

Milltown's new church one of the most beautiful in the country



An exterior view of the church

THE new Church of St. Joseph, Milltown's £75,000 architectural centrepiece, was described on Wednesday evening as one of the most beautiful in the country.

Speaking at the dedication and official opening, the Archbishop of Tuam, Most Rev. Dr. Cunnane, said that it could justifiably take its place beside the most beautiful churches here, or in any country.

The design was quite unusual without being bizarre and even to the untrained eye its overtones of biblical symbolism suggested at once a dwelling pre-eminently functional and worthy of the presence of God.

The new Church replaces a 150-year old parish church, which was also dedicated to St. Joseph, and the Archbishop congratulated the parish on its magnificent achievement.

He said it was a great privilege for him to dedicate the new church and he prayed that God would reward those who had so generously contributed to the work.

Artistic Stations

The Stations of the Cross, which were sand-blasted on to the walls, add a further dimension of muted splendour and the overall concept of futuristic elegance has been executed with dignified restraint.

The Epistle was read by the architect, Mr. John Thompson, Limerick; the sermon was preached by Rev. John Flannery, C.C., Teoroon, and the parish choir was conducted by Mrs. P. J. Garvey and Miss Therla Flannery.

Concelebrated Mass

The dedication ceremony was performed by His Grace the Archbishop, who was assisted by the newly appointed parish priest, Very Rev. John Lowry, and members of the Diocesan clergy. Afterwards Dr. Cunnane was the principal celebrant at a concelebrated Mass.

The concelebrants were Very Rev. C. Canon Heaney, P.P., Athenry; Very Rev. Michael Godwin, P.P., Kilkenny; Very Rev. Thomas Martin, P.P., Corrandulla; Very Rev. Thomas Molloy, P.P., Kilmeena; Very Rev. Joseph Ryan, P.P., Ballinlough; Very Rev. John Concannon, P.P., Glenamaddy; Rev. John Blake, C.C., Kilmaine; Rev. William Diskin, C.C., Ballyhaunis; Rev. Peter Tierney, Kora; Rev. Frank Brennan, U.S.A.; Rev. C. Arton, England; Very Rev. T. Varley, P.P., Ballindine; Very Rev. P. Delaney, P.P.

Other clergy present were: Very Rev. J. Canon Walshe, P.P., Very Rev. M. F. Canon Hennelly, P.P., Very Rev. M. Canon Mooney, Very Rev. E. Donohue, P.P., Rev. J. D. Flannery, C.C., Rev. S. Flannery, C.C., Rev. M. Flannery, C.C., Rev. P. O'Connor, C.C., Rev. B. Brennan, Rev. J. Diskin, C.C., Rev. J. Connelly, C.C., Very Rev. J. O'Connor, P.P., Rev. J. McGowan.

"Challenging work"

He paid special tribute to the architects, John Thompson and Partners, and to the local building firm, Messrs Birmingham, who carried out the challenging work efficiently and in good time.

The church, which is built on the site of the former building, incorporates many of the features recommended by Vatican II and has an air of dignity, luminousness and strength.

The polished stone altar follows the design of the ground plan and is surmounted by a matching stone cross. The tabernacle was designed by the well known ecclesiastical artist, Eada Gill.

Ramp for the disabled

One of the most unusual features is the provision of a special ramp to facilitate disabled people and wheelchair users—St. Joseph's is believed to be the only church with such a facility.

High level windows give the building an unusual brightness without distracting attention from the altar on which complete attraction is focused by deliberately converging building lines.

HERALD SPECIAL REPORT

Parishioners thanked

In his address, Archbishop Cunnane paid special tribute to the parishioners who had contributed so generously to an undertaking which would have disheartened a less generous people.

He also thanked the priests who had borne a heavy share of the responsibility for the work and fund raising—often a thankless and discouraging task.

He went on: "It is indeed fitting that with the church building completed, your revered and saintly pastor, Fr. Concannon, should retire from his long years of service to the Diocese."

"I join with you in wishing him many years of happy retirement and thank God he will still be amongst you to serve you by his prayers as he has always done."

