

# Parish Rises Above Trials

Amid colorful ceremonies and exact ritual, Bishop Matthew H. Clark last Sunday celebrated the dedication of a new altar at St. Salome's Church.

The rites culminated the parish's positive response to theft and vandalism with which it was beset some months ago, Father Conrad Sundholm, pastor, said.

A major element of the rites was the burial, at the base of the altar, of relics of Saints Conrad Birndorfer, Oliver Plunkett and John Neumann.

Catholic ritual emphasizes that "the Christian altar is by its very nature a table of sacrifice and at the same time a table of the paschal banquet: a unique altar on which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in mystery throughout the ages until Christ comes; a table at which the Church's children assemble to give thanks to God and receive the body and blood of Christ," the official directions state.

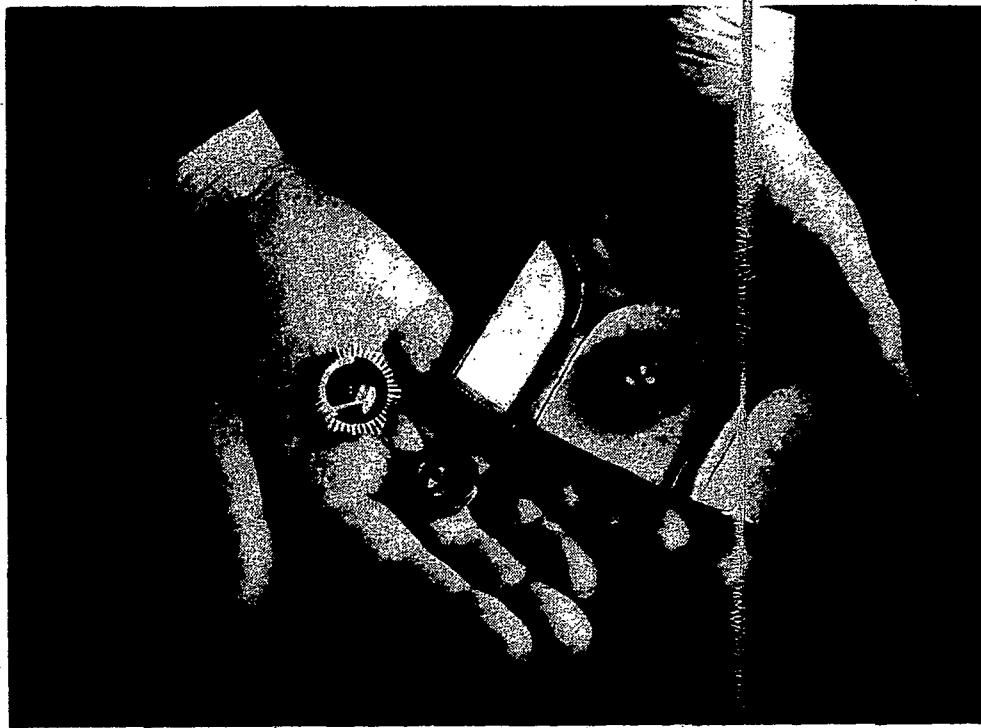
In addition, the ritual states, "Because it is at the altar that the memorial of the Lord is celebrated and his body and blood given to the people, the Church's writers see in the altar a sign of Christ himself — hence they affirm: 'The altar is Christ.'"

The veneration of relics, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "is to some extent a primitive instinct, and it is associated with many other religious systems besides that of Christianity."

The Catholic practice is based on the teaching that the body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit and is destined to be raised to eternal life and be glorified.

To lay relics beneath an altar is part of Roman tradition; and in this respect the ritual states:

"The entire dignity of an altar consists in this: the altar is the table of the Lord. It is not, then, the bodies of the martyrs that render the altar glorious. However, as a mark of respect for the bodies of the martyrs and other saints, and



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan

The relics placed beneath the new altar at St. Salome's Church are those of, from left, Saints John Neumann, Oliver Plunkett and Conrad.

as a sign that the sacrifice of the members has its source in the sacrifice of the Head, it is fitting that altars should be constructed over their tombs, or their relics placed beneath altars, so that 'the triumphant victims may occupy the place where, Christ is victim: he, however, who suffered for all, upon the altar; they, who have been redeemed by his sufferings, beneath the altar.'"

The relics, Father Sundholm said, are the special interest of Father Robert McNamara, diocesan historian and archivist. The relics of St. Oliver and St. John are his; and, by coincidence, Father MacNamara was present for the canonization of St. Conrad, whose relic belongs to Father Sundholm.

The most recently canonized of the saints, John Neumann, was a Redemptorist priest who began his ministry in Rochester. Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, was martyred, Friday, July 11, 1681. St. Conrad was a lay brother of the last century, famed for his personal holiness, charity and ability to "read hearts."



Bishop Matthew H. Clark anoints the new altar with Holy Chrism during the rites last Sunday.

# Death Not Bad, Moralists Claims

By John Dash

Prefacing his remarks by stating, "Life is the good and the pre-condition of all good," Daniel C. Maguire also said that in certain circumstances "death by choice" is both "moral and permissible," and "not letting a patient die is bad ethics."

who holds a doctorate in theology from the Gregorian in Rome and now is professor at Marquette University, spoke to more than 400 last week at Nazareth College's "Dialogue between Scientists and Moralists."

He characterized the Right to Life movement as an "extreme" position in the current debate over abortion

and euthanasia. Each instance of abortion, he said, is performed in "a moral crisis," and there can be no absolute condemnation of the act.

In a wide-ranging talk on the topic "Death by Chance, Death by Choice," Maguire developed his contention that "the ending of life may be the best good life has to offer."

He told several stories to illustrate his point that medicine's goal in certain instances should be to ease the patient's path to death, and to allow death to take place.

That death is the worst event in life, he said, is the "belief of an immature, materialistic culture."

He said that when the practice of medicine stops being a "healing process," it should allow the patient to experience the "rite of passage" of death.

He surprised his audience by identifying an ethical maxim, "Human actions are right or wrong according to

their circumstances," as not from the pen of a situation ethicist, but from Thomas Aquinas.

The maxim, he said, demonstrates Thomas' understanding that only God can know the exact reality of each action and therefore pass moral judgment on it.

To make a blanket condemnation of "death by choice," therefore, he said, is an ethical impossibility.

He rejects traditional Christian teaching that human suffering has meaning. He said that that teaching developed to its "pernicious extreme" in the self-flagellation practiced in the Middle Ages.

"Suffering is an evil to be worked against," he said, "and that's the work of God."

There is value, he said, "not in suffering, but in its transcendence."

That, he said, is the proper work of medicine.

## Lenten Regulations

Good Friday is a day of both fast and abstinence.

Other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat.

The fast is defined as one full meal a day, with two lighter meals. It is required of those 21 to 59 years of age.

The prohibition against meat on Fridays applies to those 14 years of age and older.

A Catholic should not lightly excuse himself from these practices.

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Stuffed Shrimp & Rib	9.95
Filet Mignon	
Longhouse Cut	11.35
Teepee Cut	9.65

Dinners Include:  
Salad or vegetable, potato or baked rice pilaf, rolls and butter.  
Please Note: Salad Bar Not Available This Day

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This Saturday, April 4:  
Baked, Stuffed Fresh Coho Salmon **9.25**

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