

*Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Catholic Church  
Sun Prairie, Wisconsin  
Celebrating 150 years  
1863-2013*



Courtesy of Sun Prairie Historical Society



*"In Christ you are being built together into a dwelling place of God." Ephesians 2:22*



# *History of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish*

## *The First Church*

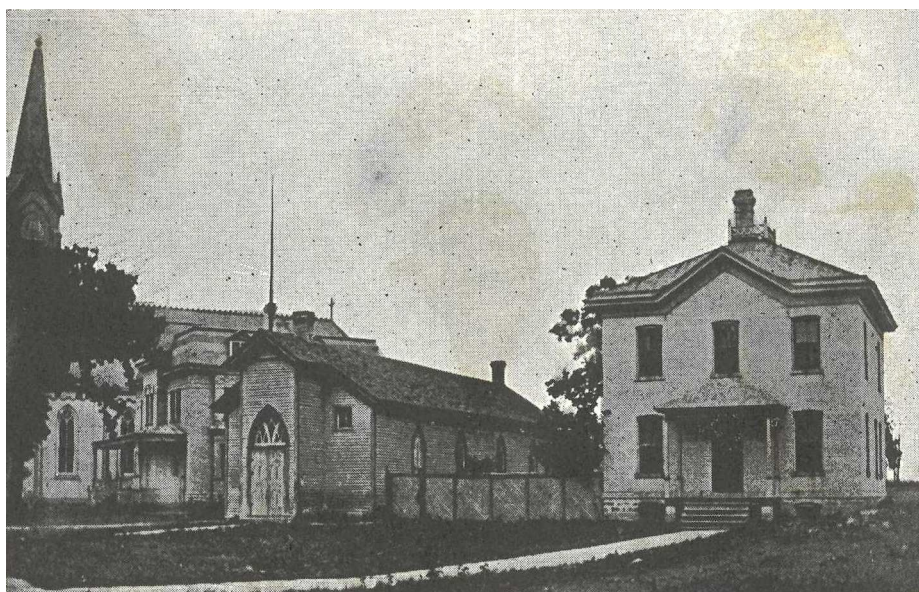
### *1863-1886*

Not long after Charles Bird gave Sun Prairie its name and pioneers began to settle the land, visiting pioneer priests began coming to say Mass in private homes for area Catholics. In 1862 several Sun Prairie families united and on December 21, 1862, John Dolan purchased a 3/4 acre parcel of land for \$140 from Robert Beecham for a Catholic Church. Construction began in spring under the direction of architect and builder Mr. Clancey of Columbus. The church cost \$1,100 to build and measured 22 x 32 feet.

The families involved in building this first church included: Dolan, Cromby, Broderick, Moore, O'Keeffe, Dunphy, Galvin, McCormick, Howe, Burke, Marooney, Harvey, Flavin, McCannon, Murry, Sweeney, Duggan, Quilty, Conley, Connor, Harrigan, Tenning, Kleiner and Sprengel. Notice a similarity? Most were Irish. Hence the first church was christened St. Patrick.

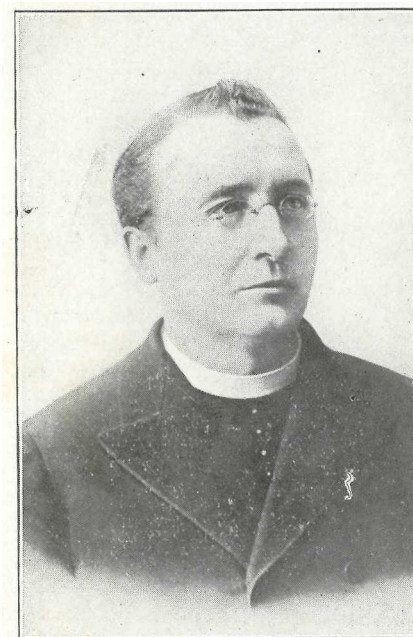
In these early years, visiting priests from neighboring parishes came to St. Patrick church to say Mass, including priests from Waterloo, Westport, East Bristol and Madison. The parish purchased land for a cemetery in 1868 (at the present site) and in January 1869, Fr. Wilmes was appointed first resident pastor.

In 1882 Catholics in Cottage Grove built their own church and named it St. Patrick. Whether for that reason or another, the Sun Prairie congregation changed its name. There is an account from a descendant of Thomas Howe, one of the founding members, that as more Catholics with German heritage joined the parish, they disputed the name. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee, which at that time oversaw Madison area congregations, settled the dispute by giving the parish the name of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Why this name? No accounts exist, but scholars say devotions to the Sacred Heart of Mary and often to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary were common in the 19th century.



The First Church 1863-1886

You can just see the scalloped roof line of the second church to the far left of the original church. To the immediate left of the church sits the rectory and to the right is the convent, which would date this photograph to sometime between 1917 (when the convent was built) and 1920 (when construction of the new, third church, would begin.



