

# 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

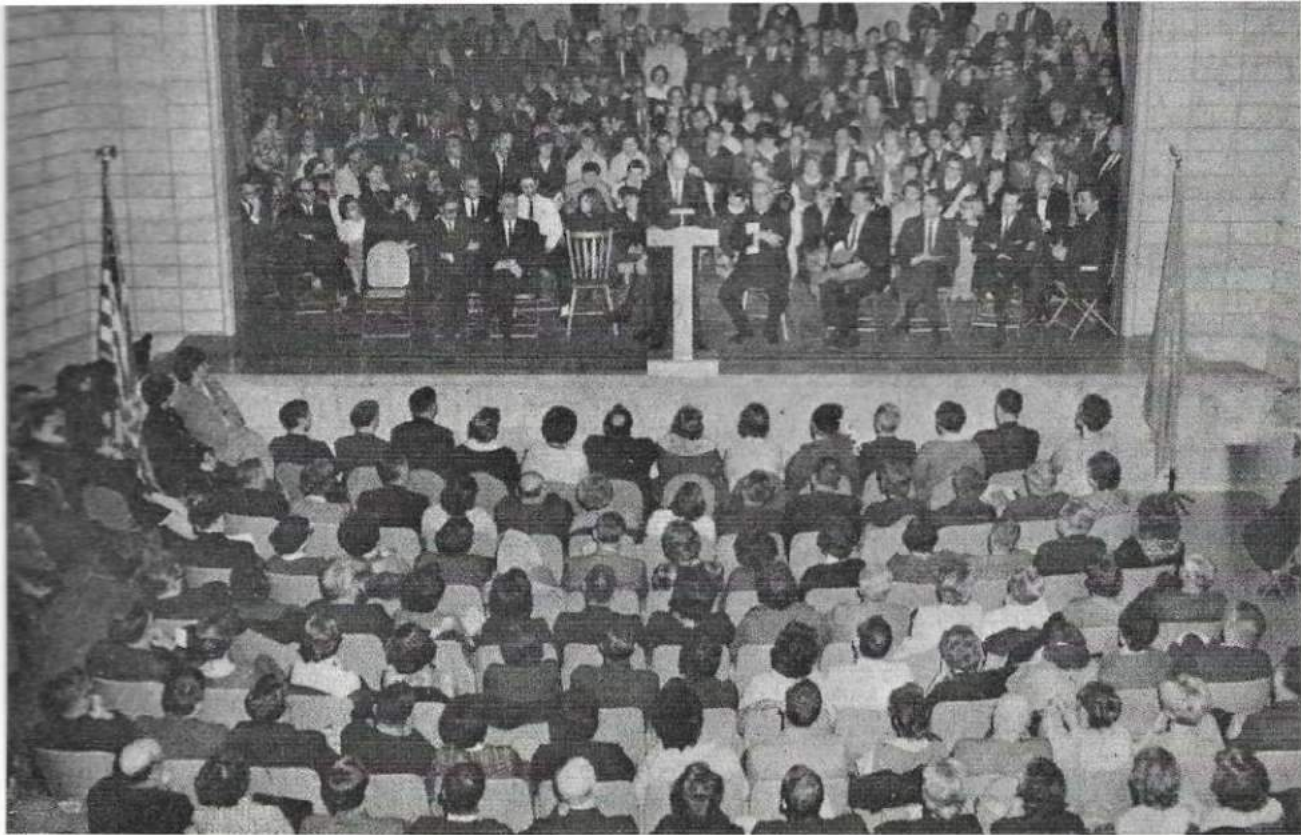
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The school was badly vandalized on Halloween, 1966. Ensuing discussions between Father Dempsey and village officials resulted in the calling of a public meeting with the largest turnout recorded to date. Many speakers, including the pastor, related 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 Ortner, 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

