

'This Is the Day the Lord Has Made, Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad'

Bells to Ring throughout Diocese to Signal Holy Year End

By Sister Mary Louise Heffernan, SSJ

At noon on Easter Sunday, bells will ring through the diocese signaling the conclusion of the Holy Year.

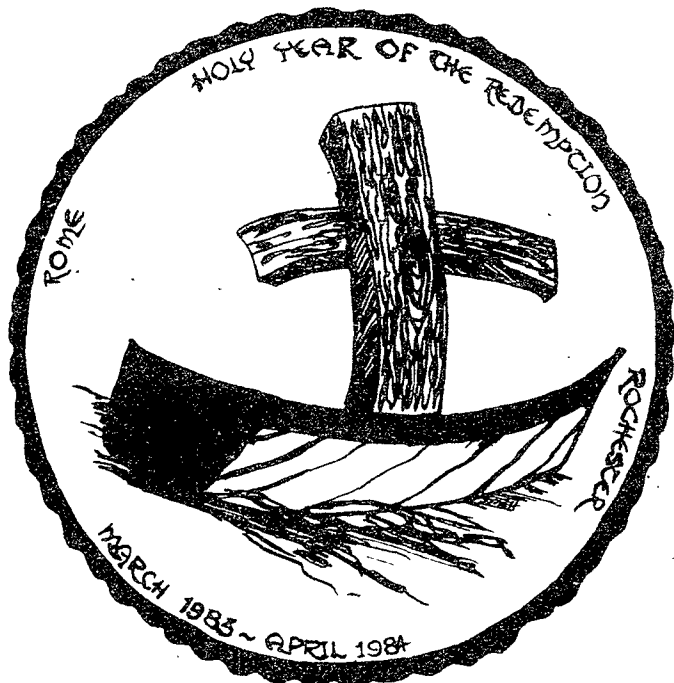
Pope John Paul II called the Holy Year of Redemption on March last year, when he broke the seal of the holy door.

"Open the doors to the Redeemer," were the words he spoke in announcing the Year of Jubilee. As we conclude this Holy Year on Easter Sunday, we are in different places in our journey than a year ago. With RENEWED HEARTS, we enter into this Easter season as "new creation" reconciled in Christ and reconcilers to our brothers and sisters.

Our challenge is to live the words of the psalmist, "This is the day the Lord has made . . ." Living these words compels us to reach out and offer healing in a world suffering alienation and disorientation from Gospel living.

Repeatedly in the Gospel we see Jesus reconciling. His mission was one of reconciliation and when he died on the cross he was embraced by the Father as the RECONCILER of all humankind. Our life in HIM is manifest in our efforts to be RECONCILERS.

The ringing bells symbolize our renewed hearts open to listening to the myriad needs of reconciliation and our willingness to respond. Let us keep the bells ringing as we move forward as reconcilers.



Easter Finale: Ringing Out The Year of Redemption

By Father Robert F. McNamara

The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle of March 29 gave the latest news about the "war of the crosses" that the school children of Mietne were waging against the Polish government. The government had banned crucifixes in the classrooms. When the children raised a hue and cry, the public officials ordered them either to sign a declaration of acceptance or be ousted. Fifty signed, but 600 refused, packed their bags, and went off to find another school.

Why did the 600 take this brave stand? Because, as one 18-year-old girl explained: "Signing that declaration is like signing away your own soul. It is like throwing away the cross."

When Pope John Paul II inaugurated the worldwide Holy Year of Redemption on March 25, 1983, he did so to help us all "to seek to rediscover Christ, the center of history and the Redeemer of man." Has anybody during this Holy Year taught us so heroically of the importance of the cross than these teenagers of Mietne?

The Holy Father picked this period to commemorate the Redemption because 1983 was the 1950th anniversary of the death of Christ. The pope opened the "Holy Door" in St. Peter's Rome, on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1983. The reason why he chose the Annunciation was because it marks the date of Jesus' conception in the womb of Mary; and Mary became a key figure in the redemption by bringing the Redeemer into the world. Later on, John Paul pointed out that this year also marked, approximately, the 2000th

anniversary of the birth of Our Lady. The Blessed Virgin has therefore been given due prominence during the present jubilee as truly the "Cause of our Joy." The crowning tribute of course, was the consecration of the world to her Immaculate Heart on March 24-25, 1984.

In this consecration, the pope and all Catholic bishops and their people entrusted to Mary's care "all individuals and peoples and nations." When the Holy Father prayed especially for those who oppose "the very truth of God," we may be sure that he had Soviet Russia and other Communist-dominated countries in mind — particularly the "anti-crucifix" officials of the Polish government.

And now this jubilee draws to a close. The pope will seal up the Holy Door on Easter Sunday. How well has the Diocese of Rochester observed the Year of Redemption?

