

Ceremony Commemorates 75th Year Of St. John's Church Building In Greece

By ARTHUR P. FARREN

Purchase by a congregation of 20 families of a historic Ridge Road West tavern — the first building erected in the Town of Greece — inaugurated St. John the Evangelist parish there in 1865, at the close of the Civil War.

On Sunday, Nov. 20, 1949, nearly 400 families in the increasingly-populating parish adjoining Rochester will participate in a double celebration — the 75th anniversary of the present church building and the laying of the cornerstone of a new \$100,000 addition to the school.

Passing in review will be the years of struggle of this little church—from its early times, when stage coaches took travelers past its doors enroute to Buffalo, Niagara Falls or points west; through the final decades of the Nineteenth and early years of the Twentieth Century, when the hardy parishioners in the sparsely-settled countryside drove their teams to Sunday Masses; through the materially-progressive years of the last few decades, when the parish's farmlands flourished and were invaded by paved roads, big industries and bus transportation.

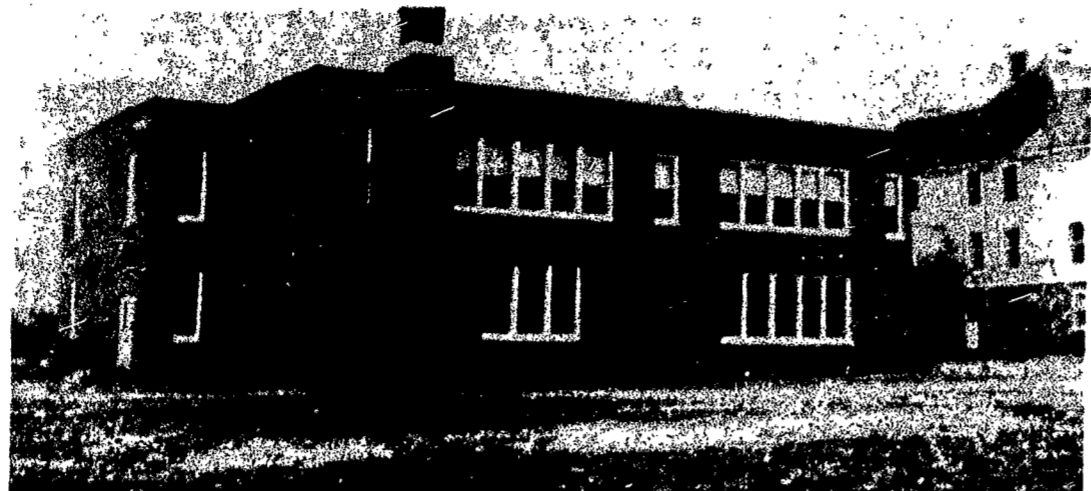
Tones from a 125-year-old bell, which has called generations of the faithful to the little church, will ring out as the jubilee procession proceeds from the rectory.

Nine pastors have served the parish, which now is under the pastorate of the Rev. John J. Baier, Ph. D., who succeeded the Rev. Sebastian B. Englerth in 1936.

IT WAS IN 1865, while the Rochester area still was part of the Buffalo Diocese, that a handful of parishioners—who had to travel long distances to Our Mother of Mercy Church, the more than century-old "Buddy Hill Church" on Mt. Read Boulevard—decided to ask for a parish of their own. Among the families were those of Daniel Sharps, Peter Marlon, Henry Burrows and John Straub.

For the sum of \$5,000 they purchased the old Haves Tavern on Ridge Road, on the site of the present parish property, and converted it for church use. Funds for Sunday Masses were supplied through the Rev. John M. Maurice, then pastor of Our Mother of Mercy.

The first St. John's Church building was blessed May 22, 1866, by Bishop Timon of Buffalo.



Catholic education in Rochester Diocese takes another step forward on Sunday when His Excellency Bishop Kearney will lay the cornerstone of the new \$100,000 addition to St. John the Evangelist's School in Greece. Part of the old frame school still being used is shown at right.



Familiar to thousands who have traveled Ridge Road West in Greece during the last 75 years has been St. John the Evangelist's Church, situated just east of the Greece Town Hall. On Sunday nearly 400 families of the Rochester suburban parish will commemorate the 75th year of the church building, when His Excellency Bishop Kearney will preside and preach at a Jubilee Mass.

Construction of the present church edifice, which is of English architecture, was begun in 1874. It is in this date that is being commemorated in next Sunday's ceremonies.

One year later, on Sept. 15, 1875, the church was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist by the first Ordinary of Rochester Diocese, Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid.

FIRST RESIDENT pastor of St. John's Church was the Rev. Frederick R. Hauber, appointed in 1876. The congregation had purchased a Ridge Road Inn which had accommodated travelers journeying west. The house was used as a parsonage until 1883.

The Rev. Mathias Hargather was appointed to succeed Father Hauber in 1880. Father Hargather undertook erection of the present rectory, a large house on Ridge Road next to the church, which was completed in 1884.

A TRANSOCEAN shipwreck is involved in the story of the bells at St. John's, which were donated in 1886 by Adam Volkmar.

Volkmar, enroute to the United States from Europe, was saved in the wrecking of the ship. In an act of gratitude for the special favor, he purchased the 60-year-old bells of the Monroe County Court-house and donated them to the church.

Father Hargather, who was appointed in 1888 to found St. Francis Xavier Church in Rochester, was succeeded as pastor by the Rev. St. D. Musmacker. It was during Father Musmacker's two-year pastorate that part of the present old school, which also was used to house the Sisters teaching in the school, was erected at a cost of \$2,600.

IN 1890 the Rev. Hubert J. Straten succeeded Father Musmacker as pastor. Father Straten served for four years, being succeeded by the Rev. Jacob F. Staub. Father Staub, who later was pastor of Holy Redeemer Church, Rochester, served from 1894 to 1901.

