

# Father Berrigan Testifies At Ransacking Trials

Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., serving a three-year prison term for destroying draft records, testified at the trial of eight persons charged with ransacking the Federal Building in Rochester.

Father Berrigan was brought here as a character witness for Joseph T. Gilchrist, the only one of the defendants represented by counsel. Herman Walz is his attorney.

Highlights of Father Berrigan's testimony came under examination by defendant Joan Nicholson, acting as her own attorney.

Miss Nicholson attempted to get the New Testament admitted as evidence but the objection of Asst. U.S. Atty. Michael Wolford was upheld by U.S. District Court Judge Harold P. Burke.

Miss Nicholson then asked to have the first 12 verses of Matthew 5 (the Beatitudes) admitted. Again the prosecution objected but this time Judge Burke allowed it.

Father Berrigan then read the verses from the witness stand.

Father Berrigan, who occupied the stand for about three hours, said early in his testimony that he is still in good standing with his order (Jesuits) and that he is allowed to perform such priestly duties as saying Mass in prison, although no inmates are present.

The bulk of his testimony supported defendant Gilchrist as a "peaceable and truthful" person and that he had been counseling the defendant from 1968 to the spring of 1970. Both had worked at Cornell University during that time. Father Berrigan stressed that he never advised any specific action by the defendant but that he had told him to do what he thought he must in the light of his conviction on the Vietnam war.



Bible readings and anti-war statements featured daily gathering of friends of Flower City Conspiracy at Rochester's Federal Building during its trial for allegedly ransacking building offices. Addressing group is Bishop Antulio Parrilla-Bonilla, S.J., (bareheaded), former auxiliary of Caguas, Puerto Rico, who teaches at University of Puerto Rico. Next to him is Bishop Daniel Corrigan (with beret), dean of Bexley Hall, Episcopal seminary in Rochester, and behind Bishop Corrigan is Father Laurence Tracy, co-pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church.

Judge Burke would allow Father Berrigan's testimony only as it related to direct conversations with Gilchrist. The priest was continually warned of injecting his own philosophy into the testimony and such remarks drew many objections from Wolford, usually sustained.

At one lull, Father Berrigan turned to the press and said he was not eating or drinking until he got back to Danbury, Conn., prison because "treatment of prisoners on the road is inhumane."

Judge Burke quickly remonstrated and Father Berrigan re-

torted that it was his only chance to tell the press about the situation.

Earlier in his testimony, the priest said that he wasn't too clear "because I've been in solitary . . ."

He was cut off by Judge Burke for making remarks irrelevant to the case.

## School Prayer Still an Issue

Annapolis — (RNS) — The president of the Maryland branch of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said his organization will oppose any attempt to use a new amendment to the state constitution to reintroduce religious exercises in schools.

"We are prepared to go to court if the new amendment is used to bring back the recitation of prayers and Bible reading for religious purposes," said Thomas R. Asher.

Assistant Attorney General Martin D. Greenfield commented last Spring when the legislature approved the measure that voluntary prayers prior to school hours had never been forbidden, and that the measure would mean no change.



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