

from the
MARTYRS SHRINE

SUMMER
1973

Auriesville, N.Y. 12016

No. 3

FEATURED
IN THIS
ISSUE:

REV. WILLIAM J. SCHLAERTH, SJ
1904 – 1973

Nothing could have been unexpected than the phone call which came from Father Paul Gamp, superior at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Clarence Center, with the news that on the previous evening, Tuesday, August 28, Father William J. Schlaerth, S.J. had died in Sisters' Hospital, Buffalo.

From early July until August 6, Father Schlaerth had stayed at Auriesville. After finishing his annual retreat he had done the sort of priestly work at the Shrine which had been so much a part of his life a decade ago when he was the director. He preached, heard confessions, and spent hours at a time at the Shrine gate greeting pilgrims. He visited with many friends of his Auriesville years, and on Polish Sunday he delivered a memorable talk in the ravine in which he linked Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, the martyr of the concentration camp, with Rene Goupil, the first martyr of Auriesville.

Upon his return to Clarence Center, he wrote back in this vein: "I enjoyed the month very, very, very much. Your company was an inspiration. It was so good for me spiritually, materially and otherwise. I just might do it again in 1974." The day before his death another letter came with the word that he and Father McBride would arrive "late afternoon on Saturday" for the Kateri Weekend. Little did he know how this prediction would be carried out. On August 26, he was taken to the hospital because of a recurrence of stomach trouble. Two nights later, although he had no record of coronary problems, a heart attack ended his life after 52 years as a Jesuit and a few months short of his seventieth birthday.

Just as the Mohawk pilgrims were arriving on Saturday, Father's remains were brought to the cemetery chapel of the hill of prayer. After Father Edward Kennedy, superior at Auriesville, had led the prayers and spoken words of eulogy, Father Michael Jacobs and his Mohawk parishioners from St. Regis very fittingly prayed in Iroquois for the Jesuit who had always made them feel that Auriesville was indeed their home and who had worked untiringly to further the beautification of their cherished Kateri. Father Schlaerth will be remembered long and lovingly here on the Hill of Martyrs. May he now enjoy the presence of the Lord forever.



Summary of a Full Life

Born in Buffalo January 13, 1904

Entered Society of Jesus

July 30, 1921

Ordained priest June 24, 1934

Died in Buffalo August 28, 1973



Auriesville Years

Rector, Auriesville Community 1956-62

Director, Martyrs Shrine 1960-64

Vice-Postulator, for Kateri Tekakwitha 1964-68

President, LeMoyne College, Syracuse 1947-54

Teacher Loyola College, Baltimore 1928-31

Canisius College, Buffalo 1940-42, 1954-56

Fordham University, 1942-47

Treasurer, Buffalo Province 1964-68

Retreat Master, St. Ignatius, Clarence Center 1968-73

*Now open to page five to read the eulogy
to Father Schlaerth given by Father
James J. Shanahan, SJ*

MOHAWK
VISIT
TO
SHRINE

PRAY
FOR
THE
SHRINE
ON
OCT. 9



Each year on the Labor Day Weekend the descendants of the proud people who lived in the Mohawk Valley three centuries ago come on pilgrimage to the Martyrs' Shrine, built on the site of one of their ancestral villages. True to this tradition, two busloads of Mohawks pulled up on the Shrine grounds on Saturday, September 1, in time to participate in the 4 p.m. mass which officially opened the Kateri Weekend.

The Rev. Michael Jacobs, S.J., principal concelebrant of the mass, preached the homily on the debt of gratitude his Mohawk people felt toward St. Isaac Jogues, his companions in martyrdom, and the other Jesuit missionaries who returned to work in the Mohawk Valley in the late 1600's.



Born of a Mohawk family well known at Caughnawaga across from Montreal for nearly 250 years and a member of the same Turtle Clan from which Venerable Kateri took her origin, Father Jacobs was guest of honor at last year's celebration when he observed the fiftieth anniversary of his entry into the Society of Jesus. In his homily this year he emphasized that the Catholic Mohawks come on pilgrimage each year "to thank God for the great faith of the Indian people." He went on to explain that "I am not ashamed of having to tell that some, not all, of my nation were responsible for the death of the missionaries. Their sacrifice was permitted by God in order to bring the grace of faith to my people."



