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54 PRIESTS LISTED AS SLAIN IN ALBANIA

Catholic Agency Reports Death
of Archbishop by Torture
—19 Others Are in Jail

Special to The New York Times
ROME, March 7—Of eighty ecclesiastics who composed the Albanian Roman Catholic secular clergy at the advent of the Communist regime in November, 1944, fifty-four are known to have been killed and nineteen are in prison, according to the Catholic Fides News Agency, which quoted a "well-informed person who left Albania recently."

Among those listed as dead is Msgr. Nicholas Vincent Prennushi, Archbishop of Durazzo, who "was arrested in 1947 and died after torture and indignities," the agency said. His death must have occurred recently, since the official Catholic Yearbook for 1952 lists him as the only Albanian bishop still alive.

Several of the ecclesiastics killed were tortured, the Catholic agency said. Speaking of tortures, it declared, "We mention only some: breaking of bones, cutting into muscles and rubbing salt into wounds, immersing the feet in scalding water, causing the victim to stand immersed to his neck in filth of a septic tank, application of hot irons to various parts of the body, electric shock. We prefer not to mention some of the tortures."

The report added that "the revolution devours some of its own in Albania, too." In this connection it mentioned the case of Lieut. Pierin Keira, former member of the security police in Scutari, who was condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment. After his sentence he rose in court and accused the Communists of obliging him to "in-

vent" evidence against the Catholic clergy.

"You obliged me to go out at night to conceal arms in their churches and convents so that you could find justification for destruction of the clergy and the Catholic churches," he was reported to have said. "I declare before the whole Albanian people that I carried out your orders with great exactness and secrecy, but since you have no pity on me I wish these things to be known publicly."

The agency said that after a telephone call to Tirana, the Albanian capital, the court had condemned Lieutenant Keira to death. He was shot and his body was thrown into the very ditch into which he himself had thrown the bodies of innocent murdered priests, the service said.

This document is part of an integrated file. If separated from this file it must be subjected to individual systematic review.