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FHS. 539

THE HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS MORE, DECATUR, Ga.

Compiled and written by Mrs. Joseph M. Toomey.

The rapid growth of the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Ga., especially to the east and northeast, drew the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities of the diocese of Savannah-Atlanta to the necessity of the establishment of a parish within the borders of DeKalb county, Georgia. A number of Catholic families had made this county their home, and as there was no church of their faith in this county they attended services at the ~~nearest~~ Catholic church in Atlanta, either the Co-Cathedral of Christ the King, the Sacred Heart, or the Immaculate Conception.

The first definite move for the establishment of the new parish was the selection of a committee by Monsignor Joseph E. Moylan, Pastor of the Co-Cathedral of Christ the King. This committee was composed of Mr. J. Gershon Epler, of Atlanta, Mrs. Henry H. McLaughlin and Mr. Robert K. Whiteford of Decatur. This committee met at the home of Robert K. Whiteford on Sunday, January 21, 1940 and formulated plans to determine the number of Catholic families ^{then} were living within the boundaries of the proposed parish. The contacted Catholics were asked to attend a meeting at the American Legion Post Hall, on Sycamore Street, in Decatur, at 8 PM, Thursday, March 14, 1940. A cursory survey, made by the committee, disclosed that approximately three hundred Catholic families lived in Decatur and the nearby communities.

This meeting was presided over by Monsignor Moylan. The Rev. James T. Reilly, S.M., Pastor of the Sacred Heart Church of

Atlanta, and the Rev. Joseph R. Smith, Pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church of Atlanta, represented their respective parishes, since these two parishes were to be effected by the creation of the new parish. Many Catholics from Decatur, Druid Hills, EastLake, Kirkwood, Avondale Estates and other nearby communities were present and entered into a discussion of matters pertaining to the new parish. The large attendance at this meeting and the interest displayed made it evident to the presiding officer and the Most Reverend Bishop, Gerald O'Hara, Bishop of the diocese, that the time had come for the establishment of a parish in DeKalb county, Georgia. However, no definite steps were taken until the following year.

As there was no adequate place for the Catholics to hold services in Decatur, Monsignor Moylan asked Mr. Robert K. Whitford, an officer in the local post, if he could obtain the use of the Legion hall, where the first meeting was held during the previous year. Mr Whitford appeared before the executive board of the Harold Byrd Post No 66, The American Legion, and this board graciously granted permission, without cost, for the hall to be used for Catholic services. This hall was a renovated barn on the grounds of the old Scott Home, on Sycamore St., one of the landmarks of Decatur. On this property the Decatur-DeKalb County Public Library now stands.

THE FIRST MASS IN DEKALB COUNTY

At 10 AM, March 30, 1941, in the American Legion Post hall Monsignor Moylan celebrated the first Mass of the new parish. Monsignor Moylan announced that beginning on the next Sunday that Mass would be said at 7 and 10 AM. He discussed the proposed limits of the new parish and the obligations of its members.

It is, indeed, a coincidence that as our Divine Lord, at the beginning of the Christian era, was born into the world in a stable in the city of Bethlehem, that nineteen hundred odd years later, in a renovated stable in the city of Decatur, the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass was offered.

At the conclusion of the Mass the ladies of the parish remained in the hall and organized an altar society. Monsignor Moylan requested Mrs Henry H. McLaughlin to take charge of the meeting and assist in the election of officers. Mrs. McLaughlin called for volunteers and after some discussion the following officers were elected to serve as the first staff of officers for the parish,

Mrs. Paul J. McGovern, President; Mrs Charles M. Haasl, vice-President; Mrs Robert K. Whiteford, Secretary; Mrs Price R. Cross, Treasurer. Mrs Ray Wilmer was appointed Chairman of the sewing committee. Other ladies who joined the Altar Society that day included, Mesdames. R. B. Flanders, Alice Nellis, Lucie P. Byrd, David R. Driscoll, William Geriche, W. L. Cone, Walter J Burke, Ruth Echols, Richard F. Sams, Don Joiner, Selman L. Threadgill, R. C. Hackman, F. R. Chadwick, Joseph M Toomey, Arthur E. Davis, S. C. Stockdale, David L. Chaney, A. J. Bruner, H. O. Swann, Clifton A. Dukes, Mary Wallace, J. Cleaton Jones and Lillian Jones.

April 13, 1941 was Easter Sunday, and through the courtesy of the city and school officials of Decatur the high school auditorium was made available for the Easter Masses. His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop, Gerald P. O'Hara, said the High Mass and in his sermon announced that the new parish would be named in honor of Saint

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Mass was well attended by Catholics and non-Catholics; too large a congregation to have been accommodated in the small Legion hall.

Throughout the following months Masses were celebrated in the Legion hall by priests from the Co-Cathedral of Christ the King; Reverend Fathers Thomas J. Finn, David Doona, Brady and others.

Three predelux, given by Mr J Gershon Epler, of Atlanta, was the first gift received by the parish. They were used during the services in the Legion hall as well as at the High Mass at Easter in the city auditorium. The first gift for the altar was a piece of beautiful handmade lace, used on one of the first altar cloths made by the sewing committee of the Alter Society. This lace was given by Miss Aimee Clohecy of Atlanta.

The first Catholic baby born in the parish of St. Thomas More was Henry Earl Echols, Jr., son of Ruth McLauchlin and Harry Earl Echols, Sr. He was the grandson of Mr. Henry H. McLauchlin. Born on May 9, 1941, he was christened on June 22, 1941 at the Co-Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta.

THE FIRST PASTOR

On June 22, 1941 Reverend Father Thomas L. Finn was appointed, by the Right Reverend Bishop, pastor of the parish of Saint Thomas More. Father Finn was born in Charleston, S.C., the son of Mary Patrick McGuire and Patrick C. Finn. After receiving his preliminary education in his natal city he began his commercial career in the cotton business in Savannah, Ga. During World War I Thomas Finn served as Second Lieutenant, 43rd. Regiment, 15th Division and saw service overseas. Upon his return and discharge

from the army he entered Mt. Mary Seminary, Baltimore, Md., in 1923, to study for the priesthood. He was ordained in Savannah in 1929 by the Right Reverend Michael J. Keyes, Bishop of the diocese of Georgia. His first duty, as a priest, was in Washington, Ga., where he was in charge of St. Joseph's Home, the diocesan home for boys. Later he was transferred to parish duty in Savannah, Atlanta, and Albany. He was appointed diocesan director of Catholic charities. While carrying on the duties of this office he also served as the pastor of St. Thomas More until February 13, 1945, when on account of ill health, he was replaced by Reverend Father Thomas I. Sheehan. (Reverend Father Thomas L. Finn died in Savannah on July 26, 1946.)

THE FIRST RECTORY

In order to have a home for the new pastor, Reverend Father Finn, a residence at 119 Fairview Avenue was rented, renovated, and furnished by the parishioners. Most of the household furnishings and kitchen equipment came directly from the homes of members of the parish.