TOP: Sister Dorothy Lazare, cousin of Father Jacobs reads the first lesson at the pilgrimage mass of the Mohawks. MIDDLE: Hope of the future for both the Mohawk nation and the Church, these young people from St. Regis demonstrated their proficiency at tribal dances Saturday evening. BOTTOM: Five recipients of this year's Kateri Award pose with three of their Mohawk friends. Left to right: Father William Greier, pastor of Queen of Heaven Church, Tacoma, Washington; Joseph O'Brien, auto dealer, Cleveland, Ohio; Father Bernard Fagan, S.J., pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, Rosebud Reservation of the Oglala Sioux, South Dakota; Chief Silas Left Hand Bull, also of Rosebud, who made Kateri known among his Sioux people; two male voices of the Caughnawaga Choir flanking Sister Dorothy, and Mrs. Margaret Brookhiser, directress of the Religious Gift Shop at the Shrine.

ks from Caughnawaga and St. Regis Come on 1973 Pilgrimage

Commenting on the fact that there have been white men over the centuries who, unlike the missionaries, exploited the native Americans and despoiled them of their lands, Father Jacobs confessed that he felt no bitterness, for "my faith is worth more to me than all the lands of the whole world."

"God has taught us," he continued, "that we are all brothers, no matter what nation we come from. We are only pilgrims in this world and God merely loans us the land for our use."

Saturday evening a cultural and dramatic program opened with liturgical selections by the choir from St. Francis Xavier Church in Caughnawaga. Mrs. Esther Phillips (White Dove) as president of the choir dedicated the numbers to the late lamented friend of the Mohawks, Father William Schlaerth. A troop of young men and women ranging in age from 8 to 16 who had come with Father Jacobs from St. Regis on the St. Lawrence acted out to the beat of the tom-tom and to

the accompaniment of Iroquois chants several native dances of the Mohawks developed to illustrate the incidents of everyday life.

Mary Eunice Spagnola then presented a characterization of Kateri Tekakwitha, relating in the first person her first impression of the missionaries, her decision to accept baptism, and her efforts to grow in holiness. Finally with the aid of a commentator the young St. Regis Mohawks along with the Shrine's youthful sacristy crew presented a living roll call of the first generation of Christians, both Indian and European, who lived in the Mohawk Valley from 1642 to 1683.

The Rev. Joseph S. McBride, S.J., Vice-Postulator for the cause of Kateri's beatification, led seven of the priests in a solemn concelebrated mass at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday. The Caughnawaga Choir directed by Father Henri Lalande, S.J., sang the choral parts of the mass in Iroquois. After reading the gospel Father McBride presented a series of Kateri awards for the second successive

USE THIS ENTIRE FORM FOR REQUESTS YOU HAVE OF THE SHRINE STAFF YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ARE ALREADY TAPED ON THE REVERSE SIDE

CONCERNING MASS CARDS

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.

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 _____

Mail to:

FR. DIRECTOR,
MARTYRS' SHRINE, AURIESVILLE, N.Y. 12016

CONCERNING ENROLLMENTS In the Martyrs' Memorial Association

The usual offering is one dollar for an individual annual enrollment, five for a family, living or deceased.

Dear Father Director:

Kindly enroll _____
in the Martyrs' Memorial Association for _____ year
(or years) or perpetually.

Send enrollment to: _____

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

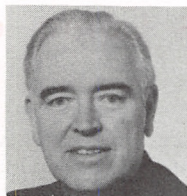
State _____ Zip Code _____

SEND ME THE SPECIAL EDITION OF THE
☐ AMSTERDAM EVENING RECORDER
ON THE SHRINE

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends and Pilgrims:

As this late summer issue of the PILGRIM goes to press, members of the Shrine staff are delighted over the attention given to Auriesville in three recent illustrated news articles. If you did not as yet spot them, you may want to track them down. The Shrine received national attention when Katherine Cassidy, regular columnist for TWIN CIRCLES, featured the Catholic Mohawks, on the occasion of their annual pilgrimage visit to the Shrine over the Labor Day Weekend.



Closer to the local scene, our alert and challenging EVANGELIST, Albany Diocesan Catholic weekly, covered the same "Kateri" Weekend with a full-page picture story and an accompanying article by Walt Chura who had the occasion to interview a number of the notables here on that weekend. We are grateful to Father Ken Doyle, the editor, and to assistant editor, Helen Fagan, for the spotlight thus thrown on our Mohawk friends.

Finally our home town daily, the AMSTERDAM EVENING RECORDER, has just released a 32-page historical supplement on the history of the martyrs and the development of the Shrine. We first learned last winter of General Manager Charles Miller's decision to produce this special edition and all through the spring old copies of the PILGRIM dating back to 1885, the founding year, were researched by our own Eloise Etzkorn, who not only presides at the Coliseum organ but excels in the office as well. As a result we were able to turn over our source material and old photographs to Managing Editor, Stanley Silvernail, who did all the planning and made the editorial decisions. Finally young Tom Frank of Canajoharie, now a senior of St. Lawrence University wrote most of the articles during a summer assignment with the Amsterdam paper. Never has there been as extensive a study made on the 88-year-old history of the Shrine. The articles should serve some future Shrine staff in good stead when it comes time to write our centennial story in 1985.

