

# The Week in Religion

## Political Changes Affecting Religion in East Europe

Political changes, rapidly accelerating in Eastern Europe, are affecting the religious life of several Communist nations.

In some countries, notably Romania and Czechoslovakia, recent changes of policy are giving religion a more optimistic outlook. Elsewhere, particularly in Poland and East Germany, the prospects for religion are more dubious though some aspects may be hopeful.

Only in East Germany does the trend of change seem to be counter-revolutionary.

At least three different kinds of revolution are taking place in Russia's Eastern satellites representing three major forces at work to determine the Communist status quo. Each force moves from a separate base and philosophy but all three—youth, nationalism and the average citizen's desire for a better life—are joining and moving toward a common goal: autonomy.

Roman Catholics have been significantly affected by the political changes in several countries. In East Germany, political change is directed largely against German-Protestant unity. Jews have been made scapegoats of the forces opposing change in Poland.

The most rapid and sweeping changes, still largely theoretical but accepted with an enthusiasm that may make them hard to reverse, are taking place in Czechoslovakia.

In January, Antonin Novotny was replaced by Alexander Dubcek as first secretary of the Czech Communist Party. Since then censorship has been virtually eliminated from the communications media. Large scale

rehabilitation proceedings have begun for the victims of Stalinist repression. The military and political champions of the "Old Guard" have been losing their positions.

The religious response to the changes has come chiefly from Catholics. Church officials have welcomed the promise of increased freedom for Czechoslovakia and have asked for reforms in Church-State relations.

Many other Catholic spokesmen and groups have asked for rehabilitation of priests and others who were jailed for religious reasons. There is also widespread demand for the reorganization of the "Peace Priests" movement which supported the Novotny government's religious policies.

One of the most dramatic appeals was signed by 83 Catholic priests and was addressed to the national Communist Party, which is pursuing a role in Eastern Europe similar to that of Charles de Gaulle in the West. His chief emphasis has been on strengthening diplomatic and trade relations with Western powers as Germany and the United States, but he has also taken positions that are "heretical" in Russian terms on relations among Communist countries.

As it works, Romania has introduced slight changes in its domestic religious policies. Symptomatic of such changes and probably related to current negotiations with the recent release of Bishop Aaron Maron of Alba Iulia from arrest.

Bishop Marton, whose freedom had been restricted in various ways for 20 years, has recently been allowed to travel freely and to officiate at confirmation rites. He was visited last November by Franz Cardinal Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna and one of the Vatican's chief negotiators with Communist regimes.

In January, a few days before Romania Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer visited Pope Paul at the Vatican, Bishop Marton issued a pastoral letter announcing his freedom to officiate at Confirmation rites. He remains the only functioning bishop in Romania's 10 Catholic dioceses.

The Romanian Orthodox Church is now intensively developing its foreign and ecumenical relations. Pledged to "entire devotion" to the government, the Church is reportedly growing despite the teaching of atheism in the public schools. It has more than 9,000 priests, most of whom are university graduates, among 13 million adherents.

Religious tensions remain significant in Poland, where the Roman Catholic primate, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, plans to spearhead a year-long, nationwide campaign "in defense of the Church" against government interference. In Poland's most recent crisis, however, Catholic-Communist conflicts have been minimized.

Poland's revolution, unlike those in Czechoslovakia and Romania, seems to have no support or control from any sector of the government. It has shown itself, so far, in a constantly spreading series of student demonstrations in the chief Polish cities. The demonstrations were apparently inspired in part by the developments in

Czechoslovakia and also to some extent by a perennial anti-Russian national sentiment.

Catholic officials have carefully avoided any gesture that could be considered encouragement of the student demonstrations, though Cardinal Wyszynski went to Warsaw's "student church" and prayed publicly for students who had been injured or imprisoned in the riots.

He also prayed "for those who hold power, that they never forget that holding power means humble service to man who is the child of God."

The government, attempting to restrain the demonstrations and to prevent their spreading to the students to the work-stations, has avoided implicating the Church. Instead, various pro-government agencies have tried to label the demonstration as the work of "Zionists"—a label which would presumably have little popular appeal in a nation whose Jewish population is estimated at 30,000.

Jewish observers in Europe and the United States have pointed to anti-Semitic developments in Poland since the Arab-Israeli war last June. Like all Ubricht's Stalinist police.

