

WINTER
1975

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

1675

SACRED HEART APPEARS TO ST. MARGARET MARY
OUR LADY OF FOYE COMES TO MOHAWK VALLEY

MARTYRS' SHRINE HAILS DOUBLE TERCENTENARY DURING 1975 HOLY YEAR

Three centuries ago during the 1675 Holy Year two events occurred which were destined to shape the traditions of the future Martyrs' Shrine. The first took place on June 16 at Paray-le-Monial, France, where St. Margaret Mary received the first of the revelations from Christ the Lord about His Sacred Heart. The second came later in the year when a replica of the statue of Notre Dame de Foye was brought from Belgium to St. Peter's chapel in the Mohawk Valley, where two Jesuit missionaries were ministering to an increasing number of Christian Iroquois.

The happenings went unnoticed by most of Christendom. Clement X, a frail and tired pope of 85, was preoccupied by matters of seemingly great moment. Poland was threatened by the Turks, but King Jan Sobieski repulsed the invaders at Lvov and again at Vienna eight years later. A future saint, Archbishop Oliver Plunkett, primate of all Ireland, was tramping the length of the land to rally his flock worn by persecution. The promising spiritual revival in France, which had produced a generation of saints, including the North American martyrs, was now being stifled by the strictures of the Jansenists. Small wonder for the Holy Father's failure to note new stirrings among the humbler folk.

In the 300 intervening years devotion to the Sacred Heart with its stress on the love and mercy of the Savior has enkindled the piety of successive generations. Because of the guidance given St. Margaret Mary by the young Jesuit, Blessed Claude de la Colombiere, and indeed, as a result of their mention in the revelations, Jesuits have subsequently figured prominently in propagating the devotion. No exception to this tradition, Father Joseph Loyzance, Father of the Shrine at Auriesville, began Sacred Heart devotions on the very first pilgrimage in 1885.

Mary's statue among the Mohawks is the first recorded instance where an image of the Blessed Virgin was venerated in New York State. Though the little mission was to suffer destruction within a decade, the Mohawks who thus honored Mary may well be proud of their descendants who still hold her dear at the Canadian Caughnawaga, St. Regis (Akwasasne) and Oka.

Surely there is no better way to mark the 1975 Holy Year at our historic shrine than to make devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Our Lady of Martyrs central to all observances during the coming season.



Life-size statue of the Blessed Virgin, sculptured in Carrara marble to resemble Our Lady of Foye, was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Mead of Buffalo to commemorate the golden jubilee of the Martyrs Shrine in 1935. It is now enshrined in the Martyrs' rustic chapel.



The late Father Thomas Grassmann, O.F.M. Conv. brought two identical replicas from Belgium in 1948, one for his Tekakwitha Shrine in Fonda, the other for the Shrine at Auriesville.

1975

OUR LADY OF FOYE – FROM A TREE IN BELGIUM TO THE VALLEY OF THE MOHAWKS

Just inside the Shrine gate stands the little round chapel, 90 years old this summer, in which the first pilgrimage mass at Auriesville was offered. An inscription over the door reads:

NOTRE DAME DE FOYE	1675
OUR LADY OF MARTYRS	1884

Newcomers often ask: "Does that mean you actually started the Shrine 300 years ago?" The answer is of course in the negative, but the Jesuit at the gate then explains that 1675 does refer to an event closely linked to the history of the Shrine, the coming of a statue of Our Lady to the Indians of the Mohawk Valley three centuries ago. In fact the very name "Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs" was chosen by Father Joseph Loyzance, S.J. precisely because of the association of the Blessed Mother with the Mission of the Martyrs of the seventeenth century. That mission with its celebrated statue of Our Lady of Foye came to an end in 1684, whereas the first Shrine property was purchased in 1884.

There are two more questions our pilgrims usually ask: Who is Our Lady of Foye and why was this particular statue of Mary brought to the Mohawks?

