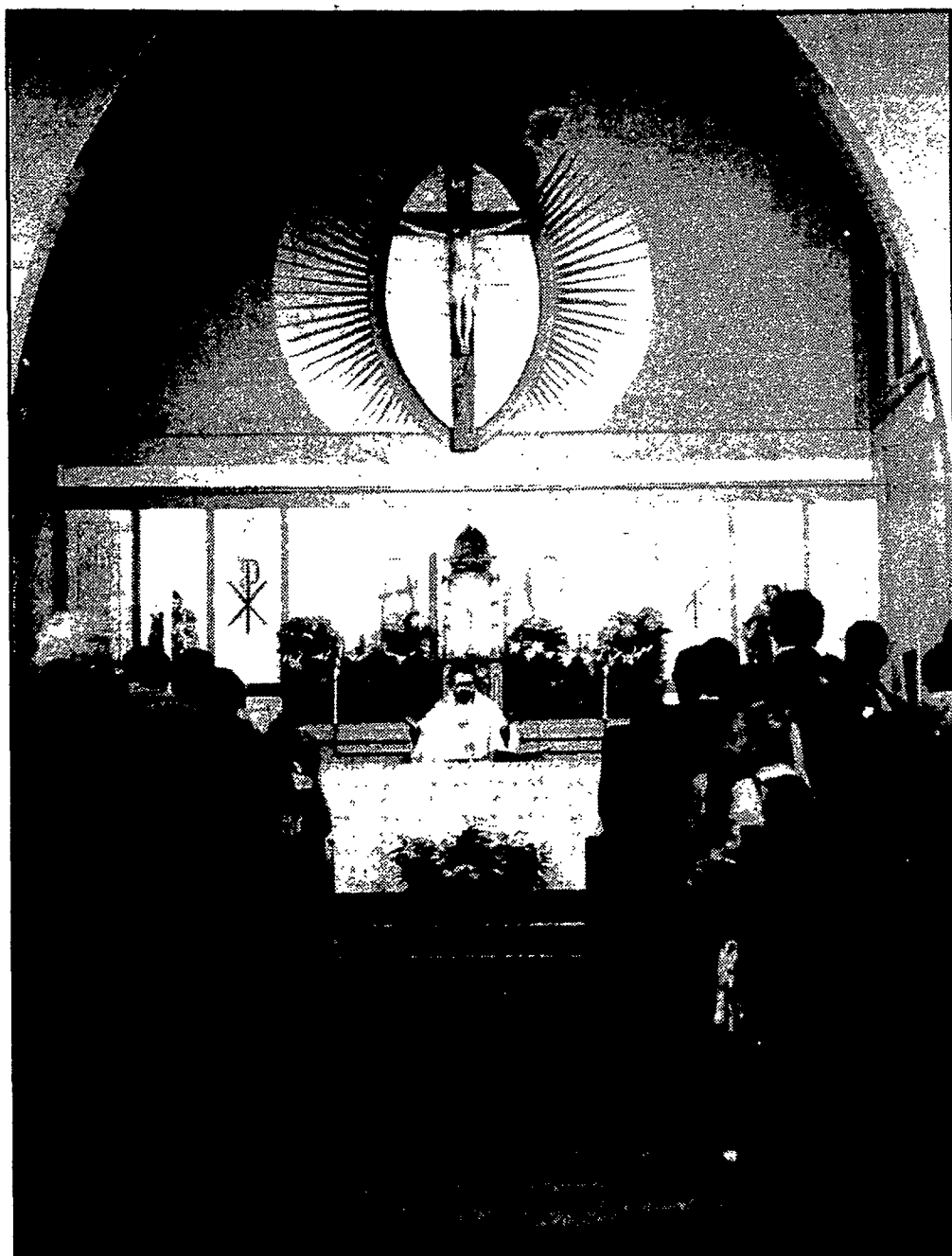
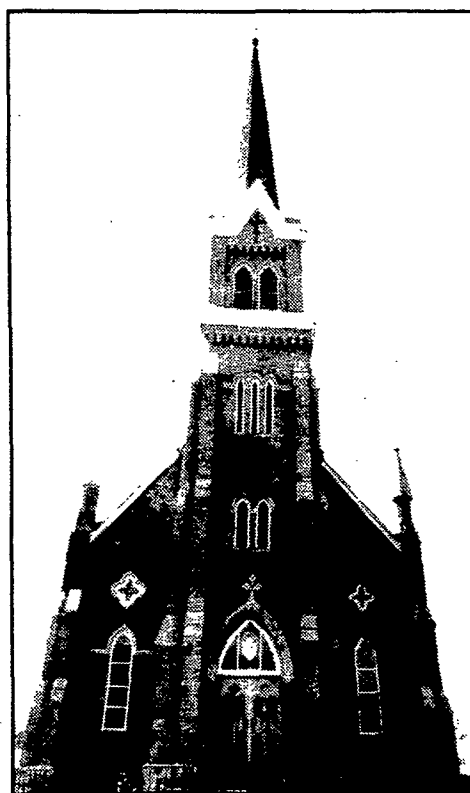


FEATURE



The interior of St. Patrick's Church features a reproduction of Raphael's 'Transfiguration' and a stained-glass portrait of St. Patrick with the church cradled in his arms.



