

A First-Hand View of the Irish Trouble

Matt Linehan Also Offers His Impressions of America

By PAT PETRASKE

All-American expressions like "cook-out," "rap session" or "boob tube" can confuse an English-speaking foreigner trying to communicate with his Yankee friends.

"One guy looked at me like I was a little tyke when I called a truck a lorry," sighed Matt Linehan, an Irish student visiting Rochester for the summer.

Linehan's major concern, however is not with American phraseology but with the treatment of the Northern Ireland situation by the American press.

"What is printed consists of statements made by the British army," complained Linehan, who is a third-year medical student at Galway University.

The Council on International Education Exchange, which is open to any student attending an Irish college is sponsoring his trip to the United States. "It lets the Irish see American life," Linehan explained in the characteristic thick brogue. Since June he has been living with an aunt and uncle who left Ireland in 1960.

Fortunately Linehan's exposure to American life has changed the

Seminary Sets New Program

St. Bernard's Seminary launched a continuing education program today that opens several regular seminary courses to lay people and offers studies geared to the needs of parish leaders.

Sister Margaret Mary Mattie, secretary of the liturgical commission, urged men and women active in parish council committees to investigate the program, for which registration continues.

Classes meeting tonight, 7:30-9:30, include Religious Development in Contemporary Psychology, given by Sister Anne Mary Dooley, program coordinator, and Theology of Celebration, by Sister Margaret Deegan, of the seminary faculty.

Msgr. Wegner To Resign at Boys Town

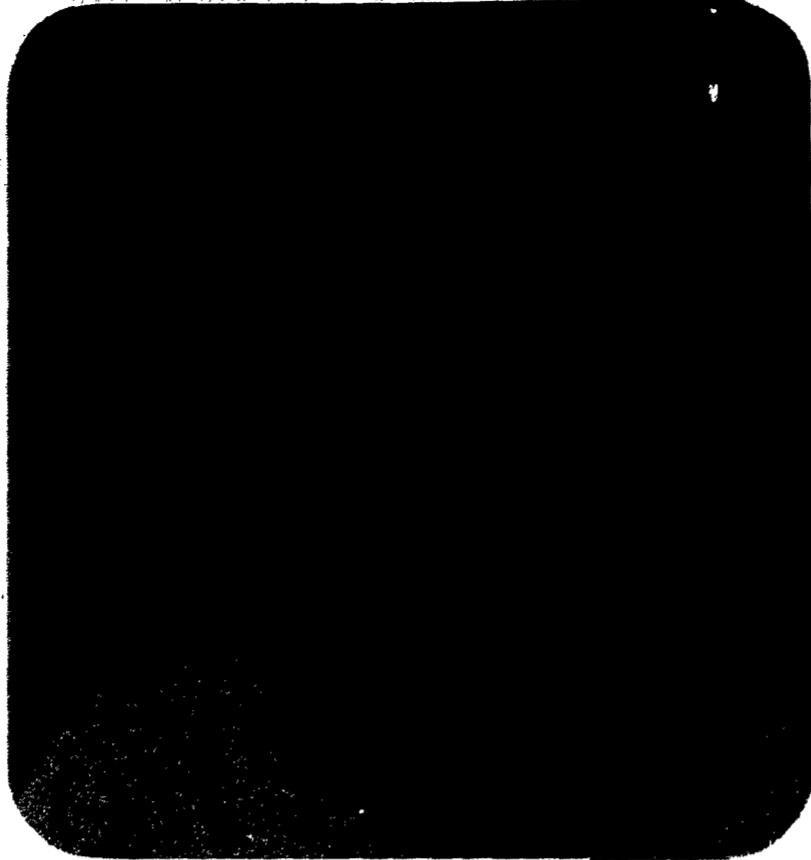
Omaha [RNS] — The priests' personnel board of the Roman Catholic archdiocese here has issued a call for applications from priests in the 23-county See for the soon-to-be-vacant post of executive director of Boys Town, the famed refuge for boys.

