




### DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the faithful who have helped, and who are helping, to build up the Body of Christ in the world — especially to all the pioneers who, like their patroness, Mary Immaculate, brought forth Jesus into the generations to follow.

*Mary . . . shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues . . . as a sign of sure hope and solace to the people of God during its sojourn on earth.*

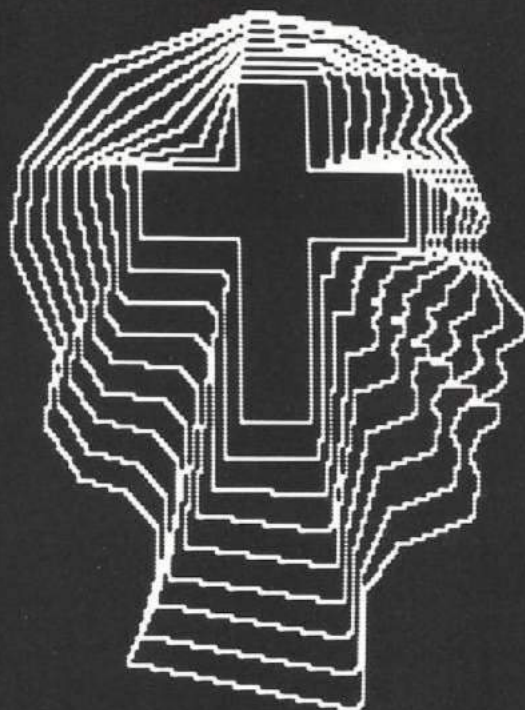
Lumen Gentium, Ch. VIII, Nos. 3, 4  
(Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 1964)



Over a century has passed between the founding of the Catholic community in East Aurora and the Dedication of the New Immaculate Conception Church in 1978. Countless changes have affected its people. Yet a steady tradition, a constant vision, and a shared hope join today's congregation with yesterday's pioneers. The way to today's bright accomplishments has been illumined by a light of faith kindled generations ago. Perhaps it is a happy coincidence that Aurora itself meaningfully names our Christian heritage: it is the Latin word for "dawn, light." What dawned so many years ago was spirit to live together in the light of Christ, Whom the Second Vatican Council called the Lumen Gentium, "the Light of the Nations." We parishioners at Immaculate Conception are Aurorans, then, from the glimmering hopes and beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century to the intense midday light of the challenging seventies. This story attempts to trace the path of that light as it has enfolded many lives.

Rev. Alfons M. Osiander





A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, used in the Dedication Mass, October 15, 1978, is a lesson to all builders — not only as they build physical structures, but as they themselves are built up to become temples of the Living God.

*We are God's co-workers, while you are his cultivation, his building. Thanks to the favor God showed me I laid a foundation as a wise master-builder might do, and now someone else is building upon it. Everyone, however, must be careful how he builds. No one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid, namely Jesus Christ. If different ones build on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, the work of each will be made clear. The Day will disclose it. That day will make its appearance with fire, and fire will test the quality of each man's work. Are you not aware that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

I Corinthians 3: 9-13, 16-17

# PARISH HISTORY

## INTRODUCTION

The history of the Catholic Church cannot be detached from the history of the country and of the world. It is a story of kings and government, of war and famine, of struggling humanity trying to find peaceful freedom. Historical accounts of Indians, the Revolutionary War, the Holland Land Purchase, immigrants and westward migration seem far removed from church history. Yet between the shadows of these and other historical events the light of faith glimmers and glints, spreading God's love in the New World and to the settlers of Western New York.

*His people . . . are sent forth into the whole world as the light of the world . . .*

— Lumen Gentium, Ch. 2, 9

## 1803-1882

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### WE ARE GOD'S CO-WORKERS. . .

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Soldiers of the Revolutionary War, descendants of the Dutch, English and French colonists, spread word of the beautiful terrain in New York State, and when the government gave bounties of land to the veterans, many of them returned to settle in Central New York.

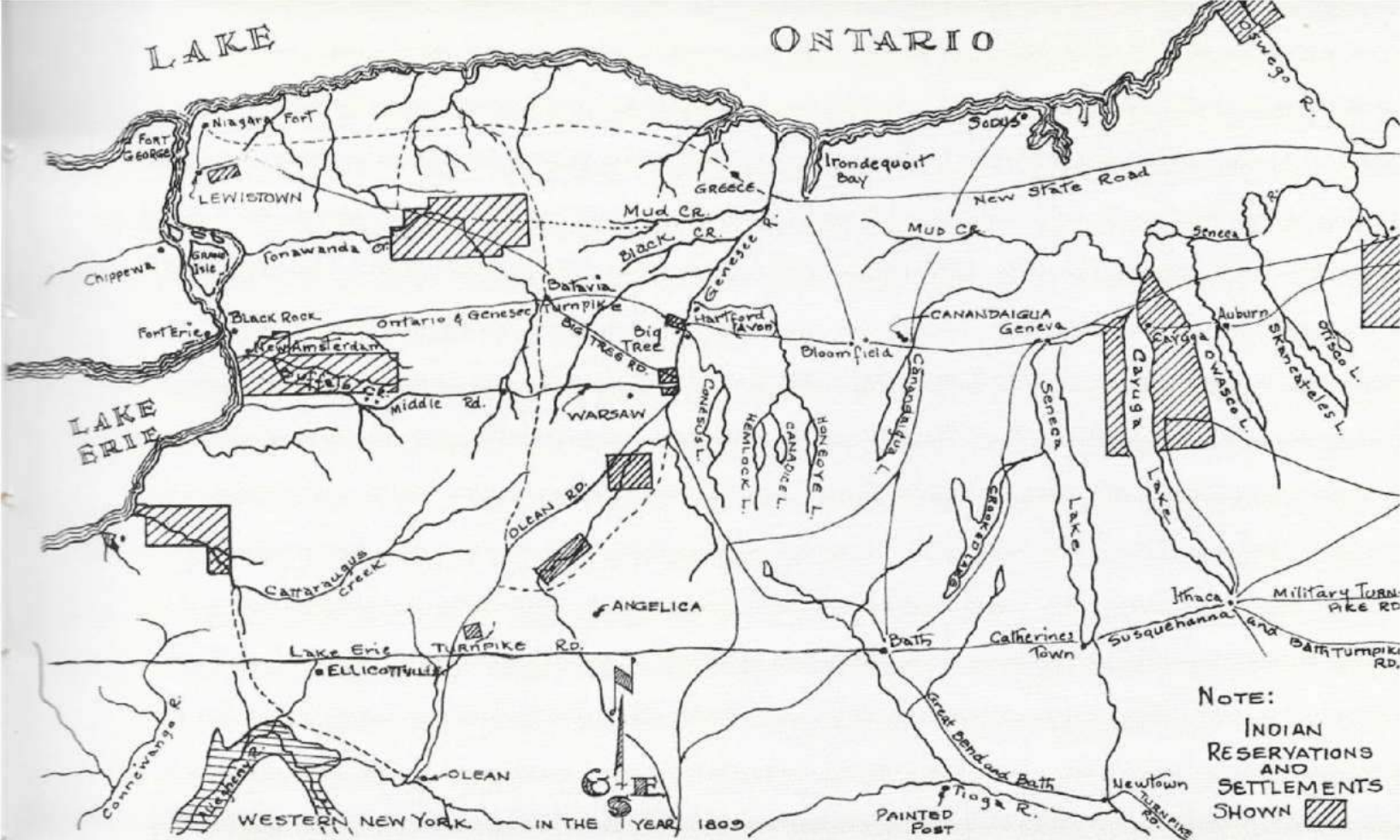
In 1803, one of those veterans, Jabez Warren, brought his family from Vermont to settle in the Batavia area. He joined Joseph Ellicott, a surveyor for the Holland Land Company, in laying out the Middle Road — now Route 20A and Big Tree Road. It ran from the Genesee River area to Lake Erie and was the first white man's road in Western New York.

The Company had surveyed virtually all the land of Western New York and divided it into townships and lots to be sold to individuals. The area around Olean Road and Main Street was part of the town of Aurora and the circle area was part of a town called Willink. Warren himself chose several acres in the area, as did the proprietor of the Holland Land Company, Wilhelm Willink, whose name appears (spelled Wilhem) as the original owner of Immaculate Conception Church property.

By 1806, school was in session in Aurora with Jabez Warren's son, William, the teacher for the first winter. By 1811, another schoolhouse was built, which was to be the site of Mass celebrations for the Catholics later in the century.

Soon new settlers moved along the road, their fears of Indians allayed by the knowledge that they were now





Map of Western New York, 1809. (Drawn by Carol Schmitt Martin)

confined to reservations. Their fears were unfounded, however, for the Seneca Indians, who had occupied much of the territory of Western New York, were actually friendly and helpful to the newcomers, allowing them to cross the reservations without incident.

Timber of all kinds abounded, and early residents built log cabins and settled down to farming and horse-breeding. A lumber mill was one of the first businesses, followed by a feed mill and a blacksmith shop.

Warren, and other early residents of Aurora and Willink, were Baptists, whose ancestors dated from pre-Revolutionary time. The story of Catholics in the area is linked with the large immigration from Europe between the end of the War in 1776 and the year 1820.

By 1816, Central New York was booming as a result of the influx of veterans and new immigrants. The village of Auburn was the most prosperous community in the State outside of New York City, with enough Catholic families to warrant asking for a priest. The settlement of Greece, along the Genesee River, was graced with several enthusiastic Irishmen, who built the first Catholic Church outside of the large towns of New York State in hopes of finding a resident priest.

By the time the priest arrived five years later, another historical event took place.

Over 10,000 Irishmen landed in New York City between 1816 and 1819, nearly all of them Catholics of the laboring class attracted to the Erie Canal project that began in Rome, New York in 1817. The Genesee







Rt. Rev. John DuBois, S.S., Bishop of the State of New York, 1826-1842.

River canal project around the same time brought many Irish Catholics into the Southern tier, particularly in Allegheny County.

The entire state was part of one Diocese in 1820, with the Bishop's See, or headquarters, in New York City. An itinerant priest visited Auburn in 1820 but moved on to Rochester, and it was 1821 before Bishop Connolly ordained Patrick Kelly, who had just come from training in Ireland, and sent him to Auburn to minister to the Catholics of that community and all the territory to the West, including Rochester and Buffalo.

It was an impossible task. Stagecoaches traversed the archaic equivalent of modern highways only once every two or three days, providing transportation and communication between the larger settlements. Travel on lesser roads required walking, unless the fortunate person had a horse.

Only the firm faith of some of those pioneers kept the light of Christ glowing, for in many places a priest was seen only once or twice a year, the cause of great jubilation. In the interim, a family fortunate enough to have a spiritual book might read from it regularly, but, more commonly, group prayer around the fireside helped to keep the faith strong.

After the canals, the railroads came, and once again many Irish Catholics sought work. The bridge over the Genesee River at Portage was a huge project, and many workers remained in the area when it was finished, emigrating to surrounding towns. By 1850, both Warsaw

and Java were busy towns, among many of that era that have since been dwarfed by population expansion along the Niagara Frontier.

Another large group of Irishmen had begun entering the country about 1845, primarily to escape the potato famine, but also because of unfair laws and the intolerant rule of Great Britain. Undaunted by Western New York weather, many of these hardy men continued to work at outdoor occupations even after the railroads, building highways or public works. It is interesting that several construction and transportation enterprises in Western New York have Irish roots. Cottrell Bus Service is a prime example.

An Irish priest, Father Thomas McEvoy, apparently followed his countrymen and is the first recorded priest in numerous settlements. Catholics in Olean, Perry and as far away as the Dunkirk-Fredonia area credit him with the first celebrations of Mass in private homes, town halls and work shanties.

While stationed at Saint Patrick's in Java from October 1844 to September 1850, Father McEvoy came over the hills on horseback to celebrate Mass at the home of Thomas Flannigan in Spring Brook (still spelled as two words in that village). Baptisms were postponed until his arrival, about once a month, but weddings and funerals often necessitated finding someone else if he was not available.

By this time the Erie Canal had been completed in 1825, and Buffalo was the scene of incredible growth despite the interruption of progress made by the War of 1812.

The War, in fact, increased the development of Western New York and East Aurora, as land grants were again given veterans.

By 1832, Buffalo was a thriving city of 10,000 people of many nationalities. Three Catholic churches indicated the large French, German and Irish Catholic communities — St. Louis, St. Mary's and St. Patrick's.

Bishop Dubois travelled the Canal from New York City on an official visit, finding active Catholic communities along the way. His report to the Holy Father recommended new Dioceses at Albany and at Buffalo.

Very Reverend John Timon, an Irish priest of the Lazarist order, was consecrated First Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo in the Cathedral of New York on October 17, 1847. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, he gave a sermon in German at St. Mary's Church and two days later headed for Java in the company of Father McEvoy and two other priests. It was the beginning of a tour of the Diocese that was to take all winter.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception was not official at this time, for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was not defined by the Pope (Pope Pius IX) until December 8, 1854, but was widely accepted and celebrated long before that time. It is often confused with the Virgin Birth, but there is no connection between the two. Simply stated, it means that the



Virgin Mary, in order to be pure enough to become the Mother of Christ, was conceived free from original sin. Her soul was created in purest holiness and innocence.

Curiosity has arisen as to why the Catholics of this area chose the name Immaculate Conception. There is no record to be found of what prompted the choice, when the decision was made, or by whom. But the declaration by the Pope of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, followed by the apparitions to Bernadette at Lourdes four years later, led many Catholics to believe that this was Our Lady's confirmation of that doctrine. Both of these events must have been world news covered by newspapers in this area and, no doubt, were the conversation topic of the day.

It was fitting that the first Bishop should be an Irishman, for most of the first immigrants were either Irish or English and almost all the early Catholics were Irish. It was also fitting that he should celebrate Mass and give a sermon in the German community, endearing him to the hearts of this large segment of the Catholic population.

The German population in Western New York had been increasing, along with the Irish, since the beginning of the Century. Early Germans had come from the region of Alsace-Lorraine, for centuries the scene of conflict between the Germans and the French. Once again the French had moved in, beginning with Robespierre and the Reign of Terror, followed by the French Revolution in 1789. Among the Alsatians were many farmers who could not tolerate the French domination that required a complete change of language and culture. Nor could they consider having their sons go to war, fighting on the side of the French. Many of these settlers formed small communities in Sheldon and Lancaster, some moving from there to what is now East Aurora.

Around 1845 and thereafter, many of the Germans came from Bavaria in southern Germany, where autocratic kings were very unpopular. A group of liberals failed in an attempt to set up a republic, and dire punishment awaited any of those involved who were caught. Again, impending war caused many to seek freedom in America. Among these people were many craftsmen, skilled in leather work, carpentry and other occupations useful in the new country. Machinists and millwrights found immediate use for their talents in Western New York as they set up such factories as Kurtzman Piano, Fleischman Yeast and Bausch and Lomb Optical Works.

The population was rapidly growing with immigrants who had come for a better life. Many had gone to bed hungry every day of their lives before coming to America. Europe simply had too many people for the amount of space. America needed workers, and there was plenty of land on which to grow food.

As the immigrants from various places struggled to make new lives in America, the only thing they seemed to have in common was their lot as newcomers. But when the Germans who moved into what is now East



Rt. Rev. John Timon, D.D.C.M., first bishop of Buffalo, 1847-1867 — a Vincentian (also called Lazarist) missionary, chosen for his zeal in the missions of the South and Southwest.

Aurora met the Irish in worship at St. Vincent's in Springbrook, they discovered the strongest link of all — their faith.

About this time Girdle Road was laid out by the Highway Commissioners of the towns of Aurora and Lancaster. Two parishioners who have studied parish history give us some background to the story.

Miss Martha Schwartz and Mrs. Estelle Nuwer Minderler, whose ancestors were of German descent, tell us that their grandparents lived on Schwartz Road near Broadway. The Schwartz family raised wheat and corn and the nearest mill was in Aurora. From Clinton Street southward Indian trails branched off and farmers frequently got lost and wound up in Ebenezer in West Seneca. The Indians were friendly and communicated with some of the settlers. Chief Red Jacket was asked to mark the trail to Aurora. The trees were girdled, a process of removing a strip of bark in a circle around the tree to kill it. The trail thus marked is now Girdle Road.

Much of the road to Buffalo from Aurora went through scrub and bog, as one historian put it. Traffic was increasing and heavy wagons often "bogged down" in the mud. A one-lane plank road was completed in 1849 from Main and Olean, down Main Street to the West End at the circle, turning up Buffalo Road (Seneca Street) to a point near city line.

The third and last toll gate was set up just past the intersection of Harlem Road and Seneca Street, near the





John J. Marshall (Marshall) family with maternal grandmother, about 1905. John had been brought to America from Bavaria around 1856, settling on Pine Street with seven brothers and sisters, mother and stepfather, Henry Rebman. Couple on left, front row, are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marshall, parents of Jay Marshall, Sr. of Perry Street. (Photo from Verna Marshall Benzel)

railroad overpass. The wooden base allowed merchants to travel faster with farm produce and lumber to sell in the city. Wholesalers made no deliveries, so area store owners drove horse and wagon into the city to pick up merchandise. The plank road was used for heavy loads in either direction. When wagons were empty they turned out, in favor of loads, onto a dirt road that formed a second lane.

As the plank road made travel easier, Masses were more often celebrated at the home of John Devins, who lived closer to the circle, making it possible for more Aurorans to participate. There were at least ten Catholic families in Springbrook at the time, about as many in East Aurora area, and a few in Marilla and Holland.

An old parish history, compiled by a Miss Aimee Eno, records interesting details of a visit by the new Bishop.

Father McEvoy had broken his leg while on a visit to the Devins home and was obliged to remain there. Bishop Timon stopped on his way to Java for Confirmation ceremonies and delivered a lecture in the Universalist Church in East Aurora. He was entertained by the Devins family, and while Mrs. Devins was preparing his supper the Bishop walked the floor with the baby and fed her.

The next recorded priest after Father McEvoy was Father John Doran, who also apparently came over the hills from Java. In 1853, he started the first church

building in Springbrook on Seneca Street and Rice Road. The floor was crude planking, as was the altar, and there were no seats.

Father James M. Early appeared on the scene the same year, apparently the first Diocesan priest. Others were missionaries who often went on their own initiative to various communities.

Father Early supervised additions and improvements to the little church in Springbrook, while living with the Flannigans until 1857. He celebrated the first Mass in Marilla in a cooper's shop in 1853, and a church was built there in 1854 under the direction of Father Denis English, while Father Early was working on the church at Springbrook. Marilla is not mentioned again for several years, leading one to conclude that perhaps it was not a regular part of the early Springbrook mission.

In 1857, Father J. V. O'Donohue served the mission, during which time school was begun in the church building. Father O'Donohue began to build a rectory. The house was completed before he went to Java, but the first to occupy it was Rev. Dionysius (Denis) English, who arrived in 1858. He left in 1861, leaving the mission without a resident priest.

During this time, Rev. T. F. Heines celebrated Mass on



Sundays and Holydays, coming out from Limestone Hill, now Lackawanna, and in 1864 Rev. John Touhey spent the year in the Springbrook mission, his name appearing on a Baptismal record on Christmas day.

The first record of a resident priest in East Aurora is a Redemptorist from the German parish of St. Mary's in Buffalo. Father Miller, C.S.S.R., (first name unknown) stayed with the Marshall family on Pine Street from Christmas 1864 to Easter 1865. He celebrated Mass in the Regulator Building on Main Street, presently the site of The Sample Shop on the northeast corner of Main and Riley. He also celebrated Mass in Springbrook that winter.

From 1865 to about 1890, East Aurora Catholics again attended Mass at St. Vincent's in Springbrook.

In the summer of 1865, Bishop Timon's visit to minister Confirmation was the occasion of great rejoicing in the mission. The Bishop and his escort drove from Buffalo in carriages, arriving about ten o'clock in the morning. A procession of men, women, and children — the girls all dressed in white — eagerly waited at the foot of the hill. Presumably this was near the corner of Seneca and Transit. The procession headed back to the church upon the Bishop's arrival, singing "Vivat" and other Latin hymns. On reaching the church, the procession parted and the Bishop stood on the steps and imparted his blessing to the congregation. Then all entered the building for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, followed by Confirmation.

On December 23, 1867 the first train rolled into the village of Aurora. It was a welcome sight and a harbinger of future prosperity.

The records show J. V. O'Donohue returning in 1869 to attend the mission, and T. F. Heines again in 1870, followed by T. Ledwith in 1871 and Edward Quigley in 1872. The present pastor of Immaculate Conception (1978) tells us that his father served as altar boy for Fr. Quigley in a city parish.

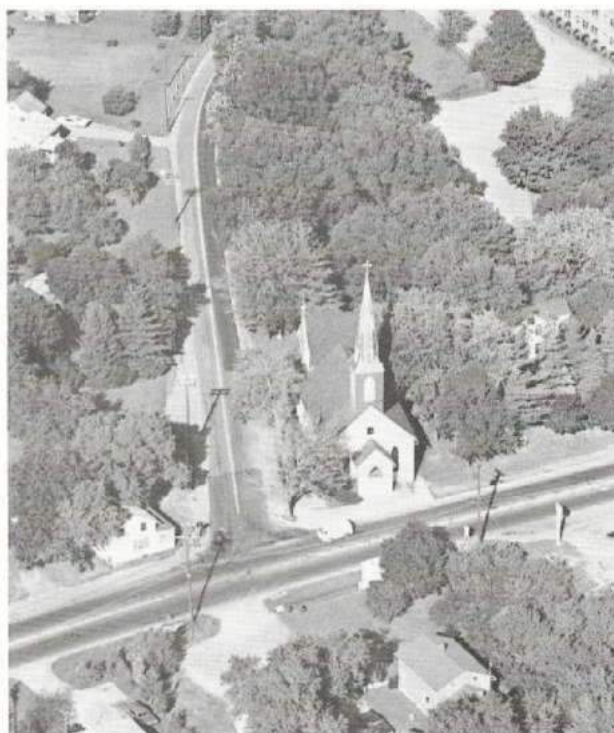
Up to this time the Village of East Aurora had consisted of two hamlets, a mile apart, often referred to as the East and West End of Main Street. West End was part of Willink, also known as the Lower Village of Aurora. The village corporation of Willink was extended in 1873 to include the Upper Village of Aurora (East End). A vote was taken to choose a name and in 1874 the entire area was incorporated under the name East Aurora.

In 1873, Rev. Martin Byrne attended the mission, and Bishop Stephen V. Ryan ministered Confirmation that year. The same year Father P. V. O'Brien is credited with building the present Saint Vincent's Church in Springbrook. He left in 1875, succeeded by Father David Lasher, who remained only a few months, as did Rev. Francis Cooke, who arrived early in 1876.

The addition of another congregation to the mission of St. Vincent's in Springbrook is accompanied by an interesting tale in Miss Eno's history.

While Buffalo was still a village, two sturdy Irish boys, John and Joseph Cottrell, purchased large pieces

1969 aerial view of St. Vincent dePaul Church, Spring Brook, New York. Built in 1873 and attended by East Aurora Catholics for many years, the church still stands on the corner of Seneca Street and Rice Road.



Engine of Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Western Railroad Company — the company merged with Western New York and Pennsylvania, which became the famous "Pennsy" whose trains came through East Aurora regularly for many years.

of land in Sardinia and Concord. They cleared the forest and built homes. John married a Methodist girl and together they raised twelve children. Several years after marriage she turned to Catholicism and the children were baptized. Joseph Cottrell remained a bachelor for years, but eventually married and raised three children. Most of John's children remained in the area as they matured, so that by 1865 there were 15 to 20 Catholic



families in West Sardinia and Concord. The nearest churches were in Java or Springville, the latter without a resident priest. A building was erected and priests came about once a month from Springville, Springbrook or Boston. Eventually Sardinians joined the Holland Mission.

From 1876 to about 1882, Sardinia was annexed to the Springbrook mission, with Father Cooke going out regularly from early in 1876 throughout the summer. He was succeeded later in the year by Rev. Bartholomew B. Grattan who drove (presumably horse and buggy) in all kinds of weather from Springbrook to Holland and from there to Sardinia. It is not known how often he made the trip, but the same year he reportedly went once a month to Marilla, also, to celebrate Mass for the Catholics there.

According to the old parish history, the priest labored under many difficulties. The house allotted him was in a most dilapidated condition, its few contents in great disorder, and so far as furniture was concerned, it was destitute of anything deserving the name. The church was in debt, but Father ordered outstanding accounts against it brought in, and succeeded in paying at least some of them and cancelling the mortgage on the church.

On July 11, 1877, Bishop Ryan confirmed eighty people and on July 29, 1880, fifty-one more. In those days Confirmation and Communion were celebrated on the one occasion, when the candidate was twelve years of age or older.

The area was growing by leaps and bounds. East Aurora was already famous for the breeding of fine horses. Many well known trainers and horsemen began their careers at Hamlin's Village Farm. By 1885, there were seven hundred horses stabled there, and it was known as the "world's greatest trotting nursery."

A census taken in 1880 showed 1500 people in the village. One source says there were about twenty-five Catholic families, but there are no exact figures.

Rev. Bartholomew B. Grattan, pastor of St. Vincent's, Spring Brook, and the missions of Marilla, East Aurora and Sardinia (Holland), 1876-1882. His attempt to build a church in East Aurora failed.



There is a mystery attached to this point in time. Many sources indicate that Father Grattan constructed the framework of a church building — some say, around 1880 — which was no sooner up than a severe wind storm blew it down. Older parishioners believe it was on the same site as the church built in 1882. However, there is no record of land owned by the East Aurora congregation until after Father Grattan left.

Early in 1882, Father Grattan went to St. Patrick's in Java as pastor and was succeeded by J. V. McInerney for a brief period, followed by Rev. Dennis Maria Reilly in late spring.

## 1882-1901

### HIS CULTIVATION,

The year was 1882. Chester A. Arthur was President and Leo XIII the Pope. On November 7, Grover Cleveland was elected Governor on a reform ticket. He had entered politics as a ward worker in Buffalo and had been Sheriff of Erie County and Mayor of Buffalo. Father Reilly was the pastor of the mission with a church, rectory, and cemetery in Springbrook, serving Catholics from there and East Aurora. The priest probably celebrated Mass in the church in Marilla also, although history books are not clear.

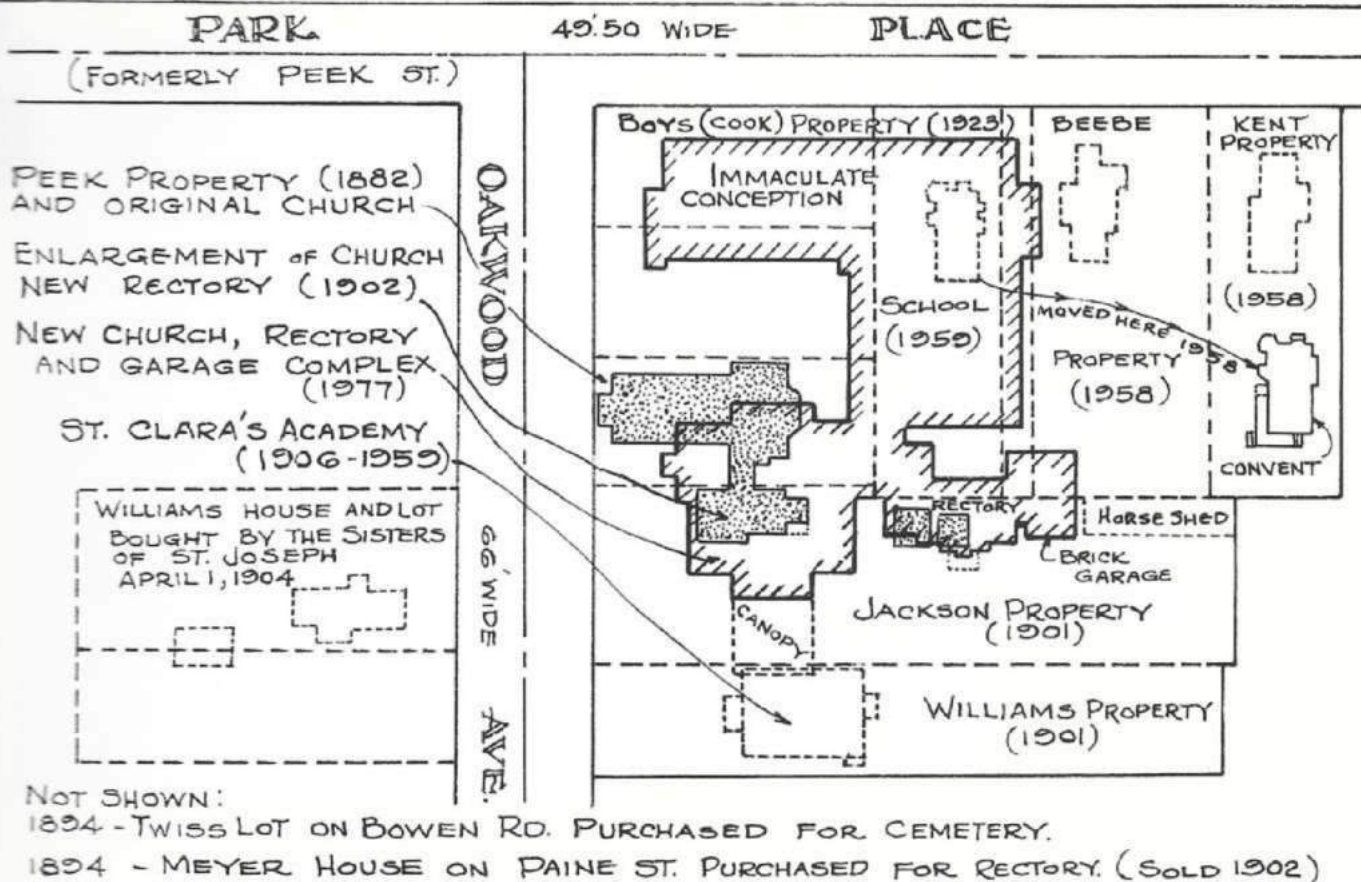
During the eight years of Father Reilly's pastorate, many exciting things happened. Masses were again celebrated in the village, property was bought, and the church was built.

With the Bishop's permission Mass was celebrated regularly in the old District Number One schoolhouse, erected in 1810, on the west side of Olean Road, between Main Street and Oakwood Avenue. The

Rev. Dennis Maria Reilly, pastor of St. Vincent's of Spring Brook and the missions of East Aurora and Marilla, during the building of Immaculate Conception Church, 1882; celebrated Mass in District No. 1 schoolhouse.







Property map, Immaculate Conception parish. (Drawing by Carol Schmitt Martin)



District No. 1 schoolhouse, built in 1810. Used for Catholic services around 1882-83, while the church was under construction. (Photo by Richard Will)

building still stands at the rear of the Holmes garage property.

The school was still in use by pupils of the East End, as the area was called, and it is interesting that there was no complication involved in allowing the Catholic congregation to use it. Perhaps it had something to do with a notice in a school record book, dated October 11, 1811:

*Notice — that this schoolhouse be appropriated to the*

*use of a common day school and likewise to hold meetings of Public Worship for all orders of religious worship, when it is convenient and not infringing on the day school.*

On August 14, 1882 a plot of land was bought from Christopher Peek for \$300. It was the first piece of property purchased by the Catholic congregation at East Aurora. It was 61½ feet wide and 174 feet deep, on the north side of Oakwood Avenue about 150 feet east of the corner of Park Place, then called Peek Street. It was the site of the future church.

The cornerstone was laid November 19, 1882 by Rt. Rev. Stephen V. Ryan, second Bishop of Buffalo. St. Vincent's in Springbrook was still the mother parish to the missions, with the priest residing there, so for the first seven or eight years, Catholics of East Aurora continued to attend Mass at Springbrook, except for the one Sunday a month the priest came to East Aurora.

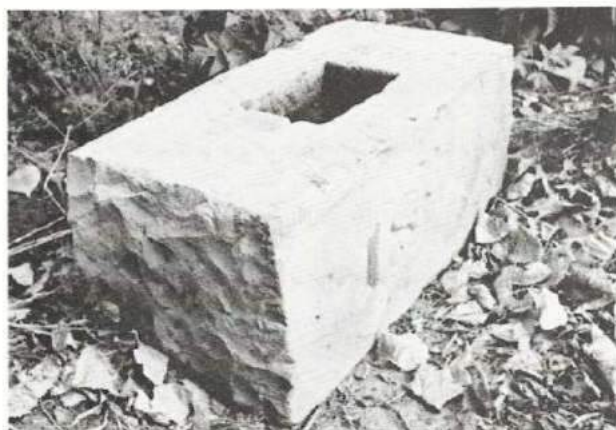
The building was oblong, with about twelve double rows of seats, enough for 180 to 190 people. Gas fixtures along the side provided light. It had three altars, two of them being almost immediately enhanced by statues of the Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph, donations of a Mrs. Becker and Mrs. Cunningham, respectively. It is believed that the statue of Mary originally stood in the center altar. It was moved to the left side some time later.



Rt. Rev. Stephen Vincent Ryan, D.D.C.M., second Bishop of Buffalo, dedicated and laid the cornerstone of Immaculate Conception Church, November 19, 1882.



Henry Dwyer, at whose home Bishop Ryan and over a dozen priests were entertained while in the area for Confirmation ceremonies at Spring Brook in 1887. Mr. Dwyer was superintendent of the W.N.Y. and Pittsburgh railroad. (Photo from Henry Dwyer Norton)



Cornerstone of the original church, laid in 1882 by Bishop Ryan. The tin box sealed inside was opened in September 1976 when the church was demolished. Only the Latin word for clergyman—ecclesiastic—was legible among the contents, but a microfilmed newspaper article revealed the contents. (Photo by Richard Will)

Among early Catholic families here were: the James Ragan family, who lived on a Maple Street farm later owned by Sandy Hubbard; the Vignerons on Jewett-Holmwood Road, the Marshalls who came from Connecticut; the Philip Logels from Sheldon; Dwyers from Oil City, Pennsylvania; Youngers from Varysburg; Conrads from Strykersville; Clearys from Cuba; Kysers, Millers and Minderlers from Buffalo; Steckmeyers,

Michael O'Shea, John Haas, John Roes, VanAntwerps, John Kingston, Christian Link, Leonard Ernst, William Kelly, Adrian Metz, John Brennan and the Tackbarys.

