

WINTER
1971

from the **MARTYRS SHRINE** Auriesville, N.Y. 12016

Isaac
Jogues

Rene
Goupil

Jean
Lalande

Jean
Brebeuf

Charles
Garnier

Gabriel
Lalemant

Anthony
Daniel

Noel
Chabanel



The Coliseum, The Shrine Church

On June 21, 1931, the Coliseum was dedicated. Construction had begun the previous year in June and on September 28, 1930 a huge Civic Celebration and Cornerstone Laying took place. All of this happened 40 years ago. In this present issue of the "PILGRIM" we are reproducing articles that appeared in the pages of the "PILGRIM" at that time. Besides the main article about the dedication itself, which contains an architect's description of the construction details of the Coliseum, we are presenting interesting side-lights. These include the Inscription contained within the Cornerstone which the "PILGRIM" published in July, 1931. A comment on a "REMARKABLE CHURCH" first appearing in "Socony Tours and Detours" was reproduced in the July, 1933 issue of the "PILGRIM". There is also a

poem in the July, 1931 issue which modestly indicates A.G.S. as the author, who has been discovered to be a present Assistant Director of the Shrine, Fr. Anthony G. Schirmann, S.J. He has been here at the Shrine for 17 years. Finally in the New York Sun an editorial appeared in 1933 which advised ecclesiastical architects to look into the possibilities of "ROUND CHURCHES". This editorial and a pertinent letter from Father Wynne are presented. The dates of the editorial and the construction of the Coliseum are significant not only for those times but also for the tendencies of liturgical renewal in our present day. Old, old Auriesville with its round church is very much up-to-date today. So too are its Saints. So too is the Shrine for the Church and World.

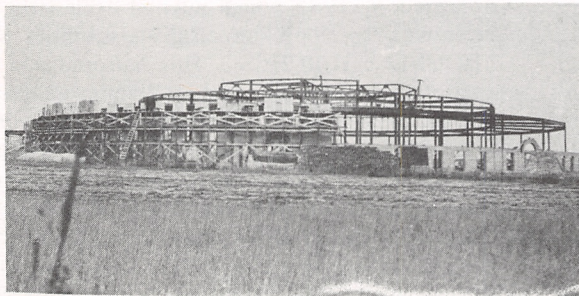
Dedication of Coliseum

The dedication of the new coliseum at the Shrine of the North American martyrs, Auriesville, took place Sunday, June 21, when the Rt. Rev. Edmund F. Gibbons, D.D., Bishop of Albany, blessed the huge amphitheatre that marks the site of the heroic labors and death of Father Isaac Jogues, S.J., Rene Goupil, S.J., and John Lalande, S.J., who in company with the five Canadian martyrs were canonized at Rome June 29, 1930. The new coliseum, one of the largest buildings in central New York state, replaced the modest little chapel that had been in use since the founding of the shrine in 1884. Its plan, drawn by Chester Oakley, Buffalo architect, is an innovation in ecclesiastical design, an ideal structure to accommodate the immense crowds of pilgrims that flock to the sacred grounds to ask intercession of the newly canonized saints. Construction work was done by Boehm Bros., Inc., of Buffalo.

Four shades of Kitanning brick, in colors from white to a deep brown, have been used in the outer walls. These are set in a decorative effect of garlands, stars and crosses. The diameter of the coliseum is 257 feet and to walk around it six times is to have covered a distance of nearly a mile. The walls rise to a height of 28 feet, covering the outer monitor of the roof, visible only from an elevation.

There are 72 entrances in the eight sections, one section for each of the martyrs. A cross is mounted above the eight double doors leading directly to the main aisles and a large crucifix stands high above the center of the building. On each side of the main entrances are marble medallions set in sunken circles.

Engraved on the medallions are crossed tomahawks and the palms of victory and the name of the saint in whose honor the section is dedicated. In arches above the double doors are niches containing Carrara marble statues of the saints, one to each section. To the right of the Saint Isaac Jogues entrance is the cornerstone, laid September 28, 1930, also engraved with the tomahawk and palms design.



