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D-Day, 40 Years Later

By Father John S. Hayes

Chaplain (Capt.) John S. Maloney, 0428979, jumped out the door of a DC3 at 1:14 a.m., June 6, 1944. A full moon brightened the night for a quick drop into a hedgerow near Hiesville on the Normandy Peninsula. Seconds before he jumped, the plane flying at a low, hazardous height of 800 feet lurched suddenly as if hit by anti-aircraft fire. Maloney said later this sudden, shaky turn after much turbulence frightened him more than any other experience that day.

His DC3 was one plane in the largest air armada ever launched. Gen. Omar Bradley noted that a thousand aircraft took off from fields all over England carrying 24,000 American and British soldiers. Father Maloney's plane departed from a field near Exeter in the southwest of England about 11 p.m., June 5. A day's anxious delay heightened the excitement and anticipation of D-Day. Tension, prompted by ever-tightening restrictions, confinement to embarkation areas, security precautions where each bivouac area was ringed with Military Police standing guard with live ammunition — all these signs told the paratroopers of Maloney's 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, that something big was up.

The paratrooper padre spent the last days making the rounds of two stations several miles apart. So tight was security that only two officers were allowed to leave their own area. An exception was made for chaplains to travel on orders from Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's headquarters.

In the evening on his rounds, Father Maloney offered Mass, alternating between the two stations on his regiment. After Mass, he remained for perhaps two hours hearing confessions. This chaplain was well-known to the soldiers. He had trained and jumped with them for more than two years. Recalling his work just before D-Day, Father Maloney recently said, "The response was first rate, perhaps because the troopers had no where else to go."

Father John Maloney, like everyone else in his command, was curious to learn just when D-Day would dawn. A communications officer confidentially informed him, "The pigeons are here." This meant that unless the pigeons were released within a day or two they would have difficulty with their homing instinct. They were essential for communication for there was a total radio blackout on D-Day.

Maloney explained to some men in his group just before departing that he would be carrying a pyx the size of a small watch, containing the Holy Eucharist. He showed it to them. He said if he were killed one of them would be responsible for taking the Holy Eucharist to a priest or consuming the Blessed Sacrament himself. This procedure

Continued on Page 4.



Father John S. Maloney, right, of the Rochester diocese received the Distinguished Service Cross July 15, 1944, from Lt. Col. Patrick Cassidy. He was believed to be the first chaplain so honored. With the 101st Airborne, he "jumped" into Normandy five hours before troops arrived on the beaches, according to Stars and Stripes which first ran this photo.



Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Solar Eclipse Recorded

This photograph by Terrance J. Brennan of last Wednesday's solar eclipse was taken using various polycontrast filters, thus giving the image a moon-

like appearance against a black sky. Thanks to dense clouds, upstate dwellers were at times able to look up and see the partial eclipse with the naked eye.

DPC Elects Officers

Mendon — The Diocesan Pastoral Council established a task force on the laity in the Church and elected officers Saturday at its final meeting of the season.

Patricia A. Defendorf of Corning was named chairperson of the council's executive committee. Mrs. Defendorf, who is establishing an emergency telephone number program in Corning, is married to Deacon Ray Defendorf.

She has been a member of the DPC for the past four years, and a member of its executive committee for the past two.

Elected vice chairperson was Sara McLaughlin, a DPC member for two years, and a prominent member of the task force on Bishop Clark's pastoral on the role of women in the Church.

In addition, the council named Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kane, Gerald F. Driscoll,

Rose Marie Lombard, Mr. and Mrs. Ron Jodoin and Timothy Mancini to the executive committee.

Following a morning of group discussion, the DPC unanimously voted to establish a task force on the laity in the Church.

The discussion had originally been slated to follow a panel presentation, given two meetings ago, in which six persons described their lives

both within and beyond the parish structure.

At that time, the discussion was tabled to allow Bishop Matthew H. Clark more time for a question and answer period.

Last Saturday, the group discussed four questions:

- How can questions concerning the laity in the Church be made known to Church leaders;

- What can Church leaders do to make the people aware of their role in the Church;

- What can be done to strengthen and deepen lay participation in all aspects of the life of the Church;

- What directions should the DPC give to Bishop Clark in regard to the above questions, how should followup to this discussion be handled?

A number of proposals came from the floor in response to each of the questions; and it was decided that

Continued on Page 4.

Nuclear Free Zone

New York (NC) — "We declare this area to be a nuclear free zone," said Father Robert O'Connor as he removed a fallout shelter sign from the auditorium of Holy Name of Jesus School.

He then went to the adjacent church and posted a sign made by a graduate of the school, with "Peace and Justice" on one line and "Nuclear Free Zone" on another.

The change of signs occurred at a press conference called May 30 by the Religious Task Force of the national anti-nuclear group, Mobilization for Survival. Holy Name of Jesus Church was the first religious institution in New York City to join the task force's campaign for making religious buildings "nuclear free zones."

Task force leaders are promoting the movement to give local churches and other religious groups a way of getting involved in the movement against nuclear war. Declaring a place to be a nuclear free zone is intended to reject the idea of defending the nation by nuclear means and to assert that no defense against nuclear war is possible. The task force says calling areas fallout shelters gives people a mistaken

belief that nuclear wars can be fought and won.

Gary Gamer, a staff member at the National Council of Churches who presided at the press conference, said 55 Protestant, Catholic and Jewish institutions in 22 states had made such declarations said.

The Rev. Benton Rhoades, director of the NCC program, Agricultural Missions, said his denomination, the Church of the Brethren, declared its headquarters in Elgin, Ill., a nuclear free zone in March.

On April 25, the Benedictine Sisters of Ferdinand, Ind., adopted a statement saying, "We declare that we are willing to live without the security proposed by stockpiling nuclear weapons. We further declare the property of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Ind., to be a nuclear free zone."

Father O'Connor said fallout shelter signs were present in the school and rectory -- indicating shelter areas were to be found in their basements -- when he became pastor of the church in 1972, but he had not paid attention to them.

Anniversary Mass for Bishop

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has invited the people of the Diocese of Rochester to a celebration of his fifth anniversary of installation, 7:30 p.m., June 26, at Sacred Heart Cathedral. The event will include Mass and a reception.