



**Epitaph**

A simple mailbox stands like a tombstone where the flood floated away the home of Maurice Buckley and his wife at 40 Roosevelt St. in Corning. All that's left is the walk leading up to the basement.

**Though Many Parishioners Gone**

**Churches Make Comeback**

By JOHN DASH

Houses of God were not spared in those dark days last summer when flood waters ripped through Southern Tier communities, taking life, destroying homes and wrenching families from their familiar neighborhoods.

Today, after a year of labor and sacrifice, the places of worship are nearly back to former condition as sanctuaries of faith and hope for a people still hard-pressed by the wiles of nature.

But the churches are not as full

of worshipers as they once were.

Two of Corning's Catholic churches, St. Patrick and St. Vincent de Paul have nearly completed their restoration. But, Father Eugene Sweeney of St. Patrick, cautioned, "There's still a goodly number (of parishioners) living in trailers. Hopefully, by the end of summer they will be in homes."

Father Joseph F. Hogan, pastor of St. Patrick's, echoed that thought when he said the parish had been blessed in terms of church buildings, but noted that there is a need for about 700 homes in the Corning area. Father Hogan expressed great thanks to all those who helped in recovery programs.

The Corning community held an ecumenical service of thanksgiving to God last weekend, and a number of parties were scheduled to note the flood's anniversary.

But the raging waters are still too raw a memory for the Elmira community surrounding St. Mary's Church to observe their anniversary, Father John J. Leary, pastor, said. While there was not much physical damage to the

church buildings, he estimates that about 60 per cent of his parishioners were hard hit. About 100 families have moved out of the parish, and while the finances of the parish held up through January, they are now way down. The parish is feeling the pinch, but not complaining, Father Leary said.

One of the hardest hit churches was St. Peter and Paul's, but its pastor, Father Edward J. Foy, said that the school building is completed and the church nears completion. Yet, one year ago the Sunday attendance numbered 800; today 550 people worship there.

In Painted Post, Father Harold F. Rogers, pastor of Immaculate Conception, still lives in a trailer. His church, however, has been the gathering place for worshipers since Christmas eve, and is about 90 per cent recovered. He notes that while about 50 families have moved out of the parish the financial condition of the church is almost to the penny of what it was before the flood.

All the pastors expressed their gratitude for the help given them in their recovery programs.

**Photos by  
Laurence E.  
Keefe**

**THE FLOOD**  
**one year after**  
**ELMIRA**

By DICK BAUMBACH

Elmira — It's been a little more than a year since the swirling, muddy flood waters of the Chemung River, poured into Elmira and areas surrounding the Southern Tier's largest city.

Most people would probably think the area quickly returned to normal. Such is not the case.

Frank Patterson, director of flood relief work in Elmira for the diocese's Office of Human Development (OHD), says he still has quite a few families which his organization is helping. He says the need for continued assistance will exist until September or October.

Patterson, who is also a social worker with Catholic Family Service in Elmira, said he is constantly in need of work crews. "Right now we are behind in our rebuilding work."

"We have 32 families which are at various stages of rebuilding. I

expect we might receive requests for additional assistance from several other families before the program ends."

Right now the majority of the work crews consist of inmates of the Elmira Correctional Facility. The inmates work in teams of two with a non-prison resident acting as work foreman for the various rebuilding jobs.

Patterson said seven crews are working on restoring private homes to pre-flood conditions.

Over the past year OHD, and in recent months with the help of Elmira Aid, have helped 110 families get back into their residences.

Patterson said the link up between OHD and Elmira Aid came about during a January meeting of relief agencies working in the Elmira area.

"I was attending this relief meeting when I got to talking

Continued on Page 12

**CORNING**

By CHARLES RANDISI

Corning — June 23, 1972 at first seemed more than a mere year away on June 12, 1973.

Gone was the stench of dirty water that greeted everyone's nostrils back then. Gone was the permeating dust that Agnes left behind. Gone was Agnes herself, and good riddance.

A white banner proclaiming an upcoming Senior Citizens' Day hung with limp pride across West Market Street. On Denison Parkway, a mustachioed young man with a tennis racket was thumbing his way out of town.

Do such scenes mean that Corning's problems belong to the past? Not on a bet.

The Office of Human Development occupies part of the basement of St. Patrick's School, right across from the bingo hall. Father Peter Bayer has coordinated OHD operations in Corning since last summer. He spoke of the glass capital's problems and OHD's role in dealing with them.

There are still foundations looking for their houses to be returned. There are still 699 Corning and Painted Post families out of their homes. Of these, 395 homes have been completely destroyed.

"When the flood first hit," Father Bayer said, "people were sending down help from outside all the time. Now, it's difficult to get one truck to come down."

As far as federal assistance is concerned, he said that "as you move away in time, it becomes harder for government to recognize your needs."

Visiting with Father Bayer at the time were the Rev. Merle Herr, local chairman of the Mennonite Disaster Service, and W. Donald Walker, manager of facilities at Corning Glass. They, along with Father Bayer, are supervising this Summer's YES program, which will provide summer jobs for students who want to help repair flood-stricken houses.



REV. HERR



DON WALKER

Mr. Herr said that a major problem exists in that "the people who could least help themselves were the ones who were least helped."

Continued on Page 12