

# Scipio Center Parish Marks 100th Anniversary

Parishioners of St. Bernard's Church, Scipio Center, will mark their parish centenary at a jubilee Mass, Sunday, October 15, at 8 p.m.

The anniversary dinner will be held at Mt. Carmel High School auditorium following the Mass.

Celebrant of the Jubilee Mass will be Rev. Daniel V. Hogan who was appointed pastor of St. Bernard's Church this past June.

St. Bernard's is not one of the larger parishes of the Rochester Diocese — it counts about 250 members — but its village name and its traditions are long and justly proud.

The village, not far south of Auburn, is named for one of the other two famous Roman generals, a father and son of the second century B.C.

The spiritual battle for souls began at the Scipio Center parish church one hundred years ago.

The Auburn Daily Advertiser of October 9, 1867, announced the event as follows:

"The new Roman Catholic church at Scipio will be dedicated next Sunday, the 13th inst., at 11 o'clock, by the Very Reverend William Gleason, Administrator of this Diocese. Some other Reverend Gentlemen will also assist at the sacred ceremonies. Very Reverend Michael Creedon, formerly of this city, will preach the dedication sermon." The church was a part of the diocese of Buffalo. There was no Rochester diocese at the time.

The land, where the 100 year old edifice still stands is just 1000 feet west of State Route 34 in Scipio Center. The deed states it was bought from Valson and Rachel Smith.

In 1866, Rev. Bernard McCool, purchased less than an acre of land for \$100 for the church, and in 1867 the 32 feet by 45 feet wood frame structure was begun. It was completed that fall. Father McCool resided in Union Springs at the time, and was a pastor for all of southern Cayuga County, even though there were no churches except in Union Springs and Aurora — and the new Scipio church.

Later on, Father McCool bought a lot east of the church for a rectory, and a lot south of the church for a cemetery from the same Valson and Rachel Smith for \$382.50. The date was April 1, 1870.

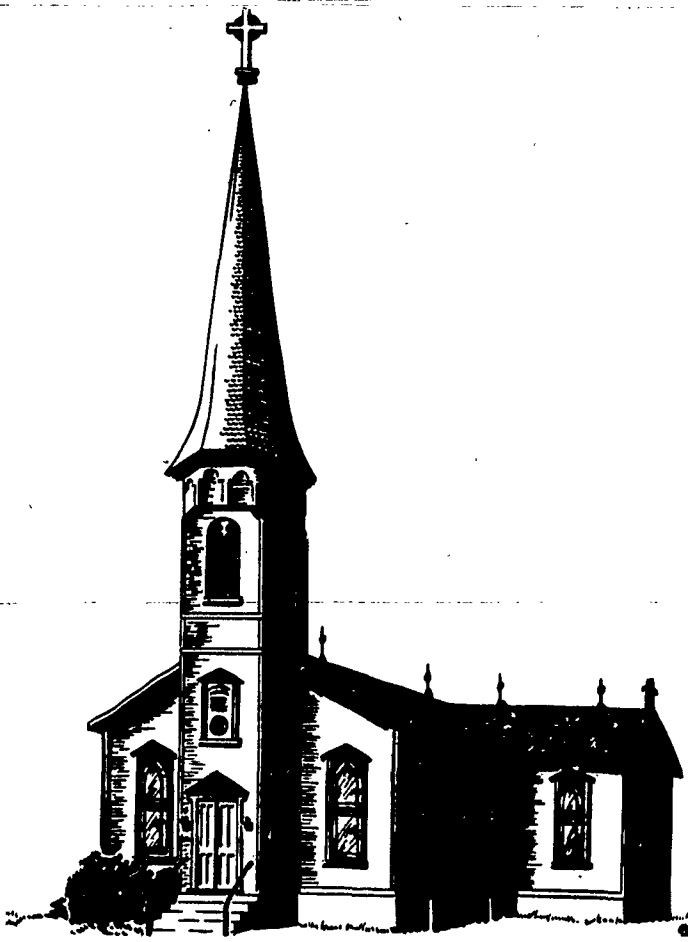
The cemetery was used for some time, throughout the 1870's, but later land was acquired some 1000 feet east of the church on a small hill for a larger cemetery, in use today. The graves in the old cemetery in the rear of the church are blessed each year along with the newer cemetery.

A two story brick rectory was built for the priest's living quarters on land immediately east of the wooden frame church.

Father McCool was pastor of St. Michael's Church in Union Springs, St. Agnes's church in Aurora (later a new church would be built on the Main St. and called St. Patrick's), and also the "stations" in the townships of Aurelius, Scipio and Genoa, until October of 1870. The new church in Scipio was now termed a "mission" rather than a station. The "station" term represented an area with no church, but an area served by a priest; the "mission" term meant a church without a resident pastor.

