

Grid Fame Wanes

New York — (RNS) — Only five American Catholic universities are playing what is considered "big-time" football today, it was noted here in an article in the September issue of Information, a monthly magazine issued by the Paulist Fathers.

The enormous expense of maintaining a major football program at Catholic universities, plus poor attendance at games, year-round competition from other sports which used to be seasonal, and the televising of professional football, were among the reasons given for the decline.

Within the past 10 years, the article observed, several Catholic colleges throughout the country either have dropped football entirely or have reduced it to a minor sport in their intercollegiate athletic programs.

The five still playing big-time football were listed as Notre Dame, Boston College, Holy Cross, Villanova and Detroit University.

The sport, information said, has been dropped at such former football greats as Marquette, Fordham, Georgetown, Catholic University and Duquesne.

The Paulist publication quoted Father Paul L. O'Connor, S.J., president of Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, as suggesting that the current decline in the sport at Catholic schools might be remedied if "colleges seek direct support from those they benefit the most by continuing football — namely, the professional teams."

Without financial support from outside the schools, he said, the future of intercollegiate football in Catholic colleges looks bleak.

"If the colleges drop their programs," Father O'Connor said, "the professional teams would have to establish costly minor league systems in order to keep up their present high quality of performance."

Poland Faces New Wave of Oppression

Warsaw — (RNS) — All schools and orphanages run by Roman Catholic religious orders in Communist Poland will be taken over by the Education Ministry within a year, it was disclosed here by a spokesman for the government's Office of Religious Cults.

The takeover will be carried out under a law enacted last year prohibiting nuns and monks from teaching school, the spokesman said. Orphanages, he added, are being placed in the hands of so-called "patriotic priests."

Asked to comment on the recent pastoral from Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, who denounced the closing of convents and nurseries in the Warsaw area, the spokesman denied that brutality was used in the evictions.

He said officials had strict instructions to be gentle, but that there had been cases when nuns barricaded their doors and force had to be used.

In the cardinal's pastoral, there was severe censure of the action of several "patriotic priests" in being present at the closing of the convents and nurseries.

ASKED WHY they were there, the spokesman said that orphanages and children's homes would now be coming under the care of Caritas, an organization to which the "patriotic" priests belong.

Caritas has been condemned by the Catholic hierarchy in Poland.

Citing an example of where force was used to evict nuns, the spokesman referred to an incident in Mlody, five miles north of Warsaw, where nuns barricaded the door, rang bells and shouted to the people for help.

"Members of religious orders were never thrown out on the street," he declared, saying they had been taken to houses of other religious communities where, he claimed, there was "room to spare."

OTHER REPORTS from non-governmental sources said nuns and monks had been made literally homeless and that in some sections, members of religious orders have been offering themselves as domestic servants and laborers.

The spokesman said 17 schools out of 50 and 30 orphanages out of 480 remained in the care of religious orders.

"They will be taken over gradually," he said, "but some schools remain open longer than a year until children study, and then finish their course."



MOTHER MARY VERONICA Pioneer Foundress and First Superior General BERNARDINE SISTERS O.S.F.

In the Vineyard

The Bernardine Sisters, O.S.F. . . . The first foundation of the Bernardine Sisters in the United States was made in 1894, by Mother M. Veronica and her four companions who had come from Poland where the community was in existence since the fifteenth century. The Sisters based their rule on the Third Order Rule of St. Francis, influenced by the reform brought into Poland by St. John Capistran, a disciple of St. Bernardine. Because the Sisters attended divine services celebrated in a church dedicated to Saint Bernardine near their convent, the people began to call them the Bernardine Sisters. The small group of pioneer Sisters who came to America has grown into a community of hundreds reaching out across the length and breadth of the United States and south of the Equator to far off Brazil. They staff grade and high schools, hospitals and take care of orphans, the poor and aged, and do social service.

Silent World Behind Wall

Cleveland — (NC) — It's what you don't hear — the unearthly stillness and quiet — that impresses you most about East Berlin, said Notre Dame Sister Mary Sean, instructor at Notre Dame College here.

Sister Sean has returned here after studying at University of Muenster and had made two trips into East Berlin, the second a private walking trip to some of the museums.