One room of this house was made into a chapel. A small altar was arranged and serviced by the sacristan, Mrs. W. E. Freeborn; she was assisted by Mrs. George P. Donnellan, sacristan of Christ the King, in the original arrangement of the altar. In this small chapel daily Mass was celebrated, and, for a time, Lenten devotions on Wednesday and Friday nights were held here.

FIRST MEETING OF MEN OF THE PARISH

On the night of September 24, 1941 Father Finn invited the men of the parish to a "snacker" at the Rectory, 119 Fairview Ave. It was the first meeting of the men of St. Thomas More and much

interest was displayed as matters pertaining to the new parish were discussed. Occasionally the men would assemble in a meeting at the Rectory, for social and for business meetings.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

On September 28, 1941 Sunday school classes for the young boys and girls were organized under the direction of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, who were stationed at the Co-Cathedral of Christ the King. These classes were held immediately following the second Mass.

Under the capable and devoted guidance of Father Finn the parish activities were well organized and the membership rapidly increased until soon it had outgrown the seating capacity of the Legion Hall. In order to accommodate the large attendance at Mass the auditorium of the Decatur Womens' Club, West Ponce de Leon Avenue, was rented for use on Sunday and P Days. The first Mass was celebrated in this auditorium October 5, 1941. The second Mass on Sunday continued "Childrens' Mass" ; the Sisters led the children in the Mass prayers with congregational singing. In October Father Finn organized an adult class which met each Sunday following the 9.30 Mass.

HOLY NAME SOCIETY ORGANIZED

On November 7, 1941 the men of the parish met at the Rectory and organized a Holy Name Society. On the following Sunday, November 9, 1941, after receiving Holy Communion, at the 7.30 AM Mass, the initial members were inducted into the society by the spiritual director, Reverend Father Finn.

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A choir was organized under the direction of Mrs Selman Threadgill, organist and director, and met each Monday night at the home of Mrs Threadgill, 219 Superior Ave, for practice.

The ostensorium, processional cross, censer and incense boat, which were purchased through contributions by members and friends of the parish, arrived the week before Christmas and on Sunday, December 21, 1941, Father Finn announced their arrival and invited the parishioners to visit the rectory, where these religious articles were on display. Everyone was charmed by their beauty and felt a just pride in having them for their own parish. These articles were used for the first time at the mid-night Mass which was sung on Christmas morning in the high school auditorium on McDonough St. The guest speaker was the Reverend P.J.O'Connor, of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. To the great sorrow of the parishioners the beloved pastor, Father Finn, was ill and could not sing the High Mass. Father O'Connor sang the Mass -- the first mid-night Mass ever celebrated in the city of Decatur. The altar, arranged on the stage, was beautifully decorated. The auditorium was filled with Catholics and many non-Catholics. Father O'Connor, in his sermon, stated,

"The memory of this first Christmas Mass in Decatur will go down the years in the hearts and minds of you who have attended, as well as your children to whom you will relate it as a great historical fact, just as for nearly two thousand years the history of the first Christmas has been handed down from generation to generation with no additions or subtractions, just in its simple greatness."

The beautiful vestments worn by the celebrants of this Mass had been made by the women of the Altata Society during the preceding months.

Under the auspices of the Altar Society, on January 13, 1942, the Catholic War Service Council of St. Thomas More parish was organized. This unit was one of ten Catholic units composing the Catholic War Service Council of the Atlanta area. The Catholic War Service Council was affiliated with the National Catholic Community Service.

The officers appointed for the St. Thomas More Council were, Mrs William Geriche, General Chairman; Mrs Joseph M. Toomey, Historian; Mrs. W. E. Freeborn, Chairman of Red Cross; Mrs S. E. Thredgill, Defense Stamps; Mrs D. L. Chaney, American Woman's Volunteer Service; and Mrs John B. McCallum, Chairman of Publicity. Mrs David R. Driscoll was appointed Chairman of the Sunday Open House Program at the Knights of Columbus Club, 1200 Peachtree, Atlanta, on the Sundays sponsored by the St. Thomas More council.

An extensive program of war service was undertaken, consisting of knitting, sewing, making surgical dressings for the Red Cross, teaching first aid and nutrition classes, and entertaining the service men. An honor roll was maintained in the room upon which was placed the names of the men and women of the parish as they entered the armed service of the United States.

Throughout the war this council continued its work. In 1943 Mrs William Geriche resigned as General Chairman and Mrs William L Schmidt was appointed to this position. In 1944, Mrs Schmidt moved to Florida and Mrs Joseph M Toomey was appointed as General Chairman in her place, serving in this position until the close of the war.

St. Vincent de Paul

Soon after the establishment of the parish the St. Thomas More branch of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was organized. Mr Hughes Spalding, of Atlanta, installed the officers. Robert K. Whiteford served as President from 1941 to 1949. He resigned. Arthur Davis was vice-president and W.D. Sheehan treasurer. William Sheehan, being transferred, Arthur Davis assumed the office of Treasurer in addition to his duties as vice-president. With the resignation of Robert K Whiteford, 1949, Arthur Davis became President, and James Harkins was made Treasurer. This organization seeks out and renders aid to those in need. Their only funds are secured by the solicitation of money at the door of the church after Sunday Masses.

The dual duties of Reverend Father Finn, diocesan director of Catholic charities, and pastor of a fast growing parish, proved too great a burden for one priest to carry. In 1942, Reverend Father John Morris, of Philadelphia, Penn., came to Decatur to serve as assistant pastor of St. Thomas More. Father Morris through his kindness, zeal and ability as a leader soon won the hearts of all of his parishioners. He remained in Decatur until 1945 when he was transferred to Savannah for parish duty.

ALTAR SOCIETY

The names of the initial staff of officers are carried in the account of the first Mass ever celebrated in DeKalb county. This staff of officers held office until September 9, 1941. At a meeting, held in the home of Mrs. Martin F. Donahoe, 168 Pinecrest Avenue, Decatur, the following officers were elected;

Mrs Selman L. Threadgill, President; Mrs Joseph M. Toomey, vice-President; Mrs Val McL. Vanzile, Recording Secretary; Mrs. John B. McCallum, Corresponding Secretary; Mrs Lawrence Medcalf, Treasurer. Mrs Paul J. McGovern, the first president of the organization was elected president emiritus.

At this meeting an appeal was made to the ladies of the altar society for furnishings for the rectory which was being made ready for the new pastor. As no funds were available the rugs, furniture, dishes and kitchen equipment were given from the homes of the members. Curtains were made, the pantry stocked and the home was made ready for the new pastor.

The October meeting was the first meeting held by the altar society in the new rectory, 119 Fairview Avenue.

During this year, and the war years that followed, most of the activities of the Altar Society were directed to war work yet the principles of the organization were not neglected.

1942

On Page 8 will be found a record of the organization of St Thomas More Service Council during the January meeting.

On Feb. 9 the Altar Society sponsored a benefit bridge party at the Georgia Terrace Hotel, Atlanta, which netted the sum of \$328.10. This was the major fund raising parish activity up to

On September 15, 1942 Mrs Martin F. Donohoe was elected president; Mrs Bolman L. Threadgill, vice-president; Mrs H. R. Bolman, Recording secretary; Mrs Ray Wilmer, corresponding secretary, Mrs J. Cleaton Jones, Treasurer.

