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The Catholic Bishops of the United States of America, gathered together in their annual assembly at Washington, proclaim to all their faithful priests and people the solemn duty of INSTANT and CONSTANT prayer for our suffering Brethren of the Church of Silence.

—Bishops' Statement, 1953

Prayers
for
The Church of Silence

by
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Pulaski, Wis.

1954

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INTRODUCTION

What is **THE CHURCH OF SILENCE?**

THE CHURCH OF SILENCE is the Church behind the Iron Curtain.

It is the Church which is suffering persecution in Communist annexed or controlled lands of Albania, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Indo-China, Latvia, Lithuania, North Korea, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Transcarpathia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, and the eastern parts of Austria and Germany.

Why is it called the **CHURCH OF SILENCE?**

It is called **THE CHURCH OF SILENCE** because the barbaric persecutions which have been unleashed against it by its atheistic political masters have silenced the official spokesmen of the Church: its cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests and religious.

Why should we pray for **THE CHURCH OF SILENCE?**

Because we have been encouraged repeatedly to pray for it. The Holy Father and our own Hierarchy have time and again brought this to our attention. At their meeting in Washington in November of 1953, the Bishops most clearly declared this to be our duty. In a public statement entitled "Peter Is Again in Chains," they announced: "The Catholic Bishops of the United States of America . . . proclaim to all their faithful priests and people **the solemn duty of instant and constant prayer** for our suffering brethren of the Church of Silence."

This should be reason sufficient for the faithful who are obedient to the voice of their leaders.

Another reason is that by prayer we can help the Church of Silence. We have an obligation to do so. This obligation flows from our membership in the Mystical Body of Christ and our membership in the human race.

How can our prayers help **THE CHURCH OF SILENCE?**

Our prayers can be of aid to the Church of Silence because they can obtain at the throne of God the graces necessary for our suffering brethren to remain steadfast and courageous witnesses to the truth of our Christian Faith.

All the faithful are members of the one Mystical Body of Christ. Throughout the ages various members of this Mystical Body have been called upon to testify, even unto physical death, to the truth of our common Belief. Today our fellow members of the Mystical Body who find themselves behind the Iron Curtain are suffering one of the most terrifying persecutions in all history. Their undaunted spirit and courage are contributing to make this one of the glorious periods in the annals of the Church. History will some day point to our times to exemplify the greatness of Christ's true Church.

We can and should contribute to this greatness by petitioning God to

grant unto these modern Martyrs and Confessors the necessary fortitude and strength and, if it be His will, a victorious termination of the persecutions.

What else should we pray for?

We should also make reparation to God for the infamous blasphemies which are hurled against Him, His holy Mother, His Church and its saints. For, just as we are all members of the Mystical Body and whatever any of its members suffer, we suffer; and whatever contributes to the glory of any of its members, also contributes to our glory; so also all human beings are members of the great family of humanity. Consequently, those who are persecuting the Church and blaspheming God are members of the human race; their sins are the sins of humanity. We must make reparation and penance for these sins. The common brotherhood of man demands this.

The example has already been set by many bishops throughout the world who have set aside periods of

time for special prayers of reparation in connection with prayers for the Church of Silence.

Thus, while the present time is a time of suffering and glory for the Church, the Mystical Body, it is also a time of infamy and disgrace for the human race. While history points with glory to the martyrs of the early Church, it points also with scorn and shame at Nero and Caligula and the other tyrants who led the early persecutions against the Church.

* * *

EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS

The prayers in this booklet may be used as a private devotion or as a separate public devotion or in connection with some other public devotion. They may be used at any time or season. The Church of Silence suffers in and out of season.

As arranged in this booklet, the prayers follow this order:

1. Singing of any HYMN appropriate to the season of the Church.
2. A READING or a sermon. (Twelve readings are included in this booklet. The "Introduction" to this booklet can also serve as an introductory reading.)
3. Recitation of the prayers entitled SUPPLICATIONS For The CHURCH OF SILENCE. (These prayers alone may be added to any other service.)
4. If time and circumstances permit, any other prayers appropriate to the liturgical season MAY be added here. Suggested: the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Rosary, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, short Stations of the Cross, etc. If time does not permit, no other prayers need be added.
5. HYMN appropriate to the season of devotion.
6. BENEDICTION of the Blessed Sacrament.
7. Appropriate closing HYMN.

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The material in the READINGS is based on the latest information available to the public in December of 1953. Understandable discrepancies exist between various sources: the American and British Catholic press; the Catholic and secular press. Information from behind the Iron Curtain is slow in reaching the outside world. Besides the general American Catholic magazines and newspapers, the following sources of information were used: releases of the National Catholic Welfare Conference; the Inter-Catholic Press Agency publications; "News From Behind the Iron Curtain," publication of the National Committee For a Free Europe, Inc.; the London newspaper "**Catholic Herald**"; and other foreign Catholic periodical literature of a general nature.

* * *

MAY THESE SUPPLICATIONS,
THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD,
IMPLORE NEW STRENGTH
FOR OUR BRETHREN
OF THE CHURCH OF SILENCE!

READINGS



PETER IS AGAIN IN CHAINS

(The following statement was issued by the American Archbishops and Bishops at their annual meeting in November of 1953.)

The heroic constancy of the Martyrs and the unwavering witness of the confessors have always been pre-eminent among the signs that distinguish and identify the True Church of Jesus Christ. Look where you will in Europe and in Asia, in every land now shrouded in the gloom of Com-

munism, and you will see the solid phalanx of bishops, priests, religious and faithful, our modern Martyrs and Confessors, gathered around the Cross of Christ, the Standard of Salvation — the one steady light which still shines in the general darkness. We in the free countries still speak of a cold war; these men and women are enduring the bitterest, the bloodiest persecution in all history.

Shepherds of the Flock of Christ are hunted down, imprisoned, debased, tortured, slain. Sick and helpless Sisters are dragged from their convents, condemned to the slow death of forced labor on roads, in forests, and in mines, or to the quicker death of starvation. Peasants are slaughtered and flung upon the pyres of their burning churches. Innocent children are torn from the arms of their Christian mothers and handed over to atheist debauchers.

It is a war against all who believe in God and His Christ, against all who dare to claim for man the liberty of the sons of God. It rages from Korea to China and to Indo-China; from

Russia to the Baltic lands; from Poland and Lithuania to Yugoslavia; from the Ukraine to Albania; from Czechoslovakia to Hungary, to Rumania and Bulgaria; it rages in the eastern parts of Austria and Germany. And everywhere the Church of God, her sacred ministers and her faithful children are the first targets of the persecution. Millions of them have already died for the Faith. Who shall count the number of those who are now suffering and marked for death?

This is a war against the True Religion of Jesus Christ. When will men in the free world come to realize that the crisis of today is first of all a crisis of religion, that the Communist debaser of man is essentially a hater of God, that his long-range and his short-range purpose is the destruction of Christianity? From Marx to Malenkov, the Communist sees Christ as the enemy to be exterminated.

Is it not, then, the strange anomaly of our times that a calculated confusion has been able to hide from so

many of our people the primary, the changeless purpose of the enemy? How few there are who understand that the struggle for liberty is a warfare against the fanatical foes of Christ! How few there are who know that millions of Catholics have already died that the rest of us might live!

Here is a story of epic nobility, of unsurpassed human grandeur, of deathless spiritual devotion. Our Martyrs and Confessors are the glory of the age in which we live. One would have thought that the western world would rise as one man to do them reverence, would write their deeds of valor in letters of enduring gold. Instead, indifference, scant notice or silence. Only in the Catholic press will you find the Martyrology which the historians of tomorrow will account the greatest glory of today.

Who can now recall the chroniclers of Nero's day? But the names of Peter and Paul have endured throughout the centuries. Above their tombs rise the noblest temples of Christendom, and pilgrims come in multitudes unnumbered to remember and to pray.

Nor can history be kind to those men of state who retreated to the refuge of a polite neutralism while the crucial battle of our times was being fought.

History can record only in reprobation that while Nero raged in the East against the true Church of Christ, the Voltaires of the West raised their olden cry "**Ecrasez l'Infame**" [Crush the Wretch] and sought to crush these valiant fighters for God and human freedom. Genuine philosophy must list Nero and Voltaire as allies. History will register the fact of that alliance in the Warsaw maneuver which would cut off from help the champions of the authentic liberties.

