

# 50-Year History Of St. Stephen's Parish, Geneva, Recalls Growth Of Faith In Finger Lake City

Parishioners and friends of St. Stephen's Church, Geneva, N.Y., will receive this week a fifty-page book as souvenir of the Golden Jubilee observance. Prepared by the Rev. Thomas C. Kane, it chronicles and illustrates the history of God's grace in this parish in the heart of the Finger Lakes region. Following is a summary of Father Kane's book "The Song of Stephen."

CHRIST has told us, "In My Father's House there are many Mansions." In Geneva, because of the generosity and kindness of the Priests and People, there are two of these mansions—houses of the Kingdom of God on earth. One is dedicated to a great Bishop, St. Francis DeSales. The other is dedicated to the first Martyr, St. Stephen. Each parish, as all Catholic parishes, is engaged in making effective the prayer of Christ for His disciples—"That all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee."

GENEVA has long been noted for its strong Catholic traditions of devotion and loyalty. As the twentieth century dawned, however, the pioneer parish of St. Francis DeSales was overcrowded, its facilities taxed to the limit.

On June 12, 1904, the Very Rev. William A. McDonald, pastor at St. Francis, told his people that a new parish was to be organized in Geneva. The historic "Old Dutch Church" on Main Street, which had served as a parish hall since 1891, would serve as a church for the new parish. Father McDonald also announced that the Assistant Priest at St. Francis, the Rev. Stephen McPadden would be the pastor of this second parish.

Father McPadden had been born in Rochester, N.Y., in 1872, and educated at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries, Bishop Bernard A. McQuaid, first Bishop of the Rochester Diocese, ordained him a priest on May 30, 1896 and appointed him Assistant to St. Francis in Geneva.

He had a great devotion to his own Patron Saint, St. Stephen, the first Martyr, and requested that this be the title of the new church.

The first Holy Mass was celebrated on Sunday, July 3, 1904, at 8 o'clock, by Father McDonald, and the next Mass at 10:30 was celebrated by Father McPadden.

TRUSTEES of the new St. Stephen's parish were Mr. Thomas H. Sweeney and Mr. Daniel E. Moore. It was Mr. Sweeney who had been the first person to contribute toward the just-established parish by giving Father McPadden a \$100 bill as a start for a parish treasury.

William H. Miller was the first child to be baptized in St. Stephen's, on Oct. 2, 1904. The first wedding took place Sept. 23 when Miss Mary Casey became the wife of Edward Walsh.

THE FIRST SCHOOL was housed humbly in the basement of the church, in the vestry, and in two rooms of the Fage House, across the street. The first graduating class of four scholars consisted of Francis and William

## Famous Choir At St. Stephen's

St. Stephen's Men's and Boys' Choir is justly famous in Geneva for its tradition of fine church music. Originally organized by Father Stephen McPadden and Sister Pancratia, the choir never avoided its responsibility by attempting mere "easy" music. Father Finn, of Faullist Choir fame, visited Geneva to assist in the early programs.

The boys practiced regularly every Monday and Wednesday after school, and returned for full choir practice with the men on Thursday evenings. Choir boys were drilled to pronounce their Latin clearly and correctly, and to render their notes properly. For many years, a summer home at Valois was maintained by the parish and the choir had a two week's vacation and music school at the lake side.

Only recently a new organ has been installed and the choir looks forward to an even greater musical heritage for the years ahead.

Loman, Howard Sparrow and Rose Gallagher.

