

Pontiff Hails
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Mrs. Petracca

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Inside Prison Walls: A Chaplain's View

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Big Flats — Tired but in good spirits even though it was past midnight, Msgr. Ronald C. Bill talked freely about his first week of duty as a National Guard chaplain in the Elmira Correctional Facility and Reception Center.

Father Bill is chaplain of the 204th Engineers; as a civilian, he is pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Binghamton.

A graduate of St. Bernard's Seminary and a National Guard chaplain for 14 years, Father Bill was called for duty with his unit to staff the prison Thursday, April 19, early in the prison guards' strike.

The following Wed-



Msgr. Bill

nesday, the last regular prison chaplain left the facility, leaving him the only religious minister to the 450 Guard members and the 1,557 inmates.

Normally, the facility has

five and a half chaplains, three of them Catholic. Father Daniel Tormey, head of the Catholic chaplains, reported that they did not cross the picket line when the strike began, noting their need to work with the staff

after the strike, and their interest in not showing a judgement of the strike as reasons for their decision. Since then, he said, they have asked the union for permission to cross the picket line to resume their spiritual work with the inmates. As of last Thursday, the negotiations were continuing.

Father Bill has been "taking care of the needs of the soldiers, which is my primary mission." He has been counseling Guard members and helping with problems caused by their quick call-up, he noted.

Secondarily, he explained, he is "constantly roving," doing what he can to help the inmates. He said that he has helped with telephone calls, talked with inmates, and worked to "keep the

inmates relatively satisfied and up to date with what's going on."

He commented that he has had to "hustle" to keep up with the work.

The inmates were suspicious of the Guard when they first arrived, he said, but their "attitude toward us has changed dramatically." Now, he said, "many of them wish we'd stay on."

"Morale is high, excellent, among the guardsmen," he stated, and the "cooperativeness of the inmates" is partially responsible for that.

He reported that inmates have hung banners in the cellblocks calling for the Guard to remain.

A problem for the Guard

is the long hours, Father Bill said; "hopefully, that'll end soon," as they are scheduled to begin eight-hour shifts instead of the current 12-hours.

Father Bill's commander, Major Richard S. Fidurski, had his own comment on Father Bill's hours. He said that the priest had been getting only four hours of sleep each night, and that on one occasion, he had had to order him "out of the prison and back to the armory for rest."

The difficult part of the job, Father Bill said, hasn't been the work with the inmates, but work after a 12-hour shift, "you have to fight your way off the hill."

He described the trip

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Mount Morris Native To Head Florida See

Msgr. William Thomas Larkin of the St. Bernard's Seminary Class of 1947 has been appointed Bishop of St. Petersburg, Fla. He is a native of Mt. Morris.

The appointment was announced last week in Washington, D.C.

The new ordinary has been in parish work in Florida for many years. He was ordained for the Diocese of St. Augustine on May 15, 1947, in the Syracuse Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. His ordination as bishop will take place in

Rome May 27, and he will be installed in St. Petersburg June 28.

He earned a doctorate in theology 25 years ago at the Belgian College of the University of St. Thomas in Rome. One of his classmates was Pope John Paul II.

Bishop Larkin was born March 31, 1923, son of the late William and Julia Beuerlein Larkin. His father was editor of the Mt. Morris Union; now the Enterprise, a weekly newspaper. He grew up in St. Patrick's

parish and attended Mt. Morris High School before entering St. Andrew's Seminary in preparation for St. Bernard's.

The bishop has a sister, Clarice Larkin, who lives in Clearwater, Fla. Relatives in this area include two aunts, Veronica Larkin and Agnes Bryant, and three cousins, Hanley Larkin of Wayland and Robert and J. Frederick Beuerlein of Mt. Morris, according to the last named, who formerly was a correspondent of the Courier-Journal.

Crossing Picket Line Said a Greater Problem Than Guarding Inmates

Big Flats — The challenge take over operation of a maximum security prison with more than 1500 inmates on 24 hours notice.

The National Guard 204th Engineers and members of 13 other units faced that challenge at the Elmira Correctional Facility when the state's corrections officers went on strike.

But, as evidenced by activities at the Big Flats Armory one evening last week, crossing the picket line outside the prison apparently has been

more of a problem than the inmates.

The convoy for the shift change left at 1 p.m., and those in the Armory office listened to the radio for signs of trouble, as there had been on other occasions.

One officer said to another, "now you'll find out that it's harder to be here" instead of at the picket line where you can see what is happening. A telephone line is kept open to the prison, and reports are relayed as to the convoy's progress.

Convoy members reported that a stone was thrown, but there was no damage. An hour later, the shift getting off duty also crossed the line without serious incident.

When the day shift arrived at the armory, Ived, they appeared haggard, after a 12-hour shift lengthened an additional two hours by the time required to change shifts and conduct the convoy.

Meanwhile, preparation was underway to take the cooks into the facility in time to cook breakfast.

Archdiocese Issues 'Moral' T.V. Guide

New York (RNS) — Cardinal Terence Cooke has asked the pastors of his archdiocese to distribute a parents' guide for children's viewing of television and movies and listening to rock music.

The eight-page tabloid contains comments on 82 television programs and 102 current movies, compiled from reviews by a committee of parents, under the

auspices of the archdiocesan office of communications.

The committee recommended 10 TV programs as "consistently productive of sound moral values." In alphabetical order they are: Battlestar Galactica, Different Strokes, Donny and Marie, How the West Was Won, Little House on the Prairie, Mork and Mindy, Paper Chase, The Waltons, The White Shadow and World of

Disney.

The committee highly recommended Family, Lou Grant and Sixty Minutes as "programs parents might watch with their children and use as a basis for profitable discussion with them of the values involved in the shows."

The committee also named what it considered the 10 programs constituting

"the worst steady influence on youngsters' minds and characters." In alphabetical order they are: Brothers and Sisters, Dallas, The Dating Game, \$1.98 Beauty Show, Loveboat, Newlywed Game, One Day at a Time, Soap, Starsky and Hutch, and Three's Company.

The movie reviews give a brief outline of the plot to permit some understanding of how questionable scenes fit into the story. The comment, for example, for

the Academy Award-winning The Deer Hunter says: "The devastating effects of Vietnam on three boyhood friends continue to change their lives after the war. The scenes in Vietnam are very real, including a horrifying torture scene involving Russian roulette."

A media fact sheet for parents, included with the capsule comments, warns parents that current media content is often anti-Catholic in tone, "Catholic parents in particular," it says, "fare

very poorly. They are easily identified as ethnic or white middle class people, or the script openly ridicules their Catholic origins."

The guide also asserts that "television and movies in 1979 often create for youngsters bizarre and corrupting sources of wisdom—prostitutes, pimps, criminals, addicts and other street people." It also describes rock heroes and rock lyrics as "frequently obscene and bitterly anti-religious."