

# Beware of Thieves In Nun's Clothes

By DICK BAUMBACH

Elmira — As a general rule Catholic institutions are not usually involved in criminal cases, but the actions of a young Elmira Heights woman brought the name of St. Casimir's Church in Elmira into a news story concerning a grand larceny charge.

A spokesman for the Horseheads Village Police gave the following account of how the church, indirectly, became involved in the fraud case.

Mrs. Kay S. Scharett of Elmira Heights was charged with grand larceny last week after she allegedly stole \$339.59 in merchandise from Fay's Drug Co. in Horseheads.

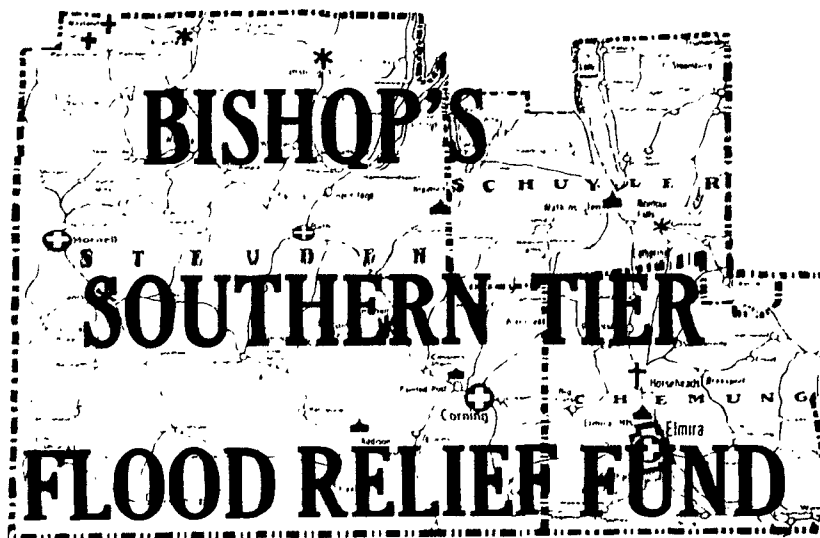
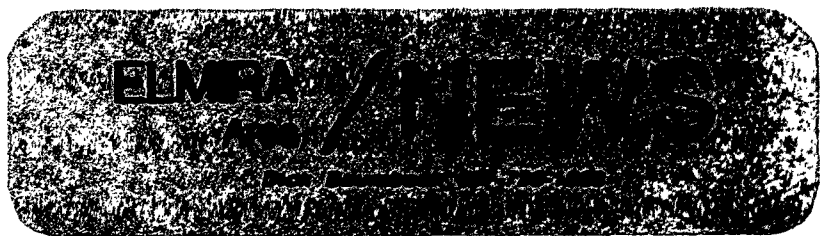
Police said events surrounding the grand larceny charge began several days before the merchandise was actually taken from the drug store.

Earlier in the week a female, posing as a nun from St. Casimir's Church, called the drug store and said flood victims were being sent to the store to purchase merchandise. The female said bills should be sent to the church.

The manager of the store called back a telephone number the woman gave him to verify the church had given authorization for the bills. The woman accepted the phone call and verified that bills were to be sent to the church.

Several days later a woman, who said she was from St. Casimir's, accompanied by another woman, who was later identified as Mrs. Scharett's mother, came to the drug store and purchased \$339.59 in goods and asked that the bill be sent to the church.

As clerks were loading the goods into a car one of the em-



ployes was able to obtain the license number of the vehicle.

Mrs. Scharett was also asked to sign a receipt for the goods and signed the name Ella Butters. Unable to produce any identification the license number was given over to police to check.

However, the two women had left the store and said they would return the next day to pick up additional merchandise.

A call to St. Casimir's revealed that the church knew nothing about the "flood relief program" and said they had not given any one authorization to make the purchases.

When Mrs. Scharett returned the next day to pickup more mer-

chandise, including stereo speakers, she was arrested.

Later she gave a written statement admitting her guilt in the unusual swindle which used the tragedy of the floods and the good name of a Catholic church to try and obtain merchandise.

In relation to the Scharett arrest police in the Southern Tier report that many "fly by night" contractors and home improvement firms are moving into the area in attempts to swindle flood victims.

Police warn that flood residents should verify the background of the firm offering to do any work on their properties and that the flood victims should turn over no money until the work has been completed.

# 'Business as Usual' For Elmira Schools

By DICK BAUMBACH

Elmira — "We are planning business as usual with our schools opening on Sept. 6, the day we had originally planned to begin our new school year."

V. Thomas Agan, president of the Chemung County Catholic School Board, said many of the individuals connected with the reopening of the consolidated Catholic school district "are very optimistic that we are well on our way to returning to normal."

Agan said the school district is now out of the volunteer clean-up phase of the flood relief program and is now having contractors come into the various schools to rebuild them back to the point they were before the flood.

Agan said school principals are now in the process of taking head counts of the number of students who were displaced by the flood and arrangements are being made for a new bus schedule.

"We will either bus children to their original schools or we will try and place them in schools more convenient to their new homes on a space available basis."