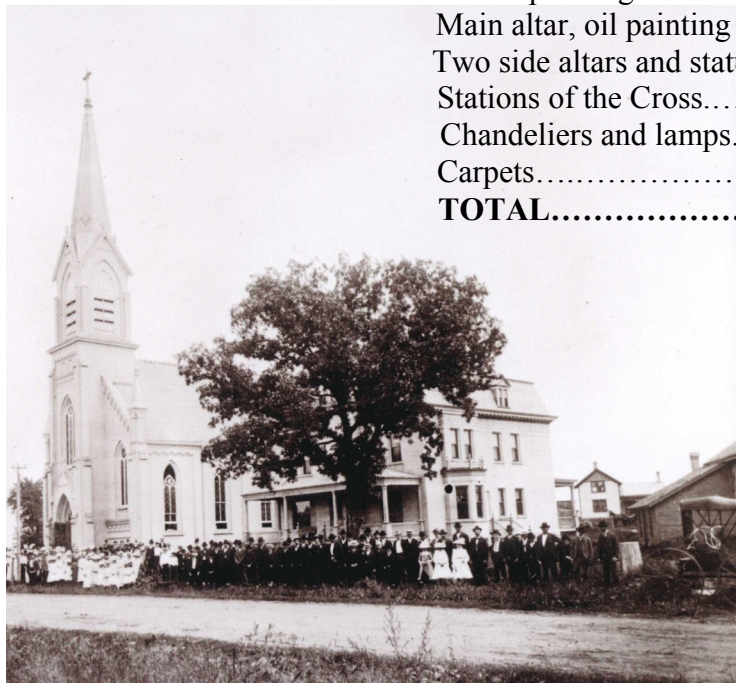
Fr. H. WILMES  
Jan. 1869—May 1870

## *The Second Church 1886-1921*

Due to significant growth in the parish, Sacred Hearts broke ground in the spring of 1886 for a new church, designed by architect A. Druiding of Chicago. The church measured 45x104 feet, with a 133-foot steeple. It was built for \$10,630. The cornerstone was laid and blessed on July 18, 1886 and the building was completed on June 1, 1887. This second church was dedicated on June 21, 1887 by the Most Reverend Michael Heiss, archbishop of Milwaukee, on the feast of St. Aloysius during the octave of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Over the next several years the church was decorated and stations and statues imported from France, Germany and Switzerland were added.

The parish's 1891 annual report demonstrates the generosity and sacrifice of the Sacred Hearts faithful, with the parish showing zero debt from building the church and a balance of \$25.35 in the treasury. The report details the following:

Cost of church building, including plans, specifications and superintending...	\$10,639.00
Cathedral glass windows.....	600.00
Pews, pulpit, confessional, sanctuary chair.....	675.57
Two furnaces, two stoves for chapel and vestry.....	299.00
Fresco painting and decorating.....	811.38
Main altar, oil painting and two statues.....	632.80
Two side altars and statues (donated).....	0
Stations of the Cross.....	456.25
Chandeliers and lamps.....	195.80
Carpets.....	122.12
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$14,431.92</b>



Dedication of the second church

The priest shepherding the parish during this time of significant transformation and growth was Fr. A.J. Kuehne, who came to Sacred Hearts when he was 24 years old, *“with a sturdy character and full of zeal for God’s holy cause,”* according to the 1913 Sacred Hearts Golden Jubilee souvenir booklet.

Fr. Kuehne served the parish for 25 years until his sudden death on August 13, 1905.

The sermon at his funeral Mass was preached both in English and German. He is buried at Sacred Hearts cemetery.