At the November meeting of the society Father Finn read the letter of resignation from the President, Mrs Donahoe. He requested Mrs. H. H. McLaughlin to accept the presidency, which she did. Mrs Ray Wilmer, also resigning; Mrs Mohn B. McCallum was elected the corresponding secretary. Later in this administration, April 1943, Mrs Bolman, recording secretary, moved to California, and Mrs W. E. Freeborn was elected to the office.

Each Thursday the St. Thomas More took charge of the Red Cross sewing program in Decatur. A Mrs Perry, though a non-Catholic, was Chairman of this sewing group. Later, upon her resignation as Chairman, Mrs Joseph M Toomey took her place. Other phases of war work was intensified and occupied the attention of the members of the altar society as individuals and as a group. A bingo party held during this administration netted the society \$234.46. As was the custom of discontinuing meetings during the summer months, from May until September, Mrs McLaughlin felt that this custom should be discarded for the time; as a result there was no letup of its activities during the summer of 1943.

At the October, 1943, meeting of the Altar Society the following officers were elected, Mrs. Joseph M. Toomey, President; Mrs H. H. McLaughlin, vice-president, Mrs W. E. Freeborn Recording Secretary, Mrs A. A. Baumstark, Corresponding Secy and Mrs J. C. Jones, Treasurer. Mrs H. L. Peterson was api

chairman of the sewing group. Mrs Paul J. McGovern was made chairman of Library and Literature.

A movement was started by the President to have volumes of good Catholic literature be placed on the shelves of the Decatur Public Library. This program was continued, a book being bought each month, for several years.

The Altar society pledged itself to donate each year \$300 to the building fund of the parish. Each year this contribution was increased; the funds being raised from bazaars, parties, and other activities.

In September 1944, the following officers were elected, Mrs. J.M. Toomey, President; Mrs John B. McCallum vice-President; Mrs E.B. Mason, recording Secretary; Mrs R. E. Andrews, corresponding secretary and Miss May Droesch, Treasurer.

At the March meeting, (1945), a list of the gifts, presented to the Parish by Father Finn, before his departure, was read.

The list is as follows,

1 set altar cards, 1 set cruets and tray(glass), 1 ciborium, 3 chalices and patens, 1 white vestment set, 1 white cope, stole, maniple, burse and humeral veil, 5 ciborium covers, 12 cinctures, 1 long altar cloth, 12 anices, 10 collars, long, 7 collars, short, 22 corporals, 31 purificators, 18 palls, 52 finger-tip towels, 12 sick-call linings, 2 albs and three purple stoles.

These gifts were greatly appreciated by the altar society as well as the members of the parish.

This meeting was the first attended by the new Pastor, Reverend Thomas I. Sheehan .

REVEREND FATHER THOMAS I. SHEEHAN

Thomas I Sheehan was born in Savannah, Ga., the son Hannah O'Sullivan Sheehan and Timothy Sheehan. He was educated in Cathedral School and the Benedictine Military School of Savannah.

It is an interesting fact that Thomas Sheehan and his mother before him received all the sacraments in the Cathedral of St.

John the Baptist of Savannah. After finishing high school

Thomas Sheehan entered St. Charles College, Catonsville, Maryland and completed his training at St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 29, 1930 by the Right Reverend Michael J. Keyes, in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, Ga. In this Cathedral his first Mass was said on June 1, 1930.

Father Sheehan was assigned to the Cathedral from June to September 19, 1930. He was sent to St. Theresa's Church, Albany, Georgia; taking care of the south Georgia Missions from Sept 19th 1930 to July 1, 1935, when he was made Manager of St. Joseph's Home for Boys in Washington, Ga and Pastor pro tempore of St. Joseph's Church there. On July 1, 1935 he was appointed the first Pastor of St. Augustine's Church, Thomasville, Ga, remaining at this post until June 19, 1936. He was then appointed the first pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes' Church, Port Wentworth, Ga, July 1, 1936, where he remained until being transferred as the second pastor of St. Thomas More Parish, Decatur, February 13, 1945.

During the April 1945. Reverend Father Sheehan announced that the sum of \$6595.71 was on deposit for the building fund. The numerous contributions by the Altar Society, together with collections taken up at each Mass on Sunday, made this sum possible. This was most interesting to the parishioners. As this sum the fulfillment of the dream of their own parish church drew and nearer.

Later in the summer Mrs E. B. Mason left for New Orleans and Mrs Gertrude Pollock was elected in her place as recording secretary.

At the September 1945 meeting of the Altar Society Mrs David L. Chaney was elected President. The other officers elected were, Mr Arthur Smith, vice-President; Mrs Gertrude Pollock, recording secretary; Mrs Arthur Davis, corresponding secretary; Miss May Dreesch, Treasurer. Mrs Pollard resigned and Mrs William Gereche was elected in her place.

The Altar Society assisted the men of the parish in a local building fund drive. Parishioners were solicited and asked to sign a pledge for monthly payments to this fund. This drive increased the building fund to \$13,300 as announced by Father Sheehan in February 1946.

After inspecting numerous sites, in and around Decatur, the Most Reverend Bishop decided upon the lots on Ponce de Leon Ave. In April 1946 these lots were purchased for \$20,800; fronting five hundred and twenty feet, on the south side of West Ponce de Leon Ave., in the city of Decatur. On January 1949, two hundred and twenty ^{five} ~~six~~ additional feet frontage, adjoining the first purchased property was bought, for the sum of \$10,691. This gives the parish of St Thomas More a building site of seven hundred and forty-five frontage, with a total cost of \$31,491; this sum being raised by the parishioners of St. Thomas More.

The selected architect made an inspection of the property and submitted plans to the Most Reverend Bishop; these being finally approved, Henry Daggitt and Son, of Philadelphia, the architect, was given the contract for the construction of the first unit.

1947

In September the officers of the Altar society were elected as follows, Mrs Lay Everhart, president; Mrs John Fitzgerald, vice-president; Mrs J. A. Snitzer, recording secretary; Mrs Kathryn O'Shea, corresponding secretary, and Mrs William A. Knapp, treasurer.

Two book reviews were held during this administration, both in the home of Mrs J.M.Toomey, 523 Church St. Decatur; On Jan 20, 1948, "I Chose Freedom" by Krevschenko, reviewed by Mrs. Toomey
March 16, "The life of St Thomas More" reviewed by Reverend Father Cornelius Maloney, who was serving as pastor of St. Thomas More during the illness of Reverend Father Sheehan.

The staff of officers for the year of 1948 was elected by the Altar society in its September meeting,

Mrs Lay Everhart, president; Mrs William Knapp, vice-president; Mrs J. Albert Snitzer, recording secretary; Mrs Daniel Montroy, corresponding secretary and Mrs John Fitzgerald, treasurer.

In January Mrs William Knapp resigned as vice-president and Mrs C. F. Porter was elected to the position.

Reverend Father Sheehan made a request of the Altar society to form small study groups, consisting of from eight to twelve members, and that each group meet at least every two weeks at the home of one of the members. A study of Catholic doctrine and a discussion of current religious events were to be the subjects of study for these groups. Two groups were soon organized and later two more became active.