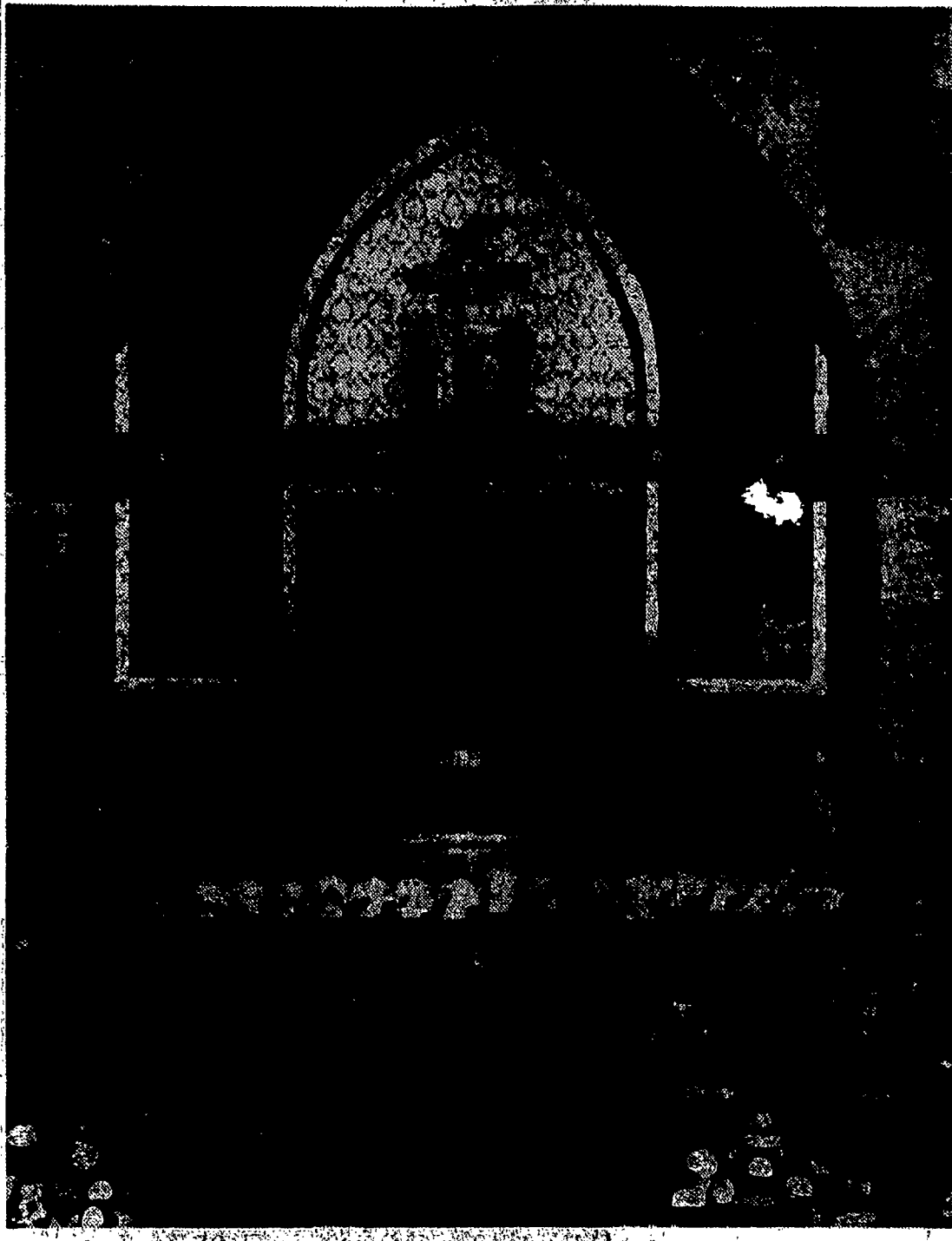
FINANCIAL RECORDS of the early days indicate that the people pitched in with a generous will to raise funds for their parish. Although the first Sunday's collection was a mere \$50, a lawn fête in August, 1904 netted the sum of \$351 and an opera, "The Mikado," in September, brought another \$380 into the treasury.

At the end of 1904, expenses were over \$12,000 and income was less than \$4,000. The parish was in debt but the extraordinary expenses of establishing the parish would not be repeated and priest and people looked courageously into 1905.

THE SISTERS who taught at St. Stephen's lived on Fulleney St. in one of the houses purchased in 1904. A second house on the property was used as a Rectory. In 1910, when ground was to be broken for the present church, the convent-house had to be removed, so the present DeSales convent was purchased and enlarged. Finally, in 1929, the present convent on High Street was selected as home for the Sisters of St. Stephen's school.

Both Geneva parishes were delighted in May of 1905 to learn that a priest formerly Assistant at St. Francis had been named as co-adjutor Bishop. Four years later, he succeeded Bishop McQuaid and became Rochester's second Bishop.

In the autumn of 1905, a Grand Fair was held in the State Armory. It opened with Mayor George F. Licht as special guest and had to be extended an extra



Interior of St. Stephen's Church, Geneva.

week because it was such a tremendous expense. Many local firms donated exceptional "grand prizes" which helped to attract Genevans. Emig and Hatmaker donated a gas table lamp; the Summit Foundry gave a Parlor Range; the Geneva Wagon Company a buggy; and Dye Brothers of Syracuse sent twenty buggy whips. Receipts of the fair totaled \$7,800.

Ground was broken for the new and permanent St. Stephen's Church May 9, 1910. Bishop Hickey performed the ceremony on the occasion of his first canonical visit to the parish. On July 3, 1910, the corner-stone was put into its place by Bishop Hickey and this ceremony on a hot summer day was attended by sev-

eral thousand residents of the city. The church was ready for use within two years and was dedicated Sept. 1, 1912. The Geneva Daily Times in its editorial termed the new St. Stephen's, "an ornament to the city, and a monument to the Catholics... such a building represents energy, determination, self-sacrifice, generosity and endless labors on the part of the people and Pastor."

ST. STEPHEN'S classic Gothic style is famous for its architectural beauty. Its mellow limestone exterior is an invitation to the quiet shadows of the interior. Over the high altar is "The Martyrdom of St. Stephen," painted by the New York artist, Mr. Frederick Wilson. Hand-carved statues at the altar, side

chapels, and throughout the church are the work of Isaac Kiermayer, nationally recognized as a genius of his art. The entire church can comfortably seat over 650 people.

FIRST ASSISTANT Priest to be appointed to the parish was the Rev. Arthur Smith, now pastor in Elmira. Two years later, Father William McPadden, a younger brother of the pastor, was appointed as Assistant. He had previously served at St. Francis parish and was well known to the people of both parishes.