The interior of the massive amphitheatre is floored with concrete of gray coloring in the seating sections and red with a hard smooth finish in the aisles. Walls are of building tile with a glazed tile wainscoting. The seating capacity is 6,517 and it is estimated that the use of standing room space will raise this number to a maximum capacity of more than 10,000 pilgrims.

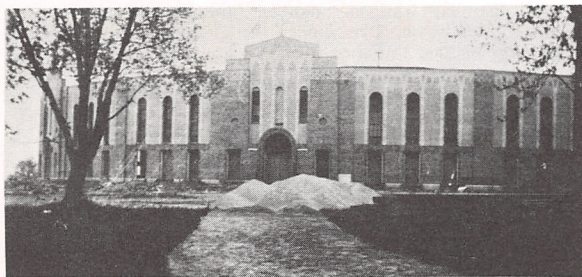
Seats and kneeling benches have wrought iron standards with a cross and circle design on the aisle end. Inner and outer sections of seats are enclosed with ornamental wrought iron railings. Twenty-four spacious aisles lead from a 12-foot passage way that follows the outer wall and these connect with the aisles of the inner circle of seats. A passage way of the same width is formed between the front seats and the altar rail.

Sixty steel columns support the roof which is of a monitor design in three sections, each encircled with windows of cathedral glass. From the outer wall height of 28 feet, the sections of the roof are raised until a height of 48 feet is reached in the center. Proper ventilation is assured through a simple operated mechanical device extending from the windows down to the lower section of the center columns. The supports are covered with maftex and a lower section of five feet is paneled and mounted with a wooden design, the bishop's cap. All overhead steel work is covered except the main trusses, which are decorated to harmonize with the color scheme.

Four gates at the end of main aisles lead to the circular sanctuary, with a diameter of 72 feet. The hardened and polished composition floor has a large white diamond section in front of each altar. Enclosing the altars is the woodwork sanctuary rail sufficiently large to allow 200 communicants to kneel at one time.

The altars, of wood, are approached by five steps. There are four, facing in different directions, and dedicated to Our Lady of Martyrs, St. Jogues, St. Goupil and St. Lalande. Tabernacles are of bronze. On each altar there are three octagonal panels of oak carved from a tree which stood on the shrine site, then the Lower Castle of the Mohawk Indians, at the time of the martyrdom of Goupil in 1642 and of Jogues and Lalande in 1646. The background of the altars is formed by a 14 foot palsaded wall of white pine and hemlock grown on the shrine grounds.

Four entrances lead to the sacristy which is located in the enclosure formed by the background of the altars. Here are contained the vestment cases and cabinets for articles used in connection with the services. Built in the center support is a reinforced concrete vault in which are kept the sacred vessels and relics of the martyrs. A stairway leads to the upper platform.



A second tier of palisades forms the background for this platform. There are four projecting pulpits over the entrances to the sacristy. Between the pulpits over and to the right of the Jogues' altar is the two manual Estey organ and choir loft. Surmounting the sacristy is a tower which contains the amplifiers of the address system.

On the outer passage way are eight confessionals, one to the left of each main entrance. Lighting fixtures are suspended from two sections of the ceiling.

Shrine services will be broadcast throughout the large coliseum by an electrical system which has microphone connections on the four altars, in the four pulpits and over the organ. Connecting with the amplifiers in the tower above the altar group are extensions to the outside of the building.

A Solemn High Mass followed the dedication services. The Officers of the Mass were: Rev. Edward S. Swift, S.J., of Boston, Celebrant; Rev. Martin J. Smith, S.J., of Wernersville, Pa., Deacon; Rev. James P. Sweeney, S.J., of Buffalo, N.Y., Sub-Deacon; Rev. Joseph F. Busam, S.J., of Worcester, Mass., Master of Ceremonies. The preacher at the Mass was the Rev. Charles F. Connor, S.J., of Philadelphia, Pa. The altar boys were from St. Cecilia's Church of Fonda, N.Y. The choir was conducted by Mr. Hugh Donlon, of Amsterdam, New York, and consisted of male voices selected from the Catholic churches of Amsterdam. The Mass entitled "Mass in Honor of the North American Martyrs," was composed by Mr. Donlon for the occasion.