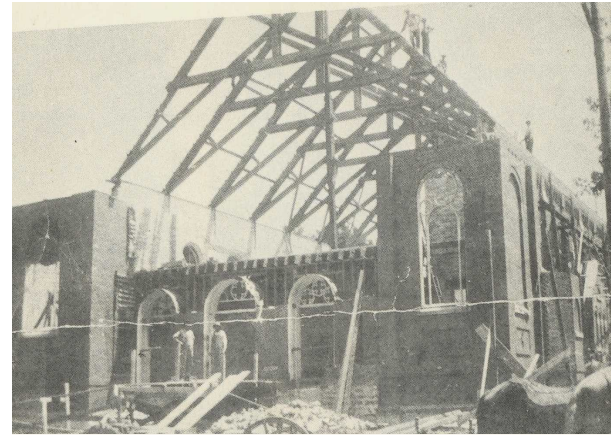
*...through the years*



Miss Flavin  
First church organist



Church Choir circa 1913



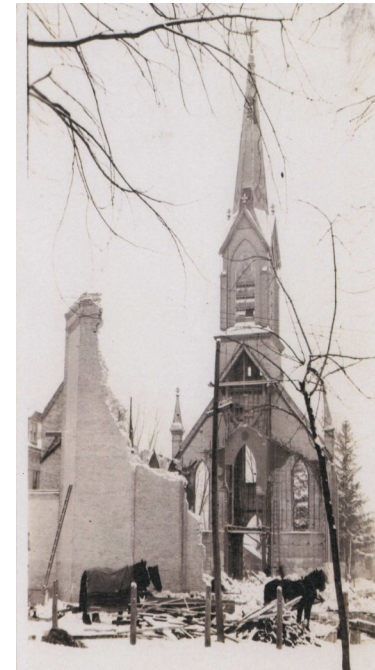
Construction of the third church



Fr. Salentin's Silver Jubilee 1918



Interior of church, year unknown

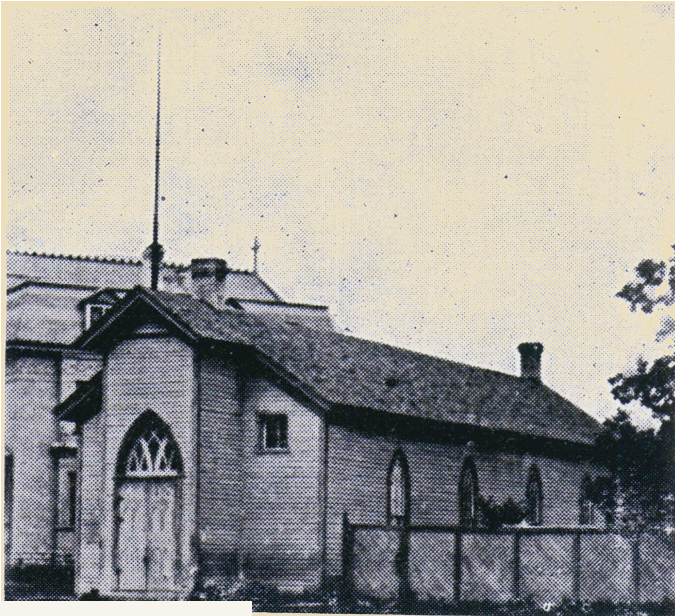


Demolition of the  
second church



## *The School...*

In 1892 the old church building was equipped to operate as a school and on October 10th of that year a parochial school opened with an enrollment of 60 students. These students would be taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame from Milwaukee. At the writing of the Sacred Hearts Golden Jubilee book in 1913, the school had a total enrollment of 180 pupils. By January of 1906, the school enrollment had outgrown the little church building and work began on a new brick, three story school building. On February 5, 1907 the new school opened with four school rooms and a chapel in the basement. With an ever-growing parish and increasing school enrollment, construction of a new 16-room school building was completed in 1957. This building remains the home of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary School today.



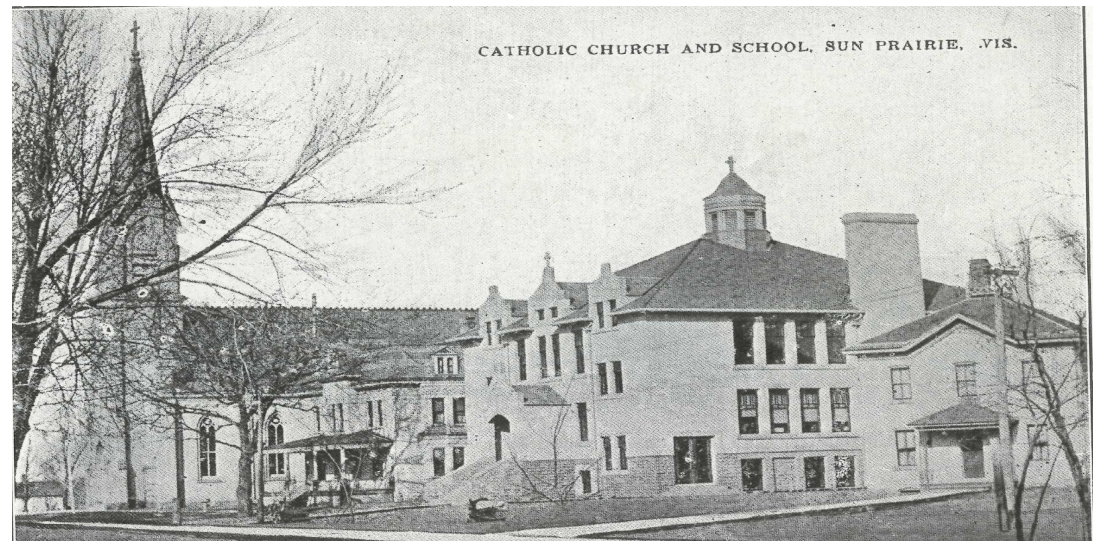
The first church would become the first school in 1892.



The photograph below shows the Parish campus sometime between 1907 (when the second church was completed) and 1921 (when the third church was completed). Pictured from left to right is the church, the rectory, the school and the convent.



