



From left to right, the Garry sisters are Dorothy, Bernadette, Mary Helen and Mark.

## Our Lady of Charity Has 4 Sisters Garry

By BONITA BALDWIN

In a special Mass at Holy Angels School this Sunday two Garry sisters who unwittingly entered the convent on the same day will celebrate their 50th Jubilee as professed Sisters of Our Lady of Charity.

Sister Mary Helen and Sister Bernadette follow another Garry, Sister Mark, who celebrated her 50th Jubilee two years ago.

Three years from now, Sister Dorothy Garry will join the Golden Jubilarians.

The four sisters recalled their childhood and convent years in a conversation at Holy Angels School recently. They agreed that their choice of vocation had been strongly influenced by their mother, a devout convert to Catholicism who died when they were not yet all in their teens. "Our mother in heaven watched over us," Sister Mark explained.

After their mother died the girls were taken in by aunts and uncles, all of whom they described as "very good Catholics." Living with different families, neither Mary Helen nor Bernadette knew that the other was entering the convent where their Sister Mark already lived.

The Garry sisters, middle children in a family of 11, entered the convent in Buffalo, the first house of the order brought to the United States in 1855 by Bishop John Timon of Buffalo. St. John Eudes founded the order in Caen, France, in 1641. The sisters noted that their father died on the saint's feast day and that this year marks the 50th anniversary of his canonization. "Our family is full of such coincidences," Sister Dorothy mused.



### Petitions

Sister DeChantal, administrator of St. Mary's Hospital, stands beside stacks of petitions containing more than 36,400 signatures supporting the continuation of obstetrical services at St. Mary's. The petitions were delivered to the Genesee Region Health Planning Council which plans to decide on June 12 whether to recommend closing a local maternity unit.

Although each house of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity is autonomous and sisters usually live their entire lives in the house where they enter, the Garritys have moved, helping to establish new schools and convents. Sister Mark, retired and living at Holy Angels school here, spent her years serving in Buffalo, Rochester, and Saskatchewan, Canada.

The convent at Holy Angels where nine sisters now live was started in 1930. Sister Mary Helen arrived in 1932 to found the character-building school for girls. In 1968 she moved to Wisconsin to assume duties as the mother president of the federation of all houses in the U.S. and Canada. She served in that office until 1972. Superiors, the mother president, and representatives to the federation's conference of religious are all elected within the government structure of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity.

During her term as mother president, Sister Mary Helen traveled to each of the 10 houses in North America where 200 sisters live and to Rome three times. Sister Mary Helen emphasized how really extraordinary this experience was for a Sister of Our Lady of Charity. "Before Vatican II we were a minor cloistered order. We could go out only for education or to take the girls some place."

While cloistered the sisters were unable to attend their father's funeral. After Sister Mary Helen came to Rochester it was 12 years before she saw her sisters again. Sister Mary Helen and Sister Bernadette were separated for their Silver Jubilees. "We knew all this before we entered. It wasn't anything we were tricked into. We knew what we wanted

when we entered the convent," explained Sister Mary Helen.

They admitted, however, that they enjoy their noncloistered life and the other changes that they have seen in their 50 years of vocation. They now have vacation time and one day a week off "if we can fit it in." Two years ago the four sisters took their first vacation together. They went to the Canadian Rockies.

Changes in dress are also appreciated. The former habit of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity was a long white gown with scapular. Sister Mary Helen laughed as she remembered the impracticality of the dress in the outside world. One day when she was getting off a plane, the wind caught her scapular and wrapped it around a railing. "There I was tied to the railing with a suitcase in each hand!" Sisters of Our Lady of Charity may now wear whatever they choose, but have agreed to dress in blue and white.

The changes have given the sisters more responsibility for their jobs and themselves, according to Sister Mary Helen. For example, now that they have some personal money they have to consider their vow of poverty more seriously.

The Garry sisters have not only seen and enjoyed the changes that have occurred in their order. They helped to effect those changes. Sister Bernadette spent two years in Rome as a member of an international committee rewriting the order's constitution that outlined the modified lifestyle in accord with Vatican II. Sister Mary Helen headed the American delegation.

At home in the Buffalo area, the convent has relocated in Hamburg. Sister Bernadette is superior there. When she entered the convent as a 15-year-old girl, the superior that year was celebrating her Golden Jubilee. She told Sister Bernadette, "I was fifteen when I entered. Maybe in 50 years you will be superior here." Sister Mary Helen reported that most sisters today are in their fifties and that the number of women entering the convent has declined greatly.