"Motorists visiting the Mohawk Valley will find a building of unusual historic and architectural interest on Route 5S at Auriesville. Here on a hillside overlooking this beautiful valley is the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs. The principal unit of the Shrine is a remarkable church dedicated in 1931 and which already attracts a steady stream of visitors from many States. This church is of special interest because it is round. It seats 6,500 worshippers."

Excerpt from Socony Tours and Detours, July, 1933

INSCRIPTION INSIDE CORNERSTONE

On this cornerstone rests the Shrine erected in honor of the eight Martyrs, Isaac Jogues, John Brebeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Anthony Daniel, Charles Garnier, Noel Chabanel, Rene Goupil and John Lalande, members of the Society of Jesus, declared Saints, June 29, 1930, by His Holiness Pius XI, the first so honored of all who lived, labored, suffered and died for the Faith in North America.

"This Shrine rises out of soil consecrated by the presence, torture and death for religion of Jogues, Goupil and Lalande, and of many Huron and Algonquin Christian Indians. In 1642, when Goupil, proto-martyr-saint of America, was slain for teaching the Sign of the Cross, and Jogues was tortured and enslaved for a year, it was known as the Village of Ossernenon, occupied by the Mohawk nation of the Iroquois Indians. In 1646 Jogues came to establish the Mission of the Trinity here, his brethren in Quebec predicting that it would be the Mission of Martyrs, as it became by his martyrdom, and his companion's, John Lalande, soon after their arrival.

"To the heroism and holiness of these outstanding Servants of God the Maryland-New York Province of the Society of Jesus, assisted by the Right Reverend Edmund F. Gibbons, Bishop of the Diocese of Albany, following the example of three of his predecessors, the hierarchy, clergy and faithful of the United States, rear this first portion of a temple dedicated to Saints whom, all without distinction of clime or faith, revere as founders of religion and civilization in North America.

"Auriesville, New York, in the Year of Our Lord, 1930, September 28th, Sunday following the Feast of the Martyrs, September 26th."

At the time of the construction of the Coliseum, **Rev. Peter F. Cusick, S.J.** was the Shrine Director and **Brother Joseph Stamen, S. J.** supervised the work for the Shrine staff.



DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Dear Friends and Pilgrims:

This year's winter PILGRIM featuring the 40-year-old Coliseum here at Auriesville should stir nostalgic memories for all friends of the Shrine of middle age and beyond. It may even evoke keen interest on the part of the younger generation,

many of whom are showing themselves ever more curious about the way things used to be done.

A vast cross section of Christ's Mystical Body has prayed in the Coliseum ever since it was dedicated in early 1931, back when dear Father Cusick was the Shrine Director. A conservative estimate of the number of people who have prayed within its circular walls would run around 6,000,000. This vast throng is all the more remarkable when we realize that it has included representatives of every state, nearly every country in Europe and the Americas, as well as some of the nations of Africa, Asia and the South Pacific.

Not all the worshippers have liked the architecture. The celebrated Joe Breig, writing a few years ago in the now defunct Ave Maria, thought the Coliseum the worst venture the Jesuits ever made into the building field. Our round chapel may have struck other pilgrims the same way, but there is evidence that for most of them the rustic simplicity and the palisaded altar area made it easy for them to put themselves back into the forest primeval in which Isaac Jogues tried to preach the gospel and faced torture and martyrdom.

One of the most vivid recollections of my boyhood is the long line of cars backed up all the way to

Amsterdam on the day the Coliseum was dedicated. My father was in the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard that day while my mother, brother and I looked proudly on. I remember the great Father McGrath, assistant to Father Cusick, talking many of us youngsters into doing six laps around the great structure in order to run the mile. He was years ahead of his day in advancing an argument for jogging.