Churches already established here were the Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist and the Universalist, and streets then laid out were Main, Oakwood, South, South Grove, Walnut, Center, Maple, Olean, Buffalo Road, Grey, Hamburg, Mill and Big Tree.

Early settlers used oil lamps, burned wood for heating and cooking, and carried water from their own wells, having no indoor plumbing. Houses were mostly frame construction and several fires resulted in the building of a West End fire hall for \$400 and the formation of a volunteer department.

Newspapers of the time frequently reported deaths from meningitis, scarlet fever, diphtheria, stroke, colic, cholera and consumption, known later as tuberculosis (TB). Louis Pasteur's experiments with bacteria in food were not common knowledge and many babies died of "colic," which was probably food poisoning. A common medical problem of the era was the broken bones caused by falls from horses, or overturned carriages when the horses ran away.

Twice during Father Reilly's pastorate, Confirmation was ministered in Springbrook by Bishop Ryan. In June, 1884, thirty-nine persons were confirmed, and in July, 1887, thirty-six.





Family of Henry Dwyer, about 1906, after his death. Seated: wife, Ellen; son-in-law, William Whitney and two Whitney children, daughter, Josephine, who later became Mrs. Charles H. Norton. Standing: son, William, and daughters, Mary (Mrs. Whitney) and Sarah (Sadie), who died three years later. (Photo from Henry Dwyer Norton)

East Aurora Chemical Company, No. 1 (Volunteer Fire Company), about 1908. The building stands on the northeast corner of Oakwood Avenue and Elm Street, presently an antique shop. John Marshall, veteran of the Connecticut Army in the Civil War, is third from the left. (Photo from his granddaughter, Verna Marshall Benzel)





Rev. James C. Cain. Soon after his arrival he issued the first financial report, for eight months of 1892.



James B. Ragan, the son of early Irish settlers, active parishioner and first recorded trustee. (Photo from his daughter, Catherine Ragan)

During the latter visit the Bishop was the honored guest of Mr. Henry Dwyer, whose home at that time was on South Grove Street. The Eno history gives colorful details:

*His Lordship, accompanied by thirteen or fourteen priests, was royally entertained by this prominent Catholic family. Following the benediction of the church by the Bishop, the parishioners repaired to the old skating rink on Park Place, then called Peek Street, where a noonday repast was served.*

In 1888, during Father Reilly's pastorate, the census of Marilla was taken and it was found there were twenty-five Catholic families living in that town. It is assumed that Father Reilly went there to celebrate Mass regularly. He was instrumental in forming three First Communion Classes, consisting of one person in 1886, six persons in 1889, and five in 1890. All debts on the Springbrook mission were paid before he left in 1890.

Father Reilly was succeeded by a Father Lafferty, who remained but a short time in Springbrook, attending the East Aurora and Marilla missions. Then the Rev. J. Brady came in 1891, and during his rectorship a class of eighteen persons received First Communion. Of this number, seven were from Springbrook, eight from East Aurora and three from Marilla.

The year 1892 saw the advent of Rev. James C. Cain who printed the first financial report. It covered the eight-month period of May 1, 1892, to January 1, 1893 for three congregations. Springbrook was still the mother parish to the missions of East Aurora and Marilla

but the priest resided in East Aurora now and that congregation was the largest of the three.

Several disbursements are interesting, especially "Horse support" costing \$50 and "Boy support," \$40. Horse and boy were needed to drive the priest from parish to parish. Among Springbrook expenses was \$1.50 paid to John Bove for ringing the bell, and Marilla spent \$1.15 on books for church purposes. There was already one society listed with a donation of \$76.80 — the Altar Society.

The priest's salary from the three parishes was supposed to be \$800.00, each parish paying a share. They also shared the expense of horse and boy. It was unusual for the priest to receive his entire salary; during several years there was a shortage of several hundred dollars each year. That particular year he received \$329.69 for the eight months, \$203.58 short.

That year there were 6 baptisms, 3 marriages and 3 burials. The report was signed by James B. Ragan and William J. Switzer, trustees for Immaculate Conception, Patrick Whalen and Patrick Donohue, trustees for St. Vincent de Paul in Springbrook, and Messrs. McCarthy (Michael) and O'Sullivan (Peter), trustees for the Church of Saints Philip and James in Marilla.

Churches raised money by both plate collections and pew rent. Remarks on the back of the 1893 report attest to this out-dated custom, whereby parishioners paid \$1.50 quarterly for a seat in the center aisle and \$1 for the side aisles. Trustees were the same that year for Springbrook and Marilla, but Christopher Kyser and Christian Link were trustees for East Aurora.





Mr. and Mrs. Christian Link and family. Clockwise from top, left: Caroline (Sr. Flavia), Valeria (Mrs. Denzel), Louise (Sr. Helena), Rev. Aloysius, Edward, Christian, Jr. (father of Sr. Margaret Mary who loaned us this picture), Albert and Rev. Leo.

On November 21, 1893, the Christian Men's Benevolent Association, (C.M.B.A.), Branch 169, was organized with James B. Ragan as President and thirty-nine charter members. Within two years other societies are listed in the annual report, with sometimes sizeable donations to the church income.

The year 1894 brought two important purchases. Christopher Kyser, trustee for East Aurora, bought

the cemetery property on Bowen Road just off Seneca Street from a Mr. Twiss for \$100 and a house on the East side of Paine Street, on the corner of Oakwood, was purchased for a rectory by a committee of Messrs. Steckmeyer, Kaiser and Link for \$1,200. Wood for church heating cost \$17 that year, a stark contrast to the parish fuel bill for one month in February, 1978, which was close to \$1,700.

Father Cain moved into the rectory in March, 1894. Since East Aurora was growing much faster than Springbrook, Immaculate Conception replaced St. Vincent's as the mother parish of the missions. That



Christian Men's Benevolent Association badge, for organization formed in 1893 with James Ragan, first President. (Badge from Daniel Ernst)

Home on Paine Street near Oakwood, bought for use as a rectory in 1894. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



Sarah (Sadie) Dwyer. She and Frances Vigneron formed a choir in 1893. (Photo from Henry Dwyer Norton)

same year Father Cain and the trustees from Springbrook went into Buffalo and proposed to the Bishop that East Aurora attend the Holland congregation which had been attended by priests from Boston only monthly. Father Cain went out twice a month. The Marilla church was changed to Alden that year, leaving three parishes again in the mission. Six persons received First Holy Communion in 1894, all from East Aurora.

In January, 1895, a choir was organized with Mrs. Switzer, organist, being paid \$52 for the year. The Altar Society was officially organized with Miss Louise Sutton, President, Mrs. E. Miller, Vice-President, Mrs. P. Caseman, Recording Secretary, Mrs. William Kelly, Financial Secretary, and Miss Louise Link, Treasurer. Electrical service was installed that year at a cost of \$78.65 and taxes were \$6.51. A number of bills are listed for improvements and repairs, and the church had to borrow \$600. Trustees for Immaculate Conception were William Kelly and Philip Logel.

A hand-written entry in a brief parish log states that Father Cain died very suddenly of appendicitis on June 9, 1895, the day on which the Vincentian Fathers were to open a mission. At a "mission" a missionary priest, as opposed to a diocesan priest, came to the church for eight consecutive evenings, preaching on the Gospel and repentance. This was postponed until the





Rev. Edward J. Rengel, pastor 1895-1900. Solicited funds from the community in 1898 to repair the church and the school and retire the debt on the missions of Holland and Springbrook.

following August.

The Rev. Edward J. Rengel now took up the duties of the mission. Father Rengel held special collections and subscriptions in 1898, raising enough money to put the church and house in excellent condition. St. Anthony and Sacred Heart statues were bought in 1889 and natural gas was installed. Most of the money came from non-Catholics, primarily local businessmen from whom church purchases were made.

In 1895, the Cunningham property had been bequeathed to the Catholic Church. It consisted of a house valued at \$900, cottage, \$600 and barn, \$100. This property was sold in 1900 along with the old rectory and barn in Springbrook, leaving all the church properties in East Aurora, Springbrook and Holland free of debt.

In June, 1900, Father Rengel was succeeded by Rev. James J. Gilhooly, who left in December. East Aurora was without a resident priest for four months. During this time Rev. T. Walsh came from the Cathedral in Buffalo every Saturday for the Sunday Masses and occasionally during the week when necessity required. Father Walsh eventually became Archbishop of New Jersey. On April 20th, 1901, Rev. James H. Quested came from Randolph to take charge of the mission. He made plans at once for getting a rectory nearer the



Rev. Thomas J. Walsh — Came out from the Cathedral parish on weekends, early in 1901. Later became Archbishop of New Jersey.

church. The church, too, needed enlargement, being inadequate to accommodate the Sunday congregations, especially in Summer.

Many of the Summer visitors were guests of the Roycrofters, who were famous for their work in bookbinding, quality printing and illuminating, — i.e. initials, covers and title pages done in leather, copper and brass. The Roycrofters, by this time, had expanded to various other crafts and artistic endeavors. Among these were ornamental blacksmith work, cabinet work, artistic painting, clay modeling and terra cotta, and later tapestry. It was Elbert Hubbard's belief that work done by marriage of head and hand can never go out of style. Today Roycroft pieces are collector's items.

The 1901 Annual Report stated that there were 510 parishioners, including children, in all the missions. There were 22 baptisms, 71 confirmations and 46 First Communicants. Eleven persons died, three of them children. All buildings were insured and in good condition except for Marilla where expenses for repairs were not warranted, as the congregation was attending neighboring churches. A new society was formed that year, Branch 767 of the Ladies Christian Benevolent Association (L.C.B.A.).

# 1901-1904

## HIS BUILDING. . .

In 1901, with Bishop Quigley's approval, the trustees bought the Jackson house and lot to the east of the church for \$2,400. The house was sold for \$400 and a rectory was begun.

The 1902 report gives a striking insight into the accomplishments of a small loan at 4% interest: . . . *The only indebtedness is \$3,000.00. This sum we borrowed with the Bishop's permission for the new Rectory. Without exceeding that debt we have finished the Rectory, bought half of the Williams lot for a Convent school site, remodeled, repainted and enlarged the church so as to nearly double its seating capacity — it can now seat 400; provided a Basement Hall to seat 250 persons for societies and meetings, inserted 16 stained-glass windows, and built 1206 feet of concrete sidewalks.*

A history compiled by Miss Martha C. Schwartz, presently (1978) a member of the parish residing on Buffalo Road, explains that in this renovation the church had to be raised to accommodate the basement, the altar wall was moved back to make room for more seats, and three altars were built. Virtually all the labor was volunteered by parishioners. They installed the new bell, using horse and pulleys, says present resident historian, Mrs. Estelle Minderler. They installed the sidewalks and did all the hauling and grading. The grading took three years, according to the Annual Reports, which gave thanks to many workers. Names mentioned more than once as having done grading were: Ambrose, Barnett, Becker, Bodecker, Conley, Denzil, Head, Kingston, Leibold, Link, McHugh, Mindeler, Scheiwiller and Steckmeyer. These names are familiar to many parishioners as relatives or friends. Some of their descendants are still very active in the parish.

While the men did the heavy manual labor, the women raised money through their talents for cooking, sewing, and organizing contests and festivals. There were several of these each year, including doll contests and ring contests which brought in \$50 to \$100. Men and women combined to put on plays and a choir concert. The 1902 Report thanks the young ladies' sewing society which "paid for the new sanctuary by their quilt party."

The cooperation of the parishioners did not stop at this volunteer effort, for they gave generously of their money as well. A pipe organ was the gift of a friend, and the eight-hundred pound bell bore the names of its sponsors: Elizabeth Meuter, Sarah Dwyer, Margaret



Original statue of the Blessed Virgin, moved to side altar in the Thirties, then to St. Clara's Academy vestibule after renovation of the Forties. (Photo from Estella Minderler)



Tabernacle in center altar, flanked by Tiffany stained-glass windows installed in 1902, showing cross and veil placed by Father Cash in the Thirties. (Photo from Estella Minderler)



1902 — newly-built rectory with wrap-around porch, connected by breezeway to the enlarged church, showing bell tower and stained glass windows installed at that time. (Note Philip Logel house, far left.) (Photo from Verna Marshall Benzel)



Sanctuary and side altars before renovation in the Forties, showing wooden altars and Communion rail built by parishioners under the supervision of cabinet-maker, Philip Logel, around 1902. (Photo from Estella Minderler)



Immaculate Conception Church before remodeling in 1941. View towards rear shows pipe organ from anonymous donor, long stained-glass windows donated by parishioners and oil-painted stations donated by Very Rev. Dr. Fallon, O.M.I., all part of 1901-02 renovations. (Photo from Estella Minderler)



Hawthorne, R. Benoit, Catherine Kelly, Elizabeth Meyer, Philip Logel, M. Mindeler, B. Link, F. Boland, L. Ernst.

The stained-glass windows were donated by Mr. and Mrs. Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. Logel, C. Link, J. J. Marschall, Mary and Elizabeth Eggert, Mrs. Hawthorne, Mrs. Kinder, Mrs. VanAntwerp, George Keem, Adrian Metz family, L.C.B.A. Branch 767, Sacred Heart League, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Meuter, Mrs. Hennessy and Miss deSomer. Charles Youngers and Merritt Kyser gave the new pulpit and a handsome triple sanctuary gong was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. Miller and son.

In August, 1902, Father Quested moved into the new rectory, which was connected to the church with a breezeway. The church improvements were completed that September.

On Easter Sunday, 1903, Father Quested received some help from a visiting priest, Rev. J. T. Lynch, C.M., of Niagara University. Father Quested celebrated the seven o'clock Mass at East Aurora and the nine o'clock Mass at Holland. Father Lynch celebrated Mass at nine o'clock in Springbrook, followed by an eleven o'clock Mass in East Aurora.

The emphasis shifted to the children's needs in 1903, when an arrangement was made with the Sisters of St. Joseph by which two of the nuns came to East Aurora every Sunday to take charge of the Sunday School. On March 22nd, Mother Mary Ann and Sister St. Augustine began the work, and during the remainder of the year Sister St. Augustine was assisted by Sister St. James and Sister Juliana. Beginning in May, two nine o'clock Masses were set apart each month for the children, who took part in the service by singing hymns.

The church was fitted with steam heat (Mott's Steam) in 1903 and the rectory with Mott's hot water apparatus, at a cost of \$1,125, the latter to be completed in 1904.

The population of East Aurora rapidly increased after the turn of the century. The sulky races attracted people from all over. Horse fanciers flocked to the area, buying and selling, working or simply watching. The Roycroft Shops experienced similar attention as people flocked to see the craftsmen at work and skilled artisans came to teach. They gave expert instruction in printing, binding, metal craft and the production of modeled leather articles, while sharpening their own skills.

The overwhelming popularity of Elbert Hubbard's article, "A Message to Garcia," in his monthly magazine, *The Philistine*, in March 1899, catapulted Mr. Hubbard into the world of celebrities. Thousands of orders came in for reprints, which eventually amounted to eighty million copies published in eleven languages. Within a few years he was the highest paid lecturer in the country, as well as a columnist for the Hearst papers.

In accordance with his disdain for luxuries and desire to foster the development of individual talents and skills, Mr. Hubbard bought only what he needed for himself, using the bulk of his money to enlarge the complex. Originally none of the guests at the Inn paid, as these were personal friends of Mr. Hubbard. A sort of bonanza fell on farmers in the area when Mr.



James H. Quested, pastor during the greatest growth period, invited Sisters of St. Joseph to teach Sunday school in 1903, which resulted in establishment of a convent-school and two years later St. Clara's Academy.



Martin Minderler, daughter Lena, and wife, Frances. He and many men of the parish did all the grading of the land around the rectory and the Academy. (Photo from Estella Minderler)





Mother Mary Ann, about 1900. She and Sister St. Augustine came out to teach Sunday school in March 1903, beginning an association between the Sisters of St. Joseph and Immaculate Conception parish that continues to this day (1978). (Photo from Srs. of St. Joseph Archives)

Hubbard bought many loads of field stones, which the farmers considered useless, for the wall which still stands around the complex on Main and South Grove.

It is no wonder, then, that shortly after Immaculate Conception Church was enlarged, overcrowding became a problem. A new church hall, called St. James Hall, had been completed in the basement of the church and the C.M.B.A. and L.C.B.A. had begun to hold bi-monthly meetings there in January 1903.

It was necessary on Sunday, August 2nd, to borrow seats from St. James Hall in order to accommodate the influx of visitors from Buffalo and other places, who had come to witness the children's First Communion. Nine boys and sixteen girls marched in procession from the Hall, under the direction of Sisters Sts. Augustine and Juliana, and took their places in front of the Sanctuary, while the organ sounded a solemn march. The girls and their supporters, the Children of Mary, were attired in white, with veils and wreaths of smilax and flowers. (Smilax was a garland — a thin stem encrusted with tiny white flowers that looked like rosebuds.) The boys had on dark suits and each wore a white boutonniere. After Mass, the Communicants took the total abstinence pledge, were invested in the Scapular of Mount Carmel, and received First Communion certificates. The procession then re-formed and marched to the Hall, where a generous breakfast was served. The happy day was crowned by the beautiful procession of the Blessed Sacrament, during the evening service.

By the time the enlarged and remodeled church was

rededicated, September 24, 1903, there were 403 people in Immaculate Conception parish, 81 of them children of Sunday School age.

St. Vincent's in Springbrook had also been crowded when thirteen children received First Communion there August 16th, 1903. On July 7th, 1905, Springbrook became a separate parish.

## 1904-1909

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### THANKS TO THE FAVOR GOD SHOWED ME.

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On April 1, 1904 the Sisters of Saint Joseph bought the Williams house and lot for a convent-school. It stood on a small hill on the south side of Oakwood Avenue across from the rectory. The property is currently (1978) a vacant lot between the McClure's (515) and the McDonnell's (537), across from the church driveway.

The school in the convent was opened in September 1904. It was intended to be a boarding school for children of the rural district. However, the needs of the parish soon changed that aim and it served as a parochial school until one could be built.

Two rooms in the convent were set aside for teaching. Downstairs, a room was built at the rear of the house for the primary grades, and a classroom upstairs doubled as a bedroom for one of the sisters. Classes started with two grades in each room, 44 pupils in all, including 27 boys and 17 girls. It was called, appropriately, Saint Joseph's Convent School.

On Christmas Day, just four months after the Sisters opened the school, the first entertainment by children was given at 3 p.m. in the church basement. There were songs and pantomimes. Father Quested presented each child with a bag of candy, an orange and a popcorn ball.

The 1904 Annual Report quotes a newspaper article about the program.

*The dance of the little ones, the choruses, recitations and tableaux were especially good. We think the children showed great talent and extraordinary results from the careful training of three short months. Indeed, the remarkable distinctness, purity and accuracy of pronunciation displayed by all the children impressed us more than anything else, except perhaps their excellent deportment. Certainly this performance fully sustains the high reputation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph as teachers and trainers.*

On July 10, 1905, the first commencement exercises were held. By that Fall, the convent was obviously too small for a school. There were 103 pupils: 49 boys and 54 girls.





Immaculate Conception Church, rectory and newly-built school, St. Clara's Academy, probably 1906. (Photo from Verna Marshall Benzel)

On the lot east of the rectory, a new cement block school was started. This had been an old sand pit containing all kinds of trash. The parishioners filled the hole, leveled the slight hill along the street and dug the school basement. There were four classrooms on the first floor, a hall with stage on the second and a kitchen and dining room in the basement.

Phillip Logel, a trustee for many years, contracted the carpentry work and Jeremiah Cleary, another parishioner, supervised the masonry. The two worked together on the school and the church, as well as other buildings in town. Mr. Cleary also worked on the Roycroft wall which is a landmark in the village.

Mr. Logel also built a shed for horses and buggies at the rear of the church on the Beebe lot on Park Place. It was a long building, open to the East, with an upright supporting post at the front between the two vehicle spaces. Behind this shed was Harry Hall's Cider Mill, a place the children liked to visit. Later, parishioners laid a sidewalk from the horse shed to the church.

The school was completed and dedicated November 4, 1906 by Bishop Charles H. Colton assisted by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Nelson A. Baker, the famed Apostle of Charity in Lackawanna. Total cost was \$12,000, believed to include contents.

There was a real spirit of competition among the parishioners of Immaculate Conception as they strove to raise money for the building projects. A contest had been proposed when the hall in the church basement

was completed in 1904. Whoever could raise the most money by April 1st would have the privilege of naming the new hall. Mrs. Edith Banks organized the first Dramatic Club and won the contest by giving an entertainment which netted \$107.00. She named the hall St. James, in honor of Father Qusted.

The naming of St. Clara's Academy also involved a contest according to an article written by Father McCoy 60 years later, when the school was torn down:

*When Father Qusted saw the need for the new school he formed a committee of the interested ladies of the parish and asked them to canvass the parish for funds. He told them that the lady who brought in the largest amount of donations would have the privilege of naming the school. The deadline date and time was set. The donations were to be brought to the rectory by 8 p.m. on the fateful day. The ladies showed plenty of apostolic zeal and personal dedication in their appeals.*

*Finally the deadline day arrived. The ladies, coming to the rectory, laid their offerings in sealed envelopes upon the desk in the pastor's office. The room was charged with nervous anticipation; each one in her own mind determining a fitting name for the school if the good fortune would fall to her. The silence was punctuated only by the loud ticking of a clock. The large hand moved with agonizing slowness. Finally it stood erect*





Mary (1886-1971) and Margaret Marshall (now Sr. Silverius), about 1920. Mary crocheted lace for altar linens made by the sewing circle. Margaret worked in Father Baker's Infant Home until retirement. (Photo from niece, Verna Marshall Benzel)

at 12. It was 8 p.m., the time to open the envelopes. One after another they were opened.

As Father Quested announced the amount in each envelope, a feminine crescendo of triumphant screams pierced the hallowed room. The largest amount in these envelopes had been submitted by Miss Emily Baetzhold (Mrs. Edward Ball) . . . Someone said: "Oh, Emily, you won. What are you going to name the school?" At that moment another lady came with her donation. It was higher than the amount of Miss Emily Baetzhold. The last entry was Miss Clara Keem. So, Clara did what came naturally. She named the school "St. Clara's Academy."

In October 1907 St. Clara's School was accredited by the New York State Education Department. A letter from James D. Sullivan, Chief of the Attendance Division, attested to its quality education. It stated in part:

*I have found the attendance in the grades above the primary the best of any school I have inspected. Absences are rare and then only for substantial and legal reasons. The work done in the school is of a high standard, some of it excellent. Writing and Reading in this school is far above the average in the public schools; the work in Arithmetic is very good indeed. The school*



Louis Marshall, about 1905, son of John J. He took the priest to the mission churches on Sundays, by horse and buggy. (Photo from his daughter, Verna Marshall Benzel)



*as a whole is highly complementary to Father Quested and his teachers.*

*I take pleasure in being able to say that this is one of the very best reports had from our inspector in some time and I commend you and your teachers for the interest you are taking in the advancement of education among your people.*

Two pianos were given to the parish at the time of the building of the school. One was from Denton, Cottier and Daniels, the other from Mr. Kurtzman, a piano builder whose factory was a Buffalo industry.

## 1909-1924

### I LAID A FOUNDATION. . . .

Colorful pastors are a part of every church history and Immaculate Conception is no exception.

Parishioners tell numerous stories about Rev. George Zurcher, a remarkable man who became pastor on March 1, 1909. According to Miss Schwartz, he was most generous and frugal, giving away anything he could spare. One story tells of a woman who came to the rectory on Thanksgiving morning, asking for a little money to buy food, as she had nothing at home to feed her children. Father Zurcher said he had little money but asked her to wait. He took the roast goose from the oven, put it in a basket with bread and other foods, and gave it to the woman. When his housekeeper returned, she was angry and said they would have to eat sausage for their own Thanksgiving dinner, and it served him right.

Another story relates that one morning Father Zurcher visited the school room of the sixth and seventh grades and gave each child a Latin book saying it was time they started Latin, a basic language for higher education and the language of the church. He gave them one lesson, the only one they received. In June when they all failed the Latin examination, he supposedly told them it was because they did not study enough.

Father Zurcher was a prohibitionist; he would not use wine when celebrating Mass. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), which was locally strong at the time, invited him to lecture against liquor, which he did in various halls in town. Some of our older people remember him because, when they were confirmed, he made them take the pledge to refrain from alcoholic beverages until they were twenty-one.

On November 2, 1909, when Woodrow Wilson was elected the first time, local option for prohibition for the town was voted in, to take effect almost a year later, October 1, 1910, and to last for two years.

One Catholic family, who operated a saloon for part of their income, became angry at Father Zurcher for



Rev. George Zurcher, vegetarian, apostle of Prohibition, noted speaker and writer. During his pastorate, pew rent was paid by Elbert Hubbard for guests of the Roycroft Inn. (Photo from the Ragans)

his part in the campaign. They left the church and went to Springbrook for Mass on Sundays.

Elbert Hubbard, also a prohibitionist and a friend of Father Zurcher, asked how much the parish income would suffer because of this family's departure. When he learned that the principle loss was the pew rent, he told Father Zurcher he would take the pew, call it the Roycroft pew, and told him to send a bill. When Catholic visitors came to the Inn and inquired about Mass times, they would be told to use the Roycroft pew.

At the November 2, 1912 election, prohibition was again on the ballot, but this time the "wets" won. That week the W.C.T.U. had a notice in the Advertiser which included this notation: "The campaign was a 'wet' one indeed. Aurora has not been so wet with mothers' tears in years as it has been since October 1st."

It was during 1910, while Father Zurcher was pastor, that Pope Pius X changed the First Communion regulation. Prior to that time, children had to be twelve to receive Communion, and often were confirmed at the same ceremony. Thereafter, children six and seven years old, as soon as they reached the age of reason, made their First Communion.

Father Zurcher resigned from East Aurora parish in November, 1912, in ill health. He died September 10, 1931 and a large monument was erected in his honor





A classroom in St. Clara's Academy, March 1914. Upper left, Ruth Youngers Woodward (who loaned us this photo); second row, second seat, Jack Youngers. Sister Dolorosa is the teacher.

on a plot of ground on the southwest corner of Southwestern Boulevard (Route 20) and Shadagee Road, just south of 18 Mile Creek.

Father Andrew Porter took charge of the parish in December 1912. He was of Irish parentage and according to our sources, a very gentle and saintly man.

Times were not good, and Father Porter found it difficult to talk "money." As a result collections were meager and nothing could be paid on the debt; in fact, it increased. However, being generous, we are told, he would divide the pennies in the collection and give them to the altar boys for their services. Sometimes they would receive as much as ten or twelve cents each, sometimes only two cents.

One Sunday the collection was under \$3.00 and Father Porter spoke of it the following Sunday, suggesting that in place of the many pennies, some folk should be able to give nickles or dimes.

Merritt Kyser and the other ushers decided to substitute nickles for the pennies. When they had 150 pennies they put them in a bag and dropped it into the collection box. The following Sunday Father Porter said that, while this was evidently done in the spirit of boyish fun, it would have been even better had they used dollar bills.

Despite the shaky economy, the Fourth of July

picnic was held in Hamlin Park. A notice in the Advertiser in 1913 invited the community, mentioning plans for a spacious marquee and "delicious eats." A baseball game was held between the parish team, the Oakridges, and the Roycrofters. The Roycroft Band of 24 pieces was scheduled to entertain.

Because Father Porter loved to see the children perform, programs were held at the end of each school year. At this time the Sisters taught two years of high school in addition to the grades. Added to the graduation exercises, each grade had to perform. There were drills, songs, pantomimes and sketches. This gave the children confidence, delighted the parents and brought in a little money. Twenty-five cents was charged for general admission, fifty cents for reserved seats.

The Holland mission had been changed to Arcade July 7, 1907 and also had a resident pastor for a time, but because the Holland parish again became attached to East Aurora while Father Porter was pastor, he was given permission to celebrate three Masses on Sundays, two in East Aurora and one in Holland.

On May 7, 1915 the Lusitania was sunk by a German submarine off the Irish coast. Elbert and Alice Hubbard were among those lost — a great blow to the people of East Aurora, and to many others as well.

Many parishioners, men, women and teenage children, had worked in Mr. Hubbard's Roycroft Shop, some now able to recall personally their association with that fascinating endeavor.





Monument to Father Zurcher erected in 1935, paid for by anonymous donors believed to be supporters of his work in the cause of temperance. All four sides of the solid granite monument are inscribed, the front featuring an almost life-size relief of the priest. At the time of his death in 1931 he was pastor of St. Vincent's, North Evans, whence he travelled worldwide in the fight against alcoholism and other abuses. (Photo by Richard Will)

One in particular is Miss Martha C. Schwartz, whose manuscript, presented to the pastor in 1973, is the basis for this compilation. She recalls doing advertising for Mr. Hubbard. She left for a job in Detroit, which led to a forty-year career in Advertising Copywriting, there and in New York, Chicago and the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

She also tells us that her great grandfather (grandmother's father) Charles Beckman, was brought into town, ill and wrapped in blankets, to direct the men in cutting stones for the walls surrounding the Roycroft campus.

Middle grades, St. Clara's, 1910. Front row (l-r): Nellie Kyser, Julia Farley, Violet Marshall, Florence Ess (Dodge), Evelyn Carroll, Julia Dubois. Row 2: Lawrence Dibucci, Helen Ragan, Miriam Logel (Haselbauer, whose family loaned us this photo), Genevieve Carroll (Sippell), Marion Schneider, Myrtle Marshall, Kenneth Damon, Charles Kyser, Clarence Gross, Josephine Eley (Loersch), Richard Gregor, Patrick Ernberg, (rear) Charles Baetzhold, Eileen Reimer, Irving Kinder. Row 3: Ralph Marso, Horatio Bangs, Sylvester Snyder, Marion Deheck (Schwartz), Ruth Geyer (Hotwes), Edward Ernst, Helen Persons (Varley), Margaret Osborne (Heins). Top: (corner, unidentified), Eugene Jerge, George Russell, Henry Snyder, Ed Kingston, Al Maynard, Ralph Dibucci, Father Zurcher, Florence Reimer, Philip Persons.





Mrs. Estelle Nuwer Minderler, parish historian, worked at the Roycroft around 1930 laying gold leaf on the covers of Mr. Hubbard's famous Little Journeys volumes. She and many women worked on various stages of the bookbinding process.

Mrs. Robert C. Woodward (the former Ruth Youngers) tells us that her father, Fred, did bookbinding and hand tooling. He worked at one time for St. Bonaventure University, restoring old Bibles. One of Elbert Hubbard's original aims had been to revive the lost art of hand work in the making of books.

She adds that her mother, Josephine Youngers, was soloist in the parish for many years. She also filled in as organist for a time. Jennie Kingston became organist in 1916 and remained until 1939.

Father Daniel J. White, our next pastor, came on June 17, 1917. He was tall and thin, retiring and gentle. In spite of a slight throat impediment, his sermons could be heard throughout the church.

Father White was very much concerned with the mortgage on the church property which was taken out

in 1906 and, since World War I was in progress and everybody working, he decided to get rid of the indebtedness and thus save the parish the interest payments.

Pew rent was abolished under Father White and the Duplex Envelope System was begun. He was against the ten cent sitting charge in vogue in some of the Buffalo parishes, so parishioners were asked to increase their Sunday offerings. He encouraged the various church societies to hold money making activities. As a result the receipts for 1919 were \$5,601.08, which included returns from a lawn social, baked goods sale, church supper, hall rent and cemetery lot sales. The St. Clara's Dramatic Club was organized and their production, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, brought in \$217.78.

Principal expenses for the year were: Pastor's salary \$1000.00, teachers' salaries \$750.00, coal \$524.77, janitor \$103.70. Payment on the mortgage was \$1500.00, which made everyone happy.

On October 24, 1918 the Holland church was destroyed by fire and for the next two years that parish was serviced from elsewhere. In November 1920 Holland again became a mission of Immaculate Conception. Father White continued to celebrate a Mass there each Sunday in addition to the two in East Aurora. Originally he was taken to Holland by one of the parishioners, Fred Nuwer, but later he had a small car of his own.

On November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed

Upper grade pupils of St. Clara's Academy, 1910. Front row, left to right: Frank Vigneron, Edward Logel, Anthony Farley, Stanley Persons, Edward Riley, Floyd Balthazar. Row 2: Alphonse Vigneron, Vincent Ragan, Martha Persons, Anna Juenker, Ethel Osborn, Clara Ragan, Maud Ely, Annabelle Hannan. Row 3: Henrietta Gardner, Margaret Ragan, Mary Osborn, Juvenelia Ragan, Edwin Marso. Top row: Father George Zurcher, Gertrude Vigneron, Anna Conley and Sister Adelaide. (News clipping from Alice Logel)





and World War I was over. The age of airplanes and automobiles had arrived. Within a few years the old horse shed at the rear of the rectory was no longer needed. It was torn down and much of the lumber bought by a Mr. Willis. This space was added to the children's playground.

On October 21, 1923, the Catholic Daughters, Court 831, was formed with 47 members. Margaret Persons was first Grand Regent, Marion Deheck, first Financial Secretary. Meetings were held in St. Clara's Hall.

The same year the parish bought the Cook property on the northeast corner of Oakwood and Park Place where the present (1978) school stands. It consisted of a large piece of land, a good-sized house facing Park Place, and a garage.

Father White had wanted the corner site for a new church. He even had plans drawn up for an elaborate and sizeable edifice. However, he died in Sisters Hospital during an operation for appendicitis on January 18, 1924. His dream of a new church on the corner died with him.

Following the death of Father White, Rev. Roman J. Nuwer of St. Vincent's in Springbrook, filled in for

two months until Rev. Cornelius J. Cash was appointed, March 14, 1924.

Boys of the First Communion Class of 1922. Front row (l-r): Robert Ernst (who loaned us this picture), Richard Little, Leon Snyder, Michael Carini and Anthony LaMantia. Row 2: Wallace Kelly, Herbert Arndt, Robert Higgins and Fred Eberle.



