

DeGaulle

Staunchly Loyal to Church

Colombey - Les - Deux-Eglises, France — (RNS) — In the death of Charles de Gaulle at his home here France has lost a national leader who was as staunchly loyal to his Church as to his family, his country, and his own inflexible principles.

Since giving up power in April 1969, when French voters failed to endorse his proposals for constitutional changes, the former President had usually arranged for Mass to be celebrated at his home.

But from the time he came to power during the Algeria crises of 1958 until his final retirement to write his famous memoirs, he made it a point to attend Mass wherever his world-wide travels took him.

On a 1958 visit to Algeria, he attended Mass at the Algiers Cathedral. And during his 1966 visit to Russia he received Communion in Leningrad's only Roman Catholic church, Our Lady of Lourdes — presenting the extraordinary sight, for Russia, of a head of state kneeling in prayer.

The agenda for state visits included attendance at Mass in such widespread locations as Our Lady's Cathedral in Munich, Germany; the national shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico; the Metropolitan Cathedral in Buenos Aires, Argentina; the Cathedral of Gdansk in Poland; and the Noumea Cathedral in New Caledonia.

Gen. de Gaulle, leader of the Free French forces during World War II, headed the pro-

visional government for a short time following the liberation of France, but resigned in January 1946 in the midst of political friction.

During his period of "exile" from 1946 to 1958, he lived quietly at his country home here in eastern France, but regularly attended Mass at the newer of the two churches from which the village gets its name.

One of his first acts on resuming national leadership in 1958 was to appeal to Pope Pius XII for his "spiritual support."

On a visit to the Vatican in 1959, he was named by Pope John XXIII to the Supreme Order of Christ, the highest of the five pontifical orders of knighthood.

Observers interpreted the visit as a symbol of his desire to form a closer alliance between the Holy See and the frequently anticlerical French government.

Pope John had earlier expressed high praise for the French leader, when General de Gaulle was head of the French provisional government and the Pope—then Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli—was Papal Nuncio to France. Delivering New Year's greetings on behalf of the diplomatic corps, Archbishop Roncalli lauded Gen. de Gaulle for his "political clairvoyance and energy."

In 1967 President de Gaulle conferred with Pope Paul VI and the Pope praised the president and the French people for the "exemplary generosity" of France to developing nations.

On the question of European unity, however, the independent course set by President de Gaulle put him to some degree in tension with the views of

the Pope, a strong supporter of greater unity.

Gen. de Gaulle's strong historical sense, and his strong sense of his own place in history, were often blended with his religious devotion.

On a state visit to West Germany in 1962, for example, he visited the historic Cologne Cathedral and knelt at the place where the Emperor Charles V prayed after his coronation in Aachen.

Pope Sends Condolences to Mme. De Gaulle

Vatican City —(RNS)—Pope Paul sent to the French people and the widow of General Charles de Gaulle his condolences upon the death of the famed military leader and statesman.

Other cables expressing sympathy were sent to the French president and Madame de Gaulle by Cardinal Villet, Vatican Secretary of State, and Archbishop Benelli, the Substitute Secretary of State.

In a cable expressing "our deep condolence" to President Georges Pompidou of France, the Pope recalled Gen. de Gaulle's visit to the Vatican in May 1967 when the continent was marking the 10th anniversary of establishment of the European Economic Community.

During that visit, Pope Paul had expressed his admiration of the "exemplary generosity" of France to developing nations.

Nurses' Revolt Halts Abortion At 3rd Hospital

London — (RNS) — The state-run Birch Hill Hospital at Rochdale became the third British hospital to put up "no more abortion" signs when nurses there refused to cooperate in further operations.

The nurses exercised their rights of conscience. As a result, the hospital, the only one in the populous industrial town having maternity facilities, was forced to halt admissions of patients for therapeutic abortions.

A spokesman said the future policy of the 730-bed hospital as regards abortions is being studied.

The first hospital to have its abortion operations brought to a halt was Stepping Hill Hospital, in the northwest English town of Stockport, where nurses "revolted" last June. The second case occurred at Harold Wood Hospital at Romford, just east of London, in October.

Commenting on the situation, Father John A. Byrne, national chaplain to the Catholic Nurses Guild, said here that in most cases where hospitals were forced to stop abortions the pressure had come from non-Catholic nurses.

In the case of Catholic nurses, he said, it was customary for hospital authorities to refrain from asking them to take part in abortions, thus avoiding a collision course.

Canterbury, Vorster to Meet

London — (RNS) — Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury will confer with South African Premier John Vorster in late November, it was revealed here on the eve of the Anglican primate's departure for Capetown.

The visit to South Africa is primarily concerned with church functions. The inclusion of a visit with Premier Vorster in Pretoria, however, is sure to raise political overtones in light of the on-going international controversy over apartheid (racial separation).

Give Thanks, Nixon Urges

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — President Nixon, in his Thanksgiving Day proclamation has called upon all Americans "to give thanks in homes and in places of worship for the many blessings our people enjoy."

His proclamation expressed thanks for "God's strength and guidance upon which we confidently rely today and every day." It also urged Americans to remember the nation's senior citizens and to assure they are not left alone on the holiday.



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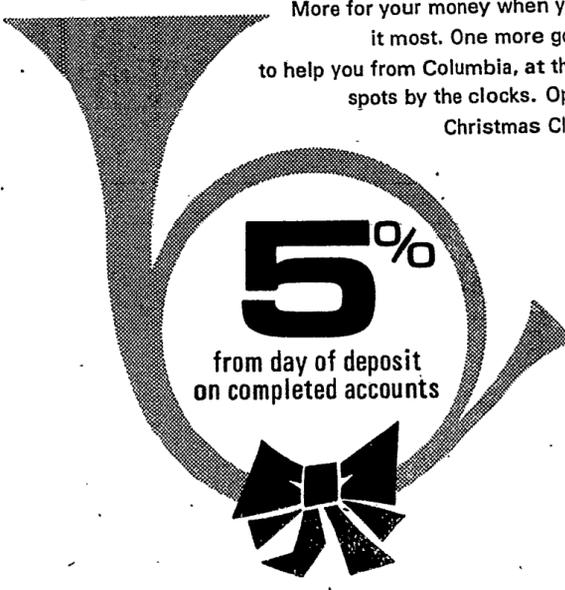
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