St. Patrick's construction began in 1869. Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid dedicated the church 1874.

parish center at 33 Murray St., she said, but the growing children's education programs may force a fresh look at how the parish teaches its youngsters.

"Our enrollment is at capacity," she said. "If we go any higher, we're going to have to look at alternative methods — classes during the week, classes at home."

If this all sounds like the parish is implementing the diocesan synodal priority calling for Lifelong Religious Education, St. Patrick's parishioners will insist that they were doing this before synodal delegates voted for the measure.

"We kept just nodding our heads during the Synod," said Scura.

"We were saying 'we already do that,'" added Beck.

Father Condon stressed that the parish was inspired to actively pursue another synodal priority — Small Christian Communities. Such communities often start out as Bible study groups, a pattern that St. Patrick's has witnessed among its own parishioners.

A member of the committee implementing that synodal priority, Father Condon sees small Christian communities as the wave of the future in the church, especially for small-town parishes such as St. Patrick's that want to edify their members' faith and further educate their adults.

"We have an advantage over suburban churches because people know each other," he said. "We don't have to create a sense of community."

To learn more about St. Patrick's Church, call 716/658-2110.

Livingston

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important for the parish to reach out to the younger generation of Catholics, a sentiment echoed by Michelle Levey, coordinator of St. Patrick's junior high youth group.

"At that age they want to do their own thing, but they still want guidance," Levey said of her youth group members. "They really want to know about God, but they don't want their parents to know."

Some youngsters are embarrassed to share their spiritual side with their families and feel more comfortable opening up to their peers and Levey in a youth group setting, she said. The coordinator welcomes their efforts, and encourages them to share their hunger for God with their families.

"They can have these spiritual feelings now, and they don't have to wait till their 20 or 30 like I did," she said.

But if they do, the parish offers a host of programs to aid them when they do realize their spiritual needs, according to Julane Beck, religious education administrator.

In addition to overseeing 117 children in the elementary-age catechetical program, she noted that St. Patrick's offers faith formation for adults along with Bible study classes.

The parish also plans to link up with St. Mary's Parish in Dansville to utilize satellite programming from the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America.

Word of mouth has led to across-the-board increases in enrollment for St. Patrick's religious education programs, Beck said. Currently, most of the parish's programs and classes operate out of the

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Past meets present in Carmelite opera

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Richard Pearlman acknowledged that he was unaware of how history and current events would intersect when he began planning for Eastman Opera Theatre's April 8-9 production and symposium of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*.

The contemporary opera recounts the deaths of 16 Carmelites — 10 professed women religious, a novice, three lay sisters and two extern sisters — on July 17, 1794. Their murders came during the Reign of Terror in France.

After learning the opera was to be performed, Joseph Kelly, professor of religious studies at Nazareth College of Rochester, called Pearlman to point out that this year marks the 200th anniversary of the Carmelites' deaths.

Pearlman also noted that the sisters' death decree was issued on July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The day the opera opened in Rochester was also the International Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust. It was also the day that 19 people — including three Jesuits and five diocesan priests of Rwanda — were massacred during fighting in that African nation.

"As one speaker said," Pearlman said, "It's contemporary in the worst way."

The all-day symposium April 9 at the Eastman School of Music, 26 Gibbs St., examined the 1957 opera's historical, literary, theological, cultural and musical aspects during a panel discussion.

Kelly, a panel member, noted that the opera's composer, Francis Poulenc, "had a great religious conversion and began to write great religious compositions."

The opera's plot revolves around one young woman, Blanche, who enters the convent in an attempt to avoid her own fears and the growing terrors in France, leaves before the others are arrested, and then rejoins them as they are about to be executed, Kelly explained.

Pearlman pointed out that the opera — which he described as a "20th century masterpiece" — is based on a movie script and subsequent play written by French writer Georges Bernanos. Bernanos himself based his work on Gertrude von le Fort's 1933 novella, which he said, was written in "reaction to her sense that the Holocaust was going to be a second Reign of Terror."

The story itself is based on the memoirs of Sister Marie of the Incarnation, a member of the Carmelite monastery from which the executed women had been taken. She had been away at the time of their arrest, and watched in the crowd as they were executed.

At the symposium's conclusion, a number of participants drove to the Carmelite Monastery of Our Lady and St. Joseph, located at 1931 Jefferson Road, Henrietta, for evening prayer.

Ironically, the Carmelites living on Jefferson Road were not able to attend the opera because they are a cloistered community. Pearlman said he wants to contact the prioress, Mother Miriam of the Angels, to see if cast members can travel to the monastery and sing selections from the opera in the monastery's chapel.