*The second school 1907*





## *...Parish Hall and Day Care*

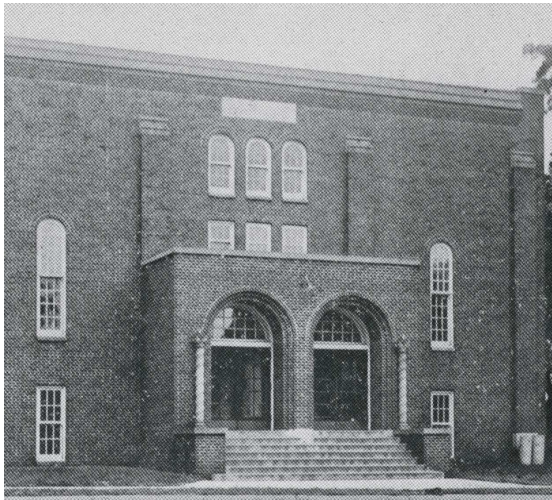
Sacred Hearts Extended Day Care began operating in the school cafeteria on August 25, 1987 with 26 children enrolled in the program. In the fall of 1988 a program was added in the church basement to provide before and after school care for the kindergarteners. The summer day care program began in 1989 and included transportation to a variety of activities including summer school, swimming, basketball camp and more. In 1991 Sacred Hearts purchased the house at 315 Columbus Street for the day care. Renovations were completed to meet child care licensing regulations for up to 50 children and the house opened for day care on April 27, 1992. The house was built by Stephen Edison, the first cousin to inventor Thomas Edison, in 1910. In 2010, an addition to the day care was completed to meet the needs of a 4K program as well as providing additional space for the day care.



Sacred Hearts Day Care



This photograph, donated by Anna Friedel, shows a group of students outside the “third church” which would date this picture to sometime after 1921.



The “Parish Hall” envisioned by Fr. J.J. Salentin was completed in 1926 and partially reconstructed in 1959. In 1957 a new school would be added to the front of this building.

Today the “Parish Hall” serves as Sacred Hearts School gym and cafeteria. You can still see the arched windows of this original building on the exterior of the gym; though they are now filled with brick.



# *Photographs...*

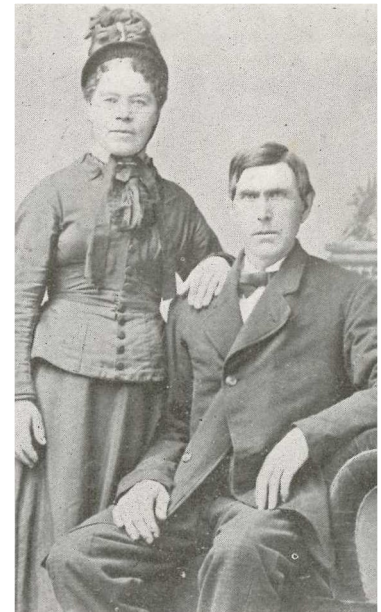
## *Our Founding Fathers*



Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy



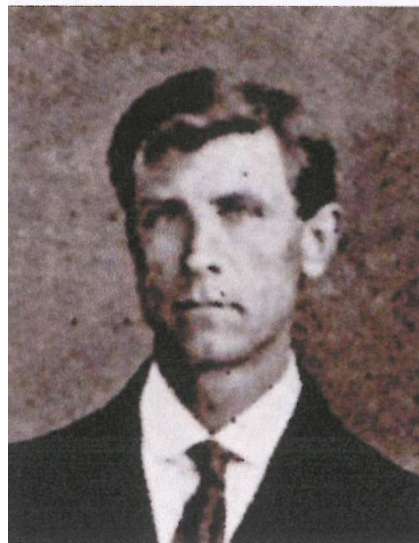
Mr. and Mrs. Michael  
Conley



Mr. and Mrs. Dugan



Mr. and Mrs. L. Dolan



Mr. John Sprengle



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Howe



## *The Third Church 1921-1963*

By 1912, when Fr. J.J. Salentin became pastor, Sacred Hearts parish was growing so much that talk of expansion began. As more settlers moved to the village from the outlying rural communities, pew space during Sunday Masses was in short supply. However, church leaders deemed remodeling too expensive and believed it would not adequately address the space shortage, so they began considering building a new church. At the same time, school growth and a ruling by the archdiocese that all parishes with schools must provide a home for religious sisters necessitated the construction of the convent in 1917. After the convent was completed, plans to build a new church began in 1919.

The site of the existing church was chosen for the new building and the old church was demolished in 1920. Plans for the new church were drawn by John Paulu and the construction contract was given to the Frank Stegerwald Co.



Fr. J.J. Salentin  
January 1912 - October 1927



Construction of the third church



1921 - 1963



# *The Convent, the Rectory, and the Grotto*

In 1891 a solid brick dwelling was erected at a cost of \$2,500. This building would house the School Sisters of Notre Dame. These Sisters came from Milwaukee to teach the children who attended the first school, built in 1892. In 1917, as Sacred Hearts Church and school continued to grow, the parish needed to build a new home for the Sisters. At that time, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee ruled that every parish with a Catholic school must own and provide housing for its teachers. Prior to this time, some of the homes had been owned by the convents. The contract for the sisters' dwelling was awarded to the lowest bidder, Adam Lessner of East Bristol. After the new convent was finished, the school sisters purchased their old residence to use as a boarding house for students who stayed in town to attend school because their families lived too far from the village of Sun Prairie to make the trip daily. Remnants of the former convent were discovered when the parish garage and parking lot were constructed.