Mrs. Estella Nuwer Minderler, whose knowledge of parish affairs and contacts with numerous "old-timers" led her to be named parish historian for the Dedication Committee. The pictures, mementos, clippings and stories which she has presented for use have added immeasurably to the text of this history.



Mrs. Jennie Kingston, organist for many years. (Photo from Donald Kingston)



In June, St. Joseph's in Holland became a separate parish, ending the mission work of the East Aurora pastorate.

Rev. Roman J. Nuwer, later to be the highest ranking chaplain in World War II, ran the parish after Father White's untimely death, until an appointment could be made. (Photo from Estelle Minderler)



Rev. Daniel White. During his brief pastorate more land was bought and plans drawn for a new church on the corner. (Photo from Estelle Minderler)

## 1924-1941

### SOMEONE ELSE IS BUILDING UPON IT.

It was Father Cash's first experience as pastor and he remained seventeen years, through the Roaring Twenties, the Depression and FDR's New Deal, to the brink of American involvement in World War II.

With a dry sense of humor he stated, "My name is Cash, but you'll never hear that word unless I'm desperate." Included in one of his first sermons was the fact that he was going to cost the parishioners some money — that he was not as frugal as Father White, nor was he a saint like Father White, who slept on a very lumpy mattress in a bed that was a foot too short. Therefore, Father Cash purchased suitable bedding and other necessary rectory furnishings.

He was a tall man, and parishioners say that he could reach the sanctuary lamp, which hung from the ceiling, without either standing on a stool or using a cane, as did his predecessors.

Soon after he arrived, the recently-purchased Cook residence on Park Place was converted into a convent with a chapel. The four Sisters of St. Joseph moved with their housekeeper from the old convent-school on Oakwood Avenue into the "Cook" house, which still serves as a convent for the Sisters in its present location on Park Place.

The first Boy Scout Troop was formed during this time with William S. Lydle accepting the charter on July 4, 1925. Scouts have continued to meet in the parish up to the present time. John Sly was leader for many years and, more recently, Steve Ingraham. In the 10 years prior to 1978 many boys moved up to Eagle Scout rank.

The Great Depression began with the Stock Market crash in 1929. Life savings were lost, as companies went bankrupt and banks failed. Millions of people lost their jobs, with only charitable organizations to help them. Bread lines were common in the cities, where at least a bowl of soup and a sandwich were available.

Because of the Depression, Father Cash took no salary and used his Christmas money to pay parish bills. The Roycroft Shops closed in 1938 because of the economy, but, even before that, Father had refused to accept the usual stipends for Masses, Baptisms and the like, knowing certain people could not afford them.

During his pastorate he was threatened with a knife



by a man who apparently went beserk, claiming the priest was too holy. Father had to lock himself in his room while awaiting rescue by the police.

Some criticism arose over the Blessed Mother statue being enshrined above the tabernacle in the center altar, and Father Cash moved the statue to the side altar, putting in its place a gold cross, set off by a background of white veiling.

By 1936 the parish needed an assistant and Father James Kane was assigned. He had a fine singing voice and he instituted the Thursday night Holy Hour, followed by an interesting Question and Answer session. The organist at this time was still Mrs. Kingston, who was succeeded by Mercedes Graham around 1939.

In 1937 the men of the parish held a strawberry festival to raise money for the school. With the receipts, and some additional income amounting to about \$2000, the men purchased new school equipment and did most of the work themselves. They installed new floors, plumbing fixtures, toilets, water lines, acoustic ceilings, slate boards, wiring and lights that gave four times as much illumination as before.

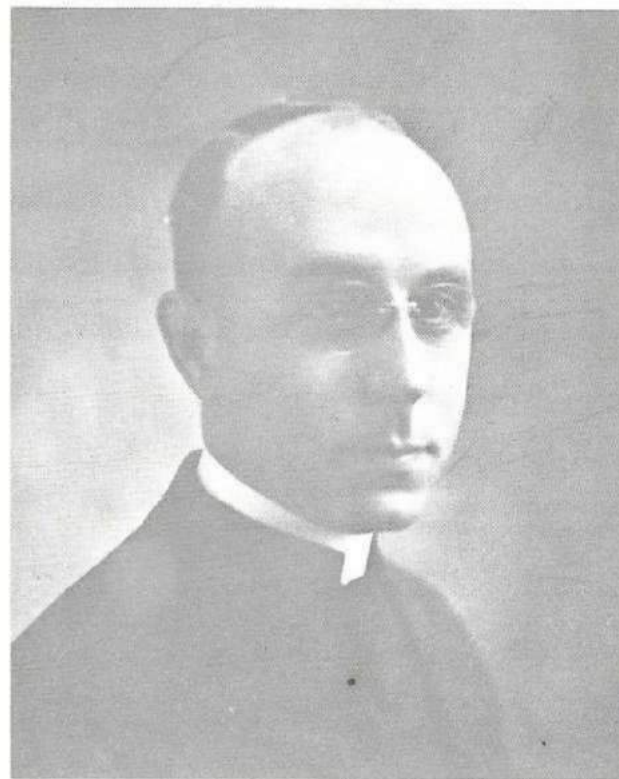
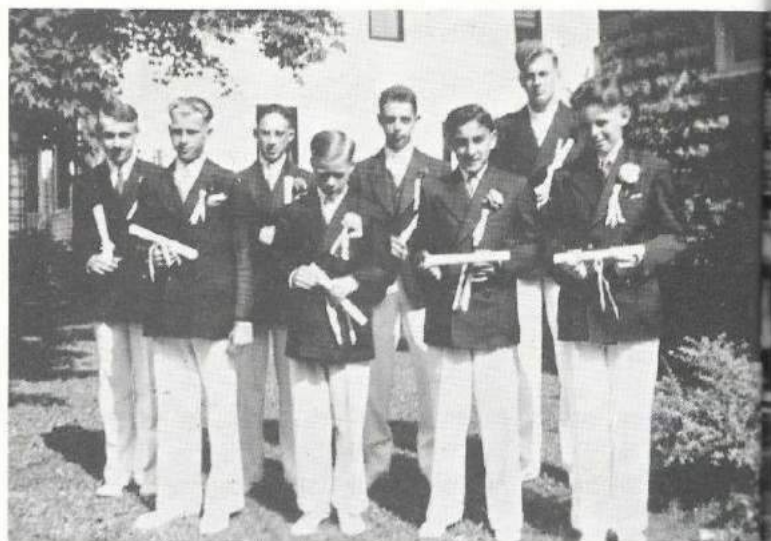
To bolster the regular church collections, the young people held dances and presented plays and the women ran baked goods sales. Many delicious dinners were served in St. Clara's basement dining room. Everyone helped with fish fries and potluck suppers which attracted so many customers that the line often went out the door and down the street.

In October 1938 a large statue of St. Clara was presented to the school by Monsignor Britt, Chancellor of the Diocese. On November 14 of that year Father Weismueller, Dean of the County outside of Buffalo, paid a canonical visit to the parish. (This involves a check of books, records and parish affairs to be sure they are in accordance with Diocesan standards.)

The inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in March 1933 had been followed by numerous government programs which had alleviated some of the economic depression. Despite hard times, society as a whole continued to progress. By the end of the decade of 1930 to 1940, radio, movies, and automobiles were part of most people's lives, in one way or another. Radio brought comedy and mystery programs into people's homes, as well as fresh news from around the country. The local movie house showed three hours of black and white film, early in the Thirties, for as little as a nickel. Adventure stories, comedies, cartoons and musical extravaganzas took people's minds off their troubles and only an occasional newsreel brought them back to reality.

A 1940 grocery bill for the St. Vincent dePaul Society gives us some idea of the prices about this time. The bill was signed by Rev. Maurice Woulfe who had replaced James J. Reddington as assistant pastor. It includes groceries for four families for Christmas and totals \$20.69. Interesting items are coffee at 25¢ a pound, butter 30¢ a lb., a 13-lb. turkey for \$4.10 and 6¼ lbs. beef, \$1.78. The total for one family was

Boys of the graduating class, 1937. (Photo from Alice Logel)



Rev. Cornelius J. Cash, the longest pastorate, plagued by a \$10,000 mortgage and the Depression. (Photo from Estelle Minderler)

only \$2.75 and included a chicken, cranberries, celery, cabbage, oranges, figs, grapes and chocolate candy.

In October 1941 both the pastor and the assistant were transferred. According to one historian Father Cash had been an ideal priest and a true shepherd of the flock — he loved them and they loved him.



First Communion Class in the Thirties, in front of St. Clara's Academy. (Photo from L. Montague)



Mr. and Mrs. Philip Logel and children, Carl, Edward, Leo, Marian, Sylvester and Jim. One of the Logel boys rang the church bell every day at noon and 6 p.m. for many years. (Photo from Alice Logel, widow of Carl)



Confirmation, 1933. Bishop Turner on rectory steps, flanked by Revs. Edward Ott and George Spetz of the Orchard Park pastorate. Front of procession: Revs. John Marekovic of Strykersville and Charles Arnold, Sheldon. Row 2: Revs. Edmund Britt, Secretary to the Bishop, and Leo Link, Varysburg. Row 3: (unidentified). Row 4: Father Cash, pastor. Altar boys are Donald Kingston (who loaned us this picture) and Jack Agnew.



# 1941-1954

EVERYONE. . .  
MUST BE CAREFUL HOW HE BUILDS. . .

On October 3, 1941, Reverend James T. Sullivan was canonically installed as pastor by the Very Rev. Dean Weismantle. He brought much of his own fine furnishings and household goods, as did his sister, Alice.

The parish was in debt and some people wanted to save money for a new church on the corner, but Father wanted to improve the existing building. He was filled with determination and ambition and was able to personally solicit much of the money to be used for renovation from parishioners and non-parishioners alike.

Architect Mortimer Murphy was employed to draw plans for remodelling the church and rectory. A \$1200 bid by DeSprit Mosaic and Marble Co., Inc. was accepted for terrazzo flooring in the church aisles and front vestibule. New pews were installed and the carpenter-built altars were replaced with plaster altars of Gothic style and new statues. A wrought-iron pulpit and Communion rail were installed and higher wainscoting on the walls covered the old light oak. It is believed that the loud-speaking system was installed at that time, also.

During this time the bell tower was repaired and given added support, the inside vestibule was remodeled and the stairway to the choir loft opened. Bob Logel, grandson of the original builder, tells us that he and classmates from the eighth grade helped Msgr. Sullivan remove the front porch from the rectory.

New, Gothic-styled stained glass windows were installed, which were of a type used in Belgium and France, designed to let in maximum light. The old ones had been opaque Tiffany leaded-glass. They had contained the names of the donors, and descendants now complained as the old windows were discarded.

World War II was in progress and the economic situation was good for many families. Parishioners made generous donations for the improvements, paying for windows, statues and the like. Their names were found in a tin box behind the tabernacle of the little white church when it was razed in 1976. The Catholic Daughters paid for the Papal and American flags for the sanctuary. A parishioner, Norman Kobel, painted the convent and the school, but the church was done by an outside contractor. There were few money-raising activities, as Father Sullivan had asked for a \$10.00 contribution from each wage-earner in lieu of holding picnics, dinners, festivals and the like. Father Sullivan himself contributed over \$2000 over a period of five years, ending in 1947, though his salary was only \$1500 a year.

The cost of improvements during the War was about \$50,000 and the total cost, which included work on the four buildings — church, school, rectory and convent —



Msgr. James Sullivan and First Communion Class, 1950, the largest class to receive as a group. Since that time the class has been divided into two and sometimes three groups on succeeding Sundays in May. (Photo by Both and Teall from the Samuels)

amounted to \$92,000, according to the 1951 Financial Report. However, because of the post-War move to the suburbs and the comparative affluence during and after the War, contributions kept pace with expenses and the parish was solvent by 1951.

Father Sullivan was raised to the level of Monsignor during his stay of thirteen years. He also was appointed the first Dean of Southern Erie County. He had helped keep countless Catholics close to the Sacraments during his pastorate, as he initiated Communion before daily Mass for those who could not stay for the entire Mass. He was also available for confessions every morning, aiding especially those who worked all hours on weekends during the War. He left in failing health in January, 1954, to become pastor of St. Mary's, Medina.

Assistant pastors through those years had been the Reverends Christopher J. Roche, Aloysius G. Kuntz, Richard Strassberger and Charles R. Amico. Trustees had been George Meyers and Earl Wittmeyer. The latter was then replaced by Robert C. Woodward, who still holds that position at this writing (1978).





Altar boys, 1943, John C. Youngers and Robert W. Woodward.  
(Photo from the Robert C. Woodward)



First Communion Class, May 20, 1945. Front row, left to right: Patrick Morgan, John Bartus, Joseph Spahn, David Schwartz, Martin O'Brien, Larry Cummings. Row 2: Joyce Dooley, June Teufel, Mary Magin, Mary Calpo, Mary Patterson, Mary Ann Sly. Row 3: Carolyn Woodward, Patricia Ernst, Mary Nichter, Janet Schnitzer, Enola Fisher, Sr. M. DePazzi, teacher. (Photo from the Woodward)





First Grade, 1949-50: Top row: Sr. Francis Xavier, Sharon Wagner, Sandra Pensis, Carol Transki, Kathleen Kennedy, Carol Norman, Barbara Chandler, Judith Doe, Carol Eddy, Joyce Holmes. Row 2: Lyle (?), Dianne Merlau, Kathleen Spahn, Sarah Krum, Mary McDonald, Veronica Carini, Rosemary Stack, Kathleen Meckin, Ann McKenzie, William Cran. Front Row: Gerard Simon, Neil Meyer, David Findlay, Michael Barber, Kathleen Stolle, Patricia Montague, Donna Barkowitz, John Geary, Stephen Ellison, David Hubbard. (Photo from the Samuels)

Sister Augustine's second grade, 1950-51 (from right, front to back), aisle 1: Robert Aubrecht, Charlene Basil, Martha Long. Aisle 2: Kathleen Nerf, Sandra Arlotta, Marsha Benzel, Sharon Nenno, John Rademacher. Aisle 3: Kathleen Meaken, Mary O'Brien, Jean Guion, Sharon Barkowitz, Dennis McCarthy, Jerome Schmidt. Aisle 4: William O'Brien, Steven Buchanan, Dennis Transky, Paulette Drushler, Ronald Patrid. Standing (left to right): Mary Barber, Billy Ronan, Harlane Foss, Jack Kingston, Suzanne Williams, David Ernst, Marilyn Persons, John Hoeh, George Kibler, Louis LeVeque, James Nowak, Mary Finley. (Photo from Mrs. A. C. Kibler)







Class of 1948. Seated: Jane Falk, Robert Woodward, Joann Wittmeyer, George Fattey, Jean Brosnan, William Dietsche, Rita George. Standing: Sr. Rita, Sr. Catherine, Mary Ann Wittmeyer, Marilyn Reed, Rev. Christopher Roche, Dianne Foss, Sr. Francis Xavier, Sr. Julia Agnes. (Photo from the Woodward)

Seventh grade, St. Clara's Academy, 1950-51. Sr. Margaret Joseph, teacher. (Photo from the Woodward)







Immaculate Conception Class of 1952. Front row: Jim Leffler, Barb Geary, Trudy Casazza, Mary Ann Kibler, Carolyn Woodward, Mary Ann Kramer, Ann Stiles, Pat Dugan, Dennis Dineen. Row 2: Jean Buchanan, Joe Gillespie, Joe Spahn, Joyce Dooley, Larry Casazza, John Bartus, June Tuefel. Top row: Marty O'Brien, Joe Lucage, Msgr. J. T. Sullivan, Jim Miller, Jack Wheeler. (Photo from the Woodwards)

Class of 1953: Row 1: Patricia Kramer, Joanne Nuwer, Carolyn Jacobs, Cynthia Carini, Joyce dePerno, Marilyn Hennessey. Row 2: Msgr. James Sullivan, Joanne Simons, Carol Kingston, Yvonne Nenno, Catherine Prevot, Mary Eddy, Rev. Richard Strassberger. Row 3: Donald Grew, Bruce Holmes, David Transki, John Smith, Daniel Ernst. Row 4: Patrick O'Brien, Joseph Patti, Gerard Wittmeyer, Jack Winkler. Missing: Paul Clark. (Photo from Michael Carini)







Catholic Daughters 25th Anniversary Banquet, officers, representatives and charter members, 1948: Seated: May Jerge; May Riley, District Deputy — Buffalo Court; Mary Harrington, District Deputy, Aurora Court No. 831; Rev. Christopher Roche, assistant pastor; Mrs. Ryan; Rev. Luke Sharkey, guest speaker; Msgr. James Sullivan, pastor; Dena (Christina) Roes, Grand Regent; Eva Rieman; Mary Little. Standing: Louise Glazer, Winifred Snitzer, Josephine Youngers, Eva Ragan, Mollie Denz, Evelyn Ernst, Agnes Brass, Mary Denz, Mary Juenker, Margaret Persons, Susan Almeter, Mary Marshall, Marion Deheck, Grace Buchanan, Beatrice Logel, plus over 100 other members and guests, also at the Banquet. (Photo from the Woodwards)



Dinner with Msgr. Sullivan at Holy Family Church, about 1954. Clockwise from front left: Joseph Madigan, Robert C. Woodward, Msgr. Sullivan, Lawrence Casazza, John Dooley, unidentified. (Photo from parish files)



# 1954-1959

## IF DIFFERENT ONES BUILD ON THIS FOUNDATION

The development of television had been interrupted by the Depression and the War, but by 1955 national and world affairs were brought into living rooms daily. The civil rights marches and the bus boycott in Alabama might have been obscure articles in the paper, noticed by a few; but television educated millions of people in realities they might never have known and presented issues they might never have faced.

The goal of the country in the late 40's and early 50's was recovery from the War and the pursuit of the "American Dream." Servicemen and women came home and settled down to family life, many of them buying cars and houses with their savings and GI loans. Many who would not have been able to afford it before were now able to attend college with assistance from the government given to veterans.

By the time Father Leo J. Glynn became pastor in February, 1954, the post-War move to the suburbs had caused a considerable increase in population in the area. It was apparent that the parish had outgrown the cement-block school which had been so proudly opened half a century before. Classrooms had been chiseled out of the basement dining rooms and the top floor auditorium had been converted into classrooms.

Father Glynn was a quiet, gentle man, who visited the parishioners' homes and was well liked for his calm, friendly manner. His assistant, Father Richard T. Nugent, began talking "new school" to various parish organizations and influential parishioners. As a result, Sunday collections increased during 1955, creating a surplus of \$30,000 that year and \$31,000 the next.



Rev. Leo J. Glynn. Under his pastorate a new school was planned.

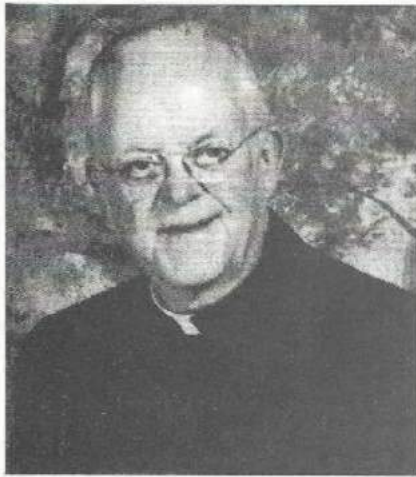
Added to the \$12,000 surplus on hand, this made a sizeable building fund. Special summer collections those two years added over \$6000 each and contributions from the Catholic Daughters, Immaculate Conception Guild, Catholic Youth Organization and the Parish Dance Committee greatly increased the fund during that time.

The first weekly church bulletin was begun about 1954, sponsored by the Holy Name Society. John Geary typed parish news on the outside of an 8½ x 11" sheet, which was then folded in half. Inside, for the first 4 or 5 weeks, was information about the Holy Name Society and its history. Later there were explanations

Cub Scouts, organized by men of the parish in the early Fifties, formed a basketball team. Pictured are (seated): Tom McDonnell, Tom Moore, Bob Alfieri, Tim Carini, Art ("Deke") Buchanan. Standing: Dick Cottrell, James Findlay, Russell Patti, Norm Simons and Dick Mullens. Cub Master is Michael Carini, from whom we received this picture. Mrs. Buchanan was original den mother.







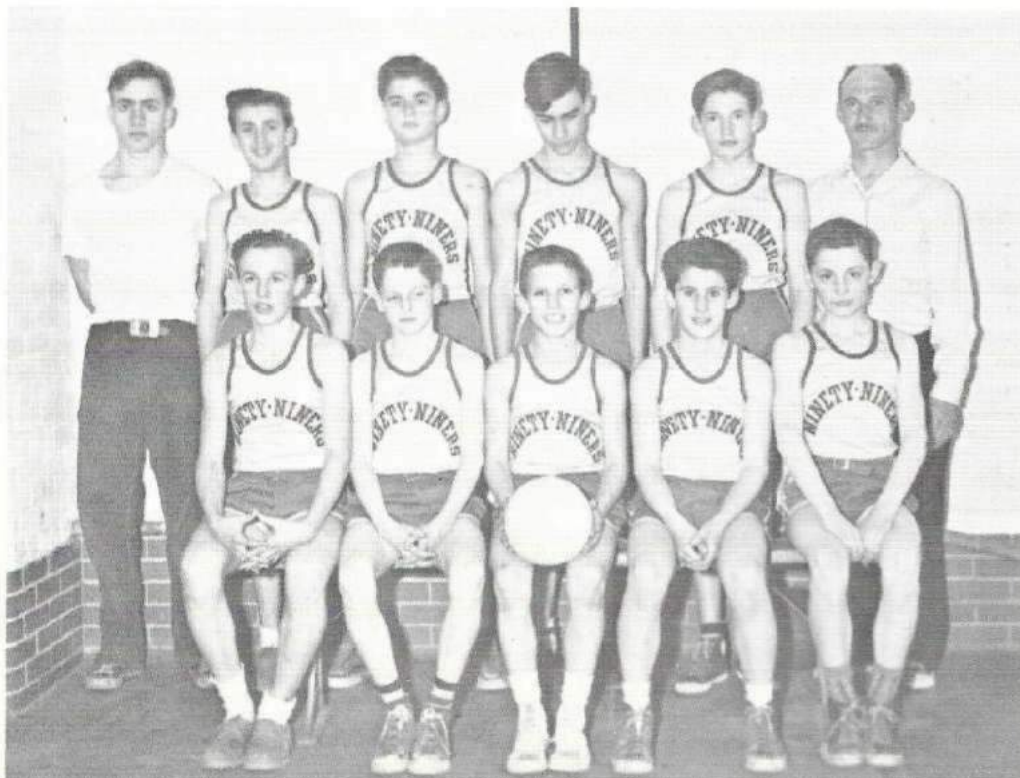
Rev. Samuel J. McCoy, popular pastor in the Fifties. (Photo from Estelle Minderler)

of feasts and Catholic doctrine on the inside. A parish couple, Tony and Marge Mandry, did the printing, free. They have moved to Texas where their son, Steve, is now a priest.

In 1956 the local Catholic Daughters unit changed its name from Court Aurora to Court Immaculate Mother. This group has contributed immensely to the parish through the years, though not actually a parish society but a branch of the Knights of Columbus.

The nine o'clock Children's Mass was eliminated about this time. Many parents, especially those living out of town, had been making two trips, one to bring the children to their special Mass and another for themselves.

The first school basketball team used the name Ninety-Niners, since they originally belonged to Pack 99 of the Cub Scouts. Seated are: Paul Spahn, Arthur Buchanan, Timothy Carini, Robert Alfieri and James Findlay. Standing: coach (unidentified), Joseph Patti, Charles Spahn, Russell Patti, Norman Simons and Michael Carini. (Photo from the Carinis)



Now they attended the same Mass. The Mass schedule had been 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 a.m. and 12 noon Sundays, and 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 on holydays. The 6 a.m. Mass on Sundays was eliminated about this time and an 11 a.m. Mass added.

In March, 1957, Father Glynn was transferred to St. Theresa's in Niagara Falls and Rev. Samuel J. McCoy became pastor, with Father Nugent remaining as assistant. George J. Meyer and Robert C. Woodward were trustees.

Twenty-six ushers were required to serve the six Masses held in the church each Sunday. The first observation of the new pastor was that a larger church was needed, as well as a larger school. The need for a school seemed greater at the time.

The corner of Oakwood and Park Place appeared to be the logical place for the new building. This meant buying more property along Park Place, so the Beebe-Meyer house and the lot next to it was purchased for \$20,000, as well as the Kent house and property.

The Cook house, still used for a convent, had to be moved out of the way and was placed at the back of the Kent lot, where it continues to serve as a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph. The house was renovated, fences were erected and the parking lot paved.

The first estimate received for an adequate, modern school building was in excess of \$400,000, a far cry from the cost of earlier buildings. An outside organization was called in to institute a fund-raising campaign. During 1957 it netted \$200,000 in thirty-month pledges, only a few of which failed to materialize. The Immaculate Conception Guild donated \$1,100 as did the Parish Dance Committee, and the Catholic Daughters gave \$200. A special summer collection netted \$53,000 and regular Sunday collections, an equal amount. A dual envelope system was then used.

The ground breaking for the school was held Sunday, Nov. 2, 1958, with the Very Rev. Alfred A. Hagemeyer, V.F., Dean of Southern Erie County, officiating.



The Knights of the Altar, adult servers, with the travelling statue of Mary, May 1958. Left side of picture, row 1: Rev. Arthur Connors, O.M.I., who travelled with the statue, Chuck Northway, Frank Cahill, Harold Willis. Row 2: left: Edward Juengers, John Dooley Sr., George Samuels. Top row: left: John Dooley Jr., Don Kingston, Lee Pfohl. Right side, front: Jay F. Marshall Jr.,

Frank Painter, Jim Kingston, Father McCoy, Fr. Nugent, who trained the men. Row 2: Jay Marshall Sr., behind him his father, Fred Marshall, Hank Spahn. Top row: right: Mark Muther, James Tanner, John Geary and Henry Ainsworth. (Photo from parish files)



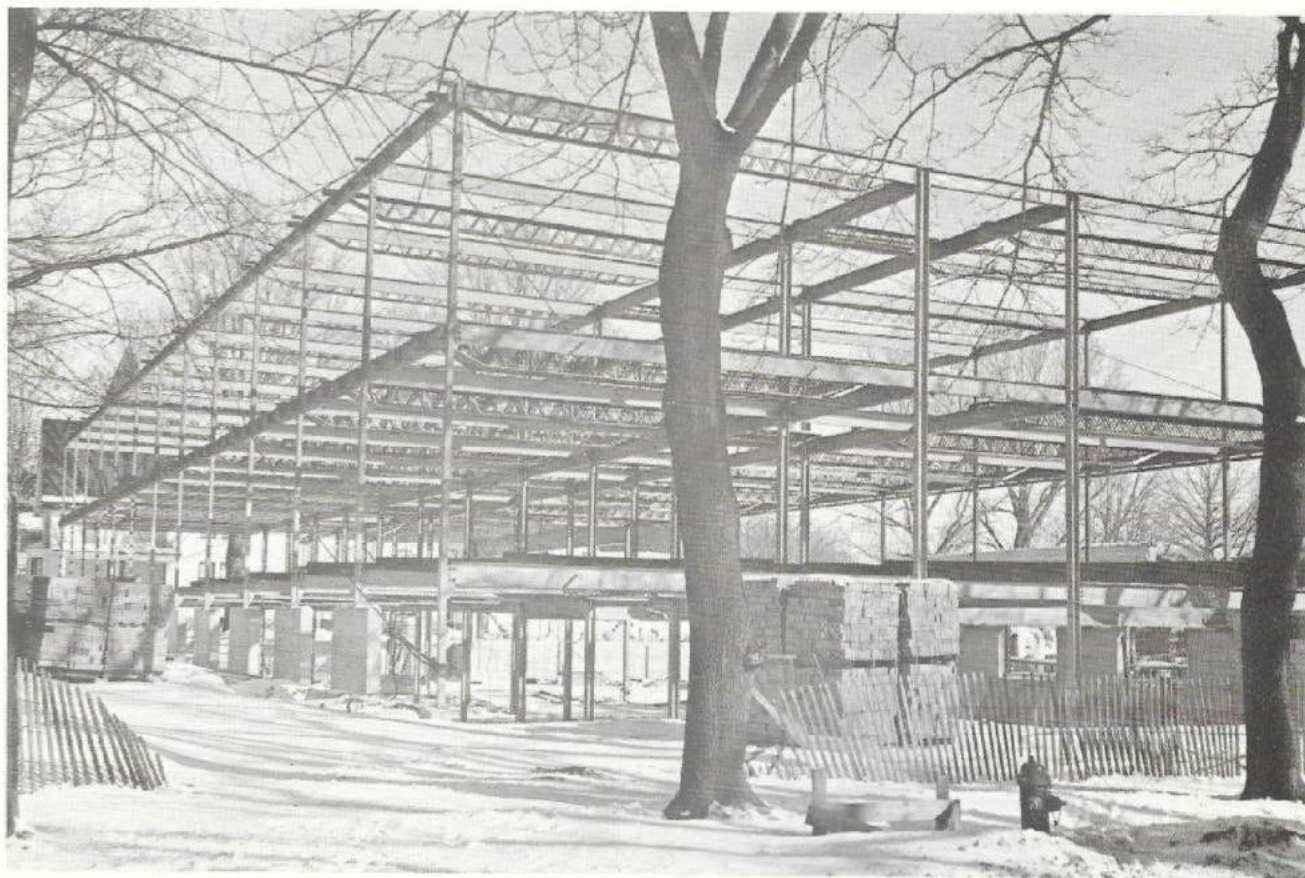
Installation of the boys' group of Knights of the Altar, April 1958. First row, left: Paul Transki, George Heffernen, Steven Dodson, Marshall Eames, Gerald Cully, Donald Aubrecht, Edward McDonald, Frank Painter, David Jerome, Donald Ketler, Peter Rosowski. Row 2: Michael Garvey, Jeffrey Kampion, John Rogers, Gregory Northway, Carlton Phillips, Raymond Moran, Kevin Grew, Donald Bach, Samuel Arcara, James Conroy, James Edwards. Row 3: Henry Spahn, vice supreme grand knight; Brian

Shaw, Charles Sheehan, Wallace Raupp, Mark Becker, Salvatore DiFilippo, supreme grand knight. Row 4: Albert Moran, James Schwartz, Francis Patti, John Cahill, Joseph Ernst, William Person. Row 5: Rev. Richard T. Nugent, assistant pastor; Richard Penfold, Thomas Ernst, Gary Almond, Joseph Schmid, John Kelver, James Juenker, secretary-treasurer; Rev. Samuel J. McCoy, pastor. (Photo from parish files)



Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new school, Sunday, November 2, 1958. From left: altar boys Samuel DiFilippo and Francis Patti; Father Nugent, Very Rev. Alfred A. Hagmaier, VF, dean of Southern Erie County, officiating; unidentified, George

Meyer, Sister Alicia, John Conroy, Gerald A. Braun, Sr. St. Mark, Kevin Kennedy and Father McCoy. Note convent in left background before it was moved to its present site. Right background shows rear of church and St. Clara's Academy behind it.



Framework of new school, Winter '58-'59. (Photo from parish files)



# 1959-1962

## WITH GOLD AND SILVER,

BINGO games were started weekly in 1959 and brought in \$7,700 that year. A drawing for a Cadillac netted almost \$3,000 and a parish dance, \$874. Father McCoy was very supportive of these activities, often staying to help out.

There were 1,060 families in the parish at this time, 448 children in school and 339 in public school. There were several lay teachers on the staff and teacher salaries climbed to almost \$14,000. \$1,200 was paid extra clergy, needed to handle all the Masses.

During 1957 and 1958 prices had been rising on all kinds of equipment at an alarming rate. The old school desks were literally on their last legs and Father McCoy arranged for new ones to be installed in the old building, rather than wait until the new school was finished and risk prohibitive prices.

The cornerstone of the new school was laid May 31st, 1959, Most Rev. Leo R. Smith, D.D., officiating. After the school opened September 9, 1959, Sister St. Mark, the Superior, saved the cost of laborers by having the older boys move the benches (desks) into the light, modern classrooms in the new buildings. The auditorium was completed two months later.

The new school had sixteen classrooms, a large cafeteria with fully-equipped kitchen, a library, store-rooms, offices for the nurse and the principal and a combination auditorium gymnasium with stage. This room was equipped with folding chairs with rear kneelers, which were stored under the stage and used to accommodate people for Sunday Masses. An organ and sound equipment were purchased for this purpose, and the stage was set up to serve as an altar area. The 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Masses were celebrated in the church, but an additional 9:30 Mass, as well as the 11 and 12:15 Masses were held in the auditorium.

When completed the total investment for building and equipment was \$642,000. Everyone was delighted with the school, but not with the resultant debt which took ten years to pay off.

The next few years everyone made an extra effort to liquidate the parish debt. The Catholic Daughters pledged \$3,000 for library furnishings and a statue of St. Clare. In 1961 the parish received \$1,000 in a bequest from Mrs. Angeline Barber. Rents from use of the property amounted to \$2,752 and individual donations amounted to \$1,080. Anyone who contributed \$100 or more was to have his name inscribed on a metal plaque in the school vestibule. Other sizeable contributions came from the Home School Association, the Holy Name Society, the Parish Dance Committee and a school Dance Recital.



St. Clara's Academy, called by the parish name in its later years, was razed in July 1960, having served the parish for 55 years. Father McCoy said at the time, "The physical building is gone but the past will spring eternal in the memories of her former students, and in their grateful tribute to those pioneer parishioners whose sacrifice made it possible." (Photo from parish files)



Bishop Burke officiates at the laying of the cornerstone for the new school, as Father McCoy and Mayor Cain look on. (Photo from parish files)





Immaculate Conception School, corner Oakwood Avenue and Park Place, cost \$500,000 for construction and \$50,000 for

equipment. It took until 1969 for the parish to pay off the debt. (Photo from parish files)



Cornerstone laying, May 1959. Left to right: Sr. St. Mark, principal; John Conroy, contractor; Dr. Lyle S. Tillou, Aurora Town Supervisor; J. Forrest Cain, Mayor of East Aurora; Rev. George Koch, pastor of St. Cecilia's, Sheldon; Kevin Kennedy, Diocesan attorney; George Meyer, parish trustee; Most Rev.

