



THE CHURCH 1973
Fr. Andrew Greeley

After "Star Trek" went off television my favorite program for a long time was "Mission Impossible." The nice thing about that program was that you did not have to take it any more seriously than you did "Star Trek." The IMF in the real world would be irresponsible criminal bullies — government-sponsored vigilantes who were above the beyond the law. Similarly, I have always enjoyed reading Helen MacInnis's spy novels in airplanes. They were a diverting way to kill the pain of jet travel. No one really believed that the CIA did that sort of thing, of course.

There were those extreme leftists who suggested that the CIA might have been behind the assassination of President Kennedy, and occasionally a military chaplain would tell me about the CIA's "hit men," the hired killers that the U.S. government used to assassinate undesirable — usually undesirable foreigners, but occasionally an undesirable American got it, particularly if he was somehow or other associated with what the CIA was doing.

But neither the fictional IMF nor the rumored CIA seemed very real, at least they didn't until the whole mad Watergate episode surfaced. And if the White House's crew of spies — Krogh, Hunt, Liddy, McCord, etc. — are not a real life "Mission Impossible," then I don't know what one would look like. The only difference between fact and fiction is that the real one used Cubans instead of blacks to do the actual breaking in — quite possibly part of Mr. Nixon's Southern Strategy.

FBI files are destroyed, psychiatrist's offices ransacked, a man who was later to become commandant of the Marine Corps turns over equipment to the White House's private Gestapo, former CIA agents strike out on secret missions for the White House — complete with equipment as elaborate and sophisticated as Barney carried in his tool kit. Indeed, truth is stranger than fiction — and considerably more frightening.

Deaths

B. R. Sripati

Bhaskara Rao Sripati, associate professor of business administration at St. John Fisher College, died May 23, 1973.

He had been on the Fisher faculty since 1957 and lived on Culver Road.

Professor Sripati was born in India and educated at Loyla College in Madras, the University of Pennsylvania and Atlanta University. His widow, Susheela, survives.

Mrs. Benzoni

Hornell — Mrs. Felix A. Benzoni of Seneca Road, North Hornell, died May 26, 1973, after a long illness.

She was a native of Easton, Pa., and lived in North Hornell for more than 35 years. Mrs. Benzoni was a member of the Women's Board of St. James Mercy Hospital and had operated the Resale Shop for the board from its inception. Burial was at Phillipsburg, N.J.

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I am now prepared to believe anything. Helen MacInnis's history of the Cold War may well be the truth. Daniel Ellsberg may be only the tip of the iceberg. Watergate may be only one of the more minor capers in which the real life Mission Impossible got caught; there may have been hundreds — even thousands of others. The leftists who said that the FBI and the CIA were becoming a Gestapo may have been speaking the truth.

And it may well have been a clique in some shadowy secrecy-cloaked segment of the federal bureaucracy that decreed that the Kennedys must die. The Cuban influence in particular seems to run through the whole mad pattern of the Watergate/Ellsberg/CIA/FBI/White House corruption of American freedom. Maybe, after all, the CIA did have President Kennedy assassinated because he had been too soft on Castro's Cuba.

Do I really believe this? At one time I would have thought such a suspicion was absurd. I am still prepared to believe that the CIA is for the most part an agency that collects its information from newspapers, journals, and long-range electronic surveillance (information which, as far as Vietnam goes, seems to have been quite accurate and mostly unused). And yet I'm not so sure any more. If Lord Acton was right when he said that power corrupts, he might just as well have added that the most corrupting form of power is secret power.

There are too many sources of secret power in the United States today for a free society to tolerate. Once one discovers that secret power has been responsible for extraordinary crimes, then one must face the possibility that it is capable of any crime. I don't think that secret government agencies did away with John and Robert Kennedy, but the very fact that such a possibility must be seriously raised once again indicates how utterly devastating for our society has been the revelation that Mr. Nixon really did have his own Mission Impossible force (whether he knew about it or not).

What is needed it seems to me, is a thoroughgoing impartial investigation of not only Watergate and the Pentagon Papers spying but of the whole secret intelligence apparatus of the federal government and of the government's use of its police investigative powers for political purposes. One federal attorney remarked to me that the Justice Department could indict anyone in the country of any importance if it were so directed. The power of indictment is not secret, but it can be used for secret political purposes.

If Nixon really wishes to restore the confidence of the American people in their government he must, not merely get to the bottom of the Watergate affair, he must get to the bottom of the much broader question of the secret abuse of government power.

Assistant Superior Named

Appointment of Sister Janet Wahl, RSM, as assistant superior general of the diocesan Sisters of Mercy has been announced by Sister Mary Judith Heberle, superior general of the congregation.

Installation of the two nuns and of three others elected to the congregation's executive council will take place at a Mass Sunday, June 10, in the Motherhouse Chapel on Blossom Road.

Elected to the council for a term of four years, in addition to Sister Janet Wahl, were Sister Jane Frances Hauser, Sister Mary Bonaventure Hall, and Sister Mary Walter Hickey.

Sister Janet Wahl has been working this past year in a Masters of Religious Studies program at Notre Dame University, Indiana. She will receive her degree in August. Preceding her study, she served for five years as assistant principal at Notre Dame High School, Elmira, and taught on the faculties of Notre Dame High School, Mercy, and Cardinal Mooney.