On Feb 27, the St Thomas More Altar Society was hostess to the Atlanta Deanery, National Council of Catholic Women, at its quarterly meeting. The meeting was held in the Decatur

Woman's Club, on West Pond de Leon Ave. After the business meeting the officers, delegates and guests were entertained at a tea in the club rooms. This was the first areal gathering ever by the Catholics in Decatur.

In September 1949 the officers elected by the members of the Alter Society were, Mrs. C. F. Porter, president; Mrs Leo Zuber, vice-president; Mrs Arthur Orth, recording secretary; Mrs Daniel Montroy, corresponding secretary, Mrs John Fitzgerald treasurer.

The Alter Society from its very earliest days was the chief money-making organizations in the parish. In its bazaars, picnics, parties etc., it was ably assisted by the members of the Holy Name Society and the other men of the parish. This organization was ever-ready to respond to the wishes of the pastor and the Alter Society of St Thomas More devoted itself with great zeal to the spiritual and physical welfare of the parish.

Summe

affiliated the West Catholic Community
Comrade of the Alter Society
the the Alter Society, this
unit composed of the
of the Decatur West

The sale of the building owned by the Decatur Woman's Club, on West Ponce de Leon Ave., would leave the parish without a place to hold services. It was necessary to move. Reverend Father Sheehan secured the use of the auditorium of the Ponce de Leon (public) school, paying a fee per hour for its use. The first services held in this school auditorium was on the first Sunday in August, 1948. Four Masses per Sunday: 8 AM, 9.30 AM, (the Sunday school Mass), 11.15 AM, and 12.15 PM.

In January 1949 Reverend Father Sheehan announced that the first careload of steel, to be used in the construction of the new church, arrived and had been placed on the lot. As stated the architect was Henry Daggitt and Son of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The contractor was George P Donnellan, of Atlanta.

The cost of the church is estimated -- that is the church and school building, the first unit constructed, at \$225 000.

This structure is constructed of steel and faced with cream and buff brick, inside and out. The main floor is used as a church, the upper floor contains eight class rooms, the library and office. The basement, rather a lower floor as it now stands, will be used as a community center, with kitchen and cafeteria.

It was with great satisfaction -- a joyful-occasion -- when the parishioners of St Thomas More assembled in the new church on Holy Thursday, April 6, 1950, at 8 P.M. for lenten services. The following day, Good Friday, Stations of the Cross, were recited at 3 PM and at 8PM. And on Easter Sunday, April 9, all Masses were celebrated in the new church; the 9.30 Mass being a High Mass was sung by the Pastor, Reverend Father ...

The first gift to the parish was three predeix, given by Mr. Gershon Epler. They were used in the Legion Hall ~~for~~ as well as in the City auditorium for the Easter Mass.

The first gift for the Altar was a piece of beautiful hand made lace which was used on one of the first altar cloths made by the sewing committee of the Altar Society. This lace was given by Miss Aimee Clohecy, of Atlanta.

The first meeting of the Altar Society was held at the home of Mrs. Eldredge Freebprn, 122 Lamont Drive, on April 22, 1941. The president, Mrs. P.J. McGovern presided and gave a report of the activities of the Society since ~~it was organized~~ its organization on March 30th. At this meeting it was decided that the Altar Society should meet on the morning of the second Tuesday of each month in the homes of the members.

Mrs. Bruner was elected to fill the office of secretary.

Fr. ~~George~~ Brady was present and gave an interesting talk on the life of St. Thomas More.

The June meeting of the Altar Society was held at the home of Mrs. H.A. Stockdale, 131 Superior St. Mrs. Bruner sent in her resignation as secretary and Mrs. Selwin Threadgill was appointed to fill this office until an election could be held. Fr. Finn read paper on "Meet the Catholic Church". The first of a series. Altar cloths etc. made by the sewing committee. Names.

The September meeting of the Altar Society was held at the home of Mrs. M.F. Donohoe, 165 Pinecrest Ave., at 10:00 A.M. on Tuesday Sept. 9. Fr. Finn offered prayer and Mrs. P.J. McGovern presided. After some discussion and a few changes, the Constitution was read and adopted. Constitution and By-Laws. /for the year 1941-42.

The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. S.L. Threadgill; vice-president, Mrs. Joseph M. Toomey; recording secretary- Mrs. R.P. VanZile; Corresponding secretary, Mrs. John D. McCallum; Treasurer, Mrs. Lawrence Medcalf; Spiritual ~~advix~~ Director, Father Thomas Finn.

Standing committees-

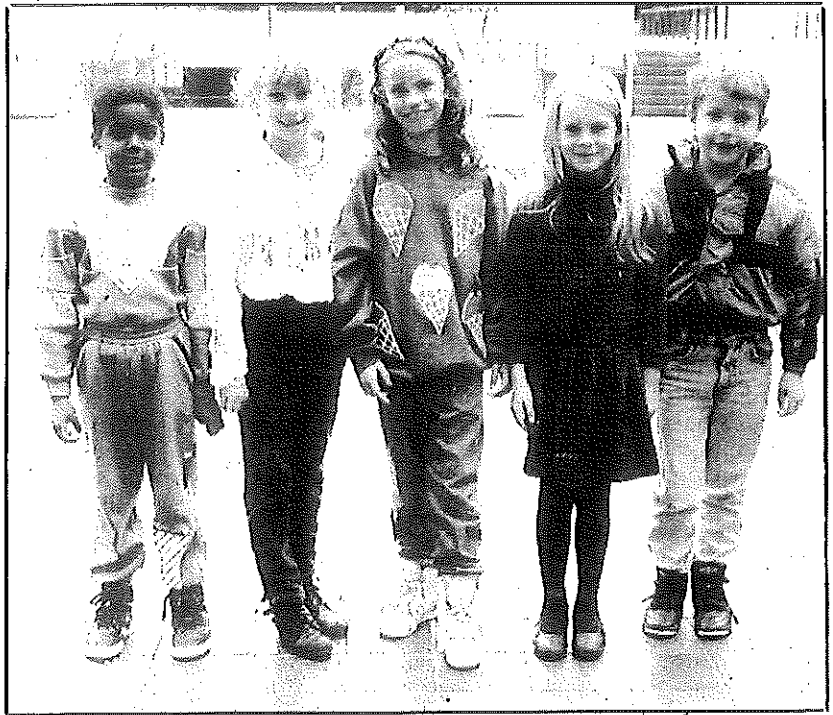
Sewing Committee- Mrs. W.E. Freeborn, chairman; Mrs. Barr, Mrs. McGovern, Donohoe, Geriche, Burke, Harbin and Tadlock.

Visiting Committee- Mrs. Wilmer and Mrs. A.A. Baumstock.
Mrs. S.A. Stockdale.

Flower Committee- Mrs. Freeborn who also served as sacristan

Membership- Mrs. J.M. Toomey, chairman; H.A. Stockdale, Harkins.

Ways and Means- Mrs. H.H. McLaughlin, chairman; Mrs. W.C. White, Mrs. C.W. Carver, C.M. Haasl, Mrs. Marie Cheney and Mrs. Driscoll.