Sister Bernadette is also the executive director of the Institute of Hopevale, the public school for girls on their grounds, which include 71 acres and 17 buildings. The 33 sisters at Hamburg also operate Bethany, a home for the aged. The staff includes an additional 88 lay professionals.

Sister Dorothy lives at the Hamburg convent. Presently she is the acting principal of the Hopevale Institute. She and her sisters said that they believe she may be the only woman in a New York public school who wears her veil and is called "Sister." Besides teaching in Dallas, Texas; Hot Springs, Arkansas; Buffalo and New York, Sister Dorothy is a librarian and has worked training young sisters, serving as federation mistress of novices for a time.

Reflecting back on so many years and so much change, Sister Mark exclaimed, "If I were a girl today, I'd do it over again!" Her sisters agreed.

## Nazareth Adds To Campus

Nazareth College has purchased an additional 23.15 acres to accommodate expanded programs designed to enhance the quality of campus life.

The college's previous land holdings of 52.8 acres off East Avenue in Pittsford have now increased to more than 75 acres with the acquisition of property from the Sisters of St. Joseph-Nazareth Convent and Academy Inc.

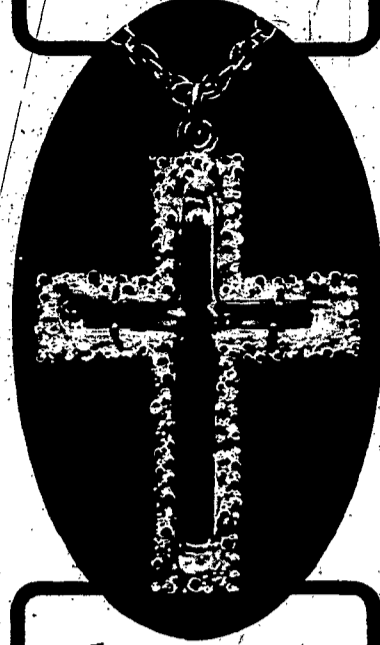
The new property, to the west or back of the current campus, is undeveloped. Plans for use of some of the land include four new tennis courts to augment the college's physical educational and recreational program, additional parking to accommodate the growing number of part-time students and to provide more convenient access to the new College Community Center, and a major playing field suitable for sports such as soccer, softball, field hockey, running and cross country skiing.

According to Dr. Alice L. Foley, president, the first stage of the development project will be construction of the new tennis courts and a small parking lot for users of the courts. She said that these facilities should be completed by June 23, the beginning of the college's summer session.

### CENACLE CDA

Court Our Lady of the Cenacle, Catholic Daughters of America, will meet at 8 p.m. Tuesday, June 17, in St. Philip Neri hall, to install the following officers: Mrs. Henry Taillie, regent; Mrs. Carl Hendrickson and Mrs. Thomas Finley, vice regents; Mrs. Edward Kelly, financial secretary; Mrs. Liborio Balsamo, treasurer; Mrs. Gerald Sullivan, recording secretary; Mrs. Gary Zaso, monitor; Mrs. Charles Combs, lecturer; Miss Eleanor Schwind, organist; Mrs. Thomas Crews, Mrs. Nelson Schum and Mrs. William Crosby, trustees.

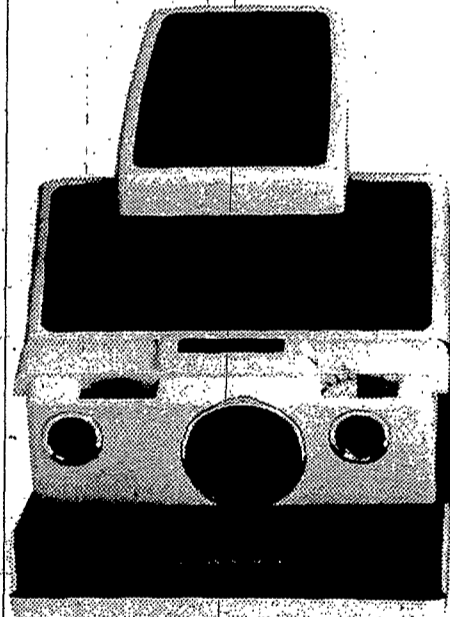
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