

# VERBUM

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## Torrents Of Grace Seven Americans Receive an Eternal Inheritance

*"Do manfully and be of good heart: fear not, nor be ye dismayed at their sight: for the Lord thy God, He Himself is thy leader, and will not leave thee nor forsake thee" (Deut. XXXI, 6).*

While 1992 has brought much to disquiet the soul in today's world—economic breakdown, increasing abortions, riots in Los Angeles, etc.—the All-merciful and All-powerful God in His ineffable and infinite wisdom, has not abandoned His few faithful children but continues to bestow upon the United States and the entire Mystical Body immense graces, such as the ordination of seven young men to the eternal priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ—six in Winona on June 20 and Father David Hewko at Saint Mary's Academy and College on April 21—each one a continual testimony to the promise of Our Lord: "I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world" (Mt XXVIII, 20).

The incredible abundance of Our Lord's vivifying grace was striking at the beautiful ceremony in Winona. Besides the largest SSPX priestly ordination class since the beginning of the Seminary in the USA, three men were ordained to the diaconate, with two bishops, thirty-one priests, fourteen nuns, five brothers, and four monks participating—all witnessed by over 1,000 faithful representing twelve countries and six continents.

Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais performed his first American ordination and called Saint Thomas Aquinas Seminary a "lighthouse for the Catholic Church in America ... the spiritual center, where your priests are being trained in the spirit of the Church, according to the statutes of the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X ..."

*"And He heard my voice from His Holy Temple: and my cry before Him came into His ears" (Psalm XVII, 5-8).*



**PRIESTS FOREVER**—Above, the newly ordained priests (front row, l to r): Fr. Benedict Van der Putten, Fairplay, Missouri; Fr. Kenneth Novak, Downers Grove, Illinois; Fr. Michael Harber, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Fr. David Nichols, Salem, New York; Fr. Christopher Leith, Lonedell, Missouri; Fr. Stephen Stanich, East Chicago, Indiana.



**ANOTHER CHRIST!**  
Fr. Kenneth Novak (Right) receives the matter of Holy Orders;

(Left) The three new deacons from l to r: Rev. Mr. Jorge Diaz, El Paso, Texas; Rev. Mr. Gerard Ockerse, Johannesburg, South Africa; Rev. Mr. Louis Alessio, West Patterson, New Jersey.



## "Teach ye all nations..." (Mt XXVIII, 19).

The Universal Church was well represented in Winona with priests from around the globe. Following are words from a few:

**SWITZERLAND**—The 1992 ordinations brought the Society's fourth bishop to the United States, Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais. Stationed at SSPX headquarters in Rickenbach, Switzerland, Bishop de Mallerais was delighted to be performing his first ordinations in the United States. "It is an honor to perform my first ordinations in America, by ordaining six priests and three deacons, who are the fruits of the persevering works of His



Bishop Tissier de Mallerais

Excellency Bishop Williamson and his colleagues."

Bishop de Mallerais impressed upon the ordinands the importance of the truths which they would teach, preach and preserve, "God is unchanging, God is holy, God is spirit and life. So, in the same way you must uphold firstly the Catholic doctrine that is an unchanging doctrine, as unchanging as God Himself—which is for all times and all places—it is forever. Secondly, a truth which is holy, as holy as God Himself; and therefore a truth free of any mixture with error, with impurity or with

any liberal values. Thus, you will have to fight against the errors and heresies with the strength of the Holy Ghost and the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary who is 'terrible as an army drawn up in battle' (Cant. VI, 9). This truth you must live, so that not only your words, but also your life becomes a living lesson for the faithful. This truth will be your own salvation and the salvation of those to whom you make it known."

**SOUTH AFRICA**—Blazing the missionary trail is the Canadian-born Superior of South Africa and Zimbabwe, Fr. Loren

(Continued on pg.4)



# "No longer do I call you servants... b

## FATHER MICHAEL HARBER

At 34 years of age, Fr. Michael Harber is the eldest of this year's ordinands to the priesthood of St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary. He was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1957, the second of four brothers. After four years of college, studying mechanical engineering, he moved east to Rochester, New York, to take a position with Eastman Kodak.

Three years later he returned to college, this time to get a Master's Degree. It was while he was there that he first heard about Archbishop Lefebvre and the Society of St. Pius X.

"My parents told me that they had attended the Tridentine Mass said by a priest of the Society of St. Pius X. I made some inquiries and shortly thereafter I went to Mass at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Mission."