The first convent built in 1891.  
It would later become a  
boarding house for  
Sacred Hearts students.



Rectory built in 1892

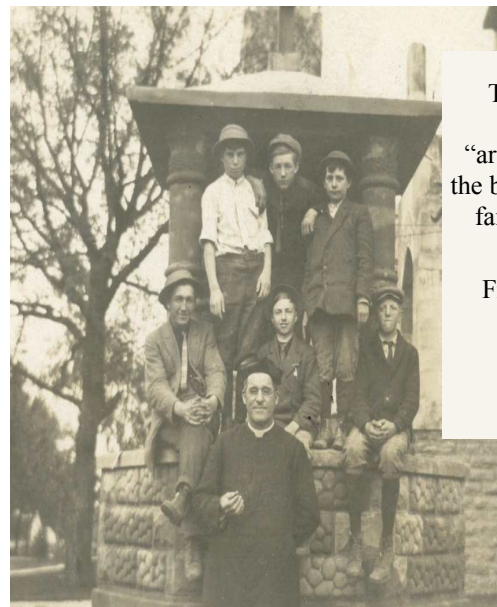
In 1869, Fr. Wilmes was appointed our first resident pastor. An old house purchased by the church served as his residence. In 1892 a new parsonage of solid brick was erected for about \$5000.00. Except for the front porch, this building is still in tact and remains in use as the rectory.



The notation on the back of this photo indicates that this grotto was behind the original convent. This would place it at the rear of the current Parish Center.

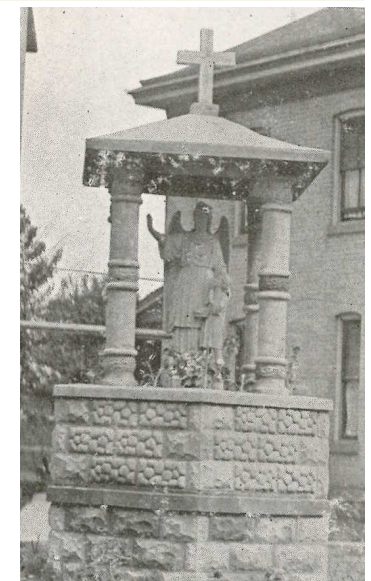


The second convent built in 1917



This photo of the Guardian Angel Grotto is dated "around 1916." The writing on the back of the photograph is very faint but we can make out the following names:

Fr. Salentin, Victor Betlach,  
George Schleicher,  
Paul Skalitzy, Kleiner?,  
Leffler? and Shernecker.





# *History of Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish*

*1862-1981*

## *A Timeline*

*“Man’s belief in the sovereignty of God has been practically universal, for we can trace its origin by the fact, that man realized he could not get along without God’s help as he craved His company. One of the first things he did after trying to provide a home for himself was to build A House of God, so he could live in God’s loving, comforting presence. The beginnings of all congregations were of the same order, small and unpretentious at first. The same was also true of Sacred Hearts Parish in Sun Prairie, over seventy-five years has passed since the first pioneers made preparations to build their first house of God.” ~Sacred Hearts Diamond Jubilee Book*

Another seventy-five years have passed since this was written in 1938.

This excerpt and the following timeline were discovered in our archives while preparing for the Sesquicentennial.

- 1862 - John Dolan purchased three-quarters of an acre of land for \$140 from Robert Beecham for a Catholic Church.
- 1863 - Work began on a small Church structure 22x32 feet, costing \$1,100. From 1862 until 1869 the spiritual needs of the people were attended to by priests from the neighboring parishes of Waterloo, Westport, East Bristol and Madison. The first little church was under the patronage of St. Patrick.
- 1868 - Land was purchased for a cemetery.
- 1869 - Fr. H. Wilmes became the first resident pastor.
- 1885 - A new church was erected. It was completed in 1887, costing \$14,431.32.
- 1891 - The first convent was built, costing \$2,500.
- 1892 - A new parsonage was erected, costing \$5,000. A parochial school was opened in the old church building with an enrollment of 60 pupils taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame.
- 1906 - A new three story brick school was erected. Measuring 56 x 72 feet, it cost \$23, 206.59 to build. It was completed in 1907.
- 1913 - Commercial courses were introduced into the school program.
- 1917 - The Sisters purchased the old convent to use as a boarding school. A new convent was built.
- 1919 - Building of a new church began; work was completed in 1921 at a cost of \$90,000.00
- 1926 - A parish hall was completed at a cost of \$48,000.00
- 1927 - Fr. Michael Krusing became the first assistant pastor.
- 1930 - Two year High School courses were introduced.
- 1934 - The church was redecorated. The work was a donation of one of the parish families. A garage was also added.