Tribute to priests

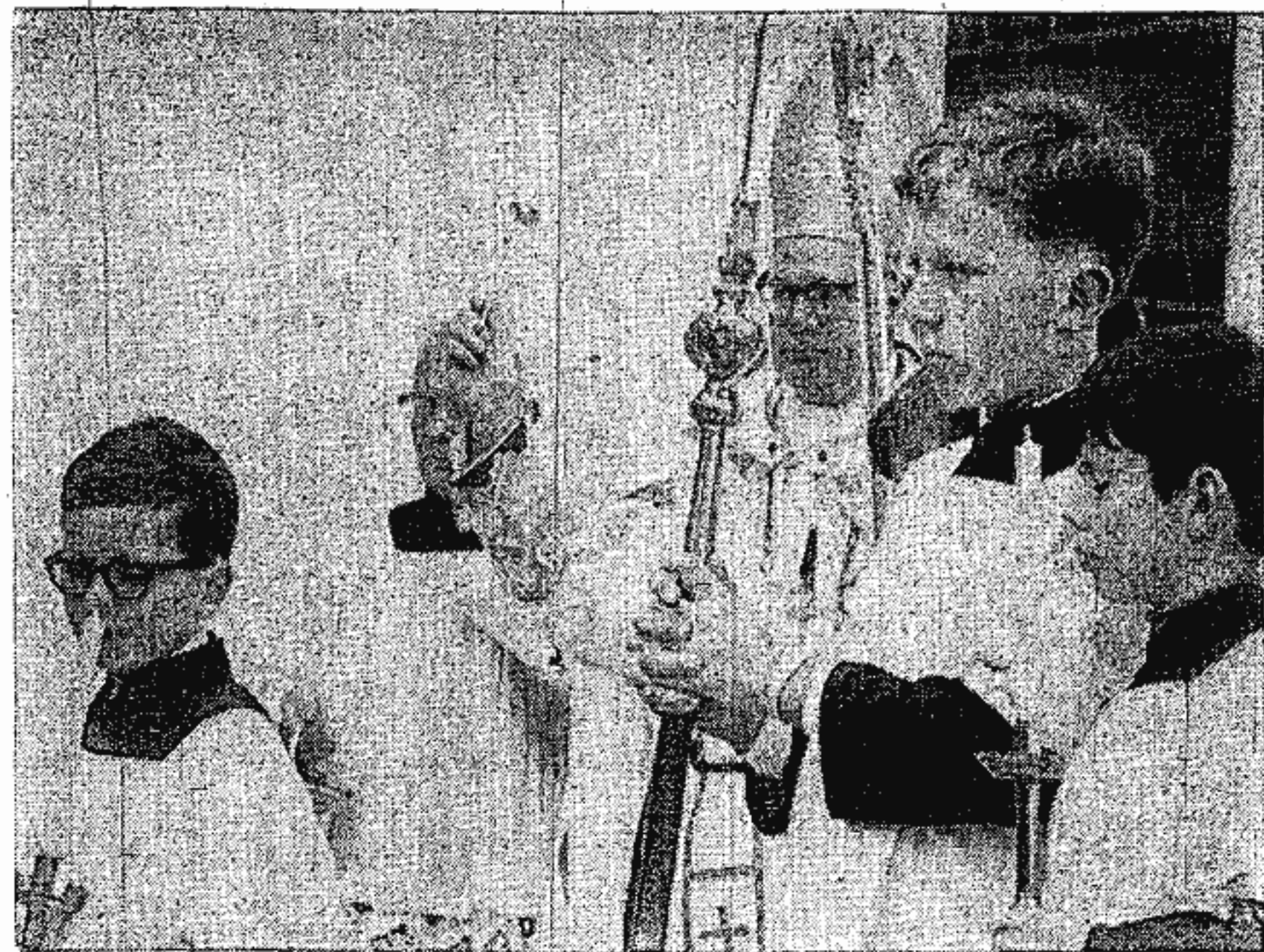
Dr. Cunnane continued: "With an aging pastor it was inevitable that a great deal of the work and the worry fell on the shoulders of Fr. Berry and to a lesser but very real extent, Fr. McGowan."

"I cannot speak too highly of Fr. Berry's efforts, which of course are not yet done because a considerable debt still remains to be paid—but I congratulate him and Fr. McGowan on having seen their labours come to fruition today."

