

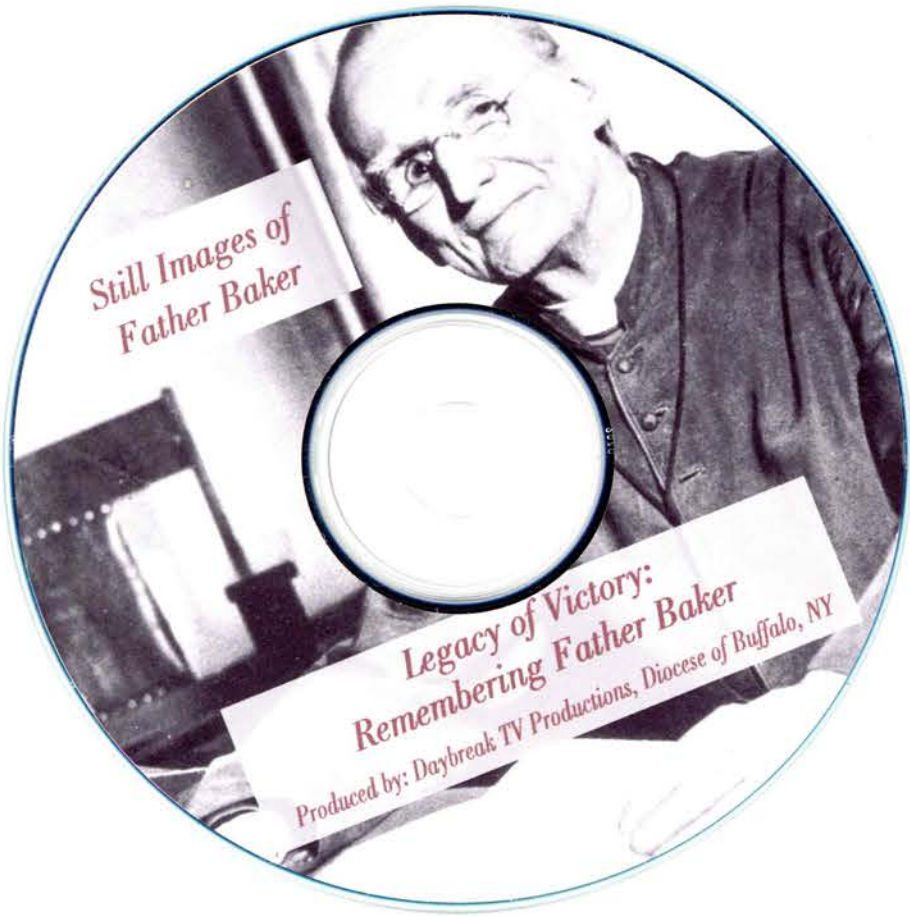
***Legacy of Victory:
Remembering Father Baker***

Feb. 17-18
2003

3 hrs

11-5-11

Produced by
**Daybreak
TV Productions**
Diocesan Office of Communications



*Still Images of
Father Baker*

*Legacy of Victory:
Remembering Father Baker*

Produced by: Daybreak TV Productions, Diocese of Buffalo, NY

FRBAKER1
FRBAKER1
PAGE =
DATE = 02/12/2003
SHOW = EWN at 5pm
WRITER = kra
TALENT = KEITH
LOG TIME =
SS = FATHER BAKER

(***KEITH***)
IF THERE WAS EVER A PART
OF WNY THAT'S HAD MORE
THAN IT'S FAIR SHARE OF
HARD KNOCKS OVER THE
YEARS..... IT'S THE CITY
OF LACKAWANNA.... BUT THE
"CITY OF CHARITY" AS IT'S
KNOWN...IS ON THE VERGE
OF BECOMING FAMOUS
AGAIN....ALL BECAUSE OF A
HUMBLE PARISH
PRIEST.....WHO IN ALL
LIKELYHOOD WILL SOON
BECOME THE FIRST
AMERICAN-BORN PRIEST TO
BE GRANTED SAINTHOOD IN
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Joe Kelly
825-5150

"Baker Boy"

825-5150
- FEB 5/12 10AM - Bishop
- " 11AM - JOE
FATHER BAKER ROOM
BASILICA

FRBAKER1
PKG

kra PAGE - (B)

(*** PKG ***)

CLIP = 5PM_PFRBAKER1/A

SUPER = 1-

SUPER = 1-

SUPER = 1-
RUNS = :00

OUTCUE = EWN

(A)

PFRBAKER1
PAGE=
DATE=02/12/2003
SHOW=EWN at 5pm
WRITER=kra
TALENT=KEITH
LOG TIME=

(***PKG***)

(***NATS---STEEL MILL****)

WHEN AMERICAN STEEL COMPANIES WERE IN THEIR HEYDAY.....LACKAWANNA NY WAS BOOMING.... 25 THOUSAND PEOPLE WORKED IN THE STEEL MILLS HERE IN THE 50'S AND 60'S....TODAY OF COURSE...THAT'S ALL GONE...

(***NATS---CHURCH MUSIC OR MASS AT BASCILLICA***)

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE IN LACKAWANNA THAT WAS HERE LONG BEFORE THE BIG STEEL SMOKE STACKS.....OUR LADY OF VICTORY BASILLICA PUT THE CITY ON THE MAP 80 YEARS AGO....IT WAS THE WORK OF FR. NELSON BAKER..BUT HE DID MUCH MORE THAN THAT

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:8:10

OUT TC:9:00

((""it's the legacy of a tremendously holy man, who did so much good taking care ofone of the most beautiful parish churches in all the world ""))

RUNS=0:50

FOR THE PAST 16 YEARS.... FR. BAKER HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE VATICAN FOR SAINTHOOD....IT IS A LONG AND INVOLVED PROCESS.... BISHOP MANSELL HAS JUST RETURNED FROM ROME.. WHERE HE PRESENTED POPE JOHN PAUL WITH A 750 PAGE SUMMARY OF THE LIFE OF THE MAN KNOWN AS THE "PADRE OF THE POOR"

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:3:33

OUT TC:3:51

((""all the work has been done now, the only thing needed is the verification of a cure that can be seen as miraculous, if we have that then we're at beatification, then another cure is needed, it could be one of the ones we have now for cannonization, so we are very close ""))

RUNS=0:18

MOST PEOPLE IN WNY HAVE CERTAINLY HEARD OF FR. BAKER...BUT HOW MUCH DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT THE MAN...NEXT MONTH CHANNEL 7 WILL BROADCAST A ~~1-HR.~~ DOCUMENTARY ...PRODUCED BY THE BUFFALO CATHOLIC DIOCESE...."LEGACY OF VICTORY..REMEMBERING FR. BAKER"

(***NATS OF DOCUMENTARY***)

EDITOR:MCHENRY IN TC:4:26

OUT TC:4:42

((""well basically the documentary chronicles his life from his roots in the city of buffalo, he was born in 1842, and his parents were both immigrants, which was pretty common at the time, and how the climate of the city and everything affected his life ""))

RUNS=0:16

EDITOR: IN TC:

OUT TC:

(("" ""))

RUNS=0:00

EDITOR: IN TC:

OUT TC:

(("" ""))

IFRBAKER2

kra PAGE - (A)

IFRBAKER2

PAGE =

DATE = 02/13/2003

SHOW = EWN at 11PM

WRITER = kra

TALENT = KEITH

LOG TIME =

SS = FATHER BAKER

(***KEITH***)

IT'S BEEN 16 YEARS NOW
SINCE THE FIRST STEPS
WERE TAKEN TO TRY AND
CONVINCE THE VATICAN IN
ROME...THAT LACKAWANNA'S
FATHER NELSON BAKER
SHOULD BECOME A SAINT...
IT HAS BEEN A LONG HARD
ROAD...BUT FINALLY...IT
APPEARS SAINTHOOD COULD
BE JUST AROUND THE
CORNER... FOR THE
CATHOLIC PRIEST THEY
CALLED "PADRE OF THE
POOR"

PKG

(*** PKG ***)

PFRBAKER2
PAGE=
DATE=02/13/2003
SHOW=EWN at 11PM
WRITER=kra
TALENT=KEITH
LOG TIME=

(***PKG***)
(***NATS***)

BUFFALO BISHOP HENRY MANELL IS LEADING THE PUSH TO GET THE RECOGNITION MANY FEEL FATHER BAKER DESERVES...THE BISHOP HAS JUST RETURNED FROM ROME AND A MEETING WITH THE POPE

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:23
OUT TC:43

((""it was an opportunity to present to the holy father, pope john paul the second, what we call the positio, it's a 750 page document which is the summary of the life of father baker and a description of his heroic practises of the virtues and also the stories surrounding his reputation as a holy person here in wny ""))

RUNS=0:20

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE...HAS ALSO PRODUCED A ~~1-HOUR~~ TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY ON THE LIFE OF FATHER BAKER...IT WILL AIR HERE ON CHANNEL 7 NEXT MONTH....

EDITOR:MCHENRY IN TC:3:46
OUT TC:3:59

((""when we first started this documentary we put articles in the paper and church news letters and asked people to please come forward and tell your stories about fr. baker and we were surprised with the amount of people that came forward and just told us things ""))

RUNS=0:13

EDITOR:JOE KELLY IN TC:32:09
OUT TC:32:17

((""i beleive honestly and truly that he's a saint, and i sure hope i can see it in my lifetime if they announce it ""))

RUNS=0:08

JOE KELLY WAS ONE OF THE "BAKER BOYS"... HE CAME TO LIVE AT THE FR. BAKER ORPHANS HOME WHEN HE WAS ONLY 5 YEARS OLD... HE STILL HAS THIS PICTURE OF HIMSELF AND HIS MENTOR....KELLY IS ONE OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN TAKEN IN OVER THE YEARS ... WHEN THERE WAS NO WHERE ELSE TO GO...

EDITOR:JOE KELLY IN TC:26:26
OUT TC:26:56

((""like i said the nuns used to take us for a walk(**edit**) fr. baker would be sitting on the little porch they had on the building they called the protectory, and he'd be just sitting there and the nuns would say ok children, everybody say hello to fr. baker, fr. baker would wave back and give us our blessings, sometimes we'd get a double treatment, he'd be there on our way back and it was the same thing ""))

RUNS=0:20

AS A FINAL TRIBUTE...KELLY WAS A PALL BEARER...CARRYING THE CASKET... WHEN FR. BAKER'S REMAINS WERE MOVED FROM THE HOLLY CROSS CEMETARY 4 YEARS AGO ...AND PLACED IN A CRYPT..INSIDE THE BASILLICA

(B)

EDITOR:RADMAN STANDUP IN TC:

OUT TC:

(("the next step in the process to sainthood, is to provide the vatican with proof of a miracle, a physical cure, testimony from patients or doctors..that the intercession of fr. baker alone, saved someones life. the bishop says many people have already come forward and the research work continues "))

RUNS=0:00

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:10:34

OUT TC:10:54

(("it's because of fr. baker that lackawanna is called the city of charity, these institutions, most of which continue to function, meeting changing needs, this is an enormous institutional accomplishment but it's inspired, it's motivated, it's driven by a holy man, a terrific priest "))

RUNS=0:20

TRT=00:01

IFRBAKER3

kra PAGE - (A)

IFRBAKER3

PAGE =

DATE = 02/14/2003

SHOW = EWN at 5pm

WRITER = kra

TALENT = KEITH

LOG TIME =

SS = FATHER BAKER

(***KEITH***)

NEXT MONTH CHANNEL 7 WILL
BROADCAST A DOCUMENTARY
ON THE LIFE OF FR. NELSON
BAKER....THE LACKAWANNA
PARISH PRIEST ...WHO IS
NOW HEADED FOR
SAINTHOOD... FR. BAKER IS
BEST KNOWN AS THE BUILDER
OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY
BASILICA.. ONE OF THE
GRAND CATHOLIC CHURCHES
OF THE WORLD... BUT HIS
LEGACY IS MUCH MORE THAN
MORTOR AND STONE.... IT
IS THE NURTURING AND
GUIDANCE.. GIVEN TO SO
MANY HUMAN BEINGS

IFRBAKER3
PKG

kra PAGE - (B)

(*** PKG ***)

CLIP = 5PM_PFRBAKER3/A

SUPER = 1-

SUPER = 1-

SUPER = 1-
RUNS = :00

OUTCUE = EWN

PFRBAKER3
PAGE=
DATE=02/14/2003
SHOW=EWN at 5pm
WRITER=kra
TALENT=KEITH
LOG TIME=

(***PKG***)

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:15:12
OUT TC:15:20

((("we are very fortunate, how many places in the world can claim a priest like father baker as one of their own"))

RUNS=0:08

BUFFALO BISHOP HENRY MANSELL HAS MADE IT HIS MISSION...TO GET THE RECOGNITION HE FEELS FR. BAKER DESERVES.. AND HE'S WELL ON HIS WAY....THE VATICAN HAS ALREADY AGREED THAT THERE IS NO SICENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR THE BLOOD FOUND IN FR. BAKERS CASKET..WHEN HIS REMAINS WERE MOVED TO THE BASILICA 4 YEARS AGO... VIALS OF BLOOD THAT ARE EXACTLY THE SAME NOW....AS THEY WERE IN 1936..THE DAY FATHER BAKER DIED...A MIRACLE...

