

Seventy-fifth Anniversary of



Saint Catherine Church

In this, our seventy-fifth
year, we wish to dedicate this
book to Our Parish Family.
May they grow in mind, spirit
and unity over the next
seventy-five years.

August 28, 1988

Mount Union, Pennsylvania



Catherine Benincasa (Saint Catherine of Siena)

Catherine was the youngest of a very large family. In 1353, at the age of six she had a vision in St. Dominic Church which our Lord appeared to her and blessed her.

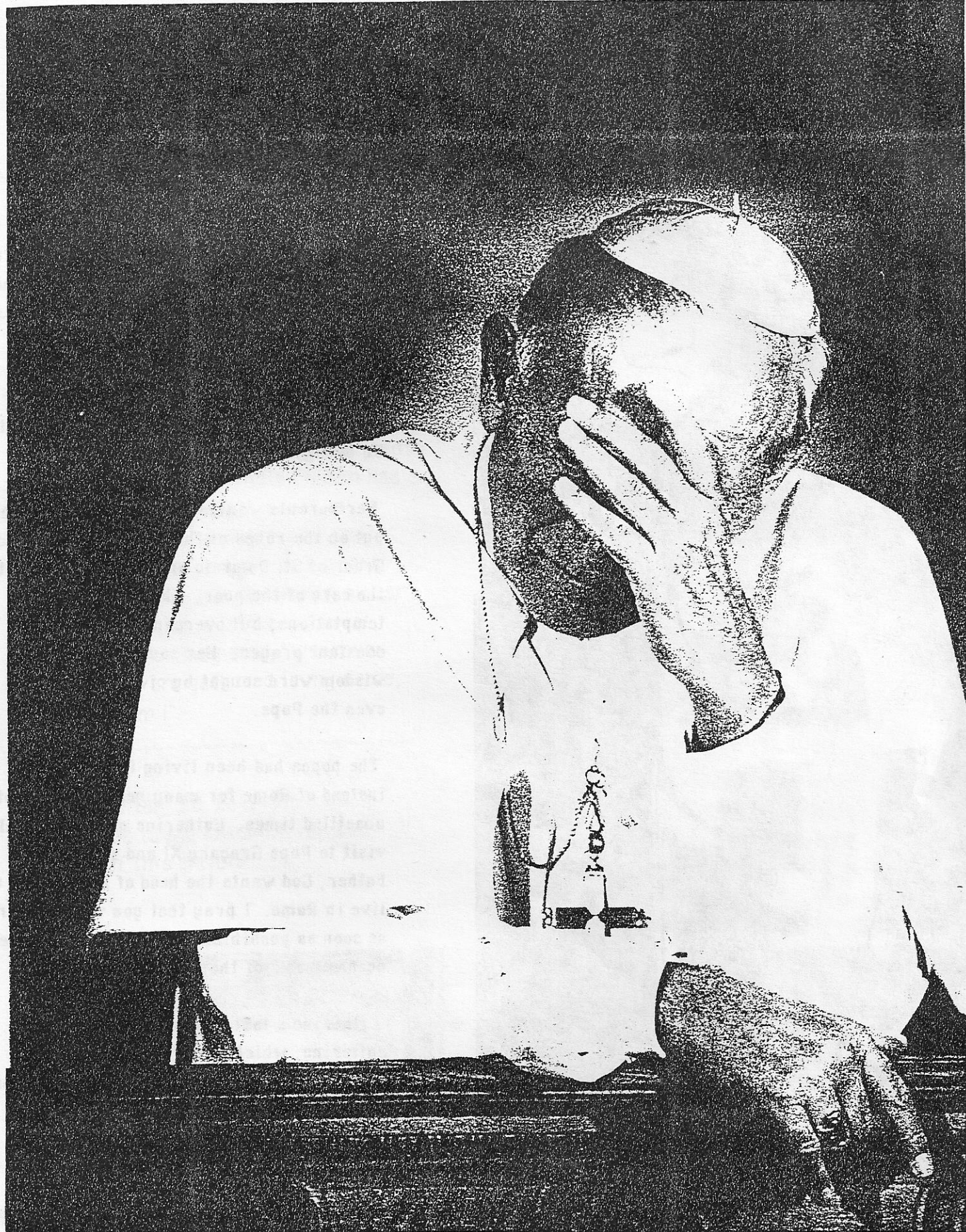
She felt that our Lord wanted her to do some special work, so she prepared for it by penance and fervent prayer.

Her parents wanted her to marry, but she put on the robes of the Sister of the Third Order of St. Dominic and devoted herself to the care of the poor. She had many temptations, but overcame them through constant prayer. Her sound advice and wisdom were sought by civil leaders, and even the Pope.

The popes had been living in France instead of Rome for many years because of unsettled times. Catherine made a special visit to Pope Gregory XI and said, "Holy Father, God wants the head of His Church to live in Rome. I pray that you will go there as soon as possible." And once again Rome became home of the Popes.

Catherine's last days were full of suffering, which she offered up for all Christians. Our Lord granted her a vision showing the beauty of soul in the state of grace. She died at thirty-three.





POPE JOHN PAUL II



Bishop Joseph Y. Adamec

MEN ORDAINED FROM SAINT CATHERINE PARISH



Fr. Dennis Boggs



Fr. Stephen Gergel

PASTORS WHO SERVED SAINT CATHERINE



Rev. James A. Tolan



Rev. Michael E. Zamba



Rev. Thomas O'Donnell



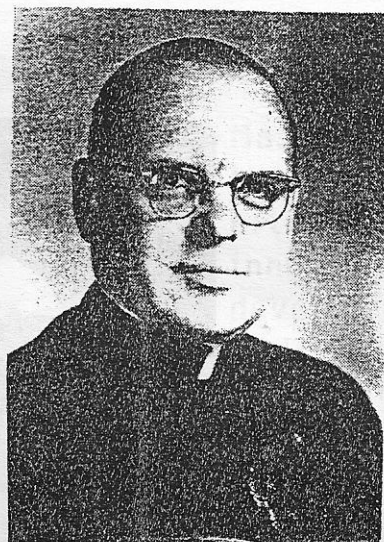
Rev. John A. Kerkoska



Rev. Joseph M. Rusnak



Rev. John B. Golias



Rev. Gerard J. Oeler



Rev. Joseph D. Tomko

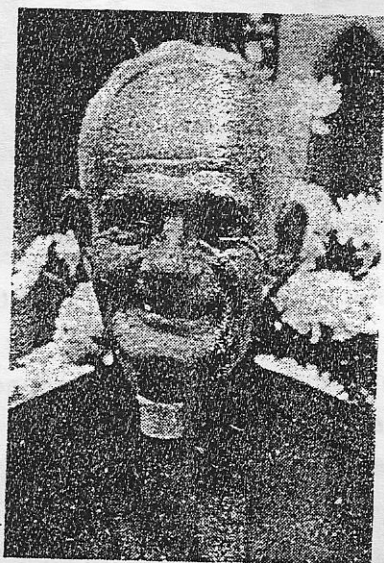
Retired Pastor Outwits Devil

BY: FATHER
TIMOTHY P. STEIN

Everyone knows that the devil is only capable of telling lies, but according to Father Paul Thomas, Satan may have told the truth once, and in so doing, kept him from becoming a priest five years sooner than what he did.

