

Pastoral Perspective

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Prayer — An Art of Listening

Last week we wrote about the lost art of listening to others, and promised this follow-up on prayer which is above all a listening process.



St. Paul exclaimed, "God's word is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword." Since His word is living it is being uttered at this very moment, it is being born anew now, it is personal and it is meant to penetrate our innermost being. Since His word is sharper than any two-edged sword, it can be a disturbing word which challenges us, it can call for a conversion of our hearts and lives. And this usually involves a painful personal struggle. God's word is compassionate, too. It comforts, it gladdens, it gives new life. I wonder how many of us hear God's word in these ways. Or better, how many of us hear His word at all, allow His message to touch us, to churn in our hearts, to transform us?

Prayer has been defined at times as talking with God. First and foremost, prayer is listening to God. In prayer, God invites us to become aware of ourselves, to discover our own personal meanings and values, to reflect on our doubts, our fears, our hopes, our relationships with others, to discover His will in the midst of the noise and confusion that surround us.

From time to time we all experience the drain, the anxieties, the exhaustion which comes from hurried lives, uptight working situations, broken relationships. The world is filled with crushing noises, with clashing cymbals, with hollow rings. Where in all of this can we find God? How can we hear His voice in the midst of ceaseless activity?

The answer is that God is to be discovered within ourselves. Before we can see and hear Him in the marketplace, we must meet Him in the very deepest core of our own being. And for this we must be silent! In silence, God will speak. In silence, God will invite us to become aware of ourselves, to search out

the meanings life has for us, to ponder His will for us. Silent listening is possible — is rich and full — is self-revealing and God-revealing. In our silent listening, God can break through our fears, our limitations, our weariness, our emptiness. He can piece together our shattered hopes; He can give direction to our urgent concerns; He can give new life and spirit and strength; He can reveal His purpose, His way, His goodness.

If we are to hear Him we must begin to listen differently. We must begin to reflect — to be silent — to be open. The word open is so important. It means allowing God to speak His word in our lives in His way. It means a willingness to learn what God's own hopes for us are. So often we look for God everywhere — except within. We must start with ourselves. We must create on the inside what is missing on the outside. Authentic prayer flows from God's presence within — and our willingness to find Him there — to listen to His expected word and His unexpected word — and to make our lives a vibrant and effective sign that God is within us — that we have discerned His will.

Aurora Parish Notes 100 Years

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Aurora — The celebration of Confirmation by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan on Sunday, Oct. 28 at St. Patrick's also will inaugurate the centennial year celebration of the laying of the cornerstone for the church in 1873.

"Confirmation seems especially significant on this date, as we are sending out new Christians into the second century, celebrating not only the history of the past, but looking to the future with new Christians carrying out, rejoicing in, the promise of the future," reflected Father John S. Hayes, pastor.

St. Patrick's Church is nestled on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake in one of the oldest villages in the central and western part of the state. Its parish history is steeped in the saga of early French Jesuit missionary activities, when as early as August of 1656, a mission of the Cayugas was established at the Indian village of Coiogouen, about 6 miles northeast of Aurora.

Names like Father Joseph Chaumonot and Father Rene Menard ring out through the annals of Church history in the area. These two priests erected the first temporary chapel in the Indian village. Father Menard remained for some time to care for the mission, winning the Indians' affection only after first receiving their scorn. Forced to withdraw from the mission at times, the missionaries nevertheless kept returning to evangelize the Indians of the area.

In the 1800's, before a priest came regularly to Aurora, the Catholics of the village traveled to Auburn and Seneca Falls or were visited periodically by traveling missionaries.

The first resident pastor of Aurora was Father William Quigley (1851-1852) who opened the baptismal registry Easter Sunday, April 20, 1851. Father Nicholas Byrne, 1853-1855, became its second priest. Mass was celebrated in private homes, but then a house purchased on Dublin Hill became St. Agnes Church property. During Father Byrne's pastorate, he completed St. Michael's Church, a frame structure in Union Springs (Springport) and resided in that town.