Apart from the ceremony itself, one of the most impressive things, recalls Fr. Harber, was the example of the priests. "They were so young and yet they gave such a strong example, that the thought of a vocation was awakened in me."

So after seeking advice from the priests, he made the decision at 28 to give up a promising career, entering the Seminary and the service of our Lord at Ridgefield in 1986. Now, six years later, he has finally arrived at ordination. What is in the mind of a newly ordained priest? Fr. Harber explains, "As a priest one is dealing with questions of eternity—the salvation or damnation of souls every single day! Just as a natural father looks mainly after the

natural life of the child, so as a supernatural 'Father' I will have to look after the supernatural life of souls. I pray with confidence that God will give me the grace to do my duty."

For his first appointment, Father Harber will be sent to Browerville, Minnesota, to be Chaplain at the Society of St. Pius X Novitiate for Sisters and to minister in the parish there. Fr. Harber quipped, "After growing up with three brothers, I'm finally going to get some 'Sisters'!"



## FATHER CHRISTOPHER LEITH

An interest in cars lead Fr. Leith into a career as an auto mechanic. Six years in the trade saw him fully certified and even thinking about going into business on his own until he began to recognize the gentle calling of a vocation to the priesthood.

Fr. Leith recalls his path to the Seminary. "Some years earlier, I had started going to the Tridentine Mass with my Father who had always been opposed to the New Mass. We went to the Society of Saint Pius X mission in St. Louis and I was very inspired by the young priests who said the Mass. So I started to think about the possibility of a vocation."

A vocation is a grace from Almighty God. Fr. Leith insists, "My decision to go to the Seminary was only a response to the grace given me by God via the priests." So in 1986 he packed up his tool box and came north to St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, then in Ridgefield. It proved a difficult challenge.

"The seminary had a tough schedule," relates Fr. Leith. "An awful lot is expected of the young seminarian. But I really loved the courses we were taught, especially Philosophy, because it builds the mind to learn the eternal Truths." After six years of Philosophy,

Theology, Dogma, and other challenging courses, Fr. Leith has now been ordained a priest forever.

"One cannot fully comprehend that! It's a life in the service of others. My main concern will be to continue to sanctify myself in order to lead others to sanctity. I am not really worried, though. I know God's grace is sufficient."

Fr. Leith has some words for any young man thinking about the priesthood. "You should give it a try and see what happens. You will not regret it. If it's your vocation, you will have come to the seminary to answer it. If not, you will gain a tremendous amount just being here for some time. Heads you win and tails you don't lose!"

Fr. Leith has been appointed to Post Falls, Idaho, as Chaplain to the Dominican Sisters. He also has two bi-monthly missions in Montana and a monthly mission in Hawaii to serve.



## FATHER DAVID NICHOLS

Fr. David Nichols was born in Flemington, New Jersey, as a twin in a family of nine children. Raised in a rural area, Fr. Nichols attended Catholic schools and enjoyed studying foreign languages. At home the Faith was strong, with the



## FATHER DAVID HEWKO

Of the more than 30 priests who assisted at the ordination ceremony, one had a particularly keen interest in the event, since the class of ordinands was his own. Fr. David Hewko, the youngest of his seminary class, was to have been ordained in the same ceremony ... that is, until a recent urgent need for a professor at St. Mary's Academy and College prompted the advancement of Father's priestly ordination to this past Easter Tuesday. Eight priests and over 500 faithful were present for the ceremony, the first ordination at St. Mary's in 25 years. It meant Fr. Hewko's trading in his position as head sacristan at the Seminary for the demanding duty of assistant parish priest (at America's largest society priory) and college professor. In his first week of ministry, Father administered the sacraments of baptism, confession, Holy Eucharist, matrimony, and extreme unction, including the last anointing of Father Victor Mroz, O.F.M. Cap., a long-time friend and associate of the Society, who died shortly after Easter.