And what shall we say of those ungenerous men, who in the crisis of our times have been found so sadly wanting — these narrow sectarians who allowed their petty or their imagined grievances to obscure the true greatness of our blessed Martyrs and Confessors? We shall leave them to God and to the worm of their conscience, as we pray "Father, forgive

them for they know not what they do.”

The Catholic Bishops of the United States of America, gathered together in their annual assembly at Washington, proclaim to all their faithful priests and people the solemn duty of instant and constant prayer for our suffering Brethren of the Church of Silence. When Peter was in prison, the Church prayed without ceasing for him, and the Angel of the Lord touched him and the chains fell off from his hands. Peter is again in chains.

Let there then be supplication to God and penance that His grace be poured out in superabundant measure to strengthen those who hold the place of honor and of danger in the new warfare launched against the Church. Let us all cherish in our hearts the epic story of our own Martyrs and Confessors. Let us tell this story to our children that they may learn the names of Stepinac and Mindszenty and Wyszynski, of Beran, of Cule, of Ford and of Byrne, along with the heroes of the Faith in ages

past that they may understand how great it is to be a Catholic.

And let us raise our voices, in a unison of protest, a protest that will penetrate into the consciences of all decent men, into all the chancelleries of the world, against this new scourge of God and man.

To our brother bishops, to the priests, religious and people of the Church of Silence, we send affectionate greeting and the tribute of our devotion, of our admiration, of our entire solidarity. We salute you; we embrace you; we minister in spirit to your necessities; we bind in prayer the wounds you suffer for justice's sake. For you are blessed when the enemies of Christ persecute and revile you. You are the light of the world, giving to our generation that saving example of fidelity spoken of by St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall privation or distress, or famine or nakedness, or danger, or persecution or the sword? As it is written: For Thy sake, we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“But in these things we overcome because of Him that hath loved us.”

Indeed your Faith is the victory which overcometh the world. By your stripes will the modern world be healed.

Peter's Successor Who is Pius spoke the deepest sentiments of our own hearts when He said to you: “We embrace you with a special love and we kneel to kiss your chains.”

(Turn to p. 87 for SUPPLICATIONS)

WHY PERSECUTION?

“This is a war against the True Religion of Jesus Christ.”

—Bishops’ Statement, 1953

Persecution of the Catholic Church is not a novelty. Neither is it unexpected. The Divine Founder of the Church had foretold it more than nineteen centuries ago: “Remember the word that I have spoken to you: No servant is greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15,20)

History has recorded that the Catholic Church from the very days of its infancy has produced a long list of glorious Martyrs whose blood has made fertile the work of the Church. Beginning with St. Stephen and the universal persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, countless Christians down through the ages have gained the crown of heavenly glory by giving their lives in witness to their Faith.

This crown of glory was also promised by the Founder: “Blessed are

you when men reproach you, and persecute you, and, speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in heaven; for so did they persecute the prophets who were before you." (Matt. 5,11-12)

One of the beatitudes spoken in the sermon on the mount was: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5,10)

Thus the Church of God expects persecutions. They are a sign that the Church is steadfastly clinging to and guarding the heritage of Truth which it had received from its Founder. For there would be no persecution if the Church would agree to the terms imposed by man. But the Church continues to obey and teach the laws of God.

Take the example of the Church behind the Iron Curtain. The Church would suffer no persecution if it would agree to become a pawn in the hands of the atheistic governments controlling the earthly destiny of the millions of people behind that curtain.

There would be no persecution if the Church would agree to teach what the Communist regimes want it to teach.

But the Church cannot do this. It must teach the Truth that was taught by its Founder, Jesus Christ.

The Communists say that there is no God. They say that Jesus Christ never existed. They say that they have no use for any religion. They say that they will eradicate all religion. And because they have said these lies, they very logically have had to say a thousand and a million other lies: that man has no soul; that there is no future life; that there will be no reward for a good life nor punishment for an evil one; that parents have no right to educate their children; that man has no freedom of expression; that man has no right to the fruit of his labors; that the only source of authority and truth is the state; that if the state says black is white, the citizens must also say that black is white; and thousands upon thousands of similar lies.

And even while the Communist

governments can hoodwink many by these lies, and even while they can bludgeon into agreement various human organizations and entire nations, the Church of God will never permit itself either to be hoodwinked or to be bludgeoned into saying that black is white.

The Church continues and will continue to teach Truth: that there is a God; that there is a true religion; that there are laws of morality; that there is a future life; that good will be rewarded, and evil will be punished; that parents have a right to educate their children; that man has a right to the fruit of his labors; that black is black, and white is white. The Church cannot do otherwise.

And so the Church is being bludgeoned. It is being maligned. Its leaders are imprisoned, tortured and executed. Those who believe in God and obey His laws are discriminated against and punished. All true followers of Christ, however, continue to hold to the Truth: white is white, and black is black. This they will continue to say, even though their voice may

be beaten down to a whisper. This they will say with their last breath. For this is the truth! And even when they will be silenced, their very silence will shout this truth!

The militant atheistic Communists have not learned their history well. They should have learned that long after the Neros of this world passed into ignominious defeat and failure, the Church continued to flourish with the added brilliance of the Martyrs who had been their victims.

They should have learned that the Church cannot be liquidated the way purely human organizations and institutions are liquidated. Otherwise the Church would have long ago succumbed to former persecutors. Yes, the Church can be silenced for a short time; but even that silence is eloquent. The Church can be placed in chains; but even chains will rust away, and their clanking meanwhile will proclaim the truth.

The Church will not cease to perform its God-given task because of tortures, lies, or any other force. The Church of God is a divine institution

with the assurance of its Founder that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. All that the enemies of the Church will accomplish will be to add lustre and power and glory to the Church in the form of new pages in its martyrology.

Let us pray that the example of our modern Martyrs and Confessors of the Church of Silence may merit sufficient grace of perseverance for all who call themselves Christians and the grace of repentance and conversion for their persecutors.

(Turn to p. 87 for SUPPLICATIONS)

THE RED PROGRAM

“This is a war against all who believe in God and His Christ, against all who dare to claim for man the liberty of the Sons of God.”

—Bishops’ Statement, 1953

The long range plan of the atheistic Communist regime entrenched in the Kremlin is the total elimination of all religion. This goal was set by Marx. It was never abandoned.

Experience, however, and the advice of Lenin that direct assaults on religion usually strengthen the resistance, have been instrumental in formulating also a short range policy and pattern to the manner in which the Communists wage war on religion. The general outlines of this pattern are easily observed in the various areas controlled by the Communists. The most advanced stage is found in Russia.

In Russia at present the Russian Orthodox Church is an instrument of the political power of the State. The totalitarian regime uses the

Church as it would any other useful instrument to help keep the people in subjection. This is the goal of the short range plan.

In the meantime the regime also fosters an atheistic atmosphere in which it is bringing up a de-Christianized generation, which eventually will have no need of a Church. When that day arrives, the Church will be liquidated. The long range goal will have been attained; the short term goal will have served its purpose.

These two goals then are the basis of the present policy and pattern of Communist tactics within the **annexed territories** and the **dominated countries**. One must distinguish between these two.

Within the **annexed territories** the realization of the short range objective, the creation of a State-dominated Church, has progressed more rapidly for a number of easily understood reasons. The Soviet regime either simply abolished all Churches except the one that was willing to become a tool of the State or by decree forced an Orthodox or "national" religion to serve as such a tool.

A State-dominated Church of this type is used then to support collectivization drives, industrial speedup campaigns, hate-the-West, hate-America, hate-the-Vatican publicity, and such "peace campaigns" as the Stockholm Peace Appeal of 1950, the Berlin Peace Meeting of 1951, and the Vienna People's Congress for Peace of 1952.

The Kremlin had to proceed with lessened tempo in the Communist **dominated countries**, which must have the semblance of a People's Republic. Also it was content to exert disproportionately greater effort to attain the short term objective rather than to create an atheistic atmosphere.

To arrive at this objective of State control and utilization of any religion or Church, the puppet regime uses tactics which, while they make it impossible for the Church or Churches (generally there are more) to perform their spiritual functions effectively, create conditions favorable for the State to utilize the organization and prestige of the Churches to defend Communist thinking.