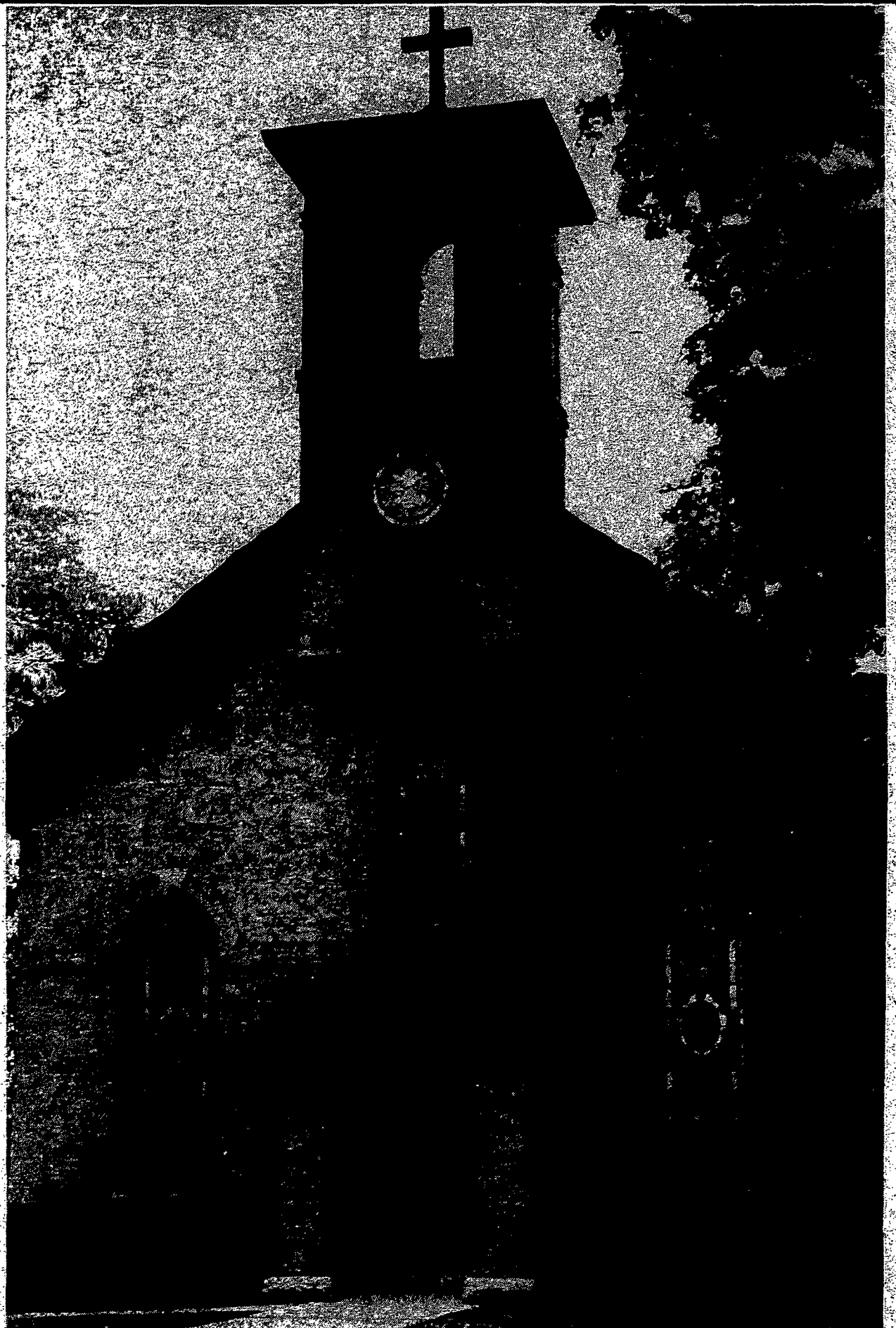
Ground was broken for St. Patrick's Church during the pastorate of Father Eugene Pagani, the seventh pastor of Aurora, who served from 1871-1877.

The ground was broken the first week of October in 1872, and the laying of the cornerstone took place before a large gathering Sunday afternoon, July 6, 1873. The church was dedicated by Bishop McQuaid on Sunday morning, October 11, 1874. Following the ceremony, Father Pagani celebrated the first Mass in the new church and Bishop McQuaid delivered the sermon.

The total cost of building St. Patrick's, a church of Romanesque architecture, came to \$8,199.99. The stained glass windows were donated by members of the congregation.

Among the 18 pastors who have served Aurora was Rt. Rev. Thomas A. Hendricks (1877-1891) who later became Bishop of Cebu in the Philippine Islands.

It was under the pastorate of Father John Nelligan (1891-1919) that the priests' residence was moved from Union Springs in 1901 to a newly purchased residence in Aurora, still in use.



Father James Kennedy (1910-1923) marked the good-bye to the days of the horse-drawn transportation with the arrival of the automobile as a means to keep in touch with parishioners.

Residing in the Aurora rectory today is its current pastor, Father John S. Hayes who was appointed in 1972 to succeed Father Robert J. Downs. Father Hayes, whose career as a priest varies widely from chaplain to rector at Sacred Heart Cathedral, relishes his country pastor role as another vital way to carry out the mission of the Church.

Father Henry C. Manley, pastor from 1959 to 1970, who will celebrate his golden jubilee during the centennial year, still resides at the Aurora Rectory.

During the Confirmation ceremony the 53 persons to receive the sacrament from St. Patrick's in Aurora and St. Michael's in Union Springs will be introduced to Bishop Hogan by Paul W. Haley, representing the parish council. Youths will present the Bishop with a food basket during the processional as an expression of concern for the poor.