Fr. Hewko says that the work is demanding, but that it is good and worthy labor. His joy was evident at having the opportunity to be present at his former classmates' ordination, and it was a memorable sight to behold him in the line of

## FATHER BENEDICT VAN DER PUTTEN

"My Father is the Farmer" (Jn XV, 1). Fr. Benedict Van Der Putten grew up on a Missouri farm and most likely would have followed in his father's footsteps as a farmer. But the Father in Heaven had different plans for His servant. Meditating on the words of Christ, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, for the harvest indeed is great but the laborers are





# ut I have called you friends" (Jn XV, 15).

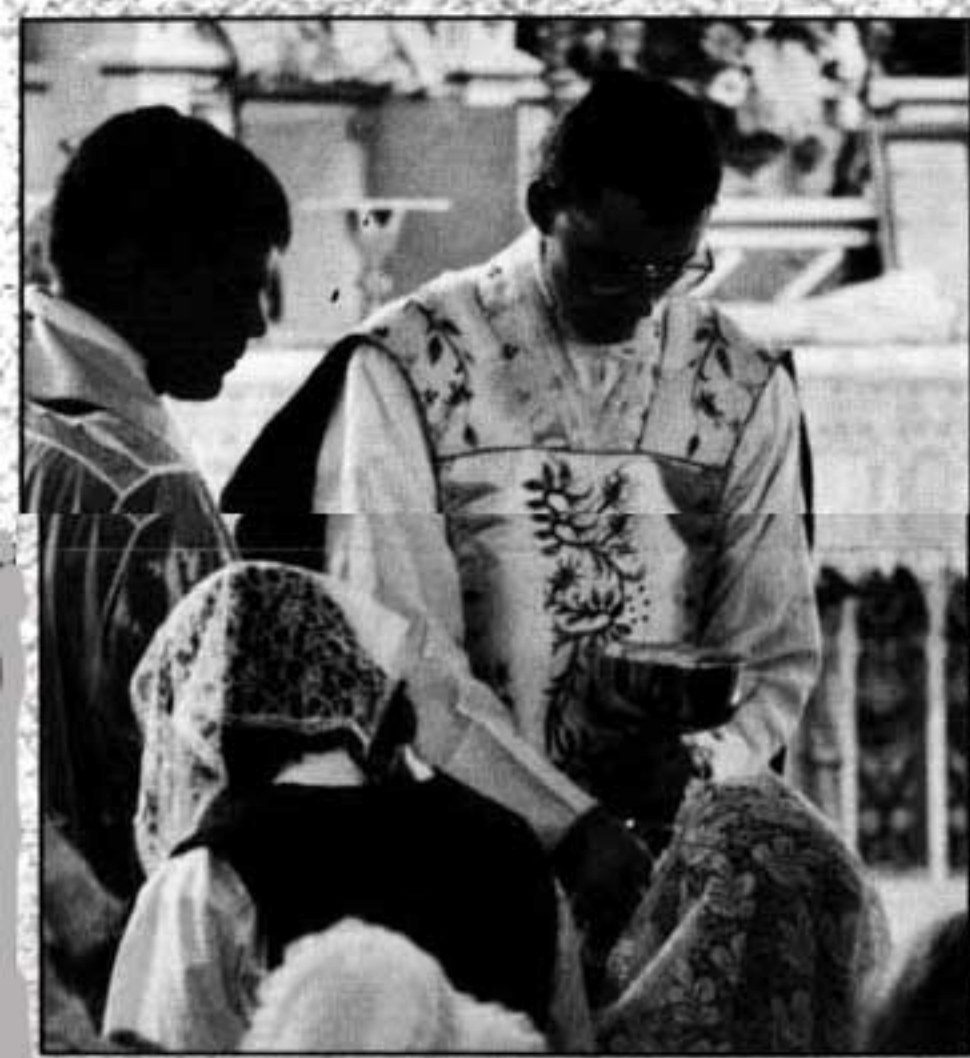
family praying the Rosary together every day—no doubt a big influence on the grace of his vocation.

In 1985 Fr. Nichols and his twin brother (now Brother Gerard) decided to go on retreat at the Seminary in Ridgefield, Connecticut. Father had always been attracted to the priesthood, but it was the encouragement of then Father Williamson that convinced him to enter the Seminary and give it a try. Upon entering, he knew he had made the right decision, and he felt at home there ever since.

At the Seminary, Fr. Nichols was assigned the important responsibility of being the Infirmarian. Known as "Dr. Dave" by his fellow seminarians, he was always very kind to those in need and would not deny the least sacrifice to help an ailing seminarian. Since he was gifted with a good singing voice, he sang in the schola and polyphony choir and even fiddled on the violin in his spare time.

Assigned now to England, Fr. Nichols is very enthusiastic about his apostolate, especially the education of children and rebuilding the lives of the faithful who are daily victimized by the tragic modern world.

priests who, one after the other, imposed hands upon each of the six ordinands. Indeed, the first were last, as six new priests joined their junior comrade in the Society's sacerdotal ranks.



few" (Mt IX, 38), Fr. Van Der Putten realized that his future lay in reaping souls for God.

