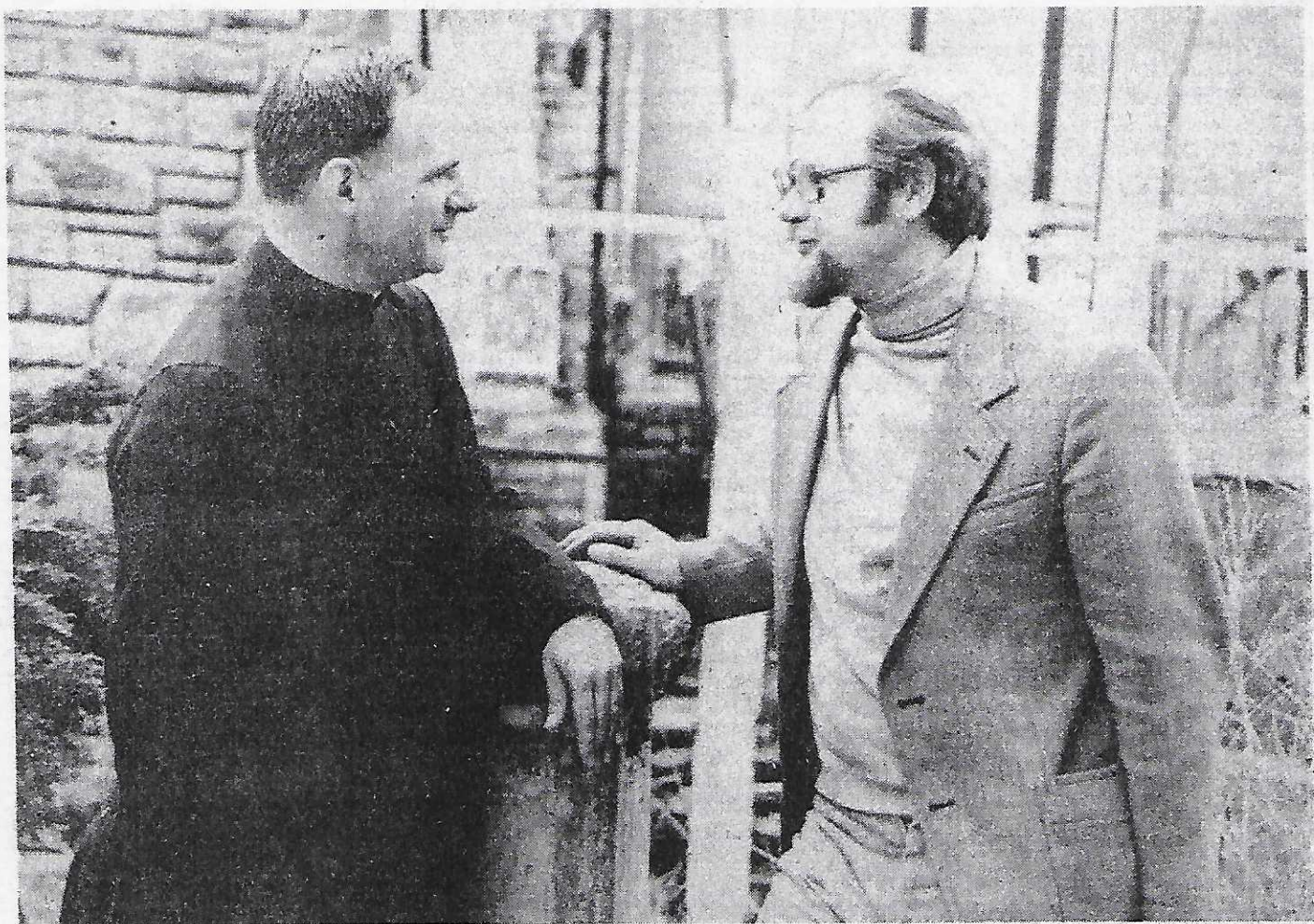


The St. Marys Star

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FATHER HECTOR BOLDUC, left director of the Society of Friends of St. Pius X, discussed the planned restoration of the windows of Immaculata Chapel with Manfred Hoehn. Hoehn, who visited the St. Mary's College campus last week, is a representative of the Franz Meyer Factory, Munich, Germany, which made the original windows. He will supervise the reconstruction according sketches and plans found safely preserved in the basement of the bombed-out factory building.

colors can be skillfully matched. Mr. Hoehn estimated that one third of the windows can be salvaged.