5/11/93
News
EKA

St. Thomas Moore students attend Saturday school

Victor Leslie, Helen O'Donnell, Danielle Bueter, Katie Walker and Blake Bonsack recently attended the Georgia State University Saturday School for Scholars and Leaders. Not pictured are Lindsay Winzeler and Margaret Dolg. They are all students of St. Thomas Moore School, the metro Atlanta private school with the greatest fall quarter attendance in the program. Under supervision of the Georgia State University Department of Early Childhood Education, Saturday School is an enrichment program that offers classes to preschool through high school students, from private and public schools throughout the metropolitan Atlanta area.

St. Thomas More Students Receive Science Fair Awards

Seventh and eighth graders from St. Thomas More School, Decatur, brought home seven awards from the Atlanta Area Independent Schools Science Fair, held at Our Lady of Assumption School on Friday, March 1.

Jean Shoemaker, Michael Guerucci and Anderson Hughes will represent the independent schools at the state fair to be held in Athens in April.

SUBJECT FILE

St. Thomas
More Catholic
CHURCH

Weekend
The Atl. Journal - The Atlanta
Constitution 4-23-83

Rev. Ludden made diocese chancellor

The Rev. Peter Ludden, vice chancellor of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, has been appointed chancellor of the archdiocese by Archbishop Thomas A. Donnellan.

In his new role as head of the chancery office, Ludden is an executive officer of the archdiocese and will assist the archbishop in the administration of the archdiocese.



Ludden

He succeeds Msgr. Jerry Hardy, who had served as chancellor since 1972. Msgr. Hardy, a well-known Atlanta clergyman, requested and has been granted a leave of absence.

The Rev. Mr. Ludden, a native of Ireland, came to Georgia in 1967 following his ordination. His first assignment was as an assistant pastor at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Atlanta.

He was formerly pastor of St. Andrew Catholic Church in Atlanta, St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Lithia Springs, and Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Atlanta. He was an assistant pastor of St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Decatur and also taught at St. Joseph's High School.

Appointed vice chancellor of the archdiocese in June 1982, the Rev. Mr. Ludden has also served on the Archdiocesan Board of Consultors.

April 23, 1983

indexed

The Atlanta Journal -
The Atlanta Constitution

LEARNING

Class has recipe for special Holy Week



Diane Laakso/Staff

Cathy Todd, a volunteer at St. Thomas More, helps **Danielle Pendrick**, 6, with a piece of unleavened bread during Holy Week festivities.

By Dena Smith

Staff writer

Patty Childs's kindergarten class at St. Thomas More Elementary School didn't get a rise out of baking in school one day last week. Instead the Decatur pupils got just what the recipe called for: unleavened bread.

In preparation for an Easter celebration, the 22 pupils baked bread during their first in-school retreat.

Their version of the Last Supper during lunch included grape juice and the bread they baked. The event coincided with the last lunch to be served in the soon-to-be demolished and remodeled cafeteria.

Mrs. Childs, an alumna of the elementary school, praised the event: "The retreat has been

great for my class," she said.

"We've, of course, simplified events for the younger students by making things very visual. Coloring pictures of Jesus, baking unleavened bread, and having prayer services is all part of the agenda that has replaced our more structured schedule that includes English, math and other academic criteria."

Shaun Spearman, 6, of Decatur, encouraged by a couple of his classmates, expressed his feeling about the retreat with dance movements.

"I like to do the M.C. Hammer dance, and I love doing work about Jesus," he said, breaking into an elaborate spin.

"I love everything about school," 6-year-old Erin Wright said.

Teacher:

Patty Childs

Students:

Kristen Born
Jennifer Kehoe
Amanda Kelley
Meagan Kendall
Erin Lorenz
Sarah Nelson
Danielle Pendrick
Merri Redmon
Andrew Rogers
Daniel Scantlebury
Marc Silpa
Elizabeth Sizemore
Adam Slater
Shaun Spearman
Daniel Thompson
Christina Timm
Katie Walker
Michael Walker
Joey Walton
Dominique Willis
Warner Wolf
Erin Wright

"I love it because I get to do all of my favorite things," she said, listing recess, lunch and English.

Sister Mary Margaret McKeon has been principal at St. Thomas More for 14 years. During those years, she's gotten used to entering a classroom with small voices greeting her in unison, "Hello, Sister."

"This is a wonderful school to work at," Sister McKeon said. "I work with a great group of teachers and children. That's why we won the National School of Excellence in 1987. We are a family, and I'm proud to be a member."

Community Thanksgiving Service

In a continuing tradition of the Decatur Cooperative Ministry, their community Thanksgiving service will take place at the Saint Thomas More Roman Catholic Church, 624 W. Ponce de Leon Ave. at 9 am on November 23rd, Thanksgiving Day.

This service will reflect Decatur's hosting of the Irish Olympic teams in 1996. All the music and hymns are being chosen from ancient Gaelic tunes or texts, some dating back to 700 A.D. Efforts are being made to recruit musicians who play traditionally Irish music to perform at the service. The color of the day will definitely be green, in addition to traditional Thanksgiving hues.

Those attending the service are asked to bring donations of canned or staple goods in addition to monetary offerings. The gifts of food will be distributed to those in need. For further information, call the Decatur Cooperative Ministry at 377-5365.

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Mrs. Gilbreth	Ursula Weiss	Rita	Jacqueline Merkling
Mrs. Fitzgerald	Jane Elmore	Laurie	Maria Bips
* Anne	Judy Lynn Taylor and Barbara Shook	Jackie	Billie Elmore
* Ernestine	Nancy Draut and Mary Muesle	Dr. Burton	John Harrington
Frank	Bill Copeland	Mrs. Brill	Mary Hausenbauer
* Martha	Karyl Kuhn and Nancy Harrington, Jr.	Larry	John Copeland
Bill	Buzzie Weiss	Joe Scales	Ed Troncalli
* Lillian	Kathy Troncalli and Margaret Tierney	Mrs. Hobbs	Nancy Harrington
Fred	Rickey Tierney	The Baby	Herself
		Sugarfoot	The Dog

*Duel casting - one plays Saturday night, the other Sunday night.

The entire play takes place in the living room of the Gilbreth home in Montclair, New Jersey - some time in the twenties.

