

and a few other virtues I didn't possess, thus making the choice a moral one, directly related to my religious convictions."

Once in Ottawa, Pelletier was reluctant to show off his religious faith, "but (he) didn't hide it either," he says. He had lived through a period of Quebec history where its politicians "shrouded themselves in their devotion to St. Joseph and their closeness to the clergy," and he found this both distasteful and unethical. He also referred to Western Canadian premiers who preached the bible over the radio. "Using one's faith as vote getter was, and still is, repugnant to me."

Pelletier noted that the foundation of his own political thinking is summed up in the words of the French lay Catholic philosopher Emmanuel Mounier. "All human beings are, by nature, essentially equal. Inequalities between them are accidental. Sound policies are those which tend to reduce inequalities among human beings; policies which increase and exploit those differences are wrong and should be fought against."

Referring to so-called "free votes" in the House of Commons, Pelletier asked rhetorically, "Does the occurrence of such free votes signify that in all other votes, MPs are allowed to ignore their conscience? I prefer to believe that an MP's conscience holds a full-time job, not a part-time one."

He spoke of the dangers of "religious radicalism" in politics, particularly the Ayatollah Khomeini variety which blends politics with a rigid and authoritarian view of religion. He cautioned that Catholics are not immune to this danger, and cited the arch-conservatism of French Archbishop Le Febrve, and the entry into political debates by some American Bishops. "Is it legitimate to impose, through legislators, our Christian convictions on non-believers or people of other religious persuasions?" he asked.

Many agnostics hold views which we

photo by S. Bjorkquist



might call Christian, he said, and Christians in politics should never isolate themselves from the political milieu in which they operate. Christians, he observed, do not have a monopoly on political virtue, and should work co-operatively with colleagues of different beliefs.

Pelletier concluded by referring to the "utter failure" of Marxism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. "People, and in particular, the young, will be looking for another source of hope, another shield against despair. It is our Christian responsibility to put forward, in deeds more than in words, the message of hope we find in the Gospel, the only one that has outlasted secular doctrines and political disappointments over the last two thousand years."

"'Tall assignment' you will say. Indeed. Nothing in Christianity is mediocre, except Christians. An extraordinary opportunity is given to us at the turn of this millennium."

"If Christian politicians, and Christians generally, throughout the world, live up to the occasion, history will remember the present decade as the time of an extraordinary and unexpected revival of the Christian faith." ♦

Cassette tapes of Mr. Pelletier's lecture are available @ \$6.00 each and can be ordered by using the coupon on p. 8.

## Reunion '91 Fête de Finn!

The St. Jerome's College Graduates' Association's Reunion '91 will be held on Saturday June 1, 1991, and will feature a special tribute to a dear friend of hundreds of SJC grads. **Fête de Finn** will roast and boast retired French Professor and former President Fr. John Finn, C.R.