Would you like a copy of the RECORDER'S commemorative edition on the Martyrs' Shrine? We can send you one if you fill out the form on page 3 of this issue of the PILGRIM. Simply send a small donation to cover the handling and we'll be happy

to oblige.

At the start of the 1973 season Father Fleig, Father O'Dwyer and I were frankly quite worried over the shortage of priests on our staff. Father Robert Burns had been recalled to Buffalo for work with Marriage Encounter and that just left the three of us. Our Provincial didn't forget us though. By early July two tried and true missionaries, both old-time friends, Father Edward Sullivan, S.J. of the Philippines and Father Richard Roszel, S.J. of the Carolines, joined us for the season. In addition for a month at a time we had the assistance of Father John Gormley, S.J. of St. Peter's, Father Shanahan and our dear departed Father Schlaerth who was in reality making his last tour of duty on the Hill of Martyrs.

Often during the summer we priests expressed our amazement at seeing the fervor of so many pilgrims to our sacred hill who in this day when some of the familiar signposts of the faith seem obscured come here to draw inspiration from the devotion of our martyrs-saints to Christ, His Blessed Mother and the Church and from the loyalty of the Catholic Mohawks, Hurons and Algonquins who 300 years ago were living the faith most heroically in this valley.

There was a decided up-swing this year in the number of pilgrims, thanks in large measure to the good weather which the Lord sent us from late July until Labor Day. But there is a frustration brought home to us from time to time when we realize how many of our Catholic people, even some who actually visit the Shrine, don't know who Isaac Joques and his companions were. In other words, the Shrine has been here nearly a century and we have yet to succeed in propagating the martyrs' story. Naturally, we keep looking for new ways to tell their tale. Perhaps, our readers could best advise us on how to do it, but among all the means available one of the most effective still consists in a deeply moved pilgrim telling his friends and neighbors upon his return from this hill what it was that impressed him. Do us the favor between now and next spring of telling the people you meet how you feel about Auriesville.

Come and see us if you can while the full color of autumn is upon us. Meanwhile you can rely on our prayers.

Devotedly in Our Lord,

Thomas F. Egan
Rev. Thomas F. Egan, S.J.
Director, Martyrs Shrine

THE MARTYRS' SHRINE
Auriesville, New York 12016

PRAY FOR THE SHRINE ON OCTOBER 9

**KATERI
WAS
BATIZED
IN 1676**

**PRAY
THAT SHE
WILL BE
BEATIFIED
IN 1976**

Remember the Martyrs Shrine in your will.

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Thomas F. Egan, S.J. President and Shrine Director; Robert L. Fleig, Secretary and Treasurer; and Timothy C. O'Dwyer, S.J.
Assistant Director; Edward F. X. Kennedy, S.J., Board Member.

Entered as second class matter July 6, 1942 at Auriesville, N.Y. act of March 3, 1879.



THE IMPORTANCE OF OCTOBER 9

Father Schlaerth finished his last letter to the Shrine staff with the words: "All the best and my prayers for that court decision!" He was referring of course to the eight years of litigation over the taxable status of the cafeteria and other Shrine properties. The Appellate Division ruled 5-0 in favor of the Shrine last fall. Now it is the turn of the New York State Court of Appeals. October 9 is the date now assigned for the case to be reviewed. We ask all friends of the martyrs to pray most fervently these next few weeks that a just solution may be found.

year to six individuals who had performed outstanding service in promoting devotion to Venerable Kateri. The recipients are all pictured and identified in the accompanying pictures. A seventh award was conferred posthumously on Father Schlaerth, former director of the Shrine who had served as vice-postulator until 1968.

One of the choir members, a graduate of Loyola College in Montreal and a young married man, spoke of the great contribution made by the French Jesuit missionaries to the preservation of the culture of the five nations by the systematic study of the Iroquois language and the unusual permission which they obtained from the Holy See in the early 18th century to employ Iroquois as a liturgical language. While admitting that he was far from being an expert in the history and traditions of his people, he confided that singing in the Caughnawaga Choir not only provided him with a meaningful means of worship, but also made him aware more than any other factor of his identity as a Mohawk.