"From the time I reached the age of reason, I never wanted to be anything but a priest," says the retiring pastor of St. Catherine's in Mount Union, "but when I got to St. Francis College in Loretto, and was around priests, the devil put it into my mind that I wasn't worthy to be one of them, and that I should give the idea up. And for once in his life the devil was right! I am not worthy of the priesthood."

For five years, Paul Thomas made his living as a door-to-door salesman selling household products in the Wilmore and Portage areas. But the idea of someday becoming a priest never left him in all that time. "Finally I went to my spiritual director, Father Doyle, and told him that the



FR. PAUL THOMAS

thought was still with me. He said 'if that's the case, you'd better go ahead, and I'll take full responsibility for it.' So all that I can say to anyone now is, blame it all on Father Doyle."

That advice ultimately lead to the Cambria County native's or-

dination on May 14, 1942. "That was the real high point of my life," says Father Thomas, "and after that day, the one that stands out the sharpest in my memory was the day that I celebrated my mother's funeral Mass, the day that I sent her to heaven."

Sending people to heaven has been the main thrust of Father Thomas's priestly ministry. "When I was ordained forty years I thought, I've been telling people how to get to heaven for all of this time now. Maybe I should put it in a nutshell for them."

That idea lead Father Thomas to compose a mimeographed hand-out for his parishioners, a hand-out that became the basis for the pamphlet. "My Ticket to Heaven." In the four years since the first printing of the small booklet took place, 1,400,000 copies have been printed and distributed. "Recently I sent 20,000 copies to the Philippines. Outside of the United States, the widest circulation of the pamphlet has been in the Philippines," Father Thomas.

said.

Father Thomas, whose retirement became effective on August 15, plans to spend his time continuing to promote his pamphlet. "Whatever I can do to help the church and to save souls, I will do," he says.

Father Thomas plans to reside in a mobile home on his family's farm, between Patton and Carrolltown. "It's going to be like a dream come true," he says of the move. "I'm placing the trailer exactly where our house used to stand. I'm going back to the very spot where I was born, to wait for the Lord to come for me."

The diminutive priest, who walks six miles every day, is entering upon his retirement now because of increasing difficulty with arthritis. "As hard as Cambria County winters are, both the Bishop and I thought that it would be better for me to get settled in now, while the weather was still good."

As he contemplates the end of 19 years of service to the Mount Union parish, Father Thomas looks back to the establishment of the Knights of Columbus, the Columbian Squires, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and the Junior Catholic Daughters, as his proudest accomplishments. "It's going to be hard to say goodbye," Father Thomas says. "The longer that you're with people, the more you get tied to them. Still, I wanted to do what's best for the church, and right now, my retirement seems to be the best thing."

Looking back on his experience of 44 years of service, Father Thomas thinks of what he might tell some other young man with the same doubts about a vocation as he had. "If the idea of becoming a priest keeps on coming back to you, then you finally just must trust that it comes from God," he says. "In the end, if it really is God's will for you, then all of the difficulties will drop away. I thank God that they did for me."

MY TICKET TO HEAVEN



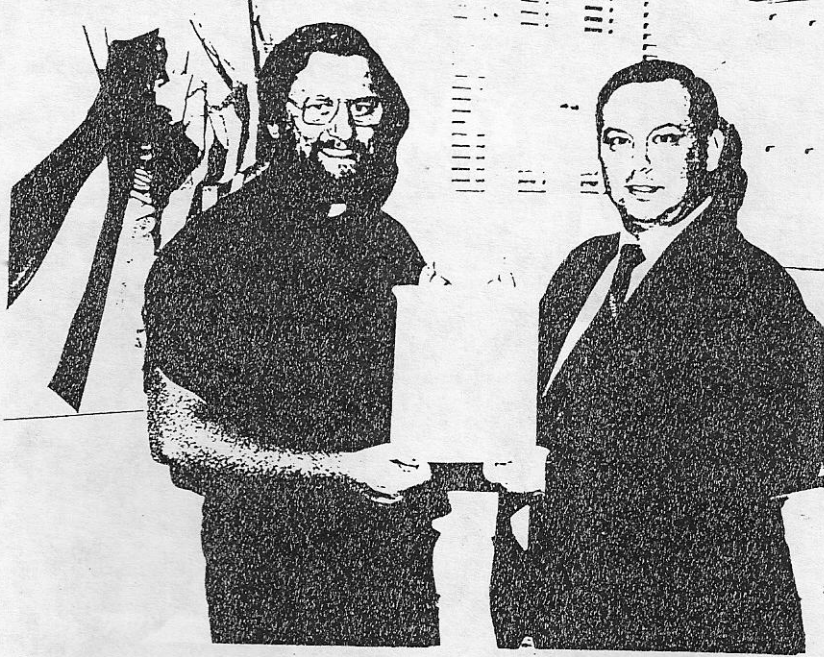


Father James Damian Zatalava is the present Pastor of St. Catherine. Father J.D. has been responsible for many changes since his arrival in November 1986. The main thrust of these changes has been involving the laity with parish activities. He has been instrumental in the formation of the lay minister program, and in supporting an increased involvement of the parishioners in the Sacraments and CCD program.

He has developed many programs that bring our Parish together for Fellowship. These include the Lenten Celebration of Fat Tuesday, Passover Seder Supper, Holiday Celebrations, Marian Breakfasts, Memorial Day Mass at the cemetery, and this, our 75th Anniversary Celebration.

Father J.D. administers to our spiritual growth by offering retreats, meditations, and unique Rosary experiences. He administers to our growth as a "family unit" by providing family orientated educational projects and his upcoming Active Parenting Program.

We, his parish family, wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to Father for his many contributions to St. Catherine.