Joseph A. Burke, Bishop of Buffalo; John Beecher, benefactor; unidentified; Rev. Alfred A. Hagemajer, Dean of Southern Erie County; Rev. Richard T. Nugent, assistant pastor; Walter Baumgartner, superintendent of schools, East Aurora; Rev. Samuel J. McCoy, pastor; Elwin Pauly, architect. (Photo from parish files)



The first Easter Candy Sale was held in 1959 to purchase books for the library. Parish women did the marking, sorting and packaging, and men took care of deliveries. Orders were taken by school children and some parishioners solicited orders from their fellow workers in plants and offices. Several cooperating beauty shops and retail stores displayed samples of the candy and took orders. Mrs. George Harrington's basement was used to pack 924 orders with a profit of \$1,603.88.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1960 Mrs. Henry Dwyer Norton set up the school library with 1,500 books and several sets of encyclopedias. She and Sister St. Mark, both of whom being trained librarians, worked closely together choosing books that were added as funds were available, primarily from the Catholic Daughters and Easter candy sales. Numerous books were donated and Mrs. Jerome (Arlene) Schmid did the clerical work, typing catalogue cards, with the help of other ladies of the parish.

Catholic Daughters of America, East Aurora Chapter Sewing Circle, Fall 1961. Seated, left to right, are Mrs. Fred Youngers, Mrs. Jay Marshall, Mrs. Ted Becker. Standing, same order, Mrs. Edward Marx, Mrs. Walter Zale, Mrs. Harry Kelsey, Mrs. Edward Ernst and Miss Mary Juenker. (Clipping from The Orbit, Nov. 29, 1961)



In October, 1961, Father McCoy attempted to liquidate the debt of \$378,000, as the interest was well over \$15,000 a year. With Father Nugent's aid a fund-raising campaign was held on the parish level. There were now 1,150 families, as shown by a census taken about this time. Two hundred seventy-five men worked with a committee of seven and called on every one of the families in the parish. The results were discouraging.

Meantime school expenses almost doubled in two years. There were now 900 children in the parish, 486 of them in the parochial school. Ten lay teachers were needed to assist the six nuns assigned to the parish. Sister Macrina was the newly appointed principal.

In June, 1962, Father McCoy was assigned to St. Bartholomew's in Buffalo and Father Nugent left about the same time. Both Father McCoy and Sister Macrina passed away in Spring 1978 as this history was being compiled. Father Nugent went on to become Monsignor under Bishop McNulty while serving as Diocesan Director of Vocations.

Sister St. Mark, S.S.J., confers with Mrs. Henry Dwyer Norton, parishioner who set up the library over the Summer and Fall of 1960. Both are trained librarians. (Photo from parish files)



Meeting of the Western New York Catholic Librarians' Conference, May 7, 1960, in the new auditorium/gymnasium with a

seating capacity of 600. Later that month the first Sunday Masses were held here to alleviate overcrowding in the church.



Barbara and Joan Norton and Ann and John Schmid gather at the desk in the new library with Sr. St. Mark and Mrs. Jerome

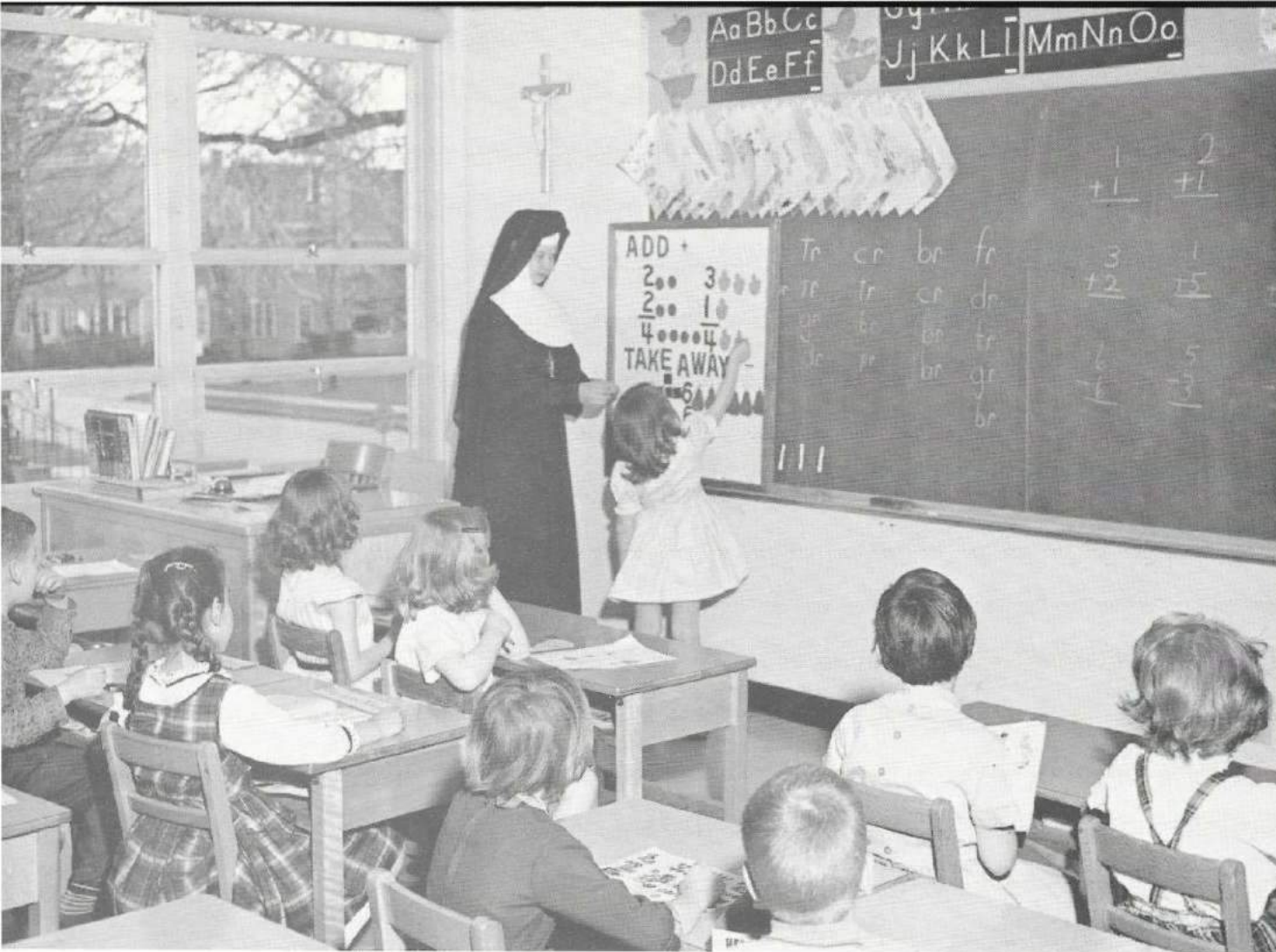
Schmid. Mrs. Schmid typed all the cards for the catalogue of about 1500 volumes. (Photo from parish files)



Mrs. Norton looks on as children work in the new library. The Home School Association (formerly Immaculate Conception Guild) and the Aurora unit of the Catholic Daughters of America

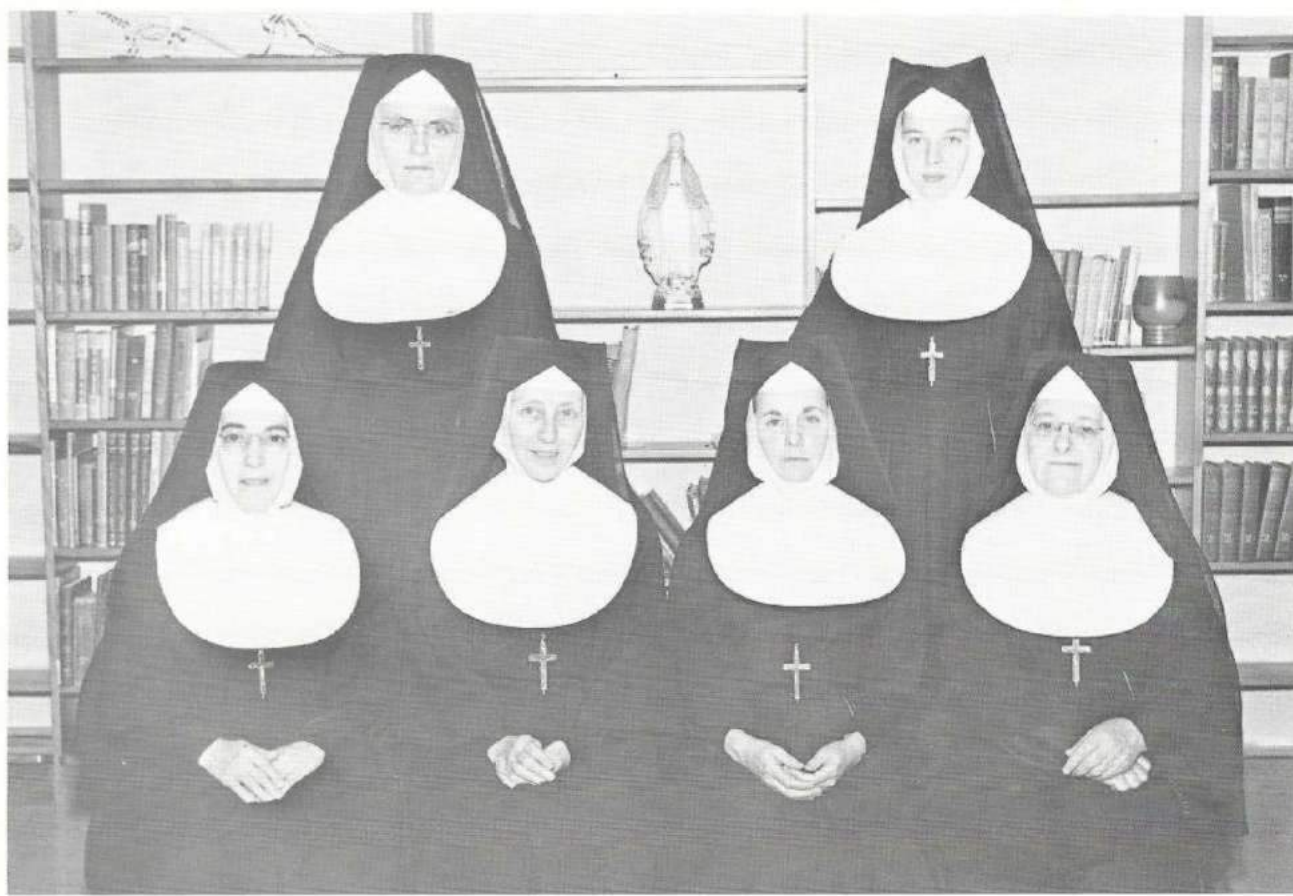
planned many activities to raise money for books to fill the shelves creating one of the best elementary school libraries in the Diocese. (Photo from parish files)





Sister William Anne's class, about 1960. (Photo from parish files)

School faculty, 1962. Seated: Sisters Helen Therese, Aubert, Macrina (principal) and Joseph Marie. Standing: Sisters Columba and William Anne. (Photo from parish files)





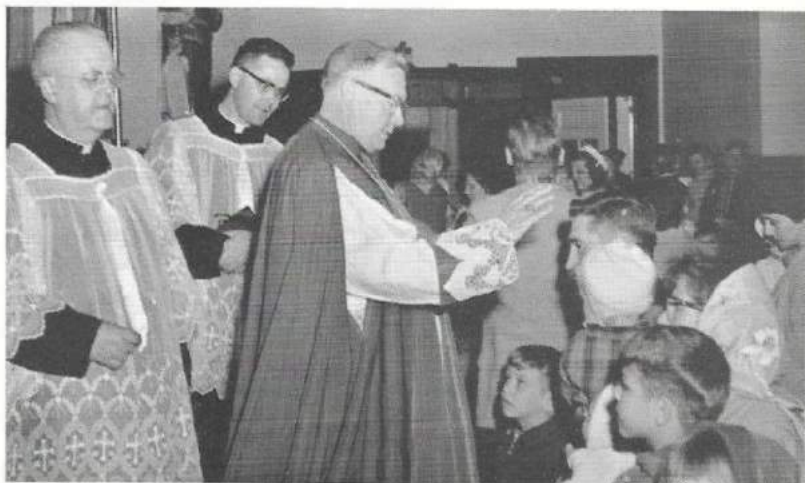


May crowning was an annual affair including a procession of First Communicants, one of whom was chosen to place the wreath of flowers on the statue of Mary. The date and the name of the girl are unknown. Do YOU know?

Nine sets of twins attended Immaculate Conception in 1962. Row 1: the Riscusso, Phelan and Stackowski twins. Row 2: the Guion, Teufel and Northways. Row 3: the Boyer, Lucca and Maurer twins.



Sister Annunciata and First Communion practice, 1960.



Most Rev. Leo R. Smith, D.D., auxiliary Bishop of Buffalo, blesses children in the church. Bishop Smith also blessed and dedicated the new school June 12, 1960.

(Photos from parish files)



Christmas crib set up in the plaza by CYC members directed by Mr. Michael Carini. It won first prize in Diocesan competition in 1960. Cribbs were set up several years in succession in front of church, at the movie theater and in the plaza. There were over 80 members in the local CYC in 1960. (Photo from Michael Carini who appears in the picture)



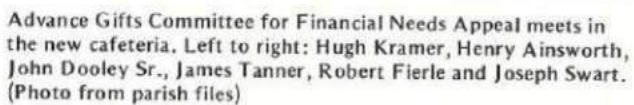
Catholic Youth Council (CYC, later CYO) officers, Fall 1959. Left to right: Steven Buchanan, president; Barbara Brown, secretary; Paul Grew, treasurer. Standing: John Geary, vice-president. (Photo from Michael Carini)



Proclamation of CYC Week being signed by Mayor Forrest Cain in his home, October 1961. Left to right, seated: Father McCoy, Mayor Cain and Father Nugent. Standing: Betty McTarnagajin

(later Sr. Marie, OSF), Mary Findlay, Dave Conley, Vicki Carini, Gail Muldoon, Sharon Ernst, Paul Becker, Mary Dugan, Cele Kingston and Kathy Spahn. (Photo from parish files)







# 1963-1966

## PRECIOUS STONES, WOOD

With the early 60's came Flower Children and "hippies" who turned away from the materialism that characterized much of the American Dream their parents had pursued, and this, along with the drug culture, was instant news around the country via TV.

By the time Father John J. Dempsey came from Attica, New York, to become pastor on June 18, 1962, the Russians had launched the first satellite, Sputnik, and the world was launched on the Space Age. President John F. Kennedy vowed we would have a man on the moon by the end of the decade.

Pope John XXIII had called an ecumenical council in 1959. Already in 1958 efforts had been made to facilitate more active involvement of the people in the Mass: commentators were leading congregational responses in many churches, as well as reading the Epistles.

Now the Pope was calling together a world-wide gathering of Church leaders, the first in a century and the twenty-first in the Church's entire history. It was called the Second Council of the Vatican (Vatican II). Its purpose was aggiornamento, the "updating" of the Church's liturgy and thinking. Bishops came from all over the world for the first session, October 13, 1962. Two days later Buffalo's representative, Bishop Joseph A. Burke, D.D., suffered a heart attack in Rome. He died the following morning and was succeeded by Bishop James A. McNulty of New Jersey.

Locally, the first concern at the time was the debt and the high running expenses of the parish. Father Dempsey asked the women of the parish to serve three dinners a year, one by each age group, so that no one group would be doing all the work. Each dinner brought in about \$1,000.

Tireless volunteers continued to run BINGO weekly on Wednesday nights, to net \$10,000 a year. Other volunteers ran Fall Bazaars and Easter Candy Sales, each bringing in \$1,000 or more. The Catholic Daughters arranged with a local store to get a percentage of all purchases made by society and church members, and this gained \$7,720 for the parish. The Parish Players gave the proceeds of four royalty plays which they produced. The Home School Association began Spring Style Shows, netting \$1,000 or more each. Other organizations gave aid also, including the Holy Name Society, the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), the Legion of Mary, Third Order of St. Francis, Camp Fire Girls, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.

Father Dempsey was very supportive of parish activities. He appeared at virtually all fund-raising events, often staying to help, even to relieving the BINGO

Msgr. John J. Dempsey, pastor through the difficult years of the Sixties, now retired in Sun City, Arizona. (Photo from Judy Boyer)



caller at times. He was very devoted to the Blessed Mother and started the Monday evening Novena Mass.

From 1963 to 1968 the world and the country suffered many shocks. Pope John XXIII, one of the most popular popes in the history of the Church, died early in 1963. He had been nicknamed "good Pope John" by a world that loved him for his kindness, humility and lively sense of humor. He had "opened the windows" of the Church allowing the winds of change to enter when he initiated Vatican II. His encyclicals (addresses to the Church and the world) had stressed the quest for peace and social justice, and he had begun to explore the possibility of unity with the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, was shot and killed that November, and the suspected assassin was gunned down and killed in full view of live television cameras. Lyndon B. Johnson, taking over the reins of government after Kennedy's death, put through much social legislation, aiming for "The Great Society," while gradually increasing America's commitment to fight in a far-off Asian country called Vietnam.

Civil rights workers insisted on equality for Negro citizens, which was not as yet a fact in many places. The Rev. Martin Luther King led many peaceful demonstrations, preaching non-violence by marching without arms and refusing physical confrontation. Senator Robert Kennedy, popularly known as "Bobby," urged reforms to care for the poor and the ill, as he sought the 1968 Democratic nomination for the Presidency. Both King and Kennedy were shot and killed in the first half of '68. Headlines were filled with stories of riots in the cities that Summer, even in Buffalo, as people vented their frustration and despair.

Meantime, Pope Paul VI had seen to it that the remaining three sessions of Vatican II were held, and the Council completed its work in December, 1965. In all,



Mrs. Connie Painter and Sr. Stanislaus confer in the school office about 1962. Mrs. Painter later worked many years in the rectory office also. (Photo from parish files)



sixteen Constitutions and Decrees came out of it, and they were to develop considerably the meaning of the words "Roman Catholic" in the minds of many.

The Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, promulgated on December 4, 1965, brought about the most noticeable change. Before Vatican II, the liturgical celebration of the Church — which includes the Mass and the Sacraments — as well as the official prayer books, had come to reflect the idea that the clergy and hierarchy constituted the "church." For when one popularly thought of the "Catholic Church," a picture of bishops, priests and religious immediately came to mind. As the Church celebrated its liturgy, nearly all public and active roles had been reserved to the clergy. The priest "said" Mass and "administered" the Sacraments, which all others "received."

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and in fact all the Council's documents, strongly suggested that

Children in the schoolyard with Father Dempsey. Note old Beebe-Meyer house which stood on Park Place next to the school. It was removed in the early Seventies and the parking lot expanded accordingly. (Photo from parish files)





the Church is really the totality of the Pilgrim People of God. All are part of the Mystical Body of Christ, and thus all are to take an active and rightful part in the concerns and health of that living organism, the Church. The Constitution further declared that, since the Church is all the people, the congregation ought to take a more active part in the celebration of the liturgy.

It was a difficult time of adjustment for many people, especially for those who had never recognized or questioned their passive part as obedient servants to the Church's hierarchy. Those who were born before the turn of the century remembered that hand-missals had once been outlawed, so that the congregation was left to passive prayers unrelated to the Mass, such as novena devotions and Rosaries, as the priest and altar boys quietly engaged themselves in the sacred action taking place within the sanctuary. There was not even musical participation by the people then, as the language of worship was Latin and Greek, and the sung responses were performed by the organist or choir. The altar boys took the "people's" part.

For at least some of the people who grew up in the 30's and 40's, who were exposed to hand-missals with English translations of the prayers, the transition was much easier; but they, too, were dealing with the issues of authority and participation in a new way.

During 1962-1963, Father James G. Kelly, assistant pastor, helped implement some of the changes which the Pope and Bishops had promulgated. A table-altar was erected to allow the priest to face the congregation, and English was gradually introduced into the Mass, as was hymn singing. An occasional youth Mass was celebrated, with singers accompanied by stringed instruments.

Almost prophetic of the involvement of the laity that was to come, Father Nugent had organized adult servers — the Knights of the Altar — while Father McCoy was still pastor. These men continued to assist at 40-hour devotions, the weekly Novena Mass and benediction, and the five o'clock Mass on Sunday afternoons. Father Dempsey now asked some men to be commentators, to assist in congregational response. George Samuels, Ian Joyce, Don Hayes, Frank Lewandowski and Al Maniak came forward, the latter two as song leaders as well.

Communion railings, which had become symbolic of the division of the Church into its hierarchy and common people, were not being built into new churches, or were removed in several places as the implications of the Liturgy Constitution took hold. The fast before Communion was reduced from overnight to one hour, and weekly Friday abstinence from meat was made voluntary, as were some Lenten fasts. Women began to appear in church hatless as they realized this had been a custom, not a law. The Church was encouraging its members to make mature and voluntary decisions about such matters: for many it was challenging and exciting, while for others it was frightening.

Meantime the Diocese of Buffalo under Bishop

McNulty had embarked on an extensive building project for Diocesan high schools. From 1964 through 1966 an assessment system was utilized, whereby each parish in the Diocese would contribute toward reducing the huge debt so incurred. Immaculate Conception parish was assessed \$117,461, to be paid by special monthly collections, with envelopes. On many occasions the assessment had to be taken from regular collections, for lack of subscriptions.

Similarly, when Diocesan-wide coverage of the Magnificat, the Catholic paper for Western New York, was instituted, parishes were assessed for each family. There was much confusion over whether people paid directly or through the parish, and the system was changed back to individual subscribers.

## 1966-1971

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### HAY OR STRAW

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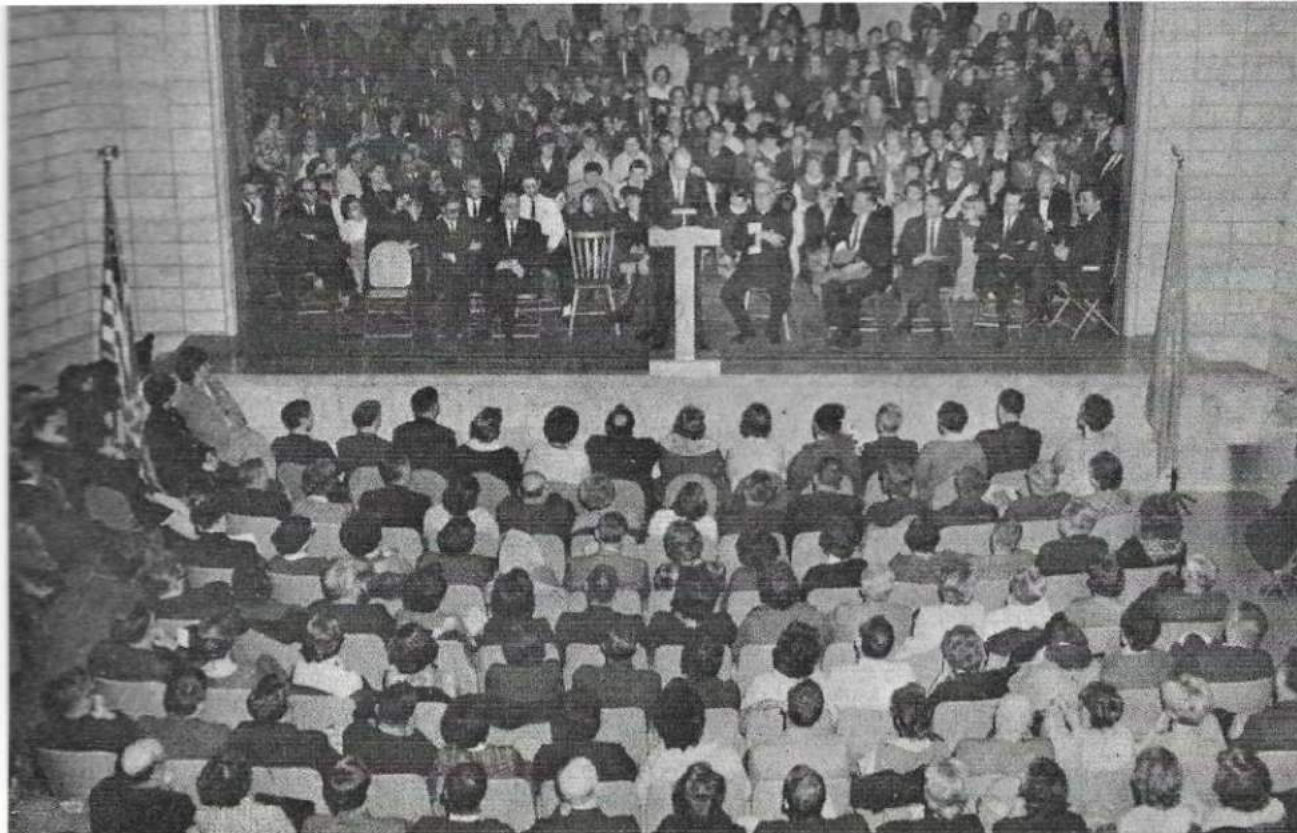
The school was badly vandalized on Halloween, 1966. Ensuing discussions between Father Dempsey and village officials resulted in the calling of a public meeting with the largest turnout recorded to date. Many speakers, including the pastor, related their views on possible solutions to the problem. An article appeared in the East Aurora Advertiser on, of all days, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, containing much of the context of Father Dempsey's talk. He suggested that parents take a more active interest in what their children were doing and exercise better control and firm home training.

With the assassinations in 1968, the young, the poor and the black had lost their leaders. College students who had worked to help the downtrodden and illiterate became disillusioned with working within the system. There were mass demonstrations, campus strikes and building seizures. Young men scheduled to be drafted burned their cards and some left the country to protest being sent to what they considered the illegal "War" in Vietnam. Many other Americans also lost their confidence in working within the system as they condoned police violence at the Democratic Convention that Summer and later at Kent State and Jackson State Colleges.

The women's lib movement was born, as new awareness of rights for the young, the poor and the blacks made it apparent that, in many areas of life, women had not been treated equally, either.

Conformity of any kind was questioned, including the value of good grooming. Martin Luther King's successor wore dungarees on ensuing marches to symbolize his identity with the poor and soon dungarees were worn on virtually all college campuses and eventually by almost all young people. It was conformity of another sort, as boys and girls wore the same kinds





Town meeting in Parkdale School believed to be the largest to date in 1966, was triggered by community concern over vandalism of the Immaculate Conception School. Suggestions ranged from imposing a curfew to creating better recreational programs for young people. (Clipping from East Aurora Advertiser, Dec. 8, 1966)

of clothes and long hair on the boys made it difficult to tell them apart from the girls. Beards were more common by the early Seventies than at any other time in history since the era of Abraham Lincoln.

In addition to the frustration on the national scene in 1968 there was confusion and tension within the Church in regard to the changes which had been made or which were still in the experimental stage. Some people wanted more sweeping and faster reforms, while others wanted to return to the ways of the past. Active participation in public affairs by clergy and religious from the civil rights marches to the war protests had created much controversy. The question of priestly celibacy had been raised as well as that of birth control and use of artificial means of contraception. The many changes in the past few years had led to speculation that there might be a change in the Church's stand on these issues. But in July, 1968, Pope Paul maintained the traditional stand on birth control in his encyclical, "Humanae Vitae" — Latin for "On Human Life."

In the midst of all this turmoil a Parish Council was being formed. The Council's Decree of the Apostolate of the Laity (1965), Chapter V, Section 26, had proposed the formation of diocesan and parish councils "which, through the cooperation of clergy and religious lay people, can assist the apostolic work of the Church both in evangelizing and sanctifying and in charitable, social and other endeavors. Such councils will be helpful to the mutual coordination of various

lay enterprises and organizations without threatening the autonomy and special character of each group."

Present at organizational meetings of the parish council, held in April and May of 1967, were Very Rev. Monsignor John Dempsey, Rev. Fred Conoscenti, Sister M. Marian, Sister M. Donald, Mr. Arthur Archung, Mrs. L. Austin, Mr. Arthur Buchanan, Dr. Donald Hayes, Mrs. Leon Illig, Mr. Jay Marshall, Mrs. Matthew Masterson, Mr. George Meyer, Mrs. Howard Ortnier, Mr. Leland Pfohl, and Mr. Robert Woodward. Temporary chairman was Art Buchanan.

The Constitution and By-laws for the Immaculate Conception Parish Council, first proposed May 26, 1967, stated the purpose simply: "To form a consultative group representing the parishioners, who, by their counsel, will collaborate with the pastor in the government and functions of the parish." The By-laws called for a thirty-member council. This included the pastor and his assistant (Father John Dempsey and Father Frederick Conoscenti), Sister Superior and one other sister (Sisters Miriam and Donald), nine lay appointees, eight representatives of parish organizations and nine elected at large. An election was held in October, 1967, at which Art Buchanan, Don Kingston and Dr. Donald Hayes were elected for three-year terms; Henry Ainsworth, Dr. James Dunn and Hugh Kramer for two years; and Mrs. Hugh Kelly, Michael Gibbons and William Schuch for one year.

The first official meeting of the full Council was held Friday, December 1, 1967, in the school cafeteria. Chairman was Don Hayes; Vice-Chairman, Patrick Brogan; Recording Secretary, Marie (Mrs. Hugh) Kelly; Corresponding Secretary, Leon Illig; and Treasurer, Thomas Meldon.



Five Standing Committees were set up, including Liturgy, led by Bill Schuch, Education, Robert Woodward, Jr., Budget and Finance, Thomas Meldon; Social Action, Ann (Mrs. Daniel) Kluczynski; and Building and Maintenance, Hugh Kramer.

The Home School Association representative was Robert W. Woodward; Rosary and Altar Society, Mrs. J. Paul May; Holy Name Society, Tom Considine; CYO, John Gatro; CFM, Ted Callisto; St. Vincent de Paul Society, Leland Pfohl; and Bishop's Committee, Mrs. William (Tracy) Coyle.

One of the first orders of business to be discussed even before the initial meeting of the new council, was the problem of parking. As many as 350 cars appeared for some Sunday services and the police chief was consulted as to his suggestions to alleviate the traffic jam. Masses were then celebrated at 7, 8:20, 9:45 and 11:00 a.m., and 12:15 and 5:00 p.m.

Heated discussion accompanied the suggestion by the Liturgy Committee of a weekly Folk Mass to be held either in the church or in the auditorium at 9:30 when two Masses ran concurrently. Father Dempsey finally approved a monthly Folk Mass to be held at 8:30 a.m. in the auditorium on CYO Communion Sunday.

In August, 1969, Father Dempsey was elevated to the rank of Monsignor. The investiture took place at St. Joseph's Old Cathedral September 8th and a parish reception was held in the cafeteria the evening of the 11th.

By the end of 1969, the parish was solvent, the school debt having been paid, and a fund started toward a new church. The following year teachers' salaries rose another \$10,000 to \$46,000 and the building fund climbed \$20,000 to \$100,000.

Father Swick came as assistant in 1970 for a short time. He often celebrated 9:30 Mass in the auditorium which was now a weekly Folk Mass led by Al Maniak with several young singers and guitarists. The altar was on the auditorium stage and Father Swick would come down to give his homily in the center aisle. He left because of ill health and was followed for a short time by Father Frank Buffamonti, who took a leave of absence shortly after his arrival. Rev. Robert G. Ochs then became assistant, working with the CCD program and the CYO.

On December 20, 1970, Monsignor Dempsey observed his fortieth anniversary with a special Mass of Thanksgiving at 12:15. A reception was held in the school hall at 4:00 p.m. wherein the school children presented a fine program in his honor.

Around this time, in order to have a unified system of accounting, the fiscal year was changed to August rather than December. So the next financial report was for the period of January 1 to August 31, 1971. It showed total receipts of over \$100,000 and total expenses of almost \$90,000.

Disillusionment and distrust of authority marked the political, social and religious scene in the early Seventies. Disagreements over various public issues

hardened the line between liberals and conservatives. Autumn, 1971, witnessed the Attica Prison Riot and its many violent deaths. The Vietnam conflict continued, and President Nixon's handling of it was questioned, as marchers in Washington, D.C. demanded an end to it at any cost.

Richard Nixon was re-elected President for a second term in November, 1972, amid a strong swing toward conservative government. Shortly afterward, a scandal and criminal charges forced the resignation of the Vice President, Spiro Agnew. By the following Spring, the so-called "Watergate Scandal" dominated the news, with various members of the Administration leaving office. Congressional hearings and a move to impeach the President led to Richard Nixon's historic resignation in August, 1973. The newly-appointed Vice President, Gerald Ford, then became President and pardoned Mr. Nixon.

The country had been through much turmoil as respect for authority reached a low point and people sought ways of making their views known and of influencing decisions. Churches and Synagogues experienced drops in membership and attendance. Public debate on certain issues in the Catholic Church, such as mandatory celibacy for the clergy and birth control, were an embarrassment to Church leaders and marked a new challenge toward their authority.

Numerous priests, religious and seminarians left during these years, their reasons being many and varied. Some felt the Church they knew and loved earlier had changed too much; others felt the updating of the Church had ground to a halt, and that there was no hope for future renewal. For many it was evidently a case of opportunity for fulfillment, or self-expression, in secular life, particularly in the fields of education and social work, which were felt to be challenging and rewarding. The stigma attached to leaving the convent or priesthood was not so strongly felt as it would have been ten years earlier, perhaps because of the climate of change and acceptance which had developed.

## 1972-1973

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### THE WORK OF EACH WILL BE MADE CLEAR. . . .

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Father Ochs assumed his own pastorate in the Summer of 1972 and was succeeded as assistant by Rev. Fred Voorhes, a Buffalonian who had been educated and ordained in Rome. It was natural for a number of people to call the new assistant "Father Fred," given the changing climate of attitudes toward authority and formality.

Father Voorhes, assisted by a few parishioners, worked with the East Aurora Ministerium in 1972 to plan and carry out Key 73, a nationwide movement





Rev. Fred Voorhes, assistant pastor, taught Bible study classes for adults and organized home discussion groups.

designed to bring people closer to Christ in 1973. Paperback copies of Luke and Acts were distributed to homes throughout the Town of Aurora and parts of Elma and Marilla, covering the various parishes. Joint services and other activities contributed to a feeling of good will and brotherhood among the various pastors and parishioners.

