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The "new man" that the Cuban Revolution is relentlessly trying to produce for a socialist state, comes out of a past hazily Christian. Many are now unbelievers.

In the process of adjustment, however, churches are being filled with "daily Christians," not the "Sunday" worshipers so common in that

Quite a number of these "daily Christians" are old, anguished and resigned, but most are mature men and women who are determined to live their faith amid the surrounding unbelief. And a few, particularly among the young, want to become "the leaven" of the revolution and "humanize" it, by purging its

Along their thorny path these Christians constantly face conflicts of conscience as their daily decisions confront their emotional and intellectual ties with their inner convictions, as well as with their loved ones.

These decisions concern such things as sending children to a school where they will learn materialism, or performing "voluntary" manual work on Sunday, or having to attend Marxist indoctrination courses, or joining the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and having to spy on neighbors. For the young, there is the Communist Youth League; for women, the Federation of Cuban Women, and for all, the new Advance Movement to increase production.

"Do I have to read these books which ignore or mock spiritual values?" asks Marta Lluberi, the wife of a longshoreman living in a modest apartment in Havana. "Do I give in, do I resist? Will I make life harder for my husband, for the children?"

The answers that organized religion can give now to these crucial questions may well determine the future of Christianity in Cuba. What are the opportunities for the believer to receive inspiration, guidance and strength from the Gorpel?

Indeed, the professed position of Fidel Castro's government since 1963 is that of the Marxist-Leninist ideology that fosters "dialectic materialism" — a constant change of men and things toward a classless society - and re-

CASTRO AND FRIENDS.

jects spīritual values as a so-

The regime's Committee for Revolutionary Orientation says "it does not wage war on religion, although it considers religious beliefs as

In practice, however, or ganized religion has survived, while most pre-Castro in-

Others believe this tolerance comes from some kind of "humanism" still left among the leaders of the revolution.

There are today in Cuba eight Catholic bishops—three in the Havana archdio-cese. one in the Santiago archdiocese, and one in each of the remaining dioceses: Cama-. guey, Cienfuegos, Matanzas and Pinar del Rio. Seven of

'Must I Read Books That Mock Spiritual Values?'

strongest religious body by Cuban tradition is the Catholic Church. The state Registry for Religions lists some 30 non-Catholic groups-Protestant. Orthodox, Jewish and Buddhist — as officially recorded. A decade ago they numberea members; today, estimates cut

that figure in half. -Some observers attribute this government tolerance of religion to tactical reasons, in see saw pattern alternating ith sporadic repression.

stitutions have vanished. The them were installed within the past 10 years.

> Like most bishops in other countries, they have a national conference, with a secretariat and several committees: liturgy, Christian doctrine, pastoral work, vocations, priestly affairs and regularly scheduled meetings, and some consultations, although no public pronouncements are made. Several of the bishops went to the Second Vatican Council and to more recent events like the

Canadians Plan More 'Democratic'

Valuable Painting Stolen in Italy

Rome- (RNS) -Italian police and Interpol, the interna- Ottawa, Ont. — For 50 years the CCC. tional police organization, have now Canadian bishops have begun an intensive search for been selected in the private art thieves who stole a valu-club manner — by the bishops bishops, or even that priests and able painting from a parish of an ecclesiastical province. laymen will be consulted about church near Pesaro.

value estimated at between gate, who forwards them to evaluation and nomination of \$500,000 and \$1 million, de Rome. pending on the still-disputed But that could be changed national conferences of bishops question of who painted it.

value in the million-dollar

Choice of Bishops

By MIKE O'MEARA

(NC News Service)

The painting, known as the fragan bishops select three step to a more open, democra"Madonna, del Cardellino (Our with preference or priority in-Lady of the Goldfinch)," has a dicated, to the Apostolic Dele- The project "for selection,

Some experts call it the work ed by the Canadian Catholic Norman Gallagher of Montreal, of the Renaissance painter Conference of Bishops here, working with a number of and forwarded to Rome for ap canon lawyers, theologians and Perugino, which would put its proval.

school, and thus worth about as all bishops in each ecclesias-diocesan or a national pastoral \$500.000.

cess forwarding their names to a special ad hoc committee of

It doesn't mean election of particular persons. But it could An archbishop and his suf- be an important intermediate

candidates for the episcopacy' - as the Vatican requested of radically by a project approv- — was drawn up by Bishop

range. Others consider it the The new method would build Initially, at least, consultation work of Eusebio da San Giorgio, up a national "bank of candi- with priests likely would be dates through a process of con-through their senates or couna member of the Umbrian sulting priests and laity as well cils, and with laity through

July 16th! See it all for yourself!