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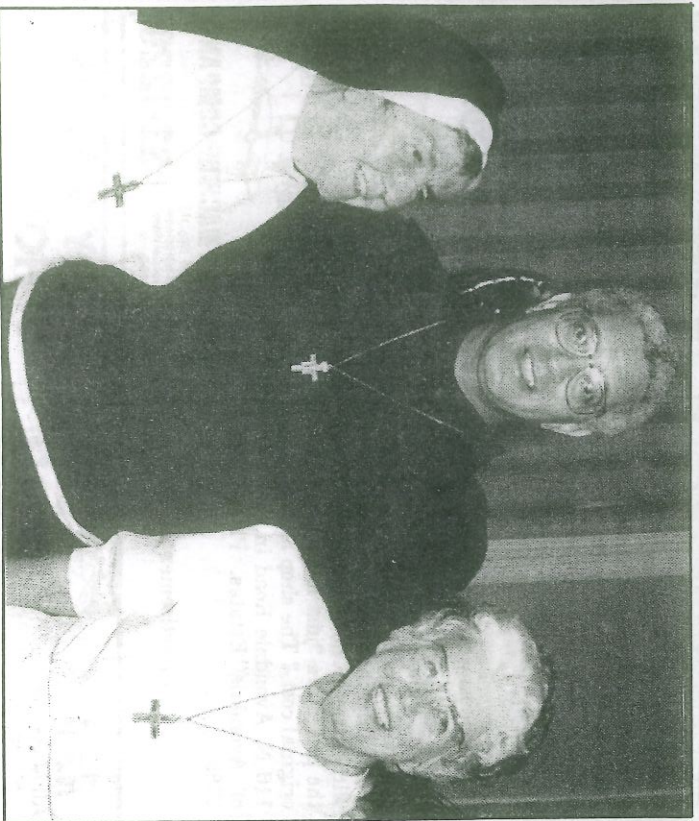
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Bishop Congratulates Nuns

Bishop James P. Lyke had kind words for Sister Rose Lally and Sister Margaret Thomazine Grady, whose religious service to the church totals 110 years.

Nuns Celebrate Anniversaries

Hundreds of well wishers gathered recently to pay tribute to Sister Margaret Thomazine Grady and Sister Rose Lally, Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur, with a Jubilee Liturgy at St. Thomas More Church in Decatur. The occasion marked the celebration of 50 years of religious service by Sister Margaret Thomazine and 60 years by Sister Rose. Both are teachers at St. Thomas More School.

Most Reverend James P. Lyke, O.F.M., bishop of Atlanta, was the chief celebrant of the Mass and was joined on the altar by the Revs. Patrick F. Mulhern, Hugh Byron, Walter J. Donovan, John P. Farrelly, Walter W. Foley, Joseph Ware, Terry W. Young, and John Walsh.

The Rev. Peter J. Rau in his homily recalled the love and encouragement he had received as a student of these nuns, whose perseverance and dedication inspired him and laid the foundation for his decision to enter the priesthood.

Mass was followed by a reception in the parish hall where the Sisters greeted students, friends and family members who came from places as wide spread as Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Colorado.

Later that evening family and friends attended a reception at the convent followed by dinner at East Lake Country Club, where music was provided by Decatur resident Betty Fowler and her daughter, Carol Betsill.

*Subject File: Churches, St. Thomas More
Catholic News/Sun
DeKalb News/Sun
9/19/90*

St. Thomas More Breaking Ground

The St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Decatur has scheduled a groundbreaking ceremony for its new activity building and school renovation for Sunday, Jan. 20 at 4 p.m.

"This groundbreaking ceremony will be the culmination of two years of planning, fundraising, and hard work by the members of our parish," said Father Patrick Mulhern, pastor of the church. "Our 48-year-old church, school and convent have needed renovation for a long time," he continued, "and the new activity building will be a real plus for our growing and active congregation."

The ceremony will begin with Mass at 4 p.m. in the church, followed by the on-site groundbreaking.

The church, located at 630 West Ponce de Leon Avenue, has a membership of over 1,000, and is a member of the Decatur Cooperative Ministries.

*De Kalb News/Sun
1/16/91*

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Decatur Asking Catholic Church For Conference

Decatur commissioners plan to ask officials of St. Thomas More Catholic Church to a "sit-down" meeting to consider the church's long-range plans.

Church neighbors, who live in the Charter Square area and West-Ponce area, protested to commissioners Monday night that a recreation center and new circular drive planned by the church will be detrimental to them.

They objected to the proposed location of the new building and a sanctuary which they said is in the church's long-range planning.

Rosemary Steifel told commissioners that if long-range plans for building and parking are followed, the amount of ground covered would likely violate environmental standards.

If the long range plan is not to be implemented, she said, she could see no reason for putting the recreation center in the location neighbors object to, rather than the site originally chosen for it.

Mayor Mears suggested asking church officials to meet with the city in an "informational mode."

"We need to let them know, early on, if they are choosing that location for long-range needs," said the mayor. "When bulldozers are out, the right time for reasoning is past us."

St. Thomas More Activities Building Opposed

8/90

We citizens of Decatur are very proud of the residential areas of our community and wish to protect their quality.

Did you know that St. Thomas More Catholic Church will very shortly begin construction on a large Activities Building on church property only a few feet from our homes? This building will be used by the Church, the Catholic School, and, we were told by the Pastor and Architect, might be used by outside groups for various activities.

The residents of the West Ponce de Leon, Charter Square and Swanton Hill neighborhoods are distressed with this plan which will impact our homes unfavorably by obstructing the view, removing trees and shrubs, increasing noise, parking and traffic.

We are concerned not only for our own safety but the safety of the families delivering and picking up school children during the rush hour traffic every day of the week. Traffic is already a problem on Trinity Avenue and a new entrance and additional drop-off point on what is already a dangerous curve will only make it worse. Street parking is already heavy due to activities at the church, The Swanton House and The Mary Gay House, causing cars to serve at times to avoid impact.

It should be pointed out that Trinity Avenue is a through street with not only our homes and the St. Thomas More School located on it, but the Decatur Police Department and the Decatur Fire Department. In addition to the residential, church, school, and emergency vehicle traffic, many commuters use Trinity as a bypass of downtown Decatur.

The large majority of the members of this Catholic church do not live in our neighborhood or the City of Decatur and may not be aware of the concerns we have about the location of this project. The church owns a large tract of land and could locate the building on another site which would be less objectionable. We have appealed to the Building Committee personally, in a neighborhood meeting, and in written communication concerning an alternative location, but to no avail.

We are appealing now to the community at large as well as to our city officials to help us maintain, with dignity, the quality of life with which the citizens of Decatur have long been proud...a place of homes, schools, and churches, living harmoniously together without the feeling that the homes are less important than the institutions in our midst.

Will other citizens of Decatur who are interested in helping to preserve the quality neighborhoods we enjoy in our community please join in our effort to protect our homes by voicing your protest, to your Decatur City Commission and also to the St. Thomas More Catholic Church?

William C. and Rosemary Stiefel

Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Brittain

R. Admiral and Mrs. R.C. Williams

Mrs. H.F. Rainey

Alwilda L. Wallace

Mr. and Mrs. John Daniel Knox

Mr. and Mrs. Collins Flynt

Workshops To Address Preparing An Estate, Will

St. Thomas More Board of Education is sponsoring two community service workshops in October.

Wills and Probate in Georgia will be held Oct. 2 and Trust and Estate Taxes will take place Oct. 9.

Robert T. Wilson, a Decatur attorney and specialist in wills and estate administration, will lead a panel in presenting wills and probate in the state of Georgia.

The program will cover dying without a will, the Probate process and avoiding probate problems, guardianship, living trust, and gifts of life and sight. Zoe Hicks will be the featured

speaker for the trust and estate taxes panel.

Her program will cover the estate planning process, federal and Georgia state tax laws, rules for gifts, and using charitable trusts.

Joe Cahoon, a financial consultant, will discuss insurance and long-term health care.

