

PILGRIM

MARTYRS SHRINE

from the

Auriesville, N.Y. 12016

WINTER 1979

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OLD ST. MARY'S OF ALBANY PRESERVES HISTORIC LINKS TO EARLY CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES

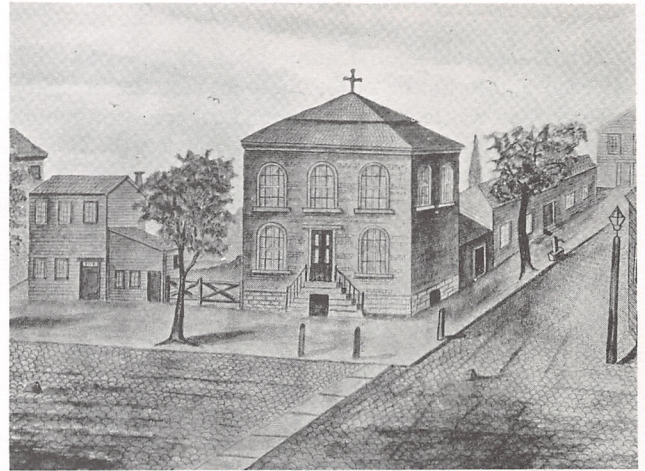
Just down the hill from the State Capitol one block to the left of State St. stands St. Mary's, Albany's oldest Catholic church, second only to St. Peter's in New York City among the Catholic churches of the Empire State, and mother church of all the Catholic congregations of upstate New York. When it was established in 1797, it was the only Catholic parish between New York and Montreal, between Boston and Detroit.

Many a significant event in the early history of the Catholic Church in America took place in the neighborhood around old St. Mary's. The first priest to visit the little Dutch outpost which was destined to become the Albany of today was a future saint, the Jesuit Father Isaac Jogues. That was in 1643, a mere 29 years after the first Europeans had come to settle in the area. Yet 154 more years would pass before the community would have a Catholic parish. Through most of those intervening years the lot of Catholics who visited the settlement or came to take up residence was one of opposition and repression.

A Dutch Village on the Frontier

By way of prenote it should be stated that Albany is one of the oldest, continuously occupied settlements in the thirteen original states. A small Dutch fort with a garrison of a dozen men was erected on Castle Island in the Hudson River in 1614, but three years later the fort was abandoned. In 1624 a detachment of soldiers and eighteen families came from Holland to establish Fort Orange on the west bank of the Hudson. Not until August 1642, however, did the little outpost have the benefit of a clergyman. In that month, Dominie Jan Magapolensis arrived with his wife and four children, just about the time that Father Jogues was captured on the St. Lawrence River by a roving band of Mohawks and brought down the trail to Ossernenon, on the river which bears their name.

Priest and minister became acquainted thirteen months later when the Mohawks brought their unusual captive with them on a visit to Fort Orange. The Jesuit was



Wood cut of the first church to be constructed for St. Mary's Parish. Work was begun in 1797 but was not completed until 1808.

persuaded by the Dominie to make his escape and return when he could do more good. Consequently he was spirited away to an attic over a store, located just a short distance from the present St. Mary's Church, so as to conceal him from the frustrated Mohawks.

A priest visitor to the St. Mary's rectory of today can look out the window to the northeast and see a skyline dominated by the twin towers of the First Reformed

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Old print of 1st Reformed Church on North Pearl Street in Albany as it appeared in early 1800's. Cornerstone was laid in 1797.

Church, an architectural masterpiece designed by Philip Hooker and begun in 1797, the same year the St. Mary's cornerstone was laid. The Reformed congregation proudly recalls Megapolensis as their first pastor. Yet the Dominie preached to his flock in far simpler surroundings, first in a converted warehouse and later in a single-room log church.

Not only did the pioneer Dutch clergyman help in the delivery of Father Jogues, but the next year he managed to effect the ransom of another Jesuit prisoner of the Mohawks, Father Giuseppe Bressani. Still a third Jesuit, Father Joseph Poncet, was rescued in 1653, but by this time Megapolensis had left Fort Orange to become the pastor of the Reformed congregation in Manhattan and Dominie Gideon Schaets had come as his replacement.

The fourth Jesuit to see the Dutch settlement did not come as a prisoner. Father Simon LeMoine made four visits to the Mohawks between 1655 and 1659 as an ambassador of peace and on at least two of these journeys paid his respects to the authorities at Fort Orange. He might even have offered the first mass in the future city of Albany in the secrecy of the room in which he was quartered, though he has left no record of having done so. He must have observed the Reformed congregation hard at work on a more substantial house of worship then being erected at the foot of State St. right in the middle of its intersection with Broadway. Long known as the Block House Church, it was in turn replaced by a still larger square church which was somehow constructed around it. The pulpit from the Block House Church, shipped from Holland in 1656, is still in use in the present twin-towered church on North Pearl Street, and the weathercock installed the same year was put on permanent display in the church vestibule in 1972 after over three centuries of use.