Actually, Mr. Hoehn admitted, it's easier and less time-consuming just to make new glass, but as he described the ancient process, I wasn't so sure. The Franz Meyer Company is world-renowned for its excellent work. It uses the old method which had been lost for centuries, but was rediscovered in the 1850s. Using a portion from the Assumption window as an example, Mr. Hoehn explained the complicated process. The glass is really "stained," not painted. With the exception of silver yellow used as trim on the sleeve of Mary's robe, only basic colors are used -- red, green, blue, and so forth.



THE IMMACULATA CHAPEL
Clean-up and restoration work has started.

Would You Call It A Miracle?

by Dorothy N. Hoobler

Easter is the season for miracles, and that seems to be what's happening in the stained glass window restoration project at Immaculata Chapel. At least, listening to the story of Father Hector Bolduc, director of the Society of the Friends of St. Pius X which is located on the St. Marys College campus, the discovery seemed miraculous. Few people have forgotten the tragic fire last November which destroyed so much of the Chapel and left only eight of the magnificent windows still intact. "Irreplaceable" was the word most often used to describe the loss. No one dared to dream of miracles.

The windows, designed and constructed by craftsmen at the Franz Meyer Glass Company in Munich, Germany were shipped to their import company in Chicago. American glaziers, trained by the Meyer Company, installed the beautiful windows in the Immaculata which was dedicated in May, 1909. After the fire, all the bits and pieces of glass were carefully removed from the debris and tediously sorted, in the hope that the windows might someday be restored. On a recent trip to Europe, Father Bolduc turned detective, contacting every Franz Meyer family in Munich to ask if their family had ever done stained glass work. Since "Franz Meyer" is a little like "John Smith" in America, it turned out to be quite a task, he smiled, but finally, the correct family was located. A surprised descendant told Father Bolduc that the factory had been rebuilt after the Allied bombings during World War 2, and that once again, skilled artisans were making those lovely windows and mosaics.

Father Bolduc visited the factory in Munich about a month ago. In searching through old sketches and plans that had evidently been stored in a cellar and had survived the bombings, they found the original drawings for the windows of the Immaculata. These sketches, along with the many pictures and slides sent in response to Father

Bolduc's plea for help, will be of tremendous value in the restoration. Perhaps almost as amazing as the sketches' preservation is the fact that three of the original craftsmen who actually worked on the windows are still living. All three men, including a delighted Franz Meyer, are in their 90s.

Manfred Hoehn, a bearded, young but knowledgeable representative of the Meyer Factory, has been on St. Marys campus, carefully checking the conditions of the remaining windows as well as the fragmented ones. I watched as he and Father Bolduc checked the pictures and then accompanied them to what Father Bolduc laughingly calls the "intensive care" room. It contains a sample piece of everything that could be salvaged from the debris -- pieces of railings, columns and ornate decorative pieces which will provide the molds for reconstruction. Placed in the windows of the room, where the sunlight once again revealed their loveliness, were rescued sections from damaged windows. Mr. Hoehn pointed out the various kinds of damages and explained how they would be repaired. In the "Land of Galilee" panel, one area had been completely knocked out by pressure from the fire hose or debris from the falling tower. Those pieces will be matched and replaced, probably with fragments of other windows. The "Marriage Feast at Cana" window had some sections with only small scratches and they can be covered. Some showed tiny fractures or cracks from the intense heat; they can be repaired by a special epoxy. There were even some windows unbroken but melted by the flames, and these will be released.

We then visited the "recovery room." The entire floor was covered with portions of the windows which had been retrieved from the burned-out sanctuary shell. The exquisite colors of the glass were completely hidden under layers of smoke. The task seems formidable, but it can and will be done, both men assured me. All the panels which have damaged or missing parts will be sent to Germany so that the

patterns are made of each shape (flower petal, a leaf, or the face), and then the piece of glass is cut out. It is set on clear glass with hot wax for several hours. The pigment is the mixed and applied (it contains water, vinegar and other undisclosed ingredients), and the skilled artist erases parts of the stain to form the necessary details and lines. The glass is fired at 1,100° F for brief seconds and the stain melts in to fuse into one piece of lovely colored glass. They are leaded into the designs, and the results are those magnificent picture windows you remember. Luckily, there were eight still intact after the fire, three large ones at the north end of the sanctuary and five in the tower. Many of the ornate frames are also in remarkably good condition.