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:2:20
OUT TC:2:48

((("but they said in addition you do need a miracle that is a cure, that is a physical cure that can be traced to the intercession of fr. baker (2:31 EDIT 2:43) that's what we need in terms of the next step, beatification"))

RUNS=0:16

EDITOR:RADMAN STANDUP IN TC:7:03
OUT TC:7:26

((("it is hard to comprehend today what fr. baker did here in lackwanna so long ago, it's estimated he served up more than 50 million meals during his time here, some 300,000 children and young adults went thru the schools he set up in the community, and 6,000 destitute orphans who had no where else to go got a new lease on life from fr. nelson baker"))

RUNS=0:23

EDITOR:JOE KELLY IN TC:34:27
OUT TC:34:38

((("what do you think would have happened to you had there not been a father baker? i have no idea, but all i do is count my blessings, every day? every day, right"))

RUNS=0:11

JOE KELLY WAS ONLY 5 YRS. OLD WHEN HIS FATHER DIED...AND HE CAME TO LIVE AT THE FR. BAKER HOME....HE STAYED TILL HE WAS ALMOST 17.. FR. BAKER WAS ALREADY ELDERLY AT THAT TIME..BUT JOE SAYS HE REMEMBERS SEEING THE PRIEST SITTING ON HIS PORCH...EVERY DAY...AND THE NUNS MADE SURE THE CHILDREN PAID THEIR RESPECTS...FR. BAKER WAS THE BOSS

EDITOR:JOE KELLY IN TC:27:05
OUT TC:27:17

((("oh ya he was, the nuns told us all about father baker over and over and over, and another thing, the kids paid attention to him because he used to give us candy, and any little kid i think would pay attention to that"))

RUNS=0:12

(B)

EDITOR:TRISH MCHENRY IN TC:9:53

OUT TC:10:06

((""people always tell this thing that they were told that they were going to be sent to father baker's if they didn't behave, but really a lot of those kids who did get sent to father baker's had a very good life because of it""))

RUNS=0:13

TRISH MCHENRY PRODUCED THE FR. BAKER DOCUMENTARY AIRING NEXT MONTH... SHE SAYS EVERYONE WHO WORKED ON THE PROJECT LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT FR. BAKER AND HIS POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE....INCLUDING BISHOP MANSELL

EDITOR:MANSELL IN TC:12:06

OUT TC:12:19

((""the world in so many ways is broken, but there are people who stand up to bring things back together heroically, and father baker in my mind is a true hero, a true saint""))

RUNS=0:13

TRT=00:01



795 Main Street
Buffalo, NY
14203-1215
716-847-8700



Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker

Diocesan Links

Diocesan Offices

Subscribe to News

Western New York
Catholic Newspaper

Diocesan Organizations

Diocesan Cemeteries

Calendar of Events

Catholic Charities

Catholic Health System

Catholic Hospitals &
Nursing Homes

Parishes

Schools

Social Services

Special Education

Spiritual Enrichment
& Education

Universities, Colleges
& Campus Ministry

Vocations &
Religious Life

Daybreak TV is partnered with WKBW Channel 7 in the production of "Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker", a documentary on the life and times of Buffalo's own Msgr. Nelson H. Baker.

Father Baker died in 1936, but is still remembered and honored for helping countless numbers of orphans, unwed mothers, and people who had fallen on hard times.

The work he began continues at Our Lady of Victory Basilica and the Homes of Charity he created in Lackawanna.

The documentary will portray his life from his childhood home on Batavia Street (now called Broadway) in Buffalo, to his inspirational visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Victory in Paris, to his final resting place in the basilica he built.

The piece will examine Father Baker's life-long dedication to helping those in need, what motivated him, and how his compassion affected those who knew him and even those who only knew of him.

Father Baker has been under review by the Vatican for possible sainthood since 1987. The canonization process is a long



Site Map

and slow one, but his cause continues to move forward.

Related Links

Since she began work at the diocese in late May, Daybreak Producer Trish McHenry (A CNN veteran of 13 years) has spent countless hours researching the "Padre of the Poor" and interviewing Western New Yorkers about their personal Father Baker stories.

The Vatican

"Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker" will air March 19, 2003 at 8pm on WKBW Channel 7.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

New York State Catholic Conference

The documentary is funded by the Vincent & Harriet Palisano Foundation.

Catholic News Service

Back to Daybreak

Mass Times

Other Links

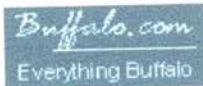


Click here to send E-Mail

3-9 Father Baker 1 — Grave to Be Mored
3-10 — Father Baker 2 — Padre to the poor
3-10 — Father Baker 3 — Calmization
His work continues — Looking for a miracle

Diocese of Buffalo Home

The Diocese of Buffalo is an affiliate of.



The Diocese of Buffalo's web site contains links to sites on the Internet which are owned and operated by third parties. The Diocese of Buffalo is not responsible for the content of any such third-party site.

Grave To be moved

3-9-99 - 10:59

KURETTA KATRA

3-10-99 4:59

Mrs. Sr. DOROTHY GARY

3-10-99 - 10:59

BAKER

© 2000-2001 Diocese of Buffalo, NY All rights reserved

DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
Catholic Center
795 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14203-1250

Daybreak
TV Productions
phone: (716) 847-8719
fax: (716) 847-8722

DAYBREAK TV PRODUCTIONS

Daybreak TV Productions of the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo has been in existence since 1984. This non-profit production and postproduction facility provides programming to local network, cable and PBS affiliates. Special productions have been distributed nationally through the Catholic Communication Campaign and the American Public Television.

Daybreak has received numerous national honors including Gabriel, Telly, Communicator, U.S. and International Film Festival, Aurora, Proclaim and Videographer Awards. In addition, Daybreak has been nominated for three New York State Emmy Awards.

Daybreak provides video production and educational videos to parishes, schools and libraries. Funding for productions is provided by the Diocese of Buffalo as well as through local and national grants.

THE VINCENT AND HARRIET PALISANO FOUNDATION

Mission Statement

The Vincent and Harriet Palisano Foundation was established on October 2, 1962 by Vincent H. Palisano. The original purpose of the Foundation was to provide financial assistance to needy and ambitious students at the college level. Following the death of Vincent H. Palisano in 1972 and the death of his wife, Harriet Palisano, in 1984, the Foundation has expanded its philanthropy to providing scholarships for secondary school students, funds for cancer research and support for specific projects for organizations in Western New York. The Trustees of the Foundation seek projects related to education as well as the larger community.

Main Identity

From: "Nicole Beslian" <nbeslian@wkbw.com>
To: "Nancy Sanders" <nsanders@wkbw.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2003 1:50 PM
Subject: Father Baker

Nancy

This is what I wanted to post for the Father Baker Page:

Giving, loving, very serious, hard working, and kind hearted are only a few words that can describe Father Nelson Baker. The documentary – "Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker," takes a deeper look into his life.

Nelson Henry Baker was born in Buffalo, N.Y., on February 16, 1842 and died in 1936, but is still remembered for the positive impact he had in the area.

 The documentary begins with his parents, who were immigrants, what Buffalo was like in the 1930's, and how the city affected him and his life. His father was a German Lutheran and his mother a Roman Catholic. At the time a mix religion marriage was not common. He converted to Catholicism when he was 9-years-old. The documentary also, reviews when he decided to go to the Seminary, his whole time at Lady Victory, right to his funeral.

His steps are traced back to inspirational visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Victory in Paris. The visit reflects the building of Our Lady of Victory Basilica.

The producer of the documentary, Trish McHenry says, "Extensive research was done on Father Baker. She started reading about him and started going through archives at the Diocese of Buffalo and the Lady of Victory Church."

Many people came forward to talk about Father Baker and tell their stories even some Baker boys. Baker boys are boys that grew up in Father Baker's institutions.

 He wasn't afraid to approach controversial topics that the rest of the community didn't want to talk about like pregnant unwed mothers. He felt that they should have a place to go and have there babies and find someone to adopt them. He is also remembered for helping countless numbers of orphans and people who had fallen on hard times. He helped anyone that came to him no matter of race, sex, age or situation.

The piece will examine Father Baker's life-long dedication to helping those in need, what motivated him and how his compassion affected those who knew him and those who only knew of him.

Father Baker has been under review for possible sainthood since 1987. The canonization process is a long and slow one, but this continues to move forward.

"Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker" will air March 19 at 8 p.m. right here on Channel 7. "

For more information on Father Baker click here.

Please let me know what you think so I know when I can tell Glenn to go live with it.

Thank you,

Nicole Beslian
 WKBW-Channel 7
 716-840-7722
 Internet Writer

2/14/03

Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker

Documentary to premier on WKBW
March 19 at 8pm

Special Series with Keith Radford
On Eyewitness News February 17 and 18

The Buffalo Catholic Diocese has produced an extraordinary documentary that WKBW TV is proud to air on March 19 at 8pm. 'Legacy of Victory: Remembering Father Baker' examines the life of Father Nelson Henry Baker and many of the people whose lives he touched. The world is waiting to hear news of the process and progress of making Father Baker a saint, a process that was started in 1987. This incredible documentary will introduce you to some never-before-seen video of Father Baker and will bring you up close to those who truly believe in his higher state of holiness.

Eyewitness News anchor Keith Radford will give us a preview of the Father Baker documentary through a specially produced three-part news report on the documentary and the Baker boys who have special stories to tell about the priest who so touched their lives. You will meet Trish McHenry who produced "Legacy of Victory" after more than a year of working through the archives of the diocese of Buffalo and the Our Lady of Victory Basilica.

Biography of Father Nelson Baker

Buffalo Catholic Diocese

Our Lady of Victory

Video clips- (3 of them)

Information on purchasing the tape - if available



Our Lady of Victory Homes of Charity

Continuing Father Baker's Legacy of Caring

780 Ridge Road • Lackawanna, N.Y. 14218

(716) 828-9648 • Fax (716) 828-9643

www.ourladyofvictory.org

Msgr. Robert C. Wurtz, P.A.
Executive Vice President & Treasurer



FOR IMMEDIATE USE
February 13, 2003

Tom Lucia, OLV Institutions
Office: (716) 828-9623

Father Baker's Story Re-Published After 43 Years

LACKAWANNA, N.Y. — Father Baker's life story, originally documented by Floyd Anderson in 1960, has been re-published and will be re-released at a special reception held at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003, in the Baker Hall School cafeteria (777 Ridge Road, next to the OLV Rectory).

The biography, originally entitled *The Incredible Story of Father Baker*, chronicled the life and times of the "Padre of the Poor." The new book, entitled *Apostle of Charity: The Father Nelson H. Baker Story* includes Anderson's work, but also picks up where the original left off, detailing the humble priest's compassionate legacy and his ongoing Cause for Canonization. In addition, 16 pages of historical photos and a foreword from Father Baker's third successor, Msgr. Robert Wurtz, have been included to enhance the narrative.

"We are all excited about re-releasing Mr. Anderson's book," says Msgr. Wurtz. "The story of Father Baker's remarkable life is one we feel should be shared with everyone, regardless of faith or background. It is truly an inspirational tale."

Refreshments will be served at the reception, which will also commemorate Father Baker's birthday 161 years ago to the day. The doors will be open between 1 - 3 p.m.



Western New York CATHOLIC

Top Stories

State / National

Catholic
Lifestyles

Education

Health

Organizations

Parishes

Youth

Columns

Clergy
Assignments

Obituaries

Advertising

Staff

Archives

Calendar
of Events

E-Mail
Subscriptions

Friday, January 31, 2003

[Lifestyles](#) / [Television](#) / [Movies](#) / [Books](#) / [Radio](#)

Bishop Mansell presents "Positio" document on Father Baker to pope

By KEVIN KEENAN
Editor-in-Chief

In the latest step in what could lead to sainthood for Father Nelson Baker, Bishop Henry J. Mansell presented the "Positio," a 750-page summary of the life, virtues and reputation of Father Baker, to Pope John Paul II following a papal audience in Rome on Jan. 8.

"We were happy to have the opportunity to present the Positio," Bishop Mansell said, "moving forward the cause of Father Baker's beatification and canonization."

Joining the bishop at the Vatican for the presentation was Msgr. Robert C. Wurtz, pastor of Our Lady of Victory Basilica and the head of Our Lady of Victory Institutions, which continue Father Baker's tradition of service in and around Lackawanna.

As he presented the Positio, Bishop Mansell told the pontiff, "We truly regard Father Baker as a tremendous leader, as an inspiration for holiness, for fidelity, for sanctity of life, and our hope is that he moves forward toward beatification and canonization."

The bishop said he also expressed to the Holy Father the tremendous impact the beatification of Father Baker would have on the people of Western New York, on people throughout the United States and around the world.

"I've waited since 1987 for this to happen," Msgr. Wurtz told the Western New York Catholic. "For me to be able to shake the Holy Father's hand once again, and kneel before him was truly an outstanding privilege. I am sure that from the bishop's remarks, and the few of my own, the pope completely understood why we were there and attention will be paid to Father Baker's cause as much as possible."

As the pope accepted the Positio, Msgr. Wurtz urged the pontiff, "Please give consideration to the beatification of Father Baker, an outstanding priest of the Diocese of Buffalo, a champion of the right to life."

"We know the story," Bishop Mansell said upon his return to Buffalo, "but if he is to be beatified, that story will spread and will be a lift to the Church across the United States, a lift in the culture of life, a lift in multiplying candidates to the priesthood, a lift in terms of the inspiration to live the universal call to holiness, the call to fidelity."

Vatican officials in the Congregation of Saints continue to examine the documentation surrounding Father Baker's bodily fluids which were stored in a separate vault and buried with him in 1936. When his body was moved from Holy Cross Cemetery in Lackawanna and interred in the basilica in 1999, the vault was opened and the fluids were found to be totally intact.

Subsequent independent scientific examinations of the fluids were unable to come up with a logical explanation as to why they had remained in their original state. Diocesan officials are pointing to that as a special sign of God's favor for Father Baker.

"We are still working on claims for cures that can be attributed to the intercession of Father Baker," the bishop said. "We do have some possibilities, but we need more attention to this and more reports across Western New York about the influence of Father Baker in terms of healing and cures.

"There have been many (reports of cures) over the years, but we do need to focus with more attention on the reports from doctors, people attending those who have been seriously ill and people who have been cured. We will intensify our efforts on that."

