

# St. George's Church To Celebrate 75 Years

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will join parishioners at St. George's Lithuanian Church 11 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 23 for a Mass celebrating the 75th anniversary of the parish.

Later that day, a dinner and artistic program will be held at the Mapledale Party House.

A parish commentary on the event stated:

"Today, when Roman Catholics have become increasingly aware of religious repression in Poland and other eastern European countries, they fail to realize that their local community may harbor a parish whose

very existence is an enduring symbol of the adversity eastern European refugees overcame to preserve their right to live and worship in freedom.

"St. George's Lithuanian Church is one such parish in the Rochester Diocese. Named after St. George the Martyr, a saint revered in Lithuania, the church was incorporated in 1908 to serve as a religious and cultural haven for Lithuanian emigrants who left their homeland because of czarist repression which, among other limitations, denied them freedom of worship. Roughly 700 Lithuanians lived in the Rochester area at that time, and it is through their efforts that the parish was established on the present site (545 Hudson Ave.)

"Building the church in the early 1900s was a financial hardship because many in the congregation were modestly employed when the economy was faltering. But, organizers like Mrs. Joseph Mocejunas diligently collected nickels and dimes from Lithuanian emigrants on pay day to start the construction work.

"By 1910 a building which included a church, several class rooms and an assembly hall was completed. Later, in 1925 a rectory was added, and in 1934 Archbishop Edward Mooney blessed the cornerstone for a new and separate church."

"With the onset of the Second World War, the parish played a noteworthy role in the war effort. From this small congregation approximately 180 men served in the United States armed forces around the world.

"When the war drew to a close, parishioners responded to the difficulties faced by Lithuanian refugees in Europe who were driven from their homeland by Stalin's armies. Fund raising



Anniversary committee members, left to right, are: (first row) R. Liutkus, L. Lelis, F. Mockevicius; (second row) R. Obalis, J. Naujokas, G. Blavesciunas, A. Januska. Absent for the picture are A. Olis, J. Lavkaitis and A. Bulsys.

campaigns were begun through the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America and, in the summer of 1947, a parish-sponsored city-wide campaign provided \$10,000 for the relief of displaced Lithuanians in Europe. Under the leadership of Father J. Baksys some 200 Lithuanian families found employment and a new beginning in the Rochester community.

"To this day the congregation is active in assisting Lithuanians in their homeland resist the subjugation imposed by the Kremlin. Besides arduously laboring for human rights abroad, the parish has enriched the social consciousness of the Rochester area. Through organizations like the Lithuanian-American Council, the Rochester Lithuanian Community Choir, the folk dance group, "Lazdynas," The Lithuanian Scouts, the Lithuanian Radio Club, and other groups the rich cultural heritage of this small nation has become better known."

The parish is administered by Father Justin Vaksys,

OFM. His work was described by the parish as guiding it "through a demanding period of reassessment brought on by a dwindling membership and inflationary pressures. He has been instrumental in placing the parish on a stable footing so that, once again, its members have confidence in the future.

"Through its 75-year history, St. George's Church has faced difficult times,

fought for religious freedom, and attempted to preserve the unique spiritual and social traditions of its congregation. It serves today as living proof that the Catholic Church is truly a universal Church containing within it diverse, devoted, yet undivided Christians."

Persons wishing to participate in the anniversary celebration are asked to call the rectory, 232-4111, or Jan Naujokas, 671-2968.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

## Reflections On Dublin

Our May tour had three days in Dublin, where we did the usual things: a tour of Trinity College with the famous Book of Kells; Phoenix Park; bustling O'Connell Street with its crowds, stores, hotels, post office; heroic statues of Irish patriots, and even a little shrine to Our Lady erected in gratitude by Lithuanian refugees; Grafton Street with its elegant shops and Bewley's coffee house; Christ's Cathedral, Church of England (Episcopal) since the Reformation, where a TV crew from Sweden was filming an Anglican service for a special on Ireland.

Two things were added at my request. First, a visit to University Church off St. Stephen's Green, opposite the Shelbourne Hotel. This beautiful basilica church was built by John Henry Newman during his seven frustrating years in Dublin, 1852-1859.

During these seven years, Newman founded the University. He built University Church, a holy work of art and architecture. And he delivered the famous lectures, published as "Idea of a University." Father O'Connell and I were pleased to have our picture taken by Dansville's Helen Pratt, standing in the same pulpit from which Newman preached. The best book of Newman's Ireland days is "Newman's University: Idea and Reality" by the Irish Jesuit Fergal McGrath. (Longmans-Green, 1951.)

Then we drove to Our Lady of Lourdes Church in the toughest part of Dublin, where the body of Matt Talbot is venerated. Matt was born in 1856 in Dublin and was a drunkard at the age of 16, so bad he sold his shoes for drink. At the age of 28 he abruptly reformed and became a saintly man of profound prayer and charity, and later a loyal member of the Irish Transport Workers Union, when it was being organized by the famous union organizer, Jim Larkin, known to Americans by the TV presentation of "Strumpet City." He died in 1925. His cause for canonization is being promoted.

On my first tour of Ireland I became a friend

of 23-year-old Frank Moore who had charge of cassette tapes at Veritas, Ltd., a large Catholic book store near Abbey Theatre. I was trying to introduce Sheen tapes into Ireland through Veritas.

Each year since we have met in Dublin. I said: "Frank, there is a boys high school run by Franciscans in Gormonstown, about 10 miles from Dublin. The Irish-American Cultural Institute arranges for 150 American boys and girls to spend five weeks in Ireland in the summer. They live at the school, taking courses and experiencing Irish culture. Ellen Ganey, one of our group, has sent grandnieces and a nephew there, and is anxious to see the place. And so am I. Could you take us there?"

He and his friend, Danny O'Brien, picked us up at Bloom's Hotel, named after a character in Joyce's "Ulysses." The school has a fine chapel, golf course, dormitories and all. It has 500 students and costs about \$1,700 a year.

I asked the secretary: "Will you get us an alert boy to show us around?" He was 16-year-old John Cominsky. I exclaimed: "Cominsky! Why, that's Polish!" He grinned: "Yes. We came here a hundred years ago." He was a charmer.

The president of the I.A.C.A. is Professor John Kiernan, who was head of the English department at Geneseo State University some years ago. He transferred to St. Thomas College, St. Paul, Minn., and has directed the Institute for many years.

Sight-seeing, shopping, visiting can be tiring, but all weariness disappears at a night at Jury's cabaret. It features Irish dances by graceful, energetic Irish youngsters, musicians including seven harpists, vocalists, and Hal Roach, the funniest of men.

With a comfortable stomach after the dinner served, all relaxed for two hours of song and dance, and humor: all modest and clean. Roach looks like Woody Allen — large glasses, nose and all. This is typical of his humor:

"The expectant father anxiously phoned the hospital.

"Murphy: 'How is my wife?'

"Nurse: 'She's in labor. Is this her first baby?'

"Murphy: 'No. This is her husband.'"

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