On the first trip, she said, she got the "red carpet" tourist deal reserved for foreigners which were restricted to the middle of the city.

On the second, she was struck by the "unearthly stillness" of the people and city, the barbed wire fences, police watchtowers, and sawdust trails on which potential escapees can be more easily traced and seen, and shot. She added:

"On the western side of the wall—the wall of shame—I had noticed someone had scrawled the giant letters 'KG', the German designation for concentration camp. And for certain, when you go into the eastern zone, you feel like you are in a huge KG."

"No one can trust anyone else. Even the border guards do not trust each other. The same two guards are never stationed together more than once. And no guard serves too often at the same spot."

The stillness of East Berlin, Sister Sean concluded, is in sharp contrast to the friendliness of the West sector where people on casual walks stop and chat with everyone they meet.

Russian-born Priest

Kidnapped or Homesick?

Brussels — (RNS) — News papers in this city continue to debate whether the Russian-born Catholic priest Jean Kornievsky returned to the Soviet Union of his own free will or did so under constraint.



FATHER KORNIIVSKY 'do not judge'

Father Jean, as he was known, was assistant chaplain at the Russian Catholic Mission in Brussels. On Aug. 3 he disappeared in Helsinki, Finland, during the Communist-organized World Youth Festival.

The Finnish government has officially stated that he cleared Helsinki customs after the usual formalities on Aug. 4 on board the Soviet Aeroflot plane serving the Helsinki-Leningrad-Moscow route. Some days later, a letter in his handwriting postmarked Helsinki, Aug. 7, was received in Brussels.

Father Kornievsky's associates are steadfast in their belief that some form of pressure or blackmail was used to persuade him to return to the Soviet Union. He has a father and other relatives in the U.S.S.R.

IN ANSWER to Belgian journalists who put forward the theory of "homesickness" to explain the strange and mysterious event, his intimates declare that while Pere Jean loved his country and his country, he never displayed symptoms indicating unhappiness. Nevertheless, the Soviet agents were sufficiently sure of themselves to take their victim by public transportation.

Whether Father Jean would have made resistance had he been interrogated probably will never be known. The Helsinki police arrived at the airport half an hour too late.

The hypothesis of homesickness is supported by the letter which begins with the words, "I leave for the fatherland." The priests of the Russian Catholic Mission (Foyer Oriental Chretien) argue, on the contrary, that the very existence of the letter is proof that the Communist captors of Pere Jean wished to create the impression of a free departure. The Soviet police are not in the habit of acceding to last minute sentimental wishes, such as a letter of farewell, without an ulterior purpose.

THE SOVIETS, in fact, seem to have overreached themselves in their attempt to create the impression that Father Kornievsky left the West of his own accord. One Brussels newspaper, La Dernière Heure (organ of the liberal party), quoted East German sources alleging that the priest had applied in East Berlin for a 30-day visa for the U.S.S.R. The members of the Brussels mission scoff at this crude and palpable try at sowing confusion. It is easily proved that Father Kornievsky, before and after his disappearance, could not have been in Berlin (East or West).

To further strengthen the case for the "kidnap" theory, Father Jean point to the record of abduction and high-handed procedure by Red agents during the Helsinki youth meeting, of which many persons were eyewitnesses.

The Brussels press, consisting of nine priests and a number of lay persons, were the object of particular harassment. The places where the members lived were observed by unknown persons. Their photographs were snapped by passersby on the Helsinki permit sterilization of persons with mental illnesses, also followed. And, most important of all, before Father Jean's disappearance, one of the women members of the group barely escaped being pushed into a waiting car by a Russian who had pretended to be interested in religion.

The Finnish police, tardy in taking their alarm seriously, implicitly admitted the legitimacy of their fears by finally providing them with police protection in the days following Father Jean's disappearance.

THE KREMLIN had reasons for harassing the Brussels group in general and Father Jean in particular. The Russian Catholic Mission had labored during the Brussels World Fair in 1958 to bring religious literature in Russian to the attention of Soviet visitors, with great success.

During the Vienna youth festival three years ago, Father Jean and his colleagues performed the same work of religious zeal. The team which wished to Helsinki for the recent World Youth Festival sought particularly to contact young Soviet delegates. Father Jean, the only native Russian in his group, was conspicuous in this work. He became a marked man, and there is every reason to suppose that the orders went out from Moscow to entrap him by one means or another.

