

# Nativity Celebrates 125th Anniversary

Brockport — Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish here is celebrating the 125th anniversary of its foundation this year.

To mark the occasion, Bishop Matthew H. Clark joined Father Edward J. Lintz, pastor emeritus, and Father John J. Philipps, pastor, for an anniversary Mass on Sunday, Sept. 9.

The first Mass in the Brockport area was celebrated in 1848 at the home of William Skidmore in Sweden Center, on the occasion of his baptism by

Father Bernard O'Reilly. Later that year, Father William O'Reilly celebrated Mass in the Brockport village hall and continued to celebrate the Sunday liturgy on occasion for some time.

In 1851 Father Michael Walsh of Scottsville supervised construction of a church building on property purchased at Erie and Utica Streets. Later that year Father Thomas Walsh took up residence in Brockport and served, in addition, Catholics in Bergen, Holley and Spencerport.

Father John Donnelly took charge of the mission in 1854; and during his tenure, the walls of the church were built and the structure was enclosed. He was succeeded in 1855 by Father M.P. O'Loughlin who remained until 1856, when Bishop John Timon of Buffalo appointed Father Edward McGowan to minister to Brockport, Bergen, Holley and Spencerport.

During his pastorate the church was completed and consecrated, and the parish's first cemetery was dedicated.

Father Terence Keenan was assigned to the pastorate in 1861. His tenure ended with reassignment to Waterloo in 1863. He was followed for a few months by Father Michael Creedon, who was succeeded by Father Richard J. Story.

Father Story's pastorate was destined to last for 51 years.

The parish celebrated its first Confirmations in 1865. The first parish mission was preached the year following by Father W.H. Gross, CSSR, later to become the Bishop of Savannah.

Father Story enlarged the church and the pastoral residence in 1870 and the structures were dedicated by the recently named Bishop of Rochester, Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid.

In 1876 a school opened under the supervision of the diocesan Sisters of St. Joseph.

On the Fourth of July, 1886, the Church was the site for the first Mass celebrated by a native of the parish, Father John L. Harriston.

Father Story died in 1914. He was succeeded by Father James B. Keenan, who in 1915 purchased the site for the present church, and another site for a new school. Construction of the



Bishop Clark signs his autograph for fans following the jubilee Mass.



Photos by Francis J. Welch

Pastoral portraits taken 25 years apart span nearly half of the church's 125 years of existence. Above, the late Msgr. Michael J. Krieg who built the present church is shown at the centennial celebration with Bishop James E. Kearney and Father Edward J. Lintz, then pastor. Below, Father Lintz, pastor emeritus, poses with Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the present pastor Father John J. Philipps.



school was completed the following year.

Father Michael J. Krieg was named pastor of the Brockport parish in 1917.

On July 10, 1926, Bishop Thomas F. Hickey celebrated a Pontifical High Mass and dedicated the present church building on the village Main Street.

In 1938, the old church was converted into a parish hall.

Fire struck the parish in 1944 and the school building was extensively damaged. In the time it took to repair the building, classes were conducted in rooms offered by the Presbyterian and Episcopal communities of Brockport.

In 1950 Father Krieg was able to announce that the parish was free of debt and had a bank balance as a start for future operations and expansion.

The parish made elaborate plans in 1952 to observe Father Krieg's 50th anniversary of ordination,

but illness prevented him from attending the festivities. Bishop James E. Kearney preached before the packed church on the morning of the anniversary and told parishioners and townspeople that the pastor had been elevated to the ranks of the monsignori.

Msgr. Krieg retired from the pastorate two years later. He was succeeded by Father Edward J. Lintz.

Holding a doctorate in

philosophy, Father Lintz came to the parish not only with expertise in parish administration but also the wide respect of professionals in the field of education.

Msgr. Lintz retired from the pastorate in 1973 and was succeeded by Father John Philipps. In Father Philipps' time, the school has celebrated its centenary; and this year, of course, the 125th anniversary of the parish's origins.



## STRETCH YOUR MISSION DOLLAR

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

How can you get more for your mission dollars? In Mukkudam, India, only \$5,000 will build a church and a house for Father Francis. Catholics there now worship in a flimsy thatched shed which they built themselves and is now collapsing. Although they are so poor that few can even afford three meals a day, they have raised almost half the total funds needed and will contribute their labor free of charge...The Franciscan Clarist Sisters in Chalakudy, India, maintain a hostel for the Christian education of children three to ten years old to counteract the Goddess education they would receive in the government schools. They live and teach in a small house with a very high rent. They desperately need a more spacious building of their own. They can build one for as little as \$3,000. Pope John Paul II asks your help in these worthy undertakings. Please send what you can—\$500, \$50, \$5. We'll mount plaques in the native language asking prayers for all donors.

