

ASSUMPTION GROTTO PARISH

150 Years of Faith 1832-1982



THE ASSUMPTION

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150 Years of Faith 1832-1982

Catherine Bicknell, Ph.D.

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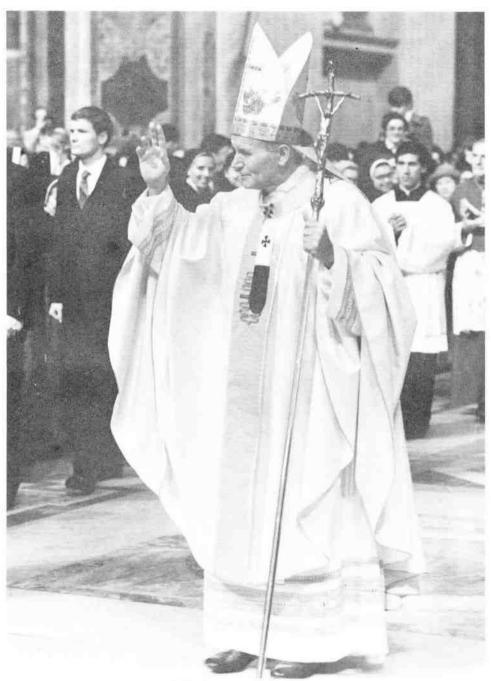
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To the old parishioners

and to the pioneers

whose blood runs in their veins.



POPE JOHN PAUL II during Midnight Mass at St. Peter's, 1981.



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

No. 82677

FROM THE VATICAN, February 10, 1982

Dear Archbishop Szoka,

The Holy Father was pleased to learn that Assumption Grotto Parish in Detroit is soon to be commemorating the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of its establishment.

He is aware that over the years the grace of God has brought forth fruits of holiness and justice in Christian living. The power of God's word has taken root in the hearts of the faithful and has enabled priests, religious and laity to serve diligently Christ and his Church.

As he gives thanks to God for the benefits received in the past, His Holiness asks God to sustain all the parishiorers in giving an ever more authentic witness to the ideals of the Gospel, and to continue to inspire many young people to devote themselves generously to the priesthood and to the religious life. He prays that new fervor will be enkindled in all the members of the Parish and lead everyone to a greater participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, "in which the work of our redemption is continually carried out" (Presbyterorum Ordinis, 13).

With great confidence in the power of Christ's sustaining love, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing to the entire parochial community.

I am happy to have the occasion to express $\ensuremath{\mathtt{m}} y$ own prayerful good wishes for the anniversary.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

FE. Martinez
Substitute

The Most Reverend Edmund C. Szoka Archbishop of Detroit



THE MOST REVEREND EDMUND C. SZOKA, Archbishop of Detroit



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT

1234 WASHINGTON BLVD DETROIT, MICHISAN 48226

December 30, 1981

Dear Monsignor Sawher:

I am pleased to rejoice with you and the people of Assumption Grotto Parish as you celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the parish. It is a historic year for your parish. The year-long celebration affords the faithful of Assumption Grotto Parish an opportunity to reflect in a spirit of gratitude to Almighty God upon the blessings that have been experienced over the past 150 years.

The parish had humble beginnings when the German Redemptorist priests began ministering to the Catholics "in the woods" in the log cabin Chapel of the Assumption. Fifteen years later, Bishop Lefevre canonically established the parish of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary; and still five years later, Father Amandus Van Den Driessche was appointed the first resident pastor. Since that time, many priests and religious have labored with the lay people of Assumption Grotto Parish to build the Kingdom of God on the Eastside of Detroit. As the city expanded and the suburbs developed, parishes as far away as Mt. Clemens, Centerline, and Roseville were developed from Assumption Grotto as the Mother parish.

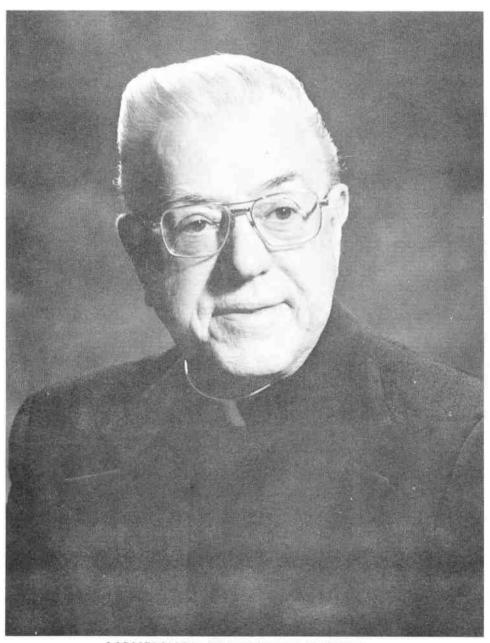
I join you and all of the parishioners in thanking God for the formation and growth in the Catholic faith which has taken place at Assumption Grotto Parish over the past 150 years. I continue to remember all of you in my daily Masses and prayers that you will continue to be effective instruments in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.

With all best wishes, I am

Fraternally yours in Christ,

+ Ednume e. typka
Archbishop of Detroit

Monsignor Clifford F. Sawher Pastor, Assumption Grotto Parish 13770 Gratiot Avenue Detroit, Michigan 48205



MONSIGNOR CLIFFORD F. SAWHER, Pastor of Assumption Grotto Parish (1969-)

PASTOR'S PROLOGUE

MEMBERS OF A NEW PARISH AND THEIR PASTOR SHARE A sense of pride when they see a new church arise, perhaps accompanied by a school building, a rectory, and a convent. As the years progress and they celebrate the anniversaries of their existence, they are filled with a great glowing pride and people and Pastor express their commitment with words of gratitude and hopefulness for the future.

None of us today can know exactly the feelings which existed a hundred and fifty years ago, especially those of the mission priests who came to minister to the small congregation that assembled in that log cabin church. One thing struck me recently, however. I noticed on the righthand side of the steps going into the north entrance of the church the old cornerstone of the first permanent church, dated 1852. Nearby, on the side of the steps, is another cornerstone, dated 1908, from the second permanent church. Further back on the right on the wall of the church one notices a third cornerstone, dated 1929. These three cornerstones indicate something which has preceded us, something for which we are grateful in a sense different than had we been among the founding people. We are grateful because the people of Father Vandendriessche's and Father Bolte's and Father Ronayne's times were concerned with passing down to future generations what they considered to be valuable in the life of Assumption Grotto Church. They did not leave a history as such. They left people who had the history of the church in their minds and in their hearts. They loved Assumption Grotto and as time went by, others came along to add to the story of this parish. The people, many of whom are still alive, bring to the present time their own historical perceptions of the years.

Monsignor Marx remained longer than any other Pastor and did much to construct the almost final stages of the building process. He built well, with foresight. It's unbelievable but he built a rectory in the early 1920s that would someday be able to house seven priests. Then, in the time of Bishop Breitenbeck, the new school addition and Activities Building were constructed, offices added onto the rectory, and a new garage and the Sisters' garage built. The considerable work he did on the Grotto and cemetery left his mark on the parish.

I have been Pastor of this wonderful parish for thirteen years. I was here two years beginning in 1960 as an Assistant. I've seen many things change since that time; however, I have been constantly impressed by the deep loyalty of the people of Assumption Grotto Parish, both young and old. All thinking, feeling people here, appreciate the fact that they have been given something by way of trust and they care for it with loving devotion, desiring to pass it on to the next generation so that they in turn can continue to pass it on. Even though the parish has taken on an entirely different aspect from former days, it is still a viable, healthy, moving place in which to live. Either because of its years or because of circumstances, there has always been a certain moderate attitude here, undoubtedly set by the Pastors and their Assistants, but perhaps it is also the quality of the people themselves. I have often thought that in a certain sense, we form a community that is not unlike a little city or village. We do not have a civil government in our parish community, but our ecclesiastical government is quite capable of taking care of our needs, outside of those that must be supplied, of course, by the city of Detroit. But the feeling of belonging here is the same as I have experienced in the small town from whence I hailed as a young man. There is a closeness among the parishioners of this parish. We share simple ideals, relatively simple aspirations. We really want to practice our faith and not be flamboyant in the process. There is a kind of sense that bespeaks a deep desire to be quietly in pursuit of our eternal salvation without allowing anyone to hinder us. With this in mind, it is ironic that we have been forced to do things that certainly do not fit with the quiet desire to live aloof from the rapid pace of the outside world. Such things show our strong determination not to be overcome: our Spring Festival, the weekly Bingo, the Christmas Bazaar, the many Flea Markets we have, other fundraising and fun raising events, the Ladies' Sodality's card parties, the Scouts and their get-togethers, the annual Athletic Banquet, the Workers' Party, the Millionaires Parties, the St. Patrick's Day Dance, the square dances. All these things are enjoyed as one enjoys such things in a little town or village. It's the nature of the parish.

In writing the history, we owe a great debt of gratitude to Bishop Breitenbeck and his foresight in gathering together many materials that have been of inestimable value in putting together this book. We also are grateful to him for obtaining the services of the late beloved Father Dan Reilly, the Dominican priest who contributed so much before his death in 1962. Everyone will recognize, I'm sure, in reading this book, that there is a lot of peace and happiness at Assumption Grotto. Good people enjoying good people, working towards eternal salvation in this portion of the vineyard of Jesus Christ Our Lord. May He be praised in His work and may He bless us as we continue on into the years ahead.

Msgr. Clifford F. Sawher, Pastor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IN THIS HISTORY OF GROTTO PARISH, I HAVE FOUND MYSELF concentrating on family histories and the development of the neighborhood as much as on the features of each pastorate and the story of the buildings. For many years, a person baptized in the parish could reasonably expect to be married and buried here, too. Because the population was stable for so long, I have made some sidetrips into individual stories to give a flavor of the times and the sense of what a hardworking, closeknit community this has always been.

I am indebted to Father Dan Reilly, O.P., and Barbara Hansknecht for the materials they collected, including photostats of records from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, land records, newspaper clippings, and interview materials. Father Reilly worked on the history for three summers before his death in 1962. Barbara was my immediate predecessor until March, 1980.

Father Charles Denys, of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, an expert on Belgian history in Detroit, read and corrected the chapter on Father Vandendriessche. For social history up to about 1920, extensive use was made of the newspaper articles of Steve Spilos, who has been interviewing the "oldtimers" of northeast Detroit since 1947. As an overview and for the 1960s, the history of Grotto written by Ed Ertzbischoff as a high school project was very valuable. Father Ed is now a priest in Ann Arbor.

In August, 1980, I spent two days at the Dominican motherhouse in Racine, Wisconsin, interviewing Sisters who had taught at the Grotto School. The Sisters at Grotto also lent me their Archives, which contain parish history extending from 1894 to the end of the 1960s. In 1980 and 1981,

I represented the community organization G.R.E.A.T. in a governmentsponsored oral history project which produced many of our tapes. Four of our best interviews were recorded by Gerrie Kaufman.

My two right hands in making sure the early history was correct were Delia Biermann and Arthur Trombly, born in 1895 and 1887, respectively. Both have many spent hours taping, reading rough drafts, making corrections, and answering questions on the phone.

Thanks are due to Monsignor Sawher for his steadfast belief in the importance of this history, and to all the parishioners who have lent pictures, mementoes, and family geneologies, and given time and support. We are grateful to the Grotto's unofficial photographer, Bernard Skibinski, for many of the recent pictures. An especial salute to Audrey Holsenburgh, who retyped the entire manuscript in the last few days.

Everyone who is asked about Grotto, whether former priest, teaching Sister, or parishioner, remembers time spent here with pleasure, and misses it. I will, too.

-Catherine Bicknell, Ph.D.

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PREFACE

A WALK THROUGH ASSUMPTION GROTTO'S CEMETERY AND down to the shrine restores the spirit at any time of the year. But to experience the sense of family and history which are a part of this parish, plan to be there any August 15th, because every year, on the Feast of the Assumption, the descendants of the old families come home. As you stroll along the wide central path leading down to the shrine, read the names on the stones. They will bring to mind streets and avenues all over the eastside of Detroit: Kelly, Morang, Schoenherr, Rivard, Trombly, Young, Greiner, Pfent, Dubay, Girard, Maddelein, Lappin.

The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a special place, the spiritual home of many who have left as well as those who have stayed. People find solace and comfort here, enlightenment, discipline, and a community of belief. Many years ago, the "Little Church in the Woods," as it was first known, kept the ancient fire of religion alive as the pioneer families carved their livelihoods out of the thick woods and stubborn fields. Today, the church continues to be a beacon of hope to those who struggle equally hard in the face of modern adversities.

Come back with us now to trace the living flame of faith as it has been passed from hand to hand and heart to heart in the parish family over the last century and a half.

INTRODUCTION

IN 1832, A GROUP OF GERMAN IMMIGRANTS SETTLED ON FARMland several miles northeast of Detroit. Their neighbors were the earliest French families who had followed Cadillac to Detroit. In order to avoid the walk in to St. Anne's, they built a log cabin chapel where visiting priests could say Mass.

When a permanent pastor was assigned in 1852, he and his flock resolved to build a church whose grandeur would remind them of the places they had left behind in Europe. As farmers with little ready cash, the first parishioners were unable to pay for such a large structure, but their faith made them strong. Instead of money, they volunteered their skills and muscle. Clay was dug from a pit on the church property and a kiln built to fire the bricks; lumber was cut in the nearby woods and hewn on the premises. The church which soon rose out of the farmland alongside old Fort Gratiot Road was a sign of their devotion.

Today's church is the fourth building. The brick and frame structure which replaced the log chapel was gutted by fire on January 1, 1907. Its successor was razed to make room for the present church in 1929.

Over the last 150 years, the original small community of German and French families has expanded as a result of the Irish, Belgian, Italian and Polish migrations into Detroit. Today, the parish in its ethnic diversity is a microcosm of the city which has expanded to include it, and its history cannot be separated from the larger context of events of which it is part. Industrialization and rapid growth, wars, economic depressions, race riots, and

urban decay have all touched it. In the final analysis, the history of the parish is the story of the people who founded the church and who form it today, of their pastors, and of the Archdiocese and city of Detroit, the background against which Grotto's drama continues to be played.

BEGINNINGS

EARLY COLONIZATION

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A.

ON JULY 24, 1701, ANTOINE DE LAMOTHE CADILLAC SAILED UP the Rivière du Détroit to establish Fort Pontchartrain on the site of what is now downtown Detroit. Two days later, one of the priests who had accompanied him dedicated the first Mass to St. Anne, patron saint of Quebec's St. Lawrence fishermen. Shortly thereafter, construction of St. Anne's Church was begun.

The early French explorers were deeply religious men, eager to win converts as well as to make their own fortunes. Priests were consequently an important part of their early voyages and settlements, necessary to direct them in their faith and to bring the word of Christ to the Indians.

From 1701 until the British and American occupations of 1760 and 1796, Detroit was a small French Catholic town. The city's progress was hindered by hostilities with the Indians, wars, fires, and natural hardships. A hundred years were to go by before the population reached 2,000.

During the nineteenth century, the settlement of the Midwest began to flourish. People forced out of Europe by political upheavals and famines found their way to Michigan along the Erie Canal, opened in 1825. "Chain migrations" of European immigrants often took place as the first settlers were joined in the New World by their families and friends. Such was the case when a group of families in Neustadt, Germany, were told by their advance scout of the excellent opportunities for farming in the Michigan Territory. It was this group which founded the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

EVOLUTION OF CHURCH

Like Detroit, the Roman Catholic Church structure was still in its pioneer stage when the group from Neustadt began to arrive in 1830.

Father Gabriel Richard was pastor of St. Anne's. One of the city's leading citizens, he had served a term in the House of Representatives as a delegate from the Michigan Territory, from 1823 to 1825. Detroit was at that time part of the Diocese of Cincinnati. As the city grew, a Detroit diocese was planned with Father Richard at its head as Bishop. Because the priest was involved in financial and legal difficulties, however, it was decided in Rome to postpone the establishment of the diocese until after his death.

The German immigrants who arrived in Detroit in 1832 were warned away from the heavily populated center of town, where a cholera epidemic was raging. Ludwig Diegel told his grandson, Michael, that they were told: "Get out of here! Get out of here! Everybody's dying." Father Gabriel Richard contracted the disease and died of it, as a result of ministering to the sick.

In 1833, Father Frederick Rese was consecrated as Bishop of the new Detroit Diocese, which included Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and North and South Dakota. Despite the extent of the territory, he had the help of only fourteen priests. Most of them were working in and around Detroit, at the early parishes of St. Mary's, in Monroe; St. Paul's, in Grosse Pointe; St. Gertrude's, in L'Anse Creuse; St. Peter's, in Mt. Clemens; and Holy Cross, in Marine City.

SECOND OLDEST CHURCH IN DETROIT

Assumption Grotto is the second oldest church within the present city limits of Detroit. Although it was served by mission priests until 1852, its status derives from its actual founding at least as early as 1832.

In its earliest days, the chapel was called "Kirche im Walde" (Church in the Woods) by the German settlers. It was a log cabin structure, measuring about fourteen by twenty-four feet on the inside. The priests who first visited were Redemptorists from Vienna who had been encouraged by Bishop Rese to come to the United States as missionaries. They were assigned to St. Mary's Church, permanently established in 1835 for the Germans. One of the mission priests, Father Francis Xavier Haetscher, wrote in a letter preserved in the records of the Redemptorist Fathers:

- A civil suit had been brought against him by a man he had excommunicated at the order of Bishop Flaget.
- Spilos, Steve: "Many German Street Names are Reminders of Pioneer Hessians," Northeast Detroiter, December, 1958.

Every Sunday I preach and have Mass and teach Sunday School at the Kirche im Walde. I have never seen a people that has more patience with a priest and such unselfish love as is the case here. They are good souls, devoted to their Church, and I receive great consolation working with them. Two and one half hours from Detroit, in the woods, is a German colony and it is increasing daily in numbers. These settlers pray that we establish ourselves in Detroit. They wish to furnish us with timbers for building, but are unable to aid financially. These farmers are our fondest hopes. They show such childlike confidence in a priest that they exemplify what our Lord said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me'.

Another Redemptorist, Father Saenderl, assisted Father Haetscher during those early years. In 1838, a German priest from Boston, Father Joseph Freygang, was placed in charge of the "Chapel of the Assumption." Father Freygang moved to the Diocese of Cincinnati in 1840. From 1840 to 1847, the church was attended by priests from St. Anne's, as well as the Redemptorists from St. Mary's, and baptisms performed there were recorded at St. Anne's. In the Western Catholic Register of 1842, the Rev. Mr. Kilroy is mentioned "on a mission to Connor's Creek" where he administered the temperance pledge to twelve persons.

FIRST CHURCH PROPERTY

On April 22, 1844, Joseph Young and his wife, Catherine, sold two acres of land to Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere for the token sum of \$2 to be used "for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Congregation in Hamtramck, to build a chapel on it and for a burial ground . . ." On the same date, John and Catherine Greiner gave an acre of land to the church. On May 24, 1847, Martin and Mary Pulcher donated an acre of land, and on October 17, 1848, Michael and Margaret Dalton another. The donations were made to the Bishop of Detroit for the use of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary, listed in the Township of Hamtramck until 1848, at which time it became the Township of Grosse Pointe.

FIRST RECORDS

From 1847, when records began to be kept at the church, to 1851, the chapel was called St. Mary's in the Woods, and was attended by Reverend M. Maslinger, Reverend Maximilian Leimgruber, C.SS.R., and Reverend Peter Kindekens, Vicar General of the Diocese of Detroit. The date of the first two registered baptisms is May 30, 1847. Father Kindekens baptized Antoine Koch, the son of John Joseph Koch and his wife, Marie Kuelche, and

Mary Catherine Jung³, the daughter of Nicholas Jung and Mary Noblet. The godparents of Mary Catherine Young were John Greiner and Catherine Domitio.

On October 25, 1847, the first two marriages were performed by Father Kindekens, of John Greiner, 24, to Catherine Eglof, 21, and of Dagobert Juif, 30, to Magdalena Zuger, 19.

Other priests whose names appear on the church records up until the appearance of Father Vandendriessche, in 1851, are Reverend John Farnan, Reverend Peter Hennaert, and Reverend De Raymacken, O.P. The church continued to be served by priests from Detroit until 1852, the year that Father Amandus Vandendriessche was appointed as permanent pastor.

A FIRST PASTOR

A few days before Christmas, 1841, Father Peter Paul Lefevere arrived in Detroit to take over the function of Bishop abdicated by Bishop Rese when he returned to Germany. In 1837, the Detroit Diocese had been split: Minnesota and North and South Dakota became the Dubuque Diocese, and the Detroit Diocese was made up of the State of Michigan and the Territory of Wisconsin. In 1843, the Detroit Diocese split again and the Territory of Wisconsin became the Diocese of Milwaukee. As a result of the loss of territory, Bishop Lefevere was left with the assistance of only thirteen priests in Michigan. In 1846, he wrote to this second cousin⁴, Amandus Vandendriessche, in Belgium: "In every direction new Congregations are forming and churches abuilding but our great affliction is that for want of a sufficient number of clergymen, we are unable to supply the urging calls and desires of the people." To obtain more priests, he turned to Europe for recruits and particularly to his homeland, Belgium.

Amandus Vandendriessche was one of the outstanding young men who heeded the missionary call to come to the United States. Born in Moorslede, West Flanders, Belgium, on March 1, 1826, he was the sixth of the eight sons and four daughters of Peter and Barbara (Muylle) Vandendriessche. His patron saint had been a missionary evangelist in Flanders in the 7th century. Amandus studied the classics at the Minor Seminary of Roeselare, in Belgium.

On a trip to Belgium in 1841, Bishop-elect Lefevere took back with him to America three students from the Minor Seminary of Roeselare, including

- The German name was soon anglicized to Young.
- 4. Amandus Vandendriessche's mother was Bishop Lefevere's cousin.
- Letter preserved in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Karel Vandendriessche, Amandus' brother. Bidding Amandus goodbye, he wished him well until they should meet again in the next world. Fifteen-year-old Amandus surprised his cousin by replying that he expected to be in America in six years, a prediction which would come true almost to the year. In 1847, while still in his last year at the Minor Seminary, Amandus left for America with a classmate, Karel Deceuninck. Arriving in Detroit early in 1848, he continued his theological studies under Bishop Lefevere at his home, where he conducted the Seminary of St. Thomas. He received his first (minor) orders in old St. Anne's Church, and on June 30, 1850, was ordained sub-deacon in the new Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. On December 21, 1850, he was ordained as a priest by Bishop Lefevere. Shortly afterwards, he was assigned to the Chapel of the Assumption, at Conner's Creek.

Father Vandendriessche's first signature in the church records is for the baptism of Louis Bisson, son of Francois Bisson and his wife, Lorette Leveque, on February 17, 1851. During that same year, the names of Father Maslinger, Father Glaunach, C.SS.R., Father Schoeffler, C.SS.R., and Father Kronenberg also appear in the records. After 1852, when Father Vandendriessche was assigned to the church as resident pastor, his name appears alone.

A RURAL PARISH

The little Church of the Assumption was located seven miles out from the center of the city. Arriving with the trunk containing his few belongings on the wood rack of a horse-drawn wagon, the young priest found only a chapel built of frame and wood blocks. The community around Conner's Creek had already attained a certain identity, however, and some of the farmers who would be his parishioners had ancestors who went back to the beginnings of Detroit's history. Many were grandsons and great-grandsons of Frenchmen who had followed the frontier from Quebec to the Michigan Territory. Their own ancestors had left France during the 1600s for the opportunities offered in the new world.

We are indebted to Father Christian Denissen for his study of the French families who settled in Detroit during the 1700s.⁶ Several of the parish families found in his genealogy are listed below in some detail.

 The material was revised and updated by Dr. Harold Powell, and published in 1976 under the title, Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region: 1701-1911.

EARLIEST PARISHIONERS

Marsac

Jacob Marsac, an army sergeant, arrived in Detroit with Cadillac. His grandson, Francis, owned one of the original "ribbon" or "strip" farms. It started at the river in the present vicinity of the Edison power plant and ran along what was later known as Conner's Creek as far back as the French Claim Road (Harper Avenue). The Marsac and Piche families came from Poitiers, France, and were related. During the War of 1812, Francis' son, Robert Marsac, left his farm in the care of the Piches when he went off to fight. A bachelor all his life, he lived with them when he returned, and left them the property when he died in 1840.

Robert's nephew, Cajetan Marsac, married Clothilde Champagne, and was one of the early members of the parish of the Church of the Assumption. Their daughter, Caroline, was buried in the church cemetery, in 1857. Another daughter, Philomene, married Joseph Bondy, in 1859. A son, Francis Xavier, married Rose Laderoute. Cajetan Marsac's brother, Francis Xavier, had thirteen children, two of whom, Elizabeth Nancy and Matilda, were baptized on February 25, 1849, and August 7, 1852, respectively. Another daughter, Monica, married Joseph Brassard, in 1853.

Robert Marsac's niece, Julia Gouin, married Anthony Rivard. He was buried in 1887, and she in 1888. The above ceremonies all took place at the Church of the Assumption.

Chapoton

The Chapotons were one of the earliest settler families. John Baptist was born in Detroit, in 1721. His grandsons Richard, Edward, and William were married and their children baptized at the Church of the Assumption. Another grandson, David, was baptized in the parish and married in Roseville. His first child was baptized at the Church of the Assumption.

Trombly

The Tromblys⁸ were from Chartres, France, home of the famous cathedral. Pierre Tremblay had settled in Petite Rivière, Quebec, in 1657. In

- 7. Until well into the 1800s, there was very little road development in Detroit. Most transportation took place along Lake St. Clair or the Detroit River. Because of the water's importance for commerce and transportation, land grants were made giving as many people as possible lake frontage. What is now Detroit's eastside was cut up into narrow properties extending back about three miles.
- 8. Originally spelled Tremblé, and subsequently Tremblay and Trembley.

1750, his grandchildren left Baie St. Paul, Quebec, in "royal canoes." They arrived at the mouth of what had been designated by Cadillac's mapmakers as the Rivière du Grand Marais (River of the Great Swamp) along the shore of Lake St. Clair. The party consisted of three Tremblay brothers and a sister and their families. They were Peter, married to Magdalene Simard; Ambrose, married to Margaret Simard; Augustine, married to Mary Judith LaForest; and Marguerite, married to William LaForest. They settled on the eastside of Detroit along Fox Creek, the Milk River and the Rivière du Grand Marais. The wife of Peter Tremblay, who settled along Fox Creek, died the year they arrived. He later moved with his children back on his claim to the present site of the city airport, thus becoming one of the earliest settlers in what is now the northeast section of Detroit. Sometime before 1760, he married Mary Joseph Tonti, widow of Louis Damours, and daughter of Alphonse Tonti, captain of Cadillac's landing party. In 1760, the Tremblay parents, Michael and Genevieve, joined their children in Detroit.

Rivard

In 1657, Nicholas Rivard had landed at Trois Rivières, Quebec. In 1762, his descendant, John Baptist Rivard, established a homestead in Michigan adjoining the Tremblays, and made an application to the French government at Quebec for a legal claim. Like Peter Tremblay, John Baptist also established his home at the back boundary of his property, in the area of today's junction of Harper Avenue and Rivard Boulevard. In 1762, he married Mary Catherine Yax.¹⁰ Thirteen children were born to them.

After St. Anne's burned in the fire which destroyed Detroit in 1805, Father Gabriel Richard bought the property which became known as the "Church Farm," a ribbon farm facing today's Belle Isle. Charles Rivard, son of John Baptist Rivard, was appointed a Trustee of the Church, in 1808.

LITTLE LOG CHAPEL

During the early 1800's, Joseph Tremblay was granted 640 acres by the United States government adjoining what was later known as Conner's

9. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the custom of the old French and German families to have more than one marriage between two families. Before "instant communication" became available, it was a practical way for brothers and sisters to stay in touch.

10. Her father, Michael Jacks (the spelling had been anglicized) was an illustrious citizen. He had been kidnapped by Indians in southern Ohio and his wife sold to the French as a slave. Spared because of his engineering and surveying skills, he was later reunited with his wife and became the first German settler in Detroit.

Creek, including land which is now the Detroit City Airport. A tradition associated with the burial of his cousin, Louis Michael Tremblay¹¹, in 1825, sheds an interesting light on the possible beginnings of Assumption Grotto Church:

In 1825, Louis Tremblay, beloved of both whites and Indians, was laid to rest beside a little log chapel seven miles from Detroit. Nobody knows when this chapel was built, but this is supposed to have been one of the first burials on the grounds. It was built after the fashion of many of the homes of that day, a low log structure plastered on the outside with clay. It had no priest, being a part of St. Anne's parish, and was built for christenings and weddings and burials, with an occasional celebration of Mass, for it was a long walk to St. Anne's.¹²

A log chapel may already have existed, then, on the site where several years later, in 1832, the German settlers would found their church.

CONNER'S CREEK

The reference to Louis Michael Tremblay leads us to the origin of Conner's Creek¹³, the name by which the settlement around the Church of the Assumption was known for many years. In 1782, a community of Moravian missionaries and their Indian converts settled at Gnaden-huetten near present-day Mt. Clemens. In 1786, the American government decided to develop the land and restrict "New" Gnaden-huetten to white people. One of the converts, Richard Conner, was allowed to stay. In 1808, his son, Henry Conner, married Theresa Tremblay, daughter of Louis Michael Tremblay, and they settled on her father's estate. The property was situated along the Rivière du Grand Marais, known by this time as Tremblay's Creek. Henry Conner was paymaster to the Indians and known as "White Hair" by the Chippewas. In 1818, he became supervisor of Grosse Pointe Township, and the name of Tremblay's Creek was changed to Conner's Creek.

OTHER EARLY FRENCH SETTLERS

Meldrum

George Meldrum arrived in Detroit around 1768 from Old Meldrum in northern Scotland. He spoke fluent French and married Marie Catherine

11. In 1767, he had married Cecilia Yax, sister of Mary Catherine.

12. Sugars, W. P., Tales of a Forgotten Village, (Ypsilanti, Mich.: University Lithoprinters, Inc., 1953), pp. 18-19.

13. Variations to be found are: Conner Creek, Connor Creek, and Connor's

Chapoton. The couple settled on a ribbon farm along the Detroit River. During the second half of the nineteenth century, their descendant John William Meldrum and his son Napoleon farmed land on the French lane. John William had married Susanne Tremblay, granddaughter of Louis Michael Tremblay. When she died, he married her sister, Magdalene. Napoleon was a son of the second marriage.

Chauvin

The great-grandfather of Celestin and John Baptist Chauvin, Charles, was born in Quebec in 1702, and died in Detroit in 1772. Celestin's daughter, Elizabeth, was baptized at the Church of the Assumption on July 2, 1854, and John Baptist's son, Charles, on August 13, 1854. Their brother Simon was married there, and his first child, Joseph Simon, baptized on April 18, 1875. Their sister Archange was buried in the parish cemetery. She was unusual for that time in that she outlived three husbands: Peter Tremblay (died 1843), Louis Fournier (died 1857), and Edward Tremblay (died 1875).

Another family of Chauvins, descended from Louis, also lived in the parish during Father Vandendriessche's time. They were Henry Barnaby, his brother Ezechial, and their cousins, Charles and Dominic.

Greffard14

Laurence Greffard was married in Detroit in 1769. His granddaughter, Cecilia, married Hubert Champagne, who was buried in 1853. Charles Greffard, the grandson of Laurence's brother, Louis, was buried in 1870, near his second wife, Marcelline Keeler. Charles' son, Honorius Laurence, had a home on the French Road at the turn of the century.

Champagne

Peter Champagne was born in 1733, and died in Detroit in 1805. He married Regina Christina Tremblay, daughter of Augustine. Their grandson was Hubert Huyet, whose daughters Mary and Monica were baptized at the Church of the Assumption in 1847 and 1850, respectively.

