

## It's a New Church For an Old Parish

In the fall of 1955, Father Francis Reilly, pastor of then St. Mary's Church, conducted a parish survey and found that a new church was needed.

St. Mary Our Mother is an old parish, founded in 1866 as a mission of Ss. Peter and Paul, Elmira. A statue of St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars, in the reconciliation chapel of the new church is a gift of Ss. Peter and Paul in memory of the past affiliation.

Later it would become a mission of St. Mary of the Lake, Watkins Glen, and eventually a parish in 1879, 100 years ago.

Following that 1955 survey, the Horseheads area

and the parish expanded rapidly, as more people moved into the area. Interest in a parish school resulted in the construction of a school on Westlake Street near Westinghouse Road, some distance from the church. The school was dedicated by Bishop James E. Kearney on Sept. 13, 1959. It had eight classrooms and a gym, and was soon increased to its current size, with 10 classrooms, gym, library-cafeteria and the chapel.

The chapel, placed at one end of the gym, made it possible for Masses to be celebrated in the new structure as well as the parish's church, which had been dedicated in 1903. The new chapel seated 250 per-

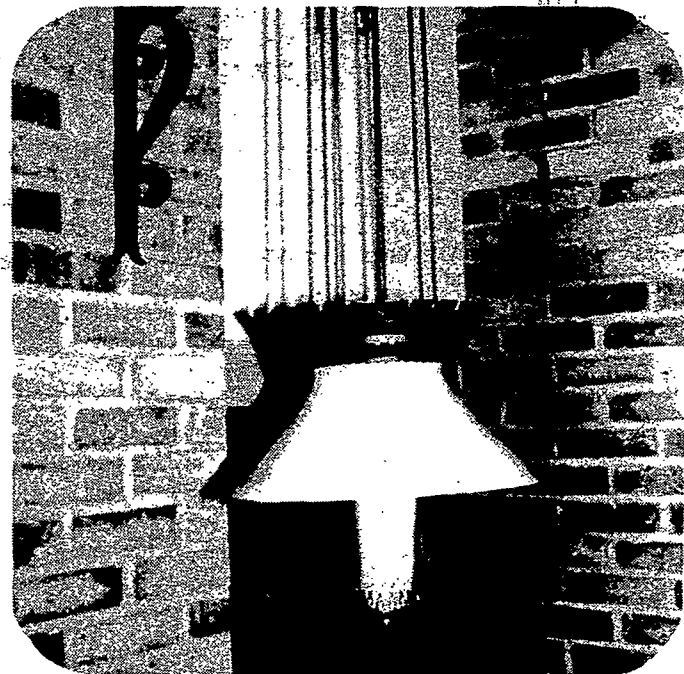
sons, itself more than the church, and that figure was increased to 750 when the screen between the chapel and gym was opened, and folding chairs were set up in the gym. The arrangement, in use for 14 years, meant that a third of the congregation faced the celebrant during Mass, and two thirds were behind him.

In 1965, the growing parish was forced to discontinue use of the old church, as it no longer could seat enough people to make its use worthwhile. Parish worship was moved completely to the chapel in the school, and the church was sold.