The settlement around Fort Orange was sometimes referred to as Beverwyck (Beaver Town), while the entire patroonship stretching for 24 miles along the Hudson was known as Rensselaerwyck, named after Killiaen Van Rensselaer, the wealthy Amsterdam merchant who was given title to this vast tract in 1630. All three names were discarded when the British renamed the settlement Albany after their surprise takeover of the entire colony in 1664. New Netherlands was divided into New York and New Jersey, while New Amsterdam was henceforth called New York City.

Catholic Beginnings in a Renamed Village

How many priests stopped at Albany after the establishment of British rule? Possibly all seven of the Jesuits who served at various times on the mission to the Mohawks begun in 1667. It was in the hope of such a



Catholic Mohawks, members of the Caughnawaga Choir, whose ancestors traded at old Fort Orange three centuries ago, file solemnly toward the sanctuary on last September 3 for their annual pilgrimage mass.

mission that St. Isaac Jogues and his two companions had willingly laid down their lives two decades before. England and France were allies during this period, and the burghers of Albany, though not inclined to allow the Jesuits to establish themselves there, would certainly welcome them with no less courtesy than during the days of the Dutch regime. A visit by the last of these missionaries has been recorded. Father Francois Vaillant de Gueslis, took refuge in Albany in 1684 after being driven from the mission by the native people. By this time nearly half the Mohawks, including Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, had accepted the Catholic faith and migrated to the mission of St. Francis Xavier at Caughnawaga in the St. Lawrence Valley. Small wonder that the remainder of the Mohawks who had resisted conversion grew resentful of the depopulation of their villages.

In 1683 New York received an Irish Catholic governor in the person of Thomas Dongan, appointed by James, brother of King Charles II, Duke of York and Albany, himself a convert to Catholicism. Dongan convened the first representative assembly ever held in the province and that body under his supervision passed a "charter of liberties" which among other things guaranteed the right of religious freedom. With a view to helping his fellow Catholics who, though few in number, were now living in New York City, the governor invited the English Jesuits from Maryland to start a Latin School. For a few brief years Fathers Thomas Harvey, Henry Harrison and Robert Gage worked quietly in the New York area. Dongan undoubtedly hoped to provide for the few Catholics at Albany, but a chain of events overtook him.

A Century of Repression for the Catholics

When James II succeeded his brother on the British throne in 1685, there was an almost immediate outcry from his subjects at the thought of a Papist as their king. By 1688 an invitation went out to Mary, his daughter, and her Dutch Protestant husband, William of Orange, to become joint sovereigns in Britain. Civil war erupted and soon became a war with France in Europe and the New World. When the fanatical Jacob Leisler seized control of the provincial government in New York and embarked on a reign of terror which included denunciations and public hangings, Dongan and his Jesuit friends had to go into hiding.

Though Leisler was imprisoned and sent to the gallows in 1691 after a new governor had arrived from England, the ensuing years brought no relief for Catholics. In a statute enacted by Governor Bellomont in 1700 "Jesuits, Papists and popish missionaries" were outlawed and a bounty of \$113 was offered to the nations of the Iroquois for every missionary they would bring to the authorities. New York became a veritable "no priest land" when life imprisonment was ruled for any Catholic priest who dared to enter the province and the death penalty decreed for a second offense. Not until France had been bested in the struggle for control of the eastern half of North America and Canada had submitted to British rule in 1763 did the crusade against popery in the province of New York show signs of slackening. The law against priests remained in effect until 1784 and it was not until 1806, well after the Revolution, that a

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Escorted by members of the 4th Degree Color Corps, State Deputy William Van Tassell, fourth from left in first full row, leads his brother Knights of Columbus in a living rosary through the Shrine grounds. His wife Julia is at his side. Associate State Chaplain Msgr. William A. Gorman to the left, and Pilgrimage Chairman Michele T. Aldi to the right.

—photo by James Heffernan

statute barring Catholics from holding public office was declared unconstitutional.