Msgr. Wurtz urged people to come forward if they feel they have a cure relating to Father Baker. "If (a cure) has been obtained through his intercession only, we ask that they contact us at Our Lady of Victory and we will talk with them and tell them what we need to study the case.

"I think there are cases out there. Since we have come back from Rome, we have composed a new prayer that favors be granted through the intercession of Father Baker."

If Father Baker is to be beatified and then canonized, and the bishop said he believes that will happen, Father Baker would be the first American-born priest, the first American-born man to be made a saint. Being first or last is not important, the bishop added. "The importance is sanctity and holiness, matching words and deeds which Father Baker did to such an extraordinary, holy degree."

The bishop described Father Baker's priesthood as, "60 years of phenomenal, almost unbelievable leadership as a priest."

— • —

[PFATHERBAKER]

[PAGE=9A]

[TALENT=ASI]

[DATE=3/9/99]

[SHOW=11]

[WRITER=ARA]

[LOG TIME=41:56]

[TRACK #1]

AMONG THE REGULARS AT TUESDAY NIGHT MASS AT OUR LADY OF VICTORY BASILICA,

[LORETTA READS at 18:56]

ARE PEOPLE LIKE LORETTA KATRA-- A LACKAWANNA RESIDENT WHO IS PASSIONATE [BAKER PICTURE HERE from #1]

ABOUT FATHER BAKER AS A CANDIDATE FOR SAINTHOOD. LORETTA SAYS TWENTY YEARS AGO SHE THREW HERSELF ON FATHER BAKER'S GRAVE-- PRAYING THAT HER TERMINAL ILLNESS WOULD BE CURED.

[(***SOT***)]

[LORETTA KATRA- SAVED BY BAKER]

[INCUE=I HAD CANCER at 12:18 on #2]

[OUTCUE=I'VE BEEN HEALED]

[RUNS=:12]

(("I had cancer and I would go down there and pray, and thanks to Father Baker and his intercession and our Lady of Victory, I've been healed."))

[TRACK #2]

TESTIMONIALS LIKE THAT ONE ARE SURPRISINGLY COMMON WHEN IT COMES TO FATHER NELSON BAKER--

[USE RARE MOVING FOOTAGE HERE]

A MAN KNOWN AS A CONSUMMATE SERVANT OF GOD WHO HELPED ORPHANS, SINGLE MOTHERS AND THE POOR FOR DECADES. AND YET DESPITE THE SUPPORT OF THE MASSES AND THE MONSIGNORS, THE VATICAN NEEDS MORE BEFORE FATHER BAKER BECOMES A SAINT.

[(***SOT***)]

[MONSIGNOR WURTZ]

[INCUE=THE NEXT THING WE NEED at 1:33 on #1]

[OUTCUE=NEED WHAT WE CALL A MIRACLE]

[RUNS=:06]

(("The next thing we need is proof of the supernatural-- what we call a miracle."))

[TRACK #3]

TO HELP SUPPORT FATHER BAKER'S CAUSE, THE CHURCH IS MOVING HIS BODY THIS WEEK-- FROM HOLY CROSS CEMETERY...TO THE BASILICA ITSELF... AND THAT, SAY SOME PARISHIONERS IS LIKE DIVINE JUSTICE.

[MERRICK HERE AT 23:33]

92-YEAR OLD THOMAS MERRICK WAS FATHER BAKER'S STUDENT BACK
IN SUNDAY SCHOOL...

HE SAYS IF ANYONE NEEDS EVIDENCE OF HIS OLD MENTOR'S
MERIT... ALL THEY NEED TO DO IS LOOK UP.

[***SOT***]

[INCUE=THE MAIN MIRACLE at 16:24 on #2]

[OUTCUE=VALUE OF IT NOW]

[RUNS=:10]

(("The main miracle is he built this Basilica-- and you can't tell the value of it
now."))

[PBAKERBOYS]
[PAGE=]
[TALENT=]
[DATE=]
[SHOW=]
[WRITER=]
[LOG TIME=1:17:36]

[SOT AT=47:16]

in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit. amen."

12:10 MASS AT OUR LADY OF VICTORY BASILICA... AND THE FAITHFUL COME TO PRAY. FOR GERALD SCHENK, THIS PLACE HAS SPECIAL MEANING. HE WAS AN ORPHAN, TURNED BAKER BOY... AND HE REMEMBERS FATHER BAKER.

[SOT AT=45:42]

Gerald Schenck/BAKER BOY: "He's an inspiration."

IT IS A MESSAGE HEARD OVER AND OVER HERE.

AT THE GRAVESITE... A HANDFUL CAME TO WITNESS THE CASKET BEING MOVED TO THE OLV HOSPITAL MORGUE.

AMONG THEM KATHLEEN AND ED CARNEY... WHO SAY THEY FELT FATHER BAKER'S PRESENCE.

[SOT AT=1:07:00]

Kathleen Carney/EYEWITNESS: "Breathtaking. It was just wonderful. I felt as though i was being blessed just watching him."

[SOT AT=107:13]

Ed Carney/EYEWITNESS: "I can feel the spirit in the air. I think its just great, beautiful."

THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY BAKERS BOYS TO EVER NAME... COUNTLESS ORPHANS... AND WAYWARD BOYS TAKEN IN RAISED AN EDUCATED BY THE LOVING FATHER BAKER.

AT OUR LADY OF VICTORY MISSION SCHOOL.. FORMER STUDENTS REMEMBER HIS FRIDAY VISITS.

[SOT AT=52:57]

Helen Bonarek/REMEMBERS FR. BAKER: "He would touch all of us who were ditting on the edge and he would say, 'you are

the cream of the crop'. And we would wait for him because we would get a gum drop, a cookie and an orange, every friday."

AND EVERY DAY THOUSANDS PRAY TO HIM... REMEMBERING HIS GOOD WORKS... PRAYING FOR A MIRACLE THAT MIGHT CURE THEIR AILMENTS... AND LIFT FATHER BAKER TO SAINTHOOD.

GERALD SCHENK PRAYS TO FATHER BAKER OFTEN... TOMORROW THIS FORMER BAKER BOY WILL BE A PAUL BEARER CARRYING THE LITTLE PRIEST TO HIS NEW RESTING PLACE.

[SOT AT=46:19]

Gerald Schenck/BAKER BOY: "I'm glad I'm alive to be able to see this.

BOYD: AND DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE ALIVE TO SEE HIM CANONIZED.

Gerald Schenck/BAKER BOY: "I hope so."

[TRT=01:36

[PSAINTHOOD]
[PAGE=]
[TALENT=SMY]
[DATE=03/10/99]
[SHOW=6PM]
[WRITER=SMY]
[LOG TIME=1:19:33]

[TRT=01:26]

SISTER DOROTHY GARRITY SAYS IT WAS A MIRACLE WHEN HER
SISTER GRACE VEREL STOPPED BLEEDING ON HER DEATH-BED AT O-
L-V HOSPITAL WHEN A CROSS USED BY FATHER BAKER WAS PLACED
ON HER STOMACH.

[SISTER DOROTHY SOT]
[INCUE=53:25 "AND SHE]
[RUNS=00:07]
[OUTCUE=53:32 BLOOD."]

((("And she blood."))

ANN PLUCINSKI LOST HER RIGHT LEG TO A TUMOR, AND SAYS IT'S
A MIRACLE THAT SHE'S ALIVE TODAY. SHE SAYS PRAYERS TO
FATHER BAKER HAS KEPT HER ALIVE.

[ANN PLUCINSKI SOT]
[INCUE=3:21 "THE LAST]
[RUNS=00:11]
[OUTCUE=3:32 TODAY."]

((("The last today."))

IN ORDER TO BE CANONIZED, IT MUST BE PROVED TO THE VATICAN
THAT TWO MIRACLES WERE PERFORMED BY GOD IN THAT PERSON'S
NAME.

[MSGR. DAVID LEE SOT]
[INCUE=31:31 "THE CHURCH]
[RUNS=00:11]
[OUTCUE=31:42 BEYOND NATURE."]

((("The church beyond nature."))

THERE ARE ROUGHLY FOUR STEPS NEEDED TO BE CANONIZED. ONE,
THE PERSON, LIKE FATHER BAKER, NEEDS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A
SERVANT OF GOD. THE VATICAN RESEARCHES THE PERSON TO SEE

IF THEY LED A HOLY LIFE. MORE PROOF OF GOOD DEEDS IS
NEEDED FOR THE PERSON TO BE CALLED VENERABLE. THE FIRST
MIRACLE MOVES THE PERSON INTO THE BLESSED STAGE. ONE MORE
MIRACLE, AND THE PERSON BECOMES A SAINT.

[BISHOP MANSELL SOT]
[INCUE=7:57 "IT CONFIRMS]
[RUNS=00:10]
[OUTCUE=8:07 THE WORLD."]

(("It confirms the world."))

[PBAKER]
[PAGE=]
[TALENT=]
[DATE=]
[SHOW=]
[WRITER=]
[LOG TIME=1:02:16]

[SOT AT=17:07]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "This has got to be told because its happened to me and I know. And I know."

[SOT AT=NATS OF BELLS]

BETTY CROWLEY ATTENDS DAILY MASS. ON THIS DAY SHE RETURNS TO OUR LADY OF VICTORY BASILICA... A PLACE WHERE MANY YEARS AGO... SOMETHING PERHAPS UNEXPLAINABLE HAPPENED.

BUT THIS STORY DOESN'T BEGIN HERE... IT BEGAN IN THE BASEMENT OF BETTY CROWLEY'S HOME WHEN SHE WAS ONLY 9 YEARS OLD.

[SOT AT=:44]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "And it was august of that year and I put my hand in my mother's ringer for a washing machine.

BETTY'S LITTLE HAND WAS CRUSHED... IS WAS THE MID 1930'S AND MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY WOULD OFFER LITTLE HELP.

[SOT AT=1:54]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "When I went to the doctors office they took the scissors and they cut the last finger small finger and ring finger off."

A FEW DAYS LATER INFECTION SET IN... THE DOCTOR DECIDED THE HAND WOULD BE AMPUTATED... BUT FIRST THEY WOULD TRY A SERIES OF SOAKINGS... HOPING TO CLEAN THE HORRIBLE WOUND.

[SOT AT=3:56]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "Next time I went to the doctor hopefully that it was going to be better, doctor said no improvement and it no doubt would go to the elbow or to the shoulder."

AND THAT, SAID THE DOCTOR COULD KILL THE LITTLE GIRL...

BUT THERE WAS SOME HOPE... HOPE SUGGESTED BY A MAN BETTY REMEMBERS AS BROTHER LIGOREE OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY BASILICA.

[SOT AT=5:57]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "He asked if he could take me to Father Baker because he knew he could help me."

BETTY REMEMBERS THE SATURDAY MORNING THAT BROTHER LIGOREE TOOK HER TO THE BASILICA.

[SOT AT=14:11]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "It was just an overwhelming feeling there were angels all over."

[SOT AT=7:02]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "He took me up that long church aisle. We went in the front door there, and all the way up to the altar where father baker was on the altar to the left kneeling in prayer."

IT WAS LATE IN THE PASTOR'S LIFE... FATHER BAKER WAS BLIND... BUT SEEMED TO HAVE A CLEAR VISION OF WHAT TO DO. BETTY CROWLEY PUT IT ALL ON PAPER 11 YEARS AGO.

[SOT AT=8:41]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "He just took my arm that was in a sling squeezed it and said 'don't be afraid little boy, now his blindness had prevented him from knowing I was a girl, you do not have to worry you will not lose any more of your fingers or your arm. He held my face in his hands and prayed. and they placed a large Our Lady of Victory gold medal on my sling."

A FEW DAYS LATER.... THE WOUND WAS UNCOVERED FOR ANOTHER SOAKING... BUT SOMEHOW... THE INFECTION WAS GONE. AND THE DOCTOR SAID THERE WOULD BE NO AMPUTATION.

[SOT AT=15:22]

Betty Crowley/CURED BY FR. BAKER: "He said that he thought it was a miracle. Those are the words that he used." AND DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU RECEIVED A MIRACLE? I certainly do.

[TRT=02:32]

[PFRBAKER]
[Page=]
[Talent=LUKE]
[Date=11/03/00]
[Writer=lmo]
[LOG TIME=53:35]
[Show= EWN at 11PM]

(***PKG***)

[NATS FULL/piano]
[RUNS=00:03]

BEAUTIFUL MUSIC FLOWS FROM THE FINGERS OF 16 YEAR OLD JOE DONOHUE--WHO NEARLY DIED THIS SUMMER FROM BACTAERIAL MENINGITIS.

DOCTORS THOUGHT HE WOULD NEVER MAKE IT--BUT HE DID. AT FIRST, HE WONDERED WHY.

[JOE DONOHUE]

[INCUE=11:18 Why I'm alive]

[OUTCUE=11:26 has to be something]

[RUNS=00:08](Why I'm alive, how close I came and no one expected me to live, it has to be something)

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH BELIEVES THAT **SOMETHING** WAS A DIVINE FAVOR FROM FATHER NELSON BAKER--FOUNDER OF THE MAGNIFICENT OUR LADY OF VICTORY BASILICA IN LACKAWANNA--WHOSE REMAINS ARE ENSHRINED HERE. THE HEAD OF WESTERN NEW YORK'S CATHOLIC DIOCESE SAYS WHAT HAPPENED WITH JOE DONOHUE SHOULD HELP MAKE THE CASE FOR SAINTHOOD.