As a child, Fr. Van Der Putten attended Catholic elementary and high schools, and had some training under the late Fr. Nelson. After his parents became dissatisfied with the "new religion" taught at diocesan schools, Fr. Van Der Putten and his brothers and sisters were home-schooled. Later he went to St. Mary's College and was eventually made a house father.

Soon after, though, his desire to enter into the service of God was fulfilled. Bidding farewell to what the world had to offer, Fr. Van Der Putten entered the Society of St. Pius X Seminary, then in Ridgefield, Connecticut. As a seminarian, Fr. Van Der Putten was well-known for his good-humor and vast literary knowledge (Having never had a television in the house, he spent most of his free time reading books). An excellent teacher, Fr. Van Der Putten was assigned to undertake the weekly "Music Appreciation" class at the Seminary—a course designed to deepen the seminarians' knowledge of music and art.

Fr. Van Der Putten is a strong advocate of large families, being himself one of 13 children. Father has been assigned to preach retreats at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

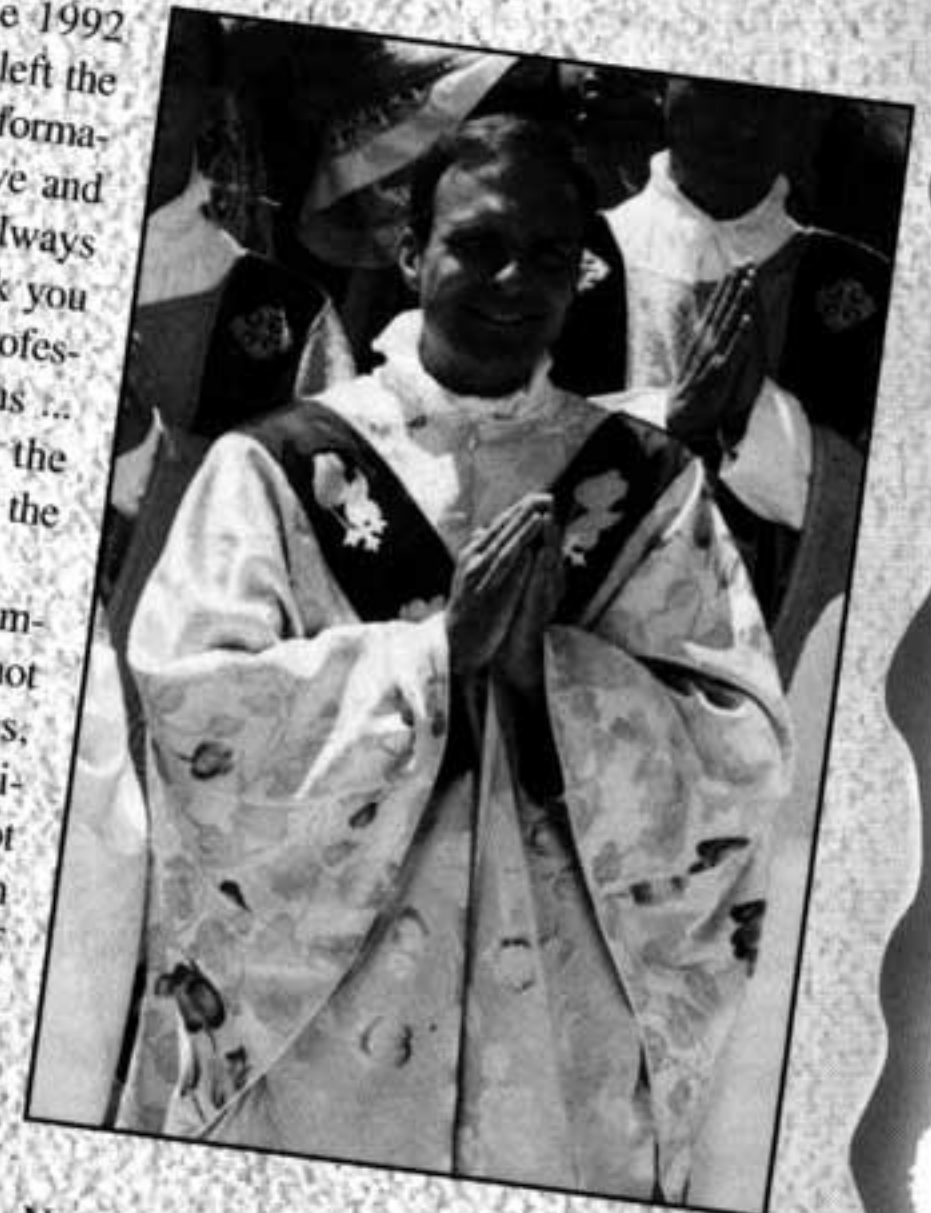
## FATHER KENNETH NOVAK

"By the time this is read, the 1992 Class of Winona's priests will have left the 'seminary nest,' that secure place of formation suddenly somewhat hard to leave and where each of us new priests will always want to keep part of ourselves. Thank you to each benefactor, each priest and professor, our Rector, each praying religious ... ultimately Archbishop Lefebvre and the High Priest. Now, the courses are over, the studies begin.

