

7/29/66



"Father" William E. Riker, 93, who for 48 years led a white supremacist religious cult in Holy City in the Santa Cruz mountains between Santa Cruz and Los Gatos, kisses the hand of the Rev. Henry Tomei. Rik-

er yesterday was baptized a Roman Catholic in Los Gatos. He says Roman Catholicism is the "most Christian" church. Godfather Mike Steffani looks on. (AP Wirephoto)

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'Father' Riker Of Holy City Becomes A Roman Catholic

"Father" William E. Riker, leader of his own church and founder of Holy City in the Santa Cruz mountains, just off Highway 17, has merged with the Catholic church.

The Rev. Henry Tomei, of St. Mary's church in Los Gatos, baptized the 93-year-old invalid in brief ceremonies yesterday.

Riker for 48 years was the leader of the Perfect Christian Divine Way, Inc., with headquarters in Holy City, a small hamlet created by and for his few followers.

Back in 1918 he led a band of disciples into the mountains and preached his own doctrine, setting himself up as "father."

"I've spent the past 40 or 50 years in great meditation," he said. "It terminated in what happened today. I'm very proud of it," he said yesterday.

Confined to a wheelchair as the result of a stroke, he was accompanied by Mike Steffani, and his mother, Mrs. Edward Steffani, both friends of Father Tomei, who acted as Riker's godparents.

Riker said that "three months ago I had a vision regarding Catholic nuns and it dawned on me they were the spiritual wives of the Savior.

"Virtually all my great endeavors of the past have led to this. I am going to work to bring back all Christian people into the Catholic church," he said.

Witnessing the baptism were two of Riker's first disciples, Irving B. Fisher, 85, who has followed Riker since 1913, and Stephen Rozum, 81, who trained for the Catholic priesthood in Poland before joining Riker in 1916.

Riker ran for governor in 1946, but got nowhere.

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KNIGHTS JOIN FOR MASS

Members of the Santa Cruz and Cabrillo councils of the Knights of Columbus are asked to gather in front of Star of the Sea Church, 515 Frederick street, at 9 a.m. Sunday, to attend mass and communion together at 9:15 a.m. A group breakfast at Spivey's, on the corner of Water and Ocean streets, will follow.