

# Priest Reports on Visit Behind Iron Curtain

**Father William Amann of Our Lady of Mercy parish, Greece, took a springtime tour into Iron Curtain countries, including close to a week in Moscow. This is the last in a series of articles reporting his trip.**



A Berlin couple, friends of Father William Amann of Rochester, live in shadow of East Berlin Wall and guard-towers of Communist controlled East Germany.

A long ride thru Moscow to the airport, then customs, passport check, where the girl said, "You can go up now; they are waiting for you." I had visions of the plane ready to leave ahead of time and waiting for me. I hurried to the International Flight deck — no plane. What she meant was that I would have to wait — and for six hours — there in that room. After 45 minutes the announcement came that flight 601 for East Berlin was delayed, new departure time 6 p.m.—5 hours late—no reason given or would be. I spoke with some East Germans—all seemed resigned — as if this were common occurrence. We were treated to a substantial steak dinner at 3 p.m. in the waiting room restaurant, and I made use of the flying privilege to eat it on Friday.

There was a long, long line of huge Aeroflot jets on the apron of the airfield, but our flight, an Interflug turbojet, left at 6:30. I noticed a man taking movies, rather closeup of all who boarded planes. We flew at about 400 mph nonstop over beautiful country — lakes, over Russia, Poland, and East Germany, landing at East Berlin's Schonfeld Airport, about 10 p.m. (8 p.m. Europe time). It was a feeling of great relief to be out of Russia, even if in East Berlin, because you knew you were close to West Berlin. I began filling out forms for East Berlin. When it was discovered I wouldn't stay long in East Berlin, the procedure was simplified for a transit visa. I was supposed to be met by a transfer car to take me to West Berlin, but no one there knew anything about it. Later I found that the car had been there for me at noon when I was first scheduled to arrive, the driver was informed that the plane was delayed and they didn't know when I'd be in.

The information girl was kind — took me to a guarded airport van, and arranged with the driver to have me dropped off in West Berlin at Tempelhof Airport. I could inquire about my transfer side there.

Crossing the Wall took time, soldier police boarded, examined everything and everybody, and it's all there: the road barricades, the barbed wire with the searchlights, watchtowers, guards with automatic rifles, etc. But what a relief to get back to the West and to freedom. Everybody a udibly breathed and laughed easier. It was good to see light after darkness, joy after gloom, and even the gaudy advertising of the neon lights, so colorful looked so cheery — and a German from the back laughed aloud as he read, "Ah, Coca Cola." From Tempelhof Airport, I took a cab to my West Berlin Hotel Am Zoo.

I went back to East Berlin Saturday, April 2, to get the complete tour. At Checkpoint Charlie, the bus was delayed an hour, standard procedure, while everything was inspected by the Communist side. It isn't difficult for an American passport to cross — but delays are inevitable. There an East Berlin driver and guide took over the bus. Passengers had to disembark first to walk over a disinfecting rug, because they said a "hoof-and-mouth" disease was about. By this time I had become quite used to the propaganda line of the Communist guides — sometimes it was sad, other times childishly funny.

Most of the tour goes over the deliberate showplaces, but it is not hard at all to see down other streets the desolation — still ruins of World War II, the gloom of the people.

It isn't hard to see either why they built die Mauer, the ugly Wall. Back through the Wall, the border guards even use a mirror on wheels to check the undercarriage of cars and buses for escapes.

In West Berlin that evening I visited some people who lived a block away from the Wall. He told me of gunfire they occasionally hear beyond the Wall during the night. We walked to the Wall, and immediately the East Berlin guard atop the watchtower focused his binoculars on us. "Es soll nicht sein — it shouldn't be," I kept commenting. "Nein, and the same people — both Germans — so divided," added my friend. What a false idea, what propaganda, what stifling the truth can do to people.

As I strolled through the brightly-lighted West Berlin Kurfurstendamm St., crowded with Easter shoppers that evening, as we flew the corridor from Berlin to Amsterdam the next day, then jetted back to the U.S., I reflected on my dip and plunge, brief as it was.