Father Voorhes also taught evening classes in Bible study and suggested home discussion groups held monthly using the book, *Renewal of Faith*. At least one home Mass was celebrated, moving the participants deeply as they experienced the warmth of Christian concern and brotherhood.

Around July 6, 1972, a group of volunteers organized by Norma (Mrs. Julian) Fischer assisted by Gloria (Mrs. Leon) Illig, began leading daily recitation of the Rosary in the church. Fortunately the promotion of this idea was aided — some say by the Holy Spirit — by leaflets which arrived around that time from the National Rosary Crusade. Recitation is presently prior to the 9 a.m. Mass except Sundays when it follows the 12:15 Mass.

Bishop James McNulty died on September 4, 1972, after suffering a stroke. He was succeeded by the Most Reverend Edward D. Head, D.D., who had been noted for his work in Catholic Charities in the New York City area.

About this time, Monsignor Dempsey invited parishioners to attend several open meetings to discuss the possibility of constructing a new church, large enough to accommodate the growing congregation. The cost was estimated to be \$400,000, and was to

include a new rectory and meeting rooms. With rising costs, it was felt there was some urgency to begin as soon as initial funds were available.

However, some opposition developed, including such questions as to the wisdom of building when Mass attendance was down nationwide; others asked whether the young people, a good number of whom were leaving the Church, would be able to carry the future burden of retiring the debts. However, still others argued that the School auditorium was not a conducive place for worship, and that a beautiful building would draw together the efforts and interests of the parishioners and bring back many who had left. Many wanted to keep and enlarge the old church, rather than risk a modern design that was unsuitable. The matter was shelved for the time being.

February 18, 1973 a farewell party was held in the school cafeteria to honor Monsignor Dempsey as he left to become pastor of Most Holy Redeemer Church in Buffalo. \$100,000 had been accumulated in a building fund during his pastorate.

## 1973

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### THE DAY WILL DISCLOSE IT.

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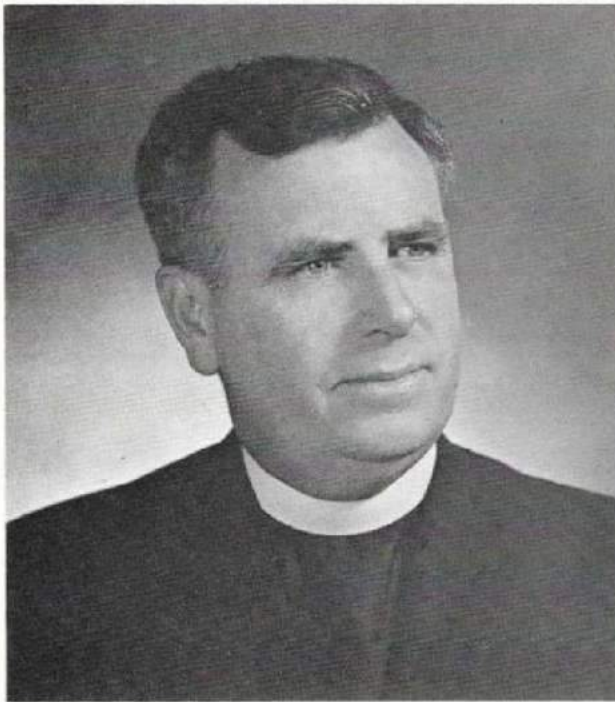
On March 4, 1973, Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan was welcomed as the new pastor. At this time there were many active parish societies and activities, including the Parish Council, Home School Association, Holy Name Society, St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Bishop's Committee Discussion Group, CYO, Boy Scout Troop 599 and Brownie Troop 660. BINGO continued to be held weekly in the cafeteria, and a Parish Dance and 300 Club were organized by the Home School Association.

Several changes were made. A new hymnal, *The Peoples Mass Book* with a supplement of folk music, replaced the leaflet missalettes. Separate books had been prepared for the Folk Mass. Father Sullivan hired a new, full-time parish secretary, Helen Woodson, as well as a part-time Coordinator of CCD.

Mrs. Connie Painter, the retiring office secretary, had worked in the school office and then in the rectory for many years. Besides her clerical duties she aided the assistant pastor in administration of the CCD program. By 1972 the program of weekly classes on Sunday mornings and released-time Monday afternoons had become cumbersome and both Father Ochs and his successor, Father Fred, attempted to coordinate the classes' content with the school religious program. Sally (Mrs. Owen) Mangan first worked part-time to coordinate grade levels, materials and class content.

In June, 1973, 38 members of the parish graduated from Catholic high schools, a significant number, considering that the nearest school is over ten miles away.





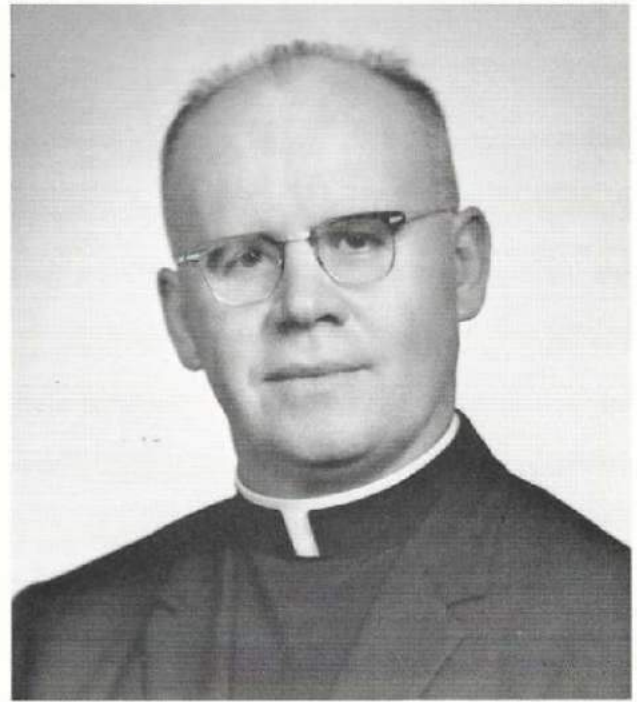
Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan, present pastor, is a native of South Buffalo with a fine tenor singing voice and a repertoire that ranges from Gregorian chant to folk music, American Western to old Irish tunes. Ordained in 1944 at Christ the King Seminary in Olean, he served as assistant at Holy Name parish, Buffalo; St. Paul's, Kenmore; St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Buffalo, before becoming pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary in Wilson. He was pastor of St. Bonaventure in West Seneca prior to his appointment here, and he served many years as chaplain with the N.Y.S. National Guard.

In October, a \$5,000 gift was received from the John Beecher estate, and in November, the annual Thanksgiving collection was taken up by the St. Vincent de Paul Society to benefit the 23 families they assisted throughout the year. A dinner was held in November for Mrs. Walter (Sue) Zale who had served as parish organist over 23 years, from Father James Sullivan to Father Arthur Sullivan. She was succeeded by Miss Julie Ciesinski, who was assisted by Jean Foltan in 1974 and by Carol Welch from then until Summer 1978.

The Altar and Rosary Society found it more difficult in recent years to continue the annual Bazaar, so in 1973 Marge May and Gloria Illig chaired it, making it a parish-wide effort. Many men, women and children have donated much time and effort through the years to make the Bazaar a success.

In the Spring of 1974, another Mass was added, so that now one Saturday Mass was celebrated at 4.30 in the afternoon in the auditorium, followed by another at 6:00 p.m. in the Church.

For about ten years, priests from the St. John Vianney Seminary on Knox Road had assisted with our weekend Masses. In June of 1974, the diocesan Seminary was amalgamated with Christ the King Seminary of St. Bonaventure University. The new



Rev. Nicholas Sojat, whose jolly good humor warms the hearts of the congregation weekly. A refugee from Croatia during the reign of Tito, he served on the faculty of St. John Vianney Seminary 14 years and is presently a member of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal residing at Our Lady of Pistrice, Lackawanna.

interdiocesan Seminary is largely staffed by Franciscan priests who continue to serve our parish with their weekend help.

Father Thomas Crane, who had taught at the Seminary and helped this parish for 13 years, left to accept a teaching post at a Seminary in Australia; Rev. Gil Weil took up similar duties at St. Mary's College Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland, after eight years of service here.

Father Nicholas Sojat began to assist at that time, having taught at St. John's Seminary and been a member of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal. His beautiful faith

Mrs. Walter (Sue) Zale, in the choir loft of the old church. She served as organist and choir director for 23 years.





and jolly good humor warm the hearts of the parishioners at the 6:00 p.m. Saturday Masses and Monday evening Novena Masses.

A parish census conducted by Father Voorhes in 1974 revealed that there were 1,200 families in our Church community.

# 1974

## THAT DAY WILL MAKE ITS APPEARANCE WITH FIRE. . .

September 9, 1974, marked the opening of the first Kindergarten class. A Resource Room was added for children with learning problems, and the School gymnasium was opened on Wednesday nights for the use of the parish men. School enrollment was 304 that Fall, the lowest in several years. The lay faculty amounted to thirteen and there were only three Sisters teaching, Sisters Ellen McCarthy, Linda Talbot and Monica Krupinski. Sister Marian Schwenk was principal.

The Financial Statement for the year ending August 31, showed the cost of school salaries, utilities, taxes, insurance and supplies to be \$99,297.51. Clergy salaries amounted to \$5,400, extra clergy help was \$2,555, and the Catholic newspaper, The Magnificat, cost \$2,881.22. In December, a Bazaar raised \$3,236.31.

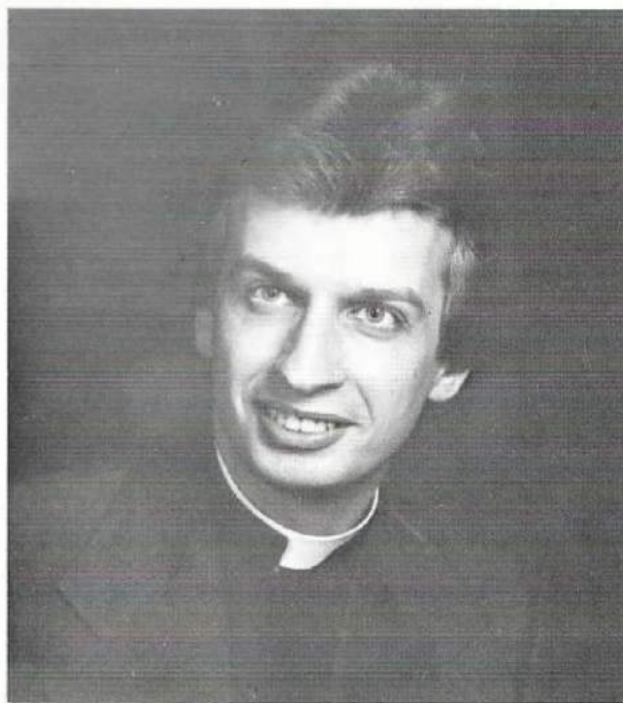
The high cost of the school program had been alleviated somewhat as a result of government programs and Supreme Court decisions. A Court decision on bussing ordered the Districts to supply transportation to the nearest Catholic school. This allowed parishioners' children from Holland, Iroquois and parts of the Springville and Colden districts to be brought to Immaculate Conception at no additional cost to the parents.

The textbook loan law eliminated the need for Catholic school students to purchase their own books, a real problem of finance for some families already burdened by tuition costs.

Title IV-B, a Federal program, released funds for certain library-media materials, which the Resource Room at Immaculate Conception utilizes, along with government-paid teacher aides.

Also available now are a part-time doctor, a nurse, a psychologist and a speech therapist. For a time funds were supplied for record-keeping mandated by the State, but this allotment was declared unconstitutional in a court test.

In October, Father Voorhes was succeeded by Rev. Alfons M. Osiander, a native of the Netherlands, who had studied at the Knox Road Seminary. In addition to parish duties, he has been on the Adjunct Faculty of Christ the King Seminary, where he teaches New Testament Literature.



Rev. Alfons M. Osiander, native of the Netherlands, was ordained at St. John Vianney Seminary (now Christ the King Seminary) on Knox Road and served at St. Agatha's before coming here. His sincerity and intellect drew people of all ages to him.

Sr. Marian Schwenk, S.S.J., principal for nine years. Her calm efficiency and fairness made her well-liked by all. She is presently a religious studies teacher at Mt. St. Joseph Academy and involved in campus ministry there.







Sr. Ellen McCarthy, S.S.J., presently principal of St. John's School in Alden, taught music one year here while supervising an experimental religious action program for the school children. Prior to that she had taught fifth grade and was chairman of the Liturgy Committee.



Sr. Jane Ludwig, S.S.J. served as principal for a short while after Sr. Marian. She is a religious studies teacher and administrative assistant at Mt. St. Joseph Academy.

Sister Ellen had gone to a Liturgy workshop in Indiana the Summer of 1974, updating her knowledge of good parish liturgy. She volunteered to be Chairman of the Liturgy Committee of the Parish Council and invited Monsignor Kowalek to come to the November meeting to talk about good liturgy, particularly in regard to music. Twelve to fifteen people met regularly throughout the Winter, discussing plans to implement new guidelines and make the Liturgy more meaningful. As a start, a penitential service was held in Fall and was well attended.

## 1975

### FIRE WILL TEST THE QUALITY OF EACH MAN'S WORK

The practical effects of the Vatican Council's Liturgy Constitution continued to be noticed, as a new Roman Missal took the place of the older Tridentine Mass Book. A new format of Scripture readings had begun with the issuance of the Lectionary in 1970. The Liturgy Committee made an extensive study of the Roman

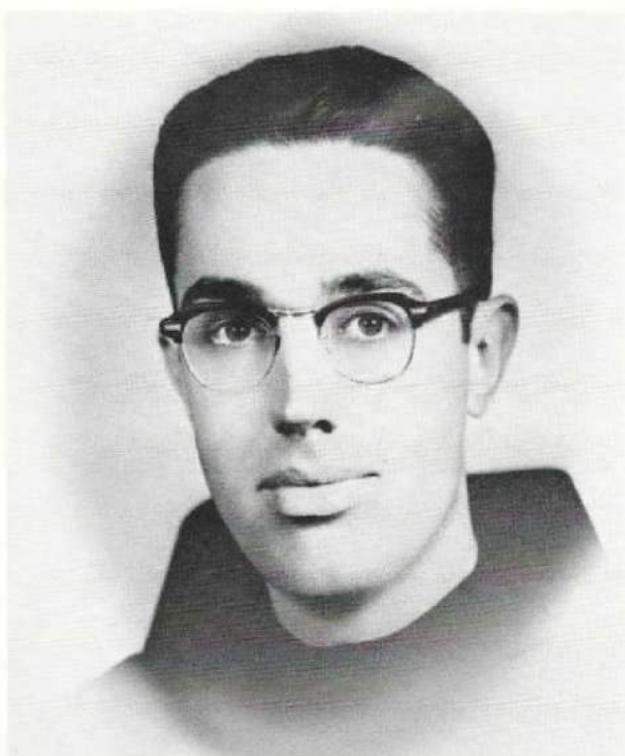
Liturgy, conducted by Father Osiander. Plans were executed for beautifying the auditorium with large seasonal banners. The altar in the auditorium had been on a slightly raised platform along the side wall for a year or more, but the walls were not decorated. Many people had complained that it distracted them in prayer to look at gymnasium walls. In June 1975 huge banners formed a backdrop for the altar and new vestments and altar cloths added to the beauty, all constructed and sewn by men and women of the parish, under the direction of Dolores Merla.

The Committee also initiated plans for Children's Christmas Masses and efforts were made by Mrs. Theresa Hayes as well as the Parish Folk Group, to develop congregational singing.

In the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (1970), women were encouraged to take a public and official part in the Liturgy. Sister Marian Schwenk and Sister Linda Talbot were among the first Eucharistic Ministers in our parish, installed on Palm Sunday, 1975. Other Extraordinary Ministers included Don Kingston, Bill Blum, Jim Kistner, Dick O'Connell and Charlie Streicher. They were assigned to assist at the Communion rite in the weekend Masses.

A Liturgy Festival at the Seminary in the Summer of 1975 covered all phases of liturgy and was well attended by members of the parish. Lectors, eucharistic





During the holidays parishioners look forward to seeing someone with long hair and a beard, who is hardly recognizable from this photograph. The holidays are vacation periods from his duties as assistant director of Humanities and Fine Arts at Fisk University and as chaplain there and at Meharry College, Nashville, Tennessee. His gifts are interesting homilies given during the Masses he celebrates in the church while visiting his parents in East Aurora. Rev. Neil (Daniel) O'Connell, O.F.M.

ministers, ushers and musicians attended the workshops, increasing their enthusiasm to make positive changes in parish liturgy.

Sister Marian Schwenk left that Summer after nine years as principal. Her quiet manner and pleasant efficiency were admired by all. She was succeeded in September, 1975, by Sister Jane Ludwig, who also was Supervisor of school activities in parishes staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

In the Fall a Better World Retreat was conducted by a team of a priest and three sisters. The intense, week-long retreat involved many parishioners, who were helped to discover their strengths and talents in living a community life-style that is Christian.

The number of lectors had grown from a few selected by Father Dempsey to twenty-four. Sister Ellen arranged for Fr. David Lee to come to the auditorium in January of 1976 to give a Lectors' Workshop. In Spring the lectors were installed, including three women.

A new organization of young adults was formed that year called the Catholic Young Adults Club (CYAC). Twenty new families joined the congregation and the Parish Council set up Sunday Coffee Hours to acquaint people after the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

Rev. Vincent Grogan, O.F.M.



Rev. David Sweeney, O.F.M.



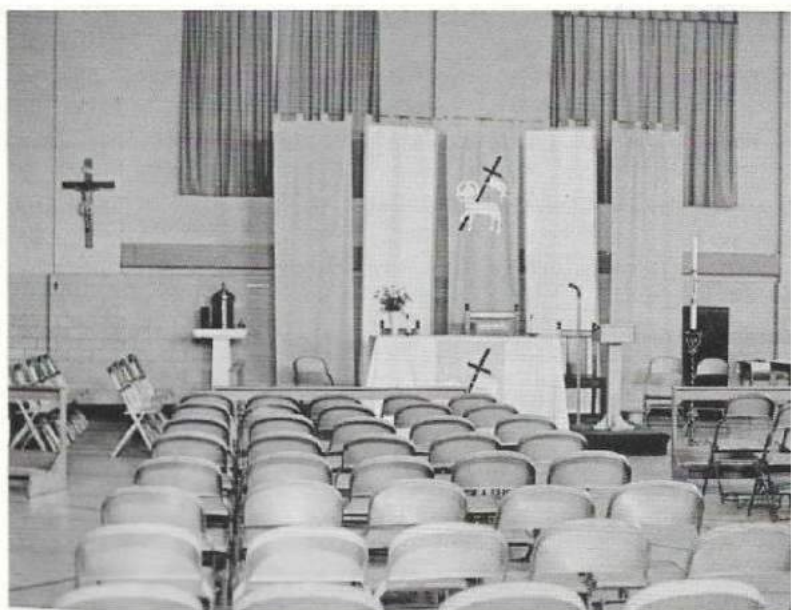
Rev. Gerald Dolan, O.F.M.



Rev. Joseph (Donatus) Doyno, O.F.M.

The faithful four Franciscans, priests from the Seminary who take turns celebrating the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. Sunday Masses, or whenever they are needed to assist the parish priests. Father Sweeney is religious superior of the Franciscan community at the Seminary, as well as professor of church history; Father Grogan is a professor of canon law; Fathers Dolan and Doyno both teach dogmatic theology.

The auditorium was made more suitable for worship when large banners were designed and constructed by parishioners to form a backdrop for the altar and a focal point for the congregation. (Photo by Richard Will)





# 1975-1976

## ARE YOU NOT AWARE

The military involvement in Vietnam had ended, but thousands of refugees needed new homes and care. Consequently, many were airlifted to the States. A diocesan appeal was issued to parishes to sponsor one or more families in their adjustment to life in this country. The Parish Council made plans to sponsor Mr. and Mrs. Le Van Tac and their three children. Parishioners volunteered their homes, furnished clothing and found employment for Mr. Le. Meanwhile, concerned women of the parish helped tutor the family in the English language, in shopping and numerous other activities. Soon another child was born, whose name, Mary Ellen, was chosen to honor the Blessed Mother and the late mother of Father Sullivan, the pastor.

Toward the end of 1975, the St. Vincent de Paul Society continued their very successful Christmas Gift program. Members of the Church showed splendid generosity, as they purchased toys and clothing for underprivileged children in the area. These items were delivered in time for Christmas, along with food baskets, so that over 700 parcels were given.

A Christmas program performed by the parish school children was entitled, "Christmas in the Old World." It was dedicated to the Home School Association, whose volunteer time and money were responsible for many improvements in the school's quality.

Earlier that year, a question had been raised at the Parish Council regarding the possibility of expanding the old church. That building seated 325, necessitating the use of the auditorium for most weekend Masses. Architects and engineers, representing both the Buffalo Diocese and the parish, examined the property and recommended against restructuring a very worn-out wood-frame edifice. High costs of maintenance and insurance compared unfavorably to lesser upkeep of a new church. Bishop Head suggested that the parish explore the feasibility of constructing a new church.

The Council formed a Building Committee to study designs and related problems, while a Fund-Raising Committee, headed by Mr. Ted Podolak, went about planning a financial appeal. The Building Committee was chaired by Mr. Harold Hoffmann.

The architectural firm of Edward Trautman and Associates was hired to draw up plans and specifications, following guide-lines issued by the Buffalo Diocese several years earlier.

The first consideration was cost. It was decided that expenses should be kept within the \$500,000 to \$600,000 range. Secondly the buildings — church and attached living quarters and offices — were to be as maintenance-free as possible. They were to be constructed of durable materials, assuring long usage

of the new facilities. As many of the old church furnishings as possible were to be installed in the modern structure, and the church was planned to be beautifully devotional in character, despite its simplicity.

Among the appointments saved from the beloved old church were the stained-glass windows, Stations of the Cross, the statues of Mary and St. Joseph, the iron gates of the Baptistry, the Tabernacle and the church bell.

The Bicentennial Year of 1976 opened with ongoing discussion about this project. Father Sullivan remarked that for 16 years the more crowded Masses had been held in the auditorium. A whole generation of children had grown up and worshipped in inadequate facilities. The Bulletin of March 14th announced that \$210,000 had been saved in the Building Fund.

An architect's rendering of the proposed new church was posted at the church and auditorium entrances. It was a modern looking structure with a high mansard-style roof, topped by a slim steeple and a cross. The drawing surprised many parishioners. It was to be set on Oakwood Avenue, with a large canopy erected on the east side, shielding worshippers from the elements as they drove beneath.

On April 29th, Father Sullivan called a meeting, asking that at least one member of every family in the parish be present. There had been some argument about the design, and a second drawing was submitted. However, the majority preferred the first rendering.

Beginning May 23rd, volunteers called on families of the parish to secure pledges. By June \$351,591 was promised.

On July 4th, Mr. George Samuels rang the old church bell, joining all the churches of the nation at 2 p.m. in commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

In August, the Sisters moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel Convent, located in Blasdell, N.Y., graciously choosing to let the parish priests remain close to church activities. On August 19th, a public auction was held to dispose of rectory and church furnishings. Two garages were sold and the rectory was offered for sale, but the moving costs were prohibitive to any prospective purchasers.

The last Mass in the old church was celebrated on Sunday, August 22, 1976, 94 years after its inception. A search of microfilmed newspapers revealed an article in the Aurora Advertiser about the laying of the cornerstone November 19, 1882. A special train arrived from Buffalo at 3:30 p.m. with four coaches of "friends," including the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Stephen Vincent Ryan, a Rev. Dr. Holcher of Buffalo and Rev. Dennis M. Reilly (pastor of St. Vincent's, Springbrook, and of the East Aurora congregation) and Rev. W. Ryszewski of Sheldon, the latter two officiating at ensuing ceremonies. Carriages took these gentlemen to the Person House which was a hotel that stood on Main Street across from Church Street (where the



Finance Committee for the new buildings: Frank Zagrobelny, Florence Kiec and Ted Podolak, Fund Drive Chairman.



Building Committee. Seated: W. Bruce Penfold, Louis Lambert, Henry Spahn, Ed O'Neill. Standing: Harold Hoffman, Edward Walek. Not pictured: Donald Sobina, Owen Mangan, Rev. Arthur Sullivan.

theater is now). The welcoming crowd formed a line at the depot under the direction of Jacob Marshall, and with the Cowlesville Cornet Band at the head, marched up Main to the Person House. From there, in company with the Bishop, they countermarched down Main to Chestnut (now Paine Street) to Oakwood to the church grounds.

The foundation had been laid and was covered with a platform for the Bishop and assistants. The Bishop led an opening prayer and gave a dedicatory address that lasted 45 minutes. He spoke of the steady growth of Christianity in this country and remarked that church edifices dedicated to the worship of the ever-living God speak of the intelligence as well as the moral and religious sentiments of the people. This edifice to be erected belongs to God, he said, and is dedicated to His glory for all Christian worship, hence the ground itself is holy and sacred.

The Bishop then laid the cornerstone, sprinkled it with holy water and pronounced benediction, presumably giving the people his blessing. The article goes on to say that the line then marched back to the depot

and dispersed. The erection of the first Roman Catholic Church of East Aurora was to bring the number of church buildings in East Aurora to nine. It was to cost \$5,000. The article boasted that no other village of its size in Western New York had so many churches and so well sustained.

At least part of a mystery was solved by the micro-filmed article as it described the contents of the tin box inside the cornerstone which was opened when the church was demolished in September, 1978. All that was legible among the crumbling bits of aged brown paper was the word or part-word, "Ecclesiastic." The article relates that the papers contained the names of Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States, A. B. Cornell, Governor of New York State, and M.L. Holmes, chief magistrate of the village of East Aurora, along with names and dates associated with the dedication service.

As the church and rectory were demolished, many parishioners were gathered to see the toppling of the old steeple, long an East Aurora landmark. Remarkably, the golden cross atop the steeple was preserved as the tower crashed to the ground. It was put in storage. While it was a tearful moment for all who loved the quaint little country church, still excitement and hopes for the new church lifted everyone's spirits. The demolition contractors explained that the old building had deteriorated considerably, making their work perilous. As the 800-pound bell was hoisted from the tower, one workman felt the structure shuddering and shifting.

By mid-September, all was ready to begin construction. But the plans had not yet been approved by the Building Inspector of the community. As each step of planning had been completed by the Parish Building Committee, it was presented for approval by the Parish Council. Now that an application had been made to the Village of East Aurora, the go-ahead was awaited from the Architectural Review Board. It delayed progress through postponed meetings, and eventually disapproved of the architectural renderings. After several appeals to the Village Zoning Board of Appeals, a variance was granted. The Building-Permit was issued shortly before Thanksgiving.

Masses were celebrated in the school auditorium and in a portion of the cafeteria for a period of 16 months. Funerals took place in local funeral parlors, while weddings were celebrated at the Christ the King Seminary Chapel.

A Variety Show was organized in the Summer of 1976, with rehearsals in the school auditorium. The show was presented for two evenings in the Fall at St. John Vianney Seminary auditorium. Mrs. Mary Evens was director, assisted by Mrs. Jean Foltan, who was music director in the school at the time. The acts ranged from professional performers, through seasoned amateurs who had worked yearly in the village J.C.'s Annual Revue, to rank amateurs, including a seventh grade boys' rendition of *Consider Yourself* from the musical, *Oliver*.

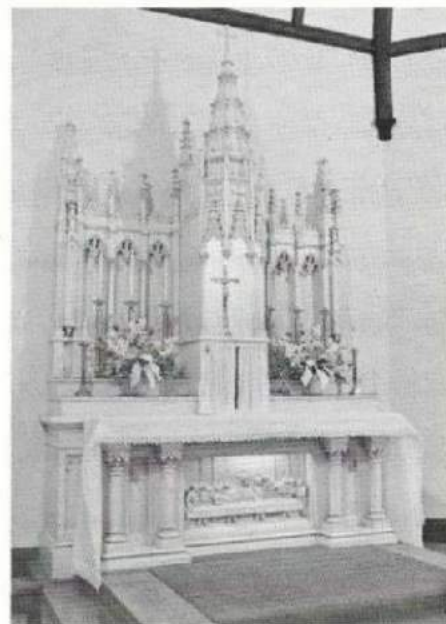




The little white church, built in 1882, enlarged in 1901 to provide more seating and three altars. Cross shown was erected in 1920 by Leonard Ernst after original was struck by lightning.

*When they were few in number, a handful, and strangers there, wandering from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another people . . . he led forth his people with joy; with shouts of joy, his chosen ones.*

Psalm 105: 12, 43



Photos by Richard Will

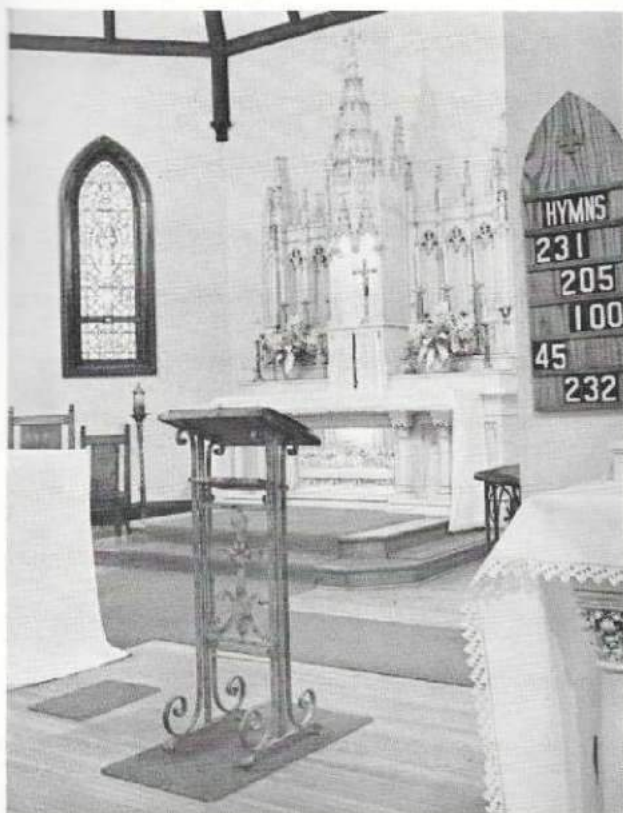


View toward altar area showing Sacred Heart and Blessed Mother statues on the left, and St. Joseph, Infant of Prague and St.

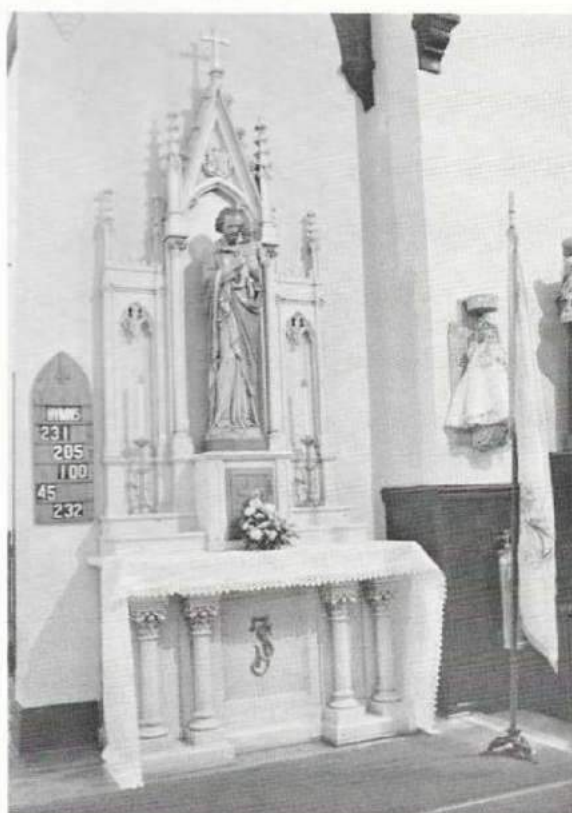
Anthony statues on the right. Note altars in Gothic cathedral style, ceiling beams and chandeliers, all added in renovation in the Forties.



View of sanctuary showing main altar, lectern and hymn board.



St. Joseph altar with papal flag and Infant of Prague statue.



Interior view from altar area, showing windows, stations, terrazzo tile floor and pews added in the Forties. Baptismal area on the

left, and stairway to choir loft on the right were opened to view at that time also.



*Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem like nothing in your eyes? But now, take courage . . . all you people of the land . . . and work! For I am with you, says the Lord of hosts. This is the pact I made with you . . . and my spirit continues in your midst; do not fear!*

Haggai 2: 3, 4, 5



Demolition of the church, September 1976







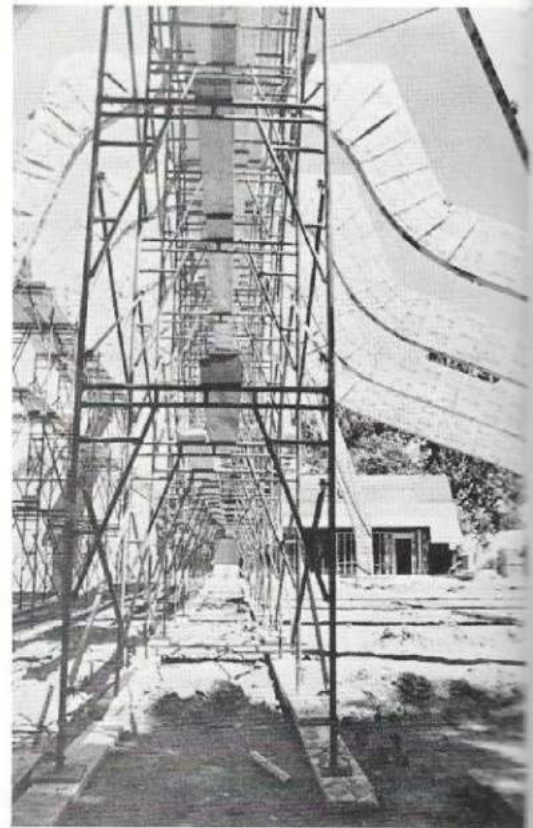
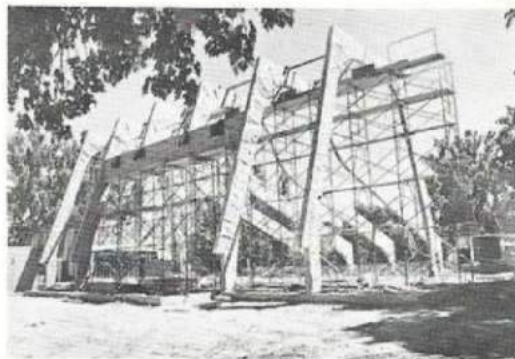
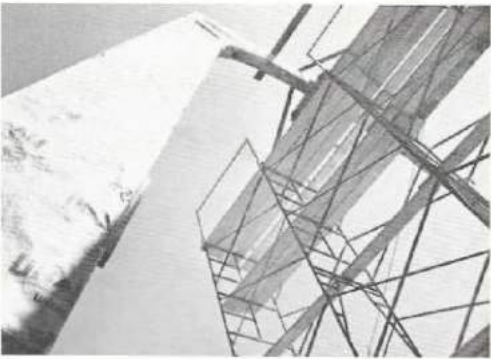
Photos by Neil Ellson



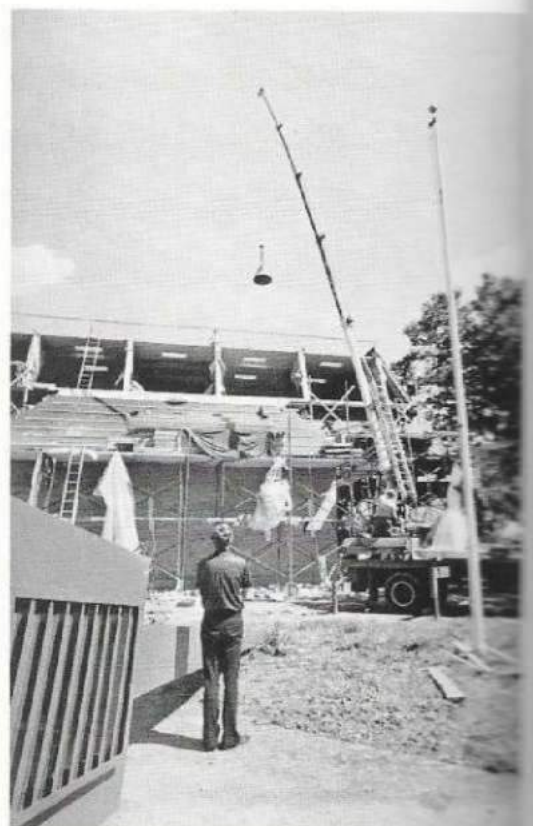
*I will not enter the house I live in,  
nor lie on the couch where I sleep;  
I will give my eyes no sleep  
my eyelids no rest,  
Till I find a place for the Lord,  
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.*

Psalm 132: 3, 4, 5

Spring 1977, first beam in place . . .



August 25, 1977 . . .



Bell, inscribed with the names of the donors "in honor of St. Elizabeth and St. Joseph," which was installed in the original church in the Fall of 1901. It was made by a firm in St. Louis, Missouri, and installed in the tower of the new church on St. Louis' feast day in 1977. (Photo by Richard Will)





Father Sullivan confers with architect, Eugene Trautman.



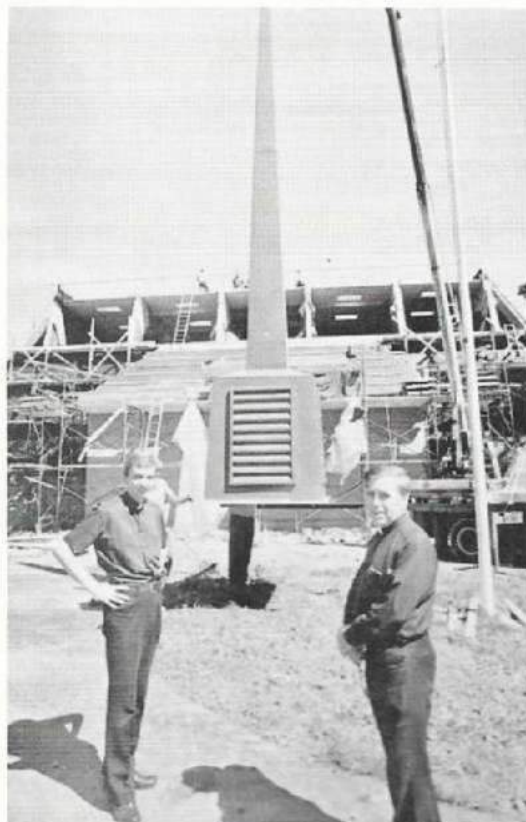
July 1977, brickwork started . . .



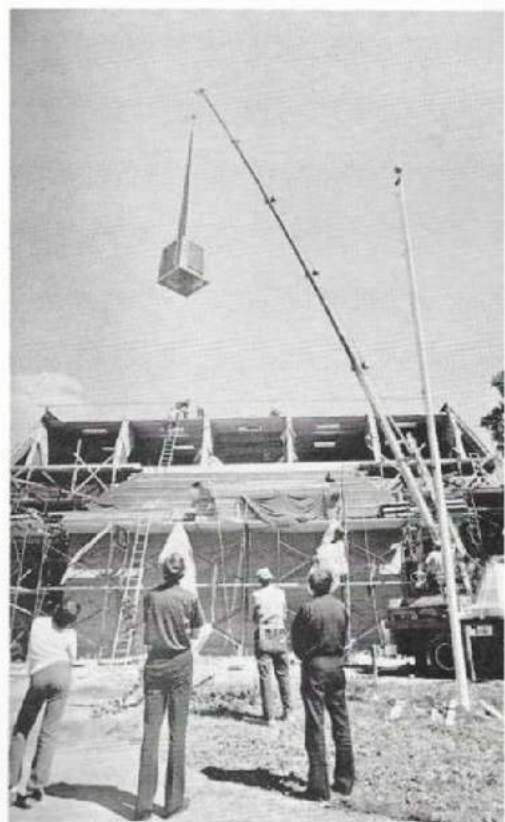
Roof sheathing, south wall . . .



Father Sullivan writes an inscription in the bell tower . . . a message to future generations.



Photos by Richard Will





Fall 1977, floor tile being installed . . .

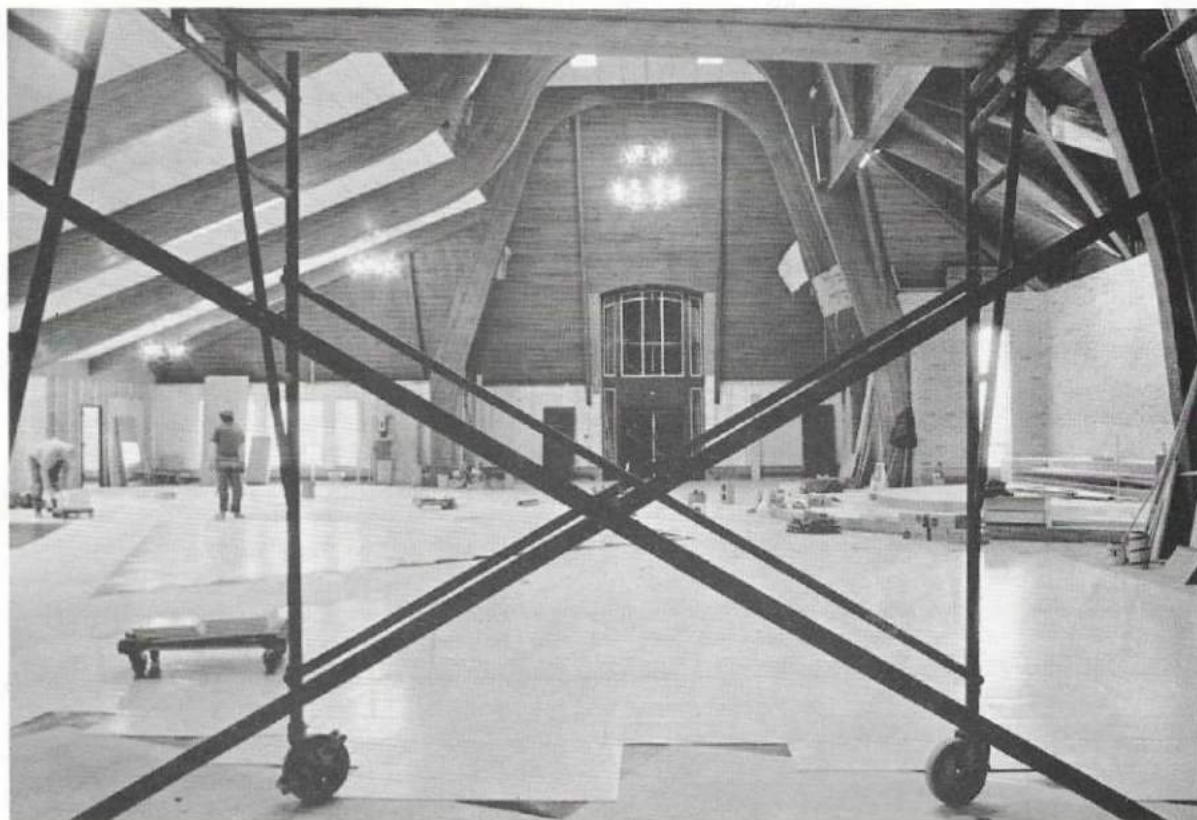


Photo by Richard Will

December 1977 . . .



Photo by Bernard Filozof



Photo by Bernard Filozof



Photo by Bernard Filozof



# 1977

## THAT YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD

1977 opened with snow, snow and more snow. On Friday, January 28th, the Big Blizzard began. High winds blew blinding snow until visibility was nil, and drifts ranged from five to fifteen feet or more. East Aurora was isolated as local roads were closed. People were stranded, cars buried, and snowmobiles were at times the only means to provide emergency transportation.

Work on the new buildings was at a standstill. Rapid progress was not evident until late April when the shape of the rectory appeared and the church foundations were poured.

One hundred and ten children made their First Holy Communion in the Spring. Some families chose to celebrate this in the Seminary Chapel, while others preferred to worship at the 8:00 a.m. Mass in our school auditorium. For the first time, a special ceremony was held for handicapped children.

Karen (Mrs. Paul) Synor became the CCD Coordinator in January of 1977, replacing Sister Kathleen Kane, S.S.M.N. The Religious Education Program was continuously expanded, and work was jointly planned by the CCD and parish school. Resources, techniques and events such as the First Communion service merged the talents of adults and children of the entire parish.

St. Joseph's New Cathedral was demolished that year, because of severe structural defects, and diocesan parishes were asked to support the upcoming renovation of the Old St. Joseph's Cathedral. The St. Vincent de Paul Society took up a second collection in July in the parish to help meet unusual needs.

In the past decade, school enrollments had dropped nearly everywhere, and both public and parochial schools were being consolidated and closed. There was talk of closing the West Falls Elementary School, but public outcry kept it open. Catholic schools in Strykersville and Sheldon had been closed because of high costs and low enrollments.

Immaculate Conception School actually increased in population, opening in September, 1977, with 333 pupils, more than at any time since 1973. Five sisters and thirteen lay teachers constituted the Faculty. A developmental learning center (the Resource Room) was attractive to newcomers in the parish, as it was supplied with cassettes, film strips, head phones and other audio-visual aids to education. Mini-courses were introduced during free periods, so that students could pursue special interests. Parishioners, mostly parents of the children, volunteered time to share their talents and give talks which covered a broad range of subjects from French to photography. The Home School Association worked closely with Miss Carmel Besch,

the principal, in developing exciting new learning opportunities. Their yearly donations from money-raising activities pay for many activities and materials. In addition to regular physical education classes, a basketball team competed with other area Catholic schools. Girls from the seventh and eighth grades were cheerleaders. Seminarians from Christ the King Seminary assisted in coaching and gave much of themselves beyond the court and athletic field. Federal funds to aid education had been received yearly for certain subjects and services mandated by the state. Still, the financial report for the year ending August 31, 1977, listed expenditures exceeding \$200,000, over two-thirds of which were school-related.

The first Sunday of Advent brought another liturgical change. People were given the choice of taking Communion directly from the priest or eucharistic minister, or in the hand, restoring a practice of the early church. Many opted for the change, while many others did not.

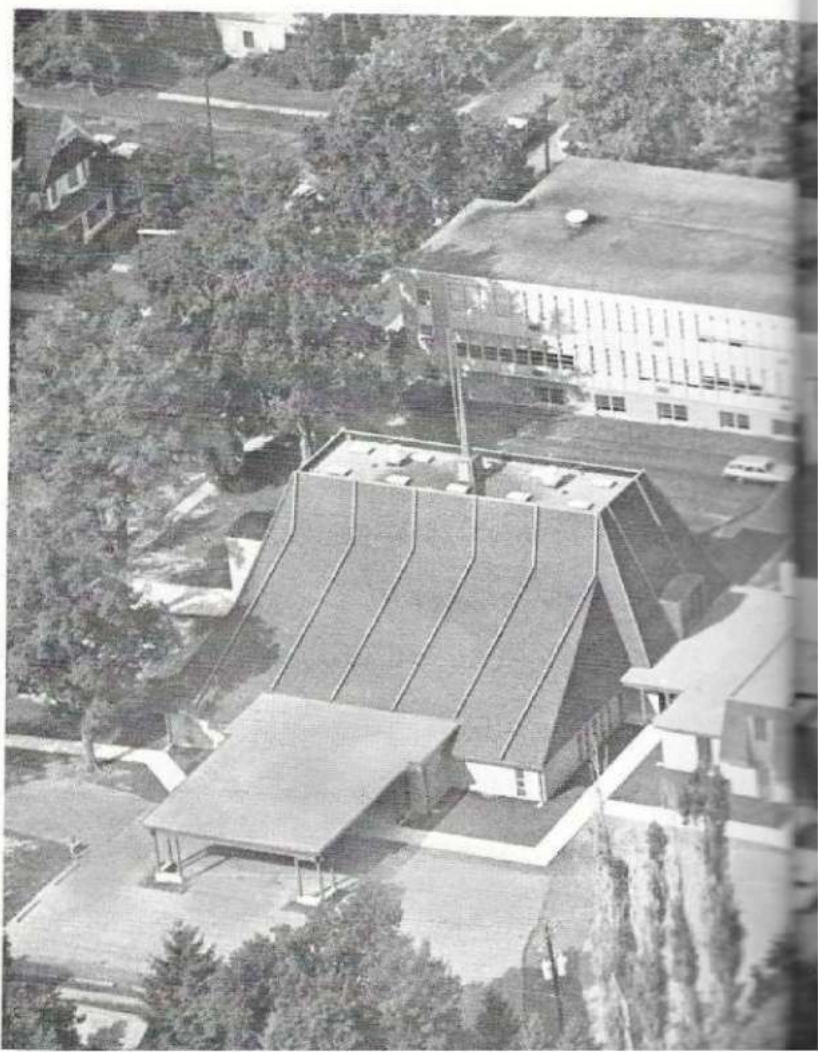
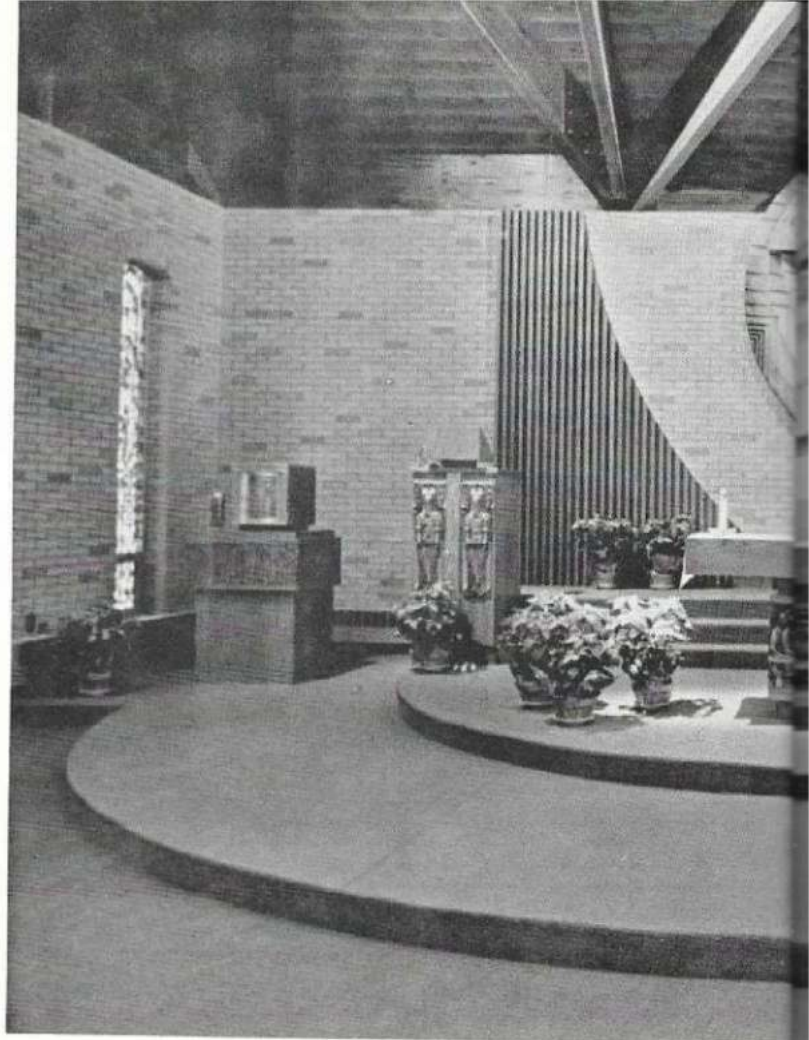
In December the new rectory was sufficiently complete for the priests to move in. The Sisters returned to the convent at 42 Park Place.



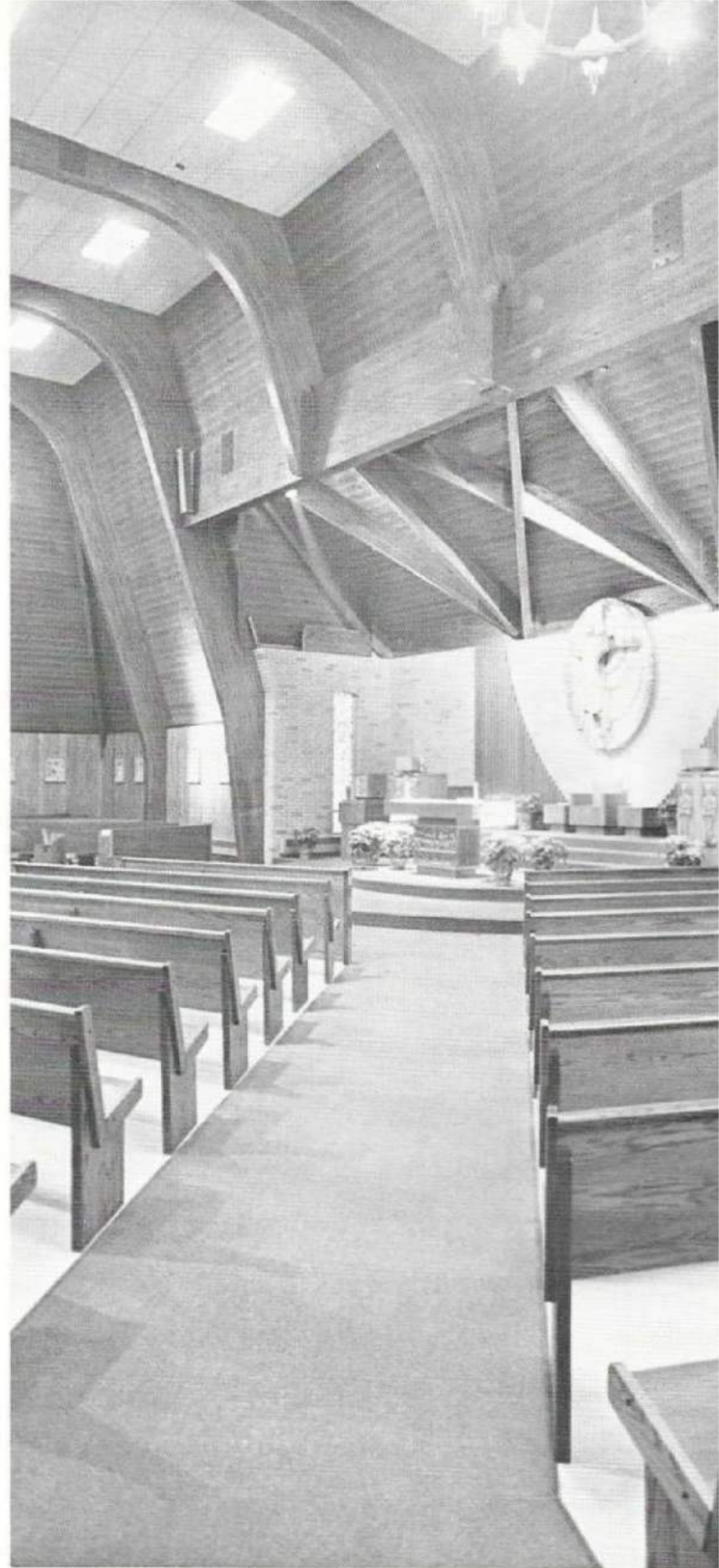
The convent was moved to its present site in Fall 1958 to make room for the new school. A foundation was dug that Winter while the Sisters stayed in another house on the property. (1978 photo from Sr. Monica)

It was hoped to have the new church ready for use by Thanksgiving, but the week before Christmas the pews were not ready for installation. Father Sullivan and men of the parish prevailed upon the contractor to ready the building for Christmas. Carpenters labored into the late night hours installing seats, though most of them were not anchored to the floor and kneelers were not in place.









Photos by Bernard Filozof and Richard Will

*... I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. Greater will be the future glory of this house than the former ... and in this place I will give peace ...*

Haggai 2: 7, 9



*Let us enter into his dwelling,  
let us worship at his footstool.  
Advance, O Lord, to your resting place . . .  
let your faithful ones shout merrily for joy.*

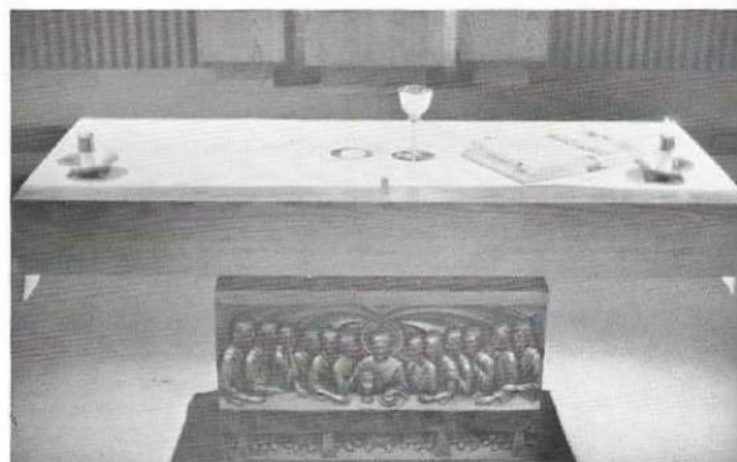
Psalm 132: 7, 8, 9

It was the conviction of the Old Testament that God's earthly dwelling place was the Temple, situated on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Ever since the experience of Jesus Christ, however, his Christian disciples have felt themselves to be the living Temple of the Holy Spirit (see I Cor. 3:9 and I Peter 2:5). Nevertheless, many people regard churches as sacred places, made holy by the faith and prayer of the worshipping Christian congregation. For the Liturgy, the Church's worship, is far more than cultic observances. Through its celebration, the Liturgy recalls the major events of salvation and becomes the meeting-place between God and man. The celebration of the Sacraments joins Christians in the saving power of Jesus Christ.

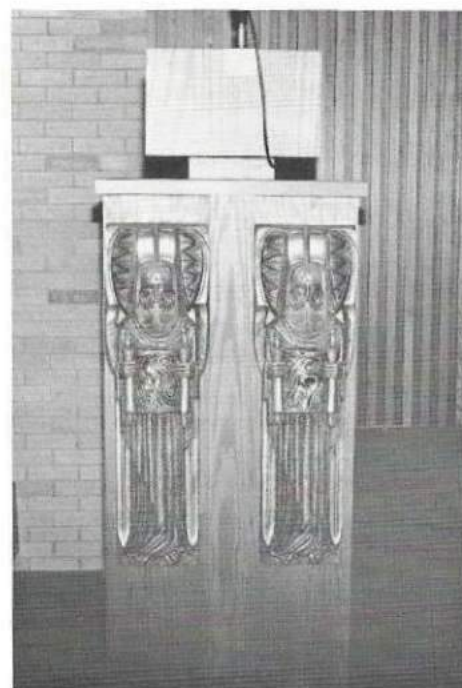
Church architecture has, therefore, a great responsibility. The Church-building must be not merely functional or decorative, but supportive and informative. In a very real sense, the layout and style of the church reflect the purpose of Catholic worship.



**TABERNACLE.** Reservation of the Eucharist began as an early Christian effort to supply the Body of Christ for the sick and those unable to join in the Eucharist. Recognition of the Real Presence led to the worship of the Eucharist, and to its safekeeping in a public place, accessible to adorers. However, the Eucharistic Presence must never be divorced from its primary context, the Mass Liturgy. Therefore the Tabernacle has been placed to the side of the Altar-Table, where its relationship to the Lord's Table is clearly seen.



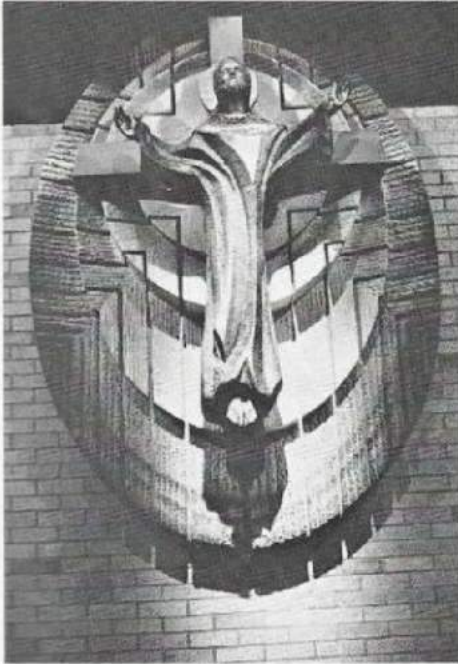
**ALTAR-TABLE.** What immediately draws the attention of the congregation is the centrally-located Altar-Table. There must be only one prominent place for the celebration of the Eucharist, "which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life" (Lumen Gentium, No. 11). Older stone churches often have decorative side altars, whose historical and devotional value often prohibit their alteration or removal. Nevertheless, in every church the one Altar-Table must be distinguished as the honored place of the Eucharistic Celebration.



**AMBO/LECTERN.** The figures adorning the lecterns are symbols of the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, whose writing constitute the Gospel. The artistic style is reminiscent of the Biblical world, with each figure supporting a scroll featuring the traditional symbol of one of the Evangelists.

The Ambo, on the left as the congregation faces the altar, is set aside for the proclamation of God's Word in the Holy Scriptures, and for their explanation in the homily. The symbols of St. Matthew, a man, and St. Mark, a lion, appear in the scrolls on the front.





**RESURRECTED CHRIST FIGURE.** The stunning figure of Jesus suspended on the rear wall of the Sanctuary represents the Crucified and Risen Lord. The coloration suggests Jesus' return to the Heavenly Father, and finds its inspiration in the Fourth Gospel: "And now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made." (John 17:5)

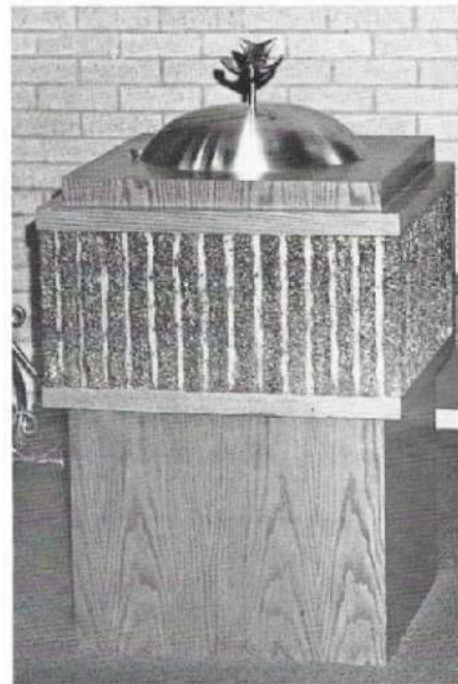


**PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR.** Prior to the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the priest-celebrant had absorbed into his role all the worshipping functions and prayers of the entire congregation. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy restored the prerogatives and roles of the congregation and the various ministries (No. 26). Thus the priest has resumed the responsibility of presiding and leading the worship. In his person he unites the prayer of all, and signifies the fellowship which is the effect of the Eucharist. The location of the Presidential Chair, facing the Assembly, facilitates an understanding of the celebrant's proper ministry.



An ox, representing St. Luke, and an eagle, signifying St. John, are held by the figures of the lectern to the right of the altar. This lectern is to be used for commentary, petitions and announcements.

Note the bells at the base of the lectern. A remnant of the Latin Masses, when the priest faced the altar with back to the people, they were used to alert the people to the sacred moment of consecration. They are still used at times, but are not a necessary part of the service.

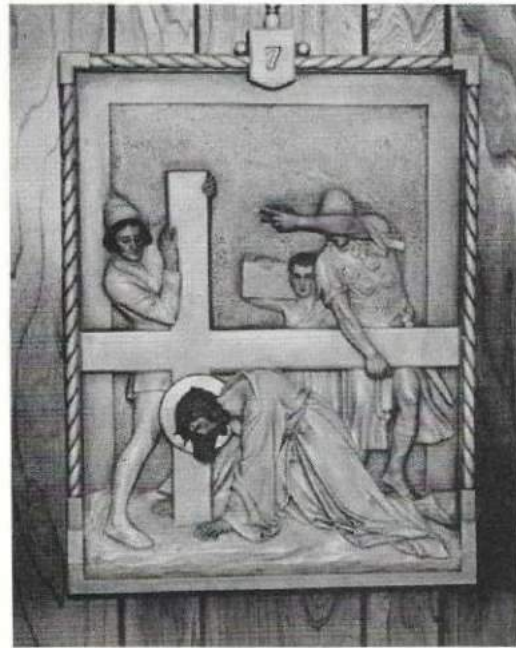


**BAPTISMAL FONT.** Baptism is the first of the so-called "Sacraments of Christian Initiation," which also include Confirmation and the Eucharist. Eucharistic worship represents the fullness of Christian unity and responsibility. It is fitting that the intimate connection of Baptism and the Lord's Supper be manifest by the proximity of the Font to the Altar-Table. Eucharistic celebration is the acme of Catholic liturgy, and that Sacrament's effect can be seen as radiating throughout the other rites.

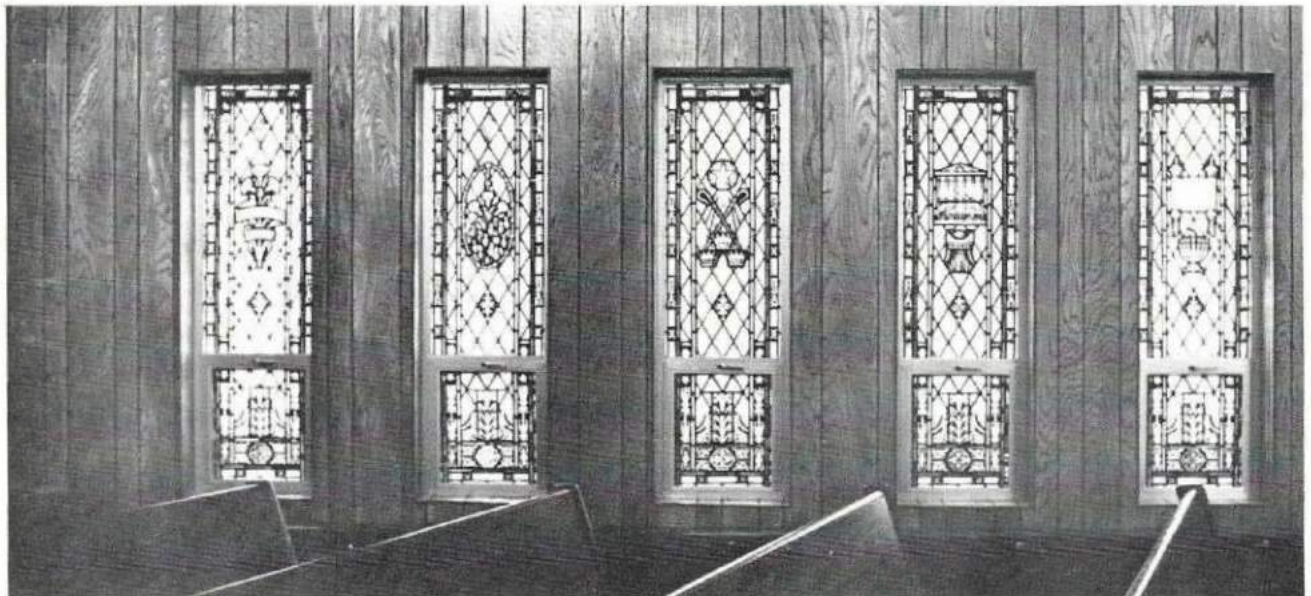




**THE TABLE OF GIFTS.** The procession for the Presentation of the gifts, preceded by the Collection, was restored by Vatican II and is symbolic of community sharing fostered in the earliest days of the Church. St. Paul is known to have appealed to the Christians of the Churches he founded for support of the Church in Jerusalem, demonstrating friendship and concern. The gifts of wine and water and the ciborium containing the hosts are carried by laymen to the celebrant for consecration later in the Mass.