The Story of Our Lady in the Tree

The story begins in 1609 near the Belgian city of Dinant in the Meuse River Valley. The forest area east of



Pilgrimage Church of Our Lady of Foye, dedicated in 1624, a mere fifteen years after the celebrated statue of the Blessed Virgin had been discovered in an oak tree. Elaborate ceremonies marked the 350th anniversary of the find in 1959.

the town was the property of the Baron de Celles, who had contracted with the shipbuilders of the city to clear the woods around the hamlet of Foye and to haul out the lumber. One particular tall oak with a trunk eight feet in diameter caught the eye of Gilles de Wanlin, who felled it with an ax. Disap-

pointment was in store for him, for the heart of the giant tree had already rotted away. Innocent Delimoire, the foreman, ordered the tree sawed up into firewood, as it would provide no planks for the builders. Cutting into the upper portion of the trunk, Gilles struck some bright colored stones and some metal. There behind three iron bars he spied an unpainted statue of the Blessed Mother holding the Christ Child. Not more than nine inches in height, the statue had in all likelihood been placed in a niche to make a wayside shrine at least a century before, but then the oak became so tall and the bark so overgrown that the statue eventually was hidden from view.

When notified of the discovery, the Baron had the statue repaired and placed in a niche cut out of another tree nearby, with the bars put back in place as a grill-work. However after attempts had been made to pry the bars loose, he decided that the statue would be more safely preserved in his castle chapel. Word spread quickly through the countryside and it was not long before he was besieged with requests to view the "lady who had been found in a tree." Soon miracles were claimed. A particularly well documented one was the cure in 1616 of the father of a parish priest of the neighborhood who had contracted a malignant disease.

The Baron then sought the advice of his bishop, Prince Ferdinand of Bavaria, head of the diocese of Liege, and eventually agreed to build a small chapel on the spot where the mysterious oak once stood. In elaborate ceremonies on the feast of Our Lady's Presentation, November 21, 1618, the statue was solemnly carried from the castle to a place of honor in the newly consecrated chapel. Within six years the pilgrims coming to pray before the statue were too numerous for the chapel. Thus on the feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 8, 1624, the prince-bishop returned to Foye to consecrate a still larger edifice, the pilgrimage church which has remained in use to the present day.

The student Sodality from the Jesuit college in Dinant participated in the ceremonies on both these occasions, while the Jesuit rector, Father Bouille, wrote the first history of the new devotion. Thus it is not surprising to find the Blessed Mother being venerated under this new title in other Jesuit schools throughout Northern Europe. While there is no evidence that St. Isaac Jogues went on pilgrimage to Foye, he certainly must have been familiar with the devotion, as it was being enthusiastically introduced to the Catholics of Rouen when he was stationed there as a novice from 1624 to 1626.

Within a few years the tradition of an annual pilgrimage to Our Lady of Foye spread to nearly all the cities of the Lowlands. The Catholics of northern France and the Rheinland soon adopted the practice. As the century progressed Foye became one of the best-known Marian shrines in Europe. Early records revealed that it was not at all unusual for as many as 12,000 pilgrims, including 200 of the crippled and the infirmed, to gather at the shrine of Foye Notre Dame.

In his chronicle Father Bouille tells us that "this image of the Mother of God is of terra cotta (baked clay) and moulded to perfection. The countenance is full of grace and has a winning smile. The head is crowned with a diadem of flowers and precious stones like that of a queen. The child Jesus is as gracious as His Mother. He places His left hand on the bosom of Mary, and with His right He holds a round ball."

The rotted oak, far from being consigned to the flames, became eagerly sought after so that carved replicas of the statue might be made. By 1638 no more of the wood was available, but by that date replicas had been carried all over Europe and even to the missions.

Our Lady of Foye in the New World

The American bishops in their 1973 pastoral letter on the Blessed Mother recalled that St. Isaac Jogues was the first to bring devotion to Mary to the area which is now New York State. Could he and St. Rene Goupil, as they recited the rosary together during their captivity at Ossernenon (now Auriesville), ever have suspected that within a generation the very Mohawks who had tor-

mented them would be kneeling before a statue of the Virgin in this same valley? It could well have been their prayerful petition as they offered their lives for the conversion and well-being of their persecutors. In any case it was a prayer that would be answered, a dream that would be fulfilled.