The Coliseum, awesome though it may seem, has also brought anxiety to Shrine Directors. Father Devaney and Father Schlaerth, for example, spent many an hour worrying over how the roof could effectively be repaired. During the past year this is a worry that has surfaced once again.

The Coliseum has told a story to nearly three generations and we hope in future years to see that story retold and even expanded. By means of the statuary obtained from the former Novitiate of St. Andrew, we hope to use one area of the great structure to describe with paint and marble the Jesuit family from which our North American Martyrs sprang and the church of their day with problems and challenges as great as any that we know in our age. Our martyrs tell us to be stouthearted, not to grow faint and weary. We may not see clearly where the church and the human race are heading on today's rough seas, but the brave men of Auriesville would remind us that Christ is still at the helm and that He has a port clearly in mind.

Come pray with us in the great round chapel of the martyrs once we open up the Shrine again next May.

Devotedly in Christ, Our Lady and the Martyrs

Father Egan SJ

Director, Martyrs Shrine

THE MARTYRS' SHRINE Auriesville, New York 12016

THIS IS MY
COMMANDMENT
LOVE
ONE
ANOTHER

PILGRIM, WINTER — Vol. LXXXII, No. 1 — Quarterly publication of The Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs, Auriesville, N.Y. Thomas F. Egan, S.J. President and Shrine Director; W. Robert Burns, S.J. Secretary and Editor of "PILGRIM"; James H. Thiry, S.J. Treasurer; Anthony G. Schirmann, S.J. and Timothy C. O'Dwyer, S.J. Assistant Directors; Harold X. Folser, S.J. and John J. McMahon, S.J., Board Members.
Entered as second class matter July 6, 1942 at Auriesville, N.Y., act of March 3, 1879.



Round Churches

For all religious denominations the problem of providing places of worship in new settlements is rendered more difficult by the business depression. This is true here and abroad. In England the Committee of the Incorporated Church Building Society has studied the situation carefully; in a letter to the London Times, its senior member, Athelstan Riley, presents a suggestion which may be of interest to harassed building committee men here. He says:

"If building committees will not be frightened by the somewhat unusual plan, and will face a circular church (of which there are already a few in England and western Europe, dating from the Middle Ages, in honor of the Holy Sepulchre), they will find that plan by far the least costly, partly because you can enclose a larger congregation in a circular than in a rectangular building. If any one is interested and will write to me at the Athenaeum at the beginning of next month I will send him the particulars, with plan and elevation, of a twelve-sided church with a central dome, which in closely estimated cost, partly from actual tenders, is below any church of the size, even the plainest, built during the last few years."

The round plan for buildings was common among the Greeks and a favorite among the Romans for mortuary and commemorative structures. Christian practice was deeply affected by the custom of setting the clergy aside from the congregation. There are conspicuous churches of circular design, however; of these that of St. Costanza at Rome, the original chapel of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, St. Maria at Nocera and St. Sepulchre at Cambridge are excellent examples. Longfellow points out, in Strugis's Dictionary of Architecture, that "the great achievement of the Renaissance architects in church building was the union of the central type with the cruciform by setting over the square crossing the dome built on pendentives, after the manner of St. Sofia, which culminated in St. Peter's."

The original plans for the New York County Court House called for a round structure, and the first publicly discussed design for Rockefeller Center presented a round building on its Fifth Avenue front. In neither case was the suggestion cordially received. A circular church would, of course, be known popularly as "the church of the holy roundhouse," just as a striking juxtaposition of materials of different colors gave the name "church of the holy zebra" to a famous New York place of worship. This fact would not impair the usefulness of the structure; indeed, it would identify it, and thus advertise its mission.

—Editorial in New York Sun, June 2, 1933

LETTER TO THE NEW YORK SUN A Round Church in the Historic Mohawk Valley

To the Editor of the Sun:

Sir: — I read with delight your editorial article "Round Churches." For light, air, beauty, there is nothing to match the round Church.

