only has more charm and music than anything Webster provides, but in its own way seems more apt than the staid and conventional dictionary usage.

Take, for example, that small square of terrycloth used for cleansing one's face and body.

When our daughter first started to utilize the language she christened it "wash cloth." It seemed a perfect definition for the cloth, so my wife usually found under the washbowl after she finished her morning ablutions.

She added several other words to our family's vocabulary, most of them

coined before she was 2. Now, nearly 5, she has improved her pronunciation as well as comprehension and no longer needs them to communicate. Her mother, to our daughter's amusement, still reverts to their use from time to time.

I cannot help myself. "Grubby", the word she used to describe her mildly cranky condition upon waking from a nap, was more apt than the correct "grumpy." She often did lie down with a little of the grime garnered from the morning's play and awoke the same way. Sometimes she awoke from her nap both "grubby" and "wuggy" as anyone might be had they decided to skip lunch in favor of an extra 45 minutes in the sand box.

Coffee, her mother's eyeopener, was "caw caw" which sounds more like a picker-upper than the original label. Television was nicely shortened to "tweshion" and the pasta dishes of which she was fond became

a liting "mackamoki".

Her 2-year-old brother has coined his own words for the same objects. The TV to him is the "fifi." His Italian supper is "ronis".

Her term of endearment, "Sweet-heart", became "Freetart" for him.

One area in which he excels is the labeling of animals. A picture of a couple of spaniels became "puppy gogs" and any domesticated creature on four feet is known in our family as a "sorsy-cow." Larger animals, depending on the degree of fright potential are known as "monks" — monsters to you.

Trucks are "gucks" as anyone can verify who has heard one grinding its gears and three-sided geometric figures are "fry-angles".

And those funny films the kids watch every Saturday morning. At your house they're cartoons. At ours they are tune-cars.



EUROPEAN SCENE

Pope May Speak Out on Brazil

By ROBERT HOLTON

Courier-Journal European Bureau
Vatican City — Pope Paul soon will speak out against the reported persecution of Catholic clergy, religious and laity in Brazil, a Vatican source said.

The source said the Vatican Secretariat of State was given a full report on the Brazilian government's persecution of the Church on Dec. 24.

The report was contained in a 12-page "Black Book" listing "documented incidents of terrorism and torture against Catholic priests, religious and lay leaders" in the Latin American country.

An assistant general of the Dominican order was sent from Rome recently to Brazil, where he said he spoke with seven members of the order under arrest.

He said he was not permitted to "talk freely with the prisoners" and considered the interview very unsatisfactory.

"The Black Book was turned over to the Secretariat of State and has been called to the attention of the Holy Father," the source said. "There is no way in which the Holy Father can ignore it and I know that he will speak out very soon on the subject."

A group of Catholics have established a committee throughout Europe for the purpose of drawing more international attention to the situation in Brazil in regards to Church-state relations.

"The Black Book contained detail-

ed documentations on 11 causes of torture and suppression of Catholics," the source explained. "It was handed delivered by courier to the Secretariat of State and then passed on to the Pope."

"I can understand that it is a ticklish situation for the Holy See. But I also cannot see how the Pope can hold off much longer on addressing himself to it, regardless of whose toes he might step on."

Several days earlier, Msgr. Joseph Gremillon, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, revealed that his agency had been given the documents.

Brazil is the largest Catholic nation in the world with 90 per cent of its more than 80 million population claiming to be Roman Catholic.

However, the country has a long history of government suppression of Catholics which has been intensifying in recent years.

Given that background, it is understandable that Pope Paul would be cautious in making any statement about present conditions lest he set off a chain reaction that could result in a bloody, all-out campaign by the government and the army against Catholicism in the country.

There also is the matter of other conflicts throughout the world and the pattern of action the Pope has followed in his commentaries on them.

In the Vietnam war he has been extremely cautious to maintain a position of neutrality. The same holds true in the Middle East dispute.

In all of these he has merely spoken out against the evil of war and oppression, carefully choosing his words so as not to make them appear as singling out either side in any dispute as the target of individual criticism.

He managed to turn a similar trick in the case of the riots in Northern Ireland last summer. The violence there, although not entirely a religious matter, certainly cannot be termed completely divorced from the issue of Protestants vs Catholics.

Yet, the Pontiff refused to condemn outright the Protestant government in the area, settling instead for words of advice on how to settle the matter and a general condemnation of violence.

Whether such a statement in the Brazilian situation will work, is questionable because it would be difficult under the present conditions to ignore the government intolerance of Catholic rights in the country.

If he fails to pinpoint the blame as he sees it, the Pope will incur the disfavor of many of the nation's Catholics — including some members of the hierarchy who have been extremely active in the battle for complete Catholic freedoms.

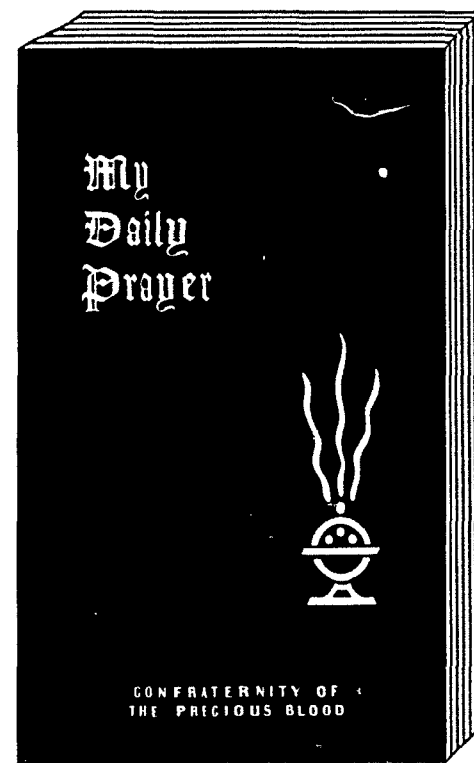
If he clearly calls on the government to halt its actions against the Church, he could be courting an intensification of the persecution.

If and when Pope Paul speaks out on the Brazilian situation, it is a sure bet that his words will be analyzed closely by both sides in Brazil and by experts in many other parts of the world.

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