The first record of a statue of Our Lady of Foye in the New World is found in the *Jesuit Relations* for 1669-70 (Vol. LIII, page 131) where Father Joseph Chaumonot left an account of his little parish of Christian Hurons near Quebec:

"Last year there was sent to our Reverend Father Superior a statue of the Blessed Virgin, made of the wood of the oak in which was found some years ago a miraculous figure of Our Lady at Foye near Dinant. . . Those who sent the statue manifested their wish that it should be set up in a chapel where the Indians commonly perform their exercises of piety, in order that they might honor the Mother of God and ask from her the graces necessary for the conversion of all these nations of New France. Accordingly Father Superior had no doubt that God's Providence had procured for us this precious gift for the good of a little church which had just been finished in a settlement of Hurons, at a distance of a league and a half from Quebec. Monseigneur our Bishop had wished us to dedicate it to Our Lady under the title of the Annunciation."¹

¹The superior to whom Father Chaumonot referred was Father Francois le Mercier, while the bishop was Mgr. Francois de Montmorency Laval, vicar apostolic of New France and first bishop of Quebec.

HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR INTENTIONS TO BE REMEMBERED IN THE OCTAVE OF MASSES DURING EASTER WEEK AT AURIESVILLE?

Dear Father,

Please place this list of my intentions beside the tabernacle in the Retreat House Chapel in order that they may be included in the Shrine's Easter Masses:

Your name and address can already be found on the underside of this intention slip. Please correct any misspelling or inaccurate address. Then cut out and mail to:

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



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends and Pilgrims,

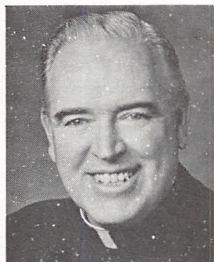
What's been happening on the Hill of Martyrs since the cold weather drove away our pilgrims last fall? Our readers might enjoy a situation report about this time of year.

There has been a changing of the guard within the Auriesville Jesuit Community. Father Edward F.X. Kennedy surrendered his duties as superior in early October. After executing several studies for Father Provincial, he has recently returned to Fordham University where he was well known in the early '60's, there to take up the work of campus ministries. The Shrine staff is most grateful for his support over the past two years, particularly during the crucial stages of the celebrated battle over the property-tax exemption.

Father Thomas J. Wade, his successor as superior, comes to us from LeMoyne College, Syracuse, where he was a professor of theology. A native of Schenectady, he has had a distinguished teaching career at St. Peter's College, Jersey City and Canisius College, Buffalo, as well as at LeMoyne.

Another new arrival is Father Paul J. Gampp, who will act as director of retreats at the Auriesville Jesuit Retreat House. Having served here as administrator in the time of Father Messner, Father returns to us after his term as superior of St. Ignatius Retreat House in Clarence Center, N.Y.

There is still another change to report: Father Vincent B.



Ryan, Auriesville's administrator for the past two years, has been named chaplain of St. Vincent's Hospital, Staten Island, and has handed over his duties here to Father Alvin S. Mahlmeister, who has been on parish assignments in the Buffalo Diocese.

The regular members of the Shrine staff are all slated to return for the 1975 season. Father O'Dwyer plans to resume his greeting of pilgrims after parish work over the winter in Auburn, while Father Barrett, holding down several assignments on the LeMoyne campus for the scholastic year, assures us that he is working on a bigger pageant for the coming season. Father Fleig and I have stayed close to headquarters this winter, aside from weekend parish work and occasional talks on the martyrs. We'll both be glad to see the return of the pilgrims, once we open our gates in May.

The price of gasoline and the state of the economy may keep some of our friends from visiting us frequently this season. Nonetheless, we are planning many prayerful events. The Our Lady of Foye anniversary, described elsewhere in these pages, will make this season a year of Marian devotions at the Martyrs Shrine, while the Sacred Heart tercentenary is most in keeping with the interior renewal and reconciliation proposed for the Holy Year.

You are constantly included in our prayers and masses. May the Lord of Easter preserve you from harm and bring you back to see us.