Pitre

John Baptist Pitre, a carpenter, was married in Detroit, in 1773. His grandson, Richard, married Bridget Dalton at the Church of the Assumption, in 1857. Four other grandsons: Louis L., Samuel, Toussaint, and An-

 An illustration of how hard it can be to track down French geneology is that Greffard appears as Grifors on a 19th century map, and is spelled Griffore today. thony were also parishioners. Louis L.'s sons Louis, Charles, and Alexander, and their cousin, Alfred Alexander, lived in the parish and their children were baptized there.

Dubay

The Dubays came to Detroit in the 1700s. Their descendants, Joseph and Anthony Dubay, were parishioners of the Church of the Assumption. Anthony lived on the French Lane. His son John was baptized on February 25, 1849.

Fournier

Abraham Fournier, born in 1780 in French Canada, married Archange Campau in 1802. Both were buried at the Church of the Assumption, in 1854 and 1862, respectively. Their son, Eli Hilary, had nine children, all baptized in the church. Another son, Abraham, was the father of Richard Amandus, baptized on June 4, 1851, and the first of many babies to be named after Father Vandendriessche. Mary Ann Fournier, the sister of Eli Hilary and Abraham, married Leander Rivard.

Cartier

Peter Cartier was born in the province of Quebec in 1790 and buried in Detroit in 1840. His son, Peter, had five children baptized at the Church of the Assumption.

Laderoute

Francis Seguin, who changed his last name to Laderoute, died in Detroit in 1747. His grandson, Joseph Laderoute, married Mary Teresa Tremblay, daughter of Peter Tremblay, in 1751. Their granddaughter, Felicity, married Leo Rivard. Joseph and Mary Teresa were both buried in the church cemetery on July 14, 1877. Mary Teresa's sister, Julia, had married Edward Tremblay. They were buried in 1856 and 1875, respectively.

Ignatius and John Baptist were also grandsons of Joseph Laderoute and Mary Teresa Tremblay. Several of their children were married in the parish in the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s. John Baptist, Eli Hilaire, Charles, and Benjamin Alphonse, all sons of John Baptist, lived in the parish.

Peltier

Andrew Peltier came to Detroit in 1760. His granddaughter, Mary Ann Fournier, was buried in the church cemetery in 1857. His grandson Simon and Simon's wife, Mary Archange Paget, were buried there in 1873 and 1862, respectively. Eight of Simon's ten children were baptized, married, or

buried at the Church of the Assumption. His nephew, Timothy, married Octavia May there, in 1869.

Laferte

Toussaint Laferte, grandson of Louis, who came to Detroit in the early 1760s as a tailor, had four children baptized at the Church of the Assumption in 1851, 1855, 1858, and 1861.

FORT GRATIOT TRAIL

After the devastating fire of 1805, Detroit's growth took on new vitality. Civic leaders such as Judge Augustus Woodward dreamed of rebuilding the city after the model of Washington, D.C., with avenues 200 feet wide leading out from Grand Circus Park like the spokes of a wheel. One of these projected avenues was Gratiot.

The Fort Gratiot Trail was a military road named after a colonel in the army of General William Henry Harrison. It was opened a little after 1820, giving the soldiers a direct route between Fort Shelby, in Detroit, and Fort Gratiot, on the St. Clair River a few miles from Lake Huron. The road followed the trail cleared by the Moravians near Mt. Clemens to bring their produce to market in Detroit. Taverns were built along the Fort Gratiot trail to accommodate travelers. One was built midway between Detroit and Port Huron, another at Tremblay's Creek, and in 1821, the "Four Mile House" was built near the present intersection of Harper and Gratiot. In 1825, Eli Fournier acquired the land south across the Gratiot trail from the Four Mile House and built a hotel there. The settlement which grew up at this crossroads became known as Leesville, after Charles Lee, who immigrated to Detroit from England, in 1832.

In 1835, the Army built a wagon road along the Gratiot trail and soon after paved it with planks to make it passable over the marshes. The road was officially named the Moravian Highway, but the name that stuck was Fort Gratiot Road. Friend Palmer, a contemporary, described it in 1845 as "a lonely road through the wilderness with almost no house except the taverns."

HAMTRAMCK TOWNSHIP

The Church of the Assumption was first located in Hamtramck Township¹⁶, a division of land created after the War of 1812 and named for Colonel John F. Hamtramck, of Quebec. He had joined the American army during the Revolutionary War and in February, 1793, served under Anthony Wayne in the Northwest. As Commander of Detroit during the American occupation, he won the affection and respect of the city. When he died in 1803, he was buried in St. Anne's churchyard.

MORE FIRST FAMILIES

Schoenherr

Michael Schönherr¹⁷ went to Pennsylvania from Alsace-Lorraine before moving to Michigan in 1827. He settled on a 160-acre federal land grant in Wayne County near the Macomb County line. His sons were Michael, John, Victor, and Paul. John raised a family of nineteen children, one of whom, Alex, married Ida Schmidt. They were the parents of Bishop Walter Joseph Schoenherr, presently an Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit. Two of John's other children were Charlie and Ray. When Charlie died in 1976, he had served Mass for every one of Grotto's pastors. His first wife was Delia Rivard, daughter of Leander and sister of Alfred Trombly's wife, Rose, and of Father James Rivard. His second wife was Molly Roberts. Ray, Jr. today continues to run the real estate business started by his father across Mapleridge from the church. Ray and Charlie's cousins, Pete and Mandy Schoenherr, were long associated with the tavern business on the southwest corner of Seven Mile and Gratiot.

Juif

Dagobert Juif arrived in Detroit in 1828 from Balfour, France, and operated the grist mill at Seven Mile and Gratiot. The mill was located back from Gratiot where Montgomery Ward's now stands. He married Julia Prevost with whom he had seven children, three boys, Frank, James and George, and four girls, Caroline, Justine, Emma and Josephine.

^{16.} The area became part of Grosse Pointe Township in the late 1840s, and of Gratiot Township in 1909.

^{17.} Schönherr was later anglicized to Schoenherr.

Gitre

Joseph Gitre came to Detroit from France sometime in the 1820s or 1830s. The family originally owned a coal company. He and his wife, Helena, had six children.

Greiner

John and Catherine Greiner moved to Detroit from Alsace-Lorraine, in 1831. John was a schoolteacher and later became a farmer. They brought with them their four children: John Paul, Nicholas, Andrew, and Michael. Six more children were born to them in this country: Joseph, Catherine, George, Charles, Peter Paul, and Caroline. The Greiners lived in a large frame farmhouse across Gratiot from the Church of the Assumption. The family became prominent and gave their name to the area, the post office being alternatively known as Conner's Creek and Greiner, Michigan¹⁸. The post office was Michael's and was part of the brick house and store which he built south of his parents' house on Gratiot. Nicholas preceded Michael as postmaster and his house was north of Michael's facing Seven Mile Road. When Father Vandendriessche was appointed pastor, Nicholas Greiner invited him to live at his house until he could build a rectory. Michael was married to Catherine Pulcher and their children were Mary, Edward, Caroline, Josephine, Rose, Grace, James, Emma, and Martin Celestine. Mary became the wife of David Trombly. Emma married Herman Mayer and, after her death, he married her sister, Rose. Joseph Greiner, the brother of Michael and Nicholas, lived on a farm on Seven Mile and Pumpkin Hook.

German Immigrants from Neustadt

The German settlers from Neustadt who arrived between 1830 and 1832 settled along what came to be known as the Hessian Road, today Houston-Whittier. The Hessian Road was also known as Taylor Road. According to Michael Diegel: "Groll opened a tailor shop on the corner of Gratiot. The old Hessian road led to the shop. Eventually, they called it the 'tailor' road, but we spelled it T-a-y-l-o-r!"

Ludwig Diegel and Engelbert Reichenbach filed a joint claim to President Andrew Jackson for 80 acres of farmland. Other families who had taken part in the group migration from Germany were the Grolls, the Jahns, the Huhns, and the Rheins. The Germans attended their log chapel on the Fort

- A post office for the area was established in 1855 and designated "Conner's Creek." From 1893 until 1899, the name was changed to Greiner. It was known as Conner's Creek again until 1907.
- Spilos, Steve, "Many German Street Names are Reminders of Pioneer Hessians," Northeast Detroiter, December, 1958.

Gratiot road when they had a visiting priest; otherwise, they made the long trip in to St. Anne's. In 1835, St. Mary's German Catholic Church was built at St. Antoine and Monroe, and they went there until Father Vandendreissche became their resident pastor, in 1852.

Ludwig and Elizabeth Diegel had five children: Anthony, Elizabeth, Henry, Catherine, and Louis. Anthony married Margaret Girard; Elizabeth and Catherine married Nick and George Greiner; Henry married Amelia Groll. Louis remained on the family farm. With his wife, Elisabeth Bucher, he had eight children: George, Mary, Josephine, Albert, Michael, Rose, Cecelia, and Laura. Mary became the wife of August Burkel, and George the husband of Mary Rivard. Michael Diegel was a member of the parish until his death a few years ago.

Engelbert and Christina Reichenbach had five children: Margaret, who married John Klein; Anthony, who married Wilhelmina Todenbier; Henry, who married Louise Glaser; John, who became a priest; and Christina, who married George Jahn.

Lang

Joseph John Lang was born in 1780 in Prussia. He was one of the first settlers on the Hessian Road. His son, Joseph John, helped build the Church of the Assumption and Joseph John's son, Philip, later hauled stones for the Grotto. Philip had several sons. Arnold and his wife, Florence, live today in East Detroit. Norman's widow, Evelyn, lives nearby. The widow of Ervin, Isabell Kelly Lang²⁰, lives in Fraser, and Clarence's widow, Bernadette Hoefer Lang, lives in the Grotto parish.

Young

Nicholas and Mary Noblet Young arrived in Detroit from Alsace-Lorraine, in 1833. The family became large landowners. In 1853, Nicholas Young bought a section of land from Michael Frank for \$3,800. Frank had bought the property for \$500 in 1842 from Martin Croneweth, who had bought it as a homesteader from the government in 1835. Out of this section of land, Nicholas was able to leave each of his children eighty acres. His children were Nicholas, Anthony, Joseph, Michael, Steven, Catherine and Margaret. Anthony Young was born in 1838 in a log cabin on the old Hessian Road before the family moved to Seven Mile Road. His parents carried him to St. Anne's in Detroit to be baptized. He later farmed a hundred acres on Seven Mile Road. He and his wife, Euphrasie Denewith, raised seven children: Charles, August, Mary, Rose, Joseph, Stella, and Delia, who is still

20. Kelly Road was named for her father, John Kelly.

a member of the parish. Georgina and Rose, daughters of Nicholas and Margaret Young, continue to live today in their family home on Mapleridge.

Baumgartner

Wendelin Baumgartner left Germany in 1834 during a time of severe economic depression. He arrived in America almost penniless, but due to his talents as a businessman and farmer, ultimately became one of the leading citizens of the Conner's Creek area. He married Franziska Anselm in Germany. Their children were: Catherine; Frances; Anthony, who married Teresa Zuger; Wendelin; Elizabeth, who married Januarius John Tremblay; Henry; Catherine, who joined the Order of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at Monroe, and was thereafter known as Sister Marie Gonzaga, I.H.M.; Fridolin, who was ordained to the priesthood in 1876, and was Chancellor of the Detroit Diocese from 1894 until 1912; George, who married Margaret Dalton; and Mary, who became the wife of John Schmidt.

FATHER VAN

Father Amandus Vandendriessche was uniquely qualified to be a pioneer priest. He spoke four languages, French, Flemish, German, and English, which permitted him to communicate with his diverse parishioners. He was also a man of energy, with resources of faith and imagination. Through the next forty years, he would have many occasions to draw upon both his physical and spiritual reserves to overcome the obstacles and endure the hardships of leading a struggling young parish.

FROM LOG CHAPEL TO BRICK CHURCH

The priest's first task was to build a proper church. When he presented the Bishop with his plans for a large structure, the latter replied that such a project was too ambitious for the means of the parish. Father Van was not to be discouraged, however. Since the area was rich in lumber and blue clay, it was decided that the parishioners would as far as possible build their own church. Kilns were built, the bricks were fired, wood was cut, and the new church was completed in 1852, in time to celebrate Mass at Christmas. It was dedicated on May 1, 1853, by Bishop Lefevere. The church was a large brick structure, 107' x 64', with a seating capacity of about 500. The old log

chapel was moved southwest on the church property and turned into a replica of the stable at Bethlehem²¹.

There is no record of the date of construction of the wooden frame schoolhouse which stood across the street from the church, although Arthur Trombly reports that in 1894, the building looked as though it was already at least thirty years old. In any case, it is clear that from the beginning, the parish had trouble meeting the extra expense of supporting the school. Father Van wrote the following report in 1856:

Whereas many exertions have been made for some years, in order to support a Catholic school in this parish and that notwithstanding all their efforts, the parishioners have not been able to procure it a regular support, a meeting was announced by the Rev. pastor. During the meeting a plan was proposed, discussed, and finally unanimously adopted; which if carried out will in a short time prove its numerous advantages. The proposed plan sounds thus: that the school should be supported by a voluntary subscription; that any person may send as many children and whenever he pleases without any extra pay. From this you perceive that provision has been made to procure a religious education to all poor and rich; that it will be an encouragement to send the children to school whenever they can spare them a couple of days and moreover their contribution may be considered as an alms. We have entered the proceedings of this meeting with the respective subscriptions in the parochial register, that in ages to come our descendants may feel grateful and pray for all those who have contributed to procure them a true and religious education.

MISSION WORK

The young priest had a warm, gregarious personality and soon became Father Van to his flock. He seemed tireless, although his duties led him out in all weathers to minister to the sick and dying. On weekends, he went by horseback or carriage to remote parts of the parish to say Masses at private homes, which were attended by people from miles around. He also served as visiting pastor at parishes which were just forming, such as St. Clement's in nearby Center Line, which he attended from 1854 to 1858, until the appointment of the first resident pastor.

From February to November, 1851, Father Van visited the parish of St. Mary's of Redford. Six years later, he returned as peacemaker between the Bishop and the parishioners. Through his tact, Father Van was able to rescue the parish from its own disharmony when the mission was threatened with

Later, the building is said to have served as a residence for an elderly couple named Deloor, and was finally destroyed by fire in 1882.

closure. "His charity prevailed where harshness would have failed." With the Bishop's permission, he reopened the church in July, 1857, and served it for three months before a resident pastor was appointed.

In the 1850s, Father Van attended the Catholics of the Junction, later known as Roseville, south of Mt. Clemens on Gratiot Road. Many of them were former parishioners of the Church of the Assumption, as well as recent Belgian and Irish immigrants who had settled there to farm. Father Van was a builder and was instrumental in bringing the early wooden churches in Roseville and Utica into being. On June 16, 1865, Bishop Lefevere dedicated the Church of the Sacred Heart, located today in Roseville at Gratiot and Utica Roads. The mission remained attached to Assumption Parish until the appointment of its first resident pastor, in 1873. In the late 1860s, Father Van also visited Utica, a village located northwest of the Junction, where forty Catholic families, mostly Irish, were living. A church site was purchased in June, 1866, and on August 16, 1874, the Church of St. Lawrence of Utica was dedicated.

Besides attending to his regular duties, Father Van conducted missions in outlying areas. On August 26, 1874, he opened a mission at the French settlement of Pinnebog. Three days later, he opened another at St. Michael's Chapel in Port Austin, the first mission to be given in this wooded region.

Father Van was energetic in his own parish in developing and beautifying the church grounds. When the rectory was built, he attached a greenhouse where flowers and plants were grown all year round for the altar. Like his parishioners, he also planted a vegetable garden. The old rectory was built farther forward on the property than the present one, and Father Van's kitchen, which had a well in it, was located in the back, approximately where Monsignor Sawher's office is now in the front of the rectory. In the place where the clay had been dug out to make bricks for the church, a pit formed and filled with water. In the winter, the schoolchildren slid on the ice during recess. There was an island in the center and Father Van built a little bridge and a shelter with wooden lattice-work. During the summer months, flowers grew there.

ARCHDIOCESAN RECORDS

There are only two mentions of assistants to Father Van in the early Archdiocesan records. The first priest, who was not named, was described as

22. Saint Lawrence of Utica: 1866-1951, (Detroit: Gabriel Richard Press, 1951), p. 11.

"old and infirm." He came from the Diocese of Munster, in Westphalia, Germany, and was recommended by the Archbishop of Cincinnati. He was assigned to the Church of the Assumption on June 14, 1866.

In August, 1867, Reverend William Hendrickx, from the Netherlands, was sent to the Church of the Assumption as assistant to Father Van and to attend the congregation in Center Line. In September, 1868, he was appointed pastor of St. Clement's, in Center Line. He would later become the first pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows, in Detroit. Father Van performed a marriage there, in April, 1887.

Information forms sent out by Bishops Peter Paul Lefevere, in 1869, and Caspar Henry Borgess, in 1870, show that during these years Father Van was "Pastor of Souls" of the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at Conner's Creek, and of the missions of the Sacred Heart, at the Junction, and St. Joseph's, in Utica. In both 1869 and 1870, Father Van asked for permanent priests to be appointed to the Junction and Utica.

One hundred and fifty families belonged to the Church of the Assumption. Children made their First Communion at the age of twelve. Catechism was taught three times a week, the classes lasting from a quarter of an hour to two hours. After the question: "What time is allotted in each Congregation for hearing confessions?" the answer in 1869 and 1870 was: "All the time that the people desires." Public services were held at the Assumption every Sunday and holy day. In 1870, the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given every Sunday and holy day, three times a week during Lent, and twice a week in the month of May. There were three church societies: the Altar Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with about 90 members; the Society of St. Sebastian, with about 45 members; and the St. Joseph's Society²³, with about 80 members.

In 1869, Father Van furnished the following list of vestments and sacred articles: 4 white chasubles, 2 red, 2 green, 1 violet, 1 black; 2 white capes, 1 black; 3 albs; 3 surplices; 3 chalices; 1 ciborium; 1 monstrance; linens for the altar; and 5 rituals; of which the following belonged to Father Van: 1 black and 1 white complete vestments, 2 albs, and 3 surplices.

In 1869 and 1870, the following sources of support were listed: the use of about 12 acres of land and \$400 from the Assumption. The system employed for raising salaries was "voluntary subscriptions." In answer to: "Furnish a list of those heads of families who refuse to pay salary," no names were

^{23.} The St. Joseph's Society was an organization of men whose purpose was to "collect by quarterly contributions from its members a fund by which sick and needy members, or in cases of death the widows and orphans of such, can be supported."

listed in either 1869 or 1870. The largest source of church income was pew rents: \$740.50 in 1869, and \$722.15 in 1870. The teacher's salary was \$550 in 1869 and \$600 in 1870. Other major expenses were furniture, painting, and repairs for the priest's house and schoolhouse, and \$796.95 in 1870 for a new altar.

The accounts for 1873 show that \$894 was raised in pew rents. During this year, the church was paying for an organ, a new altar, and new benches. Expenses came to \$3,490.48, and receipts were \$2,000.44. The difference was made up by interest-bearing loans from parishioners Rosa Vanlandeghem and Henry Diegel, and by a loan from Father Van.

In 1873, Father Van was informed that Father Francis Hendrickx had been appointed pastor at the Junction, and that he was consequently relieved of his duties at the mission.

In 1873, an article appeared in the Western Home Journal which paints a charming picture of Father Van's country parish:

We arrived at the close of High Mass, regretting we had not dispensed with attending Church services in Detroit and started earlier, as it was 'Procession Sunday,' and we should have witnessed that beautiful ceremony of Catholic countries, so generally dispensed with in America.

Conner's Creek is about eight miles from Detroit, and is possessed of a good farming country, and though the prospect in winter is never pleasant, we were pleased with the picturesque scenery, clothed though it was in a mantle of 'beautiful snow,' while the comfortable homes and well stocked barnyards gave the best evidence of the industry and prosperity of the inhabitants.

The parish contains about one hundred and fifty families, estimated at one thousand souls, and is under the charge of Father Van Driss, who is a most laborious worker in God's vineyard, one of his regular visits necessitating a trip of thirty-two miles, and who has also ministered to the wants of the Grosse Point Parish during the absence of its pastor in Europe. Father Van D. contemplates a visit to his native land at the end of the twenty-fifth year of his pastorate.

The church is of brick, and of moderate dimensions, but its interior adornments would reflect credit upon any of our city edifices. The frescoing is chaste and artistic in its tastefulness, while its niches of carving and statuary are far more elaborate and valuable than are possessed by any other church in the state. We especially noticed the exquisite design and workmanship of the pulpit, while we deemed the penitents of Conner's Creek the most fortunate of mortals, as the sight of their church's Confessionals would, of itself, bring the most obdurate sinner to repentance.

Our visit was made memorable by our unexpected meeting with our old schoolmate and friend, Mr. Richard Pulcher. Mr. Pulcher is, next to the good clergyman, the most valuable man in his community, being at once Dominie, Organist, Leader of the Choir, &c., and as we followed him around the beautiful little church, and listened to the 'Adeste Fideles,' which had never before sounded half as sweet to our ears, we deemed our friend most fortunate, in having his life cast in such pleasant places.

We need hardly say that during our visit, we met many warm friends, among others, W. Baumgartner, Esq.; but we feel especially honored in being indebted to the generous hospitality of Michael Greiner, Esq., and his estimable lady, our host and hostess to whom we chiefly owe the many pleasures of our visit.²⁴

As time went on, it became increasingly clear that Father Van was a highminded individual who was not particularly adept at handling the mundane details of finances. On January 15, 1874, the Bishop's secretary, Father Henry Schutjes, sent him a note chastising him for the church's increased indebtedness, the low revenues from pew rents and collections ("What a shame for such a rich congregation" and the fact that in 1873, Father Van did not receive his salary in full.

THE BUILDING OF THE GROTTO

On October 6, 1875, Father Van celebrated his Silver Jubilee. The priests in attendance were his brother, Reverend Charles Driscoll, S.J., Reverend William Corby, C.M.C., and the Reverend Fathers Ganthier and Decker. Three days later, Bishop Borgess sent him the following letter:

We learned with regret from Very Rev. Peter Hennaert, V.G., that you are in a very debilitated state of health which is attributed to an excess of labor imposed upon yourself by an immoderate zeal. Therefore, in justice to you and prompted by the kindest of motives we believe it our duty of confining the jurisdiction given to you of exercising the holy ministry to the limits of the congregation of the Assumption of the Bl. Virgin, Wayne Co. . . .

Several months later, Father Van returned to Belgium for his first visit since coming to America. The solemn High Mass he dedicated to his deceased parents and relatives in Kachtem on July 27, 1876, was attended by about fifty priests. From there, he went on to Lourdes²⁶ to make his devo-

- Trainor, W., "Conner's Creek," The Western Home Journal, Detroit, February 15, 1873.
- All references to correspondence to and from the Bishop's office are from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit.
- 26. The shrine of Lourdes is located in the Pyrenees Mountains, in France. There, in 1858, the Virgin Mother appeared several times to a peasant girl, later canonized as Saint Bernadette. A spring appeared and the site of the apparitions became a place of worship. From that time on, shrines in imitation of the grotto of Lourdes have been built all over the world.

tions to Our Lady and try to renew his failing health. His visit inspired him so much that he resolved to build a replica of the Grotto of Lourdes behind the Church of the Assumption. The shrine would be the outward expression of his own devotion to the Blessed Mother, and would provide his fellow Americans with the opportunity of worshipping at an outside shrine.

When he returned to Detroit, Father Van built a little chapel on a mound in the rear of the churchyard grounds. He made a path through the cemetery leading to the shrine bordered on each side by a double row of pine trees. On the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Blessed Sacrament was borne down the path to the chapel in a procession. The chapel was later moved to the side of the cemetery when the Grotto was constructed.

PLAN FOR A "HOME FOR THE POOR"

In December, 1876, Father Van received a letter from Bishop Borgess regarding the home for the poor of the parish which Father Van had expressed an interest in establishing. During their conversation, Bishop Borgess had agreed to the plan, but he now qualified his approval: "It must be distinctly understood, that neither now nor hereafter the mission of Connors Creek, or the pastor, or the Diocese of Detroit shall in any manner whatever be held responsible for the keeping up, or maintaining, or providing for said 'Home'." As Father Van was soon to have all he could do to raise funds for the building of the Grotto and an adequate schoolhouse, it is not surprising that the home for the poor never progressed beyond the planning stages.

At the beginning of 1877, Bishop Borgess received a letter in French from a member of the Church of the Assumption which marked the beginning of a decade of conflict between the priest and a dissatisfied faction of his parishioners. The author of the letter complained that upon his return from Belgium, Father Van had dismissed the male instructor at the school. Promising that he would soon find nuns to teach, he had first hired a fifteen-year-old girl from Detroit, and then a Mademoiselle Juif, daughter of one of the parish families. The latter had turned down a job offer in Canada to accept the position. He had then replaced Mlle. Juif with a girl who had returned with him from Belgium. The parishioner complained that the Belgian teacher's English was so limited that the students corrected her, and ended by asking the Bishop if the children might still be allowed to make their First Communion if they attended public school.

There were two major complaints which would continue to be directed at Father Van: 1) the inadequacy of the teacher and the schoolhouse, and 2) the priest's manner of raising and disbursing church funds. Father Daniel Reilly

considered this "the conflict of wills between the independent parishioners, mostly farmers, and the zealous and equally strong-willed pastor."

In 1878, Father Schutjes admonished Father Van for not receiving his full salary during the year, as well as for having borrowed \$69.54 from Mr. Baumgartner, the parish treasurer, and having neglected to credit it to the church's account. Because of this oversight, Father Schutjes did not consider it to be the church's debt and refused to repay it.

In January, 1879, Bishop Borgess received another letter of complaint from two of Father Van's parishioners, John C. Pulcher and Jerome Trembly. In it, they indirectly accused their priest of having paid for his trip to Europe in 1876 with money raised by the congregation to pay off the church's debt. They also protested against a tax levied on all parishioners for the priest's salary. The normal church practice was to regulate the pew rents so that the income would pay for all ordinary expenses, including salaries. They charged that the priest had refused to hear the confessions of those who refused to pay the salary tax, had threatened to withhold absolution from them, and had insulted them from the pulpit. They also accused their priest of bad faith in having taken up Sunday collections for seven or eight years to pay for a main altar and then having spent the money for a side altar on the right, and afterwards having gone into debt again for a side altar on the left.

The authors of the letter stated that their families had built the church and sacrificed so that their descendants would have a place to worship. They now resented travelling a long distance in bad weather in order to confess because their own priest refused to hear them.

Father Van soon received a letter from Father Schutjes asking him to respond to the charges made to the Bishop. Within a few days, the Church Committee of 1878: Anthony Baumgartner, August Groll, Anthony Pfent, and Joseph Pulcher, had sent a letter to the Bishop, defending their priest and castigating his attackers. In regard to the accusation that he was using the church's resources to satisfy his own "notions," they stated: "We do not see that our priest spent any money to satisfy his notions, except they should mean decorating the church, ornamenting the graveyard, or building the schoolhouse, and this we leave to your judgment; but with regards to personal comforts, he is far behind all the priests we know."

On February 4, 1879, Father Schutjes wrote to Father Van that such accusations would not have arisen if the account books had not been kept in a confused manner. He ordered him to hire a competent bookkeeper to straighten them out, and to raise the pew rents to a level where they would provide for the ordinary expenses of the church.

^{27. &}quot;caprices," in French.

Apparently, Father Van and his committee did not heed the Bishop's order to raise the pew rents, because at the end of January, 1880, Father Schutjes ordered him to read the following statement at High Mass:

 The odious and unusual system of paying dues for salary is forever abolished. Those who do not rent any pew must contribute to the support of the church a reasonable amount according to their means.

2d. Those who have paid any sum of money for dues or salary since January 1st 1880, can call on the Committee, and the amount

paid will be refunded.

3d. A regular and fixed price will be put upon the pews, said price to be sufficient to pay all the ordinary expenses of the church. This must be done immediately. It is positively forbidden to charge different prices for the same pews to different parties.

4th. If the Committee refuses to rent a vacant pew to anyone, or if the Committee demands dues for salary, by this very fact the

Committee is discharged.

In a report to the Chancery in 1881, Father Vandendriessche reported that there were 100 pews in the church, for which he received \$10 to \$20 each.

THE GROTTO

In the midst of these troubles, Father Van had been trying to raise money to build the Grotto. Early in 1880, Father Schutjes cautioned him that no improvements "whatsoever" could be made until the church's debt of \$1,000.16 was paid in full. In 1881, the Bishop wrote: "The 'Grotto' is a pure matter of devotion, and no necessity whatever. But as it is no necessity, why go into such a serious debt? Why not wait patiently until devotion has furnished the requisite means?" The Bishop's own enthusiasm for the project may be guessed, however, from the fact that he forwarded Father Van the dimensions of the Grotto at Lourdes and offered to pay for the centerstone.

On May 29, 1881, the Grotto was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The cornerstone was laid in a ceremony preceded by a procession down to the site of the shrine. On April 30, 1882, Pope Leo XIII granted Bishop Borgess an audience in Rome during which he signed a proclamation²⁸ authorizing the shrine for devotions. Father Van's request was granted for partial and plenary indulgences for all who visited and prayed there.

The architect for the Grotto was Mr. P. Dederichs, Jr. and the stonecutter, Felix Meier, was in charge of construction. When it was completed, the

28. See Appendix for the text of Pope Leo XIII's proclamation.

shrine was made of boulders which the farmers had laboriously brought in by horse and wagon from all parts of Michigan. One of the young parishioners who worked on the shrine was Charles Lefevere,²⁹ who helped haul stones in from Utica.

The shrine was lined with squared stones. Parish families and church societies had donated the ones which rose up in rows from the marble floor. The names of the popes were engraved on those which spanned the ceiling. The Litany of the Virgin was carved at eye level starting on the left exterior wall of the Grotto and ending on the right. The altar, also cut from rock, was against the rear wall. On it were inscribed the names of the three church societies: the Altar Society, the Society of St. Sebastian, and the Society of St. Joseph. Above the altar, under an arch of lilies, was a statue of Mary, over which was a small oriel window containing the painting of a dove. Another statue of the Holy Mother, shielded by a canopy of stone, was placed at the apex over the centerstone, flanked by two stone angels.

In front of the Grotto was a fountain, around the base of which were written the words: "Glory to the One Triune God, Now and Forever." On the three sides of the stem of the fountain, the words appeared again, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. To the side of the mound was a little chapel, representing the stable of Bethlehem.

The shrine as described was not completely finished in 1881. Expenses for the year 1882 included work on the Grotto: a statue of the Blessed Virgin, an iron fence, a fountain, a stained window, Lourdes holy water, labor, candlesticks, flowers, angels, and linens. In 1883, there were expenses for finishing the roof, carving emblems, sculpting and marble for the cupola, and for the Stations of the Cross in the cemetery.

Carved into the cornerstone on the left, dated A.D. May 29, 1881, are the words: "Upon This Rock I Will Build My Church, Pope Pius IX, R.I.P. and Pope Leo XIII, Presented By This Congregation." The cornerstone on the right reads: "Most Rev. John Carroll, Died 1815, Rt. Rev. P. P. Lefevre, Died March 4, 1869. Donated By Rev. Amandus Vandendriessche." Inside the Grotto, the four rows of stones rising from the floor are inscribed with dedications. The letters carved on some have become illegible over time, but the ones that remain are a treasure of parish history. They read as follows:

In Memory of the LII Year of the Marriage of Philip Wiegand & Anna Mandel

In Memory of Bruno Van Damme, Wife and Family

 Charles used to walk from the family farm on Conner and Warren to the parish school. In Memory of Rev. Father A. F. Bleyenberg, Pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Detroit, 17 yrs., died 1885

Given by Wendelin Baumgartner & Wife Fr. Anselm

Given by Charles Maddelein & W. Rosalia Velyn

Donated by Henry Brinkers and Wife Cath. Koch

Donated by the Boys of the Cath. School of the Assumption

In Memory of Peter Ja. Viaene, July 12, 1865 & W. R. Vandendriessche by Miss Mary Viaene

Patrick Lappin & Wife Mary . . . 30

Donated by John Brinkmann & Wife E. Dreisbach

In Memory of Anthony Schaid by his Wife Anna Reuter

In Memory of Francis Weber by his Wife E. Reichenbach

In Memory of Rev. Gustave Limpens

In Memory of Eva Hauck by Wendelin Sprenger

Given by Hugh McCarran

Donated by Casper Salter

Given by Michael Schoenherr and W. M. A. Young

Given by Philip Kerwin & Edward Chapoton

In Memory of Joseph Gerardy

. . . celebrated his Golden Jubilee 1882, George Godez, Died Jan. 1883, R.I.P.