Such tactics usually involve the following steps: 1) expropriation of the Churches and their consequent economic dependence on the State; 2) use of the economic control to split the clergy, generally by sponsoring a pro-Communist clergy movement; 3) silencing the hierarchy and choking off its ability to fight back by a heavy and strict censorship of Church publications and sermons, usually followed by the suppression of all Church publications or permitting one publication to function under a pro-regime policy; 4) imposition of loyalty oaths on all the clergy, thereby giving the regime the opportunity to replace the opposition within the ruling hierarchy with its own adherents; 5) while emphatically insisting upon the separation of Church and State, the regime places the Church or Churches under some political office of ecclesiastical affairs, making the State thereby the chief and sole final authority in religious affairs. The Churches thereupon become tools of the State.

In the meantime the State carefully and by progressively more effective measures cuts off all foreign

support and relationships with co-religionists, brother Churches, international religious conclaves or the Vatican.

“Compromise” agreements between individual Churches and the State accompany these various steps. The State always succeeds “to prove” that the Church has violated the previous agreement: succeeding agreements always give the State increasing control over the Church.

To add to the internal pressures on the Churches the regime will play one Church against another. The religion which has already compromised more will receive seemingly greater benefits from the government. While such benefits are short-lived, they serve the purpose of weakening other Churches to make similar compromises.

Thus the Orthodox Churches in Albania, Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania were converted into instruments of the State.

Certain minority religions suffered more drastic fates. The Uniate Church organizations in Poland and Rumania

were completely suppressed by compulsory "conversion" to and a merger with the Eastern Orthodox Church, already a tool of Communism.

In Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and even in parts of Czechoslovakia the regimes succeeded in partially transforming the Roman Catholic Church, which is usually the most adamant in its stand against Communism, into "national" Catholic Churches under government domination.

The puppet regimes were able to place pro-regime clergymen in most of the Protestant religious groups. The Communists even left these Protestant groups a semblance of "freedom" in order to make use of their connections with the West and to exploit such connections for spreading Communist propaganda.

Other minor religious groups were also changed into State instruments.

Those who oppose this process pay the penalty. Trumped up charges, imprisonment, deportation, tortures, privations, even death are their lot.

Though not alone, the Catholic Church stands in the foreground in

its opposition to these tactics of the Communists, not only in virtue of its size, which makes it numerically the largest single Church within the dominated territories of Europe, but more so because of its Divine character whereby the grace of God is operative not only in the hierarchical organization of the Church but also in the least of its members.

Of secondary importance at present, but certainly not neglected, is the creation of the atmosphere of atheism which eventually will produce a de-Christianized generation which will repudiate all religion and every Church. The chief instruments employed by the regimes to create such an atmosphere are antireligious campaigns within the youth movements, education of the youth in Marxist-Leninist principles, systematic reduction of religious practices, impeding liturgical and ritual observances, official regulations hampering Christian practices, and many other similar indirect means. Antireligious propaganda is encouraged and widely disseminated, but the defense of religion is prohibited.

By such various steps the Catholic Church, in varying degrees, has been reduced to a status of suffering in silence. Let us pray for this Church of Silence that its suffering, God willing, be shortened and that its silence may be broken by a song of exultation and joy at having been tried and tested in the crucible and not found wanting.

(Turn to p. 87 for SUPPLICATIONS)

THE BLACK RECORD OF THE REDS

**“Millions of them have already
died for the Faith.”**

—Bishops' Statement, 1953

Like a volcano spewing lava, ashes and destruction over large expanses of neighboring land, so the caldron of all that is evil which has erupted in Russia under the guise of Communism has engulfed all neighboring lands and peoples.

Atheistic Communism was not satiated by the persecution of religion within Russia, but it had to spill over into adjoining territories to carry similar destruction to its neighbors. It had to do this because it is determined to engulf the entire world.

Let us look at the bits of information concerning this diabolical fury against the Church that have trickled through the Iron Curtain. Of necessity the information is meager and incomplete. The list of Martyrs and Confessors grows longer with each passing day.

The 100,000 Catholics of **Albania** have seen their Apostolic Delegate expelled, two bishops executed and an archbishop die in prison. Nearly all the male religious have been either killed or expelled. The rest are scattered or in hiding. One of every five women religious has been condemned to forced labor or has been interned.

The Catholic Church in **Bulgaria**, whose membership was only about 45,000, is similarly paralyzed. One bishop has been condemned to death and another arrested. All religious houses have been suppressed.

During the relatively short time that Communism has been dominant in the **China** mainland, at least 250 Chinese priests and religious been imprisoned, and more than 100 Chinese priests and 28 religious have been put to death. Foreign missionaries within these territories have been reduced from more than 5,000 to less than 300. By the end of 1952 at least 68 foreign missionary priests had either been killed or had died in jail. New violent waves of persecution occurred in 1953.

Toward the end of 1953 the total of bishops and other heads of Sees who had been imprisoned, expelled or otherwise prevented from performing their functions had grown to 96. This number included 1 Cardinal, 18 archbishops, 54 bishops, and 23 monsignors serving as prefects, administrators or visitators apostolic.

Similar conditions have developed in all the Far East Catholic mission areas which have fallen under Communist sway. In **Northern Korea** 2 bishops are dead and 1 is in prison; in **Indo-China** 2 bishops have been arrested.

In the seventy percent Catholic **Czechoslovakia** the Communists have shackled the Church by imprisoning at least four bishops. One archbishop and two bishops have been banished; four more bishops were forcibly removed from their office and detained in unknown places. All Catholic schools and many religious houses have been suppressed.

A similarly deplorable condition exists in **Hungary**, another seventy percent Catholic country. The Cardi-

nal Primate, along with an archbishop and two bishops, has been imprisoned. Another bishop and 21 priests and religious have been executed. More than 70 priests and religious are in concentration camps or prison. All schools have been closed and almost all religious houses have been suppressed.

In 1940 **Lithuania** had a population of 3 million. Eight of every ten Lithuanians were Catholic. One of its bishops was murdered by the Soviets; three bishops were deported and imprisoned, of whom one is reported to have died in a Soviet prison. One archbishop and two bishops are in exile. Of the 1,482 priests who ministered to souls in 1940, only about 100 remain. All seminaries and convents have been liquidated.

Neighboring **Latvia** and **Estonia**, who along with Lithuania had been gobbled up by the Russians at the outbreak of the second world war, have two bishops in exile and an archbishop in prison. Most of the clergy was also deported.

The 96 percent Catholic **Poland** has seen its Cardinal Primate arrested

along with an archbishop and at least eight bishops. More than 2,000 Polish priests have been either imprisoned, deported or forced into exile. At least 37 are known to have been put to death. Religious persecution has been stepped up in 1953.

From **Rumania**, whose 1,700,000 Catholics constituted about 17 percent of the population, the Papal Nuncio was expelled; twelve bishops were either imprisoned or deported. Two of the bishops have died in prison. At least 55 priests have been killed and another 700 either imprisoned or sent to forced labor.

In **Russia** the number of all congregations has dropped 75 percent since 1917. None of the former Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Mohammedan or other minority faiths is even tolerated. Only the Orthodox Church is tolerated; its priests are dominated by the regime and used by it to help rule the people. But the Communists have frequently said that they are using this pawn only for a time, that eventually it will be liquidated. Officially the Catholic Church is nonexistent in Russia. The list of Martyrs

and Confessors in Russia is a long one.

In the **Ukraine** the Greek Catholic Church was completely suppressed and merged by forced conversions with the puppet Orthodox Church of Russia. At least two archbishops and three bishops have died. In the **Transcarpathia** territory annexed to the Ukraine after the war, at least one bishop and 12 priests were killed; 111 priests were deported, and 93 condemned to forced labor. Thousands of the faithful were either deported or interned.

The Communist regime in **Yugoslavia** imprisoned the Cardinal Archbishop, murdered two bishops, interned or exiled four more bishops, and inducted three more into the army. At least 348 priests have been killed, and hundreds more are in prisons. Two-thirds of the dioceses have no bishops. About 300 religious institutions have been suppressed in Yugoslavia, which is one-third Catholic.

This is part of the black record of crimes which atheistic Communism

has perpetrated in its mad desire to destroy the Catholic Church.

A rather exhaustive list prepared by the National Catholic Welfare Conference indicates that toward the end of 1953 at least 4 Cardinals, 32 archbishops, 117 bishops and 32 monsignors, who served as prefects, administrators or visitators apostolic, have been persecuted by the Communists. These 185 Bishop-Martyrs have been either murdered, expelled, imprisoned or otherwise impeded forcibly in the exercise of their office.

