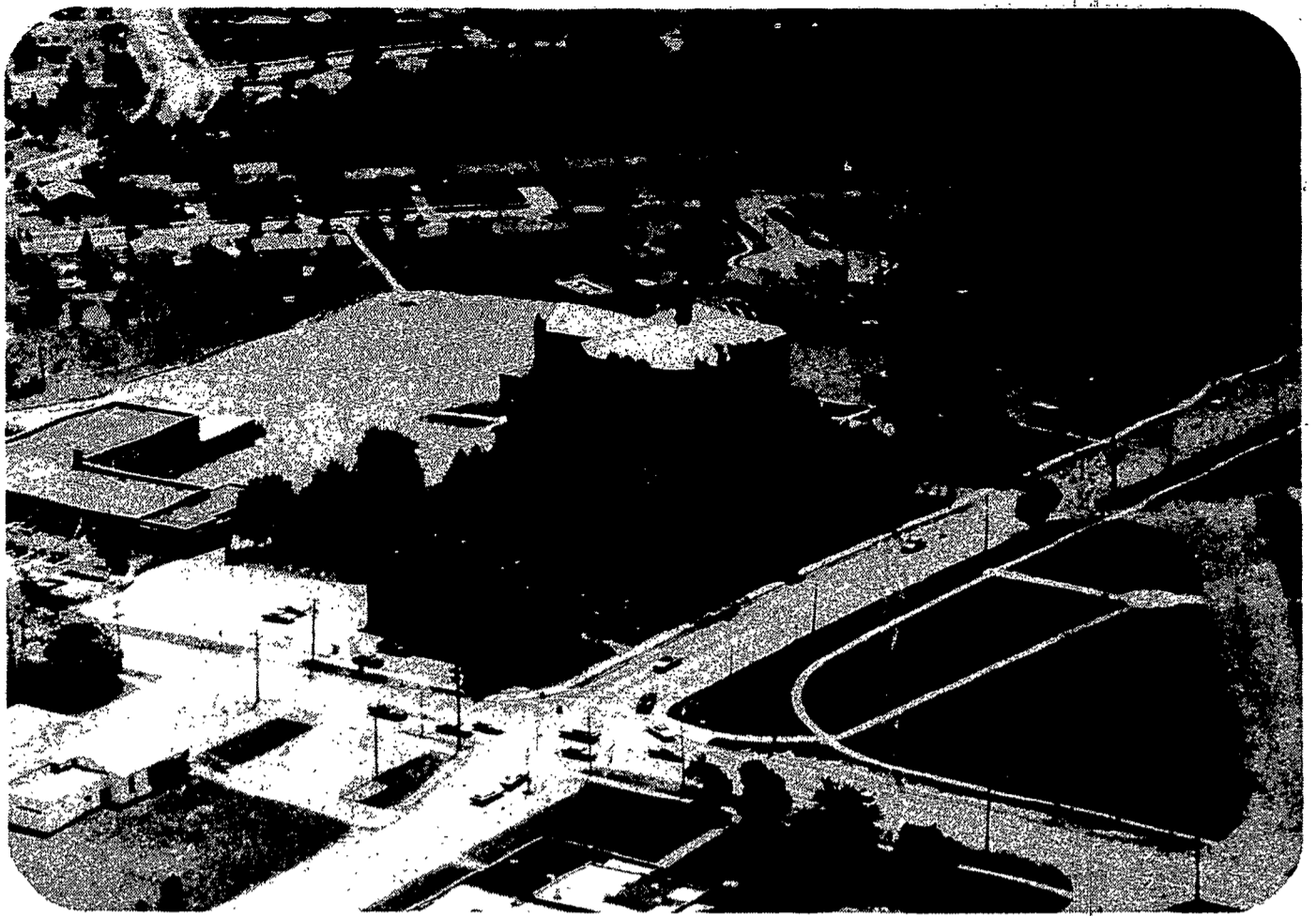




Father George Wood looks over plans for the new church.



An aerial view of Our Mother of Sorrows as it looks today.

Celebrates 150th Parish Anniversary

that the year of his appointment was the hundredth anniversary of the 'Church in the Wood.'

Father O'Rourke immediately set out to organize a celebration for the following spring. When that day was observed, a new organ was dedicated, there was a civic ceremony, and a church service presided over by Bishop O'Hern and attended by then Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. More than 5000 attended from as far away as Texas and California.

Father McNamara notes that following World War II, the parish began to grow so rapidly that Father O'Rourke recognized the pressing need to establish a parish school. This he did in the Bemish McKenzie House in 1946. In 1947 he set up a prefabricated aluminum building to house the school, and in 1948, added yet another room to this building.

Then, in 1953, Bishop James E. Kearney dedicated a brick building as the parish school. When the new school opened, it had the largest enrollment of any such institution in the diocese.

Father O'Rourke's last project was to build a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph who staffed the school. Unfortunately, because of his failing health, he was unable to carry out his program personally. However, under the direction of Father Raymond Moore, an associate at the parish, the sisters' residence was ready in 1958.

Father O'Rourke resigned the pastorate in 1961 and was named pastor emeritus.

Assuming the pastor's mantle was Father George Wood, the former diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and a weekend assistant at the parish.

Father Wood, then with more than two decades in the priesthood, had already established himself as an able administrator. It is he, who in 1946, was responsible for the

establishment of the School of the Holy Childhood in the diocese.

At the time of his appointment, it was also evident that the parish was in need of a new church building. A fund drive was begun in 1964 and the magnificent building was inaugurated on St. Patrick's Day, 1968, by Bishop James E. Kearney, who had recently retired.

The following September, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen solemnly dedicated the new church. Present for the ceremony was Father Daniel O'Rourke. "The dedication was his last great memory of the Paddy Hill parish. He died at St. Ann's less than two years later, on May 5, 1970," Father McNamara writes.

Father Wood has been described by Father McNamara in these words:

"Father Wood has shown himself open to the changes in the liturgy inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council, so long as they are in keeping with the Church's specific regulations. The climate of Our Mother of Sorrows can therefore be characterized as neither 'radical' nor 'reactionary,' but 'straight-down-the-road.'"

The historian notes that the parish Mass attendance has maintained a greater constancy than in some other diocesan parishes, and that the school is thriving, with more applications for entrance each year than the classrooms can accommodate.



A view of the old Church through the cemetery.



An inside view of the new Church.



The new Church.