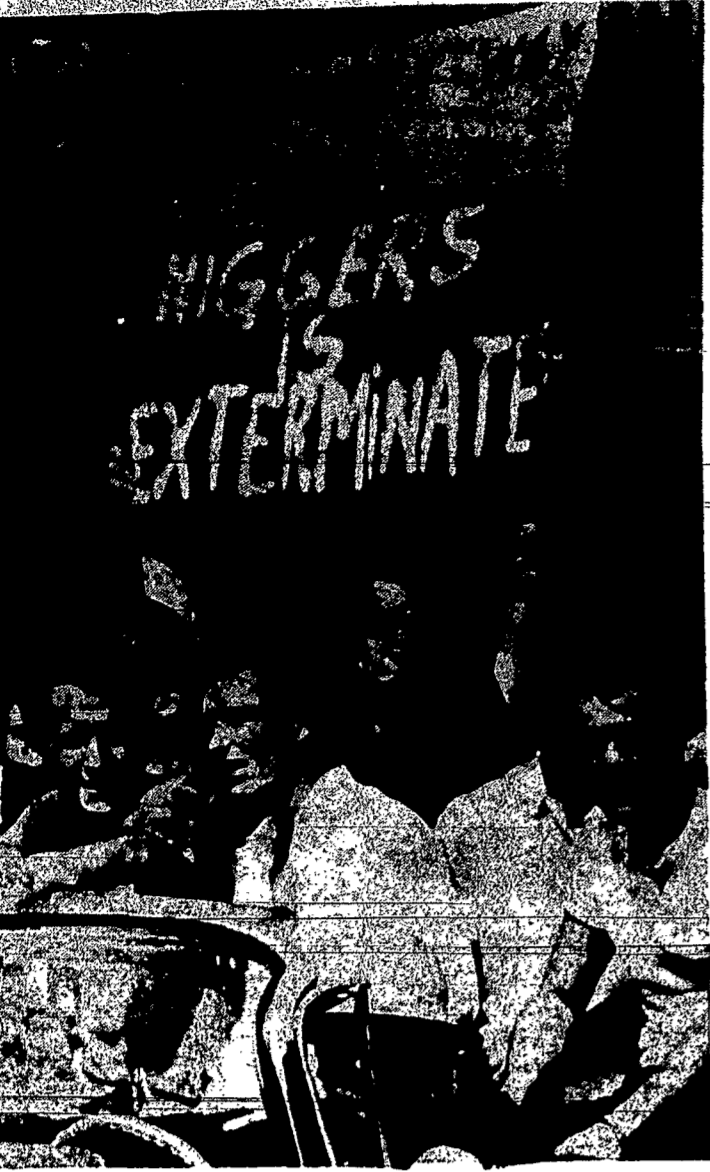
People are good — especially in Russia did I find that so interesting, friendly, and most interested in the West. They know what their leaders want them to know and are able to read only their government newspapers, to watch government TV, to listen to government radio. On the streets, terminals, public places all over, through PA systems, they are constantly reminded of the Party, its achievements, and the "glory of the people. Their official "god" is the future economic and material prosperity of Mother Russia and the Soviets, tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow. They are content and happy, because they are told they are much better off than their ancestors, and their children will have it even better yet. They evoke at once your impatience and your sympathy.

But to this visiting American there was the oppressive and depressive feeling of being surrounded by a deeply, if not bitterly at least strongly, anti-American system of government; and a difference that could still be a powder keg.

To the visiting American priest — the gloom and weight is even more oppressive. To see not only the red banner in place of the red, white and blue — but the image of Lenin all over — as if revered and adored, — and the hammer and sickle on everything — the sym-

bol not only ignores God but indicates an anti-God sentiment as an official policy of such a powerful government.

The good and bad of Russia — what can one say? One wonders how they have done as well as they have — without God — At the same time, one recalls the Psalm "Unless the Lord build the House, they labor in vain who build it." I conclude, "Christ, come back to Russia. Mother of Christ, help Mother Russia," a prayer I say frequently these days as I recall my visit to Moscow.



Young Chicagoans, many of them Catholics, indicate their interpretation of Christ's words, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another."

## One Explanation Isn't Enough

The most eloquent endorsement of the Catholic Church's new liturgy came from mellifluous Senator Everett M. Dirksen in a brief television interview following Luci-Johnson's wedding at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington last Saturday.

