

CATHOLIC MARTYRS IN RUSSIA SEED OF CHURCH OF FUTURE

Klanmen Admire Exalted Heroism of Prelates Who Die for Principle.

CHRISTIANS AND GENTLEMEN

Tragedy Embodies Vital Lesson for All American Patriots.

BY LEM A. DEVERS

Say what you will, wrong though they be in placing obedience to the Pope above the law of the State, we must admire as red-blooded heroes those grim and unyielding Roman Catholic prelates who stood up in the pride and majesty of manhood and, in the face of death, standing before their executioners, defied the Soviet butchers at Moscow and welcomed death rather than deviate one iota from devotion to their religious cause.

There's a lesson for all Americans in this startling story from Russia, stenographic notes of which are given in extenso in *The Catholic Sentinel* of May 24. The WESTERN AMERICAN tried to obtain the story of the trial and execution of the Catholic prelates in Russia, but failed. The dailies also failed. It was a story which any journal worth its name, for it is a tragic episode in the red chapter of history now being developed in the Land of the Dark People.

All Admire True Heroism

Whatever we may think of Roman priests and their adherents, who place obedience to their Pontiff above all other authority, all of us, if true Americans, admire and applaud the heroic Russian Catholics who hurled defiance in the teeth of death and perished like gallant men. The rack, the stake, the hangman and firing squad hold no terrors for courage of this exalted type, and it recalls a remark of John Randolph of Roanoke: "Fanaticism hath no stopping place, short of heaven or of hell."

Remembering now that we are dealing with a fragile phase of fanaticism, but one embodying heroic spirit and lofty zeal, holy and sacred in the conscience of its followers, we must be charitable, kindly and liberal, making all due allowance for the almost invincible power of heredity and for hallowed memories, and ask of our Catholic fellow-citizens only this concession to Americanism: that they bring all influence to bear, through their priests and congregations, throughout our country, to place AMERICAN citizenship above "Catholic citizenship," and obedience to the Constitution of the United States above every authority. This is the only basis of safety and harmony.

The story of the trial of the Roman Exarch Fedoroff, and of Archbishop Cappelak at Moscow, is more thrilling than any stage-play possibly could be, for it was a blood-red tragedy, full of heroic climaxes. After the splendid address of Fedoroff before the High Tribunal, Prosecutor Krikenko savagely replied, concluding as follows:

"Citizen Fedoroff can speak in the pulpit of God, of the Prophet Elias, but if he begins to tell ignorant people and children that the Prophet Elias will come down from heaven and crush you, we will not permit it. To the formal prohibition of the law to terrorize children, you reply, 'I shall do so,' and we say 'We do not permit it.' We in Russia know how to react against that. Your game is up! You have nothing to do but to bear your cross. Your religion—I spit upon it!—as on all religion—on Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Mohammedan and the rest. There is no law but the Soviet law, and by that law you must die."

"Contradiction of Duties"

With magnificent courage, in noble and classic language, the doomed Archbishop defended his course and that of his associates. He did this apparently for the purpose of leaving an historical record. "Canon law is for us," he said in the course of his address, "an absolutely sacred thing. The existence of the Roman Pontiff is a dogma of our Catholic faith. Submission to him as to the Vicar of Christ on earth is, for us, a formal obligation. That is why for us it was a matter of principle. . . . There was a contradiction of duties. Power is one thing and the propagation of atheism is another. I have always fought atheism by showing its powerlessness. I often spoke at the meetings in Petrograd; politics was ex-

cluded and there is no man who could accuse me of even the shadow of politics in my speeches. As for the teaching of children—the idea of teaching is an integral part of Catholic dogma. We should cease, ipso facto, to fulfill our duties as a priest if we did not teach. The Soviet power forbids teaching religion to children. This contradiction is a frightful thing to us, Citizen Judges."

Hewled Down by Court

"At this point the doomed prelate was hewled down by the savage Prosecutor; 'Enough!' he cried, 'this is a comedy!' (There was laughter and excited movements in the room.) The Archbishop calmly retorted: 'As you like. Certainly, if you consider us as charlatans, offerers of sacrifices, if you say that I am playing a comedy, it is impossible for me to defend myself, and there remains for me nothing but the role of victim.'"

"The President of the High Tribunal roared a rebuke at the priest, Fedoroff replied: 'All right. What is a church without teaching? For instance, if some young people between 16 and 18 years of age come to me to marry them, how can I do it without giving them some notion of religion? You yourself, do you not teach children anything before the age of 18 years? What sort of a child would it be who had learned nothing before he was 18?'"

President: "You are criticizing the laws of the Soviet Power?"

Fedoroff: "I am explaining our religious psychology. According to the constitution I may spread my religious ideas. Why can I not impart them to children?"

President: "The law forbids it."

