ENTERING PRIESTHOOD — These seven were ordained into the priesthood yesterday for service within the Diocese of Allentown. All are graduates of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, near Philadelphia. Pictured left to right are the Rev. Frederick F. Sattler of Reading; the Rev. Thomas J. Benestad of New Rochelle, N.Y. (top of stairs); the Rev. Gerald J. Adamcik of Bethlehem; the Rev. Edward Coleman of New Philadelphia (Schuylkill County); the Rev. Edward G. Sproesser of Hyde Park (Berks County); the Rev. John W. Bambrick of Tremont (Schuylkill County), and the Rev. Leo F. Lenick of Mary-D (Schuylkill County). They will receive assignments in the diocese tomorrow.

# 7 Take Priesthood Vows In Answer to Call of God

By BILL KULP

What makes a man enter the priesthood in a time when it is no longer unusual to read of Roman Catholic clergymen "defecting" and of even larger numbers of priests dissenting with the church?

This was the question asked of the seven men ordained yesterday in the Diocese of Allentown.

They were unanimous in recognizing a personal call by God to the vocation.

In each case, there was "one or more priests whose example of holiness influenced us to go into the priesthood," as one new priest expressed it.

In their replies, however, the new priests also affirmed there was a positive side to the recent changes in the church — a side which they said offers them greater opportunity for Christian service.

This called for renewal of lives based on Christ and ultimate values rather than on self-gratification and immediate values, asked affirmation of faith in the family structure, and urged young persons to "revolve" themselves in life rather than seek escape.

**Called by God**

"Basically, one becomes a priest first because one feels he has been called by God to serve the church," said the Rev. Thomas J. Benestad of New Rochelle, N.Y.

The years at the seminary are a time of preparation, when an individual reflects on his vocation. At the same time, the church calls him to this service.

"For us," he stated, "it's the word of God which gives meaning to human life. I usually make the distinction that poets present reality, philosophers attempt to interpret it, but it's only the theologians who give meaning and purpose to life."

Rev. Benestad added: "It's a faith experience, your relationship with God. You feel you will live your faith in the world by being a priest."

**Changes in the Church**

The Rev. Edward G. Sproesser of Hyde Park, Berks County, observed the reasons for entering the priesthood "could fill a book," but commented instead on some of the problems facing the Catholic church.

"What is going on, the troubles in the church, is largely due to the changes taking place in the church. I would point out the church has never been static, but perhaps is changing more rapidly now than it had in the recent past.

"Because of these changes, some priests for various reasons cannot exercise their call — but this is just the negative aspect."

Whenever something as complex as the church changes, there will be problems, he stated.

**New Ways of Serving**

"But there is also a positive side. We who are entering the priesthood can look forward to new areas, new developments, new ways in our time in which we can bring God's word to his people."

Citing as examples the move toward ecumenism and greater involvement of the church in social work, Rev. Sproesser added: "The whole liturgical renewal was aimed at making people more involved in the church's worship."

Commenting on priests leaving their vocations, Rev. Sproesser said: "A priest probably does not leave the ministry because he is no longer called, but because for one or more reasons he cannot exercise that call."

Rev. Benestad agreed: "He fails to define his role as a spiritual role, and that's why some priests leaving say the church is not doing enough in the social areas, or isn't fulfilling human personality.

"When the faith experience diminishes, then he has defined himself out of existence as a priest."

**Spiritual Goal**

The Rev. Gerald J. Adamcik of Bethlehem spoke of personal goals:

"Some persons might go into social work or education. Personally, it would have to go deeper than that — it would have to be spiritual.

"It would be helping persons spiritually, making God more meaningful to them, presenting God as there in this world, showing that God is just as relevant today as ever before.

"I would hope, by introducing a person to Jesus Christ, to make his life more meaningful, and bring peace to him and his neighbors and make Christianity more vital."

**Speaks of Mission**

The Rev. Edward Coleman of New Philadelphia, Schuylkill County, also spoke of his intended mission:

"I would start off the same way as Tom (Rev. Benestad) did — I feel called by God to the service of his church and his people.

"I think since that is what we are going to be doing, the question is, what can we give them.

"By what we do, continually presenting Christ to the people in the Mass, we can give them two things they need more than anything else — the peace of Christ which must come before any other peace, and the unity which Christ makes through us as his instruments by making us his brothers and sons of his Father."

"I'm entering the priesthood because I feel I've been called by God to life service," stated the Rev. Leo F. Lenick of the village of Mary-D in Schuylkill County.

"I feel this is the best way I can show my love for God — by dedicating myself to the service of his people and making God's presence felt among them.

"I thought of becoming a doctor or a teacher," he admitted, "but I wanted to do something more — bring an added dimension to life, the spiritual dimension.

"I believe the priest in the community is the witness to the community that this life isn't all there is — that there is more to life."

**Found Greater Value**

Ten years ago, the Rev. Frederick F. Sattler of Reading explained, he was settled "in the midst of a comfortable job, plenty of parties and good living.

"For some particular reason, the human person of Christ took on an appeal and a value to me personally, so much so that I wished to follow him in the priesthood.

"Since entering the seminary, this value of Christ has increased.

"The conditions such as celibacy have been integrated into my person. The gift of life I received from my creator and my parents, and the gift of priesthood from the church I wish now to share fully with the people of God and the human community."

**Describes Vocation**

The vocation comes from God, "but this is expressed by the good example of the priests we meet in our lives," stated the Rev. John W. Bambrick of Tremont, Schuylkill County.

"It is also the call of the bishop from the example of our seminary life and the example we have shown the people in our apostolic activities."

Rev. Bambrick explained the three-fold dimension of the vocation of priesthood:

"There's the fatherhood, who creates with dynamic love in the sense of hope he gives others in seeing Jesus saved the world.

"The mediatorship is explained by bringing God to his people through the Mass and sacraments, and, in turn, bringing the people's petitions or thanksgiving to God. The priest is the representative of the people in the community, and also one who forms the community of the people of God.

"Leadership is exercised by being aware of the relationship the priest has in his parish but also in the community in which the parish is located.

"This," said Rev. Bambrick, "I see is a full time job and is quite rewarding."

PROMISE OF OBEDIENCE — A priest-elect kneels before the Most Rev. Joseph McShea, bishop of Allentown Diocese, and promises obedience to him and his successors in yesterday's ordination service at the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown. Seven men were ordained to the priesthood for service in the diocese during the ceremony, each advancing individually to make the vows.