

KEY 73: CROSS PURPOSES?

Many see Key 73 as symptomatic of a national desire to make the United States strictly a Christian nation. Members of the Jewish faith have had particular fears of such a happening. For a look at the national debate, see Page 21. Meanwhile a Jewish scholar spoke on the situation at a Rochester lecture last week. Page 15.

Pontiff Assails Attack

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul has strongly criticized the downing of a Libyan jetliner over the Sinai desert by Israeli war planes.

The pontiff denounced the violence in a cable to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the ruler of Libya.

Pope Paul said:

"Permit us to express to Your Excellency our profound pain at the tragic attack on a Libyan airliner over the Sinai that caused the loss of numerous lives.

"We desire to assure you that we share the profound grief of the stricken families while we pray to God to grant the victims eternal repose and give quick recovery to the wounded.

"We repeat our criticism of every act of violence that strikes the lives of innocent persons and we reaffirm the need that respect for human life must prevail in the conscience of individuals and the people."

245 Sign Bishop's Peace Statement

On Feb. 2, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan sent out letters to all clergy in the diocese, asking them to support a statement he prepared after the Vietnam armistice.

The statement called for assistance for Vietnam era veterans, reconciliation for those who "for sincere reasons of conscience" chose not to participate in the war, and a collection for children orphaned by the war.

"I am more and more convinced," said the Bishop in the enclosed letter, "that we who are ordained to be the moral leaders in the Church of God must speak clearly, forcefully, and publicly against injustice and for justice, against war and peace, against death and for life."

However, Bishop Hogan made it clear that he would respect a decision not to sign, and would not presume to judge personal motivation for silence or for expressed refusal to sign.

All together, 245 priests and deacons, signed the statement. Since there are approximately 450 priests in the diocese, support for the document was strong if not overwhelming.

Many priests, both in agreement with and opposed to the statement, expressed their feelings in responding to the Bishop's request.

Most of the comments were favorable. Some praised Bishop Hogan's courage in his stand. One priest signed "with sincere admiration for your forthright leadership in this deep moral issue, despite some unfavorable reaction possible."

A chaplain wrote, "A great letter and I heartily endorse the sentiments."

Another priest said, "I think the statement is powerful and in particular I am glad to speak for amnesty."

A few hesitated, but agreed to sign. "The statement on amnesty is too broad," said one. "Some had good conscientious reasons. Some just avoided conscience."

Another reasoned, "The ques-

tion of amnesty per se is unresolved in my mind, but Christ's law of forgiveness transcends this situation. If we do not move forward and establish genuine peace, our lack of forgiveness will bring us closer to more war."

Other signers expressed their feelings in a few words, such as "good," "libenter," and "right on."

Most of the objections concerned the call for amnesty. "Amnesty for genuine conscientious objectors, yes," said one retired priest. "But not for those who, whatever their motive, or by whom inspired, have torn a great breach in this country, threatening the very existence of authority and government."

"Granted that pardon is sought for those whose non-participa-

tion was 'sincere,'" said a church leader. "Only God Himself can determine sincerity, and the appeal for human judgment would create judicial horror . . ."

One signature was withheld through a democratic process. A pastor asked his parish council, which in turn asked parishioners to vote on it. "Overwhelmingly," said the pastor, "they opposed the statement concerning the granting of amnesty."

The collection for war orphans, as well as the plea for amnesty, raised one doubt. "Will any part of this collection benefit sons and daughters of American service men killed in Vietnam?" he asked. "Are they not just as truly the most helpless of all the war's victims, as are those orphans in Vietnam?"

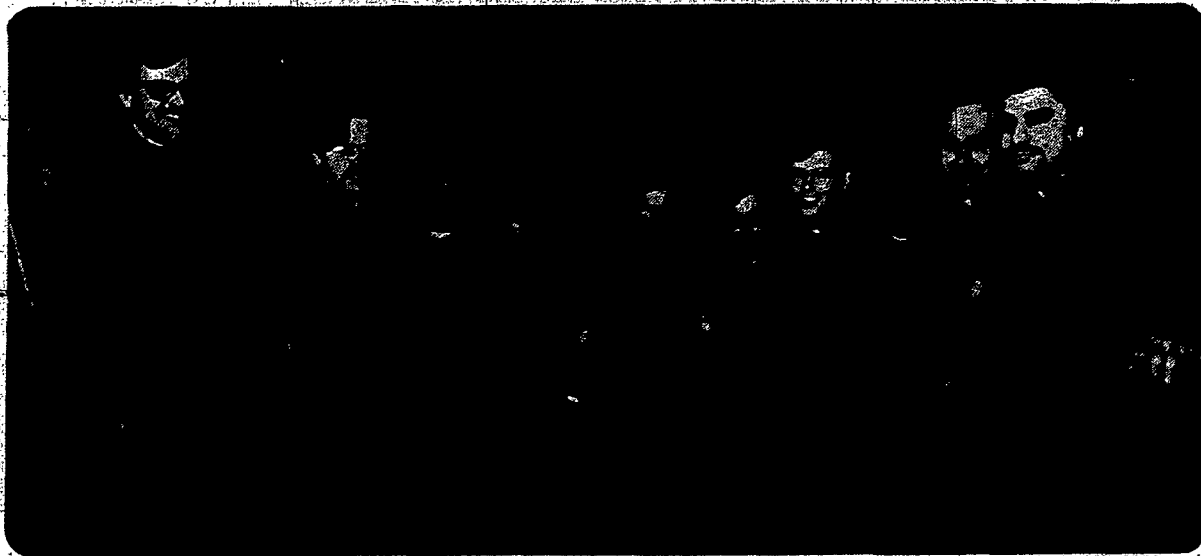


Photo by Susan Mc Kinney

The deacons are beginning to play a big role in the life of the Rochester diocese. Nine of the newest deacons, all of them students at St. Bernard's seminary, are shown here, left to right: Lou Sirtanni, Jim Hewes, Jim Callan, Denny Shaw, Bill Spilly, Jerry Moynihan, Bob Kennedy, Bill Leone and Bob Gaudio (missing are Fran Blighon, Gerry Wahl, Ron Antinarelli). Bishop Hogan discusses the newly emphasized ministry of the diaconate in his column on PAGE 3, and talks about the lay deacons.