Sentence of Death

Despite the brutal interruptions and ridicule of his accusers, which recall the awful trial and condemnation of Christ, this heroic priest held his own in a brilliant manner, debating with the Soviet butchers the law and the facts involved in the accusations. In a statement, which proceeded probably five minutes without interruption, due to the solemnity and eloquence of it, the doomed priest declared that "The Catholic church is obliged to accept the laws of the country and concern itself only with the propagation of Christianity." His logic and eloquence were unavailing, however, and before he could conclude the Court brutally halted him with this pronouncement: "Sentence of death!"

Facing Certain Death

At the outset of his defense Fedoroff had said:

"At this moment I am before an earthly tribunal, and soon shall appear before the one on high. I have but one desire: that the earthly tribunal be just toward me and that the heavenly tribunal be equally merciful. My whole life has been based upon two elements: love of the church and love of the country which I adore. If it is all the same to me whether I am condemned to prison, or whether I am shot, it is not because I am a fanatic. Frequently an innocent person must be executed in order not to release a guilty one. My sole object has been to bring my country closer to the Catholic church, which I esteem to be the only true one. Under the old regime I was in prison two and a half years at Tobolsk. One of my priests spent three years in the prison at Souzdale. . . ."

President: "Do not digress! What do we care what the Catholic priests suffered?"

Persecuting All Religion

We have given enough of the stenographic report, which was published at length in *The Catholic Sentinel* of May 24, to show the horrid character of the Soviet persecution of all religion in Russia, and to prove the exalted heroism of the Roman Catholic priests and prelates of high rank who defied the Soviet monsters to do their worst and who died like Christian gentlemen. May their memories never perish from the annals of man. May the flowers on their graves bloom forever.

In the name of God and our common humanity, Klanmen, Americans! Remember at all times that the Klan fights its opponents only in self-defense; that reprisals in kind are made only because of the unfair assaults and underhand tactics of the Knights of Columbus; but that we have no quarrel—and only high respect—for the Catholic Faith and Religion; that our opposition is only against what we rightly term Political Romanism—the functioning of the Papal Hierarchy in American politics and the meddling of foreign prelates in our country's domestic affairs; that our mission is the promotion of pure Americanism, which is tolerant of all religion, as guaranteed under the Constitution, and intolerant only of alien interference and propaganda; that the Catholics have only to place AMERICAN citizenship above "Catholic citizenship" and the Constitution above everything, to restore harmony and good-will between these warring factions. The Klans-

men are not bigots, but libertarians, and individuals who exceed the limits as defined by the term Political Romanism are mistaken in their whole conception of Klankraft and doing an injury to our splendid cause.

The Real Klan Issue

The Klansmen deplore the factional division on "religion." They admit the good that is in the Catholic church, the sterling virtues and patriotic loyalty of millions of its adherents, and they admire the heroic spirit of devotion which animates them, wishing only that the average Klansman may prove equally as steadfast and active in maintaining his own fraternal obligation; and, finally, the Klansmen earnestly desire and hope that their Catholic fellow-citizens may listen to reason and cease to place the authority of their foreign Pontiff above that of our President and the Constitution. The Klansmen do not want the Catholics to die for the Pope, but to die when the time comes (and it is coming) for our own dear America—the most glorious country in the world.

Here in Oregon the new law, to take effect in 1924 (D. V.), will require all children to attend the public schools—a wise and necessary safeguard; but this law does not interfere with the teaching of religion in home and church, and no law of this kind can be made in America. If the Catholics and their friends would avert in this great country—their last refuge and hope—group developments which might result in reprisals costly to their church, they will cease and prohibit the further activities of the College of Propaganda of Rome and its agents in America and face the facts of the situation as true Americans, with no foreign allegiance whatsoever.

The "KC" and The Klan

There is no reason for anyone to oppose the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and its constructive purpose of promoting Americanism in every legal manner. The Klansmen, in regalia, wear white robes; the "KC" prefer the black. The one wears the lodge room, the white hood; the other wears the black cowl. In regalia surely the Klansmen have the best of the comparison. The one is a protestant order, the other Catholic. The Klan is devoted to the maintenance and improvement of the public school. The "KC" is champion of the parochial school. Both should be united in the upbuilding of the public school, which serves all alike, and the "KC" if wisely led, would disavow the placing of "Catholic citizenship" above "AMERICAN citizenship" and show themselves altogether American, with no foreign allegiance whatsoever.

The Fundamental Issue

The Klan is opposed, with all of its might, to any kind of union between church and State, while the "KC" favor this un-American development, destructive to all our ideals of liberty. In the light of continuing tragedies in Russia, surely the Catholics can see the folly of the principle, so bravely but foolishly taught by precept and example, that their first duty is to the Pope of Rome, who claims both spiritual and political authority. The brutalized and ignorant Russians, led by monsters, are dealing with the problem in the only way they know; the Americans are solving it by the civilized methods of education and constitutional law, with all due regard to the rights of the minority.

