

# Finger Lakes proffers fine churches to view

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

The Rochester diocese is graced with the Finger Lakes district, a popular tourist area that features rolling hills, cottage-lined lakes, and one of the nation's largest wine producing regions.

Amid these scenic wonders, the Finger Lakes region also offers some fine examples of church architecture.

The following is a brief look at three churches offering a sample of different styles of design.

One of the most distinctive churches in the diocese is St. Januarius in Naples, located at the southern end of Canandaigua Lake in the heart of wine country. In addition to its reputation as a ski resort town, Naples is also widely known as an arts community and for its annual grape festival.

In 1966 the parish built a church at 180 North St. to replace the edifice constructed in 1879. Designed by Rochester architect James Johnson, who also is responsible for Rochester's Liberty Pole, the new church features a roof shaped like a grape leaf.

The roof rests on poured concrete walls punctured by red, purple, yellow and blue ovals of glass that resemble grapes.

The windows filter multicolored light into the church, which features a number of wall decorations — including a sculpture of Christ titled, "Christ in Turmoil," created by Coming artist Fritz Wasser.

The parish also has an outdoor Shrine of Our Lady of the Grapes. The shrine is located in a rose garden behind the rectory.

St. Januarius represents a very modern church building design.

On the other hand, Canandaigua's St. Mary Parish offers an example of more traditional design: the Romanesque.

Located at 95 N. Main St., the church was constructed of pink Medina stone hauled by train from Medina, N.Y. Bacon quarry stone was used to back the Medina stone. The design includes twin towers rising 85 feet tall. The building's windows and arches, true to the Romanesque design, are rounded at the top.

St. Mary's was designed by two Rochester architects responsible for a number of diocesan churches: Edwin S. Gordon and William V. Madden. The



St. Stephen in Geneva offers unique altar woodcarvings.

1905 building replaced a structure built in 1844.

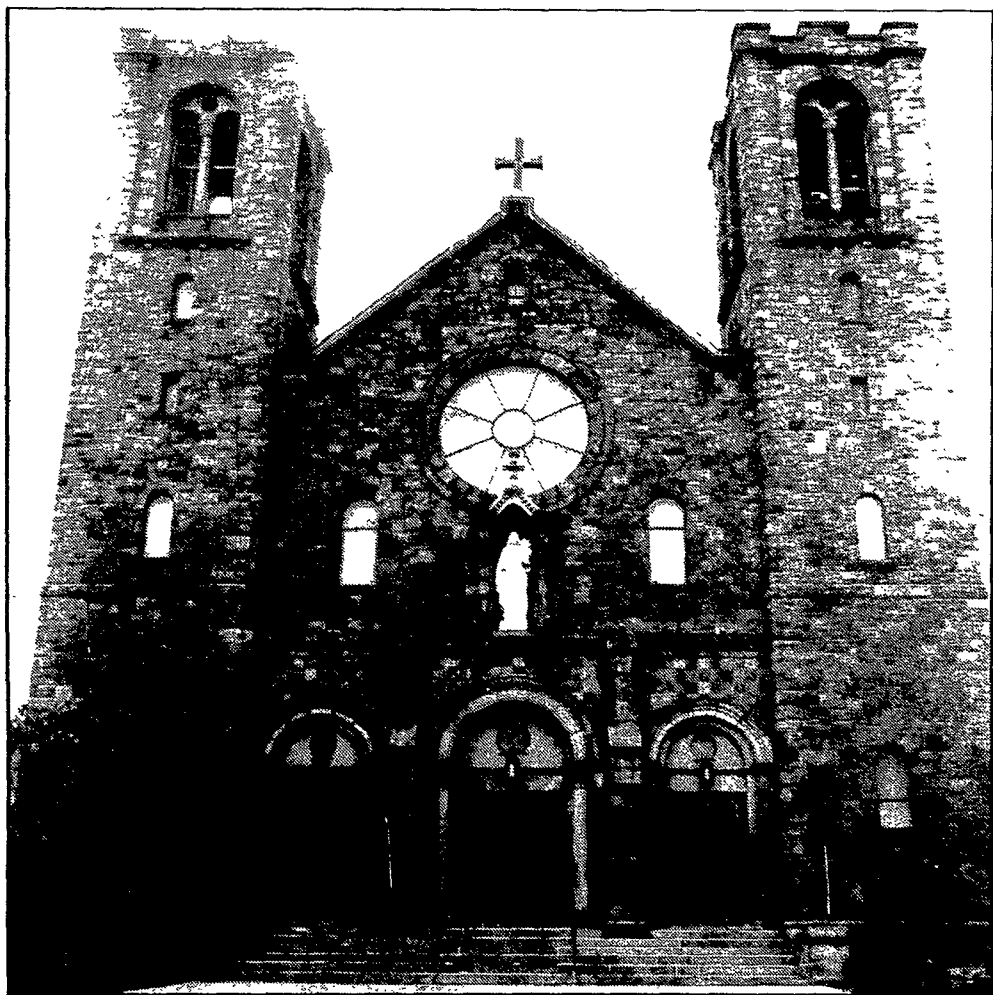
The Canandaigua parish is also in the process of restoring its convent, an historic Greek revival building. The 165-year-old building featuring massive columns is registered in the National Register of Historic Places and the New York State Register of Historic Places.