## Holy Spirit's Church Opens in Penfield

Palm Sunday, April 7, will mark the opening of the parish home of the Church of the Holy Spirit located at Plank and Hatch Roads in Penfield.

The structure will provide a worship center, offices and religious education facilities for the parish founded in 1965.

An open house for the community and friends of the parish is planned from 3 till 5 p.m. Palm Sunday, with a tour of the building and refreshments. An ecumenical service with the area clergy will follow.

Holy Spirit parish consisted of 650 families and a piece of land when Father Joseph Lynch was assigned to the pastorate.

Since July, 1965, the parish has used Mercy High School auditorium for Sunday Masses. Daily Mass is celebrated in the neighborhood house where Father Lynch and his assistant, Father Dennis Mancuso, live. They will continue to use this rectory.

Father Lynch described the broad, shallow sanctuary as "designed for the participation of the whole congregation." "Private devotional life" he added, "is accommodated by the chapel area parallel to the nave." The religious education section has facilities for kindergarten through grade 12.

The church seats 500. The brick and block building has a steel beam and cedar wood ceiling and a concrete floor.

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## Date Book

Mercy Guild, Meeting April 9, 1 p.m. at Catherine McAuley College.

Diocesan Council of Catholic Nurses, Bishop's Banquet honoring Bishop Kearney May 5 at Notre Dame Retreat House. Mass at 5 p.m.

Catholic Widowed Parent's Club, Meeting April 5, 8:15 p.m. at St. Monica's Rectory. Thomas More Club Campaign Opening April 7, 7:10 p.m. at Mendon Ponds.

Holy Hour, April 11, 7 p.m. at St. Andrew's Church.

Catholic Daughters of Rochester, No. 1139, Meeting April 9, 8 p.m. at Calvary United Brethren Church.

State Convention Trip May 13.

Catholic Mission Guild, Meeting April 10 at 513 Monroe Ave. Sacred Family, April 15, 12:30 p.m.

Catholic Adult Club, Dinner at Moose Club, April 6.

College of New Rochelle Alumnae, Experimental film showing April 5, 8 p.m. St. Basil's Hall, John Fisher College.

## Events in the Parishes

**ST. MARGARET MARY.** Breakfast after 9 a.m. Mass. Altar Society Communion April 7.

**MOTHER OF SORROWS.** Breakfast after 9 a.m. Mass. April 7, after 8:30 a.m. Mass.

**HOLY APOSTLES.** Mothers' Club and Rosary Society Mothers and Children banquet, April 15, 6:15 p.m. in school hall.

**SACRED HEART.** Rosary Guild meeting April 8, 6:30 p.m. with tureen supper.

**ST. JAMES.** Rosary and Holy Name Societies meeting April 8, 8:30 p.m. in church hall.

**ST. NICHOLAS.** Youth Club communion breakfast after 10 a.m. Mass, April 7.

**ST. JOHN.** Spencerport. Confraternity of Christian Mothers, Evening of Reflection, April 9, 8 p.m. in school hall.

**ST. JOSEPH.** Archconfraternity of Holy Family Communion.

## Theology Program Set

The next session of the Adult Theology program will get underway April 22 and will run through June 6 in Auburn, Corning, Geneva and Rochester centers.

Fees are \$5 for one course and \$8 for two. No credit is given, nor will any exams, homework or recitation be required.

The three centers and the courses being offered are:

**Auburn — Mt. Carmel High School, Wednesdays, April 24-29.** "Christ in the Gospel of Mark" (7:30 p.m.) Father Brian Murphy.

**Corning — St. Patrick School, Thursdays, April 25-June 6.** "The World of Religion" (9 p.m.) Dr. Joan Martin. "Basic Interpersonal Encounters" (7:30 p.m.) Faculty of Corning Community College.

**Geneva — DeSales High School, Mondays, April 22-May 27.** "Introduction to Paul" (7:45 p.m.) Father Sebastian Falcone.

**Rochester — Nazareth Academy, Tuesdays, April 23-May 28.** "The Church — Sign of the Times" (7:30 p.m.) Father Albert Shamon.