- 1951 - The first lay teacher, Mrs. JoAnn Sheehan, joined the school faculty.
- 1955 - The rectory was remodeled, to include an addition.
- 1957 - A new school was completed costing \$396, 641.00
- 1959 - The parish hall and gym were remodeled and the school entrance built.
- 1961 - A two-manual pipe organ was installed in the church
- 1963 - The Parish Centennial was celebrated. The church entrance and bell tower were built and the interior of the church redecorated.
- 1964- The Sacred Hearts High School closed and the Women's Circles group developed a portion of the Church basement into the Circle Room, presently our Gathering Room
- 1967 - St. Albert the Great Parish was formed
- 1968 - The Parish Council and commissions were formed. A new convent and garage were built.
- 1971 - Religious Education consultants joined the Parish Staff.
- 1975 - The Director of Liturgical Music joined the Parish Staff.
- 1976 - The Director of Apostolic Ministry joined the Parish Staff and part of the church basement was remodeled into the Religious Education Center (now the Furnace Room next to the St. Isidore Room.)
- 1980 - The nursery in the church basement was remodeled and named the East Room (now the St. Isidore Room.)  
A new roof was put on the church and the playground resurfaced.
- 1981 - Total Parish membership is 4,084. At that time the Parish consisted of 22 acres, including seven acres at the cemetery.  
Three Priests served the Parish.  
The school served grades 1-8 with an enrollment of 465 students and staff consisting of the principal, 20 teachers, a librarian and a secretary.  
The Religious Education Program served children from pre-school through 12th grade and enrollment was 500 students.  
Staff consisted of two directors and 50 volunteer teachers and staff.  
A Director of Liturgical Music and a Director of Apostolic Ministry were also on staff.

Just think of the many additions to the timeline there may be by the time the 175 anniversary rolls around in 2038;  
our “*Septuinquataquingecentennial!*”

***We are makers of history: co-creators of God's world.  
We ask His continued guidance and blessing.”***  
~unknown



*Thou Art a Priest Forever*  
*J.B. Henri Lacordaire, OP*



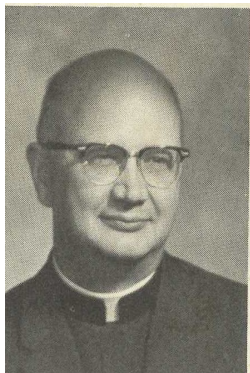
*To live in the midst of the world*  
*With no desire for its pleasure...*  
*To be a member of every family*  
*Yet belonging to none...*  
*To share all sufferings;*  
*To penetrate all secrets;*  
*To heal all wounds...*

*To daily go from men to God*  
*To offer them His hope...*  
*To have a heart of fire for charity*  
*And a heart of bronze for chastity...*

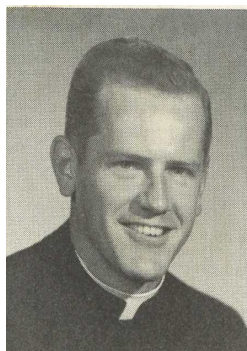
*To bless and be blest forever,*  
*O God, what a life, and it is yours,*  
*O Priest of Jesus Christ!*