In Memory of Rev. M. E. E. Shawe, an English Noble & Soldier, Ordained in France was Pastor of the Cathedral of St. Peter & Paul, Detroit, was fatally injured in coming to the consecration of the Assumption Church, died May 10, 1853, R.I.P. Donated by Mrs. Frances Elliott

Given by Gerard Keiles & W. J. Veit

Given by Anthony Baumgartner & W. T. Zuger

Donated by Rev. Theophilus Buyse

To the . . . Very Rev. Gabriel Richard, Elected to Congress in 1825, died Sept. 15, 1832 a Victim of his Heroic Charity in the Cholera '32, Donated by Hon. Wm. G. Thomson, Alex Chapoton, T. P. Hall, W. Y. Hamlin, Mrs. E. V. Watson, George H. Hammond, Daniel Scotten, John Moran, James Edson, Celimene, Beloved Wife of F. F. Palms, R.I.P.

Given by John March

30. Dots (. . .) indicate that the rest of the inscription is undecipherable.

Donated . . . Rev. L. Sifferath

Given by Blasius Zuger & W. J. Elspas

Donated by Rev. G. Tileck

Silver Jubilee Nov. 5, 1882, of Very Rev. Ed. Joos as Director of the Sisters Servants of the I.H.M.

In Memory of Michael Kratz by his W. E. Arnauld

Donated by Rev. J. Francis Broegger

In Memory of Jer. O'Leary & W. M. O'Sullivan by Florence O'Leary

Donated by Rev. Camillus P. Maes, Sec.

. . . Winkelmeier

. . . Waterschoot

Donated by John Salter

Donated by . . . Wife Marg. Girard

Donated by Anth'y Reichenbach & W. Odenbier, Records their S. Jubilee Oct. 29, 1882

Given by Francis Ternes and W. Helen Brinkers

In Memory of Louis Diegel by his Wife E. Reichenbach

In Commemoration of my First Mass Celebrated April 9, 1882, Rev. D. C. Coyle

In Memory of my Prematurely Departed Parents Louis Compeyn, Renilde Constance De Donder, Donated by Mary Elodia C. Compeyn

Donated by Henry Diegel & Wife Mag. Schoenherr

Donated by Anthony Phent & Wife Mar. Brinkers

Donated by Thomas Corby & Wife Anna Lappin

Donated by John Corby & Wife A. Trombly

Donated by the Girls of the Cath. School of the Assumption

Given by John Kelly & Wife . . . Collins

. . . Corby . . . Wife Mary Foley

Word of the new shrine soon spread and people began to make pilgrimages. Crutches were left behind as a testimony to the power of prayer. An 1883 article from the *Michigan Catholic* related:

Miss S., a young lady who has been a sufferer for years, paid a visit to the Grotto of Our Lady of the Assumption parish recently with the most satisfactory results. Writing to a lady who is herself a sufferer and at present residing in Detroit, Miss S. says: "I am happy

to inform you that I am improving every day. I paid a visit to the Grotto about two weeks ago, since which time I have improved so much that with the help of God I will be able to lay aside my crutches in a few weeks. I am making a Novena and it is to last 33 days. It has done me more good than all the doctors I ever had. I can walk now quite a ways without my crutches, and I attend Mass every morning in spite of the weather.³¹

Pete Dedenbach, born in 1860 and baptized by Father Van, remembered the healings:

Never forgot the boy who doctored all over. They gave him up. His parents heard about the Grotto and came for nine Sundays. The boy was cured—still living today. Weighs 225 pounds.

There was a very pretty young lady. She came here on crutches. Made a novena. One day Father Vandendriessche preached a sermon. 200 people were there. I can still remember his words: "My friends, this young lady is going to walk away cured." She did—and her crutches are still here today.³²

On July 8, 1883, a solemn blessing ceremony for the new Stations of the Cross took place at the Grotto. Reverend Francis Lings, O.S.F. officiated, and Reverend C. P. Maes, Secretary of the Diocese, preached.

In May of 1887, there was a special ceremony at the Grotto celebrating Pope Leo XIII's fiftieth year as a priest. A "Festal Lyric" for the Pope and "May-Song to the Madonna" were composed and sung on the occasion.

As a result of the shrine's fame, the Church of the Assumption began to be known as Assumption (Grotto) Church, or simply as "The Grotto." The church and shrine became landmarks along Gratiot Road and Catholics and Protestants from the neighboring settlements proudly led visitors on tours of the cemetery and Grotto. On the last Sunday in May, the anniversary of its founding, and on August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption, crowds of people visited and attended services. People would often come on foot from the city, just as in Europe they had made pilgrimages to shrines outside their towns.

Sometime during the 1870s or 1880s, a couple named Grambau lived with Father Van as rectory housekeeper and caretaker of the buildings, grounds, cow, and horses. The Grambaus were Lutherans but soon converted to the faith of their beloved employer. Both are buried in the Grotto Cemetery.

 "Diocesan News: Connor's Creek," Michigan Catholic, Thursday, November 29, 1883.

32. Spilos, Steve, Northeast Detroiter, "Tombstones Relate Work Well Done," Northeast Detroiter, February, 1948.

"THE APPROACHING STORM"

In their desire to complete the Grotto, Father Van and his parishioners neglected the problem of replacing the old frame schoolhouse. In August, 1883, a committee wrote a letter of complaint to the Bishop, enclosing copies of a petition and letter which they had presented to Father Van. In the letter, they had said: "Rev. Father, we assure you that all we do is for the welfare of the school and church, namely to avoid the storm, which is rapidly approaching." The following resolutions were put forth in the petition:

Whereas on the 15th day of July, our priest published in church that if the people of the parish wanted Sisters to teach school, he would give them two weeks time to see how they can support them, if they did not make any provisions within the time specified, he would have to make his own arrangements.

Therefore since the Bishop's rules compel all Catholic children to

attend a Catholic school, to which rules we humbly submit.

We are satisfied that our school has not been properly conducted for years, by a teacher, which we were compelled to have, against the will of the majority of the people, and which is not able to conduct our school in a proper manner, therefore, be it resolved.

First To have a change in teachers, Sisters, or a qualified male teacher, with an assistant if necessary.

Second We are willing to build a schoolhouse, and support a good school if properly managed.

The parishioners complained that a young woman was unable to control so many students, and that the old schoolhouse was too small. School enrollment was close to one hundred, all under the care of Mary Compeyn³³, who had come back from Belgium with Father Van in 1876.

Finally, the writers accused their priest of "bad management of the financial part of the Parish." The letter to the Bishop was signed by Anthony Diegel, John Schoenherr, Joseph Pulcher, Georg Jahn, Jerome Trombley, Anthony Baumgartner, and Nicholas Young. For confirmation of their complaints, they referred the Bishop to nine priests, including Father Van's brother, Rev. Charles Driscoll, of Cincinnati, and two priests who had been raised in the parish, Fathers F. Pulcher and Fridolin Baumgartner. The letter to Father Van was signed by sixty-one parishioners, including members of founding families and prosperous landowners, such as Michael Greiner, Anthony Pfent, Dagobert Juif, David Trombly, George Morang, and John Kelly.

She had dedicated a Grotto stone to her deceased parents in 1881, from which
it may be presumed that she was an orphan and Father Van had taken charge
of her.

Father Van's own church committee, Frank Ternes, Bernhart Decker, and Frank Brohl, as well as Joseph Schmitz, a member of the school committee, remained loyal. In their letters to the Bishop and to Father Van they defended him and the schoolteacher and lambasted their attackers. The insults exchanged by both sides illustrate how the attacks and counter-attacks created an episode which split the parish. The priest's defenders spoke of his critics as: "these discontented and disorderly, pretentious self-constituted judges," motivated by "low interest, jealousy, and revenge," saying of one of them that he "would do well to pay the great sum of school money he owes to the teacher," and characterizing another as "a man who should remember the scandals of his family, and never mention this word in speaking of respectable persons."

In October, 1883, Father Van wrote to the Bishop defending the schoolteacher, in a letter which also sheds light on the curriculum of that time:

In the appointment of Miss Mary Compeyn as teacher, I find a lady competent, moral and energetic, as can be attested by impartial witnesses. The branches taught are those which are followed in the District schools, viz: Reading, Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, History, Geography, Composition, Elocution, First principles of Book-keeping, singing and above all the Christian Doctrine.

By May of the next year, Bishop Borgess was encouraging Father Van to apply to teaching orders for Sisters. His suggestion was to contact the Sisters of Christian Charity, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Father Van replied that he had already made an unsuccessful application to them, but that he had been notified by the Sisters of St. Agnes that they would begin teaching at the school in September.

The following month, Bishop Borgess admonished Father Van in stern terms for his continued failure to unite the warring factions in the parish:

It ought to be evident to you from the sad experience of the past, that the unfortunate spirit of opposition is not the work of God, and that it surely will lead to the entire ruin of your parish which is even now in a deplorable state.

Two months later, the new schoolhouse and sisters' residence had not yet been started, and a school committee consisting of James P. Buckley, Peter Girard, Anthony Baumgartner, Georg Jahn, Anthony Pfent, John Schoenherr, and Dagobert Juif complained to the Bishop that the priest had 1. prejudiced wealthy parish subscribers against the project 2. interfered with plans drawn up by the architect, Mr. P. Dederichs, Jr. and 3. sabotaged the school committee's plan to secure a building loan from the Diocese. They

also stated that in violation of diocesan regulations, they had not yet in August been provided with a published report of the preceding year's finances.

Again, Father Van and his church committee wrote back to Bishop Borgess defending the priest's actions, and charging that although the school committee had complained a lot, they had actually done nothing toward building the schoolhouse and Sisters' residence. They also contended that the members of the committee knew that the financial accounts of the previous year had been approved by the Diocese, and that if some of the complainants had not waited over a year to settle their pew rents, the financial report might have been published sooner.

The school issue was not resolved overnight and feelings between the two groups continued to run high. Within the next several years, Mary Compeyn was succeeded first by Dominican Sisters and then by a male lay teacher. The old schoolhouse would not be replaced, however, until the pastorate of Father Charles Bolte, in 1894.

THE PELICAN

Father Van was fervent in his religious practices. Visitors to the cemetery were used to seeing him make the Stations of the Cross on his knees. One of his favorite devotions involved the stone statue of the pelican which now marks his grave. Outside services were conducted around it, especially on the Feast of Corpus Christi. On such occasions, the pelican became a fountain, as water was piped into a hole in the back of its neck and out through its beak.

The pelican is an ancient symbol of self-sacrifice, the myth growing out of a misunderstanding as to how the mother feeds her young: when the pelican dips into her pouch for food, it looks as though she were pulling out pieces of her own flesh. Father Van used the statue in the ceremonies of Corpus Christi because the bird had come to symbolize Christ's love of mankind, for whom He shed His Blood. Father Van may have also found in the pelican a symbol of the fate of the pioneer priest, enduring hardships and privations to bring the nurturing Word of God to his flock.

Charlie Schoenherr, the last parishioner to have attended Assumption Grotto School when Father Van was still pastor, described how the priest constructed three crosses in imitation of Calvary on a hill a couple of blocks past Houston-Whittier. The school-children would walk down Gratiot and up a path along the hill, and pray in front of the crosses. Then, led by the Sisters, they would return to school.

THE COMMUNITY AROUND THE CHURCH

In the 1880s, the plank part of Fort Gratiot Road went along the right side going into the city. It ran from McDougall, the city limits, to French Lane. Tollgates were set up to collect charges for the use and upkeep of the road. From French Lane out, going away from the city, Gratiot was a two-lane gravel road. Mr. Chub, a relative of Emral Zinser, today's plant superintendent, was a tollgate keeper.

The area around the church had developed into a thriving community. All along Gratiot were colonies of people. The Germans were settled on the old Hessian road (Houston-Whittier); French families such as the Rivards, Dubays, Laderoutes, Marsacs, and Meldrums lived along French Lane, now French Road; and the Belgians of Leesville tended their gardens on Cucumber Lane (Georgia) and worked in the local brickyards.

The farmers who settled along Gratiot Road prospered. Besides farmland, the area contained abundant wood for sale in Detroit and clay for bricks. In the early 1800s, Joseph Louis Tremblay, son of Louis Michael Tremblay, operated a water-powered sawmill on Conner's Creek on property deeded to him by the United States, in 1821. But Joseph Louis died young and the mill fell into disuse. His son Eustache, married to Cecelia Rivard, turned the lumberyard into a brickyard and became the pioneer brickmaker of the area.

Eustache Trombly's³⁴ brickyard was on the west bank of Conner's Creek, just south of Gratiot Road. It was an established business in the 1850s. His son Dan managed it in later years until he married and established a farm and lumberwoods farther out. Dan's brother January, or John, married Elizabeth Baumgartner and stayed on with his father, taking over the brickyard and inheriting it when Eustache died, in 1875. The immediate neighborhood around the brickyard included Seifferlein's saloon, a blacksmith shop, and David Trombly's home.³⁵ John Trombly also had an orchard and people from miles around bought his crab apples for jelly.

The change from lumberyard to brickyard was typical of the trend in the area. Because of the abundance of wood, most of the first settlers in Leesville, Conner's Creek, and other nearby villages had engaged in lumbering as well as farming. A narrow gauge railway ran to the Van Dyke woods

34. At some point, the Tremblays yielded to the pressure of the surrounding English-speaking culture and anglicized their name to Trombly.

35. David Trombly was the largest landowner in the area and one of the first graduates of Notre Dame University. He farmed and at different times held the positions of supervisor of Grosse Pointe Township, Wayne County auditor, and moderator of the school district. and the farmers brought logs into the mills on wagons and sleighs. But around 1881, the lumber in the area ran out. The farmers turned to another resource, clay, and brickyards sprang up where the lumberyards had closed down.

Directly across Gratiot from the church was the Pulcher family's property, and directly southwest of them was the Webers' property, where the Ramona Theater used to be. George Weber lived downtown and owned a pottery and china store on St. Antoine and Gratiot. He used his house as a summer home, and there was an orchard behind it. The Greiners' imposing house was next door, where Mt. Zion Lutheran Church stands today. Michael Greiner had served as a representative in the State Legislature in the 1870s and ran the post office. The building also contained a general store and bowling alley, a rarity in those days. The cross street on which his store stood, originally called Grotto Road, was later changed to Greiner Road.

CITY LIMITS

The Detroit city limits continued to advance toward the communities of Leesville and Conner's Creek. In 1857, they were extended to McDougall on the north and Mt. Elliott on the south, along Gratiot Avenue. In 1884, they crossed Gratiot at Sheridan. First Leesville and then Conner's Creek would finally be absorbed by the city in the early part of the twentieth century.

EIGHT MILE HOUSE

Mary and Joseph Wirtz bought the building and land on the southwest corner of Seven Mile and Gratiot from Dagobert Juif, in 1866. The tavern was built sometime between 1875 and 1880. The Wirtzes later sold it to Pete Girard, and it became known as Girard's Eight Mile House. The cross street at Gratiot, called Girard, was later changed to Seven Mile Road. The "mile roads" were measured by their distance from City Hall to their intersections on Woodward. The place where Seven Mile crossed Gratiot was actually eight miles from City Hall; hence the name of the tavern. For a number of years, the Eight Mile House alternated with Michael Greiner's general store as the site of the Conner's Creek post office.

The Eight Mile House was always busy. Besides offering food, drink, and relaxation to travelers, it was a place of refreshment for hunters in the fall and horsedrawn sleighriders in the winter. In the summer, the hotel made a picnic grounds and food available for picnickers.

36. Spilos, Steve, "Land of the Forward Look," Chrysler Magazine, September, 1955.

Between the church and the Eight Mile House were Joe Greiner's and Dagobert Juif's farms. The Juifs' gristmill was on the north side of Gratiot, east of Seven Mile Road. Across Seven Mile from the Eight Mile House was Charley Girard's house, then the district school, and then the Maddeleins' farm. Across Gratiot from the Eight Mile House was Anthony Pfent's house, Pfents' blacksmith shop, and Joe Schmitz's house. The Pfents had also bought the old B. F. Gardner Hotel, at the site of the present Kresge's, and converted it into a hardware store. Anthony Pfent had four sons, Joe, George, Anthony, Jr., and Ed. His head blacksmith for a time was August Fruehauf, who later moved up Gratiot closer to Detroit and began his trailer business. Beyond Pfent's hardware store was George Kelly's cider mill. He and his wife, Mary Juif, lived in a white frame house on the site where Montgomery Ward's now stands.³⁷

The oldest residence still in existence dating from this period is the old Salter house, located today at 15303 Seven Mile Road, near Morang. John Salter and his wife, Sophie Geller Salter, built the house sometime before 1880. Andrew and John Young's mother, Helen A. Salter, was born there, and generations of the Young family were subsequently raised in it.

Paul Schoenherr opened Schoenherr Road from Girard (Seven Mile) to Pig Tail Alley, or State Fair. What is now Kelly Road was first known as Pumpkin Hook after someone "hooked" Casper Salter's pumpkins. The Terneses, Grants, Diegels, Buckleys, Salters, and Kellys all lived there. The name was changed to Kelly Road by John Kelly, a Gratiot Township justice of the peace, who lived opposite the present site of Denby High School. He placed a sign on his barn which said "Kelly Road" and the name took hold.

Greiner, or the Grotto Road, began at the junction of the Townline Road (now Hoover). The community there was known as "Smock Town" because the men—the Ackleys, Trombleys, Kettles, Metters, Schroeders, and Gietzens—all wore blue jackets when they farmed.³⁸

Spilos, Steve, "Anthony Pfent's Blacksmith Shop," Northeast Detroiter, October, 1947.

^{38.} Spilos, Steve, "Pranksters were Busy in Early Northeast Detroit," Northeast Detroiter, November, 1957.

FATHER VAN'S SISTER

In 1876, Father Van's sister, Rosalia Viaene, accompanied him back from Belgium with seven of her children, a son-in-law, Pieter Olivier, and a grandchild. She had been preceded the year before by another son-in-law, Henri Dumoulin, his wife Julie, and their three children. Rosalia's husband, Petrus, had been killed in an accident at his mill in 1865, and Father Van had written and urged her to come to Detroit, offering to help her build a house. The house was built between 1875 and 1876.

Cyril Viaene and his sister, Mrs. Emma Cnudde, were the only two children to stay in the parish.

FATHER VAN'S LAST YEARS

In 1890, Father Van was described by Silas Farmer as follows:

His life has been one of great activity owing to the constant demands made upon him by his congregation, which is spread over a

large territory.

Of a kind and benevolent disposition, he promptly extends a helping hand to those in need of assistance. Extremely simple in his habits, he lives in a frugal and unostentatious manner, and finds his recreation and pleasure doing deeds of goodness. Although for forty years he has fulfilled the extremely trying and arduous duties of his priestly office, he is still hale and vigorous, and shows but slightly the advances of time.³⁹

On January 2, 1892, Father Van retired as pastor of the Church of the Assumption. His remaining years were spent in the house he owned at 515 East Canfield Avenue, across from St. Albertus Church, where he went to Mass. His housekeeper, Teresa Naumann, had already cared for him for many years. Her young stepbrother came to live with them on Canfield following his mother's death, and the old priest developed a great affection for the child.

After leaving the Grotto, Father Van was free to pursue some of his most ambitious projects. He devised a rhyming dictionary, entitled: Father Van's Progressive Dictionary for Versification. 40 His desire to leave an intellectual legacy was a testimony to the affection he felt for the country he had adopted as a young man. In the "Prologue" he states: "It is beyond controversy that at present English is understood, if not spoken, by half of the civilized world; and that its rapid expansion will ere long made it the language of courts." For the improvement of the English language, he proposed the establishment

40. Published in Detroit by Wm. Graham Printing Co., 1900.

^{39.} Farmer, Silas, History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan, Vol. II, 1890, p. 1302.

of a Grand Columbian Academy to function like the French Academy and have jurisdiction over which words should be accepted into, or dropped from, the language. The name of the Grand Columbian Academy was a tribute to Christopher Columbus, who had opened up a new world of opportunities in which men of vision and energy like Father Van could turn some of their dreams into realities.

In 1900, just before the publication of his dictionary and a year before his death, an article appeared which paints a vivid personal portrait of the priest:

Father Vandendriessche has his sick days and his days on which he feels more like his former self; but the sick days now predominate, when he lies all huddled up in a chair, or stretched on a sofa.

Sitting in his little parlor, discussing the great labor of his latter years, the dictionary and the academy, the aged Belgian priest sips a glass of amber-colored wine and lounges in a big armchair, whose back is higher than his head, a restful place for an old man. His beretta is on the carpet beside him, and his long black robe swings free. His folded hands denote repose. It is a strong face, that, of which the aquiline nose is the symbol. A saving grace, however, is a mild expression ever present . . .

The father sits where, through the rear room, he may see on the wall a lithograph in colors of the grotto at Conner's Creek, where he

was stationed for many years.

On his right and left are holy images of colored plaster, the martyred Jesus, and the virgin, in a flowing white robe, with a blue sash and a long gold rosary at her girdle. There are pots of bright paper flowers in front of the Jesus, and there is also a miniature reproduction in colors of a ship; and not far away, beyond the piano, across the threshold, is an oak sideboard, grotesque heads and geometrical curves deeply cut by a Polish woodcarver. A small bookshelf contains works of reference of the encyclopedic sort. The ordinary furniture of a poor man's home is scattered about, but the window curtains are scrupulously white and unwrinkled, showing the touch of a careful domestic hand . . .

It is with such souvenirs of a simple home life that the declining years of the old scholar are sweetened. But he never forgets the great debt that we, as a nation, owe to Columbus, whose gilded statue stands on a bracket behind the big chair, looking in the direction of the Virgin, on the Crescent Moon, and Jesus Confounding the Wise Men in the Temple. The old man's mind is filled with the vast import of his work to society, the Columbian Academy, recognition of which he is assured will now be taken up by the Michigan University.

'It must be done,' he says as he sinks into the big chair, and his face becomes alight with happy anticipation. To him, it is all very real. He adds, as he folds his hands and looks up from his massive

book of words:

'But first of all, it is for the glory of God!"41

 "The Remarkable Work of an Aged Detroit Priest," Detroit News Tribune, July 1, 1900.

FATHER VAN'S FAMILY

Father Amandus Vandendriessche came from a devout family. His older brother Charles (Karel) had responded to the call for missionaries in the New World by joining the Jesuits in Missouri. Most of his life was spent in the Diocese of Cincinnati, where he died in 1885. At the time, he was pastor of St. Xavier's Church and had changed his name to Driscoll.

A younger brother, Louis (Lodewijk), ordained in Brugge in 1861, had studied for a short time at the American College⁴² in Louvain, Belgium, before coming to Detroit in 1863. After a year's pastorate in Corunna, Michigan, he went to Lansing, where he served for twenty-seven years as pastor and dean, building a church, a rectory, and a school. He died in Belgium in 1901. In America, he was called Van Driss.

Julia Vandendriessche, the sister of Charles, Amandus and Louis, was Superioress of the Convent of St. Clare in the city of Ypres, Belgium.

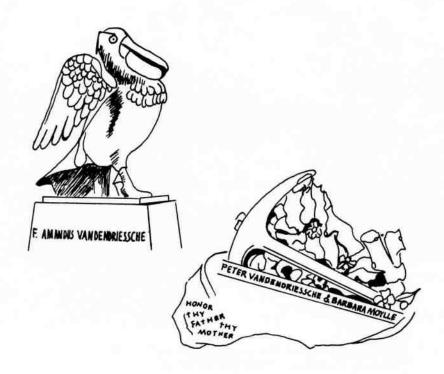
FATHER VAN'S DEATH

On November 23, 1901, Father Vandendriessche lost consciousness on the way to the private chapel in his house and was carried to bed. He died a short time later in the presence of several friends. The funeral took place on November 27th at St. Albertus Church. The Very Reverend Chancellor Fridolin Baumgartner celebrated the Funeral Mass in the place of Bishop Foley, who had missed his train connection from Baltimore. The service was also attended by Father A. P. Ternes, like Father Baumgartner the son of an old parish family. The church was draped in black, and the congregation crowded the aisles. Before the funeral, Father Van had been laid out in his priestly robes, and the old parishioners brought their children and grand-children to view the last remains of the man who had been their spiritual father for forty years. He was buried in the Grotto cemetery near what is now the north front gate.

There are two distinctive gravestones connected with Father Van. One is the large stone which he and his two brothers, Charles and Louis, had carved in honor of their mother and father, who had died in Belgium in 1856 and 1862. The cross is a symbol of faith, the anchor represents hope, and the heart charity. The other stone, on which is set the statue of the pelican, marks Father Van's final resting place, beside the original grave.

Father Van was the last but two of the priests who had been ordained by

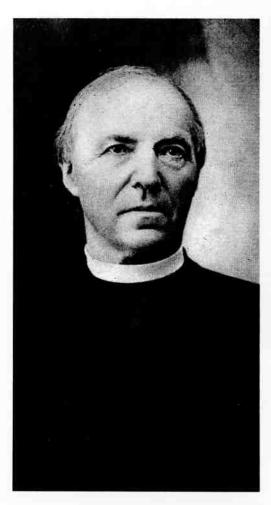
 The college had been founded by Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere and his Vicar General, Father Peter Kindekens, to train priests for the American missions. Bishop Lefevere, head of the Detroit Diocese from 1841 to 1869. Like Bishop Lefevere, Father Van was a pioneer priest, in terms of character as well as circumstances. When he died in 1901, the world had entered upon a century which would present a host of new opportunities and challenges for Grotto's priests and parishioners.





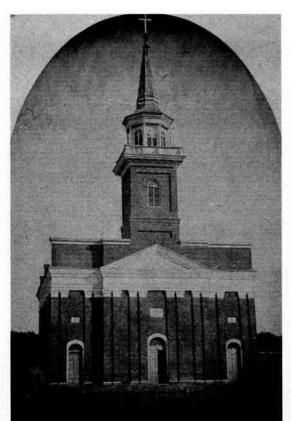


Most Reverend Peter Paul Lefevere, Bishop of Detroit from 1841 to 1869, and Most Reverend Caspar Henry Borgess, Bishop of Detroit from 1870 to 1887. Bishop Lefevere was related to Father Vandendriessche and inspired him to come to Detroit as a missionary. Bishop Borgess brought back from Rome the papal proclamation which granted indulgences to those who prayed at the Grotto. The two prelates tried to moderate Father Vandendriessche's enthusiasm for building a large church and, later, the shrine, but ended up supporting him in both projects.

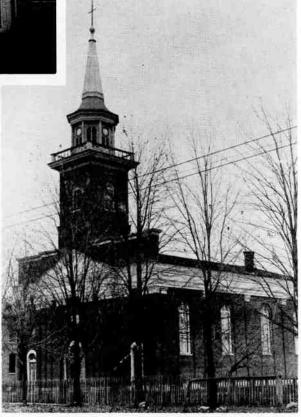




Father Amandus Vandendriessche, pastor of the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary from 1851 to 1891. The picture on the left appeared in Father Van's Progressive Dictionary for Versification, published a year before his death, in 1900.



Two views of Father Vandendriessche's church (1852-1907).





The memorial stone which Father Vandendriessche and his brothers had carved for their deceased parents. The stone rectangle next to it marks Father Vandendriessche's grave.

Interior view of the 1852 church taken during Father Bolte's pastorate (1894-1899).





John Greiner's family, taken before 1869. Seated from the left: John, Caroline, Mrs. John Greiner (Catherine Schable), Catherine, Nicholas, George M. Rich (a friend of the family). Standing from the left: Andrew, George, Joseph, Peter, Michael. John Greiner was born in January 1800, and died May 19, 1855. A son, Charles, died in 1858. The Greiner sons and daughters pictured had a total of 102 children.

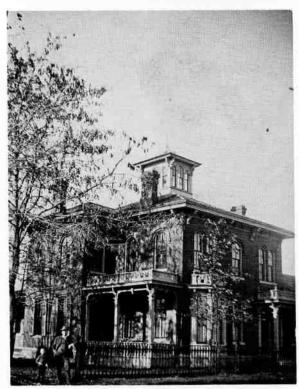
The Salter home, built in about 1870. The picture was taken around 1880.

On the front porch, from left to right are Casper, Joseph, Mrs. John Salter (Sophie Geller) holding John, Helena (mother of Andrew Young), Casper, Mary, and John Salter (son of Casper). The house still stands at 15303 Seven Mile Road.





Michael Greiner (1830-1899).
Michael Greiner served as a
Michigan State Representative in
1875-1876, and was elected to
the State Senate in 1884. In the
early 1880s, he became
postmaster of the Conner's
Creek post office and later
served as justice of the peace.



Michael Greiner's house stood on the present site of the Mt. Zion Lutheran Church kitty corner from the Grotto Church. Attached to it on the right (not visible in the picture) were his general store, post office, and bowling alley. The picture was taken around 1906.



One of the oldest tombstones in the cemetery belongs to Ludwig Diegel, whose dates are August 19, 1800, to June 15, 1855.



The artist's drawing for the Grotto shrine, designed by P. Dederichs, Jr., Architect.

COUNTRY PARISH

FATHER MARKER

BISHOP JOHN S. FOLEY APPOINTED FATHER RUDOLPH MARKER to replace Father Van at the Church of the Assumption. Born in 1848, he was the son of pioneers of the great German immigration. In 1854, his family moved from Detroit to Wayne, where they lived for nearly twenty years. Father Marker studied at St. Mary's of the West, in Cincinnati, and later at Assumption College, Sandwich, Ontario. He was ordained by Bishop Caspar Henry Borgess on June 18, 1883, and sang his first Mass at St. Joseph's, in Detroit, the parish in which he had been born and where he received his First Communion. Before coming to Assumption Grotto, he served at Ruth and at Paw Paw.

Upon his arrival, Father Marker caused some ill feelings between himself and Father Van by burning all the refuse in the buildings and on the grounds. The older priest was upset to see things which he had saved go up in smoke. Because of clashes resulting from personality differences and problems in straightening out financial matters, Father Van elected to move to his own house rather than remain at Assumption Grotto as Pastor Emeritus.

Father Marker's assignment at Grotto was only from January 2, 1892, to January 3, 1894. During his pastorate, he faithfully kept up the devotion to the shrine of the Virgin inaugurated by Father Van and made improvements and repairs on the church buildings and grounds. He left to become pastor at the Church of the Sacred Heart, in Dearborn, where he served for the next twenty-two years. Dearborn was still a village then, and Father Marker took an interest in its affairs. He was a popular priest, known for his cheerfulness, his neighborliness, and his love of children.

Father Marker died December 7, 1915, after an illness of two years. On his way home from funeral services for his friend Father Bernard J. Wermers, of St. Joseph's Church, he was stricken at the corner of Congress and Woodward and rushed to the city hospital. He died there a few minutes later. His funeral was held at his parish church, in Dearborn.

FATHER BOLTE

Father Charles G. Bolte followed Father Marker as pastor of Assumption Grotto parish. He was appointed to his post on January 3, 1894. He had been ordained on May 29, 1862. Like Father Marker, he was of German parentage, as were many of his parishioners. The Grotto was, in fact, thought of by many as a German parish.

Before coming to Assumption Grotto, Father Bolte had been pastor of St. Mary's German Catholic Church. Prior to his appointment, the church had been in the charge of the Franciscan Fathers and then of the Redemptorist Fathers. Many of the parishioners were attached to the religious orders and expressed their dissatisfaction with the Bishop's decision to replace them with a secular priest. Father Bolte said nothing until he received an anonymous letter of criticism, which he read aloud at Mass, addressing himself to each one of the complaints made against him. Speaking calmly, he ended by reassuring the congregation of his goodwill and his readiness to fulfill the charge laid upon him by the Bishop until his death, or until the Bishop should decide to remove him.¹

Arthur Trombly², born in 1887, remembers Father Bolte as a meticulous, orderly man. One quirk he had was sometimes saying Mass with his leather slippers on. Arthur was an altar boy, and it was his job to hold the priest's vestments while he made his genuflexion, and then ring the bell. One morning, when Arthur rang the bell, it struck Father Bolte's stockinged heel. The boy was afraid to apologize, and the priest never mentioned it.