Father McCool went on to build churches in King Ferry, which closely resembles the Scipio church in size and style of architecture, in Cayuga, bought the land for a new church on Main Street in Aurora, and when he was transferred to Seneca Falls he built a parochial school and residence. This builder of churches died in Seneca Falls Feb. 11, 1878.

Father McCool was followed by Father Schmeltzer who lived in Union Springs and served



Aurora, King Ferry, Genoa (a station), and Scipio. Because of the large area the churches, necessarily did not have Mass every Sunday. This was to come later.

In 1871 Father Schmeltzer was transferred to Rochester and Father Eugene Pagan took up residence in Union Springs at St. Michael's and served until January 1877.

In 1873, St. Bernard's received its first resident pastor, Father Hugh Francis Rafferty. Father Rafferty spent his entire priesthood in Scipio. He served until 1908.

Father Rafferty enlarged the box-like church built by Father McCool, adding two well-proportioned wings, making the church bigger, and adding a front section which dignified the church with a steeple. The new construction was done in 1877. In 1873, Father Rafferty attended the cornerstone laying of a new church for St. Patrick's parish, Aurora. Also present at the cornerstone ceremony was the first bishop of the newly formed Rochester diocese, Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid. The Rochester diocese dates from 1868.

Father Rafferty was buried in the new parish cemetery land which he had acquired for the parish during his term of pastorate.

Father John Doran was the second pastor, 1908-1915. Other pastors have been Fathers Edward Dwyer, 1915-1920; Frederick Straub, 1920-1924; Edward Lyons, 1924-1935; Emmett Dougherty, 1935-1940; John Maxwell, 1940-43; Francis Turner, 1943-1950; William Tobin, 1950-1954; Leo Hastings, 1954-58; Elmer Heindl, 1958-1960; Raymond Wuest, 1960-1964; John Morgan, 1964-1967, and the present pastor, Father Daniel Hogan who assumed the position in August of this year.

Before the present building was erected in 1867, Mass was said in the homes of Catholics. In 1835, there were only 36 priests in all of the Diocese of New York State.

The priest often arrived in the evening at a "station." Catholics would come from the surrounding area, the priest would hear confessions, stay overnight at the residence, and say Mass in the morning. Marriages and baptisms and priestly advice also took place at the stations. During the 1850's and the early 1860's the priests from either Aurora or Union Springs or Auburn served the "stations," perhaps once a month. Records are few, and some traditions, plus "what probably happened" can be a guide.

A home now standing in the village of Scipio, so one tradition goes, then owned by a Mr. Flynn, was the scene of the first Mass in 1864, but Mass was probably said in the area years

before this, when a priest was available to make the rounds.

The first recorded baptism in Scipio Center was of William Murphy in 1864 and the first couple to be married there was Daniel and Anne Sullivan in May of 1869.

In preparation for the October 15 evening Mass and banquet, the church has been extensively redecorated in honor of the 100th anniversary. A new gold-tone rug has been placed over the entire area of the church, new pews have been installed of a blonde-colored wood, and a new altar now faces the people. The pews in the wings are at right angles to the pews in the main body of the church.

Other redecoration has taken place in the past few years of the church under Father Morgan who preceded the present Father Hogan.

The pastor of St. Bernard's also has charge of the mission churches of St. Hilary's in Genoa and St. Isaac Jogue's in Fleming.

The parish has a active Rosary Society for the women, and a Holy Name Society for the men, and an extensive religious education program for all school children of all grades.

Like all rural churches, the cemetery behind the church was a part and parcel of the parish life. In the old cemetery behind the church, most of the stone monuments are dated in the 1870's.

One series of monuments reads as follows: Thomas, March 31, 1876, 8 years, 6 months, 16 days; Edward, April 1, 1876, 6 years, 5 months; Katy, March 31, 1876, 12 years, 22 days; James, March 30, 1876, 1 year, 9 months, 22 days; Mary, April 7, 1876, 10 years, 5 months, 22 days. The story is summed up by the following words on one of the five monuments, "children of Patrick and Julia Byrne" and "we loved them dearly." There is no nearby marker for the parents. However parish tradition says that the family lived in the rural hamlet of East Venice, some ten miles south-east of Scipio Center, and that one son survived.

Chairmen for the jubilee celebration include Francis McGarry, Clifford Beadin, Mrs. Ruth Dugan, Mrs. Agnes Powers, Mrs. Florence Sullivan, Mrs. Nellie Powers, George MacDonald, Mrs. Irene Welch, and Mrs. Elizabeth King.

