

Mass Commemorates Feast of St. John Fisher, Martyr



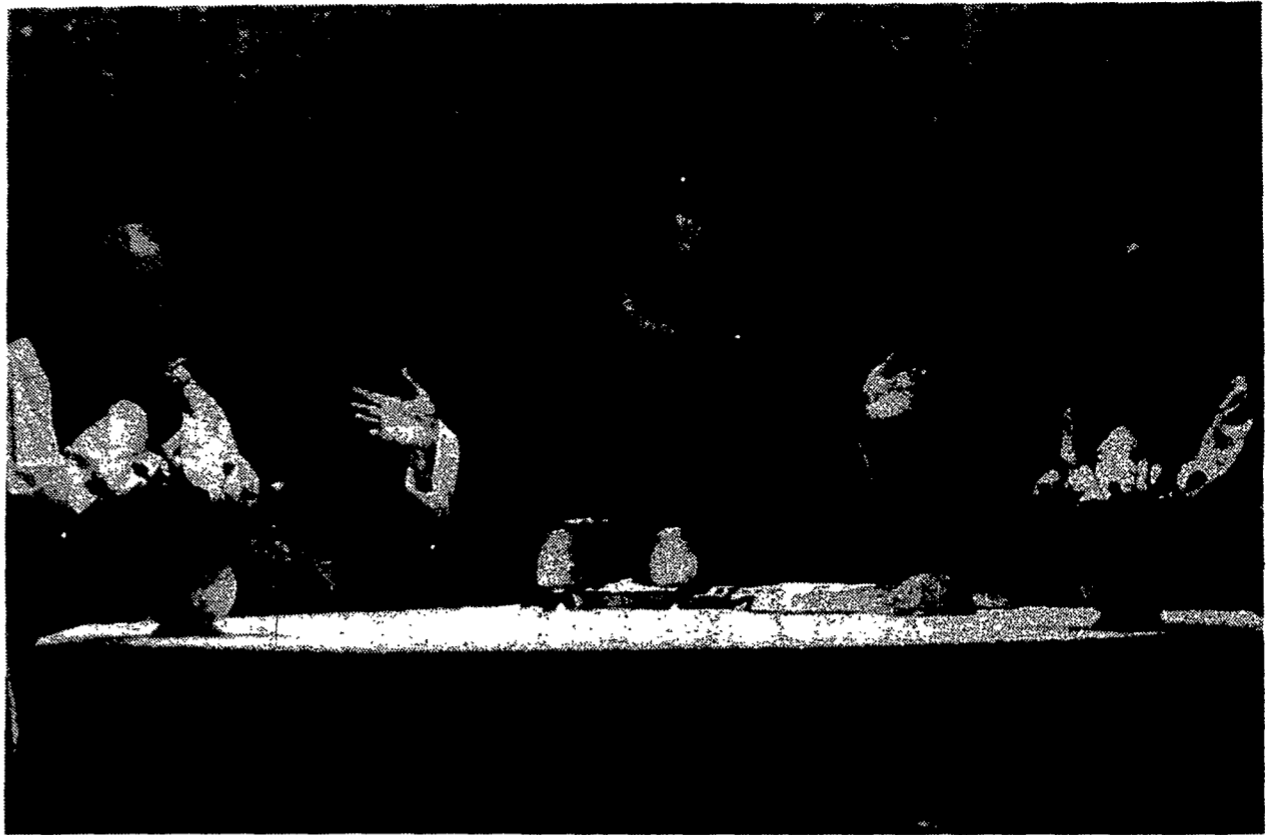
Father Joseph A. Trovato assists Bishop Matthew H. Clark, principal celebrant.

The ultimate self-gift — martyrdom — was the theme for a celebration of the feast of St. John Fisher, patron of the Rochester college that bears his name and of the Diocese of Rochester as well.

Fisher, the bishop of Rochester, England, was beheaded at the order of King Henry VIII on June 22, 1535, for refusing to sign the Oath of Supremacy. He shares his feast day with St. Thomas More, who was executed 14 days later, also for refusing to sign the oath. The 450th anniversary of Fisher's martyrdom and the 50th anniversary of his canonization were commemorated Saturday, June 22, in a special Mass at Murphy Chapel at St. John Fisher College.

