



Techny, Ill. — (RNS) — Two Protestant monks from the Taize community in France hold a Holy Communion service in the chapel of the Divine Word Seminary, Techny, Ill. The service, by Brother Jacques and Brother Christopher, ended a day-long retreat they led for 29 Christian clergy in the Chicago area. The Taize Brothers, dedicated to Christian unity, have formed an interreligious community in Chicago which includes two Franciscan priests.

God's World

# Taize Monks In Chicago

By DENNIS J. GEANEY, O.S.A.

For several years I had heard about the Brothers of Taize. It is a unique ecumenical community of men of many Christian denominations, who give witness by their way of life to both the hope and the reality of Christian unity. I recently had the privilege of visiting with them in their first American house in the heart of a Negro ghetto in Chicago. They are celibates who share all their possessions and accept the authority of the local Prior. They meet three times a day for prayer. They work themselves through work in stores, offices, or factories.

The occasion for my visit was an invitation to the local clergy to join the community for an afternoon and evening of conversation, common prayer and a meal. It was an opportunity for the brothers to explain and interpret their way of life to us. Although the brother who was the discussion leader was German born, Taize is a town in France from which this community has sprung.

What seemed to impress the brother was our quick response, both to their invitation to join them and our eagerness and openness in discussing Christian unity. He attributed it to our American pragmatic genius to find ways and means of achieving unity in our civic community as well as in religiously orientated relationships. This seemed obvious to us given our melting pot tradition and the green light given us by Pope John, Vatican II, and the encouragement of American bishops.

I would like to comment on two points that struck me during our free-wheeling interchange. At one juncture, the discussion leader interrupted by saying that he was very much surprised at how often we used the word "experience." We were using the word in a Protestant context and a part of their heritage about which they are not happy. He said that Protestants have too long looked for a good feeling to come from a service which they called an "experience." For many, the absence of this warm inner glow was the absence of an encounter with God. This, he said, puts one's prayer life on a pretty shaky emotional basis. When our feelings take precedence over our convictions, we are in trouble. We would be inclined to deprecate our attempts at prayer when we are not emotionally in high gear.

The Taize brother's comment gives us pause as the Church is shifting from the rigid liturgical forms which were frozen in their molds in the 18th century to our present thaw which all

## Carthusians In Vermont

Bennington—(NC)—The first Carthusian monastery in the United States will be built some 20 miles north of here. The 7,000-acre property, known as Mount Equinox, is the estate of Dr. J. G. Davidson, retired vice president of Union Carbide.

The Carthusians, established in Europe 600 years ago, took up residence in a temporary monastery in the United States in 1950. At present two Fathers and two Brothers serving here receive American applicants into the order. Candidates are sent to Europe for novitiate and training.

There are now 16 Americans in Charterhouses in France, England, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. Upon completion of the Vermont Charterhouse, the Americans will return to form the nucleus of the new community.

## Priests for Tomorrow

### The Minor Seminary

By FATHER LOUIS J. HOHMAN  
Diocesan Director of Vocations

As with so many other things, the value of a minor seminary has been called into serious question in recent years. We are speaking of the minor seminary as a ground of careful nurturing and testing which is still a six year school — four years high school and two years college.

The questioning of the minor seminary revolves around two questions: Can a young man at age fourteen make a serious and valid commitment to the priesthood? If a boy attends a minor seminary, is he not deprived of basic life experiences, and therefore becomes "out of touch" with life as it is? Unfortunately these questions cannot be answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." The particular structure of the minor seminary will modify the answers considerably.

Let's grapple with the first question: At what age is a boy able to make a valid vocational choice?

Father Eugene Kennedy in his book, "The Genius of the Apostolate," cites a research program of Columbia University which came to the conclusion that at age fourteen, some boys were quite capable of making a firm choice, and furthermore it would be a mistake for them to have that choice delayed.

The problem with this is the word "some." Which ones would they be? Can we predetermine the choice or must we simply wait until ordination and point them out with hindsight? Would they comprise a very small minority of boys who enter the minor seminary or a significant percentage?

There are priests today who know they made a solid commitment even in their minor seminary days. These men usually defend the existence of the minor seminary with great vigor. But how many are there? I suspect relatively few, in which case we would be right back where we started from.