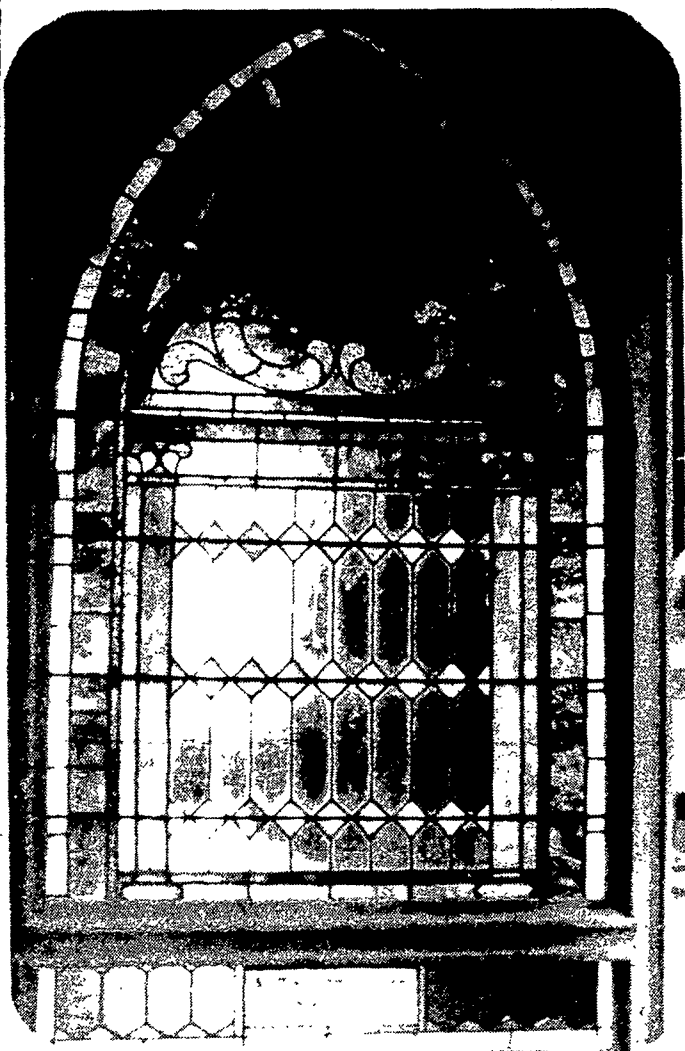
The following years were marked by construction of the parish Administration-Rector Center, on the same property as the school but on West Broad Street, and by elimination of the parish debt. That was accomplished and celebrated May 18, 1975.

Then attention turned toward construction of a church to provide worship space for the parish which now exceeded 2,000 families in Horseheads and Big Flats.

The new church, attached to the school, will have seating for 873 persons normally, and that can be expanded to 1,031 for special occasions.



The new sanctuary lamp in the Eucharistic Chapel near the tabernacle.



The stained-glass window which was installed in the former church in 1902.

### Parish's Past Remembered Through Use of Window

The new church includes a reminder of those who worked for the Horseheads parish many years ago.

One stained glass window was brought from the old church, at 408 W. Broad St., and placed at the right of the entrance to the Eucharistic Chapel. The window dates back to Jan. 25, 1903, when the parish's second church was dedicated. It was that church building which the parish closed and sold in 1965 when it became inadequate for the parish's needs. The window was preserved and donated for inclusion in the

new structure by Reeve H. Ammerman.

There were eight of the windows, identical in design, save for a cobalt disk at the top, each with a distinctive theme. This window has a dramatic design: the Cross and the Crown, with glass jewels in the Crown.

The windows of the new church are not stained glass, but are a bronze, reflective glass designed to conserve heat, to protect fabrics, and to reduce glare. It is known as Pella glass, as it is made in Pella, Iowa.

### Art Completes Reconciliation Chapel

Three works of art complete the Reconciliation Chapel. In the waiting area, there is a statue of St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars, known for his ability as a confessor. The statue was the gift of the people of Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Elmira, in memory of the parish-mission relationship between the two

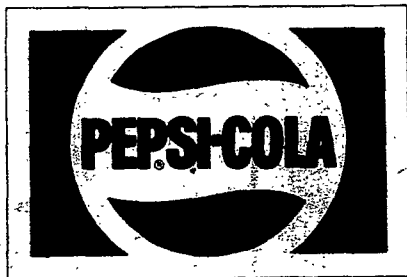
parishes when St. Mary Our Mother was founded in 1866.

Inside, the reconciliation rooms are two impressions of the suffering Christ by Georges Roualt: an etching from the Misere series, and a wood engraving from the Passion series.

## OUR BEST WISHES TO St. Mary Our Mother Parish



on the Dedication of your  
new Church



**PEPSI COLA**  
Elmira, New York

1-(607) 733-7106