FATHER BOLTE'S GARDENS AND THE NEW SCHOOL

Like Father Van, Father Bolte grew flowers year-found in the greenhouse attached to the rectory. He also kept flower and vegetable gardens. The

1. "Death of the Bishop," Detroit Free Press, September 14, 1891.

 Arthur's parents were Jeremiah Trombly and Mary Diegel. His father was the son of Jerome Trombly and Sophie Fournier, the daughter of Archange Campau. His brothers and sisters are Edward (recently deceased), Sylvester, Genevieve, Jim, and Florence. Sylvester lives in the parish. priest was a somewhat retiring man who preferred the cultivation of his garden to company. Visitors dropping by during the week were likely to find him out working in the overalls and jacket worn by the other farmers of the area.

The local fame which Father Bolte's gardens achieved was indirectly responsible for the coming of the Racine Dominicans to the Grotto school:

It was in 1894 that several Sisters from Center Line chanced to come to the Grotto to see the wonderful flowers, flower house and gardens which were the source of so many happy hours to the then residing pastor, Father Bolte. Sister Reginald was one of these Sisters. He told her of his great desire to have Sisters for his school, but he had tried several places to no avail. She suggested that he get in touch with the Mother House in Racine. He did. The Racine Sisters took charge August 4, 1894.³

As we have seen, the parish school suffered many ups and downs before the arrival of the Dominican Sisters, in 1894. From 1886 to 1889, the school was under the charge of the Dominican Sisters from the Congregation of the Most Holy Rosary, Second Street, New York City. At that time, the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids and Adrian belonged to that Congregation and together formed the province erected in Traverse City in 1885. In 1886, the Sisters assigned to Our Lady of Lourdes Mission, as the Grotto was known to the Sisters, would have come either directly from New York, or from the province of Traverse City. Sister Hieronyma Egbert was one of the Sisters from Adrian. She often spoke of the hardship of getting in and out of the mission because it was surrounded by mud.⁴

Sister Evangelista related the following concerning the stay of Sister Hieronyma's group at Grotto:

Father Vandendriessche, the presiding pastor, was zealous, especially in things concerning processions and the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, which still is a distinctive characteristic of the grounds. He it was that had told the people not to bring things to the Sisters, that as they had taken the vow of poverty they were expected to keep it. His injunction was quite literally fulfilled for as it happened that on one occasion when one of the fathers of the Sisters happened to visit his daughter, he found them truly living the life of poverty. This parent immediately went to the Mother House and told the Reverend Mother that if his daughter was not taken away he would take her home. The Reverend Mother came in person to verify

- Quoted from Sister Evangelista, who taught at Assumption Grotto school from 1894-1917, in "The Chronicle of the Mission up to 1937," Assumption Grotto Archives. Sister Reginald herself would later teach at the Grotto from 1903 to 1912.
- Archives of the Adrian Dominicans.

his report. Her visit resulted in the removal of all her Sisters. It had chanced that the humble saintly old superior in charge had not reported conditions, being content to lead the life of abject poverty.⁵

Between 1889 and 1894, the school was taught by a lay teacher, Joseph Donahue, who was also the church organist. He was remembered by Michael Diegel as "a heavy man, with a stiff, bent leg" who "bobbed up and down when he walked."

The building which the Dominican Sisters took charge of was an old frame schoolhouse directly across the street from the church. It was small and rectangular with a porch on one side and a peaked roof. The school was built on land that had been donated to the church by parishioners Martin and Marie Pulcher. The nuns lived in a white frame cottage with a porch on the front and one side on the corner of Gratiot and what is now Greiner. The building and land were owned by the Diocese. The students were seated according to size, an imaginary line across the center of the schoolroom separating the older children from the little ones. They were grouped scholastically by readers rather than grades.

In November, 1894, the Sisters and their students moved across Gratiot to a newly completed two-story red brick building with four rooms on the site where today's school stands. The old school building was later sold and moved onto Alter Road, in the second block north of Warren Avenue. Rooms were created by putting in partitions and it was used as a residence.7 One of the parishioners who began school in 1902 remembers gathering up wooden shingles which had fallen off the roof of the old school building and carrying them over to the new school to be used as firewood. The Sisters' residence was attached to the rear of the new school, and had a kitchen, parlor, and common room downstairs and three bedrooms above. In back was a big yard with a fence around it. The new school and convent were built with funds resulting from the sale of a piece of church property. In September, the school enrollment was about forty-five, increasing to the nineties when the farming season was over in November. Most of the Grotto parishioners had small farms and the families made their livings growing produce for the markets in Detroit. Farmwork for every member of the family was a fact of life and the nuns were tolerant of absences caused when the boys and girls were needed at home for cultivating, weeding, and harvesting.

Sister Evangelista.

Spilos, Steve, "Many German Street Names are Reminders of Pioneer Hessians," Northeast Detroiter, December, 1958.

In the early 1970s, it was decided the house was too fragile to be moved again, and it was torn down to make room for a parking lot. From 1894 to 1900, Sisters Evangelista and Scholastica taught the lower and upper classes, respectively, and Sister Villana did the housework. Sister Evangelista was principal of the school and superior of the little convent. Arthur Trombly, who attended the school during those years, remembers that Sister Scholastica used to play baseball with the boys. She had a bat that looked like a barrel stave or paddle.

The Sisters were each paid \$200 a year for teaching and received \$100 for taking charge of the choir. A Sister sacristan and her assistant cared for the altar and vestments. A Sister was also in charge of training the altar boys, and from 1894 to 1916, Sisters directed the boys' and girls' Sodalities.

For a number of years, the choir at High Mass consisted of Fred Brinkman and the brothers, Anthony and Wendelin Baumgartner.

FOURTH OF JULY CHURCH PICNIC

During the 1890s, the 4th of July Grotto Church picnic was an important annual event. It was held in Joe Pulcher's woods, at a site which today would be two blocks north of Gratiot and Mapleridge. Long tables were set up for eating, and sawdust covered the ice which kept the ice cream, pop, and beer cold. A large platform was set up in a clearing for dancing, and there were games of skill and prizes. Late in the evening, fireworks flashed toward the sky.

FATHER BOLTE'S LAST DAYS

Father Bolte left Assumption Grotto on November 24, 1899, to become pastor of St. Michael's Church, in Monroe. In 1915, he retired because of failing sight.

When Father Bolte died on April 20, 1920, he had been a priest for fifty-eight years.

FATHER RONAYNE

On December 1, 1899, Father James Ronayne became pastor of Assumption Grotto Church. Born on January 28, 1851, in Elgin, Ontario, he was educated for the priesthood at St. Mary's Seminary, Cincinnati, and St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, and ordained February 10, 1881. His first assignments were at St. John's, where he was stationed a year, and Hubbardston, where he remained for three years. Before being transferred to Assumption Grotto, he served as pastor for fifteen years at Stoney Creek.

Father Ronayne's pastorate was the last during which the Grotto was a

country parish with a sizable group of German-speaking parishioners. Life was still slow in those days before the widespread use of the automobile. Parishioners who were children during the first decade of the century remember the priest making home calls on his bicycle, carrying the sacraments to people who could not come to church and visiting the sick. He would ride down Gratiot and all the way back to Pumpkin Hook, both of which were dirt roads then.

Parishioners and Sisters who knew him remember Father Ronayne with affection. He was a scholar and a linguist with a special fondness for German who carried a Latin edition of the Divine Office in one pocket, and a German translation in the other, preferring the German. Delia Biermann remembers that he used to come over in the evening sometimes and chat in German with her father, Anthony Young. The priest had an excellent memory for names and faces. Whenever he met any of the Sisters from Hubbardston, he would say: "I remember the day I baptized you." And he would then proceed to describe what the weather had been like that day. He also had a wry sense of humor. In his yearly report to the Chancery, in 1911, he said in answer to the value of property, "The priest's house has been valued at fifty cents but is worth more than that."

Like the priests today who like to get close to the congregation, Father Ronayne had a portable pulpit on casters which he rolled out into the center aisle of the church. He was a man who loved to communicate and was famous for the length of his sermons, which always lasted over forty minutes and often over an hour. Parishioners remember the sound of the men's knuckles on the benches and their boots on the floor as they restlessly tapped to get the priest's attention. Wrapped up in the subject of his sermon, he was oblivious even to the sound of the small bell he had asked one of the altar boys to ring after an hour.

The pond on which the children slid in the winter was between and in back of the priest's house and the barn. A horse and buggy were kept in the barn, cared for by Pete Dedenbach. Pete also looked after the greenhouse attached to the rectory. Between the church and present-day Seymour stood Gottfried Brinkman's saloon and home. Behind his house was the Grove Gun Club, which he ran. The Brinkmans were active members of the parish. Their children were Genevieve, Freddy, Art, and Viola.

Father Ronayne's two maiden sisters, Kate and Johanna, kept house for him. Kate was the older of the two and thin. Johanna was heavy and limped from having broken her hip. Both sisters were very attached to their bulldog, Buster. An example of Father Ronayne's well-known frugality was that he owned only one suit with two pairs of pants. One day, to the dismay of the

sisters, he gave his good pair of pants away to a tramp who came knocking at the door.

Inside the front door of the old rectory, there was a kind of waiting room and a staircase leading to the priest's two rooms. Because there was no telephone, messages for Father Ronayne were taken at the Youngs' house across the street. When Delia Young arrived with a message, she would be sent right upstairs. For her trouble, Father Ronayne would chop off a piece of maple sugar for her from the bar he kept as a reward for good children.

THE CHURCH NEIGHBORHOOD

Between the church buildings and Seven Mile Road, the land was owned by Joe Greiner, the Juifs, and Pete Girard. In 1906, Pete Girard sold his tavern to Joe Gipperich and Pete Schoenherr. The business was operated under the name of "Schoenherr and Gipperich," but continued to be known as the Eight Mile House. The property included a large picnic grounds south of the buildings along Gratiot. Before selling to Pete Schoenherr, Pete Girard rented the store and saloon to Frank Diegel. His cousin, George Diegel, who a few years later served as Gratiot Township clerk, worked for him.

Directly across Gratiot from the present-day school was the Pulchers' property. The southern boundary of their land was defined by a county ditch which was filled in around 1902 or 1903. The land from the ditch to Greiner belonged to the Diocese. There was an L-shaped open shed on it where the parishioners kept their horses and carriages during Mass. When the gypsies visited the neighborhood every three years or so, they sometimes parked their wagons in the shed and set up camp, much to the fear and delight of all the children in the neighborhood.

On the site where the National Bank of Detroit now stands stood a long, low frame building which was the Young family's general store and home. In 1906, no longer able to farm because of arthritis, Anthony Young had bought the store from Sylvester Girard and he ran it with his family. Sylvester Girard had built the store and lived with his family in the old Sisters' house. The store soon became a main source of staples for the priest's and Sisters' households.

Around 1908, Dr. Cornelius Carey rented Michael Greiner's house from his daughter Mary to use as a home and office. The residence stood where the old Sanders used to be. Dr. Carey was a hardworking, inventive man and a valuable member of the parish. In those days, people gave birth at home and Mrs. Anthony Young was his right hand in delivering babies. Dr. Carey and his friend Dr. Sipe put together minstrel shows in which the parish

teenagers participated, among them Sylvia Claeys, Eleanor Barbaret, and Arthur Brinkman. There were songs, jokes, and different acts. Sylvester Trombly was an end man and wore blackface. Dr. Carey also organized a boys' athletic club. The minstrel shows and the boys' athletic activities took place in the old hall behind the church, a long, narrow, one-story structure which was built to be temporary. Minstrel shows were also sometimes performed at the Westphalia Shooting Park and on the stage upstairs in the old school.

In 1913, Dr. Carey suffered a tragedy when his young son, Richard, drowned in the cistern. The practice at that time and for many years later was for the undertaker to visit the home and the body to be laid out for viewing by friends and family. Richard Carey's open casket was set among potted palms in the Careys' living room. White ribbons ran from his hand to a white dove hanging in one of the palms.

Another well-known doctor in the community was Dr. John R. Jones. Older than Dr. Carey, he lived in Leesville and tended patients for a radius of several miles around, including the Grotto parishioners.

Past George Weber's and Michael Greiner's houses was an old farm-house owned by the Greiners and rented out in around 1906 to a family named DeHooghe. Further down was the Gitre family's farm, bounded on the west by what is Gitre Street today.

WESTPHALIA SHOOTING PARK

On the other side of Westphalia, abutting the Gitre property, was the Westphalia Shooting Park, opened by Detroit's Westphalian Germans on Gratiot opposite the old Hessian Road. The members were mostly businessmen from the Eastern Market area. The club existed in the years between the Spanish American War (1898) and World War I. I. F. Cron and his family lived there and took care of the grounds, buildings, and business. Other proprietors were Fred Fritz and Peter Droste. In addition to the rifle range and target house, located at the far end of the property, there were a dance pavilion, bowling alley, picnic grounds, and beer garden. While Father Ronayne was pastor, the 4th of July picnics were held at the shooting park. Dinners were served and everyone contributed something. Chickens and other kinds of food were easy to come by, as most of the parishioners were farmers.

LIFE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Before the advent of the automobile, people didn't tend to travel too far from home. After church on Sundays, families often went by horse and buggy to the houses of friends or relatives for dinner and the afternoon. The Tromblys and their six boys and girls, for instance, regularly exchanged visits with Mr. and Mrs. Ameis and their six daughters. It is not surprising, then, that in the geneologies of the old families who lived around the Grotto, the same names keep cropping up. Boys and girls also met at organized socials such as the picnics held at the Eight Mile House or on Belle Isle, to which the young people often rode in market wagons.

There was a sense of togetherness in the community, and people helped each other. During the summer and fall, if a farmer's sons were still too young to help with the heavy work, his neighbors would send their older boys over for such jobs as pitching hay or feeding bundles of grain into the threshing machine. The threshing machine was powered by a black iron steam engine that was kept a short distance from the barn and connected to the machine by a wide, heavy belt. The farmers planted wheat, oats, and rye. The rye straw was used for horse collars and the boys used flails to get the rye out of it. Even today, the oldest parishioners remember the wonderful meals prepared by the farm women for the hungry workers.

People worked hard for their families and their church then. Thinking back on those times, Delia Biermann sums up the attitude of the farmers: "People worked for their dollars and they got very few. Either you saved your money or you didn't eat."

Every Saturday morning, Anthony Young and his wife, Euphrasie, hitched up their horse and wagon and carried eggs and butter and other farm produce to their customers in St. Anthony's parish. They paid at the tollgate at Conner and Gratiot going into town on the plank road. There were also tollgates on Gratiot at Seyburn, Eight Mile Road, and Utica Junction. The Plank Road Company charged 1¢ per mile for a horse and wagon and 2¢ for a two-horse team. The other side of Gratiot, coming out of town, didn't have planks, so there were no tolls to pay on the way home.

Many jokes went around Leesville and Conner's Creek in those days about the condition of the road. The side of Gratiot not covered by planks had the twin disadvantages of turning into mud in the winter and dust in the summer:

They used to tell about a man finding a hat in the middle of Gratiot Avenue. Going over to pick it up he found a man's head under it. 'Want some help?' he asked.

'No, I'm all right,' replied the other, 'I'm just driving to town on a load of hay.'8

W. P. Sugars, who related the anecdote above in his history of Leesville, also tells of seeing wagons abandoned in the mud until the owners could return with shovels to dig them out. The farmers wore rubber boots, but had a hard time keeping them on their feet. The boys put stepping stones across Gratiot at Jean Avenue (Marcus) to get to the streetcar, but the stones would sink out of sight in two or three days.9

OLD GRATIOT ROAD

Until almost the turn of the century, horsecars from Detroit came out Gratiot to Mt. Elliott, where the city limits were located. The "Commons" was the open land around McClellan from Gratiot to Mack which the farmers used for pasturage.

Old Gratiot Road was the scene of many interesting events in the late nineteenth century. A traveling band of gypsies set up camp on a dead-end street near Cadillac. They told fortunes and entertained with dancing bears. Once a year, the circus passed through. In those days, there was a bridge across Conner's Creek and the elephants could not be persuaded to cross over it. They had to be led across the creek and back up to Gratiot. Indians periodically came down from northern Michigan to sell their maple sugar and baskets. These things, in addition to the fishing and swimming which the creek provided, made the Conner's Creek area a paradise for young boys.¹⁰

NORRIS

The village of Norris, located on a plateau between the forks of Conner's Creek, was founded during the ten years following the Civil War by Colonel Philetus W. Norris. It had originally been known as "Dalton's Corners." From Norris, the main body of the creek ran through the present airport property down to the Detroit River. Colonel Norris had wanted to call the village "Prairie Mound" for the Indian burial ground there, but the post office was officially designated as Norris. Today, the Indian influence is reflected in Mound Road. In 1891, the village was renamed North Detroit.

9. Sugars, pp. 166-167.

^{8.} Sugars, p. 166.

Spilos, Steve, "Denby's First Principal Recalled Gay Nineties," Northeast Detroiter, October, 1977.

Miles Orton used the town of Norris as the winter headquarters for his circus. He was a famous rider and every fall, he put on a special show for the local people. Katie Bacon, who later married Napoleon Meldrum, helped Miles Orton's caretakers with the housework and got to know the circus people.

THE SCHOOL

In 1904, Sister Reginald became the third teacher at the school. The first and second grades were taught in one room downstairs; third, fourth, and fifth in the other; and sixth, seventh, and eighth upstairs by Sister Reginald. Third, fourth, and fifth grades were always taught by Sister Evangelista, the principal.

The classroom upstairs was marked off by partitions in the larger room, which included a stage. A pail of water with a dipper in it was always kept on the stage to provide drinks for thirsty children. The boys would periodically refill it with water from the nuns' well. When there were entertainments, the partitions were taken down and chairs set up.

Sister Evangelista acted as mother not only to her own little group of Sisters, but to those who came to teach at Center Line¹¹ and Nativity.¹² As the "senior Sister," she told the new Sisters how to get around in Detroit by public transportation, where the market was, etc. The nuns and parishioners were lucky in that the Interurban electric train stopped in front of the church about once an hour. It went as far as Port Huron and stopped at the depot in Detroit on Jefferson east of Woodward.

There are happy memories of school days at the beginning of the century. At the start of the school year, when the pear trees in the cemetery were bearing fruit, Sister Evangelista would have one of the boys pick some, and would distribute a little pile on each student's desk. At recess, when the boys went out to play, she taught the girls hemstitching, crocheting, and embroidery. In bad weather, the children who walked to school from as far away as Harper and Eight Mile often arrived with wet shoes and socks. The nuns took them off and hung them on the potbellied stove so that they'd be dry by the time they went home.

Father Ronayne made a daily round of visits in the school before noon. He went to each class, asking the students questions from the Catechism and giving them short talks on religion. The children put in an eight-hour day,

The Dominican Sisters began teaching at St. Clement's, in Center Line, on Aug. 18, 1892.

^{12.} They began teaching at Nativity on July 13, 1913.

beginning with Mass at 8:00 and ending with class dismissal at 4:00. They sat in assigned seats. The Sisters were demanding teachers and the children learned many things which children today don't learn until high school. This was a good thing, as most of the children left school after the eighth grade and went home to work for their families, the boys in the fields and girls in the gardens and house.

Because the Youngs lived right across the street from the church, Delia Young was often called upon when there was work to be done. She helped the nuns wash out their long white habits, and remembers walking down to scrub the Grotto with her cousin, Genevieve Brinkman, a big wash boiler of soapy water carried between them.

At that time, there were crutches in the corner of the shrine. Father Ronayne was attached to the Grotto and on the third Sunday in May, there was always a procession. The girls wore white dresses and the schoolchildren strewed flowers along the cemetery path.

FIRST CHURCH BURNS DOWN

The best remembered event during the pastorate of Father Ronayne was when Father Van's old church burned, in 1907. On New Year's Day, during 10 o'clock Mass, a fire started smoldering in the attic. The church had no basement, and the large furnace stood on the ground floor near the front of the church, on the right. It was bitter cold that day and the furnace was working on both new burners. Sparks must have escaped into the attic. Pete Dedenbach, the caretaker, said later that he felt responsible because there was a large crack in the chimney which he hadn't gotten around to fixing.¹³

The church was made of brick, but the interior of the square parapet and the steeple were made of wood frame and shingles. Arthur Trombly remembers forbidden climbs up into the parapet and looking out through a broken shingle across the woods toward Lake St. Clair.

Arthur and Sylvester Trombly's family pew was four rows from the front, off the center aisle of the church, and both boys were at 10 o'clock Mass, as were Delia Young, Bernadette Hoefer, and Mabel Kelly. Father Ronayne had chosen the vanity of earthly possessions as the theme of his sermon that day. Suddenly, one of the kerosene lamp chandeliers fell in front of his pulpit. The congregation was startled, but the priest simply said, "It is

- 13. Spilos, Steve, "Tombstones Relate Work Well Done," Northeast Detroiter, February, 1948.
- All five have described the fire in interviews. The married names of Delia, Bernadette, and Mabel are Mrs. Ben Biermann, Mrs. Clarence Lang, and Mrs. Erwin Lang.

nothing but a little glass which can be replaced."¹⁵ Delia Biermann remembers that he said this just went to show that all things perished. Then a second, larger chandelier fell a little further up from the Trombly's pew, and Sylvester remembers that the kerosene splattered on Angela Gitre's skirt. This time, it was seen that the end of the cord was smoldering and sparks were coming out of the ceiling. Someone said: "Fire, Father," and the church was quickly evacuated. At that time, the congregation was still small, and there probably weren't more than two hundred people in the church.

Once the church was empty, Father Ronayne and some of the men began to rescue what they could: the Blessed Sacrament, statues of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and St. Anthony, the priest's vestments, the sacred vessels and books, etc. These articles were taken to the school and the priest's house, which was connected to the church by a boardwalk. The fire department was of no use because the church was located outside the city limits. A bucket brigade was formed, but the fire was soon burning out of control. As a precaution, the men poured water on the roofs of the school and nuns' house to protect them from flying cinders. Fortunately, the wind was blowing toward the cemetery, so neither the school and convent nor the rectory were burned.

When nothing more could be done, the congregation stood in front of the church and watched it burn. Within half an hour, the wooden roof had fallen and only the four outside walls and the brick exterior of the steeple were left standing. The steeple was topped by a metal weathercock which was a landmark in the area. Before falling, the weathercock paused for a long moment at a 45-degree angle above the flames. When it fell, Sister Evangelista clasped her hands and cried out. In no time at all, the sacred old church was a charred and smoking ruin. The Sisters and many of the congregation were in tears. Finally, two of the walls and the brick part of the parapet were all that was left standing.

The church was fifty-four years old when it burned. The greatest loss was of the interior adornments which had been so painstakingly provided by Father Van. Anthony Young told his daughter, Delia, that it had taken one man seven years to complete the interior wood carvings.

The altar rail, the gallery rail, the baptismal fount and the niches for the statues were handcarved from walnut and years were spent in the task. This work can never be replaced. Later three marble altars were installed and they are destroyed; also a beautiful pipe organ imported.¹⁶

Detroit News, January 2, 1907.

^{16.} Detroit News, January 2, 1907.

The old organ would be especially missed by the altar boys and schoolboys. Volunteers from among them always had to be on hand when it was played to generate air, stepping alternately into two stirrups hanging from the wall.

Shocked and saddened at their loss, the priest and his parishioners set about to see what could be salvaged to rebuild the church. It was thought at first that the two remaining exterior walls could be saved, but while deliberation was going on, a strong wind came along one night and blew them down. This was interpreted as an act of God, so during the winter months, the brick tower was torn down and the debris carried away.

On November 25, 1907, Father Ronayne signed a contract with F. J. Herman, a contractor from Toledo, Ohio, and the architect, W. R. Dowling, to build a new church. The total for the job to be done was \$19,405.33, including a reduction for work and materials provided by the parishioners. The contractor agreed to use bricks from the old church which had been cleaned, as well as "rubble stone" and sand. The parishioners were allowed to do the teaming, hauling, and other common labor, and the excavating and grading.

In 1908, Father Ronayne received \$5000 in insurance for the "loss of church and contents by fire," which helped to pay for the new church.

While the church was being rebuilt, church services were held in the upstairs room of the school. Georgina Young recalls an incident from that time. As she was kneeling in front of the offering candles, her straw hat caught on fire. Sister Reginald grabbed it and stamped the fire out, after which the stunned child put the battered hat back on her head and knelt down again.

Another occurrence involved Father Ronayne's friend, Father C. T. B. Krebs, who was very short. After a Mass said for the schoolchildren, one of the Sisters motioned to John Mauch to help the priest with his coat. John Mauch, who was a tall boy, held the coat up behind him, and after trying in vain to get his arms into the sleeves, Father Krebs turned around and said, "Do you think I'm eight feet tall?" The appreciative schoolchildren burst into laughter.

The new church was built of red brick and was constructed in the same basilica style as the present church. On the cornerstone, Father Ronayne had engraved in Flemish: "De vrees des Heeren is het begin der wijheid," which translates: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The first Mass was said on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in 1908. A new organ had been purchased for which the air was kept going by pulling down a

lever. Again, the schoolboys lent their muscle power, often with the help of the caretaker, Pete Dedenbach.

MRS. SCHULTE

In 1908, Mrs. Wilhelmina Schulte bought Joe Greiner's farmhouse¹⁷ and property next to the church on Mapleridge and moved in with her nine sons and two daughters. Mr. Schulte had owned a saloon and meat market downtown on Congress and had died at the age of forty-nine. Mrs. Schulte was to become one of the most active members of the parish. She was German and her daughter, Lidwina, remembers her and Sister Villana, the German cook at the convent, standing on opposite sides of the county ditch separating their properties and chatting in their native tongue. The Sisters' parlor, or study room, faced the Schultes, and when the children were out playing and making noise at night instead of studying, they would hear about it in class the next day.

The Sisters loved Mrs. Schulte. On Saturday, she would tell the dog which chicken to pick out for dinner, and would always add: "And get one for the Sisters." Like most of their neighbors, the family lived off the land as much as possible. They kept two cows and Mrs. Schulte made her own butter. They also had chickens, ducks, and a garden and fruit trees for canning. For transportation, they had a blind horse named Babe. Mrs. Schulte encouraged her boys to be helpful, and when the Sisters felt like visiting the convent at Center Line, one of the boys would hitch up Babe and drive them over. It was not a popular assignment, as the driver would have to sit around for an hour or so while the Sisters visited. Every year, Joe Schulte cleaned the Isinglass in the Sisters' base burner and the chimney above their fireplace.

Our Lady's and St. Joseph's shrines were in the cemetery then and the schoolchildren took care of them. Vespers was at 3:00 every Sunday and you had to have a good excuse not to go. Lidwina remembers that at the Schultes', if someone didn't go to church, he didn't leave the house that day. Sunday church services were not a place where children could sit and daydream, either. The next day in school, the nuns were sure to ask what the Gospel was about.

Mrs. Schulte had one of the first baby grand pianos sold at J. L. Hudson's, and the choir practiced at their house. Lidwina's brothers all sang in the choir and she sang almost every Requiem Mass in the morning. Sister Eustachia played the organ and was the music teacher.

Mrs. Schulte had a great sense of humor. One Halloween, she put on one

17. Joseph Greiner had bought the farm from Catherine Pulcher.

of her son's shirts and pants and a false face and took Lidwina, dressed in overalls, over to the convent. The Sisters didn't know who they were and when Mrs. Schulte grabbed Sister Evangelista and hugged her, the nun screamed. They were really very frightened, but then one of the Sisters said: "I'll bet that's Mrs. Schulte."

Mrs. Schulte rose every morning at 5:00 and put coal in the base burner to heat up the house. When the boys came down for breakfast, there was a big pot of rolled oats on the stove, and everyone helped himself. On Sunday mornings, a roast would be started in the wood stove for dinner at 1:00.

Mrs. Schulte's word was law with her sons and she would not tolerate profanity from them or anyone else. One day, when an addition was being built onto the house, she heard cursing and swearing. Going to the window, she saw it was coming from the workmen who were hauling in the bricks. She went out swinging her mop and said: "If I ever hear another swearword out of you . . . You're not cursing the brick that goes into my home, because when this house is completed, it's going to be blessed." From then on, no one heard any swearing from the men. Throughout Lent, the children went around the dining room table saying the rosary. And every day, Mrs. Schulte went to Mass in the morning and said the Stations of the Cross in the afternoon.

Shortly after Mrs. Schulte bought her property, Gratiot was widened, and the city paid to move the house back from the street. Gratiot became a four rod or sixty-six foot gravel road, and tracks for the new electric streetcar were laid down. In 1915, the Wayne County Road Commission put down cement paving.

ARRIVAL OF THE AUTOMOBILE

When the first automobiles came out, they were often road tested on Gratiot before they were finally assembled. Testers from the Packard Motor Car Company, located on Harper, became familiar sights to the inhabitants of Leesville and Conner's Creek. The test cars were motorized frames on wheels with a board for the driver to sit on, and they created clouds of dust on the gravel road. When housewives saw the testers coming, they ran inside and shut all the windows and doors to keep the dirt out.

Arthur Trombly, who was living downtown in 1913, remembers driving out to Grotto that year. Gratiot was paved by then from the city to Conner. At a Sunday morning Mass in September, his car was one of four parked in front between the school and church. He had an Overland, made in Toledo. He also remembers a Willys and a Packard. A lot of horses and buggies were tied up in the shed across the street. When he returned to the church in

November to tell Father Ronayne about his plans to marry, his car had to struggle along the gravel road, which had turned to mud.

In 1914, Anthony Young and his family bought two acres of land from the Pulcher family and moved to a new store and home, built by son Joseph, at the present site of Weitenberner's Funeral Home. The old store, moved over and attached to the back of the new building, stands today facing Mapleridge.

FATHER BAUMGARTNER'S FUNERAL

Father Fridolin Baumgartner, Chancellor of the Diocese of Detroit from 1894 to 1912, died on December 7, 1914. He had been born in 1850, the son of Wendelin Baumgartner, and was baptized in the Church of the Assumption. Father Ronayne's church was crowded with the laypeople and priests who came to honor Father Baumgartner at his funeral. The priest had asked to be buried in the old Grotto cemetery, in the family plot, next to his father, mother, sisters, and brothers.

FATHER RONAYNE'S DEATH

Father Ronayne was pastor of Assumption Grotto Church for sixteen years. On Sunday, November 21, 1915, while preaching a sermon on death, he collapsed in the pulpit. Charlie Schoenherr recalled:

I was serving when Father Ronayne collapsed at the altar. I remember that the men who were sitting in the front pews jumped over the communion rail and helped the visiting priest carry him over to the old rectory.¹⁸

Father Francis Heidenreich, Father Ronayne's good friend from Nativity, finished the Mass for him.

Mrs. Irene Couvier said that her mother and the women who took care of the rectory while Father Ronayne was dying, considered him a saint:

I think he was. The house he lived in was so old it was falling apart.

The day Father Ronayne died, it rained and my mother said they had to run all over the house with pails and buckets to catch the rain which came through the holes in the roof. The people were always telling him to build a new one, but he told them that the one he had was good enough and that he came into the parish free of debt and wanted to leave that way.¹⁹

- 18. Charlie Schoenherr, interviewed by Ed Ertzbischoff, 1966.
- 19. Mrs. Irene Couvier, interviewed by Ed Ertzbischoff, 1966

Father Ronayne died December 1st at St. Mary's Hospital, after being unconscious for forty-eight hours. His close friend, Father Krebs, was by his side. Without regaining consciousness, he continued his priestly functions in his mind, making the sign of the cross as he whispered the baptism ceremony in German. On the day that Father Ronayne was buried, there was water in the cemetery that had to be dipped out of the grave during Mass. Father Heidenreich officiated at the large funeral, which included a moving eulogy by Bishop Kelly, who praised Father Ronayne's learning and virtues. Afterwards the nuns stood and said the rosary. Sister Nicoline Palzkill remembers that Father Krebs said: "He loved the Germans! Now let's say an 'Our Father' for him."

