

# Auburn Priest Keeps Dachau Promise

By MARY NYDER

Auburn — Three tributes in stone to Our Lady built in this area by a Carmelite Priest attached to the Carmelite Monastery have a special significance.

They are three "sermons in stone" erected by Father Francis Marianus Nowakowski, O. Carm., in thanksgiving for deliverance from the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Dachau.

A NATIVE of Poland, Father Marianus well remembers his first solemn Mass, for on that day, 19 years ago, hostilities broke out between Poland and Germany, thus starting the Second World War.

Father Marianus left his village immediately to return to the Carmelite Monastery in Krakow — not knowing that it would be 19 years before he would be able to re-visit his village and be reunited with members of his family.

During this space of time, Father Marianus would face death many times in the infamous concentration camps created by the fanatic Hitler. He was also to be blessed with dreams in which Our Lady appeared, which seemed to guarantee his personal safety.

AFTER RETURNING to the Krakow Monastery, he and the other Carmelite priests helped with the evacuation of refugees that fled their way in attempting to get away from the scourge of Hitler.

Shortly afterward however, the Carmelite priests became the victims of Nazi terrorism and were thrown into concentration camps.

It was while he was in a box car on the way to Auschwitz, that Our Lady first appeared to him in a dream. He saw himself lying in a ditch, when Our Lady came to his aid and helped him up.

"I opened my eyes expecting to find myself on the beautiful green grass at Our Lady's feet, but there I was in the crowded, dirty box car," he said.

On that trip to the concentration camp were 44 priests from the Krakow Monastery. Of these, only three, including Father Marianus, survived.

HIS SECOND dream of the Blessed Virgin occurred after the terrible death of one of Father's brother Carmelites. His head was literally smashed in with bricks. This left Father Marianus the only priest with three young Carmelite orphans.

Sleeping on damp floors that brought sickness and discomfort to both young and old, Father Marianus again saw the Virgin in a dream standing on a pedestal which was on a mound carpeted with the tender green grass of Springtime.

After five years in the camp, Father Marianus' health finally broke and he was sent to Dachau — where there was only one cell for internees; the horrible gas oven.

It was at this infamous camp that about 2,000 Polish Catholic Priests were executed, according to figures published in Osservatore Romano.



"SERMONS IN STONE." Fathers Francis Marianus Nowakowski, O. Carm., stands next to one of three shrines he constructed in honor of Our Lady for his deliverance from the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau. This one is in Auburn at the Whitefriars Monastery there. (A. G. Tarby Photo.)

The night before his scheduled execution, Father Marianus again saw the Mother of God in a dream. She again seemed to indicate to him that he was going to be rescued by Her.

AND THEN there occurred what Father calls "the miracle of our rescue," for on April 23, 1945 just about one hour before his scheduled entrance into the gas chamber, 13 Americans appeared before the gates of Dachau, thus heralding the advance of the Army.

In this unit were 11 soldiers, a Catholic chaplain and an Army nurse. The arrival of the Army at Dachau and their flashing to the world of the brutality there, of "man's inhumanity to man" is well known from films, books and various articles.

The day of the full emancipation was the first day of the month of Mary and Father Marianus recounts that the freed prisoners gratefully assembled for Mass and May devotions.

The difficulty which the priests and lay people encountered in the practice of their religion has been recounted many times, but the constant surveillance by the German guards, the bone crushing labor demanded of the internees, the innumerable risks did not deter the faithful.

IT WAS WHILE he was undergoing the torture and confinement in the concentration camps that Father Marianus resolved

to build a shrine to Our Lady in the pose that he had seen her.

Thus he built the three shrines in the Auburn area. One can be seen on the grounds of Whitefriars Monastery on South St. Auburn; a second at St. Mary's Church, Skaneateles, and the third at New York Mills, a community northeast of Utica.

Built of fieldstone, painstakingly gathered from the surrounding countryside and constructed by hand during time allotted for recreation, these shrines are indeed a labor of love and gratitude to Our Blessed Lady.

THIS HE HAS done during his stay at Whitefriars in Auburn. These lovely shrines to Our Lady are Father's methods of thanking and honoring Our Blessed Mother.

At the same time he intensely hopes that the lessons of love which they silently preach to us will cause us to turn to Mary, to love and honor her, to love all mankind for her sake and that of Her Son and to ask her to be as loving a mother to us as she has been to Father Marianus.

In his own words Father Marianus' message is: "Whenever you pass one of my shrines to Our Lady, pause for a short visit for I am sure that Mary will give peace to your heart. She will help you to forget and forgive injustices, even those of such enemies as mine who

brought suffering and death to so many. If you remain before the shrine, Mary so silently whispers to your heart of her love and the love of Her Divine Son for all that you can forgive and forget even your worst enemies."

Reservations can be made by calling or writing Mrs. Robert Bohrer, 919 Cliff Ave., ID. 6-5622. Deadline for reservations is Sept. 7. Dinner tickets are \$2.95. The class of 1949 will celebrate its 10th year reunion. Also honored will be the classes of 1933 and 1938.

Devotions of the Forty Hours will be conducted in the following churches of the Diocese of Rochester: Sunday, August 31—St. Plus V, Colton; St. Mary, Rexville; St. Bernard, Scipio Center.