Father Jean Kornievsky was born in Omsk, Siberia, in 1910. Though he was never a militant atheist, he was educated in the Soviet antireligious schools and

became religiously indifferent. Serving in the Red Army during the war, he was taken prisoner and, when the war ended, did not return to the Soviet Union. In 1947 he came to Belgium and worked in the coal pits as a miner.

It was at this time that his revived interest in religion led him to contacts with the Catholic Church. He decided to become a priest and was ordained in 1955 after studies at the Russicum in Rome. He came to the Brussels mission in 1957.

In his letter — a pathetic and dramatic piece of paper torn from a schoolboy's composition book — he wrote: "I return to the Fatherland. Farewell. Do not judge. Thanks for all the good you have done. Pray for my cross." Then followed a few words concerning the status of book purchases which he had made. The letter closed with the blessing: "May God's blessing be upon you, Jean."

Father Kornievsky's friends in Brussels stress the point that a religious allusion appears twice in this missive. In their eyes, he wished, in the last minute, to communicate to them his unflinching belief in God, against the possibility that one day Soviet propagandists may try to contend that Father Jean returned to the U.S.S.R. because he had lost faith in God. If there are many mysteries and puzzles in the Kornievsky case, this is not one of them.

Tensions Eased In Puerto Rico

Notre Dame — (RNS) — The strained relations between the Puerto Rican government and the Catholic Church, which burst into controversy in 1960, are improving, according to Bishop Alvaro Mendez of Aricebo, Puerto Rico.

In his own newly-formed diocese, the bishop said there has been a 20 per cent increase in Church facilities in two years. "I don't pretend to say that we have adequate religious education at present," he added, pointing out that only 4,000 Catholic children are in parochial schools, while 100,000 more are in public schools.

BECAUSE OF the shortage of priests and nuns in his diocese, Bishop Mendez said the hierarchy has begun a program of educating laymen to assist in giving religious instructions. "Cursosillos," or very short courses, are the immediate solution to the problem of providing religious education to more than 640,000 Catholics in the Aricebo diocese alone.

Bishop Mendez said he hopes laymen eventually will be allowed to administer baptism to believe priests facing "overwhelming" duties.

'Blasphemy' In Churches

Buffalo — (RNS) — Delegates attending the 25th annual meeting of the Catholic Art Association here heard one of its officers condemn the "blasphemy of ugliness" in some of today's churches.

Graham Carey of Boston, chairman of the association's Advisory Board and editor of Good Work, the group's magazine, said a main objective of the association is to arrive at an "authentic philosophy of art to guide us as Christian artists and help us eliminate the blasphemy of ugliness from our churches."

This "blasphemy is due almost wholly to commercialism, an inordinate concern with profit," he said, "but aestheticism, or inordinate concern with thrill and with reputation, is another side of secularism equally dangerous."

"Both commercialism and aestheticism are perversions of normal art, where the maker's first motive is to make a needed thing as well as possible. Money and pleasure and reputation are good things . . . to be enjoyed. But when they become a primary motive for working, the workman ceases to serve God and neighbor and becomes a servant of himself."

Pontiff Calls For Loyalty

Hannover — (RNS) — Pope John XXIII, in a message to some 230,000 persons at the closing rally of the 79th German Catholic Day Congress (Katholikentag) here, urged German Catholics to remain steadfast in their faith and "frankly profess their loyalty to the Church."

He also called on the faithful to "resist uncompromisingly all temptations of egotistic, materialistic and opportunistic thinking." At the same time the pontiff said West German Catholics should thank God for the "grace" to be able to make their professions of faith in a free country.

Pope John expressed his gratitude to German Catholics for their campaign against hunger and sickness throughout the world and for their aid to the Latin American Church.

U.S. Air Force Names Priest

Washington — (RNS) — A Catholic chaplain, decorated in both World War II and Korea, has been named Deputy Chief of Chaplains for the U.S. Air Force.

Ches. 49, currently command chaplain for the U.S. Security Service Headquarters, San Antonio, Tex., will be promoted to Brigadier General Sept. 1.

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