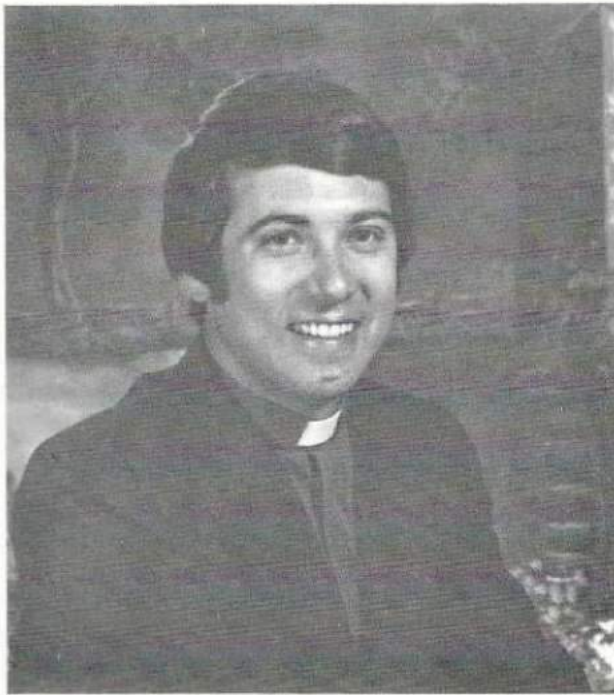
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THE WORK OF EACH WILL BE MADE CLEAR. . . .

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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.

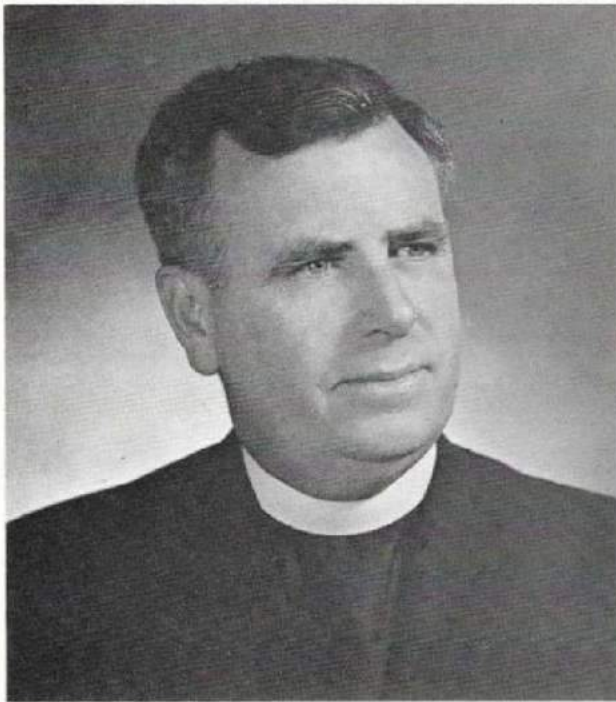
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On March 4, 1973, Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan was welcomed as the new pastor. At this time there were many active parish societies and activities, including the Parish Council, Home School Association, Holy Name Society, St. Vincent de Paul Society, the 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.



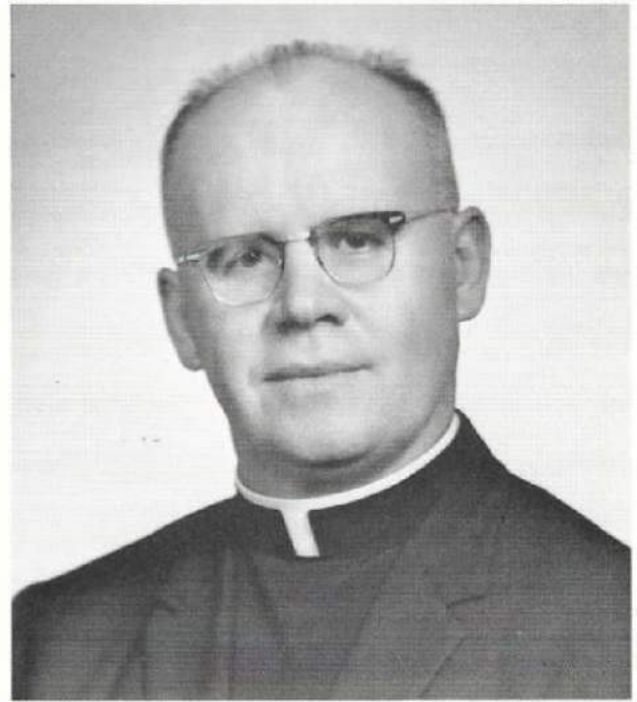
Rev. Arthur T. Sullivan, present pastor, is a native of South Buffalo with a fine tenor singing voice and a repertoire that ranges from Gregorian chant to folk music, American Western to old Irish tunes. Ordained in 1944 at Christ the King Seminary in Olean, he served as assistant at Holy Name parish, 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 Pistrica, 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

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

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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.