A BRIEF HISTORY

Catholic religious services were held in Mount Union at various times as early as 1848 in the home of John Dougherty. They continued to be held there until our church was built. The present site on which St. Catherine Church now stands is part of an eight acre tract of land donated in June 1872 by the Daughertys. Mr. Dougherty was a staunch Catholic and a man of progress and charity. He was instrumental in the development of Mount Union. Besides generously allowing religious services to be held in his home, and donating land for the church, he also had our first three Pastors live in his home until our Rectory was built.

Our congregation was considered a Mission of the Holy Trinity Church in Huntingdon during the early years. In 1912 the Most Reverend Eugene Garvey, D.D., first Bishop of Altoona Diocese, gave permission to Father James Tolan, Pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Huntingdon to build a Church in Mount Union.

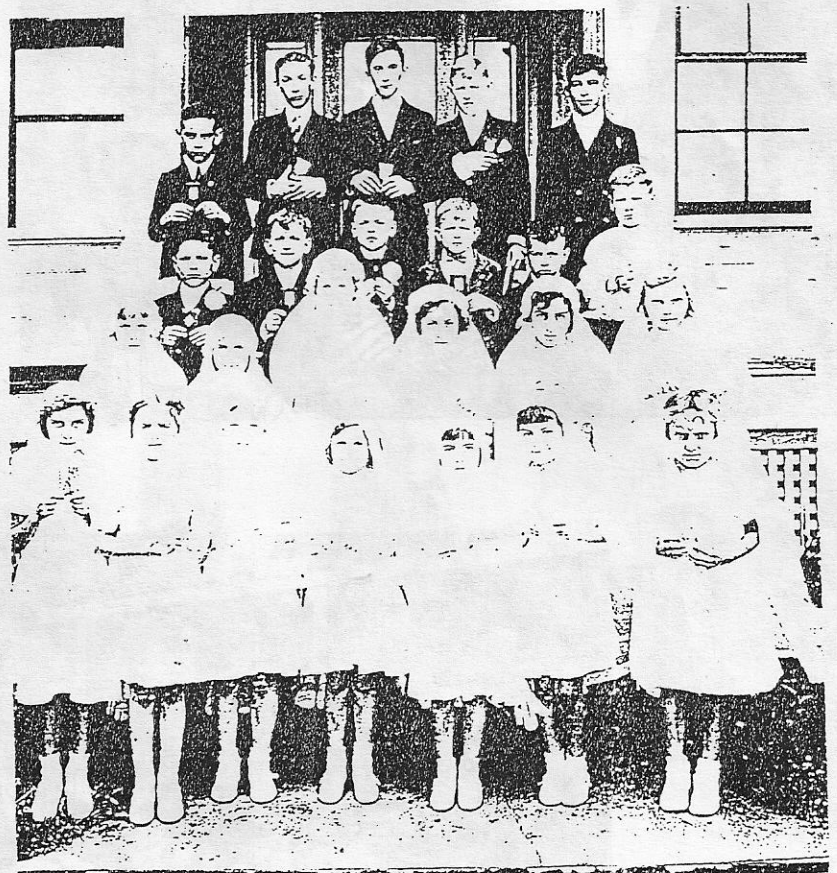
On September 2, 1912 the contract for the new church(\$8,630.10) was given to T.C. Peduzzi. The architect was J. Herbert Hall. The church was constructed of red brick and a

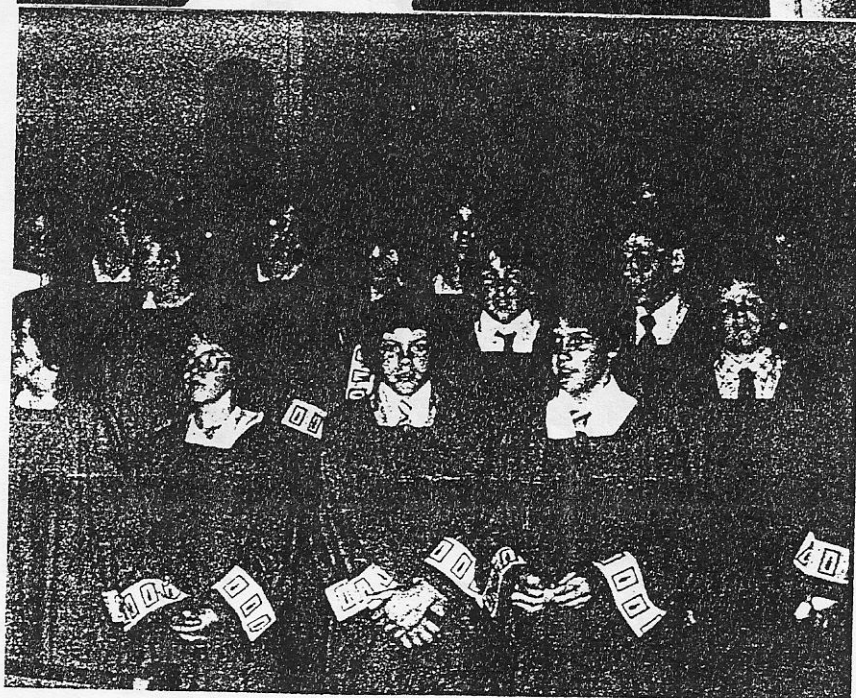
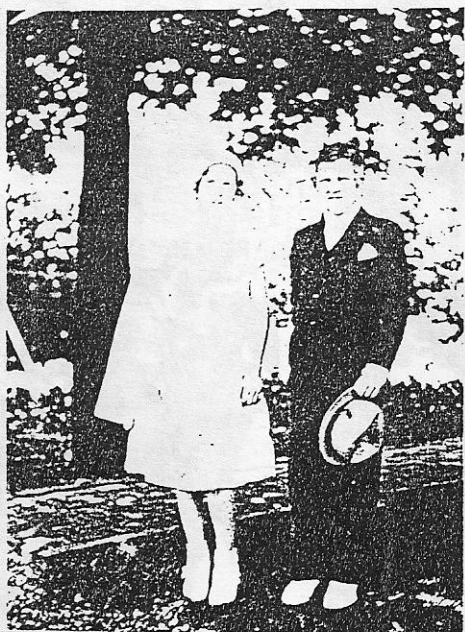


JOHN DOUGHERTY



CATHARINE DOUGHERTY





slate roof. Excavation was done by Henry and Samuel McGarvey. The three alters were a donation from St. Matthew's Church in Tyrone through the Cullen family. The bell was donated by Patrick Garaghty and named in honor of St. Patrick. The stained glass windows and statues were donated by parishioners or societies. Bishop Garvey laid the cornerstone in the fall of 1912. On Sunday, August 12, 1913 the new church was blessed and dedicated by Bishop Garvey under the title of St. Catherine (in memory of Catherine Dougherty) in the presence of some 500 priests and people. The church continued as a mission from Huntingdon.