International Eucharistic Congress in Bogota, Colombia, last August.

Two hundred twenty-eight priests remain in active service. The country has 228 parishes, but not all with a resident priest. In fact, 99 of those priests are in Havana, while the Pinar del Rio diocese has only 13. Of the priests, 99 are diocesan, 129 Religious; by nationalities, 80 come from Spain, 40 from other European countries and from North America. The rest are Cubans.

In 1959, the priests numbered 723. Many were expelled during the first three years of the Castro regime, along with Auxiliary Bishop Eduardo Boza Masvidal of Havana, Other priests left the country under varying degrees of pressure. Quite a few have returned, new ones have been ordained, and

At one time the seminarians in Havana enjoyed the spacious Good Shepherd seminary in the nearby countryside, but in 1966 the regime confiscated the compound. giving strategic reasons for the takeout. The students now live at the old archbishop's house in downtown Havana.

How many active Catholics are in Cuba's two archdioceses and four dioceses? Even in the pre-revolution times this was an unknown factor. A survey conducted in 1954 by members of the then vigorous Catholic Association of University Students showed that professed Catholics were 72% of a population of 5.6 million. Protestants and others were estimated at 8%, and 20% had no religious af-

8 Catholic Bishops, 228 Priests Guide the Faith

others allowed to enter for the first time. However, should a priest be considered "over-zealous" and stepping beyond the bounds of "strictreligious activities," he is "invited" to leave the country. There were two such cases reported in 1968, one a Belgian priest, one a Cuban.

At present, there is one priest in jail, Father M. A. Loredo, O.F.M., charged with harboring an alleged saboteur. The Franciscan church and convent in Havana, occupied by the military because of this incident a few years ago, have not been returned. Several "unused" churches in Havana and in other cities are now social centers for the revolution, or storehouses.

There remain in the island 129 Religious Brothers and 198 nuns. Several perform hospital, administrative and counseling duties in government institutions for medical and social assistance. All of them, however, are banned from schools. Ten years ago, 2,462 nuns and Brothers were prominent in running 411 church-sponsored institutions.

Significant for the future of the Church in Cuba is the fact that two seminaries are functioning, with close to 100 students: the San Carlos y San Ambrosio seminary in Hayana; with 78, students of philosophy and theology, and the San Basilio minor seminary at Santiago, with 20 students. Some seminarians have studied in Europe, but in recent years few persevered, and those who reached ordination had difficulty in reentering their country. All counted, there are 108 Cuban youths studying for the

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filiation. Some observers say that today practicing Christians may

> number from 700,000 to over 1 million, a great majority of them Catholics, and most of them to be found among school-age children or among those over 35 years of age. That would be between .10% and 15% of the present popu-

Lay leaders have also start, ed running small groups of the Christian Family Movement, which meet at homes to discuss religious formation. Some go a step further and hold short retreats. There is also a national board of Catholic Action for girls, with a small membership, and some students meet intermittently to discuss modern Christian thinkers such as the late Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Late last year from 200 to 300 persons attended, every evening, a two-week study course on the Bible at the parish of San

"Doors and shutters were wide open . . . Passersby could hear our discussions," said one of the lecturers.

Nicolas in Havana.

Another area of Church concern is relations of the Holy See with the Castro regime. Following the pattern already established for Eastern Europe after World War II, the Vatican has not taken any initiative to break diplomatic relations, and neither has Castro.

Many Catholics in the country are reserving their judg-

ment on the price of such liaison especially as it regards the image of the Chaurch; but others recognize that the ties have helped the bishops to maintain communications with Rome and the

Courier-Journal - Friday, April 25, 1969 outside world, including per- curt protocol to special conmission to travel, and that

sideration, dip-lomatic relathey have helped ease the tions with Rome have not inclergy shortage. While underfluenced the legal status of going various degrees from the Church in Cuba.



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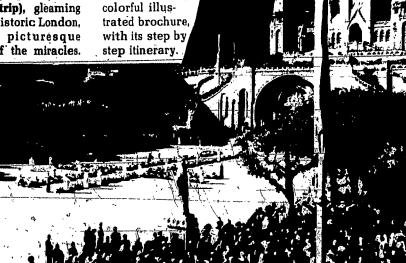
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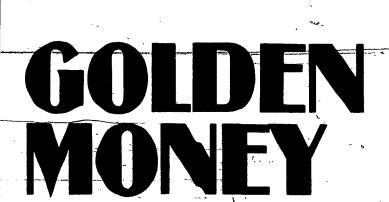
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