

# 125th anniversary

## Parish devoted to Jesus and Blessed Mother

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

SPENCERPORT — St. John the Evangelist Church was founded in 1867 to serve the growing Irish-Catholic community in the area, according to a parish history compiled by parishioners Jean DeRuyter and Margie Armstrong.

The new church building erected in that era was evidence of how far the Catholics in the area had traveled from 16 years before when "Father Michael Welch was sent, and celebrated a Mass in a wagon shop at Ogden Center," the authors wrote.

St. John's still draws parishioners from Ogden — along with worshipers from Parma, Spencerport and other surrounding towns — and continues to grow. Indeed, since Father Robert J. Winterkorn became pastor in 1975, he has seen his flock nearly double in size, from 800 families to 1,500 families.

The church in which the parishioners' currently worship was built of field stones from neighboring farms in 1915 to replace the old structure. Located at 60 Martha St., the church was renovated in 1967. Its interior received a paint job about 10 years ago, Father Winterkorn said.

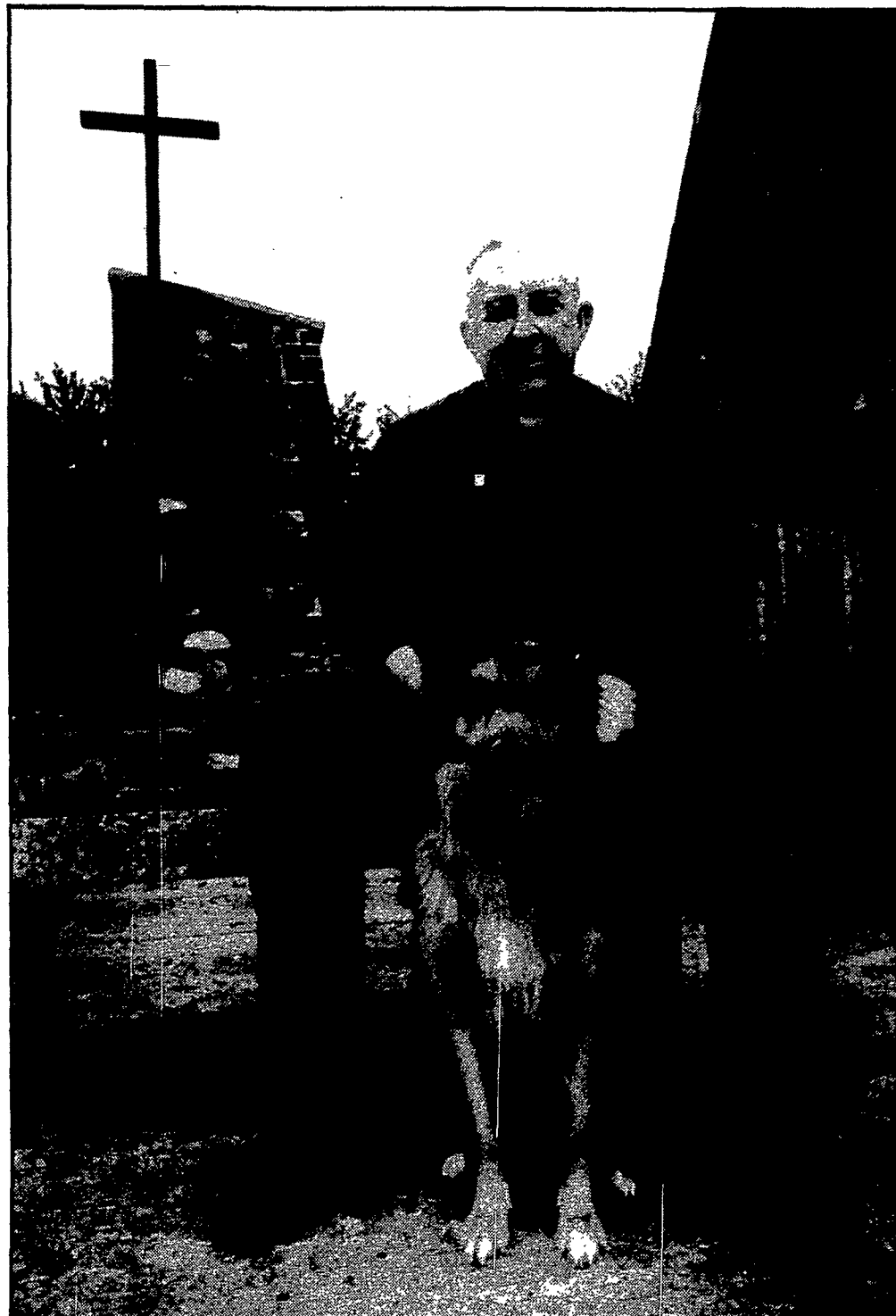
But more important than the building in which they worship is what the parishioners worship, the pastor emphasized. Reverence for the Eucharist and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary form the basis of spiritual life at St. John the Evangelist Church, according to Father Winterkorn.

"It's always been one of my ideals," he said. "If we had a parish that was devoted to the Eucharist and Our Blessed Mother, it certainly would be good."

Indeed, the parish celebrated its 125th anniversary with a number of eucharistic and Marian events during the months of October and September. In addition to living rosaries and eucharistic expositions, the parish sponsored a pilgrimage to a shrine in Le-



The parish recently expanded the stock its religious shop carries. The store offers shoppers audio- and videotapes, books, Bibles, papal encyclicals, greeting cards, framed holy pictures and more.



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor  
Father Robert J. Winterkorn, pastor at Spencerport's St. John the Evangelist Church since 1975, sits with his dog Smokey near the shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary in between the church and the rectory.

wiston devoted to Our Lady of Fatima.

The parish's celebration culminated with an anniversary banquet at the Mapledale Party House in Gates on Sunday, Oct. 11.

Such notable officials as Monroe County Executive Robert King, Donald Walzer, supervisor of the Town of Ogden, and John Hubbard, mayor of Spenceport, joined Bishops Matthew H. Clark, Joseph Hogan and Dennis

Hickey at the dinner.

The celebration was organized by John J. Grieco, chairman of the anniversary committee. Father Paul Wohlrab, priest-in-residence at the parish, said the Benediction.

But the end of anniversary celebrations won't quell the fire of sacramental and Marian devotion that expresses itself most of all in the religious shop the parish operates in the church's



In addition to reflecting the theme of the diocesan Synod, a church banner marks the Spencerport parish's 125th anniversary.

basement.

The parish originally opened a small-scale shop in the 1980s after a parishioner complained that he was unable to find any Catholic religious articles to buy in the area, Father Winterkorn said. The parish revamped the store about one-and-one half years ago, he said, expanding its stock considerably.

Currently the shop features Catholic audio and videotapes, books, Bibles, papal encyclicals, greeting cards, framed holy pictures, religious articles, and pro-life materials. Information on Marian apparitions and Marian devotions take up much of the shop's space.

The shop is open Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Saturdays from 5-6:30 p.m.; and Sundays from 8:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The pastor said the shop draws a large number of non-parishioners, and that all its profits go back into buying more religious articles.

Barb DiVincenzo, one of the shop's managers, said 28 volunteers staff the shop. She estimated that between 40 to 50 customers patronize the store each day it is open.

All the shop's prices are discounted, she said, so that information about the Catholic faith is easily affordable to the curious.

"We just want to spread the Lord's love and help people grow in their Catholic faith," she said. "We want to help people renew their interest in the Blessed Mother out of concern for the world."

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