[BISHOP HENRY MANSELL]

[INCUE=1:38 The doctors tell us]

[OUTCUE=1:44 for his recovery]

[RUNS=00:06](The doctors tell us that it's a miracle, there's no scientific or medical explanation for his recovery)

PRIESTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS PRAYED TO FATHER NELSON BAKER--WHO DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO HELPING THE SICK AND THE POOR. RELICS--EVEN A ROSARY BELONGING TO FATHER BAKER--WERE BROUGHT TO JOE DONOHUE'S HOSPITAL BED. IT WAS THEN THAT THE SO CALLED "MIRACLE OF RECOVERY" BEGAN TO HAPPEN.

[BISHOP HENRY MANSELL]

[INCUE=6:43 His feet were still coal black]

[OUTCUE=6:53 he was coming back]

[RUNS=00:10](His feet were still coal black but the hands had begun to turn back to their natural skin color. To realize that this was the case with his ear, with his chest with various parts of his body, but now he was coming back)

THE HAMBURG TEEN STILL HAS THE MEDALS BLESSED BY FATHER BAKER---EVEN A PIECE OF FATHER BAKER'S CLOTHING THAT WAS SENT WITH A LETTER. AT THE TIME--DONOHUE WAS IN AND OUT

OF CONSCIOUSNESS-- UNAWARE OF THE PRAYER VIGIL AROUND HIS
BED .

[LUKE MORETTI]

[INCUE= 21:49 The catholic church calls it a miracle]

[OUTCUE=21:57 given his last rites]

**[RUNS=00:08](The catholic church calls it a miracle, but what does Joe Donohue
think? The teenager just hours from death and already given his last rites)**

[JOE DONOHUE]

[INCUE=9:31 It's gotta be something, it's a miracle]

[OUTCUE=9:38 it has to be]

[RUNS=00:07]

[NATS FULL/piano]

[RUNS=00:05]

[TRT=01:48]

History of the Shrine

The Basilica of Our Lady of Victory stands as a tangible symbol of one man's faith in God and devotion to his helpmate, Mary. The Rev. Nelson Baker crowned 60 years of priesthood and charity work with the completion of this magnificent shrine.

After five years of construction, the church was consecrated on May 25, 1926, by Cardinal Patrick Hayes and Bishop William Turner of the Diocese of Buffalo. Just two months later, Pope Pius XI designated the shrine as a Minor Basilica, making it only the second such church in the United States.

The design of the Basilica, a blending of the architectural styles of the most striking European cathedrals, is credited to Frenchman Emile Ulrich, an expert in ecclesiastical architecture. His commitment to Father Baker and the shrine was so complete, he halted all other projects he had at the time to focus on the Basilica. Ulrich personally inspected all of the artists' work in the U.S. and Europe, to fulfill Father Baker's wish for the finest materials and craftsmanship.

The task of planning the interior of the shrine was Master Artist Gonippo Raggi's. The Italian-born Raggi, in cooperation with Buffalonian Marion Rzeznik, created all of the magnificent oil paintings, mosaic work, and murals found within the church.

All other associated work was handled by various Buffalo craftsmen and businesses, including the foundation (Memorial Art Co.), the copper dome and angels (Machwirth Brothers), and the nearly 200 stained-glass windows (Otto F. Andrie Stained Glass and Art Institute).

In 1981, the Delaware Pipe Organ Co. constructed and installed the magnificent pipe organ, which currently sits in the balcony of the Basilica. The newer instrument replaced the original Wurlitzer organ, which had deteriorated beyond repair.

"Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother". Father Baker was found reflecting



Mass Schedule

Sunday Masses

Vigil Mass - Saturday - 4:30 p.m.
Daytime - Sunday - 8 a.m., 10 a.m. (Folk Mass),
12 noon (Choir), 4:30 p.m.

Holy Day Masses

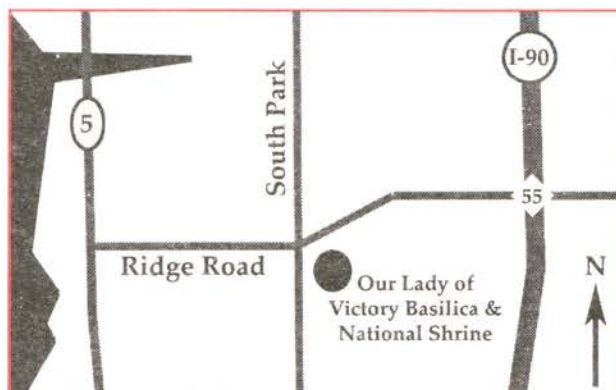
Vigil Mass - 7:30 p.m.
Daytime - 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 4:30 p.m.
Weekday Mass - 7:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 12:10 p.m.

Tour Information

This beautiful sanctuary of Our Lady of Victory welcomes pilgrims and visitors of all faiths. To set up a tour, or for more information, contact:

Our Lady of Victory National Shrine,
767 Ridge Road, Lackawanna, NY 14218
Phone (716) 828-9444.

The Gift Shop is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday through Sunday. Closed on holidays.



Directions to Basilica

From Canada (QEW) and Downtown Buffalo
Route 5 West (Skyway), Exit Ridge Road

From North (Niagara Falls)
I-190 South to Route 5 West (Skyway), Exit Ridge Road OR
I-290 East to NYS Thruway I-90 West, Exit 55
(Lackawanna/Ridge Road)

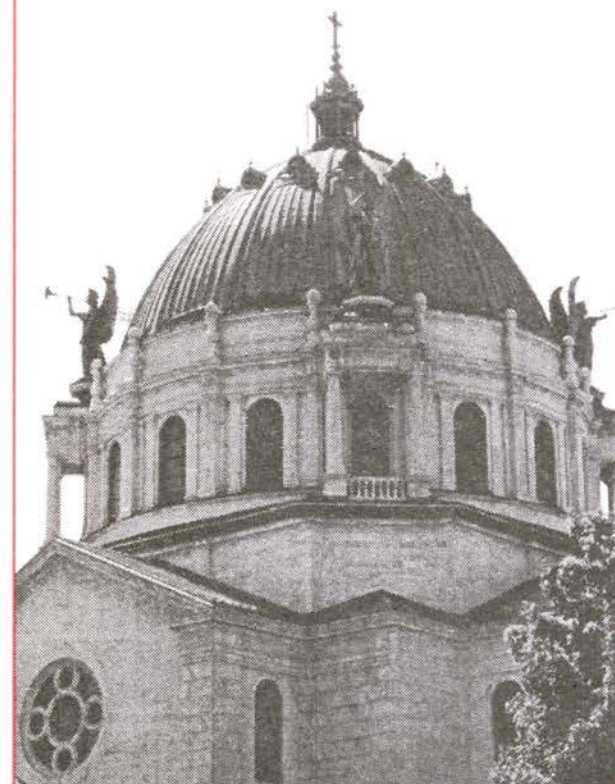
From East (Rochester)
NYS Thruway I-90 West to Exit 55 (Lackawanna/Ridge Road)

From South (Erie)
NYS Thruway I-90 to Exit 55 (Lackawanna/Ridge Road) OR

Our Lady of Victory

Basilica and

National Shrine



The Exterior

Perhaps the most prominent exterior features of the Basilica are its copper-tipped twin towers and the huge copper dome. Measuring 165-feet high, the dome, at the time of its completion, was second in size only to the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Four 18-foot copper angels flank the dome and point in each of the compass' four directions.

Topping the dual colonnades to the left and right of the Basilica are two striking marble groupings. One pays tribute to the Sisters of St. Joseph, depicting a woman instructing a group of 30 youths, while being watched over by an angel.

The other, ordered as a surprise and contrary to his wishes by the architect and Bishop Turner, honors Father Baker himself.

At the main entrance, a domed niche houses the 12-foot tall, 16,000-pound, statue of Our Lady of Victory.

Crafted of the finest carerra marble available,

the work symbolizes all of the artists' efforts and their complete dedication to the Basilica and to its' creator, Father Nelson Henry Baker.

Our Lady of Victory Basilica and National Shrine

Overwhelmingly decorated with sights of beauty, religious significance, and symbolism, the interior of the Basilica is nothing short of breathtaking. Especially of note is the dedication to Our Lady of Victory, as her life story is told—her seven sorrows, her seven joys, her desperate journey to Calvary, and her special relationship with her children on earth.



▲ The high altar features a nine-foot statue of Our Lady of Victory that was personally blessed by Pope Pius XI at the Vatican in Rome.

The **Stations of the Cross** (located along each side of the Basilica), each an example of impressive workmanship, consist of life-sized figures in scenes that have been carved from a single piece of marble. Pepini, the Italian sculptor responsible for their artistry, took 14 years to complete all 14 stations, using painstaking detail to depict emotions such as pain, sorrow and compassion in each figure.

The most elaborate work of art, though, appears in the **Great Dome**. The oil painting on the dome, 80 feet in diameter and 113 feet from the floor, celebrates the Assumption into Heaven and the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. An angelic host carries her heavenward to meet the Holy Trinity which awaits her. The pinnacle of the dome (and the Basilica itself) is a white dove of peace which peers down from Heaven. Also pictured in the dome are the 12 Apostles and numerous archangels.

Another focal point of the shrine is the magnificent **high altar**. Flanked by four swirled columns of rare red marble from the Pyrenees Mountains, the altar features a nine-foot, carerra marble statue of Our Lady of Victory, which was taken to the Vatican and personally blessed by Pope Pius XI. In gratitude, Father Baker reserved space for the painting of His Holiness to the left of the altar.

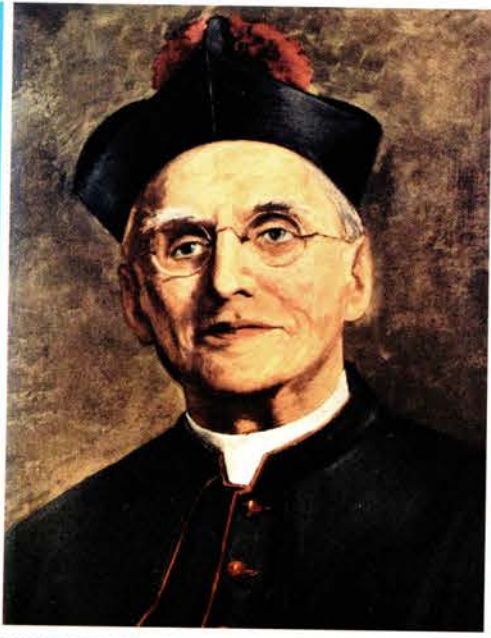
Two important religious symbols appearing in front of the pews are the **tintinnabulum** and the **canopeum**. The tintinnabulum is a small gold bell mounted on a six-foot pole with a golden frame crowned with a papal tiara and keys. As a mark of recognition, it is usually carried in solemn processions. The canopeum, or umbrella, is a mark of honor for a basilica, and is a symbolic shield for the Pope during his travels. The umbrella stands only half open, ready for use should the Pope visit. Those two items, along with the **Papal Coat of Arms**, which hangs just above the main entrance, are those which are bestowed only to a true basilica.

Of unique significance is the **Grotto Shrine and Altar to Our Lady of Lourdes**, found on the southern end of the transept. In stark contrast to the flowing gracefulness of the rest of the Basilica, this altar is hewn out of black lava rock from Mount Vesuvius in Italy. Father Baker insisted on obtaining a material that was untouched by humans to pay tribute to the vision of Our Blessed Lady to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France.

"There are a **thousand angels** in the Basilica," Father Baker once said. But, according to estimates, the actual number ranges anywhere from 1,500 to 2,500. It was Father Baker's plan to place an angel in every possible sight line, reminding visitors that for all its beauty and dedication to Our Lady of Victory, the Basilica is meant primarily for God's praise and glory.

There are also plenty of other noteworthy items on the grounds, as well. The **baptistry** is located adjacent to the main altar, and includes a marble baptismal font and numerous wall and ceiling paintings of religious significance. Also, the **Father Baker Rooms**, located in the crypt of the Basilica, honor the saintly man through a reconstruction of his living quarters, with authentic items such as books, clothing, and furniture. A glass cabinet displays some of Father Baker's own personal





SERVANT OF GOD — NELSON H. BAKER
"Apostle of Charity"

PRAYER

Lord, you gave us Your Servant Nelson Baker as an example of service to the poor, homeless, and young. By "Father Baker's" ardent concern for those in need, inflame our hearts and lives with compassion for the poor, justice for the oppressed, hope for the troubled, and courage to those in doubt. We pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Victory, if it be Your will, that Your servant, Nelson Baker, may one day be canonized. Amen. Glory Be (3 times).

SERVANT OF GOD
MONSIGNOR NELSON H. BAKER
1841-1936



ONE LIFETIME

Dear Friend:

I don't know how many times my mother, like so many other mothers in the Western New York Area, said, "If you don't behave, I'll send you to 'Father Baker's.'" God rest her soul, she never did live to see that day in 1974 when I finally was sent to Father Baker's by Bishop Edward D. Head.

Each day since then, I have become more keenly aware of the greatness of Father Baker, both spiritually and mentally.

He was indeed a man "before his time." His renowned holiness is certainly without question and many years ago it gained him the titles of "Apostle of Charity" and "Padre of the Poor."

In 1979, Father Salvator Fink, O.F.M., Director of St. Anthony's Guild, first printed "One Lifetime" written by Father Boniface Hanley, O.F.M., and published it as an issue of the "Anthonian."

I thank Father Salvator and Father Boniface for allowing us to reprint this biography of Father Baker especially now that he has been declared a "Servant of God" and his cause for canonization is being explored.

I know that you will enjoy reading this life of Father Baker - a simple, yet a great man - and that you will agree with me that it is my privilege to have been sent here where he spent so many years of his life, and an even greater privilege to walk in his footsteps.

May Almighty God bless you and Our Lady of Victory protect you.

Sincerely in Christ,



Msgr. Robert C. Wurtz
Executive Vice President

ONE LIFETIME

BY BONIFACE HANLEY, O. F. M.