It is estimated that some 60 million Catholics are found in the Church of Silence in Europe alone. Of these about 10 million are in the territories annexed to the Soviet Union; the remaining 50 million live in territories dominated by the Communists.

Let us pray that this hideously black record in the history of humanity can be sufficiently cleansed by the blood of the Martyrs and the merits of the Confessors so that the just anger of God against mankind may be duly propitiated.

(Turn to p. 87 for SUPPLICATIONS)

THE MARTYRS IN RUSSIA

“Let us cherish in our hearts the epic story of our own Martyrs and Confessors. Let us tell this story to our children . . .”

—Bishops’ Statement, 1953

The Catholic Bishops of our country have asked the faithful to cherish the epic story of our Martyrs and Confessors of the Church of Silence. They desire that this story be told to all that all may understand how great it is to be a Catholic.

This epic story of modern heroism in the face of ruthless religious persecution by Communism had its beginning in Russia, where atheistic Communism began its hideous experiment.

Russia, of course, never was Roman Catholic. She received her Christianity from the Greek Church and followed that Church into schism or separation from Rome. Various attempts at unification with Rome were short-lived except for the Uniate Church. Despite the tremendous ob-

stacles which they frequently had to overcome, the Russian people have proved to be truly religious. Their capacities in this respect have never been fully developed.

The Russian Orthodox Church numbered about 90 million faithful in 1917. Roman Catholics in Russia proper numbered about 5 million. Other Churches also existed.

Shortly after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, all the Churches became the object of persecution. Confiscation of properties, abuse of clergy, control of the press, control over education, suppression of seminaries, laws prohibiting church attendance, and similar measures were applied.

The Communist leaders, pledged to eradicate all belief in God, threw all their might against the Churches. By 1932 the Greek Orthodox Church revered as martyrs some 58 bishops and more than a thousand priests who had given their lives in witness to the freedom of their conscience.

The other Churches suffered corresponding losses. Archbishop Cieplak and Monsignor Budkiewicz were out-

standing Catholic figures. Only the protests of the entire civilized world induced the Communists to mitigate the saintly Archbishop's death sentence to life imprisonment. Monsignor Budkiewicz was actually executed on Good Friday, 1923.

The terror unleashed by the new Soviet government against God claimed thousands upon thousands of victims. God alone knows how many gave their lives for their belief in Him.

Father Edmund Walsh, S.J., Director-General of the Papal Relief Mission to Russia during 1922 to 1923, has this to say concerning the tortures to which these Martyrs had to submit:

“The manner of their death is a revolting page in the long annals of man's inhumanity to man. The Archbishop of Perm was buried alive after having his eyes put out. The Bishop of Belgorod was cast into a pit of quicklime. The Bishop of Youriew was incarcerated in a cellar with common criminals, his nose and ears cut off, and after being beaten merciless-

ly with a bayonet, was finally hacked to pieces. The Archbishop of Voronej was hanged before the altar of his own church, while throughout his archdiocese 160 priests were shot. Archbishop Feofan, already at the point of death from abuse, was carried to a hole in the ice of a frozen river and cast into the water. Another priest at Tcherdin was stripped naked in the cruel Russian winter and sprinkled with cold water till he became a statue of ice. In the case of certain other priests condemned to death, crowns of barbed wire were placed on their heads before their execution. At Poltava and at Kremenchoug the victims were impaled. At Poltava . . . eighteen ecclesiastics were impaled in one day."

During 1929 some 1,370 churches were either destroyed, closed or transformed into playhouses or used for other "public purposes."

By 1930 half of the Catholic clergy in Russia disappeared as victims of murder, exile, starvation or imprisonment.

And the lists continued to grow longer.

Simultaneously the Soviet regime through its "Association of the Godless" flooded the country with blasphemous atheist propaganda in an effort to stamp out all belief in God.

And the lists of Martyrs grew longer.

The Orthodox Church finally became a puppet of the State. Other Churches went underground. Officially they do not exist.

Perhaps no person knows the actual condition of all the Churches in Soviet Russia. This much is known. The masses of Russians still believe in God. They are the best allies that all believers in God in the West have inside Russia.

And as the lists of Martyrs within Russia grow longer with each day, let us pray that God in His mercy may grant sufficient strength and love to the believers in Russia that they may not only resist the onslaughts of the impious but eventually may lead the way for a general return to God and true religious freedom.

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PERSECUTION IN THE BALTICS

“... Men and women are enduring the bitterest, the bloodiest persecution in all history.”

—Bishops' Statement, 1953

During the summer of 1940 the Soviets entered the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia; seized the control of their governments; and incorporated them into the USSR. A ruthless antireligious campaign was immediately begun.

Since then the Church properties have been confiscated; religious organizations proscribed; the press liquidated; religious instructions have been forbidden; taxes have been imposed on Church rites; the clergy and laity have been denounced, deported and executed. All Churches have been affected.

The status of the Catholic Church prior to the persecution was as follows:

In LITHUANIA the Catholic Church was the dominant Church.

About 80 percent of the three million inhabitants of Lithuania were Catholics. Some 1,646 priests served its 1,202 churches; the 681 parishes were organized into 2 archdioceses and 4 dioceses. The hierarchy consisted of 3 archbishops and 8 bishops.

Catholic lay organizations flourished. Half of all students in secondary and higher education belonged to the **Ateitis** Youth Movement. Four of the seven most popular periodicals and newspapers were Catholic; between 300 and 400 religious books were published annually. Free non-compulsory religious education was provided by the State in all public schools. Similar freedom was enjoyed by all minor denominations.

The Communists struck one great blow at the Catholic organizations by decreeing that all organizations which had been established prior to June 20, 1940, "jeopardized public safety." Consequently they were suppressed; the State took over the property, archives, membership rosters and funds of all the religious organizations. This nationalization of proper-

ties forced the religious — Marian, Jesuit and Franciscan friars — into exile. The Catholic press was suppressed, and all stocks of religious books were confiscated.

LATVIA'S population of two million included a half million of Roman Catholics and about 175,000 Greek Orthodox Catholics. The Catholic Church had enjoyed freedom; religion was taught in the schools; a theological faculty existed at the State University at Riga; Catholic seminaries flourished.

A nationalization law in July of 1940 confiscated all properties. The new regime charged rent for the use of the churches, which had been taken over by the government. Exorbitant taxes were levied for the use of church records, regalia and equipment. The administration of Sacraments in churches became a very costly ceremony; an average monthly wage was required to cover the taxes connected with the ceremony of a church wedding. Furthermore, the government forbade services outside

of churches, such as those in cemeteries, schools or private homes.

The total population of **ESTONIA** was only 1,250,000. There were only 2,268 Roman Catholics and 214,307 Greek Orthodox Catholics.

The antireligious campaign in Estonia followed along the same lines as in the two other Baltic countries.

In fact, the Soviets used two techniques in destroying all traces of Baltic culture and imposing their own way of life upon the people. The seizure or nationalization of churches, schools, seminaries, libraries, suppression of religious and cultural organizations, the spread of terror by arrest, imprisonment, deportation and murder of the cultured elements within the population was accompanied by isolating the countries from the outside world. Particular stress was laid on severing all relations with the Vatican.

Religious instructions were outlawed in all three countries, and courses in Marxist theory were introduced in the schools. The courses were

supplemented by a barrage of atheistic propaganda directed at the youth in the press, on the radio, in youth organizations, school celebrations, etc.

The text of a sample, a pamphlet circulated in Estonia, entitled "The Ten Commandments of Communism," follows:

“1. Never forget that the clergy are the greatest enemies of the Communist state.

2. Try to convert your friends to Communism. Remember that Stalin, who has given a new Constitution to the Russian people, is the leader of the godless, not only in the USSR but in the whole world.

3. Advise your friends to avoid clergymen and Christians.

4. Beware of spies! Denounce saboteurs!

5. Distribute atheistic literature among the population.

6. A good Komsomol youth is a fighter for the cause of atheism. He must know how to use his weapons and harden himself in the art of war.

7. Fight the religious element

wherever you can and prevent its influence on your comrade.

8. A good godless youth must also be a good policeman. It is the duty of every godless youth to defend the security of his country.

9. The godless movement grows also by means of monetary contributions which are indispensable for foreign propaganda, which, owing to present conditions, can only work underground.