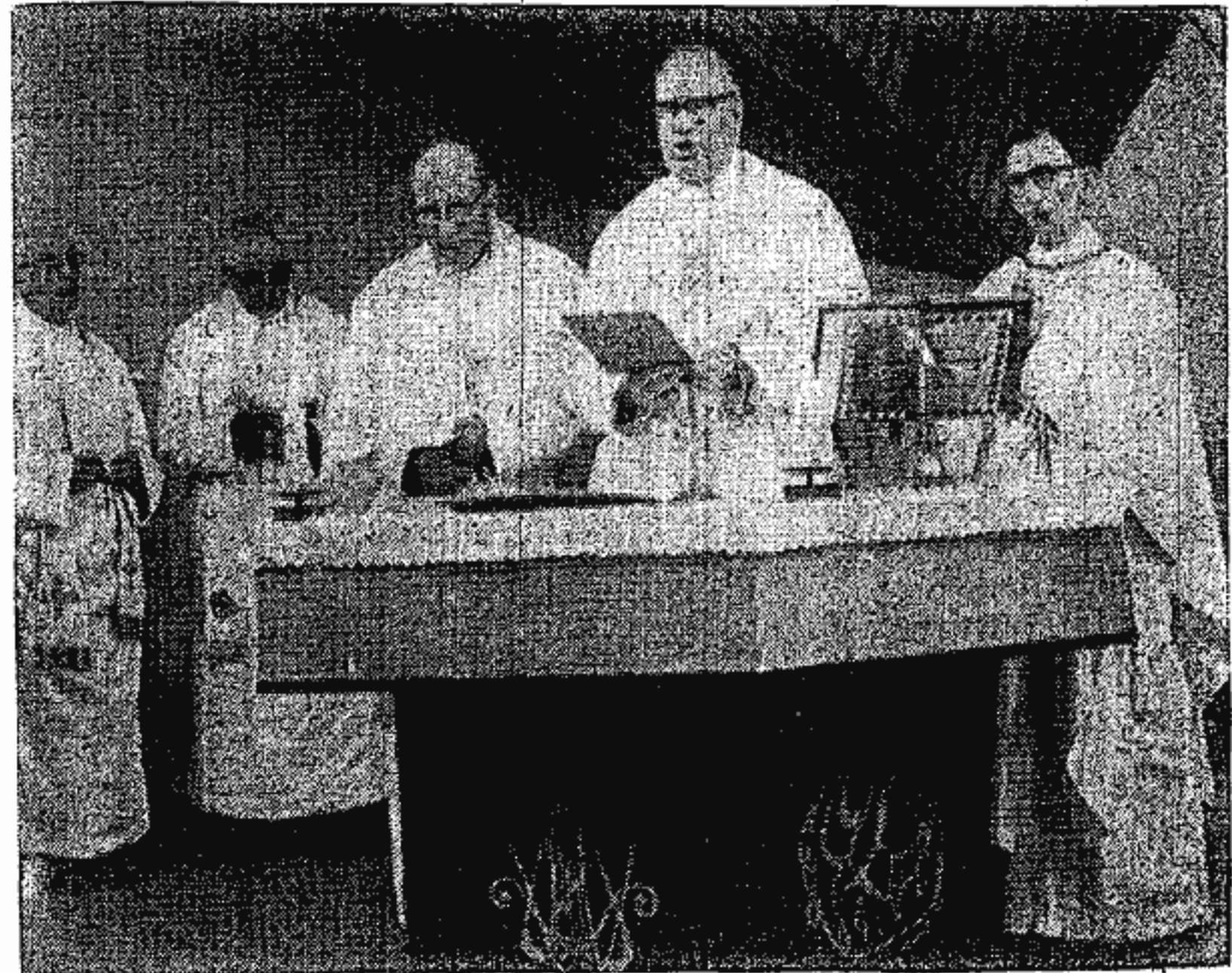
"With your new Parish Priest, Fr. Lowry—whom I wish many happy years among you—Fr. Berry can face the rest of his task with courage and with confidence that you will not fail to continue to give the same generous co-operation that you have given up to now."

"Great tradition in parish"

The Archbishop added "Your parish has a great Catholic tradition, shown not least in the number of its priests gathered here today, not to



Flanked by Very Rev. J. Lowry, P.P., and altar boys Padraic Glynn, John O'Donnell and Liam Glynn, the Archbishop of Tuam (Dr. Cunnane) blesses the new church.



The Archbishop of Tuam, Most Rev. Dr. Cunnane, was the principal celebrant at concelebrated Mass.

THE ATTENDANCE

Among those present at the ceremony were: Mr. and Mrs. A. Pache (John Thompson and Partners), Mr. John O'Connor (consulting engineer), Mr. Ted Starr (clerk of works), Mr. John Sadler (Lyons and Partners, Dublin), Mr. Arthur Russell (O'Reilly, Hyland, Tierney and Associates), Mr. F. Reeves (Smith and Pearson Ltd.), Mr. W. Earley (Abbey Studio, Dublin), Mr. S. Moran (H. A. O'Neil Ltd., Dublin), Mr. S. Fitzsimons (Gill and

Gunning, Dublin), Mr. G. McCarr (Modern Floors Ltd., Dublin), Mr. W. Grinstead (Organ Builders, Kilkenny), Mr. J. P. Roche (Atlas Cine Supply Co., Dublin), Mr. Harrison (C. W. Harrison Ltd.), Mr. K. Edwards (Harrington Goodlass Wall Ltd.), Mr. V. Van Boven (Landscaping, Dublin), Mr. B. Boyd (Mipolam, Dublin), Mr. John Batt (John Thompson and Partners), Mr. J. Baile (Baxendale and Co. Ltd., Dublin).

