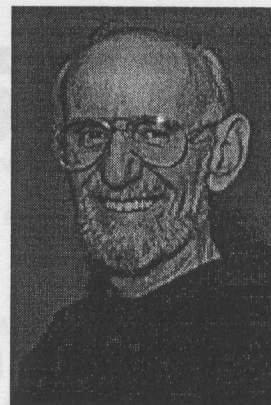


Despite its dramatic sound, crossing the line means peacefully trespassing onto the Army base. Each November, hundreds of protesters -- who contend that the school trains foreign soldiers in such black arts as assassination and making biological and chemical weapons -- trespass and get themselves arrested.

The following summer, dozens go before Faircloth; most receive maximum six- month sentences.

Among the many people Faircloth sentenced last July to six-month stays in federal prison was an 88-year-old Franciscan nun, Dorothy Hennessey. Three years ago, he slapped consecutive six-month sentences on Charlie Liteky, a Vietnam War hero who won the U.S. Medal of Honor for dragging 27 G.I.'s to safety during a fire in 1967.



Louis Vitale, O.F.M.
Instructor in Spirituality and
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Liteky, a former Catholic priest who lives in San Francisco with his human rights activist wife, Judy, was among the well-wishers at last week's bon voyage party. After he listened to O'Donnell read a speech he plans to give in Faircloth's courtroom, he told the throng: "Say goodbye to Bill now because you're not going to see him for a long time if he reads that statement."

Along with calling the court "a pimp for the Pentagon," O'Donnell will ask Faircloth to sentence him to study at the Fort Benning school so he can "tell the world: indeed the new institute has amended its ways and teaches only nonviolence and democracy to its students."

For all the joshing, Vitale and O'Donnell both know that what's ahead is serious business. Besides his usual pastoral duties, Vitale is in the middle of a multimillion-dollar renovation and earthquake retrofitting of St. Boniface. O'Donnell's Options Recovery center, which primarily serves the East Bay poor, is perpetually in need of funding.

But both men also believe priests can be called to live their faith in ways beyond their pastoral duties.

"I really, actually, did not intend to get arrested at Fort Benning," said Vitale. "But there's something just deep down inside of me that says this is the right thing to do. I'm really glad to have the opportunity to make this witness."

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