Appointed pastor in 1901 was the Rev. John F. Boppel, later Chancellor of the Diocese. During his eight years at St. John's the parish debt was cleared. One of the means of income were two long rows of sheds (only recently torn down) which kept some 30 teams of horses out of inclement weather during church services. Team owners at one time were charged \$5 monthly for the rentals.

The Rev. George W. Eckl followed Father Boppel as pastor of the Greece church in 1909. During the pastorate of Father Eckl, who now is Monsignor Eckl, pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Rochester, the front part of the old school, still serving parish pupils, was constructed. Father Eckl left in 1914 to become pastor of St. Andrew's.

FOR THE NEXT 21 years, from 1914 to 1935, the Rev. Sebastian B. Englerth was in charge of St. John's Church. During these decades the parish population made rapid increases, with many persons building homes in the area. So varied became the activities of the little parish that an assistant pastor was named. He was the Rev. William Lammers, who served (Continued on Page 9)

Increased Enrollment Brings Necessity for Larger School

Continually increasing pupil registration made necessary the construction of the new \$100,000 addition to St. John the Evangelist's School, Greece, which will be dedicated Sunday by His Excellency Bishop Kearney.

Bishop Kearney will lay the cornerstone of the new building which was put in use in September.

Of fireproof construction, containing an auditorium and four classrooms, it is built in the rear of the present small wood frame school fronting Ridge Road.

It is but half of a complete school which has been provided for in future planning, with the present old building to be replaced with a new one.

St. John's first school was opened in the church basement in 1885, during the pastorate of the Rev. Michael Hargather. There were 34 pupils, taught by Father Hargather and lay teachers.

Three years later the Sisters of St. Joseph came to the parish, during the pastorate of the Rev. M. D. Musmacker. At that time a school and convent combined was erected at a cost of \$2,600.

While the Rev. George W. Eckl was pastor (1909-1914), the present front part of the school was constructed. The school was dedicated in 1914.

Fr. Baier Marked Jubilee Twice

The Rev. John J. Baier, Ph. D., pastor of St. John the Evangelist's Church, Greece, which will mark a 75th anniversary on Sunday, had the distinction of a double celebration in 1937 on the occasion of his 25th anniversary of ordination.

Father Baier celebrated Jubilee Masses in the adjoining parishes of St. John's Church and in St. Theodore's Church, Spencerport Road, Gates.

Father Baier founded St. Theodore's parish in 1924. In 1935 he was appointed pastor of St. John's in Greece, and at the same time remained as pastor of St. Theodore's until the following year, when the Rev. Raymond J. Epping was named to succeed him.

Thus it was that Father Baier celebrated a silver Jubilee Mass in his new parish of St. John's and then went to the parish which he had founded and headed for 12 years for a second Jubilee Mass.

Born in 1886 in Rochester, he attended Holy Family School, St. Andrew's Seminary and St. Bernard's Seminary. He was ordained June 8, 1912 by Bishop Thomas F. Hickey. He served for 12 years as assistant at Holy Family Church before being appointed to St. Theodore's.

Father Baier was one of a family of three boys and five girls. A younger brother, the Rev. David Baier, O.F.M., is head of the Franciscan House of Studies at Catholic University, Washington, D. C.

75th ANNIVERSARY

OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CHURCH GREECE, N. Y.

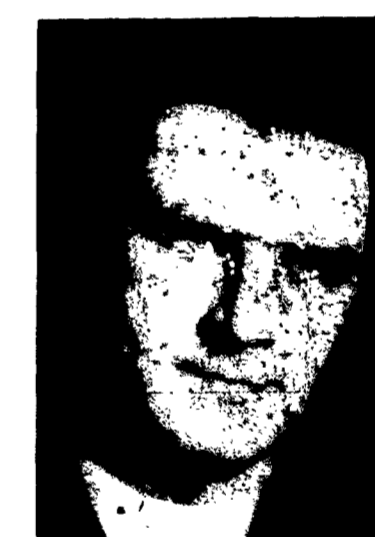
WILL BE CELEBRATED SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20th



REV. JOHN J. BAIER
Pastor



HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP KEARNEY
Presiding



REV. DANIEL MCCARTHY
Assistant Pastor

ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

JUBILEE MASS -- 11:00 A. M.

PROCESSION FROM THE RECTORY TO THE CHURCH

HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP KEARNEY

PRESIDING

REV. DANIEL MCCARTHY

CELEBRANT

SERMON BY HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP KEARNEY

DEDICATION OF NEW SCHOOL

CORNERSTONE LAYING BY

HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP KEARNEY

IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Priests and Parishioners of St. John the Evangelist's Church take the occasion of this jubilee celebration to express their sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed so generously to the continued support of the parish.

We ask that everyone remember in their prayers the sturdy pioneers of the parish, whose zealous efforts and perseverance have left us today's legacy of a successful and growing church and school.

We have recognized the vital need in the lives of our children for religious education, and have shouldered a large debt to erect modern classrooms for them. In this undertaking we are carrying out the tradition of Mother Church — to prepare our children for service to God as well as country.

We ask God's continued blessings on priests and people in the years to come, that they may continue to serve well their Creator and the community.

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St. Joseph Nuns
Conduct School
Nine Sisters of St. Joseph and one lay teacher conduct St. John the Evangelist's School on Ridge Road in Greece.
Sister Mary Angelica is school principal. Other nuns are Sister William Joseph, Sister Mary Celesta, Sister Mary Basilica, Sister Mary Mercedes, Sister Rose Cecelia, Sister Mary Phillip, Sister Anne Helene and Sister Joseph Michelle. Miss Marlon Wis is the lay teacher.

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• Members of this Parish

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