Sister Jane Frances is currently a member of the Science Department at Our Lady of Mercy High School. She was a science instructor at Notre Dame High School, Elmira, for 17 years, prior to her re-assignment to Mercy last year. She had also taught at Mercy from 1940 to 1955.

Sister Mary Bonaventure has been an executive councillor for the past two and a half years. She has been a member of the Diocesan Sisters Council for the past three years and served as its

Mum's the Word On Meeting of WCC, Catholics

London, [RNS] — Jan Cardinal Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, headed a Roman Catholic delegation which held a week's meeting at secluded Cumberland Lodge, in Windsor Great Park, with delegates from the World Council of Churches.

Both teams were made up of members of a joint working group which meets at regular intervals to discuss cooperation between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council.

Sessions were held in private and the only reports that it was taking place appeared in the Catholic press here.

These journals also revealed that the delegates were visited on one day by Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury and on another by John Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster.

The full composition of the teams was also not made generally public but it was disclosed that Bishop Thomas Holland of Salford, northwest England, represented the English and Welsh Catholic bishops at the meeting.

At the end of the meeting no information was immediately available as to what had transpired.

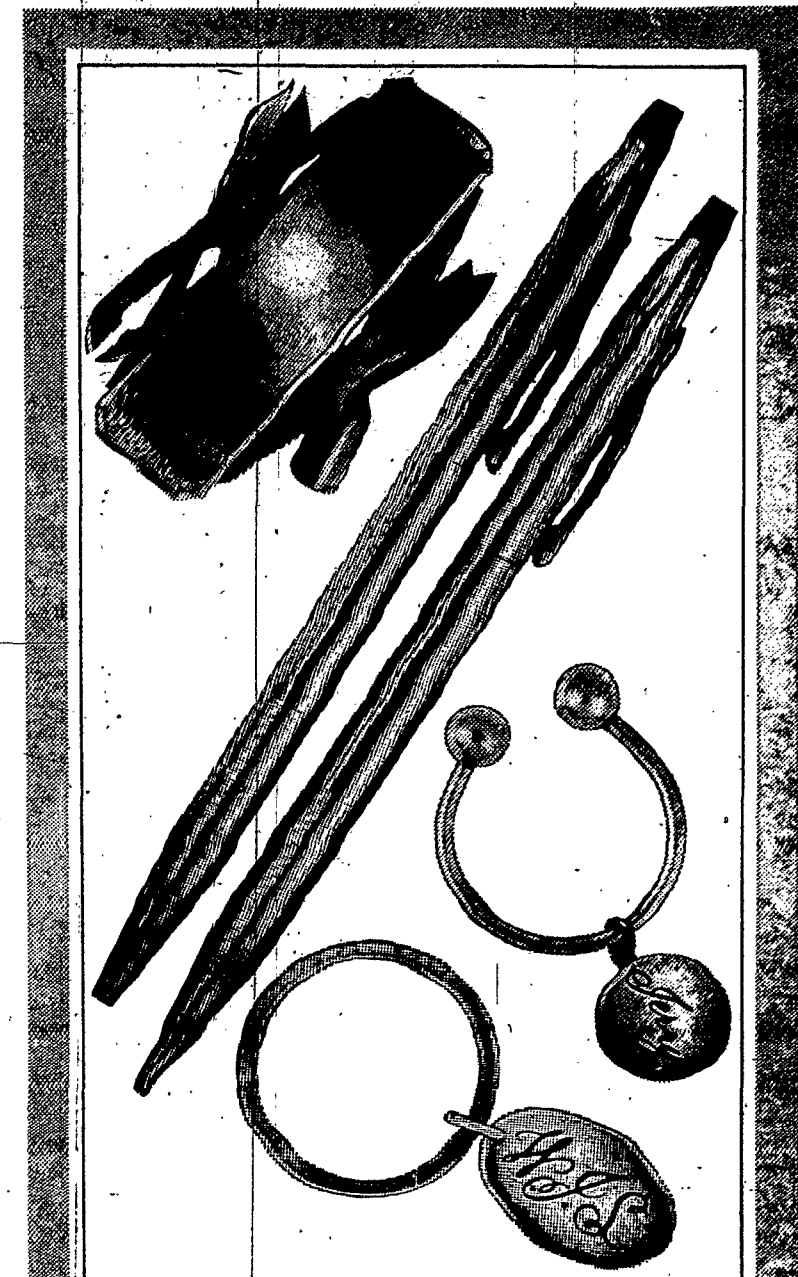


SISTER JANET WAHL

president last year. She is also currently a member of the Math Department of Our Lady of Mercy High School and formerly served as vice principal of Mercy and Academic Dean of Catherine McAuley College. Sister Bonaventure is also a member of the board of trustees of St. James Mercy Hospital; the Board of Governors of Notre Dame High School, and the finance committee and the retirement

maintenance committee of the Sisters of Mercy.

Sister Mary Walter, also an executive councillor for the past two and a half years, is assistant principal of Notre Dame High School, Elmira, and a member of its Social Studies Department. Prior to this, she taught at Mercy High School for 12 years and was the Social Studies Department chairman there.



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