According to a news article after Father Ronayne's death, the new Church of the Assumption was completed during his pastorate and cleared of a \$40,000 indebtedness. Father Ronayne had also served as censor librorum for the Diocese of Detroit.²⁰

A tombstone with Father Ronayne's name remains in the cemetery, although his body was later transferred to Mt. Olivet Cemetery. It lies next to the graves of two priests who were sons of parish families: Father James Rivard, who used to come to visit Father Bolte on horseback when he was pastor of Sacred Heart, in Roseville, in the 1890s;²¹ and Father John Reichenbach, who died in 1903. On Father Ronayne's stone are carved the words: "His good works follow him."



20. "Stroke Fatal to Rev. Fr. Ronayne," Detroit News, Dec. 2, 1915.

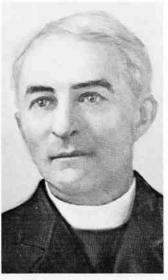
 Father Rivard was born in the parish in 1870. He died prematurely on November 13, 1895, within the same year that he began his assignment at Sacred Heart.



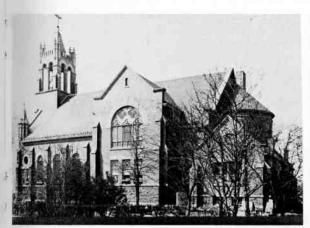
Father Rudolph Marker, pastor from 1892 to 1894.



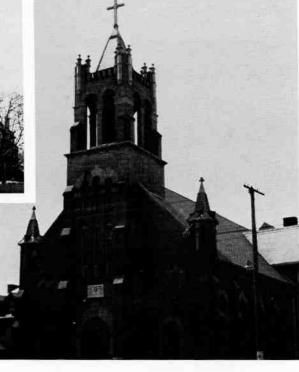
Father Charles Bolte, pastor from 1894 to 1899



Father James Ronayne, pastor from 1899 to 1915.



Two views of the church that Father Ronayne built (1908-1929).

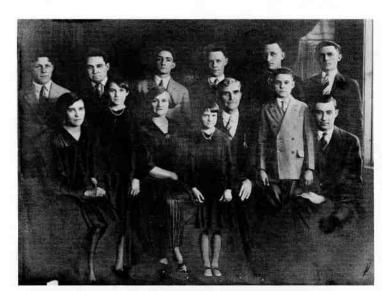




Four generations of Juif women. Standing from left: Justine Deneweth and Emma Gerardy. Seated: Mrs. Dagobert Juif (Julia Prevost) holding Geraldine Cottey.



The Dominican Sisters in charge of the Grotto School from 1904 to 1906. Standing from the left: Sister Evelyn Broecker (left the community), Sister Villana Van den Eng (the cook). Seated from the left: Sister Reginald (of French parentage, last name unknown), Sister Evangelista Thomas (principal). The Sisters are posed in front of the lane of pine trees leading through the cemetery down to the shrine.



The Alfred Trombly family. (Picture taken around 1910.) Seated from the left: Sadie, Marcella, Mrs. Alfred Trombly (Rose Rivard), Beata, Alfred, Leander (Butch), Gore. Standing from the left: Raymond, Wilfred, Alfred, Otis, Eugene, Oliver.



The Anthony Pfent (1838-1917) family. Seated from the left: daughter Rose, wife Margaret, Anthony Pfent, daughter Maggie. Standing from the left: sons Joseph, Edward, George, Frank, and Anthony.



Interior of Anthony Pfent's hardware store on Gratiot near Seven Mile Road. The store closed sometime before 1930.



Wilhelmina Schulte and her family around 1910. Seated from the left: sons Elmer, Albert, Arthur, Second row from the left: daughter Lidwina, Bertha Mues (Mrs. Schulte's sister), daughter Mary, Mrs. Schulte, Joseph Fuerst, Francis Fuerst (Mrs. Schulte's sister), son Edwin. Top row from the left: Mary (the housekeeper), son Joseph, Fritz Mues, Frank Knoche (Mrs. Schulte's brother from Lapeer), Mary Knoche.



Margaret and Nicholas Young, married on June 6, 1893, by Father Marker. Their farm was on Greiner Road (the Grotto Road) across Gratiot from the church.

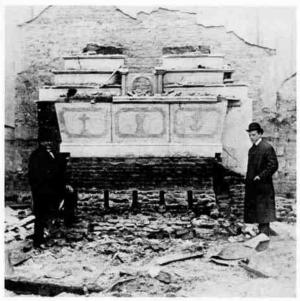


On May 24, 1892, parishioners Charles Lefevere and Ida DeSmyther were married by Father Rudolph Marker. Ida's sister, Lena, was already married to Charles' older brother, Henry. Both sets of parents are buried in the Grotto cemetery. In 1942, Charles and Ida celebrated their Golden Wedding Mass at Grotto.



Parishioners standing in front of the burned out shell of the 1852 church after the fire on New Year's Day, 1907.

Parishioners in front of the remains of the altar.





The Grove Gun Club, run by Gottfried
Brinkman in the rear of his Seven Mile House, located on the corner of present-day Six Mile Road and Gratiot.
Father Ronayne's church is visible in the background.



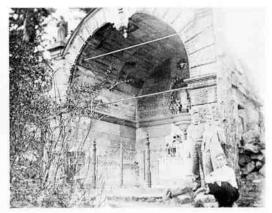
The Grotto Choir. Mr. Donahue, the man on the right in front, was the Grotto school teacher and played the organ. Standing at the left, with his hand in his coat, is Wendelin Baumgartner. His brother Anthony is third from the left. Fridolin Baumgartner is at the top.



Ceremony at the Grotto. From left, facing the camera: Frank Mauch, Bill Schulte (top), Alex Carreyn, Frank Schulte, John Rinke (with glasses); on the right, John Mauch, full back, Gus Guitry. Notice the fountain, the lilacs growing in front of the shrine, and the pine trees.



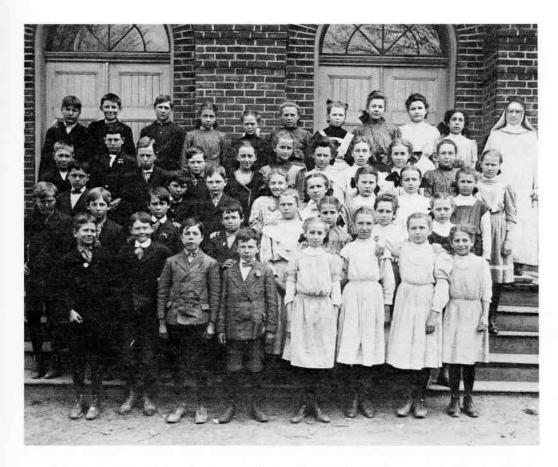
Wooden shrine dedicated to the Blessed Mother in the old cemetery facing Grover. The statue of Mary inside was donated by Mrs. John Greiner when the chapel was built around 1865. The chapel was replaced by a cement block shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in the 1940s and by one of the Stations of the Cross in the 1960s.



Standing in front of the Grotto, left to right: Gottfried (Fred) Brinkman (died February 22, 1913), unknown, and Gottfried P. (Freddy) Brinkman.



Tombstones of three of Grotto's priests: Reverend John Reichenbach (died 1903), Reverend James P. Rivard (died 1895), and former pastor James Ronayne (died 1915), who is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery.



The sixth, seventh, and eighth grades standing in front of the old Grotto School entrance in May, 1909.

Fifth row: Elmer Decker, Anthony Schulte, Vincent Lefevere, Rose Wancour, Mary Van Overbecke, Gertrude Gietzen, Alice Vanthomme, Lucy Huys, Delia Young, Genevieve Brinkman, Sister Reginald

Fourth row: Joe Reichenbach, Rudolph Barbaret, Sylvester Kranz, Edmund Lefevere, Mercedes Boucher, Mamie Young, Ella Diegel, Christina Young, Charlotte McCarthy, Mary Meerchaert, Cecelia Salter

Third row: Charley Dulzo, George Kelly, Joe Gietzen, Edna Krohn, Julia Salter, Hilda Schuitz, Beatrice Ameis, Clara Young

Second row: Elmer Whitoff, Joseph Biermann, Wilfred Trombly, Alfred Smith, Zelma Claeys, Catherine Bour, Clara Lefevere, Madeleine Nuytten

Bottom row: Johnny Schoenherr, Arthur Diegel, unknown, Eugene Michaels, Genevieve Trombly, Susie DeMorray, Annie Jahn, Effie Schoenherr

GROWTH AND CONSOLIDATION

FATHER MARX

BISHOP JOHN S. FOLEY APPOINTED FATHER JOSEPH MARX pastor of Assumption Grotto Church on December 20, 1915. Born in Cincinnati on December 31, 1875, Father Marx had completed his classical studies at Assumption College, Windsor, and received his theological training at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. On July 2, 1899, he was ordained by Bishop Foley in Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, and was soon assigned to St. Mary's, in Adrian, as assistant pastor. His next assignment took him to St. John's, in Albion, where he remained from 1901 until 1915.

Like Father Van, Father Marx was a man of vision who realized that the parish was once again entering a period of growth which would require much larger facilities. He will always be remembered in the history of the parish as the "Great Builder." With the exception of the new school addition and Activities Building, every one of the present church buildings was constructed during his pastorate. Parishioners frequently describe Father Marx as "a good businessman" and "a good manager." His abilities later led him to be a financial advisor to Cardinal Mooney, and an officer on the building committee of the Diocese. He saved the parish enough money so that Grotto was able to make loans to other parishes.

When Father Marx arrived, the area surrounding the Grotto was mostly farmland, and gardening was still the principal occupation of the parishioners. He later said that when he first came, his territory extended as far as Kelly Road on one side, and Van Dyke on the other. To get to his parishioners' homes by foot, he often cut through farmyards. But the rural

character of the parish would soon change. Detroit was expanding in every direction, and there were movements to annex the northeast area in which the church was located into the city limits. On April 23, 1917, Gratiot Township, which included Leesville and Conner's Creek, became a part of Detroit.

In 1917, construction of the present rectory was begun and was finished the following year. In 1922, the first part of the new school was started. When the road was widened in 1908, the old schoolhouse and convent had found themselves right up against the sidewalk on Gratiot, so the new school was built farther back. Completed in 1923, it contained eight classrooms.

Sometime before 1920, Seymour and Troester, the developers, began buying up farm properties and subdividing them for sale. As the small lots were sold off, young families started moving into the area to build. Joe Bogan remembers that when his family arrived in the 1920s, they lived in a tent and got their water from the Youngs' farm across Greiner until their house was built. Two indications of the parish's expansion during this period are that as of 1922, there were four Masses said on Sundays instead of two, and Father Leo Zindler was assigned to the church to assist Father Marx. The steady increases in enrollment made a larger staff of teaching Sisters necessary. In 1926, a new convent was built to accommodate as many as twenty-three nuns. The Sisters moved in during Christmas vacation of the same year. Between 1927 and 1928, additions were added on to the front and back of the new school, enlarging it by eight classrooms.

THE GROTTO

Like the priests who preceded him, Father Marx maintained the devotions at the Grotto. The following is a description of the August 15th ceremonies in 1924.

Masses were celebrated at intervals during the morning, the first at 6:30 a.m. In the afternoon the church societies and others assembled in the church for the beginning of the vespers service, and from the church marched in procession to the Grotto, down the long avenue of trees planted by the side of the graveyard. The altar within the grotto was ablaze with candles and bright with flowers—the fountain in front was also heaped with blossoms.¹

^{1. &}quot;Grotto Draws 3,000 Pilgrims," Detroit News, August 16, 1924.

TEARING DOWN AND BUILDING UP

The neighborhood was also growing and changing. Bill Schulte, the oldest of the nine Schulte boys, took over the little building owned by the Archdiocese at the present site of the National Bank of Detroit and ran a small gas station and auto accessory shop there. Jim Trombly worked for him for a couple of years. Bill later moved his business into larger quarters further north on the same block. In 1925, the building on the corner was torn down and the bank built. In 1927, the Ramona Theater opened with its first film, "Tillie the Tailor." It was built on George Weber's old property on the west side of Gratiot between Greiner and Six Mile. The theater was a neighborhood landmark until it was torn down a few years ago to make way for a parking lot.

In 1928, Conner's Creek, which had given the area its name for so long, was filled in. With its disappearance, an era ended. Gone were the bridge and the fences marking property lines, as the old farms were sold off and subdivided.

The growth in the neighborhood and parish made it imperative to build a new church. Father Ronayne's red brick church was of a modest size and had heating problems, so that on winter mornings, the Sisters didn't take the schoolchildren there to Mass. In August, 1928, excavation for the new church building was begun. It was built around the old church so that Masses could continue to be said uninterrupted during construction. On September 22, 1929, the first Mass was celebrated in the finished church. In the steps and the front are the cornerstones, from Father Van's 1852 church, Father Ronayne's 1908 church, and the 1929 cornerstone of Father Marx's church. The church was designed by Aloys Frank Herman, Inc., Detroit architects. It cost about \$250,000, and was built to seat around 1,150 people.

The church is built in the basilica or cross style with buttresses along the sides to support the walls. A true basilica church usually has large towers in the front, which the design of the present church would allow to be constructed in the future. The interior of the new church was made to be as ornate and stately as the exterior. The altars and communion rail of the sanctuary were carved from Italian marble. The stained glass windows throughout the church were donated by parish families and have as their themes events in the life of the Virgin Mother, and depictions of the saints.

THE SISTERS AND THE SCHOOL

Sister Canisia

The first Principal, Sister Evangelista, had been replaced by Sister Thaddea, in 1917, and Sister Dorothy, in 1921. In 1925, Sister Canisia Stangl became principal. The way which led her to the Grotto School illustrates the experience of the early teaching Sisters, who no less than the priests, were pioneers in this part of the country. Born in 1894, in Germany, she decided at an early age that she wanted to be a missionary teacher in Africa or America: "I prayed very hard during my high school years. I prayed that God would give me a sign showing where he wanted me to go." When she was fifteen, she met a priest from Wisconsin who had promised the Mother Superior of the Dominicans at Racine that he would recruit German girls on his trips home if she would give him Sisters for his school. In 1910, she left Regensburg, Germany, and followed him to the United States to enter the Dominican convent at Racine. Stopping in Chicago on the way, she was shocked at how littered and messy the streets were after Germany, and remembers thinking: "This must be missionary country."

When Sister Canisia arrived at Grotto in 1924, the new school had been built, but the Sisters were still living in the old convent. Conditions there were austere, but they had most of the modern conveniences for that time, including electricity and indoor plumbing.

There were seven Sisters. Four of them slept in the little bedrooms upstairs in the convent and three in an empty classroom in the old school. The stove which provided heat was located in the general room on the first floor and heated the bedrooms through grates in the floor. The general room was small and there was a big table in the middle of it around which the Sisters gathered in the evening.

When the foundation for the new convent was put down, Sister Canisia put a medal in each of the four corners: the medal of the Little Flower, the Miraculous medal, the St. Benedict's medal, and the St. Joseph's medal.

Father Marx oversaw every aspect of the construction of the new buildings, and inspected what the workmen had done at the end of each day. Once, when he was gone, they put brick pillars up in the basement of the convent. The next day, he made them tear them down and replace them with solid steel ones. Another time, the bricklayers didn't do a good job and he made them do it over again. Despite these delays, Sister Canisia remembers that the pastor managed to save \$10,000 on the convent building.

With so much building going on, things could not have been expected to go smoothly. The Sisters were supposed to move into their new convent before the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, but on December 8th, with half their things already in the new building, the furnace burned. The janitors had built a fire in it and forgot to fill it with water. The move was delayed until almost Christmas and for a long time after that, the boiler didn't work. The first telephone which was installed didn't work, either, but

the Sisters could make calls in Ben Biermann's² store across the street. Sister Canisia remembers that the parish women were always kind to them, coming over every fall on their return from Racine to find out what they needed. They brought them furniture, curtains, towels, and blankets. The Sisters knew Mrs. Schulte and Mrs. Schoenherr, their neighbors on Mapleridge, best.

When Sister Canisia became principal, in 1925, the office hadn't been built yet and she had to conduct school business from a cardtable on the second floor landing. She contracted flu from sitting in a draft, and by February was so ill she had to return to Racine. By the following fall, her lungs had still not recovered, and she was replaced as principal by Sister Praxedes.

Father Marx is remembered by many people as a man with a brusque temperament. Sister Canisia provides an illustration. In 1924, a priest who had come to assist mentioned that Father Marx's Silver Jubilee would be in September and that the Bishop wanted the nuns to organize a program for him. One day, as Sister Petronella and her first graders were practicing their part in the entrance of the church, Father Marx stopped and asked what they were doing. When he was told, he went over to the school and called Sister Canisia out of her classroom to tell her very definitely that he didn't want any kind of celebration. She replied: "Well, the Bishop ordered us to have one," at which he had to be satisfied. The nuns and schoolchildren had a little program to which the parish was invited and the hall was filled.

Madeline O'Grady³ gives a glimpse of another side of Father Marx's character. When her mother, Marie DeKoninck, was tragically killed in 1917, the children went to live with parish families. Andrew and Albert were taken in by the Van Overbekes, and Madeline was brought up in the Nicholas Young family as Georgina and Rose's little sister. Their brother Charles lived in the rectory with Father Marx until he graduated from the Grotto School.

Others recall that Father Marx had a soft spot for music. One of the Sisters remembers that he came over to the school once to listen to the band practice and thrilled them by commenting: "You sound just like Guy Lombardo's boys." Florence Trombly, who was church organist for six years around the early 1920s, relates a charming story. One warm day before Easter, when she was about sixteen, she was practicing on the organ in church. Florence was a student at the Detroit Conservatory of Music and had been playing in bands since she was thirteen. After practicing for about two

When Anthony Young died in 1920, his widow rented the general store to their son-in-law, Ben Biermann.

Madeline has worked in the Grotto school office for the past twenty-one years.

hours, she suddenly had the urge to see how jazz would sound on the organ. The windows were open, and by the time she had gotten three quarters of the way through the "St. Louis Blues," Father Marx poked his head in with a big smile. He said, "What are you stopping for? It sounds good." Then he sat down and asked her to play something fast, so she played the "Twelfth Street Rag." At the end, he clapped for her. She was embarrassed, but he said that since the Blessed Sacrament wasn't there, and no one was in the church to be bothered, it was all right.⁴

Sister Theodosia Livernois⁵ remembers Father Marx as strict, but a good financier and a priest who had his whole heart and soul in his parish.

Sister Theodosia taught seventh grade at Grotto from 1925 to 1929 and returned as principal from 1939 to 1945. From the 1920s, she remembers trying to teach her class of seventy above the noise of automatic drills from the classroom being built next door.

Mary Campion⁶ came to teach at Grotto in 1928 and 1929. The other lay teachers were Helen Pfent, the daughter of a parish family, Rosemary Schmitz,⁷ and Eva Marx. Mary, Rosemary, and Eva were all from Wisconsin. Mary Young remembers writing what she wanted to say in class on the board because of the noise coming from construction of the new church.

The lay teachers from Wisconsin got their jobs through the Sisters and were given \$30 a month plus board. They wore uniforms when they taught, and like the Sisters, weren't encouraged to socialize with the parishioners. The new convent was big enough to accommodate the lay teachers as well as the Sisters, and they slept on the third floor.

SCHOOL DAYS

During the 1920s and for many years to follow, the religious education of the schoolchildren followed a familiar pattern. The whole school filed into church for Mass in the morning, and the children were occasionally taken to confession. The Children's Mass was at 9 o'clock on Sunday, and they took their places by classes with the Sisters sitting behind them. The priest would

- Among other teaching and performing jobs, Florence has been the regular organist at Weitenberner's Funeral Home since 1940.
- Livernois Avenue was named after Sister Theodosia's great-grandfather. The family came from French Canada and was one of the first to settle around St. Anne's Church.
- Mary Campion stayed in the Grotto parish and married Andrew Young. After
 raising a family of five children, she came back to the school to work in the office twenty-three years ago and has been there ever since.
- Rosemary is the sister of Sister Ann Mary Schmitz, who taught at Grotto from 1948 to 1950 and from 1963 to 1976.

sometimes ask them questions during the service. At seven years of age, or second grade, a child made his First Communion. First confession was before the First Communion and confirmation was in the fourth grade. The children had religion once a day in school for half an hour. Once a week, the assistant pastor came to give religious instruction, and before First Communion, Father Marx gave the children instruction in the church.

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

Father Marx organized the Ushers' Club and the Married Ladies' Sodality, in 1919. Neither had been formally organized up to that point. The Married Ladies' Sodality had grown out of the Ladies' Altar Society, and when ushers were needed in church, they had been appointed by the pastor. The Young Ladies' Sodality⁸ was also established. A privilege of belonging to it was that only members could be married at the altar.

As Spiritual Director of the Married Ladies' Sodality, Father Marx asked for their support in raising money for the building that needed to be done. His request led to the bazaars, raffles, "feather parties," and card parties which characterized the social life of the parish for decades to come.

The men's and women's church groups worked together on the bazaars and 4th of July picnics. Charlie Schoenherr was often in charge of the raffles and dances. At one picnic raffle, \$1500 was made. Tickets were sold for \$1, which entitled the purchaser to three beer tickets and a chance at 100 prizes. The beer tickets were particularly attractive, as it was during Prohibition. Charlie Schoenherr remembered that the beer was served in 7-ounce glasses and consisted mostly of foam, but no one complained. Another successful venture was the raffling off of a car, purchased despite Father Marx's forebodings of ruin.

The women made quilts for the bazaars. Well-known quilters of that time included Mrs. Schoenherr, Mrs. Schulte, Mrs. Rivard, Mrs. Gudenau, Mrs. Kaufman, Mrs. Marshall, and Mrs. Doyle. The ladies would make a day of it, including lunch. Gerry Kaufman, who started school in 1922, remembers playing under the quilts, pinned like tents to their frames. A few of the ladies in charge of the quilting groups were hard taskmasters, and someone who made the mistake of leaving knots under the quilt, or got blood on the material, might not be invited back.

The church bazaar lasted several days. The women got people to donate

In 1960, the Married Ladies' Sodality and the Young Ladies' Sodality merged to form the Ladies' Sodality.

prizes and cooked. Charlie Schoenherr, who was a carpenter, built the booths. The Monday afterwards was the children's bazaar and they had their own games, food, and prizes.

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society started in 1921. Father Marx liked to attend the meetings and if he couldn't come on a Tuesday night, he'd ask them to switch to another date. In the beginning, they didn't have any money except what was taken in on meeting nights, and dues. Later, they raised money by selling the calendars which they bought every year from one of their members, Al Lesperance. The St. Vincent de Paul men worked in teams, and on Sundays each team had seven or eight families to visit. Some of the roads were muddy then and in bad weather they had to leave their cars and walk down the roads in their boots. On Christmas, they'd deliver as many as forty-five bushel baskets full of groceries. Among those who were most active during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s were Ben Biermann, Charlie Schoenherr, John Marshall, Tom Perry, Al Lesperance, Joe Bork, Emral Zinser, and Joe Pixley.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Lidwina Schulte married Ed Geiger, in 1924, and the couple built a home and meat market on the piece of land which Mrs. Schulte gave them beside her house. The lot was next to the convent and Father Marx said they could build on the line between the two properties if Ed planted trees to hide the building from the convent. When it was completed, Dr. Diedrich and Dr. McDonald rented office space upstairs. At that time, people bought live fowl and the butcher killed and dressed them. Ed Geiger always donated live turkeys for the feather party raffles in the fall.

Father Leonard Kostka's family joined the parish in 1925 and he entered sixth grade at the Grotto School. He remembers that Sister Teckla, the eighth grade teacher, taught the boys how to twirl Indian clubs, which bore a resemblance to bowling pins and were twirled like batons. Charlie Eisbrenner was one of the group who gave Indian Club demonstrations. He and Father Kostka were two of the founders of the "Varier Club," a neighborhood club of boys from Grotto who played ball together. One of their favorite spots was the site on which the Ramona Theater would soon be built across the street from the church between Seymour and Greiner.

There were many vacant lots in those days. Dorothy Nowak remembers that when her family moved onto Parkgrove, in 1926, her father would watch for the Interurban from his porch. When he saw it stop at Seven Mile and Gratiot, he would walk over in time to catch it in front of the church.

LANDMARKS

Ben Biermann's store⁹ was a neighborhood meeting place, especially for his friends in St. Vincent de Paul. The boys and girls who delivered the *Detroit News* picked up their loads there. Weber's Bakery, a couple of blocks down Gratiot, was popular with the schoolboys, who went after school to buy potato bread. Simon's Jewelry Store was a familiar site, next to where Remer's is today. For twenty-seven years, Johanna Simon donated a ring every year either for the Sisters' Party or the bazaar. The property which Pete Schoenherr and Joe Gipperich owned at Seven Mile and Gratiot was later sold to Mandy (Amandus) Schoenherr, Pete's brother. He and his partner, Johnny Young, built a new building with a bowling alley upstairs and a bar downstairs called the "Palace Schoenherr." It stood where Church's Chicken stands today. Eastwood Park, another landmark, was an amusement park located at Eight Mile and Gratiot.

NEIGHBORING PARISHES

While Father Marx was building to make room for his expanding parish, several new Catholic churches came into being in the area: Holy Name of Jesus (1919), St. Margaret Mary (1920), St. David's (1921)¹⁰, St. John Berchmans (1923), Patronage of St. Joseph (1923), St. Clare of Montefalco (1926), St. Matthews (1927), Guardian Angels (1927), Our Lady of Good Counsel (1928), Our Lady Queen of Heaven (1929), and St. Juliana (1932).

THE DEPRESSION

The Depression that followed Black Tuesday, the 29th of October, 1929, dealt a blow to the Grotto parish just as it did to communities across the nation. Banks were closed and people lost their houses, property, and jobs. Those who already owned their homes were usually able to keep them, unless they couldn't pay their taxes. Those who were building or still paying off their mortgages, though, often lost their property, as did those who had invested all their money in land speculation. But in a closeknit community like the Grotto, support could be found among family and friends. Many young couples who lost their homes moved in with their parents and never moved out again. Couples and their children shared homes with other families. The

Ben Biermann ran the store until the 1930s when it was rented to a family named Parrish. Mrs. Young later sold the building to Henry Weitenberner.

St. David's was named after its patron, David Trombly, whose widow, Mary Greiner Trombly, donated the land upon which the church was built.

old farm families whose land allowed them to be self-sufficient shared their daily bread with their neighbors. Many of the people in the parish were used to just getting by on their hard work, and for them, the adjustment to hard times wasn't as difficult as it was for others. As one woman said of her girlhood, "I think we didn't really realize there was a Depression because we never did have a heck of a lot. And so, if you didn't have it, you didn't miss it."

THE SCHOOL

During the Depression days, when there wasn't always enough money to pay the teachers' salaries, the schoolchildren put on plays and programs for their parents and friends, and the mothers sponsored candy and bake sales.

The Dominican Sisters were very conscientious in keeping up-to-date as teachers. During the summers in Wisconsin, they took courses and during the school year, they attended Saturday classes at the University of Detroit and Wayne State University. Up until the early 1970s, the Dominican community sent out supervisors every year to evaluate teaching methods. Because of the emphasis on academic excellence, children who went from parochial school to public school were usually far ahead.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the use of I.Q. and standardized tests became popular and for awhile the students were grouped in classes according to I.Q. In 1934, the fourth through eighth grades began participating in the "cooperative system," where the students moved from class to class and the books and materials for each subject were kept in the teacher's room.

Beginning in the 1930s, the school children began to contribute to the Holy Childhood Society, a program of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, whose purpose was to raise money for the foreign missionaries. Fundraising for the missions abroad was commonly known in parochial schools as "ransoming pagan babies."

1936 PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

In 1936, the parish printed a "Bazaar Book" which is interesting as a kind of "Who's Who" of almost fifty years ago. The following church societies and their officers are listed: The Parish Committee: William P. Addy, Charles A. Schoenherr, Thomas O. Perry, John B. Smith, and John Marshall; the Holy Name Society: H. F. Weitenberner, Bernard Biermann, John B. Smith, and H. J. Rohlman; the Married Ladies' Sodality: Margaret Helka, Pauline C. Lee, Isabel Pixley, Dorothy E. Nowak, Blanche Ferschneider; the Young Ladies' Sodality: Louise M. Heidisch, Lucille M.

Seipp, Marguerite Kostka, Lillian Widenmann, and Irene C. Clos; the Third Order of St. Francis: Mrs. Anthony Weiler, Mrs. H. D. Rohlman, Ed Rivard, and Mrs. John Marshall; the Ladies' Auxiliary Knights of St. John: Genevieve O'Brien, Cecelia Marko, Genevieve Farmer, and Gertrude Kehrer. Besides these organizations, a Choir Club, an Ushers Club, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society were listed.

When Father Marx came to the parish, in 1915, there were 190 families registered, 120 children in the school, and four Sisters teaching. By 1936, there were more than 2,000 families in the parish, over 1,000 children in the school, twenty-two Sisters, and three lay teachers.

PLANS FOR A HIGH SCHOOL

In light of his interest in building, it is not surprising that the idea of building a high school periodically crossed Father Marx's mind. The archives of the Dominican nuns at Grotto contain the following entry: "Memorable date December 27, 1936. Father Marx made for the first time the announcement that just as soon as \$200,000 could be raised, he would begin the building of a high school." On May 13, 1937, there was a May Festival at Grotto, which the nuns noted was "the first attempt of the school to put on a big all-day money making affair for the benefit of the new high school." The idea of building a high school on the Grotto grounds was shelved sometime thereafter. When it emerged again, it would be in the form of two schools which Grotto cooperated in building with neighboring parishes. These were Notre Dame and Regina, built in the middle 1950s to take care of a half dozen parishes on the eastside, including Grotto. Monsignor Marx contributed the parishioners' share of the building fund out of the parish's surplus money.

In 1939, a group of representatives from Catholic schools in the Province of Ontario visited Grotto. Father Carroll Deady, a former assistant pastor at Grotto who was then Superintendent of Catholic schools, wrote in a letter to the principal, Sister Theodosia: "We are pleased to recommend Assumption School as an exemplification both of the Detroit Plan of School Organization and of outstanding teaching."

FATHER MURRAY

A popular assistant during the 1930s was Father Timothy Edward Murray, who was later pastor at St. Mark's, and then St. Clement's, in Center Line. He was very outgoing and the parishioners and children liked him and went to him with their problems. He understood Monsignor Marx and was very good to him. A nursing home was later named for him in Center Line.

SHRINE AND CEMETERY

During the 1930s, members of the Third Order of St. Francis decided that they would do something to improve the appearance of the cemetery and shrine. The brush which had grown up around the graves was cut and mowed and the tombstones repaired. They cleaned the stone on the Grotto, which was dark with age, mended the crumbling roof, repaired the fountain, and repainted the statues. Iron grill gates were put up across the front of the shrine so that it could be locked.

Father Van's shrines of St. Joseph and Our Lady of Sorrows, which stood in the cemetery at opposite ends of the crosswalk, had begun to deteriorate. The shrines were part of the tradition of the cemetery, however, and people did not want them removed. On the saints' days and on August 15th, Italian parishioners, especially, would walk along the cinder paths in their bare or stockinged feet, visiting the shrines and singing hymns. With the help of Third Order members Henry Masserang and John Rademacher, George Laporte, who was a mason, reconstructed the shrine of St. Joseph in brick. It was blessed by Father Marx on Sunday, September 22, 1939. The smaller chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows was also rebuilt.