"At the start, for me, entering the seminary was an attempt to test a vocation, not a commitment. A successful business, probable promise in party politics, eligibility to begin a family ... all these were not enough to silence the Hound of Heaven that barked, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and shall lose his own soul?' (Mt XVI, 26) ...

"In a brief but memorable exchange with Archbishop Lefebvre in 1984, His Grace replied simply, 'Do God's will.' Then, I knew a try at the priesthood was inevitable. Would I want to lie on my deathbed cursing the course my life could take were I not to at least do that?"

"I know priests, but this is not to know necessarily the priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I will begin to know it only when I begin to live it. The priest is answerable for the souls of others at the risk of his own. A shepherd at risk! To sacrifice the Savior! To sacrifice self! ... He is 'Another Christ.' Result? There is no Fr. Novak, only the High Priest Our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whose Person and



Name he 'lives, and moves, and has his being.'

"I have been stationed at the Regina Caeli House, Kansas City where by working in the capacities assigned to me, I will best serve the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ. No warped, overly ambitious messianism here on my part, but obedience to superiors tenacious in the Holy Faith. 'Any thing; any time; any place.'

"With my request for your prayers, dear reader and the promise of mine for you in return, onward with the 'restoration of all things in Christ!'"

## FATHER STEPHEN STANICH

"As Bishop Williamson frequently says to the seminarians, the priesthood is the 'Major Leagues'. In the service of the Divine King, the stakes are high: the eternal salvation of immortal souls. One needs to be prepared for the battles ahead because the battles we fight have eternal ramifications. The great consolation is that we're on the winning side. Our Lord, by enduring

His Passion, has already conquered through His Cross. We simply need to win those battles that He sends to us."

The first line of battle for Fr. Stanich will be St. Louis, where he has been assigned as assistant pastor to Fr. John Young. This September, a school opens in St. Louis, which along with regular parish duties, will most certainly keep Father busy. "I will help Fr. Young with the school—teaching catechism; I enjoy working with young people to help them grow in knowledge and love of Our Lord."

As Fr. Stanich knows from his days as point guard on the Seminary basketball court, victory is never accomplished by individualism, but will be earned only through a team effort. "We must all play our role, that is chiefly in fulfilling our duty of state—mine is preaching and praying, for example—in order to continue Our Lord's victory over His enemies. This must be done whether you're in Chicago, New York or India. That's the reality of the Mystical Body—the Communion of Saints."

Fr. Stanich had some words of advice for those considering a vocation to the priesthood, "If you have a desire to serve Our Lord and average intelligence, then you have absolutely nothing to lose by coming and giving it a try. Whether you make it for a year or two or all the way to the altar, you will have profited much by the time spent at the seminary. The key is simply to find God's Will and have the perseverance and fortitude to carry it out."





**Gerspacher.** Despite severe financial difficulties and the tense political situation in South Africa, Fr. Gerspacher has started a weekly newsletter and opened a new priory in Roodeport, S.A. The priory building was big enough to house a school, so 13 rooms were partitioned off and a chapel installed. The school will open in January, 1993, handling the first three grades of elementary school. Thanks in part to Fr. Gerspacher's efforts, South Africa has produced three more vocations for the Seminary starting next year. And help is on the way in the form of soon-to-be-Fr. Van Der Kerckhove, a native Belgian who will be ordained in Econe and assigned to assist Fr. Gerspacher.

