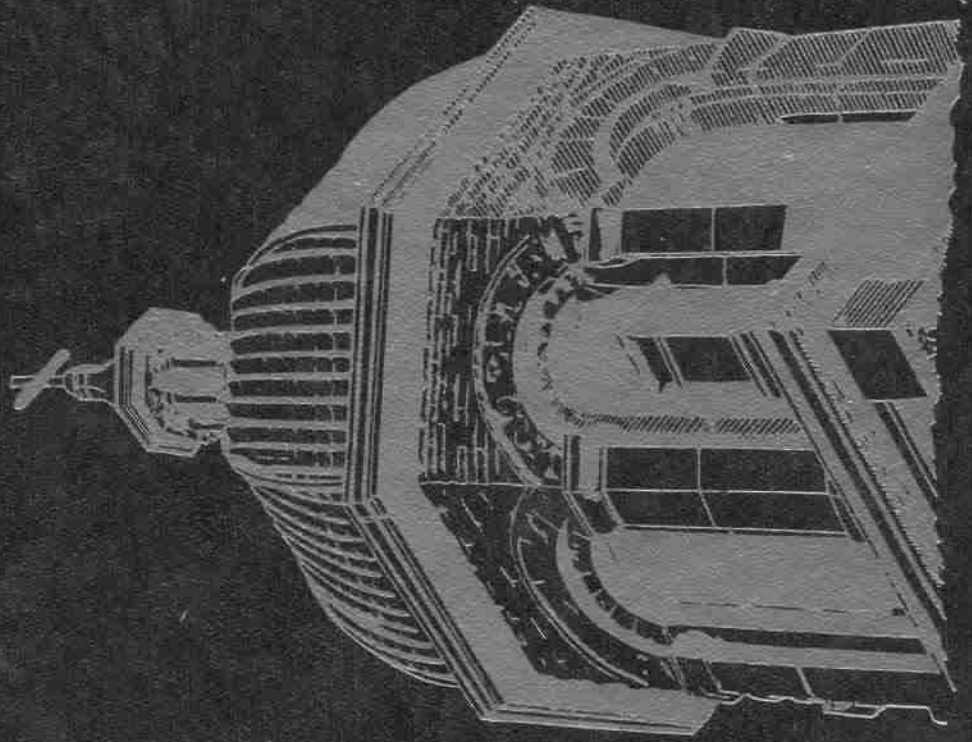


# The First 100 Years

*Basilica of St. Adalbert*  
1881 - 1981

by Philip Jung



*Philip Jung  
1981*

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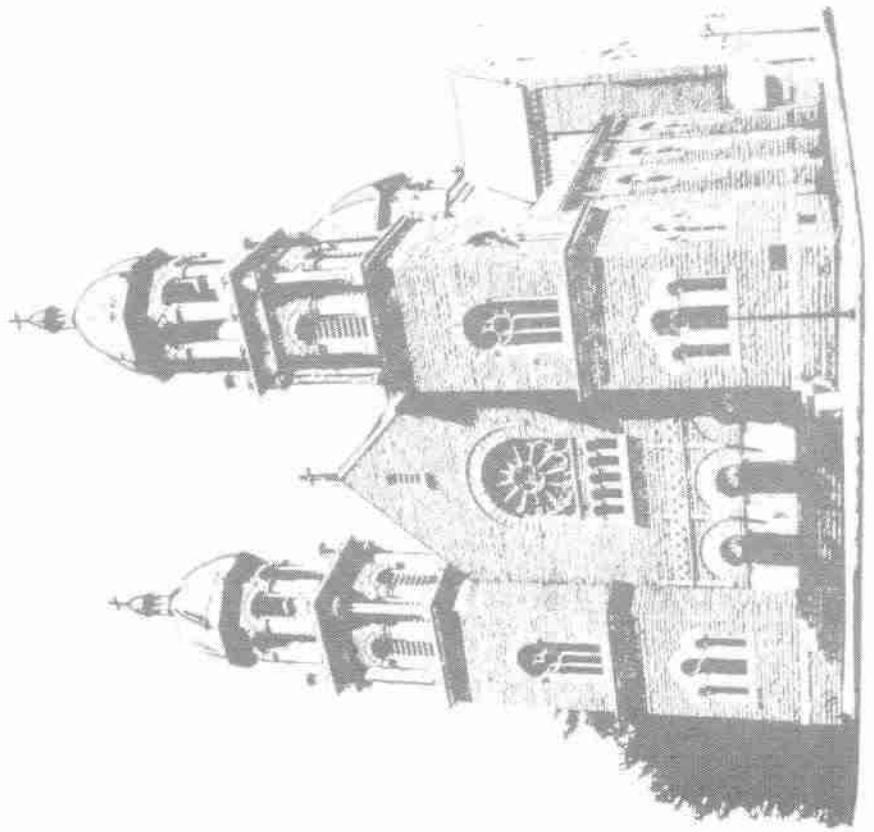
**The  
First 100 Years**

*Basilica of St. Adalbert  
1881 - 1981*

by Philip Jung

**A REVIEW OF  
FAITH,  
LOVE,  
AND  
HOPE**

**BASILICA OF  
SAINT ADALBERT**



Photographs furnished by Basilica of St. Adalbert  
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Philip Jung  
The First 100 Years

## **DEDICATION**

This Centennial review is respectfully dedicated to our forefathers for their faith, to our fathers and mothers for their love, and to our successors that they will also appreciate their heritage.

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## PROLOGUE

Decades have passed, many of us have suddenly found ourselves well into middle age since that spectacular celebration of American greatness which we labelled — “A CENTURY OF PROGRESS.” A wonderful thing it seemed then to look back over the scientific miracles, the bourgeoning growth, the “manifest destiny” of a triumphant America. Ahead lay wars and rumors of wars, but that era of history indeed seemed momentous.

As I write, I can only look back wonderingly at another CENTURY — not just of progress but more importantly of *Faith*, of *Dedication*, of *Charity*. For here, in the parish of St. Adalbert, Mother-Community of all those ethnic groups which fled from Poland and its subjugated provinces in the last century, here we keep green the memory of our forebears and their *Fides Catholica*, their Catholic Faith which sustained them and supported them, challenged and inspired them in their passage from their Roots to the new Polonia they would found across the tossing seas.

What a wondrous story it is! First huddled together in the old stone church on Monroe Avenue — dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle by their fellow-Slav, Andreas Vyszosky — they sat as they listened to the Mass in an alien tongue, amid the Germans, whom they felt some kinship with, and the far-flung Gaels, who must have seemed foreign to them indeed. Then as the German population sought its own place of worship, the Poles followed them, still longing for the day when they might worship their God as a Polish community, in the language of their Slavic ancestors.

At last came the joyous day when a little church, poor and struggling — dedicated to St. Adalbert — could serve this intrepid ethnic group. Our hearts are lifted up in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Almighty for those forefathers of ours who were so strong, so courageous, so farsighted in their efforts to build for Christ a temple of their own. For a long century they and their progeny have kept St. Adalbert's alive, active, faith-oriented. A struggle it was, almost beyond our comprehension, to build this place of worship where they and their children could come closer to God in prayer and sacrament. Each Sunday, decade after decade, thousands knelt in prayer, heard

the Word, shared the Eucharist. Countless babies were christened at the font of baptism, and thousands again were carried solemnly from this sanctuary to their final resting place.

Our Centennial remembers those hundred years, and the unfolding story of lives and events during those years. We know that there were moments of sadness and deep hurt. There were times of trial, times of labor, years of toil and sweat. But there were times too of great rejoicing, times of success and gladness, great moments, prosperous moments, golden years — when the Parish reached its peak.

But this is really the story of people, of a community, of many men, women, and children. It begins with very humble origins, — and then there come hours of great beauty and splendor. But most of all it is the tale of people, their lives and their hopes.

Three leaders, all outstanding men in this twentieth century, made St. Adalbert's one of the greatest parishes in all of Michigan. First there was Simon Ponganis, then Casimir Skory, and finally John A. Maksymowski. Priests, titled Monsignor, they were above all else leaders of men. Together they led their parish for eighty-five years. During their combined pastorates, the parish grew and became a visible landmark, but a spiritual landmark as well. God blessed their work, rewarded their efforts. Let us not forget what they did.

Now suddenly as the entire Diocese of Grand Rapids prepares to celebrate a centenary, our St. Adalbert's Community shares in the far wider excitement of the memorializing of our past. Herein we are attempting to preserve our heritage, so that none of it be lost. Professor Philip Jung of Junior College has undertaken the task of selecting from a great store of materials, gathered by a multitude of people, the memories of a CENTURY OF FAITH. We are so grateful to all who have helped to make this Centennial Celebration possible. Especially we are grateful, however, to our Heavenly Father, to our Lady, and to St. Adalbert for their overshadowing love during these hundred years of Catholic life. May our forefathers rejoice too as they behold, as I am sure they can, the great thing they have wrought.

Msgr. Thaddeus R. Sniegowski, Pastor,  
Basilica of St. Adalbert

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Composing a work like this in a relatively short time has its hazards, particularly concerning omissions. Perhaps a longer, more comprehensive history of St. Adalbert's Parish will be written some day. If so, it should consist of several hundred pages. I wish that I could have included the name of every worthy parishioner who has ever taken an active role in the parish; I wish I could have included more details for every club and organization. At any rate, because of the limitations placed on the size of this work, there are bound to be some omissions, and I apologize for them.

I wish to thank Msgr. Ted Sniogowski and the Centennial Book Committee for bestowing on me the privilege of composing this work. It has been a great honor to learn so much about the people and events that have made this one of the finest parishes in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. And I wish to thank everyone who chased around digging up information for my use, especially material on parish organizations. Special gratitude is directed toward Mrs. Esther Longfield, who must be dizzy from all the running around that she did. Thanks also to Sister Peter Verona, O.P., Helen Koperski, and Esther Usakowski for their fine translations of important documents and news items from Polish into English. And I owe much to Mr. Ted Buzalski and Margaret Kumko for their encouragement and confidence during the progress of this work. Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Joan, and my children for their patience and selflessness during this intense period.

### *Profile Of The Author*

Philip Jung was born in 1945 in Chicago, where he was baptized in St. Michael's Church on the near-north side. After moving to Grand Rapids as a child, he attended St. Francis Xavier Grade School and Catholic Central High School, graduating in 1963. While attending Grand Rapids Junior College he developed an interest in writing short fiction, an activity he continues to engage in. He received his B.A. degree in 1967 and his M.A. degree in English in 1968 from Michigan State University, then began teaching English and Humanities at Grand Rapids Junior College, where he is currently employed.

In 1967 he married a third generation member of St. Adalbert's, the former Joan Prawdzik, and now is happily raising a fourth generation: Jacqueline 10, Matthew 7, and Joseph 3.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication .....	i
Prologue .....	ii
Acknowledgments .....	iv
Profile of Author .....	v
Table of Contents .....	vii

### Section I

IMAGININGS .....	3
------------------	---

### Section II

A NEW PARISH .....	9
Chapter I: The Founding of St. Adalbert's Parish .....	11
The First Church .....	13
Finding a Pastor .....	17
Chapter II: The Ponganis Years .....	21
Building Projects .....	22
St. Adalbert — The Mother Parish .....	25
New Societies .....	27
The St. Hyacinth Society .....	28
The Society of St. Hedwig .....	29
Knights of St. Casimir Aid Society .....	30
The End Of An Era .....	30

### Section III

THE SKORY YEARS .....	33
Chapter I: A New Pastor .....	35
The Early Years .....	37
Chapter II: Silver Jubilee .....	41
Chapter III: The Monument .....	43
The Romanesque Style .....	46
Additional Details .....	49
The Consecration .....	52
The Denouement .....	55
Chapter IV: A Flurry of Building .....	57

	The School	57
	Convent And Rectory	59
	Good News	60
Chapter V:	Twenty-Five Years Of Faithful Service	65
	Organizations	66
	The Ladies Welfare Society	66
	The Mother's Club	67
	St. Theresa Society	67
Chapter VI:	Polish Businesses	69
Chapter VII:	The Golden Jubilee	73
	Pillars Of The Church	74
	Societies And Clubs In 1931	75
	Surviving Founders	78
Chapter VIII:	The Passing Of A Good Man	81

### Section IV

	THE MAKSYMOWSKI YEARS	87
Chapter I:	A Man Of Energy And Vision	89
	Rolling Up The Sleeves	91
Chapter II:	Social Life In The Thirties and Forties	93
	St. Adalbert's Memorial Post #1058, Catholic War Veterans	97
	Parish Cohesion	99
Chapter III:	West Catholic Moves In	101
Chapter IV:	Renovations	103
	The Church	103
	The Convent	111
	The School	112
Chapter V:	A Holy Triumvirate	115
Chapter VI:	The Turbulent Sixties	117
	Stability	118
	The Parish Council	119
	The Board of Education	120
Chapter VII:	The Beloved Pastor Retires	123

### Section V

	TO THE FUTURE	125
Chapter I:	Monsignor Thaddeus R. Sniegowski	127
Chapter II:	Highlights Of The Sniegowski Years	131
	The Eminence Of Music	131
	Other Highlights	132
Chapter III:	St. Adalbert's Aid Society's Centennial	134
Chapter IV:	Immediate Action	137
Chapter V:	The Basilica	141
	Bishop Breitenbeck's Efforts	142
	The Response	143
	The Meaning Of The Basilica	146
	Dedication	147
	Subsequent Festivity	150
	Letter To The Holy Father	151
Chapter VI:	The Centennial	173
	Church Beautification	174
	The Fund Drive	175
	Renovations	176
	The Organ	176
	Organ Dedication Concert	179
	Centennial Year Schedule of Events	180
	The Jubilee Committees	182
	The Centennial Festival	183
	The Climax—100 Years And Beyond	190
	The Centennial Liturgy	193

### Section VI

	EPILOGUE	207
	The Challenge Of The Future	209
	Footnotes	211
	Appendix	213
	Parishioners Aged 85 And Over	254
	Parish Roster	257



**I**  
**IMAGININGS**

**I**MAGINE IF YOU WILL, the formation of a people into a ripple, and that ripple multiplying into an assembly of ripples, growing larger, more voluminous, until they become a massive wave sweeping northward across the lowlands to the port cities on the Baltic Sea, and finally arriving there weary, spent, in despair perhaps, perhaps afraid. Conceive of that wave of people, sturdy but tired, having faced the disappearance of their country from the map of the world, partitioned by Prussia, Austria, and tsarist Russia, having met the oppressors with strong-willed resistance and gallant insurrection, but having lost the battle and, worst of all, the hope of being able to battle again. Picture them gathering at the gangplanks leading to the old, worn, ocean-going vessels, dressed in their blue greatcoats and heavy boots, in their scarlet shawls and pleated full skirts, waiting to embark on the ships that would take them across the vast ocean (most of them never having been more than ninety miles away from their homes in their lives) into another world far away from their homeland.

Imagine the regret, the distaste, the gnawing sorrow over having to leave that homeland, that nine hundred year old culture grounded in the very center of the European continent. Their ambivalence must have been as thick as the fabric of their greatcoats, and heavier. For not only were they abandoning the fecund plains which they and their ancestors had overseen, or at least tilled, for generations, and from which they had dug the rich peat to heat their homes; but they also were leaving the cities with their splendid Romanesque and Renaissance architecture, their markets, their ancient fortifications, their palaces, and their cathedrals. Imagine the remorse they must have felt relinquishing the orchestras of Poznan, and the lovely soprano voices of their “nightingales”—the celebrated boys choirs—and their opera, and the lilting melody of the Warta River. And how many of them would rejoice at leaving the region of the revered Gniezno Cathedral, that magnificent gem of Romanesque architecture containing the remains of St. Adalbert (Wojciecha in

their tongue), the beloved patron of their homeland, the Saint who converted Poland to Christianity almost a millenium earlier and thus paved her way to glory during the subsequent centuries. For they knew as they prepared to sail to that strange new land called America that they probably never again would have the opportunity to approach those magnificently sculpted bronze doors depicting the life and death of St. Adalbert—doors famous throughout Europe for the intricacy and richness of their detail—before entering the vastness of the Cathedral's splendorous interior to celebrate their faith. This and so much more: the lakes and forests and wildlife, the rolling hills, the temperate climate. How could they have known what lay ahead on the other side of the ocean?

Imagine, too, the anger, the powerlessness, the disgust, the hatred even—the feelings aroused by the unavoidable necessity of having to not so much leave their homes as escape from them. That necessity must have hurt most of all. Through the arduous duration of seven decades, they and millions of their compatriots had been unable to reconcile themselves to the loss of freedom at the hands of three powers that had jointly stripped them of their national identity. Now the noblest of their uprisings, known historically as the January Insurrection, had ended in defeat. For over two years (1863-65) these brave people, though suffering under the rule of Prussia, had nevertheless helped in their various capacities the 30,000 armed fighters wage warfare against tsarist Russia in a culminating effort to regain their statehood. This final defeat, following others in 1794, 1830, 1846, and 1848—the last specifically in Poznan Province—must have been particularly bitter and intolerable. Further, those who had participated directly in the uprising, or who had actively supported it, now had reason to fear retribution: imprisonment, exile, perhaps death. For them and their families, as well as for others whose disgust with their conditions became unbearable, the imcomprehensible had become real: They could no longer live as Polish nationals in their own land, thus they could no longer live with pride and honor. But living without pride and honor was also intolerable, so rather than suffer it they opted for the mysteries and challenges involved in starting a new life.

But after all, and in spite of their disillusionment, these brave souls were not alone. Devoted to their Faith and to the Saint who long before had given his life to perpetuate it, they must have been

somewhat fortified and confident in their journey. Drawn to the shores of America like a tide during the late 1860's and '70's, they carried with them their most precious possessions: the image of their white eagle with its golden beak and talons set against a red shield; the strains of "Dabrowski's Mazurka" (later to become Poland's national anthem, its title being *Jeszcze Polska nie zginela*, or, significantly, "Poland Has Not Yet Died"); and, most important of all because of its perpetual sustaining power, their intense faith in Jesus Christ and their love of the Saint who had planted the seed of Christ's message so deeply into the fertile soil of that sturdy and vibrant national character. Cloaked with these possessions, they could hold their heads high.

Now imagine these same pioneers settled into their new lives in the vicinity of a young, growing city, not yet fifty years inhabited by white men, and without the music, the sculpture, the architecture, the cathedrals, and the traditions of the Poznan region that they had left forever behind. But they had the Grand River, not too unlike the Warta at home, and they had the woodlands and, beyond the valley, the relatively flat land resembling that of their homeland. Moreover, they had the opportunity to practice their crafts unhindered: metalwork, pottery, construction, and others — not to mention farming north and east of the city. In addition to those occupations, there was work available in the plaster mines, the foundries, and the factories of the growing community. Finally there were churches in which to worship in an area where Catholicism arrived in 1833 with its earliest missionaries (Father Frederic Baraga, a Slovene from Malavas in what is now Yugoslavia; and Father Andreas Voszsky, who may have been of Polish extraction though he was born in Wallendorf, Hungary). The churches were modest in comparison with the grand structures in Poznan and Gniezno and other Polish cities, but the people at that time had no pretensions. Nevertheless, imagine the faint twinges of regret that once more must have entered their breasts when the small community of immigrants found themselves, because they knew the German language and not the English, worshipping in the German parish of St. Mary's. For despite the parish's hospitality, the immigrants must have recalled the Prussian occupation of their homeland and their own enforced subservience. So they must have been more than grateful when, in 1880, the occasion arose for them to form their own parish: They must have been absolutely jubilant!

Looking back across the years, one might be tempted to think that it was inevitable that these determined and honorable people would name their parish after their beloved St. Adalbert, the martyr whose remains lay in repose in their native region of west-central Poland, and whose presence in their hearts guided them in their journey to their new homes.

Now picture what it must have been like thirty-three years later when those surviving pioneers and the spirits of the deceased, along with the hundreds of other families who had joined them in successive waves over the years from all over Poland—the Bialystok region in the northeast, Silesia in the southwest, as well as the Poznan region—when all these families, on a warm, golden June day in 1913, congregated on the corner of Fifth Street and Davis Avenue for the consecration of their magnificent new church. Imagine the intense pride mingled with profound humility—those emotions which, in combination, so exalt the human spirit—that they must have experienced as Bishop Paul Rhode of Chicago, the first Polish bishop in the United States, and Bishop Henry J. Richter of Grand Rapids, along with their own Father Casimir Skory, presided over the eighteen hour long ceremonies. Imagine the joy that they felt, these people of humble means, knowing that their modest wages, derived from hard labor performed during long daily hours, had paid for this lovely and imposing shrine to their Lord in the name of their patron, and that this edifice had no outstanding debt other than what they owed to God Almighty for allowing them to fulfill their dreams. But it was not only that. It was also hard work by thick, rough hands, and sacrifices, a willingness to hurt for a greater purpose, and dedication and dignity and love—the spirit of a people the likes of which perhaps will not be seen again.

Finally, imagine what it would be like if these same people, ninety-nine years after they founded their parish and sixty-seven years after the consecration of their great church building, could have been physically present for the dedication of that church as a Minor Basilica by decree of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II—one of their own, a fellow Polander who had also suffered in his homeland. Imagine their joy, so depthless that it probably would have rendered them mute, as they listened to the words of the Pope being read to them and heard Bishop Breitenbeck's congratulations in their native tongue, and as they witnessed the elevation of Father Thaddeus R.

Sniegowski to the rank of Monsignor. Imagine their sense of awe as their ears vibrated with the pealing of the bells and their eyes gazed at the improvements wrought by their successors: the marble pillars and wainscoting, the lofty and graceful baldachino, the lovely marble altar. Truly the church which they had sacrificed so much to build can even today be described as the most magnificent in the city, a testimony to their indefatigable spirit, the culmination of their dreams, a fitting and lasting memorial to their faith and the faith of all of their successors.

**II**  
**A NEW PARISH**

## THE FOUNDING OF ST. ADALBERT'S

**T**HE IMMEDIATE ROOTS of St. Adalbert's Parish go back to the year of 1872 with the formation of the St. Adalbert's Aid Society. As mentioned in the previous section, the early Polish immigrants were a faithful and determined group, generally cultivated in the finest traditions of their country and devoted to their patron Saint. So it is fitting that when the first few pioneers, clustered together on the northwest side of Grand Rapids and attending St. Mary's Church, assembled in brotherly love and solidarity to form their mutual aid society, they named it St. Adalbert's Aid Society. Their first impulse to create the society derived from the urging of a traveling Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier Schulak, who happened to be visiting them at the time.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, except for the first president, Michael Lauferski, the names of those few charter members of the organization have been lost, according to the Society's centennial jubilee booklet; but in the next couple of decades names like Thomas Kolczynski, Rudolph Twork, Ignace Szkula, Stanley Pietowicz, and Anthony Stiller appear. No doubt some of these were among the first of the honorable men who founded the Society and watched it grow in number and prosperity until, in 1890, it was able to purchase grounds measuring 50 feet by 100 feet at the corner of Fifth Street and Davis Avenue at a cost of \$1,000. That same year ground was broken for a new building to house the Society at a cost of \$15,000. Completed in 1893 and still standing on the original site, the imposing brick edifice has witnessed innumerable processions, festivities, parades, and historic occasions in its long life. Testimony to the wisdom and foresight of these founders is the fact that today, 109 years later, the Society still thrives.

Even from their earliest days in their adopted country, these pioneer Polish missionaries must have harbored dreams of congregating as a parish in a church of their own construction. Gathering

in their homes, or in the room made available to the Aid Society in St. Mary's school, they must have had many discussions about the subject—dreaming, outlining their plans, organizing. By 1878 they were already gathering funds for that future day when they could build their own church.<sup>2</sup>

The pastor of St. Mary's at the time was the Reverend John Ehrenstrasser, a kind and humane man sympathetic to their cause. He and the principal of his school, a Notre Dame nun named Sister Mary Tita, of Polish heritage herself, recognized their longing for an independent parish and offered encouragement. Further, Sister Mary Tita, a wonderfully energetic and compassionate woman, realized the difficulty that the Polish children had in classes which were still mainly conducted in the German language. Though their parents knew the language reasonably well, they themselves had not had time in their young lives to learn it and, as a result, had difficulty in adapting to their academic environment. Sister Tita, quick to perceive this, advanced the cause of independence in the minds of their parents and provided the final inspiration to create their own church and school. The funds collected among themselves had accumulated sufficiently so that in May of 1880 they were able to purchase two lots at the corner of Fourth Street and Davis Avenue for the sum of \$2,700.<sup>3</sup>

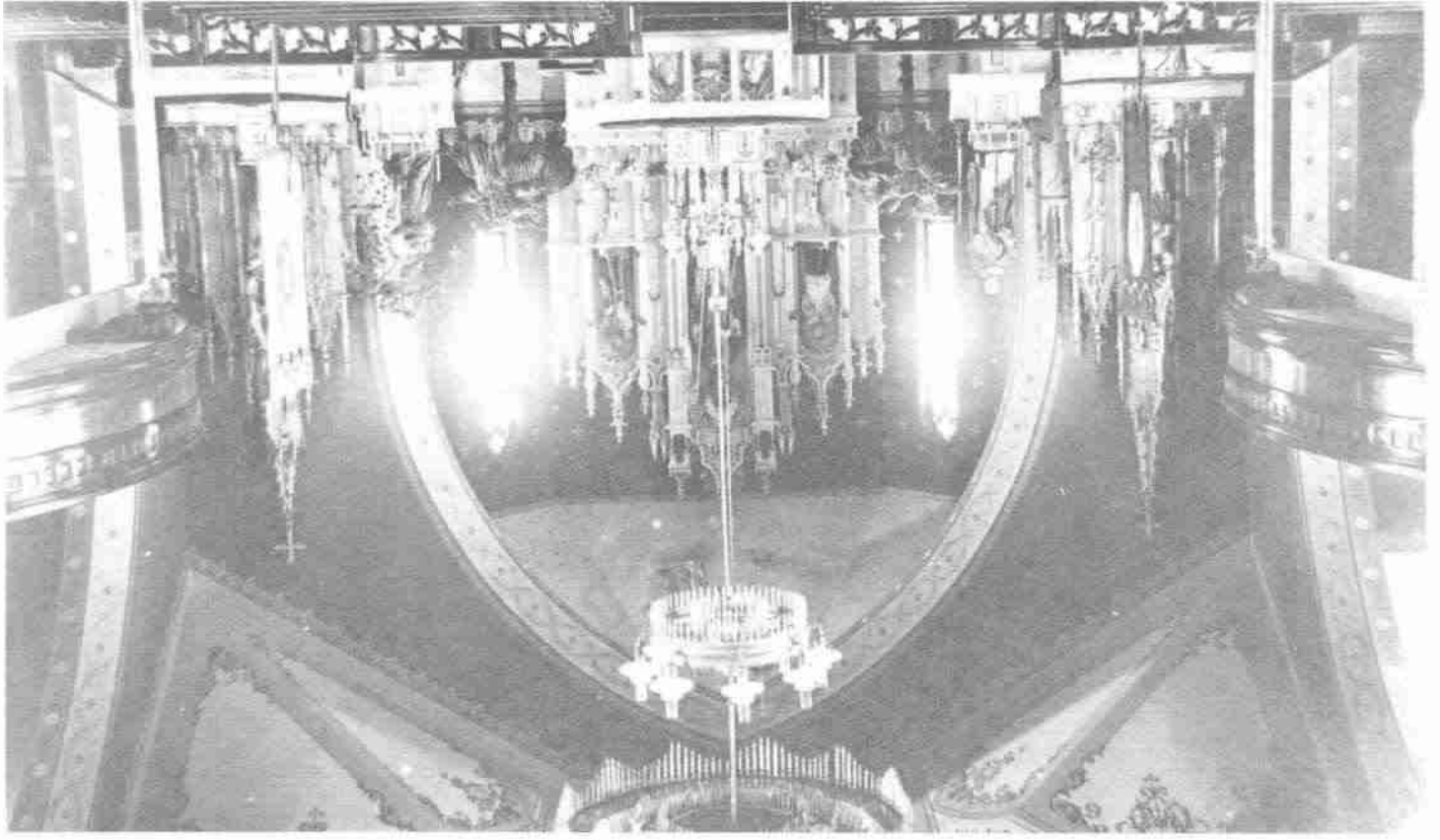
On September 20th of the same year a meeting was held in St. Mary's school, attended by members of the St. Adalbert's Aid Society, other members of the Polish community—20 members in all—Sister Tita, and Father Ehrenstrasser. Here three representatives—Thomas Kolczynski, Anthony Stiller, and Albert Damski—were appointed to petition the bishop for permission to organize a Polish Catholic Church. Since the Diocese of Grand Rapids did not yet exist, these men had to travel to Detroit for their visit with Bishop Caspar Henry Borgess. The visit was successful, episcopal approval was given, and the organization of fifty charter members was constituted. Anthony Stiller, a gifted and erudite man, Albert Andrezejewski, and Frank Czerwinski were elected as the first officers. Two of their chief concerns were to collect the needed funds with which to build the church on the lots they already owned, and to hire the contractors to construct it.

### *The First Church*

At the time their numbers were small and needs were simple. Though visionaries, these parish founders could not have foreseen the great tide of Poles that would be rushing into the region during the next thirty to forty years. So they planned for a wood frame structure to seat a congregation of about four hundred, and contracted the work to the firm of Richens and Stearns at an estimated cost of \$3,800. Finally, in June of 1881, the cornerstone was laid. The occasion, in accordance with centuries old Polish tradition, was one of solemnity, celebration and festivity as the happy families attended the ceremony presided over appropriately by Father Ehrenstrasser and a visiting Polish priest, Father Hyacinth Gutski, from Milwaukee.

Construction of the church took the better part of a year, with the new parishioners meanwhile continuing to attend St. Mary's while anxiously watching the gradual shaping of their dream. The exterior was of a modified Gothic style with its pointed-arch windows and its tower and steeple rising from the center of the facade, flanked on either corner of the facade by smaller spires. The building was situated on the corner facing Fourth Street, with very small lawns separating it from the sidewalks in front and on its west side. In 1891 the building would be enlarged by Father Simon Ponganis at a cost of \$5,000, and later, prior to the beginning of the erection of the new church in 1907, it would be relocated to the spot where the present rectory now stands facing Davis Avenue. The dimensions of the church were forty feet by sixty feet.

The interior that was taking shape at the time was much more noteworthy, and the finished product was, overall, a statement of refined taste, unassuming elegance, and great dignity. The general style was Gothic, though unpretentious and modest in scale. It was dominated by a graceful pointed archway, reaching almost to the ceiling, that led to the sanctuary. Inside the sanctuary, illuminated during the daytime by the light from two narrow arched windows, stood the splendid Gothic altar, ornate as befits the style but by no means garish, eventually to be flanked by two small potted palm trees. On the outside of the archway the two side altars were situated, narrower but, with their central Gothic spires, reaching almost as high as the main altar. Most of the other features consisted of wood:



Interior of original St. Adalbert's church.



Original church of St. Adalbert on the corner of Fifth & Davis (1887).



the oak Communion railing, the four aisles of pews, and the two startlingly beautiful oak balconies that hovered over the outer rows of pews on each side of the nave.

Although the ceiling was painted with tracery in the Rococo style, it was not at all incongruous with the main Gothic features; on the contrary, it appeared to ease the severity of the Gothic by adding a lyrical tone to it, a quality that may have been a necessary design feature in the relatively small confines of the building.\* From this ceiling hung one of the church's most delightful properties—its main lights. These hung at two levels on a cable attached to the ceiling, where it was surrounded by a sort of canopy of prisms hanging from two rings, the outer one about nine feet and the inner one about six feet in diameter. Six feet below this canopy was the first chandelier with eight lamps arranged around another ring, from which also dangled prisms. And about ten feet below that was the smaller chandelier, this one containing just four lamps. This graceful fixture hung like a rare jewel, complementing the beautiful interior.

If a church might be said to reflect its congregation, then an interesting picture forms of these pioneer parishioners. It's a picture of an outwardly modest people, but a people with a profoundly dignified and richly cultivated spirit. It must be said that the church that they built to fill their hours of worship, at least in its physical appearance, was altogether worthy of their collective soul. And their souls in turn, given the presence of their Lord in so lovely a home, must have been further blessed by their attendance in it.

\*It might be added that in Poland, as in other central European countries, the rich tradition in art and architecture offered a rich variety of architectural styles, and it is not unusual to find a blending of styles in eighteenth and nineteenth century churches. The founders, having inherited this tradition, including the Central European love for Rococo, discretely and wisely drew upon it for the interior of their church. The same tradition can be seen in the blending of several styles in the Basilica, to produce a beautiful and harmonious whole.

### *Finding A Pastor*

Finally, in the spring of 1882 the work was completed. The parishioners beamed with pride at the dedication in honor of St. Adalbert, presided over by the Reverend O. Vincent Barzynski of Chicago, with Father Hyacinth (Jacek) Gutski of Milwaukee delivering the sermon in the Polish language. It was also attended by Reverend Ehrenstrasse, Sister Mary Tita, and friends from St. Mary's, some of whom had contributed to meet the expense of the new church. Cost overruns were known to occur in those days no less than in our own, and what had originally been estimated as a cost of \$3,800 ended up at the figure of \$5,000. Nevertheless, the joyful parishioners met the expense and at last could justifiably boast of their accomplishment, the culmination of their long journey across the ocean and their noble efforts at regrouping in the new land.

The joy and happiness over having their own church and hearing their own tongue could barely be contained by these enthusiastic pioneers. But additional practical matters began to arise almost immediately, foremost among them the problem of finding a priest to minister to their needs. Understandably they desired a fellow Polish, but unfortunately the Polish community of priests was not yet extensive or well organized. Thus, for the first year after the church was completed Mass was conducted by itinerant priests or those from other local parishes, with the parishioners persevering in the search for their own Polish pastor. Finally, a delegation of two—Albert (Adalbert) Damski and Francis Szocinski—was elected and sent to Bishop Borgess in Detroit, who had been so solicitous of their needs two years earlier, to petition for a priest of their own nationality. Bishop Borgess, as concerned as always, received them graciously and heard their request with sympathy. Unfortunately he had to inform them that none was available, but he urged them to continue to seek one on their own. Disappointed but not discouraged, the two men proceeded to visit the large Detroit Polonia and make inquiries at the parishes and among the organizations there. They learned that a Father Nikodem Kolasinski, still living in his native country, had expressed an interest in working in the American Polish community. The delegates wasted no time in sending him a written request, explaining the circumstances of their new parish and their great desire for one of their own to tend to them. They had to wait several

months before they received a reply from Father Kolasinski: He was unable to come, though he sent his blessings for all their endeavors.

“The Poles were crestfallen, but Providence intervened.”<sup>4</sup> In June of 1883, a priest by the name of Father Casimir Jablonowski arrived in Grand Rapids and announced his willingness to work with the people of St. Adalbert’s. Father Jablonowski was in exile here, having fled Siberia<sup>5</sup> where he had been detained for political reasons. He settled into the parish as its pastor immediately, tending to a congregation that by this time numbered one hundred families, most of whom lived in a close knit community called “Wojciechowo”—the St. Adalbert District.

At first the joy of the people was limitless. It is not at all difficult to imagine the jubilation of a hundred families—almost all of them immigrants, living in a still strange land with a strange language and almost no tradition, working long hours in small shops and factories for fifteen cents an hour—at having a priest who could lead them, counsel them, and comfort them in their own language. But apparently that thrill was short lived. Not long after Father Jablonowski joined them he began to plan the erection of a school for the parish, and he set forth to elicit funds from the congregation. He asked them to make more sacrifices so that their children could be taught Religion and Morality. The parish, though growing in members, was still small and perhaps felt that their individual burdens were already heavy, and they dissented. Apparently, also, the rather pointed diatribes he used to elicit funds tended to be a bit personal, thus alienating many of the younger parents in particular. According to the *Grand Rapids Echo*, “The Parish wanted a younger and more modern Priest and made it quite bitter for Father Jablonowski.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, in February of 1884 he asked the bishop to relieve him of his duties, his brief tenure lasting barely eight months, and he left for California.

That same month a new pastor, Father Marion Matkowski, arrived and was well received. His years were quite fruitful in the parish, as he was able to cooperate closely with the parishioners as well as guide them, A young, handsome, and energetic man, he continued in the effort to build the school and accomplished his goal quickly, constructing it at a cost of \$830.00 and operating it that same year.



FATHER MATKOWSKI

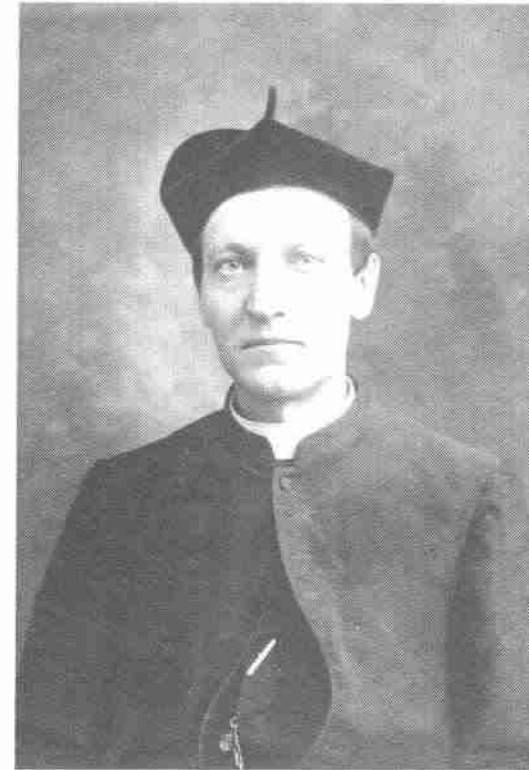
Two sisters of the Felician Order in Detroit were brought to teach the 250 pupils at the new school, and the parents, fearful that their children were becoming too “Americanized,” were overjoyed to hear them learning the Polish alphabet and grammar.<sup>7</sup> Along with the school, the parish financed the construction of a rectory in 1884 at a cost of \$890.00. This was a fairly large wood frame building, large enough to eventually become a duplex when it was moved to 39 Seward Street many years later, after the construction of the present rectory in 1921—certainly at the time quite a comfortable dwelling for Father Matkowski, though by 1892 it needed enlargement and better furnishings.

Much work and growth were accomplished during the two year tenure of the capable Father Matkowski as pastor. Besides the above mentioned construction projects, he succeeded in gathering the widely scattered records and receipts of the parish, since they had not

previously been kept in any orderly fashion. In many cases he was forced to seek out information by word of mouth from the older parishioners. By the time he was transferred to St. Stanislaus Parish in Bay City in March of 1886, St. Adalbert's had grown to more than two hundred families, and was considered a prestigious parish. Later, in 1897, he would return to Grand Rapids as pastor of St. Adalbert's first daughter parish, originally called St. Stanislaus but later known as St. Isidore.\* And still later, in 1903, he played an important role, through his articulate encouragement, in the formation of St. Adalbert's third daughter parish, Sacred Heart.

\*For an interesting and well documented history of the Polish people in the city of Grand Rapids, see Eduard Adam Skendzel, *The Sacred Heart Story* (Grand Rapids: Foremost Press, Inc., 1981).

## THE PONGANIS YEARS



FATHER SIMON PONGANIS

**A**FTER FATHER MATKOWSKI DEPARTED he was replaced in March of 1886 by the Reverend Simon Ponganis, who inherited a parish that was growing in both prestige and numbers and who continued during the eighteen years of his pastorate to preside over a growth that can only be called staggering. People from southern and eastern Poland resumed the tide of immigration in the 1890's with even more

## *The First 100 Years*

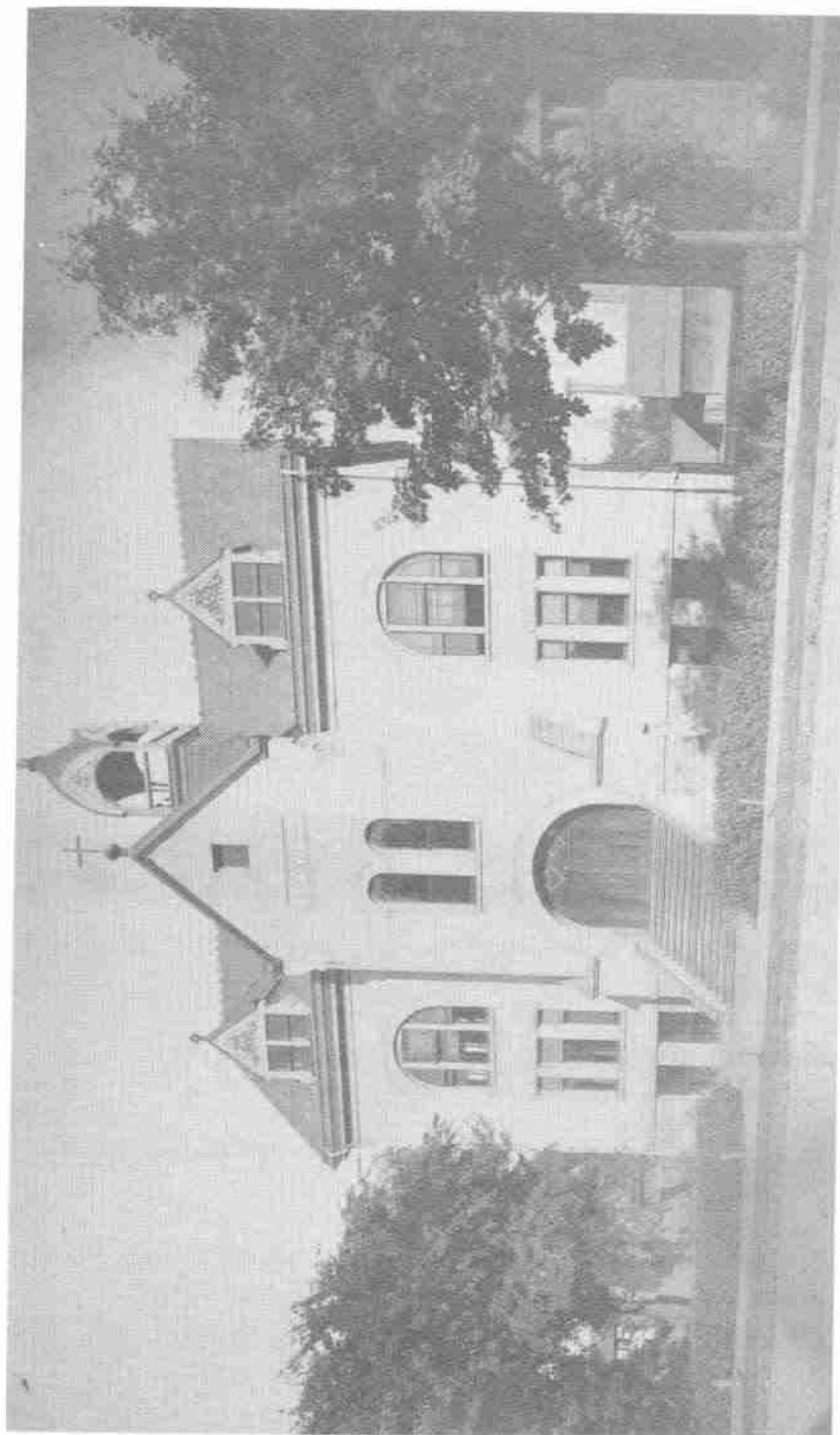
force than in the 1860's, so much so that when Father Ponganis left the parish in 1904 it had grown by five hundred per cent, from two hundred to over a thousand families. He brought with him to the parish a sound business sense and a character highlighted by a strong sense of dedication and commitment, as well as a deep accord with the congregation. All of these traits characterized his lengthy tenure at St. Adalbert's Parish, and may have contributed to his removal in 1904.

His first task after assuming the pastorship was the enlargement of the church which, though it had a seating capacity of four hundred, was becoming too crowded with over six hundred parishioners already attending Masses and a large projected increase over the next decade. He planned and oversaw an addition of thirty-five by sixty feet, with extensive interior remodelling, at a total cost of \$5,000.<sup>8</sup> This addition doubled the seating capacity and placed it high among the finest churches in the city, according to observers at the time. Completed in December, 1887, its formal consecration took place on January 1, 1888. The ceremonies were conducted by Bishop Henry Joseph Richter, assisted by the same Rev. O. Vincent Barzynski of Chicago who had attended the consecration rites of the original building.

