



First Vows

Father Howard Keon, CSB, novice master, and Father Thomas Bales, assistant, pose with (back row, left to right) Dennis Noelke of Detroit, Ronald Fabbro of Sudbury, Ont., and Mitchell Dowalgo of West Haven, Conn., on the steps of the Basilian residence at Aquinas. The three pronounced vows of poverty, chastity and obedience Aug. 15 for a period of three years, in the Congregation of St. Basil.

Life, Liberty and Law



Nancy Murphy

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose eyes haunt the human soul — whose words jolt the Christian conscience — said just over a year ago, "It is an astonishing phenomenon that Communism has been writing about itself in the most open way in black and white for 125 years — but somehow no one wants to understand."

"Communism has never concealed the fact that it rejects all absolutes, all absolute concepts of morality. It abolishes eternal truths, all religion and all morality. It scoffs at any consideration of good and evil. It considers morality a relative value. Depending on circumstances and the political situation, any act including murder — even the killing of thousands — could be good or could be bad. Communism has infected the whole world with a belief in the relativity of good and evil, and many today are carried away with this idea. Among enlightened people it is considered rather awkward to use seriously such words as 'good' and 'evil'. For Communism has managed to instill in all of us the belief that these concepts are old-fashioned and laughable. But if we are to be deprived of the concepts of good and evil, what will be left? Nothing but a manipulation of each other, we will decline to the status of animals." (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, July 1975)

The Li-Wei Han "Plan of Action" reported here for two weeks, is a case in point. But it defined only one approach to world domination. (Readers interested in securing a free copy of the very brief 4-page document may send a stamped self-addressed envelope to me, P.O. Box 8450, Rochester, N.Y. 14618). The Soviets use many approaches.

In March 1973, 16,498 Catholic

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citizens of Lithuania unsuccessfully petitioned the government for additional copies of the Sacred Scriptures (there is one official government-printed copy for every 300 Catholics). The Lithuanian press continuously encourages high school/university students to become more concerned with materialism, socialism, Soviet patriotism and atheism. Lithuanian history is downgraded and denied; teachers are urged to ask ideological questions, and to use classes (scheduled for other courses) to teach atheism.

Antanas Snieckus, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Lithuania, spoke at a recent meeting: "We must not accommodate ourselves to a de-escalation of atheistic activity. Our era demands not only widespread but constant, deep atheistic propaganda." His words were in response to another petition (14,284 signatures) requesting the Ministry of Education to "prevent harmful manifestations of atheism" in the schools.

Religious medals and crucifixes are taken from students. Children are ridiculed for attending Mass, and parents are asked by school officials, "Why do you take your children to Mass; do you wish them to be scoffed at and harassed in school, to be different from their friends?" The Soviet Deputy for Religious Affairs in Lithuania, J. Rugienis, directs the transfers and assignments of priests, and the bishops must sign for them. It is no coincidence that the most zealous priests are scattered in small out-of-the-way villages, while those who have been compromised in the eyes of the faithful often occupy the important ecclesiastical posts.

Religious instruction in Lithuania is forbidden; children are forced to discuss family matters in class; atheism is a must for admission to youth groups. Communism uses many approaches.

Documentation: The Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League, 64-14 56th Rd., Maspeth, Long Island, New York 11378.

NEXT WEEK: Continued

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Liturgy Office Names Nowak to New Post

The human resources of the diocesan liturgy office expanded by one last week with the arrival of a full-time consultant to regional and parish liturgy committees. David

Nowak, who this summer earned his Masters degree in Liturgy from Notre Dame, started work for the diocese on Aug. 16.

Diaconate Unit Asks for Input

Priests in the diocese shortly will be questioned for information and suggestions on the local restoration of the Permanent Diaconate, and reactions to the work of the task force working toward that restoration will be asked of the three consultative bodies in the diocese.

In copies of letters released last week, the task force's communications committee has indicated that questionnaires on the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Rochester will be sent in the near future to all priests and that information and input will be asked from virtually everyone in the diocese.

The letters further indicate that the Courier-Journal will be a major tool in disseminating information on the developing program.

In the past two weeks the Courier has published a report from the task force, outlining the objectives of the group and delineating the history of the permanent diaconate in the Western Church.

Father William J. Amann, 36 Armstrong Rd., Rochester, 14616 is head of the communications committee.

A native of South Bend, Ind., Nowak is expected to make his home in Rochester. He has previously served as consultant to a committee of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, has been a consultant to both the Murphy Center and to the Center for Human Development, and has co-edited Liturgy of the Hours at Notre Dame (a prototype for a pastoral office book for the English speaking world).

He has also taught at the Logan School for the Retarded in South Bend and has served as a volunteer at his home area hospitals.

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