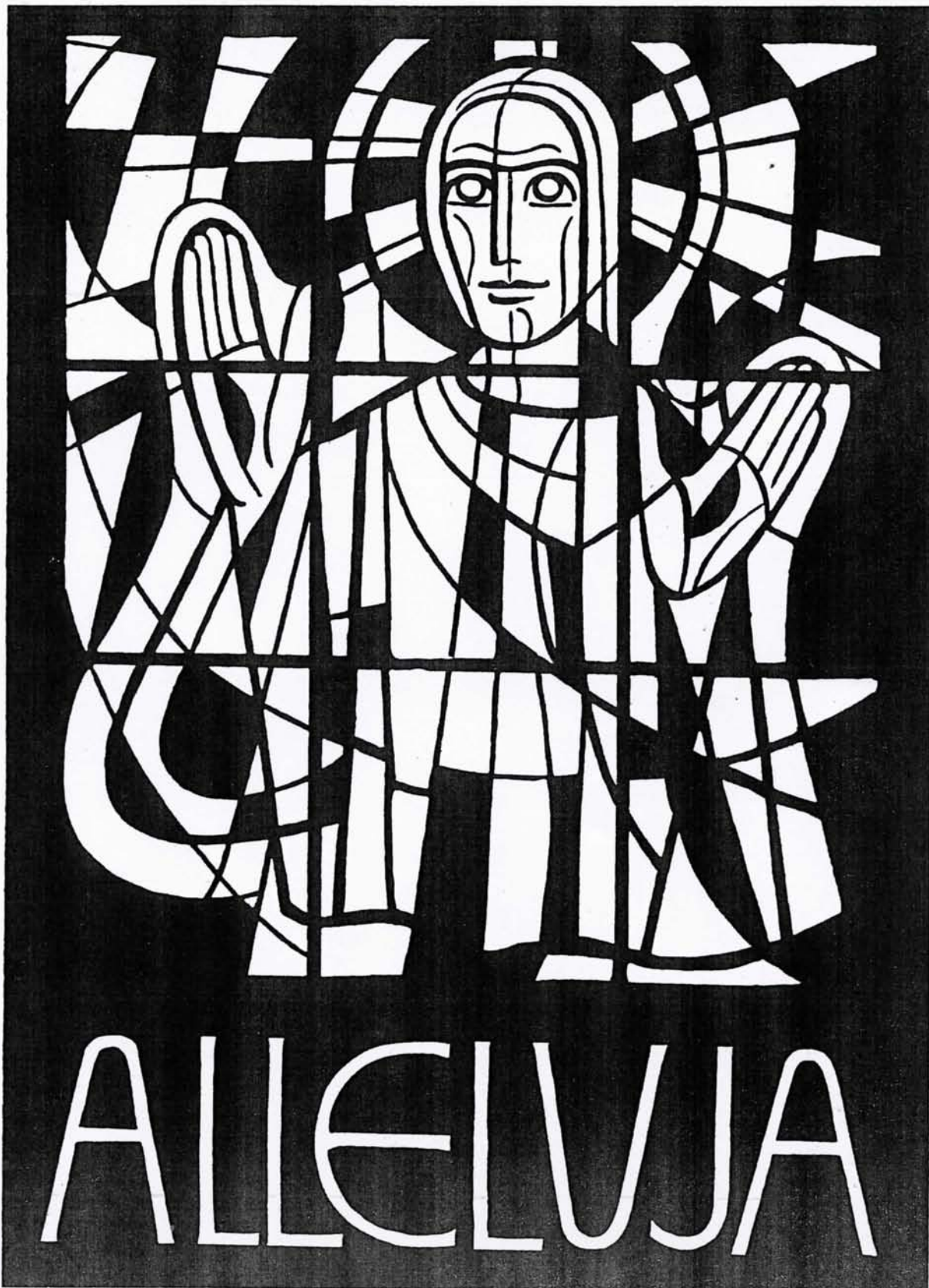


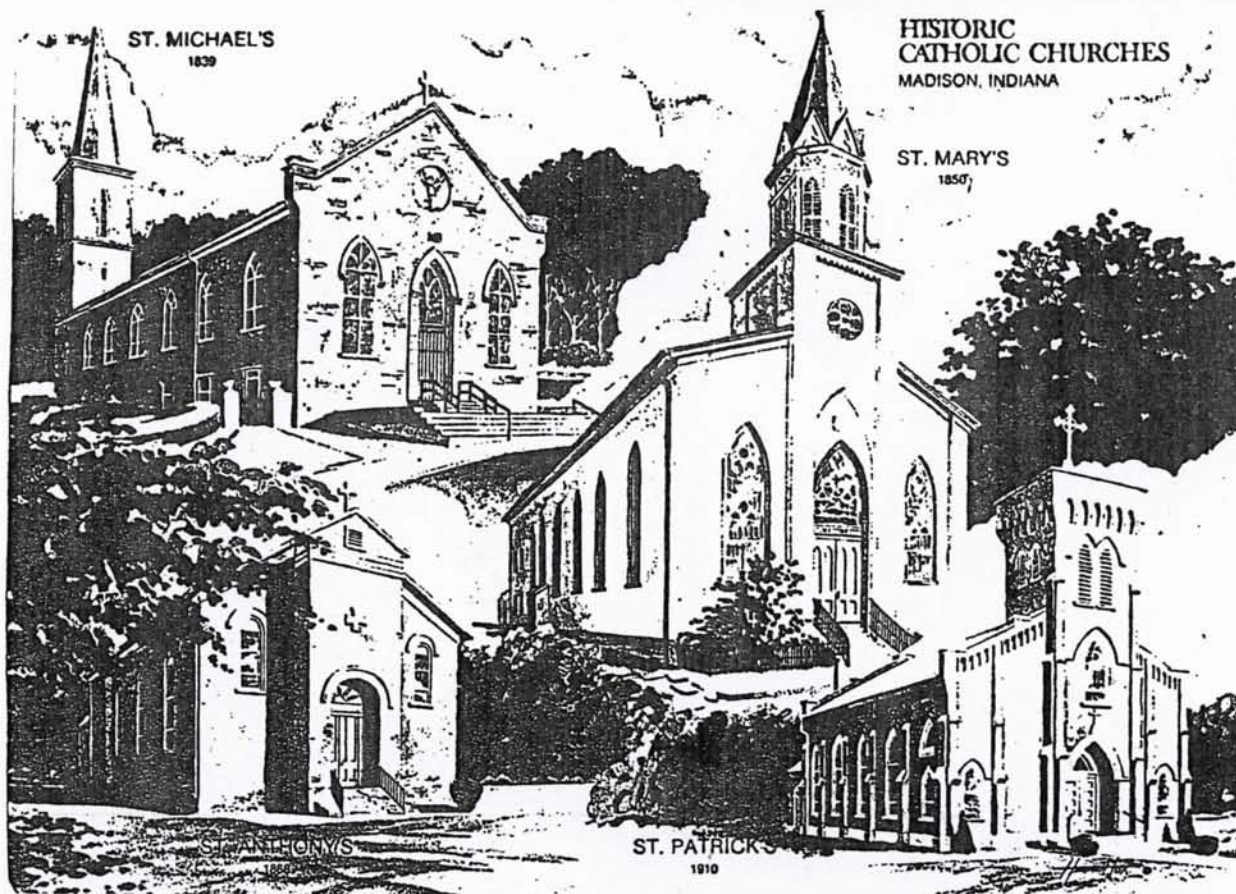
Midwest Bits and Pieces

April 1, 1993



ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH
 Madison, Indiana
 1817 - 1993

It was during the early years of the decade 1849-1850 that the parish school was founded. The first record we have of a Catholic school in the parish is a brief note on the fly leaf of the Baptismal Register stating that the school was opened on September 26, 1843. For the first few weeks, classes were held in the church itself, but on November 1, of the same year, were transferred to the basement. The first teachers were Brother Mary Joseph and Anselm. Both belonged to the Brothers of St. Joseph, an organization which later became part of the Congregation of Holy Cross. A small band of these Brothers had set up a mission on the site now occupied by the University of Notre Dame. Father Delaune had obtained Brother Mary Joseph and Brother Anselm from this place.