There have been estimates that as many as 5000 Catholics were living in upstate New York in the decade following the Revolution. The actual number of those



**THE JOYS OF EASTER
TO ALL OUR PILGRIMS**

SEND 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

SCHEDULE OF PILGRIMAGES & SPECIAL EVENTS AT MARTYRS' SHRINE 1979

May 6	SUN	ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS
May 12	SAT	LEMOYNE DAY: Fr. Grewen Memorial
May 13	SUN	Mother's Day
May 19	SAT	CATH. DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA
May 20	SUN	JESUIT PARISHES of N.Y. City & N.J.
May 24	THURS	ASCENSION DAY
May 27	SUN	INTERFAITH MEMORIAL SERVICE Armed Forces Past and Present
June 3	SUN	THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS
June 10	SUN	LEGION OF MARY
June 24	SUN	SLOVAK DAY
July 8	SUN	LEBANESE DAY: Maronite Liturgy
July 15	SUN	STATE-WIDE ROSARY RALLY Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Sunday
July 22	SUN	HUNGARIAN DAY
July 29	SUN	POLISH DAY
Aug. 4	SAT	HANDICAPPED PILGRIMS of UTICA
Aug. 5	SUN	CHARISMATIC DAY of PRAYER
Aug. 12	SUN	LITHUANIAN DAY MADONNA DELLA LIBERA
Aug. 15	WED	ASSUMPTION DAY Annointing of the Sick

Aug. 7-15	Novena to Our Lady and the Martyrs
Aug. 12-13	NIGHT OF PRAYER — Vigil in Coliseum from 8:30 p.m. Sat. to 6:30 a.m. Sun.

(The National Pilgrim Virgin will be brought to the Shrine for the All-Night Vigil and will be present for veneration until after the 4 p.m. mass on August 12.)

Aug. 19	SUN	ITALIAN DAY MODONNA DELLA CATENA
Aug. 26	SUN	BOSTON DAY
Sept. 2	SUN	KATERI WEEKEND Indian Pilgrimage — Mohawk Choir
Sept. 8	SAT	FILIPINO DAY
Sept. 9	SUN	KNIGHTS & LADIES OF ST. JOHN
Sept. 16	SUN	KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS DAY
Sept. 21-23		SCOUT RETREAT ENCAMPMENT
Sept. 23	SUN	JESUIT PARISHES OF BUFFALO
Oct. 28	SUN	Closing Day of 1979 Season

NOTE — This is only a partial list of the Major Pilgrimages. Changes may be made due to circumstances beyond our control. The Shrine and all its facilities are open daily to pilgrims from May 5 to October 28.

THE MARTYRS' SHRINE
Auriesville, New York 12016

PLAN A PILGRIMAGE IN 1979
95th SEASON BEGINS MAY 5

MAIL YOUR
EASTER NOVENA
INTENTION SLIP

Remember the Martyrs Shrine in your will.



PILGRIM (USPS 571-800), WINTER 1979 — Vol. XC, 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, S.J., Secretary and Treasurer; Francis C. Pfeiffer, S.J., Timothy C. O'Dwyer, S.J., Paul J. Gamp, S.J., John M. Doolan, S.J., Vincent P. McCorry, S.J. and Raymond B. Fullam, S.J. Board Members.

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

who had preserved their faith was probably much lower, for many a defection had occurred with no priest on the scene. Some of the Germans from the Palatinate who settled in the Schoharie and upper Mohawk valleys from 1710 to 1730 were Catholic, but within two generations all vestiges of their Catholicism had disappeared. Several hundred Acadians, uprooted from their homes by the British in 1755 and dispersed along the eastern seaboard, found their way to upstate New York, but by the end of the century little trace of them as a Catholic people remained in the state.

It was precisely to stem these losses that a group of concerned Catholic families in and around Albany met in late 1796 to organize themselves into a congregation. A church corporation came into existence according to the laws of the state without the aid of a priest, but subsequently, the parish was erected canonically by Bishop John Carroll, who in 1789 had been named by the Holy See to head a diocese taking in the entire country. St. Mary's Church was to receive a visit from another future saint, in 1836, namely John Nepomucene Neumann; would serve as a cathedral for the first five years after Albany became a diocese in 1847, and would claim as its first bishop, John McCloskey, a prelate who would one day be the first American cardinal. But all this must be left for a future installment.

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Who would suspect that this little family on the hillside near the Coliseum overlooking the Mohawk Valley carry a heavy cross? The little girl suffers from a rare syndrome. Her parents brought her to Auriesville on the Day of Prayer and Healing.

REFLECTIONS UPON A VISITOR

In two feet of snow, while making my rounds in the great Coliseum, I saw foot steps in front of my own. Going quietly through the door I followed the prints, still wet, and saw that they led down the aisle to the main altar and then went off to the right. One could see that the one who made the prints had knelt in prayer before the statue of St. Isaac Jogues.

Then the wet prints beckoned me to the statue of St. John LaLande, where once again the person had knelt in prayer. The next prayer indicated by the prints was in front of St. Rene Goupil's statue. Back and forth the prints went, stopping finally at the beautiful carving of the Lily of the Mohawks, Kateri Tekakwitha.

Why in two feet of snow amid the deadly winter cold does a person come to visit the Shrine, leaving behind only foot prints which will melt away and leave not a shred of his identity. Is it the magnetic, miraculous influence of these holy grounds upon which the martyrs tread that draws the pilgrims and visitors to prayer and contemplation?