Joseph Cartier, the Prefect of the Third Order, assisted the men in their efforts to beautify the cemetery, as did Mrs. Joseph Jansen, who was later chairman of the Grotto maintenance fund.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Ray Schoenherr, Jr., and some friends used to drive Father Marx to his relatives' house on Sunday afternoon. The priest owned a car, but he told the boys that he had seen a bad accident once and had never been able to drive after that. In return for driving him to and from his relatives, they were given the use of the car for the evening.

On December 10, 1940, the parish celebrated Father Marx's twenty-five years as pastor with a solemn High Mass, a dinner, and a program by the schoolchildren. In 1941, Father Marx received the honor of being appointed an Archdiocesan Consultor, which gave him the title of Monsignor. Later, on November 1, 1944, he was raised to the rank of Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

WAR YEARS

Grotto families listened anxiously for news of the war as husbands, fathers, and brothers enlisted or were drafted into the service. On the home front, everyone was urged to do his or her part. Women who no longer had children at home, such as Mrs. Mary Bogan, worked in the munitions plants. And everyone, including the Sisters at the Grotto School, planted a Victory Garden. On Tuesday nights, the church was full as the parish gathered to pray for the intercession of the Virgin Mother in bringing the killing to a quick end. Under the leadership of two strong principals, Sister Theodosia Livernois and Sister Albertona Wenthold, the schoolchildren were busy during the war years joining their efforts to help the destitute to those of the government and Catholic missions abroad.

In 1941, the Junior Red Cross was organized in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, and the children sewed, knitted, and made laprobes, afghans, mittens, checkerboards, slippers, and greeting cards to send abroad. Air raids were held regularly, during which spirits were kept up with singing, story telling, and the saying of the rosary. There were Victory Book and War Stamp campaigns. In 1943, a Minute Man Flag was presented to the school for 90% participation in purchasing war stamps and bonds. In 1943 and 1944, paper drives were conducted and the students collected scrap metal.

The students were inspired by the programs priest and Sister missionaries presented at the school. In 1943, they had 100% enrollment in the Holy Childhood Association and the Junior Mission Club, ransomed 150 pagan babies, and raised \$300 to support the school of the Blessed Imelda Mission, run by a Dominican Sister in Puerto Rico. Mass stipends were forwarded to the Dominican Fathers' Missions in China. In the spring of 1945, they were able to contribute \$100 to the Archdiocesan Development Fund.

In the 1940s, as now, Gratiot Avenue was one of the busiest streets in the city and a dangerous crossing. The schoolchildren participated in the national Safety Patrol program and in 1947, a special flag was presented to them for a perfect safety record.

Paper drives were the specialty of Sister Albertona. Children and their parents arrived with paper in cars, wagons, and baby buggies. The children were rewarded for their hard work with puppet and marionette shows in the school hall. The money raised was used for teachers' salaries and for school improvements. In 1947, new clocks, files, and manila envelopes were bought for the school office, as well as a new American flag and flagpole.

SPORTS AT GROTTO

During the 1940s, the Holy Name Society supported the development of organized sports at Grotto. Their fundraising efforts were a natural extension of the close relationship fostered between fathers and sons, who once a month attended Holy Name Mass together. As the boys got older, they went to Holy Name meetings with their fathers. The meetings were held on the Monday nights following the Holy Name Mass on Sunday, and featured speakers and entertainment. The Society raised money for athletics at the annual feather party raffles held before Thanksgiving. Raffle tickets were sold for turkeys, chickens, and ducks. The event included a Keno game, similar to Bingo, in the school hall, with more feathered prizes. The money raised was used to buy uniforms and equipment.

Grade school athletics weren't as highly organized then as they are today, and the coaching was usually done by the fathers or one of the priests. On June 13, 1945, Assumption Grotto's baseball team won the City Championship, coached by assistant pastor Father Henry T. Hengehold.

In November, 1945, the Assumption Grotto Athletic Association sponsored its first raffle and feather party to raise money for competitive sports. That year, the school participated in organized football for the first time in the C.Y.O. (Catholic Youth Organization) League. The Athletic Association sponsored a second feather party in November, 1946, during which there was a drawing for 25 turkeys and a Bingo game. Charlie Schoenherr, Thomas Perry, Ben Biermann, and Joseph A. Bork were on the Committee.

In 1947, Grotto student Jack Weber made the all-state all-star football team from the C.Y.O. teams, and Assumption Grotto won the C.Y.O. football championship. The proud mothers prepared a banquet for the teams and their guests. Grotto's C.Y.O. football and basketball teams were known at that time as the "Blue Blazers."

Other church organizations were also busy in the 1940s. In 1945, the St. Vincent de Paul Society collected canned food to be sent to Europe by the national Catholic Welfare Organization. In 1946, the Young Ladies' Sodality had a Christmas party for 30 orphans from the Guardian Angel Home. In 1949, they dressed in formals to form the Living Rosary and crown Mary Queen of May.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA

On October 3, 1948, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima was brought to Assumption Grotto to be venerated. It had been traveling through the

United States since December 8th of the preceding year. Continuous rosaries were said throughout the afternoon and night as people reverently filed by the statue, and Mass was said the next morning. During one day, 40,000 people visited the church.

PETE DEDENBACH

In March, 1944, the following poem appeared in the "Assumption News," written by parishioner Alois Abele:

TO ONE PETE DEDENBACH

Janitor at the Assumption (Grotto) Parish for 50 Years

The 25th of March of Eighteen-ninety-four (1894) Is dear to our memory
As set aside by Our Lord
A better date, a nicer day
Could hardly ever be found
When you were called as janitor
To the good old Grotto ground.

A young man then, but not a boy Your tasks were many then. The bell you rung at 6 o'clock And planted corn at ten.

The City then was far away You seldom went to town. In summer you had chores to do To keep you on the ground.

The cemetery oft' needed care
The weeds would make you sweat,
So many duties to perform,
No time was left to pett.

A paradise the Grotto grounds Was ever sweet to you, You made your friends then by the bounds No maiden due to woo.

In winter you had wood to split You shoveled snow at dawn To keep the walks clean for our feet And church and priest house warm.

The years rolled by and well on high Your record will be found. Good service to your fellowman Rewarded with a crown.

May your life's evening be of joy. Grief, sorrow, worry not annoy, For a single moment through your life Although you never had a wife.

With kindest greetings I remain, Your good old Friend the Coffeeman.

The story of Pete Dedenbach's life connects Grotto's early years with its modern history.

Pete was born on February 25, 1860. He was gravedigger, bell ringer, and general caretaker around the Grotto cemetery, convent, church, school, and rectory for over fifty years. For the parishioners, Pete remained a constant while different pastors came and went. Pete never married, and for him as for the priests, the parish was both work and home.

Pete's parents were living on a farm near Conner's Creek and Gratiot when the was born. Like some of the other farmers, his father had begun to feel the pressure of the city as it spread out along Gratiot Road, so he sold their place and moved farther out to Utica Road and Gratiot.

As a young man, Pete worked for a soap company. At that time, it was a two-day trip to Utica with a horse and wagon to pick up potash from the farmers and haul it in to Detroit. Later, he worked at Dr. John R. Jones' big home and office, in Leesville. Keeping Dr. Jones' carriage clean was a hard, dirty job as he often travelled long distances over muddy roads to see his patients.

During Father Ronayne's time, Pete slept in a room in the rectory above the kitchen. When Father Marx became pastor, his housekeeper, Pearl Rohoviak, served Pete meals in the rectory kitchen, and he slept in the basement (flower room) of the church. Later, he and another janitor, Mr. Walschon, built a sleeping space for him in the boiler room of the school. Sister Canisia Stangl remembers that Pete sometimes slept on the floor of the church in front of the statue of the Virgin Mary.

Pete's duties included the maintenance of the church grounds and buildings, a job which became increasingly harder as new buildings were erected and old ones enlarged.

Pete lived a simple, solitary life, but he is remembered as being congenial. He was especially fond of the Grotto schoolchildren and there are men who still recall getting 5¢ and 10¢ haircuts from him. On Sundays, he would stand in front of the church and greet people as they went in and out. There was hardly any similarity between the appearance of Pete on Sundays and during the week. Like most people in those days, he followed the ritual of scrubbing in a tub of hot water on Saturday night. With the addition of clean clothes, he was a different man by the time he went to church.

Pete had two special friends among the parish ladies who were kind to him, Mrs. Schulte and Mrs. Ertzbischoff, who both lived close to the church. Mrs. Schulte told her daughter Lidwina that Pete seemed to have a sixth sense that let him know when she was baking bread. The path of Mrs. Ertzbischoff's friendship with Pete had also led to his heart by way of his stomach. She would call over and offer him something to eat or drink when she saw him working in the cemetery.

The affection which existed between Pete and the Ertzbischoff family eventually led to his "adoption" by them. The relationship is illustrated in the following incident. One day, around 1928, as he was picking pears in a tree near the rectory, his home-made ladder collapsed and he fell, breaking his shoulder bone. Barely able to stand, he hobbled over to the Ertzbischoffs' for help. Mrs. Ertzbischoff's sister, Henrietta,11 was babysitting and Pete's distress upset her so much that she broke the door key off in the lock. Luckily, a young seminary student, Father John Schmidt, happened to be passing by and helped get Pete onto a chaise lounge in the spare bedroom. When Mrs. Ertzbischoff returned, everyone was eager to get Pete to a doctor or hospital as soon as possible, but he refused to go. A chiropractor came over to look at him, but when he started working on his shoulder, Pete screamed in pain. Finally, he got his way and was allowed to recuperate in peace at the Ertzbischoffs'. Because his shoulder bone wasn't set right, it never healed properly, and people who remember Pete after the accident describe him as "stooped." During the course of his long recovery, Pete became part of the Ertzbischoff family. As George Ertzbischoff remembers: "Everyone thought he was our 'Grampa'." He was called Grampa by George and his brothers Lolly (Edmond)12 and John. Pete was John's godfather, and along with the rest of the family was stunned when on September 15, 1936, John was killed by a car on 7 Mile and Gratiot while riding his bicycle.

When he was well enough to work again, Pete asked Monsignor Marx for permission to eat his meals at the Ertzbischoffs' rather than at the rectory. Monsignor Marx agreed and paid Mrs. Ertzbischoff for Pete's board.

One of Pete's duties was to ring the bell before Mass in the morning, and nearby parishioners used him as their alarm clock. Sister Canisia remembers the problems that resulted from the difference between "real time" and "Pete's time." When she was principal, one of the lay teachers complained

 Henrietta, or Helen, is married to Leo De Clark, and today lives in Sacred Heart parish, in Roseville.

12. Edmond Ertzbischoff lives on Spring Garden. His wife, Barbara, is a Commentator in the church, and their son Edmond, Jr. is a priest in Ann Arbor.

to a parent that her child was often late to school. The angry mother came to school for a confrontation and the teacher called Sister Canisia in to mediate. During the discussion which ensued, the mother said: "I told you that I go by Pete's time." The family only got up when Pete rang the bell for church, which was not at precisely the same time every day.

Pete is remembered most of all as Grotto's official gravedigger. This was his most important job and he was given responsibility for the cemetery. Having worked so long at the church, he knew all the parishioners he buried. Pete had an excellent memory for what concerned his work. As Chekhov said of one of his characters: "His is the memory of one who loves." He not only had a map in his head of all the cemetery plots, but he could tell you what the weather was like on the day of the burial. The Grotto cemetery had always tended to be marshy.13 A horseshoe shaped moat had been dug around it to act as a drain, but when it was wet, water still tended to collect. Pete was a sensitive man and couldn't bear to see a roughbox and casket lowered into a grave half-filled with water. So with a hooked branch and a bucket, he engaged in a never-ending war against seeping water. Delia Biermann remembers walking down to the Grotto with her sister on an August night after dinner. The girls were surprised to hear angry sounds coming from a freshly dug grave. Approaching the hole, they found Pete down at the bottom muttering against the standing water which he was bailing out.

For many years, the Third Order of St. Francis helped care for the cemetery and Grotto. Once George Weber decided it would improve things to have the fountain in front of the Grotto moved to Our Lady of Sorrows chapel. This upset Pete so much that he used his own money to move the fountain back to its original location.

During Pete's time, the cemetery plots did not include perpetual care. Many parishioners tended their own, like the Laethems and Malburgs and Irene Couvier, who always took care of her mother's and father's graves. Others paid Pete to keep the grass cut and hedges trimmed. After Pete retired, the neighbor boys earned money by taking over some of his jobs in the cemetery and around the shrine during the August 15th festivities. The money they were paid went as often as not for treats at nearby Howard's Ice Cream store on Gratiot.

Gravedigging was a hard job. Pete sometimes had help from Mr. Ertzbischoff, who was also paid to do maintenance work around the church grounds. And Mrs. Schulte and Mrs. Ertzbischoff both sent their boys over to help Pete when they saw that he had too much to do. Helping Pete dig

This was corrected as soon as the area was connected with the city sewers, into which the water now drains.

graves gave the boys an experience of death which few other boys their age had. George Ertzbischoff remembers helping Pete move bodies from one burial plot to another. The coffins had usually deteriorated, and the dust and bones would have to be scooped up and placed in new boxes. He remembers the body of a little girl enclosed in a glass-topped coffin which appeared to be perfectly intact until the lid was opened and the air made the body crumble into dust. Another body's torso looked like a big cotton ball and didn't disintegrate even when it was exposed to the air.

Pete was tender-hearted and buried the bodies of babies, whose remains were sometimes brought over in shoe boxes, near Our Lady of Sorrows chapel.

There were advantages to having one man in charge of the cemetery operation, but there were also problems. People were so used to relying on Pete to remember where everyone was buried that no official cemetery records were kept. The records were in his head, or on scraps of paper stored in trunks among his personal possessions.

When Pete retired, he moved in with the Ertzbischoffs on Spring Garden. He lived there happily until he was in his late eighties, by which time the Ertzbischoffs were also aging, and found Pete hard to take care of. When the family decided that he needed closer supervision, they called his niece and her husband, Irene and Leo Kaiser, and the Kaisers took him to the Sands Sanitarium in Romeo, Michigan. There, Pete found his parish contemporaries, the Laethem twins, Richard and Conrad, but by then their minds had all slowed down to the point where they didn't recognize each other.

When the Kaisers were moving Pete into the nursing home, they inspected the trunks which he had kept down in the boiler room of the school. In his old age, Pete had squirreled away all kinds of things which had sentimental value to him and none to anyone else. He gave one trunkful of papers to George Ertzbischoff, who was thereby able to save some of the cemetery receipts. But before the situation could be properly assessed, Leo Kaiser had done what seemed like the reasonable thing to do, which was to throw most of Pete's trash into the furnace.

Sometime after he retired, Pete had had a family stone made for his parents to mark their graves in the small cemetery behind Sacred Heart Church, in Utica. When he died, between Christmas and New Year's, in 1951, he was laid to rest beside them in the cemetery. There was more than the usual sadness and nostalgia in the timing of Pete's death because Christmas had always been a time of great joy for him. It was then that he

prepared the manger for the Christ child, and joined his wonder and love with that of the parish children, for whom this was his gift.

THE BLOCK ROSARY

At the start of the Korean war, Monsignor Marx urged the Ladies' Sodality to pray to the Blessed Mother by saying the rosary often, in order to bring peace to the world, stop the spread of communism, and insure Catholic unity. Members suggested a block rosary. This devotion started in October 1950 and soon spread to many blocks. Small groups met weekly in each others' homes to pray the rosary for peace. The rosary groups continued for many years.

THE SCHOOL DURING THE 1950s

The Grotto fathers continued to back C.Y.O. sports with their fundraising and the assistant priests with their time. In 1952, the Assumption Girls' softball team won the C.Y.O. championship, with Father Vincent Myrick as their athletic director.

Around 1950, Grotto had its peak enrollment, the result of the post-war "baby boom." There were about 1200 students. When Sister Alice ("Aloysius") Pittz taught during the 1950s, classes of 50 and more students were the norm. "You did what you could with as many kids as you had," she remembers. The school went into uniforms during those years.

The departmental system was abandoned in 1950 and everyone went back to permanent rooms. Nativity High School was dedicated that year. Like Grotto, it was run by Dominican Sisters from Racine, and many of the Grotto children went on to it in the ninth grade.

Discipline was strict during the 1950s, and it was also a period in which the nuns worked on character-building and social skills with their students. In the spring, when the weather got warm and the boys took off their ties, Sister Alice remembers the principal, Sister Agnes Claire, walking down the classroom aisle and quietly saying to the tieless people: "You know, gentlemen, we have a waiting list." Like many of the Sisters, Sister Agnes Claire was a stern enforcer of the law, but she had an affectionate relationship with her students. Every morning, she stood outside the office to smile and greet them as they entered school.

Sister Alice was in charge of the eighty patrol boys who stood on the corners near Grotto from 7:50 till 8:45 every morning. "There were some real princes," she remembers. "I used to look forward to the meetings we had. They were responsible, reliable young men." Once, when the temperature

was between 15 and 20 degrees below zero, she got the principal's permission to put the boys on 15-minute shifts and bring them in to warm up with hot chocolate. This meant that neither she nor all the extra boys on duty were at Mass that morning, but Father Marx never said anything. It was always Father Marx's policy to let the nuns run the school.

One of Sister Agnes Claire's projects was to have a dance teacher come in and teach the eighth graders ballroom dancing. At first, the students weren't very enthusiastic, especially the boys. But on graduation night, there was a beautiful party, first Mass, then a dance in the school hall for the children and their parents. The young people showed great poise, and the dance lessons proved themselves to have been worth the effort.

Before their First Communion, the second graders were quizzed by Monsignor Marx from a little book called *The Christian Doctrine*. Sister Jean Anthony VerVoort remembers that when she taught from 1953 to 1957, there were five classes of second graders. Monsignor would have them all come into the church to answer questions. The teachers were asked to leave, but the priest had no problem with discipline. "To look at Monsignor, the youngsters knew well enough to behave themselves," Sister Jean Anthony observes. One day, a student was sent back from church in tears for having missed the first question, the sign of the cross. "I got the Ghost on the wrong shoulder," she said. Sister Jean Anthony had her repeat the sign, which she did correctly, and asked her the other questions. Sure that the child had only made the mistake out of nervousness, she sent her back the next morning, but had her sit in a different seat.

In the 1950s, the atmosphere was free and friendly at Grotto and danger was the farthest thing from anyone's mind. But in March, 1955, tragedy came when a second grade girl was kidnapped on her way to school, and murdered. In the ten days it took to find the girl's body, the school was overrun with police and reporters. At the funeral, the child's classmates formed an honor guard standing in a double line facing the path the casket would come through, and the body was carried to the cemetery in a white hearse.

For months after the murder, the second graders drew pictures of the casket and of the people at the funeral in their art class. The atmosphere at the school changed and security was tightened. Children who were absent from school were called and checked on. By the end of the 1950s, the numbers on the telephone in the school office had been worn off from dialing. The children had been warned so often not to talk to strangers or accept rides that they sometimes over-reacted. Around 1960, there was a little boy whose behavior had branded him as a "holy terror" at school. One day, two of the schoolchildren saw him pulled into a car by a man. They ran to a phone and called the police, giving an exact description of the make of the

car, color, and license number. The police commended them on their quick action and excellent description, but as it turned out, it was the boy's father taking him back to school after he had run away again.

By the late 1950s, Father Marx was beginning to show signs of age. During his last years at Grotto, he confined himself more and more to the rectory except for saying Mass. He was fortunate in that he could allow some of the weight of his burden to be picked up by the active, united church organizations and his assistant pastors.

The Mothers' Club raised money to buy things for the school. As a result of their first May Fair, in 1951, they were able to contribute \$2500 to the library fund, and in 1952, they donated \$500 for a movie projector.

In 1952, a Catholic Book Fair was sponsored by the Holy Name Society and the Third Order. Father Ryder, Spiritual Director of the two groups, who had encouraged the fair, also helped St. Vincent de Paul by suggesting that a special envelope for them be passed out during Sunday morning Masses.

During the 1950s, the school hall was the center of parish activities. Women went over to sew cancer pads, the school band practiced there, and on Friday and Saturday nights, there were dances for the young people. People of all ages were invited to these parties and the Sisters would sometimes go over to join in the fun.

Grotto was financially secure during the 1950s. The building debts had been paid off and the parish was prosperous. The impression of one of the nuns was: "Nothing was too much for them. They had their strong values and if you had money, you got it through good, solid, honest, steady work. But, by the same token, they didn't restrict their giving." But the era when all energies were devoted to maintaining the status quo was drawing to a close. The changes of the Sixties were looming just around the corner when Monsignor Marx retired in 1959, at the age of seventy-four. The preceding year, Pope Pius XII had died on October 9th, and Cardinal Edward Mooney on October 25th. With Cardinal Mooney at his bedside had been his secretary, Monsignor Joseph M. Breitenbeck, who would be Grotto's next pastor. In January, 1959, Cardinal Dearden was installed as head of the Detroit Archdiocese and by June 26th, Monsignor Breitenbeck had received his assignment and was moving into the rectory at Assumption Grotto. Monsignor Marx was appointed Pastor Emeritus of the church, but ill health forced him to reside at Carmel Hall nursing home until his death two years later.

FATHER MARX'S LAST YEARS

In November, 1960, Monsignor Marx sent a gift of \$3,000 to the Sisters teaching at the Grotto School for their "personal needs" and asked to be remembered in their prayers. The nuns used the money to buy a blue Ford sedan. Later that same month, Monsignor Breitenbeck brought Monsignor Marx from Carmel Hall for a visit. The frail old priest wore his monsignor's robe and beretta and heavy leather slippers. The younger man had recollections of the older one which went back thirty years, however, when he remembered him as a dynamo. When he was fourteen or fifteen, around 1928, Joe Breitenbeck had gone out to Grotto with his parents to visit a cousin who was a nun. The school and convent had been built and the new church was under construction. Sitting on some pieces of stone which would go into the new building, he watched his parents talking to the energetic priest, then at the height of his powers, and never dreamed that thirty years later he would be returning to replace him.

During the years he spent in the Chancery as Secretary to Cardinal Mooney, Monsignor Breitenbeck had had many contacts with Monsignor Marx. He knew that although the older priest presented a gruff exterior, he had quietly performed many acts of personal generosity for people in his parish, particularly during the Depression.

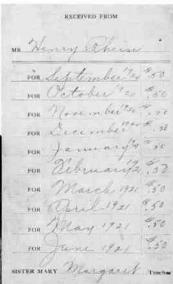
On his visit to Grotto, Monsignor Marx spoke to the children during Forty-Hour Devotions. Then Monsignor Breitenbeck took him around the grounds and buildings in his wheelchair to show him the improvements and the plans for the new Activities Building. Monsignor Marx's love for the parish to which he had dedicated over half his life overflowed and he wept with emotion. A little over two months later, on January 14, 1961, he died.





Monsignor Joseph S. Marx in his middle and later years. He was raised to the rank of Monsignor in 1944.





Left: Mary Campion (Mrs. Lawrence Young) wearing the uniform required of lay teachers, 1928.
Center: Helen Pfent, lay teacher, 1928.
Right: Henry Rhein's receipt for his son Leo's tuition for the school year 1920-21. Notice that tuition is 50¢ a month.





Father Joseph Marx with the Class of 1917. Third row standing: Violet Michels, Angela Smith, Angela Throstied, Irma Mierschaert, Ralph Schoenherr; Second row: Joseph Radzwion, Margaret Nuytten, Father Marx, John Pajot, Emil Hauteman; Seated flower girls: Pfent girl, Bernadine Lefevere.

Sadie Trombly and Joseph Schulte, married at the Grotto on September 7, 1921, by Father Joseph Marx.



September, 1916.
"The Surrey with the Fringe on
Top." Anastasia Young standing in
front of the horse, Mrs. Nicholas
Young in the back of the buggy.
The driver is Christina and next to
her is Jim.



February, 1917. The Nicholas Young farm on Greiner Road.



Georgina Young, Lawrence Young (married Norma Schoenherr), and Madeline DeKoninck (married John O'Grady). The picture was taken at Jim Young's wedding in 1934.









Officers of the Holy Name Society from Grotto's 1936 Year Book: H.F. Weitenberner, Bernard Biermann, John B. Smith, J.J. Rohlman.



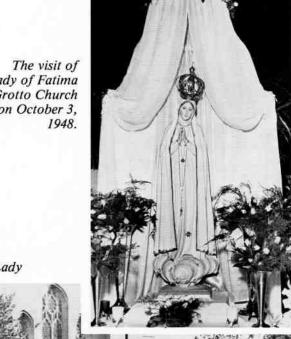


Group pictures of the 1936 and 1946 Ushers Clubs.

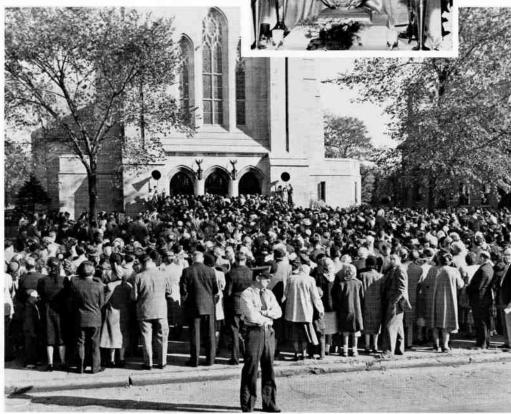
Fall, 1947. A football banquet prepared by the mothers for Grotto's championship team.



The visit of Our Lady of Fatima to the Grotto Church on October 3, 1948.



The throngs of people who came to revere the statue of Our Blessed Lady





A Sister working with the little ones during the 1941-1942 school year.



May, 1943. Parishioners inspect craft items made by the schoolchildren for the war effort.



Organized chaos: the May 1948 paper drive.

Spring, 1943. The nuns and their student helpers digging up the ground behind the convent for a Victory Garden.





Celebrity Soupy Sales calling out the prizes that were given away to 80 boys at a Father and Son Program sponsored by the Holy Name Society. Behind him are Wally Fromhart, new football coach at the University of Detroit, and Don Lund, outfielder for the Detroit Tigers.



Informal snapshot of Ed and Mary Rivard, John Marshall, and Charlie and Delia Schoenherr.





Peter Dedenbach, caretaker, gravedigger, and bell ringer at Grotto from the 1890s to the 1940s.



Isabelle and
Joseph Jansen,
among the most
dedicated of the
Third Order
members who for
many years took
responsibility for
the upkeep of
the shrine and
cemetery.



Mrs. Vera Doyle, President of the Married Ladies Sodality and longtime active parishioner, arranging a side altar for a special celebration.



George Laporte and Henry Masserang explaining the history of the Grotto. From 1936 on, the rosary was led at the shrine every evening in May and October, and was said informally throughout most of the summer.

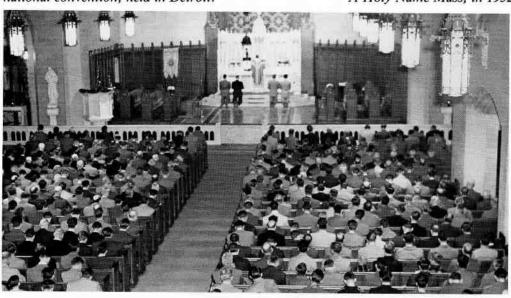


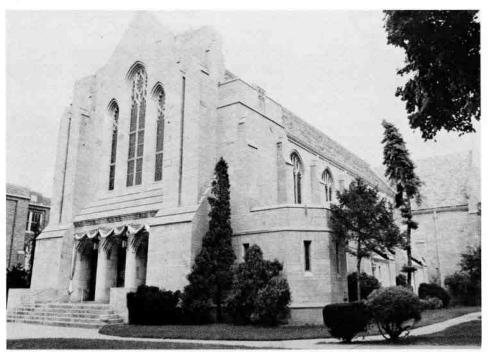
Monsignor Marx and parishioners in front of Our Lady of Sorrows in the old part of the cemetery facing Grover. This shrine, as well as the St. Joseph shrine at the other end of the crosswalk were built by the Third Order of St. Francis. George LaPorte did the masonry work, helped by Henry Masserang and Joseph Cartier and their sons.

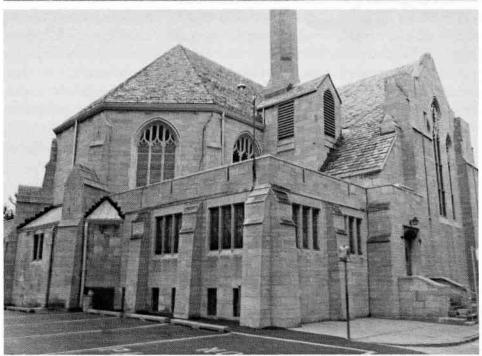


October 7, 1951. The Assumption Grotto float, created and manned by the Holy Name Society for their national convention, held in Detroit.









Two views of Father Marx's 1929 church as it appears today.

NEW DIRECTIONS

MONSIGNOR BREITENBECK

WHEN MONSIGNOR BREITENBECK TOOK OVER AS PASTOR, HE had his work cut out for him. There were 4500 families in the parish, almost 10,000 people. Monsignor Marx's declining health had prevented him from keeping up with his duties, and the buildings he had erected thirty and forty years ago were in need of repairs. The grounds were rundown and the shrine and cemetery showed signs of neglect. The parish school, still at peak enrollment, was in need of new classrooms. The new pastor had a number of pluses to work with, however. The parish community was active and united, and Monsignor Marx had handled finances so well that when repairs had to be made, the money was there to make them.

Monsignor Breitenbeck began his pastorate at a historic moment in the history of the Catholic Church, the beginning of the Vatican II Council in Rome. In him, his new parishioners were to find a man uniquely qualified by his education, background, and temperament to lead them through a difficult period of transition.

Joseph Matthew Breitenbeck was a native Detroiter, the son of Matthew J. Breitenbeck and his wife, Mary A. Quinlan. Born on August 3, 1914, he was one of seven brothers and sisters. His parents and two of his brothers, Daniel J. Breitenbeck and Father James J. Breitenbeck, C.SS.R., had died by the time Monsignor Breitenbeck had finished his first year at Grotto. His brother, Father Gerard Breitenbeck, C.SS.R., was at one time business manager of the Ligourian publications. Another brother, Thomas V. Breitenbeck, lived in Detroit. One sister, Mrs. Mary A. Carter, lived with her

family in West Severna Park, Maryland, and another, Ann Terese Breitenbeck, lived in Lake Zurich, Illinois.

Joseph Breitenbeck went to Holy Redeemer for elementary and secondary school. After graduating in 1932, he spent three years in pre-law studies at the University of Detroit. In 1935, he entered Sacred Heart Seminary where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree. He was sent to Rome in 1938 for two years of theological study at the North American College and the Gregorian University. From 1940 to 1942, he attended Catholic University in Washington, D.C., from which he received a licentiate in Sacred Theology.

He was ordained at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral on May 30, 1942, by Archbishop Edward Mooney, and served his first assignment as assistant in St. Margaret Mary's parish, in Detroit.

In 1944, Archbishop Mooney picked Father Breitenbeck to be his secretary, a post he was to keep for fourteen years, except for the years 1947 to 1949, when he returned to Rome to obtain a licentiate in Canon Law at the Pontifical Lateran University.

During the 1950s, Father Breitenbeck was made a Papal Chamberlain with the title of Very Reverend Monsignor, and three years later was named Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. In October, 1958, Monsignor Breitenbeck accompanied Cardinal Mooney to the conclave in Rome which was to elect a successor to the late Pope Pius XII. During that trip, the Cardinal died. Monsignor Breitenbeck continued for a year as secretary to Archbishop John F. Dearden, Cardinal Mooney's successor. On June 11, 1959, Cardinal Dearden appointed his secretary to be pastor of Assumption Grotto parish.

SUNDAY "GOOD MORNIN'S"

Judging that vigorous new leadership was needed, Monsignor Breitenbeck took several initiatives during his first years to bring the parish together as a family. The first Sunday after his arrival, he and his assistants, Father Schwager and Father Lentine, started the practice of standing outside the church after Masses. The new pastor wanted to meet his people and answer any questions they might have. He was aided in getting acquainted by a remarkable memory for names and faces, and parishioners were soon amazed to hear him call out to them by name.

