

Bishop Clark Dedicates New Church in Rexville

Rexville -- Parishioners of St. Mary's Church should celebrate not only their new church, Bishop Matthew H. Clark told them, but also the gifts they have received as a worshipping community.

Bishop Clark dedicated the parish's new church Feb. 19. The two-story brick structure replaces the wooden church that burned June 9, 1981.

"Your presence is a joy today," he said. "It's a sign of beauty, a cause of life in the Church."

He said it was "not just a day we celebrate the beauty of this new place for worship but also the favors God has bestowed on the parish."

Bishop Clark said he was impressed with the new building and with the parish's spirit. Referring to the dish-to-pass dinner which followed the dedication, he said, "I leave here today — after we eat — with very happy memories of this parish."

Father Thomas Burr, pastor of the parish in the southwest corner of Steuben County, thanked the 300 people who participated in the ceremony for their con-



Pastor Father Thomas Burr incenses the congregation.

tributions, and the many people who were involved in the construction.

He also led the congregation in applause for those volunteers and for Bishop Clark for allowing the parish to rebuild.

Two local parishes assisted. Members of the folk

choir from St. Ann's in Hornell joined the St. Mary's choir for the Mass. Members of the St. Joachim's, Canisteo, Rosary and Altar Society helped with the dinner to let local parishioners participate in the Mass.

The new church seats 200 for Mass, more appropriate for the parish's membership, than the 700 of the 104-year-old building that burned in 1981. The new church has a parish hall and many other facilities which were not available in the old church.

Father Burr said the old rectory will either be sold or demolished. It had been used as a parish hall. Father Burr lives at St. Joachim's, his other parish.

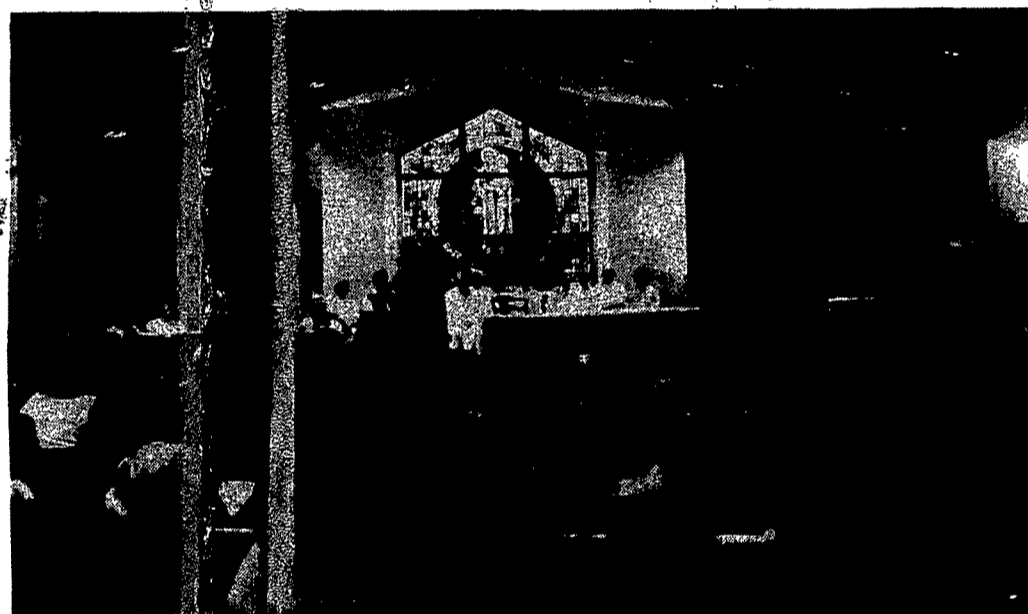
St. Mary's, founded in 1845, is one of the older parishes in the diocese. It had seen bad fires before; its church of only three years burned in 1877, and in 1943, a fire destroyed the parish's former school building. The two-story school had been built in 1889 and was being used as a parish hall at the time of the fire.



The new St. Mary's Church, Rexville.



Bishop Clark chats with some of the parish's teenagers after Mass.



The church features a large stained glass at the rear of the sanctuary.