Since the opening of the new church at the corner of High and Fulleney Streets, the "Old Dutch" had been used as parish school. In 1917, work was begun on the present St. Stephen's school building and the "Old Dutch Church" was sold for \$15,000. This sum was put toward the cost of the new school.

During that summer, Father McDonald, pastor of St. Francis and friend of St. Stephen's parish, died suddenly and left his worldly goods to St. Stephen's to assist the still struggling parish.

Father Stephen McPadden observed his silver anniversary as a priest in 1921 and the parishioners gave a new Organ to the church as a memorial gift. The first boy of St. Stephen's parish to complete his studies for the priesthood was Father Henry C. Manley who was ordained in 1924.

FATHER MCPADDEN stood in the pulpit for his last sermon on July 26, 1924 little suspecting that within three days, God would call him in death. All Geneva deeply mourned their loss and his



St. Stephen's Church, Geneva.

## Assistant Priests

Assistant Priests who have served at St. Stephen's include the Rev. Fathers Arthur Smith, Simon Wallace, Wilfred Craugh, Raymond Lynd, John Guy, Thomas Toole, John Burke, Ralph Meyer, Dorisio Moreau, Daniel Fraher, Irving Sullivan, Robert Fennessy, John Brill, and Donald Lax. Present Assistants are Father Joseph F. Hogan and Father William Hickey.

FATHER, the speaker said that this monument was the church he had built, a proof that he had a love and reverence for the beauty of God's House where he dwells with his chosen ones.

THE REV. WILLIAM MCPADDEN succeeded as pastor with the sad but necessary task of continuing the work his brother had so ably begun.

In early autumn of 1924, the new rectory was completed and the parish was now a unit. Church, school and rectory were built in the same style, and the convent conveniently located nearby.

The Pastors of St. Francis' and St. Stephen's determined in 1929 to erect a DeSales High School to provide secondary education for the children of both parishes.

Although the financial depression of 1929 cut deeply into parish incomes, the High School was soon completed and ready to receive its students.

In 1943, a disastrous fire destroyed the wooden-front building which served as library, laboratory, and classrooms. Building materials could not be obtained during those critical years of war, so DeSales limped on with restricted facilities until peace permitted the erection of the striking and modern DeSales Institute which stands today.

HONORS came to quiet Father McPadden in quick succession. He was appointed Dean of the Geneva area clergy in 1945 and entitled to be called "Very Reverend." Two years later, he was made a Domestic Prelate with the title "Right Reverend Monsignor." His health was failing, but never his devotion. Father McPadden's whole life could thus be summed up. He had always been "about His Father's business," busy about the things of God and the welfare of immortal souls.

Bishop Kearney, on Feb. 4, 1953, appointed the Rev. Raymond Nolan, to be pastor at St. Stephen's. Father Nolan was a native of Auburn but long known and loved in Geneva. Ordained in 1934, he came as Assistant to St. Stephen's in 1936, and after 1939

did double duty as Assistant at the parish and Principal of DeSales High School.

Many zealous Assistants, devoted Mothers who came to school for their children, housewives home-ward bound after shopping, men coming from work, all who came to St. Stephen's for a late afternoon visit would see this humble pastor in his accustomed place before the shrine of the Sacred Heart with the familiar silver Rosary in his hands.

ON THE HEART of the Holy Family, January 1853, in the early morning before his death was set, he rendered his soul into the hands of God. The Gospel that day had the question of the Christ Child, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" There are few who did not feel that Father McPadden's life was a life of that magnificent Kingdom, the Church of God.

As Father's and people's hearts were ever with the Holy Family, they too, the people of the ancient Church, have had their hearts characterized by the love and unity of the two persons and persons who have gone to God. "I have loved, O Lord, the Beauty of Thy House." "I must be about My Father's business."

## Mayors Map Drive Against Objectionable Comic Books

Geneva — The Four-County Mayors Association, comprising Ontario, Seneca, Yates and Wayne counties, met last week as a first step in their drive to curb the sale of objectionable comic books.

The group voted to order 600 copies of a list of objectionable comics currently sold by magazine dealers. About 20 copies of the list will be distributed to key organizations and individuals in the four counties.

Mayor Gardner of Lyons reported that representatives of more than 25 organizations in that community were to meet to discuss the comic book problem in Lyons.

Mayor Gerlach of Waterloo urged the other mayors to inspect the books their own children were reading. He also announced plans to inspect reading material being offered in Waterloo barber shops and suggested other mayors might want to do likewise.

The mayors agreed to hold regular meetings the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

## Newman Club Elects Officers In Aurora

Aurora — Newman Club of Wells College reelected Miss Ann Stark of Cleveland, O., as president at a meeting held in St. Patrick Hall, Aurora. Other officers are Miss Deirdre Henderson of Essex, Mass., vice president; Miss Lillian Growney of Bergenfield, N. J., secretary; Miss Sarah Benton of Ogdensburg, treasurer; and Miss Anne Crimini of Rosemount, Pa., elected to the executive board.

The Rev. Ralph Meyer, chaplain, outlined the program for the year which will include a lecture survey of the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic Church. A social hour followed the meeting.

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