MOONLIGHT can play tricks on a man, especially a young man; and most especially on a rookie soldier standing lonely sentinel in a dark wood. Private Nelson Baker of the 74th Regiment, New York State Militia, was the rawest of rookies.

A few hours after he enlisted in his home town, Buffalo, his outfit moved out to the Pennsylvania-Maryland border where Federal forces were massing to meet the threat of Confederate invasion of the North. For weeks Southern armies had been streaming northward through the green mountains and valleys of Virginia and Maryland. Robert E. Lee, drawing his men together into a great, grey fist, was preparing to smash through the Union troops confronting him and thus occupy for the Confederacy the lush farms and industrial centers of Pennsylvania and New York. Within a few weeks of Baker's arrival at the front, the two armies would fight one of the Civil War's bloodiest battles and enshrine forever in history the name of a quiet Pennsylvania village called Gettysburg.

But in these last weeks of June as Private Baker stood his post, battle lines had not yet been clearly drawn. Northern and Southern patrols, as well as lost or straggling units of both

nights of confusion, Company A of the 74th was ordered to guard a strategic railroad bridge.

Private Baker, who had volunteered for night watch, stood alert at his post in a thick wood near the bridge. A full moon bathed the night in a shower of light. Nelson's sensitive ears picked up all the sounds of the night: insects humming, frogs croaking, owls hooting, June bugs bumping themselves into trees. The night was full of beauty and full of danger.

Sometime in the early hours of the morning, Nelson heard a new sound, of someone or something moving through the underbrush. "It could be a small animal," the startled soldier thought. Every nerve in his body tingled as the sound came closer and closer. It came from the woods bordering a clearing close by. "Maybe Johnny Reb is trying to lure me into the light," he thought. "I wonder how many of them there are?" Keeping a lock on his fears, he took up a position behind a tree bordering the clearing and peered at the wooded area the sound was coming from. Moonlight lay over the open space but the woods on the other side were black and the shadows of the trees deep and dark. The noise got louder. Baker placed his rifle in firing position and waited, his eyes riveted on

Nelson did not move. His heart pounded as he waited anxiously for others to emerge from the trees. Finally, mustering a courage he hardly felt, he barked out into the night, "Halt — halt or I'll fire." The Confederate stopped and in the light Nelson could see him, his face contorted in pain, holding a blood-soaked handkerchief against his shoulder. "Please help me, please help me," the rebel pleaded softly. "Are you alone?" Baker queried. "Yes, I'm all alone. Please... Please..."

Nelson immediately stepped from behind the tree and ran across the clearing. By the time he reached the soldier, he had slumped into a heap on the ground. Nelson knelt beside him and lifted him gently to his feet. The boy's sharp eyes detected the cavalry insignia on the soldier's uniform. Supporting the wounded cavalryman, Nelson guided him through the woods to a safe place.

Baker's mission of mercy accomplished, he returned to his post.

For a veteran of only two days in a combat zone, Private Nelson Baker handled his rescue mission extraordinarily well. Perhaps it came to him naturally. Whatever the reason, he was to spend the rest of his long life repeating in one way or another the very same deed — rescuing the wounded, the broken, the lost.

THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST

Great Lakes and terminus of the Erie Canal, served as the gateway to the riches of America's Midwest. Boasting a population of twenty thousand, Buffalo boomed with prosperity and immigrants, heading West, poured into it. Some, like Lewis Baker, Nelson's father, established businesses there. The grocer endowed his son with an acute business sense as well as a fluency in German. Nelson's mother, Caroline Donellan, an Irish Catholic, passed on to her son her own deep love of the Faith. Nelson was an active and intelligent child, and from his early years possessed a spirit of initiative and adventure. The small, wiry boy, quick in mind and movement, could not resist a prank.

NIGHT-TIME PRANK ON BATAVIA STREET

Young Baker's greatest coup as a youngster had all the elements of the Watergate break-in, except for the fact that it was successful. It all began when his father rented the rooms above the grocery he owned on Batavia Street to the local Republican organization. The Republicans, establishing campaign headquarters there, proudly flew the party flag in front of the store. Not far down the street, Democrats set up their headquarters and likewise raised their party flag. The political rivalry between Buffalo's Republicans and Democrats which often sparked arguments and



Although still a pioneer city during Nelson Baker's early years, Buffalo offered fine spiritual and intellectual opportunities. In 1841, the year of Baker's birth, Irish immigrants had already constructed and were worshipping at Old St. Patrick's Church on Broadway. It was here that Nelson, encouraged by his devout mother, came to know and love his Catholic Faith. At Public School No. 12 (left), Nelson studied his "three R's," played baseball and learned to sing. His parents sent him to Old Central High (right), a privilege rare enough in those days when most boys went to work in their early teens. Nelson graduated from high school at seventeen and then clerked in his father's grocery store.





Many of these Northern soldiers would die in combat before the end of the Civil War. The North sent more than two million men into the conflict. Nelson saw action in the early phases of the Battle of Gettysburg.

hind the store, below the Republican headquarters. "Ransom, get up," he ordered, "get dressed. But don't make any noise." After Nelson led his half-asleep brother outside, the two boys eased their way along the wall of the store to Batavia Street (now called Broadway) where the Republican flag was flying. The night was dark, the moon buried in heavy clouds. From time to time, however, moonlight shafted through the clouds and illuminated the strange sight of the two boys slowly lowering the flag from the top of its pole. The flag lowered, Nelson and Ransom folded it. Nelson then told his brother to put the banner under his arm. "Now, Ransom," the older boy ordered, "fol-

low me!" The two pranksters, clinging to the shadows of stores along the way, moved silently down Batavia Street. When they arrived at the Democratic headquarters, they lowered its flag and folded it. Nelson then attached the Republican flag to the rope and silently raised it. That task completed, the two youths slipped back to Baker's store and there raised the Democratic flag in front of Republican headquarters. Mission accomplished, they tiptoed back to bed and giggled themselves to sleep.

As headquarter staffers arrived at their respective battle posts the next morning and saw the flags snapping in the fresh Buffalo breeze, they were aghast. Two men ran down to



"This town is taken by its rats." Thus did Herman Melville describe New York City's draft riots of July 1863. For four days mobs swept through the city, burning, looting, lynching. Nelson's regiment helped quell the disturbances.

Baker's store from the Democratic headquarters and met a Republican force sallying forth to do battle. Curses flew and fists clenched. A small riot was about to occur when Mr. Baker, who did not want his place broken up, came running out of his store. "Stop it," he commanded, "you'll all get arrested and the newspapers will make you look like fools. Some smart joker is cracking his ribs at your expense."

No one knows if Papa Baker knew who the smart jokers were, for somehow Ransom and Nelson, unnoticed in the crowd, kept straight faces. When the Republicans and Democrats reclaimed and rehoisted their respective flags, peace returned,

at least temporarily, to Batavia Street. The two culprits were never discovered.

NELSON COMES MARCHING HOME

When the 74th Regiment had completed its mission on the Pennsylvania front, it entrained for the North to assist in quelling the bloody draft riots rocking New York City. After successfully completing that grim mission, the militia unit returned July 21 to Buffalo where its troops were mustered out of service.

Shortly after Nelson's return, Joseph Meyer, a close friend, suggested that the two establish a business partnership. Nelson, responsive but not

enthusiastic, explained to the surprised Meyer that he was considering becoming a priest. The desire, he admitted, had not taken firm resolution in his mind. Nelson finally accepted Meyer's proposal and the two began what eventually became a very successful feed and grain enterprise.

Young Nelson was originally attracted to the priesthood through his work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Buffalo. One of his favorite Vincentian duties involved assisting Father Hines, director of St. Joseph's Boys Home in West Seneca. The Diocese of Buffalo had established and maintained the home to accommodate orphans and young boys who had fallen afoul of the law. Father Hines admired Baker very much and suggested to him one day that he take concrete steps to study for the priesthood. "But how will I know God is calling me there?" he asked Father Hines. "I can't answer that question, Nelson; I can advise you of one sign, at least, that God is calling you. Apply to the Bishop. If he is willing to accept you as a candidate, you can be fairly sure that at least one component of your calling to the priesthood will be accurate."

Nelson was twenty-six years of age. He had to reach some decision regarding his life. Accepting Father Hines' advice, he notified Meyer that he would spend one more year in business and would then enter the seminary. To prepare for this step, he began night studies. The long year of study and the business activity took its toll, however, and by the spring of 1869 his health began to

fail. To rest his body and clear his mind, he took a steamer trip along the shores of the Great Lakes. It was during that voyage in the summer of 1869 that he reached a firm decision to study for the priesthood. He told his mother about it on his return to Buffalo. She was delighted. "I always prayed that one of my sons would become a priest," she exclaimed. His father was not so sure. "Nelson, you have a good business; you have money in the bank. You should be thinking about getting married and setting up your own home."

Mr. Baker's words were ironic and prophetic: ironic in that Nelson never did marry; prophetic in that he did eventually establish his home. And what a home it was!

Joseph Meyer took the decision hard. "Nelson, we built a good business together and I will be lost without you." "No, Joe," Nelson replied, "my brother Ransom can take my place as your partner." "Nobody can ever take your place as my partner," the disappointed Meyer responded.

THE SEMINARY

On September 2, 1869, Nelson entered Our Lady of the Angels Seminary at Suspension Bridge, Niagara Falls. Although older than most students, he participated in every aspect of the seminary life—in theatrical productions, athletics, debates. He possessed a fine singing voice and a flair for poetry. From the very outset of his seminary career, he labored to develop his spiritual life. He prac-

DISCOVERING GOD'S WILL

"What will I do with my life?"

For many years the question troubled the talented and already successful businessman, Nelson Baker. Since his infancy, his mother Caroline had led him more by example than words to a deep love of God. She nurtured his natural spirit of generosity. It was Father Hines (below), pastor of St. Patrick's, West Seneca, and director of the Boys Homes there, who actively encouraged Nelson (middle) to decide to study for the priesthood.



ticed discipline, mortification, fasting and prayer. He denied himself little pleasures of the table, like pie, custard and puddings.

Outwardly, Nelson was warm and witty; few people realized the depth of his asceticism.

ILLNESS

Two years after entering the seminary, Nelson suffered a severe attack of erysipelas, a particularly painful disease. During the illness he manifested signs of genuine holiness. "For several weeks we have had two boys at the point of death," a fellow seminarian wrote home. "One has been half devoured with erysipelas; but he seems to be out of danger now. He is one of the two I mentioned . . . as being real saints; and he is looked upon as such by the whole house."

Nelson was to feel the effects of erysipelas for several months. It wasn't until Easter, 1872, that he was able to be about and to feel himself.

ROMAN PILGRIMAGE

In 1874 the first national American pilgrimage to Rome was organized under the leadership of Bishop Joseph Dwenger, C. PP. S., of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Nelson read about the proposed tour in the newspapers and was given permission to make the trip as a representative of the seminary. For him, the journey would be a pilgrimage of thanksgiving for his vocation and for the recovery of his health. He also regarded the pilgrimage as a means of demonstrating his loyalty

to Pope Pius IX who had become the first "Prisoner of the Vatican" following the seizure of the Papal States by armed forces of the Kingdom of Italy.

In mid-May, one hundred and eight pilgrims from various parts of the United States gathered in New York City to prepare to board the French steamship *Pereire*. At ceremonies in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Archbishop John McCloskey offered Mass for the pilgrims and blessed a special banner they would carry to Rome. Following the Mass, the pilgrims boarded the *Pereire* and departed on the Atlantic leg of their journey. On shipboard the Bishop said Mass each day and led the wayfarers in special novenas, the Rosary, meditation and night prayers. It was Bishop Dwenger who first told Nelson about the Shrine of Our Lady of Victory in Paris. "My brother was suffering from an illness that seemed incurable," he told the seminarian. "I prayed to the Blessed Mother under the title of Our Lady of Victory, and I feel my brother was cured through her intercession."

The pilgrims disembarked at Le Havre, France, in late May and proceeded to Paris. Cardinal-Archbishop Guibert, greeted them and celebrated Mass for them in his private chapel. During the group's stay in Paris, Bishop Dwenger celebrated Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Victory. Nelson, of course, assisted. No one knows what went on in the heart of the seminarian during that Mass, but a lifelong devotion to the Blessed Mother under her title, Our Lady of



Seminary of Our Lady of Angels, Niagara University, as it appeared when Nelson Baker, at the age of twenty-seven, began his priestly studies.



In 1874, while on a pilgrimage to Rome, Seminarian Nelson Baker made his first visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Victory, Paris.

Victory, was begun. The relationship was to influence his whole life.

The pilgrims left Paris for Lourdes and then went on to Rome.

Pius IX's health had been failing for some time. He was living, Vatican observers judged, on raw courage. The Pope nevertheless granted the Americans a special audience and celebrated Mass for them. For Nelson it was an immense privilege to meet the Holy Father and to receive Communion from his hands. After several days in the Eternal City, Nelson began the journey home. On his way he passed through Paris and once again visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Victory. While there he promised Mary he would take advantage of every opportunity to further devotion to her under that special title.

THE PRIEST

Nelson Baker was ordained to the priesthood at the age of thirty-four by Bishop Stephen Ryan, C. M., of Buffalo on the feast of St. Joseph in 1876. His mother and father attended the ordination and his first Mass; both were very proud of him.