Mr. John Thompson (Limerick), architect of Milltown's new church reads the epistle. On left is Rev. Padraic O'Connor (St. Jarlath's College).



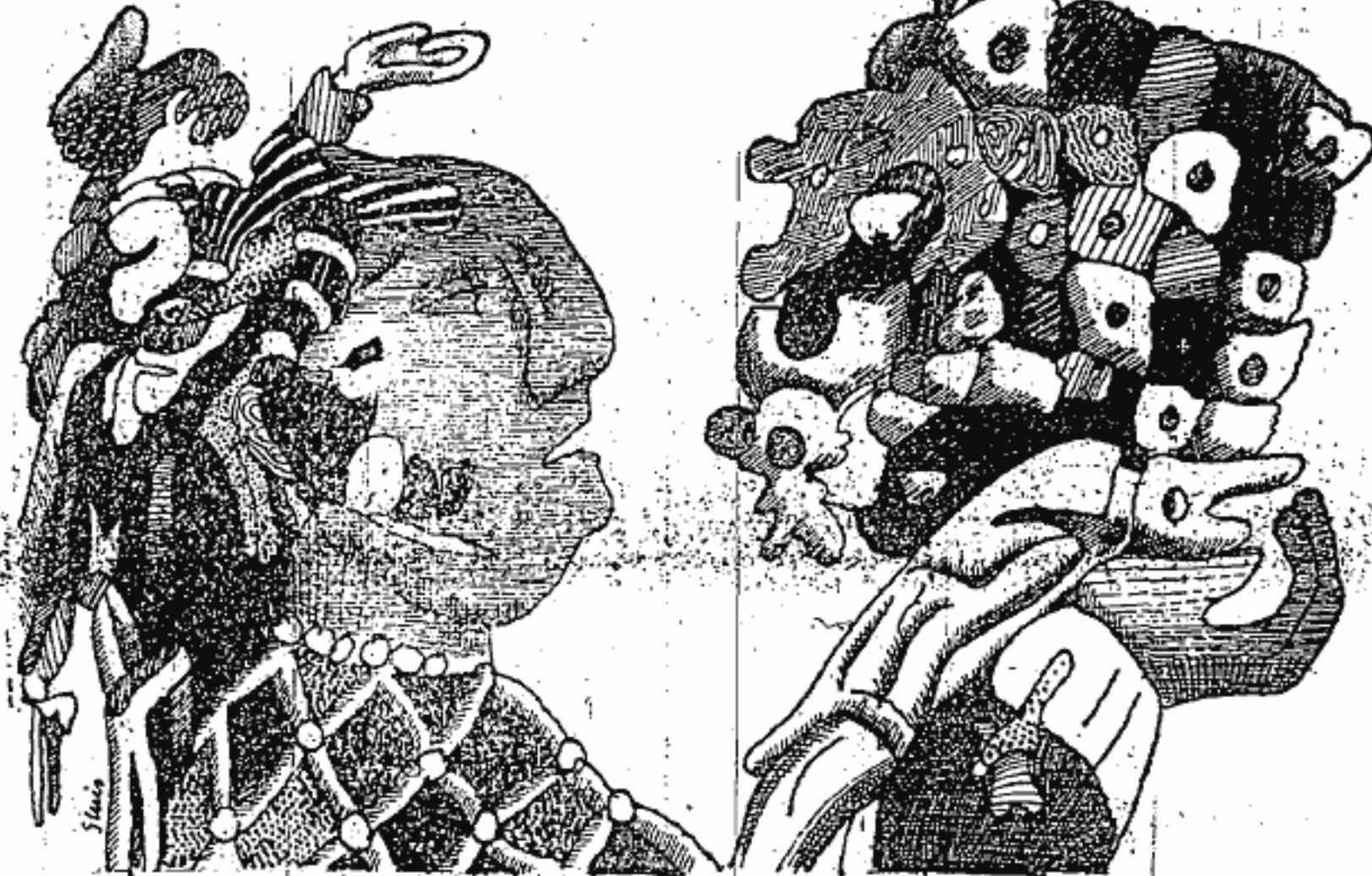
The scene inside Milltown's new church during concelebrated Mass, showing the free-standing altar and timbered ceiling.

PALLENQUE

This figure in stucco beautifully modelled in form, drapery and ornament, still sits, arms outstretched, in a temple in the long abandoned city of Palenque in the South of Mexico, surrounded by wooded hills and overgrown by tropical vegetation.

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