The Senator, in his deep, distinct, stentorian tones, said the Church's new rituals enabled him to follow the Mass and wedding ceremony word for word and that it was most impressive and inspiring to him.

Other prominent government leaders made similar comments.

Catholics, however, in large numbers, are not as enthusiastic.

A woman phoned the Courier this week to ask the address of Father Gomar DePauw's Traditionalist Movement headquarters because she wanted to contribute to his efforts to reverse the current changes in Church ceremonies. Asked if she had talked to a priest to learn why the Church was making the changes, she said yes she had and the priest admitted he didn't much like them either and added his comment that he didn't read the Courier anymore because it obviously was one-sided in favor of them.

Her call came immediately after a man had expressed similar befuddlement, but after an explanation of the Church's centuries-long efforts to keep its rituals meaningful for all, he was able to see at least the reasons for the changes.

These two are not the only Catholics disturbed and confused. The poll the Courier took of its readers earlier this summer shows a significantly high percentage of Catholics either unimpressed or actually opposed to the new liturgy.

And it is not only in the quiet of the sanctuary that Catholics have failed to comprehend the direction the Church guides them.

The cursing, brick-throwing mobs in Chicago — in an area dominantly Catholic — are frightening proof that the Church's doctrine that God created all men to be brothers and that Christ shed His blood to redeem all men and that in the Church there can be no barriers dividing those who are made one family by baptism — this doctrine was shattered in as many fragments as the bottles thrown in hate this past weekend.

Stupidity, stubbornness, sin, muddle are, after all, not novelties nor are they likely to stop tomorrow. There will continue to be Catholics who will refuse to open their minds to any kind of change — be it in liturgy or housing or any other aspect of life.

Normally, however, we could expect such recalcitrants to be a negligible minority but there is mounting evidence that Catholics in increasing numbers are either not hearing what the Church is trying to tell them, or if they hear it, then they reject it if it disturbs their personal preference.

And if such is the case must we not ask ourselves if such people have ever even been actually Catholics at all?

We suspect that, as in most cases, the answer is somewhere midway between not hearing and not accepting.

Our clergy apparently assume that an explanation once given is sufficient. Now we know it isn't — that explanations have to be repeated many times and in many ways. Most Catholics, like most people, are not perfect, but they are reasonable and once the Church's teachings are reasonably presented, we are convinced our Catholic people will respond, as they have in the past, with enthusiasm.

—Father Henry A. Atwell



War-wrecked church still in ruins in East Germany.



Brandenburg Gate beyond hated Wall

## Vatican Begins Dialogue With World's Humanists

Paris — (RNS) — Another major boost to a developing dialogue between Roman Catholics and humanists was seen here when the Vatican sent an observer to the 10-day congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. The IHEU has its headquarters in Utrecht, Holland, and is composed of 27 national organizations.

The Vatican observer was Father Vincenzo Miano, S.D.B., secretary of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians created by Pope Paul VI in April, 1965, with Franz Cardinal Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, as its president. Father Miano, a member of the Salesian order, is dean of the faculty of philosophy at the order's pontifical university in Rome.

First international meeting of Catholics and humanists took place in May at Amerstroot, Holland. Participants discussed,

among other things, whether secular humanists had enough in common with religious folk to make cooperative effort meaningful.

Commenting on the presence of the Vatican observer, IHEU chairman Dr. J. P. Van Praag, professor of Humanist philosophy at Leden University, Holland, said the Union had had explorative discussions with Catholics in 25 countries in order to "learn to know respective points of view in all sincerity."

"We realize," he said, "that the modern point of view in the Catholic Church makes it possible for us to discuss problems together with respective understanding. We do not discuss theology in our encounters but we agree that humanity is now in a new position. Our opinions on concrete realizations are much closer than is generally believed."



Russians queue up for Moscow bus.

## Who Speaks for Poor on Committee to Battle Poverty?

By GARY MacEOIN

I happened to be in Quebec when the news came through that its archbishop, Maurice Cardinal Roy, had been entrusted with an important new job. Pope Paul had named him to head a committee charged with implementing two major decisions of the Council.

