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Fire Destroys Holy Rosary School



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan

Radiators, texts, wood and bricks litter the scene last Monday, two days after the catastrophe.

By Carmen J. Viglucci

The destruction last Saturday morning of Holy Rosary School on Lexington Avenue struck grief in the hearts of many but there was one cause for gratitude — it was an empty school that was ruined.

Sister Mary Wintish, RSM, diocesan director of Urban Ministry, just one of the many on the scene to share concern for the Holy Rosary family, expressed the sentiment:

"We will be always grateful that it happened when children were not in school."

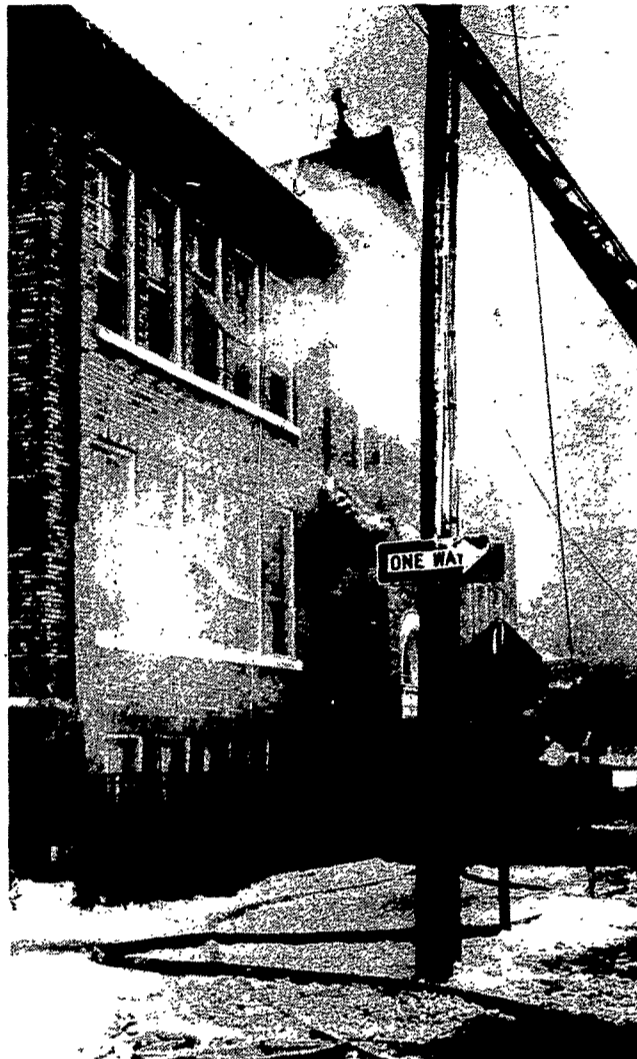
The feeling was echoed many times as grim onlookers watched the 65-year-old school being destroyed in the three-alarm fire.

The fire was discovered by parishioner Alan Goff on his way to work at 6:40 a.m. He immediately went to the rectory and roused Father Thomas J. O'Keefe, associate pastor, who in turn told pastor Father Robert A. Meng.

Father O'Keefe went next door to the school and got into the basement where the fire started because of an electrical short, according to preliminary reports.

"I was driven back by thick, yellowish smoke," he said.

The eight Sisters who lived in the convent, practically adjacent to the school, were roused by the blaze and will have to move, probably to the Sacred Heart Cathedral convent, because the school's heating system also served the Holy Rosary convent.



The cross atop Holy Rosary School begins to sag back as fire reaches roof.

The 230 pupils at Holy Rosary were placed on early Christmas vacation and will return to studies Jan. 4 at the now vacant Holy Apostles school building.

Sister Roberta Tierney, SSND, said that "staff people and many volunteers from Holy Rosary were already moving any salvageable materials to the Holy Apostles building."

Sister Roberta, diocesan director of education, said that Msgr. Emmett Murphy, pastor, and others at Holy Apostles, "have been most hospitable."

She also had praise for City School District officials who "have been very helpful in establishing transportation and textbook replacements ... they have really opened their doors to us."

In addition, Holy Rosary alumni and diocesan staffers from across the diocese "have showed their concern. The spirit of community has been very heartening."

Among onlookers at the fire scene were many Holy

Rosary pupils. None seemed pleased.

For instance, fourth grader Joseph Romano said, "This is terrible. I'm not feeling good about it."

His feeling was shared by third grader Greg Phillips.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark headed a band of diocesan officials who gathered at the Holy Rosary rectory to offer consolation and assistance to Father Meng. Among others on hand were Sister Tierney; Sister Edwardine Weaver, superintendent of schools; Father Richard Kinsky, former superintendent of

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Fund Set Up to Aid Poland

Bishop Clark Leads Peace Mass at St. Stanislaus

By John Dash

More than 600 people bowed their heads as the mournful strains of the penitential rite, Syn Mar-notrawny, drifted through St. Stanislaus Church Saturday night. The assembly had gathered to worship and to pray for family and friends in strife-locked Poland.

Pinned to the lapels of many were the red ribbons of solidarity. In her shrine, Our Lady of Czestochowa was presented a bouquet of red roses, tied with red ribbon.

Children dressed in native Polish costume gathered closest to the sanctuary.

And in the midst of the gathering was Bishop Matthew H. Clark, leading the worshippers in "a night of holy communion," in which they were "joined with friends who are suffering" half a world away.

The Mass followed the



Roses grace the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa.

Advent rubrics, but it was also a Mass for Peace in Poland.

Joining Bishop Clark at the altar were a number of priests, Fathers Joseph Reinhart, Charles Latus, Joseph Jankowiak, Andrew Grzela, Alexander Stec, John Glogowski and Valentine Jankowiak.



Kathryn Gustyn, a member of the parish choirs.

Speaking of the Polish crisis, Bishop Clark said, "We long to share with them what they are going through ... Tonight we give rich symbolism to the holy communion which we are."

But in the midst of trial, he said, "faith means hope," in the providence of God, the

care of Jesus; and "we commit our sisters and brothers to that same care."

The bishop announced that he had given permission for a collection to be taken up in the diocese on behalf of the Polish Tribute Fund which will be

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Bishop Clark To Say TV Mass

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate the Christmas Mass over WHEC-TV, Channel 10, at 9 a.m., Friday, Dec. 25.



A fireman is framed in window at side of school. The roof of that part of the school is already gone and the sky forms his background.