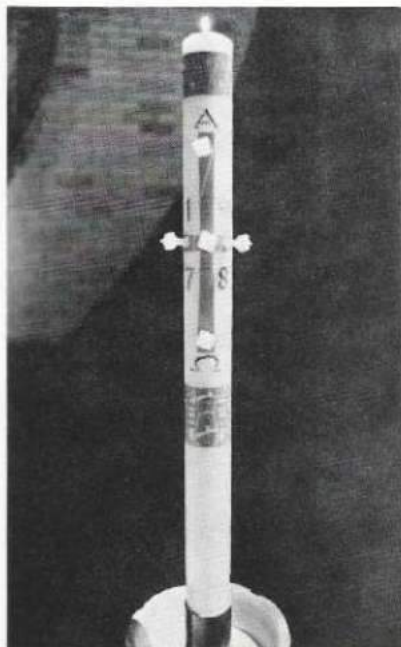
**STATIONS OF THE CROSS.** Pilgrims to Jerusalem have for centuries retraced the Via Dolorosa, or Sorrowful Road, taken by Jesus on his way to Mt. Calvary. St. Alphonsus Liguori, the 18th Century Bishop of Naples, Italy, popularized the fourteen Stations of the Cross, which adorn nearly every Catholic Church today. The Seventh Station, Jesus Falls the Second Time, appears to the left of the altar. The Stations are among many appointments saved from the old church.



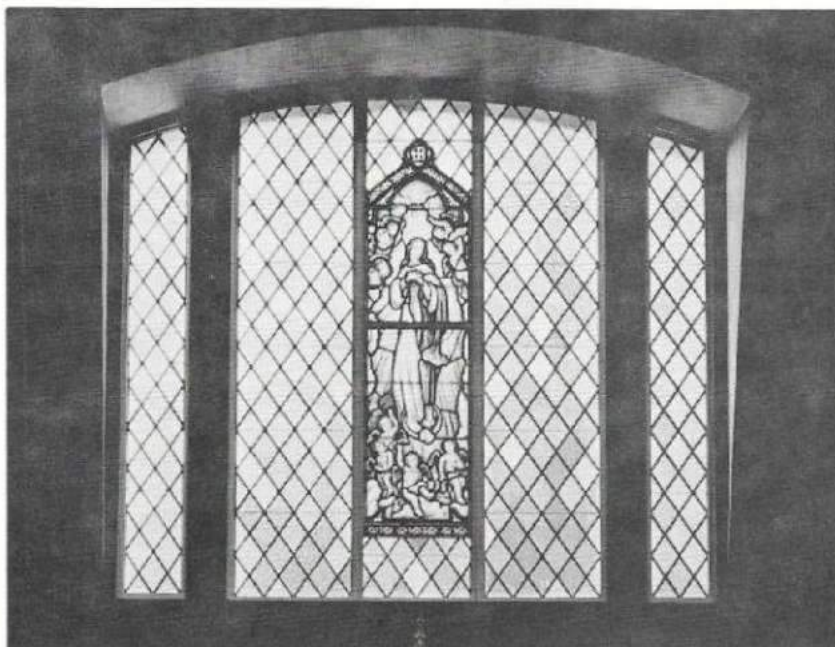
**WINDOWS.** Five windows on the north and south sides of the church commemorate the Joyful and Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary. The term "mystery" is biblical, and refers to the divine plan of our salvation. "For (God) has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, all things in heaven and things on earth." (Ephesians 1:9-10). The Mysteries of the Rosary recall key moments in the saving life of Jesus. The south wall (Oakwood Avenue) contains the Joyful Mysteries: The Annuncia-

tion of Christ's Birth ("Ave, Gratia Plena" means "Hail, Full of Grace"); The Visitation (Mary's visit to Elizabeth, here symbolized with a bouquet of hearts); The Birth of Jesus (featuring the crowns of the Magi, the Star of Bethlehem, and the shepherds' staves); The Presentation of Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple (the figures of the turtledoves, the offering of the poor at the presentation of the first-born to God, and the priestly headpiece recall Jewish worship practice); The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (the scroll suggests the Torah, and the Menorah is the celebrated candlestick of the Temple).





**PASCHAL CANDLE.** Blessed at the Easter Vigil Liturgy, this candle is an ever-present reminder of Christ's nearness as the Risen Lord of the Church. The Paschal Candle is renewed each year, and is lit for those occasions when the issue of life or death is most clear; thus, the Light of Christ shines at every Baptism and Funeral Mass. "Christ (is) that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all mankind." (Exsultet, the Easter Proclamation)



The window depicting the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, located over the north vestibule doorway, is one of 18 stained glass windows saved from the old church.



The Glorious Mysteries include: The Resurrection (symbolized in the victorious Passover Lamb); the Ascension (the fiery chariot, a feature in the ascent of Elijah the prophet to God in II Kings 2:11, is combined with the imagery of Acts 1:9); Pentecost (tongues of fire represented the coming and gifts of God's Spirit on the church); The Assumption of Mary to Heaven

(this scene employs imagery from the Book of Revelation, also applied to the Church: "A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars ..." Rev. 12:1); The Crowning of Mary (the glorious letter M contains within it the sign of the cross, the sign of Jesus).

(Explanation of church furnishings and appointments by Father Osiander. Photos of stained glass windows by Richard Will. All other photos of church appointments by Bernard Filozof.)



# 1977-1978

## AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU?

A muted welcoming bell — the original bell from the old church — sounded as parishioners arrived for Christmas Eve Masses at 7:30 and Midnight. Members of the church expressed their elation and delight with the interior appointments. The entrance was at ground level, and pews fanned out around the Altar Table. The Sanctuary featured a sculpture of the Risen Christ.

On several Sundays following Christmas collections topped the \$5,000 mark, but utility bills escalated dramatically. The fuel bill for one month was almost \$1,700.00. The Winter of 1978 was not as severe as 1977 had been, but there was no January thaw and persistent cold weather continued into April.

By Spring a new sewing circle was formed by Katti (Mrs. James) O'Brien, intended to create items for the Fall Bazaar. Lee (Mrs. Louis) Lambert became Music Coordinator and Choir Director, and a newly formed Choir sang at Holy Week services, accompanied by Miss Ciesinski. Carol (Mrs. John) Welch shared part-time duties as organist, playing for Sunday Masses. A small Choir assisted at the 8:00 a.m. Sunday Mass, coordinated by Mrs. Estella Minderler and accompanied by Miss Debbie Kloiber.

Members of the congregation participated in the East Aurora Ministerium's Lenten program, which consisted of a series of lectures on the Sufferings and Death of Christ in the Gospels. These services were held at the First Church of Christ, and included a presentation by Father Osiander.

Father Sullivan was very pleased with the results in the parish of the 1978 Catholic Charities Drive — "the Drive that never fails." \$43,000 was collected, mostly without home solicitation, a considerable increase over the \$25,000 collected in Spring, 1973, when Father became pastor.

On Friday, April 7th, the parish was privileged to welcome Bishop Edward Head for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The candidates were the first to be prepared over a two-year period, having had classes, retreats and specific apostolic projects to undertake.

The new Sports Program, organized by Mr. and Mrs. Al Miranda and Mr. Don Bach, was an outstanding success all through the year. Various tournaments were held; new uniforms were bought for the boys' and girls' baseball teams; family recreation nights and weekends brought many parents and children to the school auditorium. An end-of-year Sports Night, prepared by Mr. Jesse Fodero, packed the auditorium.

First Communion was celebrated on two consecutive Saturday mornings in May, the change to Saturday allowing for longer services, more guests and



Bishop Head speaks on Confirmation Day 1978. Concelebrants were Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan, pastor, and Msgr. William J. Snyder, pastor of St. George's, West Falls. Note banners made for the occasion, on standards originally made by a parishioner to beautify the auditorium for Masses. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)

a more relaxed atmosphere. Communicants each occupied a pew along with their families and friends.

A Parish Dance, "Night in Blue Hawaii," with buffet dinner was an artistic triumph, chaired by Barb and Bernie Filozof and sponsored by the Home School Association.

*Tall Tom Jefferson*, a historical musical, was an ambitious undertaking under the direction of Sister Ellen McCarthy, music teacher, with the assistance of Mr. Alan Romyak, third grade teacher. Several performances were given, receiving widespread acclaim.



Keith Eckert as "Tall Tom Jefferson" and Richard Kent as his grandson appeared in the Spring musical staged by school-children in 1978. (Photo by Ruth Kent)





"... be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit..." (Photo by Bernard Filozof)

Some graduation exercises took place June 22, 1978 in the new church, following a special Mass which the class had planned. Monsignor William J. Snyder from the neighboring parish of St. George's in West Falls concelebrated the Mass, with the pastor, Rev. Arthur Sullivan, the celebrant and homilist. At this occasion it was announced that Mrs. Logel was retiring after nineteen years as cafeteria manager. She had started when Immaculate Conception School opened.

Hard-working people, guided by the light of faith, has been the common denominator in all that has happened in Immaculate Conception parish. The first society that was mentioned, back in 1892, is the last to be mentioned.

The ladies of the Altar and Rosary Society continue to care for the altar — candles, cloths, flowers and vestments — and have done so since before 1900. Some who have helped more recently, i.e. over the past 20 to 40 years, are Mabel Fischer, Eleanor Kelver, Theresa Kobler and Honey Wagner.

Three teams of women clean the church weekly, also. Many of these same women, along with some men of the parish, assisted with the landscaping in the Spring and Summer of 1978, buying and planting flowers and sod to beautify the church grounds.

The Summer of 1978 found Father Sullivan hard at work, nursing the new lawns, foundation plantings and flowers to healthy growth in record heat, and Father Oslander deeply engrossed in committee meetings planning the upcoming Dedication of the church.

Shortly before publication the Pope died — Sunday, August 6, 1978. Paul VI had come to be known as the "apostle on the move," as he travelled more widely than any of his predecessors, and was the first to fly. He had spoken to the United Nations, pleading for peace in the world, wept at the suffering in India, searched for unity in talks with Anglican leaders, and



Concelebrating priests sit in the foreground as Bishop Head begins to accept the candidates into full participation in the life of the church. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)

initiated the first meetings with Orthodox leaders since their separation from the Roman church. During his historical visit to the United States he celebrated Mass in the Yankee baseball stadium in New York City, which was quickly nicknamed "the sermon on the mound" by a television commentator.

He was succeeded by Albino Cardinal Luciani, the first Pope in modern history to come from the working class and the first to take two names. This was done to honor his immediate predecessors, John XXIII and Paul VI. In the midst of riots for human rights and the threat of nuclear warfare they had worked toward understanding and peaceful arbitration. John Paul was well-received by a world that welcomed his obvious optimism.

Only 34 days after his installation the new Pope died. The Mass of Dedication of the new Immaculate Conception Church was held at 3 p.m. October 15th, its television news coverage blotted out by reports from the Vatican on the ballots for yet another Pope. The following day the conclave of cardinals chose a successor to lead the 700 million Catholics of the world. He, like his predecessor, was from the working class. He had studied for the priesthood in secret under a Communist regime, and had spent his entire career balancing the needs of the faithful with the requirements of a militaristic Marxist government.

Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, was to be the first non-Italian Pope in 455 years. A prudent man with a spirit of holiness and a warm sense of humor, again like his predecessor he chose a simple ceremony of installation in which a woolen pallium was placed around his neck, symbolic of his new position as patriarch of the Western world.

John Paul I had brought hope to the world by reaching out to others. John Paul II spoke in 11 languages at his installation, emphasizing that the Church is universal



and men should not be afraid to "open wide the doors for Christ."

The delegation from Buffalo to the ceremonies in Rome was the largest from the United States, undoubtedly reflecting the percentage of Polish people in Western New York, but also the warmth and charisma of his personality. They were privileged to be greeted by him after the ceremony and in an audience later, at that time renewing acquaintances that had been made in visits to the area while he was a cardinal. In 1969 he had toured the facilities of St. John Vianney Seminary on Knox Road, meeting faculty and students in the refectory at that time.

Religious education coordinator Karen Synor discusses the day's plans with volunteer teachers as students look on. The CCD program includes evening classes Tuesdays and Thursdays for high school students and Saturday morning classes for the grades. Sunday morning pre-school classes are coordinated by Jane Snyder. (Photo by Richard Will)



More than anything else it was the love and concern for all people demonstrated by John Paul II which permeated the papacy as the year 1978 drew to a close, giving hope to a troubled world that the faith is alive and God is with us.

This history has been more than just a chronicle of events. It has been the story of people — the people of God as they carried the light of faith into the world around them. It has attempted to trace that light, like the path of the sun, from its dawning in the lives of the early settlers, through the clouds of myriad problems, to the rainbow of lay involvement in parish ministry that is the Roman Catholic Church of 1978.

Children raise their hands to respond as Rosemary Will teaches religious education (CCD). Dozens of volunteer men and women are joined by the Sisters in residence to provide Catholic education to pupils of the public schools. (Photo by Richard Will)



Parishioner Donald Kingston, second from left, was recipient of St. Joseph the Worker Award, May 6, 1978 for outstanding service in parish activities. (Photo by Harasty)



Dedication Committee. Seated (L-R): Sr. Monica Krupinski, Invitations; Father Osiander, Chairman; Judy Pastore, Reception; Leonore Lambert, Liturgy. Standing (L-R): Anthony Rozak, Layout and Design; James Tanner, Open House; Donald Kingston; Louis Lambert, Historical Brochure; Bernard Filozof, Publicity. Not pictured: Mike Devine and Estella Minderler, Historian. (Photo by Al Miranda)



# October 15, 1978

This account of the rebuilding and rededication of the temple of Jerusalem reminds us of our roots in Jewish tradition as it recalls the origin of the feast of Channukah (Hannukah), the Festival of Lights:

*And they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former. And they built up the holy places, and the things that were within the temple, and they sanctified the temple and the courts. And they made new holy vessels, and brought in the candlestick, and the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. And they put incense upon the altar, and lighted up the lamps that were upon the candlestick, and they gave light in the temple. And they set the loaves upon the table, and hung up the veils, and finished all the works that they had begun to make. And they*

*arose before the morning . . . And they offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of holocausts which they had made . . . in the same way was it dedicated anew with canticles, the harps, and lutes, and cymbals. And all the people fell upon their faces, and adored, and blessed up to heaven, him that had prospered them. And they kept the dedication of the altar eight days, and they offered holocausts with joy, and sacrifices of salvation, and of praise. And they adorned the front of the temple with crowns of gold and escutcheons, and they renewed the gates, and the chambers, and hanged doors upon them. And there was exceeding great joy among the people . . . And Judas, and his brethren, and all the church of Israel decreed, that the day of the dedication of the altar should be kept in its season from year to year for eight days . . . with joy and gladness.*

I Maccabees 4: 47-59



Photo by Richard Will





Photo by Bernard Filozof

The dedication of the new Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church took place Sunday, October 15, 1978, at 3 p.m. within a special Mass of Dedication. Bishop Edward D. Head officiated, assisted by pastor, Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan, and assistant, Rev. Alfons M. Osiander.

A trumpet solo, played by parishioner Terence Reidy, intoned the opening phrase of "Praise to the Lord" which the congregation sang as the procession entered the church with an honor guard of Knights of Columbus.

Leading the procession was adult acolyte, Edward Walek, who carried the processional cross made for the occasion by parishioner, William Murphy. Mr. Walek was flanked by candlebearers Peter and Michael Filozof, followed by altar boys James Tanner and Dale George bearing the holy water dispenser and incense thurifer. Lectors Harold Hoffmann and George Samuels, the former carrying the Holy Scriptures, were followed by eighteen concelebrating priests. Immediately preceding the Bishop was the pastor, the assistant, and the Bishop's Secretary, Rev. Peter Popadick. Altar boys Craig and Drew Walek followed the Bishop, carrying his mitre and crozier.

The choir under the direction of Mrs. Leonore Lambert sang a hymn to Mary just before the Mass began, and the ever-popular "Bless This House" as a Communion meditation. "The Blessing of St. Francis" was sung by the folk group, under the direction of Steven Ingraham, as the Bishop walked around the church, blessing the building and the congregation.

Organist Julie Ciesinski played a processional and recessional and accompanied the choir and congregational singing. The folk group was accompanied by guitarists Anne McGarl, Charlene Tucker and Joseph Marx.

Among the concelebrants were former pastor Rev. Leo J. Glynn; former assistants, Monsignori Richard T. Nugent and Maurice Woulfe and Revs. Leon M. Neu and Aloysius G. Kuntz; former parishioners, Monsignori Paul Juenker and Nelson W. Logal and Rev. Robert Wurtz; Chancellor of the Diocese, Msgr. Donald Trautman;

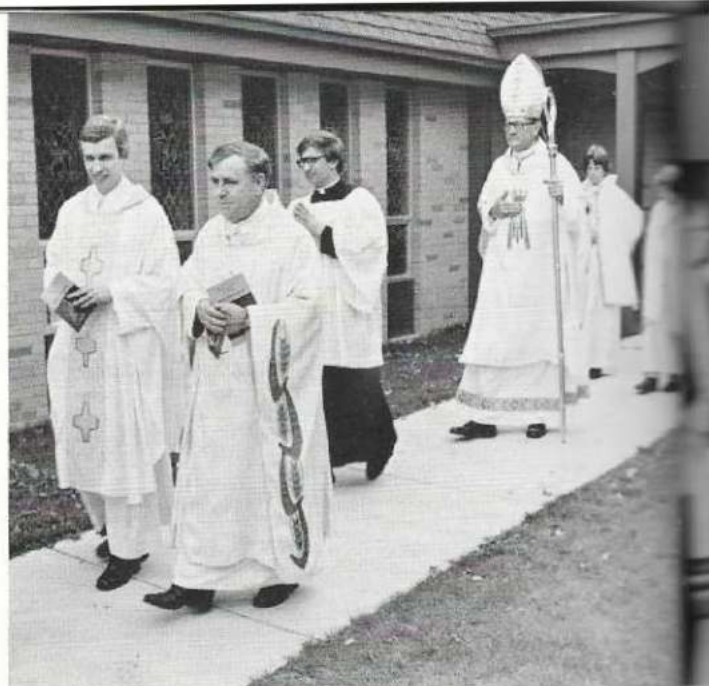


Photo by Richard Will

weekend assistants, Revs. Nicholas Sojat, Lawrence E. Burns and Vincent Grogan, O.F.M., and pastors of neighboring parishes, Msgr. William J. Snyder of St. George's, West Falls, Rev. Patrick Woods of St. Patrick's, Java Center, and Rev. James Dyrek of St. Joseph's, Holland. Also concelebrating were Rev. Frank Gardner, Msgr. Franklin Kelliher, former Director of the Working Boys' Home, and Revs. Theophane Larkin and David Sweeney, O.F.M. from Christ the King Seminary.

The Mass had been planned by the Liturgy Committee of the Parish Council. It had as its theme, "living temples of God" with readings from Isaiah 56: 1, 6, 7; I Corinthians 3: 9-13, 16, 17; and Matthew 5: 23, 24. Congregational singing was encouraged by the choice of familiar hymns, traditional and folk in style. Trumpet and tambourine were used in Psalm 150 sung by the choir and folk group with congregational response of Alleluia.

Cantor Al Maniak called to mind the theme of the Mass as he proclaimed the Alleluia verse, "The Spirit of God dwells in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple." The theme was also carried out in the prayers of the faithful led by Karen Synor, CCD coordinator, the response, "Make us living temples, Lord." Commentator Ted Podalak added to the congregation's understanding of the ceremony with appropriate comments. Presenting the offertory gifts on behalf of the parishioners were Trustee Mr. Robert C. Woodward and his wife.

Father Osiander in his homily noted that the parish boundaries encompass 90 square miles and house people from virtually all walks of life and all parts of the nation. In the past few years we have learned what it takes to build a church building, he said, — the time, the reality of disappointment, the high cost and sacrifice, the beauty of cooperation, of listening to one another, and the reward of a finished project.

Comparing the growth of a building project with the spiritual growth of ourselves as individuals into temples of the Holy Spirit, he remarked that we have freedom to choose materials and style, but they must be chosen, as St. Paul said, wisely and carefully. Progress is often slow,





Photo by Richard Will

but we must be patient and pay attention to detail, adjust to change and face disappointment. In the end there is the reward of a finished project: a soul pleasing to God.

Fr. Osiander presented a framed plaque of the seal of the United States to Fr. Sullivan as a gift to the parishioners, sent on behalf of the Congress by Representative Jack Kemp. He then presented a proclamation to the pastor and congregation from Erie County Executive Edward V. Regan.

Before giving his final blessing the Bishop recounted some of the history of the parish and called on the congregation to live the Gospel of Matthew proclaimed in the dedication Mass. He asked for a spirit of reconciliation, saying "when we have the power to forgive one another, it is then that we have the power to love one another."

A booklet containing the Order of the Mass, hymns and responses was distributed to the congregation of about 700 people. The cover and title page featured computer drawings created by artist, Anthony Rozak, which emphasized the theme of the Mass.

The booklet also contained a statement of rededication of the parish to the Immaculate Conception:

*We rededicate this church building and the holy ground on which it stands to Almighty God, who in His providence and wisdom has sent us Mary, the Immaculate Conception, Mother of His Son, Jesus Christ. We place ourselves under her patronage. Her fulfillment of God's will, receiving His Word in faith; her charity in carrying out her duties and privileges as Mother of God; her prayerful concern and love for all people; her triumphant sharing in the Resurrection of her Son — all constitute an example and an archetype of and to Holy Mother Church and the people of Immaculate Conception parish, East Aurora, New York.*

Present at the dedication Mass and accompanying festivities were many nuns formerly associated with the parish school, and their associates, including former principals Sr. St. Mark, Sr. Jane Ludwig and Sr. Marian



Photo by Richard Will

Schwenk, along with Sr. Kathleen Kane, S.S.M.N., former CCD coordinator, Sr. Madonna Sweet, President of the Community of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Buffalo, and Sr. Marion Zimmer, member of the Sisters' House Council, also attended, as did the three resident teaching nuns, Srs. Linda, Monica, and Ann Therese.

Former teachers present were Sr. Catherine Gallagher, Sr. Martha (formerly Sr. Aubert), Sr. Barbara Stafford (Sr. Marietta), Sr. Mary Raynor (Sr. Dominica) and Srs. Catherine Flury, Mary Carmen, Charlotte Territo, Rita Barrett, Ellen McCarthy, Michelle Beiter, and Sr. Augustine.

Former parishioners who entered the convent and who returned for the dedication were Srs. Frances Klar and Mary Lou Schnitzer, S.S.J., and Sr. Margaret Mary, F.M.S.D.C. (Mary Link).

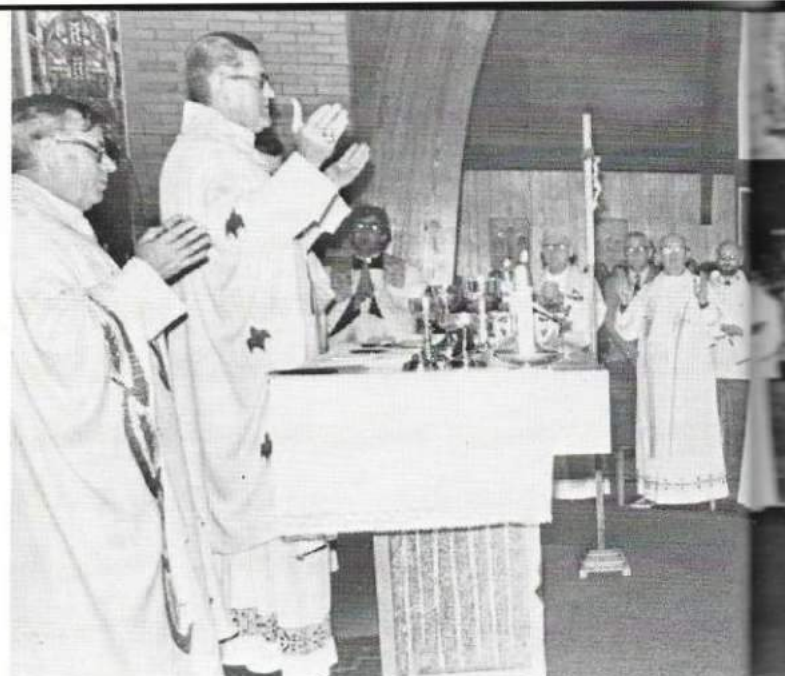
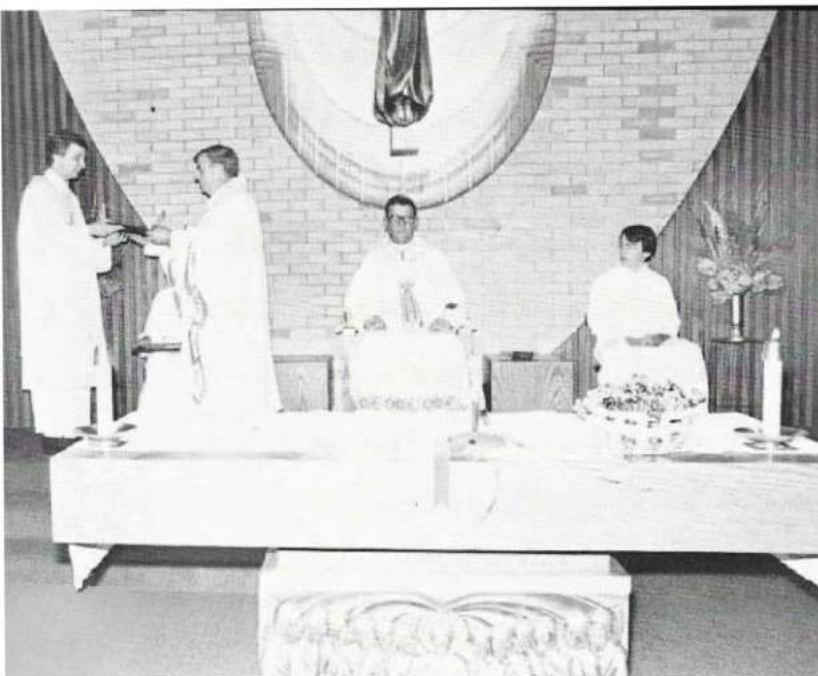
The East Aurora Ministerium was represented by the Rev. John W. Fehringer, pastor of Nativity Lutheran Church; the Rev. and Mrs. Merrill Cadwell of the East Aurora Christian Church; the Rev. and Mrs. Robert A. Jones of Baker Memorial United Methodist Church; and the Rev. and Mrs. William G. Steele of Wesleyan Methodist Church. Mrs. Betty Campbell represented the Presbyterian Church. Rev. and Mrs. Michael Schell, formerly of the Wesleyan Church, also attended.

An open house in the school and church before the Mass brought many community residents to view the facilities. A leaflet prepared by the Open House Committee explained the meaning and background of the various parts and appointments of the church building.

Following the Mass a large reception was held in the school gymnasium at which time many old friendships were rekindled. Parishioners donated most of the food for the reception and all the labor involved in preparation and service.

The Sunday bulletin following the Dedication credited parishioners Jane Murphy and Mabel Fischer and their committee for altar decorations which included arrangements of dried Fall flowers highlighting the





Gospel lectern and the presidential chair. Altar table decorations featured a basket woven of bread holding purple grapes, and a sheaf of wheat, simple but elegant accompaniments to the beauty of the liturgy.

The entire ceremony was video-taped for posterity with Arthur Lester manning the television camera and Merritt Malvern, the sound recording. Movies were taken by William Cantwell and still pictures by Richard Will and Bernard Filozof for the historical booklet and the

parish archives.

A statement by Father Sullivan in the Sunday bulletin on the day of dedication announced that the building was already almost debt free. Father Sullivan said, "In the last five years during a period of increased cost of living, more than \$525,000 has been generously donated by more than 800 families to fulfill a dream of two decades. We thank you most sincerely and will be eternally grateful for your confidence and support."





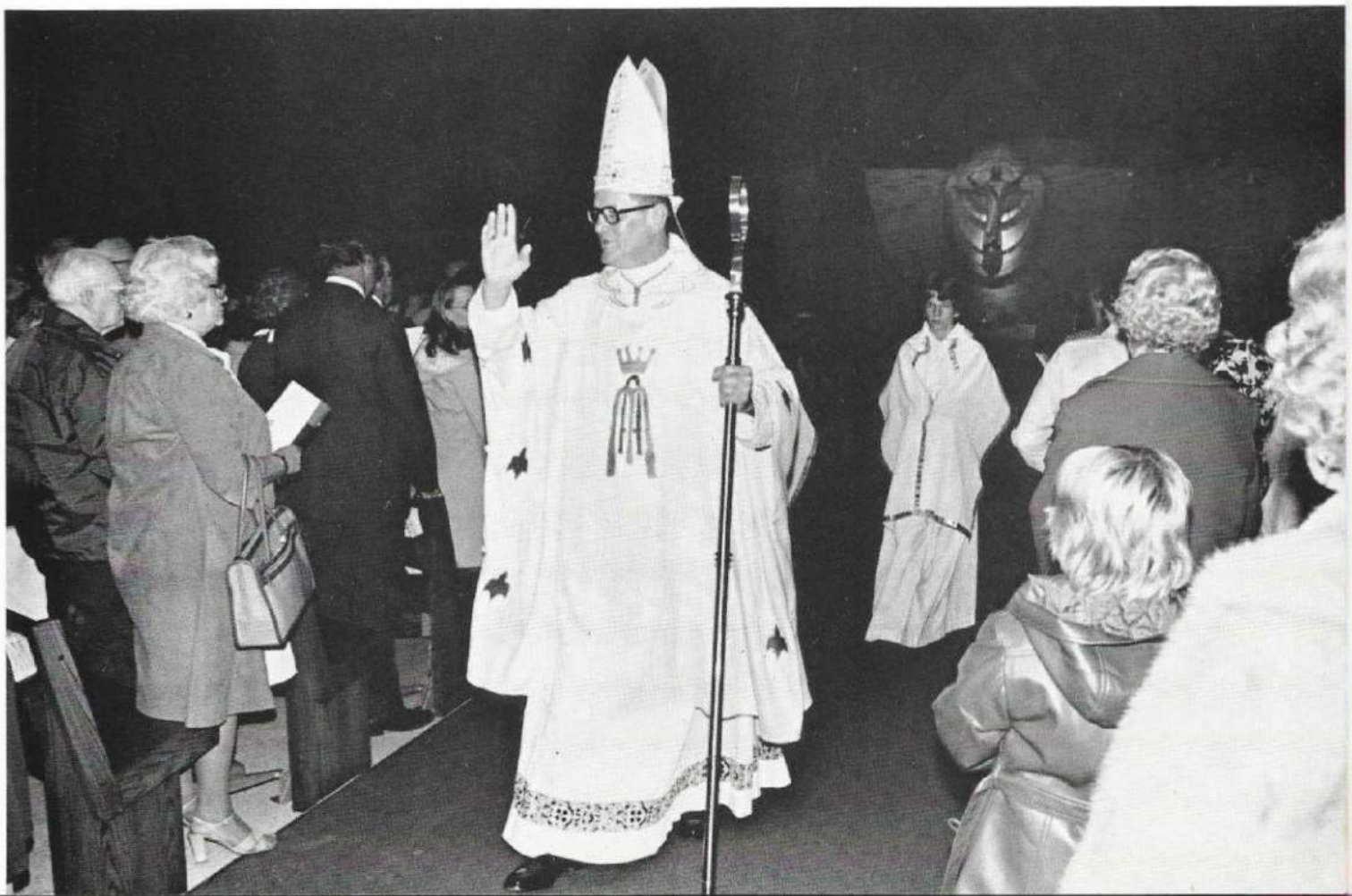


Photos by Bernard Filozof

### SOLOMON'S PRAYER

*Can it indeed be that God dwells among men on earth? If the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain you, how much less this temple that I have built! Look kindly on the prayer and petition of your servant, O Lord, my God, and listen to the cry of supplication which I, your servant, utter before you this day. May your eyes watch night and day over this temple, the place where you have decreed you shall be honored; may you heed the prayer which I, your servant, offer in this place.*

I Kings 8: 27-29





The Chancery  
Diocese of Buffalo  
35 Lincoln Parkway  
Buffalo, New York 14222

(716) 883-1372

October 1, 1978

The Reverend Arthur T. Sullivan  
Immaculate Conception Rectory  
520 Oakwood Avenue  
East Aurora, New York 14052

Dear Father Sullivan:

I wish to extend to you, Father Osiander, the Sisters of St. Joseph and your entire Parish Family my prayerful best wishes and sincere congratulations on the dedication of your parish church of the Immaculate Conception in East Aurora, New York. This beautiful edifice, built for the honor and glory of God and for the worship of God by the Christian community, is the result of planning, cooperation and sacrifice by all members of your parish community. I know that the day of dedication of this church will be a day of great pride and rejoicing for your parish community, as you celebrate together the loving presence of God in your midst.

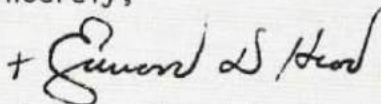
The parish church of the Immaculate Conception will be a visible sign of the presence of God to the community of East Aurora. This church building will remind people of your community of the presence of God and call them to live lives of greater holiness and service. It is within this church building that the people of your parish will experience the healing and saving actions of God, as they celebrate the sacred mysteries. I am confident that within this parish church the people of your parish will grow in faith, hope and charity and experience more deeply the reality of a true Christian community.

I want you to know that I share deeply in the joy and happiness of this occasion in the life of Immaculate Conception Parish. This new church building speaks of the vitality and strength of the Catholic faith in Western New York.

Again, I would ask you to extend my congratulations and best wishes to your entire Parish Family and assure them of a remembrance in my Masses and prayers.

With every kind wish, I am

Sincerely,



Most Rev. Edward D. Head, D.D.  
Bishop of Buffalo





IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH  
520 Oakwood Avenue  
EAST AURORA, NEW YORK 14052

My dear Brothers and Sisters:

St. Peter writes to the Christian Community, "You are living stones, built as an edifice of spirit into a holy priesthood." (1 Peter 2,4) Among the yearly scripture readings, I think this is one of the most beautiful - and especially appropriate for all of us who have recently joined together in sacrifice in the construction of our new church and rectory complex.

Your priests are delighted with the comfort and convenience this new facility offers us as our parish enters into its second century of existence. We use the wonderfulness of Peter's truth, however, to observe that more important than the consecrated brick and mortar, such as have risen on this historical and sacred ground, is the 'living stones' to which he makes reference.

