

Catholic World

FRENCH PRELATE FOR MOROCCO.

A Papal decree of July this year (says *Catholic News Service*, London) has erected French Morocco into a separate Apostolic Vicariate, whose limits conform to the political boundaries of the French Zone. The ecclesiastical title of the new jurisdiction is the Vicariate Apostolic of Rabat.

Hitherto both French and Spanish Catholics in Morocco have been under the jurisdiction of a Spanish Vicar Apostolic. But France has agitated, and at last the Holy See has granted the French wishes.

The Pontifical Brief confides the spiritual interests of the new Vicariate to Friars Minor of French nationality. An Apostolic Bull, promulgated at the same time, confers the title of titular Bishop of Orthosia and the charge of the Vicariate on Father Columban-Marie Dreyer, Procurator-General of the Franciscan Missions at Paris, who has been consecrated to the episcopate by Cardinal Dubois at the convent of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Paris.

PROPOSED NEW CATHOLIC MOVEMENT.

The establishment of a Catholic Council of Foreign Relations is proposed by the fraternal order of the Knights of St. Columba, for the purpose of facilitating exchange of information between Catholics of different countries. The proposal, made at a session of the Knights held in Birmingham University, follows along lines advocated by many Catholic societies in Continental Europe, and is one more evidence of the desire felt by Catholics to get together to safeguard civilisation. Material for the formation of such a council is ready to hand, and as many distinguished visitors from European countries pointed out, it is only the co-ordination of these various existing agencies that is needed to bring the entire Catholic world into a solid unity.

FRENCH PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES.

The French National Pilgrimage to Lourdes this year, which was more largely attended than for some time past, reports two cures of a very remarkable nature. In one case, an elderly woman, who was taken to Lourdes in a semi-conscious condition, and who for five months has been kept alive only by morphine injections, suddenly sat up in bed and declared that she was cured.

The other case is that of a young woman, a sufferer from spinal trouble, who for many months has lain in Paris supported in a plaster wrapping. After being taken down to the waters and placed therein, this patient, to the amazement of her friends, immediately arose and walked from the Grotto to the hospital of Our Lady of Lourdes.

These cures are verified by the bureau at Lourdes; but there are many other instances of cures not so verified, but which are reliably declared to have been wrought.

GREEKS WILL ACCEPT GREGORIAN CALENDAR.

After much discussion the Greek Orthodox Church is to follow in line with the Greek Government, and adopt the Gregorian Calendar. This will put an end to much confusion that would have followed had the Orthodox kept to their plan, which was to stick to the Old Style, although in secular affairs the Gregorian Calendar has been adopted.

The whole question was recently discussed at the Pan-Orthodox Congress at Constantinople. The Ecumenical Patriarch was agreeable to accepting the change, and so were the Orthodox Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria. So it is now merely a question of arrangement with the Metropolitan of Athens.

This change will mean that the Orthodox will keep Easter on the same day as the Roman and Greek Catholics, the Anglicans, and the other Christian Churches which observe the Paschal festival according to the Western computation.

The change from the Old Style to the Gregorian Calendar was made some months ago by the Greek Government.

But the Orthodox at first refused to change, and had they persisted the utmost religious confusion would have followed with nobody knowing exactly when the feast of Easter occurred.

GAELIC CENTRE FOR SCOTLAND.

The little island of Iona, that lies snugly off the west coast of Scotland and is the cradle of Christianity in the Northern Kingdom, is to be the seat of a Gaelic college, which is to be founded for the restoration of the Gaelic language, literature, and culture.

It was the Irishman, St. Columba, who first brought Christianity to Scotland. Exiled from his native land, he was bidden to seek a home where the shores of Ireland would not be visible. And setting out, he reached Iona, where he founded a monastery which was the centre for the evangelisation of the North.

Iona is not Gaelic-speaking territory, though at some of the outlying farms both Gaelic and English are spoken. But the language is not general. In other islands of the diocese of Argyll and the Isles Gaelic is the only language spoken, particularly in some of the more northerly islands, where the people have never lost the Faith and the Reformation has never penetrated even at this day.

The new Gaelic college on Iona will be under secular auspices. There are no Catholics on the island and only three or four Anglicans. The people are mostly Presbyterians, divided up into the opposite factions of Free and Established, which is not so much a matter of doctrine as of enjoying or not enjoying the ancient endowments that were filched from the Catholic Church by the Scottish Reformers.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN RUSSIA.

M. Richard Eaton, who has been visiting Russia as the special correspondent of the *Journal des Débats*, declares that the religious persecution in Russia continues unabated, in spite of the protestations of the Bolsheviks. Writing since his release from prison, M. Eaton says in his paper:

Three days after my arrival in Moscow, in spite of the permission given to me to stay two months in that city, I was imprisoned by the Cheka (espionage agency), which kept me for 48 hours in a black hole, solely because I was a newspaper correspondent. I was not freed until three weeks later, and then only following a secret message sent by a liberated prisoner.

Whilst in prison I learned the details of the anti-religious campaign, which is redolent of Oriental cruelty. After the liberation of the Patriarch Tikhon, the Bolsheviks carried out reprisals which are comparable only to the persecution of the Christians by the Roman Emperors. The Bolsheviks are afraid of the eventual influence of the Patriarch Tikhon, and they are plotting the extermination of the ancient Church. Four hundred priests were exiled to Archangel, where they are sure to die of sickness or cold, since they have neither money nor proper clothing. Three hundred priests and all the archbishops and bishops, except eight, are imprisoned, accused of counter-revolutionary activities.

I saw in the most deplorable conditions, old priests who had devoted all their lives to the service of others, sleeping on the bare ground in a miserable hovel. All they get is half a pound of black bread and some soup twice a day. Most of them are over sixty years of age. One of them who had been in a faint for more than half an hour was refused admittance to the hospital. At the daily exercise if they do not march sufficiently quickly, they are beaten by their guards and flung headlong into their cells. Yet their faith is remarkable.

I spoke with the only person who has had access to Archbishop Cieplak. For six months he has been imprisonment in a tiny cell. He is never allowed to go out, and all he gets is black bread and water.

Nor are these religious persecutions limited to ecclesiastics. All civil servants are forbidden to go to Mass, and one of my comrades, a Soviet civil servant of importance, was put into prison for having dared to attend Mass. The Last Sacraments are forbidden both in the hospitals and in the prisons, while religious instruction is also forbidden, even in the family. Half the churches in Moscow have been closed, while a third of the priests languish in prison.