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U.S. Parole Board Decides Not to Free Berrigan Brothers

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WASHINGTON, July 28 — The United States Board of Parole decided today not to parole the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and the Rev. Daniel J. Berrigan, Roman Catholic priests imprisoned for destroying draft board records.

The board heard the cases automatically, since both men will have served one-third of their prison sentences within the next two months. It was the first hearing given them, and, under the board's rules, they were not represented by counsel and no witnesses were present at the closed session.

The board, which currently has seven members, does not announce the vote by which it reaches its decision. The Berrigans needed a majority of four votes to be paroled.

George J. Reed, chairman of the board, said that it would again consider Father Philip Berrigan's case in January, 1973, but that Father Daniel Berrigan should remain in prison until his mandatory release date. With time off for good behavior, that would be Nov. 23, 1972.

Father Philip Berrigan was indicted last April, together with seven other persons, in Harrisburg, Pa., on charges of conspiring to destroy the files of several Selective Service board offices, to destroy the heating system of Government buildings and to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser.

When William Bender, attorney for the priests was told of the parole decision, he said, "In 90 days we're entitled to appeal to the parole board. We will."

Sentenced in 1968

Father Philip Berrigan, who is 47 years old, was sentenced in May, 1968, to six years for mutilating draft board records in Baltimore. In November, 1968, he received a three and a half year sentence, to run concurrently with the six, for destroying draft records in Catonsville, Md.

Father Daniel Berrigan, his brother, who is a poet, was sentenced in November, 1968, to three years, also for destroying draft records in Catonsville.

Both are serving their sentences at the Federal Correctional Institution at Danbury, Conn.

In accordance with the parole board's procedure, the priests had a hearing at Danbury on July 19. Each of them met for about 30 minutes with a parole examiner, who went over their files and asked them questions about their adjustment to prison life to try to find out how their rehabilitation has progressed.

Today, the board looked at the reports of the examiner and the prison records of the Berrigans. The priests' cases were two of 11 considered by the board today.

If Father Philip Berrigan is not granted parole, he will be in prison until the date of his mandatory release. With time off for good behavior, that would be Feb. 15, 1974.