These programs are free and open to the public.

They will be held from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Thomas More School/Church cafeteria.

Handout materials will be provided and a question and answer period will follow each program.

For more information or to register, call 378-4588.

Fewer projects likely, however, as recession bites into donations

By Susan Laccetti
STAFF WRITER

WHILE CONSTRUCTION IN Georgia has slowed during the recession, religious groups continue to build at a pace slightly faster than the industry as a whole.

But that may not last. As projects are completed, groups may be starting fewer new ones.

"Church work has been pretty steady through the ups and downs of the economy," said Jack Haynes, an Atlanta architect who specializes in church designs. "A church makes plans ahead of time and it [recession] doesn't influence it."

The Rev. Neal Ponder, associate director of the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta, said many projects, which range from larger sanctuaries to classroom buildings, gymnasiums and nurseries, have been in the planning stages for several years because of anticipated growth.

'Timetable has slowed'

Statistics from McGraw Hill Information Systems, a real estate data service, show a 25 percent drop in the construction industry in Georgia during 1990, with a smaller drop in the number of religious projects.

Religious leaders say they expect the number of construction projects to slow even more in the coming months, largely because of a decline in donations in some congregations.

"It's very clear the projected timetable has slowed down considerably," Rabbi Harvey J. Winokur of Roswell's Temple Kehillat Chaim said of his synagogue's plans for a school addition. "The recession has probably pushed us off a good nine months to a ..."



JEAN SHIFRIN / Staff

Sister Mary Margaret stands outside Saint Thomas More Catholic Church in Decatur, which is finishing a \$1.2 million building and renovation project. Father Pat Mulhern, pastor, says: "I can't imagine anybody [who is] paying for something not worrying right now."



Denominations find themselves with loans that sometimes total several million dollars, leaving some religious leaders feeling nervous.

Roswell at the First Church of Christ. | "Everybody worries," said Father

doesn't influence it."

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Mr. Haynes said the greatest amount of building in the metro area involves the Catholics, Mormons and Christian Scientists. But religious leaders of other denominations say they too are building facilities of various kinds.

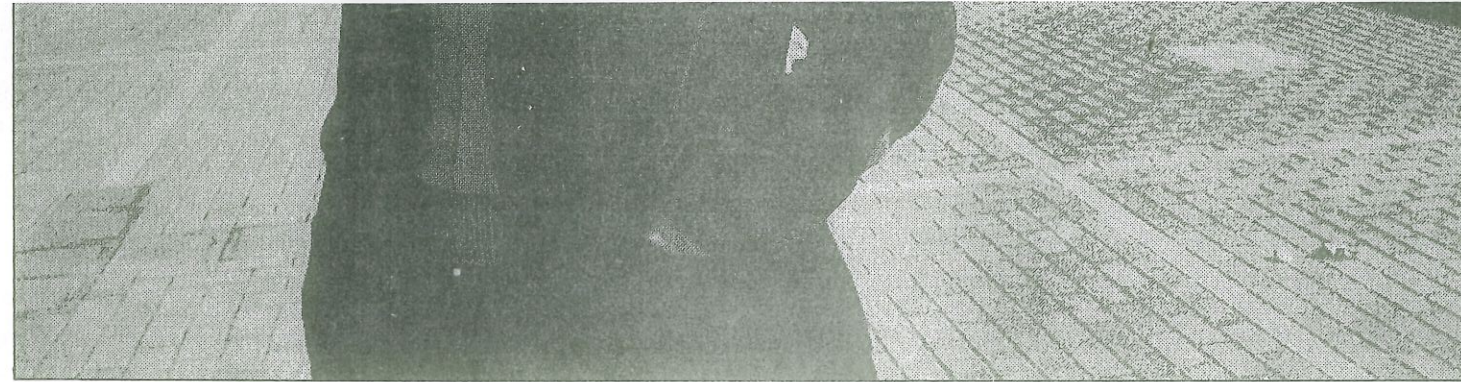
Recent projects include:

▶ A 9,600-square-foot pre-school and children's building at the North River Baptist Church in Roswell.

▶ Mount Carmel Christian Church in Stone Mountain has a new \$9 million sanctuary, recreation center, Christian school, office and classroom complex.

▶ Members of the Jewish Temple Kol Emeth in Marietta are moving into their \$1 million temple, gift shop, office and classroom complex today.

▶ A \$450,000 auditorium, classroom building and office complex in



JEAN SHIFRIN / Staff

Sister Mary Margaret stands outside **Saint Thomas More Catholic Church** in **Decatur**, which is finishing a \$1.2 million building and renovation project. Father Pat Mulhern, pastor, says: "I can't imagine anybody [who is] paying for something not worrying right now."



W.A. BRIDGES JR. / Staff

Rabbi Steven J. Lebow of **Temple Kol Emeth** is set to move into the \$1 million temple and classroom complex today.

Denominations find themselves with loans that sometimes total several million dollars, leaving some religious leaders feeling nervous.

Roswell at the First Church of Christ, Scientist.

"Parishes are becoming more oriented toward activities other than worship," said the Rev. Peter Dora, a spokesman for the Catholic Archdiocese of North Georgia.

"Churches feel they can better minister if they have facilities to reach different age groups and different classes of people," added the Rev. Ponder. "In many instances, it helps strengthen the church."

Nervous over loans

In order to get financing for a new project, the Catholic archdiocese requires individual parishes to raise one-third of the money before construction.

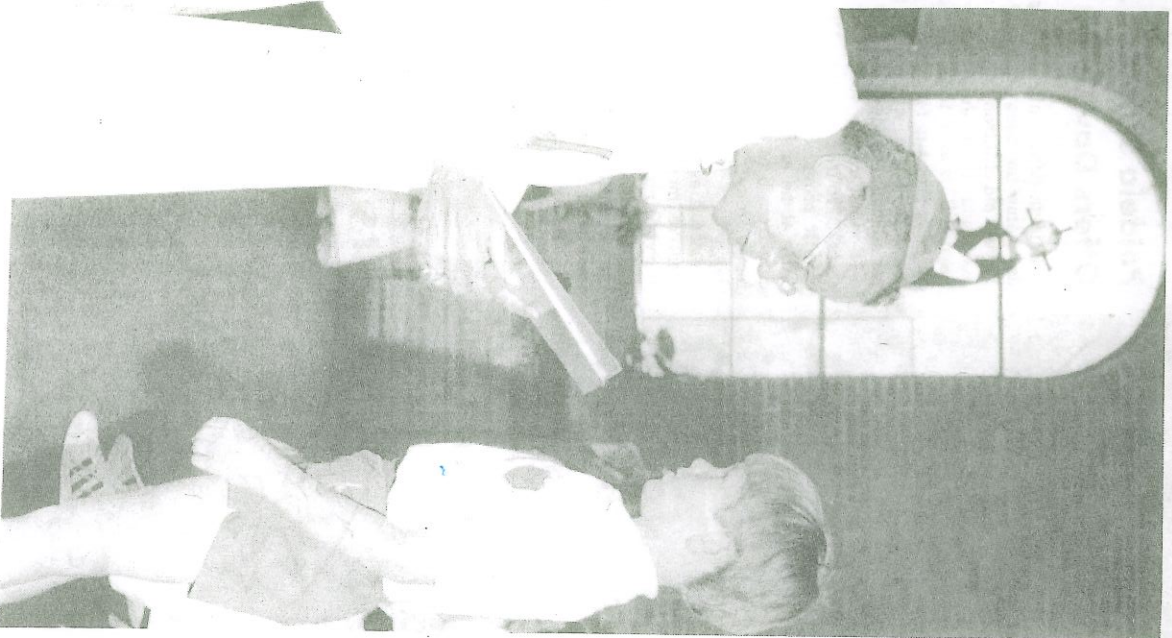
Other denominations find themselves with loans that sometimes total several million dollars, leaving some religious leaders feeling nervous.