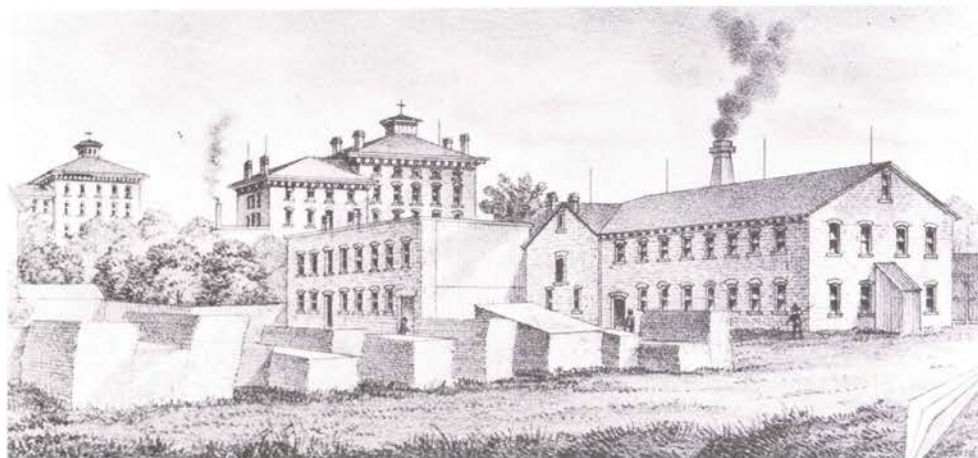
Soon after these celebrations, Bishop Ryan called Father Baker to the Chancery and posted him as assistant to Father Hines, the pastor of St. Patrick's Parish at Limestone, West Seneca. As pastor of St. Patrick's, Father Hines was responsible for St. Joseph's Orphanage and St. John's Protectors. "You have a good business background," the Bishop told Nelson. "I'm sure you'll be very helpful to Father Hines." It was

Father Hines, the reader will remember, who had encouraged Nelson a decade earlier to study for the priesthood.

Father Hines was delighted with his new assistant; he desperately needed support. St. John's and St. Joseph's were staggering under tremendous debt with a combined annual deficit of twenty-seven thousand dollars, a large sum in those years. "We don't have two hundred dollars in cash in the bank," Father Hines glumly advised his new assistant.

The situation was so bad that even Nelson's business sense availed little. The Limestone institutions sank deeper and deeper into debt. After five years of struggle, Father Baker announced that the homes were running a fifty-six-thousand-dollar annual deficit and that he had had enough. He sought a transfer. "St. Joseph's and St. John's are doomed," he advised Bishop Ryan, "and I cannot continue." The Bishop agreed to his request for a change and sent him to St. Mary's Parish in Corning, where he soon won a fine reputation as an effective parish priest. But the Lord had not destined him for that apostolate.

Exactly one year after arriving in Corning, he was told by Bishop Ryan: "I want you to go back to Limestone Hill and take Father Hines' place. He needs work that is less strenuous." "I don't feel up to the job, Bishop," Nelson replied; "I really don't want to do it." "Yes, Father Baker, let's both sleep on it," the Bishop responded. "We'll both



Newly ordained Father Baker joined Father Hines and the Sisters of St. Joseph in their work for homeless boys in West Seneca. Before Nelson's arrival, Father Hines had already established two major institutions and constructed shops where his charges could learn skills and trades. The "Long Depression" of 1879 hit particularly hard in rural areas around Buffalo. Father Hines went deeper and deeper into debt.

After five years of service, Father Baker left West Seneca to become an assistant at St. Mary's Parish, Corning, New York (on the hill below). A Corning newspaper, in the effusive prose of the time, described him as "a most devoted priest, whose endearing qualities drew forth the encomiums of the masses . . . his humility counteracts silently . . . the vile and rabid passions of man."



offer Mass tomorrow morning for God's guidance on the matter."

The following morning, Bishop Ryan summoned him to his office. "How do you feel about Limestone Hill now?" he asked. "I feel no different than I did yesterday." "Well I feel no different than I did yesterday," said the Bishop. And then came the thrust: "Nelson, go out to Limestone Hill and do the best you can. I will pray that God will be with you."

It was in complete obedience to his Bishop's will and with no personal preference that Father Baker began the work that was to do so much good for God and souls.

PASTOR IN DEBT

The situation at Limestone Hill had worsened during Father Baker's year in Corning. Only hours after his arrival, a flock of angry creditors swooped down on the new director of the debt-ridden institutions. "We want our money," they demanded, "now!"

One of the businessmen recalled his previous dealings with Nelson Baker. "I used to do business with you, Father, when you were in partnership with Joe Meyer. Your word is good enough for me. You were an honest man then and I have every reason to believe you are honest now." The half-dozen other claimants did not share these sentiments; they insisted that Father Baker pay the bills immediately.

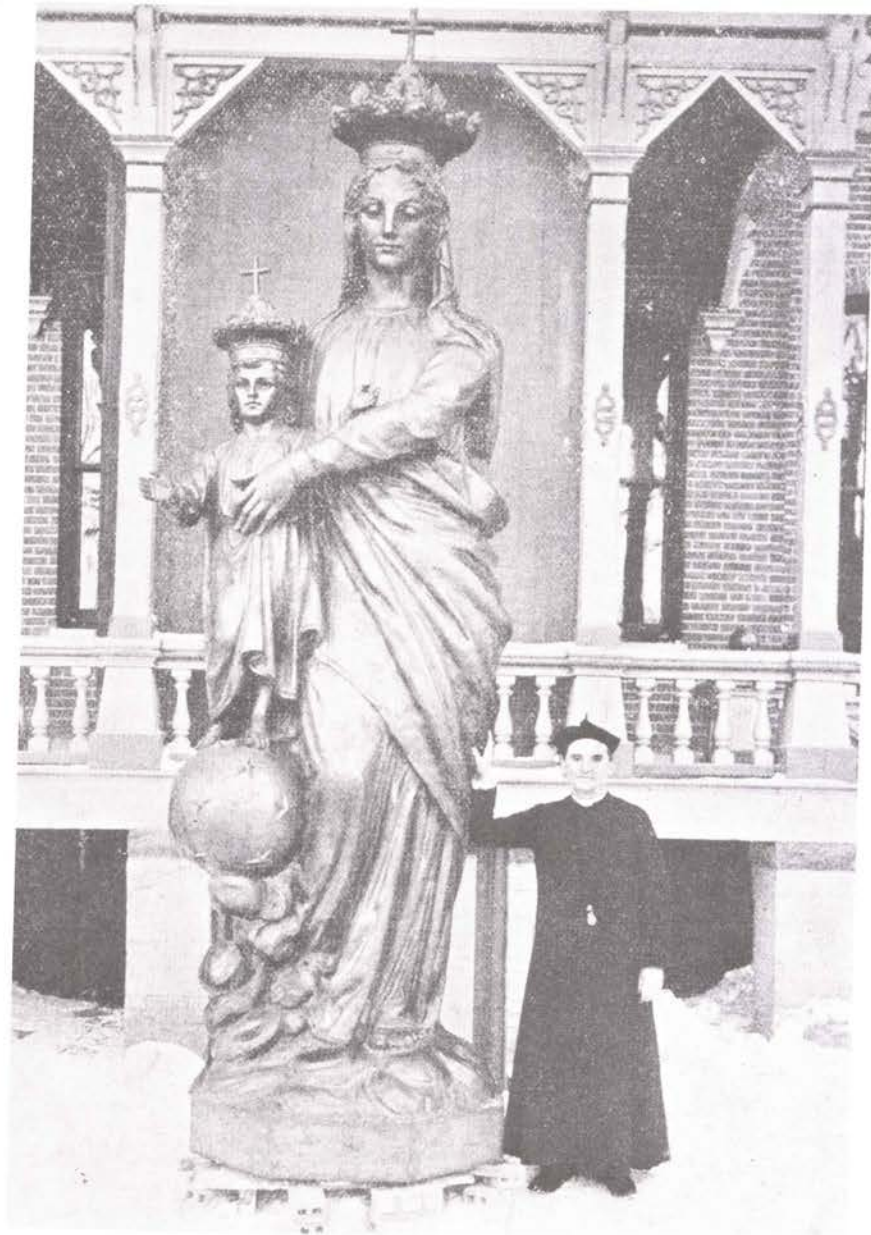
"All right gentlemen; bring your accounts to me in the morning and I will pay them in full. But I would

advise you not to come here seeking any more business from these institutions." The following morning Father Baker met with the creditors after emptying his personal savings account to pay many of the bills. And so Nelson Baker, at the beginning of his career at Limestone Hill, added to his way of life the practice of complete poverty.

OUR LADY HELPS

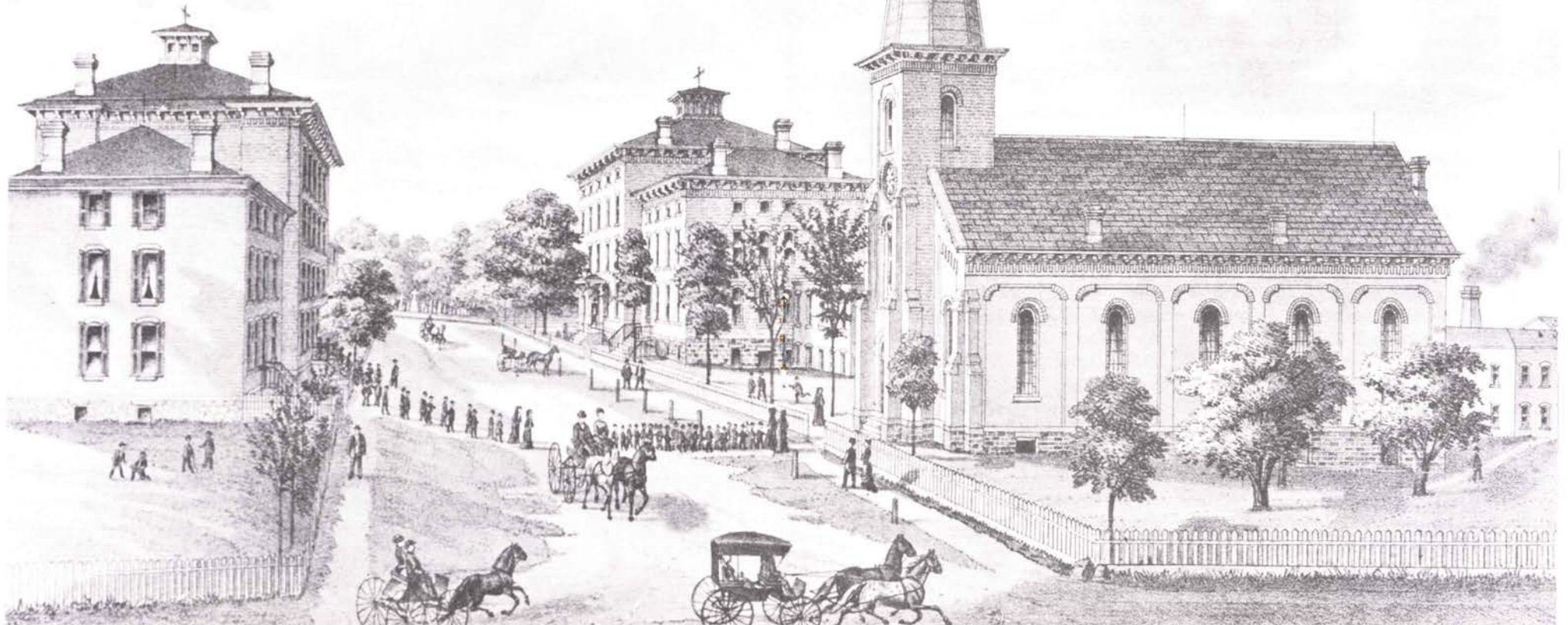
Now that he was without personal money, Father Baker had to turn elsewhere for the funding of St. Joseph's and St. John's. He prayed to Our Lady of Victory for help, fully confident that she would assist him.

One night as he knelt in prayer at St. Patrick's an idea hit him. "Why not form an Association of Our Lady of Victory?" he asked himself. He decided to appeal in Our Lady's name and under that special title for money to run the orphanage and protectorate. He put his idea to work by writing to postmasters all over the United States. He requested from them the names of a few Catholic women in their cities or towns who might assist his work for dependent and helpless boys. Within a short time many postmasters replied. Armed with this information, Father Baker then wrote these Catholic ladies. "Can you join the Association of Our Lady of Victory?" he inquired. "The cost is only twenty-five cents a year." He also asked the women to encourage their friends to join with them in supporting this work. "The money will be used for poor children," he promised. In his



Nelson had a lifelong devotion to Mary as his victorious Lady. Without hesitation, he gave her credit for all his success in helping the poor and afflicted. "I'm just her agent," he stoutly maintained. In 1897, he placed this fourteen-foot bronze statue of Our Lady of Victory atop St. John's Protectory for all the world to see.

Buffalo immigrants were as fresh and vigorous as the Great Lakes breezes that fanned the city. They called their town "The Queen City" and marveled at the variety of ethnic groups that inhabited it. Many European cultures met here — sometimes to collide, sometimes to blend. The Church struggling to sink its roots in this shifting soil, sought to cope with the endless social and spiritual needs of the people. Diocesan priests, Brothers of the Holy Infancy and Sisters of St. Joseph staffed St. Joseph's Orphan Home (left) and St. John's Proctory (right) to care for orphaned and delinquent boys. In time, on this very location, Father Baker created the miracle of charity which he called "Our Lady of Victory Homes."



early days, Father Baker began a newsletter called "The Appeal for Homeless and Destitute Children." The publication kept his ever-increasing number of benefactors informed of the good their oftentimes humble offerings were making possible.

Father Baker's success rested on the fact that he offered a Christian response to a then serious problem in the United States, the needs of orphans and delinquent children. Life expectancy was much shorter in those days and public welfare health service was not highly developed in the cities. Many a home was left without one or even both parents. Often the children were victimized. Many were sent to institutions which, at least in the case of Catholic children, were harmful to their faith. Sometimes the little ones were virtually kidnapped and sent to work on farms. Father Baker wrote in his newsletter: "There are societies that have been engaged for years in entrapping little Irish children and giving them into homes of non-Catholic farmers where they are lost forever to the Faith." Some children, escaping both fates, lived in the streets where they were exploited and abused.