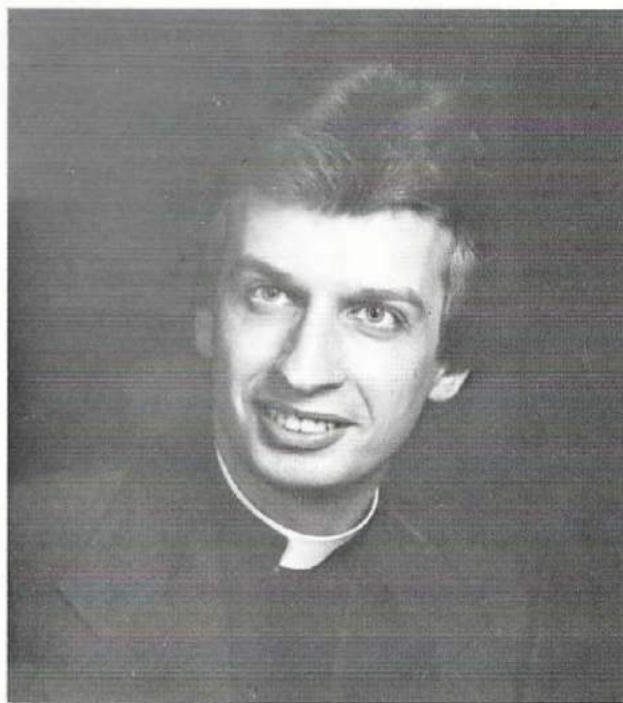
The high cost of the school program had been alleviated somewhat as a result of government programs and Supreme Court decisions. A Court decision on bussing ordered the Districts to supply transportation to the nearest Catholic school. This allowed parishioners' children from Holland, Iroquois and parts 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.

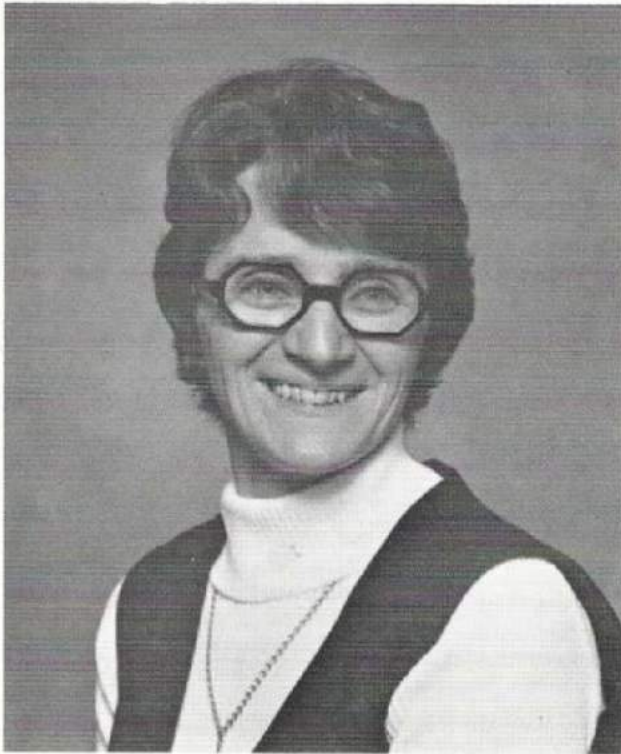


Rev. Alfons M. Osiander, native of the Netherlands, was ordained at St. John Vianney Seminary (now Christ the King Seminary) on Knox Road and served at St. Agatha's before coming here. His sincerity and intellect drew people of all ages to him.

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.

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

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

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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