Anselm Letters in Exchange for a Bird's Eye View of Madison

Copies of seven of Brother Anselm's letters were a part of the exchange. These letters will appear in the soon to be published book by Brother George Klawitter entitled: Adapted to the Lake: Letters by the Brother Founders of Notre Dame, 1841 - 1849.

Mr. John Galvin of Historic Madison asked if we might have any information about Madison. Here is a sample of information which those letters contained.,

"There are in Madison 8 ecoles primaires (grade schools) two high schools or seminaries wherein are taught Latin, Greek, etc., etc., and the other high branches of education, and also 5 or 6 little schools for children under the age of 7 . On an average each of the Primary schools is attended by about 40 pupils throughout the year, but the two catholick (with the exception of one of the seminaries) are more numerously attended than any other school in town.

"The exact population of this town (already surnamed city) will be known only in 1850. It is supposed now-a-day to be of about 6000 inhabitants, 900 of whom are Catholick.

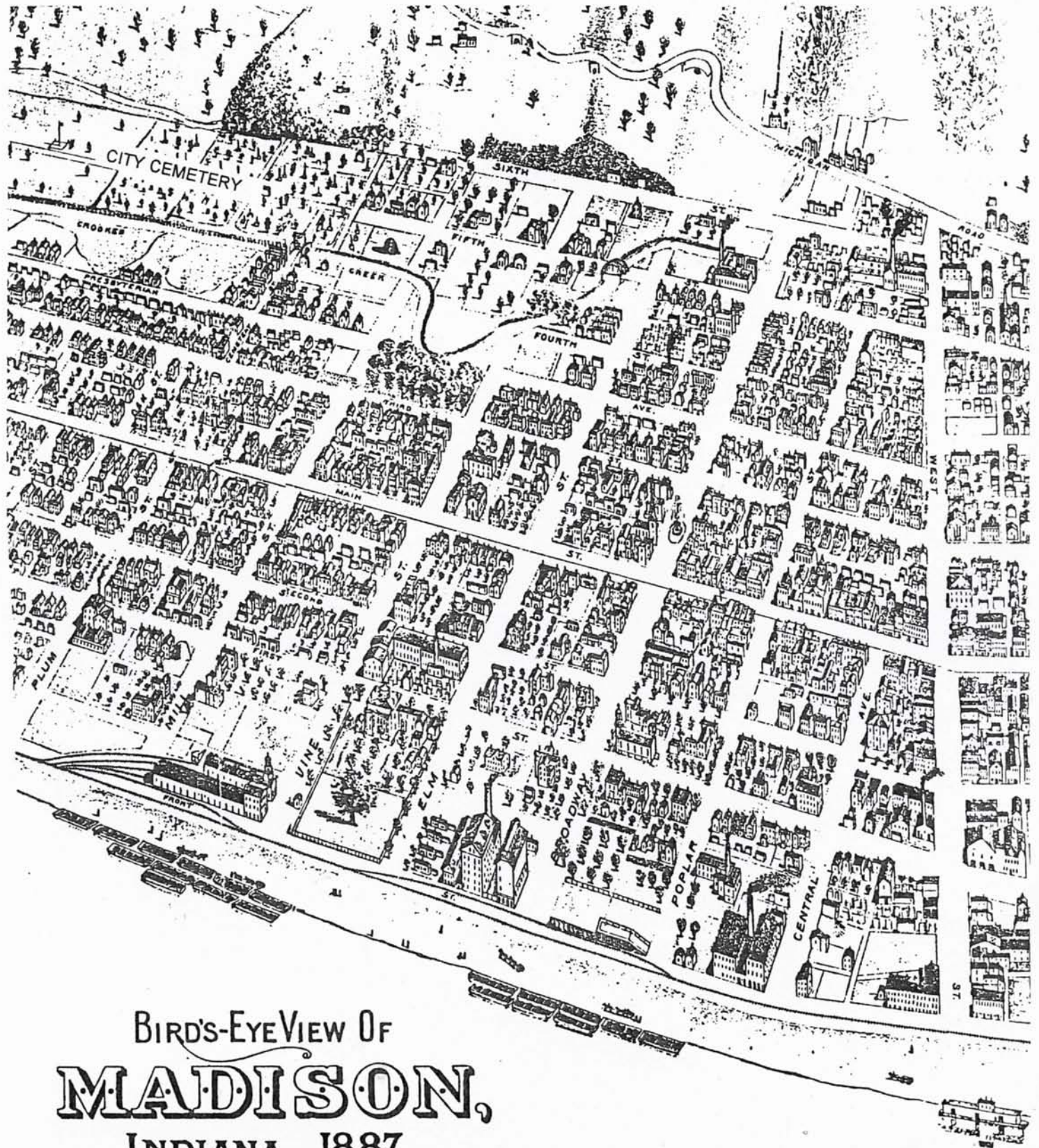
"There are in this city 12 Protestant churches among which 5 or 6 are pretty buildings, but however none of them vie with the fine Catholic church either in styles or in architecture."