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## CCD Vacation Schools Show More Pupils

A total of 4543 children, an increase of 199 over last year, attended the Religious Vacation Schools conducted under the auspices of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, according to Rev. Albert H. Schnaeky, diocesan director.

Fifty areas in the Diocese of Rochester were provided with these vacation schools, Father Schnaeky reported. Corpus Christi, Rochester; St. Alphonsus, Auburn; St. Anne, Hornell, and St. Joseph, Campbell, were new this year.

The number of parishes and children attending religious vacation schools in 1958 follow:

- Rochester, Corpus Christi, 55; St. Ambrose, 55; St. Patrick, 124.
- Addison, 76; Auburn (St. Alphonsus), 60; Aurora, 34; Union Springs, 37; Campbell, 41; Cato, 50; Red Creek, 50; Clifton Springs, 50.
- Savannah, 50; Dryden, 133; Elmira Heights, 132; Genesee, 99; Henrietta, 341; Bush, 82; Honeyoye Falls, 125; Mendon, 85; Hornell (St. Ann), 193.
- King Ferry, 60; Ludlowville, 64; Leicester, 123; Piffard, 20; Retsof, 37; Livonia, 110; Livonia Center, 47; Honeyoye, 55; Lyons, 120; Marlon, 45; Port Byron, 65.
- Moravia, 84; Owasco, 43; Newark, 76; Nunda, 68; Groveland, 20; Ontario, 173; Ovid, 88; Palmyra, 134.
- Dundee, 58; Phelps, 107; Scipio, 160; Scioville, 81; Shortsville, 180; Stanley, 70; Trumansburg, 95; Interlaken, 40; Watkins Glen, 175; Weedsport, 89; Wolcott, 62.

## Mercy Alumnae Slate Banquet

Our Lady of Mercy Alumnae Association will hold its annual Fall Banquet on Wednesday, Sept. 10. Dinner will be served at 6:30 in the school gymnasium. Mrs. Leslie Up, chairman, announced that Bishop Kearney will be the guest of honor. There will be entertainment furnished by the "Accordianettes." Also, there will be installation of the new officers for the coming year.

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## Nunda Sesquicentennial

# 'Altar' Takes First Prize

Nunda — The dint of many hours of hard work by several members of Holy Angels Church, paid off in rich dividends last Saturday during the sesquicentennial parade in this little town in Ontario County.

These seven parishioners of the church designed and built a float for the town parade during their spare hours — and it topped all other entries to win first prize before a gathering of 5,000 people.

THE REMARKABLE thing about the float's winning was that it represented a Catholic Church Sanctuary. Children were posed as ready for their first Holy Communion.

"My parishioners really did a wonderful job," Father Raymond G. Heisel, church pastor said. "I was very happy for them that the float was awarded first prize and it showed me that the people in this town, most of whom are Protestants, have a sincere respect for the faith of their Catholic neighbors."

Putting in long hours of labor to construct the float were James Kellogg, Charles Somers, Hubert McMaster, Walter Walsworth and the Mesdames Clair McCarthy, Paul Byrnes and Stanley Zareczny.

STANDING BEFORE the altar of the giant gold and silver float was Dennis Kellogg, the "priest" ready to give "Communion" to Kathleen Byrnes, Linda Creveling, Patricia E. S. L. r. Doreen Sanford, Eugene Martin and James Reynolds.

On either side of the altar were two "angels" dressed in appropriate garb regarding other communicants as they were about to receive the "host" for the first time. These "angels" were portrayed by Julie Ann Piraino and Mary Ann Zareczny.

Assisting the "priest" were his two altar boys — Donald Byrnes and Philip Nasca.

"The children on the float were absolutely marvelous," Father Heisel related. "They were as serious about their business as if they really and truly were in church. We couldn't have gotten a better job out of professional actors."



PRIZE WINNING 'altar,' the work of Holy Angels Church members, Nunda, as seen in the town's sesquicentennial parade.

THE FLOAT was drawn down the street by an automobile. For some I guess, this was the second drive by another first time that they had ever seen a replica of a Catholic Church sanctuary.

The parade was the highlight of the observance of this town's 150th anniversary. Both town and county officials were represented for the occasion.

## Father Murphy First Saturday Speaker

Rev. Richard E. Murphy, assistant pastor of St. James Parish will be the guest speaker for the First Saturday Luncheon, held at the Powers Hotel Ballroom Saturday, Sept. 6, at 12:15 p.m. Rev. Albert J. Shamon, professor at St. Andrew's Seminary is moderator of the luncheon.

THE LUNCHEON is sponsored by the Monroe County Council of Catholic Women, Rev. Gerard Krieg, moderator and Mrs. Lawrence Weis president. Rev. E. Leo McManus is moderator of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

St. James Rosary Society will be hostesses this month. Mrs. John Palermo, president of the Rosary Society will preside as toastmistress. She will be assisted by the Mesdames Michael Compertore, Homer Doane, Gerald-Hubergsen and Joseph Pitt.

Reservations for everyone outside of St. James parish should be received by Mrs. James Hilbert, 146 Normandy Ave., ID. 6-8448, not later than Sept. 3rd.

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