By 1890 the parish was healthy and beginning to prosper; it had annual revenues of about \$4,000, no debt, and property worth \$25,000.<sup>9</sup> But in that year rumors were rife that the east side Poles, in the so-called *Cegielnia* (brickyard) district around the Fuller Avenue-Michigan Street area, wanted to start their own parish. Their determination was so strong, in fact, that in the following year, 1891, they bought land on Diamond Avenue near Michigan Street for the day when they would be sufficiently organized to set off on their own. Furthermore, the school was simply too small and the four Felician sisters too few to properly meet the needs of the young scholars. These problems compelled Father Ponganis to launch a fund campaign to build a new, larger school and to solicit the services of a new order of teaching sisters, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, from Milwaukee.

### ***Building Projects***

The school, a handsome two story brick building, with a large arched main entrance, two large arched windows on the upper floor,



Original St. Adalbert's School



First Grade St. Adalbert's 1900

and a small dome raised above its sharply pitched roof, cost slightly more than \$1,100 to construct. Located on the lot where the rectory now stands, it had all the modern conveniences and would serve the student population well for only a relatively few years before the swelling parish rolls would necessitate additional accommodations. The school was finished in 1892 but a new problem arose: The Felician sisters were recalled to Detroit and Father Ponganis was confronted with the urgent business of procuring teachers to staff the handsome new building. After sending a number of letters to various convents, he received word that the Notre Dame sisters would arrive in time to begin the new school year in August. The principal was none other than Sister Mary Tita, who had been so instrumental in the founding of the parish eleven years before while serving at St. Mary's Parish.

In the year 1893 he was faced with two more building projects. To provide housing for the larger teaching staff, Father Ponganis was compelled to construct a new convent. He chose to locate it on the corner of Fifth Street and Davis Avenue, its main entrance facing south toward the school; and there it stood, with some enlargement in 1921, for almost sixty-five years, an appealing structure with its gables and arched windows on the second level and its central double-level veranda. To add beauty to the surroundings, the sisters in the early years maintained flower gardens along the walk leading to the school grounds. The cost of this new convent was \$5,000. The other project was the enlargement of the wood-frame rectory to accommodate visiting priests at special occasions such as Forty Hours Devotion.

Despite these efforts by Father Ponganis, the remodelled church and new school and convent could not keep pace with the growing population. Furthermore, the distance to church and school from the northeast side made it imperative—and inevitable—that the families that lived there begin their own parish. In 1897, therefore, with as much joy in their hearts as the pioneers felt in 1881, they formed what was to be known as St. Isidore's Parish.

### ***St. Adalbert — The Mother Parish***

It should be pointed out here that St. Adalbert's is the mother parish of five other parishes, a distinction that is not commonplace. The twenty-second urban Polish Catholic parish in the country, she

first spawned St. Isidore's Parish in 1897 on behalf of the Poles who had settled near the Fuller Avenue and Michigan Street area. Not yet a highly developed residential district, it nevertheless offered opportunities for employment at the large brickyard there, as well as land on the outskirts for farming. Having to travel west on Michigan Street on foot or by wagon must have been a severe trial in those days to even the hardiest of souls. As was previously mentioned, the land for the new parish had been purchased already in 1891 for the inevitable future move. That occurred in 1897 when the parish of St. Isidore was formally founded.

Two more parishes were propagated in the period of 1903-1904, which proved to be a rather traumatic time for the people of St. Adalbert. By then the parish had grown to over a thousand families—the largest congregation in the city—with a fine school and a closely shared heritage. Yet a number of the parishioners, some of whom were charter members, must have felt something like they had while attending St. Mary's German Church years before. These were the Lithuanians, kindred in spirit to the Poles but possessing a separate identity and background. With most of them residing north of the church, they announced their separation in 1903 and began to build their own church, named after Saints Peter and Paul, the next year. Meanwhile a group of parishioners living in the southwest section of the city in the Butterworth Street-John Ball Park area, facing some of the same hardships as the residents of the northeast section before they began their own parish, commenced to lay plans for their own independent church. Though a bit closer to St. Adalbert's than the east side people, the distance was still an impediment especially in winter. In 1904, amid bitter controversy, they received permission from Bishop Richter to form their parish and build their church, to be called Sacred Heart.

But to be called a "mother church" does not mean only that some members broke away to form their own congregation. It also means that a parish, because of its pre-eminence in a diocese or influence among a people—as, for instance, a people of a particular ethnic heritage—has sponsored the founding of another. Thus, in 1909 Father Casimir Skory founded St. Michael's Parish in Muskegon. A diminutive lumbering and port city with a small but devout number of Polish Catholics, it was in those days very far removed from Grand Rapids for the ordinary resident. Since it had no Polish church and

the distance was so great, few individuals could attend Mass at St. Adalbert, of which they were members, except occasionally. Hence, Father Skory's action was received with joy and relief by the Poles who lived in that city. Later, because of sympathy and concern for the Polish farming community north of Grand Rapids in the Belmont area, Father Skory founded the Assumption of Mary Parish in 1913. These fortunate people even received an invaluable and still beautiful gift from Father Skory and the parishioners of St. Adalbert: the lovely and sturdy frame church in which the Grand Rapids Poles began their illustrious parish history.

In addition to these efforts an area on the west side surrounded by Cora and Atlantic Streets on the south and north, and Van Buren and Garfield Avenues on the west and east was purchased in 1914 for the sum of \$1,900 by Father Skory with the intention of eventually founding a new parish there. At that time the land consisted primarily of orchards, but the west side boundaries were gradually expanding to the farm country and Father Skory's idea was basically sound. However, the flow of immigrants slowed in the years following the purchase; consequently the plans were never completed. Still, the land was held by the parish until the mid 1950's when Msgr. Maksymowski made an agreement with the Diocese to exchange it for the home and two lots on Fifth and Davis, the site of a proposed new convent.

The history of St. Adalbert's Parish, rich as it is in its own right, is multiplied in importance when we consider that the roots of five other parishes—each with its own identity and destiny—are grounded in it. For as each of the new parishes was formed not only was a new tradition begun, but, even more important, that message which the first pioneer Poles were so eager and determined to be guided by and to spread—that is, the message of their Faith—found a new home, a new arena, each time with a renewed vigor and vitality.

### *New Societies*

The health of any parish is reflected to some degree in the vitality of its organizations. Along with the other accomplishments during Father Ponganis' pastorship was the founding of several important



### ***Knights of St. Casimir Aid Society***

In 1895 another aid society, under the patronage of St. Casimir, sprang up in the parish with the intention of offering friendship and help to the many newly arrived immigrants of that time. In its early years the society consisted of two groups, the first comprising its founding members and the second, called the Young Men of St. Casimir, including youths under the age of seventeen. Unfortunately, because of a recent fire at the society's headquarters on the corner of Sixth Street and Davis Avenue, the records of its early history and the original officers are presently unobtainable.

These organizations, along with the already firmly established St. Adalbert Aid Society, would prove over the decades to be substantial parts of St. Adalbert's parish community, donating tens of thousands of dollars to the church and many more tens of thousands in sick, welfare, and death benefits to their members.

### ***The End Of An Era***

Father Ponganis continued to serve the parish well. In 1898 he began to lay plans for the future construction of a newer and larger church, and even began to set aside a fund for that day when his dream would materialize. For by now he was inextricably a part of the destiny of the parish. In 1902 it had grown to such an extent that he no longer could handle all of the responsibilities himself; thus, to make his burden a bit easier he received the parish's first assistant pastor, The Reverend Joseph Gogolewski. The following year he received the second, the Reverend Ladislaus P. Krakowski, who assumed duty on April 23. Father Krakowski's stay was short, however, lasting only until August of that year; for on the eleventh day of that month he was appointed to take charge of the development of the new daughter parish, Sacred Heart.

The founding of a third daughter parish—after St. Isidore's in 1897 and SS. Peter and Paul in 1902—was precisely the event that led to the removal, which many of St. Adalbert's parishioners found so bitter, of Father Ponganis from the church that he had served so fruitfully. He believed that the departure of so many people from St. Adalbert's would hurt its school program as well as its funding program for the projected new church. His feelings are demonstrated

in this poignant remark, recalled by Father Andrew Narloch, "Sooner will hair grow on the palms of my hands than that another Polish parish be established in Grand Rapids."<sup>10</sup> This intransigent attitude very definitely conflicted with the decision made by Bishop Richter to allow for the establishment of the new parish, and it eventually led to his transfer to St. Mary's Parish in Gaylord on August 25, 1904. To the faithful of St. Adalbert's, this move was not so much a transfer as a banishment of their respected and beloved pastor.



**III**  
**THE SKORY YEARS**

## A NEW PASTOR



FATHER CASIMIR SKORY

**B**ECAUSE OF FATHER CASIMIR SKORY'S EMINENCE in the history of St. Adalbert's Parish, space should be provided for a biographical sketch of this fine personage and revered pastor.<sup>1</sup> He was born in the province of Poznan, as were so many of his parishioners, in the old town of Trzemeszno, just outside of Gniezno, the old Polish capitol, on March 4, 1864, son of Casimir and Theresa Skory. He was baptized in a large, imposing Romanesque church called the Church

of the Assumption. It was a church with a multitude of domes, but its most outstanding ones included a very large central dome topped by a smaller one, and two more crowning the towers that flanked the main entrance of the building.

The year of his birth also brought the death of his father. Mr. Skory, a well known man who had taken an active part in the January Insurrection and was a champion of the poor and oppressed, was doing volunteer work for the victims of a cholera epidemic when he contracted the deadly disease and fell victim to it. His widow, herself a pious and devoted woman, taught the love of God and country to her children. After her grief abated, two years following her husband's death, she married a man named Kowalski who proved to be a fine stepfather, treating the children as his own and raising them with wisdom and love.

The family emigrated to the United States in 1875 and settled into the large Polish community in Bay City, Michigan, where they had relatives and old friends. Here young Casimir spent his early childhood, received his first Holy Communion, and began thinking about the priesthood. When he was fifteen he accompanied the Reverend O. Vincent Barzynski, the same priest who later participated in the consecrations of both the original and the remodeled St. Adalbert's Church, to Chicago to begin his studies. He proved to be a first rate scholar, prompting Father Barzynski to send him to Rome for further studies in 1881. There he entered the Order of the Resurrection, concentrating on the disciplines of philosophy and theology, and graduated as an honor student from the Gregorian University in 1888. That same year he received the honor of his ordination from His Eminence, Cardinal Parochi.<sup>2</sup>

After making several stops in European cities, he returned to Chicago where he asked permission to say his first Mass in Grand Rapids, the new home of his parents. Little did he or his justifiably proud parents know that in sixteen years hence he would be appointed pastor of that same parish amid turbulence and dissension, and that during his thirty-one year tenure he would earn the love and respect of thousands as one of the finest, most humane, and most adept pastors in the diocese.

After visiting his family he returned to Chicago where he became assistant pastor at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church. Later he was transferred to St. Mary's College in Kentucky, where he taught Latin,

Greek, Italian, and botany. Though he had no pastoral duties he nonetheless made regular visits to the sick and elderly, hearing their confessions and bringing them Holy Communion. He performed these duties for three years before requesting a transfer to the Grand Rapids Diocese upon the illness of his mother.

In 1892, Father Skory received a letter from Bishop Richter, assigning him to Blessed Mother of the Scapula Parish in Gaylord, Michigan. There he found a small wooden church and sixty parishioners. Immediately, he bought land and built a school. Later, in 1900, he also built a larger church for \$25,000. In 1897 while still pastor in Gaylord, his duty took him to another small Polish community in Cheboygan, where he constructed a two story building to house a church and a school. He had other missions, too—at Mullett Lake, where he built another school, and in Lewiston, St. Hellens, Pinconning, and Standish. Finally in 1904, after twelve years in his "beloved Gaylord", Father Casimir Skory was assigned to St. Adalbert's Parish to replace Msgr. Ponganis as pastor.

This brief sketch illustrates the energy of the man whose life and talents would be fulfilled at our parish, and whose legacy to us would be the beautiful church that we now call the Basilica of St. Adalbert, the large and architecturally impressive school, and the handsome rectory. Generations of people from all over the state, and even the country, have solemnly knelt and prayed in the church and have at least seen and admired the other edifices; because of their solidity and quality, no doubt many more generations will continue to hold them in esteem. It is important, therefore, to know of the man who, along with his devoted and generous parishioners, was responsible for the erection of these lasting monuments.

### *The Early Years*

But all was not smooth at the beginning. Father Skory, accustomed to the small, friendly parishes and missions of northern Michigan, stepped into a situation if not hostile then at least not particularly amicable. A good number of people were upset at the sudden, probably forced removal of Msgr. Ponganis; moreover, the parish rolls were being cut by the imminent departure of a couple of hundred families to the new parishes of Sacred Heart and Saints

Peter and Paul. This in itself was not so deleterious to the parish, but it did cut into the fund-raising efforts begun in 1898 by Father Ponganis for the projected building of a new church. Further, the fact that many of the people—both those who were embarking on the new adventures in their daughter parishes and those who remained—considered Father Ponganis' removal to be a callous disregard of his spiritual goodness and their own welfare. This feeling, perhaps, is simply a natural human response to being deprived of a vital treasure.

Undaunted, Father Skory set about his new ministry with optimism and congeniality. He wisely became a visitor to and supporter of the various parish organizations, blessing and encouraging their members in their endeavors. In 1905 he reorganized the Holy Rosary Society, which at the time consisted of seven hundred members. This society, organized with the beginning of the parish, had been quite loosely knit with no records to honor its members or to list its activities. Immediately the members elected Father Skory to the positions of president and treasurer, and he appointed leaders for each of the forty-eight chaplets. One lady in particular, Mrs. Mary Niemczewski, deserves special mention for her unceasing and untiring efforts to call on the sick of the parish, and her faithful and often solo visits to the families of deceased parishioners to pray the rosary.

The year of 1905 witnessed the formation, too, of a group of people who would for many years bring great pleasure to their fellow parishioners and to the city of Grand Rapids, and honor to their Lord. The Moniusko Choral Society was brought together in February for the purposes of inspiring and elevating the hearts of their listeners, in church as well as in social concerts, and, later, patriotic programs. The choir was led by St. Adalbert's own distinguished organist, Casimir F. Kowalkowski, a man of stern appearance and profound musical talent who followed Father Skory from Gaylord in 1904 and was installed as organist that same year.

A few words might be devoted to Mr. Kowalkowski at this point. Born in Nowe Miasto, Poland in 1870, he came to America with his family in 1892 and settled for five years in the Polonia of Detroit. Then in 1897 he was hired as organist at St. Mary's Parish in Gaylord, whose pastor was Father Skory. Besides this responsibility he also taught several subjects in the school there. It was while he was engaged in this work that he married Rose Skory, niece of the pastor,

thus becoming one of the family as it were. Inevitably, because of his great talent and Father Skory's refined appreciation of music, he came to Grand Rapids to join his uncle and help establish a musical tradition that continues today to be among the foremost in the city.

After forming the Moniusko Choral Society in 1905, Mr. Kowalkowski set about to make it the finest in the city. A man of discipline and high ideals, he expected the same from his choir; consequently, within a few short years he was able to achieve his goal as the group gained a reputation for harmony and tonal quality practically unmatched in Western Michigan. Mr. Kowalkowski would remain as organist and musical director until his death in 1935, two weeks after the passing of his spiritual leader, Father Skory.

Several other organizations were begun during his long tenure at St. Adalbert's, of which mention will be made later. Suffice it to say now that Father Skory's cultivation, humility, and interest in his new congregation gradually won him their admiration. Furthermore, he continued with the plan to some day build a new church, guided as he was by the image of the magnificent Church of the Assumption in Trzmienszno.

## SILVER JUBILEE

**D**ESPITE THE DEPARTURE of so many families from St. Adalbert's to start their own parishes, the church was still too small; for the number of immigrants continued to flow into the city's west side, many of them settling around the *Wojciecho*. Thus, by the year 1906 the parish roll continued to number about 1,100 families. This was also the year of St. Adalbert's twenty-fifth anniversary, and the people wished to celebrate it in as splendid a manner as possible. Therefore, Father Skory put forth every effort to insure that the celebration would be a memorable one, and he planned a three day program during the week of Thanksgiving.

The program began with a large banquet on Wednesday evening, November 28, at the St. Adalbert Casino, home of the Aid Society, with hundreds of parishioners attending. It was followed at 10:00 on Thursday morning by a Pontifical High Mass celebrated by Bishop Richter. A good deal of pomp and ceremony preceded the Mass, with the various societies of all three Polish parishes, in full and colorful dress, meeting the Bishop and leading him in a large parade to the church. He was assisted in his celebration by representatives of Polonia from all over Michigan as well as Chicago. These included Father Schremb, Vicar-General of the diocese, as arch-priest; Father Alexander Lipinski, pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Saginaw, as deacon; Father Teofil Szybkowski, from Chicago, as subdeacon; Father Folta, pastor of the Parish of the Sweetest Heart of Mary in Detroit, and Father Alechniewicz, pastor from Mt. Carmel, as honorary deacons. The sermon was preached by Father Marion Matkowski, now pastor of St. Isidore's. After the Mass, Bishop Richter congratulated the parishioners on the occasion of this glorious celebration and encouraged them to further efforts—especially concerning their proposed new church.

That evening a religious drama, *The Power of Prayer*, was performed before a large audience at the Casino. It was reviewed by *The Grand Rapids Echo* in its December 5 edition:

It is frequently difficult to praise amateur productions. However, it is a pleasure to describe this drama inasmuch as from beginning to end each of the amateurs played his role intelligently and attempted to faithfully depict the character he represented. Among those appearing in the drama were Messrs. Bert Tomczak, August Michalski, Frank Jaworowicz, Louis Skory, Frank Napierala, Adam Kulhawik, Bert Czubinski, and John Mickiewicz. The production was under the able management of M. K. Kowalkowski and this undoubtedly contributed to the artistic success of the presentation.

Before the beginning of the play, the ladies of the Moniuszko Choir sang a beautiful song, "Tyrol and His Son," and at the conclusion of the program the Moniuszko Choir sang "Goodnight Dear Guests." As there was no orchestra, Miss Katherine Dzieniszewski played several classical selections on the piano.<sup>3</sup>

The next morning Father Skory offered a Mass in memory of all deceased parishioners; despite its being said on a workday, the Mass was well attended.

The occasion was important for the parish, probably the culmination of the slow healing process that brought together all the people in a celebration of joy after the rather turbulent years preceding it. For it was the members of the various societies, both religious and national, that planned the festivities in cooperation with Father Skory. And as a result of this cooperation, a net profit of \$371.79 was raised for the parish and the proposed new church.

Final announcement of the plans for the new church was presented during this time, also. Notwithstanding the fact that a good wage at the time was \$1.00 for a long day's work in furniture factories and foundries, the parishioners dedicated themselves to the construction of a citadel that would bring credit and glory to God and to themselves. It was to be a church among churches, and a monument to their Faith, testimony to the loftiness of their great character.

## THE MONUMENT

THE NEW CHURCH was to not only fulfill the needs of the parish for space and to glorify God, but also to realize a dream of Father Skory's. Having been born in Trzemeszno, in Poznan Province, he carried with him that region's love of large and magnificent churches. The region was primarily noted as the center of commerce and business in Poland, and thus was quite prosperous. Further, many of the pioneers were also from this small town, forty-five miles northeast of Poznan and just outside of the ancient capitol of Gniezno. The tradition of grand edifices in which to conduct their worship was ingrained in many of these people, and they wanted to carry on this tradition here.

It is interesting to note that prior to the construction of the new church, the old building was moved to a position facing Davis Avenue, immediately next to the construction site.

The plans were drawn up by the architect Henry J. Harks, of Cleveland Ohio, the work was contracted to the Andrews Bros. Co. of that same city, and the local architect overseeing the job was Chris Verheilg. The projected cost of this magnificent structure was to be \$150,000 — \$100,000 for the construction of the edifice and \$50,000 for heating, wiring, pews, windows, pulpit, communion rail, confessionals, organ, and altar.

Finally, on July 4, 1907 the work was begun. The cornerstone was laid on August 18, 1907 with great ceremony:

The parade which preceded the dedication was imposing with various societies carrying banners with Polish inscriptions, and the military companies making a fine showing. There were the Polish Guards and Uhlans of St. Adalbert's Parish, and the Sobieski Guards, recently organized by Father Krakowski of Sacred Heart Parish. It was the first appearance of the latter and they made a

## *The First 100 Years*

brilliant display, dressed in uniforms worn by the Poles in their war against Russia. The finish and execution of their maneuver was remarkable, the company using the regular Polish tactics, similar to those used in the German army today. The uniforms were blue with red stripes and gold trimming with the regulation big helmet with huge plume. The parade moved from the cathedral across the city to the new church through Sheldon, Monroe, and West Bridge Street.<sup>4</sup>

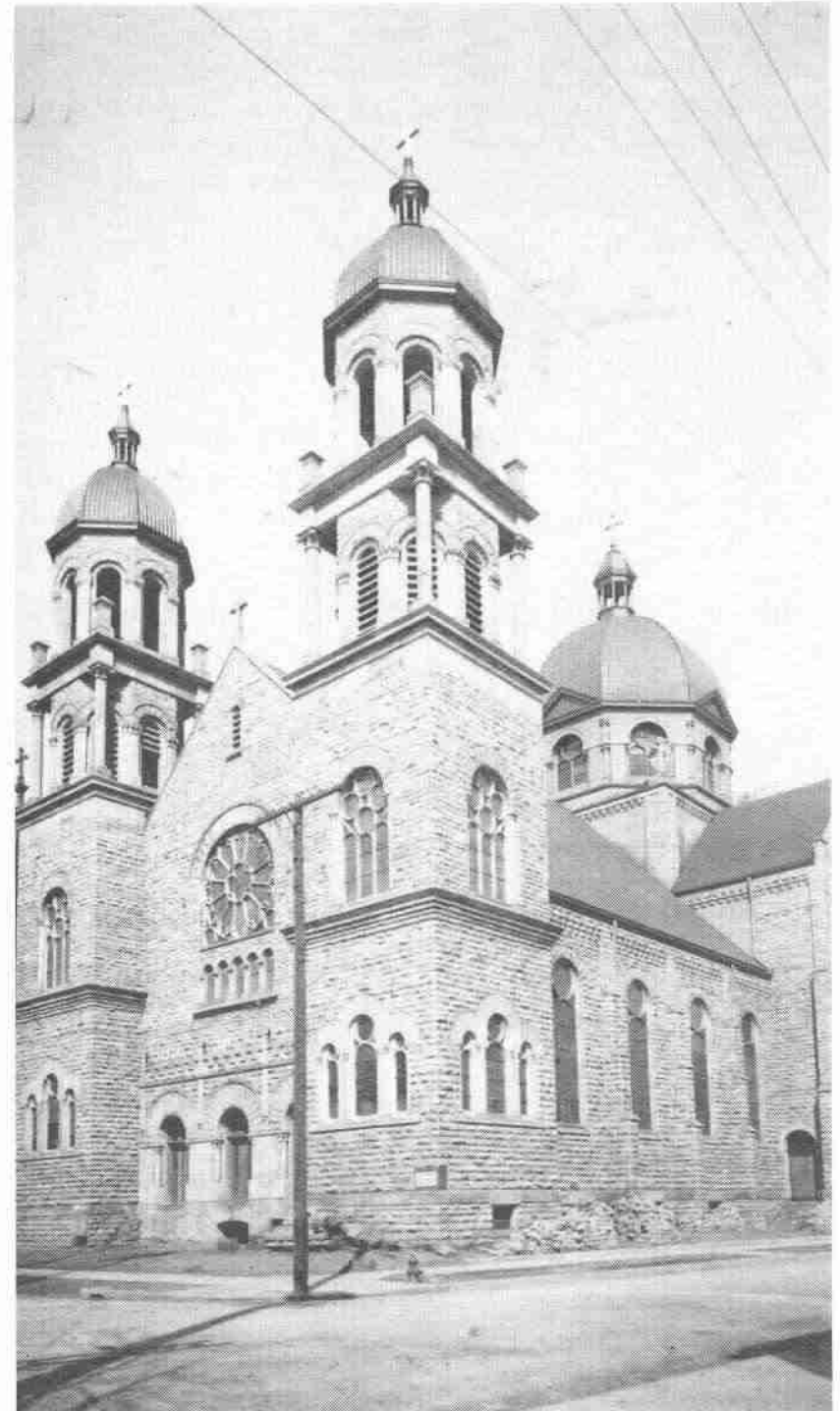
Following the parade, the cornerstone was blessed by Bishop Richter, and Father Edward Kozłowski from Bay City delivered a sermon extolling the endeavor of the people and wishing them success.

The construction of the church was to last for six years, during which time the large parish grew more and more united. They, along with members of Polonia from all over the city, contributed \$7,300 in 1909 for the purchase of eighty acres of land on Walker Avenue to be used as a burial ground for all Polish people in Grand Rapids. Prior to this time the deceased were buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, used by the German members of St. Mary's Parish. Ten acres of the ground, which until 1947 would be called the Polish Catholic Cemetery, were consecrated by Bishop Rhode of Chicago on October 24, 1909.

In that same year, Father Skory founded a mission in Muskegon for the forty-six Polish families there. St. Michael's Church was built, and the people were served by St. Adalbert's assistant pastor, Father Francis Piaskowski.

Finally, amid feelings of pride and humility, jubilation and relief, the new church was completed in late spring of 1913—a beautifully balanced, imposing, profound, and lovely building in the northern Romanesque style so characteristic of many old churches still standing in Poland, its central dome looming over the neighborhood 150 feet above the ground, and its bell tower 134 feet high. The week before its consecration presented a scene of hustling activity as workmen cleared away the remaining debris and as the altar, organ, and pews received their final touches. An article from *The Evening Press*, dated June 19, 1913, reported on the activity:

Derricks, pulleys, and a mass of big ropes were still in use. Casual visitors were slowly passing here and there to



Oldest known photograph of St. Adalbert's.

gaze in admiration on the beauty and substantial nature of the building.

Yet there has been no interruption in the regular services and stated engagements of the parish staff. Yesterday a representative of *The Press* found his way through the apparent confusion to the frame house behind the church in which Reverend Casimir Skory. . . . makes his home and headquarters. Though it was well along in the forenoon Father Andrew Narloch, the assistant, had not had time to get his breakfast. Members of the parish and others, personally and by telephone, were demanding attention for various matters of importance.

Standing on his doorstep Father Skory finally found time to answer a few questions. He told of this and that detail of the new building. But there was not a trace of human pride or vainglory in the modest priest's face or demeanor. He was a commendable example of that Christian zeal and thoughtfulness for others which led one to forget the building and think of the builder. Not a word did he have to say of himself. His first statement was this:

*"Ah, it is grand to think of what the people have done! We have none rich in the whole parish. All our people are of humble position in life. Yet they have done most nobly. In my six years they have given the money with which to build and complete the church and it has meant sacrifice. We are all grateful to God."*

It is noteworthy that the church was completely free of debt at this time in order that it could be consecrated when completed, as per a decree by Bishop Richter regarding all churches in the diocese. As *The Press* further stated, the day of its consecration would be "one of the greatest days in the Catholic history of this city. . . ." for the church was "a vast achievement for the faith it represents."

### *The Romanesque Style*

The Romanesque style appeared throughout Europe during the early Middle Ages as a statement of both the loftiness and the simplicity of the people's faith. The floor plan is cruciform, that is, in the shape of a crucifix, with a long nave or central aisle facing east, in

the direction of the risen Christ, and with transepts or arms extending outward on each side near the sanctuary. Moreover, the Romanesque style represents order, balance, and stability, so important to the medieval people. The cruciform design helps achieve these qualities as does the facade with its three doors and the beautiful roseate window above them, along with the massive bell towers on either side. Order is also represented by the number three, which was and still is symbolic of the Trinity; hence, we see three entrance portals, three domes, and three levels to each bell tower. Further use of this number occurs in the three levels of design on each stained art window and in the group of three windows on the wall of each transept. Thus, the architecture not only represents the classical principles of balance, order, and stability; it also is symbolic of the people's faith.<sup>5</sup>

The use of stained glass windows was important in the early medieval Church because the vast majority of people were illiterate. Early Church fathers realized that by the use of pictorial depictions the faithful could "read" important Biblical themes and events in the Church history. At St. Adalbert's the windows present a treasury of religious themes. Along the south wall of the church are, in order from the main entrance, The Baptism of Christ, Christ's Charge to St. Peter, The Good Shepherd, and The Apparition of the Sacred Heart. On the north wall are Christ in the Workshop, St. Anne with the Virgin Mary, Christ knocking at the Door, and St. Dominic Receiving the Rosary. On the south transept wall, in the series of three windows, appear depictions of The Annunciation, The Nativity, and Christ in the Temple. The north transept features Christ in the Garden, The Crucifixion, and The Resurrection. In the apse of the church are five windows depicting St. Hyacinth, St. Casimir, St. Adalbert, St. Stanislaus Kostka, and St. Elizabeth. In addition, there are two small round windows over the side altars: on the south wall appears The Sorrowful Mother and on the north is "Behold the Man!" Another admirable piece of cut glass is The Immaculate Conception, copied from the Bartolome Murillo painting, on the oculus of the interior dome. This window looks small from 74' below, but it is actually 16' in diameter and weighs 700 pounds. Finally, the lovely roseate window above the choir loft is a portrayal of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music.<sup>6</sup>



Another of the features of the Romanesque style is the tile roof. Unfortunately the Michigan winters have a rather severe effect on the tiles, which are more appropriate to the warm southern climates in which the style originated; thus they tend to crack and need occasional and costly repairs. Nevertheless the tile helps to maintain the architectural integrity of the building.

### *Additional Details*

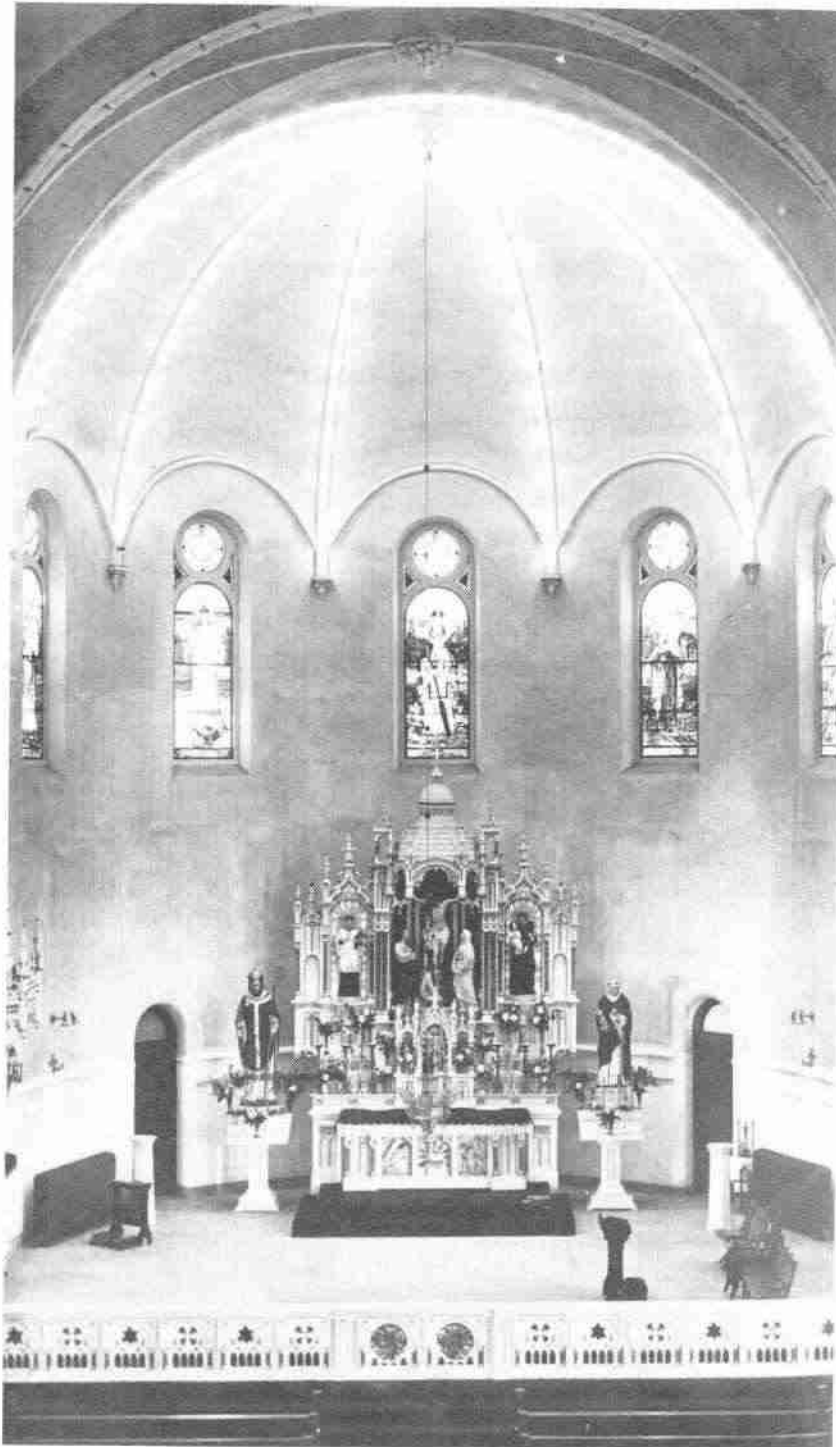
The building is constructed primarily of limestone imported from Sandusky, Ohio, with Indiana Bedford limestone trim. Its sturdiness is evidenced by the fact that today, sixty-eight years later, it has no cracks in the foundation or the structure.

The angels facing the four points of the compass and surrounding the central dome were, like the trim, sculpted from Bedford limestone on the spot by the highly regarded Gondola Brothers Company of Cleveland. Each statue, standing eleven feet tall and weighing six tons, represents the Angel Gabriel holding a long trumpet in his hand.

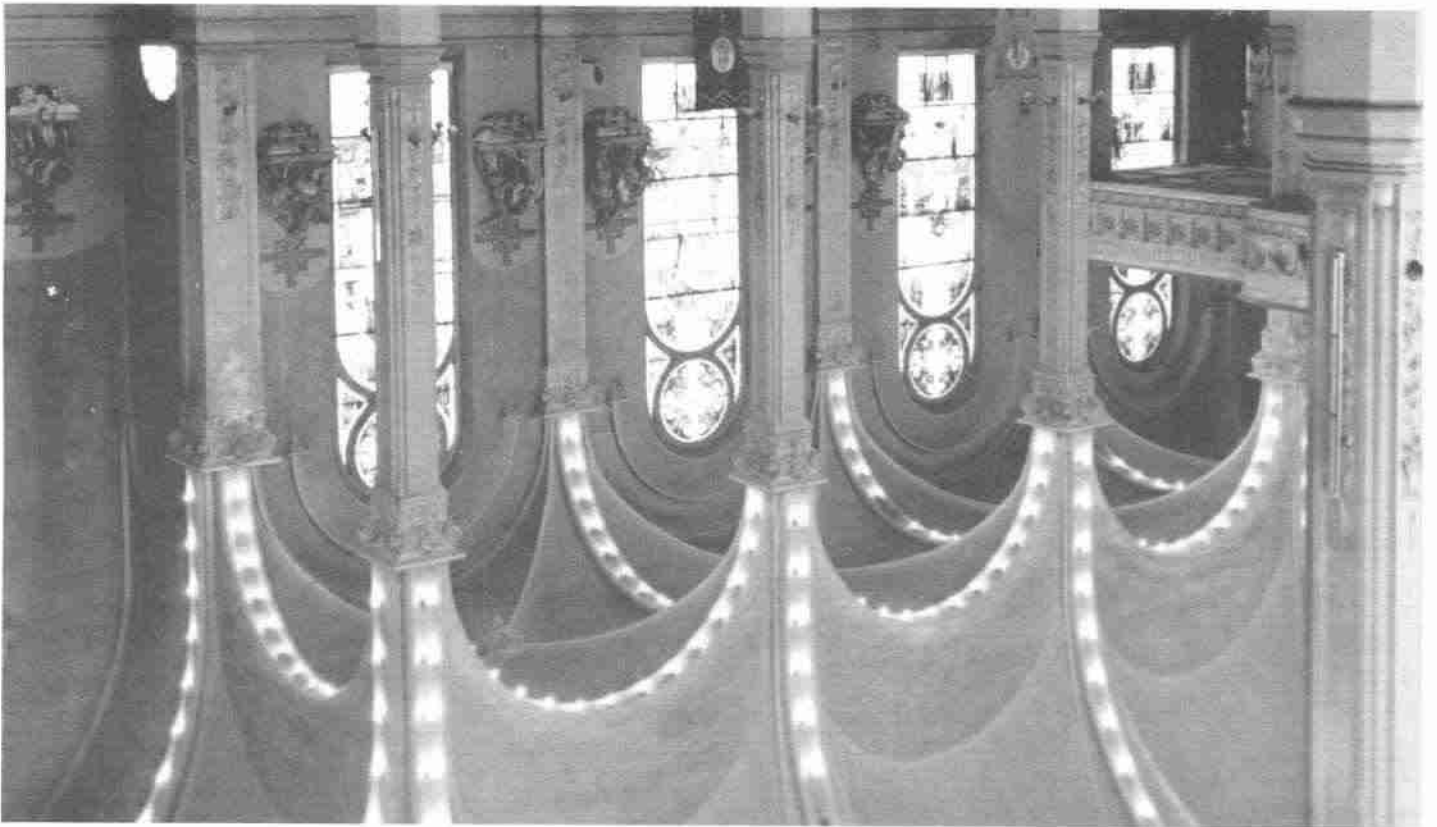
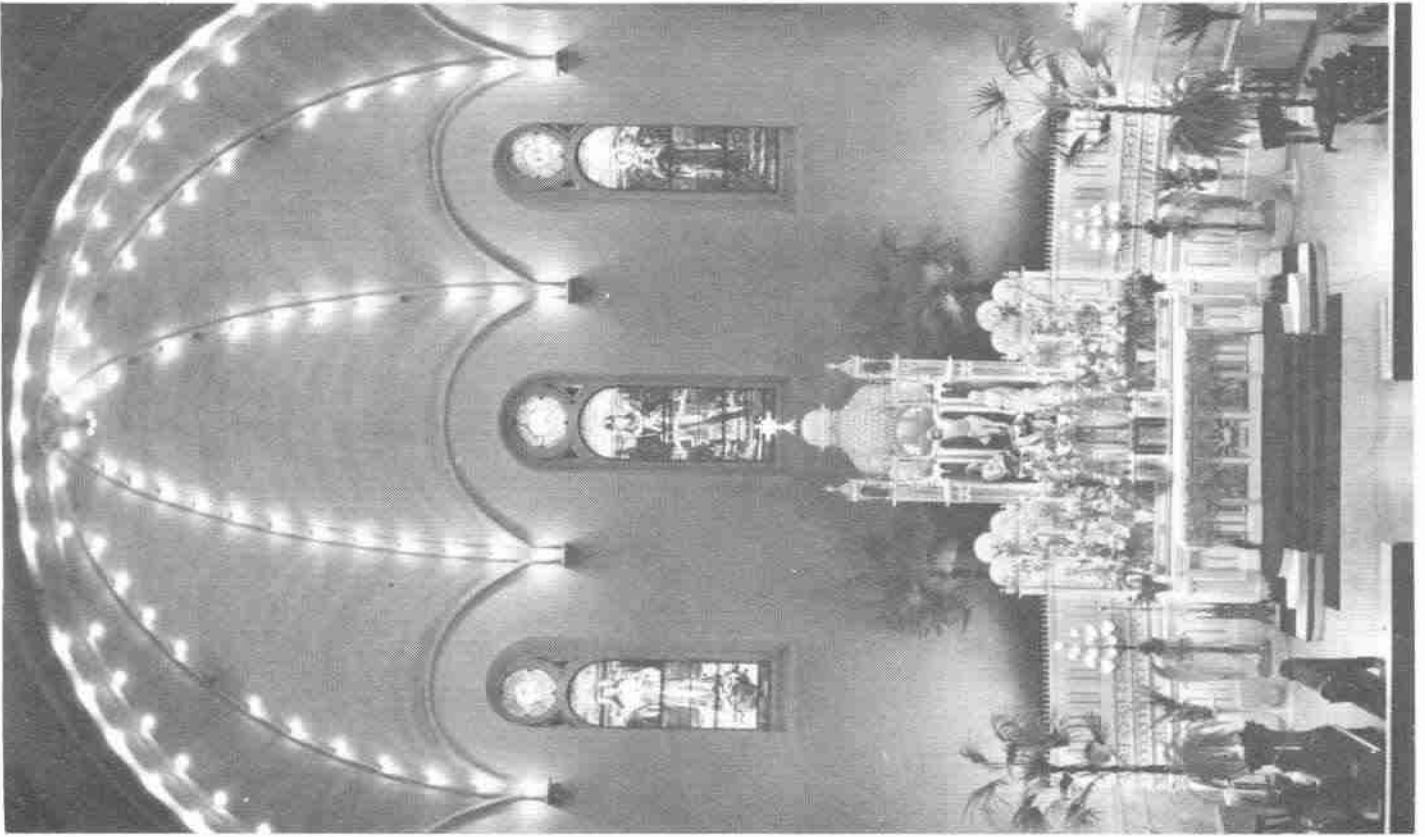
The stained glass windows were designed by A. Artmaier and supplied by a Chicago firm that employed craftsmen trained in Munich, Germany. Mr. Edmund Verlinder designed the original altar, pulpit, baptismal font, confessionals, and communion rail. The American Seating Company made the pews, and all the statuary of the old church was refinished by N. G. Serafini, an artist from Europe who came here to do the work.

Originally the church contained thousands of lights forming tracework around the dome, the ribs of the vaulting, the central and lower arches, and above the altar. Over the years they would be lit on special occasions, including Christmas Eve Masses, special novenas, and the weddings of members of the Young Ladies' Sodality.

The original sanctuary floor, wainscoting, steps to the altar, and communion rail were made of wood. They would later be changed to marble during Msgr. Maksymowski's tenure.



Interior of St. Adalbert's as it appeared in 1915.



### *The Consecration*

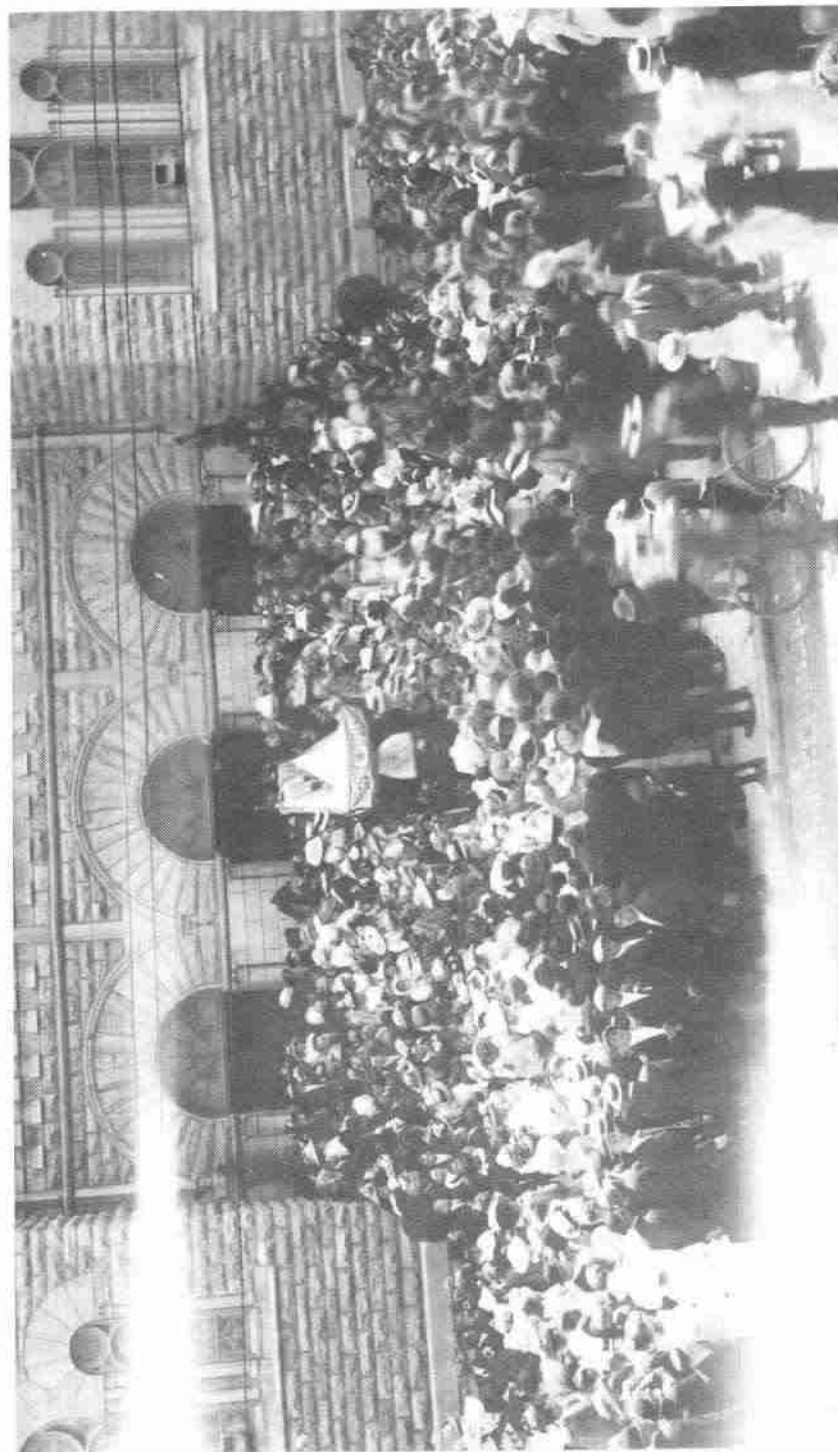
One might well imagine that some of the more devoted parishioners slept little, if at all, the night before the consecration of the new church, for by 6:00 A.M. more than two hundred persons were present at the opening rites conducted by Bishop Rhode of Chicago, the first Polish Bishop in the United States. The mood was joyful but solemn — perhaps like the mood after witnessing a birth — as these faithful followed the movements and listened to the words of the bishop and his assistant. They watched carefully as the altar was blessed and the sacred relics—parts of the bones of St. Lawrence and St. Innocent, both martyrs for their faith — were deposited and sealed with blessed cement into the altar stone. The consecration ceremony lasted for four hours altogether, and by its conclusion several hundred more people had taken their seats inside the church.

