

Pope's Letter on Mindszenty

VATICAN CITY, Feb. 9 (AP).—The complete text (unofficial translation) of a letter, made public today, which Pope Pius XII sent on Jan. 2 to the Hungarian bishops on the arrest of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty:

The news that our beloved son, Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, Archbishop of Strigonia, with rash daring has been arrested and removed from his see, has stricken us with profound grief, because we see in the person of this highly regarded prelate a serious offense against the sacred respect due to religion and human dignity.

Therefore conscience and duty impel us to express publicly our sorrow and lament for what has been perpetrated against the rights of the Church with the greatest sadness and indignation not only of Hungarian Catholics but also of Catholics throughout the world, and to protest solemnly against the grave offense inflicted upon the whole Church.

Praises Cardinal's Vigilance

We well know the merits of this excellent pastor; we know the tenacity and irreproachability of his faith; we know his apostolic fortitude in fostering the integrity of Christian doctrine and in safeguarding the sacred rights of religion. There certainly is no reason to accuse or dishonor him—but rather to render him high praise, since it was the responsibility of his position as a vigilant pastor that, fearless and strong in his heart, he felt it his duty to oppose when he saw that the liberties of the Church were being ever more restricted and in many ways coerced, and above all when he saw interfered with, to the great detriment of the faithful, the ecclesiastical office and ministry, which must be exercised not only in the churches but also in the open, in public manifestations of faith, in the primary and high schools, in the press, with pilgrimages to sanctuaries and with Catholic organizations.

We, desire, therefore, venerable brothers, to take active part, with paternal spirit, in your sorrow and grief; and we also desire to address you in the name of the Lord, our exhortation so that, as always you have done this, very particularly in this grave event, you will continue to follow your pastoral ministry with untiring vigor and unity of mind, heart and work, always remembering that for the liberty of the Church and its sacred and holy rights, one must endure not only labor and pain, but also the privation of life, when this is necessary.

Seeks That Example Be Set

We have full confidence that you will respond to this paternal appeal of ours with spontaneous and willing activity, and that all Catholic Hungary, so dear to us, whose history reflects glory in the annals of the Church, will be equal to itself in these troublesome and difficult events of the time and will know how, besides, to give other peoples the splendid example of Christian strength.

We well know what a perilous storm has descended upon you and on the flocks intrusted to your care; but equally well

known to us is your apostolic zeal; in equal measure your pastoral prudence and the solid unity of aims, of advice and of works is sure and tried; and also well known and proved your indomitable strength, which, based solely upon the help of God, can all conquer, can all overcome.

Uniting therefore your guidance, and putting together your strength, go forward, O venerable brothers, armed with that might which comes from Heaven and is sustained with divine grace. Do not let yourselves be led astray by those fallacious appearances of truth through which, with frauds and enticements, souls are decoyed. Your forebears, who in times past had to resist every kind of error and overcome the greatest difficulties, will teach you brilliantly that the Christian religion can be calumniated and fought, but not overcome.

Urges Prayers for Persecutors

Particularly we desire, venerable brothers, that, raising your prayers even for those who persecute you, to the Divine Redeemer and the Most Holy Mother, Patroness of Hungary, unitedly and insistently you will implore celestial light for minds darkened by error, concord and co-operation on the part of those who are divided by hate and rancor, so that finally, with the aid of divine grace, better and quieter times will come to our beloved country.

May the apostolic benediction, which we impart with the greatest affection to you, venerable brothers, to the flocks entrusted to you, and especially to those "who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matthew v, 10), contribute to and make effective this wish of ours.

Cardinal Spellman's Statement

Following is the text of the statement of Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, made yesterday concerning the life sentence imposed on Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary:

I have been asked by numberless people what is my reaction to the life sentence for Cardinal Mindszenty. First, let me say how heartened I have been by thousands of messages received from all over the nation and the world, protesting not only against the mock trial and conviction of Cardinal Mindszenty but expressing willingness and eagerness to help in this crusade to save civilization from crucifixion.

America seems at long last to have awakened to the dread, dire and imminent danger of communism! But it is imperative for our nation's salvation that the American people stay awakened and realize that the life sentence for Cardinal Mindszenty is but a death sentence; else we shall still be the tools and the fools for which the Communists take us! For the life sentence imposed on Cardinal Mindszenty is but prolonged murder!

A Living Death

According to Budapest releases, Cardinal Mindszenty's sentence is life imprisonment. But rather than an extension of life, the sentence imposed means merely an extension of living death—misery, anguish, pain, terror and torture.

Because of the world-wide protests of the peoples in free countries the Cardinal's Communist captors merely postponed his death in order to soothe back into quietude those people who stormed Heaven with their prayers and free governments with their protests. Whether the sentence be life imprisonment or death by hanging, it is still martyrdom, and the sentence imposed on the Cardinal—the sentence of living death—is worse torture upon himself, his aged mother and his flock than his immediate hanging!

On Cardinal Mindszenty Pray-

er and Protest Day I asked—"When will the American government, the American people and the leaders in all phases of American life raise their voices in one and cry out against Satan-inspired Communist crimes?" And now that the American people have raised their voices as one free voice, I beg that they be not again tricked into apathy, for I warn once again, and I warn Americans because I love America, that not until every Communist cell is removed from within our government, our own institutions, not until every democratic country is returned to democratic leadership will America herself be safe from conquest by communism. Yes, America must stay awakened if the great ransom price paid for freedom so little time ago by hosts of America's own martyred sons is not to have been in vain.

Prolonging the Agony

With their sentence of life imprisonment for Cardinal Mindszenty, the Communists are not relinquishing the death sentence—but for him prolonging the agony of it!

These tricksters and traitors to God and humanity want us to believe that the sentence imposed is fairer and lighter than the death sentence. I tell you that this sentence is far more merciless, his martyrdom is greater!

Therefore, I pray the God-loving, freedom-loving peoples of the world: Let us not fall back into the drugged state of satisfaction which is so easy to do, and with a pat upon our own shoulders say to ourselves, "Well done! We have won!" We have not won, nor shall we win until Cardinal Mindszenty again walks home in the light of day, or dark of night, through the streets of Budapest, a free, unfettered man—symbol of all free God-loving men—free to walk the highways of their home nations, free to live, work and go about their daily affairs—whether these affairs be of religion or business—without fear of persecution by Communists. Only then will the war of democracy against communism be won!

N.Y.

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