"Everybody worries," said Father Pat Mulhern, pastor of Saint Thomas More Catholic Church in Decatur, which is finishing a \$1.2 million renovation and new classroom building. "I can't imagine anybody [who is] paying for something not worrying right now."

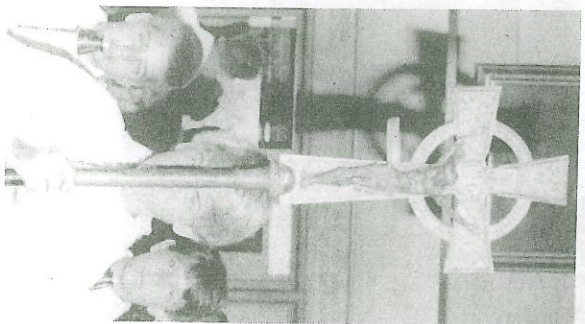
Others feel as though their members won't let them down, despite the hefty payments.

"When recessions come, people have more faith in God," said the Rev. R.L. White, pastor of Mount Ephriam Baptist Church in Atlanta which is paying for a new \$3 million sanctuary and education complex. "The attendance and offerings go up instead of down."

Rabbi Steven J. Lebow of Temple Kol Emeth agrees. "It's not like one family having to make the payment. It's 300 families."



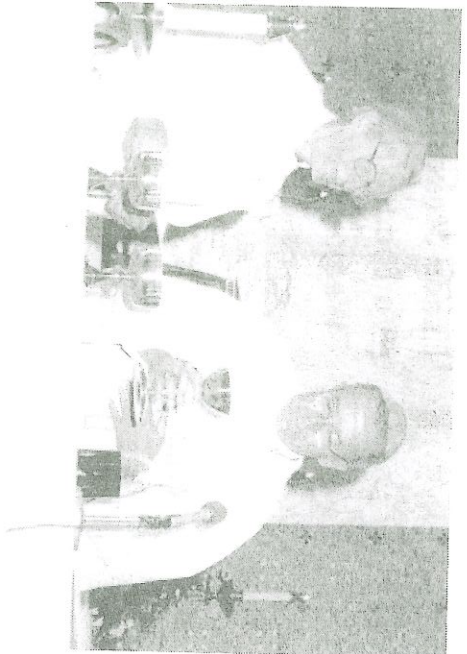
Archbishop Eugene Marino And Fritz Vonnahme



Matthew Higgins Leads Acolytes



Archbishop In Procession



Fr. Patrick Mulhern, Archbishop Celebrate Mass

Archbishop Celebrates Mass Of Thanksgiving

New Catholic Archbishop Eugene Marino paid his first visit to St. Thomas More Church and school in Decatur and it was an occasion of celebration. Archbishop Marino, with St. Thomas More's pastor, the Rev. Patrick Mulhern, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in honor of the school's being named a National

School of Excellence. The award will be presented in the early fall in ceremonies at the White House. Young Fritz Vonnahme presented the school's application which won the prestigious award to the Archbishop.

Photos by Charles L. Webb Jr.

If you ask a St. Thomas More student what he or she received for Christmas, you may get a most unusual reply. In the middle of a list containing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Nintendo games or Holiday Barbies, you are apt to hear "a dulcimer."

This may seem like an odd gift for an '80s youngster — in an era of punk and heavy metal rock music, how many average, run-of-the-mill kids would be interested in a traditional Appalachian stringed instrument? Plenty, apparently, for 24 out of the 325 students at St. Thomas More School in Decatur have just gotten new dulcimers.

The originator of this particular fad is Lois Hornbostel, a champion dulcimer player, author and director of the annual Appalachian State University Dulcimer Playing Workshop. Ms. Hornbostel (known as Miss Lois to the children) spent three weeks at St. Thomas More as part of the Georgia Council for the Arts "Artist in Education" program. She presented three concerts, one for the lower grades, one for middle grades and one for the upper grades, in order to expose the entire school to the music of the dulcimer.

These concerts featured traditional American songs and dance tunes, music from other countries, and stories and cultural background about the music. In addition, she worked extensively with the third through the sixth grades to give those students a deeper understanding of the traditions and techniques of dulcimer playing.

MS. HORNBOSTEL brought 30 dulcimers with her to St. Thomas More, so that each student could have his or her "own" instrument to play during the class period. She taught the children basic string techniques and how to find pitches and pick out melodies. The students first learned to play by ear, but soon moved on to basic tablature — playing by the numbered frets. They studied musical principles such as rhythm, harmony, dynamics and chordal accompaniment — all in the guise of fun. Miss Lois collects verses of the song "If Ain't Gonna Rain No More" at each school she visits and happily shares them with the students, encouraging them to make

up new verses of their own.

In the dulcimer-building classes, students put together instruments from durable and inexpensive kits, and decorated them as their imaginations dictated. These nine dulcimers remain at the school an are now being used in the music curriculum.

The dulcimer holds a unique place among American folk instruments for several reasons. First, it is the only major instrument currently used that was played exclusively in a single region (Appalachia and the neighboring state of Ohio). Secondly, it was always made at home and by hand. Finally, it is the only currently used instrument which is fretted diatonically; that is, the frets on the fingerboard are a whole tone apart, with several half-tones interspersed. The fretboard on a guitar or banjo, by contrast, contains half-tones its entire length.

Because it is easy to get a pleasant sound, but can be played intricately as well, the dulcimer is an ideal instrument for both a beginner and a person with a musical background.

Kathy Merritt, the school's music teacher, was impressed with the students' reactions to the program. She noticed that even those students who are not usually interested in music enjoyed the dulcimer classes. "It was a special experience for the children," she stated, "special because Lois was somebody new, special because each student had an instrument, special because she taught them to play so quickly."

Mrs. Merritt plans to continue using the dulcimers with the third through sixth grades and to extend their use to the other classes as well. Fourth graders played the dulcimers in the school's Book Week program, and learned Christmas carols to provide accompaniment for their class. Even the kindergarten classes have had a chance to try the instrument.

The parents who purchased dulcimers report that their children play them frequently and really enjoy them. The adults are enjoying the experience too—instead of listening to the music of "Super Mario Brothers" blaring from the television, they are being serenaded with traditional folk songs on the dulcimer. Certainly this is a gift to parents as well!



Fourth graders Chris Motta, left, and Patrick Reynolds play a double dulcimer.

City of Decatur

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