



"Brother Herman fits in rather well with the new bell-bottom style."

On the Line

A Cardinal And His Hope

By Bob Considine



BUDAPEST — The smallest archdiocese in the Roman Catholic world is that which is ruled by Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, 78-year-old Primate of Hungary.

It is contained within the American Embassy in Budapest. It consists of a small bedroom and bath and a larger room that serves as a combination parlor and church, where the cardinal celebrates Mass each day for the handful of Catholics on the embassy staff. The son of a minor embassy official is generally his altar boy.

Cardinal Mindszenty fled to the then American legation on Nov. 4, 1956, amidst the shot and shell of the dying hours of the rebellion of the Freedom Fighters. They had sprung him from his Communist jail a few days before that, a release symbolic of the brief, bloody and inspirational uprising against oppressive Red rule.

The aging Prince of the Church has not set foot outside his asylum since then. If he did so he would be immediately taken into custody by the detachment of troops that has maintained a 24-hour guard near the entrance to the embassy for 13½ years. Successive platoons of American personnel who have protected the cardinal over that span of time have worried over what would happen to him if he was stricken by a malady that required an emergency operation or intensive hospital care. The opinion has been and still is that the cardinal would be arrested as he was being carried to the ambulance.

In the eyes of the Kadar government, Cardinal Mindszenty is an escaped criminal. His vigorous attacks on the Communist infiltration of Hungary and other Eastern European countries in the wake of World War II marked him as a special target when the Reds gained control. He was arrested Dec. 27, 1948, and after what appeared to most of the world as a thorough case of brainwashing was given a public trial. In a dazed and abstract way, he pleaded guilty on all counts.

On Feb. 8, 1949, the cardinal

was given a life sentence on three counts: 1) treason, 2) espionage in behalf of the United States, and 3) black market operations. The trial had international impact. Hollywood made a motion picture about it. Pope Pius XII excommunicated all Hungarian Catholics who took part in the prosecution.

Mindszenty languished in his cell until triumphantly led out on Oct. 31, 1956, a day that will live in the minds of Hungarians forever, if not in their now censored history books. Khrushchev's tanks had not yet rolled into Budapest to blast the bubble of freedom.

It was too good to last, and all too soon the cardinal found another kind of imprisonment, albeit a much more humane type. The ground rules of his stay under the protective wing of Uncle Sam are clearly understood by the U.S. and the People's Republic of Hungary. Mindszenty must be kept isolated from his flock. No members of the news media may interview him because that might prompt him to spread propaganda harmful to the increasingly cordial relations between the two countries.

The only person who has talked with him, aside from embassy people, is Austria's Cardinal Koenig. Koenig is numbered among the more liberal members of the Sacred College of Cardinals; Mindszenty is deeply conservative. Koenig is believed to have recommended that Mindszenty take advantage of a tacit pledge by the Hungarian government to give him free passage to Rome — with the understanding that he retire into the Vatican and never return or agitate for Hungarian freedom. Mindszenty is said to have flatly rejected the offer. Those who have talked to him of have had a chance to observe him are certain that the old priest lives only for the day when he can go back into his pulpit and resume his mission.

Mindszenty is no drain on the American taxpayer. His room and board and his other needs, including his after-dinner White Owl cigar, are paid for by a group of American Catholics.

Letters

A Story Of Love

Editor:

This is a tale of the love of some boys for their pastor and of the love of a priest for people.

Last summer, while our own pastor, Father Shamon, was ill, Father Merklinger came to Victor to help out. There is a very old couple in our parish. The woman, in her 80s was being cared for by about 15 women.

When it was my turn I washed down the kitchen floor and raised the window to dry it. The old couple's bird died two days later. Although the bird was 8 it was said to be the result of the breeze from the raised window. We were sad that the old people no longer had their beloved bird.

In due time Father Merklinger heard the story and called me into the rectory to tell me another story.

Some very young boys in his parish of St. Alphonsus, Auburn, had given him a bird called Joey and he thought a great deal of the bird. He could understand the old people's sorrow at Tweety's untimely passing.

I was to give Joey to the old people. Father Merklinger said good-bye to Joey for the last time and Joey sang good-bye to Father but did not sing again for two weeks.

Now that Father Merklinger is dead I don't think he would mind if I tell his story of love. His bird lives with some old folk in Victor making life a little happier and I hope this story will make all who read it, especially the boys who gave Joey to father a little happier.

—(Name withheld)

The Slot Man

Are We All To Blame?

By Carmen Viglucci



Several years ago there was a French film, "We Are All Murderers"; about a slow-witted and impoverished man never adept at anything until he went into the army. There for the first time he became proficient at something — using a sub-machine gun.

Because society didn't take the time and effort to provide counter-balancing moral guides for such men, he lacked the sense to distinguish the fine line between killing in war and in peace. Home from the war and no longer useful in his society he resorts to the only thing he knows and has pride in; he murders.

He is executed and the moral of the story, through its title, is clear.

In today's violent world that lesson is still obvious and still ignored.

Training people to kill is condoned and justified with no equal effort at raising the educational standards of those segments of society which supply much of our fighting personnel.

Wars are still waged and justified but they are only another symptom of the international malady. Unhappily events in our United States exemplify much of what is wrong.

Violence is "in" — on the campuses, in the ghettos, in the business streets of New York City. Individuals go berserk and kill in wild sprees. Presidents and other leaders of men are assassinated. In the midst of 20th Century technology it is as if man has turned and started a trek back to the caves.

Yet we go on in childish and inane debate about who is good and who is bad.

Instead of resorting to democratic processes, many of us burn down buildings, glorify profanity, engage in fifth-grade epithets, threaten lives and property, and generally give vent to infantile outbursts.

Others dash through the streets of New York to ticker-tape approbation and sully the very flag they pretend to salute by beating up kids in the name of patriotism.

Our leaders resort to name-calling and offhand, callous remarks to show, for some bizarre reason, just how tough they are.

It is time for all such inanity to stop.

So, think twice the next time, before you:

- Stereotype college students as "hippies" or "bums."
- Call a policeman a "pig."
- Gripe about helping "those lazy, shiftless people on welfare."
- Call Orientals "gooks" and black men "niggers."
- Say "they brought it upon themselves" when four American students are gunned down on an American campus.
- Throw rocks at National Guardsmen serving in a frantic time and place and expected to have inner resources our elders don't.
- Jeer, hoot and verbally abuse other young men on their way to possible death in a war they didn't make either.

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