Msgr. Nicholas Wegner, who succeeded in 1948 the famed founder of Boys Town, Msgr. Edward J. Flanagan, will resign after 25 years as head of the complex.

According to a letter from the personnel board to archdiocesan priests, Archbishop Daniel E. Sheehan has asked for three names "to come from outside the ranks of the present Boys Town staff." The principal qualification is that the nominee be a seasoned and experienced administrator, open and sensitive to problems of boys.

Archbishop Sheehan, in a letter to the Boys Town Staff, indicated there will also be a search for persons to fill four other key positions. This is part of a reorganization recommended by a firm of New York management consultants. Present employees will not be excluded from consideration, he noted.

Msgr. Wegner, now 75, is a former chancellor of the Omaha archdiocese. He was also administrator during the interim between the death of one ordinary and the installation of his successor. In 1960, he was named vicar general of the archdiocese.



MATT LINEHAN

Photo by Pat Petraske

traditional European opinion that "Americans are arrogant" which Linehan says is also translated as "big-mouthed." The people he

Also opening tonight is Christian Approach to Political Conflict, by Douglas Hyde, an Englishman who forsook the Communist Party 30 years ago to become a Catholic Dr. Hyde, onetime editor of the Daily Worker in London, has been visiting lecturer at St. Bernard's frequently in recent years.

A course entitled Sacraments As Divine-Human Encounter will be given Tuesday nights at St. Mary Our Mother in Horseheads. Eighteen people have enrolled in the class, to be instructed by Father Leopold Protomastro.

A bachelor of arts degree "or its equivalent" is a prerequisite for the program, according to Sister Anne Mary Dooley, who pointed out that each course was worth two hours of degree credit.

One function of the continuing education program, the coordinator explained, is to train leaders and teachers for parish adult education classes.

Anyone wishing to register or to obtain more information should telephone her at 254-1020, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The curriculum includes two courses by Father Edwin B. Metzger, director of field education for seminarians — Hospital Visitation, Tuesdays, 4:10 to 6 p.m., and Pastoral Visitation, Wednesdays at the same time.

On Monday afternoons, 2:10-4, Father John P. McCrae, of Syracuse, a newcomer to the faculty, will teach Pragmatics of Christian Community Leadership.

Tuesday courses include Sister Margaret Deegan's Guided Readings in Liturgy, 4:10-6 p.m., and Parish Worship Committee, given by Sister Margaret Mary Mattie and others, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Scripture Themes for Sunday Liturgy will be discussed Wednesday afternoons, 2:10-4, by the rector, Father Joseph P. Brennan, and Father Sebastian Falcone.

On Thursday afternoons, 1:10-3, Dr. Christopher Pino, psychologist, will lecture on Managerial and Organizational Psychology.

On Thursday evening, 7:30-9:30, Sister Deegan will give Liturgy and the People of God, and Father Leopold Protomastro, Contemporary Theology of Religious Life.

has met through his job at the Chessman Restaurant and elsewhere make him believe that Americans are merely open-minded and extraverted. What is taken for arrogance is "an attempt to socialize and communicate to people," said the 21-year-old student.

One thing he likes here that he won't find in Ireland is the drive-in movie.

What he will find when he returns is a divided, strife-ridden country whose northern section is now policed by the British army. The "flag waving welcome" given by the Catholic minority who believed the British army would act as an impartial force has turned to hatred of what has been politely called "British army negligence," according to Linehan.

"It has been categorically stated that the British army has been ransacking homes. They will enter a Catholic home and kick in a television set for no reason," said Linehan, who lives 150 miles from Belfast in Enniskerry. "Straight away they started looking for IRA (Irish Republican Army) suspects" which is anyone from 16 on up, he added.

The greatest bone of contention is still the policy of internment without trial. Those interned are Catholics suspected of IRA activities, he said. Reports have also filtered out of alleged torture during the first 48 hours to extract information.

The role of the IRA seems to fluctuate between being the good guys and the bad guys. "They had the whole people behind them during the uprising (which resulted in the division of Ireland in 1922.) The Catholics agree with their ideals for a united Ireland but innocent people are being killed. They did look to the IRA for protection after the British troops came in," he explained.