I have just had an exhilarating week end at Auriesville, in the Mohawk Valley, where pioneer missionaries were tomahawked some two hundred and ninety years ago: Jogues, Goupil and Lalande. There, on an elevation visible to autoists north and south of the Mohawk River, New York Central travelers, barge canalers and airplaners, stands a round church — a Coliseum the man in charge calls it — of solid structure, steel and multicolored brick, with windows and two-decked monitor roof letting in light by which I could read my divine office as late as 9 p.m. It seats 6,500 and, with its aisles and its seventy-two doors open, 8,500 more can witness the services. It is 250 feet in diameter.

What I am getting at is the main point in your editorial article, the extraordinary cheapness of this round church, despite its solidity and elegance. Let no reader of THE SUN who is interested in church construction or in any form of building pass that way without visiting this innovation of genius in American architecture. The low cost of it, which the man who conceived the plan will reveal without cost, will astound the visitor. Let us have more "Round Churches."

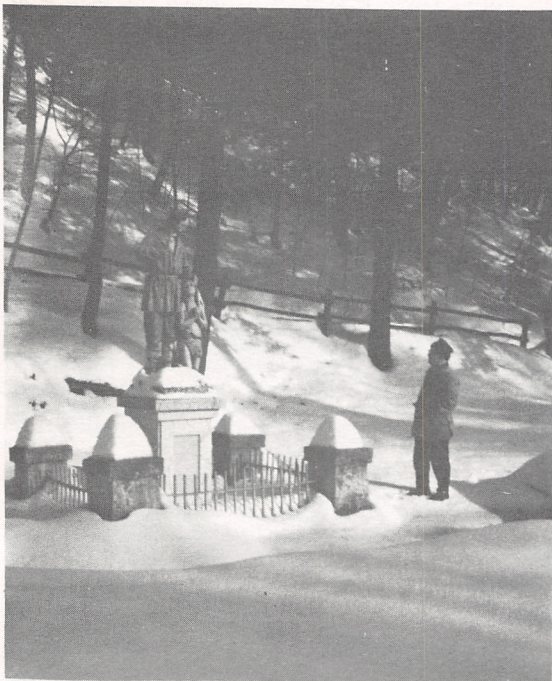
—John J. Wynne, S.J., New York, June 2, 1933



TO THE NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS

Like incense rising round a regal throne
Flooding the air with fragrance of perfume
Are your spent lives which brilliantly illumine
This blinded earth today. Mocked and alone,
With hearts as firm as adamant stone,
You faced your foe, welcomed this waving plume,
And deemed your precious blood as ocean-spume
Lost in the billows of a course loveshine.
By thousands pilgrims hymn your praise today,
Treading ravine and hill where you have trod;
With prayer and psalm they pass along the way
That leads to the stockade. The sacred sod
With your own blood enriched they kiss to pay
Tribute to you, the martyred braves of God.

A.G.S.



CONCERNING MASS CARDS

1. Address all Mass requests to:
Rev. Thomas F. Egan, S.J., Shrine Director
Martyrs Shrine
Auriesville, N.Y. 12016
2. Write in lower left hand corner, "Attention Desk M."
3. Write or print your own name, address, city, state and zip code clearly on the ENVELOPE.
4. Enclose your offering for each Mass. (The usual offering is \$2.00, but larger stipends for the upkeep of the Shrine are gratefully received.) Check or Money Order are preferred.

The attached form will serve as a typical Mass request.

Date

Dear Father Director:

Enclosed find my offering for Mass(es)
for M. (living) (deceased).

Send Card to:

Name

Address

City

State Zip Code

Before mailing sign card

ENROLLMENT IN MARTYRS' MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION grants a sharing in a daily Mass offered for all Benefactors of the Shrine. The usual offering is one dollar for an individual, five for a family, living or deceased. A perpetual enrollment remembrance for a deceased person is twenty-five.

SEVEN-DAY VIGIL LIGHTS are lighted in the Coliseum upon request. The usual offering is one dollar.

Remember the Martyrs Shrine in your Will. (The Legal Title: Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs of Auriesville, N.Y.)