

The Last Day At St. Agnes . . . Pictures, Page 10



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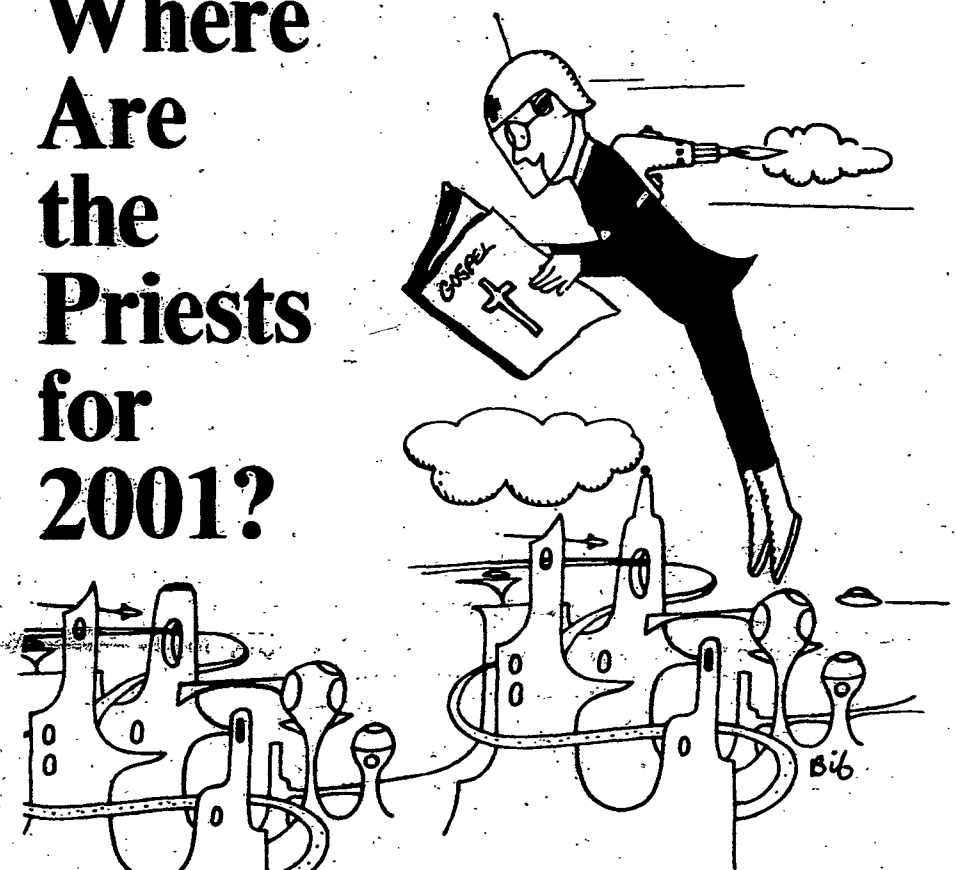
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Where Are the Priests for 2001?



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By William J. O'Malley, SJ

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. — Luke 10/2

Crisis is the call of Christ to the Christian. But not all crises clamor for our attention with voices as strident as the daily headlines or as immediate as a child's wailing over a skinned knee. Even within the church, the towncriers and prophets and doomsayers already have their hands and mouths full — what with birth control and abortion and listless liturgies and El Salvador and tax rebates for parochial school parents. Nonetheless, one crisis in the church is so crucial that it cannot for too long continue to clamor to deaf ears: the number of at least nominal Catholics is going dramatically up, and the number of priests and seminarians to serve them is going dramatically down.

In the last 10 to 12 years, the American Catholic population has grown by two million, from nearly 48 million to nearly 50 million. Of that number, 58,485 are diocesan and religious priests: 1 percent of American Catholics. If our numbers were to grow to, say, 70 million by 2001, one

would hope we would have about 70,000 priests to serve them. Not very likely.

	1968	1970	1980	12-year drop
Diocesan Seminarians	22,232	17,317	8,552	62%
Religious Seminarians	17,604	11,589	4,674	73%
Total Seminarians	39,836	28,906	13,226	67%

Of course, there is a silver lining to those bleak statistics. If the American Church is to survive, lay Catholics are going to have to assume a more meaningful role both in the ministerial and managerial offices of the church. Nor can they be treated merely as good hands and good hearts, but as good heads, too. The permanent diaconate is merely the tip of a gradually emerging need.

Moreover, the fewer ministerial priests we have, the more obviously they will have to pull back to the specific tasks for which they have been ordained and others have not. They will have to yield to others not just a share in such tasks as fund-raising, bookkeeping, and maintenance, but a real share in governing power, under the bishop, over the affairs of the parish.

This will leave the ordained priest free to

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Haitian Decision Near

By John Dash

Haitian refugees imprisoned at a number of centers around the country and in Puerto Rico may be ordered released today by a judge in Miami, Fla.

A hearing is being held today by Judge Eugene Spellman to determine whether the Haitians will be freed. Judge Spellman last Friday ruled null the government's detention policy for Haitians. That policy has been in effect for about a year.

Judge Spellman's Friday ruling denied that the federal policy was discriminatory against Haitians. He saved until today his determination whether the Haitians should be freed.

Both sides in the suit claimed victory.

In what some observers saw as a face-saving measure, the Justice Department, on the Monday before, announced it would issue guidelines for the release of some Haitians in federal detention.

The Haitians would be
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Collection to Aid Pope This Weekend

The annual Peter's Pence Collection, which provides financial aid to the pope for his personal direction and governance of the Church and for his charitable ministries, is scheduled this weekend June 26-27, at all parishes in the diocese.

Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara of Indianapolis, chairman of the ad hoc committee on Economic Concerns of the Holy See, says that the Holy See is staffed by 3,400 employees.

"Some are clergy and religious, others are laypersons with families. There also 1,600 people who are the Holy See's dependents, living in retirement after years of service when funding a pension program was not a possibility."

Archbishop O'Meara said that the only ordinary sources of revenue for the Holy See comes from its patrimony from the past and its current Peter's Pence collection, now falling far short of meeting current needs.

"In 1981," he said, "the deficit was \$25 million and in 1982 it will be \$29 million."

Peter's Pence was originally



Let us with one voice give him our support.

an Anglo-Saxon tax initiated by King Alfred the Great as early as the year 889 to give financial aid to the pope, "Peter." During the Middle Ages, the practice was extended to Ireland, Wales, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and probably to Hungary and Poland.

The modern collection began under Pope Pius IX in

the 1860s "as a subsidy to compensate the papacy for the loss of revenue from States of the Church." It was officially approved in 1871.

Because of the deficit, officials see this year as especially important in aiding Pope John Paul II, a highly active pope. Inflation is seen as the major factor for the deficit.



Photo By Terrance J. Brennan

Strolling Along

Eighty-four-year-old Clara Schilling, a resident of the United Methodist Home on East Avenue, strides proudly as she nears the finish line during the walkathon event of the third annual Sunshine Olympics last Tuesday, June 15, at Park Ridge Nursing Home. More photos on Page 2.