

Black Angel on Vatican Stamp

Vatican City—(RNS)—A dark-skinned angel will illustrate a special Vatican postage stamp being issued to support the U.N. International Year for the Fight Against Racism and Racial Discrimination.

The black angel will appear on one of a series of four stamps marking the U.N. campaign. Some 1,650,000 stamps will be issued.

'Korean Death March' Hero Dies

St. Columban, Neb.—(RNS)—The Irish-born hero of the infamous "Korean death march," Bishop Thomas Quinlan, SSC., died in Samchok, Korea, on Dec. 31, according to a report reaching the Columban Fathers headquarters here. He was 74.

Bishop Quinlan, vicar apostolic of Chun Chon, Korea, until his retirement in 1966, spent more than half a century in the missions of China and Korea. He was sent to China in 1920 and to Korea in 1933. During World War II he was imprisoned by the Japanese. When the Communists invaded South Korea in 1950, he decided to remain with "my people." Within a few weeks, three Columban priests were shot, and he and two others were imprisoned.

Chosen as the leader of a civilian group ordered to march over 100 miles to the Chinese border in the midst of winter, he strongly protested the order, complaining that many would die. But the march was carried out and over half of the 800 American soldiers and 22 civilians involved did die.

One of the survivors later wrote: "A saint was with us in our hour of trial. . . . Swollen by beri-beri, his bare feet grotesquely distorted by frostbite, Msgr. Quinlan carried the sick, the weak. . . . He tended our wounds. . . . grew down to a shadow, and still smiled."

He was released in 1953, and named a bishop in 1955. He was awarded Korea's Presidential Medal in 1961, in recognition of his long service to the Korean people.

Pope Paul's Brother Dies

Brescia, Italy—(RNS)—Dr. Francesco Montini, 70-year-old brother of Pope Paul, died here Jan. 10 following a heart attack. He had suffered a heart attack in 1962, but continued to work in the laboratory of the Fatebenefratelli clinic in Brescia.

Pope Paul, who is 73, last visited Brescia, his home town, in 1963, just before he was elected to the papacy. His other brother, Ludovico, 74, a former Christian Democrat member of the Italian Senate, lives in Rome.

Retirement Center Planned

Minneapolis — (RNS) — A corporation made up of Minnesota Knights of Columbus has purchased Assumption Seminary and College property near Chaska, Minn., and plans to convert it into a retirement center for Catholics.

Robert F. Goughnon, president and executive director, said the corporation hoped to begin operating the retirement center in about six months or as soon as money could be raised to remodel and equip the facilities. The property was purchased from the Conventual Franciscans for \$250,000.

Alphabet Key Sought in Scrolls

Ann Arbor, Mich — (RNS) — The existence of eight scrolls that may date from the time of the prophet Elijah and perhaps contain the forerunner of the modern alphabet, has been disclosed here.

Dr. George F. Mendenhall, former director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and now a professor at the University of Michigan, said the manuscripts were purchased four years ago by Dr. William Brownless of Claremont (Calif.) Graduate School through the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

The scrolls are believed to have come from an ancient site in the district of Hebron and to date between 1000 and 850 B.C. Dr. Mendenhall, called in to work with Dr. Brownlee, thinks they may be Philistine in origin. He believes the scrolls are of the period of Elijah, a prophet who chastized the kings of Israel for their tendency to assimilate the religious practices of the Philistines and Canaanites.

The documents, the professor said, all seem to be funeral books. The code of the alphabet has not been deciphered, but "a surprising number of the characters are virtually identical to our modern capital letters," he said.

Abortion Liberals Try Again

Springfield, Ill. — (RNS) — A liberalized abortion law, soundly defeated in the last session of the Illinois legislature, will be presented again in the 1971 session.

The bill would allow a licensed physician to terminate any pregnancy up to 20 weeks from the time of conception.

Canadian Priest At Century Mark

Penetanguishene, Ont. — (RNS) — Msgr. Jean-Marie Castex, believed to be the oldest priest in Canada, will celebrate his 100th birthday July 23 and his 75th anniversary as a priest on May 30.

"I'm not yet ready for heaven," he laughed. "The fruit is not yet ripe and the good Lord is patient enough."

Born in 1871 in the tiny French village of Lacombe in the Hautes Pyrenees, he attributes his long life to hard work and plenty of rest.

His hearing is failing and he sometimes slips unwittingly into French during an English conversation, but he often reads without glasses.

Bishop's Death Sentence Commuted in Cameroon

Yaounde, Cameroon—(RNS) — Following appeals from many areas of the world for clemency, the death sentences given Roman Catholic Bishop Albert Ndongmo of Nkongsamba and two others were commuted here by the Cameroon chief of state.

President Ahmadou Ahidjo granted the reprieve and changed their sentence to life imprisonment. But the death sentence was maintained for three others convicted of plotting the overthrow of the government.

Among the three to be executed is Ernest Ouandie, leader of the clandestine Union of Cameroon Peoples, who was allegedly planning the coup.

Bishop Ndongmo and the two others reprieved were convicted

for conspiring to assassinate President Ahidjo and other leading members of the government of this small West African nation.

Besides the Vatican, which expressed hope that President Ahidjo "will listen to requests for mercy coming from many parts of the world," appeals for clemency were received from two U.S. organizations, the American Jewish Committee and the National Office for Black Catholics.

Francois Cardinal Marty of Paris cabled a plea for clemency to Bishop Jean Zoa of Yaounde for transmission to the Cameroon president. Reportedly the cable was only one of hundreds received daily in Yaounde since the verdicts were announced.

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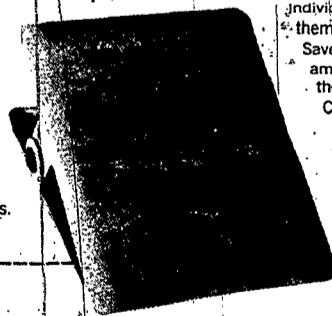
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