

Have Church's Chances in China Changed?

BY BOB JOHNSTON
Staff Writer

New York (RNS) — What promise does the impending visit of U.S. President Nixon to Red China hold for the improvement of relations between the Roman Catholic Church and Peking?

Catholics themselves differ on the answer to that question.

Exactly one year prior to President Nixon's announcement that he would visit mainland China,

A News Analysis

Pope Paul commented on the release after long imprisonment of U.S. Maryknoll Bishop James E. Walsh, saying it was "a sign of better days to come" for the

cause of "freedom of religion" in China.

Then, following the news of Mr. Nixon's projected China trip, the Pope declared that "something new and important is coming to fruition that could change the face of the earth."

While the pontiff, who has favored admission of Red China to the United Nations since 1965, is seemingly optimistic over new approaches to the Communist giant of the East, his more positive views have been countered by Catholics in many areas.

Only a few months ago, an article in L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican daily, warned that the "thaw" brought about by the so-called "ping pong" incident last Spring is merely

an economic move, aimed at increasing trade. It said "there is no cause to think that the Peking government intends to alter or change its political designs."

About the same time, Tillman Durdin of the New York Times — the first U.S. journalist granted a one-month visa to mainland China since 1950 — reported that Red China's drive against religion seems to have had a "sweeping effect."

He said that following the 1966 "cultural revolution" efforts to remove old religious traditions and practices were stepped up. The few temples, mosques and churches still used for religious purposes were closed and put to secular use.

On the other hand, Bishop

Walsh, released last year after 12 years in a Communist prison in China, said he was convinced there was a possibility "for the survival of the Church in China."

As it stands now, the Peking government "allows" religious freedom on three conditions: that every religious body be "self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing." This rules out any foreign influence.

China's rejection of Christianity, as well as Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, has been systematic and determined since the Communists came to power in 1949.

In less than 10 years, most of the Roman Catholic hierarchy were expelled or imprisoned. Of the 155 archdioceses, dioceses

and apostolic prefectures in China, only 29 remained occupied. Some 150 bishops were expelled, five exiled, 11 imprisoned, four held under house arrest, and one died in prison.

At the time of Bishop Walsh's arrest in 1958, almost all the foreign clergy and nuns had been expelled, and Chinese priests and religious were required to renounce their vows (allegiance to a foreign power the Vatican) or be imprisoned.

Since 1966, all churches and temples have been closed or taken over by the state. Only a mosque in Peking remains open to accommodate allies from African and Middle East Muslim nations.

Chances of rapprochement be-
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Mission Appeal Raises \$118,911

The Diocesan Mission Appeal for funds to support missions in Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Alabama and rural New York State raised a record \$118,911 in parish collections on the weekend of May 22-23.

Contributions were \$13,000 larger than last year's total according to Father Joseph Reinhart, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Latin American Mission Office.

The funds will be used to maintain the work in St. Joseph the Worker parish in La Paz, Bolivia, directed by two diocesan priests; parish missions in south-central Brazil staffed by 11 Sisters of St. Joseph; parish missions in Santiago, Chile run by five Sisters of Mercy; a hospital and school in Selma, Ala.
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Courier Photo by Laurence E. Keefe

Church Renewal

Workmen restore the smoke-stained walls around the altar of St. Monica's Church on Genesee St. in Rochester. After the walls are washed with a special fluid to remove soot, the paint will be retouched to erase the last traces of the 1968 fire which ruined the sacristy and damaged the sanctuary.

A New Column and a Look Ahead

Newness might be called the theme of this week's Courier-Journal with the first appearance of the Bernard Lyons column "Parish Council."

We hope this column will be of interest and information for all those parishes already having councils as well as for those organizing such units.

Please turn to Page 4A for the initial Lyons piece and we hope to hear your comments regarding the column.

Still looking ahead, the Courier next week will begin a series of articles on Monroe County's efforts to stem the tide of drug abuse. Staff writer Barbara Moynihan and photographer Laurence E. Keefe will touch on such topics as the program itself, what schools are doing and the

county mental health center.

And what we feel is a special treat is in store for next week's readers. Msgr. George W. Eckl, who just celebrated his 70th anniversary as a priest, will reflect on the priesthood as our Page 3A guest columnist.

This week's guest writer is Father John D. Malley of St. Joseph's Church in Penfield. His topic is a tribute to his friend and fellow priest Father Charles J. McCarthy, who died July 16.

Further noting the esteem Father McCarthy drew from those who knew him, we are printing excerpts from Msgr. J. Emmett Murphy's funeral eulogy for Father McCarthy.

An Old Barn An Education

What could a barn have to do with modern Christian education? Plenty — when teamed with the initiative and imagination of some people in North Rose.

Auburn correspondent Mary Ann Ginnerty tells about it on Page 4B.

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