The records from Huntingdon show that in the new church the first marriage was that of Fred Dughi and Theresa Peduzzi on Sept. 10, 1913; the first baptism was that of Leonardo Bellucci on Sept. 28, 1913; and first funeral was that of Edward Adiutori on March 25, 1914.

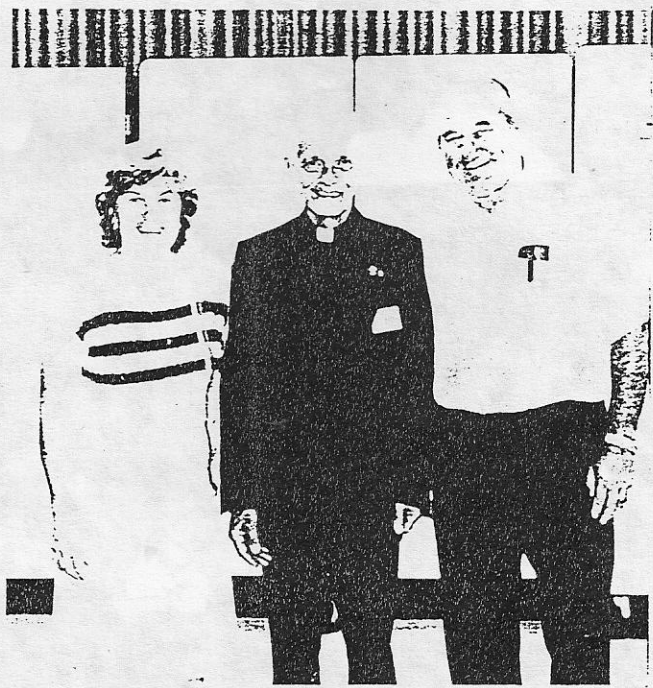
St. Catherine of Siena Church became a Parish on July 1, 1921 and St. Mary's Church in Shade Valley became its mission until June 7, 1962. The Reverend Michael Zamba was appointed its first Pastor in 1921 and he was succeeded by Father Thomas O'Donnell in 1922.

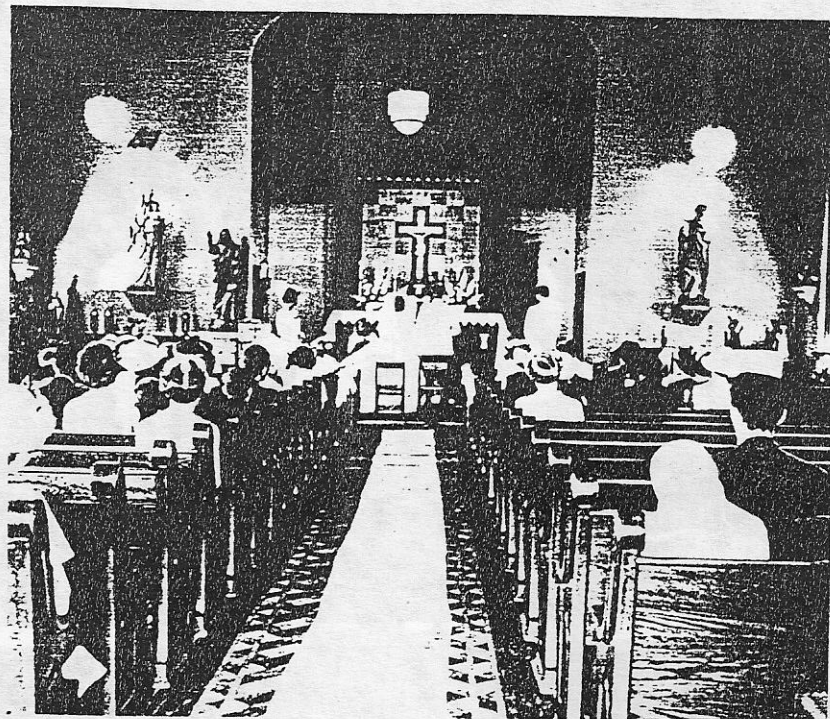
John A. Kerkoska became the third Pastor, November 14, 1922. During his pastorate, many improvements were made. The debt was paid off. The present rectory was built (\$10,752.17) in 1925. The church grounds were graded, a Grecian retaining wall constructed, steps and railings leading up to the church and rectory and sidewalks around the property put in. The grounds were terraced and sodded. A Cemetery of three acres in Shirleysburg was acquired and blessed. The church was repaired in 1934.



After the death of Father Kerkoska in 1945, the parish was administered for a time by the Reverend Alphonsus Sobota, T.O.R., who continued the good work.

The Reverend Joseph M. Rusnak became the fourth Pastor, January, 1945. During his pastorate, the debt was paid off. The Taylor property on the corner of Washington and Market Streets was purchased and remodeled for the Convent. Sisters of the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart occupied the Convent for the first time. They did Catechetical work and took an annual census of the parish. The Reverend John V. Orlando was appointed the first





Assistant Pastor, June, 1951. The Reverend George Grega succeeded him as Assistant Pastor June, 1952, and remained in charge after Father Rusnak died October, 1952