But many more hundreds of people remained outside, bathed in a warm and golden June sunshine, lining the route which the grand parade would traverse. This parade was a magnificent affair organized to escort Bishop Richter from his residence to the new church.

In the parade were 1,500 men, many of them in military array, with scarlet and blue uniforms, plenty of gold braid and rifles and sabers flashing in the sunlight. As the chanting continued inside . . . the blare of band music filled the air outside. Bishop Richter was received with bowed heads as the crowd of people opened ranks.

Andrew Panfil, assisted by Frank Kubisewski was in charge of the parade. The first division was led by St. Casimir's Military Band, then followed the Knights of St. Casimir, Capt. Julian Milanowski in command, the John Sobieski Guards, Uhlane of the Sobieski society, Hussars under the command of Maj. Panfil from the Sobieski society, Red Hussars and Muskegon Hussars, Capt. Kuf-tan in command.

St. Hedwig band led the second division which was followed by the members of the St. Adalbert's society, St. Casimir society, St. Hyacinth society, and St. Hedwig's society.



Consecration of St. Adalbert's Church in 1913.

The third division was led by St. Hedwig's Cadet band, followed by the St. Isidor (sic) society and the St. Hedwig Cadets. Sacred Heart band headed the fourth division of the parade, followed by members of the Sacred Heart society.<sup>7</sup>

When Bishop Richter's carriage, drawn by beautiful white horses, pulled up to the church he disembarked to a crowd of several thousand reverent parishioners, friends, and onlookers. Then at 10:30 A.M., he went inside to begin the Pontifical High Mass which was to last until 1:50 in the afternoon. Though the church was designed to seat 1,500 it was packed with a thousand more than that, while outside stood five thousand more. In his short homily Bishop Richter commended the people of St. Adalbert's for their magnificent accomplishment: "I did not believe that you people could complete the undertaking that you have started, but today I see the result of your generosity together with that of your pastor, Father Skory, the finished, the most beautiful and magnificent house of God in our Diocese." The sermon, preached by Father Edward Kozłowski, pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish in Bay City, lasted over an hour as he explained the full meaning of the consecration rites and extolled the generosity of the people.

For eighteen hours that day the ceremonies continued, with Vespers conducted at 3:00 P.M. by Father Skory and other activities at night. The day finally ended at 11:30 P.M. when the people who remained went home, exhausted with fulfillment.

Things were not allowed to slow down for a while yet, however. On the following morning the first weddings took place at the lovely new church, with Mr. Walter Tomczak and Miss Isabelle Dyt-kiewicz marrying at 8:00 and Mr. Joseph Usakowski and Miss Eleanor Lipczynski exchanging the sacred vows at 9:00. The latter was to be an enduring marriage of over sixty years, marked by a special Mass on June 24, 1973, the occasion of their sixtieth anniversary.

Then on Tuesday, Father Skory celebrated the twenty-fifth year of his ordination. Over two hundred priests from the diocese and elsewhere celebrated his silver jubilee, highlighted by a Solemn High Mass conducted by Father Skory himself. In keeping with their depthless love and generosity, the good people of St. Adalbert's presented him with a new automobile, a Rambler.

Shortly after that the old church was disassembled, board by board and timber by timber, and sent to Belmont — the faithful of that new parish transporting the pieces by horse and wagon and skillfully reconstructing it in almost the exact detail. This is contrary to some rumors of our time that declare that the edifice was hauled in its entirety by rafts and barges upstream on the Grand River or that it was moved in halves or sections. The truth is that every nail, every board, every shingle was removed and taken the ten miles to the church's new home, where it was rebuilt faithfully, if not exactly, and where it still graces and beautifies the countryside and keeps alive the memory of those pioneer St. Adalbert's members in a tangible form.

### *Postscript*

A postscript might be added here in the form of an anecdote told to Father Ted Snięowski in 1975 by Mrs. Joseph (Eleanor) Usakowski, who was a young lady at the time the new church was being constructed. It seems that as at all building sites there assembled from time to time a number of "sidewalk supervisors," who would stand across the street from the ongoing work and discuss the project, offer suggestions to the foremen and, in some cases, criticize the materials being used or the design in general. "Look at that foundation," they would declaim, pointing accusatory and scornful fingers at the concrete being poured. "Why that's not strong enough to hold that building for a week. No sooner will they get it finished than the whole thing is going to come tumbling down."

It is obvious that these skeptics were wrong. For today, sixty-eight years after its consecration, the monument stands proudly without a single crack in its foundation or its structure.

## A FLURRY OF BUILDING

**D**URING THE YEARS FOLLOWING THE GREAT EVENT just described, affairs returned to normal. Practical matters such as the remodeling and re-roofing of the school in 1914, at a cost of \$1,340.30, had to be dealt with. As America became involved in World War I, Father Skory became deeply committed to the sale of war bonds, encouraging the parish organizations as well as the general congregation to invest in them and buying ad space in *The Grand Rapids Echo* that featured patriotic illustrations and bold printed texts exhorting the readers to do likewise. He also served as chaplain of the Polish Veteran's Association, and was a member of the Grand Rapids War Board.

After peace returned the parish began making plans for several new building activities that would take place during a very fruitful period beginning in 1920. These would include the construction of a new school and rectory, and the enlargement of the convent.

### *The School*

Considering Father Skory's esteem for education, he must have experienced much ambivalence as he watched the school's population outgrow the facilities available. By the late teens there were already more than 1,100 pupils in the school, depleting classroom space and necessitating the use of rooms in the St. Adalbert Aid Society's building as well as in two houses across the street. Then, in 1920, word was received from the city that the old school building was condemned, providing the opportunity to construct a new one. It was to be among the finest in the city, both in its space and its design.

Work was begun in the spring of 1920. The architect was Harry L. Mead, with W. W. Bradfield as consulting engineer and John McNabb and Son general contractors. With 130 feet frontage on Fifth Street the building, when complete, would extend 186 feet behind the site of the old school almost to the church. Consisting of a basement and two stories it would house twenty-seven classrooms with a capacity of 1,500 students, and an auditorium capable of seating 850 people. In the basement would be located club rooms and other facilities for the purpose of making the school the social center of the parish. In addition, it would house a bowling alley consisting of three lanes, eventually to be expanded to four. The school would also have the latest in heating, lighting, ventilating, and sanitary equipment.<sup>8</sup>

From the twenties through the forties the school remained the focal point of the parish's social life. Most of the clubs (of which there would be as many as twenty-three in the 1930's) conducted their monthly meetings in its spacious rooms; dances and beano were held regularly in the auditorium, as were plays and movies; bowling matches were engaged in by twelve teams, along with other recreational activities like billiards, played in a room that is now the kitchen to the cafeteria. Those decades constituted a period of enormous vitality in an era before the automobile had yet become an indispensable extension of the human legs and the television, which would not be marketed until 1945, an irresistible compulsion.

The construction, interestingly enough, took place in stages, the first of which was the completion of the Fifth Street front section of the building. Construction was then halted temporarily as the students were removed from the old school to occupy the new and the old was torn down. The reason for the demolition at this time was to prepare a space for the planned erection of a new parish rectory on the site, as well as to provide more room for the southward extension of the new school. After the work was resumed on the school, it went quickly, and when completed in November of 1921 the new building stood proudly as one of the handsomest in the city — and certainly the largest, public or parochial — with its dark red tapestry brick and cut stone trim.

On November 21, 1921 Bishop Edward Kelly blessed the school and it was promptly occupied by 1,285 children from kindergarten through ninth grade, all of them delighted with the fine new learning

environment with its bright walls, large windows, and spaciousness. The final cost was around \$300,000, double the cost of the church eight years before.

### *Convent and Rectory*

To meet the needs of the burgeoning school population, it was necessary to have a large teaching staff. Thus, by the beginning of the third decade of this century there were nineteen Notre Dame sisters marching the halls to maintain discipline and conducting classes in order to, in one way or another, elicit knowledge from their charges. Unfortunately these good sisters, when they sought to recuperate from their hectic days in the classroom by means of solitude and prayer, found themselves, rather than in a somewhat moderate condition of comfort, crowded into the cramped quarters of a convent that was erected in 1893, when only five sisters were needed. Hence, on May 12, 1920 an expansion project was begun resulting in extensive renovation of the interior and a large new addition on the rear of the building that would double its size. The cost of this project reached \$40,000 — \$35,000 more than the original building cost twenty years earlier. Father Skory himself blessed the structure on March 5, 1921.

But the convent and the old school were not the only outmoded buildings on the property, Father Skory, and his two assistants— Father Casimir Szyper and Father Theodore Liebek, both of whom helped operate the parish from 1919 to 1921 — were feeling the discomfort of the modest house on Fourth Street, built in 1884 and enlarged in 1896 when the parish was considerably smaller. Furthermore, because of the esteem accorded him and the parish by priests from all over Michigan, the rectory experienced a steady stream of guests who came to visit with him and offer Mass in the grand church. Besides, the frame house stood behind the church facing Fourth Street, a location that was definitely not in the mainstream of the increasing parish activities. So Father Skory contracted McNabb and Son to construct a new parsonage on the site where the old school had stood.

At the time, according to the Gold Jubilee booklet<sup>9</sup> printed in 1931, the costs of both materials and labor were fluctuating unpre-

## *The First 100 Years*

dictably, due to the prevailing inflationary economic climate. Thus McNabb suggested to Father Skory that he might save money by using the dark red bricks and lumber of the demolished school. Accordingly almost every brick and piece of wood was salvaged and used for the new rectory.

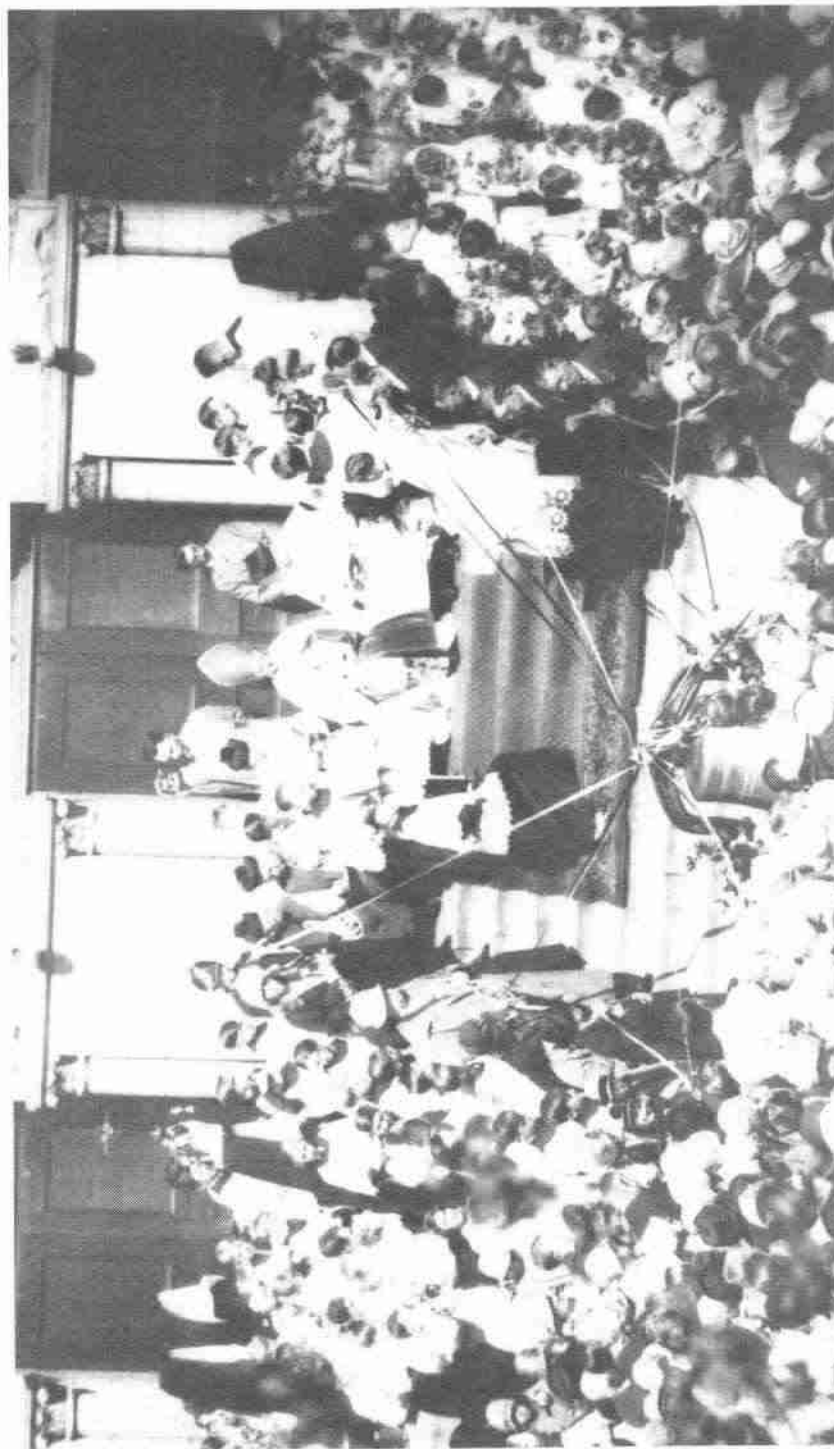
Though the finished product complemented the utilitarian style of the school, it stands as a dignified and noteworthy structure in its own right; with the twin peaks on its facade, its front bay windows with small balconies above each, its handsome balustrade, and its cut stone trim, it is in every way worthy of the fine taste that is a tradition in this parish. The interior is spacious and stately, highlighted in every room by its high ceilings and by the sturdy oak panelling and trim. Despite the use of materials from the old school, the cost amounted to \$65,000. It was blessed by Bishop Kelly on November 5, 1922.

To finance this ambitious and necessary undertaking, which in total amounted to over \$400,000, Father Skory negotiated a loan for \$350,000. This loan, an immense amount in those days, was a sound investment at a time when optimism prevailed about the economic future; but unfortunately the end of the decade brought on the worst depression since the 1890's. The parish continued to pay interest on the 7% Gold bonds, however, until late in 1932, when the Michigan Bank Holiday prevented funds from being secured for the payment. Thereafter the difficulty in meeting payments would lead to Bishop Pinten's revocation of Father Skory's responsibilities in handling the financial affairs of the parish.

It was after the construction of these buildings, also, that Father Skory first requested that the parishioners start contributing \$1.00 per week in their envelopes to help pay off the loan.

## *Good News*

In the spring of 1924, St. Adalbert's was honored and blessed by the appearance of the Apostolic Delegate at its parish. Father Pietro Fumasoni Biondi, on an excursion across America, stopped at St. Adalbert's in the name of Pope Pius XI, toured the parish grounds with Father Skory, and was so impressed with the school and the church that he was moved to lavish praise upon them. On behalf of



Blessing of the bell in 1928.

the Pope, Father Biondi expressed his deepest thanks to the pastor and the parishioners for their sacrifice and their efforts in providing the Polish Catholics and the Catholic community throughout Grand Rapids with such magnificent buildings to the honor and glory of God.

These were his words:

*“Pastor, tell your good people that the Holy Father himself, whom I represent, thanks your good parishioners for their devotion and generosity, for their erection of this magnificent temple to the honor and glory of Almighty God, and for the erection of this splendid, comfortable, and fireproof school, in which their children besides worldly subjects also study Religion, without which worldly knowledge would only result in greater condemnation. For Religion and worldly knowledge should go together, in order to educate the young people to be good citizens and exemplary parishioners.”<sup>10</sup>*

The second item of good news occurred the following year. All the hard work, the zeal, and the ardor of the worthy and modest Father Skory did not go unnoticed by Bishop Kelly; thus, on September 5, 1925, word came from Rome that he had been elevated to the dignity of domestic prelate, with the title of Rt. Reverend Monsignor. An impressive service was held at St. Adalbert’s Church for the formal investiture of this title, with Bishop Kelly presiding. The church was filled to capacity with fellow priests, parishioners, friends, and relatives as the Papal words were read and the sermon in his honor delivered by Father Michael Grupa — rector of the Polish seminary at Orchard Lake — was delivered. Afterwards, in a banquet held for the occasion, amid words of praise and songs by the Moniusko Choir, his friends and admirers presented him with a check for \$3,000.

Three years later, in 1928, St. Adalbert’s was to receive a new bell for its lovely church.<sup>11</sup> Until that time the only bell contained by the church had been taken from the steeple of the old church; purchased and placed there in 1900, it had a D-natural tone and weighed 550 pounds. Its inscription read, “St. Adalbert’s is my name. Eva Gacek is my benefactress. The pastor is Reverend Simon Ponganis. Grand Rapids, Michigan March 1, 1900 A.D.” But the grand church deserved more than merely the one bell; so a devoted couple, Michael and Mary Slupecki, approached Msgr. Skory and offered to donate

the substantial sum of \$4,000 for the purchase of a new one. Mrs. Slupecki, nee Dorff, was one of the pioneers in the area, having settled in Grand Rapids in 1873 at the age of twenty with her parents, Felix and Mary Dorff. She had seen the founding of the parish, relished in its growth and prominence, and in thanksgiving for her many blessings in life she and her husband now desired to contribute a lasting memorial to the parish. The large bell, with a G-natural tone, a weight of 1,300 pounds, and a diameter of 39 inches, was dedicated with great solemnity in 1928, its inscription proclaiming: “My name is St. Mary and St. Michael. Placed in memory of Michael and Mary Slupecki. 1928 A.D.”



## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

**B**Y THE LATE 1920's Msgr. Skory was a fixture—an institution might be a better word — at St. Adalbert's, with a reputation that extended not only throughout Michigan but also in the large Polish populations of Chicago and Milwaukee. Now, it must be remembered that his reputation was also St. Adalbert's reputation, for his identity at this time was so inextricably bound to the parish that the two were inseparable — an imperishable marriage, as it were. Hence, in acclaiming Msgr. Skory his admirers were also acclaiming the people who cooperated, supported, and loved him, and who even in the most difficult of circumstances had funded the monumental building projects that he effected.

The people at the time were aware of this “marriage” as well. Thus on Sunday, August 25, 1929, seven hundred parishioners and fifty priests from all over Michigan gathered to pay tribute to him at a banquet in the school auditorium, for which various parish committees had worked hard since April. The program included toasts and speeches in his honor by his fellow priests, songs by the Moniuszko and other choirs, and short recitations by the school children. A report in the *Grand Rapids Herald* the next day described the evening in part as follows:

The program last night was a notable tribute to Msgr. Skory's quarter century of service with the local parish. Father Joseph Kaminski was toastmaster. Among the priests speaking in congratulation and tribute to Father Skory were Rev. L. P. Krakowski of Bay City, Father Kaminski, Rev. Andrew Narloch and Rev. S. Narloch, both former assistants in the parish, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Alexander Pitass of Buffalo, Rev. Joseph Lempke of Detroit and Rt. Rev. Msgr. E. A. Lefebvre, V. G. (Vicar General), administrator of the diocese.

Michael Buzalski, speaking in tribute to Msgr. Skory, presented him in behalf of the parish a check of \$10,000 as a purse. The pastor accepted this gift with the proviso that the money be turned over to the building fund to apply on the indebtedness of the church.

At the time this honor was bestowed on Msgr. Skory, the parish under his care had a constituency of over 1,500 families and the school had an enrollment of 1,300 pupils. The parish property was worth well over one million dollars and the people were prospering, as is evidenced by the sizable and generous monetary gift to their leader. Of course, this occurred in August of 1929, still three months before the great Stock Market crash.

### ***Organizations***

Along with all of Msgr. Skory's physical contributions to the parish, he was well known for his great concern for the social and spiritual well-being of his congregation. One of the ways he showed this concern and compassion was not only in his support of existing clubs and societies, but also in those he fostered. Along with finding time to drop in on meetings and functions of the organizations, mingling with the members and giving short addresses and large speeches, he provided constant encouragement in their activities and gave his blessings to their goals. In some cases he gathered particular people together and urged the formation of new groups. Besides the Holy Rosary Society mentioned earlier in this section, some of the organizations he helped to create, and that still exist, include the following.

### ***The Ladies Welfare Society***

This society was formed in February of 1908 by Father Skory, under the guardianship of St. Elizabeth, primarily to give help to the sick and needy of the parish. At first the society was comprised of ladies from St. Adalbert's, Sacred Heart, and St. Isidore's parishes, but within a few years this arrangement proved to be impractical and difficult, leading each parish to form its own group. A humane and caring organization, the Ladies Welfare Society has over the years

performed such outstanding and diverse services as providing food and staples to the sick, elderly, and shut-ins; outfitting First Communicants whose families could not afford the dresses or suits or shoes; and even buying eyeglasses for the needy. The first president of the society was Mrs. Josephine Miskiewicz, who graciously and unselfishly held that office for thirty-one years. (It should be mentioned here that the second president, Mrs. Victoria Meinke, remained in that office for thirty-two years, from 1939 to 1971. What a testament of devotion and dedication!)

### ***The Mother's Club***

For years prior to the founding of The Mother's Club, another dedicated group of ladies had been meeting regularly to do Red Cross work. Father Skory, taking note of their enthusiastic and selfless hard work, requested a meeting with them at which he asked them to form a society for the specific purpose of working for the welfare of the school children of the parish. The ladies characteristically agreed and on that day, November 6, 1924, the Mother's Club was formed. The first officers included Agnes Jankowska, President; Ludgarda Kowalska, Vice-President; Teofila Wilkowska, Secretary; and Elizabeth Jackowska, Treasurer. They chose as their patron St. Hedwig, a member of royalty in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who devoted her life to charitable works and who fostered various religious orders, and who was hailed as an ideal Christian wife and mother.

Besides sponsoring social and spiritual occasions for the school children, the Mother's Club has over the years made substantial financial contributions to the Church, the Sisters, and the school.

### ***St. Theresa Society***

On September 17, 1929 Msgr. Skory helped to organize another ladies' society, this one to be modeled after the great, holy and visionary St. Theresa. It was to be a purely spiritual society to offer prayers for the sick of the parish and for many other intentions, and to discuss the Bible and in other ways to keep their Faith at the forefront of their lives. The first president was Katherine Okanska, and the membership numbered 317.

## POLISH BUSINESSES

**B**Y THE FOURTH DECADE of this century, the business community of the Polish people around the St. Adalbert area was flourishing. It is particularly interesting for younger parishioners today to know that, aside from Bridge Street, the hub of the business district was the Stocking Avenue - Fourth Street area, and that across Fourth Street from the church was a row of enterprises that included grocery and meat shops as well as an attorney and real estate agent. At any rate, since a study of the history of a community would not be complete without a brief record of its business ventures, there follows a list of some of the Polish enterprises in the area. The list is limited to those that bought advertising space in two of the booklets published at that time — one on the occasion of Msgr. Skory's personal silver jubilee at the parish in 1929, the other of the golden jubilee in 1931.

<i>Name of Proprietor &amp; Business</i>	<i>Location</i>
John F. Rudnik Plumbing & Heating	208 Straight Ave.
Dr. A. E. Kulczak Dentist	535 Stocking Ave.
John Dlugolenski & Sons Export Products Co.	861 Leonard St.
Bart & Bialk Clothing	673 Stocking Ave.
Anthony Majchrzak Building Contractor	1226 Fourth St.
Lawrence Kujawa Sanitary Plumbing	759 Fourth St.

<i>Name of Proprietor &amp; Business</i>	<i>Location</i>
Anthony Blaszczyk, Owner Quality Shoe Store	446 Bridge St.
John Arsulowicz Music Shop	Corner of Stocking & Third
Joseph A. Kozak Real Estate, Attorney	656 Fourth St.
John Mroz Grocery & Butcher Shop	731 Seventh St.
Joseph Watslawik Tailor	659 Bridge St.
Polish American Bank	
Echo Publishing Co.	704 Bridge St.
Frank Olszewski Decorating Shop	609 Sibley St.
Frank Kaplanowski Plumbing & Heating	409 Valley Ave.
A. Wawrzyczek, Owner A. W. Gift Shop	603 Bridge St.
Edward Zielinski Grand Rapids Custom Shirt Co.	
Frank Kaminski Life Insurance	
Frank Lewandowski Wallpaper and Decorations	557 Stocking Ave.
Anton Panfil First Ward Commissioner	
Casimir Zamiara Lawyer	

<i>Name of Proprietor &amp; Business</i>	<i>Location</i>
F. A. Vidro General Store	652-656 Stocking Ave.
Ludwig Neumann Kent County Commissioner	
Chester J. Kowalski Stocking Ave. Market	643 Stocking, corner of Fourth Street
Piotrowski and Kowalski Pharmacy	Corner Seventh & Alpine
Gogulski Bros. Valley City Bakery	Corner Fourth & Stocking
F. Latzek Mortuary	648 Third St.
Stanley Merdzinski Plumbing and Heating	639 Eleventh St.
Chester Derezinski Mortuary	701 Fourth St.
Ignace Rubach Tailor	659 Bridge St.
Chester Dutkiewicz First Rate Groceries	648 Fourth St.
Stanley Gogulski, Owner Republic Coal Co.	526 Sixth St.
Andrew Kwiatkowski Grocery & Butcher Shop	1181 Fourth St.
Frank F. Kubiak Painting and Decorating	919 Davis Ave. N.W.
Stanley E. Kaminski Groceries	801 Fifth St.
Francis (Frank) S. Kaminski Groceries and Butcher Shop	957 Davis Ave.

<i>Name of Proprietor &amp; Business</i>	<i>Location</i>
Francis Czubaj and Walter Garbula, Proprietors, Warsaw Hotel	500 Bridge St.
Joseph Sniatecki Building Contractor	40 Valley Ave. S.W.
John Kaminski Grocery and Butcher Shop	659 Eleventh St.
Dr. W. J. Jaracz Dr. S. J. Nowacki	625 Bridge St.
Walter Zamiara First Rate Meat	650 Fourth St.
Waclaw Rymrowicz Groceries and Butcher Shop	Corner of Walker and Powers
Josephine Cukierska Korney Flower Shop	650 Chatham St.
Walter Pietrzyk Groceries & Butcher Shop	223 Straight Ave.
Joseph Rettig Furniture Fabric	254 Valley S.W.

## THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

IT IS DOUBTFUL whether anyone who reaches what is called the "Age of Majority" doesn't look back over the years and wonder how they could have passed so quickly; as the years go on the speed at which they pass seems to increase. So it must have seemed to the sixty-five individuals and families who, present as small children, young adults and full adults at the founding of the parish, remained in 1931 to witness its fiftieth anniversary. To them as well as to the more recent members of the parish this was a most blessed occasion, one that reaffirmed their already steadfast faith, yet one that must have had some kind of dream-like quality to it. For surely none of the pioneers in 1891 would have been able to imagine the measure of excellence their fledgling parish would attain by the end of fifty years, or the degree of recognition it would receive throughout the State of Michigan and beyond. Indeed for all the members of St. Adalbert's, the year of 1931 would be one of triumph and rejoicing.

An indication of this spirit of elation can be seen in an announcement in *The Echo*, dated August 14, 1931. (Note: only the four area daughter-parishes are alluded to. The fifth, St. Michael's in Muskegon, for some reason — probably because of its distance — was not mentioned in the article.)

The Parish of St. Adalbert will observe its Golden Jubilee September 20. A small group of Polanders, the first settlers, fifty years ago began to build the first Polish church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Church of St. Adalbert. The Grand Rapids Polonia was rapidly growing in numbers. During the course of fifty years, four parishes evolved from St. Adalbert's Parish: St. Isidore's Parish, Sacred Heart Parish, SS. Peter and Paul Parish (Lithuanian), and the Parish of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Belmont.

We are, therefore, inviting all four parishes to participate in this celebration. And rightfully so, because the joy and good fortune of the mother is the joy and good fortune of her daughters. The Parish of St. Adalbert, as a mother, will endeavor to afford everyone a happy time during the jubilee celebration.

The newspaper goes on to list the program to take place during the latter part of September:

September 16, 17, and 18, a Retreat for the Parish.

The Jubilee Celebration will be Sunday, September 20. The Most Reverend Bishop Joseph G. Pintoni will celebrate a Pontifical Mass at 10:00 A.M. The sermon will be preached by Father Mollo, of the Jesuit Order.

In the evening, at 6:00 o'clock, there will be a banquet in the Parish auditorium.

On Monday, September 21, a Requiem Mass will be offered for all deceased parishioners, at which Mass a sermon will be preached. That evening, at 8:00 o'clock, there will be a presentation of *Kuzynka z Ameryki* (*Our Cousin for America*).

On Tuesday and Wednesday, September 22 and 23, there will be bazaar which is being put on by all the women's societies of St. Adalbert's Parish.

A dance will be held on Thursday, September 24, in St. Adalbert's Casino.

A large Beano Party will be held on Friday September 25.

On September 27, there will be a performance in the auditorium by St. Adalbert's school children.<sup>12</sup>

### Pillars Of The Church

As the festive week unfolded, it became evident from the success of the program that the laborious planning had been thorough and prudent, featuring the kinds of events most dear to the spirited, as well as spiritual, character of the parishioners. This astute planning

was ably conducted by the members of the Golden Jubilee Committee, who formed the nucleus of the parish and were its main pillars. These included the following:

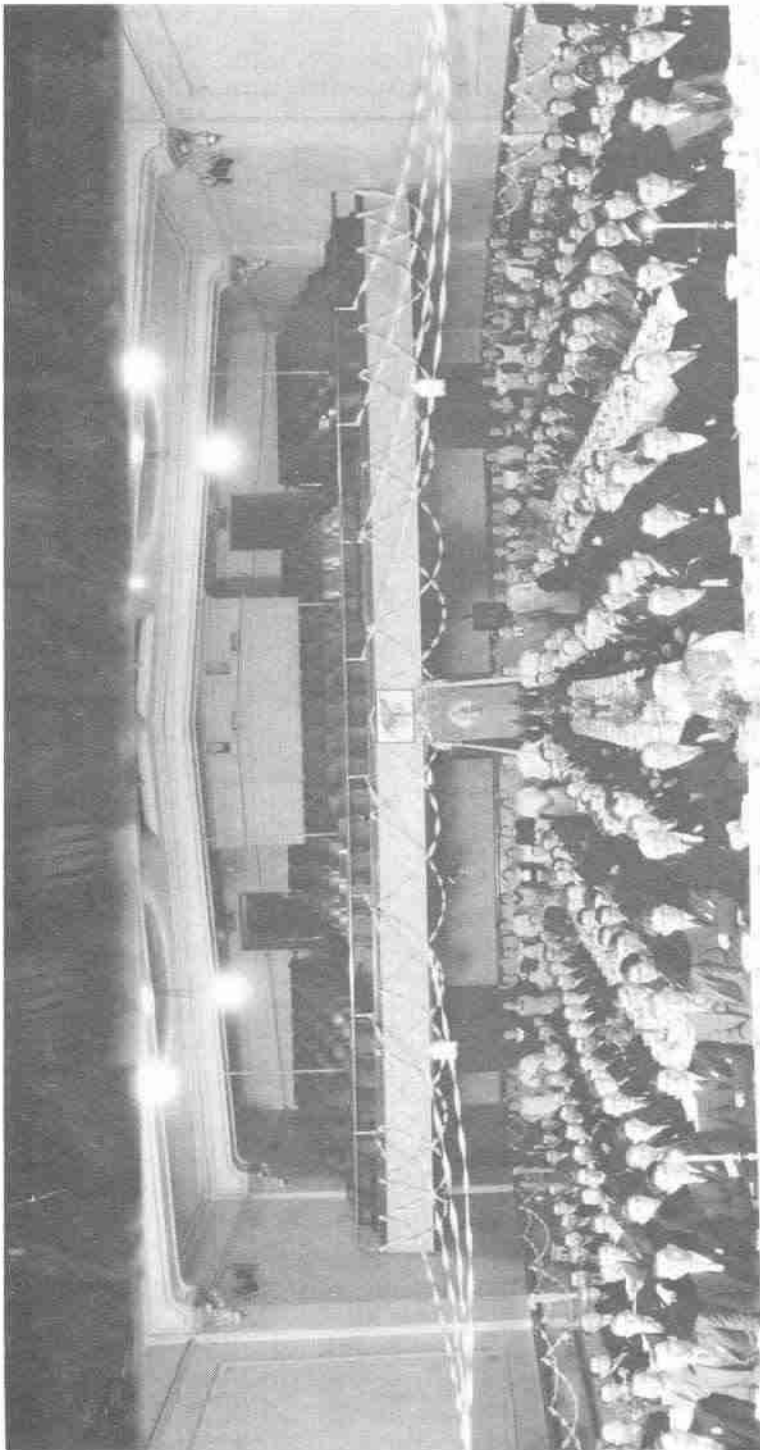
Administration:	President:	S. S. Zamierowski
	Vice President:	S. Merdzinski
	Secretary:	E. L. Mikulski
	Treasurer:	C. Derezynski
Publicity Committee:	S. Gogulski	A. Blaszcak
	S. Merdzinski	F. Jaworowicz
	L. S. Markowski	
Decorations Committee:	E. Smaglinski	F. Kubiak
	W. Sobiszewski	S. Truszkowski
	W. Wanczuk	S. Zakrzewski
	S. Zukowski	S. Grynczel
Music & Song Committee:	K. Kowalkowski	W. Lewandowski
	A. Kubasiak	
Program Committee:	Msgr. Skory	S. Zamierowski
	K. Manikowski	Fr. Latzek
	R. Walczewski	M. Buzalski
Banquet Committee:	F. Kubiak	H. Sytek
	Felix Latzek	S. Truszkowski
	E. Zielinski	W. Sobiszewski
	W. J. Mikulski	
Invitation & Reservation Committee:	M. Buzalski	W. Wanczuk
	E. L. Miklusk	
Dance Committee:	S. Miskiewicz	L. Neumann
	M. Jagielski	J. Pospiech
	L. S. Markowski	

### Societies And Clubs In 1931

When the pioneers founded their parish in 1881, they promptly instituted three religious societies to go along with the already existing St. Adalbert's Aid Society, which was formed in 1872. No doubt those surviving sixty-five individuals and families were well pleased at the Golden Jubilee to see that number grow to twenty-four,

including eight nationally affiliated, societies — each with its own composition and purpose, and all with a common aim, namely to strengthen and spread their faith. These societies and clubs included:

<i>Men's Organizations 1931</i>	<i>Date Founded</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>No. Members</i>
St. Adalbert's Aid Society	November 1872	Stanislaw Miskiewicz	175
Knights of St. Casimir	May 21, 1895	Casimir Kurdelski	150
Young Men of St. Casimir	November 1, 1884	Frank Jaworowicz	275
St. Hyacinth Aid Society	December 1886	Vincent Wancuk	269
St. Hedwig Society	January 24, 1904	Adam Kulhawik	106
Young Men of St. Stanislaus Kostka	June 27, 1915	Casimir Kucharczyk	43
Moniuszko Choral Society	February 1905	Mecenas Z. Zamierowski Casimir Kowalkowski (Director)	60
Men's Rosary Society	From founding of the parish	Emil Puppel	25
Society of Apostolate of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	December 8, 1886	N.A.	N.A.
Society of Foresters	June 12, 1921	Edward Smaglinski	132
Society of the Third Order of St. Francis	1886	Theodore Puppel	54
<i>Women's Societies</i>			
St. Theresa Society	August 17, 1929	Katherine Okonska	317
Young Ladies' Rosary Society	From founding of the parish	Mary Orłowska	300
Ladies Welfare Society	February 1908	Josephine Miskiewicz	
Mother's Club	November 5, 1924	Martha Wierzcholska	65
Ladies Society of the Holy Rosary	From founding of the parish	N.A.	125
			700
<i>National Organization - Men</i>	<i>Date Founded</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>No. Members</i>
National Polish Society of St. Stanislaus Kostki	February 11, 1878	L. Nadolski	275
Polish American Industrial Alliance	June 10, 1894	F. Szczyglowski	84
Polish American Veterans Post 97	November 28, 1927	W. Swierzawski	25
Men's Arkropolan Music Soc.	September 1925	Ignace Rubach Music Director Andrew Kubasiak	20
Society for the Memory of Thaddeus Kosciuszko	February 17, 1904	Joseph Konwinski	1200



St. Casimir's Communion breakfast in old auditorium in the early 1930's.

## The First 100 Years

### National Organization - Women

Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Veterans Post No. 26	November 1929	C. Kalinowska	23
Polish Nationals under the Guidance of Our Lady of Czestochowa	April 12, 1931	Apollonia Raczkiewicz	47
Ladies Union ( <i>Pan Zjednoczenia</i> )	August 1927	Apollonia Tomczak	52

### Surviving Founders

Special mention should be made of those faithful families who by 1931 had witnessed the entire history of St. Adalbert's: who had settled in the United States with their parents or who had come on their own prior to the founding of the parish and had watched it grow from humble beginnings to a stature unparalleled in the region at that time. Their names on this list appear in the Polish spellings in deference to their origins and heritage.

Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Mencinski	Franciszek Zawacki
Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Niemczewski	Eustachiusz Sempowski
Marja Odejewska	Franciszka Wachowska
August and Urszula Lassa	Mr. & Mrs. Kazmiercz Manikowski
Jan Derecki	Mr. & Mrs. Jan Manikowski
Franciszek Derecki	Marja Skibinska
Katarzyna Napierala	Marja Brzuszkiewicz
Franciszek Szczyglowski	Marja Slupecka
Mr. & Mrs. Wawrzyniec Balcerzak	August Zyski
Juliusz Twork	Jan Kurek
Szczepan & Katarzyna Glugla	Wojciech Bala
Jan Blaszak	Wawrzyniec Mieras
Julianna Dzieńszewska	Antoni Aleksandrowicz
Andrzej & Marja Zielinski	Helena Mieras
Apolonia Nowak	F. Zawacki
Pelagia Dutkiewicz	Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Panfil
Pawel Tomaszewski	Jan Konwinski
Wiktoria Rainka	Ewa Kaminska
Jan Radlicki	Helena Bomberska
Jakob Pienta	Wojciech Gosciniak

## The Golden Jubilee

Franciszek Latzek	Wojciech Grodzicki
Anastazy Graczyk	Franciszek Grodzicki
Katarzyna Lewandowska	Franciszka Bogdanowicz
Josef Gryka	Mr. & Mrs. Wincenty Bogdanowicz
Jan Wojcinski	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Dulski
Franciszek Damski	Mr. & Mrs. Geo. Diraitis
Adam Wosinski	Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Burniskas
Mr. & Mrs. S. Merdzinski	Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Grinis
Anastazy & Julianna Smaglinski	Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Kurantowicz
Jan Mroz	Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Sadauskas
Franciszka Skora	Mr. & Mrs. Michal Sirvinkas
Feliks Klukowski	Mr. & Mrs. Franciszek Slapikowskas
Mr. & Mrs. Jan Petruonis	



## THE PASSING OF A GOOD MAN

**A**FTER FORTY-SEVEN YEARS OF DEDICATED WORK, thirty-one of them at St. Adalbert's, Msgr. Skory passed away on March 7, 1935. Perhaps it is most appropriate to include here a section of an article from *The Grand Rapids Echo*, the Polish language newspaper, to describe the proceedings in order that the reader might more effectively be transported back to that sad time. The article is dated Friday, March 15, 1935; it was very capably translated by Esther Usakowski.

### **St. Adalbert's Parish Rendered Its Last Service to Msgr. C. Skory.**

The funeral of Monsignor Casimir Skory, long time pastor of St. Adalbert's Parish, who passed away Thursday, March 7, after surgery at St. Mary's Hospital, was held Monday morning. The parish of St. Adalbert, overwhelmed with deep sorrow, bade farewell to its beloved pastor and accompanied his remains to the cemetery.

Monsignor Skory's body was transported from the rectory to the church Sunday afternoon, with the participation of local and out-of-town priests, school children with the Sisters, delegations from various societies with their standards, and a great number of parishioners. The church was filled to the last place. Father John Makymowski, the first assistant of the parish, led the procession; close relatives of Monsignor Skory followed the casket.

After the sorrowful Vespers sung by the priests, a thousand people passed by the casket in order to gaze upon the countenance of their honored pastor who devoted himself

## As Final Tribute Was Paid Msgr. Skory



—Photo by Zane Stouth  
As the body of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Casimir Skory, beloved priest of St. Adalbert's church, was borne from the edifice he built, yesterday after the solemn requiem, an overflow crowd, unable to gain admittance to the church, gathered close for a final glance at the casket. The picture shows the casket being carried reverently down the steps of St. Adalbert's.

## The Passing Of A Good Man

to his parish for more than thirty years. People from far and near kept coming until late in the night.

Watch was kept by Monsignor's coffin, both in the rectory and later in the church, by delegations of the various parish societies.

The societies and friends of Monsignor Skory presented Mass offerings and sent many floral pieces to the rectory. They all loved him and were touched by his death; therefore, they did what they could to beautify his funeral.

A requiem Mass was held Monday morning at 7:30 especially for the children. Not long after this Mass, the church was again filled. There were more than 200 priests present from the Diocese of Grand Rapids and other dioceses. Also present were delegations from the various parish societies, judges and City officials, as well as prominent citizens of Grand Rapids. Many people were unable to get into the church, which was draped in mourning-cloth.

At 9:30 Monday morning, the reverend priests sang the *Wigilje* (Vigil), and the solemn Requiem Mass began at 1:00 o'clock. The celebrant of the Mass was Monsignor Dennis E. Malone, pastor of St. Andrew's Parish. He was assisted by Father Joseph Koss of Ludington, as deacon, and Father John Kaplanowski of Manistee as subdeacon. The Master of Ceremonies was Father Raymond Baker. Also assisting in the ceremonies were Father Theodore Liebek of Spring Lake, Father John Szydlowski of Free Soil, and Father Anthony Arsulowicz of St. Joseph's Seminary, Grand Rapids. Present in the sanctuary were Monsignor Anthony Klowo, Rector of the Polish Seminary at Orchard Lake, and Monsignor Edward A. LeFebvre of Saginaw. A choir composed of priests sang during the Mass. The sermon was preached by Father John Maksymowski.

Upon completion of the Mass and the recitation of prayers over the coffin, Monsignor Skory's body was borne from the church. The following acted as pallbearers: Father Ladislaw Krakowski of Bay City, Father Francis Kaczmarek of Saginaw, Father Andrew Narloch of Muskegon, Father Stephen Narloch of Saginaw, Father Casimir Szyper of Pinconning, and Father Walter Lipinski of Fisherville.

The Band of the Knights of St. Casimir led the procession to the cemetery. They were followed by delegates of the societies, a large number of people, and thereafter, automobiles transporting the priests and school sisters, the hearse, and finally automobiles transporting relatives and friends of Monsignor Skory.