The unknown visitor may well have had personal problems to be resolved through prayer, prayer to the Martyrs of Auriesville. It was logical to conclude that the visitor was a man because of the size and shape of the footprints. Evidently he had been here before, perhaps many times. His former requests may or may not have been answered. We have no way of knowing.

He had touched many points of the compass and the last point was east, before the statue of Our Blessed Lady, in the blue mantle, high above the Altar. Perhaps the visitor was very devout and could not conclude his prayers without a visit to her Shrine after directing his prayers to all points of the compass.

You might pass him during the season and never know him. He may be on his knees reciting Teresa's Rosary or praying quietly down in the ravine.

I shall know him by his FOOT STEPS.

— William Forde

SHRINE CHRONICLES EVENTS OF 1978 BUSIEST SEASON IN OVER A DECADE

—Continued From Previous Issue —

On Sunday, September 3, the Most Rev. Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany, came to the Shrine to lead the liturgy which climaxed the annual Kateri weekend. It was the first time since the days of the Most Rev. Edmund F. Gibbons, that the head of the Albany Diocese had been on hand to greet the Mohawk pilgrims. Very Rev. Joseph C. Towle, S.J., Vice-Provincial for Pastoral Ministries in the New York Province of the Society of Jesus, welcomed the Bishop and introduced the homilist, the Rev. Mr. Stephen Red Elk, recently ordained deacon among the Sioux people. The Caughnawaga Choir was on hand in full force. Not only did they sing at the pilgrimage Mass, but the evening before, while many worshippers recited the rosary in a procession on the hillside, the choir appeared framed against the backdrop of the illuminated Coliseum to sing their hymns in a sort of sound-and-light production, a pioneer venture here at the Shrine.

Following the Mohawk Mass hundreds of pilgrims accompanied the bishop as he moved through the grounds to bless the new structure that will now house the National Kateri Center, thanks to the industry of Father Joseph S. McBride, S.J., vice-postulator of the Kateri cause.

On Saturday, September 9, Filipino friends came for their annual pilgrimage. Father Francis J. Reilly, S.J., classmate of the Shrine Director, who was home from his duties as Professor at Loyola Seminary and the Aleneo de Manila in the Philippines, greeted many of his Filipino friends and took the lead in the liturgy. Next day a series of colorful exercises was executed on the grounds by the uniformed Knights of St. John and the members of their Ladies Auxiliary. Monsignor Carl J. Denti offered their pilgrimage mass.

Bishop Hubbard paid the Shrine another visit on September 17, when the Knights of Columbus gathered for one of the largest pilgrimages of the season. State Deputy William Van Tassell of Beacon with several of the state officers, led his brother Knights in a colorful series of outdoor exercises. The forty-voice mixed choir of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in Amsterdam provided the music for the liturgy.

When five hundred scouts from units throughout the Albany Diocese and beyond gathered for their annual retreat-encampment the following weekend, the Lord blessed them with their first rain-free weekend at the Shrine in 27 years. Father James A. O'Donnell, S.J., veteran missionary from the Philippines and now headmaster at Xavier High School, Manhattan, directed their retreat. Bishop Hubbard was again on hand to witness the

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Bishop Howard J. Hubbard pronounces the words of consecration with his brother priests at the concelebrated mass on the annual Knights of Columbus Sunday last September 17.

—Photo by James Heffernon

candlelight procession, confer over 150 awards and offer the Scout Mass.

Three busloads of pilgrims from the two Jesuit parishes in Buffalo, St. Michael's and St. Ann's, arrived on Sunday, September 24, for their annual pilgrimage. Organized by Father Maurice Miller, S.J., of St. Michael's, the pilgrims were led by Father Gilbert Schmid of St. Ann's Church.

The Ukrainian pilgrimage, originally scheduled for July, had to be postponed because of conflicts in parish schedules. However, thanks to the zeal of three young priests of the Ukrainian Rite, Rev. Bohdan Kin of St. John the Baptist Church, Syracuse; Rev. James Steele of St. Peter and Paul's Church, Auburn, and Rev. Phillip Bumbar of Sacred Heart Church, Johnson City, and the energy of Michael Pinkasiewicz, choir director at St. John's Church in Syracuse, a Byzantine Liturgy scheduled for October 15, proved to be one of the treasured events of the season. Because much of the liturgy was conducted in English, Roman Rite Catholics and even some of the younger generation Ukrainians derived a greater understanding of the Holy Sacrifice as it is offered in the traditions which stem from Constantinople.

All in all it was a season which brought many consolations both to the pilgrims and to the Shrine staff who minister to their needs. A prayer of thanksgiving is in order for the many blessings which the Lord sent to all associated with the Shrine. A prayer, too, should be offered that future efforts will bring even more pilgrims to the Hill of Martyrs where their faith may be intensified and their loyalty to Christ and the Church renewed.