Gordon and Madden were also the architects responsible for St. Stephen Church's neo-Gothic design.

Dedicated in 1912, St. Stephen Church, 48 Pulteney St., Geneva, features twin towers — much like St. Mary's in Canandaigua. The Geneva church was built with a limestone exterior. The interior includes large brick pillars and pointed-arch windows — typical of the neo-Gothic style.

The woodwork and carved statues around the altar really make the church stand out. A "rood" (or crucifix) beam — another feature of neo-Gothic design — crosses above the sanctuary bearing a carved crucifixion scene.

"Blessed Sacrament (in Rochester) and St. Stephen's have unquestionably the finest sanctuary wood sculptures in the whole Diocese," noted Father Robert F. McNamara, diocesan archi-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

The facade of St. Mary Church faces North Main Street in Canandaigua. The edifice was constructed of pink Medina stone hauled by train from Medina.

vist, in his 1968 diocesan history, *The Diocese of Rochester: 1868-1968*.

The carving, Father McNamara continued, "was done by Isaac Kirchmayer, one of the ablest American woodcarvers of the early twentieth century."

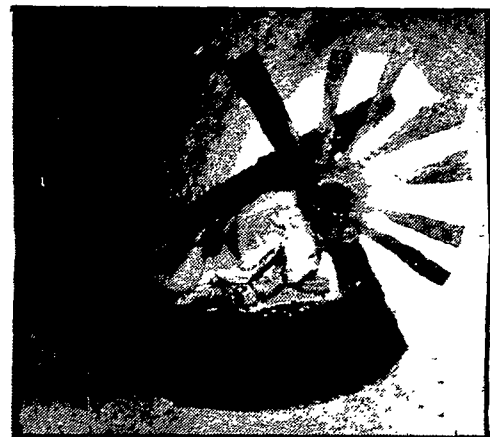
In addition, Frederick Wilson's painting titled, "The Martyrdom of St. Stephen," serves as an altar piece above the main altar.

In an interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Father McNamara said there are a number of other churches of classic design in the Finger Lakes region that might be of interest to people touring the area.

He cited as two such churches of interest because of their classical designs Seneca Falls' St. Patrick Church, 97 West Bayard St., and Auburn's St. Mary Church, 17 Clark St.

Father McNamara also pointed out that many diocesan churches are "eclectic" in design. The neo-Gothic Revival that began in the mid-1800s led to other revivals. As a result, styles were mixed. And newer churches, such as St. Januarius, are often unique.

The archivist observed that even though the Finger Lakes region and the diocese in general offer the poten-



Stations of the Cross receive light from small oval windows at St. Januarius Church in Naples.

tial for church tours, none have been organized focusing on Catholic churches.

The priest added that he was in the process of collecting notes about churches of interest both architecturally and artistically.

"On the basis of that (research), a good deal of educational matter and tourism material is going to be established in the diocesan archives," Father McNamara said.

That material, the priest believes, could become the basis of future tours.

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