10. If you are not a convinced adherent of the godless movement, you cannot be a good Communist and Soviet citizen. Atheism is inseparable from Communism. Both these ideals form the foundation of Soviet power.”

By June of 1941, a year after they entered the countries, the Soviets had destroyed the framework of Baltic culture, flooded the country with atheistic and Communist propaganda, and had terrorized the populations. Resistance was crushed by mass deportations and murder. Before they retreated from the Nazi armies, the Soviets had deported 65,000 Lithu-

anians, including 26 priests; 15 priests were murdered. Latvia and Estonia suffered similar terrors of deportation and murder.

When the Soviets returned in 1944, they continued to persecute the Churches with added fury. Six waves of deportation have sent more than half a million into exile. All churches are now under State administration. Many have been closed. Religious holidays have been declared illegal; Sunday services in churches have been replaced by compulsory Communist celebrations. An atmosphere of atheism is energetically spread in all spheres and by all known methods.

Let us pray for the Church of Silence in the Baltic countries that despite its small size it may continue to merit God's pleasure and our admiration by its fearless adherence to the true Faith.

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THE CHURCH OF SILENCE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

“It (Catholic Church) stands here today — robbed, deprived of the majority of its freedoms and rights, dishonored, soiled, persecuted secretly and openly.”

—Pastoral Letter of
Archbishop Beran, June 26, 1949

The Catholic Church has always played an active role in the cultural, political and social life of the Czechoslovak people.

According to the 1930 census there were more than 10 million Roman Catholics in the 14 and a half million population of this land. These 10 million Catholics had been well organized politically and culturally into three Catholic political parties, trade unions, welfare organizations, boy scouts and other Catholic associations. The Church enjoyed considerable freedom in the management of its Catholic educational system. Religious instruction was compulsory in primary and grammar schools. The country could

boast of three Catholic weeklies, three theological faculties and over a thousand students in 14 Catholic seminaries.

The Catholics were guided by 3 archbishops, 10 bishops and 7,000 priests.

Up to 1948 the new Communist regime with calculated shrewdness moderated its antireligious tactics against the Catholic Church.

In March of 1948 the Land Reform Law confiscated Church property as the first step toward making the Church subservient to the State.

The following month a new law was passed, designed eventually to eliminate religious instruction in schools. "Appropriate officials" asserted State authority in education, thereby eliminating the clerical authority.

That same year two of the Catholic weeklies were forced out of business because of so-called "scarce materials" allocated by the Ministry of Information. The third weekly became a Communist paper. Simultaneously the secular press was encouraged to denounce the "anti-State activities"

of the Church and to promote atheistic propaganda.

A Central Action Committee was created which began to suppress Catholic organizations, prepare attacks upon the clergy, organize mass anti-religious demonstrations, and merged all Catholic youth organizations, unall Catholic youth organizations (as "unnecessary") into the State-sponsored Union for Czech Youth.

The regime impeded the American National Catholic Welfare Conference's refugee aid program to Czechoslovakia.

The summer of 1949 witnessed further intensification of the struggle between the State and Church. A schismatic "Catholic Action" was formed. Its purpose was to disorganize and confuse the organizational apparatus of the Church.

On June 15 the use of force and terror commenced with a police raid on Archbishop Beran's palace. Four days later the Archbishop's service was interrupted by a demonstration, and he was confined in his palace under guard. The Communists confis-

cated his records and sent out notices bearing his official seal. The Vatican announced excommunication on all who participated in anti-Church activities.

When genuine pastoral letters continued to circulate, the regime forbade the clergy to meet without government permission, declared that all pastoral letters and other communications must be censored by the State, and arrogantly invalidated all Church punishments. Over 300 clergymen were imprisoned for violating these rules before the end of the summer.

In 1950 a State Office for Church Affairs was created. By 1952 this Office had performed its tasks so well against the Catholic Church that it was able to shift major responsibility back to the Central Action Committee, to the schismatic "Catholic Action," and to a newly formed Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge.

During the two years of its operation the Office had accomplished, among other things, the expulsion of the last remaining papal represent-

ative; appointment of political instructors in the seminaries; transfers of priests to new dioceses; State censorship of all communications with the Vatican; confiscation of monasteries; imprisonment or deportation of religious leaders; appointment of Communist collaborators in place of the imprisoned or dead clergymen; non-filling of vacant positions; imprisonment of all clergymen who refused to sign the oath of allegiance or made "illegal" appointments or who would not fill their sermons with praises of the regime and the new way of life.

A series of sensational trials over the oath of allegiance led to a sentence of 24 years of imprisonment for Bishop Jan Vojtassak, life imprisonment for Bishop Michael Buzalka, and the banishment of Archbishop Beran. Bishop Tomasek was arrested; Bishop Joseph Hlouch was "removed" from office, and a Communist successor appointed in his place; Bishop Skrabik died in a labor camp. Three more bishops were forcibly removed from their offices

in 1953 while a fourth, Bishop Skoupy, was arrested for daring to defy the Red ban against organizing Marian Year celebrations.

By 1950 about 10 percent of the Catholic population of Slovakia had been imprisoned.

The Central Action Committee is working at present toward the creation of a "State" or "National Catholic Church" in Czechoslovakia. The regime openly admits that the Church, which it calls "religious superstition," is its chief adversary.

Let us pray for the Church of Silence in Czechoslovakia that it may be encouraged to imitate the examples of its glorious Martyrs and Confessors to serve God faithfully despite the blows that are daily directed its way.

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THE SILENT EAST

“Grant us, Lord, to be the door-step by which the multitudes may come to worship Thee.”

—Bishop Ford

Three hundred million Chinese are within the Iron Curtain. The hammer and sickle is over Northern Korea. Indo-China's fate is not decided; the Communists have control over certain sections. The Iron Curtain is ever enclosing more and more territory and peoples.

And wherever atheistic Communism makes its appearance, there ensues a ruthless, inhuman persecution of all religion. Such persecutions produce Martyrs and Confessors.

Many are the stories that have come our way from the Catholic mission fields overrun by the Reds. They are stories of utmost cruelty and merciless hate. But they are also stories of glorious martyrdom, of heroic virtue and selfless sacrifice on the altar of brotherly love.

Consider the story of the Little Brothers of St. John the Baptist, a religious community founded by Father Lebbe. These Brothers were Chinese. They worked among the poor. The Communists, who claim that they also are for the poor people, "rewarded" the Brothers for their labor among the poor. The Brothers were either buried alive or dragged to death behind wild horses.

Consider the American-born Bishop Byrne, Apostolic Delegate to Korea, who had earned the respect of the Japanese people, the Korean populace, and of the American armed forces. His life had been one of dedicated devotion to the poor people whom he had served. So the Communists had declared him Public Enemy Number One. He was taken prisoner, beaten, exposed, and maltreated until he died in prison.

Another gallant American Maryknoll missionary, Bishop Francis Ford, suffered a similar fate. And Bishop Boniface Sauer, Apostolic Administrator of Kanka in Northern Korea, also died in a Communist prison. And

Father Bede Tsang: his death was considered a true martyrdom for the Faith by the Shanghai Catholics to such an extent that they clamored for a Mass of rejoicing in place of the usual **Requiem**.

These are not isolated cases. For when Bishop Sauer was imprisoned, he was sent to prison with 122 priests, Brothers and Sisters. With Bishop Byrne were others, among them his secretary, Father Booth, Monsignor Quinlan and the Anglican Bishop Cooper. These three helped others to bury Bishop Byrne.

There is no line of distinction drawn by the Reds whether the missionaries are native or foreign, male or female, old or young. They must be prevented from preaching the word of God.

The story is the same everywhere: in China, in Northern Korea, in Indo-China. Thousands have been imprisoned, expelled, and murdered.

In 1953 the Communists have removed two archbishops, 16 bishops and six monsignors who served as heads of Sees. An additional 400

priests and Brothers and Sisters were ousted.

The stories of the tortures to which they had been submitted in an effort to force them "to confess" to non-existent crimes are tales of horror. They told of being beaten, stripped, lifted by their hair, hung by their thumbs, forced to stand for hours without moving. They told of the hunger and exhaustion and filth; of cold and disease and the brink of insanity.

They also narrated the stories of those of their fellow-missionaries who died under the maltreatment or of exposure or were driven to insanity.