At the cemetery, where there was a very large number of people, the priests recited prayers for the repose of Monsignor Skory's soul and sang the Polish hymn, *Witaj Krolowo Niebu* ("Hail Queen of Heaven").

It is hoped that by quoting this article so extensively the tone and mood of this occasion can be more clearly appreciated. For indeed this was a man who was loved and admired by thousands, and whose humaneness and compassion and expansiveness of spirit left an imprint on the soul of his parish, his colleagues, and his friends. But the virtue and eminence of a man shine brightly or dimly according to his milieu, and to pay tribute to Monsignor Skory is to pay tribute to the people and the tradition of St. Adalbert.

His passing was reported extensively in both the *Grand Rapids Herald* and the *Press*, as well as the *Echo*, and it culminated in an editorial in *The Press*:

With the death of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Skory the city and the state join his parish in mourning the loss of a respected church dignitary and beloved leader among Polish-Americans. During his forty-two years of service in Michigan, thirty of which were spent in Grand Rapids, Msgr. Skory became known as a man of fine culture, but even more as a student of the human heart and an inspiring builder of lives and churches.

His work as pastor of St. Adalbert's church has been outstanding. When his parish outgrew the small wooden church then in use, he directed the building of a splendid new edifice and later of a convent, school, and parish house. He believed the church should be represented physically by structures of a sort to maintain its dignity as well as increase its services to members.

He won the confidence of all who knew him by his great common sense. His work in the Polish-American community to which he devoted himself, especially his activities

during the World War, brought him promotion to the rank of domestic prelate . . . Msgr. Skory will be greatly missed in the church he served and in the lives he influenced.

Thus, the passing of Msgr. Skory brought about a deep sense of grief not only in the hearts of his parishioners, but also of the entire city. But perhaps because of Divine Intervention, his death did not leave a void. For his place was occupied by another great man, Rev. John A. Maksymowski.

**IV**  
**THE MAKSYMOWSKI YEARS**

## A MAN OF ENERGY AND VISION



FATHER JOHN MAKSYMOWSKI

**T**HE GROWTH OF ST. ADALBERT'S did not stop with the passing of Msgr. Skory, though perhaps the grief of some of the parishioners might have led them to wonder what the future would hold. Nevertheless, as the weeks and months passed the people began to slip more comfortably and securely into the ministry of Father John Maksymowski. A man of sharp intelligence, energy,

and organizational abilities as well as a man of great compassion, wisdom and humility, Father Maksymowski began to demonstrate his strong leadership from the start — a leadership that would honor the tradition of his predecessor and the people he served for the next thirty-five years.

Born in Grand Rapids on December 28, 1897, son of Theophile and Mary Maksymowski, he received the Sacrament of Baptism in St. Adalbert's Church. As a boy he attended St. Isidore's Grade school, then entered St. Joseph's Seminary in Grand Rapids. He completed his studies at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan and was ordained in St. Andrew's Cathedral on May 19, 1929. After a brief month-long assignment as Chaplain of St. Mary's Hospital in Saginaw, Michigan, he was appointed assistant pastor of St. Adalbert's Parish in July, 1929, a position he filled until March of 1932. Thereafter he received appointments at St. Lawrence Parish in Cheboygan and St. Florian's Parish in Standish before returning to St. Adalbert's as assistant pastor on November 15, 1934. On that same day Father John, as he came to be affectionately known as to his parishioners, was placed in charge of the Polish Catholic Cemetery by Bishop Joseph Pinten. (In 1947 the name was changed to Holy Cross Cemetery by Bishop Francis J. Haas upon the request of Father John). During his years as superintendent and treasurer of the burial grounds, Father John paved and expanded the roads, installed a new water system and an automatic sprinkler system, built the Shrine of the Holy Cross, and rejuvenated the old sections that had been long neglected.

A practical man adept at soliciting and creating ideas for raising funds, he was at the parish for only three weeks when Bishop Pinten made a controversial move. Perhaps the move was the result of a misunderstanding or of impatience on Bishop Pinten's part, but he felt that a new administrator was needed to pay off the large parish debt of about \$230,000 that remained from the building projects of the 1920's. Thus, on December 6, 1934 Bishop Pinten decreed that Msgr. Skory would remain as pastor in spiritual matters only, while Father Maksymowski would administrate all financial and temporal affairs. The appointment was made formal the next day, December 7.

One of the first ideas that he implemented was the organization of a group of ten volunteers into the Ushers Club. This took place during

his first month as financial administrator, and what a wise idea it turned out to be! For this club has proven to be an energetic, cheerful hard working, dedicated group in its physical work and fund-raising activities on behalf of the church and school — one of the most important parish organizations of the past fifty years. Beginning in the summer of 1935, when the club organized its first festival at the school, and continuing for the next twenty years, this club sponsored dances and festivals, ran "beano" (earning as much as \$40,000 in one year, according to one of the club's earliest members, Mr. Edward Perkowski), and organized raffles to help pay parish expenses. Besides these activities the ushers helped in other ways to reduce operating expenses. Among other things, they installed new school seats in 1949; repaired and repainted the basement of the church, with Mr. Joseph Alberts laying the tile; and built the room that would be their headquarters.

### *Rolling Up The Sleeves*

The early 1930's, of course, were the years of the Great Depression. With its onslaught in 1929 and its relentless persistence, the community of St. Adalbert's suffered many setbacks, beginning with the closing of the Polish-American Bank, located at the intersection of Bridge, Lexington, and Stocking. As a result of its closing, many parishioners lost a large share of their life's savings. The setbacks continued with the folding of small businesses and the slowdown of larger industries, resulting in layoffs and, at least, cutbacks in working hours. Thus, it was inevitable that the Sunday offerings and pew rentals would also decline, and with them Msgr. Skory's ability to meet interest payments on the loans secured a decade earlier for the construction of the school and the rectory, and the remodelling of the convent. Finally, in November of 1934 the parish entered into a supplemental indenture providing for the resumption of interest and principal payments in a complicated arrangement. Thus began Father John's untiring efforts to pay off the debt, including the mortgage principal and interest along with serial maturities totalling \$24,000 due in October of 1940, with larger amounts annually until final maturity in October of 1950.

Operating a parish has always been a complex business, and Father Maksymowski seemed well suited to manage this enormous enterprise. In the early days of the parish, for instance, its finances

derived largely from the modest rental of pews at \$3.00 per year per family. By 1928, the amount families were expected to contribute was \$15.00, with a ten cent pew rent taken in a separate collection. Now, to help offset the large debt, Father John asked for \$3.00 per family per week for a total of \$156 per year—a sum that necessitated a severe sacrifice for most of those who were able to pay it. And as the people began to witness Father John's sincere and energetic work — liturgically, socially, and financially — they determined to meet the challenge of that sacrifice to the best of their limited abilities. Finally the parish was able to once again meet the payments on its various debts.

For Father John's efforts were indeed unflagging. He presided over dinners to which he invited prominent area businessmen, insurance and banking executives, and attorneys—Catholic and non-Catholic—asking them for ideas and aid in consolidating various loans and in procuring lower interest rates. He approached individual parishioners and solicited interest free loans. He oversaw the fund-raising activities of the Usher's Club. He secured new funding in 1939 with B. C. Ziegler and Company of West Bend, Wisconsin (a leading firm in church and institutional financing) and, when the bonds were paid in full in 1942, celebrated their cremation. In 1942 he refinanced again with B. C. Ziegler and Co., at a lower interest rate of 3%. Then, in 1944 when \$100,000 remained on the principal, he negotiated a loan at 2¾% interest from Union Bank of Michigan. That loan was repaid within two years, on June 1, 1946, and with its payment the parish was temporarily, at least, out of debt.

## SOCIAL LIFE IN THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES

**A**S FATHER JOHN, THROUGH UNRELENTING HARD WORK, was demonstrating his leadership capabilities, he began to earn the respect and even devotion of his parishioners. His efforts at fund-raising led to festivals, parties and dances that large numbers of people attended. In the latter years of the Great Depression the people, who had been hit so hard, began to have fun once more. Those who had felt resentment in 1934 toward what they considered the demotion of Msgr. Skory began to forget those feelings and to join in on the activities once again. And enthusiasm reigned supreme! Typical of this enthusiasm was an article that appeared on the first page of *The Echo*, the Polish language newspaper, on November 5, 1937:

Hey! Parish of St. Adalbert's! Did you hear of the big prizes to be given away at the party on November 7? Grand Rapids has never heard of what will take place at the party. So come anyway and win yourself a prize! See you there!

During the 1940's, in particular, social activities were plentiful and thriving. It was as if the easing of the parish debt was accompanied by a lifting of the people's spirits. In the school recreational events were abundant, with a billiard room (located where the kitchen now is) and a bowling alley consisting of four lanes (located in what is now the cafeteria.) There were two leagues participating in the bowling at that time, one a men's league consisting of eight teams and the other a women's league comprised of four teams. Scores were kept, tournaments were conducted, and prizes were awarded to individuals as well as to teams; but most of all, the participants shared fun and laughter while mingling socially and enjoying the competition. In addition, plays were occasionally performed and movies shown to good sized crowds in the spacious auditorium.

To illustrate the good nature of the people and the role of such activities in their lives, it is appropriate to quote a notice in the booklet for a play entitled *Koszyk Kwiatow* performed in the late 1930's — the exact date is uncertain — in the auditorium. It is here presented verbatim, including the original spellings:

**BOWLING IS AMERICA'S  
PASSPORT TO HEALTH**

One Hour of Bowling —  
"The Easy Plan to Make the World a Healthy Man."  
ST. ADELBERT'S CLUB ROOM

-----  
Get Rid of Your Gloom  
Play Billiards

at  
St. Adelbert's Club Room

Clubs and societies, too, were thriving, with memberships high and involvement extensive. Each organization contributed mightily to the welfare of its members as well as of the parish as a whole, with the Ushers Club in the vanguard busily holding dances and raffles, and organizing the annual parish festival. On March 8, 1940 the St. Adelbert's Holy Name League was founded to, in the words of Father Peter Jakubowski, assistant pastor of the parish and spiritual advisor to the society, "(combat) the evils of the present generation, the general unrest and perils of the world today." More specifically the Holy Name League existed to give honor to the name of Jesus, to sanctify the personal lives of the members, and to assist the pastor in parish tasks and projects. Its first project occurred in the summer of that year when members of that group worked at the parish festival and collected a total of \$78.00 at its booth.

The first elected officers of the Society were the following.

President ..... Charles Witzcak  
Vice President ..... Matthew Braciszewski  
Secretary ..... George Balceowicz  
Treasurer ..... Emil Pupel



St. Adelbert's Womens' Bowling League, 1933 — Bowled in what is now the school cafeteria.



Through the years of its existence the Holy Name Society continued to contribute substantially to both the school in particular and the parish in general. For instance, in 1952-1953, under President Jerome Nawrocki, the youth of the parish were organized into baseball teams at three levels: There was a Little League team, a team for 12-15 year olds, and another for 16-17 year olds. All members of the teams wore uniforms furnished by the Society. Along with this, the parish troop of the Boy Scouts of America was reactivated. Holy Name fathers became scoutmasters, and under their tutelage and encouragement many of the scouts achieved regional and even national distinction. Other activities that were sponsored by the Society included the father-son breakfasts on the first Sundays of each month, the mother-son breakfast celebrated on Mother's Day, and parish picnics held originally at Townsend Park and later in Belmont. One other service of note that they provided was the supplying of surplices for the altar boys, a service that saved the parish a good deal of money over the years.

Another organization founded in the 1940's and supported wholeheartedly by Msgr. Maksymowski was the Legion of Mary Praesidium, begun in the fall of 1945 after a visit to the parish by Miss Mary Duffy, an envoy from Ireland representing the international Legion of Mary organization. Her talk to the parishioners must have been warmly received because the first meeting of the local presidium was held the following October 11th. The first officers elected at that meeting were:

- President .....Esther Usakowski
- Vice President .....Cecelia Bartnick
- Secretary .....Margaret Bednarek
- Treasurer .....Marian Koronkiewicz
- Spiritual Director .....Father H. J. Niedzwiecki

The first task they took upon themselves was to conduct a parish census. This they did in the cool weather of the fall of the year, many of them fulfilling their obligation on foot since they did not own cars. Other duties included visiting the sick and the mothers of newborn children, to whom they gave prayer books and Miraculous Medals.

**St. Adalbert's Memorial Post #1058, Catholic War Veterans**

One of the outstanding features of the members of St. Adalbert's Parish, and indeed a characteristic of the Polish people nurtured over hundreds of years, has been their strong spirit not only of community but of national pride. This spirit, heightened by the intense patriotism and sense of honor during World War II, led to the local establishment of one of the most important organizations affiliated with St. Adalbert's: Memorial Post #1058 of the Catholic War Veterans. Since its inception in September, 1946 this group of men have devoted themselves to their country and their church unselfishly and with great dignity.

The Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A., Inc. was founded by Msgr. Edward Higgins, Rector of Immaculate Conception Church in Astoria, Long Island, New York in the year of 1935. Its motto is "For God-For Country-For Home", and it can be truly proclaimed that St. Adalbert Memorial Post #1058 has lived up this motto over the years, as illustrated in their many programs.

**FOR GOD** — Catholic Action activities have been fostered by the Post since its beginnings. Such activities as the Rosary Crusade, Corporate Communion, distribution of the Christopher Notes, and Spiritual Bouquets for the Holy Father are just a few of the programs the members have undertaken.

**FOR COUNTRY** — The Post is a member of the United Veterans Council and works hard to foster legislation concerning veterans and their families. Furthermore, its men have held offices on the county, state and national levels, with several men having achieved the distinction of ranking as State Commander. And every year the members place flags on the graves of veterans at Holy Cross Cemetery.

**FOR HOME** — The Post's programs primarily are centered on the family unit. It works to preserve the home, the foundation of society. For many years it sponsored the Eighth Grade Picnic, parish youth activities, softball teams, spelling bees, essay contests, and the "Keep Christ in Christmas" program. Moreover, it is presently the sponsor of the St. Adalbert's Boy Scout Troop #268, one of the finest in the area. Finally, the Post provides service and financial support to the Michigan Veterans Facility and the V. A. Hospital in Allen Park, Michigan.

From the start the men of Post #1058 began to busy themselves with parish activities of all kinds, and in the thirty-five years of the organization's existence have established themselves as an indispensable part of the community of St. Adalbert's.

Though spiritual societies such as the Legion of Mary and the St. Theresa Society were not in the business of conducting gala social affairs, they contributed to the social welfare of the parish while in the act of conducting their more spiritual exercises. The Holy Rosary Society, for instance, had dozens of chaplets at which small groups of members would gather to recite the rosary and simply hold conversations over coffee or tea. And the Ladies Welfare Society and the Legion of Mary members would visit the sick and disabled, bringing them not only consolation but also news of the events going on in general. Thus, nobody was neglected; everybody, regardless of his or her condition or status, was a part of the spiritual and social community.

Meanwhile, other organizations conducted more convivial activities, and dances, banquets, and potlucks in the auditorium or in Fifth Street Hall (St. Adalbert's Aid Society) and Sixth Street Hall (St. Casimir's). Always active and helpful in preparing and catering these events were the members of the Young Ladies' Sodality (referred to in the Golden Jubilee Booklet as the Ladies' Rosary Society, as distinct from the Holy Rosary Society), a lively group of young women whose commitment to the parish was tireless during the course of several decades.

To younger members of the parish today, the decades of the 1930's and 40's must seem remote indeed. For not only was the parish a more cohesive unit with its many clubs promoting a high degree of religious involvement and community spirit, but it still maintained a regard for ceremony and even pageantry that today is seldom seen. Processions were common, particularly in the springtime with its days of devotion to the Virgin Mary and its special day when the school children received their First Holy Communion. What made this day special, besides the rite itself, was the parade conducted by the Polish Band. In full and colorful uniform the band, members of St. Casimir's Society located in Sixth Street Hall, would lead the

thrilled children in procession from the school to the church, where they would wait for the sacred ceremony to end before conducting them back to the school. It was an experience that two generations of Communicants will never forget and it took place in days that never again will be seen.

### *Parish Cohesion*

The cohesiveness of the parish, the unabashed sense of unity and purpose that existed in those days can perhaps best be illustrated in the articulate words of an anonymous contributor to *The Grand Rapids Echo* in an article that appeared on Friday, April 11, 1947. It deserves to be quoted extensively:

From St. Adalbert's Parish

#### *A HAPPY EASTER!*

This year's Easter celebration in St. Adalbert's Parish will not be forgotten in the hearts of its parishioners. This was a double celebration; first, to thank Our Lord for the great deed of redeeming mankind by His passion and death, and second, for the great task which was completed in St. Adalbert's Parish.

\* \* \* \* \*

... No less moved was our pastor, Father Maksymowski. This was evidenced by the fervent prayers which he raised to God, thanking Him for having chosen him and having placed him in charge of this parish; and today when all the hardships and hard work are over, he, as the pastor, through his priestly hands, is offering this great Sacrifice in thanksgiving to Almighty God. . . . When Father spoke these words, "Dear parishioners, we no longer have a debt, everything has been paid," great joy arose in the hearts of the parishioners and some of them cried for joy, since they had not expected to hear such news in their lifetime.

And to whom should be shown the greatest appreciation for this? Of course, to God, who gave the parishioners a generous spirit and the ability to work together in harmony and love. However, a great acknowledgement should also be given to our pastor, Father Maksymowski, that through his intelligence and prudence he was able to guide this matter to a successful conclusion. To you, our beloved and worthy priest of God, your parishioners offer their deepest thanks. May God reward you for your work, because we are not in a position to repay you.

## WEST CATHOLIC MOVES IN

ONE OF THE GREATEST TESTS ever faced by Father Maksymowski (not to mention a number of other good priests and sisters) and St. Adalbert's School occurred in the late summer and fall of 1944, when Bishop Francis J. Haas, on August 15, issued a directive that to relieve the crowded conditions of Catholic Central an annex be created on the West Side.<sup>2</sup> To be called West Catholic Central, it would comprise 290 students from the West Side parishes in the ninth and tenth grades and would be staffed by five School Sisters of Notre Dame and two Franciscan Sisters, with Father William Murphy as principal. Though St. Adalbert's Grade School was still thriving with an attendance of 622 pupils, Father John volunteered the use of this facility for the new high school annex; after all the building was the largest available on the West Side, with twenty-seven classrooms capable of accommodating 1500 students. In its peak enrollment year, 1924-25, it actually held 1573 children. Now only 40% of that number attended, and Father John, in dutiful response to his superior, justifiably opened the school doors to the older students.

But problems remained. The administrative and teaching staff balked at the move for several reasons, among them being the short amount of time to prepare a curriculum, a set of procedures, and teaching schedules; and the resentment felt by most of the sisters upon being sent to the new school after having already received new assignments elsewhere. Furthermore, the staff must have felt a bit of a letdown to have to teach at a small ethnocentric school after having been at the larger institution with its established tradition of excellence. Father William Murphy, for instance, who had requested to leave Catholic Central in order to devote himself full time to his duties as pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Parnell, was quite hesitant

about assuming his assigned role. Besides being happy in Parnell, he would not be able to get to West Catholic until noon each day. Nevertheless, upon the insistence of Bishop Haas he accepted his new position.

The students, too, were resentful and even sullen, especially the tenth graders who had already spent a year at the downtown high school. There were a number of reasons for this: they had formed new friendships at Catholic Central; some had participated in its famous athletic program as freshmen and were eagerly looking forward to the arrival of the new football season; and they had enjoyed the freedom away from their neighborhoods. But another more curious reason stands out. For many of the tenth graders, attending Catholic Central afforded them the opportunity to mingle with students of different ethnic backgrounds and varied experiences, and allowed them to attain a kind of worldliness that perhaps made them feel more sophisticated.

During the first months of the school year, which began on September 5, 1944 — less than three weeks after Bishop Haas issued his directive — confusion gripped the faculty and staff as they tried valiantly to establish their curriculum and schedule. Nevertheless, because of their fortitude, dedication, and spiritual commitment the good sisters built a sound program that would continue to improve over the years as the school grew and attained academic stature. Socially it grew, too, eventually sponsoring dances in the St. Adalbert's auditorium that would attract Catholic Central students from all over the city, many of whom, in the pre-expressway days, had never before seen the magnificent church and its neighboring facilities.

In 1960 Msgr. John was charged by Bishop Allen J. Babcock with obtaining the grounds and the site of the proposed new West Catholic High School and with selecting the architect to design it. West Catholic remained at St. Adalbert's until the new facility was opened in 1964.

## RENOVATIONS

THE LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS attributed to Father Maksymowski is long and varied, but many of them pertain to the renovation, rejuvenation, and expansion of the parish properties. By the decade of the 1940's the thirty year old church was in need of cleaning and repairs, the convent was becoming cramped, and by the 1950's the school facilities were fast becoming outdated. It took a man of shrewdness and vast energy, along with a keen capacity to handle finances, to manage all the work that needed to be done. It also took a community of generous people willing to make sacrifices for their faith to provide the means for such accomplishments.

### *The Church*

When Monsignor Skory built the lovely church that was eventually to become a Basilica, he envisioned a noble and dignified structure that would elevate the souls of his worthy people to a proper, dignified and solemn plateau from which they could worship their Redeemer with lofty and pure hearts. Unfortunately the good and revered man died before he could see the final crowning touches applied to the building. But Father Maksymowski, a kindred spirit of his predecessor, proved worthy of his task and as the decades of 1940-1970 progressed, his inspired and indelible marks were placed on the church and other properties for generations to admire. May all of us, each time we gaze upon or enter these noble buildings, think not only of the saint who is our patron, and the Lord, who was his as well as our Divine Savior, but also of these two men who humbly and with dedication and vigor provided us, the parishioners of 1981, with the means to worship with exaltation and dignity.

In proclaiming this, however, it must be remembered that our pastors, though spiritual leaders and parish administrators, are also representatives of their people. Thus, the accomplishments of our honored pastors are truly the accomplishments of the people of St. Adalbert's, of their expansiveness, devotedness, willingness to sacrifice — that is, of their nobility of spirit. Thus, the lengthy list of achievements that follows, consummated during Father Maksymowski's tenure, reflects on all of the faithful at St. Adalbert's Parish.

**August-November, 1941:** The church was decorated for the first time by the firm of Malo and Jordan of Detroit. The soot-blackened walls, the result of three decades of coal furnaces, finally were made presentable by being painted a clean beige color. The ceiling above the altar was also painted beige with gold flecks, setting it off from the walls like a crown. The cost of the work is not available.

**August 11, 1943:** The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas L. Noa, acting as an administrator of the diocese, granted permission to install new thermo-plastic kneeler cushions in the pews at a cost of \$1,725.00. The work was completed.

**October 27, 1943:** Diocesan permission was granted to install plastic floor covering in the aisles of the church at a cost of \$2,600.00. The work was completed.

**May 17, 1947:** Permission was granted by Bishop Francis J. Haas to invest in electric bell ringing in the Church at a cost of \$2,000.00. This was done.

**June 20, 1947:** Bishop Haas gave permission to decorate the church for the second time at a cost of \$12,500.00. Again Malo and Jordan were hired.

**October 2, 1947:** Bishop Haas granted permission to insulate the church for the sum of \$4,908.00.

**Date unclear:** Bishop Haas allowed the parish to spend \$1,000.00 to refinish the statuary in the church.

**March 17, 1950:** Work was completed on several improvements in the church following permission by Bishop Haas. These included the removal of the wooden steps in the sanctuary and their replacement with marble; the moving to a lower, more convenient place of the communion railing; and the removal of the wooden steps before the

communion railing and their replacement with marble. Another change was the repositioning of the pulpit nearer to the Virgin Mary's corner to permit an unobstructed view of the main altar, and to replace the curved stairway to the pulpit with a straight one. The cost of all these improvements totaled \$4,500.00.

**December 14, 1950:** Upon the approval of Bishop Haas, the original organ was revamped at a cost of \$18,850.80. The work was done by Clark den Bleyken of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and it was dedicated and blessed on October 10, 1951 by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Koss, with the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Anthony Arsulowicz delivering the sermon. Mr. Raymond Kelderman, organist and choirmaster at St. Philip's Church in Battle Creek, performed on the new organ to a church filled with appreciative parishioners and visitors.

**November 30, 1954:** On this date occurred the culmination of a large and fruitful project: the consecration of the new main and two side altars by Bishop Allen J. Babcock. This project officially began on March 30, 1950 when permission was granted by the late Bishop Haas to start a fund for the further redecoration of the sanctuary in addition to the purchase of three new altars. The firm of de Ranieri Studios, Inc. in Pietrasanta, Italy was hired to do the altars at a cost of \$46,000.00; the main altar, priced at \$38,000.00 was made possible by the offerings of the total parish, while the St. Joseph's altar, at \$4,000.00 was paid for by offerings from the school children as well as Father John himself in memory of all fathers and mothers of St. Adalbert's Parish. The altar of the Blessed Mother, also costing \$4,000.00, was donated by Messrs. Ted and Frank Olsee in memory of the Sylvester Olszewski family. The relics housed in the main altar are those of St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr, and of St. Jude the Apostle; those housed in the Blessed Mother's altar are of Maria Goretti, virgin and martyr, and of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, virgin; and, finally those resting in the altar of St. Joseph are of St. Blase, bishop and martyr, and of the martyrs Fructuosi and Loentantil. To complete the beautiful new main altar, the bronze tabernacle was bought for the sum of \$2,100.00. Altogether, the classical simplicity of the altars added further elegance and refinement to the church, and with its marble pillars and baldachino the main altar now seemed to be of more appropriate scale to the dimensions of the sanctuary. Furthermore, the dome above the baldachino, while a thing of

## *The First 100 Years*

beauty in itself, served the unifying function of relating the altar to the grandeur of the large central dome above.

To further complement the eminence and splendor of the new altars, Father John added a marble floor in the sanctuary at a cost of \$10,250.00, and marble wainscoting for the sum of \$6,925.00. The marble pillars, it should be added, cost \$10,800.00. Additional redecorating, including the graceful and dignified angels flanking the main altar, totalled an expense of \$24,473.00. The entire project upon completion, cost \$100,548.00.

It must be remarked that these renovations added the final exalted touches to an already striking building, entirely worthy in its tasteful refinement not only of the man who oversaw its development and the good parishioners who provided the offerings to pay for it, but also of the first Polanders whose vision and good taste built the parish and its first church and, later, the grand edifice of what was to become the Basilica of St. Adalbert.

**January 16, 1956:** Bishop Babcock gave permission to spend about \$8,000.00 to build restrooms in the church building.

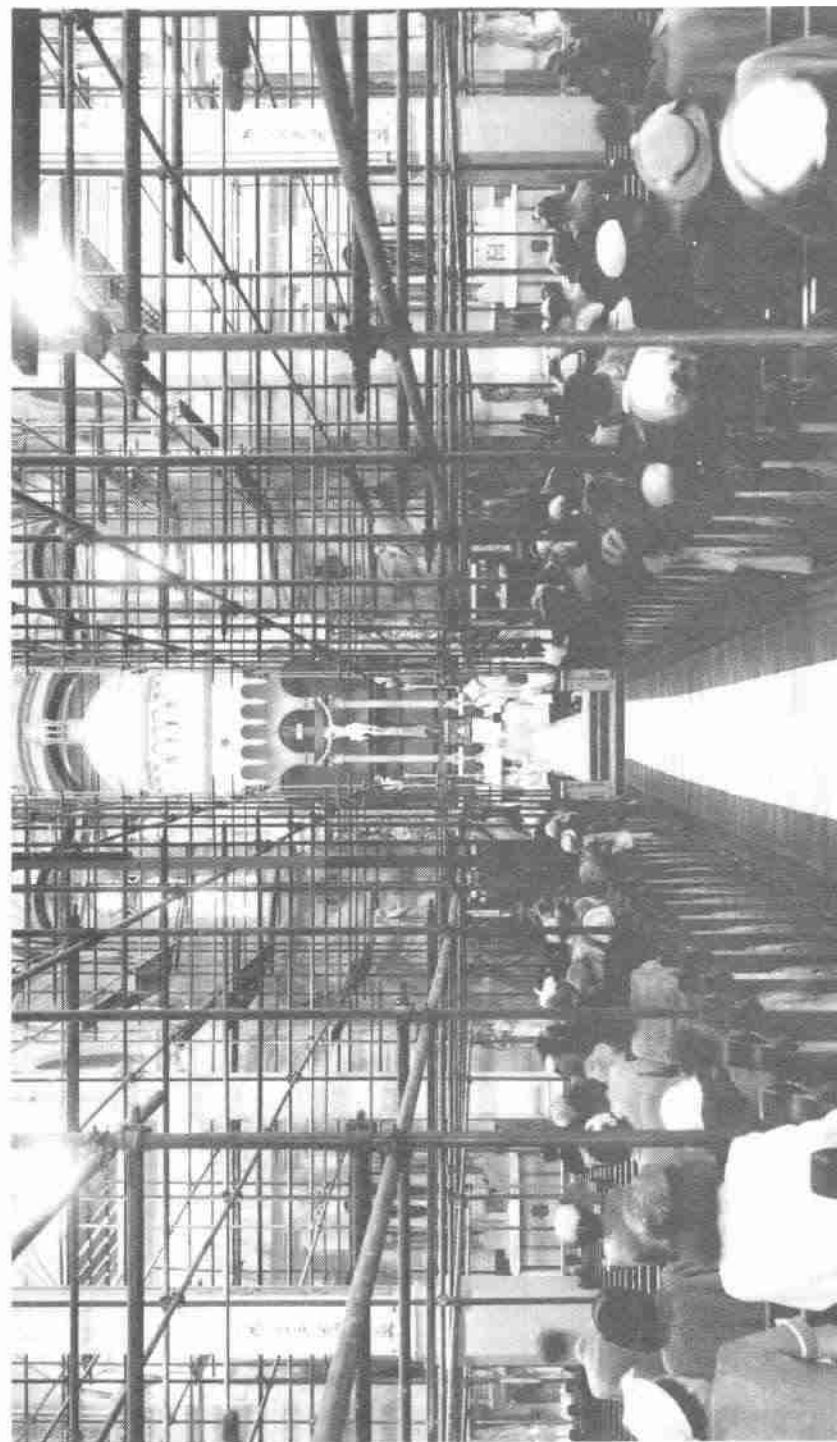
**May 9, 1956:** Because of their outmoded condition, Bishop Babcock granted permission to replace the three coal firing boilers to automatic gas firing boilers at the cost of \$6,955.00.

**July 2, 1956:** Permission was received to repair the church basement at the cost of about \$3,000.00.

**September 8, 1956:** The 45 year old steps at the front entrance of the church were replaced for \$2,875.00.

**April 1, 1959:** Bishop Babcock gave permission for improving the sounds of the bells. Msgr. Maksymowski proceeded to contact the McShane Bell Foundry Company, Inc. of Baltimore, where the two existing bells would be recast and a new one added to insure accurate tonal quality. The bells, consisting of 78% copper and 22% tin, were all cast at this foundry at a cost of \$4,810, but \$1,700 was deducted as trade-in value for the two existing ones. Following is a brief description:

The largest G-natural 1928 bell continues to weigh 1,300 pounds, it has a 39" diameter, and it is transcribed, as its predecessor, in memory of the Slupecki's (sic). In its recast form, it cost \$2,398. The second B-natural bell weighs 750 pounds and is 33" in diameter. This new bell



Renovation of church.

cost \$1,492. It bears the Latin inscription, 'My name is St. Mary Magdalene. In memory of Magdalene Yotcukas. 1959 A.D.' The Third, St. Adalbert bell of 1900, was reduced in size from 550 pounds to 400 pounds. It is 27" in diameter and is a D-natural tone. In its recast form it cost \$920.00. It is the credit of Msgr. Maksymowski that he retained the inscriptions of the two older bells and had the donor's names embossed on the new bells that were cast. He respected their wonderful generosity and their blessed memory.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, these bells were blessed by Msgr. Maksymowski on September 24, 1959, the Feast of Our Lady of Grace, and rung on the Feast of the Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel, September 24, 1959.

The importance of bells in the life of the Church are best described in the articulate phrasings of Mr. Eduard Adam Skendzel, Professor of History of Wayne State University:

Bells, while material things, even in our sophisticated Post-Vatican II age, are a reminder of God. The message they spread makes no distinction. They reach all classes, all creeds. To all, their voices are an uplifting influence. They awaken the populace at the dawn of a new day. They remind us, at the end of the day, that Time passes on. They ring wildly to celebrate our joys; they toll solemnly to honor our beloved who have gone on to give an account of their stewardship. Truly, they are a living voice — mellow and beautiful — expressing, beyond words, the message of God in imperishable bronze. Truly, too, the bells of St. Adalbert's seem to say:

*"I praise the true God. I grace the festivals. I lament the dead. I call the indolent. I tell the hours of morning, of noon, and of evening."*

Mr. Skendzel goes on to pay tribute to St. Adalbert's centennial year:

Since 1981 is the monumental Centennial Year of St. Adalbert's founding, it is well nigh unto a hundred years that these bells have ding-donged this message. Well can one imagine how wildly, with pardonable pride, these bells will flood their melody over the city throughout that year's projected festivities. Their peal will especially recall

those great hardy pioneer Polanders who left an endeared hearth and kin to carve out for their progeny, often under conditions of deprivation and discrimination and exploitation, a place in a great new land and to bequeath to them a great Faith and a great heritage. *Czesc ich pamieci!* (Honor to their memory!)<sup>4</sup>

**November, 1959:** This item might best be reported in Msgr. Maksymowski's own words: "The art glass windows were in very bad shape. The Bavarian Studios of Minneapolis, Minn. were passing by this way and repairing art glass windows, so I took this upon myself and had the very bad windows repaired in the sum of \$2,800.00 . . . After they got through repairing (them) I was very happy because they did it so very good and I could not get anyone in the city to do it. I asked the Grand Rapids art glass (sic) of this city but they never cared to take up this repair work."

**July 12, 1961:** Permission was granted by Bishop Babcock to refinish the church pews for the sum of \$6,000.00. This as well as other repair work was performed by the Bix Service Company of Grand Rapids.

**Early 1962:** Bishop Babcock granted permission for further renovation of the church. The first item to be mentioned, for which a contract was signed on February 14, was the installation of a new ventilation system that was designed for a change of air every ten minutes. The work, which cost \$19,048.00 was performed by Granco, Inc. of Grand Rapids and was completed very satisfactorily in the summer of that year. Next, new bronze doors were installed that summer at a cost of \$9,900.00, \$5,000 of which had been willed by Mr. Carl Pacukiewicz for this purpose, with the remainder paid for by the parish. These doors, designed and installed by Mr. Joseph Dombrowski and the de Ranicieri Studios in Italy, stand fittingly solid and formidable as they complement the Romanesque architecture of the building.

During this busy year, Bishop Babcock also permitted Msgr. Maksymowski to engage the architectural firm of Van Allsburg-Koprowski to assist the parish in planning more extensive renovation. On May 15, the DeYoung and Bagin Construction Company received the contract to build a baptistry, side entrances, and a breezeway between the church and school. The cost of this work, completed in the summer of 1963, is not clear.

**1963:** The Milwaukee Marble Company was retained to finish the marble work in the church. These items and their costs are as follows: wainscoting, \$14,793.00; wall pilasters, \$8,920.00; eight free columns, \$15,480.00; St. Theresa's Shrine, \$8,430.00; the Infant of Prague, \$1,664.00; the confessionals and other shrines, \$16,558.00.

**February 14, 1964:** In a controversial though practical move, Msgr. Maksymowski replaced the old carved Stations of the Cross, with the permission of the bishop, at a cost of \$7,660.00.

**1964-65:** A new floor was put in by John Zanella at a cost of \$22,000.00.

**1965:** Once more the church was decorated including painting and wallpapering, for the sum of \$30,000.00.

No doubt some of the expenditures listed above were controversial. To partly finance the renovations of 1962, for example, Msgr. Maksymowski was obliged to take out a loan for \$200,000. And it was not an uncommon event for him to make personal visits to people's homes for the purpose of soliciting interest-free loans, sometimes for the amount of \$1,000.00. A number of people felt that the improvements might have been unnecessary, or too expensive. And in some cases, as with the replacement of the original woodcarved Stations of the Cross, some people felt resentment, even anger at the changes that took place. Nevertheless, it is to his credit that the funds were raised, the renovations and decorations were always paid for, and, in retrospect, most of his decisions proved to be correct.

Although the amount of money spent during the decades of the 40's, 50's, and 60's seems staggering, it must be remembered that the valuation of the parish properties had risen considerably. When the church was originally completed in 1913, the total value of the properties stood at \$170,000, all but \$20,000 deriving from the newly finished church. By the 1960's the value was over \$4,000,000 and rising fast. It must also be remembered that these extensive renovations added such further beauty—even magnificence—to the church that they may have been partly responsible for the church's singular honor of being designated, in 1980, a minor basilica. For the building itself we have Msgr. Skory and his congregation to thank; for much of the interior beauty we must be grateful to the unyielding strength, vision, and vitality of Msgr. John Maksymowski.

## *The Convent*

During the early years of his beautification program, when he seemed to be constantly running to Bishop Haas for approval of his plan, Msgr. Maksymowski received the following admonition from the Bishop: "Father Maksymowski, you may beautify the church as much as you please, but promise me to build a new convent." Indeed the old convent, remodeled back in 1921 but without major improvements since then, was becoming old and tired. And though the grade school attendance of about 752 was now far below that of 1922, when it reached 1384, the existence of West Catholic in the building still necessitated a large teaching staff. Thus, in the early 1950's Msgr. Maksymowski began to plan the erection of a new sister's home.

Bishop Haas' successor, Bishop Allen J. Babcock, granted the final permission to build the facility. In an agreement with the Diocese, the lots bounded by Garfield, Cora, Van Buren and Atlantic streets were exchanged for the lots and home on the southwest corner of Fifth and Davis. Then, after the home at 712 Fifth was bought in 1955 for \$13,500, and all the necessary procedures with the Diocesan building committee had been undertaken, bids were let out. They were awarded to DeYoung and Bagin general contractors; VanderWaals-Troske for plumbing, heating, and ventilation; and the Clement Electric Company. The architects were representatives of Robinson, Campau, and Crowe, Inc. of Grand Rapids. Work was begun on August 14, 1956.

The cornerstone rites took place on May 26, 1957, with the blessing performed by Msgr. Raymond Baker of St. James Parish. In the cornerstone were deposited a number of items: The Sacred Heart Badge; holy cards of Our Lord, St. Theresa, Maria Goretti, and Pope Pius XII; a 1935 silver dollar and the list of first communicants from the same year, a memorial to the date when Monsignor became pastor of St. Adalbert's; and the list of all the school children of 1957, each of whom signed his own name.

To finance the project, Msgr. Maksymowski again made personal visits to homes. And although many people objected to the size of the new building, rightfully claiming that the decline in enrollment that was certain to continue in the following decades precluded a building of such large dimensions, he nevertheless was able to borrow from his



good parishioners approximately \$300,000. When completed the debt was in the neighborhood of \$400,000, but it was retired quickly, on October 23, 1961.

Finally, on January 18, 1958 Msgr. Maksymowski blessed the new convent and the good sisters occupied it the same day.

### *The School*

Seven years later, in the spring of 1965, Msgr. Maksymowski received news from the Grand Rapids Fire Marshall that extensive renovation must be undertaken in the school or it would be closed. With no choice and not much time he began to act, and by late September of that year, with no more than a few weeks' delay, the building was opened again for classroom activity. It was an incredible performance — and expensive! The cost of the project including labor, materials, and interest on the loan, would reach about \$1,000,000.

Work on the remodeling, which was designed by Koprowski Associates, began in June with the firm of Owen-Ames-Kimball as general contractor. The marvelous changes they wrought on the old structure once again brought the school to the forefront of safety, health, and academic standards in the city. On the exterior there were few changes: the old wood framed windows and doors were replaced with aluminum and the roof was repaired. The interior, however, underwent vast changes. Instead of the high ceilings, removable ceilings with fluorescent lights were installed and new tile walls and terazzo floors brightened the hallways and classrooms. The cafeteria and kitchen were enlarged and modernized, with walk-in-coolers and freezer storage units added. (It is interesting to note that the long cafeteria tables are actually the old bowling alleys refinished in 1948.)

One of the most startling changes took place in the auditorium. What used to contain balconies and a large stage now became almost exclusively a gymnasium, with a smaller stage on the south end. It is still, however, used as a sort of all-purpose room, with Christmas programs, graduations, the parish festival, and many other activities — as well as basketball and volleyball games — taking place there. Altogether, with the new heating, electrical and ventilating systems, the new boilers and sound system, and the extensive alterations in the classrooms, the new building is both efficient and attractive inside and out.

## A HOLY TRIUMVIRATE

**O**NE WOULD BE UNFORGIVABLY REMISS in neglecting to mention at this point the three priests who, in the late 1950's and early 1960's, made such an indissoluble impression on the lives of literally hundreds of students of St. Adalbert's School, and more hundreds of adults in the parish — the triumvirate of Msgr. Maksymowski; Father Joseph E. Murphy, a resident in the parish from September of 1947 to June of 1961; and Father Henry J. Dondzila, assistant pastor from July, 1958 to June, 1964. The presence of these three men, by the grace of God, in the same place at the same time, brought a dimension of grace and reverence to the parishioners that perhaps had not been experienced before. Seldom are three individuals with such intense energy, passion for their faith, love of their people, and genuine goodness brought together in the same ministry; it is the great good fortune of a generation of parishioners to have been present at that time.

If one could picture them as a child would in those days, one would see the three men — all tall; all with the quick movements and gestures that are produced by a kind of nervous energy; all contemplative, their minds continuously active even while engaging in conversation, with intense eyes and easy but fleeting smiles — traversing the path from the rectory to the school with long strides, dressed in the long black cassocks still worn in those days, entering the building and rushing from room to room to teach catechism to awe-struck students in West Catholic as well as in St. Adalbert's School, eliciting answers from them because none dared to be unprepared. And their effect on the students was lasting. At Father Donzila's twenty-fifth anniversary on July 5, 1981, one of his former students at St. Adalbert, Rev. Patrick Cwik, paid tribute not only to him but to all three when he stated that it was their presence, their devotion, their energy, and their great intelligence that inspired him to pursue his vocation.

But the fond recollections are not in the private domain of former students. The older parishioners, too, look back upon those days as among their most memorable, recalling the incisive sermons, the sincere and dignified Masses, the enthusiastic co-operation in social affairs, and the warmth and intimacy of their friendliness. To young and old alike the presence of these three holy men represented at the time the best of what their Faith is all about. By the time Father Donzila was transferred in 1964, a fermentation was taking place that would lead to significant changes in the organization and appearance, if not in the nature, of their religious way of life.

## THE TURBULENT SIXTIES

THE DECADE OF THE 1960's will go down in history for its restlessness and turbulence, but also for the changes and expansion it caused in our society's way of life. And no less than society in general was St. Adalbert's affected by these conditions, for they brought about a significant number of sociological as well as institutional changes in our parish. For instance, young people who were graduating from high school became attracted to the many new horizons opening up to them and many of them began to leave the parish for colleges and careers in distant cities, or in some cases they simply desired to adopt different lifestyles. They were aided by the increased availability of transportation, namely the automobile, that could whisk them away whenever and to wherever they chose. It was also a time of affluence that allowed them to attend the colleges or buy the cars. For those who remained at home, the increased programming offered by television tended to keep many of them in their living room rather than encourage their involvement in parish affairs. Some of these factors applied to the parents of families, too; the appeal of television, the greater affluence and the faster automobiles that allowed them to buy a cottage or boat or camper or skis and to travel up north for a day, a weekend or a week or more were accompanied by a decline in participation in club and parish activities.

Changes in the liturgy brought about by Vatican II also had an effect on the parish, with some older members slow to adapt to them. Indeed, in some matters, such as the use of English in prayer and song and the replacement of the altar with the new table of the Blessed Sacrament, the changes were quite radical. Though some people resented these innovations to the degree of forsaking their parish involvement, most adjusted eventually as they discovered the reasoning behind them. But another area affected at least to some extent

by Vatican II, along with the sociological factors mentioned above, was the prominence of clubs and organizations. Not only were many of the clubs suffering from people's loss of interest in attending meetings and volunteering for work at various functions, but some of them were not meeting the requirements delineated in Vatican II that organizations work on behalf of the parish as a whole instead of merely the members. The result of all these circumstances was a decline in membership of almost all the clubs and societies and the eventual disappearance of some of them.