**NEW ZEALAND—Fr. Shane Johnson** of New Zealand attended the ordinations



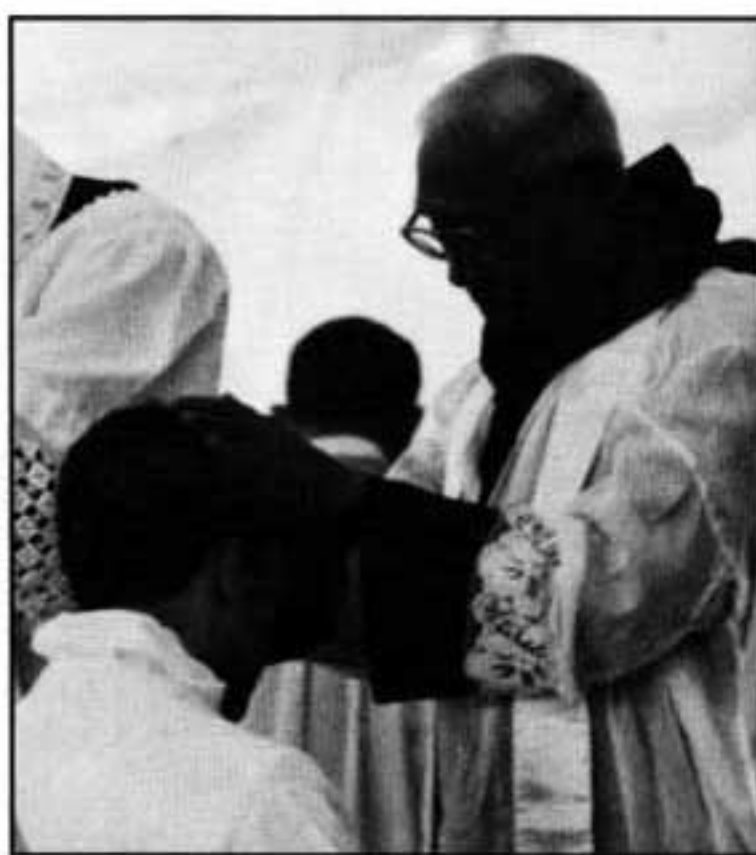
Fr. Shane Johnson

this year, his first visit to Winona since he was ordained at the end of 1989 in Australia. Fr. Johnson, who was the first priest

ordained from the Winona Seminary, says things are going well "Down Under." In Wellington, the SSPX has recently acquired the chapel of the old Sacred Heart Girls' School. Although the building is in disrepair, the 19th Century French Gothic chapel is still in good condition. The Society is also opening a primary school in Brisbane. Fr. Johnson says that the number of faithful in his parishes is steady with only slight increases.

**UNITED STATES—Fr. James Doran** has been very busy in Kansas City since he was appointed Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church last August. Besides his pastoral duties, Fr. Doran is also the Principal of the school, which recently moved to a renovated building next to the church. Father is also the editor of *The Angelus*. Currently the Angelus Press is reprinting old favorites such as *Liturgical Revolution II and III*, and the first volume of *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre*. The Angelus will soon be doing all of the desktop publishing in Regina Coeli House before sending it to the printer. This will save the Angelus Press thousands of dollars a year. Otherwise things are going very well in the City of Fountains. The school has grown by one-third in the past year, and Father says he sees someone new every Sunday.

**INDIA—Fr. Bernard Nunes, O.C.D.** from Mangalore Monastery in India, preached the pre-ordination retreat to our new priests. Born 75 years ago in Bombay he was first educated by Jesuits before entering the Carmelite Order. Next year,



Fr. Bernard Nunes, O.C.D.

God willing, Father will celebrate the occasion of his priestly Golden Jubilee.

In the retreat to our new priests, Father emphasized the suffering and humility of Our Lord—Priest and Victim. "Priests", he said, "must be willing to suffer the Way of the Cross with Our Lord. They must follow Archbishop Lefebvre who was an imitation of Our Lord before Pilate. This strength, a grace particular to saints, must be the desire of all future priests." Before returning to India, Father will visit the Carmelite sisters in Spokane, Washington. He will also spend some time directing the traditional Dominican nuns, as well as our own Society sisters.

**BRAZIL—**On the evening of ordinations, **Fr. Fernando Rifan** made a public slide presentation in the seminary refectory

concerning the situation in Campos, Brazil. Fr. Rifan was ordained in 1974 by Bishop de Castro Mayer. When the Bishop was relieved of his responsibilities in Campos by Rome, Fr. Rifan was also turned out of his church. Ninety percent of the faithful, though, followed the Bishop and Father after the Roman Intervention.

Today, Father has over one thousand children for catechism, and he is busy with the construction of a new school and social center for the thousands of poor Catholics in his diocese. During his presentation, Father referred to the relationship of Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop de Castro Mayer which he said "was only possible because of their fidelity to the true Catholic faith." During his stay in America, Father will visit Society missions in Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Farmingville and Glens Falls, New York.