It is understandable then to read of instances like that of Father John Tung in Chungking who concluded his public protest against Communist efforts to draw Catholics away from obedience to the Vatican with these words: "I make these statements now being of a sane mind and I avow that whatever I may say later in a state of confusion will be entirely invalid." He was arrested on the following day.

Such a statement shows that the

missionaries know that they may be tortured beyond human endurance. The marvelous and heroic feature is this that despite this knowledge they continue to work among the faithful. This is indeed an age of heroic sacrifice in the annals of the Church.

Let us pray for the Church of Silence in the Far East that its faithful, though they may lose pastors, may be confirmed in their Faith by the noble examples of courage and steadfastness of these same pastors.

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MARTYRDOM IN HUNGARY

“I shall neither confess nor resign. If I should, that could only be the result of torture beyond human endurance, and consequently should be regarded as null and void.”

—Card. Mindszenty, Dec. 27, 1948

About seventy percent of Hungary is Roman Catholic. Because of this size and the deep-rooted historical tradition of the Church in Hungary, the Communists left the Church unmolested until after the 1947 elections, during which they had consolidated their political strength.

After the 1945 elections, however, they had struck their first blow through the Ministry of Interior, which they controlled, in the form of an agrarian reform which confiscated a sizeable portion of Church revenue.

At a meeting of the National Congress of the Communist Party in January of 1948 the Party goal was stated: “The task of our party this year is to settle the relationship be-

tween the Church and the Republic. It cannot be tolerated that the majority of the enemies of the people should hide in the shadows of Churches, especially the Catholic Church.”

General dissatisfaction with the new regime and moral resistance to it had crystallized around the courageous Primate Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty. Because of his previous experiences with the Bolsheviks and Nazis the Cardinal was a universal symbol of resistance.

Previous attempts of the regime to destroy religious training in the schools had failed. On March 19th, 1948, the Communists proposed a four point program which aimed at eliminating religious influence in education. Since more than fifty percent of all schools were Catholic, Cardinal Mindszenty led the fight against the nationalization of the schools. The Communists thereupon resorted to terror and force in order to urge the adoption of their program. In June the Hungarian Parliament endorsed the four point program. The Church

lost thousands of schools of various types to the State.

The Communists next launched a drive for the collectivization of farms. They were aware that the Cardinal would again stand between them and their goals. He became their chief target. They concentrated all their efforts in the press, over the radio, and in mass demonstrations against the Primate. They dared not as yet attack the Church openly.

On December 26, 1948, the Cardinal was arrested and indicted for treason, espionage and illegal currency exchange. On the following day each bishop had received the Cardinal's last message to the effect that he would neither confess nor resign. Eventually, under the effect of the drug actedron, the Cardinal, broken in body, "confessed" at a mock trial on all counts. He was sentenced to death; but, under pressure from all sides, the regime commuted the sentence to life imprisonment.

The persecution reached new heights in 1948. Religious processions and pilgrimages were banned; reli-

gious associations were suppressed; almost all Catholic periodicals were banned, and the rest subject to strict censorship; bishops were not permitted to visit the Pope, and Vatican delegations were not permitted entry into the country; religious feasts and festivals were proscribed; the traditional procession on St. Stephen's Day, one of the great traditional feasts of Hungary, was proscribed, and the day was renamed the Feast of Bread (from 1950 it became the Bolshevist Constitution Day); roadside chapels and crucifixes were eliminated; churches and shrines were turned over for other uses; youth organizations were disbanded; all Catholic charity organizations such as hospitals, orphanages and old age homes were liquidated; religious publishing houses and bookstores were either brought under strict government control or were liquidated; even church libraries and valuable art treasures were confiscated; various other oppressive measures were invoked.

But these blows were not the end.

In 1949 a State Office for Church Affairs was set up. It became the chief weapon of oppression. It controlled all Church incomes; almost all properties of the Church were confiscated.

The Office attempted to split the clergy into opposing sects, but it failed to achieve this end.

The Office commandeered episcopal seals and issued edicts in the names of the bishops, without their consent. It filled vacancies in episcopal or other important posts, occasioned by execution, imprisonment, banishment or resignation, with so-called "peace" priests.

In August of 1950 the Catholic Bishops were coerced to sign a Church-State agreement. The Vatican refused rightly to recognize this signature as legal, whereupon the State insisted that the clergy and hierarchy take oaths of loyalty to the State. This too eventually was carried out.

Pressures continued to be exerted on the clergy and the faithful. By July of 1951 the regime felt strong enough to decree that in the future

all members of the episcopate could be appointed only after the **Presidium** had approved them. This was a great extension of the State's power over the Church.

In 1951 another big anticlerical trial was staged by the Communists on a pattern of the Mindszenty trial. This time the accused was Archbishop of Kalocsa, Jozef Groesz, who had succeeded Cardinal Mindszenty as head of the Board of Bishops. Archbishop Groesz also "confessed" and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The roll of Martyrs and Confessors daily becomes longer. The most zealous and firm among the hierarchy, the priests and the faithful are made to pay the penalty. At least one more bishop — Bishop Joseph Petery of Vacz — was arrested and removed in 1953.

Let us pray that the Church of Silence in Hungary may ever find such courageous and intrepid defenders of Christ's Church as was its Cardinal Mindszenty.

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CATHOLIC POLAND IN CHAINS

“We are not allowed to place the things belonging to God on the altar of Caesar.”

—Polish Bishops,
Pastoral Letter, 1953

In considering the persecution of the Catholic Church in Poland one must remember not only that the Polish population is almost exclusively Catholic and that religion is deeply rooted in the culture and history of the people but also that Poland had been partly overrun by the Communists as early as 1939.

It has been estimated that, during the first Soviet occupation of the eastern part of Poland between 1939 and 1941, about one million of the population was deported to Russia. Hundreds of priests were deported to labor camps in Siberia. Only seventy survived. Some could not even be traced.

During the second occupation of the eastern provinces in 1945, the

Communists were ready with a plan. The Church was immediately liquidated in a most ruthless manner. The Greek-Catholic Church was merged with the Russian Orthodox Church. The hierarchy of the Greek Church was imprisoned and sent to Russia; the faithful were "converted" to the Russian Church.

Simultaneously the bishops of the Latin rite were expelled from their dioceses and sent to central and western Poland.

In what is now called Poland, the Communist puppet regime did not dare risk an open attack directly on the Church. The Church and clergy had been in the forefront of the nation's struggle against the Nazi oppressors and had thereby merited the highest esteem of the populace.

Thus the first stage of the Communist persecution of the Church in Poland, from 1945 to 1948, can be termed a period of relative quiet. It is true that the regime revoked the Concordat on September 2, 1945; that attacks against the clergy appeared in the press; that the Church's wel-

fare organization, Caritas, was also assailed; that more active or fearless clergymen suddenly disappeared — more than a 100 cases of such kidnapping and disappearance of priests and religious occurred; that some 1,000 “undesirable” clergymen were imprisoned; that acts of terrorism were not unknown. However, all such instances were “unofficial.” As yet the regime had not opened a frontal attack on the Church. On the contrary, it tried to woo the Church by peaceful methods to become a tool of the State.

By 1949 the regime saw clearly that its political power had been sufficiently stabilized and that the Church would not be wooed to become a stooge of the State. Then opened the second stage of a violent attack on the Church. The following chronology gives some idea of how rapidly the persecution mounted:

On Aug. 5, 1949, the government published a decree safeguarding freedom of religion and conscience.

On Aug. 11, the government requisitioned all birth records from parish churches.

On Aug. 18, an intensive anti-Vatican campaign began in the press.

On Sept. 21, the Church hospitals were nationalized under the Ministry of Health.

On Nov. 23, the Minister of Public Administration imposed serious limitations on public worship.

On Jan. 23, 1950, the charitable organization **Caritas** was suddenly confiscated by the government.

On March 20, extensive Church properties were confiscated.

In the meantime, from August of 1949, vilification of the clergy increased in the press. All manner of charges were brought against the priests, religious and the hierarchy.

Trojan-horse tactics in the forms of "patriot priest" associations and a "National Catholic Church" failed to bring about the desired schism.

An agreement between the Polish Bishops and the State Department of Religious Affairs was entered upon in April of 1950. The Communists soon violated every pledge. In fact they used the agreement as a new weapon against the Church. Under

the pretext that the agreement had been violated by certain acts, they would remove priests and bishops and substitute in their stead the so-called "patriotic priests."

