

Veteran says fast arousing new interest in S.O.A.

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

WASHINGTON — Accompanied by sympathizers who help hold signs and talk to passers-by, 11 protesters on the U.S. Capitol steps are pushing Congress to discontinue funding of the School of the Americas, a U.S. Army program to train Latin American military leaders.

According to Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois, many of the military school's leaders have persecuted Catholic church workers associated with the poor.

Stephen Smock, a staff member at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in Rochester, is among the core group of 11 protesters committed to going 40 days without solid foods. The fast began April 11.

Smock said in a phone interview that Father Bourgeois' visit to Rochester earlier this year inspired him to go to Washington. That SOA graduates were implicated in the 1980 rapes and killings of three U.S. women religious and one lay woman in El Salvador angered Smock.

"Father Bourgeois knew one of the Maryknoll sisters," Smock said. "It really infuriated me that our money was being used for this in the name of the red, white and blue."

A naval veteran himself, Smock noted that many members of Veterans for Peace, a nationwide organization, are participating in the fast, or holding their own "solidarity" events across the nation.

Smock added that several people from the Rochester diocese have come down to Washington to participate in the fast for a few days, and that St. Joseph's House would hang a banner this week proclaiming its support for the protesters.

On the 11th day of their juice-and-water fast, Father Bourgeois said he was beginning to feel weaker, but that group morale was high — an assessment which Smock echoed. Smock said he believes that the fast is having an impact on the people walking up and down the Capitol steps each day.

"A lot of them ask, 'What's the SOA?'" Smock said. "When they find out, they're not too happy about it."

In a prior 18-day fast, Father Bourgeois joined a group of Salvadorans protesting funding of Central American military actions. Staged at St. Paul's Cathedral in St. Paul, Minn., the 1989 fast drew a rally of 3,000 sympathizers. A 35-day fast in 1990 led to solidarity rallies or fasts in 17 other cities.

"There's an aspect of fasting to call attention to injustice, but it's first a purification of one's own heart," said Father Bourgeois.

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This article contains reporting by Catholic News Service.



Lauren McFalls/Photo intern

Readying for revival

(From left) Elizabeth Ruth, Celestine Thomas, and Alfreda Brooks sang at the Black Catholic Pre-Revival Rally, held at Rochester's St. Bridget Church from May 1-2. Sponsored by the diocesan Office of Black Ministries, the pre-revival was intended to prepare participants for this fall's Black Catholic Revival — to be led by Father John Judie — scheduled for Oct. 17-19.

Nazareth College plans two commencements

ROCHESTER — Nazareth College, 4245 East Ave., has scheduled separate commencement ceremonies for graduates and undergraduates.

Maxine Greene, professor of philosophy and education at Teachers College of Columbia University and a pioneer in the field of educational philosophy, is scheduled to be the commencement speaker for the graduate ceremony at 11 a.m. May 7.

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (Dem.-28th District) is slated to deliver the undergraduate commencement address the following day at noon.

Rabbi Judea Miller of Temple B'rith Kodesh is scheduled to speak at the baccalaureate service May 7. The service will commence with an interfaith ser-

vice at 3 p.m., followed by a baccalaureate Mass at Nazareth College's Vasile Alma Mater Chapel in the Otto Shults Center.

Honorary degrees will be conferred on Greene and Slaughter, as well as Marcella Ennis, a member of Nazareth College's first graduating class, and Daniel E. Gill, chief executive officer and president of Bausch & Lomb, Inc.

St. Mary's to hold concert featuring Contestable, Jones

CANANDAIGUA — St. Mary's School has scheduled "An Evening of Cabaret," featuring Phyllis Contestable and Alan Jones, for Saturday, May 14 at 8 p.m. The gala will take place at the Canandaigua Academy auditorium, 435 East St.

In addition to Contestable and Jones, the evening will include a visit by "Rev. Mother" from the hit musical *Nunsense*.

Tickets cost \$12 for preferred seating, \$8 for general admission. Advance tickets are available at all Canandaigua National Bank offices, Wegmans in Canandaigua and Geneva, Finger Lakes Community College, the National Bank of Geneva in Canandaigua, Clancy's Cafe, and St. Mary's School, 16 Gibson St.

All proceeds will benefit St. Mary's School.

For information, contact Donna Kamholtz at 716/394-7171.

Priest flies to Lithuania

CHURCHVILLE — Father Dominic F. Mockevicius, pastor of St. Vincent DePaul Parish, left April 28 for Vilnius, Lithuania's capital.

The priest's journey took him from Rochester to Newark, N.J., where he was slated to fly to Frankfurt, Germany, and then on to Vilnius.

Father Mockevicius said he would study at a seminary in the Baltic republic in order to brush up on the Lithuanian language.

A first-generation Lithuanian whose parents came to the United States before World War I, Father Mockevicius will retire from his pastorate June 28 and will assist his brother, Father Charles Mockevicius, administrator of St. George's Lithuanian Parish in Rochester.

Father Mockevicius said he will probably lecture on the U.S. church while in Lithuania, and will stay with Father Gintaras Jonikas, a recently ordained Lithuanian priest. Father Jonikas visited the Rochester diocese twice in the last two years, Father Mockevicius said.

Father Mockevicius last visited Lithuania in the 1970s, when the nation was still ruled by the former Soviet Union.

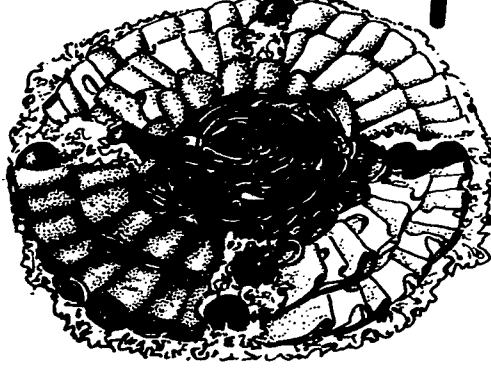
"The faith was always there," he said of Lithuania's Catholicism. "It thrived, even under the communists."

— Rob Cullivan

Wegmans

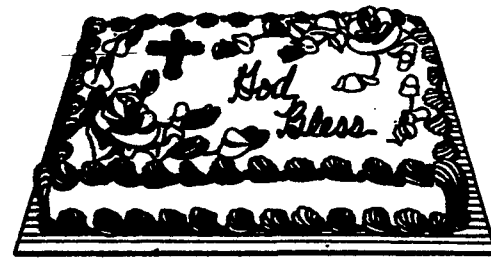
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