On the Bird's Eye map of Madison (following page) note the placement of the Church, Ohio River and the Cemetery. All of these points are a part of the tragic story of Brother Anselm"

Fr. Delaune, his pastor at Madison, wrote on his death: "Brother Anselm drowned July 12 1845 while Fr. Delaune, who couldn't swim, looked on; he was caught in a current of the Ohio, 20' deep, 200' from shore. His body was found at 1 P.M., five hours after he was drowned. Waked in chapel from 1 1/2 - 4, then in Church. More than 1000 Catholics and Protestants present for Vespers of the Dead. Delaune preached on Wisdom, Chapter 4, verses 7 and 55. Verse 13 was displayed on a black banner. Then his pupils kissed his forehead. The two schools, with corpse, people two by two. Cortege passed through town to cemetery a mile outside."

All this information comes together in a most recent event, Sunday, January 31, 1993. The Bishop has combined the three parishes, (St. Michael's, St. Patrick's and St. Mary's.) into St. Mary's. St. Anthony's has already been closed. According to John Galvin, St. Michael's and St. Patrick's are up for sale. John hopes the Historic Madison will be able to buy St. Michael's as a historic land mark. (Brothers Anselm, Bernard, Mary Joseph and Thomas were stationed in Madison from September 26 1843 to 1848) If so, one of our earlier homes here in the United States will have been saved.