Quick! Name 6 Commandments of Church

A Burt Reynolds' movie of somewhat recent vintage had a scene in which he pleaded with the Lord to save his life. Paraphrased, the script had Reynolds promising, "I shalt not covet, I shalt not murder... Uh — I shalt learn the 10 Commandments."

Well, it might be assumed that Reynolds was in a minority; most people know the 10 Commandments.

But how about the Six Commandments of the Church? How many know them?

At one time they could be tripped from the tongue of every parish grade schooler in the country.

At one time "The Catholic Encyclopedia" devoted 23½ column inches to describing them (the 10 Commandments, on the other hand, occupied only 13½ inches.)

There, the list, as approved by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, ran:

- To keep the Sundays and Holy Days of obligation holy, by hearing Mass and resting from servile work;
- To keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church;
- To go to confession at least once a year;
- To receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year and that at Easter or thereabouts;
- To contribute to the support of our pastors;
- Not to marry within a certain degree of kindred nor to solemnize marriage at

forbidden times.

They seem, for the most part, perfectly reasonable, a neat codification of canon law as it pertains to the laity, easily remembered.

In contemporary religious education, at least in this diocese, the content of the Commandments, or Precepts, of the Church is covered in the fourth grade, said Sister Mary Ann Binsack, whose diocesan department oversees such curricula content. She remarked that those schools using the Benziger texts will find the precepts listed at the back of the book.

Fourth graders here learn both the responsibilities they have and the laws that pertain in the Catholic Church, but not necessarily the codification the Commandments of the Church represents, she said.

They have been drawn together over a period of centuries.

Indeed, there is nothing so neatly defined in the highest forums of the Church; but lists of such disciplines and obligations start appearing in the ninth century in German catechetical and devotional books, about the same time as the devices for examining one's conscience appear.

The 13th century boasts a manuscript attributed to Celestine V (though the authenticity has been denied) in which there is a codification of the precepts of the Church on fasting, confession and paschal Communion, interdicts on marriage, and tithes.

A century later the archbishop of Prague instructed his priests to preach on the commandments of God and the Church.

In 1480 there appeared the catechism of Dietrich Voelde, in which there are explicitly set forth five commandments of the Church. A few years earlier, St. Antoninus of Florence enumerated 10 precepts, universally binding on the faithful.

He listed them as: to observe certain feasts, to keep the prescribed fasts, to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, to confess once a year, to receive Holy Communion during paschal time, to pay tithes, to abstain from any act interdicted under pain of excommunication *latae sententiae*, to avoid association with the excommunicated, and not to attend Mass or other religious functions celebrated by a priest living in open concubinage. (A *latae sententiae* excommunication is absolutely automatic, the result of a truly heinous deed, deliberate murder, for example.)

In the 16th century, a canonist, Martin Asplicueta, listed five main precepts of the Church: to hear Mass on Holy Days of obligation, to fast at certain prescribed times, to pay tithes, to go to confession once a year, and to receive Holy Communion at Easter.

Also at this time, Robert Bellarmine and Peter Canisius both set out precepts of the Church. Canisius wrote down five of them: to observe the fast days appointed by the Church, to hear Mass reverently on these feast days, to observe the fasts on the days

during the seasons appointed, to confess to one's pastor annually, to receive Holy Communion at least once a year and that around the feast of Easter.

At the turn of this century, Latin Americans held to the list devised by Canisius with the exception that the first two charges were combined and the injunction to tithe appears.

But what has happened in recent days? A new Code of Canon Law has appeared in the last few months, and what seems like a generation of silence on the Commandments of the Church has started to draw comment.

In Book Two, Part One, Title One and Title Two, of the new code, the faithful are called to a number of responsibilities in the Church, and given a number of corresponding rights.

Though the section is brief, nowhere is it so particularized and succinct as in Baltimore's list of the Commandments of the Church.

The new code is, however, far more exacting on the laity than the Commandments of the Church would ever indicate.

The code challenges the Church to a wholehearted, ongoing renewal. It points out individual responsibilities in the growth of the kingdom of God. In spirit it lays a far heavier burden, if it is a burden, on laymen, putting before them far more than can be encompassed in the old Commandments of the Church.