Its first task is to recommend the forms and functions of a central secretariat for the lay apostolate and councils for clerical-lay cooperation at the international, national, and diocesan levels (Article 26 of the decree on the Apostolate of the Laity). Its second is to recommend the forms and functions of the agency to promote justice for the poor of the world, and to work with other Christians to create conditions that will bring peace to the world (Article 90 of the constitution on the Church in the Modern World).

The choice of Cardinal Roy was hailed enthusiastically not only by his own people in Quebec but, as I learned in subsequent days in Ottawa and Toronto, by Canada's English-speaking Catholics as

well. The 61-year-old prelate in his 19 years as archbishop of Quebec has established himself as a straightforward and down-to-earth man who reads intelligently the signs of the times.

He is responsible in no small measure for the current projection of Quebec into the mainstream of Canadian life. Only last month he declared forthrightly that in today's pluralistic society, the Catholic Church's traditional monopoly of education in Quebec is no longer justifiable.

The membership of Cardinal Roy's committee has, however, been greeted with considerably more reserve. His two vice-presidents are long-time members of the Roman Curia. I cannot recall or discover that Archbishop Alberto Castelli made any concrete contribution to the conciliar debates. Bishop Achille Gionoux figured briefly, if not gloriously, in the headlines last November, when as secretary of a subcommittee he failed to submit for its consideration 200 amendments made by Council Fathers to a text it was revising.

The members of the committee are rather more difficult to evaluate. All four

are lay people, and I guess we should call that a breakthrough. They are also very worthy people, known for their years of service to the Church: Vittorio Veronese was long prominent in Italian Catholic Action and later head of the lay apostolate movement. Then, after a brief period as head of Unesco, he returned to what some might still describe as service of the Vatican as a director of the Bank of Rome.

Rosemary Goldie, an Australian, is Veronese's successor in the lay apostolate. Auguste Vanistendael, a Belgian, is secretary general of the International Federation of Christian Trades Unions. The name of Johannes Schaul (a German) is new to me, but I understand that he is an official of Caritas or Misereor and thus engaged in the impressive work for the world's poor conducted by the German bishops.

A Catholic editor 25 years my junior dismissed the whole group contemptuously as members of "the old guard," when I asked him what he thought of them. I cannot agree that we who bore the heat and burden of the long pre-conciliar day

should not be entitled to our equal share of the rewards. I do, however, accept his underlying premise, namely, that a group aged 50-plus and imbued with the pre-conciliar institutional attitudes, is not representative of today's Church.

What disturbs me still more deeply is the total absence of representation, clerical or lay, of "The Third World." The Council, in its decree on the Church's missionary activity, has just proclaimed the end of religious imperialism and the urgent need to incarnate the Church in every culture.

How then can we justify the expert to Asia, Africa and Latin America of forms and concepts of the lay apostolate based exclusively on European thought and experience? And can we promote justice for the world's poor while keeping them in their traditional place on the outside?

Finally, am I simply a dreamer, if I think that a committee which seeks to enlist the cooperation of other Christians in the search for peace should include at least one representative of those we want to engage in dialogue?

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100TH BIRTHDAY will roll around feast of the parish built in 1882.

## Head Start Jet

When you graduate Head Start school, you to move up — to kindergarten.

The 7-week summer for 1,080 pre-schoolers Rochester area aims to youngsters a "head-start" their first form.

"Graduates" of Start project stand a way they adapt to kindergarten to primary grade.

"Teachers tell us" a big difference between those who had training and others. Mercy Sister M. Joan co-director for the straight summer of ester area program.

## Nine Appointments To KC Post By State H

A diocesan priest other Knights of the Diocese are included in the appointments of the new St. James E. Foley of

Cardinal Spellman chaplain, Monsignor Schuffelmeier, Bronx, state chaplain; Bis. A. Donnellan of Og State Prior of You Gerald T. Conn pastor of St. Ann C. nell, is associate at Youth.

Lay appointment Paul G. Rombaut of the Diocese Council state chairman of cal committee.

Area district de 85th District, John Owego; 86th, John Ithaca; 87th, Paul Corning; 82nd, Jos Waterloo; 93rd, Schenk. Rochester Victor A. DeSimon



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