

## Current Topics

### Norway

The *Catholic News Service* tells us that while the Church is not absolutely free in Norway, many beneficial changes have taken place and the future looks bright. The weakest spot is the entire lack of native priests and nuns. There is a vigorous parish life now, and Catholic organisations are flourishing. Two religious congregations of men recently established themselves in Norway: the French Dominicans at Christiania, and the Picpus Fathers at Fredrikshalf. Their arrival was preceded by the coming of the Sisters of St. Joseph from Chambéry, the Grey Sisters of St. Elizabeth from Breslau, and the Sisters of St. Francis Xavier whose novitiate is at Bergen. The law against the Jesuits has, on the advice of leading Lutherans, been regarded as a dead letter pending its abrogation.

### Italy

Mussolini goes forward all the time. Having proved his strength in dealing with Communism he proceeded to tackle a still more dangerous enemy of the welfare of the State. Convinced that Masonic activities and his ideals are contradictory of each other he proposed and had passed by the Fascista Grand Council a resolution calling on Italian Freemasons who are members of the Fascisti either to give up their membership or abandon Masonry. From *America* we quote the text of the resolution and the following comment:

"Considering that late political events and certain resolutions passed by Italian Freemasons give reason to believe that the Freemasons are following a programme and are adopting methods which are in antagonism to those which absorb the entire activity of Fascismo, the Grand Council invites all Fascisti who are also Freemasons to choose to belong to the National Fascista party or to Freemasonry, because the Fascista can only recognise a discipline which is the Fascista discipline; can only recognise one hierarchy which is the Fascista hierarchy; can only recognise one obedience which is absolute, devoted and daily obedience to the heads of the Fascismo."

The decision of the Council is expected to have profound effect on the national life in Italy. Almost immediately after the resolution was officially made known, four high officials of the Government, Signori Acerbo, Dudan, Rossi, and Baldo, resigned from the Masonic lodges to which they belonged, and it is announced that many Deputies are to renounce their Masonic affiliations or give up their seats in Parliament. The action of the Fascista Grand Council is looked upon as a direct blow against the political activities of the Freemasons, who for years have considered themselves a dominant power in the State and have given strenuous support to Italian political parties and Italian Cabinets, because of their Masonic affiliations. Commenting upon the Fascista decree, the *Osservatore Romano* does not close its eyes to the difficulties it is bound to meet in its application.

From long study of the question and judging from Italy's past experiences, the *Osservatore* declares that "Masonry, through the men whom it controls in the various parties, will baulk at nothing to retain its strength." The great majority of the Italian journals expressed its approval of the Fascista resolution and declare that it will put an end to the long-standing control of the country's politics by outside influence. Writing in the *Giornale d'Italia*, Signore Farinacci, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, declares that the Fascista order strikes a blow at the Masonic groups. The Scottish Rite lodges, however, pretend that the blow is not aimed at them, and have sent out a circular, in which it is urged that all Masons who are also Fascisti, should adhere loyally to the decree of the Fascista Grand Council.

### Danger to the Church in Germany

Cardinal Schulte, and five and a half million Catholics of the occupied territory, have sent out a message to the Catholics of the whole world calling attention to the dangers that threaten them. The document states that the seeds of hatred now being sown by the renewed conditions of war will make reconciliation in a Christian spirit impossible. German Catholicism has already suffered severely in the loss of the mission fields and in the separation of Catholic districts, and the danger now imminent threatens the ruin of the work so laboriously accomplished by the Church through centuries. Catholic hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions are in danger. The document goes on to say:

At a time when vigorous action was being taken against the social evil German Catholics must stand by helpless and see a whole series of Catholic parishes forced to establish houses of ill fame at the cost of their own taxpayers, a condition of affairs which German women regard as an unheard-of outrage against Christian womanhood and the honor of German women. It must arouse loathing and disgust that the very first measures taken by the French forces on their invasion of the Ruhr, was directed towards the establishment of such houses. To this is added the indignity that a Catholic population whose Christianity dates back almost to the Early Church, must behold itself guarded by the bayonets of uncivilised, pagan and Mohammedan soldiers.

The appeal next addresses itself to all men who stand for justice, peace, and reconciliation, calling their attention to the misery and starvation which now claim their victims throughout all Germany, but in a very particular way among the Catholics of the Rhenish provinces, in consequence of the occupation. These are the questions it asks:

Has the world any concept of the starvation existing in numberless families? Does it know how many children die of under-nourishment or premature maladies: how many mothers, exhausted and languishing, no longer can supply their children with nature's food; how many aged men and women sink into the grave through sheer privation? Does the world know the anguish of so many ancient families, now gradually impoverished and forced to sell to foreign countries for a mere trifle their cherished possessions, that for a time they may still be supplied with at least the most elemental necessities of food and clothing? Is it known how German art and science, which surely accomplished much for human progress, are hopelessly declining because they have not even the most indispensable means for their continuance?

The engulfing waves of the misery of an entire people rise ever higher and a storm that will be destructive of all things is menacing even now, a storm such as our unhappy country has not known since the Thirty-Years' War. The catastrophe with which we are threatened means the beginning of the end of European civilisation. Would that even, at the last moment, God might avert this doom!

We Catholics of the Rhineland who wish to adhere to peace and international reconciliation in the spirit of Christianity, who unconditionally accept the principles of justice and peace, lift up our voices to the eternal and almighty Judge of human destinies with the prayer of Benedict XV.: "Give Thou the rulers and people thoughts of peace, let the quarrels cease that now divide the nations, grant that men may again unite in love. . . and at length give the storm-tossed world once more rest and peace."

The Catholic leaders of Germany, especially the Catholic bishops, are in the most earnest and touching terms appealing to the people to keep their souls free from the spirit of hatred.

### Religious Training

Some time ago a non-Catholic magistrate told us that every day he sat on the bench convinced him more and more that the only hope of salvation for society in New Zealand was the establishment among all sects of schools like ours, in which religious training is

**Henry Scott**

No. 3 CARROLL STREET,  
(late Pier Buildings)  
Phone 3106.

PAINTER, PAPERHANGER,  
AND GLAZIER : : SIGN-  
WRITER AND DECORATOR

First-class Workmanship Guaranteed.  
House Painting and  
Beautiful Room Decoration.  
PRIORS MODERATE.