In 1947, the parish observed the 75th anniversary of its first resident pastor. In a anniversary booklet for that date the then pastor, Father Francis Turner, penned these words, which serve as a fitting epilogue to the coming 100th anniversary. They are as follows: "The years have come and gone. The buildings have changed, the people have changed, the pastors have changed. But in this changing parish one thing has remained unchanged. Today as in the years of the past, the same Eucharistic Sacrifice is offered to God and the same Christ looks out from his Tabernacle Home upon those who come to worship Him. May God continue to dwell there within the walls of Saint Bernard's for many a year to come."

**Lutherans Prefer Fish**

St. Louis —(RNS)— It was Sept. 29, opening day of a national-level dialogue of Lutherans with Catholic theologians, a Friday.

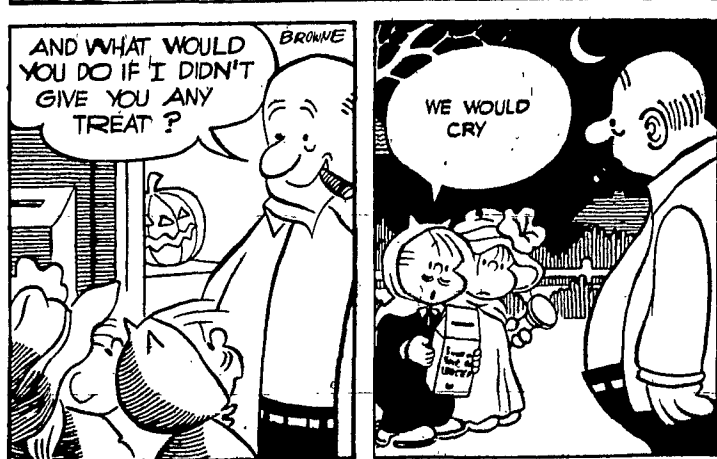
So the Catholics served steak and the Lutherans, seafood.

At a luncheon meeting, the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops served the theologians with an entree of medallion of beef tenderloin.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, host for the evening meal offered unshelled African lobster tail in drawn butter.

Both meals were served at the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel.

### Hi and Lois

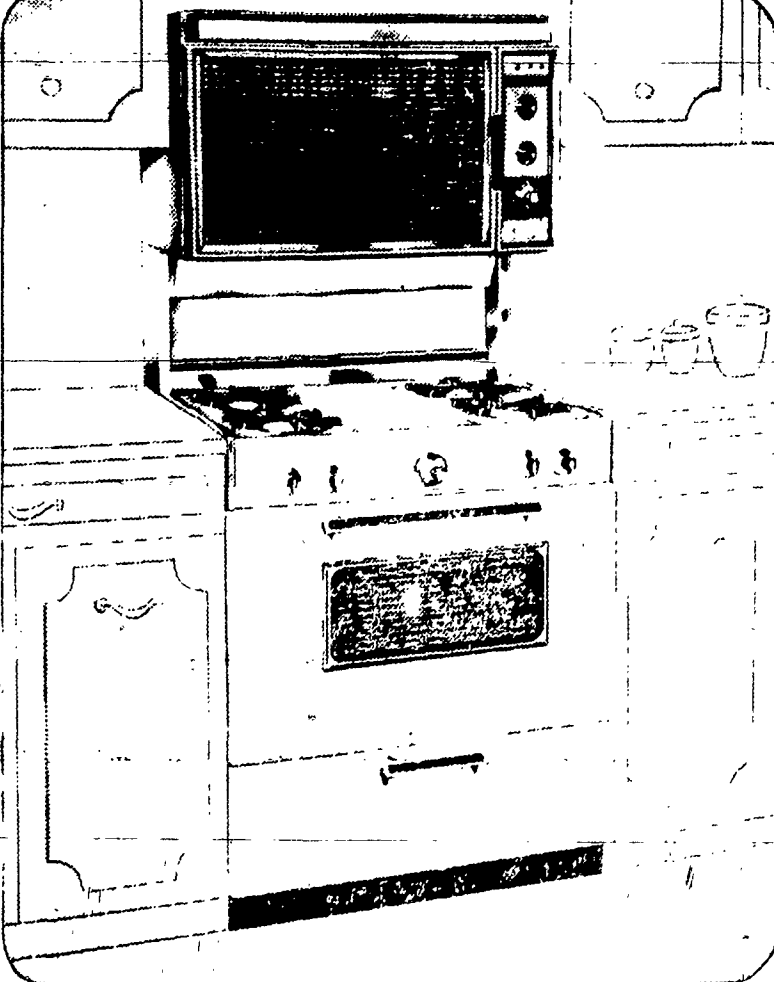


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