**Stability**

One organization, however that was still going strong was the St. Hyacinth Aid Society, which in 1961 celebrated its diamond jubilee. During the course of its distinguished history this group of devoted men had up to that time paid out insurance benefits of \$96,655.88 to its members and had donated \$28,491.13 to the church—an enviable and generous record. The officers and trustees of the society during its year of celebration were:

- President .....Walter Karatkiewicz
- Vice President .....Eugene Brzozowski
- Recording Secretary .....Raymond Klimowicz
- Treasurer .....Charles Szymczak
- Financial Secretary .....Joseph O'Krangely
- Sick Director .....Walter Karpinski
- Bar Manager .....Walter Kozal
- Trustees .....Edward Dutkiewicz  
Clyde Curtiss  
Anthony Kuzma

In its jubilee booklet is presented a list of the original founders, followed by a paragraph which even now deserves to be cited for its thought-provoking, timeless, and articulate ideas.

The spirit of these founders was formidable in their loyalty and devotion. They realize full well that life is short and uncertain and that sickness and death can come at any time bringing with it hardship to the family. To alleviate distress was their noble goal. Neither did they lose sight of the fact that the church is ever in need, and they deter-

mined to help whenever they could. Furthermore, they were proud of their Polish ancestry, as we too should be in this millenium of Christianity in Poland. Although now several generations remove us from Polish soil, yet the blood of noble Polish champions of the faith flows through our veins. And though again the wine-press of persecution has forced the blood of martyrs to flow, we must not forget that it is the blood of our relatives and country-men. Surely the founders never forgot. They remembered that we travel this earth only once, the time of our sojourn is short, eternity is our goal. To promote these noble aims St. Hyacinth society was founded under the sheltering wing of Mother Church. May these goals be again refurbished and shine forth . . .

**The Parish Council**

Not least among those disappointed with some of the changes in liturgy and administration was Msgr. Maksymowski, who was now well into his sixties. For one thing, he was accustomed to managing all the important financial, liturgical and educational matters in the parish largely by himself, with his assistant pastors and a select group of parishioners as his only advisors. But he preferred to make decisions on his own. To do so had been his commitment for three decades. Nevertheless, he made a gallant effort to conform to the directives and innovations filtering down from Vatican II and imposed by the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Thus, when the directive issued forth that all parishes in the diocese would be managed by a council of parishioners, he set about to comply, appointing the following members to the first Parish Council in 1969.

- General Chairman .....John Beatty
- Finance Chairman .....Vincent Budnick
- Liturgical Chairman .....William A. Czerney
- Education Chairman.....Robert Gersch
- Social Chairman .....Thomas Ryan, Sr.
- Health/Welfare Chairman .....Robert Czerew

It was the responsibility of these men to form committees that would take over much of the burden of operating the parish, leaving the pastor and his assistants the more priestly tasks of handling the

increasingly complex problems and spiritual needs of his congregation. The pastor would remain as head administrator with authority to initiate actions and veto decisions made by the council, but his burden of work was hereby eased considerably.

Not until the winter of 1972, under the pastorship of Father Ted Sniegowski, was the first election to the Parish Council held, with pictures and brief biographical sketches of the slate of candidates for the following week's election appearing in the parish bulletin of December 10. The successful candidates forming the first elected Parish Council in St. Adalbert's history were as follows:

- General Chairman ..... Edward K. Muraski
- Finance Chairman ..... Thaddeus W. Buzalski
- Liturgical Chairman ..... Sylvester Downer
- Education Chairman ..... James A. Soltysiak
- Social Chairman ..... Loraine L. Wesorick
- Christian Service Chairman ..... Josephine Kielek
- Family Life Chairman ..... Madeline Rutowski

The above list is noteworthy in that it indicates for the first time that women were finally being given the opportunity to assume a significant role in the management of the parish.

***The Board of Education***

First organized in early 1968, prior to the inception of the Parish Council, the Board of Education had as its purpose the creation of school policies and their maintenance, the preparation of the school budget, and the hiring of the principal when necessary. The first elected officers were the following:

- President ..... Thaddeus W. Buzalski
- Vice President ..... Edmund Preston
- Secretary ..... Mary Ann Szczepanski
- Treasurer ..... Edwin Downer

Other elected members included Louis Simhauser, who was largely responsible for composing the by-laws, Joan Kowalczk, Edward Muraski, Fred Platte, Sister Theophila, Sr. Stanislaus (Princi-

pal until August 1), Sr. Eugenda (Principal from August 1), Sr. Martin, Sr. Bonaventure, Sr. Josephia, and Msgr. John Mak-symowski.



Although many of the changes in structure and perception wrought by the decade of the 1960's were profound and at times controversial, some of them had very positive results. In terms of the parish, they allowed for a more significant kind of participation by a number of the congregation in administrative affairs. This participation, indeed, made the parish more literally their own, with many of the important decisions and ideas that have been made since then coming from them directly or from their elected representatives. It is, therefore, in the hands of the parishioners as well as the pastor — now more than ever before — that the destiny of the parish lies.

## THE BELOVED PASTOR RETIRES

**T**HE LONG AND ARDUOUS CAREER of his pastorship were kind to Msgr. Maksymowski. They had allowed him to fulfill himself and his priesthood, and this in turn had earned him the undying love of his people. Even today, after his absence of eleven years from the affairs of his parish — a length of time during which it would ordinarily be easy to formulate criticism — every person interviewed about him agrees that he was a good man and a great leader. His administrative abilities are recalled, along with his compassion for the less fortunate, his energy, his power to elicit cooperation, and in general his loving-kindness. Though some took exception to a decision here and there, such as the size of the new convent or the replacement of the old Stations of the Cross, the disagreements were cordial; because of the nature of the man and the people's respect for him, the disagreements never degenerated into grudges or other forms of hostility.

But the years of responsibility and dedication, of decisions and actions, had taken their toll. By the late 1960's his hearing began to fail and his enormous endurance and energy began to wane. No longer able to regularly attend Parish Council, Board of Education, and other committee meetings because of his hearing loss, he would send his secretary-housekeeper instead. His enormous hands, that had so gently placed the Blessed Host on untold thousands of tongues and that had formed the Sign of the Cross for countless thousands of expectant souls, were now visibly shaking. But his mind was still keen, and it told him that now, after thirty-five years at St. Adalbert's Parish, it was time to retire.

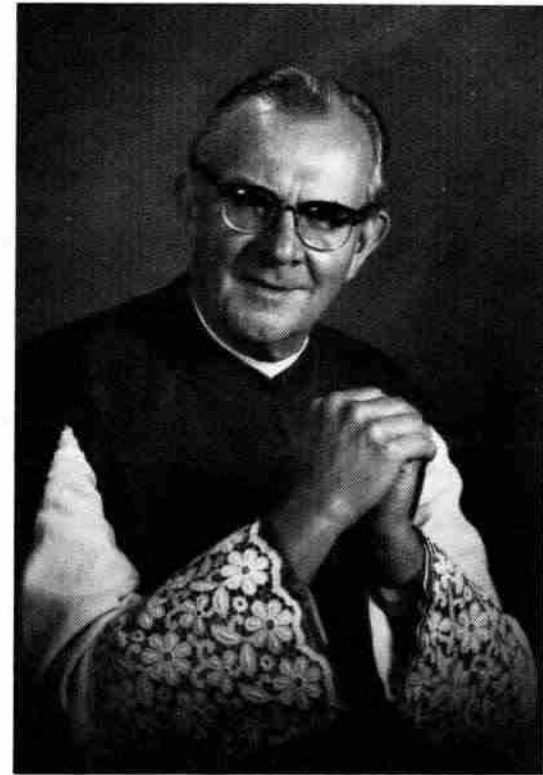
On October 11, 1970, after celebrating his last Mass with his loving people, a farewell dinner took place in the school cafeteria. Contrary to the departures of the previous two pastors, there was no division this time in the parish; the young were as devoted to him as

*The First 100 Years*

the old. Thus, it is noteworthy that two young men in particular—Messrs. Donald Kurylowicz and Thomas Czerney—played an important role in organizing this affair, which lasted all day and which witnessed hundreds of people filing past Msgr. John's table, stopping to shake hands, reminisce, receive his blessing, and wish him Godspeed. It was a day when moist eyes prevailed over dry.

**V**  
**TO THE FUTURE**

## MSGR. THADDEUS SNIEGOWSKI



MONSIGNOR THADDEUS R. SNIEGOWSKI

**I**N THE CENTENNIAL YEAR OF 1981, the parishioners of St. Adalbert are able to look forward to the beginning of the next hundred years with a clean slate, as it were. In 1976 the substantial parish debt was retired amid much jubilation, the school is in excellent shape, the population is relatively stable, and the church — now a basilica — has been improved by repairs and a general facelift inside. Much of the credit for the parish's presently sound condition is due to the zeal



and dedication of its present pastor, Monsignor Thaddeus Roman Sniegowski, a gentle and genuinely humble and kind man and, like his predecessor, a true inspiration to us all.

Msgr. Ted, as he is affectionately called, was born in Ludington, Michigan on August 21, 1916, the son of John S. and Ursula (nee Nowak) Sniegowski, and baptized four days later at St. Stanislaus Church by Reverend Joseph Lewandowski. After completing eight grades at St. Stanislaus School he enrolled in St. Joseph's Seminary in Grand Rapids. While there he was sent to study philosophy at Old St. Mary's Seminary and theology at New St. Mary's, both in Baltimore, Maryland.

Finally, on March 19, 1943 he was ordained into the priesthood along with four of his classmates in St. Andrew's Cathedral by Bishop Casimir J. Plagens, who unfortunately died that same month. It was while Father Ted was attending the Bishop's funeral that he received his first assignment from Msgr. Thomas L. Noa, who was administering the diocese *sede vacante*, or in the absence of the bishop. Thus began his long and fruitful ministry at St. Michael's in Muskegon, one of St. Adalbert's daughter parishes. Considering this appointment and subsequent assignments as assistant pastor at St. Isidore's, another daughter parish, and at St. Adalbert's in 1950-51, it almost seems in retrospect that he was destined to one day return to lead our parish into its centennial and beyond.

While at St. Michael's he also served the faithful at the mission of Our Lady of the Assumption in Rothbury. After two and a half years in Muskegon he received his assignment to St. Isidore's, and for the next five years he busied himself in not only assisting in parish matters but also teaching religion at Catholic Central High School and serving as chaplain at Sunshine Hospital, now known as Kent Community Hospital, where he tended to the victims of tuberculosis. From there he was transferred on July 3, 1950 to St. Adalbert's until August 1st of the following year, when he received his first assignment as pastor — a modest one at St. Rita's Church in Maple City and St. Joseph's Bohemian Settlement. While there he built a new rectory, completing it by Christmas of 1951.

He also was stationed at St. Joseph's Church in White Cloud along with the mission of St. Ann in Baldwin, and at St. Francis Xavier in Conklin. In 1958, while in Conklin, he was appointed by Bishop Francis J. Haas to work in the Diocese Marriage Tribunal, a respon-

sibility he maintained for seven years. He also enlarged and improved the cemetery there, built a new facade on the church, and paved and enlarged the parking lot. His last assignment before returning to St. Adalbert's as its pastor was at St. Michael's Parish in Suttons Bay, where he enlarged the church, doubling its seating capacity, and remodelled the rectory.

Then, on October 15, 1970 the people of St. Adalbert had the good fortune of his being appointed by Bishop Breitenbeck as pastor of St. Adalbert's upon the retirement of Msgr. Maksymowski. As another in a line of modest and compassionate pastors, it did not take long for Father Ted to win the hearts of those who had lived so long under the aegis of his good and beloved predecessor. For along with the above virtues Father Ted also proved to be imaginative and visionary, two outstanding traits that the people of St. Adalbert's have admired consistently since their forefathers began the parish. His ideas and inspiration, along with his ability to delegate responsibility and to work in cooperation with others, have been a source of strength to the parish and have contributed to the many accomplishments achieved over the past eleven years among which have been the retirement of the parish debt in 1976, the renovation of the rectory, the remodeling of the church, the launching of the centennial celebration, and the historical achievement of having St. Adalbert's elevated to the rank of a Minor Basilica.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EARLY SNIEGOWSKI YEARS

### *The Eminence of Music*

**A**S CHRONICLED THROUGHOUT THIS NARRATIVE, St. Adalbert's Parish has been blessed with some extremely capable and activist pastors in this century in Father Ponganis, Msgr. Skory, and Msgr. Maksymowski. But no less may be said about our present pastor in the decade of his ministry. Though the health of a parish is seen in the participation of its members, the participation is a sign of the cooperativeness and leadership of its pastor. One of the most edifying contributions of Msgr. Ted has resulted from his love of music, and this has been seen in the rise to prominence, and even eminence, of the parish choir under the direction of Joseph Westdorp.

In a cursory perusal of bulletins dating back to the late 1950's, when Mr. Westdorp assumed his position, one will note almost monthly calls for parishioners to round out the choir. By the end of the next decade the choir was a fairly well established, though not yet distinguished part of the parish life. But because of Msgr. Ted's concern, encouragement, and ecumenical sense, it began its rise soon after his arrival to the glory it has achieved today.

Already in the spring following his arrival, the combined choirs of St. Adalbert's, St. Andrew's, and Holy Name Parishes assembled at St. Adalbert's Church to present a special concert of sacred music. On December 19, 1971, the choir performed "Christmas Day" by Gustave Holst, along with a program called "Carols of the Season". On June 15, 1972 a program entitled "Songs of Broadway" was presented in the school by the choirs of St. Adalbert's, Holy Name, and Blessed Sacrament Churches. These major concerts, along with others in our church — for example on September 12, 1971 by the All-Male Choir of St. Michael's Parish in Muskegon — brought

music back into its proper place in the lives of the congregation. Not since the days of the Moniuszko Choral Society and Mr. Casimir Kowalkowski had music been so nobly encouraged and supported.

Eventually Msgr. Ted and Mr. Westdorp brought true ecumenism to St. Adalbert's when choirs from other denominations, for example Lutheran and Reformed, joined with ours for large and always inspiring concerts not only in our church but in others as well. The love of music expressed at St. Adalbert's culminated in the magnificent organ concern given by M. Pierre Cochereau on April 26, 1981.

**Other Highlights**

In 1971 a group of concerned parents of school children and promoters of health, safety, and fair play in sports assembled and formed the St. Adalbert's Athletic Booster Club. Their purpose was to raise funds to support all sports for both boys and girls, including cheerleaders and pom-pom girls, along with providing them with the best possible equipment. Prior to the formation of this club, all fund-raising activities were conducted by Ed and Ann Flak, who also stored the sports equipment at their home, along with the home of Mr. Jacob Rau.

The first officers elected by the club members include the following:

- President .....Joseph Matulaitis
- Vice President .....Stanley Swidwa
- Secretary .....Jerome Bajdek
- Treasurer .....Rose Rau
- Sargeant at Arms .....Chester Karpowicz

Since the club's inception the members—guided by the energy and devotion of various officers such as Bill Kowalczyk, James Decker, Delores Rekucki, Stan Ogrodzinski, Tom Haight, Don Golczynski, Bob Wojcik, and Ron Kozal — have enthusiastically held raffles, bake sales, and banquets to raise money. In addition, funds are raised by the payment of dues by the members. Altogether, the selflessness and commitment of the members have helped to further enrich an already fruitful tradition of sports at St. Adalbert's School.

On January 25, 1972 an Ecumenical Service of Prayer for Christian Unity was held in St. Adalbert's Church to close "Christian Unity Week" in Grand Rapids. Ministers and clergy of many faiths along with members of their congregations were in attendance and participated in the service, with Rev. Jacob Eppinga of LaGrave Ave. Christian Reformed Church giving the sermon. Following the service a period of fellowship occurred in the school.

Hubert Humphrey, former U.S. Senator, Vice-President of the United States, and Presidential candidate in 1972, attended 10:30 A.M. Mass at St. Adalbert's Church on May 14, 1972. A large crowd met with him following the Mass.

An important event occurred on August 13, 1972 when Messrs. Robert Czerney, Sylvester Downer, Chester Gumowski, Edward Roguszka, and Sister Teresa Mahony, S.S.N.D. were commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist by Father Sniegowski at the 10:30 A.M. Mass. Since then many other devoted men and women have joined these first members in this distinguished service.

On that same day The Polish Heritage Society's traditional Polish concelebrated Mass and candlelight procession was held at the church. Many Polish priests from West Michigan concelebrated the beautiful and dignified Mass, which was attended by Polish Catholics from all over the city. A social get-together with refreshments in the school followed the ceremony.

On November 2, 1972 Revered Louis Pilarowski, associate pastor at St. Adalbert's Church from 1947-1966, passed away at Villa Elizabeth. His body lay in state at the church from 4:00 P.M. Friday until the concelebrated funeral Mass on Saturday at 11:00 A.M. Many priests attended the funeral, whose arrangements were made by Arsulowicz Brothers Mortuary.

In his will, the pious and beloved Father Pilarowski had provided for a new 25 note set of chimes for the church, and they were blessed in his memory by Father Sniegowski eight months later, on June 24, 1973.

The Home and School Association was formed and held its first meeting on May 6, 1973. Their purpose was to provide material aid to the school and its children in order to better foster their education. Among their contributions over the years have been the purchasing

of books for the school library and the purchasing and installing of coolers for the school cafeteria.

St. Adalbert's Parish held its first bingo game at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, July 22, 1973. Organized and managed by the energetic, devoted, and capable Mr. Jerome Bajdek along with many assistants, it began modestly as an effort to raise additional moneys for the parish general fund. According to Parish Council minutes from September 26th of that year, "net proceeds, less prize money, was \$3,300, and out of this was purchased 152 chairs, 8 tables, all equipment initial supplies, backup equipment, and enough supplies for the next twelve months." From that point on, it was reported, all proceeds would be clear profit. Praise was also given at that meeting on the "excellent job, good service, (and) comfortable arrangements" provided by the workers. The only change since 1973 is that these conditions have gotten even better, making St. Adalbert's weekly bingo games among the most successful on the West Side, usually netting over \$1,000 per week.

***St. Adalbert's Aid Society's Centennial***

Note should be made of an important anniversary of another of St. Adalbert's affiliated societies, the centennial of the St. Adalbert's Aid Society, which took place in 1972. The oldest Polish society in Grand Rapids and the springboard from which the parish evolved, it through the years had fulfilled its intended purpose well. Nearly \$70,000.00 in sick, welfare and death benefits had been paid to its members, and \$11,000.00 donated to the Church. In addition, the society took active roles in the two world-war efforts and sponsored many club and recreational activities. Surely the founders would be proud of the society's record.

The officers in its centennial year were as follows:

- President . . . . . Kenneth McNees
- Vice President . . . . . Anthony Kopec
- Financial Secretary . . . . . Joseph Gorski
- Recording Secretary . . . . . Elmer McCalmont
- Treasurer . . . . . Floyd Bushewicz
- Sick Director . . . . . Frank Sullivan
- Trustees . . . . . Edward Shippy  
    Jerome Matzen  
    Ray Franckowiak  
    John Szczepanski

Board members of the Ladies' Auxiliary included:

- President . . . . . Mary Jane McCalmont
- Vice President . . . . . Julia Szymczak
- Financial Secretary . . . . . Dorothy McNees
- Recording Secretary . . . . . Mary Lou Raap
- Treasurer . . . . . Helen Czlonka
- Sunshine Lady . . . . . Evelyn Wierzbicki
- Trustee . . . . . Harriet Masters

## IMMEDIATE ACTION

**W**HEN FATHER TED ASSUMED THE PASTORSHIP OF ST. ADALBERT'S IN 1970 he was faced with a staggering debt in the area of \$600,000. Most of it was owed to the lending firm of McMahan and Hoban for the renovation of the school in 1965, with nearly \$100,000 of the amount owed to individual parishioners for their generous, personal interest-free loans to Msgr. Maksymowski over the years. Perhaps a lesser man would have buckled under that burden, but the new pastor calmly went about the business of paying off the debt. Yet such a large amount does not simply disappear, and by the beginning of 1974, when a new idea began germinating in Father Ted's mind, the debt remained at over \$400,000. In the Sunday bulletin dated January 27, 1974, a summary of the parish debt was printed.

TO INDIVIDUALS	\$ 55,300.00
OTHER LOANS	44,980.00
McMAHON & HOBAN	<u>301,500.00</u>
	\$401,780.00

The next month a total payment of \$29,048.43 in principal and interest was due, with the total of \$214,000 due to McMahan and Hoban by February 25, 1976. Furthermore, to refinance the mortgage of that date for a ten year period would lead to an additional \$125,000 in interest alone. To prevent this waste of the parish's resources, Father Ted, in February of 1974, presented the problem to the Parish Council and the Finance Committee, where it was decided to conduct a formal fund-raising drive to pay off the mortgage by its due date in 1976. Volunteers were needed to organize and begin the drive as quickly as possible, and the following submitted their names.

**Visitation Division**

Chairman .....Bernard Prawdzik  
 Co-Chairman .....Thaddeus Buzalski

**Audit Division**

Chairman .....Thaddeus Buzalski  
 Recording Secretary .....Eleanor Gorski  
 Associate Pastor .....Father Richard Host

These organizers began their work forthwith, inviting individuals to serve as captains in charge of other volunteers to make house calls — the first time in recorded parish history that such an enterprise was undertaken. They were aided by Father Ted’s important letter to each parish family, enlisting their help and cooperation for a fruitful venture. Following is an excerpt effectively explaining the circumstances.

St. Adalbert at present faces a serious financial problem which could threaten the effective operation of the parish and of the services that we are able to provide the faithful. Our present income is not sufficient to meet our day to day needs and still be in a position to pay the interest and principal on our debt of \$380,000 (following the February payment), meet the mortgage payment of \$214,000 due in February of 1976, and make the necessary repairs of our plant.

The response to the plea was overwhelming. The many volunteers met with generosity and warmth in their house calls, and by March 18 the pledges and cash began to flow. By the end of that month a total of 873 parishioners had pledged \$251,438.00 over a two year period, of which \$54,016.00 had been donated in cash. By the end of that year the amount pledged reached \$260,997 and the cash received totalled \$125,506.14. As that amount and further payments were deposited promptly in a local bank, it drew substantial interest, which would in turn help to pay off the debt. Thus, when the final mortgage payment date arrived on February 25, 1976, the entire amount of \$214,000 was paid off from the more than \$254,000 received by that time, with the rest left in the bank to draw interest for the payment of the other remaining debts. The success of the



program once again demonstrated the positive, affirmative, and munificent character of the parishioners of St. Adalbert’s Parish.

The evening following the final payment a “mortgage burning party” was held at the West Catholic cafeteria, where hundreds of parishioners gathered to dine, offer toasts, and enjoy the humor and words of gratitude offered by Father Ted, Father Dick Host, Mr. Prawdzik, Mr. Buzalski and others. Symbolic of the joy they all felt was the actual burning of the mortgage, along with the presentation of a large imitation of the payment check by members of the eighth grade class, who had carefully copied and enlarged every detail. Those in attendance went home that night sharing the laughter and sense of relief that accompany freedom from debt.

## THE BASILICA

**I**N THE LONG AND ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY of St. Adalbert's Parish in Grand Rapids, there have been many occasions that could be called memorable. How memorable each is often varies with individuals, of course. But some events are of such magnitude that they become not only items in individuals' recollections, but milestones in the history of a community. St. Adalbert's has had those too: one thinks of the formation of the parish and the building of the first church; the construction of its monumental citadel of faith in 1913; and the great flurry of expansion in 1920 and 1921 that produced the largest and most beautiful school building in the city, one which would be frequently emulated in both the city and other parochial school systems. Which of these or other events stands in the forefront of our thoughts about St. Adalbert's Parish is debatable. But it is not debatable that alongside these most momentous occasions is one that took place just recently, in the ninety-ninth year of St. Adalbert's existence: That was the year when the church was solemnly dedicated as a Minor Basilica.

No doubt the Basilica of St. Adalbert is a gift deriving from many sources: from the God who blessed the immigrant Polanders with a legacy of piety, fortitude, endurance, and vision; from the two previous pastors, Msgr. Skory and Msgr. Maksymowski, who together ministered to the parish for a combined total of sixty-six years, and who respectively built the edifice and maintained and added to it over the years; and from the thousands of people who with dignity and sacrifice have supported it and loved it since its consecration. But in the final analysis it is directly the gift of our present pastor, Msgr. Thaddeus Sniegowski, whose love and respect for his people moved him to begin the process that would take eleven months to complete, culminating in the honor bestowed upon the church by Pope John Paul II.

The original idea was actually the product not of Msgr. Sniegowski, but of a Notre Dame sister residing at St. James Convent, Sister Mary Xaverine Matel. While discussing with him the tradition of the School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Adalbert's and of the church's history in general (her grandparents, Joseph and Catherine Sikorski, were early members of the parish, having settled in Grand Rapids in the 1880's), the notion occurred to her that, considering the great beauty of the church and in view of the parish's forthcoming centennial, he might broach the idea to Bishop Joseph Breitenbeck in order to gain his support. To her fertile and imaginative mind, the members of the Basilica of St. Adalbert and of the Diocese of Grand Rapids — indeed all Christians in the State of Michigan, since ours is its only basilica — owe a debt of gratitude.

Following this suggestion, which took place in January, 1979, Father Sniegowski spent some time in serious contemplation and prayer before deciding to initiate the process with a letter to Bishop Breitenbeck. As unselfish and unassuming a man as one could ever hope to meet, Fr. Ted's first thoughts were of his people and the honor they would receive:

*The people of St. Adalbert's would ever be grateful to you if their church could be given the title of a minor basilica, especially at this time of its one-hundredth anniversary as a parish.*

### **Bishop Breitenbeck's Efforts**

The Bishop, in full accord with the proposal from the start, immediately wrote to Rome. Together with Father Joseph Battersby, the Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese, they followed this first one with several more, explaining the importance of St. Adalbert's in the diocese as a mother parish and describing the grandeur of the church. Another letter of recommendation was sent to Rome from John Cardinal Dearden, Archbishop of Detroit. In addition, on July 24, 1979 Bishop Breitenbeck sent photographs, floor plans, and other details of both the interior and exterior of the church to Archbishop Jean Jadot, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States in Washington, D.C. In turn, he forwarded the documents to the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship in the

Vatican.<sup>1</sup> In another letter, also dated July 24, Bishop Breitenbeck addressed a personal petition to Msgr. Virgilio Noe, Associate Director of the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments, stating the following:

*It is my sincere hope that you would look favorably on this request. It is the largest and most beautiful Polish parish church in our Diocese. And the Polish people make up the largest number of the Catholics in this Diocese. And for decades past the Polish people furnished the most significant number of vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. They really have never had the recognition they richly deserve from the other Christian denominations and the Community. The elevation of Pope John Paul II to the Papacy has been of inestimable pride to them.*

*In conclusion, I sincerely join the ranks of my Polish Catholic citizens of this Diocese of Grand Rapids in asking you to look favorably on our petition to have the parish church of St. Adalbert, Grand Rapids be elevated to the rank of Minor Basilica.*

### **The Response**

Within a month after that letter, the formal document granting minor basilica status to St. Adalbert's Church was issued by the Sacred Congregation in Rome at the request of Pope John Paul II. The document arrived at the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, D.C. on October 3, during the Pope's visit to the United States, and was immediately forwarded to Bishop Breitenbeck, who received it four days later. Overjoyed at the news, the Bishop first sought official confirmation of the document before notifying Father Sniegowski on December 18, 1979.<sup>2</sup>

The document, composed in Latin with the Papal seal at the bottom, reads in its official translation as follows:

#### **JOHN PAUL II, SUPREME PONTIFF**

For Perpetual Memory

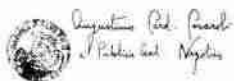
*It is gratifying to Us that both the church dedicated to St. Adalbert and the parish of that name in the Diocese of Grand Rapids are held in high esteem. This parish, from which four others have been formed, is one of the oldest of that Diocese.*



IOANNES PAVLVS PP. II

ad perpetuam rei memoriam

*Pergratum Nobis est novisse, tam templum Sancto Adalberto dicatum quam paroc-  
ciam hinc ipso nomine appellatam, quae Grandormontis diocesis sunt propria, haud levi mo-  
mento esse agendam. Talis parocchia, ad qua alicae ortae sunt quatuor, ceterarum illius diocesis  
omnium est vetustissima; eius autem templum, anno MCMXIII consecratum, structurae antiquae  
genus refert et fidelitatem. Ne, quod plus interest, tum presbyterorum provida sollicitudine  
industria tum Christianorum opera istuc crescere hoc tempore videtur incipit Christianae  
progressioni fovendae accommodata. Quae quam maxime provocare cupientes, preces iustissi-  
mi audientia, quibus Venerabilis Pater Joannes M. Breitenbeck, Episcopus Grandormontis,  
suo ipsius inique cleri ac sacri gregis nomine haud ita pridem petiit, ut illius parocchiae tem-  
plum, quod diximus, titulo Basilicae Minoris honoraretur. Nos igitur, mentem Nostram  
ad utilitatem Christianorum intendentes, idem autem sentientes de sententia Sacrae Congre-  
gationis pro Sacramentis et Cultu Divino Nobis propria, quam ratam habemus summa po-  
testate Nostra Apostolica per has Litteras perpetuamque in modum id templum in memoria  
ra parocchia Grandormontis diocesis existant, sanctique Adalberti sacrum ad dignitatem  
Basilicae Minoris eximium curisque exornamus iuribus et liberis concessionibus, quae  
ad omnia huius ordinis templa pertinent, mandantes ut, quae per decretum - de titulo Basili-  
cae Minoris - die VII mensis Junii anno MCMXVIII evulgatum, statuta sunt, ea reverenter Con-  
tariis quibuslibet non obstantibus, ceterum volumus ut has Litteras Nostrae religiose obser-  
ventur suoque et in praesentia et in posterum habeant effectus. Datum Romae, apud Sanctum  
Petrum, sub anulo Piscatoris, die XVII mensis Augusti, anno Domini MCMXXIX, Pontificatus  
Nostris iuribus*



Declaring St. Adalbert's A Basilica

The Church, consecrated in 1913, has the style and beauty of an ancient structure. But more importantly, due both to the provident and artful solicitude of the priests and to the work of the faithful, undertakings designed to foster Christian progress are proceeding at this very time.

We, desiring to promote these undertakings as much as possible, have acceded to the petition which Our Venerable Brother Joseph M. Breitenbeck, Bishop of Grand Rapids, in his name and on behalf of his clergy and sacred flock, has recently presented to request that the above mentioned church of that parish be honored with the title of a Minor Basilica.

Therefore, having in mind the good of the faithful, and concurring with the opinion proposed to Us by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, We by Our supreme Apostolic power, through this letter, now ratify and raise in perpetuity that church, which is in the above named parish of the Diocese of Grand Rapids and is dedicated to St. Adalbert, to the dignity of a Minor Basilica. We endow it with all the rights and liturgical privileges which belong to all churches of this rank. And we commend, whatever to the

contrary notwithstanding, that those things be observed which have been established through the decree regarding the title of a Minor Basilica, published June 6, 1968.

Finally, We desire that this letter of Ours be religiously attended to and have its effect both in the present and in the future.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, under the Fisherman's seal, on the twenty-second day of August in the year 1979, the first of Our Pontificate.

Augustine Cardinal Casaroli  
Ecclesiastical Notary Public

Just before Christmas Father Sniegowski read the decree to the attentive and exultant congregation at each Mass. Words of praise concerning Father Ted were overheard afterward in the vestibule and on the steps and sidewalks outside as the jubilant parishioners shared their feelings with each other. From then on it was not uncommon to hear remarks like the following: "You know I guess you just kind of take things for granted. I've attended this church for forty years and for most of them I've never really thought about how beautiful it is. But you know, it really is beautiful. I'm looking at things more closely now, and I'm seeing some things for the first time."

At any rate, Father Sniegowski and his able and astute assistant pastor, Father Joseph Kenshol, began to enthusiastically plan for the dedication ceremony. In a letter to Bishop Breitenbeck, dated January 7, 1980 Father Sniegowski first thanked him for his help, then announced the general plan:

With great joy and rightful pride, the parishioners of St. Adalbert's have received the news informing them that their church has been named a Minor Basilica by Our Holy Father, John Paul II . . . Therefore, in the name of the Priests, Sisters, and People of St. Adalbert's I wish to thank you most sincerely for all you have done, by your good word, your correspondence with Rome and the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, and your encouragement to me to carry out our plans. Thanks to you our dream is now a reality.

We are all enthused, as we prepare for our Jubilee of 1981. Preparation for the formal dedication of our new Basilica are already in motion. We hope to have everything set by Saturday February 16 at 3:00. We are planning on you to be the main celebrant and homilist for the occasion. After Mass we will have a hospitality hour and a sit-down banquet at West Catholic Cafeteria.

It should be mentioned that the work Bishop Breitenbeck performed on behalf of St. Adalbert's was not the only effort he has made for the Polish people during his productive and fruitful tenure in the Diocese of Grand Rapids. In a letter of congratulations to Father Sniegowski, the Most Revered Alfred L. Abramowicz, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago and Executive Director of The Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland, stated:

*God bless your Ordinary, His Excellency the Most Revered Joseph M. Breitenbeck, D. D. for interceding to Rome in behalf of this Polish landmark. It is another indication of his pastoral care for Poland and her people. He has shown this concern so often in the past by his support and gifts for the Church in Poland through the Catholic League . . . He has constantly aided the hierarchy, priests, sisters and the devoted laity of the Church in Poland.*

### ***The Meaning of Basilica***

As mentioned earlier, St. Adalbert's is the only Basilica in Michigan. It is interesting to note that there are only four major basilicas in the world, all found in Rome; and though there are many minor basilicas worldwide, only a handful are to be found in the United States. Thus, this distinction is even more to be appreciated. But what is a basilica?

The word itself is Greek in origin, and its meaning is "royal", "regal," or "fit for a king." Loosely translated it could mean "The House of a King", an appropriate definition when we consider that it is consecrated to Christ the King. At any rate, the first basilicas were churches modeled after the ancient Roman Hall of Justice, with such

modifications and additions as the cruciform shape, the baldachino or canopy over the altar, and the twin towers that would later evolve into the Romanesque style.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually the word "basilica" gained a new meaning quite apart from architectural style. Nevertheless the designation can only be given by Papal decree, and it is reserved for those churches that are not only architecturally beautiful but also historically and ecclesiastically important, both in spreading the Catholic Faith and in the particular nature of its ministry — as, for instance, to a particular ethnic group. St. Adalbert's fulfilled all of these criteria: Architecturally it is a splendid work of art; it is one of the first Polish parishes in Michigan, as well as in the United States in general; and it has served as the mother church of five others, thus helping to spread the Word of God.

### ***The Dedication***

The weather on dedication day, February 16, 1980, was atypical; as if by special dispensation the parishioners were delivered from the harsh cold of the Michigan winter. In the morning and early afternoon Father Sniegowski was busy receiving guests at his house, while Father Kenshol oversaw the final preparations. Then at two o'clock Bishop Breitenbeck was welcomed, and he and Father Sniegowski exchanged knowing smiles about the secret they shared that was to be announced at the dedication event.

The event itself began at three o'clock in a church ablaze with color, the most outstanding of which were the Papal colors: yellow and white bunting on the lofty columns and yellow and white chrysanthemums on the pews, graced by candles. A large yellow curtain made, as were the buntings, by ladies of the parish, formed the backdrop for the altar, and golden-flamed candlebra added further elegance to the sanctuary. It was a scene altogether fitting in view of the tradition of excellent taste that has for so long characterized St. Adalbert's Parish. The congregation of 1,500 that had filled this elegant church—now called "Basilica"—were thus appropriately prepared when the opening procession commenced with the fanfare of trumpets and trombones, the booming of drums, the ringing of bells, all softened by the glissando of violins and a cello. At the same time the choir sang "Behold the High Priest."

Special mention should be given here to Messrs. Joseph Westdorp and Jonathan Tuuk and to the choirs of the Basilica, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Holy Name Parish, and Immanuel Lutheran Church. It was Mr. Westdorp, the long-time organist and director of the choir at St. Adalbert's, who conducted the 125 members of the combined choir on this occasion. At the end of the program, after they had concluded a majestic version of the Halleluiahs Chorus accompanied by full instrumentation, the appreciative audience broke out in a long applause. And when they earlier sang the moving and lovely Polish hymn, *Serdeczna Matko* ("O Beloved Mother"), not a few eyes were unable to contain their tears. Mr. Westdorp's colleague in preparing the music was Mr. Tuuk, who served as organist and who composed and arranged several of the hymns that were performed.

The Basilica of St. Adalbert can be proud of its choir, who lent such richness to the vocal harmonies on that special occasion. Thus, it is appropriate to list their names, which are as follows:

Don Czurak	Don Kolenda
Karen Czurak	Julie Kolenda
Cathy DeFouw	Lottie Kubiak
Diane Dombrowski	Marlene Labinski
Michelle Downer	Eric Nylen
Jay Fagan	Judy Nylen
Mary Golczynski	Eugenia Perkowski
Jim Gorski	John Westdorp
Rita Haraburda	Monica Westdorp
Violet Heyboer	Mark Prus
Jacqueline Heynen	Marilyn Prus
Peggy Heitzman	Julie Schild
Veronica Jarmosco	Lucille Szoka
Gertrude Karatkiewicz	Alan Ten Eyck
Lillian Valliere	Sue Westdorp
Chuck Vogt	Marlene Wozniak
Laura Wawrzyniak	Ted Wozniak
Stan Wawrzyniak	Adele Zoppa
Kathy Westdorp	
Lori Westdorp	

The proceedings continued with great dignity and splendor from the blessing of the nave through the dedication prayer, and from the

reading by the Diocesan Notary, Reverend Ernest Schneider, of the Papal decree to the homily by Bishop Breitenbeck. Along with the solemnity of the ceremony, the sentiments of the congregation were further aroused by the large portrait of John Paul II, the first Polish Pope. But certainly one of the unexpected highlights of the day came in an announcement, in the Polish language, by Bishop Breitenbeck, following his homily:

*Praise be Jesus Christ. My beloved people of the Parish of St. Adalbert, today is for you a very historic day, as our Holy Father John Paul has elevated your church to the rank of a Minor Basilica in perpetuity. It is also my privilege in the name of the Holy Father, during this Mass, to announce this joyful tidings, that from this day on, this Church of St. Adalbert is going to be called Minor Basilica and to the pastor of this newly named Basilica, Father Thaddeus Sniegowski, in the name of the Holy Father, that from this day he will carry the title of Monsignor.*

A hearty applause followed this pronouncement as a grateful and appreciative congregation poured out their feelings for their good pastor. And so it was that only the third pastor to be named at St. Adalbert's in this century became, like his two distinguished predecessors, honored by the elevation to domestic prelate. The secret had been so well kept even from him that on the preceding day, when informed of this distinction, he had to rush to the diocesan offices to borrow the apparel appropriate to that title. These he donned after the announcement was made.

Another highlight of the day was the Bearing of the Gifts. In solemn procession a papal flag-bearer led members of the parish carrying the first Baptismal Register, a symbol of the founding of the parish as well as a reminder of spiritual commitment; the framed parchment document containing the papal decree; the portrait of Pope John Paul II; various gifts of food such as bread, grapes, and wheat; and water, wine, and eucharistic bread.

Perhaps the single most moving part of the liturgy was the Communion, with the throngs of people filing up the aisles and returning, a look of solemnity and reverence and humility on their faces. For now the 1,500 souls became as one and joined with the souls of so many departed members of the parish, the long chronicle of men and women who had so selflessly and faithfully devoted their lives to give

these present members — Polish and non-Polish alike — this incomparable and eternal gift. And the atmosphere was enhanced by the lovely melody of the *Serdeczna Matko*, a hymn so profound and touching and perfect as to be matchless.

But the entire two hour ceremony was exceptional. The liturgy, planned with painstaking care by Father Kenshol and the parish's liturgical committee, was inspiring and appropriately solemn. And assisting Bishop Breitenbeck and Msgr. Sniegowski were Father Kenshol, Deacon Jack Harig, Deacon Manuel Herrera, and Father Schneider—all of whom added to the dignity and significance of the event.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Subsequent Festivity***

Following the ceremony Bishop Breitenbeck and Monsignor Sniegowski retired to the rectory to receive further congratulations from the many visiting priests that attended, most of whom were former associates at the parish, the remainder being invited clergy from the other denominations. Meanwhile the congregation went home to prepare for the large banquet to be held that evening at the West Catholic cafeteria.

It turned out to be the largest gathering ever at that facility, with 750 parishioners, ex-parishioners, and friends of the parish assembling to share in the many libations and in the fine Polish cuisine. Well planned by Messrs. Thaddeus Buzalski, Raymond Nowak, and members of the St. Adalbert's Centennial Jubilee Committee, the entire evening was a happy and memorable event.

The festivities continued for a week, ending on Sunday, February 24 with a Eucharistic Day Closing at the Basilica. Featured again were the four combined choirs directed by Joseph Westdorp, with Jonathan Tuuk as organist. The main celebrant of this ceremony was Msgr. Edward Jaworowicz, Pastor of Holy Family Church in Caledonia, who was assisted by Msgr. Sniegowski and Father Gasper Ancona, Director of Spirituality for the diocese. Father Kenshol served as Master of Ceremonies. Father Ancona presented the homily, praising the significance of the Basilica and the people of St. Adalbert's:

*This temple is also a holy place because God makes his home here. And the generations of people who have been members here have made this a holy place as they came to be trained to share God's love here. Jesus is the temple of God, present to us in the Eucharist . . . giving Himself so that we may become living temples of God and thus may bring the living waters of God where ever we go in His name.<sup>5</sup>*

This service was followed by another banquet, thus bringing to a close the wonderful week of the dedication celebration.

### ***Letter To The Holy Father***

It should be noted here that after receiving the news of the elevation in rank of the church, Father Ted promptly and joyfully composed and sent a letter to the Pope thanking him for this honor and beseeching his presence at the upcoming centennial celebration. Because it is written on behalf of all of us, it deserves to be quoted in its entirety for posterity.

Your Holiness,

In the name of all the parishioners of the Basilica of St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., and also in my own name, I write these words to thank Your Holiness for the great honor that has come to our parish church. We are especially grateful to Your Holiness for having accepted the petition of our Most Reverend Bishop, Joseph M. Breitenbeck, Ordinary of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, for having raised our church to the dignity of a Minor Basilica.

We feel particularly happy that this honor has come to us from a Holy Father who is one of our own. The founders of this parish in 1881, and the builders of the magnificent church in 1907-1913, never gave it a thought that the church they were building for their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren would be one day raised to the rank of a basilica by a Holy Father who, like themselves, came from Poland. What a joy must be theirs in heaven!

In 1981 our parish will celebrate its centennial. Most heartily do we invite Your Holiness to be with us on this grand and memorable occasion. What a great and immeasurable joy it would be to have our Holy Father in our midst for these festivities to share that joy with us! Knowing, however, that this may well nigh be impossible for you to do, please be assured that in our festive observances we shall pray devotedly for our dear Pope John Paul II. We shall do this particularly now that we are a minor basilica for, indeed, as a special papal church, we feel especially obligated to pray fervently for Your Holiness and for the needs of the Church in these difficult times. This we shall do especially on the feast of St. Adalbert and on the anniversary of the elevation of this church to the dignity of a basilica (August 22). We likewise shall remember you very particularly on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and on the anniversary of Your Holiness' installation as a successor of St. Peter.

I end this letter with words of obedience and fealty.

Your servant in Christ,  
together with the entire parish,

*Thaddeus R. Sniegowski*  
Rev. Msgr. Thaddeus R. Sniegowski  
Pastor of the Basilica of St. Adalbert.<sup>6</sup>

Most Holy Father

Monsignor Thaddeus R. Sniegowski  
and the People  
of the Basilica of St. Adalbert  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

on the occasion  
of the 100th Anniversary  
of their Parish  
September 20, 1981

humbly beg of Your Holiness an  
Apostolic Blessing

*In nomine Domini Benedictionem Apostolicam concedit  
Alex. Cardinalis Vaticanus - die 6 Junii 1981*

+ Antonius M. Harris  
Archdeacon, P.O. S.P.