Fr. Fernando Rifan

# Taking the Oath & Keeping the Faith

When Pope St. Pius X tackled the heresy of Modernism in 1907 with his landmark encyclical *Pascendi Gregis*, he prescribed various means for checking the growth of Modernism among the clergy and for eradicating it from the Church. Months later in his *Motu proprio*, *Sacrorum Antistitum*, he issued a command that an Oath Against Modernism be taken by virtually anyone who is given the care of souls. Among the categories enumerated by the Pope were confessors and preachers, pastors, superiors of religious congregations, professors in seminaries, and those to be ordained to the subdiaconate. In each case, the individuals would have to take the oath before receiving orders, taking office, or (as in the case of seminary professors) before beginning their work each year.

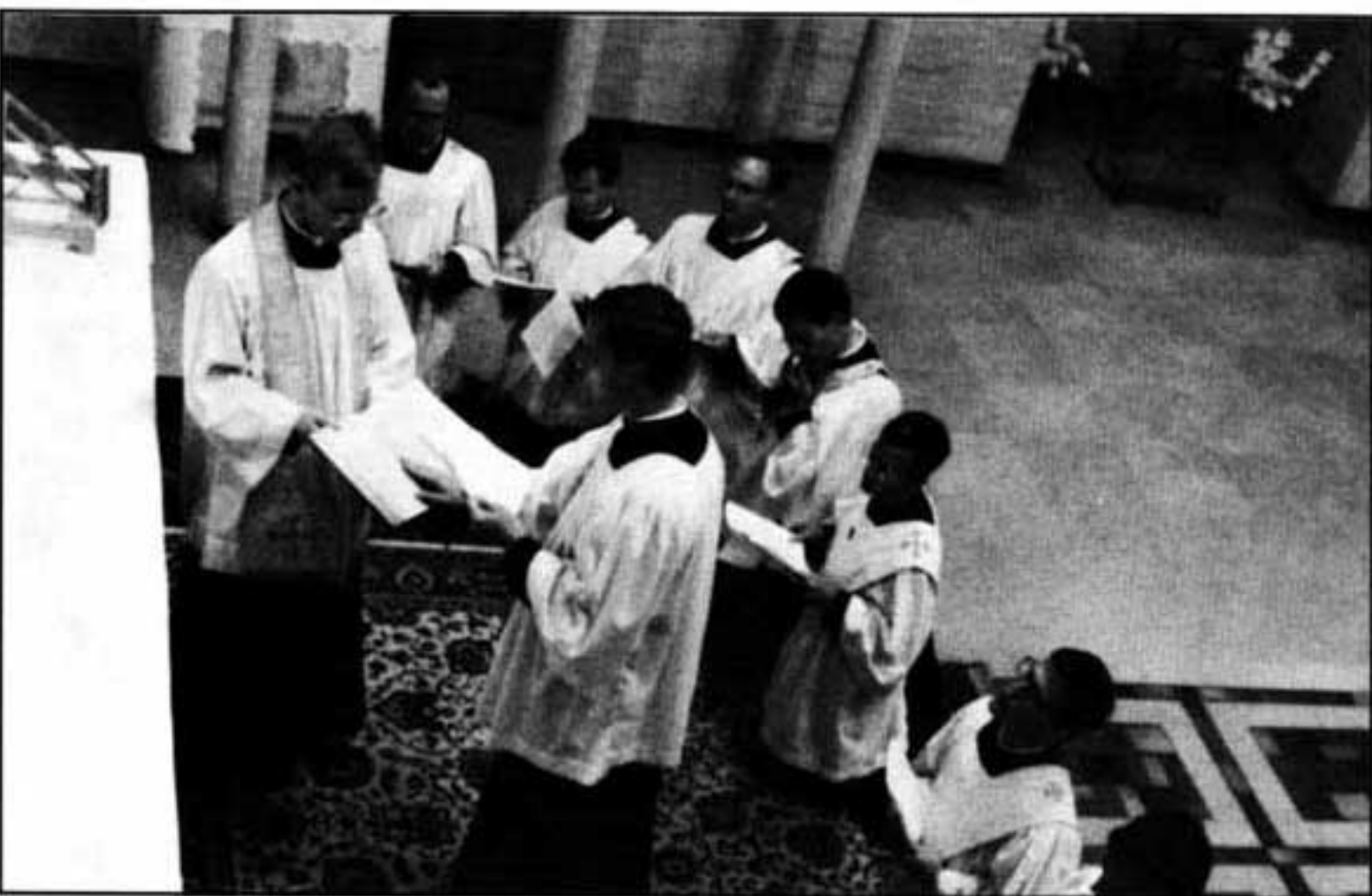
The Pope gave orders that the Oath was to remain in effect as long as the "virus" of Modernism was still infecting the Church. Many years after Pope Pius X had administered the strong antidote to Modernism contained in *Pascendi*, it appeared that Modernism had indeed gone away. In reality it merely went underground, patiently waiting for the day when it could safely raise its ugly head. Unfortunately during the intervening years, the Oath gradually fell into disuse. Had it not, the Church might not be in the mess it is in today.