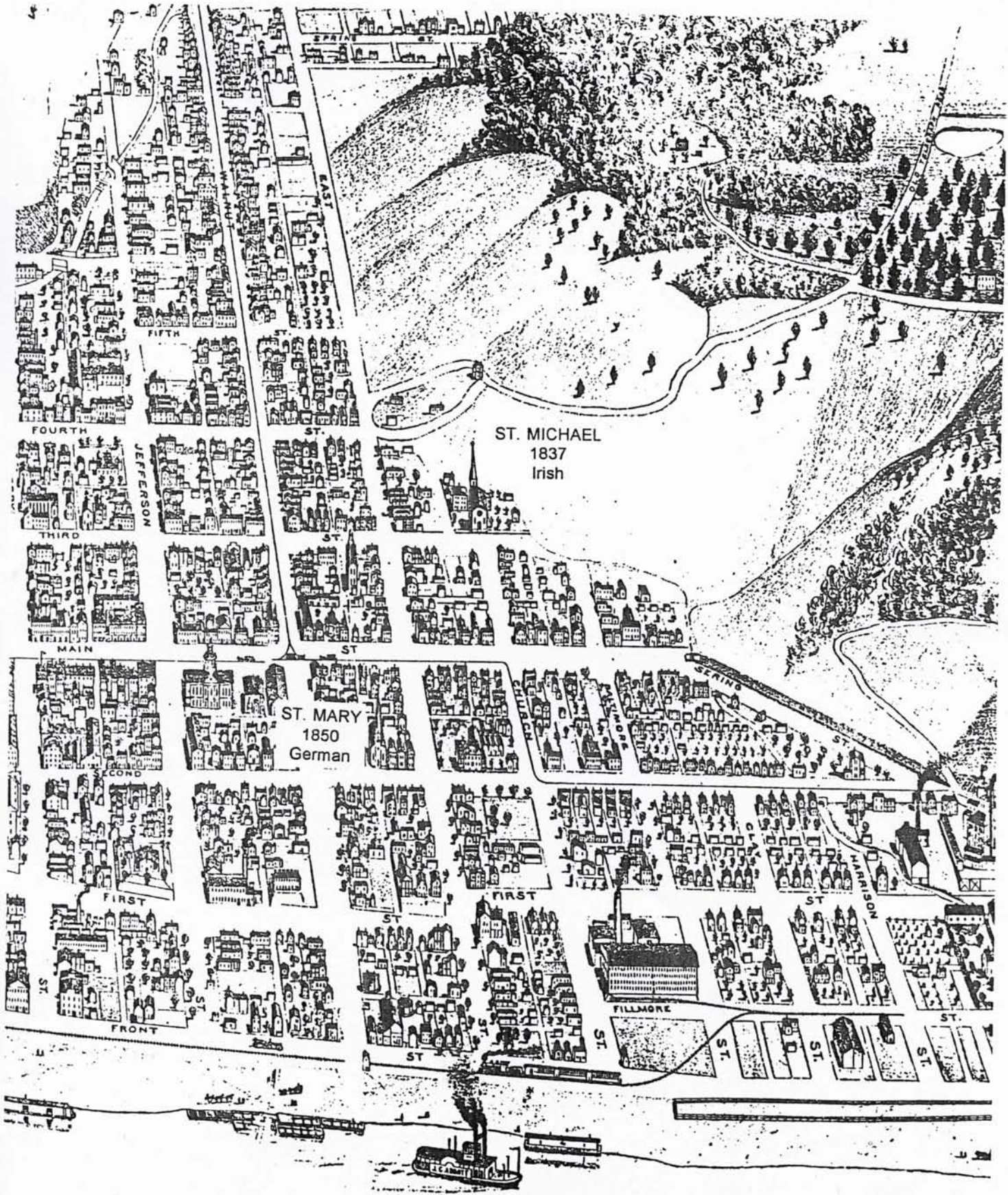
Should your travels take you close to Madison, Indiana, you are invited by John to stop by Historic Madison, a part of the down town area, with its central office in the Old Town depot.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF
MADISON,
INDIANA, 1887.

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK
OF MADISON

takes pleasure in reproducing this old etching in
the public interest.



O H I O



RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Why should religious get up in the morning?

By Mary Heather Mac Kinnon

A member of my religious congregation recently told me she has stopped reading her community mail. This woman has been known internationally for her vision and leadership in religious life since Vatican II. As we talked about religious life, she declaimed with passion: "I am so weary of questionnaires, surveys and statistical reports about the future of religious life. I want to know why you get up in the morning! I want to know what you believe, what is important to you and why you love to do what you do!"

During the last few weeks, my friend's words have stayed with me while I've read several books that examine the future of Roman Catholic religious life: Out of Chaos: Refounding Religious Life, by Gerald A. Arbuckle (Paulist Press, 1988); Living the Vision: Religious Life in an Age of Change, by Barbara Fiand (Crossroad, 1990); Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model, by Mary Jo Leddy (Twenty-Third Publications, 1991); Religious Life, a Prophetic Vision: Hope and Promise for Tomorrow, by Diarmuid O'Murchu (Ave Maria Press, 1991); and Creating a Future for Religious Life: A Sociological Perspective, by Patricia Wittburg (Paulist Press, 1991).

Each book discusses the critical identity, existence and meaning questions that face all religious communities today, and each writer offers a unique analysis of the future of religious life from a different perspective: Arbuckle from cultural anthropology, Fiand from Philosophical theology, Leddy from cultural history and sociology, O'Murchu from social psychology, and Wittburg from sociological group theory.

I found many insights that resonated with my early experiences as a member of a large international women's congregation, which I entered from high school in 1963. In addition, the authors spoke clearly about my experience of the critical transformations that have occurred in religious life in the last three decades since Vatican II. What failed to satisfy me in most of the books I read, however, were the writers' reflections on the future reality of religious life.

No one writer seemed to resonate fully with important

new experiences in my life. In the fall of 1983, I began teaching in England in a senior girls' day and boarding school founded by our congregation during World War II.