Rather well, I think, to judge by unofficial reports. In addition to the few special celebrations planned by the Holy Year Committee, there have been many group pilgrimages made to Sacred Heart Cathedral and the other pilgrimage churches. The parishes and institutes have also collaborated with Bishop Clark's Lenten Crossroads program, "Renewed Hearts — Renewed Church." Pastors have utilized the Beatitude theme issued by the Holy Year Committee. What is especially interesting is the initiative a number of parishes and groups have taken to find fresh ways of making this year extraordinary. Among these were the jubilee rite at Assumption Church, Fairport; the Westside Spanish Cluster Celebration at St. Francis of Assisi Church; the renewal week at St. Theodore's; the theological lectures at St. Thomas the Apostle Church; the celebration in honor of the religious life by Focus on the Eucharist; the diocesan "tour" of the Pilgrim Virgin; and the fine innovative jubilee program in St. James parish school in Waverly.

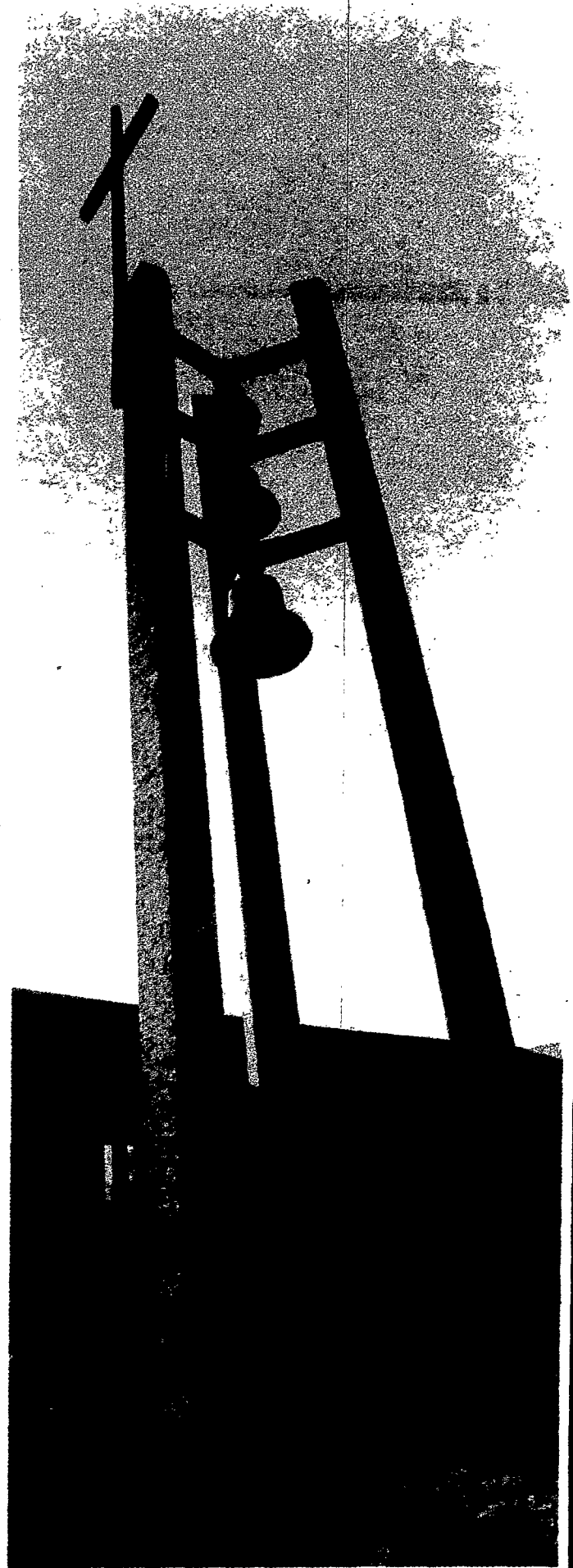
Many of our diocesans have not yet made their pilgrimages. Bishop Clark now invites them to do so during the last three days of Holy Week. He has designated all parish churches, and Newman chapels as pilgrimage churches for those days. So whoever attends any of the ceremonies in his own church can qualify as a pilgrim. He or she can gain the plenary Jubilee indulgence by: 1) praying for the intentions of the Holy Father; 2) renewing in the heart a detestation of sin; 3) making a private confession to a priest; 4) receiving a special "Jubilee Holy Communion"; and 5) performing some "act of mercy." Remember, if you can't get out to church, you can gain the indulgence at home.

The pope asks for an "act of mercy" as a sign that we have truly appreciated our redemption and want to live up to it. Lately the Holy Father has pointed out that when we speak of "making satisfaction for our sins" we simply mean making up for our wrong-doing by "right doing."

Bishop Clark has also instructed all churches with bells to signal the end of the Year of Redemption from noon to 12:05 p. m. on Easter Sunday. This peal of bells will be a joyful salute to the cross that saved us.

For the rest of our lives, may the sentiments of each of us always be those expressed in the prayer of St. Richard — the official Holy Year prayer of the Diocese of Rochester: "Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits and blessings which you have given me; for all the pains and insults which you have borne for me."

"Merciful Friend, Brother and Redeemer, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen!"



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