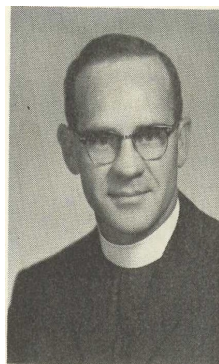




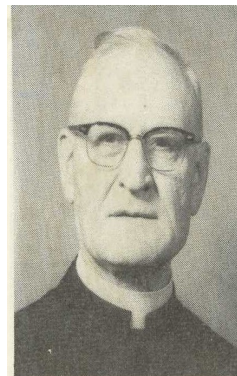
*Rev. Leo Belda*



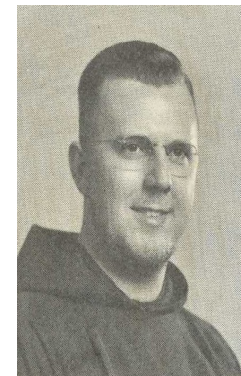
*Rev. John Dowd*



*Rev. Thomas Ryan, S.J.*



*Rev. Alois Kraus*



*Rev. Reginald Lawrence,  
O.F.M. Cap.*

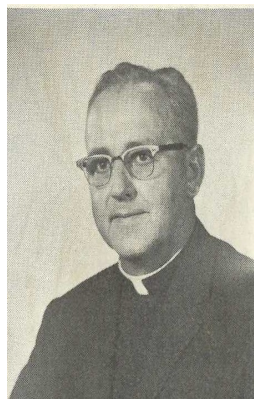


*Msgr. Douglas Dushack*

# *Priest -Sons Of Sacred Hearts*



*Rev. Patrick Wendler*



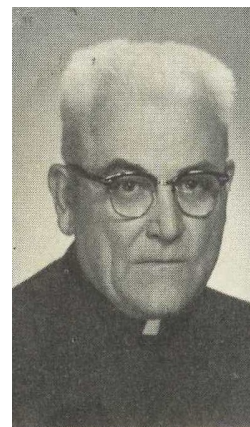
*Rev. Valery Schuster*



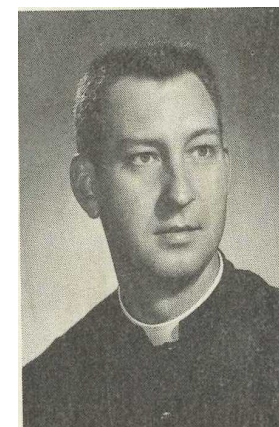
*Rev. Wilfred Schuster*



*Rev. Leo Skalitzky*



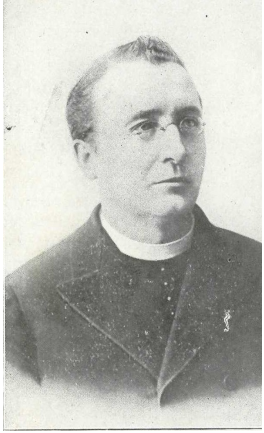
*Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Voelker*



*Brother Aloysius Tiedt,  
C.S.C.*



*"Choose you this day who ye shall serve..."*



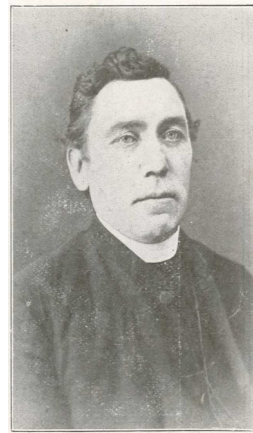
*Rev. H. Wilmes  
Jan. 1869-May 1870*



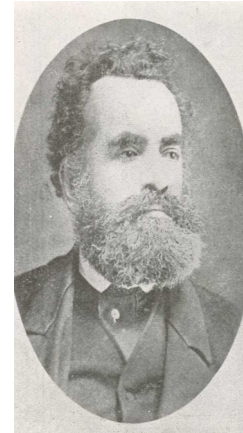
*Rev. W. Croake  
Jan. 1871-Nov. 1872*



*Rev. G.W. Miller  
March 1873-July 1874*



*Rev. P. Walsh  
Aug. 1874-July 1875*



*Rev. M. DeBecke  
Sept. 1875-May 1876*



*Rev. A.J. Kuehne  
Sept. 1880-Aug. 1905*



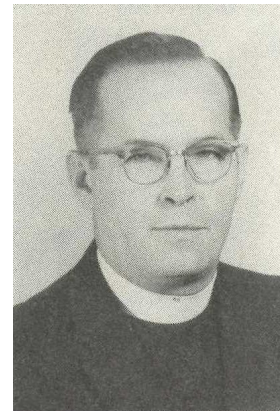
*Rev. H. Blum  
Sept. 1905-Oct. 1911*



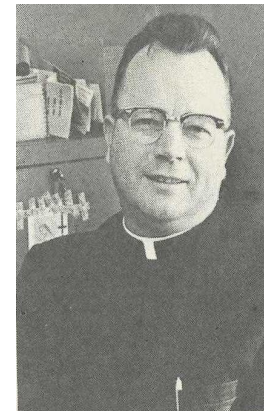
*Rev. J.J. Salentin  
Jan. 1912-Oct. 1927*



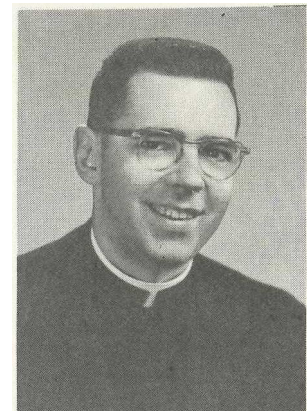
*Rev. G.A. Haeusler  
Nov. 1927-May 1954*



*Rev. Lawrence Keppler  
Sept. 1937-June 1946*



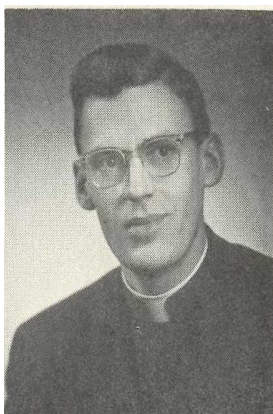
*Rev. Benjamin  
Reddington  
Feb. 1948-June 1948*



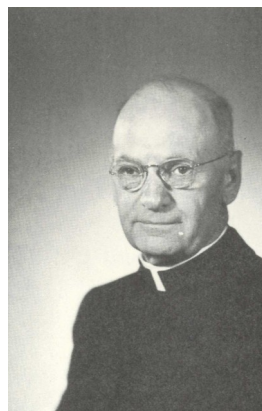
*Rev. Eugene Graham  
June 1948-Feb. 1955*