Before England, all my ministry experience was as an elementary and high-school teacher in Roman Catholic schools in Ontario, Canada. All my students had been baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition, and all students had some shared faith experience of this tradition from their homes, school and/or parish life. This was true, too, of the teachers with whom I worked.

My experience in England was dramatically different. Only a few colleagues were Roman Catholic, and I had entire classes of students who had never been baptized into any Christian tradition. Students originated from around the globe. There were representatives of most of the world's great religious traditions; however, the great majority had no community or shared faith experiences outside of this particular school context.

As the teacher of a designated Roman Catholic curriculum, I soon learned that I did not have a common religious language and heritage with those around me. Ministry experiences since my return to Canada in 1986 continue to awaken in me an appreciation of cultural and religious diversity. The world around me is not the white, western, Roman Catholic or Christian context I experienced for many years.

At the same time, I have gained new respect for the uniqueness and universality of religious experience, which seems to have a broader horizon than the perspective of any one culture or religious tradition.

As I read each of the books considered in this article, I looked to find a basic worldview that situated the present and future of religious life in the context of the multicultural and multi-faith reality of our globe. I read to find how the traditional Christian understanding of call and vocation relates to the current global quest for spiritual vision and values.

I read to find how my cross-cultural ministry experience related to many of the contemporary theological questions about the nature of revelation, the uniqueness of Jesus, and religious pluralism, syncretism and relativism.

Wittberg, Leddy and Arbuckle seem to address all issues from a North American, Roman Catholic perspective and context. Only Fiand and O'Murchu situate their reflections on the future of religious life within a critique of the limitations of an isolated Western/Christian worldview.

O'Murchu boldly declares that the tendency to study Christianity in exclusive context is the fruit of a restrictive consciousness. My cross-cultural ministry experience taught me that my Roman Catholic tradition and heritage are important to me. It also convinced me that I must find new ways to live and to share this faith tradition with others. The future of religious life seems deeply connected to how it will understand itself in a world that seeks a radical revising of the restrictions of an isolated Western/Christian worldview.

Any phoenix that rises from the current demise of the progress and prosperity of 19th- and early 20th-century religious congregational life will have to situate itself outside the dual paradigm of spiritual perfection and privilege that fostered not only the expansion of religious life, but also contributed to the white/Western/Christian/colonial domination and exploitation of the entire globe.

If Roman Catholic congregational religious life is to have a viable future, it seems necessary to envision that possibility by examining honestly the present pluralism, ambiguity, failings, and limitations not only of religious life, but of Christianity itself.

As I read Arbuckle, Fiand, Leddy, O'Murchu and Wittberg, I looked for an understanding of the future of religious life that reflected my growing awareness that life itself is relational, mutually interdependent and dynamically inter-connected.

I read to find a sense of the genesis of the Christian story within the primary source of revelation – the universe story. I read to find an understanding of religious life that is grounded in a biocentric vision of the human and natural world as a single, sacred community. I read to find how the Christian mysteries of call, vocation, ministry, community and vowed life are understood in a worldview that embraces the cosmic integrity and the time-developmental processes of the universe.

Of the five authors I read, only Arbuckle and Wittberg did not directly acknowledge in some way that the present chaos and decline of religious communities is

deeply connected to a global transition of human consciousness from a mechanistic paradigm of Newtonian science and Cartesian philosophy to a new holistic paradigm of interbeing and interdependence.

Only O'Murchu, however, explores in depth the implications of recent discoveries in science and religion on the future of religious life. Those who write about the future of religious life, I believe, must be attentive to the challenges that the recent discoveries in science and religion present not only to the future of traditional Roman Catholic religious life, but also to the continued existence of the world's great religious traditions.

Demographic and life-style changes in religious life must be examined as part of the larger dynamic of change wrought on the entire global community by the current ecological imperative to transform every facet of human relating, working, living, valuing, learning and exchanging.

Similarly, concerns about individualism, plurality and common vision in religious life cannot be resolved from within restrictive and androcentric and anthropocentric visions of reality. From the perspective of the universe story, the future of religious life is intimately related to the ecological viability of human life itself. Mission statements, vitality curves and life-cycle studies of religious life take on new meaning in the larger realities of the evolution of the entire universe.