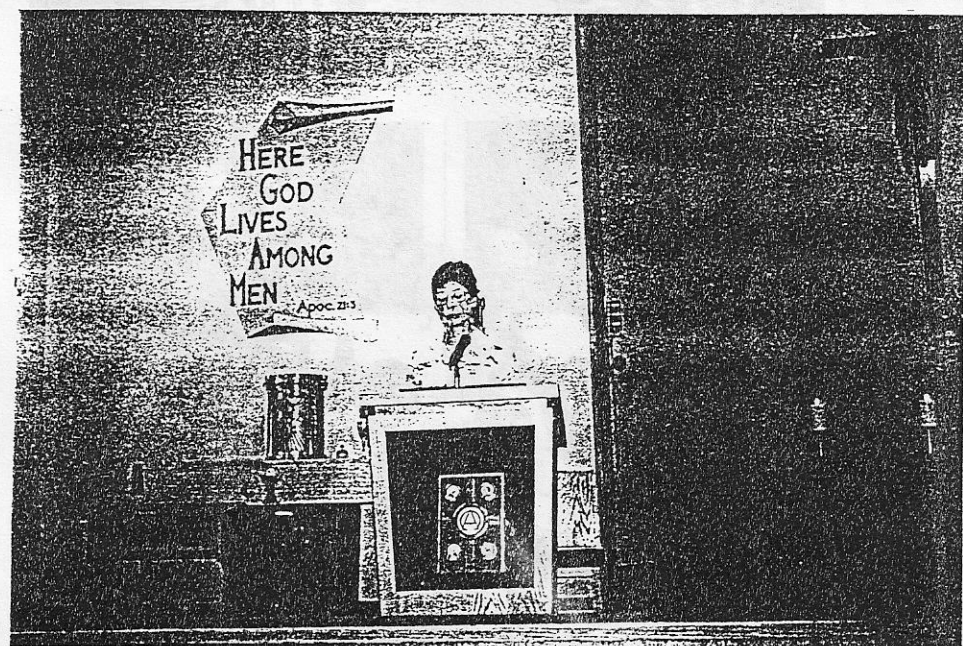
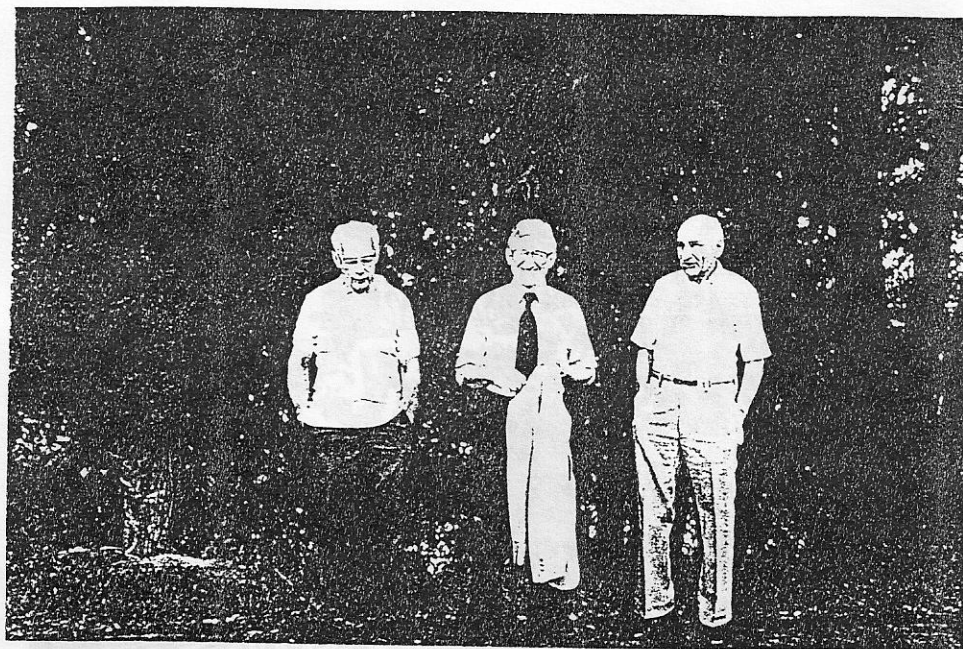
The Reverend John B. Golias was appointed fifth Pastor July 1953. During his pastorate, many improvements were also made to the church properties. A new pipe organ was installed and dedicated November 14, 1954, new kneelers put in the church, a new drive-way and side-walks around the church, the Cemetery reseeded in grass.

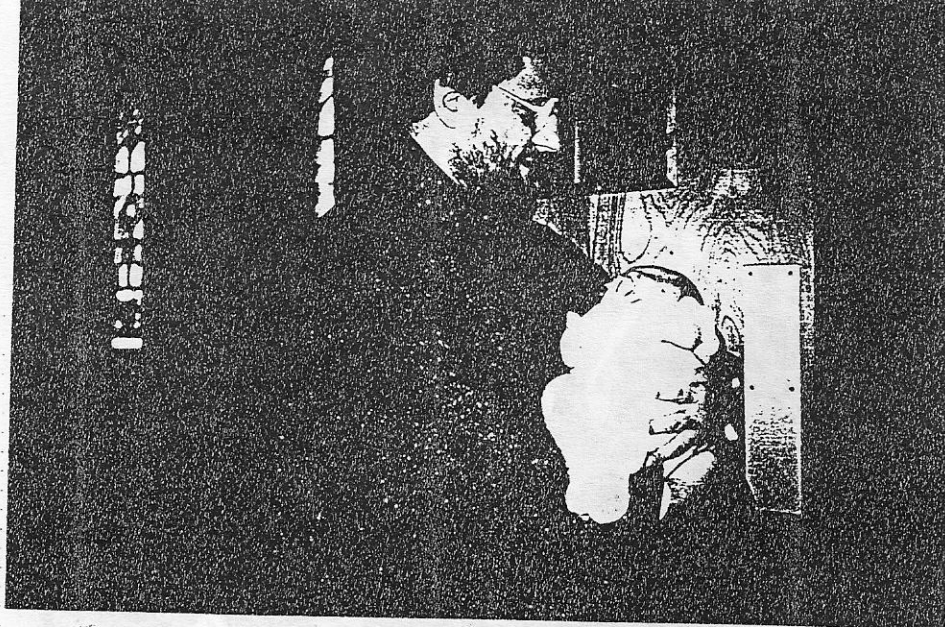
The new School Fund was increased to a point where construction was seen in the very near future. Church Societies were revitalized. Attendance at Mass and reception of Sacraments was notably increased. The Reverend John A. Halka was appointed Assistant Pastor in May of 1954, a position he held until June 7, 1962. Father Golias was transferred to Pastor of St. John the Baptist, Central City, Pa., May, 1958.