Devotedly in the Infant Savior,

Father Egan

Rev. Thomas F. Egan, S.J.

Director, Martyrs' Shrine

THE MARTYRS' SHRINE Auriesville, New York 12016

1975
—
Year
of the
SACRED
HEART
—
Year
of
OUR LADY
OF FOYE

Plan now for your trip to Auriesville in 1975!



Remember the Martyrs Shrine in your will.

PILGRIM, WINTER 1975 – LXXXVI, No. 1 – Quarterly publication of the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs, Auriesville, N.Y. Thomas F. Egan, S.J., President and Shrine Director; Robert L. Fleig, Secretary and Treasurer; and Timothy C. O'Dwyer, S.J., Assistant Director.

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

The statue was thus assigned by the mission superior to the remnant of the great Huron nation among whom Saint Jean de Brebeuf and the other five martyred priests had toiled 30 years before. Father Jogues was included among them, for he too had spent six years with the Hurons before his capture by the Mohawks in 1642. Just as conversions were multiplying, tragedy had struck this nation of 30,000 in the form of a war of extermination waged by the five nations of the Iroquois. Over half were either killed or enslaved. A few thousand migrated southwestward to form the Wyandotte people of southern Michigan, while an emaciated band of Christian Hurons came straggling to Quebec in 1650 where the French offered them protection. Although the site described above was abandoned in 1673 in favor of a new village called Lorette, the city which now occupies the spot still is known by Ste. Foy because of the shrine once cherished there by the Hurons.

Father Chaumonot, who as a youth left his native Burgundy for a venturesome life in Italy before entering the Jesuit novitiate in Rome, had maintained a lifelong interest in another Marian shrine, that of the holy house of Loreto near the shores of the Adriatic. It was thus that the new mission church was dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto, even though the little oak statue from Foye was given a place of honor in the new chapel.²

The next instance of the veneration of Our Lady of Foye by an Indian congregation is reported by Father Jacques Bruyas, one of the three Jesuits who came to the Mohawk country in 1667 to reestablish the "Mission of the Martyrs" which the sainted Jogues had begun. The three villages, which at the time of the martyrdoms were on the south bank of the Mohawk River, had been relocated on the north side. Ossernenon, village of the Turtle Clan, had been succeeded by Gandaouague or Caughnawaga, where the Tekakwitha Shrine now stands. Indeed, it was the uncle of Kateri Tekawitha who played host to the three missionaries. At first Father Bruyas pushed on to work among the Oneidas, but in 1671 he returned to the Mohawks. Two chapels had been built for the Mohawks, that of St. Mary in the village of Tionnontoguen and that of St. Peter at Gandaouague, the first two Catholic chapels ever to be built in the future Diocese of Albany. But it was at the mission of St. Peter where the efforts of the missionaries met with greater response.

It is unclear from the documents whether the Hurons sent their statue of Our Lady of Foye to their brother Catholics among the Mohawks, now that they had received a statue from Loreto, or whether the statue now among the Mohawks was sent from Belgium expressly for them. The report of Father Bruyas in Vol. 59, page

239, of the Relations, deserves to be included here:

"For my part, I attribute these conversions to the goodness of the Most Blessed Virgin, a miraculous image of whom, as Our Lady of Foye, has been sent us. I can state that, since we have possessed that precious deposit, the church of Agnié³ has completely changed its appearance. The older Christians have resumed their former fervor and the number of new ones increases daily. We displayed this precious statue, with all possible pomp, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, while the litanies were chanted in the Iroquois tongue. We uncovered it only on Saturday evening during the chanting of the same litanies, and throughout the whole of Sunday it remained exposed to the eyes of our Christians, who met three times that day for the purpose of reciting the rosary before their good Mother and Protectress."

Father Bruyas had arrived in the New World with Father Jacques Marquette, the famed missionary-explorer of the Midwest, in 1666. While the latter was naming the recently discovered Mississippi the River of the Immaculate Conception, his brother missionary in the East was engraving the name of Mary on the hearts and minds of the Mohawks.