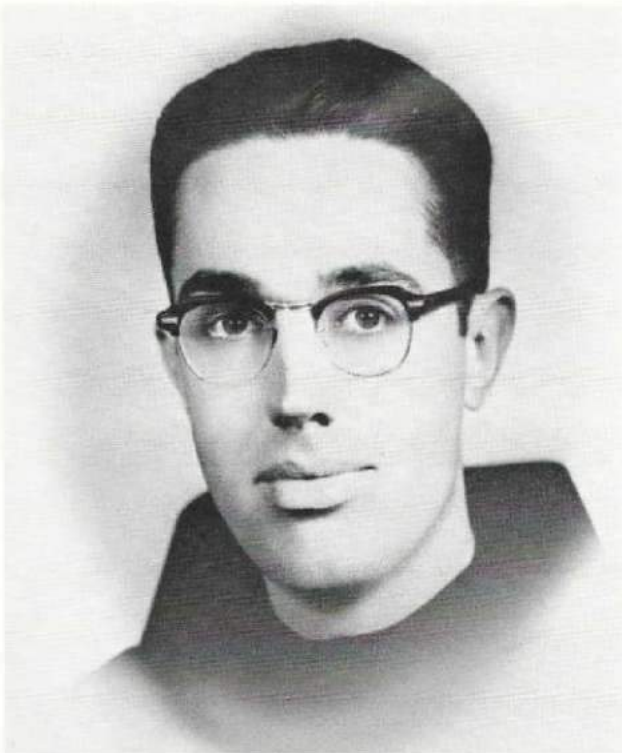
Sr. Jane Ludwig, S.S.J. served as principal for a short while after Sr. Marian. She is a religious studies teacher and administrative assistant at Mt. St. Joseph Academy.

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.



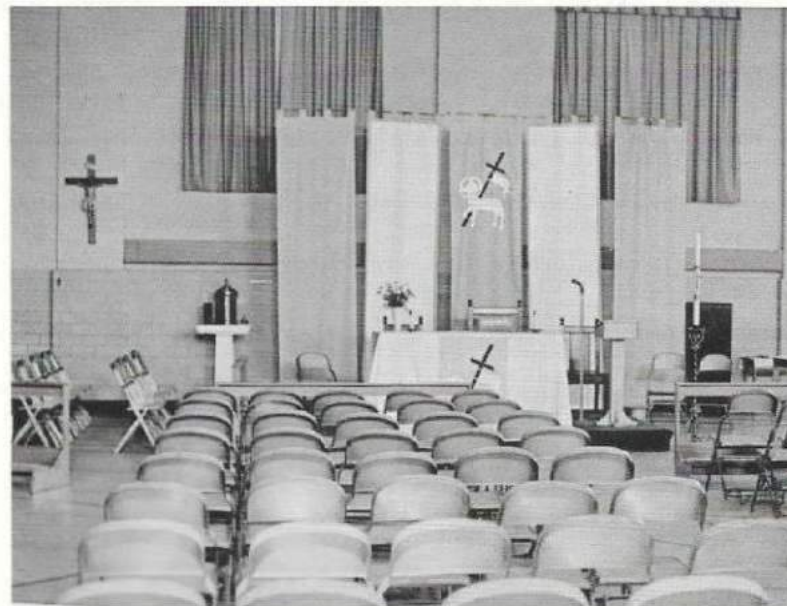
Rev. Gerald Dolan, O.F.M.



Rev. Joseph (Donatus) Doino,  
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 Doino 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. Riszewski 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.

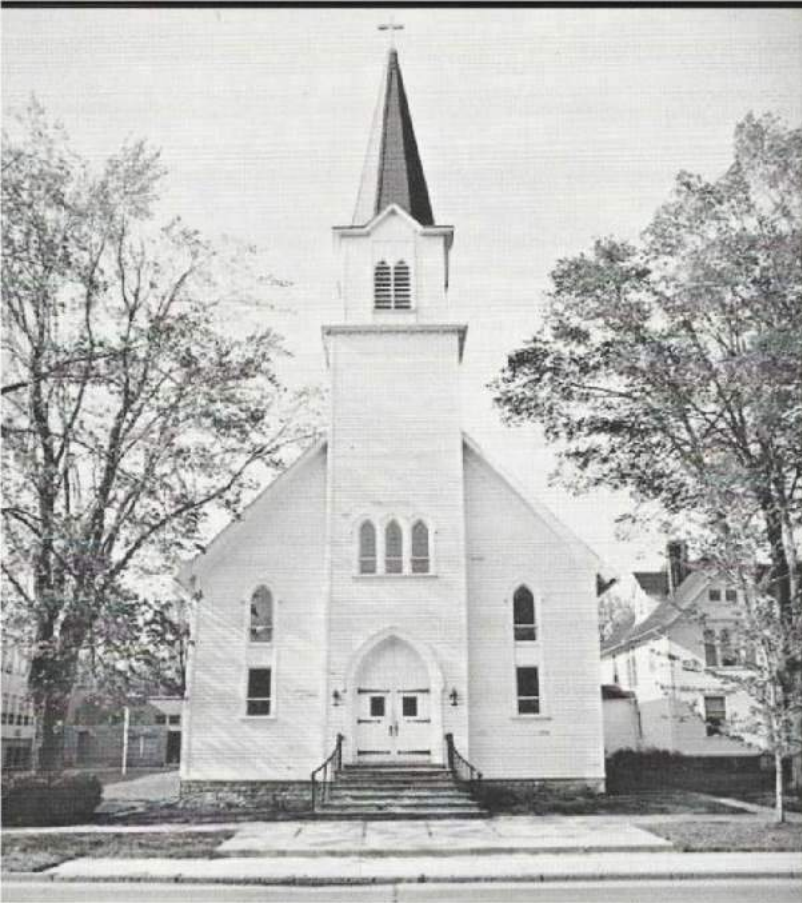
At least part of a mystery was solved by the micro-filmed article as it described the contents of the tin box inside the cornerstone which was opened when the church was demolished in September, 1978. All that was legible among the crumbling bits of aged brown paper was the word or part-word, "Ecclesiastic." 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.