The Vatican II changes did not take place overnight. In order to make the parishioners' adjustment easier, the Archdiocese ran an educational program before each change in the liturgy was made. The reasons were explained during sermons, and discussed in groups of priests and parishioners. This was a dynamic time for the parish. Over 800 people participated in the Little Coun-

cil meetings, getting together in each other's homes in groups of about twenty. Under the direction of group leaders, they studied the new rules and discussed their meaning. It was a period of voluntarism and the chance to get to know each other.

Around the same time, Mary Lowen, who taught at the Grotto School, started an adult education program. Over twenty classes were offered, including Bible Study.

Most of the parishioners welcomed having the Mass said in English with the priest facing the congregation, the participation of lay people in the readings, and congregational singing. Of course, not all the people were completely happy with all the changes. For some, the Latin Mass stood for the universality of the faith. They might have had the experience of Dorothy Nowak's son, who when he was serving in the Army in Germany in the 1950s had found that the only thing familiar to him was Latin Mass at the local church. Particularly among some of the older people, there was an undercurrent of nostalgia for the sights, sounds, and symbols of the past.

One change which the parishioners were adamantly against was the removal of Father Marx's Italian marble communion rail. Despite the urgings of their priest, they insisted that it was too beautiful and valuable to be dismantled.

For the first time in many years, the Sisters at the school felt the almost daily presence of a pastor with the arrival of Monsignor Breitenbeck. On the mornings he was home, the priest made it a policy to stand in front of the school and greet the teachers and children. He visited classrooms at least once a week to give instruction, attend a program, or make an announcement.

On Mondays, the pastor and his assistants made calls to hospitals and nursing homes. Forms in the Sunday parish bulletin were filled out for the sick by friends and relatives and delivered to the rectory. The priests covered all the hospitals in the metropolitan area, including Pontiac and Ann Arbor. They also promoted the feeling of the parish as a family through a program of home visitations. Tuesday appointments were set up by the Legion of Mary, which contacted families one block at a time. Visits lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour, and Monsignor Breitenbeck and his assistants made between forty and fifty stops a week. Turnover in the parish population was about 10% a year, and as new people moved in, they were contacted for a visit.

At first, the Sisters accompanied the priests, but it was decided that they should make their own visitations. They later started a program where they visited the homes of children enrolled in the school on Sunday afternoons.

They also paid visits to families in which there had been a death, or someone was sick.

In the spirit of ecumenism, Monsignor Breitenbeck called on the Lutheran church across the street when he arrived. As a result, the two pastors and their assistants were soon guests for dinner at each others' rectories. The Lutheran minister was invited to give the opening prayer at one of the big parish functions, and Monsignor Breitenbeck was invited to address meetings of the Lutherans.

CENTER FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

One of Monsignor Breitenbeck's first projects was establishing the Saturday morning religious education program for the retarded. No such program existed on the eastside at that time. The project was close to the priest's heart as his sister, Ann Terese, had been retarded since birth. He had heard that a parish on East Grand Boulevard was going to be sponsoring a course in religious training for the retarded, and talking with parishioners after Mass, he looked for volunteers. Two of his earliest recruits, Isabel Powierski and Helen Pawlowski, continue to serve today as Director and Co-Director of Grotto's Center for Exceptional Children.

The organization of the program was a giant task. Isabel Powierski took charge of locating volunteer teachers and organizing the facilities. Over the course of the next twenty years, she and many of her volunteers did extensive reading and attended workshops in order to become officially certified to teach the retarded.

The children came from parishes all over the area. At the peak of enrollment, which was around 1965, there were 70 students and a volunteer staff of 34, including Sisters from the school. Because of the number of volunteers, each child was able to receive the maximum of personal attention. The goal of the program was (and is) to "bring to the handicapped children and adults, physically and/or mentally, the knowledge and love of God, and an awareness that through Christ there is a place for them in union with others, on this earth as well as in heaven." The crowning achievement of all these efforts was to prepare the handicapped to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist. This event occurred at the end of the year, and Mass was followed by a breakfast of pancakes and sausages.

ACTIVITIES BUILDING AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Talking to people before and after Masses, Monsignor Breitenbeck soon discovered that there was a need for expanded classroom space and a gymnasium for the grade school, as well as a meeting place and recreation center for the entire parish. Within a few months, plans were begun to build the Activities Building. Because the subdivision in which Mapleridge was located was zoned for residential buildings only, signed permission had to be obtained from the homeowners. The last name on the list was Father Gutha, who owned the house on Gratiot and Mapleridge where Sisters Concetta and Caroline live today. Father Gutha was a priest in the Lansing Diocese and Monsignor Breitenbeck had to drive there for his signature in order to get the work started.

The pastor had long meetings with the parishioners who made up the Board of Consultors on the plans for the Activities Building. He also asked for suggestions from the Sisters who were happy to be able to get additional blackboards, storage space, and other amenities to help in their work.

Groundbreaking began in 1962. On April 11th, Monsignor Arthur M. Karey presided at the cornerstone laying of the new building and blessed the copper box to be contained in the cornerstone. The Benediction was then offered in the new gymnasium, followed by an open house. The finished building was blessed and consecrated by Bishop John A. Donovan in a ceremony on December 14, 1962, in which Grotto's present pastor, Monsignor Clifford F. Sawher, assisted.

The Activities Building added eight new classrooms to the school, as well as a science laboratory, music room, art studio, religious education room, and library. The gymnasium/auditorium became a recreational center and meeting place for the whole parish. The space also gave Grotto the opportunity to serve as host for educational workshops and conferences, as well as community organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous.

It seemed to Monsignor Breitenbeck when he arrived that everything needed to be fixed. The mortar had crumbled between the stones on top of the school and had to be filled in. A sprinkler system was installed in the school for fire prevention, and the convent and rectory were repaired and refurbished. The old fence around the cemetery no longer provided protection against vandals and was replaced by a high wire fence. The cemetery grounds were overgrown with weeds, and tombstones were broken. Monsignor Breitenbeck cleaned up the cemetery, adding bushes and shrubs. He was helped in his efforts by the caretakers, "Tiny" (Mr. Sabelhaus, brother of "Smokey," the present boiler operator and maintenance man), and Achiel and Cyril Van Overbeke, who did maintenance work and cut the grass. The metal gates across the front of the shrine were removed and the old shrines of St. Joseph and Our Lady of Sorrows were taken down. New Stations of the Cross, a gift of the parishioners, were erected in the cemetery

and solemnly blessed by Monsignor M. Stitt, Dean of Wayne Eastern Deanery, on December 16, 1962.

In all these improvements, Monsignor Breitenbeck was generously supported by the parishioners. When he took over the parish, there had been about \$1,000,000 left over from Father Marx. Within a couple of years, he had spent that money and borrowed over \$800,000 more from the Archdiocese. He also worked on raising money within the parish to meet building and repair costs. The parish men went in teams of two from door to door asking for pledges. The Ladies' Sodality had fundraisers, and a successful tithing program was instituted.

PARISH HISTORY

Monsignor Breitenbeck was very interested in the parish's long history. He was fortunate to have Father Daniel Reilly, O.P., a trained historian, as summer assistant until his untimely death in 1962. During the time he spent at the Grotto, Father Reilly did research in the Archdiocesan Archives and interviewed descendants of the old families.

Monsignor Breitenbeck was personally responsible for retrieving one artifact of Grotto's history, Father Van's pelican, which had been "perched" on the Ertzbischoffs' lawn on Spring Garden. Mr. Ertzbischoff had acquired it as the result of an arrangement with Father Marx: in return for tearing down the old barn behind the rectory and carting away the debris, he could take anything he wanted from the building. One of the treasures he had found there was the stone pelican and it had graced the front of his home for all the years since. The bird was a great temptation to neighborhood boys, who liked to demonstrate their strength by lifting it, and it had lost a part of its beak and the tip of a wing by being dropped. Monsignor Breitenbeck finally convinced Mr. Ertzbischoff that the statue belonged in the cemetery. He had it repaired and it stands today on a marble block beside Father Van's grave.

BOARD OF CONSULTORS AND SCHOOL BOARD

Not long after becoming a pastor, Monsignor Breitenbeck established the forerunner of the Parish Council, which he called the Board of Consultors. The first Board was made up of twelve people from different localities, age brackets, and nationalities. Then a big map was hung in the rectory on which every house was represented, and he and the Board divided the parish into regions and appointed a leader for each one. These people made up the Board of Consultors from then on.

In 1963, the first parish School Board was established to assist in the administration of the school. Again, the pastor picked a cross section of parishioners to serve, including both parents and non-parents, to reflect the fact that the whole parish supports the school. The School Board handled extra-curricular activities, including lunchroom supervision, serious disciplinary cases, and finances, thus leaving the teachers free to devote themselves to classwork. The eight or ten members met about once a month with the principal and the pastor. By 1964, there were twelve members appointed to the Lay School Board: James Popp, Ralph Porzondek, Robert Brighton, Charles Persons, Jerome Keller, Joseph Plizga, Mrs. Lucille Carlin, Mrs. Kathleen LeBlanc, Joseph Anthony, Mrs. Rose Valenti, Mrs. Helen Pawlowski, and Percy Bond.

Monsignor Breitenbeck encouraged families to worship together. He was not very enthusiastic about having one Mass for the Ladies' Sodality, one for the Holy Name Society, and another for the youth group. The required daily Mass for the schoolchildren at 8 a.m. was made optional.

DAD'S CLUB

Under the leadership of Assistant Pastor Edmund A. Schwager, who was athletic moderator, organized sports at Grotto were de-emphasized. C.Y.O. basketball was kept because of the new courts in the Activities Building, but football and baseball were dropped. Athletics became less competitive and more parish-wide. Dick Hayner was hired to run an after-school athletics program which operated from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. for parishioners of all ages.

Sometime in or before 1960, the parish's Holy Name Society ceased to exist. Its fundraising activities for athletics were taken over by a Dads' Club, started in 1960, with Dick Hayner and Joe Bogan as two of the first presidents. Their purpose was to organize church-sponsored activities for the schoolchildren. They promoted athletics, but were also interested in reaching the boy or girl who wasn't athletically inclined. Volunteers were sought to supervise the children in developing hobbies and skills.

During its short existence, the Dads' Club bought and raffled off cars and used the money from that and other fundraisers to pay for the school's athletic program and the annual boys' and girls' parties. The Dads' Club suffered from internal problems and lack of support, however. The crowning blow to its existence may have been the ill-fated lobster dinner given as a fundraiser. As one of the former members put it: "This is not a lobster parish." The \$800 which they lost was partially offset by \$300 made on a paper drive soon afterwards, but the Dads' Club was no more. No organiza-

tion would take its place until the pastorate of Grotto's most sports-minded priest, Father Maiberger.

Every year, Monsignor Breitenbeck organized a dinner and dance for parishioners who had worked on church committees during the year. Known as the "Boosterama," it was held at a local hall. The Ushers had their own annual banquet which was paid for with their dues and a supplement from the pastor.

OPENING OF THE WINDOWS

The 1960s was a period when people reached out to others in an effort to break down the barriers of religion, race, and class. The Grotto parishioners, Sisters, and students, as well as the pastor, were all affected by the spirit of "aggiornamento," or "opening of the windows." As a result, there was a renewed interest in the work of the missions abroad, and in opportunities for helping the poor in Detroit.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm in the school and among the parishioners for Latin American missions. One of them, Joyce Petrous, founded a mission club whose purpose was to get to know people from other countries and find out firsthand about their needs and problems.

On May 11th and 12th of 1964, four Uruguayan folk singers visited Grotto. They stayed with parishioners and presented a program for the schoolchildren. On September 20, 1964, there was a program for four Dominican Sisters who were going to staff a mission in Bolivia. One of them, Sister Mary Ruth Payne, had taught at Grotto.

Parishioners Peggy and Bill Schultheis were active in the mission group. In the summer of 1964, they held a barbeque for seven visiting labor leaders from Brazil. From December 1964, until the end of January, 1965, they hosted Armando Busto, a 13-year-old exchange student from Mexico City. The boy's visit brought home the fact that exchange with other cultures is a two-way street. Armando taught the Schultheis children Spanish during dinner, and soon even their father was studying his Spanish phrasebook over lunch at work.

Two young parishioners, Ken Kulinski and Diane Powierski, went to Guatemala as volunteers to work with the poor, Ken under the auspices of P.A.V.L.A. (the "Pope's Peace Corps"). Before leaving, Ken was chairman of the Latin American Day festival, on Sunday, November 15, 1965. The event was sponsored by A.I.M. (Apostolic Intercultural Movement). About a dozen religious and lay mission groups were there to show films and answer questions about their work. The Ladies' Sodality prepared chicken tostadas

and Mexican candy, and there was Spanish entertainment, including Mexican piñatas for the children to break open. The next year, A.I.M. sponsored an International Day, expanding their theme to all the countries of the world. The Chairman was Marvin Kozak.

The mission group held fundraising rummage sales to raise money for Ken Kulinski in Guatemala. They also made contact with the Latin American community in Detroit, and a woman came out to teach the children Mexican dances.

Parishioners also sought to help those closer to home. In early 1965, a collection of food was made at a vocation club meeting to help people in Selma, Alabama. Later that spring, the Grotto eighth graders exchanged visits with the eighth graders in the inner-city parish school of the Sacred Heart. At Christmas, they took clothes to a downtown parish and conducted a rummage sale; Sister Corrine and the CCD girls visited a home for elderly ladies; the seventh graders delivered stuffed toys they had made to Children's Hospital; and the sixth graders took cookies and presents to the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Homes for Children.

BISHOP BREITENBECK

1965 was an important date for Grotto parishioners. On October 20th of that year, their pastor was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Before his consecration, Bishop Breitenbeck flew to Rome for a private audience with Pope Paul VI. He had met the Pope in the 1950s, when as Monsignor Montini, he had visited Detroit and stayed at the Archbishop's residence. Monsignor Breitenbeck, who was Cardinal Mooney's secretary, had escorted him around the city to see various sights. As he drove past the school, the pastor was cheered on by an honor guard of over 1000 children, waving a banner which read "Arrivederci!" During his three-week stay in Rome, he took part in the Ecumenical Council.

The consecration took place on December 20th at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. Besides the consecrators, thirty-eight bishops from the U.S. and Canada were seated inside the communion rail. They participated by laying their hands on the head of the candidate, the ritual by which episcopal authority has been passed on since the days of the apostles. The ceremony was unique in that it included clergy of other faiths at the altar. A feature dating from ancient times was a procession of lay friends and relatives into the sanctuary bearing gifts of bread, lighted candles, and small casks of wine, symbols of the priestly office.

Bishop Breitenbeck was examined in his profession of faith by Archbishop Dearden. Later, he knelt before him to have the holy oils poured on his head and bound with a cloth. The consecration of his hands, with which he was to bless the faithful, ordain priests, and administer the sacraments, completed the ceremony. He then took part in the Mass with the Archbishop and two co-consecrators, Bishops Donovan and Gerald P. McDevitt, of Philadelphia, and his brother, Father Gerard Breitenbeck, C.SS.R.

The following day, Bishop Breitenbeck said his first pontifical Low Mass at Grotto.

Bishop Breitenbeck's friend, Father Bohdan Kosicki, did the research and some of the preliminary sketches for the Bishop's crest to be used on stationery and official documents. John Jendza did the final work. The distinguishing feature on the crest was the wavy, silver chevronelles on a blue shield expressing the Breitenbeck family name, originally Austrian, which signified: "widening river," or "spreading stream." There was also a martlet (a native bird), which appeared on the crest of Cadillac, Detroit's founder, and a stag, both of which were symbolic of Michigan. His motto: "Domino Servientes," "Serving the Lord," was the same as Cardinal Mooney's.

VICAR FOR RELIGIOUS

In 1966, Bishop Breitenbeck became Vicar for Religious of the Archdiocese of Detroit. His first goal was to find out from the Sisters what their needs and concerns were. With this in mind, he began contacting the local Superiors with the idea of setting up a Committee of Sisters to represent every community and age bracket of nuns. This committee, which would meet about once a month, was to be the medium through which information would flow back and forth between the communities and his office.

Beginning early in his pastorate at Grotto, Monsignor Breitenbeck had sponsored vacation trips for the Sisters who taught at the school. He took them to Washington, D.C., to Florida, and to an island in the Big Manitoulin Islands which he and eleven other priests had bought when they were ordained. Getting to the island was about a 600 mile trip ending with a half-hour ride in open waters. The only other people nearby were Indians living on a reservation. Bishop Breitenbeck remarks that the Sisters would have had an easier time getting in and out of boats if they had already changed to modern apparel.

Bishop Breitenbeck also held the position of head of the Archdiocesan Council of Men. During his pastorate, he encouraged the Grotto women as well as the men to participate in Catholic activities outside the boundaries of the parish. Once a year, he and some of the women would take gifts out to

the Little Sisters of the Poor, and a couple of times a year, parish women served lunch and provided dessert at the Kundig Center nursing home.

NATIVITY

Sometime in 1965 or 1966, negotiations were begun to build a new high school at Nativity. Grotto was to cooperate in the venture with the Church of the Nativity and the Patronage of St. Joseph. The idea was that each church would contribute toward building the school according to its means and would support it with students. The proposed plan caused a good deal of dissension among parishioners who wanted a school built farther out rather than inside the city. During the 1960s, people were pessimistic or optimistic according to which way they read the signs. Many of the parishioners were conscious of the gathering clouds of unrest which would explode in the riots of July, 1967. Bishop Breitenbeck and many others believed that social ills could be cured by financing educational and social reforms. As Bishop Breitenbeck said of Nativity High School, in 1981: "It was an excellent idea at that time, but two years later, it was not good."

Bishop Breitenbeck and his assistant, Father William B. Davidson, met with the pastors of St. Joseph's and Nativity and the major Superiors of the Felicians and Racine Dominicans, who taught at the Patronage of St. Joseph, Nativity, and Grotto. The Sisters agreed to staff the high school. The new school was meant to provide the Grotto students and their parents with two advantages: low tuition and easy accessibility. Nativity's tuition would be about half that as Notre Dame and Regina, and Grotto students could get there by taking the bus up Gratiot.

When the school was completed, the boys and girls from Grotto attended it for about two years. Then the neighborhood deteriorated and with it, enrollment at the school. The program finally caved in when the present pastor of Grotto decided that the parish could no longer afford the joint project. Grotto had ended up paying the lion's share of support because the financial terms were pro-rated according to the number of parishioners, and the number of students enrolled in the high school.

Grotto has not yet been acquitted of the debt on the Nativity School building. After the high school closed down, the building was rented to Wayne County Community College and finally sold to the Detroit Public School Board. While the building was being rented, the parish continued to pay the debt, at the same time that the rent money was paid to the Archdiocese and accredited to Grotto. The question of how much money Grotto will realize from the sale of the building is still being decided in 1982, but the transaction at least freed Grotto of further payments.

TRIP TO ITALY

In 1966, the Ladies' Sodality sponsored a trip to Italy led by the assistant pastor, Father Italo Tucci. The high point of the trip was an audience with the Holy Father, at St. Peter's. The group visited different cities and toured churches and other holy places.

Father Tucci was assistant pastor at Grotto from 1965 to 1967. During that time, Bishop Breitenbeck chose him to go with five of the teachers and secretaries from the school to hear the Pope speak at Yankee Stadium, in New York. He was subsequently pastor of St. Anne's, in Monroe, for ten years, and St. Germaine's, in St. Clair Shores, for two years, before returning to Assumption Grotto in 1979.

By 1967, Bishop Breitenbeck was having to spend so much time on the road attending to his duties at the Chancery and as Vicar of Religious that he decided to resign as pastor of Assumption Grotto. Because the parish had become his home in Detroit, he stayed on at the rectory with his replacement and friend, Father Raymond Maiberger.

FATHER MAIBERGER

Father Raymond Maiberger has been described as the kind of man one imagines a priest to be, a "Going My Way" priest. He was a former classmate of Bishop Breitenbeck's and had taken part in his consecration ceremonies two years earlier.

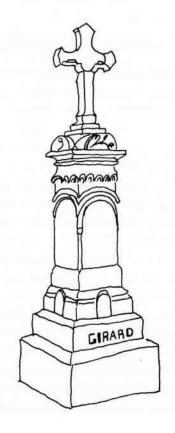
Father Maiberger grew up in Nativity parish, a contemporary of Sisters Terese ("Duane") Hoffman, Marie Louise ("Odile") Chateau, and Concetta Aluia, whom he referred to as the "Cooper Street Gang." He received his training for the priesthood at Sacred Heart Seminary, and St. Mary's, in Norwood, Ohio. He was ordained on May 30, 1962, in Blessed Sacrament Cathedral by Cardinal Edward Mooney.

Father Maiberger had a passion for sports and encouraged the parishioners' efforts to support them. In 1967, Joan Delave started a cheerleaders program. There were three squads of girls who not only cheered at games, but were able to raise \$4000 to pay for their own uniforms and sponsor the first Athletic Banquet. Lorraine Kirschner took over from Joan for many years and was succeeded by Carolyn Crudder. In 1968, the Dads' Club was revived as the Athletic Commission, organized by Carson Zeiter. Among the presidents of the organization have been Bill Milligan, Dick Hayner, and Clem Krause. Under Clem Krause, the bylaws were changed

and the President became the Athletic Director. Succeeding Athletic Directors have been Leonard Bartold, Larry Skrzypczak, and Andy Waligora. The Commission raises funds to hire coaches and buy equipment and uniforms and sponsors the annual Athletic Banquet.

In 1968, Assistant Principal James Rivard was promoted to the position of principal. He was one of the first laymen in the U.S. to become principal of a parochial elementary school. Up to that time, one of the Sisters had always been in charge of the school. He had previously served as athletic coach.

When he came to the Grotto in 1967, Father Maiberger was already suffering from leukemia, the disease to which he would succumb only a year later. The grace with which he endured his suffering and his good humor and courage set an enduring example for his parishioners. When he died, the fountain in front of the shrine was removed so that he could be buried there, and a flower garden was planted around his grave. Since then, the Father Maiberger Basketball Tournament has been held annually with neighboring parishes.





Monsignor Breitenbeck at the opening of Forty Hours Devotions, in 1961. To his left and right are his assistants, Father Sawher and Father Schwager.



Bishop Breitenbeck with Pope Paul VI, who granted him an audience on January 11, 1967.



Beginning of construction of the Activities Building and school addition in 1961-1962.

The corner of Mapleridge and Gratiot. The old Schulte farmhouse is on the left. The building next door was Ed Geiger's butcher shop, lost during the Depression. At the time of the picture, a drapery store and locksmith shop were located downstairs and doctors' offices upstairs. The buildings were torn down in the early 1960s to make room for a parking lot.







(Right) Bishop Breitenbeck and Cathy Pawlowski at his consecration ceremonies in 1965. Cathy took part in the gift-bearing procession. Her mother, Helen, has been co-director of the Saturday Special Education program since its beginning. (Left) Monsignor Breitenbeck during a Mass for Silver and Golden Anniversary couples.



December 14, 1962, at the dedication of the new gymnasium. Monsignor Breitenbeck with three principals of the Grotto School. From the left: Sister Virgine Lawinger, current principal, and Sister Agnes Claire (now Sister Margaret Lanser). Sister Agnes Claire is holding a portrait of Mother Albertine Berberich.

January, 1964. Monsignor Breitenbeck with officers of the ladies' Sodality. From the left: Louise Heidisch, Mildred Blomme, Rhea Jaminet, Monsignor Breitenbeck, Vern Broske, Pat Palm, Betty Mahoney, and Agnes Shanken.







1967-1968 Grotto School Board. Seated: Father Maiberger, Mrs. Kirschner, Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Sedmack, Sister Jean Ann. Standing: Mr. Zeiter. Mr. Anthony, Mrs. Gualdoni, Mr. Rivard, Mr. Richards, Mr. Taorimina. Additional members of the school board: Mr. Drew, Mrs. Milligan, Mrs. Zatina, Mr. Schuermann.



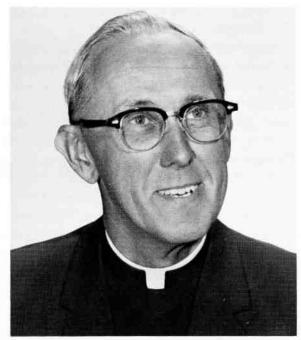


(Left) Mr. Edmond Ertzbishoff, former Grotto caretaker, on his lawn with Father Vandendriessche's stone pelican. (Right) The pelican as it now marks Father Vandendriessche's grave in the Grotto cemetery.





(Left): Father William Davidson. (Right): Father Italo Tucci. Both priests were assistant pastors during the 1960s, Father Tucci is currently associate pastor.



Father Raymond Maiberger, pastor from 1967 to 1968.



Father Maiberger's grave in the garden in front of the Grotto.

THE OLD FAITH

MONSIGNOR SAWHER

MONSIGNOR CLIFFORD SAWHER WAS BORN IN ST. CLAIR, Michigan, in 1919. He was raised a Lutheran, but was drawn to Catholicism in the course of his studies in the engineering school of the University of Detroit. His education and vocation were both interrupted by the events leading up to the Second World War. After three years at the University of Detroit, the draft was reactivated and he joined the National Guard. A month later, the National Guard became part of the Army and he had to leave school. After the bombing at Pearl Harbor, his regiment was sent to Washington to guard Boeing Aircraft. The tuberculosis he contracted there put an end to his plans for Officers' School. He was placed on the casualty list and eventually ended up at Utah State College, where he lectured on coastal artillery, as well as teaching riflery to girls.

While he was in Utah, living in the home of a Mormon Elder, he joined the Catholic church.

In the winter of 1943, Clifford Sawher was discharged to the Veterans' Hospital and from there to Herman Kiefer Hospital, in Detroit. Before leaving the Army, he had decided to enter the seminary. He returned to the University of Detroit to prepare for what he was to do. While there, he heard about St. Mary's College, in St. Mary, Kentucky, run by the Resurrectionist Fathers. He enrolled for their special Latin course, as well as English. For philosophy, which was then taught in Latin, Cardinal Mooney suggested that he come back to Sacred Heart Seminary, in Detroit. He studied theology at St. Mary's, in Cincinnati, for a year until St. John's Seminary was opened in Plymouth. He finished his schooling there in three years.

Father Sawher was ordained by Cardinal Mooney on June 7, 1952. His first three assignments were as assistant pastor at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral and Holy Name and Presentation parishes. At Holy Name, he began to be interested in marriage counseling, which was just beginning to be a growing field in psychology. In the summer of 1958, he and Father Charles Fleckenstein and another priest went to Washington, D.C. to take courses. Father Fleckenstein was subsequently appointed as Director of the Family Life Bureau of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Father Sawher had in the meantime become assistant pastor of Assumption Grotto parish, under Monsignor Joseph Breitenbeck.

Today, Monsignor Sawher looks back on his first impressions of the Grotto from as early as 1937 when he started at the University of Detroit. During those years, he often rode home to St. Clair by bus on weekends and his route took him down Six Mile and past the Grotto. He admired the looks of the place, but had no experience of it until friends who knew he passed by began to talk about it. He found there was a kind of reverence for the strong faith in the eastside parishes and Grotto was one of the strongest. His affection for the church increased during his years at Sacred Heart Seminary, and he was very happy to be appointed to the parish in 1960.

When Father Sawher arrived, Bishop Breitenbeck had begun his program of greeting parishioners between Masses out in front of the church. Monsignor Sawher remembers that it was hard to get people to say hello in those days. They weren't used to shaking hands and talking with priests after church.

In the summer of 1962, the course of Father Sawher's career was changed by a tragic accident. His friend, Father Fleckenstein, drowned in a boating accident, and he was subsequently appointed Director of the Family Life Bureau. During the next several years, he increased the staff of the existing programs, which included married couple and parent-child counseling, and initiated a marriage counseling service run by priests and a Family Life Clinic staffed by thirty doctors and thirty nurses. During two of those years, Father Sawher completed the Master's program in marriage counseling which he had helped to set up under the joint auspices of the University of Detroit, Catholic Social Services, and the Family Life Bureau.

In 1965, Father Sawher was given the rank of Papal Chamberlain, and the title of Very Reverend Monsignor.

On the day of Father Maiberger's funeral, Father Erwin Bauer, a former assistant at Grotto, said to Monsignor as they were walking back to the rectory, "You will be coming back to Grotto as the next pastor." Monsignor Sawher did not believe it, as he still had programs that were just getting underway in the Family Life Bureau. In January, 1969, however, he was call-

ed into Cardinal Dearden's office and given his new assignment, and on February 9th, he came to Assumption Grotto as pastor. When he moved into the rectory, Father George Browne and Father Joseph Novara, assistant pastors, and Father Lee Laige, were living there.

Monsignor Sawher moved into a situation in which the waves had not yet settled from the social and liturgical changes of the preceding years. Grotto was still an ethnic parish, composed mainly of Poles and Italians, with small groups of Belgians, Germans, French, and Irish, some descended from the first settlers. The new pastor was conservative and felt that the majority of the parish was, too, but there was also a small but committed number of liberals whose views had to be heard. His job was to unify the different groups and lead them as a family through the economic and social disruptions which would threaten their existence as a parish.

His first task was to resolve the Nativity problem. The whole episode had been discouraging to the parishioners because the school had been built in a declining neighborhood against most of their wishes, and they felt that their solid financial reserves had been almost depleted by the drain of funds which had gone for its support.

At the same time, Grotto's own school was fighting for its survival. The departure of most of the Sisters, and increases in salary, utility, and maintenance costs had forced the school to raise the tuition. This, combined with lower enrollment, put the institution in a precarious state. When it was finally threatened with closure by the Archdiocese, Monsignor Sawher presented the situation from the pulpit and let the parishioners know that if they wanted a school, they would have to figure out some way to keep it open.

Led by Joan Delave, a group of about twenty-seven people met at Peggy Brannigan's house to decide what to do. They devised a plan to canvass the parishioners to see if they were willing to support the school. Tino Venditti subsequently chaired a meeting with the parents in the school hall. The plan to save the school was presented, and backed by the principal, Jim Rivard, and the pastor, the idea was accepted. Volunteers knocked on 1200 doors and found everyone in the parish very much in favor of keeping the school open. As a result of the affirmative vote, the Parent Teachers Guild was formed to be a supportive fundraising group. Bernard Casey was its first president. Rose Dell'eva and Emma Belfy were the first PTG Fundraising Chairmen and initiated the Bingo and Giant Rummage Sale. Joan Delave started the Christmas Bazaar and Candy Sale. They also sponsored hotdog lunches at the school for scholarships.

Through their activities, the P.T.G. raises about \$50,000 a year for the

school. Parents of schoolchildren and many other volunteers work the Bingo and Bazaar.

The first Grotto Festival was in 1972. Bill Henry, President of the Parish Council, and Joe Bogan, Chairman of the parish Social Committee, were sold on the idea by a professional fundraiser named Ed McIntosh, who was hired to work with the Festival Committee the first year. The Chairman and Co-Chairman of the first Festival Committee were Joe Bogan and Joan Delave, and their back-ups were Ed Valstyn and Peggy Schultheis. Among the other people on the committee that year were Bill Henry, Barb Ertz-bischoff, Penny Kopytek, Tim Gierlowski, Lucille Carlin, Jean Cislo, Al Schoenherr, Lillian Whitledge, Helen Tasny, Chuck Beaubien, Ed Gamache, and Ed LeBlanc.

All the parish organizations participate in the Festival, and the money which is raised goes into the church's general fund.

When Leonard Bartold was head of the Athletic Commission, it was decided that during the summer the Commission would use the Bingo as a fundraiser, as their raffle had been overshadowed by the Festival raffle. The Athletic Commission takes a percentage of the profits raised in the summer for the athletics program. The teams they support are part of the C.Y.O. League and many fine athletes have come out of the school.

In the early 1970s, the P.T.G. and the Athletic Commission cooperated in raising funds to buy the first school bus.

Before Jim Rivard left in 1973, the advantages of starting a kindergarten at the school were discussed. It was started under Thom Engel and has been actively in existence ever since.