In his book, The Dream of the Earth (Sierra Club Books, 1989), Thomas Berry identifies three essential processes of the universe: differentiation, which is the primary expression of the universe as variety and multiple modes of expression; subjectivity, which gives the interior identity and formation, the inner spontaneity, the indwelling self of every being its immediacy with ultimate mystery; and communion, wherein each element or dimension of creation is integrally related to one another in terms of being mutual presence, and wherein in each element or dimension of creation is integrally related to one another in terms of mutual presence, and wherein each being finds its fulfillment in beings outside itself.

These three principles suggest that a tremendous resource for revising and refounding religious life may be the universe itself as the most basic expression of community.

Perhaps the concerns many religious have about diverse understandings and pluralistic expressions of ministry, community life, spirituality, vows, membership, government, prayer and leadership can find new inspiration and vision from a deeper understanding of the subjectivity, differentiation and communion inherent in all reality.

Aside from the work of O'Murchu, all the literature I have encountered on the future of religious life seems to dwell on renewal, refounding and restructuring from within a traditional modern world-view. The life experiences, concerns and spirituality of many members of religious congregations no longer fit into the sustained existence of this worldview.

Those who write about the future of religious life need to examine paradigmatic and experiential differences far more radical than differences grounded in age, ministry or personal piety.

Postmodern consciousness asks that religious life re-visit itself within a new social and cultural paradigm that is challenging traditional understanding of anthropology, economics, politics, ethics, education, religion and spirituality.

The strongest influence in my reading of Arbuckle, Fiand, Leddy, O'Murchu and Wittberg is my experience of being. In 1965, I vowed publicly to live my life for Christ in the service of the church. In 1993, this same promise is grounded in an entirely new feminist consciousness and spirituality.

The church I knew in 1963 is not the same church I know in 1993. The public image of the Roman Catholic Church in 1963 was positive, one that spoke to the whole world of aggiornamento. A high-school teacher with whom I work described this same church as "sexist, rigid, male-dominated, paternalistic and irrelevant."

Feminist consciousness has brought new relevance and meaning to my life. For me, feminist consciousness is a liberative worldview that seeks a radical, global transformation of the dualistic, androcentric, anthropocentric and patriarchal structures, attitudes, values and injustices of our entire social, political, cultural and religious heritage.

My own feminist consciousness is rooted in an understanding of the gospel egalitarian discipleship of Jesus, and it seeks the liberation, respect, well-being and nurture of all persons and all of creation.....

While no one author I read fully inspired me with her or his vision of the future of religious life, I saw common threads in Leddy's search for a radical model, Fiand's hopes for a holistic paradigm, Wittberg's exposition of intentional community, Arbuckle's convictions about refoundation personalities, and in O'Murchu's belief in liminal, prophetic values and experience.

Each author acknowledges there are tensions and unresolved questions that face those who seek a viable future for religious communal life. Whatever the shape of its future, I believe religious life will be rooted in the

deepest dimensions of the mysteries of call, response and communion that have been archetypically known in every religious tradition throughout history.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, religious life will continue to exist as a profound expression of shared faith in the gospel life and works of Jesus Christ.

Roman Catholic religious life has, in its essence, been a communal faith expression of shared meaning. The challenge of our times is to heal any divisions and dichotomies that destroy shared faith and prevent the discovery of new and creative expressions of religious life.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
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"Environments"

Brother James Greteman, C.S.C.

Link, the middle-aged pig in the barnyard, was busy about many things. Each day of the week, including Sunday, he would have the other pigs and animals police the barnyard to make sure there was no litter to be found.

Link would spend most of the morning near the barn ordering this pig or that pig to pick this up or move that over there.

In the afternoon, Link would move out to the pasture connected to the barnyard and always have this animal or that one doing something.

Link seldom rested, and each evening he would tour the entire area to see what would need to be done the next day.

Carson, the donkey, would be amazed at how Link could bring order to the outward environment of the barnyard. Carson always wondered, though, when did Link have time for his inner environment? Was Link connected to his inner strengths and feelings, or was he just staying busy?

NORTHWESTERN KANSAS REGISTER; Friday,
January 10, 1992.