

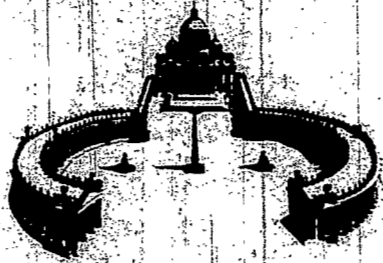
Pilgrimage Churches: St. Louis, Pittsford

By FATHER ROBERT F. McNAMARA

"Substituting" for Sacred Heart Cathedral as a pilgrimage church in the Monroe county Southeast Region of the Diocese is the Church of St. Louis in Pittsford.

St. Louis became a parish in 1911, with Father Louis Edelman as first pastor. Before that, Pittsford had been a mission of the Church of the Assumption in Fairport. Father Louis Miller (a convert and a former Lutheran minister) organized the Pittsford area Catholics, most of whom seem to have been farmers, in 1866. After that, Father Miller and his successor, Father Patrick McGrath, celebrated Mass for them in private homes. Then in 1871, the congregation rented a hall at \$52.00 per year from John Osgoodby — the upper floor of the Tousey Block. In 1874 the Pittsford Catholics, all 172 of them, finally got a chapel of their own: a small house on State Street, remodeled and somewhat enlarged by the addition of a new rear wing. This was replaced by a real frame church in 1884. It was built by a Mr. Finucane, who built a "twin" church, St. Vincent de Paul, Churchville, a few months later.

Father Edelman enlarged the white Pittsford church around 1921 by extending the south sacristy. In 1923, St. Louis church caught fire. It took an hour to conquer the flames, and considerable repair work was necessary. In 1935, Father Edelman added some rooms for religious instructions, otherwise the building remained unchanged until 1957. By that time, the Pittsford district had become one of the most populous (and prosperous) of the Rochester suburbs, with a total Catholic population of over 2,000. After it yielded the title of parish church to the new building on South Main Street, this 73-year-old structure was retained as a parish recreation center. About a decade ago the property was sold and the building later razed.



THE HOLY YEAR - '75

The "new" St. Louis Church, constructed during the regime of the present pastor, Father John A. Reddington, was formally dedicated on May 21, 1958, by Most Reverend James E. Kearney, Bishop of Rochester. Preacher on the occasion was the then Bishop of Pittsburgh, Most Reverend John J. Wright. (Bishop Wright is now a cardinal and an official at the Vatican).

The designer of the new St. Louis Church was the prominent New York church architect, Joseph Sanford Shanley (1894-1969). Shanley designed the original chapel at Mount Saviour Monastery, near Elmira (1953), and four churches in metropolitan Rochester. It is interesting to note that of these distinctive church buildings three have been chosen as 1974 pilgrimage churches: St. Louis, Mount Saviour, and St. Thomas the Apostle, Irondequoit. Although St. Louis Church was constructed for the "old liturgy", it was permanently adapted to the new in 1973 by the installation of a new altar of sacrifice forward in the sanctuary.

Pilgrims unacquainted with the artistic appointments of this church are urged to inspect them after their pilgrimage devotions are finished. Supervising the decoration was the Rambusch Studio of New York. The colored terra cotta statue of St. Louis over the entrance is by Frederick Shradly of Connecticut. Inside, the statue of the

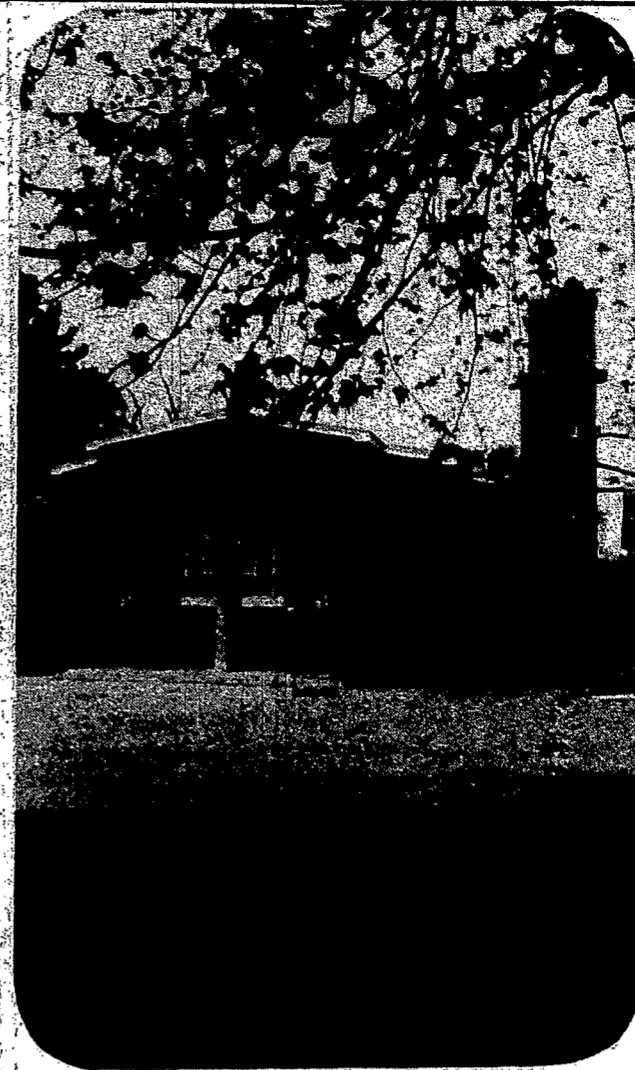


Photo by Dave Witbeck

Madonna and the stations, also in glazed terra cotta, are by Hugues Maurin, a French sculptor. John C. Menihan, a parishioner and one of Rochester's outstanding artists, created the shrine image of St. Joseph, in a mosaic of enameled copper. Menihan also designated the tester in the sanctuary. The windows were the work of Stephen Bridges of New York. Particularly interesting are the lancet windows along the side. They depict, in symbols, the articles of the Apostles' Creed. In the Eucharistic Chapel is an original eighteenth-century Madonna and Child by Giacomo Amigoni.

Very modern, yet very devotional, St. Louis Church makes an appropriate center of pilgrimage during the advance Holy Year.

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