The Society of St. Pius X, however, knows the value of adhering to the Anti-Modernist Oath and uses it more than the minimum prescriptions require. Here at the Seminary the ordinands take the Oath before receiving the three major orders of Sub-Diaconate, Diaconate and the Priesthood.

The Oath is taken in a solemn ceremony on the night before ordinations. The ordinands kneel at the altar before the Blessed Sacrament, recite the Oath and then rise to place their hand on the Missal while consummating their pledge of fidelity to the integrity of the Faith. A document is then signed, attesting to the fact that they have taken the Oath and promise to live by it.

Following are key excerpts from the Oath, designed to reinforce the Church's defenses against Modernism...

*I, N., firmly embrace and accept all and everything that has been defined, affirmed, and declared by the unerring Magisterium of the Church, especially those chief doctrines which are directly opposed to the errors of this time...*



*The Anti-Modernist Oath is recited by the future priests and deacons. Here the Rev. Mr. Louis Alessio swears his allegiance to the integral Catholic Faith, with Fr. Goettler presiding.*

*I reject the heretical invention of the evolution of dogmas, passing from one meaning to another, different from that which the Church first held...*

*I hold most certainly and profess sincerely that faith is not a blind religious feeling bursting forth from the recesses of the subconscious, unformed morally under the pressure of the heart and the impulse of the will, but the true assent of the intellect to the truth received extrinsically ex auditu, whereby we believe what has been said, attested, and revealed by the personal God, our Creator and Lord, to be true on account of the authority of God the highest Truth...*

*In the same manner I disapprove the error of those who affirm that the faith proposed by the Church can be in conflict with history, and that Catholic dogmas, in the sense in which they are now understood, cannot be reconciled with the more authentic origins of the Catholic religion...*

*I disapprove likewise the method of studying and interpreting Sacred Scripture,*

*modernists hold that there is nothing divine in Sacred Tradition...*

*So I retain most firmly the Faith of the Fathers, and shall retain it until the final breath of life, regarding the certain gift of truth, which is, was and will always be in the succession of the episcopacy from the Apostles, not so that what may seem better and more fitting according to each one's period of culture may be held, but so that the absolute and immutable truth preached by the Apostles from the beginning may never be believed otherwise, may never be understood otherwise.*

*All these things I promise that I shall faithfully, completely and sincerely keep and inviolably guard, never deviating from them in word or writing either while teaching or in any other pursuit. So I promise, so I swear, so may God help me in these Gospels.*

## Seminary Professors Take the Oath, Too.

At the beginning of each school year, the professors here at the Seminary take the Anti-Modernist Oath in a similar ceremony performed in the Main Chapel in the presence of all the seminarians. This is done to stress the importance of constant vigilance against the wily influence of Modernism, in which the Church and the world are marinated.

Highly recommended by Bishop Williamson is a careful reading—at least once a year—of *Pascendi*. For only through an in-depth understanding of Modernism can a proper diagnosis of the disease be made and a cure prescribed for our ailing Church.

If and when the hierarchy of the Church regains its *sensus fidei*, the Anti-Modernist Oath will undoubtedly come into use once again so that an eternal vigilance may be kept on this most devastating of heresies. In the meantime, the Society of St. Pius X will hold fast to the Anti-Modernist Oath in its ongoing mission to keep the Faith.

*which disregards the tradition of the Church, the analogy of faith, and the norms of the Apostolic See, and adheres to the fictions of the rationalists, and no less freely than boldly adopts textual criticism as the only and supreme rule. Besides I reject the opinion of those who hold that to present the historical and theological disciplines the teacher or the writer on these subjects must first divest himself of previously conceived opinion either on the supernatural origin of Catholic tradition, or on the aid promised by God for the perpetual preservation of every revealed truth...*

*Finally, in short, I profess to be utterly free of the error according to which the*