

Catholic Bishop In Philippines Lauds Work Of City Passionist

By ROBERT SCHWARTZ
Press Religion Editor

The economic stability made possible by training and self-support of tribes people in Mindinao, the Philippines, is being enhanced by the work of a Passionist priest from Pittsburgh.

That is the report of the Most Rev. Reginald Arliss, bishop of Marbel Catholic diocese in the southern Philippine island, during a visit here this week.

He was in Pittsburgh yesterday to ordain seven Passionist priests at St. Paul's Cathedral, Oakland.

In an interview he had nothing but commendation for the work of the Rev. Rex Mansmann, who went from Pittsburgh 10 years ago to work with the tribes people and establish a mission.

One of the highlights of the bishop's sojourn here, he said, was the opportunity to meet Mrs. Margaret Mansmann, Eighty-Four, Pa., mother of Father Rex and a member of St. Francis of Assisi parish, Finleyville.

It is in Bishop Arliss' diocese that Father Rex has been working against all economic odds to put the tribes people in the mountains on a self-sustaining basis.

Out of a population of about one-half million persons, Bishop Arliss said, about 400,000 of them are Christian.

Most of Father Rex's mission support comes from Pittsburgh which gives the mission about \$20,000 a year through the Santa Cruz Mission office in the Lawyers Building, downtown.

"Father Rex, one of 41 Passionists in the diocese in addition to six Philippine priests," Bishop Arliss said, "has a vocational school, training in carpentry, auto mechanics, elementary electronics, agriculture and operates a health clinic."

One of the primary problems during the early days of the mission, Bishop Arliss says, was the destitute poverty of the tribes people.

Unable to eke out a living, they were victims of more affluent people from the valleys who bought up the mountain land for a mere pittance.

But with the school established on a going basis and a "common" market set up at which only the tribal people could sell their products, including some of the finest fabrics made in the Philippines, the nationals learned it was worth while holding on to their land.

"The school helped them to earn a livelihood that would be profitable to help them help themselves rather than depend on charity. Charity is short-ranged and with little profit."

Father Rex is preparing now to replace primitively constructed buildings with more substantial structures that will sustain the work on a perpetual basis. Plans call for a new school and chapel built of brick and mortar.

"He's doing an excellent job," Bishop Arliss says. "The mission has had three or four seminarians at the college level come through its training."

And with the improvement in economic conditions, he said, the church, too, is accepted among the tribes. Those converted give up their pagan ways. They respond favorably to the teaching influence of the church.

The terrain is so difficult, Bishop Arliss said, that it is a four or five days' walk—and almost impossible to make—to where Col. Charles A. Lindbergh and a Philippine Senator found a lost tribe about a year ago.

Bishop Arliss, who spent 16 years in China until 1951, is not optimistic—"merely hopeful"—of conversations with Communist China and Russia.

He is hopeful the policy of the Communists "will become mellowed and more tolerant to those of the free world."

"Whether it's subterfuge we don't know," he says. "It's necessity and not choice that compels Communists to change attitudes. Public opinion seems favorable to them that they will go along with the free world."



—Press Photo by Donald J. Stetzer

BISHOP REGINALD ARLISS MRS. MARGARET MANSMANN
Visiting prelate scans St. Paul's Monastery.