From a small handful of early settlers in our community of East Aurora, the Immaculate Conception parish has grown and prospered into one of over twelve hundred families. It is our hope and prayer that the spiritual growth keeps apace with and surpasses the material and physical, and that its fervor and strength will continue to come from the holy tabernacles of our hearts and souls.

As we offer this gift, at such a special and honored time, to our Almighty Father, His Divine Son, Jesus, under the continuing patronage of His Blessed Mother of the Immaculate Conception, may it be the source of great blessing to you and yours, and the means of salvation in prayerful service and worship for all the Catholic-Christian families of many generations to come.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

*Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan*

The Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan, Pastor



# PARISH STAFF & CURRENT ORGANIZATIONS

*(The laity) . . . make Christ known to others especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity . . . it is their special task . . . to throw light upon (temporal) affairs . . .*

Lumen Gentium Ch. 4, No. 31

Helen Woodson, church office secretary/receptionist. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)



Rosemary Grant, school office secretary, with principal, Miss Carmel Besch. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)



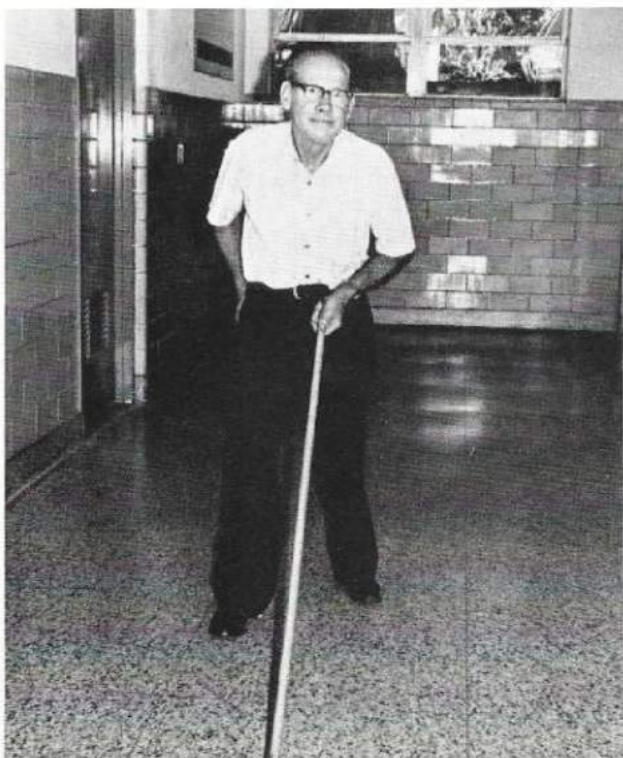
Some of the volunteers who clean the church regularly (L-R): Joan Cantwell, Clara Wagner, Margaret Bauer, Estelle Minderler and Adele Dake. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)



Some of the volunteers who help in the church office: Standing (L-R): Clara Nuwer, Estella Minderler, Norma Fischer. Seated (L-R): Mollie Johnson and Julie McCann. Not pictured: Mildred Cox, Margaret Bauer, Mildred Samuels and Annabelle Raupp. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)



Rick ("Tiny") Gleed volunteers to direct parking on weekends and special occasions. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)



Edwin J. Nuwer, retired florist, custodian, 1978. (Photo by Bernard Filozof)



Cafeteria workers (L-R): Mary Bartus, Sally Ketterer and Carol Buchner, manager. (Photo courtesy E. Aurora Advertiser)

*The church shines forth as a people made one...*

— Lumen Gentium Ch. 1, No. 4



**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL FACULTY** — Front row: Carol Bach, Sr. Monica Krupinski S.S.J., Sr. Linda Talbot S.S.J., Miss Diane Bosinski, Miss Carmel Besch, principal; Mrs. Agnes Hoffman, Mrs. Patricia Bunk; Row 2: Miss Susan Gregg, C. Stephen Ingraham II, Sr. Ann Therese Hedges S.S.J., Mrs. M.J.

McIntyre, Miss Kathleen Karg, Miss Kathleen Collins, Mrs. Maria Lombardo, Miss Deborah Pagenello, Mr. Robert Puchalski, Mrs. Lindy Redmond. Not pictured: Mrs. Irene Schroeder. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**PARISH COUNCIL** — Seated, left to right: Joan Walek, secretary; Bob Woodward, trustee; Rev. Alfons Osiander, assistant pastor; Rev. Arthur Sullivan, pastor; Art Buchanan, trustee; Carol Hummel. Standing: Robert Wagner; Henry Spahn; Karen Synor; W. Bruce Penfold; Sister Monica Krupinski; James D.

Tanner, president; Barbara Filozof; Marcella Siler; George Samuels; Leonore Lambert; Ed Walek. Not pictured: Theresa Hayes; Carmel Besch; Owen Mangan, treasurer; Larry Vogel; Agnes Sullivan; Ed Collins; Florence Klec; Jim Bach; Jim Naber. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



CCD — Seated: Judy Pastore, Barbara Filozof, Karen Synor (Coordinator), Joann Walek, Sr. Monica Krupinski, Margaret Zagrobelny, Jan Wieber. Row 2: Kathy Dark, Margaret Bauer, Jill Hilburger, Rev. Alfons Osiander, Tina Bermingham, Nancy Henkel, Richard Wiesen, Tony Rozak. Row 3: James McKenna,

Eileen McKenna, Edward Walek, James Tanner, Mickey Zaccharini. Missing: Rosemary Will, Helen Norton, Sue Tucker, Margie Kistner, Laurie Pfalzer, Margie Brauhn, Sr. Ann Theresa Hedges, Owen Mangan, Christine Penfold, Mark Costa, Mary Lou Lester, Terry Kaszubowski, Joan Tucker, Jeanne Tucker. (Photo by Oubre)



HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND BOARD:  
Seated: Carol Pfalzer, Dee Curran, Nan Schmitt, Cheryl Cummings, Jane Murphy, Cattie O'Brien; Standing: Bill Curran, Mary Locante, Bernie Filozof, Bernard Pfalzer, Rev. Alfons Osiander, James D. Tanner, Rev. Arthur Sullivan, Jim O'Brien, Larry

Schmitt, Judy Pastore, Paul H. George, Liz George, Al Miranda. Not pictured: Ken Cummings, Jesse Fodero, Miss Carmel Besch. Officers are couples: president couple, Cummings; vice-president, O'Brien; corresponding secretary, Pfalzer; recording secretary, Curran; treasurer, Schmitt. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**LECTORS** — Front row: Ed Walek, Art Buchanan, Dan Schmauss, J. Paul Synor, Sue Oliver, Al Gilman, William Crissy, Bill Marx. Row 2: Louis Lambert, John Donovan, Hal Hoffman, George Samuels, Lee Pfohl, Phil Brind'amour. Missing: Ed

Collins, George Kelter, Al Maniak, Gerry Grosskopf, Dolores Merla, Chuck Merla, Tim O'Connell, Ted Podolak, Frank Schiffauer. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS** — Front row: Edward S. Walek, C. Stephen Ingraham II, Agnes E. Hoffman, Karen Synor, Don Bach, George McGarl, James C. Kistner; Row 2: Donald W. Kingston, Frank Zagrobelny, Paul H. George, Rev. Alfons

Osiander, Theodore A. Callisto, Richard W. O'Donnell, James D. Tanner. Not pictured: Sister Linda Talbot, Charles Streicher, Noreen Schumann, John Barrick. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**ALTAR BOYS** — Kneeling: Pete Murphy, Mike Filozof, Craig Walek, Peter Filozof, Dale George; Row 2: James Tanner, Craig LaFay, James Donovan, Bob Synor, Michael Synor, Doug LaFay, Tom Henkel, Michael Hummel; Row 3: Drew Walek, Daniel Kumlander, Charles Moden, John Flynn, Steve Zagrobelny,

Daryl George, Chris Tanner, Gary Cohn. Not pictured: Cort Baker, Ronald Cohn, Andrew Hagen, Thomas Lamond, Terry Reidy, Matthew Sweeney, David Nottis, Patrick Donovan, Karl Walker, Timothy O'Connell, Roger Meinhold. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**USHERS** — Row 1, l-r: Alfred Boehm, Robert Wagner, Pat Horrigan (Secretary), Mike Devine (President), Albert J. Keem, Richard J. Rittenhouse. Row 2: Howard Grundner, Adrian Keem, Willis George, John Geary, Al Miranda, Harold Schnitzer,

Bernie Filozof. Not pictured: Ted Becker, Milton Wittmeyer, Adrian Metz, Jo Patti, Ed Pimpo, Bill Fones, Al Seeley, Ed Donohue, Robert DePerno. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**FOLK GROUP** — Kneeling: Sharie Marx, Martha Tanner; Row 1: Sharon Ingraham, Charlene Tucker, Sondra Tucker, Anne McGarl, Chris Tanner; Row 2: Carol Ingraham, Maureen McCormick, Michael J. Joyce, C. Stephen Ingraham II, Janice Tucker. Missing: Joe Marx, Suzanne Fink. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**CHOIR** — Front row: Mary Locante; Joan Smyntek; Leonore Lambert, director; Julie Ciesinski, organist; Celina Bojarczuk; Marcella Siler; J. Paul Synor. Back row: Liam Murphy; Bill Murphy; Rose Sugnet; Heidi Lisitsky; Martha Marshall; Louis

Lambert; Estelle Castle; Bernie Filozof. Missing: Dolores Merla; Al Maniak; Rosemarie Maniak; Tim Irwin; Tom Henkel; Josephine Mocuy; Mary Hilton; Kathy Patterson; Frank Schiffauer; Colleen Moritz. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OFFICERS** — Row 1: Rita Leffler, recording secretary; Agnes Sullivan, district deputy; Mary Bartus, treasurer; Cecelia Flierl; Row 2: Helen Grundner, financial secretary; Alice Logel, grand regent; Rev. Arthur Sullivan, chaplain; Janet Hayes, vice grand regent. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



**ALTAR AND ROSARY SOCIETY** — Row 1: Cecelia Flierl, Margaret Bauer, Agnes Sullivan (secretary), Rev. Arthur Sullivan (chaplain), Rita Leffler (president), Adele Dake (treasurer), Clara Wagner; Row 2: Alice Logel, Helen Spahn, Mildred Cox, Bea

Campanelli. Missing: Eleanor Kelter, Theresa Kobler, Mary Bach, Helen Grundner, Ruth Kloiber, Celina Bojarczuk, Edna O'Brien, Catherine Waggoner, Margaret Casazza, Evelyn Ernst and many others. (Photo by Paul Oubre)



St. Vincent dePaul Society. Front row (L-R): Lawrence Cassazza, Robert Wagner, John Conroy. Rear (L-R): Dr. Donald Hayes, Charles Streicher, Ted Becker Jr., Donald Bach and Paul Healy. Not pictured: Dick Mendola, Art Lester, Frank Bauer, Hugh Kramer. (Photo by Al Miranda)



Boy Scouts, Troop 599: Front row: Eric Burger, Mike Evens, Dave Schmitt, Tom Henkel, Jim Tanner, Jeff Burgio, Tim Garry. Row 2: John Draegert, Drew Walek, Chuck Moden, Ron Plyman, Chris Tanner, Walter Bernacki, Mike Hummel, Keith Eckert. Standing: Steve Heeb, Bob Wieber, Craig Walek, Liam Murphy,

Alan Weatherbee, James McKenna III, David Bernacki, Fred Darstein. Missing: Larry Britton, Mike Sly, Mark Sly, Bill Lewandowski, Joe Marx and leaders, Messrs. Ingraham, Gleed, Eckert, Joyce and O'Connor. (Photo by David Ingraham)



# RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

*All men are called to this union with Christ,  
who is the light of the world . . .*

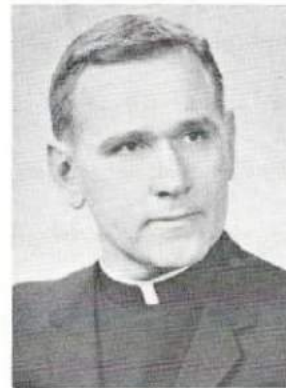
Lumen Gentium Ch. 1, No. 3



Rev. John W. Chandler



Brother Ralph Jaworski



Msgr. Paul Juenker



Sr. Frances Klar



Rev. Aloysius Link



Rt. Rev. Msgr. Leo G. Link



Sr. Margaret Mary Link



Msgr. Nelson W. Logal

Rev. John W. Chandler, campus minister at S.U.N.Y. at Buffalo (U.B.). (Photo by Schalk from Office of Communications)

Brother Ralph (Leonard) Jaworski, C.S.C. taught French and religion for many years and had been principal of Mackin High School, Washington, D.C. for ten years when he died in 1972.

Brother Ronald Johnson worked as a nurse on ships in the New York City area for many years. He attended school here in the early 1900s. The family has left the area. (Not pictured here)

Msgr. Paul Juenker is presently pastor of Blessed Sacrament, which replaces the New Cathedral parish in Buffalo, since the Cathedral was razed. He was formerly rector of the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary on Dodge Street which closed in 1973. (Photo from Office of Communications)

Sr. Frances Klar, S.S.J., religious coordinator at St. Leo's parish, entered the convent in 1944 and taught at several Diocesan schools before joining the parish ministry in 1975.

Rev. Aloysius J. Link, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child. He was buried in the parish cemetery in 1933. (Photo from Mrs. Minderler)

Sr. Flavia, D.C. (Caroline Link) was a teacher at Mother Seton High School in Baltimore, Maryland, for over 20 years. (Photo on page 15)

Sr. Helena, D.C. (Louise Link) spent her life as a pharmacist with the Daughters of Charity in hospitals in Detroit, Michigan and Norfolk, Virginia. She is buried in the parish cemetery. (Photo on page 15)

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Leo G. Link, pastor of St. Mary's on the Hill in Lancaster for a number of years, and buried there. (Photo by Schalk Studios from Diocesan Office of Communications)

Sr. Margaret Mary, F.M.D.C. (Mary Link, cousin to Louise and Caroline) taught catechetics in released-time programs in Allegheny and Cattagaurus Counties for 30 years. Once principal of Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Buffalo, novice mistress and superior of the Franciscan community of the Divine Child, she is presently Treasurer of the community.

Msgr. Nelson W. Logal was born in East Aurora and made his first Holy Communion here. Present pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul, Williamsville, he was elevated to the rank of Monsignor in 1959 while assistant pastor of St. Joseph's Old Cathedral for 15 years.





Sr. M. Silverius Marshall



Sr. M. Celine Marso



Sr. M. Scholastica Marso



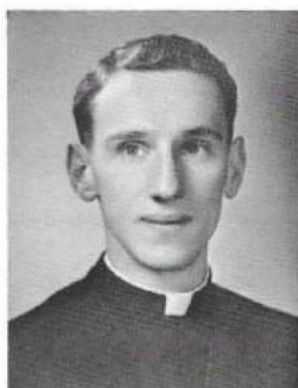
Rev. Herold M. Nuwer



Sr. M. Benedict Ragan



Sr. Mary Lou Schnitzer



Rev. Chester Schwab



Sr. Maura Smith



Rev. John Ullrich



Rev. Robert C. Wurtz

Sr. Silverius, S.S.J. (Margaret Marshall) spent her life in food service at Our Lady of Victory Infant Home in Lackawanna. (Photo from Verna Benzel)

Sr. M. Celine, O.S.F. (Helen Marso), first administrator of St. Francis Hospital, Main Street in Buffalo, she has spent over 50 years in the convent as nurse and teacher and is presently semi-retired at Our Lady of the Angels Home in Williamsville. (Photo by Ed Marso)

Sr. M. Scholastica, R.S.M. (Edna Marso) taught 20 years in Niagara Falls and 40 years at Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo, teaching French, English and Religion. She is presently at the Sisters of Mercy Generalate in Orchard Park. (Photo from Ed Marso)

Rev. Herold M. Nuwer, former pastor of St. Nicholas in Buffalo, now administrator of St. Augustine's in Clarence Center. (Photo by Schalk Studios from Mrs. Minderler)

Sr. Benedict, S.S.J. (Mary Elizabeth Ragan), founder of the Medaille College Reading Clinic, catering to the needs of all ages, races and creeds. She was active in numerous organizations concerned with retarded and crippled children and adults during her 56 years in education. (Photo from Juvenelia and Catherine Ragan)

Sr. Mary Lou Schnitzer, S.S.J. teaches second grade at Mt. St. Joseph Academy, Elementary Division. She entered the convent from this parish in 1973.

Rev. Chester Schwab, O.M.I., pastor of St. Stephen's, Miramar, Florida. (Photo by Ackad from Mrs. Minderler)

Sr. Maura, R.S.M. (Mary Joan Smith) in May 1978 became administrator of Mercyhurst Preparatory College in Erie, Pennsylvania. She had been a teacher of biology and education courses and, more recently, professor of environmental studies, which program she continues to guide.

Sister Anthony Stockwell attended school here in the early 1900s. The family has left the area. (Not pictured here)

Rev. John Ullrich, O.F.M., associate pastor of St. Elizabeth's, Denver, Colorado, and Director of the Interfaith Center built by parishioners and Franciscans to serve university students and area residents there.

Sister Margaret Winkler, G.N.S.H., deceased. Her family moved here following her entrance into the order and she spent many holidays in the parish. The family has since moved away. (Not pictured here)

Rev. Robert C. Wurtz, a member of St. John Vianney Seminary staff for 14 years, is now General Manager of Our Lady of Victory Institutions in Lackawanna. (Photo by Sterling from Office of Communications)



# PASTORS

DATE	PASTOR	STATION	IMPORTANT EVENT
1844-50	Thomas McEvoy	St. Patrick's, Java	Home Masses on Plank (Buffalo) Road between Springbrook and East Aurora
1853	John Doran	St. Patrick's, Java	First church building in Springbrook
1853	James M. Early	St. Vincent's, Springbrook	Church improved in Springbrook. First Masses in Marilla
1857-58	J. V. O'Donohue	St. Vincent's, Springbrook	School in St. Vincent's Church. Rectory building begun in Springbrook.
1858-61	Dionysius (Denis) English	St. Vincent's, Springbrook	First to occupy new rectory in Springbrook
1861	T. F. Heines	Limestone Hill (Lackawanna)	Came to Springbrook on weekends
1864	John Touhey	Springbrook	
1864-65	Miller, C.S.S.R.*	St. Mary's, Buffalo	Stayed in East Aurora for the winter; celebrated Mass in the Regulator Building. First recorded Masses in the Village of East Aurora.
1869	J. V. O'Donohue (second time)	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla Catholics went to Springbrook for Mass.
1870	T. F. Heines (second time)	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla Catholics went to Springbrook for Mass.
1871	T. Ledwith	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla Catholics went to Springbrook for Mass.
1872	Edward Quigley	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla Catholics went to Springbrook for Mass.
1873	Martin Byrne	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla Catholics went to Springbrook for Mass.
1873	P. V. O'Brien	Springbrook	Present St. Vincent's Church built.
1875	David Lasher	Springbrook	Stayed only a few months.
1876	Francis Cooke	Springbrook	Stayed only a few months. Began attending needs of Sardinia.
1876-82	Bartholomew B. Grattan	Springbrook	Missions of Sardinia (Holland) and Marilla. Springbrook rectory repaired. Attempted to build church in East Aurora.
1882	J. V. McInerney	Springbrook	Brief pastorate in spring.
1882-90	Dennis Maria Reilly	Springbrook	Masses in E.A. District No. 1 School. First land bought in East Aurora. Cornerstone of church laid 11-19-82.
1890	John Lafferty	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla missions visited monthly.

\*The record of a Father Miller, a Redemptorist from St. Mary's, was found in an old history book which contained many names later found to be misspelled. It also contained the ambiguous date "Christmas to Easter 1864." The Redemptorist Archives have no record of a Fr. Miller in 1864 or '65, but do have a Fr. Henry Meurer in the records of 1865.



DATE	PASTOR	STATION	IMPORTANT EVENT
1891	J. Brady	Springbrook	East Aurora and Marilla missions visited monthly.
1892-94	James C. Cain	Springbrook	First Financial Report printed Jan. 1893 for St. Vincent's, Springbrook; Immaculate Conception, East Aurora; and Sts. Philip and James, Marilla.
1894-95	James C. Cain	East Aurora	Cemetery on Bowen Road bought. House on Paine St. — rectory — bought. Priest moved to E. Aurora. Immaculate Conception became mother parish to Springbrook and Holland; Marilla became mission of Alden.
1895	Edward J. Rengel	East Aurora	All properties out of debt, 1900.
1900	James J. Gilhooley	East Aurora	Stayed from June to December.
1900-01	Thomas J. Walsh	Cathedral in Buffalo	Filled in on weekends.
1901-09	James H. Quested	East Aurora	Church enlarged 1901-02; basement hall added; stained glass windows, bell and tower added. Rededicated 1903. Rectory (1902) and St. Clara's Academy built, 1906. Springbrook changed to Elma as a mission, 1905; Holland to Arcade, 1907.
1909-12	George Zurcher	East Aurora	Prohibitionist; noted speaker and writer.
1912-17	Andrew Porter	East Aurora	Permission to celebrate three Masses on Sunday — Two in East Aurora, one in Holland, 1916-17.
1917-24	Daniel J. White	East Aurora	Holland church burned, 1917. Plans for a new church in East Aurora. Cook property on Oakwood and Park Place bought.
1924	Roman J. Nuwer	Springbrook	Filled in for two months.
1924-41	Cornelius J. Cash	East Aurora	Mission work ended . . . Holland a separate parish, 1924. Cook house became a convent, 1924. First assistant pastor arrived, 1936. School refurbished 1937.
1941-54	James T. Sullivan	East Aurora	Complete renovation of church; repairs on Academy, convent and rectory, 1944-47. Name of Academy changed to Immaculate Conception School.
1954-57	Leo J. Glynn	East Aurora	Funds started for new school.
1957-62	Samuel J. McCoy	East Aurora	More property bought on Park Pl. Convent moved to present site, 1958. New Immaculate Conception School built; opened in 1959; Academy torn down.
1962-73	John J. Dempsey	East Aurora	Vatican II changes initiated. Parish Council formed, December, 1967. Debt on school paid, 1968. New church fund of \$100,000 accumulated.
1973	Arthur T. Sullivan	East Aurora	First CCD coordinator. First lay principal in school. Eucharistic ministers installed. Female lectors and ministers. 94 year old church demolished, 1976. New rectory and church, 1977. Dedication — Oct. 15, 1978.



# ASSISTANTS

1935	James G. Termer, "pro-tem"	1951-52	Aloysius G. Kuntz	1966-68	Frederick A. Conoscenti
1936-37	James H. Kane	1952-53	H. Richard Strassberger	1968-70	Leon M. Neu
1938	Joseph Boyd, O.M.I.	1953-54	Charles R. Amico	1970	Franklin G. Buffamonti
1938-39	Paul G. Termer	1954-62	Richard T. Nugent	1970	Robert Swick
1939-40	James J. Reddington	1962-63	Andrew Fuller	1971-72	Robert G. Ochs
1940-41	Maurice Wolfe	1963-65	James G. Kelly	1972-74	Fred R. Voorhes
1947-48	Christopher J. Roche	1965-66	Denman Dewey	1974-	Alfons M. Osiander
1950	Thomas A. Watt	1966	Robert P. Conlin		

# TEACHERS & PRINCIPALS

*We are . . . called . . . to radiate the light of the  
knowledge of God's glory*

Two Sisters of St. Joseph came out every other Sunday starting March 22, 1903. They bought a house April 1, 1904, and started a convent boarding school. In 1906 St. Clara's Academy was opened, its name changed to Immaculate Conception School about 1946. The present school was opened in 1959.

Sr. Adelaide and Sr. Avarista set up a business school of sorts, during their stay. Students could come after school or Saturdays after they had started working, to learn shorthand, typing, business correspondence and bookkeeping. A number stayed four years. In the Twenties Sister Ethelreda offered a full first year of high school. There were still only four teachers, two

grades for each, and the principal had seventh and eighth grades plus the 5 or 6 students who stayed the extra year.

Weekly gym classes were added in the Sixties as well as an art teacher, for a time, paid by the Home School Association. A music teacher was added in 1975. Seminarians and men of the parish have helped with the sports program of basketball and track. In Fall 1977 the H.S.A. added a sports committee with a director who has expanded the sports program to include grades 1-8, with activities, intramural games and contests ranging from checkers to floor hockey.

The following is a list of teachers and principals and the year they arrived in East Aurora:

1903	Mother Mary Ann + Sister St. Augustine + Sister St. James + Sister Julianna +	1914	Sister Dolorosa + Sister M. Daniel +
1906	Sister M. Augustine, Principal + Sister M. Adelaide + Sister M. Angelica + Sister M. Avarista +	1915	Sister M. St. Paul of the Cross
1910-15	Sister M. Adelaide, Principal + Sister M. Ricardo + Sister M. Rita Sister M. Emmanuel Sister M. Hieronyma Sister Mary Ursula	1916	Sister M. Gregory, Principal +
		1918	Sister M. Ruth Sister M. Arsenia Sister M. Virginia + Sister M. Annunciata +
			+ Deceased



1920	Sister M. Ethelreda + Sister M. Vincent de Paul + Sister M. Augustine +	1950	Sister M. Julia Agnes
1924	Sister Ethelreda, Principal + Sister M. Rita Sister M. Hieronyma Sister M. de Pazzi Sister M. Regina Sister M. Lawrence + Sister M. Catherine Sister M. Annunciata + Sister M. Gregory +	1954	Sister M. Aquinata + Sister M. Augustine Sister M. Celine + Sister M. de Pazzi Sister M. Joan of Arc + Sister M. Stanislaus Sister M. St. Mark Mrs. M. Carter Mrs. Adelaide Guion
1930	Sister M. Chrysostom + Sister M. John Bosco + Sister M. Anita + Sister Margaret Mary + Sister Rose Mary +	1955	Sister M. John Catherine Sister M. Joseph Patrick +
1934	Sister M. Ethelreda, Principal Sister M. Aurelia + Sister M. Adele Sister M. Regina Sister M. Guardian Angel Sister M. St. Martin + Sister M. Carlotta Sister M. Clementine	1956	Mrs. F. Reimer
1935	Sister M. Alma, Principal + Sister Marie Amy + Sister Paul of the Cross	1957	Sister M. Alicia + Sister M. Dominica Sister Mary Harold, Principal Sister M. Sebastian + Sister M. Alexandrine Sister M. Angelica + Sister Marie Amy +
1936	Sister M. Stanislaus (Sr. Helene), Principal Sister Margaret Ann (Sr. Alice Callaghan) Sister M. Augustine Sister M. Cordis + Sister M. Lucilla Sister M. Eucharista Mother Scholastica	1958	Sister M. Annunciata
1940	Sister Anthony Marie	1959	Sister M. St. Mark, Principal Sister Joseph Marie + Sister M. Daniel Sister M. William Anne Mrs. Grace Besecker Mrs. George Chase Miss Eames Mrs. Jean Raher Miss Jeanette Roberts
1943	Sister M. Catherine McNeil	1960	Sister Macrina, Principal + Sister M. Alicia + Sister M. Stanislaus Sister M. Annunciata Mrs. Chase Miss Mary Guion Mrs. C. Guion Constance Nuwer Miss K. Smien Mrs. J. G. Reber
1945	Sister M. de Pazzi		
1947	Sister Margaret Joseph, Principal +		
1948	Sister M. Leocadia (Sr. Angela Galanti) Sister M. Hildegard (Sr. Gertrude Klein) Sister M. Alma Perpetua Sister Mary Lawrence	1961	Sister Helen Therese + Sister M. Columba Mrs. Talbot Miss Janet Parsons Miss Theresa Rogers Miss Kathleen Smith
1949	Sister M. Francis Xavier (Sr. Catherine Gallagher)	1962	Sister M. Aubert Sister M. Anne Patrice Mrs. Wilson



1963	Samuel Wilson Sister Laureen Sister M. Nolasco Mrs. Mary Jeanne McIntyre Mrs. Parsons Sister M. Lea	1970	Sister Linda Ann Talbot Miss Patricia Ortel Mrs. Joyce Creps Mrs. Veronica W. Gallick Miss Susan Gregg Gilbert Simon
1964	Sister Marietta (Sr. Barbara Stafford) Mrs. Carol Windsor Sister M. Jonathan Mrs. John R. Dempsey Patricia Patterson Miss Charlotte Tisdel Mrs. Margaret Casazza	1971	Mrs. Lydia Stang Miss Kathleen Friedman Mrs. Joan Mest Gasiewicz Mrs. Cirrincione Mrs. Johnston Miss Joan Billington Mrs. Helene Scheehe Mr. John Dezick
1965	Sister M. Roselle Miss Virginia Lietz Mr. Donato Fiorentino Mrs. James Knowles	1972	Mrs. Judy Repko Mrs. Jo Ann Marcheson Miss Denise Butler Mrs. Joan Billington McAllister Sister Ellen McCarthy Mrs. Mary Beth Webster Mrs. Margaret Syzdek Miss Kathleen Collins
1966	Sister Marian Schwenk, Principal Sister M. Edgar Sister M. Donald Sister M. Juliana Miss Mildred Lorig Mrs. Veronica Gallick	1973	Mrs. Irene Schroeder Miss Diane Bosinski Miss Patricia Halligan
1967	Carol Ann Windsor Miss Gilcher Sister M. Carmen Sister M. Gerrard Sister Loretta Marie Mr. John D. DiPasquale Jeanette Roberts Sister M. Sean Sister M. John Mark	1974	Mrs. Denise Butler Manson Mrs. Patricia Halligan Lesinski
1968	Sister Rita Barrett Sister Rita Ann Bernarski Mrs. James Bogucki Miss Carol A. Schaaf Sister Mary Lou Lindner Miss Diane Wonck Mrs. Keeney Mr. Deermeyer Mr. Theriault Mrs. Barbara O'Brien Sister Michele Beiter	1975	Sister Jane Ludwig, Principal Mrs. Christine Leicht Mrs. Joanne Chmielewski Mr. Daniel Szeglowski
1969	Miss Kathleen Lorenz Sister St. Anthony Miss Joan Mest Sister Monica Krupinski Mrs. Badell Sister Charlotte Territo Mrs. Ramming Mr. Kendron	1976	Miss Carmel Besch, Principal Mrs. Maria Lombardo Mr. Robert Puchalski Mrs. Carol Bach Miss Judith Goldsmith Miss Ruth Frost Mr. Alan Romyak
		1977	Sister M. Ann Therese Hedges
		1978	Mrs. Lindy Redmond Mr. Stephen Ingraham Mrs. Deborah Balducci Mrs. Patricia Bunk Miss Kathleen Karg



# BUILDING FUND DONORS

*That the sign of Christ may shine more brightly  
over the face of the earth . . .*

— Lumen Gentium Ch. 2, No. 15

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people who by their extraordinary financial support  
have helped to make our building project a reality.

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 Deceased members of  
     the Zalucki Family



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks are due the countless people who have made this book possible, themselves cooperators in the work of the Church in the world. Some of them are known only through their manuscripts, notably a Miss Aimee M. Eno, whose **History of the parishes of East Aurora, Springbrook, Marilla and Holland**, published in 1904, has been the basis for the story of the early years. Another document, unpublished, by a parishioner, Miss Martha Schwartz, created a general outline and filled in many details from 1849 to 1978. Much rich historical background is the result of perusal of **A History of the Diocese of Buffalo**, published in 1904, compiled by Rev. Thomas Donohue, D.D. Without these documents and numerous mementoes and stories collected by Mrs. Estelle Nuwer Minderler, this work could never have been completed in so short a time.

We are also grateful to the town historian, Mrs. Virginia Vidler, and others in the Town Hall for valuable information and for use of maps, microfilm, and the book, **150 Years in Aurora**.

Many helpful parishioners, former parishioners, and townspeople have come forward with stories, mementoes and pictures which have supplemented fragmentary parish records and the existing texts. Among these are the following:

Verna Marshall Benzel, Judy Pfohl Boyer, Michael Carini, Neil Ellson, Daniel and Robert Ernst, Frank and Dorothy Achey Haselbauer, Eugene Jerge, Ruth Schilling Kent, Anthony and Rita Bartz Kibler, Donald Kingston, Sr. Monica Krupinski, S.S.J., Sr. Margaret

Mary Link, F.M.D.C., Alice Logel, Jay and Martha Meyer Marshall, Edwin Marso, Estelle Nuwer Minderler, Lorne and Mildred Beaver Montague, Henry D. and Kathyne Leonhard Norton, Catherine and Juvenelia Ragan, Annabelle Youngers Raupp, George and Mildred Banzer Samuels, John and Mildred Glaser Schwartz, Edwin Leo Smith, Eleanor Smith, Henry and Helen West Spahn, Robert C. and Ruth Youngers Woodward. Although some pictures were not printed, in many instances they served to document times and places.

Special assignments were undertaken by photographers Paul Oubre, Richard Will and Bernard Filizof. In addition Mr. Will processed and printed appropriate photographs as needed. Principal typist was Rose Sugnet with assistance from Nancy Donovan, Florence Kiec, Anne Wentlent and Margaret Zagrobelny. Design and layout is the work of Anthony Rozak.

We are grateful to our pastor, Father Sullivan, for his support and patience as we undertook this project. We are especially grateful to his associate, Father Osiander, for his aid in research, for channeling information and documents, for collecting and recording funds, inspecting the text, and, most of all, for his advice and encouragement.

If anyone's name is omitted we are truly sorry. We have tried our best, with the information and proof available, to get as complete a picture as possible of the work of God in the people of Immaculate Conception parish.

Leonore J. and Louis J. Lambert



## CREDITS

2000 copies

Edited and compiled by Leonore Schmitt Lambert

Publication Coordination by Louis J. Lambert

Layout design and art by Anthony J. Rozak

Printed by Boncraft, Inc., Lithographers, 1979

Typist: Rose Sugnet

Typesetter: Park Advertising Service

Historians: Estelle Minderler, Martha Schwartz, Leonore Lambert

Photographers: Bernard Filozof, Paul Oubre, Richard Will

In commemoration of the

Dedication of the new Immaculate Conception Church

Sunday, October 15, 1978