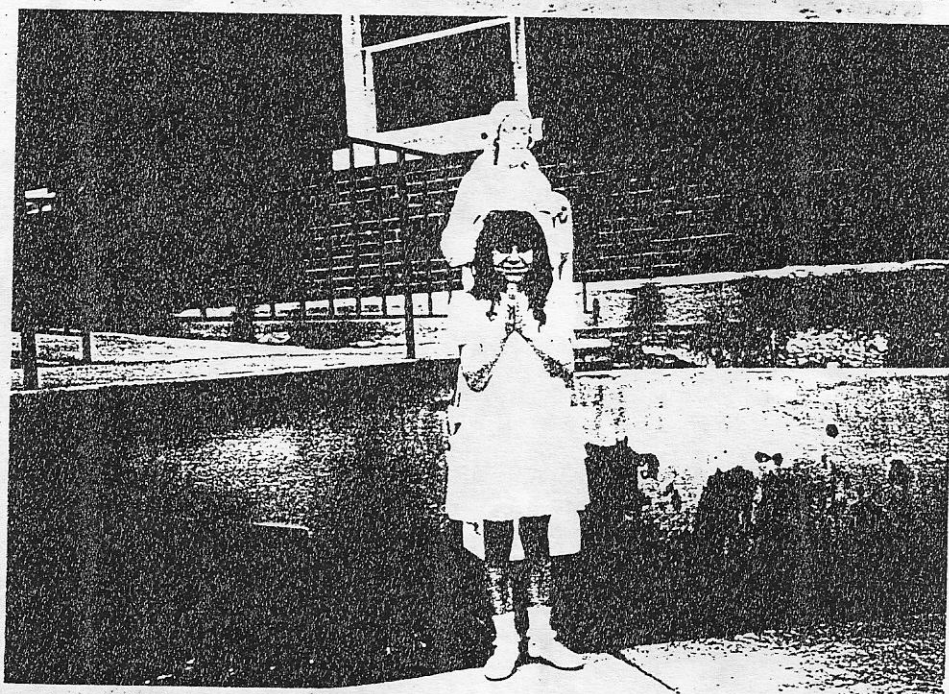
The Reverend Gerald J. Oeler became the sixth Pastor May 1, 1958. During his pastorate, a cherished dream of the parish became a reality. The first Catholic School in Huntingdon

County was built (\$140,000); ground was broken March 4, 1959, the new School was blessed and dedicated October 18, 1959 by the Most Reverend Howard Joseph Carroll, D.D., Bishop of Altoona- Johnstown, in the presence of the parishioners, friends and priests of the Diocese. The school opened August 31, 1959, with an enrollment of 45 students the first four grades; grades 5 and 6 were added in succeeding years when enrollment reached 85 students. The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth staffed the new school. Sister M. Marcella was the first Principal. A new Sacristy with new equipment was added to the old Sacristy. The front of the church was enclosed with modern glass doors, thereby, making a vestibule. The three altars were renovated, a new roof put on the rectory, the convent repainted and new lighting fixtures installed. External woodwork of the church was painted. A new drive-way and parking lot for 58 cars was constructed. The School Fund Drive netted \$55,000.00 in three years. Father Oeler was transferred to Pastor of St. Joseph Church Renova, Pa. June 7, 1962.





The Reverend Joseph D.k Tomko was appointed the seventh Pastor June 7, 1962. During his tenure the Parish debt was reduced. Many improvements were made including the renovation of the church windows, new storm windows, a new school bus and a new roof.



In April 1967, Father Paul Thomas became our eighth Pastor. His career at St. Catherine's Parish spanned nineteen years. He gave of himself unselfishly and devotedly. He was an integral part of the formation of church organizations. These include: the Knights of Columbus, Columbian Squires, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and the Junior Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Under his guidance, the CCD program, altar boys, and church choir flourished. Many of the changes wrought by Vatican II were initiated at St. Catherine's during Father Thomas's tenure, including our lay lector program. Much to our sadness St. Catherine's School closed



its doors in 1965 due to financial difficulties. Because of the Vatican II decision to have the face the congregation during Mass the altars in our sanctuary were replaced with altars that serve that purpose. This happened in 1967. Also during this time the Convent closed and we began "sharing" the Sister Servants of the Sacred Heart (who were residing in Huntingdon) with the Holy Trinity Parish and St. Mary's Parish in Shade Gap. This continued until 1987. Father Thomas retired in 1986. He was an outstanding leader for the Church and community. He is much loved and missed by Mount Union.

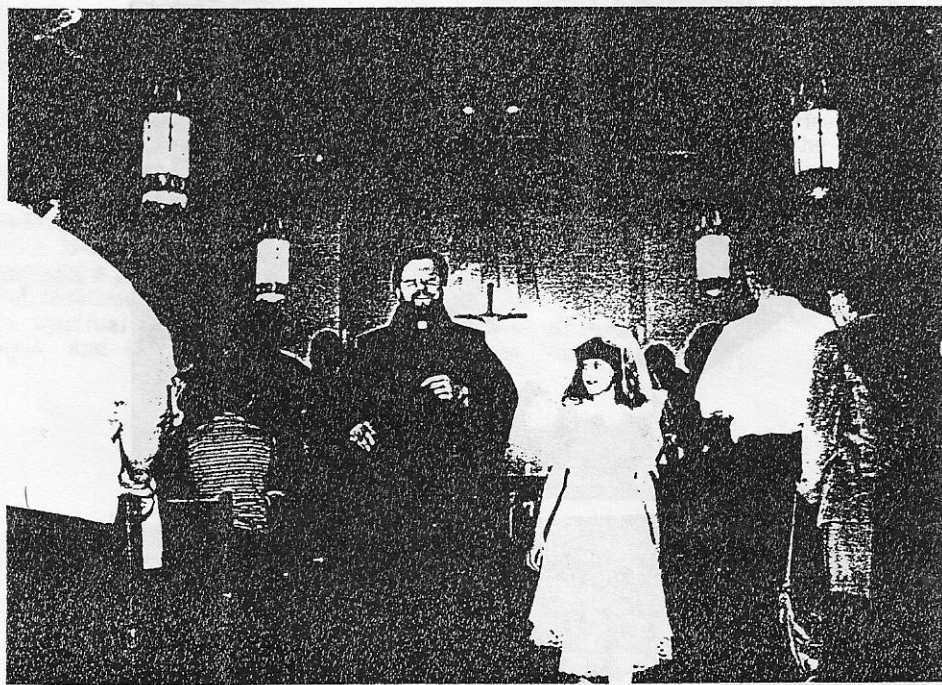


Our ninth Pastor, Father James Damian Zatalava came to St. Catherine's in Nov. 1986. During his two years with us "Father J.D." has diligently worked to increase the involvement of the Laity in Church activities. Besides our continuing Lay Lector program, we now have a new Eucharistic Ministry and hope to soon develop a Parish Council. Father Zatalava has sought to refine our thoughts on the Sacraments in keeping with the Catholic Church teachings. Our Baptisms, shared with the entire congregation during our