"Some of our schools were very tight with the number of students they taught prior to the flood, while other schools in the consolidation had more

## School Board Elections Held

West Elmira — Mrs. Matt Fennell has been elected president of Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School Board here. Also elected at the first meeting of the school board for the 1972-73 school year were representatives to the county Catholic school board.

On the regional school board level Francis Smith was elected vice-president, while Mrs. Joseph Stachowski was elected secretary-treasurer.

The representative elected to the Chemung County Catholic School Board from Our Lady of Lourdes is Robert Lynough. Donald Seaman was elected a representative from the local school board to the parish steering committee, while Sister Mary Dominic was elected a representative from the school board to the parish finance committee.

room. We just have to match up the students with the schools that can house them."

The school board meets Thursday to make final decisions on reopening the five elementary and one junior high school which make up the consolidation.

Agan said the school board will also discuss President Nixon's proposal to give flood relief to private schools.

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## St. Mary's Canandaigua

# The Story of a Parish

By PAT BOLAND

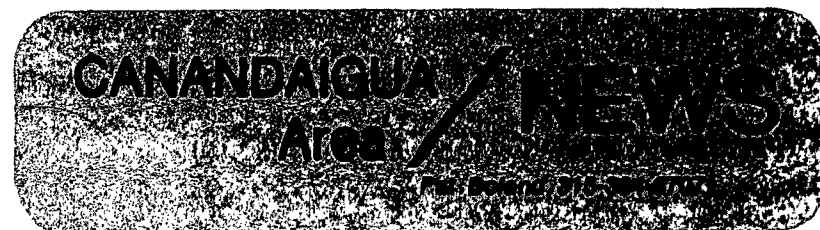
Canandaigua — Canandaigua's newspaper, The Daily Messenger, recently celebrated its 175th anniversary. The Messenger has been publishing under various names, since 1796, when George Washington was in his second term as president of the United States. The Messenger published a large anniversary edition which included many articles relating the history of this area. Among these was an account of St. Mary's Church.

The history of a church lies, not in dates, but in people. The people who struggled against hardship, poverty, and sometimes hate, to keep alive their faith.

Although in 1830, other faiths were flourishing in Canandaigua, it is recorded that Father Michael McNamara, pastor of St. Patrick's, Rochester, on visiting here, found only fourteen or fifteen Catholic families. From this small nucleus has sprung the present congregation of over 3800 members.

These families did not hear Mass in Canandaigua until 1843, but they traveled by horseback or wagon to Rochester to have their children baptized or confirmed. In 1843, Bishop Hughes of Buffalo, (Canandaigua was then part of the Buffalo Diocese) instructed Father Bernard O'Reilly to become Canandaigua's first Catholic pastor, to visit there as often as possible, and to "foster the feeble plant of religion in that place as much as you can."

So it was in this year that the first Mass was offered, on Antis Street, in a log cabin belonging to Patrick Doyle. Only 20 months later, Father O'Reilly purchased from Thomas Beals, land on the corner of Main and Saltonstall Streets, for the purpose of build-



ing a permanent church. By 1845 some kind of structure had been erected on this site and was in use as a church. The original church was completed sometime in 1848-1849.

By 1849, Canandaigua had its first resident pastor, Father Edmund O'Connor. A colorful and vigorous man, Father O'Connor was pastor during the "Know Nothing Era" a period in our country of high feelings — pro-slavery and anti-Catholic. In an old Canandaigua paper of 1890, a reporter recalls that when anti-Catholic sentiments were particularly strong, Father O'Connor posted his "most sturdy men", with shotguns, inside the little church one night.

At another time, a person appeared in town, calling himself the "Angel Gabriel." He spoke passionately in the streets against Catholicism until it seemed a riot was about to occur. Father O'Connor went to the town leaders and asked that he be stopped. They refused. His answer to their refusal was a question. "Then if I go out and speak against the others, will you give me the same protection?" Because they were unable to refute his logic, the "Angel Gabriel" was soon on his way out of town.

Father James Earley, pastor after Father O'Connor, was also a strong individual and eloquent speaker. In 1862, he was the principal speaker at a public

meeting in the town hall. His speech was a patriotic one, in which he urged all men to join the Army and fight for the preservation of the Union.

Under these forceful leaders, the small community continued to grow, and in 1873, Father Denis English, with great foresight, purchased from Hohn Granger the property and home located on Main and Gibson Street.

By 1880, a new school was completed on this property; and in 1901, under the guidance of Father James Dougherty, the present church was built. Under other pastors, and with the help of other congregations, changes have been made. The school has an addition, the church has been refurbished, a rectory has been built. Now, instead of an occasional Mass from a visiting priest, the people here enjoy an average of 24 services a week, directed for them by Father William Charbonneau, pastor, Father Kevin Murphy, and Father Joseph Gorman, associates.

## DINNER BOOKS

The Parents Association of Mercy High School has started its major fund raising project, the sale of dinner books. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Long and Mr. and Mrs. Dale Virgil have charge. Books may be reserved through 288-5354.

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