Running his fingers through his thick curly hair, Linehan commented on the year of British rule in exasperation. "The British have not eased the situation, in fact it has gotten worse. They are polarizing the communities. Catholics and Protestants who once lived in harmony have been forced to leave their areas because of extremist activities."

The fear that a civil war would erupt if the British troops were withdrawn is groundless, he believes. "People think the Protestants would go berserk; but when Stormont (Parliament of Belfast) was abolished there was no backlash. And here their whole system of government had been taken away from them."

Rule by Britain does give Ireland "a better deal" said Linehan citing the English policy

of socialized medicine as one example. Northern Ireland also could not sustain its present standard of living without Britain's aid, which amounts to 300 million pounds per year for Irish industries, he said.

At the root of the three-year crisis is a political and economic issue.

"It is not a religious war. It is not those for the Pope against the anti-Popes. Right now it is a civil rights affair similar to the black situation here with the have-nots against those who have. When a Catholic asks for a job, he is asked where he lives, which means the same thing as what religion are you. The communities are polarized and both are living in the ghettos," he exclaimed.

Until recently Catholics, whom Linehan refers to as the minority to get rid of the religious aspect, complained bitterly about the policy of gerrymandering in Northern Ireland. This practice of redrawing the lines of voting districts to the advantage of one party was one of the "unfair rules" by the Protestant majority to suppress the Catholic minority, the Irish student claimed.

The situation is not hopeless, Linehan continued with a slight smile. "The eventual solution would have to entail a united country. Most people want a united Ireland," he said, and suggested that a federal system

be set up of two states. "Each state would run its own affairs but would benefit the whole country."

Protestants, however, fear unification with the Republic of Ireland, which they call "a papal-ridden state." Border customs posts continue to operate on the main roads between the northern and southern sectors where "contraceptives are often confiscated." Birth control, abortion and divorce are illegal in southern Ireland although Linehan admits enforcement of the laws is "pretty lax."

On Dec. 7, 1972, Irish Republicans voted to scrap the section of their constitution which gives a special position to the Roman Catholic Church as "the guardian of the faith." Other clauses on the previously mentioned issues remain in effect and are a "source of embarrassment to those seeking to bring better relations between the North and South." (Courier-Journal, Nov. 22, 1972)

The Church used to have a tremendous influence over the lives of Irish Catholics but its outlook has become more liberal. Linehan, who attends Mass at St. Charles Borromeo, enjoys the guitar Masses, which are not held in Ireland.

"The sign of peace is tremendous. People seem to really mean what they are saying. We can learn from Americans," he concluded.

Father Harold Notes 50 Years

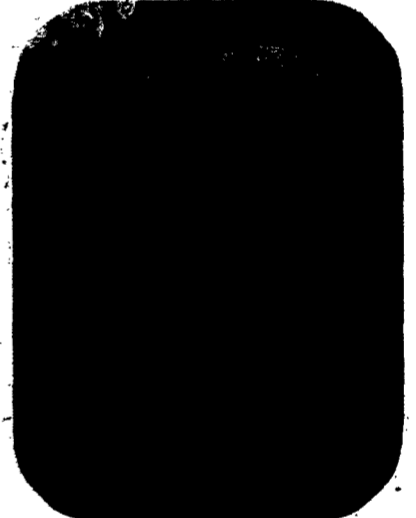
Father Harold Higgins, OFM Cap, now residing at St. Fidelis Priory, Interlaken, recently celebrated his golden jubilee as a Capuchin at the Sacred Heart Friary in Yonkers.

Father Harold, a native of Yonkers, entered the Capuchin seriphicate at the end of the seventh grade, and the novitiate on Aug. 6, 1923.

He was ordained to the priesthood June 10, 1930, by Bishop Theodore Henry Reverman of Superior, Wisc.

For the past 19 years, Father Harold was chaplain to the veteran's hospital in Canandaigua. He retired from that post in February of this year.

Father Harold's career includes six years of teaching at Glenclyffe



FATHER HAROLD

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