By 1953 the Catholic press and publications had been suppressed; Catholic societies liquidated; Church properties confiscated; religion eliminated from the educational system; monasteries and convents suppressed. The number of priests and religious in prison increased.

At the end of 1952 a new wave of persecution was launched with the objective of disrupting the organization of the Church. The Bishop of Katowice and his two auxiliary bishops were arrested and removed; the Bishop of Cracow and his auxiliary met the same fate.

In February of 1953 there appeared a new decree which gave the State the right to supervise clerical appointments. This decree virtually gave the State supreme power over the Church for it gave the regime the power to approve in advance all Church appointments, promotions,

and transfers; the creation, abolition or transformation of Church posts and functions also had to be approved; a loyalty oath was demanded from all members of the hierarchy.

Needless to say the Polish Bishops protested the decree. More bishops thereupon were removed, including Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland.

On the evening of September 25, Communist police agents invaded the Cardinal's home and, after several hours of thorough search, left, taking the Cardinal with them. He has not been seen or heard from since.

The Polish Bishops protested the action. The regime has struck again at the hierarchy by arresting Bishop Anthony Baraniak, auxiliary of Cardinal Wyszynski in Gniezno and former secretary to the late Cardinal Hlond.

There is no doubt that these blows will be followed by others. The singular position which the Catholic Church occupies in Poland and in the lives of the population makes it without doubt the strongest foe of the

Communist regime. In order to destroy the Church the regime will have to continue and intensify its persecution to a fever pitch.

Let us pray for the Church of Silence in Poland that it may remain always faithful; that, as it has weathered past persecutions only to emerge more glorious and pure, it may again take its rightful role in the life of the nation.

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RED TERROR IN YUGOSLAVIA

“But among all the trials which press upon us, we are most particularly concerned about the fate of the beloved of God, the innocent children.”

—Cardinal Stepinac

Because of its numerical minority position and because the Communist regime headed by Tito was entrenched in Yugoslavia earlier than similar puppet regimes in other satellite countries, the Church in Yugoslavia (one-third of the people) suffered tremendous losses earlier than in nearby Soviet-dominated countries.

By October of 1946, Archbishop (now Cardinal) Stepinac, head of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, was sentenced at a mock trial. The Archbishop had been a central figure in the resistance movement. In his Pastoral Letter published a few days before his arrest, he pictures the havoc created by the Red persecutors:

“The fact that so many parishes are now deprived of pastors . . . Some

priests now for a long time have been detained in camps and in prisons.”

“We are not free to publish Catholic papers.”

“The Church has been so seriously restricted in the right of private ownership.”

“Ecclesiastical institutions have been deprived of the opportunity of helping the poor and the aged, and that so many religious women . . . are no longer able to exercise their vocations . . . We ourselves, for the same reasons, are no longer able to assist the poor who now as before knock at our gates.”

“It is held against priests that they preach about God, about eternity, about the Pope, and about other truths.”

“Likewise unjust and unfounded is the accusation which is hurled against priests that they do not love their own land and their own nation.”

“But among all the trials which press upon us, we are most particularly concerned about the fate of the beloved of God, the innocent children. And so we feel obliged to address to

you some words of advice on Christian education of youth.”

Quoting freely from the Encyclical of Pius XI, the future Cardinal said:

“If the child belongs to the father and mother . . . then it must be that to them belongs first place in his education . . . The place where the child’s education begins is, therefore, in the family . . . You have received the child from God. You must educate him for God.”

“The teaching function of the Church blends happily in perfect concord with the teaching function of the family, so that we may in truth repeat the words of Pius XI: ‘The Church and the family constitute a single asylum and, as it were, a single sanctuary of Christian education.’ ”

“The function of the school has been aptly described by Pius XI in these words: ‘The need for the public school arises from the fact that the newborn generation must be instructed in all those acts and disciplines by reason of which civil society prospers and grows, and the family alone is not equal to this task.’ ”

“How did schools come into being? Pius XI answers that question: ‘The public school came into being originally, and mark this well, in order to enable the Church and family to work together, and it was much later that the state became associated in this partnership. For that reason, schools by their very nature, if we consider them in point of view of their historical origin, exist as an aid and complement to the Church and family.’ ”

“What follows from this? Pius XI again points out: ‘The consequence is that the public school must not only not conflict with family and Church, but must, as is evident, cooperate with each in such a way that the three — school, family, and Church — seem to constitute one single sanctuary of Christian teaching.’ ”

“From these words of Pius XI it is clear that a Christian spirit ought to reign in the school, and that it is not enough that the school set aside one or another period for religion. Beyond that, it is necessary that every instruction and the whole curriculum be pervaded by a Christian spirit, so

that faith may truly be said to be the foundation and crown of the entire education.”

“You yourselves know how far from the ideal set forth by Pius XI are our schools today. Consider these facts which prove it:

“In our schools prayer before and after lessons has been abolished.

“From our schools has been removed the sign of our Redemption, the Cross of Christ.

“The collective students’ Mass on Sunday and holydays has been abolished.

“Reception of the sacraments of penance and Communion by student groups has been discontinued.

“Lenten retreats in preparation for the Paschal Communion have likewise been discontinued.

“Meanwhile, in some of our schools religion lessons are tolerated. But there are whole regions in which no religious lessons are given, and that not only in the intermediary schools but in the elementary schools as well. And, when religion is taught, it is put in the last place in the curriculum,

and a wholly unsatisfactory hour is given over to its teaching.

“Obstacles are even put in the way of priests who, because of these reasons, felt it their duty to gather together the children in the churches for religious instruction — as though it were not licit to teach religion anywhere else than in the school buildings.

“By reason of these facts we demand, as we have a right to expect, that liberty of conscience be respected in a practical way, even in children when they, together with their parents, choose to assist at lessons in religion, whether they be given in school or in church.”

And further in the Letter:

“If on the one hand, it is permitted to diffuse materialism and atheism, let us be given complete liberty in the preaching of those truths which have come from God and which lead us to God.

“For we educate our children, not only to be citizens of heaven, but to be perfect citizens of the temporal society. It will be the best foundation for social and economic order in our

nation if youth is conscious that it must conduct itself in accord with the Commandments. So the state, if it assists us in Christian education, will be rendering itself a service."

The terrorizing of the Church has not ceased in Yugoslavia. In 1953 various members of the hierarchy were seized and beaten on several occasions. The government is sponsoring a "priests' association." In an effort to disrupt the organization of the Church, the regime is drafting bishops and priests into the army. The government has prepared a so-called "documentary" film, entitled "Cardinal Criminal," disparaging the Head of the Catholic Church. Religious education has been prohibited completely, and the Church has been deprived of all its schools.

As the Red terror continues against the Church of Silence in Yugoslavia, let us pray that its members will continue to profess staunchly the teaching of the Church after the example of its intrepid leader, Cardinal Stepinac.

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A CALL TO INTERCESSION AND PRAYER

(The following statement was issued by the American Archbishops and Bishops at their annual meeting in November of 1952.)

The Bishops of the United States of America bow their heads in reverent homage to the multitude of contemporary martyrs and confessors who in these latter days have suffered for their Faith in Jesus Christ.

Their name is legion. They are citizens of many lands. Never before in history have so many men and women fallen victim to religious persecution.

The modern bede-roll of Christian heroes enshrines the names of two cardinals, 130 bishops, tens of thousands of priests and religious and millions of faithful Catholics. (These figures were used in November, 1952.) The list lengthens with each passing day.

Indignity, prison, torture, death — this is the lot of those who profess

the faith of Jesus Christ in countries conquered by the hosts of atheistic materialism.

To the Holy Father, Whose heart grieves sorely for his afflicted children, we send the assurance of our filial sympathy and affectionate solidarity.

To the prelates and priests and to our fellow Catholics of the Church of Silence, we pledge the continuing aid of our prayers and the encouragement of every help which lies within our power.

And to our Catholic priests and people in this free land of America, we issue a call to intercession and prayer that God in His loving Providence may shorten these days of trial and restore peace and tranquility to the Church and to the world.

It is our prayer that the lesson of our contemporary Martyrs and Confessors be not lost in a distraught world. If Catholic bishops, priests and laymen are the first on the enemies' lists of proscription, is it not because our Holy Church, today as always, stands as a bulwark against those who would destroy religion and the

practice of justice and charity among men?