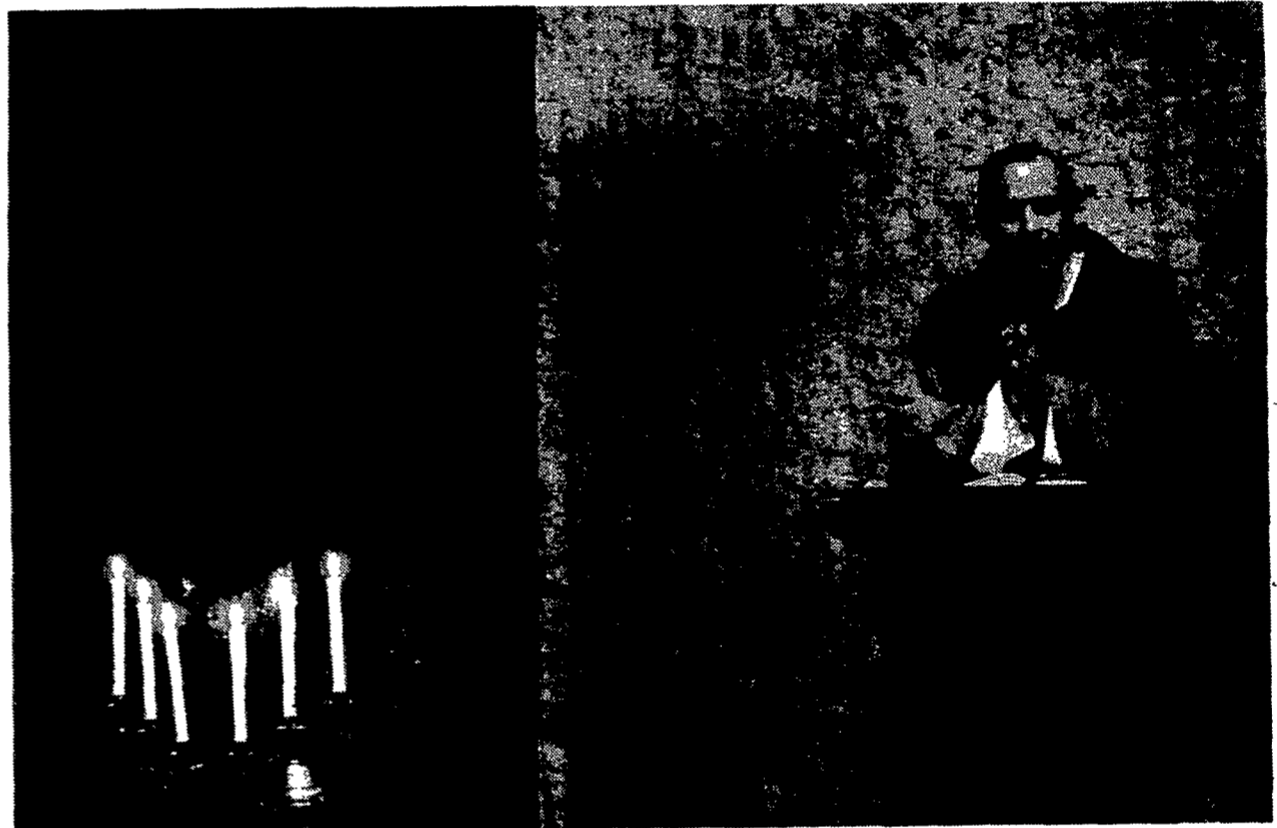
The 63rd Psalm's message "Your love is finer than life" was elucidated by principal celebrant and homilist Bishop Matthew H. Clark. "Of most people, all is not asked of them at once, but some are called to martyrdom," Bishop Clark said, directing the congregation of nearly 200 to surrender everything to the will of God and to travel the road on which God may call us.

Bishop Clark told the congregation they must "respond to God in our lives." He noted that although all are of good heart and generous disposition, we are aware of our own limitations. He said that it is difficult, therefore, to "absorb the notion of a total lifetime of giving into hearts that seem so small," but said we must ask God to "help me to open my heart in humility to be in spiritual union with You."



Bishop Clark and several of the Basilian Fathers of St. John Fisher prepare the Eucharist.

Joel H. Kithen



In his homily, Bishop Clark spoke of the sacrifices God calls each of us to make in His name.

Fast aid.

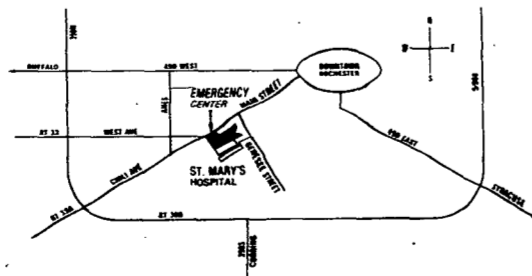
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Sanctuary Group Celebrates Delay

A prayer service turned into a celebration on Monday, June 17, when the Rochester Sanctuary Committee learned that the asylum hearing scheduled the following day had been cancelled.

Alejandro and Letitia Gomez, the Salvadorans who have taken refuge in Rochester along with their family, were ready to appear in Buffalo before Immigration Judge Gordon W. Sacks, along with a number of planned witnesses, to testify that the family has "a well-founded fear of persecution" should they be returned to El Salvador.

But the hearing was delayed until September at the request of representatives from the U.S. State Department since the advisory opinion paper they were scheduled to present was not finished.

"Anything that buys us time is good," said Christine Garrison, Corpus Christi parishioner and spokeswoman for the sanctuary committee, adding that the additional time will be used to strengthen the Gomezes' case. But above all, she noted, the family is safe until at least September.

Nearly 250 people gathered at Temple

B'rith Kodesh on Elmwood Avenue Monday evening, not only to celebrate the postponement, but also to welcome B'rith Kodesh, the first temple in the eastern U.S. to declare sanctuary, and to mark the first anniversary of the Gomez family's arrival.

"There was a real feeling of togetherness," Garrison said, despite or maybe because of the diversity of languages and cultures. Prayers and music could be heard in English, Hebrew and Spanish — and sometimes all three at once.

To date, five Rochester congregations have declared sanctuary. They are: Corpus Christi Church, Downtown Presbyterian Church, the Religious Society of Friends, the House Church and Temple B'rith Kodesh.

St. Anthony Society Banquet

The St. Anthony Society honored their patron saint and the society's 48th anniversary with a banquet held Thursday, June 13, at Club 86 in Geneva. Immediately after 5:15 Mass at St. Francis DeSales Church nearly 62 members and guests, including the assistant pastor at St. Francis, Father Eugene Emo, gathered to celebrate.



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