Mr. Hoehn, an expert who has spent 20 years in this craft, estimates it will take five years to complete the project. Father Bolduc said that as the Chapel restoration progresses, clean protective glass will be placed in the frames. Then as the picture windows arrive one by one from Germany, they will be installed in their original places. The Meyer Company does much of this kind of restoration work, and is presently working on cathedral windows in Regensburg, Germany. That is more difficult, he said, because there are no pictures or sketches to use as guides. He also explained the terrible deterioration of much precious stained glass in European cities, due to concentrated smoke, pollution, and humidity which combine to act as an acid that is gradually eating away from windows. Meyer's is famous for its skillful, beautiful work, including La Paloma (the Dove) in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, which is just behind the main altar and above the throne. They specialize in mosaics, Mr. Hoehn said, using stone, glass, and various colors of marble. Still done entirely by hand, the methods have not changed over 2,000 years.

As we watched the bulldozer remove debris from the Chapel floor, Father Bolduc discussed the progress being made in the clean-up operation, and future plans. The Chapel walls and ceiling will be completely reinforced with steel beams which will be encased in wood or decorative plaster, so the weight of the roof will rest on the steel. Fire protective materials will be added and the Chapel will be stronger than ever, he assured me. Already stored on campus (but in hundreds of pieces) are an 80 Pakistani green and gold onyx which came from a church in St. Louis and an organ from a Kansas church. Valued at \$25,000, it was given from a friend who heard of the fire. With 76 ranks, four manuals, and 5

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pipes, it will be reassembled and, hopefully, will fit in the Chapel's organ loft.

Work continues on the other buildings. The 160-bed Loyola Hall is ready to house guests for the summer retreats and the exciting ceremony scheduled for this fall. Equipment, ready for installing in the kitchen, now covers the floor in the dining hall. Father Bolduc pointed out the many beautiful windows in that building, too. One, given in memory of the Gufler family, was done by Emil Frie, an artist who worked for Meyer both in Munich and St. Louis. The Society director laughed when he told us he had refused a very, very generous offer from a rich Texan who wanted the lovely panels of "The Last Supper" for his ranch house. A da Vinci interpretation, it was given in memory of George Morpenberg, S.J., by his sister.

Sadly, some things seem to be damaged beyond restoration, including a crucifix with a smoke-dimmed plaque reading "In Memory of E.A. Coleman." It is badly burned and broken, a crumbling life-sized statue of Christ on a charred wooden cross. "But," Father Bolduc said quietly and emphatically, "we never questioned." As we walked back down College Avenue, he added enthusiastically, "It's so good to hear the sound of work being done." I wonder, is that how a miracle sounds?

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R V HAPPENINGS!

M ROSSVILLE VALLEY MANOR

Church services were brought to us this week by Reverend Bill Hurtig of the Silver Lake United Methodist Church. Connie Rueck played the piano. Special Communion services were brought to us by Bob Sieh, pastor of the Christian Church. Vickie Sieh played the piano. Those assisting were Steve Horton and David Stadler. Sister Mary Kratina shared a special Easter prayer and Communion with us this week, too.

Easter has been an exciting time here for the residents. They have been busy making bunnies, baskets and flowers. Some enjoyed coloring eggs. We are very lucky to have volunteer workers like Eunice Dannefer, Florence Tuller, Myra Hagedorn, and Pat Elliott.

The residents have been enjoying the bright sunny days. Fred VanVerth has been talking to the tomato plants he has planted indoors, and I overheard him say, "Hold on, it will not be long until you can go outside, too." Fred is a very serious gardener and his plants are proof of it.

The Bethel Community Chapel

enjoyed winning the pretty bunny cookies, fruits and other goodies.

We welcome our new residents -- Lorna Herneisen, Horton, and Beulah McIntyre, Rossville. Stop by and say hello; they are looking forward to having visitors.

Betty Lambotte

NOTES OF THANKS

It is with the deepest gratitude that I express my thanks to all of you for the cards, Mass cards, flowers, calls, visits and all other acts of kindness extended me and my family during my recent illness. You have no idea how very touched I was with all your concern. I appreciate your thoughtfulness very much.

"Whistle" Beseau
St. Marys c

Many thanks to all our friends and neighbors for expressions of sympathy to us at the time of the death of my father, and during my mother's stay in the hospital.

Bobbie Jo Taylor
and family
St. Marys c



The Virginia blue laws enacted in 1619 required men to dress according to their rank.

ATTENTION GOLFERS

A work day is scheduled for Saturday, April 21, at the St. Marys Golf Course. Plans are to meet at the club house and get started at 8 a.m. We ask that you bring a shovel. We need your help, so make plans now to give us a few hours of your time this Saturday. Also . . . just a reminder of upcoming Stag Night on April 27, and the Scotch Foursome on April 29.

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