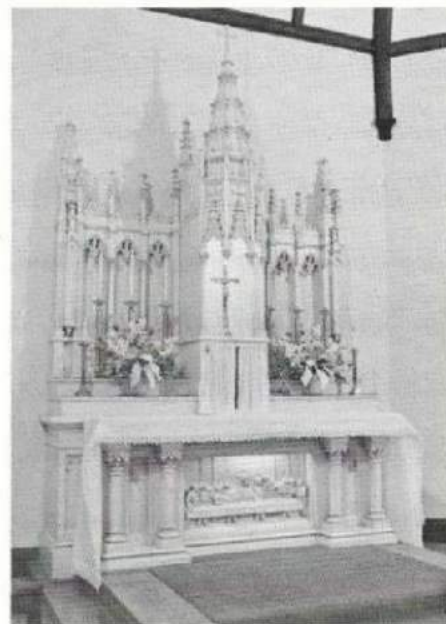
A Variety Show was organized in the Summer of 1976, with rehearsals in the school auditorium. The show was presented for two evenings in the Fall at St. John Vianney Seminary auditorium. Mrs. Mary Evens was director, assisted by Mrs. Jean Foltan, who was music director in the school at the time. The 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



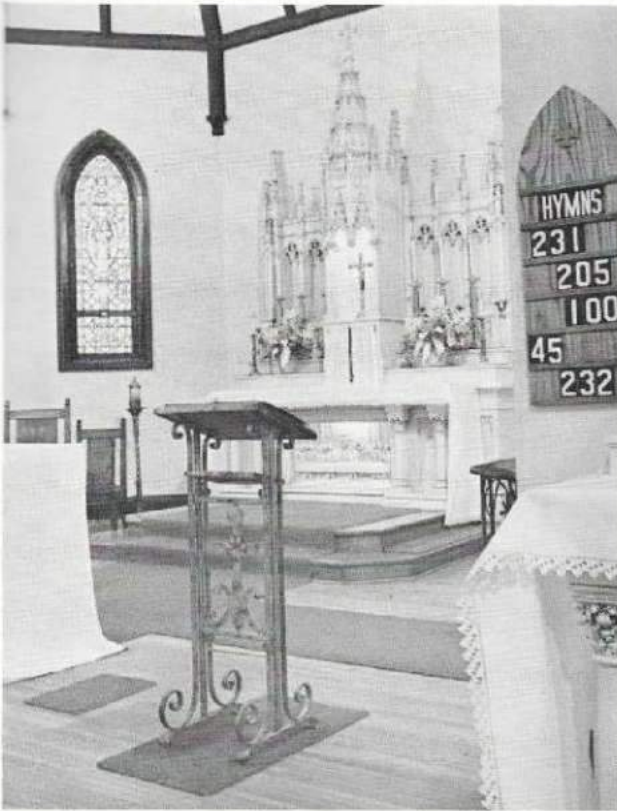