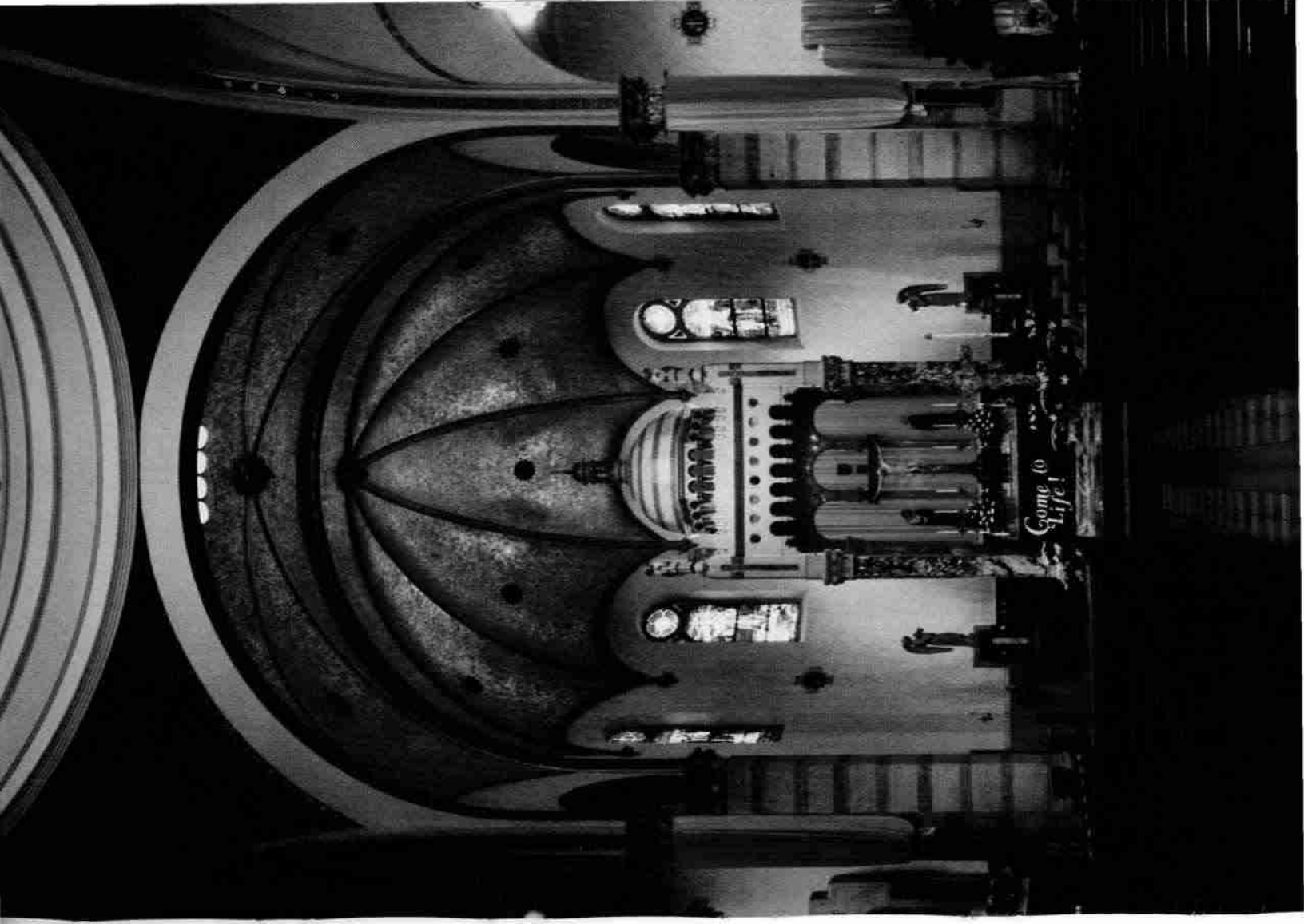
POPE JOHN PAUL II



BISHOP JOSEPH M. BREITENBECK

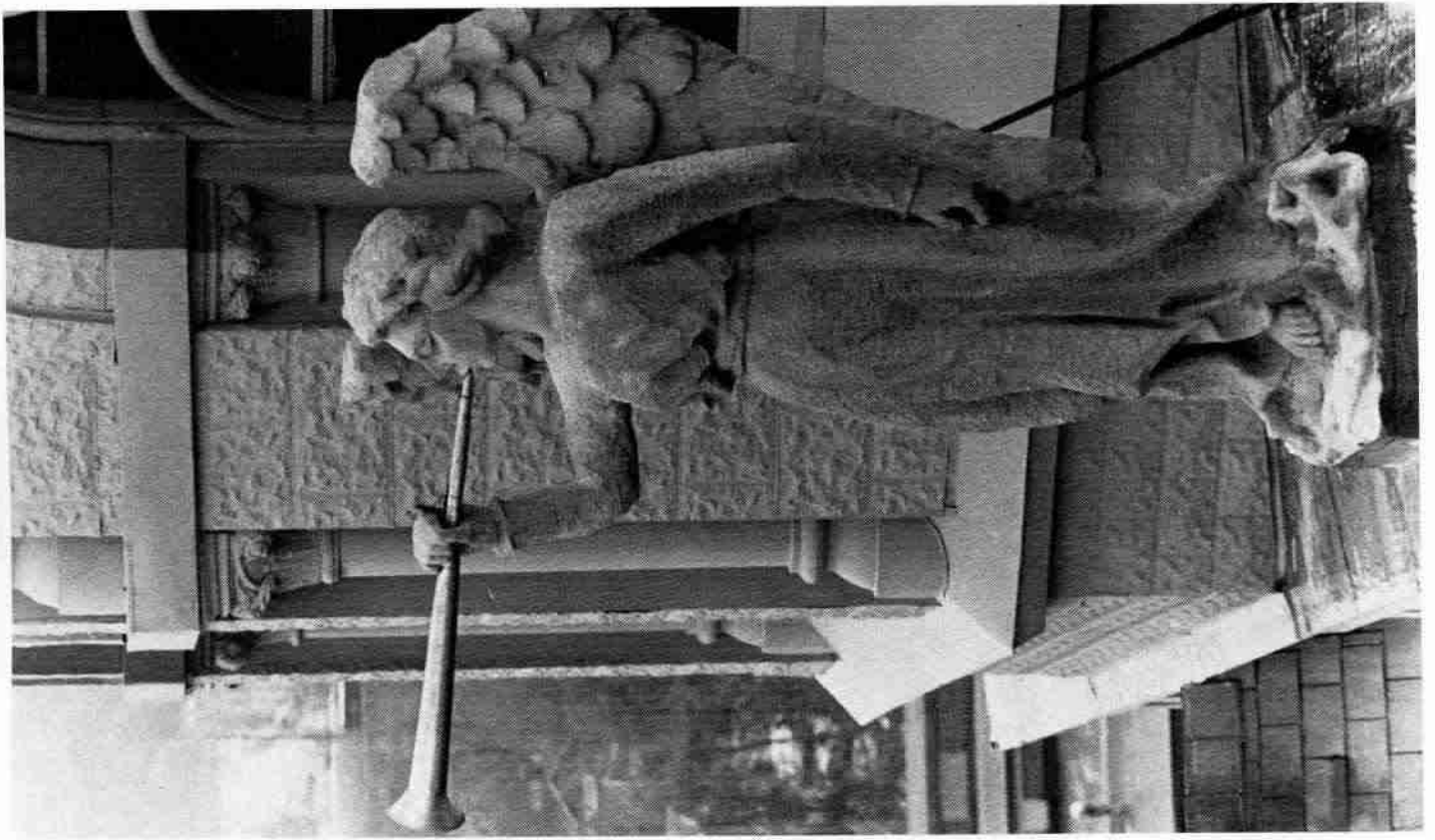


REVEREND MONSIGNOR THADDEUS R. SNIĘOWSKI

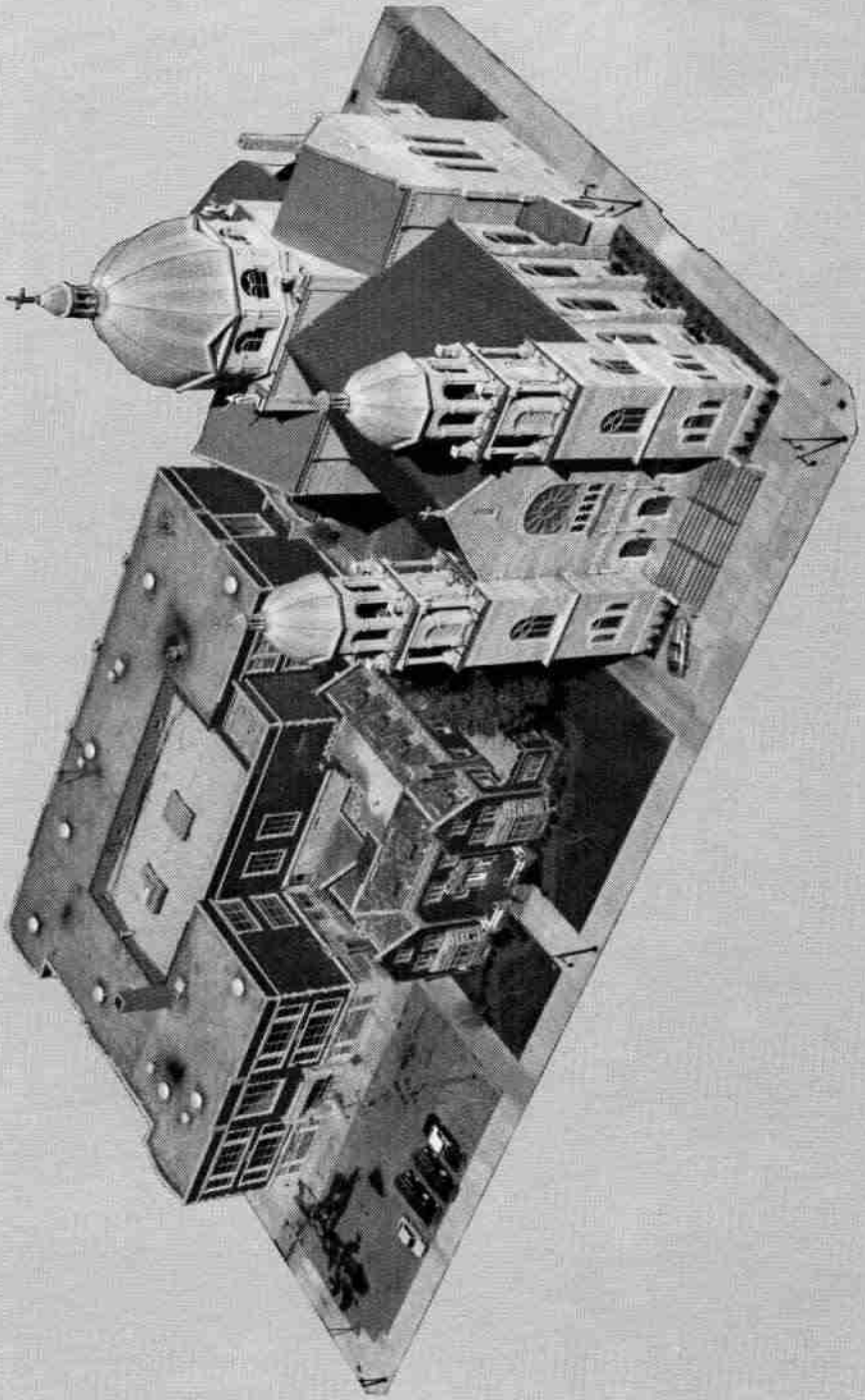








Stained Glass Windows



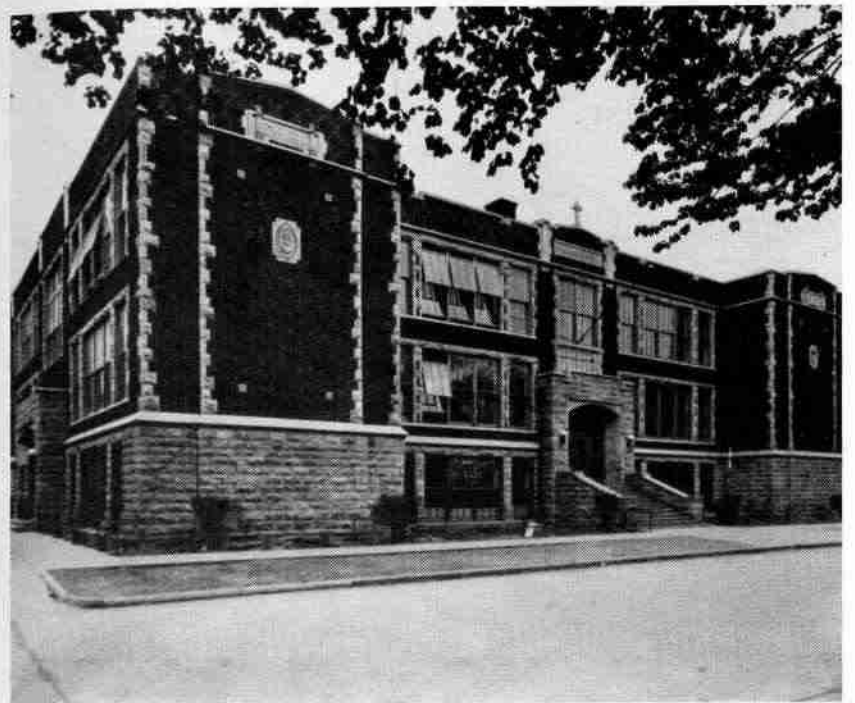
Aerial view of school, rectory and church - 1981



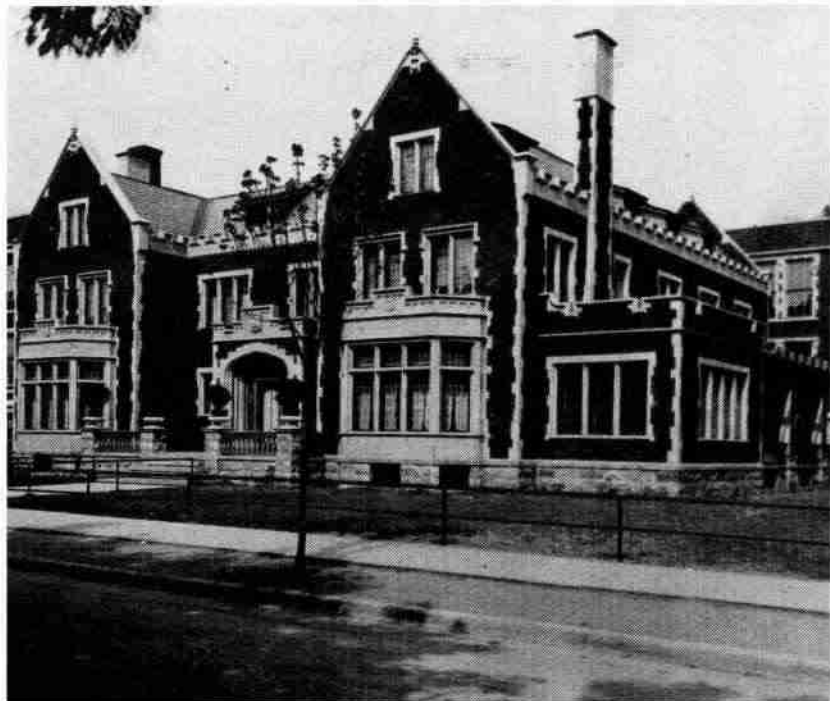
Graduating Class of St. Adalbert's - 1917



St. Adalbert's Church



St. Adalbert's School



St. Adalbert's Rectory



Original Convent in 1893.



Picture of St. Adalbert's Church, painted by the late Mathias Alten, shown to Monsignor Sniegowski by Women's City Club, - 1980.



Centennial Year Communion Class of St. Adalbert's.





ST. ADALBERT'S SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THERESE - PRINCIPAL  
SR. MAGDALESE - GRADE 1

1980

1981



ST. ADALBERT'S SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THERESE - PRINCIPAL  
MRS. CHAMBER - GRADE 2

1980

1981



ST. ADALBERT'S SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THERESE - PRINCIPAL  
MRS. LANCE - GRADE 3

1980

1981



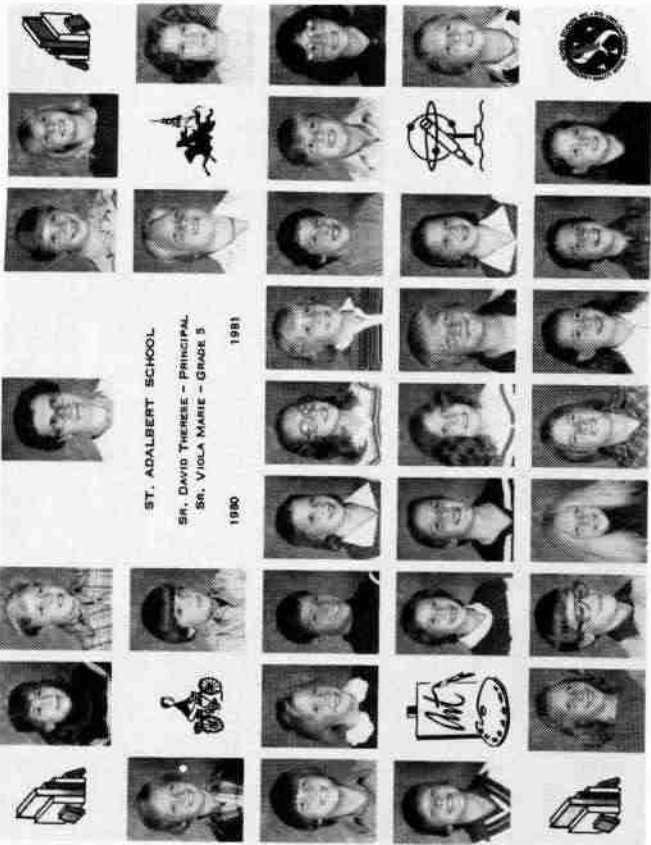
ST. ADALBERT'S SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THERESE - PRINCIPAL  
SR. WINIFRED - GRADE 4

1980

1981





ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THRESE - PRINCIPAL  
SR. VIOLA MARIE - GRADE 5

1980 1981



ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THRESE - PRINCIPAL  
SR. MARY MONK - GRADE 6

1980 1981



ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THRESE - PRINCIPAL  
SR. STEINE - GRADE 7

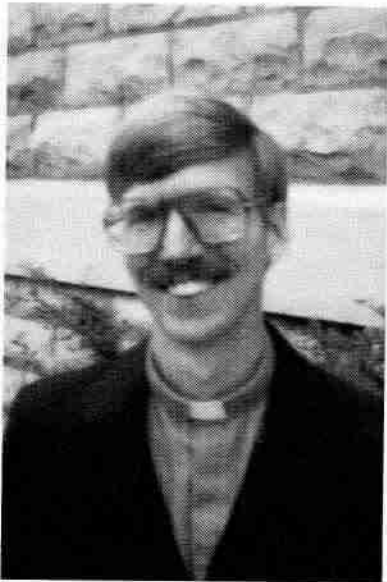
1980 1981



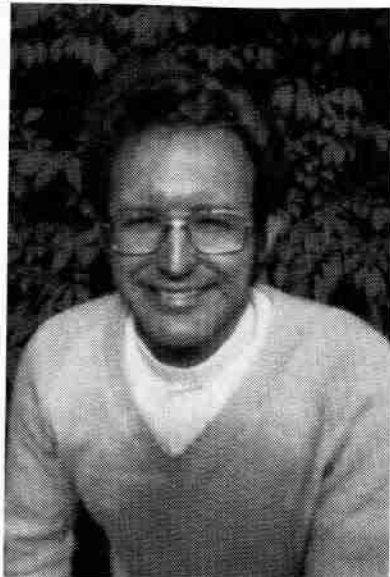
ST. ADALBERT SCHOOL

SR. DAVID THRESE - PRINCIPAL  
MR. KOLLOVIC - GRADE 8

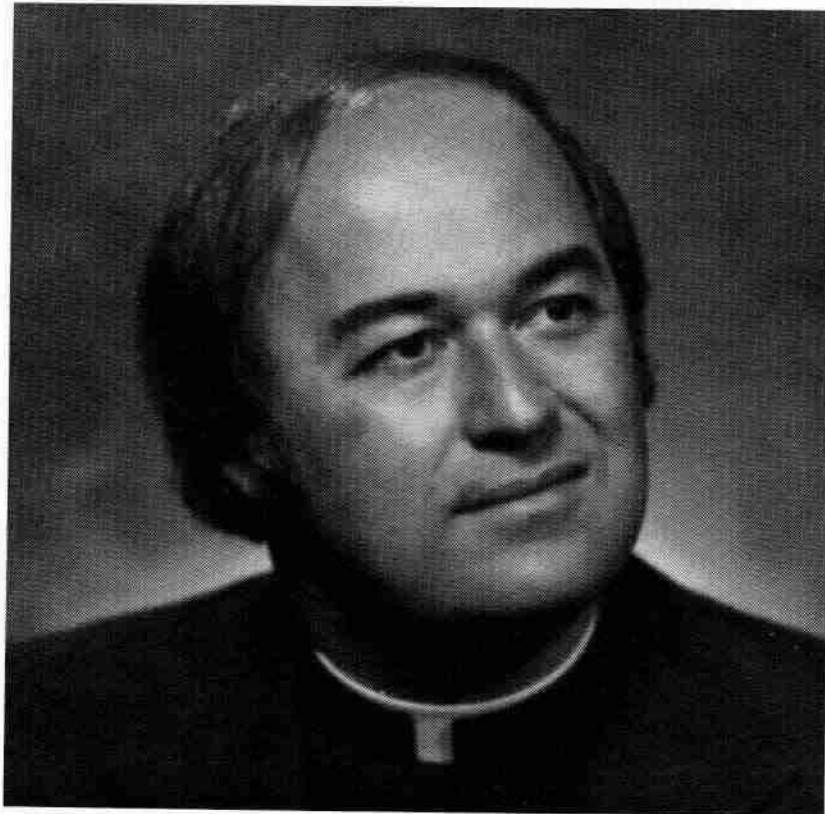
1980 1981



REVEREND THOMAS PAGE



REVEREND WILLIAM LANGLOIS



REVEREND JOSEPH KENSHOL

## PLANS FOR THE CENTENNIAL

**I**T SEEMS AS IF THE NUMBER “100” has a sort of magic attached to it, and the word “centennial”, by itself or with any numerical prefix, has a ring of grandness and importance that few other words contain. Most especially is this true for those who have been a part of any community for a length of time, from half a decade to seventy years — long enough to have sent down roots and to have grown in the fertile soil of that community, whether of a nation or of a parish. Since few people live the entire span of a hundred years, the magic consists in a kind of co-mingling of spirits: those of the present members with those of the original which results in the extraordinary feeling that the present members *deserve* to celebrate, as if they had indeed been there from the beginning and had seen all of the good times and bad, the jubilation and travail. And in a strange sense perhaps they had, for the lives of their ancestors are contained in every brick and stone, every image and word that has come down to the present. They are alive in us and for us, regardless of our background or ethnic stock, as long as we are willing to observe, listen, feel, and absorb.

With such an awareness, however dim, the people of St. Adalbert's Parish began in the 1970's to anticipate the magical event of their centennial. And in the forefront was Father Ted Sniegowski, who as early as 1974 began to visit the older parishioners and tape interviews with them about their recollections of the early days of this century, and to collect memorabilia, photographs, newspaper clippings and any other information he could come across. And ideas began to form, too, about whom he might choose to organize the festive events, about what kinds of preparations needed to be made, and about what kinds of things the parishioners — recipients of so many blessings — might bequeath to those who follow them.

Hence, when the year 1978 arrived Father Ted was ready to begin work in earnest. He approached Mr. Ted Buzalski and asked him to accept the role of general chairman of the centennial year activities. Mr. Buzalski, a devoted and energetic man who had proved himself so capable in a number of other parish functions, agreed; and together they began to plan for the event. The first thing they did was create a Centennial Board consisting of Father Sniegowski, Father Joseph Kenshol, Mr. Buzalski, various chairmen of the Parish Council and other commissions, and several parishioners active in the parish. From this the Jubilee Committee was formed; this comprised all members of the Centennial Board, the heads of all the parish organizations, and other active parishioners; these in turn were asked to seek out even more interested people. Altogether the Jubilee Committee grew to almost a hundred members, representing a genuine cross section of the parish. From them would evolve a number of other important committees.

### *Church Beautification*

Since the church is the central and most vital part of any parish, one of the first priorities of the Jubilee Committee was to improve its appearance. During the years since its last cleaning, the paint yellowed, the vinyl had grown dingy, many of the pews were damaged with age, the heating system had become antiquated and the insulation ineffective. Moreover, the organ, which had received its last renovation thirty years earlier, had deteriorated significantly — particularly its pipework. Indeed, to repair it would have cost \$100,000, with no major guarantee that the improvements would last. Considering these problems, one of the most important arms of the Jubilee Committee was formed: The Church Beautification Committee, consisting of Messrs. Frank Przybysz, Edwin Downer, Edward Muraski, and Father Ted Sniegowski. Their job was to investigate, evaluate and recommend to the Jubilee Committee the best course of action to follow regarding the renovations to be made. One of the first things they did was ask for suggestions from the parish at large. By the early fall of 1979 their recommendations and the estimated costs thereof were as follows, though not in order of priority.

1. Refinish, rebuild, or replace present pews.	\$100,000
2. Beautification of the interior of the church, including painting and decorating.	40,000
3. Outside lighting of the dome and improvement of lighting in the choir.	5,000
4. Hospitality room in church basement.	10,000
5. Improvement of public address system.	5,000
6. Outdoor identification and Mass schedule sign.	3,000
7. Improvement of the heating systems, including insulation in the rectory, convent, and school.	50,000
8. Installation of new organ.	225,000
9. Miscellaneous.	12,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECTED COST</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>

As of this writing, most of the above improvements have been made, thanks once again to the generosity and good will of St. Adalbert's parishioners.

### *The Fund Drive*

Since the money to pay for such major beautification projects unfortunately doesn't materialize out of the air or rain down from heaven, it was decided that a fund drive patterned after that of the Immediate Action drive of five years before be initiated. Mr. Bernard Prawdzik, who had chaired the earlier drive so capably, was again chosen as chairman; he was to be ably assisted by five co-chairmen: Messrs. Robert Longfield, Robert Czerney, William Jarema, Louis Simhauser, and Edwin Downer — all veterans of many years' experience in parish activities. And as in 1974 the firm of John V. McCarthy Associates in Detroit was hired, at what turned out to be a small fee of \$11,900, to advise about and manage the drive.

The well organized fund drive proved fruitful before a cent was collected in the enthusiastic willingness of the many volunteers to help out. For besides the eighteen group leaders, a total of 175 parishioners enlisted to call on their neighbors for three year pledges of whatever they could give. And in the spirit of their impecunious



forefathers, many of these devoted people offered significant sacrifices for their beloved church so that as of this writing more than \$375,000 has been contributed to the affirmation of life and faith that has long been a tradition at St. Adalbert's Parish.

### **Renovation**

With the money raised by the fund drive, the Jubilee Committee was able to initiate the planned renovations on what was now the Basilica of St. Adalbert. By the spring of 1980 insulation was added to the rectory, convent, school and basilica to help stem the rampant rises in the cost of heating. At the same time, more than 1,000 broken tiles — so vulnerable to Michigan weather — were replaced, a project which alone, including labor and materials, cost approximately \$20,000. Inside, amid a maze of scaffolding and the odor of oil paint, the walls were being covered with new vinyl; the ceiling, columns, dome and choir loft were being painted; every statue, window, and fixture was being cleaned; and the cracked pews were being mended. The entire project, supervised by the firm of Cas. Plagens Studios of Traverse City, took several months to complete; and in September, when the new school year began, the students had to attend Mass in the gym. Finally, in December the last vestige of the scaffolding was removed, and the basilica shone with a brilliance worthy of the title.

In addition to these improvements, the basement of the basilica was completely remodelled with panelling, carpeting, a kitchen, and new ceiling and light fixtures. Henceforth, it would fittingly be known as the Msgr. John A. Maksymowski Centennial Room.

### **The Organ**

In early 1980 an ad appeared in the journal, *The American Organist* with a sketch of a large set of pipes surrounding the lower three-quarters of a roseate window. Adjacent to the sketch was this legend: "1980 will see the installation of this notable 71-rank organ in a magnificent setting", and under it was printed in bold type the setting: "St. Adalbert's R. C. Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan". The ad was placed in the journal by The Wicks Organ Company of

Highland, Illinois, the firm that built, installed, and tuned one of the most beautiful organs in West Michigan.

Purchase of the organ was a major priority of the Jubilee Committee, whose members and fund raisers acknowledged such when the fund drive began. Though it was a somewhat controversial priority, most of the parishioners agreed that, considering the legacy that had been left to them by the immense sacrifices of their forefathers, this would be a fitting memorial to the future generations of St. Adalbert's Parish. The instrument it replaced had been a fixture in the parish since 1890. It was rebuilt and enlarged in 1913 at a cost of \$9,000 and again remodelled in 1950 at a cost of nearly \$20,000 (about \$100,000 in 1979 dollars). Now at ninety years of age, the organ was again in need of major renovation at a cost perhaps twice that of the 1950 amount. Rather than face escalating costs for constant maintenance, the Jubilee Committee reasoned that a new organ would eliminate the expensive cost of repairs and provide inspiration for generations to come.

Hence, a select committee including Messrs. Frank Przybysz Edwin Downer, Edward Muraski, Joseph Westdorp and Jonathon Tuuk was formed to shop around for a new instrument that would complement the beauty of the basilica and the "best acoustics in the city", in the words of Mr. Jonathon Tuuk, regarded as the foremost organist in Grand Rapids. After many months of traveling to churches and hearing organs from several companies, they settled on the Wicks Organ Company whose reputation for quality craftsmanship is acknowledged around the world.

After the contract was signed, representatives of the Wicks Company came to St. Adalbert's to test the acoustics and study its new setting. The organ was designed by Mr. Tuuk in collaboration with Messrs. Charles Moseley and William Mollema, along with our Joseph Westdorp. It is necessary to emphasize that there is not another organ like this in the world. It was designed specifically for the Basilica, built to our own specifications and later tuned to the average temperature at which the building is maintained. Moreover, even the appearance of the wooden pipe case and the organ console was matched to the ornately carved oak woodwork in the choir loft, the Wicks Company taking extreme pains to stain the new wood for an almost perfect match of the old, which dated from 1907.

The installation by Mr. Mollema and Mr. John Cathewood took two months to complete. During that time they received valuable assistance by the school children in toting the pipes, some weighing as much as two hundred pounds, up to the choir loft from the basement, and from parish volunteers in setting in place the heavy panels that would hold the pipes. Following the installation, Messrs. Tuuk and Mosely spent three more weeks tuning each of the pipes to achieve the perfect tone for the Basilica. Finally it was ready to be played during Advent of 1980.

As reported in the Organ Dedication Booklet, there are 4,242 pipes in this organ, divided into 72 sets or "ranks." Each rank produces a different orchestral sound, such as that of a flute or an oboe, a trumpet, etc. In some cases two, three, four, and five ranks sound together, producing a "mixture," that is, the bright, crisp sound of the instrument. The pipes can be made of wood or various metals, such as zinc, nickel, or copper, depending on the desired sound. Sounds will also vary according to the density, size, and metal composition of the pipes.

This organ is separated into four divisions: The Swell, Great, Choir, and Pedal. Each division has its own keyboard, with sixty-one notes on each of the three manual keyboards and thirty-two notes on the pedal board. The pipes of two of these divisions are housed within wooden chambers that open to the church with a series of shutters, controlled by the organist at the console, allowing him to make the pipes sound louder or softer. The remaining two divisions are non-expressive; that is, the method of making them louder or softer involves pulling out or pushing in a draw knob. This electrically allows the chest beneath a particular set of pipes to fill with air, which in turn causes air to rush up the pipe to produce sound when a note on the keyboard is depressed. By adding several stops or ranks together, an almost endless combination of sounds can be produced.

This magnificent instrument cost a total of \$225,000, including installation and tuning. Though the amount is high, the Jubilee Committee reasoned that it might be twice as high in some not-too-distant year when the next generation would inevitably be faced with the organ's replacement. Instead of having to confront that inevitability, they will be able to relish unimpededly the inspirational sounds of this grand new organ — the present generation's gift to the future!

### The Dedication Concert

As a part of the centennial year's festivities, an organ dedication concert was given on April 26, 1981. The Jubilee Committee had invited the internationally acclaimed organist, M. Pierre Cochereau, since 1955 organist at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, as guest artist. A brilliant musician, M. Cochereau performed to an audience of about two thousand parishioners, area musicians, student and lovers of fine music — including the owners and management of the Wicks Organ Company. The Basilica was overflowing: Every pew was filled to capacity, and folding chairs to accommodate many more appreciative listeners were set up in the sanctuary and in the central aisle. Despite these efforts another hundred people had to stand in the rear and at the side entrances. None was disappointed.

After a warm introduction by Msgr. Sniegowski and a hearty reception by the audience, M. Cochereau proceeded with his evening's program, a mixture of religious, classical, and evocative compositions, which included the following:

#### I

Offertoire "Sur les Grand Jeux"	Francois Coupenin
Chorale II in B minor	Cesar Franck
Second Symphony, Opus 20	Louis Vierne
Choral	
Cantabile	
Final - Allegro	
Evocation, Opus 37	Marcell Dupre
Final	

#### INTERMISSION

#### II

Improvisation on Two Submitted Themes
Preludium
Fuga
Six Variations

It was a superb performance appreciated by all who attended. M. Cochereau demonstrated his expertise throughout the concert as he achieved every range of each division that could be done in an hour

and a half, from a serene, almost inaudible softness to a gradual crescendo to the thunderous blast of the great exposed trumpets. Throughout, the audience responded with a decorum and appropriateness that complemented the dignity of the proceedings. A long standing ovation at the conclusion of M. Cochereau's closing thirty minute fugue and improvisation amply displayed the gratitude and appreciation of the people for this incredibly fine performance.

Following the concert a large number of the audience gathered in the Msgr. John A. Maksymowski Centennial Hospitality Room for refreshments. There many of them had the opportunity to meet the artist who had filled their souls with such inspiration. Thus ended an evening that few who attended will soon, if ever, forget.

***Centennial Year Schedule Of Events***

The Jubilee Committee, after much deliberation, decided that a year-long series of events to celebrate the centennial would be preferable to a week's festivities in order that the historical occasion would remain in the forefront of the parishioners' minds. In perusing the schedule of events note that a good many of them involve music, that lovely and noble form of expression.

January 4, 1981	Centennial Year Inaugural Liturgy and Special Opening Ceremonies
February 15, 1981	Dedication of Church Hospitality Room in Honor of Rev. Msgr. John A. Maksymowski
February 28 through March 6, 1981	Parish Centennial Mission, presented by Fr. Emery Tang of the Franciscan Order
March 1, 1981	Centennial Concert, Chorale, and Organ Music; Choirs of St. Adalbert Basilica, Holy Name Catholic Church, and Immanuel Lutheran Church
April 12, 1981	Centennial Pancake Breakfast
April 26, 1981	Organ Dedication Concert Pierre Cochereau, Organist at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, France

May 17, 1981	Open House
August 1-2, 1981	Centennial Festival
September 9, 10, & 11, 1981	Parish Spiritual Renewal Fr. Gasper Ancona
September 18, 1981	Special Mass For All Deceased Parishioners
September 19, 1981	Centennial Banquet - West Catholic Cafetorium
September 20, 1981	Liturgy Celebrating 100 Years — Sto Lat! Opening of Cornerstone
September 21, 1981	Special Children's Day
September 25, 1981	Special Senior Parishioners Day
September 27, 1981	Eucharist Day — A Special Day for Clergy.
October 11, 1981	Special Mass 10:30 A.M. for Sisters — Dinner in School Cafeteria
October 18, 1981	Organ Concert Jonathan A. Tuuk, Guest Artist
November 22, 1981	Organ and Instruments Concert Leonard Allman and Company, Guest Artists, Joseph Westdorp, Organist
December 27, 1981	Closing Jubilee Ceremonies — a spectacular and colorful liturgy and the sealing of the time capsule

It should be noted, however, that the centennial celebration is more than merely the attendance at these various events. The words of the General Chairman of the Jubilee Committee, Mr. Thaddeus Buzalski, are particularly appropriate here.

*There were many goals set for the Jubilee year aside from special celebrations. Those other goals were more personal and spiritual. We must remember and envision the first hundred years, the devotion of our forefathers, the spiritual life of the*

founders of the parish and the many hardships they had to endure. Hopefully we will make future generations as proud of our parish as we are proud of our past. It should be our goal to build even further on the foundations of faith set by our predecessors.

We have all tried to bring our parish closer together during this historic year in somewhat the same way our ancestors enjoyed social and church activities. We have all tried to capture that feeling of parish togetherness during this memorable centennial. Let us all continue this spirit as we enjoy the real reason for our temporary existence on earth in preparation for our permanent reward with God.

**The Jubilee Committees**

All of the members of the Jubilee Committee have done an outstanding job in creating a year of memorable activities. Without their dedication, hard work, and selflessness, none of these events would have been possible. Special tribute should be paid to the devoted chairpersons of the various sub-committees.

Rev. Msgr. Thaddeus R. Sniogowski, Pastor  
Thaddeus W. Buzalski, General Chairman

Rev. Joseph W. Kenshol, Associate Pastor  
Rev. Mr. Jack Harig, Deacon  
Rev. Mr. Manual Herrera, Deacon

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Chairpersons</i>
Banquet	Robert Longfield
Centennial Book	Margaret Kumko Philip Jung Stan Swidwa
Choir/Organ	Joseph A. Westdorp
Cook Book	Helen Bajdek Theresa Swidwa Beatrice Zdybel
Church Beautification	Frank Przybysz Edward Muraski Edwin Downer

Festival	Jerome Bajdek
Finance	Raymond Nowak
Jubilee Fund Drive	Bernard Prawdzik
Legal Advisor	Louis E. Simhauser
Liturgy	Sister Eileen Flavin C.S.C. Sue Swidwa
Open House	Harold DeKoster Edward Roguszka
Publicity	Robert J. Czerney
Souvenirs	Lorraine Oately
Time Capsule	Edmund Preston

**THE CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL**

Of all the events on the centennial agenda, the most visible and widely attended was the Centennial Festival, held on the weekend of August 1 and 2, at which an estimated seven to ten thousand people delighted in the music and dancing, the games and refreshments, and the spirit of brotherhood that prevailed under the warm summer sun. The first major festival held by the parish since its Golden Jubilee in 1931, its purposes were to celebrate not only the history of St. Adalbert's Church but also its present achievements, to promote parish unity, and, simply, to provide for two days of fun.

The idea for the festival germinated in 1979 during the early planning stage of the Jubilee Committee, and the burden of organizing the event fell into the hands of Mr. Jerome Bajdek. A skilled and shrewd veteran manager of various parish affairs, including the highly successful bingo games, Mr. Bajdek chose as his co-chairmen two able and energetic men, Messrs. Gerald Polkowski and Richard Broton. Together with Msgr. Sniogowski and other members of the Jubilee Committee they decided to try to make this festival resemble the Golden Jubilee celebration as closely as possible, including live polka music, dancing in the street, a beer tent, and

concessions. Thus began the exhausting work that was to lead to one of the most joyous events in the St. Adalbert's area in many years.

Immediately after this decision Mr. Bajdek and his wife Helen embarked on a two year research mission, attending church festivals of various denominations from all over Western Michigan, judging the quality of foods, games, layouts, and so on to determine what would and what would not work effectively. (It was during the summer of 1979 also that Mrs. Bajdek conceived of the Centennial Cookbook containing recipes solely of parishioners; it was to be printed and sold successfully months before the festival, and, further, was to be the largest-selling item in the Centennial Souvenir Booth at the festival. As of this writing, over 2700 copies have been sold.) Meanwhile, a date for the event had to be decided upon; hence, in the summer of 1980 a call was placed to a local meteorologist, Mr. Craig James, who, after checking through twenty-one years of records, declared that the first weekend of August consistently was the most pleasant and therefore would probably be the most propitious time for an outdoor festival. His prediction proved to be accurate as the weather was warm and balmy, with temperatures in the mid-80's.

As the date approached the heavy work began, with Mr. Broton soliciting and receiving donations in the form of gift certificates and prizes from generous local business people, Mr. Polkowski enlisting volunteers to oversee the various booths, and Mr. Bajdek procuring the necessary licenses and the permission from the city to close Fifth Street from Davis to Muskegon Avenue. Prizes, donations, souvenirs, raffle tickets, and other goods were sorted and stored in the old Derezynski Mortuary building across Davis Avenue from the Basilica. Perhaps to the chairmen's surprise — and certainly to their delight! — the parishioners were eager to help manage the many booths; some even called to volunteer their ideas and services. Older members — particularly the ladies of the Holy Rosary Society and the Welfare Society — remembering the Gold Jubilee festivities, were especially anxious to donate their time and energy. The word "staggering" is possibly the most appropriate description of the enthusiasm and earnestness of the many people who volunteered their efforts to make the festival such a success.

During the week prior to the festival, anticipation swelled like a tide. Mr. Bajdek and his daughter, Ms. Jeanne Penoyer, appeared on a local television interview program to promote the affair as well as

the cookbook. Members of St. Adalbert's recreational softball team, the Basilica Bombers, enlisted as security guards for Thursday through Saturday nights to protect the booths, tents, and merchandise from possible vandalism. Then on Thursday the tents were pitched: one on the playground at the west entrance of the school to house the games of chance; another in the city park across Fifth Street for the children's games; a third to the east of that for concessions; and the last, the beer tent, to the north alongside the playground of the park. On Friday the various booth managers and their helpers arrived to sort through the prizes and sales items, construct their booths, and arrange the space that they would use. In the kitchen, the cooks began preparing the 3000 lbs. of chicken quarters to be baked by Jeanne Penoyer and Charlene Heeren under the supervision of Helen Sienko; they, along with Donald and Theresa Golczynski, Mrs. Pola Czurak, and Julia Wisniewski, may have been the hardest workers at the festival, laboring from 2:00 p.m. until midnight on Friday and all day on both Saturday and Sunday to serve a total of 1,135 dinners (460 on Saturday and 675 on Sunday) to hungry parishioners and guests. Also on Friday the electrical wiring for the concessions and beer booths, outdoor lighting, and public address systems was installed by Mr. Fred Stasiukinas. (The generosity of the parishioners did not stop with the end of the festivities. After the last meal was served, several high school students volunteered to scrub all the pots and pans in the kitchen and mop the floors in the kitchen and dining areas. They were joined by many more volunteers who stayed for hours disassembling the tents and booths outdoors and cleaning up the grounds.)

The one sad note during the occasion was the untimely passing of Mr. Frank Perkowski, for many years one of the pillars of the parish, on Friday, July 31, the eve of the festival. A member of the Ushers Club, the Knights of St. Casimir, and the St. Adalbert Aid Society, and an active participant in countless parish projects, Mr. Perkowski's death left an emptiness in the hearts of many friends and acquaintances, as well as of his family. As his body lay in repose at the Arsulowicz Brothers Mortuary, his friends took time away from the festival to pay their respects to his memory and condolences to his wife, Estelle. His passing was a loss to the entire parish family, but his good works will succeed him for years to come.

On Saturday morning the final preparations were made by the various chairpersons and their helpers, who began to arrive before 9:00. It is fitting at this point to give the chairpersons recognition, for the tireless efforts proved indispensable to the success of the festival. They include:

- Afghan and Doll Raffle Booth . . . . Mrs. Cecilia Ziomkowski
- Balloons . . . . . Dianne Cisco, Donna Polkowski
- Bingo Room . . . . . Mary Jane Gregory, Patricia Harig
- Children's Games Tent . . . . . Gerald and Marija Nowak,  
Michael and Carolyn Szost
- Concessions Booth . . . . . Ronald Kozal and members of  
the Athletic Boosters Club
- Craft Booth . . . . . Bea Zdybel, Esther Sanborn
- Dining Area . . . . . Mrs. Lucille & Kathleen Roguszka
- Gaming Tent . . . . . Edward Wasco and members  
of the Ushers Club
- Grocery Booth . . . . . Michelle Downer and members  
of the Basilica Choir
- Kitchen . . . . . Helen Sienko, Jeanne Penoyer,  
Charlene Heeren, Donald & Theresa Golczynski,  
Julia Wisniewski, Mrs. Pola Czurak
- Money Counters . . . . . Nancy Doolittle, Mary Kuryto
- Plant Booth . . . . . Stephanie Prawdzik
- Souvenir Booth . . . . . Warren & Loraine Oatley
- White Elephant Booth . . . . . Barbara Karston

Other successful attractions included a dunk tank and raffle booths offering an automobile; a boat, motor, and trailer; a vacuum cleaner; bicycles; and a wood-burning stove. These had no chairpersons in charge of them, but were run by volunteers. It might be added that the number of volunteers helping to operate the various attractions, from the kitchen and bingo room to the children's games and the beer tent, was astonishing. And all worked their shifts, ranging from two to six hours long, not only willingly but cheerfully.