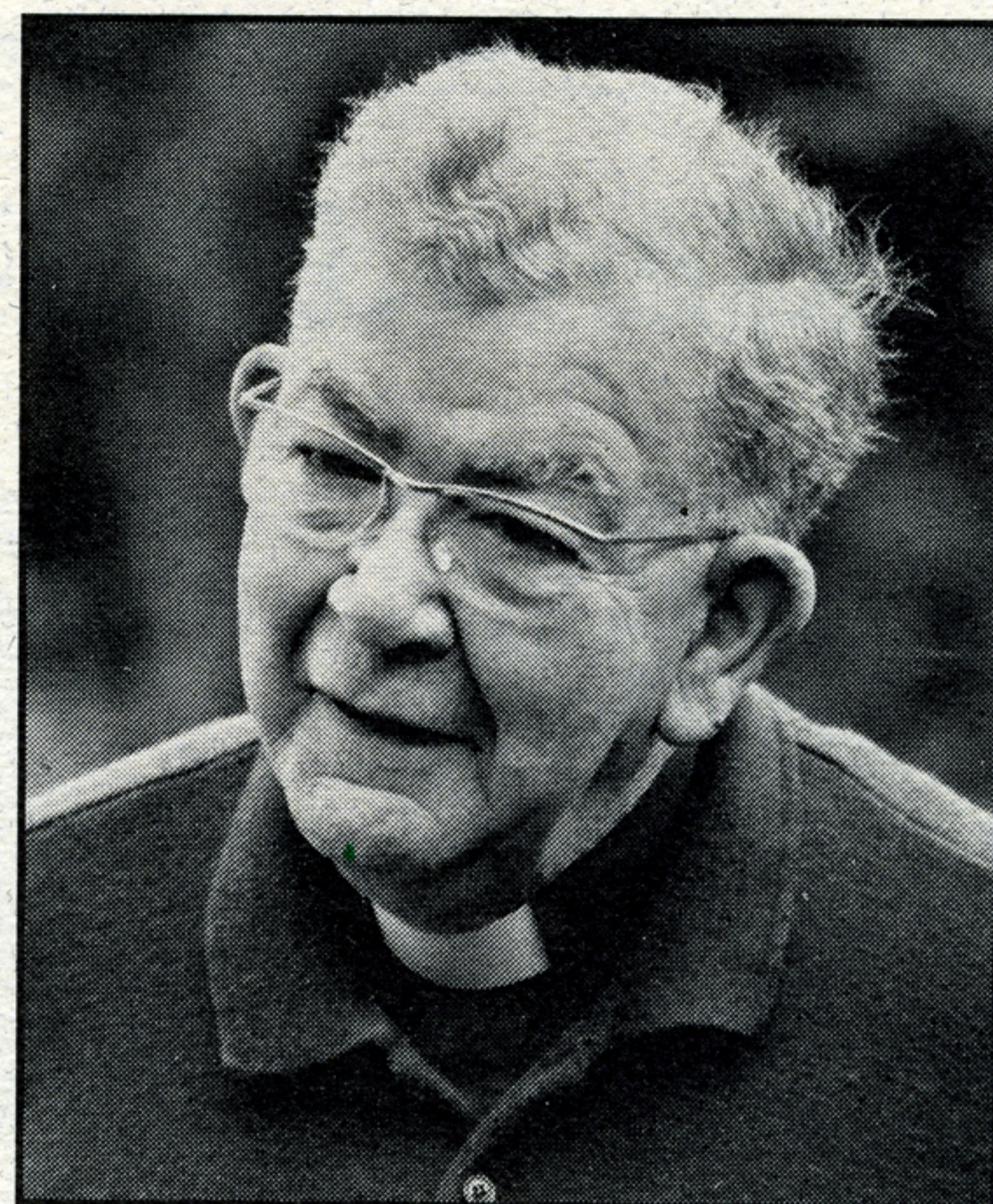


photo by C. Valertote

Fr. John Finn, C.R.

For early arrivals, there will be an afternoon excursion to the Stratford Festival to see *Hamlet*, and a short lecture on the play over lunch given by our own Shakespearean scholar Dr. Ted McGee. Reunion festivities begin with Mass at 5:00 p.m. followed by a reception and dinner. We hope to prepare a slide presentation on Fr. Finn, so if you have any photographs of him you'd like to loan us, send them to Rob Donelson at the College.

Mark your calendars for this special event, and let your SJC friends know about it, too! Watch *Update!* for more details as the date approaches. *A la prochaine!* ♦

## An autumn of achievement

All Convocation for the Faculty of Arts took place on Saturday October 20, and saw 31 new members added to our burgeoning family of over 4,000 St. Jerome's graduates. Among our new grads are Hazel Andrews, Jerry Fisher, Judy Noordermeer, and Lisa Lynn Schirch-Elias, each of whom was named to the Dean's Honours List for the Faculty of Arts. Helen Grant earned a diploma in the College's Sexuality, Marriage, and the Family programme, and St. Jerome's grad Gerry Grundy (BA '66) received a Master of Arts degree in French. Congratulations and welcome to all!

## St. Vincent Project revisited

Of special note at this year's convocation was the graduation of two students from the island of St. Vincent in the southern Caribbean who earned their BA degrees entirely by correspondence. This was made possible thanks to the initiative in 1984 of St. Jerome's grad Fr. Ron Mendes (BA '81) (See *Update!* Vol.3, No.4).

Maureen James and Carlotta Beresford-Joseph attended convocation ceremonies to receive the degree they began studying for in the mid-1980s. "Despite the obvious logistical difficulties of offering correspondence courses to students in St. Vincent, we received strong support and encouragement from St. Jerome's College,"

remarks Bruce Lumsden, UW's Associate Director for Distance Education. The College donated nearly 2,000 books, he notes, and Fr. Ron Mendes played a leading role in St. Vincent in initiating a volunteer committee at St. Martin's Secondary School to administer the programme. To date, over 25 students have taken courses.

Two other St. Vincent students graduated last year, Antionette Jardine and Mignonne Samuel. Three others will likely graduate in 1991. Lumsden says that the new grads have upgraded their jobs thanks to their degrees and refers to the St. Vincent Project as a form of "international development," on the part of UW. ♦