As soon as Father Baker acquired enough funds through his mailings, he constructed an addition to St. John's Protectorsy. It was his first building project.

Within the new addition he built a beautiful chapel in which he placed a statue of Our Lady of Victory, imported from France. The chapel and an enlarged protectorsy were dedicated on June 26, 1889.

ENERGY CRISIS

Every day Father Baker used to walk slowly back and forth across an empty lot close to St. John's Protectorsy, reading his Breviary. Eventually he wore a path through the lot. People called it Father Baker's "Prayer Path."

No one knew it, but he was combining prayer and exploration. He had been reading in the newspapers of recent discoveries of natural gas deposits in nearby Canada and suspected that similar underground pockets were beneath the buildings of the protectorsy. It did not sway him one bit that no one else in the area believed it. The only way he could settle the matter was to drill. He had, of course, no money for that expensive process. As he patrolled his prayer path daily, he was beseeching Our Lady of Victory for help.

Father Baker decided to visit the Bishop who, he heard, had recently received a generous gift of five thousand dollars. The Bishop gladly granted him an interview. After light, informal conversational sparring, Nelson threw his hook. "I'm here for money," he said. "Money for what?" the Bishop countered. "Money to drill a gas well."

The Bishop had heard many odd things about Father Baker and up until this point never doubted his sanity. "You are serious?" he asked. "Bishop, I firmly believe Our Lady of Victory has given me a sign that there is natural gas under our institutions at Limestone Hill."

He remarked that he had heard about the most generous five thou-

He wouldn't take no for an answer . . . only for a little while. Bishop Stephen Vincent Ryan reluctantly yielded to Father Baker's request for a transfer from the orphanage to parish work. A year later, convinced that Nelson belonged in the West Seneca institutions, the Bishop sent him back. Bishop Ryan headed the Diocese of Buffalo for twenty-seven years.



sand dollar gift the Bishop had just received. "I think the money is destined for our gas well," he suggested. "I'll give you five hundred dollars," the Bishop said. "Five hundred dollars is not enough to drill. I'll need at least two thousand." All the Bishop could see was two thousand dollars disappearing down a hole in Limestone. He wondered what his consultants would think of that. Setting his fears aside, however, he yielded and gave Father Baker the amount he had asked for.

Shortly afterwards, a drilling crew arrived from the Pennsylvania gas fields. After Father Baker explained why he had sent for the men, they suspected that hard work and worry had frazzled his brain. "Where is this supposed gas field?" the crew foreman asked. "I'll show you this afternoon at four o'clock," Father Baker responded.

At exactly 4 p. m. the doors of St. Patrick's flew open and a religious procession emerged. Scores of altar

boys clad in cassocks and surplices, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Brothers of the Holy Infancy, all in full habit, walked solemnly in procession behind the cross. At the end of the group, leading the Rosary, was Father Baker. The procession moved slowly along the prayer path; finishing the Rosary, the assembly sang joyous hymns in honor of Our Lady. Reaching the end of the path, the procession halted and Father Baker sprinkled the ground with holy water. Then, taking a small statue of Our Lady of Victory from his pocket, he buried it about a foot into the ground. The drilling crew observed all this with a sense of wonderment. After covering the statue, Father Baker turned and walked over to the foreman. "You see where I put that statue?" he asked. "Yes, Father," the foreman replied. "Well, that is where you put down your drill, as close to that statue as you can." And, he added, "Don't touch the statue with the drill."

Having delivered all his orders, Father Baker re-formed the procession and the group of altar boys, nuns and brothers returned to the church along the prayer path, singing hymns and reciting the Rosary.

PILLAR OF FIRE

The Limestone drilling went on for months. Just as the Bishop feared, his two thousand dollars disappeared down the hole. Unperturbed, Father Baker asked him for a few thousand dollars more. The Bishop gave it to him. At this point, everyone's actions seemed incomprehensible.

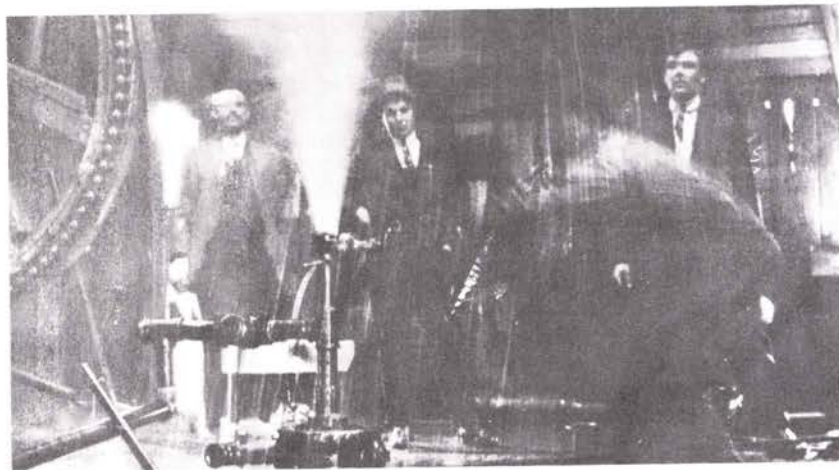
Days passed into weeks and months as the drilling continued. Seven hundred, eight hundred, nine hundred feet. Nothing. People began to refer to the bizarre scene at the end of the prayer path as "Father Baker's Folly." During the month of August a novena was made in honor of the Assumption of Our Lady. For nine days before the feast prayers were hurled heavenward to Our Lady of Victory. On the 15th of August all Father Baker's friends held their breath. This was, they felt, their last chance. But the feast came and went. Nothing. After the feast Father Baker started another novena. Again the faithful prayed, and again nothing happened. For several more days the drill bit ever deeper into the earth.

On the evening of August 21, 1891, as Father Baker was celebrating Benediction in St. Patrick's Church, a young man came running into the sanctuary. "Father," he announced

softly, "we think we've struck gas. They want you at the well." Father nodded and continued his prayers. He added a few prayers of thanksgiving before he went to the drilling site. Gas had been struck at one thousand, one hundred and thirty-seven feet.

As Father Baker arrived, gas was shooting up out of the well. Everyone was so excited that they had forgotten to extinguish the flames of a forge near the wellhead which the crew used to sharpen drills. Gas met flame. A violent explosion knocked everyone down. Flames shot eighty feet into the air and blazed angrily across the eight-foot mouth of the well. A pillar of fire, visible all over Buffalo, burned for hours until the drillers, shooting a heavy stream of water across the hole, quenched the deadly combustion. Then they covered the hole with heavy timber. The explosion injured five people, seriously but not fatally.

Father Baker called the gas deposit the "Victoria Well," in honor of Our Lady of Victory. He was happy to advise the Bishop that his five thousand dollars had not been spent in vain. The well provided gas for several years for the institutions at Our Lady of Victory. Father Baker shared his good fortune with houses in the immediate vicinity, offering them the gas at extremely low cost. When the Victoria Well was exhausted, he drilled again and tapped another deposit. To this day gas from the wells continues to provide cooking fuel for the several institutions that comprise Our Lady of Victory.



A natural gas well "blows in." When Father Baker hired professional drillers to explore his property for gas deposits, people scoffed. The only one not surprised at the Our Lady of Victory strike was Nelson himself.

"My kingdom is not of this world." This 1896 sketch shows the results of Nelson's first efforts. He had already completed the new St. John's Protectors (center). Atop that building is the large bronze statue of Our Lady of Victory. Across the street is St. Joseph's Home, which he rebuilt. To the right is St. Patrick's Church and Parochial School.



THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

In 1901 Father Baker, at the age of 60, celebrated his silver jubilee as a priest. One might think his great work at St. Joseph's and St. John's Protectors should have earned him a quiet, uneventful passage to his older age. This was not to be.

In the fruitful years in which he had served St. John's and St. Joseph's, the population of both homes increased by several hundred. To assist young men who had finished their trade schooling at St. Joseph's and St. John's, Father Baker established the Working Boys Home of the Sacred Heart in Buffalo. Here he housed eighty young men who were employed in Buffalo's industries. He replaced the old St. John's Protector with a brand new building, and in 1897 added a wing to that new structure. The protector became a five-story building which provided housing and schooling for three hundred and eighty-five boys. The building had a total of one hundred and ninety rooms for living quarters and thirty rooms for the trade schools. Thus, as he celebrated his silver jubilee, Father Baker was caring for at least fifteen hundred boys who had come to him from almost every state in the Union, Canada, and even from overseas — Ireland, England and France. The boys arrived oftentimes with simply a tag attached to their clothing saying, "To Father Baker, Victoria, West Seneca, New York." Some little ones were only six years old. None of them ever got lost.

The home was often so overcrowded that its corridors had to serve as emergency dormitories. At such times it was not unusual for Father Baker to turn over his own rooms to people in need of housing. His abstemious eating habits were matched by his little need for sleep.

His prodigious activity continued. He added new trade schools, built an orphan home for abandoned and neglected babies, and established a large hospital and nursing home. His favorites continued to be the orphan boys. He understood them well and treated them with respect and kindness. No charity engineer was he. He knew each of his flock by name; his care and concern extended to the smallest detail. At Christmastime, for instance, he would have all the desks removed from the classrooms and would celebrate a special party in each one of them. The Sisters of St. Joseph who worked so hard beside him in this apostolate would help him select presents for each boy. The gifts were not large and certainly not expensive, but everyone was remembered individually.

During summer months Father Baker set up camp for the boys in pleasant surroundings. The youngsters lived in tents and enjoyed outdoor life. Close to his homes he established farms with cows and chickens, geese and ducks. The young men carefully tended their gardens and provided vegetables for the tables at Our Lady of Victory homes.

The Sisters of St. Joseph and the Brothers of the Holy Infancy offered the youngsters an excellent education.

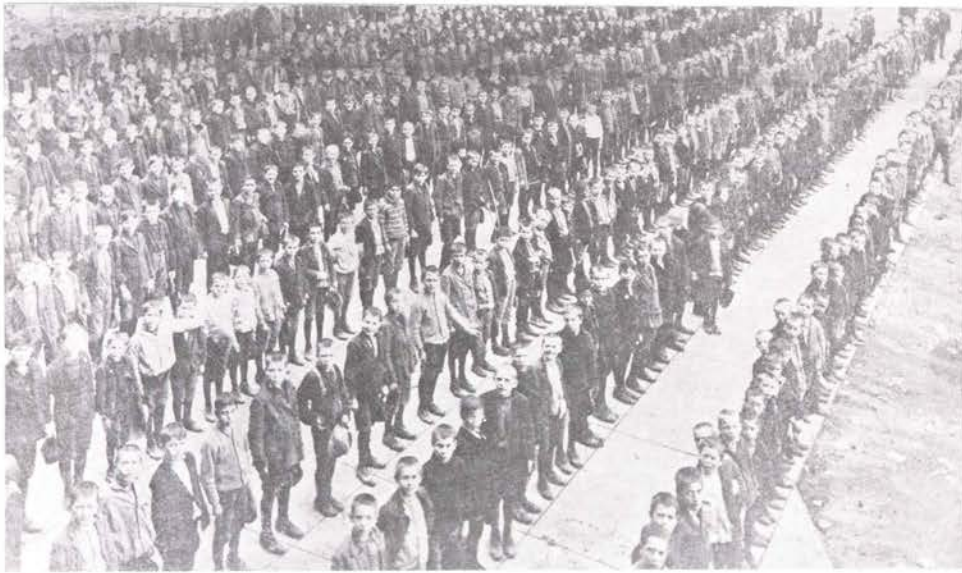


Nelson drives his boys off to a parade in an old Packard bus. A singer and musician himself, he encouraged the love of music among his charges.

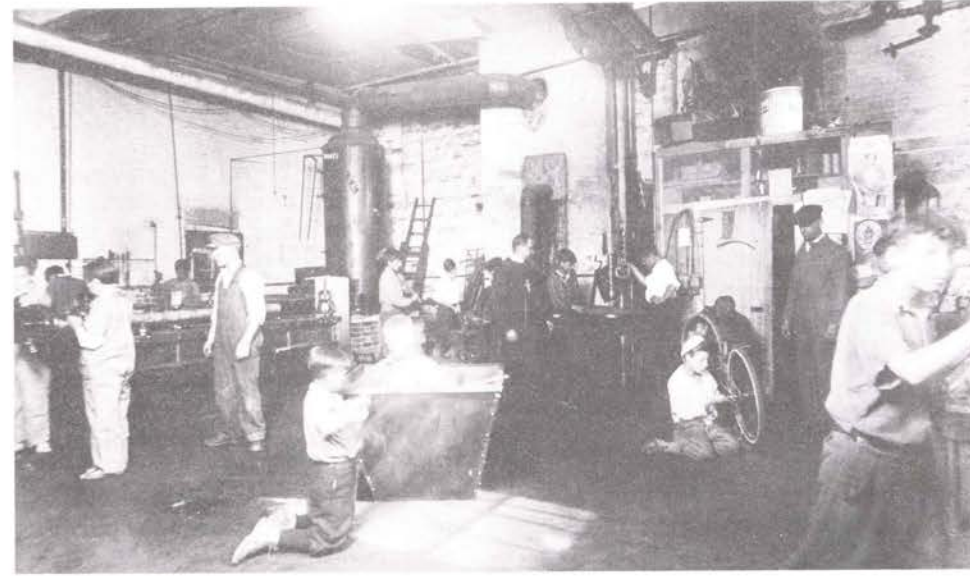
Many of Father Baker's boys became doctors, lawyers, priests, congressmen, corporate officers, politicians and governors. In later years they looked back with pride and affection on their years at Our Lady of Victory. Father Baker quietly paved the way for many of them through college and professional schools.