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² Father Chaumonot along with Father Claude Dablon are still honored around Syracuse, N.Y., for supervising the construction of a chapel in 1655 on the shores of Onondaga Lake in their mission to the Indians who bore that name. It was the first Catholic chapel in the State of New York.

³ Agnié was the word used by the French when referring to the Mohawks. It was much closer to the word the Mohawks used for themselves – Caniaga, that is, people of the flint.



Our Lady of Foye has been the Madonna of the Mohawks since her statue was brought to their ancestors at Gandaouague in 1675. A copy of the statue was placed in an outdoor tree-shrine 20 years ago at Auriesville by the well known Shrine Director, Father Louis Devaney, to the delight of many pilgrims.

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No mention is made in the documents of the sentiments of Kateri Tekakwitha about the little oak statue of Mary, but it is safe to conclude that she must have prayed before it many times. It was in the same chapel of St. Peter in Gandaouague that she was baptized on Easter Sunday 1676 by Father Jacques de Lamberville.

What ever became of the statue when the mission was abandoned in 1684? By this time over half the Mohawks had become Catholics and had taken the trail to the new Christian Caughnawaga on the St. Lawrence. Father Francois Vaillant de Gueslis, the last priest to work in the Mohawk Valley until nearly another century had rolled by, was forced both by the authorities in Albany and by hostile Mohawks to flee the region, and there is no record that he was able to take the statue with him. It might well have perished in the destruction of the chapel. Yet a tradition persists that the Christian Mohawks managed to hide it in the ground before their departure. In that case, like the first Lady of Foye, hidden in the tree in Belgium, the Blessed Mother has been quietly doing her work in New York State throughout three centuries of unprecedented changes.

PARTIAL LIST OF PILGRIMAGES & SPECIAL EVENTS MARTYRS' SHRINE 1975

May 3-4		Opening Weekend at Auriesville
May 8	THURS	Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord
May 11	SUN	Mother's Day
May 25	SUN	INTERFAITH MEMORIAL SERVICE Armed Forces Past and Present,
May 31	SAT	May Crowning
June 1	SUN	LEGION OF MARY PILGRIMAGE
(National Pilgrim Virgin, blessed by Pope Paul VI at Fatima in 1967; will be at Martyrs Shrine weekend of May 31-June 1)		
June 6	FRI	Feast of the Sacred Heart: Procession 7:30 p.m. Mass 8 p.m.
June 7	SAT	GIRL SCOUT DAY OF RETREAT
June 8	SUN	THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS
June 29	SUN	SLOVAK DAY
July 20	SUN	UKRAINIAN DAY
July 27	SUN	HAITIAN DAY
Aug. 2	SAT	Handicapped of Utica
Aug. 3	SUN	POLISH DAY
Aug. 10	SUN	LITHUANIAN DAY MADONNA DELLA LIBERA DAY

Aug. 6-14 Novena in honor of Our Lady of Martyrs and the North American Martyrs

Aug. 9-10 NIGHT OF PRAYER: Reparation Societies, Blue Army, Vigilantes, Nocturnal Adoration, Block Rosary - Vigil in Coliseum from 8:30 p.m. Sat. to 6:30 a.m. Sun.

Aug. 15 WED Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady

Aug. 17 SUN ITALIAN DAY
MADONNA DELLA CATENA

Aug. 24 SUN BOSTON DAY

Aug. 30-31 KATERI WEEKEND - Festival Sat. 8:30 p.m. MOHAWK PILGRIMAGE
MASS 12:30 p.m. Caughnawaga Choir

Sept. 7 SUN HIBERNIAN DAY

Sept. 14 SUN KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS DAY

Sept. 21 SUN JESUIT PARISHES: N.Y. & BUFFALO

Sept. 26-28 Scout Retreat-Encampment

Oct. 5 SUN KNIGHTS AND LADIES OF ST. JOHN

Oct. 26 SUN Closing of 1975 Season

Date _____

Dear Father Director:

Enclosed find my offering for enrollment of

_____ (living) (deceased)

in the Martyrs Memorial Association for this year.

Send card to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State & Zip _____

Before mailing sign card _____