Photos by Richard Will



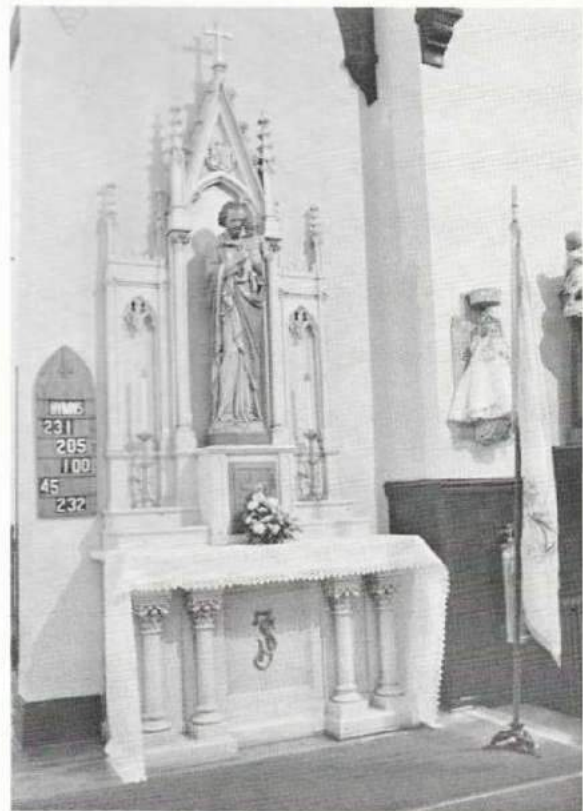
View toward altar area showing Sacred Heart and Blessed Mother statues on the left, and St. Joseph, Infant of Prague and St.

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





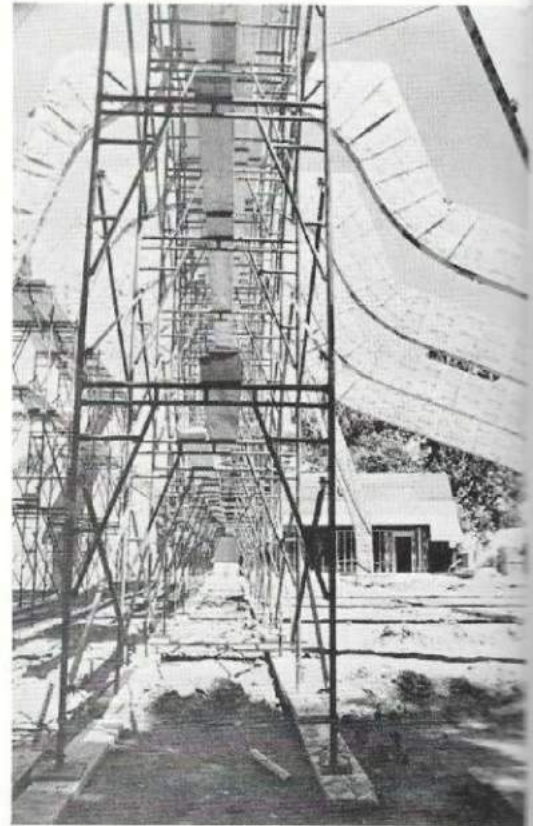
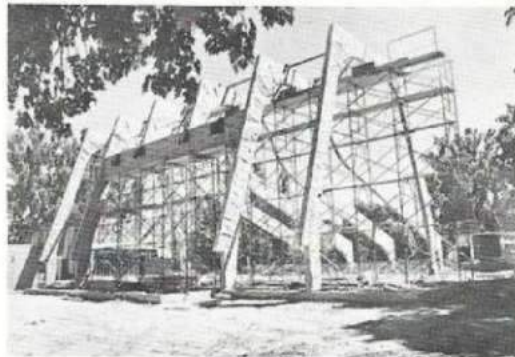
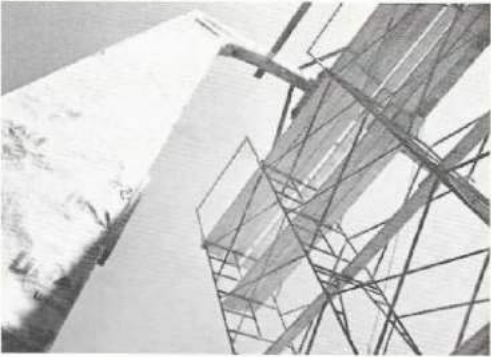
Photos by Neil Ellson