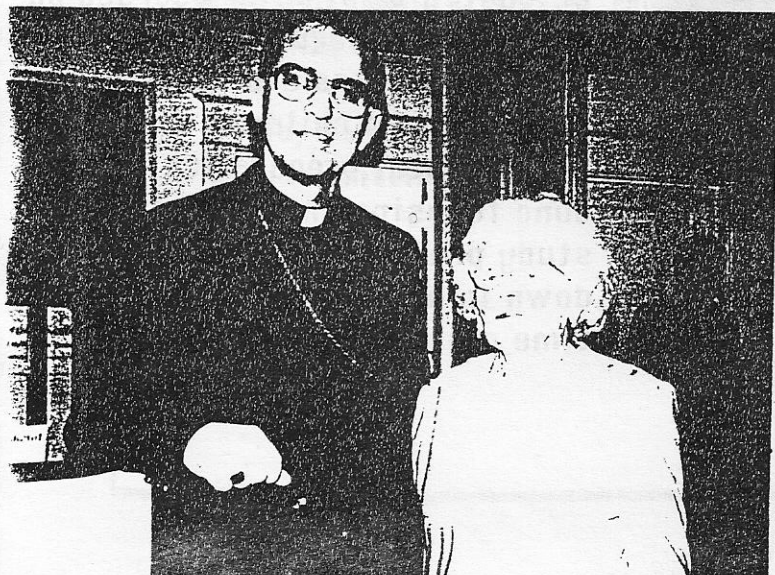
Masses, and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, done after Mass, are but a few of his innovations. Father has also developed a CCD program in which we, as parents, are primarily responsible for the teaching of our children. This approach has moved the CCD program forward from the structural classroom atmosphere administered and taught by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart to the present parent-child study program. Our new program is based upon the Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, "Families Consortio," which states: "The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life: it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being delegated to other or usurped by others." Consequently each parent educates and studies with his own children. Sacramental preparation is also done focusing on a parent-child study program. 1988 will go down in history as the first time children received the

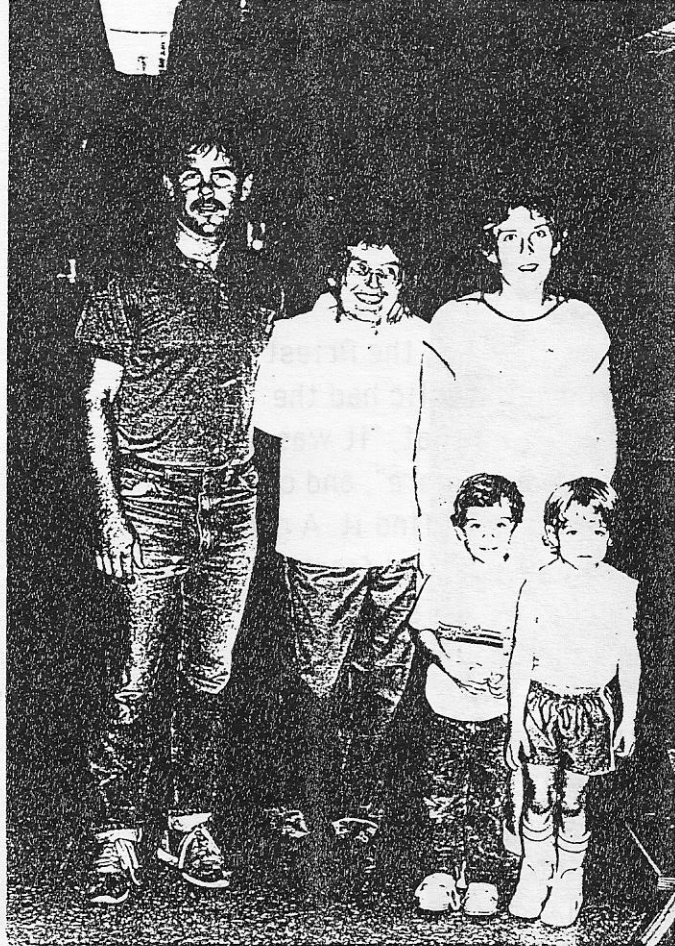


Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist as individuals rather than a group. Each child learned and studied with their parents. And when their parents felt they were adequately prepared they received the Sacrament. What began for some as "homework assignment" developed into a joyous, very memorable, experience for the children and their parents alike.

In 1987 the interior of our rectory was completely renovated and modernized. 1987 was the Marian Year. A breakfast and special mass were held each month in honor of his year. Our culmination of the Marian Year is this seventy-fifth celebration of St. Catherine's.

As we reflect on the last 75 years as a congregation and look forward to the future, we can give thanks to the Lord for all the dedicated Priests and devoted Parishioners who have worked together to make our Parish of St. Catherine a true Christian "family".





ONE CATHOLIC'S VISION

by

Kathy Kyle *

Prior to 1962 anyone could walk into any Catholic Church and experience the bells and smells of the Universal Roman Rite; incensed golden statues, Latin Chants done in triplicate, conscience stricken sinners standing in long confessional lines waiting for advice, admonition and Absolution.

Twenty-six years ago the male PRIEST planned the Mass, read all the Scripture, sang all the really good parts, distributed Communion with male altar persons at his side while the mostly female congregation got to listen to a usually (and always, preferably) all male choir sing vaguely familiar melodies. It was erroneously believed by many that the Priest was obliged (as opposed to "permitted") to say Mass every day, even if no other people were present. This misconception contributed heavily to the very prevalent notion that the Mass was the "Priest's thing" and all lay people had to do to "be saved" was fulfill their Sunday obligation to "attend Mass" (translate: "watch the priest do his thing"). Actual "participation" was unthinkable at worst and undesirable at best.

Since the Priest was already perceived as the focal point of the most important event in Catholic Life it didn't take much of a stretch to accept him as the center of all Catholic Living. Just as the Priest was the Mass so too was he not only the teacher and

interpreter of the law, the Priest was the Law. A good Catholic had the comfort of knowing that, "it was all written down somewhere", and only the Priest knew where to find it. A good Catholic could be rescued from the fires of Hell by doing what Father said: Pray... Pay... and Obey.

John XXIII and Paul VI, fathers of the Second Vatican Council, executed an historical one hundred eighty degree turn. One of the first things to be turned around was the altars. Mass, a Mass in English, was now offered with the Priest facing the congregation. The Priest no longer "said Mass". Now the entire worshipping community "celebrated Liturgy". Now the entire worshipping community is the "celebrant" and the Priest is the "presider" over the celebration. Just as the Priest's role in the Mass has been altered, so too has his position in our daily lives been redefined. Now he is less a giver of orders than he is an enabler of persons. Now he is less a teacher of the rules than he is a preacher of the Word. Now he is less an interpreter of the Law than he is a discernor of the Spirit.