Father Baker retained his zest for living and quiet spirit of joy all through the years. He delighted in taking the boys out on picnics or on swims in the summer months. He

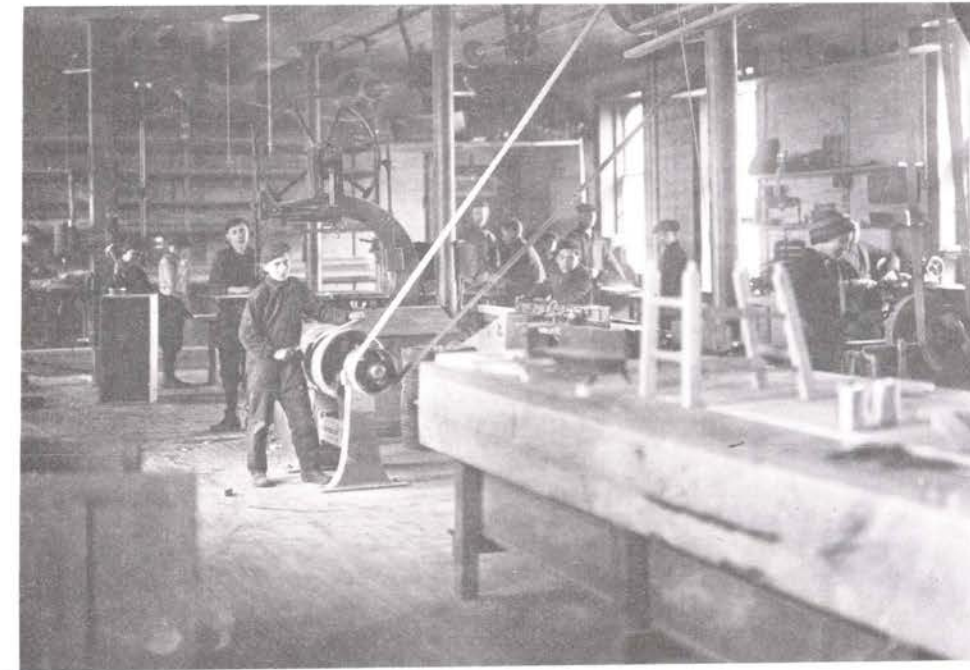
would often take bands of his orphans for long walks through the countryside around Buffalo, stopping at farm houses to buy apples and honey and whatever other treats were available for his young charges. He knew boys for what they were. When windows in the institution would be broken by a flying baseball. Father Baker would accept this philosophically. "Where there are boys and windows," he would say, "you have two items of expense you can't get away from — bread and glass."



The world inside: Behind the facades of the great buildings, behind the doors and the walls, stand the reason for all Nelson's activities — his homeless boys. This sea of faces peering down the years provides some idea of the magnitude of his charities. Many of these young men would have been street children had it not been for Nelson Baker.



Nelson made it his duty to know each boy individually and to guide him toward his place in life. In the Our Lady of Victory shops the youngsters were taught skills that would eventually enable them to support themselves and their own families. In these photos, apprentice metal workers (above) and carpenters (below) learn the rudiments of their trades.



THE POSTMAN RINGS TWICE

Postal clerks who handled the large volume of cash passing through the mails to Our Lady of Victory would yield from time to time to temptation and steal the donations. During the midst of the Great Depression Father Baker heard of one young clerk who got caught tampering with the mails. Post Office authorities fired him. Father Baker sent for him. The clerk was amazed when Father Baker, aware that the man had a family, offered him a job in one of the Victory institutions.

In 1906, five years after his silver jubilee, Father Baker announced plans to build a home for infants. Once more he was responding to a very real need. Over the years, people very often left abandoned infants on the doorsteps of Our Lady of Victory. This new facility would cost more than one hundred thousand dollars. He raised a great part of this money through one simple fundraising idea which was another stroke of his genius. "Why not ask people," he thought, "to donate a crib for the unwanted children." He couched his appeal tenderly. "Some of our friends express their wish," he wrote, "to furnish a little crib for one of the infants. We are pleased at the suggestion and will give all those who desire it an opportunity to furnish a little crib, mattress, pillow and bedding, by contributing the sum of twenty-five dollars. They will be remembered in the Masses offered at the home as well as in the pious

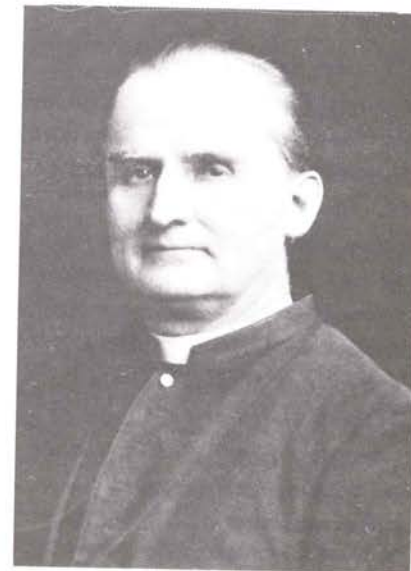
prayers of the Sisters and children, besides having their names engraven upon a brass tablet placed upon the wall which will keep them in constant remembrance, and Almighty God will not fail to abundantly bless them for he has promised that 'whatsoever you do for the least of these, my little ones, you do it for me.'

The Infants' Home, completed in 1908, was immediately filled. The new institution offered both infants and unwed expectant mothers a place of refuge. The home provided excellent pre-natal care as well as adoption services. Each evening before he retired to his rooms, Father Baker would visit the Infants' Home and give everyone his blessing.

One of the features of the home was a small bassinet, complete with pillow and blankets, that stood in the hallway just inside the unlocked outside door. Anyone could quietly open the door to the home in the middle of the night and leave a baby in the bassinet. There were no questions asked, no forms to be filled out, no one to probe into the infant's background. For a number of years the bassinet remained, quietly receiving abandoned infants.

By 1914, Father Baker had to enlarge the Infants' Home. Once more he wrote: "We had to build more because the Infants' Home is filled to utmost capacity and, unless we add more rooms, we must stop taking babies and small children. And this we do not wish to do." The new Infants' Home and Maternity Hospital was to cost nearly two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Pictured here in the prime of his life, Nelson Baker could look on several decades of priestly service with great joy. He had twice enlarged St. Joseph's Orphanage (below), built a new St. John's Protector, and added the Infants' Home (to the right just beyond). Some of his major projects, e. g., the hospital and great basilica, still lay before him.



*Old men dream dreams . . .
(below) The Basilica of Our
Lady of Victory in Lackawanna
(formerly part of West Seneca). Nelson Baker's final
dream come true. When his
will was probated, it was re-
vealed that the man who had
handled millions of dollars in
his lifetime died penniless.
This was the price he paid to
find true riches. Nelson Baker
was a good businessman
to the end.*



He had no sooner finished the Infants' Home when, in 1916, a disastrous fire destroyed St. Joseph's Home. Unflappable Father Baker began rebuilding immediately. He was convinced that he was only an instrument of Our Lady of Victory. He had full trust that Mary would provide the huge amount of money needed to continue what he considered was her work.

In 1920, Father Baker converted the Maternity Hospital into a general hospital. The Sisters of St. Joseph staffed what he called Our Lady of Victory Hospital.

THE DREAM

By 1921 Father Baker felt he could honor the Blessed Mother in a fitting manner. He began to organize the building of a great basilica in honor of Mary under the title, Our Lady of Victory. "We haven't got a nickel to start," he announced, "and we won't have a nickel left to pay on it when it is finished."

Thousands of people throughout the United States sent in contributions. Again his promotional genius hit upon an idea that immediately appealed. "Send ten dollars for a block of white marble for the basilica," he urged his readers. The basilica required four years to build. At Christmastime, 1925, Father Baker celebrated the first Mass there. In May, 1926, the shrine was dedicated. *L'Osservatore Romano* described the Basilica of Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna as "one of the most superb shrines the Catholic Church possesses in the United States."

Father Baker was now in his late eighties. As the Great Depression struck America, he was like a man renewed with youth. He fed the hungry, clothed the poor, gave shelter to the homeless. He not only did what he could to relieve suffering but also continued to train young men in his schools where they learned tailoring, barbering, carpenter work, glazing, laundering, plumbing, electrical work, shoemaking, photography, sign-painting, painting and printing. He turned his attention particularly to Buffalo's black population which had suffered so much in the Depression. He worked with such energy and zeal among them that many, moved by his faith, embraced the Catholic religion.

By 1936, when Father Nelson Baker had turned ninety-five, all the hard work and sleepless hours caught up with him. He fell seriously ill. Bishop William Turner of Buffalo judged the old priest's death was so near that he sat down and wrote a funeral oration. Life, however, being what it is, and death being what it is, the Bishop never delivered the eulogy. His Excellency died on July 10, 1936, a little more than two weeks before Father Baker.

Near the end of the month, Father Baker began to visibly fail. In the early morning hours of July 29, he lapsed into a coma. Sister Death claimed him at 9:20 a.m. Newspapers estimated that between three hundred thousand and five hundred thousand people attended his wake and funeral.



Peace of Mind

Your mature years can be among your happiest – provided you planned ahead. A Will is important for both husband and wife and for single persons as well. Your Will sets your mind at ease that your possessions will be distributed as you want them to be and your loved ones provided for as you desire. Send today for our FREE booklet, "YOUR WILL."

See your attorney about making a Will soon – and write for our FREE booklet, "YOUR WILL."

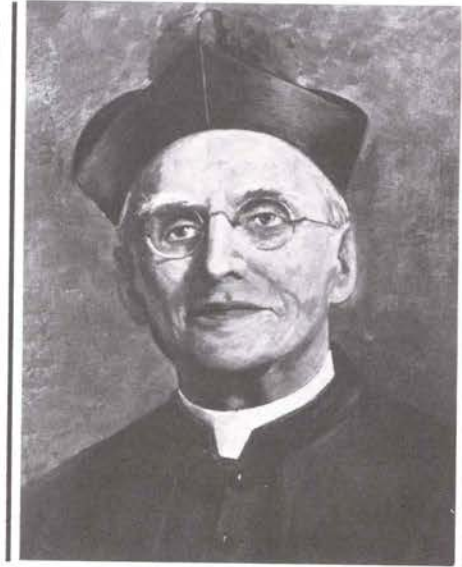
MONSIGNOR ROBERT C. WURTZ
Our Lady of Victory Homes of Charity
Lackawanna, New York 14218



Dear Msgr. Wurtz,

Please send me the FREE booklet entitled "Your Will".
I understand there is no obligation.

Name _____



SERVANT OF GOD — NELSON H. BAKER
"Apostle of Charity"

PRAYER

Lord, you gave us Your Servant Nelson Baker as an example of service to the poor, homeless, and young. By "Father Baker's" ardent concern for those in need, inflame our hearts and lives with compassion for the poor, justice for the oppressed, hope for the troubled, and courage to those in doubt. We pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Victory, if it be Your will, that Your servant, Nelson Baker, may one day be canonized. Amen. Glory Be (3 times).

Dear Msgr. Wurtz,

Please enroll me in the "FATHER BAKER GUILD".

Enclosed is my offering of:

\$100 \$25 \$10 \$ _____

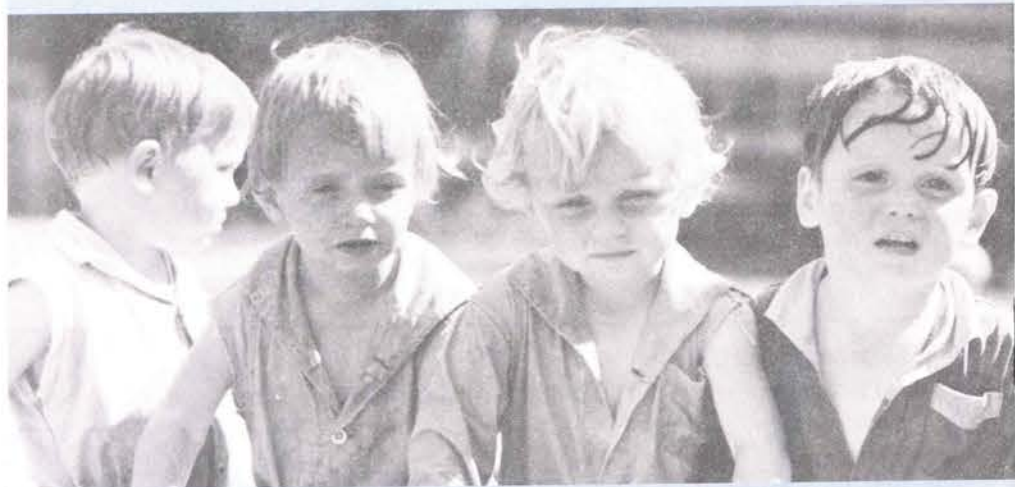
to help cover the expenses associated with the Cause for Canonization of Father Baker.

Name _____

ONE PRIESTLY LIFETIME

Shortly after Father Baker's death, the *Buffalo Times* wrote:

"To have known Father Baker was to marvel at his energy and at the works that flowed from it. . . . To the hungry during his ministry he fed 50 million meals. During the depression at one time he was serving more than a million meals a year. He gave away a million loaves of bread. He clothed the naked to the number of a half million. He gave medical care to 250,000 and supplied medicines to 200,000 more. Three hundred thousand men, women, and children received some sort of education or training at his hands. A hundred thousand boys were trained for trades. Six hundred unmarried mothers in their distress knocked at his door and did not knock in vain. More than 6,000 destitute and abandoned babies were placed in foster homes. . . . Men will give thanks that he lived and bless his memory."



"suffer the little children to come unto me."

OUR LADY OF VICTORY HOMES OF CHARITY

"Father Baker's"

780 Ridge Road

Lackawanna, NY 14218