TOP: Veteran Director Father Henri Lalonde, S.J., supervises the soprano section of the Caughnawaga Choir at the Sunday mass in the Coliseum. MIDDLE: Chet Adams of Detroit, Michigan, one of last year's recipients of the Kateri Award, who delivered the homily on Kateri at the pilgrimage mass joins Father Jacobs and Father McBride (far right) in congratulating Mrs. Ferné Carron, secretary to the Fathers on the Shrine staff, for her being chosen to receive the Kateri Award. BOTTOM: Shrine Director Father Egan, presents Father Schlaerth's posthumous award to his brother, Robert and his sister, Mrs. Rose Hepp.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER SCHLAERTH by the Rev. James J. Shanahan, S.J.

In the Chapel of Christ the King on the Canisius College Campus in Buffalo, Father Schlaerth's remains lay in state where on August 31 at 10 a.m. a concelebrated Mass of Resurrection was offered there. A life time friend and former superior, Father Shanahan delivered the following homily.

It was in the summer of 1931 at Woodstock College in Maryland that I first met Father Bill Schlaerth. He was starting his first year of theology and I my second year of philosophy. During the 42 years which have since elapsed we were members of the same communities on three different occasions for a total of six years, we were engaged in several important projects together, we participated in many a meeting, and yet in all this time I can recall nothing happening which in any way cooled or weakened the solid friendship which gradually grew up between us.

As I reflected on what I might say, the first thought which came into my mind was that there should be nothing sad. There are two main reasons for this conclusion. First, our Christian faith in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. It is at times such as these that our deep faith surfaces to strengthen and comfort us. The second reason is that sadness seems entirely out of place as we think of and talk about Father Schlaerth. Memory spontaneously brings back his warm smile, his ready laugh, his latest pun, something to lighten and to break the tension of a trying and difficult moment.

Any attempt to sum up in a few brief moments the total picture of a rich and busy lifetime is futile. All that is possible is to call attention to a few striking characteristics of Father Schlaerth. One quality which was quite obvious to anyone who knew him was his remarkable dedication to work. His years of preparation and study were indeed profitably spent, but it was only after his ordination and the completion of his graduate studies that the full scope of his energies and abilities became evident. Four years of teaching history and acting as dean of the evening program marked his first assignment to Canisius College. Three years of teaching in the graduate school at Fordham University in his favorite field of history came next. Then he went to the new Le Moyne College in Syracuse as rector and president for seven years. He then spent two more years of teaching at Canisius College before being appointed rector and director of retreats for priests at Auriesville for a period of six years. He remained two more years at Auriesville as director of the Shrine of the North American Martyrs, before becoming treasurer of the Buffalo Province for several years. His final work was at Saint Ignatius Retreat House at Clarence Center where he spent six happy and fruitful years.

For Father Schlaerth work did not mean just keeping busy. He made every effort to become thoroughly acquainted with each project with which he was associated at any time. I think it is safe to say that he never refused any important task which he was asked to undertake. He had learned and he put into practice the precious principle that only patient and persevering effort can produce lasting valuable results.



As Buffalo Provincial, Father Shanahan blessed the cornerstone of the St. Rene Goupil cemetery chapel eleven years ago. He was assisted by the late Father Schlaerth, who as Auriesville superior and Shrine director drew up the plans for the chapel and the province cemetery adjoining it where his remains are now buried.

There is an insidious danger, especially in our time, to become so involved in work that one forgets to pray. Any of us who knew Father Schlaerth well almost instinctively realized that he was a man of prayer. Many people noticed the care and devotion with which he offered the liturgy. The two most favorable situations in which he could impart to others some of his esteem for prayer were the years he spent as director of the Martyrs Shrine at Auriesville and his years of retreat work at Auriesville and Clarence Center. At its deepest levels a man's prayer is a secret matter between himself and God. Yet a rich prayer life flows over into one's associations with others. I think each one of us who knew Father Schlaerth well realized that he valued prayer highly and drew from it the inspiration and strength for his many works.

Perhaps what strikes me most as I reflect on the life of Father Schlaerth is what I may best call his loyalty. He was indeed an intelligent, imaginative, educated, capable man. Nevertheless there was about him a certain admirable simplicity, the childlike quality of wonderment and openness and enthusiasm about which Christ spoke. Father Schlaerth gave everything he had to his life's work, he developed his talents to the full, but in doing so it was not himself that he sought. He loved God first and then his neighbor. He was a true Jesuit, a true priest, a true American, a true friend.

As today we say our "auf wiedersehen" to Father Schlaerth – for in God's good time we all hope to see him again – let us recall full well that the best way to keep his memory fresh is to try to realize in our own lives the qualities which he exemplified so well. It is not merely "auf wiedersehen" but also "adios", as we commend Father Schlaerth to the loving kindness of God. His life has admirably taught the lesson of what a difference one man can make. Let us pray that God will bless us with many more like him.