Now however, let's suppose that we have a minor seminary which is not looking for a firm commitment to the priesthood in early adolescence. Let's say that this minor seminary exists fundamentally as a testing ground, a place of discovery. It would be something like trying to raise a rare plant outside its ordinary habitat. (I do not use the expression "natural habitat" because if this new environment was against its very nature it will not survive at all.) A seminary is by nature a seedbed. This minor seminary of which we speak would give very special care to the spiritual development of the boy, "fertilize" his potential for loving service to mankind, and give him special exposure to the sunshine of the Holy Spirit's inspirations. At the same time, all the other aspects of his education would be developed to fullest possible potential. He may or may not eventually opt in favor of the priesthood. Whether he did or not, nothing would be lost.

Right now, the Catholic Church is going through a reformation. The Protestants have gone through one and they know from sad experience that reformers in their zeal, too often throw out the baby with the dirty water. If we talk honestly with our Protestant brethren, they may help us save ourselves from ourselves.

have in many cases become not just good laymen but exceptionally loyal and cooperative ones. I personally think that this concept of the minor seminary as a ground of careful nurturing and testing would be entirely valid and useful.

Some might object that failure in this program could be a traumatic experience for some boys and leave scars in later life. In the first place, our society is too prone to protect children from failure, which they should learn is part and parcel of human living. Secondly, in view of the stated nature of the program, withdrawal from the program would not constitute failure at all, but merely a branching off into a more congenial way for this boy.

Now to the second objection: Does not a boy in the minor seminary get "out of touch" with life and miss some very important experience?

If we were dealing with some minor seminaries, especially in Europe, but some also in this country, the answer would have to be "yes." These seminaries operate on a monastic base and have as a principal goal the protection of the seminarian from the world.

Maybe at some time in the past this sort of system was workable, but I certainly think it is not in our time and place. In fact, after twelve years experience in a minor seminary, I think that the idea of boys boarding there, living away from home, is entirely impractical. True, there are rare individuals for whom this has no harmful effects. As a matter of fact, these boys who have boarded at the minor seminary become loners, while the vast majority of boarders drop out some where along the way, usually because they become painfully conscious, rightly or wrongly, of having missed something.

The minor seminary of our time must, I think, be quite open, and leave the boys a free perfectly normal for Christian young people, including dating as long as it does not involve

## Farmers Union Recommended

San Antonio—(RNS)—Labor leaders in Texas have enthusiastically endorsed the statement issued by the state's Roman Catholic bishops urging the farm workers to organize unions.

Cesar Chavez, national director of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee whose local No. 2 in Rio Grande City has been on strike since last June, said, "I think this is terrific."

"For those farm workers trying to form their own unions, it will give them the necessary spiritual strength to continue the fight regardless of the obstacles," he said.

Chavez called the statement "an answer to the prayers of thousands and thousands of farm workers in the Southwest asking that their Church and the Church leaders stand with them in their struggle to secure social justice as enunciated by the Popes in the many encyclicals."

He said that he believed that the statement will have a "tremendous effect not only in the Rio Grande Valley, but all over the country."

In their statement, the Catholic bishops representing the 19 dioceses in the state reminded

the farm workers that "among the basic rights of the human person is the right of freely founding associations or unions for working people."

They said the farm workers should have the right "of freely taking part in the activities of these unions without risk of reprisal."

The statement urged farmers, "especially family farmers," to

cooperate with each other and form associations so that they can obtain "a just share of the gross national product of this country."

Urging national legislation to protect the rights of the farm workers, the bishops' statement called on all citizens to be concerned with this problem so that "those who produce the food and fiber of our country, whether workers or growers, not be asked to accept less than an equitable share of the material prosperity of the national community."

Spokesmen for the growers were also in sympathetic agreement with the statement. However, they refused to make extended comments until they had time to study the bishops' document.

## FOOTPRINTS IN A DARKENED FOREST

by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen



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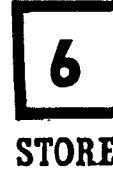
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## English Canon By Advent

Atlanta—(RNS)—Archbishop Paul J. Hallinan of Atlanta has described the Vatican decree allowing the Canon of Mass to be read aloud in English as a truly revitalized liturgy for our American parishes.

Archbishop Hallinan said vernacular Canon would be ready for the first day of Advent this year, 3, 1967.

In his statement, the bishop mentioned the work of the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, terming it "one of the most far-reaching movements." The committee represents the episcopal conferences of 10 English-speaking countries, was authorized in 1963 to prepare an English text for international

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