Great Trouble Threatens

Unless the two great factions in our country, represented by Protestant and Catholic, Klansman and "KC," get together as good Americans on the common basis of the Constitution, there is likely to be great trouble in our country—trouble which easily can be averted by the practice of the Christianity which both factions profess—and by avoiding extremes of all kinds, in everything.

The Real Leaders of the Klan

The real leaders of the Klan are broad-gauge libertarians, and not in any respect bigots or fanatics.

Nun Teachers To Go

Nuns appearing in the garb of their orders in the public schools of Oregon are preparing to leave the public service. The law which bars their employment goes into effect May 24, after which they cannot appear in their nun's garb as teachers. The law forbidding religious garb was passed by the last legislature after it was shown that a number of schools in Marion and Washington counties were being taught wholly by nuns placed in their positions by boards of school directors which were wholly Catholic.

A plot has been revealed in Oregon whereby the Catholics are trying plans to place young Catholic women in the schools, having them conceal their Catholic connections, but teaching Catholic principles after they gain their positions as teachers. The National Catholic Welfare Council is behind the move and the move to train these young women already is under way.

GIFFORD PROCLAIMS KLAN'S PRINCIPLES

Fred L. Gifford graciously granted an interview, Saturday, May 26, to a representative of the Portland Telegram, which appears in full below.

The Ku Klux Klan in Oregon will withdraw from political activities—except in the matter of supporting legislative measures which are pro-Protestant—and will function in future closely along lines that are purely fraternal, with "better Americanism" as the foundation of the ritual.

"The religious and racial fight is over, so far as the Klan is concerned, and unless the other side brings it to us, we will have none of it. We will remain pro-Protestant, as we have always been, but we will not be actively anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish or anti-anything racial or religious."

This announcement was made in an interview by Fred L. Gifford, Saturday afternoon, at which time he announced his appointment as Imperial Representative, with control of all the territory west of the Rocky Mountains, and outlined the future policy of the organization.

It was confirmed and reiterated from his office this morning, when he left for Washington, D. C., where he will be in conference with other heads of the Order, considering further plans for development of the program of Klan activity as a fraternal rather than a semi-political organization.

With the ousting of Edward Young Clarke from the position of Imperial Klansman, and the accession of H. W. Evans, of Dallas, Texas, was launched the reorganization of the Ku Klux Klan, according to Mr. Gifford, and a "house cleaning" is now under way, which he believes will wipe out all of the things that brought the Klan under fire of criticism in many parts of the country in the Clarke regime.

Mr. Gifford himself has returned from the recent conference in Atlanta, with his sphere of activities extended to include all of the territory west of the Rocky Mountains, while he also retains the office of Grand Dragon of Oregon, and will make his general headquarters in Portland.

There are two other Imperial Districts, the Southern and Eastern, presided over by officials of equal rank with Mr. Gifford and in the Klan reorganization this triumvirate controls the entire United States, subject to the Imperial Palace in Atlanta.

Colonel William J. Simmons, founder of the Klan, remains little more than a figurehead, his health being completely broken, and his fortune, too, it is asserted by the faction that accuses the deposed Clarke of having manipulated Simmons, and the entire organization for his own benefit.

"We do not intend to go after Clarke, now that he is out of the organization," said Mr. Gifford, Saturday, shortly before his departure with Klan officials, after which he will remain over for the Shrine convention.

"If we made a bad bargain in letting Clarke get control, we might as well write it up under profit and loss, forget it now that he is disposed of, and play the game out the best we can."

"We are going to devote our time to developing along the lines of Americanism, tolerance and liberality. Local Klan organizations will not be permitted to have lectures given which are unauthorized by the Imperial Palace, and all of the lecturers will be handled by the national organization.

"There will be no more anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish or anti-racial lectures permitted. 'The white mask will be retained—I am one of the principal remaining boosters for its retention, by the way—but it will be retained only as lodge room regalia.

"The symbolism of the Klan is vitally bound up in this regalia and for that reason I do not believe it should be abandoned from the ritual of the fraternity."

"It cannot be used outside the lodge, however, under any circumstances, and will remain in charge of a custodian who has no authority to let it be taken from the lodge rooms.

"Any man who appears in future wearing Klan regalia outside the lodge, except in case of formal public function of the lodge, either will have stolen it or will be wearing it not as a Klansman.

"Under the Clarke regime many things crept in that have caused the Klan to be looked upon with suspicion and have aroused animosity in many places. Now that Clarke has been eliminated—after having exploited the organization for his own benefit and aggrandizement, regardless of its principles and purposes—the organization will take positive steps to wipe out the effects of many of the things that arose under that regime."

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