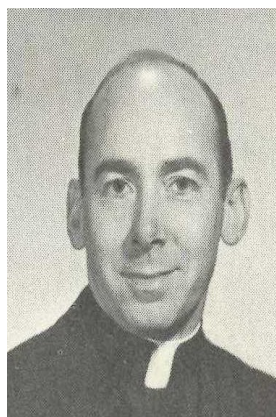
*...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15*



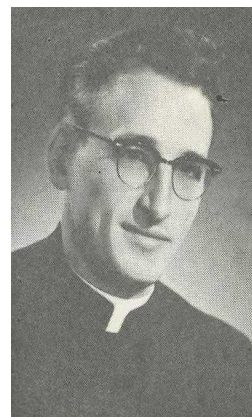
*Rev. Edmund Salzman  
Sept. 1952-March 1954*



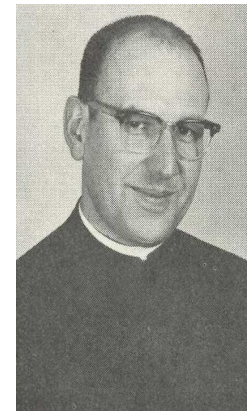
*Rev. H.A. Waldkirch  
September 1954-1970*



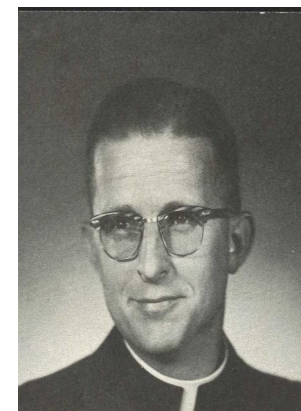
*Rev. George Hastrich  
June 1955-Dec. 1957*



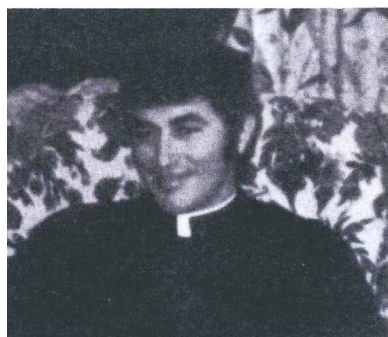
*Rev. Donald Wagner  
June 1956-June 1959*



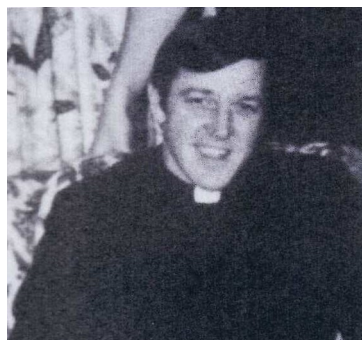
*Rev. Roman Wiedholz  
June 1959-June 1965*



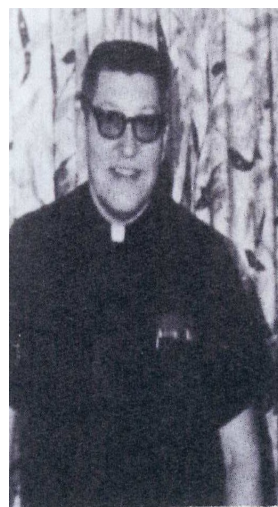
*Rev. Joseph H. Schlaefer  
June 1959-June 1965*



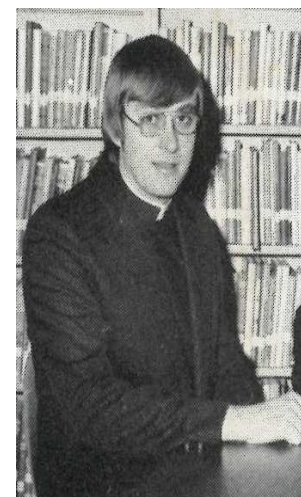
*Rev. Dennis Ganshert  
June 1967-October 1972*



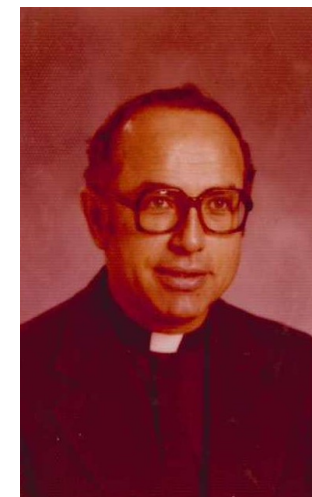
*Fr. Tony Karls  
Sept. 1967-June 1973*



*Fr. Bernard Pickarts  
Jan. 1970-Oct. 1972*



*Rev. Kent Schmitt  
June 1973-June 1977*



*Fr. Peter Fagan  
Oct. 1973-June 1982*

*Pictures unavailable for:*

*Rev. Stehle June 1870-Nov. 1870  
Rev. Joseph Huber July 1876-June 1877  
Rev. Thos. Magher June 1877-March 1878  
Rev. Geo. Weidlich April 1878-Sept. 1878  
Rev. B. Smeddlinge Oct. 1878-April 1880*