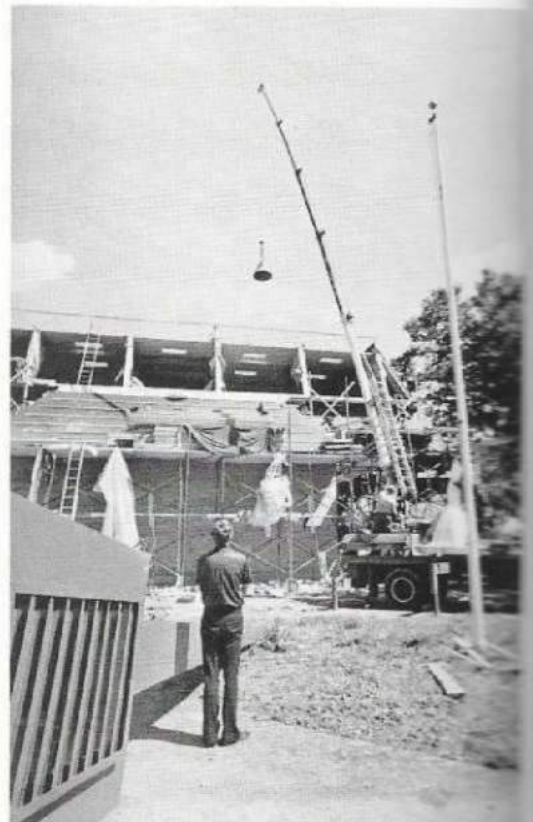
*I will not enter the house I live in,  
nor lie on the couch where I sleep;  
I will give my eyes no sleep  
my eyelids no rest,  
Till I find a place for the Lord,  
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.*

Psalm 132: 3, 4, 5

Spring 1977, first beam in place . . .



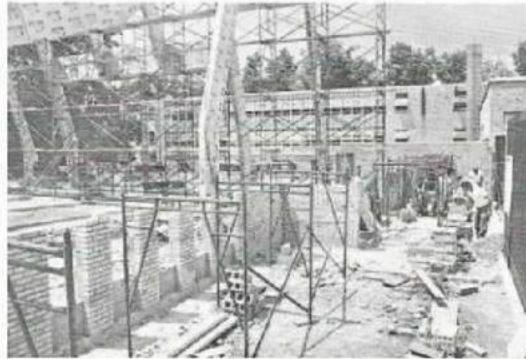
August 25, 1977 . . .



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)

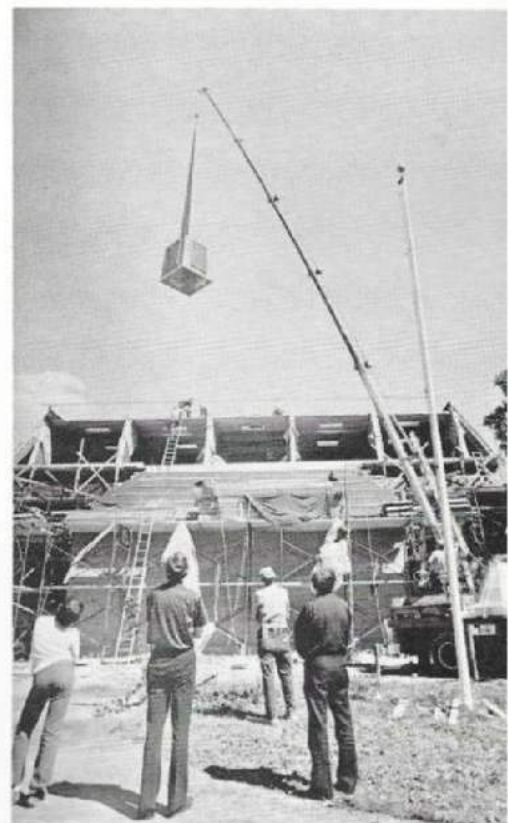
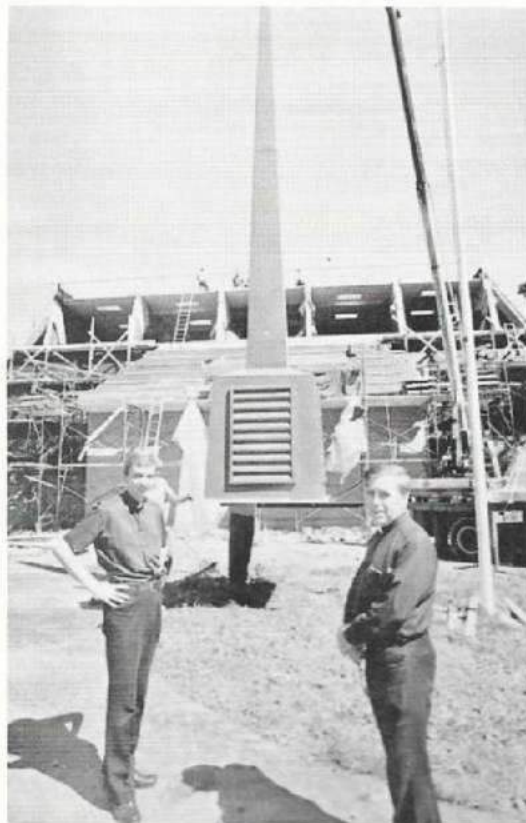