The one constant in this Post Vatican world of variables is lay responsibility. This lay responsibility extends far beyond the things-to-do department in the external world. It reaches deep down into the things-to-be department of the interior life. Sure, Catholic men and women can

take responsibility for distributing Communion, proclaiming the Word, teaching their kids, planning parish budgets, making pastoral decisions, starting prayer groups, serving on committees, making music, and just generally assuming a whole raft of those external "duties" formally associated with the Priest's job description. But, it will all be for naught unless and until Catholic women and men assume personal responsibility for their own adult spiritual growth. The Church is there to help. Only a fool would ignore 2000 years of accumulated experience and wisdom, or pass up the Graces of the Church's seven Sacraments and their extensions. No one should expect the Church to do for them that which only they can do for themselves, and that is, accept the responsibility for choosing to be Catholic and accept responsibility for the consequences of that choice. God didn't buy Adam's claim that Eve "made" him do it. God didn't buy Eve's claim that the snake "made" her do it. God isn't going to buy our claim that the Priest "made" us do it, either.

The second big turn around occurred when Vatican II took the spotlight off institutions and placed it squarely on persons. Catholics who were taught for centuries that there was no salvation outside of the Catholic Church (actually, that has never been the "official" teaching of the Catholic Church) were now being reminded that

God's love extends to Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and, yes, even Protestants ... mixed marriage weddings could now take place in front of the altar instead of in front of the Rectory fireplace ... Catholics could go into non-Catholic houses of worship and even join in some prayer experiences ... Catholics could join the CROP walk. After Vatican II the Catholic Church began to be perceived less as an Infallible Institution of men and more as "the pilgrim people of God".

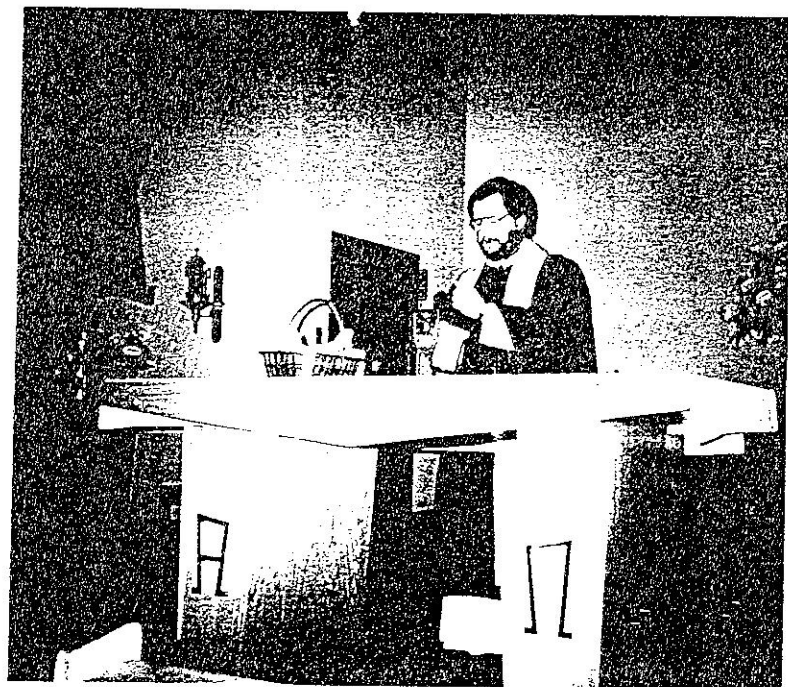
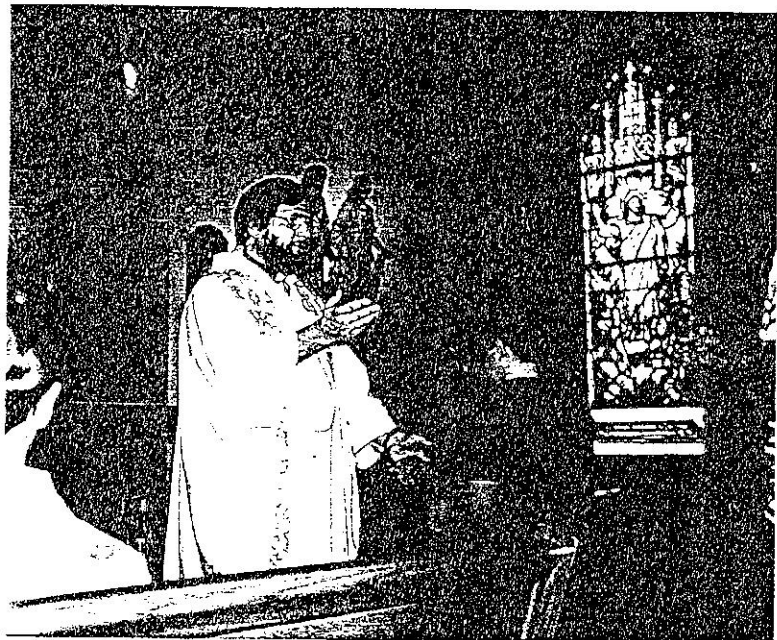
Defining the role of women in this pilgrim people has moved at a much slower pace than other "official" movements in the Post Vatican II church. It wasn't until this year, twenty-five years after the Council, that the American Bishops decided to produce a "Pastoral" letter dealing with the topic. But the women themselves have not been in hiding or standing still.

Their activity is sufficiently visible to prompt several authors to write articles inquiring whether or not the Church is becoming "Feminist". This author would argue; not feminist but feminized. Women see what needs to be done and are willing to do whatever it takes to get it done. They no longer are willing to do merely what Father tells them to do. They are now cooperating with Father in discerning and responding to the interior movement of the Holy Spirit.

What will happen in the next twenty-five years? What will the

Church do with divorce, drugs, alcohol, condoms, racism, premarital sex, aids, surrogate mothers, and world debt? What will be the vision of this visionary Church? When John XXIII "threw open the windows to let the wind blow the dust off" his dusty old Church he insured only one thing: that any future vision of the Church would be the result of the collaborative effort of both lay persons and clergy; of both male and female; of both young and old; of both liberal and conservative. There is a very real sense in which just as the whole Church has a responsibility for each person, each person has a responsibility for the whole church. No longer can any one person define the Roman Church either in Rome or in the provinces. Christ, the Head of our Body said, "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there also am I".

* TIMES editor, J.D. Zatalava contributed to the research for and writing of this article.



A Proclamation
by
The Mayor of Mount Union
Naming
August 28, 1988
Saint Catherine of Siena Day
acknowledging that Parish's
Seventy-fifth Anniversary



August 5, 1988



Catherine of Siena

August 28, 1988

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 12:00 | Mass of Thanksgiving |
| 1:00 | Buffet |
| 1:15 | Jazz Concert |
| | <i>BIG BAND SOUND</i> |
| 3:15 | Broadway Review |
| | <i>STANDING ROOM ONLY</i> |
| 4:00 | Benediction |