Is it not because the Church is the most powerful defender, against the new barbarism, of all the gains of 2,000 years of Christian civilization?

Is it not because the Church, faithful to its divine commission, is the uncompromising custodian of the Truth, which saves and sets men free?

These are sad but glorious days for the Church of Jesus Christ. Of old, the Prince of Apostles was crucified on Vatican Hill, and the Prince of Missionaries was beheaded outside the walls of Rome. It is significant that the chroniclers of that day failed to record events which have since been treasured by the centuries.

The blood of those early martyrs was the seed of the Church and the eloquent witness throughout the world to that Faith which was to shape our era and to give it its Christian name.

The Confessors and Martyrs of today are part of our Christian heritage. Let us write their deeds upon our

hearts as a sequel to the epic story of St. Peter and St. Paul, of the early Christians, and of the myriads in every age who were deemed worthy to suffer for the Faith of Christ.

Let us tell this story to our people and to our children for their inspiration and for their emulation.

God grant that the glorious death of our Martyrs may be the source of new life to millions of their fellow men in every land, and may their example hasten the return of the modern world to Christ.

From the lips of these contemporary witnesses to Christ, let us catch and re-echo those words of life which for twenty centuries have been the rallying cry of Christian civilization: "Long live Christ the King."

(Turn to p. 87 for SUPPLICATIONS)



SUPPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH OF SILENCE

Priest: In the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy
Ghost.

People: Amen.

Priest and People:

We adore Thee, most holy Lord
Jesus Christ, * here and in all Thy
churches that are in the whole world,
* and we bless Thee; * because by Thy
holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the
world.

Priest: O God, come unto my assistance:

People: O Lord, make haste to help me.

Priest and People:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, * behold us in Thy divine presence. * We have gathered here today * to supplicate mercy and strength for Thy Church of Silence, * which suffers a horrible persecution at the hands of impious men, * and to make reparation for all the blasphemies * which these impious men, our brothers, * hurl against Thee and Thine. * Hear our prayers, O God of mercy, * and look not upon our iniquities * but upon the merits of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. * Amen.

Priest: Let us pray for our Holy Father Pius XII * whose heart is sorely grieved by the sufferings of the Church of Silence.

People: The Lord preserve him, * and give him life, * and make him to be blessed upon the earth, * and de-

liver him not up to the will of his enemies.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.

Priest: Lord Jesus, shelter our Holy Father the Pope under the protection of Thy Sacred Heart.

People: Be Thou his light, his strength and his consolation.

Priest: Let us pray for the whole hierarchy of the Church of Silence.

People: Almighty and everlasting God, * by whose spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, * hear our prayers for all Orders, * that, by the gift of Thy grace, * all their different degrees may faithfully serve Thee.

Priest: Let us pray for the clergy of the Church of Silence.

People: O God, who hast appointed Thine only begotten Son * to be the eternal High Priest * for the glory of Thy Majesty and the salvation of mankind; * grant that they

whom He hath chosen * to be His ministers and the stewards of His mysteries, * may be found faithful in the fulfilment of the ministry * which they have received. * Through the same Christ our Lord. * Amen.

Priest: Jesus, Saviour of the world,

People: Sanctify Thy priests and sacred ministers.

Priest: Let us pray for all the imprisoned members of the Church of Silence.

People: O God, who didst deliver from his chains the blessed apostle Peter * and didst restore him to liberty, * loose the bonds of Thy servants now in captivity, * and through the merits of that same apostle * grant them to escape unharmed.

Priest: Let us pray for all those members of the Church of Silence who are in temptation and in tribulation.

People: O God, who dost justify the wicked, * and desirest not the death

of the sinner, * we humbly beseech Thy majesty * that Thou wouldst graciously shield by Thy heavenly aid, * and preserve by Thine unremitting protection * Thy servants who trust in Thy mercy, * that they may serve Thee always * and by no temptations ever be separated from Thee.

Priest: Let us pray for the children and youth of the Church of Silence.

People: O God, who in Thy son suffered the little children to come unto Thee, * grant the children and youth * deprived of religious instruction in the Church of Silence * the grace to learn by the example of their faithful leaders * to remain true to Thy Church.

Priest: Let us pray for patience for ourselves and for those suffering persecution in the Church of Silence.

People: O God, who by the patience of Thine only-begotten Son * hast crushed the pride of the enemy of

old, * grant us and those suffering persecution, we beseech Thee, * devoutly to keep in mind all that He endured for love of us, * and thus following His example * bear our troubles with equanimity.

Priest: Let us pray for the welfare of the living in the Church of Silence.

People: Grant unto Thy faithful people, we beseech Thee, O Lord, * constancy in Thy faith and truth, * that confirmed in divine charity, * they may preserve its integrity in spite of all temptations.

Priest: Let us pray for the faithful departed of the Church of Silence.

People: O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, * grant to the souls of Thy servants and handmaids * the remission of all their sins; * that by our pious supplications * they may obtain the pardon which they have always desired.

Priest: Let us pray that the Church

of Silence be delivered from the hands of her persecutors.

People: We beseech Thee, O Lord, * mercifully to receive the prayers of Thy Church: * that all adversity and error being destroyed, * she may serve Thee in security and freedom.

Priest: Let us pray for the enemies of the Church of Silence.

People: O God, the lover and guardian of peace and charity, * grant unto all enemies peace and charity, * together with remission of all their sins, * and by Thy power deliver us from their wiles.

Priest: Let us pray for peace for the entire Church.

People: O God, who art the Author and Lover of peace, * in knowledge of whom is eternal life, * whose service is a kingly state; * defend us Thy humble servants from all assaults of our enemies; * that we, surely trusting in Thy defense, * may not fear the power of any

adversaries. * Through Christ our Lord. * Amen.

Priest: Let us make reparation to the Son of God.

ACT OF REPARATION

Priest and People:

O Jesus, my Saviour and Redeemer, Son of the living God, * behold we kneel before Thee and offer Thee our reparation; * we would make amends for all the blasphemies uttered against Thy holy Name,* for all the injuries done to Thee in the Blessed Sacrament, * for all the irreverence shown toward Thine Immaculate Virgin Mother, * for all the calumnies and slanders spoken against Thy spouse, * the holy Catholic and Roman Church. * O Jesus, who hast said: * “If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you,” * we pray and beseech Thee for all our brethren * who are in danger of sin; * shield them from every temptation to fall away from the true

faith; * save those who are even now standing on the brink of the abyss; * to all of them give light and knowledge of the truth, * courage and strength for the conflict with evil, * perseverance in faith and active charity! * For this do we pray, most merciful Jesus, in Thy Name, * unto God the Father, with whom Thou livest and reignest * in the unity of the Holy Ghost world without end. * Amen.

Priest: Let us seek the intercession of Our Lady, Help of Christians, * for the Church of Silence.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Priest and People:

Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and our Mother, Mary, * thou seest the attacks that are everywhere made * by the devil and the world upon the Catholic faith, * in which, by God's grace, we intend to live and die, * in order that we may attain to eternal

glory. * Do thou, the Help of Christians, * renew thine ancient victories and save thy children. * They entrust to thee their firm purpose * never to enroll themselves in societies hostile to our holy religion; * do thou, who art all holy, * present to thy divine Son * our good resolutions and obtain for us the grace we need * to be unshaken in their observance even to the end of life. * Console the visible Head of the Church, * sustain the Catholic episcopate, * protect the clergy who proclaim thee Queen; * by the power of thine intercession hasten the day * when all nations shall be gathered * at the feet of the chief Shepherd. * Amen.

Priest: Mary, Help of Christians,

People: Pray for us!

(If any other prayers are to be added, they are said here.) Then follow:

An appropriate HYMN,

BENEDICTION OF THE BL. SACRAMENT,

An appropriate closing HYMN.

Let us all cherish in our hearts the epic story of our own Martyrs and Confessors. Let us tell this story to our children that they may learn the names of Stepinac and Mindszenty and Wyszynski, of Beran, of Cule, of Ford and of Byrne, along with the heroes of the Faith in ages past; that they may understand HOW GREAT IT IS TO BE A CATHOLIC.

—Bishops' Statement, 1953

**“Let there then be
supplication to God
and penance
that His grace be poured out
in superabundant measure
to strengthen those
who hold the place
of honor and of danger
in the new warfare
launched against the Church.”**

—Bishops' Statement, 1953