Father Sullivan confers with architect, Eugene Trautman.



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 . . .

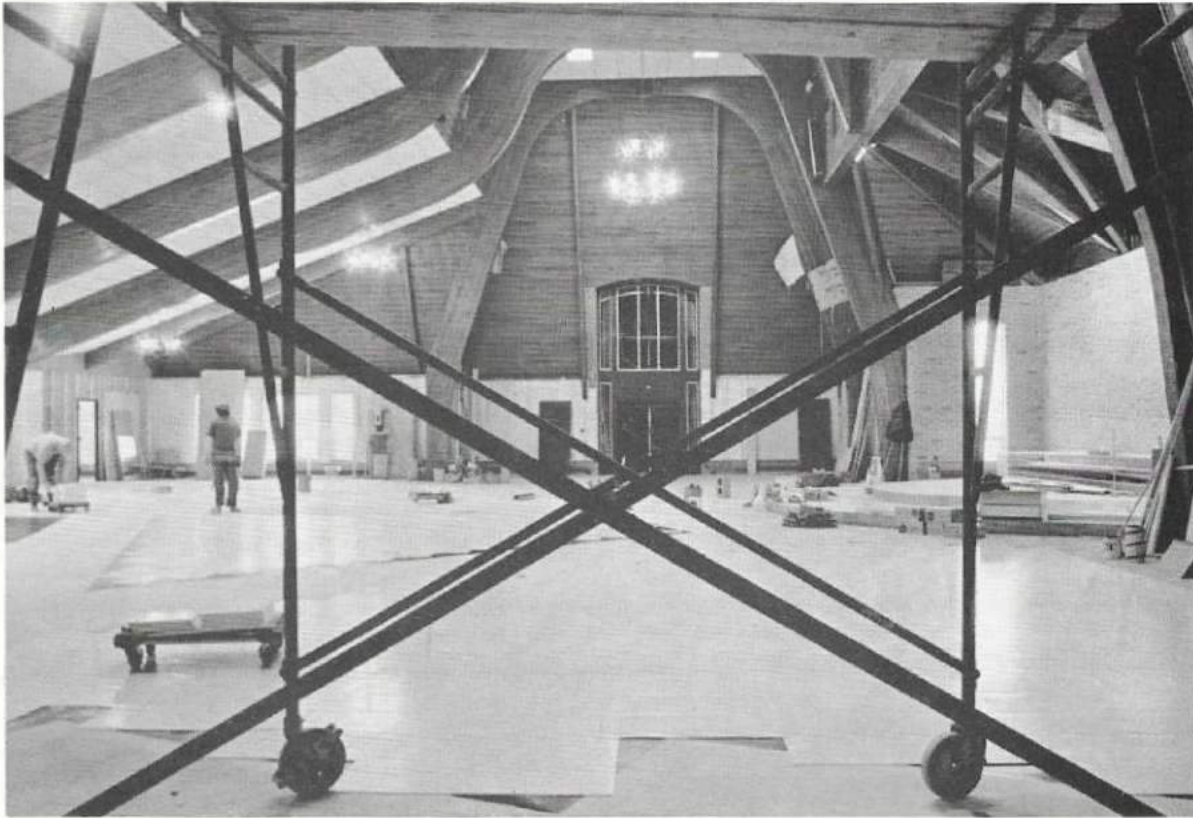


Photo by Richard Will

December 1977 . . .



Photo by Bernard Filozof



Photo by Bernard Filozof



Photo by Bernard Filozof