**St. John's.** "The Church in the Modern World" (7:30 p.m.) Sister Joseph Michelle, S.S.J.

**St. Joseph.** "Christian Service to God in the World" — Part II (7:30 p.m.) Father Patrick Logan.

**St. Lawrence.** "The Life of Man with God" (7:30 p.m.) Father Leopold Protomastro.

**St. Michael's.** "Introduction to Paul" (7:30 p.m.) Father Sebastian Falcone.

**St. Nicholas.** "The New Morality: Situation Ethics" (9 p.m.) Msgr. William Shannon.

**St. Peter's.** "The Commandments in Christian Life" (9 p.m.) Father Cypryan Roser.

**St. Raphael.** "The Life of Man with God" (9 p.m.) Father Leopold Protomastro.

**St. Vincent.** "The Commandments in Christian Morality — Part III" (7:45 p.m.) Father Cypryan Roser.

**St. Xavier.** "Mary — Truth or Fiction" (9:15 p.m.) Father Leopold Protomastro.

## Deaths

### Mrs. Vogt, Mother Of Three Priests

Three sons of Mrs. Clara V. Vogt, celebrated a requiem Mass for her last Saturday at Holy Redeemer, a church she remembered from its beginning more than 90 years ago.

The pastor, Monsignor Joseph E. Vogt; Father Francis H. Vogt of St. Bridget's and Father George C. Vogt of Good Shepherd, Henrietta, and St. Joseph's, Rush, were the celebrants. Bishop Kearney gave the blessing.

Mrs. Vogt died March 27 at her home, 137 Lincoln Rd. she was 96 years old and had lived her life in the Holy Redeemer neighborhood. Her brother, the late Father Jacob Straub,

Survivors include a fourth son, Robert, and a daughter, Mrs. Lloyd Lill.

### Mrs. Mary Piccione

The funeral of Mary Sores Piccione, wife of Samuel Piccione, 218 Curtis, was held April 1 at Holy Apostles Church. Mrs. Piccione died March 30.

Survivors include a daughter, Mrs. Maria Sores, of San Jose, Calif., and Michael, Rochester, four grandchildren; a son, James Sores, Rochester, and two sisters, Mrs. Angela Termine, Rochester, and Mrs. Libbie Sores, Los Angeles.

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NATIONAL DIRECTOR

## Is Your Love Showing

Christian witness is the charity of Christ made incarnate and operative in all areas of life and human endeavor. It is the principal element in the threefold nature of missionary activity. Mission must be, first of all, a sign of the presence of God's universal, redemptive love. This makes it all important that the missionary himself be the embodiment of the charity of Christ to men. Only then can he open their minds to Christ and show them the Church as the sign of Christ among men.

In the Incarnation, Christ embraced the world and human values, not by superimposing Himself upon them, but rather by inserting Himself into their midst. Men, respected and valued for themselves, are made premissibly open and salvation is stirring. They are made aware of a presence and salvation is beginning. The missionary must be willing not only to impart, but to learn and to listen. People legitimately fear the loss of what is precious and distinctive in their own heritage. Each nation must develop the ability to express Christ's message in its own way. The task of missionary witness, then, is not the sheer force of charity or numbers, alone, but rather to elevate, to challenge, and to meet love for love with the overpowering presence of God.

But witness is not the task of the missionary alone. . . wherever they live, all Christians are bound to show forth by means of their lives and by the witness of their speech, that new man which they put on Baptism. (Decree on Missionary Activity) As a member of the Church, he should seek to contribute to her missionary apostolate by his own understanding, enthusiasm, talents, prayers and material resources. Some will be called by divine grace to go abroad as lay missionaries. Others, fulfilling their individual vocations in the home, in professions, in the business world, can bear witness by the example of their personal and professional lives, as well as their active participation in church functions. As members of the Mystical Body, your spiritual gifts differ. Each must perform his own task well. To be a true and effective witness means that your love must be a sincere love, one that not only finds room in your heart for all men, but one that shows it.

If you have let this Lent slip by without thought of sacrifice, do not let the precious days of Holy Week remain empty. Your personal material sacrifice for the assistance of our missionaries is witnessing to your faith and a true sign of your love.

SALVATION AND SERVICE are the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Please cut out this column and send your offering to Right Reverend Edward T. O'Meara, National Director, 366 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, or directly to your local Diocesan Director, Rt. Rev. Msgr. John F. Duffy, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, New York 14604.

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