FATHER FRANCIS IN INDIA, LIKE NATIVE SISTERS, MAKES MISSION GIFTS GO FAR

FOOD BARGAINS

\$20 will feed a family of Palestine refugees for one month. In thanks we'll send you an Olive Wood Rosary from the Holy Land.

SELF-HELP IN BETHLEHEM

To enable refugee boys to become self-supporting as carpenters (St. Joseph's trade), Salesian Father Giuseppe Giorgis in Bethlehem needs lumber (total cost: \$750) for worktables, desks, stools, etc. \$50 will buy the tools each boy must have.

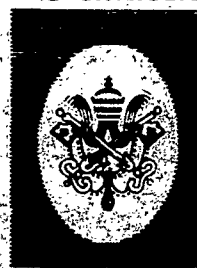
"ADOPT" AN ORPHAN OF WAR

Fadia's father was killed by gun fire. Her mother is dying of cancer. Her home was destroyed by a rocket. There are thousands of needy children like her in Lebanon alone. You can "adopt" one for only \$14 a month. We'll send you a picture and personal history and "your" child will write to you.

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## Insights in Liturgy

By Father Robert J. Kennedy

### Liturgy And Social Concern

"The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of the Church... The liturgy, in its turn, moves the faithful filled with 'the paschal sacraments' to be 'one in holiness'; it prays that 'they hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith'." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 10)

This bold statement of Vatican II's first document puts liturgy in its place in the life of the Church. Liturgy is not a peripheral activity that takes us out of the world, it is not one activity among many others. It is the basic and central action of the Church, the summit of all that Christian people do, the source of their nourishment in continuing to do it. This is a bold assertion because it condemns, on the one hand, a liturgy that is out of touch with people's lives and, on the other, a social activity that has lost sight of the source of its life. The one is pious aestheticism at best

and hollow word of hypocrisy at worst; the other, is selfishly motivated, frenetic action.

Authentic Christian worship and social concern are inseparable. The development of human potential, the respect for human dignity and the laboring for justice are, for the Christian believer, the necessary means to the glorification of God. That praise of God comes to full expression in the celebration of the liturgy. In its turn, the liturgy keeps our vision clear to what we are about and renews and strengthens us for our work of salvation and reconciliation.

The liturgy then is not a flight from the world's problems: oppression, poverty, hunger, discrimination, injustice. It does not allow an escape from the responsibility of doing something about them. Rather the liturgy helps the Christian to look at the real from the perspective of the death and resurrection of Christ and to draw up enough strength to confront these problems with faith and the power of God's Word, which of course will be their only solution.

A community baptized into the power of the death and resurrection of Christ and wholeheartedly proclaiming Jesus as Lord

cannot help but be a force for revolution in the world.

It is the same revolution that occurred when Jesus emptied himself of his divinity and took the form of a slave being born in human likeness (see Phil. 2:6-11). It is the revolution of Christ entering our world through us in order to carry out his saving plans for justice, reconciliation and freedom.

The liturgy amply challenges us to be open to this action and to carry it out.

(1) Just coming to worship the Lord should call to mind the consciousness-raising passage: "If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother (or sister) has anything against you, go first and be reconciled..."

(2) The penitential rite at Mass and the celebrations of Penance must help us call to mind all our sins, including the many forms of discrimination, racism, and oppression we participate in by simply "going along with the crowd" and "not wanting to make waves."

(3) The Word of God, and above all the proclamation of the Gospel, and the preaching of the homily, forms the consciences of the hearers and moves them to respond to the Word of God in concrete action on behalf of our needy brothers and sisters. The pulpit should not be a political or economic forum, but preachers should

not shrink from addressing the issues of the day with the sharp edge of the authentic Gospel message.

(4) The collection should never be wholly used to maintain a parish. But, in the best scriptural and liturgical tradition, a portion should always be offered to the poor, either within the parish or beyond.

(5) The Eucharistic Prayer, which calls to mind the wonderful works of God on our behalf, asks the help of the Holy Spirit so that we may "become one body, one spirit in Christ." (EP III) It is a prayer that Christ's vision at the Last Supper "that they may be one" will be fulfilled. This is ritualized in the Greeting of Peace and Breaking of the Bread where one loaf is broken to be shared by many; and we, though many become one in Christ, free of all distinctions of class or race.

(6) When, at Communion, we are presented with the body of Christ and we respond "Amen," we accept responsibility for building upon the Body of Christ, his Church and for proclaiming the Good News of his life to all the world. "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord" is not just a nice way to get rid of the congregation but the beginning of the hard work of bringing "good news to the poor, sight to the blind, liberty to captives, release to prisoners" and announcing a year of favor from the Lord.