The parishioners had realized that if the school didn't survive, the parish might not either, and through their dedication, organization, and hard work, they saved the school. Today, it is a viable institution maintained by the efforts of people who believe in the value of a Catholic education.

Another organization in which parishioners discovered new opportunities for participation was the Parish Council. The first Parish Council under Monsignor Sawher was elected from a slate which he presented to the voters. Later, the group was formed automatically by the heads of the parish organizations. Besides the Parish Council, there is a Finance and Administration Committee which meets with Monsignor Sawher to help make decisions about the parish budget and expenditures.

CHANGES IN THE LITURGY

In keeping with the generally traditional attitudes of the parish, Monsignor Sawher moved slowly in making changes. His mission has been to lead the parish back into a more active participation in the rites and ceremonies of their faith. When he returned in 1969, there was still some confusion about the Rite of Penance and people were not going to confession. Gradually, they began to return. Then the Rite of Penance was changed and became the reformed Rite of Reconciliation, where people had the option of attending confession face to face with the priest. The churches were also instructed to have communal penance services, which were relatively well attended for awhile at Grotto, and then fell off. The renewed return to confession lately seems to correspond with an upsurge in the faith life of the people.

Monsignor Sawher has particularly stressed the need for great reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, particularly among the schoolchildren. With the cooperation of the teachers, the children have been re-oriented to prayerfulness, respect, and worshipfulness in regard to even a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, as well as their participation in the Mass.

Grotto has not experienced the same need for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist as other churches have, due to the church's good fortune in having always had sufficient priests. They have been helped by Deacon Rocco Maiuri, who has been Permanent Deacon since 1979. Deacon Maiuri helps with Communion and presides at baptism and marriage ceremonies, as well as leading pre-baptism classes for parents and godparents. His wife Kathy takes care of the books and pamphlets in the bookrack in the back of the church.

Monsignor Sawher's own faith is characterized by a great personal devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At his first Mass, he announced that he would reinstitute the Perpetual Help Devotions, which do special honor to the Blessed Mother. The August 15th ceremonies at the Grotto shrine have also been revitalized.

Many of Monsignor Sawher's contributions have been in the area of practical improvements in the church and on the grounds. His right hand in the projects involving maintenance has been Emral Zinser, whose volunteer activities for the church go back to his days with St. Vincent de Paul in the 1930s. In all his efforts, Monsignor Sawher has worked closely with the parishioners, who have shown themselves willing to make sacrifices when it comes to the beautification of their church.

One of Monsignor Sawher's first ideas was to extend the floor of the sanctuary past the communion rail, and bring the altar out closer to the congregation. This would have meant removing a couple of sections from the rail. Like Bishop Breitenbeck before him, Monsignor Sawher found his parishioners firmly opposed to the idea of touching Monsignor Marx's marble communion rail.

His next suggestion brought a more positive response. All the pews in the church faced straight ahead and he had found it hard to maintain contact with the people seated on the far sides. The side pews were turned toward the altar at an angle without changing the seating capacity.

When the church received a note from the Chancery saying that temporary altars should be made into permanent altars, it was decided that the mahogany altar which Bishop Breitenbeck had had made to face the congregation should be replaced by a white marble altar to go with the sanctuary and communion rail.

The church and grounds have received many other embellishments through the efforts and generosity of parishioners. In 1970, Monsignor Sawher, who has a special devotion to Our Lady under the title Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, asked if anyone would like to donate a statue for the altar. In September of that year, Anne Green (Mrs. Edward LeBlanc) gave the statue of the Blessed Mother, with infant in arms, which appears on the center of the altar today.

A purely aesthetic improvement in the church was the removal of the dark maroon curtain behind the altar. It was replaced by a blue one, donated by the Ladies' Sodality in April, 1974.

At one point, the statue of Mary in the lower niche of the shrine was vandalized. Mrs. Roman and her son, James, took it home and he and his brother Thomas restored it. It was returned to the niche, looking better than before, with a sheet of plexiglass placed in front to protect it. Later, it was discovered that the statue on top of the shrine was about to collapse of dry rot. Charlie Van Overbeke brought it down and it was taken to Mr. Zinser's office in the school basement. The assistant pastor, Father John Gagala, painstakingly reglued and repainted it, and it was put in the lower niche of the shrine. The statue restored by Jim Roman was moved into the church and today stands next to the sanctuary lamp. It rests on a stand built by Monsignor Sawher.

On August 15, 1977, Mary Ferdinand donated a new statue of the Blessed Mother for the top of the shrine. The same year, outdoor services at the shrine were greatly enhanced by the permanent amplifier and microphone donated by Rita Berels.

With the increased purchasing of burial lots, two areas of the cemetery needed refurbishing. Thanks to Rosalie Redlin, the statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary were erected behind the Grotto. The statue of the Risen Savior was donated by Edward Kaminski, in memory of his parents. It stands in the small section of the cemetery on Grover.

Like the rest of Detroit, the Grotto cemetery suffered the loss of its beautiful elm trees. To provide for the future, around 100 new trees have been planted in a wide variety of species.

NEW CHURCH ORGAN

During Father Maiberger's pastorate, the parish had flown Donald Baber in from St. Jerome's parish, in Rochester, New York, to interview for the post of church organist. Asked what he thought of the organ, Mr. Baber replied that it should be taken out to the back of the church and burned. The Old Pilcher Pipe Organ had been installed when the church was built in 1929, and according to Mr. Baber, it was "muddy, with fat, romantic sounds, typical of the organs being built in the 1920s, very bad for leading congregational singing." Father Maiberger had agreed that the organ would be replaced if Mr. Baber took the job.

Once at Grotto, Mr. Baber kept after the new pastor, Monsignor Sawher, to replace the organ. In the middle 1970s, it was agreed that Craig Nelson, an organ builder from Brighton, Michigan, would rebuild and enlarge the instrument. The cost of the work was estimated at more than \$50,000. An envelope with "Organ Fund" printed on it was added to the regular Sunday envelopes and the special donations began coming in. In addition, the schoolchildren had bake sales and there were generous individual gifts. Under Craig Nelson's supervision, the work was done by volunteers from the choirs and other lay members of the parish. During the course of three years, the old pipes were cleaned and revoiced, and the old console replaced by a new one. The new organ has 35 ranks of pipes with a console of three manuals and pedals.

The new instrument encouraged more and better singing by the parishioners at Mass. To celebrate its completion, the church sponsored a choral concert, featuring the Wayne State University Choral Union, and three organ recitals, the last of which was by the Parish Minister of Music, Donald Baber.

CHOIRS

For awhile in the 1960s, the only choir at Grotto was the folk group. Don Baber developed a mixed Adult Choir that sings at the 10 a.m. High Mass on Sundays. There are also Boys' and Girls' Choirs which take turns singing at the 4 p.m. Mass on Saturdays.

In the early 1970s, a drive was initiated to buy a set of handbells. Parishioners responded so generously that a four octave set was bought. The money was collected through the establishment of a memorial fund by means of which a person could donate \$25 for a bell in memory of a loved one. During the time the money was being raised, the little sister of one of the choir boys was killed by a car. Afterwards, when they performed, the boy always rang the bell which his parents had dedicated to her memory.

GROTTO CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

Grotto, meanwhile, was part of a community and the community was changing. As in many other neighborhoods of the city, people watched their neighbors fleeing to the suburbs from the threats of crime, bussing, and the decline of property values. Those who stayed felt insecure and frightened. At one point, when there was a rash of "for sale" signs in the parish, Monsignor Sawher knew that something needed to be done to turn the tide, but wasn't sure what. Talking to someone in the City's Department of Human Rights, he said he felt sure that the real estate companies were trying to blockbust the area. The man came out and told the parishioners at a meeting that they would have to go door to door and get petitions saying that the signers didn't want their property solicited or people calling on them. They got the petitions and sent copies to each of the real estate companies and to the Human Rights Commission. As a result of the meetings and the concern, people saw that they'd be all right if they didn't panic, and the real estate signs came down.

GREAT

Later on, Grotto was one of the area churches that cooperated in forming a community organization called GREAT (Gratiot Residents East Area Together). At Monsignor Sawher's invitation, Mel Ravitz came to GREAT's first meeting to explain how the residents of Rosedale Park had gotten their own program off the ground. Tom Stanczyk and Joe Bogan were appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman pro-tem until the first election was held and Tom was elected Chairman. Other people volunteered for the Executive Board.

It was Monsignor Sawher's expressed wish from the beginning that GREAT be a neighborhood, rather than a Catholic, institution, and the organization has gotten a good response from members of the other churches. The purpose of the group is to keep the neighborhood up and to prevent crime. The Environmental Committee makes sure that trash and eyesores like abandoned cars are removed. The neighborhood participates in the Neighborhood Watch programs by means of which any suspicious activities are immediately reported to the local block captains and then to the police. In the areas where Neighborhood Watch is active, there has been less crime. Organized teams of volunteers also patrol the neighborhood at night in cars with C.B. radios as a deterrent to crime.

GREAT has already received a federal grant of \$150,000 for necessary repairs on homes and is applying for another one.

Grotto has entered into a period of hard times, but the pastor and parishioners have decided to hold out against the forces which would divide and disperse them. Grotto parishioners have traditionally been hardworking people who take good care of their homes and families. Their very presence in the community has a stabilizing effect on it. Monsignor Sawher's early first impression of the strength of the parishioners' faith has continued to be confirmed. He says, "The people of Assumption Grotto are strong, strong in many ways, not only in their faith. They are strong in their community attitude. They are strong in their concern for the city of Detroit, their home city. They are strong for the organizations to which they belong. They are very strong for their church."

For those who have stayed, as well as those who have moved but who still think of Grotto as their home, it is good to know that a community united by their faith in God and their fellow man stubbornly continues to work, worship, and enjoy life together. Whether their ideas are old or new, these are the people who follow the "old way" of courage and persistence, and they are a shining example.



NOTICE OF INDULGENCES GRANTED

AUDIENCE OF OUR HOLY FATHER GRANTED APRIL 30TH, 1882

Our Holy Father, Leo XIII, by Divine Providence Pope, through the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, has graciously deigned to grant, at the prayer of the Rev. Amandus Vandendriessche, priest and Missionary Rector of the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Connor's Creek, within the limits of the Diocese of Detroit, recommended by the Right Reverend Bishop, to all and every of the faithful of both sexes who shall devoutly visit the Chapel or Grotto built in the said Mission under the title of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes, and shall there offer for some time Pious Prayers to God for the Propagation of the Holy Faith according to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff:

- A Plenary Indulgence, applicable by way of suffrage to the souls detained in Purgatory, to be gained once a year in the day in which the feast in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the above title of Lourdes shall be celebrated there; and also in some day of the month of May likewise once a year to be designated by the Ordinary of the Diocese provided the faithful having confessed and being sorry for their sins, shall go to communion.
- A Partial Indulgence of 100 days, applicable as above to the souls in Purgatory, to be gained once a day by those who only visit said Chapel or Grotto.

Given at Rome from the Building of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith on the day and year as above.

Signed:

D, ARCHBISHOP OF SYRIA, SECRETARY

By these letters we designate the last day of the month of May, on which the above granted Plenary Indulgence may be gained by the faithful.

Signed:

C.H. BORGESS, BISHOP OF DETROIT.

Detroit, June 12, 1882

N.B. to modern readers:

- 1. The Plenary Indulgence may be gained at the Assumption Grotto on the feast of the Assumption, August 15th of each year.
- 2. The Partial Indulgence may be gained every day by a visit to the Church or Grotto.

PRIESTS BURIED IN ASSUMPTION GROTTO CEMETERY

THE REVEREND AMANDUS VANDENDRIESSCHE

Born: March 1, 1826 Ordained: December 21, 1850 Died: November 23, 1901

THE REVEREND FRIDOLIN BAUMGARTNER

Born: July 28, 1850
Ordained: June 3, 1876
Died: December 7, 1914

THE REVEREND JOHN REICHENBACH

Born: September 17, 1840 Ordained: 1866

Died: March 10, 1903

THE REVEREND JAMES R. RIVARD

Born: August 1, 1868
Ordained: July 1, 1894
Died: November 13, 1895

THE REVEREND JAMES RONAYNE*

Born: January 28, 1851 Ordained: February 10, 1881 Died: December 1, 1915

THE REVEREND RAYMOND J. MAIBERGER

Born: October 19, 1916 Ordained: May 30, 1942 Died: December 16, 1968

PRIESTS WHO SERVED AT THE CHAPEL OF THE ASSUMPTION BETWEEN 1832 AND 1852

The Reverends

Francis Xavier Haetscher, C.SS.R.
Simon Saenderl, C.SS.R.
Joseph Freygang
Lawrence Kilroy
M. Maslinger

Maximilian Leimgruber, C.SS.R.
Peter Kindekens, Vicar General

John Farnan
Peter Hennaert
DeRaymacken, O.P.
A. Schoeffler, C.SS.R.
T. Kotte, C.SS.R.
Edward Glaunach, C.SS.R.
P. Kronenberg

^{*}A tombstone remains in the cemetery although Fr. Ronayne's body was transferred to Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Detroit.

PASTORS

THE REVEREND AMANDUS VANDENDRIESSCHE

1852*- January 2, 1892

Born: March 1, 1826
Ordained: December 21, 1850
Died: November 23, 1901

THE REVEREND RUDOLPH MARKER

January 2, 1892 - January 3, 1894

 Born:
 December 25, 1848

 Ordained:
 June 18, 1883

 Died:
 December 7, 1915

THE REVEREND CHARLES GOTTFRIED BOLTE

January 3, 1894 - November 24, 1899

Born: July 18, 1836 Ordained: May 29, 1862 Died: April 20, 1920

THE REVEREND JAMES RONAYNE

December 1, 1899 - December 1, 1915

Born: January 28, 1851
Ordained: February 10, 1881
Died: December 1, 1915

THE REVEREND MONSIGNOR JOSEPH S. MARX

December 20, 1915 - June 25, 1959

Born: December 31, 1875 Ordained: July 2, 1899 Died: January 14, 1961

THE MOST REVEREND JOSEPH M. BREITENBECK, D.D.

June 26, 1959 - June 20, 1967

Born: August 3, 1914 Ordained: May 30, 1942

THE REVEREND RAYMOND J. MAIBERGER

June 20, 1967 - December 16, 1968

Born: October 19, 1916
Ordained: May 30, 1942
Died: December 16, 1968

THE REVEREND MONSIGNOR CLIFFORD F. SAWHER

February 9, 1969 -

Born: August 11, 1919 Ordained: June 7, 1952

^{*}The month and day of his appointment to Assumption Grotto have not yet been found in the Diocesan records.

ASSISTANT PASTORS

The Reverends:

William Hendrickx Leo Zindler Gerald Owens Leo J. Linsenmeyer Carroll F. Deady Timothy Edward Murray Justin Hermes Joseph M. Bruck Matthias A. Wiar William G. Swift Francis J. Walsh Charles Froelich, C.SS.R. Henry Hengehold John Samis, C.P.P.S. Richard Doyle, C.P.P.S. Maurice Geary R. Vincent Myrick Joseph F. Ryder Arthur F. Neffy Peter Lentine Edmund A. Schwager Daniel Reilly, O.P.

Clifford F. Sawher Gerald K. Flannery William B. Davidson Erwin Bauer Eugene Paddock Frederick J. Delaney John Galvin R. S. Nowicki Italo Tucci Dennis Moloney Glenn E. Jollimore Alfred H. Renaud George T. Browne Joseph K. Novara Robert A. Ruedisueli Paul Xuereb James J. Rvan Roger A. Holup John Gagala Tunney Hathaway Joseph E. McInnis

DEACONS

Charles Fontana David W. Harvey

Ronald G. Cyprys Russell E. Kohler

PERMANENT DEACON

Rocco Maiuri

1982 PRIESTS AND STAFF

Pastor	
Associate Pastors	. Father Italo Tucci, Father Lawrence Fares
Italian Masses	Father John Marzorati, PIME
In Residence	Father Lee Laige
Rectory Office Staff:	Janet Berger, Theresa Skotzke
Honorary Staff	Rosalie Redlin, Audrey Schmit

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Sister Evangelista	1894-1917
Sister Thaddea	1917-1921
Sister Dorothy	
Sister Canisia	
Sister Mary Joseph	1926-1927
Sister Praxedes	1927-1933
Sister Theodore	1933-1939
Sister Theodosia	1939-1945
Sister Albertona	
Sister Albertine	
Sister Emiline	
Sister Agnes Claire	1955-1958
Sister Marian	1958-1961
Sister Virgine	1961-1965
Sister Jean Ann	1965-1968
Mr. James Rivard	1968-1973
Mr. Thomas Engel	1973-1981
Mr. Richard Flaherty	1981-

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

PRIESTS

The Most Reverend Walter Joseph Schoenherr The Very Reverend Edwin Hemmen

The Reverends:

F. Pulcher
A. P. Ternes
Fridolin Baumgartner
John Reichenbach
Edward Rivard
Arthur A. Decker
Matthias A. Wiar
Adolph Oser
James Shannon
John Schmidt
Peter L. Decker, S.J.
Leonard J. Kostka, C.P.P.S.
Leo J. Smith
Jordan Aumann, O.P.
George Ernest Monte

Michael John O'Hara Robert Rohlman Edward W. Ritter Ken Kulinski John O. Ebenhoeh, O.S.F.S. James P. Frenza Raymond M. Donahue Edmund Ertzbischoff Robert D'Amico, S.J. James Macy Peter Mackert, C.S.B. Michael Vincent, S.J. Brother Jerome Stevens, F.S.C. Brother Harry St. Bernard, T.O.S.M. Brother Francis (George) Benoit, O.F.M. Cap.

SISTERS:

Catherine Baumgartner, I.H.M.

Anna Reichenbach (Sister Genevieve)

Mary Kopitzke, S.S.J.

Joann Cichowlas, S.S.J.

Joann Cichowlas, S.S.J. Mildred Werner, S.S.J.

Cecilia Louise Hemmen (Sister M. Barbara Ann), S.S.J. Joann Cichowlas (Sister Mary John Catherine), S.S.J.

Mary Anton Kenarney, S.S.J. M. Loretta Rose Konen, S.S.J.

Martha Raab (Sister Marian Dominic), Sisters Auxiliaries of the Apostolate

Margaret Kirchhoff (Sister Mary Conrad), P.H.J.C. Dolores Tyll (Sister Mary Gracilia), C.S.S.F. Florence Hoste, O.F.M.

Louise Ann Petty (Sister Mary Alysanne), S.S.N.D.

Dominican Sisters from Racine:

Rose Salter (Sister M. Rosemary), O.P.

Magdalene Laethem (Sister M. Hyacintha), O.P. Irene Laethem (Sister M. Judith), O.P.

Marie Dorothy Burnaby (Sister M. Bartholomew), O.P.

Mary Catherine O'Connor (Sister Assumpta), O.P.

Rosemary O'Connor (Sister Cynthia), O.P.

Shirley Mae Thielk (Sister Joyce Edward), O.P.

Joan Murray (Sister Mary Siena), O.P.

Betty Lou Mazzoline (Sister Cabrini), O.P.

Donna Schmitt (Sister Conrad), O.P.

Betty Trombly (Sister Edward Ann), O.P.

Grace Ziegenbein (Sister Jeremy), O.P. Ethel Konen (Sister Loretta Rose), O.P.

Joan Elizabeth Lauer (Sister Mary Rosalie), O.P.

Kathleen Kujat (Sister Mary James), O.P.

Mary Lou Fetterman (Sister Rhea James), O.P. Barbara Ann Wojtas (Sister Joanne), O.P.

Ruthanne Reed, O.P.

Marlene Rumph, O.P.

Mary Frances Willcoxson, O.P.

Dolores Enderle, O.P.

Barbara Fisher, O.P.

Mary Fisher, O.P.

Monica Gabriel, O.P.

Margaret Hild, O.P.

Roserita Kimmel, O.P. Alexia LaPorte, O.P.

Rosalie Lauer, O.P.

Carolyn Leffler, O.P. Maria Orlando, O.P. Sharon Simon, O.P. Lois Vanderbeke, O.P. Joann Blomme, O.P.

Dominican Sisters from Adrian:

Margaret Andrezik, O.P.
Mary Louise Head, O.P.
Mary Mackert, O.P.
Mary Gael Nicholson, O.P.
Molly Anne Nicholson, O.P.
Laura Pesick, O.P.
Constance Studer, O.P.
Dorothy Thielk, O.P.
Mary Patricia O'Hearn, O.P.
Joan Dwyer, O.P.

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS

(Through May 1982)

LADIES' SODALITY

President	Mary Ferdinand
First Vice President	
Second Vice President	
Third Vice President	
Recording Secretary	
Corresponding Secretary	
Treasurer	Teresa Rouch

Committees

Sick Committee	Irene Wawrzyniak
Altar Linens	Barbara Ertzbischoff
Retarded Children	Isabel Powierski
Rosary Chain	Aurelia Jaminet
Blood Bank	Dorothy Nowak, Elsie Burtz
Grotto Holy Hour First Friday	Mary Belle Reed
Baptismal Robes	
Floral Arranging	Jean Sokolnicki
Altar Care	Eleanor Schiappacasse

USHERS' CLUB

President	Verne Riecher
Vice President	
Recording Secretary	Bill Schultheis
Corresponding Secretary	Maurice McManaman
Treasurer	Ted Goulah

Advisory Board

Mike Lemaux	Robert Palm
Ron Linsley	Casimer Posniak

Social Committee

Mike Lemaux	Jordan Rivera
WIRC Lemaux	Joi dan Kivera

Sick Committee

William Henry Tom Mulrine

ST. VINCENT de PAUL SOCIETY

President	
TARRETT TEAC	HERS GUILD
President	Alice AngelucciChristine Grice
Fundraising Constitution Nominations Publicity Membership Teacher Representative	
ATHLETIC CO	OMMISSION
Athletic Director	Gari RuthenbergConnie Piotkowski
Don Kaiser	Larry Skrzypczak
Dick Kopas	Tom Hedblom
Ron L. Linsley	Linda Feldman

SCHOOL BOARD

President	Judy Lemaux
Vice President	Russ Kreinberg
Secretary	Kathy Joseph
Committees	
Lunchroom	Gladys Loehnis
Finance	
Guidance	
Graduate Awards	Kathy Joseph

1982 FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Chairmen	Joe and Noni Suhayda
Finance	Carolyn Crudder, Barbara Lemaux
Tickets	John and Lorraine Pruss
Kitchen	Rosalie Roberts
Thrift Shops	Barbara Jaeger
Tent	Sharon Saxman, Sandy Sylkowski
Manpower	Ray and Gail Lyle
Gambling	Jim Kraszewski, Ron Linsley

PARISH COUNCIL

Christian Service Monsignor Clifford Sawher President Mike Lemaux Vice President Larry Skrzypczak Secretary Barbara Wlodek Ladies' Sodality Mary Ferdinand Ushers Tom Stanczyk Parent Teachers' Guild Noni Suhayda Athletic Commission Andy Waligora Festival Joe Suhayda Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora Boy Scouts Pat Balash	Administration, Liturgy, Worship, and	
Vice PresidentLarry SkrzypczakSecretaryBarbara WlodekLadies' SodalityMary FerdinandUshersTom StanczykParent Teachers' GuildNoni SuhaydaAthletic CommissionAndy WaligoraFestivalJoe SuhaydaSenior CitizensEd GamacheTeen ClubLinda Duda, Ruth FlorekSpecial EducationMarion Jardine, Isabel PowierskiGirl Scouts and BrowniesAnne Marie McLeodCub ScoutsJoyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	Christian ServiceMonsignor	Clifford Sawher
Secretary Barbara Wlodek Ladies' Sodality Mary Ferdinand Ushers Tom Stanczyk Parent Teachers' Guild Noni Suhayda Athletic Commission Andy Waligora Festival Joe Suhayda Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	President	Mike Lemaux
Ladies' Sodality	Vice President	arry Skrzypczak
Ushers Tom Stanczyk Parent Teachers' Guild Noni Suhayda Athletic Commission Andy Waligora Festival Joe Suhayda Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	Secretary	Barbara Wlodek
Parent Teachers' Guild Noni Suhayda Athletic Commission Andy Waligora Festival Joe Suhayda Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	Ladies' Sodality	Mary Ferdinand
Athletic Commission Andy Waligora Festival Joe Suhayda Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	Ushers	Tom Stanczyk
Athletic Commission Andy Waligora Festival Joe Suhayda Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	Parent Teachers' Guild	Noni Suhayda
Senior Citizens Ed Gamache Teen Club Linda Duda, Ruth Florek Special Education Marion Jardine, Isabel Powierski Girl Scouts and Brownies Anne Marie McLeod Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora		
Teen Club	Festival	Joe Suhayda
Teen Club	Senior Citizens	Ed Gamache
Girl Scouts and Brownies		
Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks, Joyce Waligora	Special Education Marion Jardine,	Isabel Powierski
[] 2016년 : [] 1017년 - 1117년 - 1217년 -	Girl Scouts and Brownies	ie Marie McLeod
Boy Scouts	Cub Scouts Joyce Brooks	, Joyce Waligora
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ADMINISTRATION COMMISSION

Monsignor Clifford Sawher, Chairman

Members:

Ed Gamache
Jim Popp
Bill Henry
Charles Beaubien
Mike Lemaux

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

President Ed Gamache
Vice President Ethel Finn
Secretary
TreasurerAnn Zilinski
RegistrarBetty Rosinski

GUYS AND DOLLS BOWLING LEAGUE

President	
Vice President	Marvin Kozak, Jr.
Secretary	Mary McManaman
Treasurer	Theresa Kozak
GROTTO LADIES' BOWLI	

President	Anne Marie McLeod
Vice President	Caroline Stefani
Secretary	Gladys Loehnis
Treasurer	

GROTTO MEN'S BOWLING LEAGUE

President	. Tim McGerty
Vice President	. Rick Schmidt
Secretary-Treasurer	Schultheis, Jr.

GIRL SCOUTS AND BROWNIES

Troop Leader	Judy Truance
Assistant Troop Leader	Floran Szczesny
Cookie Mother (1981-82)	Christine Kanski
Calendar Mother (1981-82)	Claudia Monley

CUB SCOUT PACK 396

Chairperson	Bernice Riecher
Secretary	
Financial Secretary	
Treasurer	
Cubmaster	Jim Kraszewski

TEEN CLUB (No Officers)

BOY SCOUTS (No Officers)





Grotto School teacher Sister Concetta Aluia.

Associate Pastor Father John Gagala.

Monsignor Clifford F. Sawher's Silver Jubilee on June 7, 1977.



Monsignor Sawher greeting parishioners.



Organist and Choir Master Donald Baber at the console.



James Rivard (1968-1973)



Thom Engel (1973-1981)



Richard Flaherty (1981-19)





Principals and Secretarial Staff

(Left) Mary Young

(Right) Madelyn O'Grady



Athletics picture from the late 1970s. Head coach for football Glen Hayner, statistician Len Bartold, and assistant coaches Pat Carroll, Bob Beger, and Jim Orth. All are ex-Grotto athletes.



Grotto Panthers Championship Baseball Team, 1979. Kneeling from left: John O'Grady, Sam Morin, Jim Hubbard, Andy Krause, John Yester, Tommy Lukasik, John Acquaviva, Carson Zeiter, Greg Zeiter; Standing: Coach John Menjo, Rick Bartold, Kenny Buchman, Jim Ries, Ron Stewart, Mike O'Grady, Steve Riopelle, Tom Turkaly, Assistant Coach Pepperson.



1977 gathering of the prime movers of the Athletic Commission. Bottom row from left: Jack Plizga, Jim Deneweth, Dick Hayner, Sandy Galasso, Frank Kirschner, Clem Krause; Back row: Leonard Bartold, Bob Beger, Len Wilczynski, Russ Orth, Gerald Woloszyk, Hank Carroll, Eugene Sun, Ronald Linsley, Al Cocuzza, Ray Schoenherr, Ray Barr.





The annual Grotto Festival. Left, passengers wait in line for a ride on the "Superloops." Right: Ann Misztura selling raffle tickets.



1977 State Cheerleading Champions.
Kneeling from left: Patty Recor,
Jeannine Cylkowski, Lynn Rach, Lisa
Amodei (with trophy); Standing: Beth
Ann Brannigan,, Lenore Koss, Denise
Kiernicki, Sue Belfy, Lisa Belanger.
Standing behind is Coach Carolyn
Crudder.

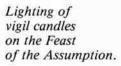








The new altar. (upper left) Julie Macks' First Communion, February 14, 1982. (far left) Raymond Lyle's First Communion, March 30, 1980. (right) Statue of the Blessed Virgin from the niche in the Grotto restored by Jim Roman and moved to the sanctuary of the church.









(Left) August 15th celebration. Priests from left to right are Fathers Roger Holup, Lawrence Fares and John Gagala. Monsignor Sawher is in the center. Next to him are Fathers Leonard Kostka, Edmond Ertzbischoff, and John Marzorati. (Right) August, 1981. 100th anniversary of the shrine celebration. Mary Ferdinand, President of the Ladies' Sodality (right) and Treasurer Teresa Rouch.



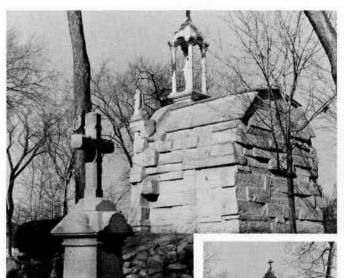
Blessing of the sick at the shrine.



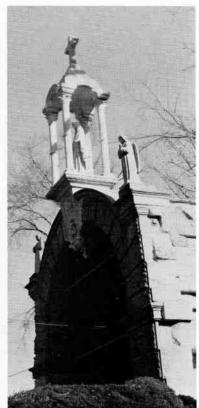
Veterans' Day memorial service.

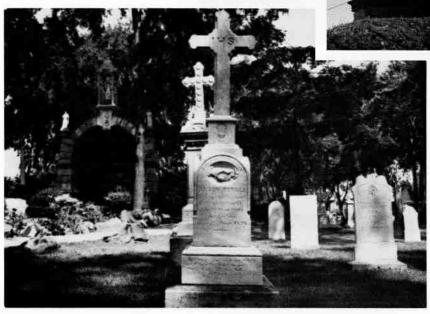


May Crowning, 1981.



Views of the Grotto.







Prayer to our Lady of Lourdes

"Oh ever immaculate Virgin, Mother of mercy, health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comfort of the afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings; deign to cast upon me a look of mercy. By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes, you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, whence you dispense your favors, and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. I come, therefore, with unbounded confidence, to implore your maternal intercession. Obtain, O loving Mother, the grant of my requests. I will endeavor to imitate your virtues, that I may one day share your glory, and bless you in eternity. Amen."



postscript

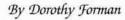
Assumption Grotto is the family of God united in His life and love.

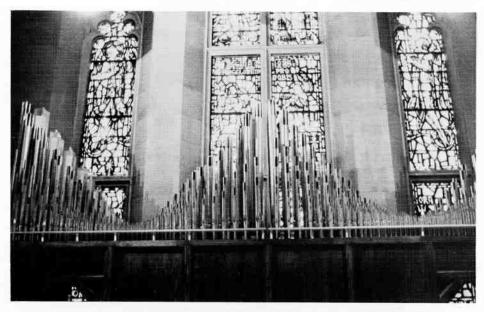
Grotto is my home. Its people are my family. There is no Grotto home in which I would feel unwelcome or uncomfortable.

As in any family, there are times of shared joy and times of shared sorrow or tragedy. We are one in Christ and through Him we are a part of each other.

There are also times of confusion, conflict, and confrontation because each person is a unique individual who is ever struggling to grow in faith and holiness.

We are continually being formed anew into the image of Christ by the gentle love of our Father and the power of His Spirit. The creative power of God never ceases as we become "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart," His children.





INDEX

Included in this index are the Pastor's prologue, introduction, letters, preface, text and photgraphs. With the exception of the photographs, the appendix is not indexed. Reference numbers to photographs are italicized. Bold numerals refer to major treatment of subjects. Names of organizations are set in small capitals. Titles of books and articles are italicized and author's names appear in bold-face type. Biographical data appear in chronological order.

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