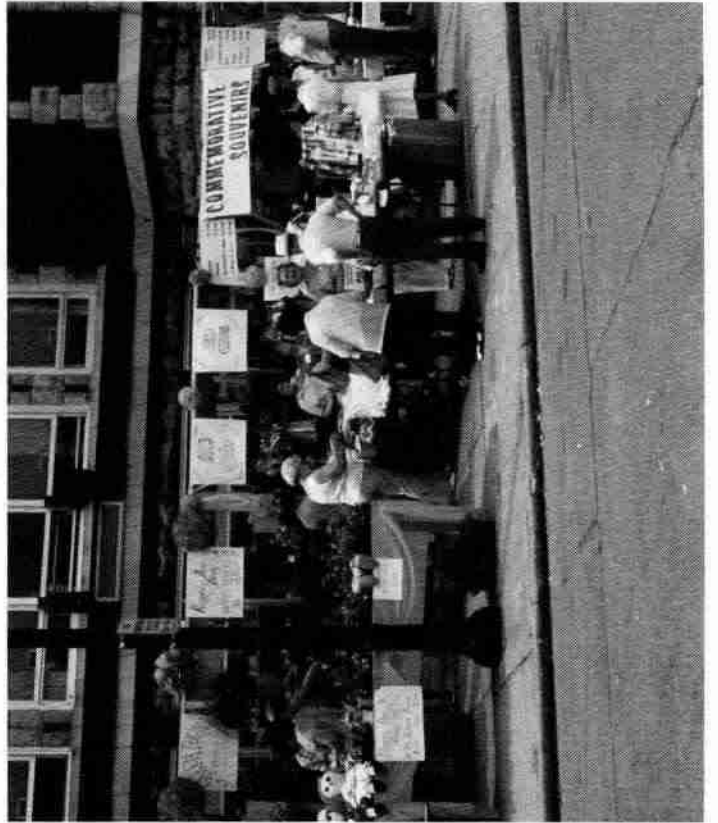
Although the official opening of the festival was scheduled for noon on Saturday, people began to appear an hour earlier browsing along the plant and souvenir booths. As the warm, sunny day progressed, hundreds more came to sample the games and taste the food. Clowns juggled and sold balloons while people sat at the picnic tables in the shade of maple and sycamore trees enjoying cold refreshments

and each other's company. At 3:00 the live music, performed by the Grand Rapids Old Time Concertina Band, began, and Fifth Street became transformed into a dance floor. In the school cafeteria large portions of tasty chicken and mashed potatoes were served, while across the hall the all-purpose room was filled to capacity with bingo players. Meanwhile, visitors to the festivities were provided a tour through the Basilica itself, from the sanctuary to the choir loft and down to the hospitality room. These visitors, who represented a number of different faiths, came from all over the metropolitan area, and many were heard to compliment both the beauty of the Basilica and the outstanding quality of the festival.

On Sunday the merry-making continued after the 10:30 Mass, with even larger throngs and more good will. When it finally ended and the last of the booths closed with the final notes of the last polka, weary workers turned over their proceeds to the counters and the clean-up began. The proceeds for the two days totalled \$34,723.99, excluding raffle ticket sales and sales of other festival-related items, such as plates and cups, tee-shirts, and other souvenirs, prior to the festival weekend. Including these early sales, the gross proceeds are estimated to be approximately \$50,000, a staggering sum considering that this was the first festival of such a large scale in many years.

But the success of the festival is by no means measured solely by the final receipts. Rather, it is measured by the good will it generated among parishioners and in the community at large, in the fun it offered to old and young alike, and in the attestation it provided to the dedication and devotion of the chairpersons, workers, and everyone involved in making this one of the premier events of this centennial year.

The Centennial Festival



## THE CLIMAX — 100 YEARS AND BEYOND

On the weekend of September 19-20, 1981, the final chapter of a century of dignity, sacrifice, creativity, and faith was composed amid festivity and solemnity, recollections, songs, and forward glances. At this juncture of centuries, the past and the future coalesced in the present for those who took part in the occasion, and time as a mere sequence of events took on, at least temporarily, the meaninglessness of a discredited illusion. For although the year-long series of celebrations was by no means ended, this weekend provided what might well be the climax, commemorating as it did the exact dates of the official founding of the parish while at the same time establishing the basis for the next hundred years.

The weekend celebration began at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday with the commencement of the Centennial Banquet, held in West Catholic's gymnasium. As the party-goers entered the facility, the first things they noticed were the large yellow, green, orange and red balloons gaily suspended from the steel ceiling beams, signalling the levity and frolic that everyone anticipated. After the balloons their eyes next fell upon the special cake, a monumental delicacy shaped in the form and proportions of the Basilica, correctly and thoroughly detailed including the tile roof, its central dome rising four feet above the table on which it stood. A work of fine craftsmanship and the source of many conversations and fond recollections to come, it was photographed often during the evening; and when the time came to cut into it a number of people expressed mild disappointment.

From the cake the eyes roamed over the banquet tables set with china and graced by flowers and candles, adding a warmth to the large, spacious gymnasium. In the midst of the rows of tables were others holding four punch bowls, and at the rear of the room stood several more tables from which the food would be dispensed.

As befits a celebration of such magnitude, the food was superlative. Diners first converged in orderly fashion on a gourmet table containing relishes, fruit salads, an assortment of fresh fruits, rolls and butter, and garlic toast. From there they went to the tables holding the main courses, including Virginia baked ham, "Steamship Round of Beef," au gratin potatoes, peas and fresh mushrooms, and corn. The food was served by the caterers, with the meats being

sliced according to the diners' desire. It was a matchless meal for the more than three hundred people who were in attendance, among whom many returned for additional servings. It should be noted that accompanying the meal the atmosphere was enhanced by the lilting tunes played by solo accordionist Mr. Andy Galas, reputed to be the finest master of that instrument in the area. The quality of his performance confirmed this reputation.

Following the meal Reverend Martin Kurylowicz, the Master of Ceremonies and a son of St. Adalbert's, entertained the diners with amusing remarks and quips, and introduced the various speakers. Included among them were, first, Mr. Raymond Heidenga, 1st Ward Commissioner, who read a proclamation, signed by Mayor Abe Drasin, designating Sunday, September 20, as the Basilica of St. Adalbert Day. Second, State Senator Stephen Monsma presented a plaque containing Michigan Senate Resolution #201, a formal resolution officially congratulating and paying tribute to the Basilica of St. Adalbert for its importance and eminence not only in Grand Rapids and Western Michigan, but in the State of Michigan as a whole. The framed copy of the resolution was presented to Msgr. Sniegowski amid much appreciative applause.

In addition to these accolades, Mr. Thaddeus Buzalski read congratulatory messages from the office of Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States; Governor William Milliken; and Congressman Harold Sawyer.

Mr. Buzalski then introduced the chairpersons of the Jubilee Committee, all of whom had worked very hard for the success of the many events that have taken place over the past two years. Special recognition was offered Robert and Esther Longfield, who must have been pleased with the success of their hard work over the past several months in planning the details of the banquet, for surely it provided the occasion for the refined and profound joy etched on the faces of the hundreds of people in attendance.

At this point recognition should also be given to those members of the banquet committee who aided in its success. These include: Bernard Prawdzik, Margaret Kumko, Dennis Kumko, Therese Buzalski, Suzanne Swidwa, Raymond Nowak, Helen Pasko, Jeanne Penoyer, and Frank Przybysz.

Following Mr. Buzalski was Reverend Patrick Cwik, another son of St. Adalbert's and presently associate pastor of St. James' Parish,



who presented the keynote address. An eloquent, even brilliant, orator, Fr. Cwik captivated his hushed audience with tributes to Fr. Ponganis, Msgr. Skory, and especially Msgr. Maksymowski — perhaps the most important earthly influence in his life. In paying tribute to these men, Fr. Cwik, exclaimed: “Have we been lucky! We young priests in particular have such large shoes to fill.” He went on to repeat what perhaps the present readers of this narrative might be thinking in recalling the events recorded: “Are we lucky! Oh God, are we lucky!”

But it is not enough to complacently reminisce about our heritage, however great it may be. No doubt we must be cognizant of it and, further, must celebrate it; but we must also follow Fr. Cwik’s example and ask the question repeatedly: “Where do we go from here?” In answering that question, he referred again to the past. “We didn’t have a lot of money,” he said. “But we had two things that helped us: our Faith, and our support of one another.” This mutual support will be more pronounced in the future, he declared, as lay leadership will become increasingly emphasized, along with the role of that leadership in dealing with issues of social justice and national and international peace. We must remember the Polish heritage that is the backbone of St. Adalbert’s Parish, he stated, especially in these days when the people of Poland are leading the way in the spirit of freedom and dignity that are the hallmarks of Christian peoples. Furthermore, we must value the principle of community and touch people with our faith. “As increasing responsibility is placed in the hands of lay people, we need one another, to touch each other with the love of God.”

In keeping with his trait of humility, before Fr. Cwik gave the audience a chance to applaud his thought-provoking words he asked Mrs. Esther Longfield to intone “Sto Lat,” and she was joined by the many parishioners who retained the words of that Polish song. Then, he read a letter from Reverend Charles R. Antekeier, Pastor of St. James’ Church, congratulating the members of the Basilica and generously offering an anniversary gift of \$1,000.00.

Finally Msgr. Thaddeus Sniegowski was introduced, and as he ascended the stage he received a standing ovation from the audience, a tribute to the productive eleven years of his pastorship as well to as the character of a man whose gentleness and leadership have deservedly won the esteem of his parishioners. After expressing gratitude

for the honors presented to the parish that evening, Msgr. Sniegowski reaffirmed the cause of that evening’s celebration as embodied in the parish’s history and encouraged the audience in its festivities. Another standing ovation was given as he descended the stairs from the stage.

The rest of the evening was given to dancing and refreshments, with music provided by a trio of capable musicians called Entourage. A highlight was provided by Deacon Manuel Herrera, who joined the band late in the evening to sing a medley of highly spirited songs which called forth most of the remaining participants in animated dance. Finally, at 1:00 a.m. the music stopped and the happy community of celebrants went home to rest up for the next day’s events.

### *The Centennial Liturgy*

Leading up the special Mass celebrating to the day the actual founding of the Parish of St. Adalbert was a series of year-long attractions that truly were in accordance with the spirit of the founders and perpetrators of the parish. Most of these have been duly recorded, though a couple more might be added. First of all, a billboard was erected in early September alongside the Gerald R. Ford Expressway, only three blocks from the Basilica, announcing congratulations to St. Adalbert’s on its centennial anniversary. This billboard, perhaps the most visible in the city, seen by approximately 60,000 people each day, was paid for by ten area businesses. Also in September lighting was added to the Basilica to highlight its domes at night, adding a special beauty to the building reminiscent of the magnificent churches of Europe.

The most solemn and beautiful event of the year took place on Sunday, September 20. On a lovely afternoon with the temperatures in the mid sixties, parishioners and visitors strolled from their cars to the Basilica, past the new bronze letters affixed to the building’s southwest corner announcing the times of Masses (donated by Stephanie and Bernard Prawdzik in memory of their son, Bernie, Jr.), and into the splendorous interior to await the beginning of the special liturgy. Arriving as much as an hour early, the congregation eagerly awaited the prefatory music and song, to be performed by the

choirs from the Basilica, Holy Name Parish, and Immanuel Lutheran Church, under the direction of Mr. Joseph Westdorp, with Mr. Jonathan Tuuk performing on the organ. Finally, at 1:40 p.m. the program commenced with the robed choir filing up the side aisles to their place at the foot of the sanctuary.

The entire prelude to the Mass was as follows:

*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* J. S. Bach  
Violin, Cello, Trumpet, Organ

*Now Let the Heavens Be Joyful* Provencal Carol Tune  
Arr. S. Drummond Wolff

Choir:

*Now let the heavens be joyful, Let earth her songs begin!  
The round world keep high triumph, And all that is therein.  
He is risen; Christ the Lord is risen,  
Our joy that hath no end.*

*From death to life eternal, From earth on to the sky,  
Our Christ hath brought us over with hymns of Victory,  
He is risen; Christ the Lord is risen,  
Our joy hath no end.*

*Let all things seen and unseen; their notes of gladness blend.  
For Christ the Lord is risen; our joy that hath no end.  
He is risen; Christ the Lord is risen,  
Our joy that hath no end. Amen. Amen.*

*The Church's One Foundation* Traditional  
Congregation, Choir

*The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is His new creation by water and the word:  
From heav'n He came and sought her, to be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.*

*Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy Name she blesses, partakes one holy food;  
And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.*

*Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation of peace forever more.  
Til with the vision glorious, her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.*

*Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in One,  
And ever holds communion with those whose nest is won.  
O happy ones and holy; Lord give us grace that we . . .  
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.*

*Sonata in D* W. A. Mozart  
Violin, Cello, Organ

Following the prelude the applause flowed freely, resounding throughout the spacious Basilica like an added chorus. It was to flow spontaneously several more times during the Mass and after it, for the joy and admiration within the inspired congregation could not be contained.

The Mass began at 2:00 p.m. with the opening processional led by the servers, including Brian Krajewski, Colin Longcore, Todd Willis, Brian Krupiczewicz and Joseph Stasiukinas. Next were representatives of the Home and School Association, Holy Rosary Society, Ladies' Welfare Society, Boosters' Club, Legion of Mary, Mothers' Club, Ushers' Club, St. Theresa Society, St. Adalbert's Catholic War Veterans, Post #1058, and Post #1058's, Ladies' Auxiliary, along with the ministers of the Eucharist and those who would participate in the Offertory procession. These were followed by visiting priests, some of whom were former associate pastors of St. Adalbert's and others of whom were sons of the Basilica. Then came the celebrants of the Mass, including Deacons Jack Harig and Manuel Herrera, Fr. Thomas Page and Msgr. Sniegowski. Finally, the procession was honored by the presence of Bishop Joseph Breitenbeck, who was to act as the main celebrant. The procession was accompanied by the choir's solemnly beautiful intonation of *Ecce Sacerdos* by William J. Marsh.

The Mass was conducted with great dignity as befitted the occasion, reminiscent of the liturgy held for the dedication of the Basilica. One interesting highlight was the proclamation of the Gospel by Deacon Harig from a portable platform in the central aisle. Following that, Msgr. Sniegowski ascended the steps of the pulpit and delivered the homily, recounting the history of the parish and weaving an atmosphere that conveyed the aspirations of the founders and the joy they must feel now over the glorious accomplishments of their descendants and heirs. He also invited the congregation to continue, and even increase, their involvement in the parish for the glory of God and in the memory of all who went before. The spell he wove completed, he descended the steps to the applause of the congregation.

One of the most gratifying moments during the Mass occurred when Bishop Breitenbeck spoke, graciously bestowing praise on the people of St. Adalbert's and especially on Msgr. Sniegowski, whose illustrious tenure at the Basilica merits the accolades conferred upon him by such an elevated source. Bishop Breitenbeck particularly emphasized Msgr. Sniegowski's efforts at implementing the changes wrought by Vatican II and referred to him as one of the leaders in the Diocese in this regard. In stating that the Church today is not the same as it was twenty years ago, the Bishop expressed his personal appreciation of our pastor and the breadth of his devotion and, in doing so, elicited a complementary appreciation in the respectfully attentive congregation. At the conclusion of his remarks, the people once more manifested their gratitude with applause.

It should be noted here that posterity, too, will owe a debt of thanks to Msgr. Sniegowski. Among his earnest intentions is that the parish archives be as complete and up-to-date as possible, and in keeping with this desire he arranged that the entire proceedings be videotaped for future generations to view. (The same had been done in 1980 at the dedication of the Basilica.) Thus, the Bishop's presence and his words, as well as the entire proceedings, will live in perpetuity for the edification of countless thousands of our descendants and heirs.

True to the spirit of Vatican II, a number of other non-clergy parishioners participated in the liturgy, including members of the Offertory procession: Mr. Edwin Downer, Miss Katherine Downer, Sister Julie Ann, SSND., Mrs. Margaret Kumko, Mr. Dennis Kumko, Mr. Bernard Prawdzik, and Mr. Jack Wysocki. Ministers of the Eucharist were Sister David Therese, OP, Mr. Harold DeKoster, Sister Karen, OP, and Mr. Paul Kozlowicz.

As is appropriate, the Communion time was exceptionally moving. While the congregation reverently filed up the aisles to fulfill their solemn privilege, the choir sang the lovely hymn *Serdeczna Matko*, whose words first in Polish and then in English appear below for those readers to whom they are unfamiliar:

*Serdeczna Matko, opiekunko ludzi,  
Niech Cie placz sierot do litosci wzbudzi!  
Wynancy Ewy do Ciebie wolamy:  
Zmiluj sie zmiluj, niech sie nie tulamy.*

*Do kogoz mamy wzdychac nedzne dziatki?  
Tylko do Ciebie, ukochanej Matki:  
U ktorej Serce otwarte Kazdemu  
A osobliwie nedza strapionemu!*

*Beloved Mother, guardian of the nation,  
Hearken, O hearken, to our supplication.  
Your loyal children from the plain and city,  
We kneel beseeching your great love and pity.*

*God of our fathers for so many ages,  
Justly His anger all about us rages,  
Still we impolore our Mother, kind and tender,  
Oh, be our refuge, oh, be our defender.*

This traditional Polish hymn expresses in a hauntingly beautiful melody the primary values of the forefathers of this parish: the love of God and the Blessed Mother, the love of homeland, and the virtues of

## *The First 100 Years*

loyalty, compassion, and sacrifice. Despite the chronological distance that time has created between them and the present generation of parishioners — of Polish as well as other ethnic backgrounds — the words even today elicit in us the depth of emotion that originally inspired them, thus infusing us with the spirit of our forefathers. And as a result, once again the artificial barriers erected by time melt away, uniting us irrevocably with the pioneers who one hundred years ago carried this hymn in their souls as they founded St. Adalbert's Parish.

Following the liturgy, a reception was held in the Msgr. John A. Maksymowski Hospitality Room, where parishioners and guests mingled with one another, discussing the weekend events over coffee, tea, and the banquet cake. And with the reception commenced a new historical occasion: *The Beginning Of The Next Hundred Years!*

## DIocese OF GRAND RAPIDS

September 23, 1981

Dear Members of St. Adalbert Parish,

As Chief Shepherd of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, it is with a sense of deep joy that I extend to you my congratulations on the observance of the Centennial of your parish.

It is with pride that you can look back and reflect on one hundred years of faith and history. My own sentiments are well expressed by St. Paul in his letter to the early Christian community at Phillipi, "I give thanks to my God every time I think of you...at the way you have all continually helped promote the gospel from the very first day" (Phil. 1:3-4). The apostolic zeal of St. Adalbert Parish is well known; your faithfulness and dedication to the work of the Church in this Diocese has always been a source of encouragement to me.

Over a year ago, your church was named a basilica -- a fitting tribute to its architectural splendor. May the excellence of its design always remind us of our own call to spiritual perfection; may its appropriateness as a house of worship ever challenge us to make our hearts temples of the living God.

In celebrating this anniversary, it is appropriate to look not only to the past but to the future as well. It is my prayer and I am confident that the same faith that sustained you and your forefathers during the past one hundred years, will guide you forward to meet the demands of Christian witness in new and difficult times.

Asking God's blessing on you, I am,

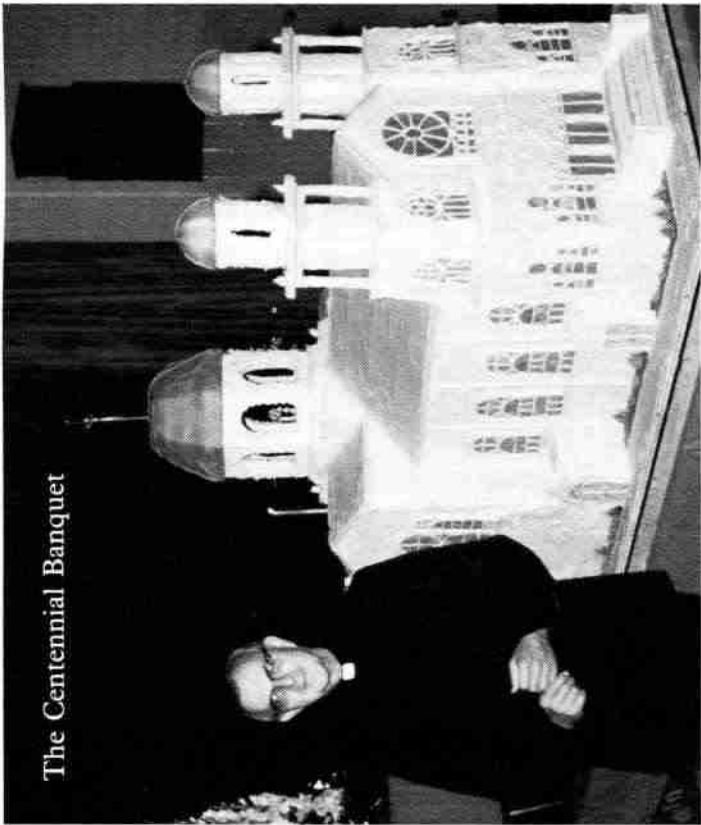
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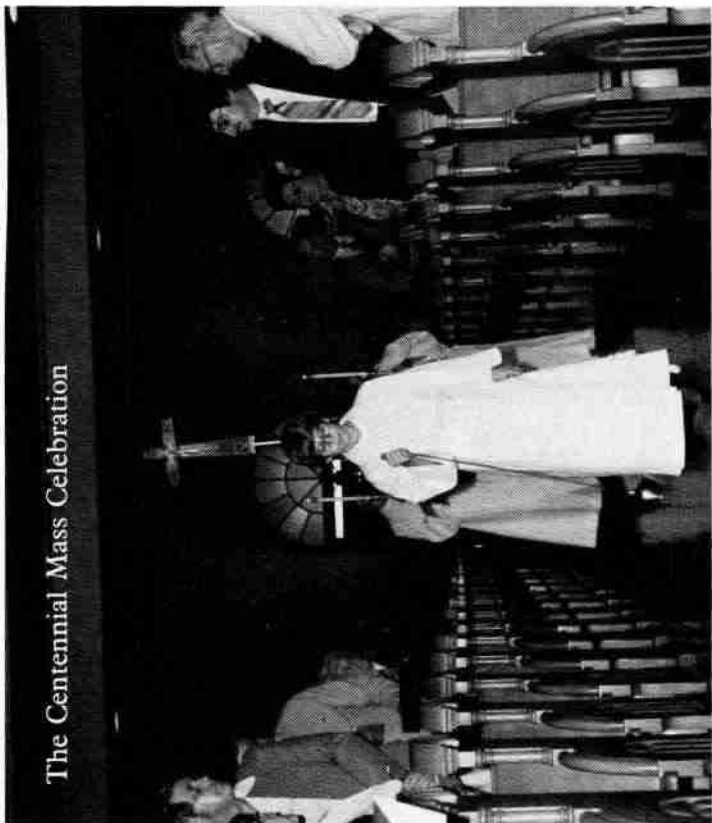
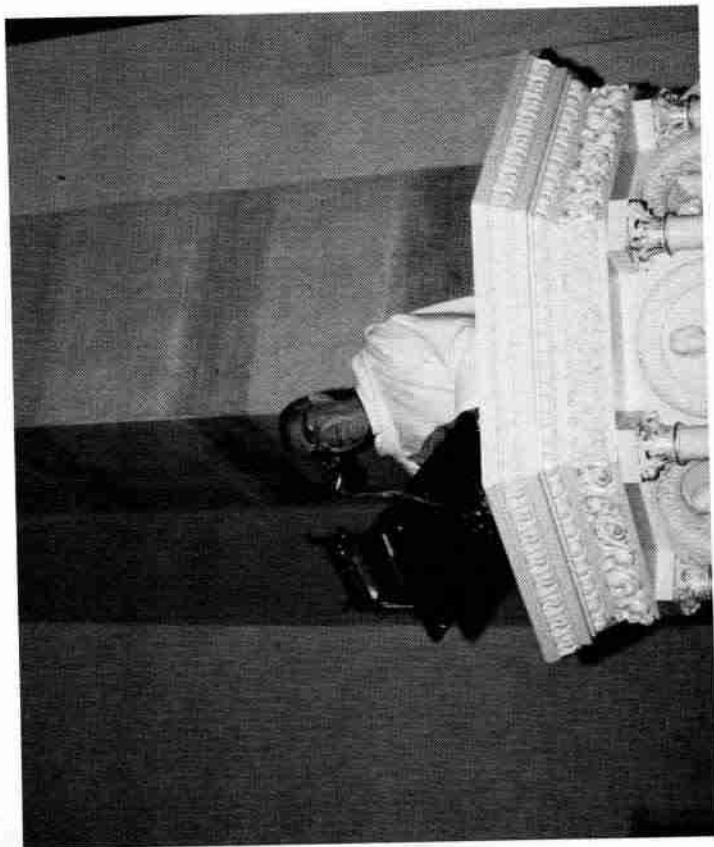
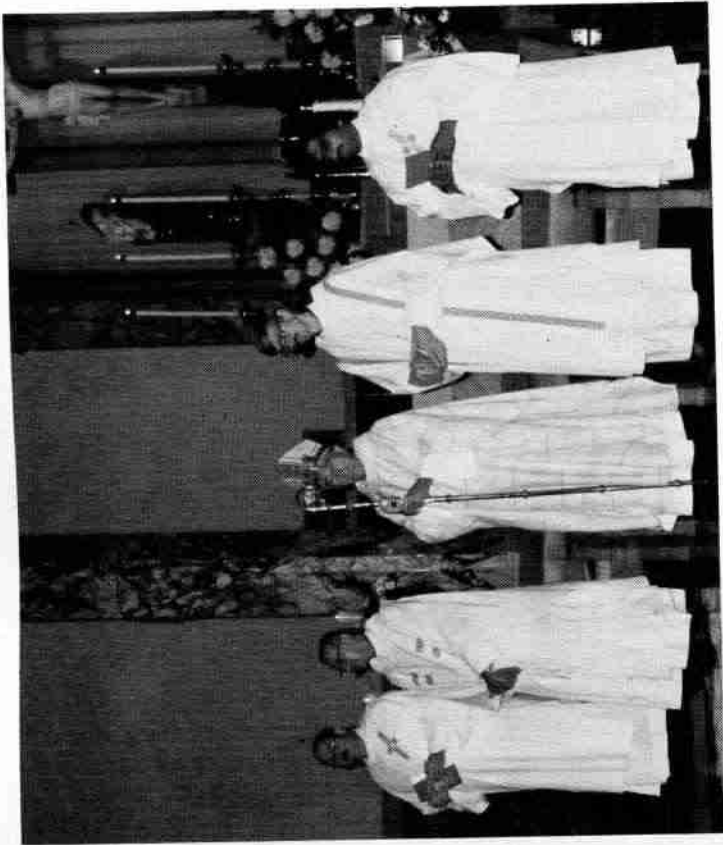
  
Bishop of Grand Rapids

Administrative Office  
616/459-4509

265 Sheldon Avenue, Southeast  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

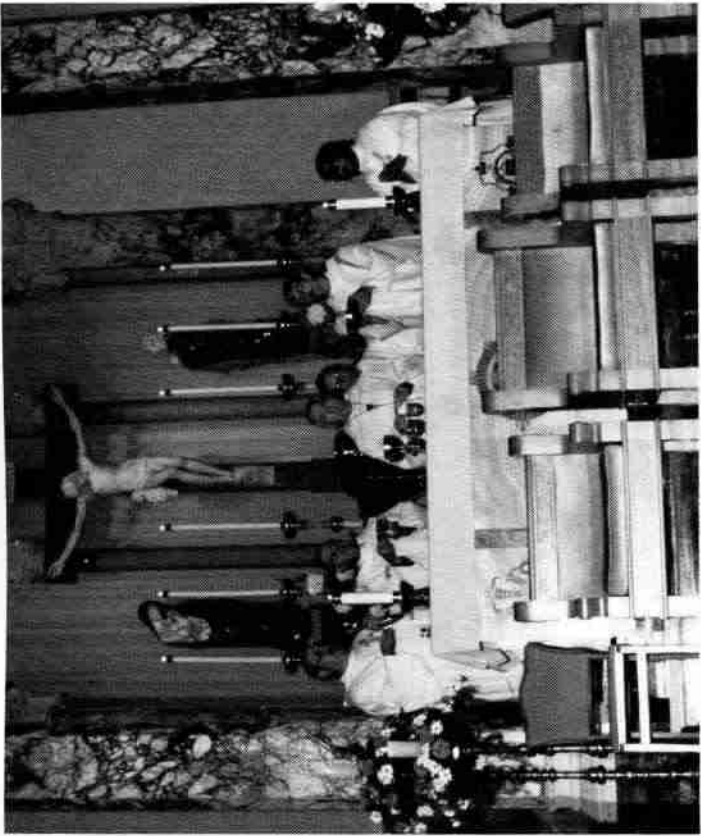
The Centennial Banquet





The Centennial Mass Celebration





## **EPILOGUE**



## THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE

**T**HERE IS AN OLD FRENCH PHRASE that when translated reads thus: "The more things change, the more they are the same." Though apparently puzzling, these words are borne out clearly in several ways during this, the centennial year of St. Adalbert's Parish. For one thing, the spirit of renewal, which surely the founders of the parish must have experienced profoundly when they congregated for the first time in their new church, is still with us as we join together in the many festive events of the year. For another, we have witnessed and taken part in the elevation of our church to the rank of Minor Basilica, which is as grand an event to us as the consecration of the first modest frame church was to the founders. Furthermore, the fact that this is the centennial year of our parish unites us in spirit to those founders; for who among us has not at one time or another reflected even momentarily on the adversities they faced and overcame in creating their parish and building their church and then twenty-six years later embarking in a new building project that would yield, with its Michelangeloesque dome, one of the finest edifices in the state? And if we have considered any of these parallels and reflections, then we have reaffirmed the sense of community that so ineradicably characterized that first group of Polish immigrants despite the vast sociological changes that have taken place in the intervening century. And that sense of community is, after all, the hallmark of a parish of faithful and devoted Christians.

Yet there are a number of differences, too, and it is these differences that will test the fiber of our community for the next hundred years. The present generation of Polish descent have been so Americanized that they can hardly even be referred to as Polish-Americans. Moreover, St. Adalbert's, though still largely a Polish parish — if one looks at the names on the parish roster — is now

ethnically diverse, with people of Irish, German, Hispanic, Italian, and other backgrounds constituting a growing minority. To its credit, St. Adalbert's Parish has assimilated all of these people without the slightest difficulty. May it continue to do so as the diversity increases. Another difference results from the inroads made by television, automobiles, and the availability of distant travel, all of which tend to divert people away from involvement in parish affairs — especially young members who have traditionally displayed such energy and enthusiasm.

Last, the economic circumstances have changed so drastically as to defy the imagination. Whereas in 1892 it cost \$1100 to build the school, today it costs upward of \$20,000 to heat the school for one year, and the cost of educating one child is well over \$1,000 per year! The projected school budget for the year beginning in September, 1981 is well over \$250,000. And this figure by no means includes the cost of maintaining the Basilica and other facilities, without which a parish cannot be operated.

The challenges we face, then, are many and of some magnitude. We must continue to foster the sense of community that has prevailed for one hundred years, so that our progeny can feel the same justifiable pride that we carry within us about our great traditions. We must continue to welcome diversity and even appreciate it, for diversity presents us with new ideas, and new ideas present us with the opportunity to grow. This opportunity for growth, in turn, is one of the main factors that encourages the youth of our parish to remain and other young families to join our community, for youth is the indispensable ingredient of a thriving future. And we must continue to be generous so that our Basilica and our school do not end up like so many of the monuments in Chicago and Detroit and other large cities, in disrepair and virtual abandonment. Such a condition would be an insult to the memory of the pioneers who built this parish and the thousands of faithful who have devoted themselves to and sacrificed for the prominence that the Basilica of St. Adalbert has attained.

The first one hundred years of St. Adalbert's Parish have been extraordinarily rich in accomplishment and tradition. If during this, the centennial year of its existence, the parishioners feel proud of its history, they are completely justified. May the festivities continue throughout the years unabated and without qualification!

## FOOTNOTES

### Section II

1. Eduard Adam Skendzel, Manuscript entitled "The Basilica of St. Adalbert: A Great Temple of God", prepared for the dedication of the Basilica, 1980.
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. "A Short History of the Parish of St. Adalbert", *The Grand Rapids Echo*, June 20, 1913, p. 1 Trans. Helen Koperski.
5. Skendzel, "The Basilica of St. Adalbert . . ."
6. "A Short History . . ." trans. Helen Koperski
7. *ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Albert Baxter, *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan* (New York: Munsell and Company, 1891), p. 344.
10. Eduard Adam Skendzel, *The Sacred Heart Story* (Grand Rapids: Foremost Press, Inc., 1981), p. 41.

### Section III

1. Most of the biographical details are from "The Silver Jubilee of Rev. Fr. Skory", *The Grand Rapids Echo*, June 20, 1913, pp. 5-6. Trans. Esther Usakowski.
2. "Death Claims Msgr. Skory, Polish Priest", *The Grand Rapids Herald*, March 8, 1935, p. 1.
3. "The Silver Jubilee . . ." trans. Esther Usakowski.
4. *The Evening Press*, August 19, 1907, p. 3. Quoted in Skendzel, *The Sacred Heart Story*, pp. 83-84.
5. Thanks to Paul Overeiner in a manuscript given to Msgr. Sniegowski in 1979 for many of these details.
6. Most of the above information derives from the booklet issued upon the dedication of St. Adalbert's Church as a Minor Basilica, composed by Eduard Adam Skendzel, copyright 1980 by the Basilica of St. Adalbert's Parish.
7. *The Evening Press*, June 23, 1913, p. 2A
8. "St. Adalbert's to Have Fine New School", *The Grand Rapids Press*, Oct. 20, 1920, n.p.
9. Graciously translated by Sister Peter Varona.
10. Translated from the Golden Jubilee Booklet by Esther Usakowski.
11. Details about the bells were taken from an article by Eduard Adam Skendzel, "The Bells of St. Adalbert", *The Western Michigan Catholic*, June 1, 1978, p. 10.
12. Trans. by Esther Usakowski.

**Section IV**

1. Trans. Esther Usakowski
2. Many thanks to Rev. Joseph Murphy for the information about West Catholic.
3. Skendzel, "The Bells of St. Adalbert", p. 11.
4. *ibid.*

**Section V**

1. Skendzel, "The Basilica of St. Adalbert . . ."
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. Some of the details in this section were taken from Eduard Adam Skendzel, "Grand Rapids' St. Adalbert's Becomes Minor Basilica", *Polish Daily News* (English edition), Feb. 23-24, pp. 3, 8.
5. Quoted in *The Western Michigan Catholic*, Mar. 6, 1980, p. 7.
6. This letter was composed and then translated into Polish at the behest of Msgr. Sniegowski and under his direction by Eduard Adam Skendzel. Reprinted in *The Polish Daily News* (English edition), Mar. 29-30, 1980.

**APPENDIX**

***Administration of St. Adalbert's Basilica***

Parish Staff  
Parish Council

***Agents of Christ at St. Adalbert's Basilica***

Pastors  
Associate Pastors  
Lay Apostolate

***Vocations from St. Adalbert's Basilica***

Sons of St. Adalbert in the Priesthood  
Daughters of St. Adalbert in the Sisterhood  
Sons of St. Adalbert in the Brotherhood

***Parish Statistics at St. Adalbert's Basilica***

Baptisms, Marriages, Interments

***St. Adalbert's Grade School***

Current Teaching Staff  
The Principals of St. Adalbert's  
Centennial First Communicants  
Centennial Graduates  
Enrollment Statistics  
Sports at St. Adalbert's

***Music at St. Adalbert's Basilica***

General Information  
Music Directors  
The Centennial Choir

***Present Clubs and Organizations at St. Adalbert's Basilica***

St. Adalbert's Aid Society  
Holy Rosary Society  
Knights of St. Casimir's Aid Society  
St. Hyacinth Aid Society  
Ladies' Welfare Society  
St. Adalbert's Mothers' Club  
St. Theresa Society  
Ushers' Club  
Legion of Mary  
St. Adalbert's Memorial Post #1058,  
Catholic War Veterans  
St. Adalbert's Scout Troop #268  
Ladies Auxiliary Post #1058,  
Catholic War Veterans  
St. Adalbert's Athletic Boosters Club  
Home and School Association

***Parish Roster***

***Current Parishioners over the Age of 85***

**THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

***THE BASILICA STAFF***

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thaddeus R. Sniegowski, Pastor  
Rev. Joseph W. Kenshol, Assistant Pastor (through June 30)  
Rev. Thomas Page, Assistant Pastor (from July 1)  
Rev. Mr. Jack Harig, Deacon  
Rev. Mr. Manuel Herrera, Deacon  
Mrs. Helen Gasper, Secretary  
Mrs. Eleanor Gorski, Assistant Secretary  
Mr. Joseph Westdorp, Director of Music  
Mr. Ronald Romanowski, Maintenance/Custodian  
Mr. Mark Badgerow, Maintenance/Custodian

***THE PARISH COUNCIL***

The Parish Council is an outgrowth of Vatican II intended to relieve the burdensome duties of the parish priests and to bring the parish membership into the decision-making process. Designed to include all areas of parish matters, the Council is composed of several commissions, each of which works in conjunction with the pastor.

***CHRISTIAN SERVICES COMMISSION***

The Christian Services Commission is concerned with the physical, mental, and emotional needs of individuals and families in both the parish and the community at large. Under the leadership of Sister Yvonne Scher, O.P., and with the aid of members of the Legion of Mary, the Ladies' Welfare Society, the Mothers' Club, and the St.

Vincent de Paul Society, the Commission distributes food to the needy, visits the parishioners currently in nursing homes along with those confined to their own homes, obtains rides for those who need to attend Mass, distributes Holy Communion, and performs other charitable work. During the present year the commission also sponsored a Cuban refugee family. Another example of the devoted work can be found in the eighteen members who, along with Sister Yvonne, have formed a sewing group; among their accomplishments are the making of over 300 bathrobes for persons in local nursing homes, and various other articles for migrant workers and Hispanic and Native American missions. At the present time they are making caps, scarves, and mittens for Native American School children in Harbor Springs, Mich.

### **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

The Education Commission, also known as the Board of Education, establishes policies governing all areas of the school, oversees the operation of the school, and determines the school budget. Two members are elected each year by the parish to fill terms of three years. This year's Members are Philip Jung (President), Russell Willis (Vice President), Sandra Stasiukinas (Secretary), Leonard Skrycki, Mary Close, Edward Ostrowski, and Jean Zemaitis.

### **FAMILY LIFE COMMISSION**

Intended to work for the welfare of the institutions of marriage and the family, the Family Life Commission, in the charge of Sister Dolores Wendling, O.P., organizes Pre-Cana conferences four times each year, operates the nursery in the basement of the Basilica during 10:30 Sunday Masses, and prepares other activities to promote the family. This year the commission presented a film series open to the community as well as to the parish dealing with marital relations and child-raising.

### **FINANCE COMMISSION**

This commission's purpose is to participate in financial decisions, budgetary concerns, disbursement of funds, and the raising funds. Its members include Raymond Nowak (Chairman), Bernard Prawdzik, William Jarema, Edwin Downer, and Donald Karpinski.

### **LITURGY COMMISSION**

The Liturgy Commission is in many ways perhaps the most important of the Parish Council commissions because of its direct involvement in the spiritual life of the parish. It assists the pastor and his assistant in planning special liturgies, in determining the hymns to be sung and music to be performed at Masses, and in assigning the lay ministers of the Eucharist to Masses. Its members include Sister Eileen Flavins (Chairperson through June, 1981), Suzanne Swidwa, Joseph Westdorp, Marge Downer, Kathy Downer, Stanley Lechtanski, Donald Kurylowicz, and Sister Anthony Marie Jendrasiak.

### **SOCIAL COMMISSION**

It is the responsibility of the Social Commission to plan and organize activities that involve the entire parish in friendship and fun. For years it has worked on presenting pancake breakfasts, the parish picnic, parish festivals, and other events. Many of the events are put on by the Social Commission members alone, while others are done in co-operation with other parish groups. Current members are James and Patricia Heitzman (Co-Chairpersons), Stanley and Suzanne Swidwa, Joseph and Marceline Matulaitis, Robert and Theresa Czerney, Leo and Beatrice Zdybel, Stella Czerney, Mary Jane Czerney, Therese Buzalski, James and Joyce Soltysiak, Fred and Annette Schmidt, Jerome and Helen Bajdek, and Peter and Marlene Labinski.

**AGENTS OF CHRIST AT THE  
BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

**PASTORS OF THE BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

Rev. Casimir Jablonowski	June, 1883-February, 1884
Rev. Marion Matkowski	February, 1884-March, 1886
Rev. Msgr. Simon Ponganis	March, 1886-August, 1904
Rev. Msgr. Casimir Skory	August, 1904-March, 1935
Rev. Msgr. John A. Maksymowski	March, 1935-November, 1970
Rev. Msgr. Thaddeus R. Sniegowski	October, 1970-

**ASSISTANT PASTORS OF  
ST. ADALBERT'S BASILICA**

Rev. Joseph Gogolewski	1902-1903
Rev. Ladislaus P. Krakowski	April-August, 1903
Rev. Francis A. Kaczmarek	September, 1905-June, 1906
Rev. Francis J. Piaskowski	June, 1906-September, 1909
Rev. Andrew P. Narloch	1910-June, 1913
Rev. Joseph A. Koss	July, 1910-June, 1911
Rev. Stephen A. Narloch	June, 1913-October, 1918
Rev. Stanislaus A. Sikorski	August, 1915-April, 1916
Rev. Paul Felchnerowski	April, 1916-June, 1919
Rev. Casimir W. Szyper	June, 1919-1921
Rev. Theodore J. Liebek	July, 1919-August, 1921
Rev. Ladislaus J. Switalski	August, 1921-December, 1927
Rev. Hippolyte B. Koscielniak	1921-1927
Rev. Ceslaus L. Lipinski	1927-1929
Rev. John F. Grzybowski	December, 1928-March, 1931

Rev. John A. Maksymowski	July, 1929-March, 1932
Rev. John C. Klonowski	March, 1931-November, 1934
Rev. Louis S. Wodecki	1932-1935
Rev. John A. Maksymowski	November, 1934-March, 1935
Rev. Edward J. Kubiak	May, 1935-January, 1938
Rev. Stanislaus A. Fron	1936-1937
Rev. Joseph I. Sruba	September, 1938-November, 1938
Rev. Aloysius V. Ulanowicz	November, 1938-July, 1943
Rev. Peter T. Jakubowski	May, 1939-December, 1944
Rev. Joseph E. Sakowski	July, 1943-July, 1944
Rev. Louis A. Pilarowski	1944-September, 1946
Rev. Henry J. Niedzwiecki	December, 1944-June, 1946
Rev. Edwin Plewka	Mary, 1946-September, 1947
Rev. Joseph J. Podhajski	June, 1946-September, 1948
Rev. Louis A. Pilarowski	September, 1947-October, 1968
Rev. Joseph E. Murphy	Res., September, 1947-June, 1961
Rev. Joseph S. Godzisz	June, 1948-July, 1950
Rev. Thaddeus R. Sniegowski	July, 1950-August, 1951
Rev. Casimir A. Zawacki	August, 1951-April, 1953
Rev. John A. Najdowski	April, 1953-June, 1954
Rev. Edward S. Orłowski	June, 1954-July, 1958
Rev. Henry J. Dondzila	July, 1958-June, 1964
Rev. Frederick J. Kawka	June, 1964-July, 1966
Rev. Gaylord F. Shimnoski	July, 1966-July, 1969
Rev. James C. Kowalski	August, 1969-June, 1971
Rev. Eugene F. Alvesteffer	June, 1971-August, 1972
Rev. Louis J. Baudone	September, 1972-September, 1973
Rev. Max J. Frego	September, 1973-June, 1974
Rev. Richard J. Host	April, 1975-June, 1978
Rev. Joseph W. Kenshol	June, 1978-June, 1981
Rev. William A. Langlois	Res., 1979-
Rev. Thomas Page	July, 1981-

Special mention should be made of Rev. Stanislaus Matiss who, although not an assigned full-time assistant, for many years helped the resident priests of St. Adalbert's by offering Mass, distributing Holy Communion, and performing other priestly duties. A pious and saintly man, Fr. Mattis passed away in July 8, 1981 at the age of 81. He will be missed by us all.

**MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST**

Special mention should be made of the men and women who have assumed the responsibility of assisting the priests on dispensing Holy Communion during weekend Masses as well as during visits to the ailing members of the parish. The duty of distributing the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to the expectant souls of hundreds of people every month demands great humility and piety on the part of these ministers.

- |                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mr. Joseph Alberts               | Mr. Gerald Nowak            |
| Mr. Thomas Ball                  | Mr. Fred Platte             |
| Mr. George Bart                  | Mrs. Donna Platte           |
| Mrs. Therese Buzalski            | Mr. Anthony Przekop         |
| Ms. Mary Jean Czerney            | Mr. Michael Rau             |
| Mr. Robert Czerney               | Mr. Edward Roguszka         |
| Mr. Harold DeKoster              | Ms. Kathy Roguszka          |
| Mr. Sylvester Downer             | Mr. Kenneth Roguszka        |
| Mr. Paul Kozlowicz               | Mr. Fred Schmidt            |
| Mr. Peter Labinski               | Mr. Joseph Sieracki         |
| Mrs. Marlene Labinski            | Mrs. Suzanne Swidwa         |
| Mr. Stanely Lechtanski           | Mr. Leonard Skrycki         |
| Mr. Joseph Lucas                 | Mr. Russell Willis          |
| Mr. Matthew Meyer                | Mr. Charles Woroniecki      |
| Mr. Norbert Miknavich            | Mr. Edward Zyzyk            |
| Sister Anthony Marie Jendraskiak | Sister David Therese Korson |
| Sister Dolores                   | Sister Mary Jolantha        |
| Sister Mary Mark                 | Eugenia Merdzinski          |
| Helen Koperski                   | Cecilia Bartnik             |
| Josephine Kielek                 | Esther Usakowski            |
| Mrs. Natalie Seymer              | Mrs. Sophie Dochod          |
| Mrs. Carmelita Franz             | Mrs. Martha Furman (dec.)   |
| Miss Helen Kaminski (dec.)       |                             |

**VOCATIONS FROM THE  
BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

In his letter to Msgr. Virgilio Noe, Associate Director of the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments, Bishop Joseph Breitenbeck, appealing for the elevation of St. Adalbert's Church to the rank of Basilica, asserted the following:

*... It is the largest and most beautiful Polish parish church in our Diocese. And the Polish people make up the largest number of the Catholics in this Diocese. And for decades past the Polish people furnished the most significant number of vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Grand Rapids . . .*

Indeed, this fact could be extended to include vocations to the sisterhood as well. At St. Adalbert's alone 46 sons of the parish have been ordained, or almost one for every two years of its history; and 71 daughters of the parish have taken their vows, or about one for every year-and-a-half of its history. In addition, five sons of the parish have entered the brotherhood. Thus, a total of 122 young men and women have added distinction and grace to the 100 year tradition of the Basilica of St. Adalbert, a tribute to the quality of the people and of the parish of St. Adalbert.

**SONS OF THE BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT  
WHO HAVE ENTERED THE PRIESTHOOD**

- |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Rev. Leopold Oprychalski | January 22, 1888 |
| Rev. Casimir Skory       | June 15, 1888    |
| Rev. Joseph Lewandowski  | July, 1894       |
| Rev. Steven Banasiewicz  | n.a.             |
| Rev. Frank Prus          | n.a.             |
| Rev. Joseph Kaminski     | April 14, 1903   |
| Rev. Casimir Piotrowicz  | April , 1904     |
| Rev. John Kaplanowski    | July 2, 1905     |

Rev. Stan Kuzniak	June 23, 1912
Rev. Theodore Liebek	June 15, 1919
Rev. Casimir Szyper	June 22, 1919
Rev. John Hurynowicz	June 27, 1920
Rev. John Szydowski	February 3, 1924
Rev. Bernard Roguszka	February 2, 1926
Rev. John Kucinski	March 3, 1929
Rev. Anthony Arszulowicz	February 15, 1931
Rev. Adalbert Radawski	February 15, 1931
Rev. Thaddeus Dereziński	June 11, 1935
Rev. Jerome Winikaitis	February 28, 1937
Rev. Joseph Ciesluk	March 27, 1937
Rev. Jerome Szydowski	April 24, 1938
Rev. Jerome Kowrach	April 24, 1938
Rev. Maximilian J. Ostrowski	April 16, 1939
Rev. Ervin Sadlowski	April 16, 1939
Rev. Edward T. Jaworowicz	May 18, 1940
Rev. Henry J. Niedzwiecki	May 18, 1940
Rev. Ceslaus Klimowicz	December 8, 1943
Rev. Edward Klimaszewski	1944
Rev. Joseph Wierkierak	June 15, 1946
Rev. Edward Roczen	May 22, 1948
Rev. Joseph Walijewski	April 16, 1950
Rev. James Jendrasiak	June 3, 1950
Rev. Harry Bartnik	June 2, 1956
Rev. Thomas Skuzinski	June 8, 1957
Rev. Larry Kozlowski	May 27, 1961
Rev. Donald Lomasiewicz	June 2, 1962
Rev. Stephen Vesbit	June 4, 1962
Rev. Norman Droski	June 6, 1964
Rev. Thomas Vesbit	June 6, 1964
Rev. Peter Cwik	June 5, 1965
Rev. James Kowalski	December 20, 1968
Rev. Donald Downer	June 7, 1967
Rev. Patrick Cwik	September 21, 1974
Rev. Thomas G. Simons	January 30, 1977
Rev. Martin S. Kurylowicz	June 16, 1979

## RELIGIOUS SISTERS - DAUGHTERS OF THE BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT

### School Sisters of Notre Dame:

Sister Mary Liventia	Lewandowska
Sister Mary Rogatilla	Dutkiewicz
Sister Mary Esteva	Szymczak
Sister Mary Rosenda	Schmidt
Sister Mary Anysia	Pawlowska
Sister Mary Synesia	Sobota
Sister Mary Veronica	Galka
Sister Mary Wendeline	Manikowska
Sister Mary Simonella	Frost
Sister Mary Celina	Zielinska
Sister Mary Declana	Ksiazkiewicz
Candidate Catherine Switek	died in the Motherhouse
Sister Mary Esther	Hernacka
Sister Mary Odualdine	Dyminska
Sister Mary Barbarine	Uzarska
Sister Mary Vitalia	Gryka
Sister Mary Antoinette	Uzarska
Sister Mary Genulfa	Smykowska
Sister Mary Johanna	Kaleta
Sister Mary Deotila	Ostrowska
Sister Mary Iphigenia	Cieslukowska
Sister Mary Blanda	Drzazgowska
Sister Mary Antonice	Murawska
Sister Mary Agnese	Szymko
Sister Mary Jolantha	Drzazgowska
Sister Mary Barbara	Drzazgowska
Sister Mary Maxime	Ostrowska



Sister Mary Pacelli	Karas
Sister Kenneth Marie	Kozal
Sister Mary Diane	Kozal
Sister Mary Kunegunda	Adamczak
Sister Mary Magdalese	Olejniczak
Sister Mary Annora	Polega
Sister Mary Michelle	Kozal
Sister Mary Jean Vianney	Jarema
Sister Mary Peter Pauline	Cwik
Sister Janese Marie	Downer
Sister Mary Jean Michael	Ignatowski

***Felician Sisters***

Sister Mary Adjuta	Slupecka
Sister Mary Marcelline	Slupecka
Sister Mary Gastolda	Dyczbalis
Sister Mary Bronislawa	Dyczbalis
Sister Mary Berchmans	Dyczbalis
Sister Mary Teotyma	Dorff
Sister Mary Norberta	Cerajewska
Sister Mary Dunstana	Kuzniak
Sister Mary Rajmunda	Gorska
Sister Mary Kunegunda	Stajnik
Sister Mary Getulia	Gorski
Sister Mary Adjuta	Kozlowski
Sister Mary Carol	Roguszka

***Dominican Sisters***

Sister Mary Rose Gonzaga	Szydłowski
Sister Mary Ralph	Cudzanowski
Sister Mary Camilla	Usakowski
Sister Mary Jean	Plachecki

***Mercy Sisters***

Sister Mary Doloretta	Szczepanski
Sister Mary Noel	Walejewski
Sister Mary Karen	Werra
Sister Mary Constance	Banks
Sister Susan Mary	Matulaitis
Sister Thomas Marie	Miknavich

***Franciscan Sisters***

Sister Joellyn Wysocki
Sister Mary Ann Dochod

***Sister of St. Joseph***

Sister Mary Terencja	Przekopowski
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***Dominican Sister of Perpetual Rosary***

Sister Mary Kolumba	Banka
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***Order Of Discalced Carmelites***

Sister Mary John of the Cross	Inglot
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***Order Of St. Francis***

Sister Mary Augustyne	Funk
Sister Mary Celine	Conant

***Sister Of Divine Providence***

Sister Mary Dominica	Czerwinska
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***Sister Of Social Service***

Miss Helen Merdzinska

***The Cenacle***

Madam Esther Derezinska, R.C.

***Sister Of The Divine Saviour***

Sister De Lellis Rayhert

***Little Sisters Of The Poor***

Sister Joseph Regina                      Downer

**RELIGIOUS BROTHERS — SONS OF  
THE BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

***Order Of The Holy Cross***

Brother Victor Czerwinski  
Brother Casimir Czerwinski

***Order Of The Divine Saviour***

Brother Stanislaus Gumienny

***Franciscan Order***

Brother Eusebius Szurna  
Brother Augustine Brian Kozdroj

**PARISH STATISTICS**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Baptisms</i>	<i>Marriages</i>	<i>Interments</i>
1881			4*
1882			9*
1883	38	3	7†
1884	82	12	25
1885	97	19	18
1886	92	8	29
1887	104	10	34
1888	117	12	49
1889	124	30	32
1890	137	20	41
1891	156	20	48
1892	183	29	53
1893	192	30	53
1894	171	16	52
1895	193	36	42
1896	200	21	36
1897	162	24	54
1898	197	28	40
1899	192	23	74
1900	168	21	50
1901	128	14	51
1902	165	32	43
1903	200	54	63
1904	165	62	81
1905	154	41	41
1906	169	41	64
1907	192	65	54
1908	207	29	41
1909	206	41	61
1910	223	69	94

Year	Baptisms	Marriages	Interments
1911	248	69	88
1912	331	78	72
1913	332	86	111
1914	297	86	80
1915	294	94	68
1916	325	80	92
1917	288	53	107
1918	238	30	102
1919	213	51	91
1920	224	57	102
1921	218	53	102
1922	192	60	75
1923	184	52	78
1924	180	42	63
1925	129	46	68
1926	174	59	76
1927	155	39	64
1928	153	62	65
1929	130	49	51
1930	123	41	63
1931	114	31	62
1932	99	27	47
1933	93	32	58
1934	94	50	56
1935	104	47	86
1936	90	69	72
1937	124	64	72
1938	126	70	52
1939	125	71	54
1940	108	71	58
1941	131	90	67
1942	170	65	68
1943	157	46	68
1944	125	45	72
1945	128	57	68
1946	182	89	67
1947	199	86	69
1948	186	93	70
1949	174	65	88

Year	Baptisms	Marriages	Interments
1950	181	65	75
1951	185	51	77
1952	177	53	70
1953	178	52	91
1954	187	47	59
1955	187	48	93
1956	167	53	65
1957	166	49	78
1958	131	42	80
1959	147	39	84
1960	110	38	94
1961	149	36	89
1962	134	35	77
1963	125	41	104
1964	120	46	76
1965	102	50	95
1966	86	48	88
1967	84	30	90
1968	69	40	87
1969	50	38	76
1970	60	42	82
1971	48	40	103
1972	42	45	99
1973	46	32	84
1974	40	24	86
1975	26	20	65
1976	24	32	69
1977	28	27	57
1978	51	30	70
1979	29	24	68
1980	35	20	76
1981**	21	11	36
	<u>14,556</u>	<u>4,413</u>	<u>6,758</u>

\*Interments took place at St. Mary's Church.  
 †Ages of the deceased range from one day to 25 years, with most being infants.  
 \*\*Through July 15, 1981

## ST. ADALBERT'S GRADE SCHOOL

### *Teaching Staff At St. Adalbert's Grade School*

Principal	Sister David Therese Korson, O.P.
Kindergarten	Sister Mary Jolantha, S.S.N.D.
First Grade	Sister Mary Magdalese, S.S.N.D.
Second Grade	Mrs. Mary Chambers
Third Grade	Mrs. Judith Lance
Fourth Grade	Sister Winifred Wheeler, S.J.
Fifth Grade	Mrs. Patricia Adams (Jan.- June)
	Sister Viola Marie, O.P. (Aug.- Dec.)
Sixth Grade	Mrs. Marian Krupiczewicz
Seventh Grade	Ms. Virginia Steiner
Eighth Grade	Mr. Paul Kozlowicz
Director of	Sister Eileen Flavins, Holy Cross
Religious Education	(Jan.- June)
	Sister Karen Thoreson, O.P.
	(Aug.- Dec.)
Librarian	Sister Mary Nonna, S.S.N.D.
	(Jan.- June)
	Sister Mary Rose, S.S.N.D.
	(Aug.- Dec.)
Reading Instructor	Sister Dolores, O.P.
	Ms. Virginia Morello
School Secretary	Mrs. Mary Fortuna
Aide to the School	Sister Yvonne, S.S.N.D.
Gym Instructor	Ms. Coyne

**Centennial First Communicants**

Benjamin Bailey	James Beke
Desiree Chayer	Rachel Close
Bonnie Davis	Faith Dombrowski
David DePriest	Natasha Godisak
Alison Fredricks	Kelly Karasiewicz
Kristin Hurley	David Kosak
Jessica Ketchel	Dennis Lance
Michelle Krupiczewicz	Kristine Meyers
Christine Longcore	Linda Ostrowski
Pamela Natoli	Matthew Ratajczak
Amy Polega	Annie Skrycki
Brian Shuker	Thomas Sobieranski
Marcie Smith	Michelle Stirrup
Christen Stirrup	Wendy Walenga
Steven Topolski	Todd Wozniak
Kristie Willis	

**Centennial Year Graduates**

Rob Armstrong	Theresa Nowak
Tim Ball	Dan Porter
Kim Briggs	Dave Prominski
Karen Czurak	Sue Prus
Scott Doolittle	Laura Schaak
Dawn Hatch	Rob Schmidt
Elizabeth Hickey	Kris Schuhardt
Craig Jarmosco	Andre Szczepaniuk
Kevin Judd	Dan Szczepanski
Chris Kohane	Donna Szymanski
Stan Labinski	Tom Tomasiak
Sandy McDowell	Joe Walczewski
Pat McKian	Carrie Zemaitis
Shelley Michalski	

**Principals Who Have Served At St. Adalbert's Grade School**

Sister Mary Tita, S.S.N.D.	1892-1900
Sister Ossia, S.S.N.D.	1900-1920
Sister Mary Nemesia, S.S.N.D.	1920-1926
Sister Mary Oswaldine, S.S.N.D.	1926-1931
Sister Mary Aurica, S.S.N.D.	1931-1935
Sister Mary Cuthbert, S.S.N.D.	1935-1939
Sister Mary Eugenia, S.S.N.D.	1939-1941
Sister Mary Pacifica, S.S.N.D.	1941-1947
Sister Mary Aurelia, S.S.N.D.	1947-1954
Sister Mary Hubertine, S.S.N.D.	1954-1956
Sister Mary Elmira, S.S.N.D.	1956-1962
Sister Mary Marcelia, S.S.N.D.	1962-1966
Sister Mary Stanislaus, S.S.N.D.	1966-1968
Sister Mary Eugenda, S.S.N.D.	1968-1975
Sister Rose Sharon, S.S.N.D.	1975-1979
Sister David Therese Korson, O.P.	1979-

**Enrollment At St. Adalbert's Grade School Since 1892\***

\*Although during the early years of Father Ponganis' tenure at St. Adalbert's Parish he made an attempt to organize the parish records, he evidently did not succeed in gathering the data about school enrollment prior to the year 1892.

Scholastic Year	Enrollment	No. Teachers
1892-93	306	5
1893-94	314	5
1894-95	485	6
1895-96	512	6
1896-97	325	5
1897-98	290	5
1898-99	373	6
1899-1900	n.a.	n.a.
1900-01	632	11
1901-02	757	12

<i>Scholastic Year</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>No. Teachers</i>
1902-03	623	11
1903-04	673	12
1904-05	700	12
1905-05	630	11
1906-07	661	12
1907-08	658	11
1908-09	652	11
1909-10	654	11
1910-11	682	11
1911-12	744	11
1912-13	739	11
1913-14	943	14
1914-15	950	14
1915-16	954	15
1916-17	993	16
1917-18	1112	17
1918-19	1140	18
1919-20	1170	19
1920-21	1275	19
1921-22	1285	20
1922-23	1384	23
1923-24	1400	23
1924-25	1573	24
1925-26	1461	24
1926-27	1514	25
1927-28	1403	26
1928-29	1336	26
1929-30	1307	24
1930-31	1195	24
1931-32	1290	23
1932-33	910	19
1933-34	893	19
1934-35	910	19
1935-36	900	19
1936-37	954	21
1937-38	875	20
1938-39	840	18
1939-40	759	18
1940-41	676	16
1941-42	670	17

<i>Scholastic Year</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>No. Teachers</i>
1942-43	685	17
1943-44	665	15
1944-45	622	14
1945-46	613	14
1946-47	636	15
1947-48	684	15
1948-49	717	15
1949-50	674	14
1950-51	665	14
1951-52	652	14
1952-53	685	13 Sisters 1 Lay Teacher
1953-54	752	13 Sisters 1 Lay Teacher
1954-55	773	12 Sisters 3 Lay Teachers
1955-56	802	13 Sisters 3 Lay Teachers
1956-57	752	12 Sisters 3 Lay Teachers
1957-58	785	12 Sisters 3 Lay Teachers
1958-59	810	12 Sisters 4 Lay Teachers
1959-60	821	12 Sisters 4 Lay Teachers
1960-61	830	12 Sisters 4 Lay Teachers
1961-62	800	12 Sisters 4 Lay Teachers
1962-63	785	12 Sisters 5 Lay Teachers
1963-64	740	12 Sisters 5 Lay Teachers
1964-65	727	12 Sisters 5 Lay Teachers
1965-66	658	12 Sisters 5 Lay Teachers
1966-67	663	10 Sisters 7 Lay Teachers
1967-68	648	10 Sisters

Scholastic Year	Enrollment	No. Teachers
1968-69	587	7 Lay Teachers 10 Sisters
1969-70	527	8 Lay Teachers 8 Sisters
1970-71	465	8 Lay Teachers 8 Sisters
1971-72	376	8 Lay Teachers 8½ Sisters
1972-73	327	6½ Lay Teachers 8 Sisters
1973-74	277	5½ Lay Teachers 7 Sisters
1974-75	294	42/5 Lay Teachers 7 Sisters
1975-76	273	6 Lay Teachers 5½ Sisters
1976-77	249	6 Lay Teachers 4½ Sisters
1977-78	231	6 Lay Teachers 3½ Sisters
1978-79	219	7 Lay Teachers 2½ Sisters
1979-80	215	6 Lay Teachers 4 Sisters
1980-81	221	6 Lay Teachers 5 Sisters 5 Lay Teachers

### SPORTS AT ST. ADALBERT'S GRADE SCHOOL

The successful tradition of competitive athletics at St. Adalbert's Grade School goes back almost thirty-five years. It is the story of many devoted volunteers, supporters, athletes, and parents — all of whom reflect the dedication and enthusiasm that so typically characterize all parish activities. Because of such support it has also been a winning tradition, a fact attested to by the numerous trophies encased on the first floor of the school.

The sports program began in the winter of 1947 with the inception of basketball, and by the end of that year softball, track, and City League touch football were added for 7th and 8th grade students. In the spring of 1948 the young athletes in the fledging program won their first city title — in softball; the following fall saw triumph in touch football, as the city championship was annexed. Over the years several more championships were won by these teams. Meanwhile, the St. Adalbert's Little League baseball team was being formed and sponsored by the Holy Name Society and, under the early leadership of Michael Swierbut, Rich Golczynski, and Gene Kubiak, performed very well.

The year 1957 saw enormous growth in the sports program under the energetic leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Flak, whose names are synonymous with St. Adalbert's athletics as we know it today. In fact the cultivation of sport is largely the story of the Flaks, whose tireless efforts initiated tackle football and cheerleading and produced dozens of divisional and city championships. For seventeen years Mr. Flak coached various sports, winning city titles in each one, including football, basketball, softball and track. And for ten years Mrs. Flak coached the cheerleading squads, which she first organized in 1957.

It was in the summer of 1957 that Mr. Flak began to earnestly make plans for initiating tackle football: buying equipment, enlisting support, and raising funds. Some of the early, very generous supporters of the program, of whom special mention should be made, include Mr. Walter Karatkiewicz of the St. Hyacinth Society, Messrs. Stan Walsh, Sr. and Stan Walsh, Jr. of the Knights of St. Casimir, and Mr. George Zielinski — all of whom helped by making available their facilities for organizing and fund-raising activities, and who also donated time and money to make the expanded program a success. Mention should also be made of Mr. Al Preston, whose love of sports and trust in Mr. Flak moved him to make the first large donation for equipment.

The efforts were fruitful. In the fall of 1959 the 6th grade won the school's first tackle football championship, followed in 1961 by the 8th grade's title. In 1959 the basketball team won its first Class B (non-gym) title. Then in 1962, the first year of dual meet competition in track, Mr. Flak coached the St. Adalbert's boys to their first championship. Altogether four division championships and two city championships have been captured in football, while two city and ten divisional titles have been added in track. In addition, the girls of St. Adalbert entered the sports program in the mid 1960's, coached by Al Potterack and Bob Zimmerman, and promptly won the first city championship in softball. Besides that sport, the girls also participate in basketball and track.

It might be noted that the school colors of green and white were chosen by Mr. Flak, who also influenced Rev. Joseph Murphy to adopt those colors for the new West Catholic High School in 1962.

Many people have contributed to the success of St. Adalbert's athletic program over the years, including Jacob and Rosalie Rau who, along with the Flaks stored equipment in their home and were instrumental in forming the present Boosters Club; Bernie Prawdzik, who also helped plan the Boosters Club and coached winning track teams for five years; Mike Nowak, Ron Kozal, Fred and Annette Schmidt, Marcie Matulaitis — all of whom have served as long-time coaches and supervisors. They and many others have contributed to making the St. Adalbert's sports program successful and enduring.

This year's coaches include:\*

Athletic Director	.....Matt Rettig
Boy's football (5th-6th grade & 7th-8th grade teams)	.....Mike Nowak Fred Schmidt, Tom O'Hearn
Girl's basketball (7th-8th grades)	.....Nick Golczynski, Mary Gumolski
Girls basketball (5th-6th grades)	.....Bob Wojcik, Sue Nowak, Pat Putz
8th grade boys' basketball	.....Fred Schmidt
7th grade boys' basketball	.....Bob Wojcik, Pat Putz, Matt Rettig
6th grade boys' basketball	.....Bill Tomaszewski
5th grade boys' basketball	.....Tom Haight, Ed Reckucki
Boys' and girls' track (grades 5-8)	.....Mike Nowak
Girls softball (grades 7-8)	.....Virginia Steiner
Boys' baseball (grades 7-8)	.....Ron Kozal, Fred Schmidt
Boys baseball (grades 5-6)	.....Tom Haight, Tim Mroz
Cheerleading Supervisor	.....Dolores Reckucki
Cheerleading Coach (grade 8)	.....Michelle Rotenthaler
Cheerleading Coaches (grade 7)	.....Kathy Little, Chris Pasikowski
Cheerleading Coach (grade 6)	.....Jean Reckucki, Mary May
Cheerleading Coach (grade 5)	.....Kathy Kowalczyk, Barb Covey

\*Through June, 1981.



## **MUSIC AT THE BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

In the early years of the church, organ music was basically used as background or for choir accompaniment. The music of the choir was sung in Polish, the vernacular of the early settlers, or in Latin, the language of the Mass. During these early years there were often two adult choirs as well as a school-children's choir. The adults performed regularly at two Masses each weekend, the Vespers service on Sundays, and any special services during the week. During the term of Casimir Kowalkowski as Music Director, the choir also presented musical plays sung in Polish. The children sang at one Mass each Sunday, as well as at their own weekday services.

With the advent of Vatican II, circa 1965, English was promoted as the new language of the Mass. This opened new vistas for church music. At last, all people could understand what was being spoken and sung in all the common languages of the time. This led the way to the formation of a folk-music group at St. Adalbert's. One Mass each weekend — at this time the 5:30 Mass on Saturdays — is devoted to this type of music featuring guitars, flute, and various other instruments, and a group of folk singers currently led by Sister Winifred Wheeler.

The English texts also furthered the use of traditional choirs within the liturgy of the Mass. Today, the Choir of St. Adalbert sings a Mass each weekend. Moreover, several times each year they present concerts both in the Basilica, using sacred music, and in concert halls, using some of the lighter "secular" music selections. In the present days of Ecumenism, they also join with choirs of other denominations, both in the Basilica and in other churches. The choir today will sing their music in Polish, Latin, and English. The heritage of all three languages is perfectly suited to a Basilica choir.

The organ at the Basilica, one of the major projects during the Centennial year and the lovingly chosen gift to the future generations of St. Adalbert faithful, is used every weekend at four Masses, as well as at nearly every other function held in the Basilica. A five-minute Prelude is played before each Mass, along with hymn accompaniment, response accompaniment, background music, and the recessional. Furthermore, several times each year there are concerts, open to the public, given by visiting organists and the current Basilica organist, Mr. Joseph Westdorp.

Rita Haraburda  
Dolores Herrera  
Violet Heyboer  
Jacqueline Heynen  
Margaret Hinzmann  
Roni Jarmosco  
Theodosia Jaworski  
Charles Kahns  
Lottie Kubiak  
Gertrude Karatkiewicz  
Marlene Labinski  
Judy Lance  
Cindy Lucas  
Gerry Lucas  
Eric Nylen

Lucille Szoka  
Irene Sypniewski  
Mitch Szczepanczyk  
Al TenEyck  
Lillian Valliere  
Laura Wawrzyniak  
Stan Wawrzyniak  
Kathy Westdorp  
Lori Westdorp  
Sue Westdorp  
Marlene Wozniak  
Ted Wozniak  
Ted Wozniak, Jr.  
Clara Wysocki  
Adele Zoppa

***Organists And Choir Directors At St. Adalbert's***

Mr. Casimir Kowalkowski .....1904-1935  
Miss Joseph Niemczewski .....1936-1954  
Mrs. Antonia Klekoda .....1955-1958  
Mr. Joseph Westdorp .....1959-

***Choir Members Of The Basilica Of St. Adalbert***

Barbara Czurak	Judy Nylen
Donald Czurak	Erna Pelak
Karen Czurak	Eugenia Perkowski
Kathy DeFouw	Rose Piotrowski
Julie Dodge	Stephanie Prawdzik
Diane Dombrowski	Marilyn Prus
Michelle Downer	Fran Romanowski
Jay Fagan	Ronald Romanowski
Mary Golczynski	Kris Rosloniec
James Gorski	Julie Schild
Doris Grant	Bill Simons



Basilica of St. Adalbert's Choir - 1981

**PRESENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS AT  
THE BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT**

***ST. ADALBERT'S AID SOCIETY***

The oldest Polish Catholic Society in Grand Rapids, the St. Adalbert's Aid Society is still going strong after 109 years. Since its founding in 1872 it has paid out tens of thousands of dollars in sick, welfare, and death benefits to its members, and many thousands more in charitable contributions. It has also supported many club activities including a bowling team, baseball teams, and a Fisherman's Club besides sponsoring dances, parties, golf outings, and children's Christmas parties. Thus, in social as well as welfare activities, the Society has unceasingly fulfilled its purpose over the years.

The Society's current officers consist of:

President .....Robert Kozal  
Vice President.....James Salkiewicz  
Recording Secretary .....Ed Haraburda  
Financial Secretary .....Daniel Mieras  
Treasurer.....Patrick Healy  
Sick Director .....Frank Sullivan  
Trustees.....Art Heaney, Barry Fox,  
Dale Markowski, Don Hansen

**ST. HYACINTH AID SOCIETY**

Organized on November 28, 1886, the St. Hyacinth Aid Society has, like its predecessor, a long and distinguished history of service to both its members and the parish as a whole. In benefits to its members it has paid out over \$100,000, while making over \$30,000 in contributions to the church — a most enviable record. It also has sponsored social as well as sporting activities, and it continues to thrive under the following officers:

- President ..... Alex Castro
- Vice President ..... Stephen Furniss
- Recording Secretary ..... John Boonstra
- Financial Secretary & Treasurer ..... Robert Weshoski
- Sick Director ..... Raymond Bala
- Trustees ..... Tom Godlewski, Ted Godlewski,  
Nick Waclawski, Daniel Kempker

**KNIGHTS OF ST. CASIMIR AID SOCIETY**

The third of the fraternal societies at St. Adalbert's, the Knights of St. Casimir banded together on May 21, 1895. Though their generosity to their members and to the parish has been equally as significant as that of the older aid societies, perhaps the Knights of St. Casimir are best remembered for their colorful band which performed on every important parish occasion up until the 1940's.

The current officers include:

- President ..... Stanley Walsh, Jr.
- Vice President ..... Ronald Koryto
- Recording Secretary ..... Howard Badgerow
- Financial Secretary ..... Hugo Witkowski
- Treasurer ..... James Nawrocki
- Sick Director ..... Edward Kumko
- Marshall ..... Eugene Derezinski
- Trustees ..... Tony Wawrzyniak, Stanley Good  
Dennis Piechocki, Richard Smith

**THE HOLY ROSARY SOCIETY**

Though the Holy Rosary Society was organized with the founding of the parish, members date the official establishment of the Society at 1905 when the newly installed pastor, Rev. Casimir Skory, reorganized it. At that time there were seven hundred members. On March 16, 1980 the Society celebrated its diamond anniversary with a special Mass and breakfast, proud of its achievements and graciously committing themselves to continue their fine duties.

The Holy Rosary Society meets the first Sunday of each month in the All-Purpose Room from October through May. Presently there are 343 members. The current officers include:

- President ..... Mrs. Cecilia Ziomkowski
- Vice President ..... Mrs. Adele Zoppa
- Recording Secretary ..... Mrs. Sophie Jalowicz
- Financial Secretary ..... Mrs. Mary Aniszko
- Treasurer ..... Mrs. Estelle Perkowski

**THE LADIES WELFARE SOCIETY**

Organized on November 18, 1908, The Ladies Welfare Society has consistently and generously dedicated itself to work for the good of the parish. Its second and current constitution was drawn up on February 4, 1930 to meet the needs of the day, including aid to the poor and sick in the form of food and staples, outfitting the First Communicants that needed help, and other good works. The present membership is 107, with the following officers:

- President ..... Esther Wojczynski
- Vice President ..... Frances Jaworowicz
- Recording Secretary ..... Martha Bigorowski  
(dec. June, 1981)
- Financial Secretary ..... Lucille Sieracki
- Treasurer ..... Gertrude Zils
- Sunshine Lady ..... Harriet Pierczchalski

**ST. ADALBERT'S MOTHERS' CLUB**

Since November 6, 1924, when it was founded at the suggestion of Msgr. Skory, the Mother's Club has worked tirelessly for the good of the school children of the parish through fund-raising activities, help in the classrooms, and the purchasing of teaching aids. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month. Membership totals 139, with the current officers in charge:

- President .....Esther Mooney
- Vice President .....Geri Krajewski
- Recording Secretary .....Evelyn Cegelis
- Financial Secretary .....Gertrude Zils
- Treasurer .....Gerry Lucas
- Sunshine Lady .....Marlene Labinski
- Calling Committee .....Barb Karston, Mary Nowak

**ST. THERESA SOCIETY**

The St. Theresa Society was also organized by Msgr. Skory, on September 17, 1929. It was and remains solely a spiritual society. Two former members whom the Society wishes to remember in this Centennial Year for their hard work and contributions to the parish are Mrs. Sabina Ksiazkiewicz, president of the Society for over twenty years who passed away in July, 1978; and Mrs. Julia Baron, longtime treasurer who passed away in 1970.

At present there are approximately 90 members of the Society, led by the following officers:

- President .....Martha Radawski
- Vice President .....Helen Kasprzak
- Recording Secretary .....Anna Zakarzewska
- Financial Secretary .....Theresa Zamiara
- Treasurer .....Bernice Czurak

**BASILICA OF ST. ADALBERT'S USHERS CLUB**

Organized in late 1934 by Rev. John A. Maksymowski, the Ushers Club has a long and fruitful history in fund-raising activities and other important contributions to the parish. Some ushers on the

present roster have been members for over forty years, with Mr. Bernard Mikulenas a charter member. Today not only do the ushers perform their duties in church, but they also are present among lector/commentators, Eucharistic ministers, collection counters, and various key positions on parish and diocesan fund drives. Indeed, it is with justification that the Ushers Club members have been called "right hand men" by each pastor because of their devoted assistance to him and to the parish.

The current officers are:

- President .....James Heynen
- Vice President .....Robert Czerney
- Secretary .....Raymond Nowak
- Treasurer .....Stephen Korda, Sr.

**LEGION OF MARY**

Formed on October 11, 1945, the St. Adalbert's Praesidium of the Legion of Mary continues its spiritual mission with unwavering devotion. Members make home visits to the sick of the parish as well as to those in hospitals and nursing homes, distribute Holy Communion to the sick upon request, and serve as distributors of Holy Communion at Sunday Masses. In addition, they have maintained a perpetual Novena to Our Lady of Fatima since the early 1960's. On every third Sunday of each month several members assist the patients at Kent Community Hospital to Mass. Other members drive sick parishioners to their doctors. Further, one member mails church bulletins to the sick at home as well as to those in nursing establishments. In general, then, the members' personal spiritual commitment brings much aid and comfort to many people.

Presently the Legion's members meet every Monday at 6:30 P.M. in St. Adalbert's clubroom. This year's officers are:

- President .....Eugenia Merdzinski
- Vice President .....Natalie Seymer
- Secretary .....Claudia Kelderhouse
- Treasurer .....Helen Koperski

**ST. ADALBERT'S MEMORIAL POST #1058,  
CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS**

Memorial Post #1058, organized in September of 1946, has for years provided exemplary work on behalf of God, Country, and Home. Its members have been the right arm of two pastors by being involved in the Ushers Club, the Parish Council, D.D.F. and other fund drives, Lay Ministers, Commentators, and other jobs for which key people are needed. The Post has provided several people for important positions in the PAVLA Program sponsored by the Kent County Chapter, Catholic War Veterans, at the request of the Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids. In 1962 the St. Adalbert's Post was a strong link in the chain which financed the sending of two papal volunteers to Latin America for a three year period. Members also helped to collect, store, crate, and ship truckloads of tools, clothes, farm implements, and sewing machines to the mission in Guatemala.

Much more could be written about this organization from its first commander to the present. Suffice it to say here that the work of Post #1058 has had far-ranging effects, not only locally but nationally and even internationally — a tribute to the noble spirits of its members.

In keeping with a request by the general membership, the names of this year's officers will not be printed here. It was justifiably felt that their inclusion alone would not suffice to properly honor the many fine commanders and officers who have worked so hard and successfully in the past. Thus, rather than include the present officers, let us pay tribute to all the members, past and present, who have made Memorial Post #1058 one of the finest in the nation.

**ST. ADALBERT'S SCOUT TROOP #268**

Though first organized in the late 1930's as Boy Scout Troop #68, the group disbanded during World War II due to lack of adult leadership and was not reactivated until April of 1956 under the sponsorship of the Holy Name Society, when it became known as Boy Scout Troop #268, with Mr. John F. Walski as scoutmaster. Since then a total of 28 members have been Eagle Scouts, the highest level a boy can attain in scouting. After The Holy Name Society

disbanded in 1965, sponsorship was assumed by St. Adalbert's Memorial Post #1058, Catholic War Veterans.

Besides spending ten days and nights camping each year, during which trips they hike and canoe, the scouts participate in all council and district affairs, attend annual Catholic scout retreats, and spend a week each year in summer camp. As a result of this spirited participation, the troop has received numerous awards over the years, including twenty national camping awards, the distinction of serving as the Governor's Honor Guard at Mackinac Island, the National Historic Trails Award and others.

Troop #268 has won other honors, also, for their efforts on behalf of our American resources. Their accomplishments have been cited by the Department of the Interior of the United States Government. In addition, it is the first troop to have received the Pope Paul VI Award, given for outstanding service in Catholicism.

The present scoutmaster is Mr. Eugene Nowak.

**ST. ADALBERT'S MEMORIAL CATHOLIC  
WAR VETERANS POST #1058, LADIES AUXILIARY**

Since its inception in May, 1958, the Ladies Auxiliary has tirelessly and enthusiastically participated in many church and school activities. Members have served in Holy Hours, rosary recitations for the deceased of the parish, Corporate Communion, and other liturgical functions. They have also served on fund drives, taught CCD classes and classes for the handicapped, and assisted the elderly in getting to Sunday Mass.

The auxiliary members have always assisted in community drives such as the March of Dimes and Muscular Dystrophy Drive, and have taken part in patriotic day observances. Together with the Kent County Chapter, they assist in the annual Memorial Day Mass at the Michigan Veterans Facility. Several members regularly go to the Facility to take wheelchair patients to the chapel for Sunday Mass. The auxiliary also sponsors Bingo parties for the patients; moreover, they make knitted, crocheted, and machine-made lap robes for the patients' use. In addition, they have purchased a wheelchair and an audio-visual aid machine for the facility's use in speech therapy for stroke victims.

Their work on behalf of the school has been equally as generous. They have donated money to help the Eighth Grade on its annual class trips and put on breakfasts for the graduates. They also sponsor seventh and eighth grade students in a C. W. V. Spelling Bee and take the winners on to the County Chapter and State Department run-offs.

The 74 present members of the Ladies Auxiliary meet once a month in the parish hall. The current officers include:

- President .....Lottie Inglat
- 1st Vice President .....Lottie Zych
- 2nd Vice President .....Lorraine Kalinowski
- 3rd Vice President .....Clara Pasikowski
- Secretary .....Frances Baczewski
- Treasurer .....Rita Mogilnicki
- Welfare Officer .....Helen Munski
- Ritual Officer .....Natalie Seymer
- Trustees .....Betty Milzarski, Mary Tabor,  
Rose Koryto

**ST. ADALBERT'S ATHLETIC BOOSTER CLUB**

One of the most recently formed clubs (1971), the Boosters have proven to be indispensable in caring for the athletic needs of St. Adalbert's school children. It has done an outstanding job of raising funds to purchase the best possible quality of sports equipment and uniforms for both boys' and girls' teams as well as for the cheer-leading and pom-pon squads. The club members have worked tirelessly at raffles, bake sales, banquets, and other activities, efforts which have allowed them to provide for the safety and health of the athletes while remaining free of debt. Special tribute should be paid to Edward and Ann Flak, who helped to organize and encouraged the development of this club.

During the Centennial Year the officers include:

- President .....Ronald Kozal
- Vice President .....Robert Wojcik
- Secretary .....Mary May
- Treasurer .....Rose Rau

**ST. ADALBERT'S  
HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

Organized on May 3, 1973, the Home and School Association has become one of the most important groups in providing aid to the school facilities as well as to the total school program. Perhaps its most visible activity is the sponsorship of the annual parish festival to raise money for school supplies. Besides their endowment of classroom, library, and cafeteria materials, the members also give generously of their time assisting teachers in the classrooms.

Current officers are:

- President .....Ronald Ford
- Vice President .....Mr. & Mrs. Michael Nowak
- Secretary .....Pat Heitzman
- Treasurer .....Rosalie Bala

**PARISHIONERS AGED 85 AND OVER**

Because the celebration of the centennial anniversary of St. Adalbert's Parish honors the principle of continuity, it is appropriate to pay tribute to the older members of the Basilica, specifically those who witnessed, even at tender ages, the turning of the century and have endured the drama of rapid change that distinguishes our time from all others. Some of these people have been faithful parishioners since the Ponganis years, and they contain in their memories recollections the details of which would enrich the lives of any willing listener. Others came here from Poland and contain within them that link to the heritage upon which the Basilica of St. Adalbert is so irrevocably based. To all these worthy people, ages 85 and over, we offer a special salute.

<i>NAME</i>	<i>BORN</i>	<i>AGE</i>
John Basarabski	1891	90
Teofila Basarabski	1891	88
Jennie Bialas	1888	93
John Czarnopys	1894	87
Mrs. Marian Ceranski Czarnopys	1896	85
Victoria Danilowicz	1891	90
Catherine Domansik	1894	87
Mrs. Cecilia Dutkiewicz	1896	85
Mary Napierala Dutkiewicz	1892	89
Frances Gieroch	1891	89
Frank Hernes	1895	86
Mrs. Agnes Jankowski	1884	96
Mary Kalinowski	1894	87
Mrs. Stephany Karatkiewicz	1891	89
Mrs. Joseph Kolasa	1895	86
Mrs. Ludgarda Kowalski	1894	87
Anna Krolikowski	1892	89
John Krolikowski	1886	95
Mrs. Benjamin Krzywosz	1894	86
Mrs. Stanley (Minnie) Glowacki Kubiak	1892	89
Mrs. Felix Micun	1895	86
Frances Miedzielec	1896	85
Albert Mrowinski	1893	88
Anna Mrowinski	1892	88

<i>NAME</i>	<i>BORN</i>	<i>AGE</i>
Anthony Adam Nadolski	1890	91
John Nawrocki	1893	87
Mrs. Cecilia Zielinski Nowak	1894	86
Anna Oleszkiewicz	1895	86
Mary Opacki	1896	85
Casimir Pasikowski	1881	100
Mrs. Susan Plocki	1895	86
Mrs. Ignatius Phillets	1896	91
Stanley Polkowski	1892	89
Mrs. Anna Uzarski Powers	1892	89
Blanch Putz	1893	87
Pauline Putz	1890	91
Mrs. Mary Sapkowski	1891	90
Victoria Schnerch	1891	90
Estelle Schoals	1888	93
Mrs. Bell Szczepanski	1893	88
Seraphine Siemion	1892	89
Mr. Edward Strzyzewski	1894	87
Mary Szczewinski	1895	86
Frances Wachowiak	1888	92
Constance Wierzbicki	1887	94
Rose Wilczynski	1889	92
Anna Wroblewski	1890	91
Mrs. Katherine Zieziul	1891	90
Mrs. Emily Zimmerman	1896	85



**PARISH ROSTER**

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Abid  
 Mrs. Anna Abramowicz  
 Mrs. Bertha Adamczak  
 Mrs. Florence Adamczak  
 Mr. Jules Adams  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Aitchison  
 Mr. & Mrs. Fred Alberts  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Alberts  
 Mr. & Mrs. Floyd Alflen  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Alflen  
 Mr. John J. Ampulski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Ampulski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley C. Ampulski  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Anderson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Isidore Andrejczak  
 Stephanie Andrejczak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Anisko  
 Mr. Thomas L. Anisko  
 Virginia Anisko  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Anisko  
 Mr. & Mrs. Lynwood Armstrong  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Arsulowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Arsulowicz  
 Mr. Robert J. Arsulowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Arsulowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Arsulowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bill Ashbaugh  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Augustine  
 Miss Barbara J. Bacehowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Bacehowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Bacehowski  
 Kenneth Bacehowski  
 Mrs. Sophie Bacehowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Wallace Bacehowski  
 Mrs. Frances Baczewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Baczewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Howard Badgerow  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald J. Bailey  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gale K. Bailey  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gale Bailey, Jr.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Bajdek  
 Jeanne Bajdek  
 Mr. & Mrs. James A Baker  
 Mrs. Hedwig Bakun  
 Mr. John Bakun  
 Mrs. Stephen Bakun  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bala  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Bala  
 Miss Mary Balakier  
 Cheryl A. Balcer  
 Mr. & Mrs. Norbert Balcer  
 Mrs. Victoria Balczak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Ball  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edwin A Ball  
 Leona Ball  
 Michael D. Ball  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Ball  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Bancuk  
 Joseph Banka  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Banks  
 Mr. & Mrs. James P. Baragar  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Baranowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Baranowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Elias A. Barnes  
 Mrs. Catherine Barstis  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Bart, Jr.  
 Miss Cecelia Bartnik  
 Elizabeth Bartosiewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Bartosiewicz  
 Patricia Bartosiewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Basarabski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Batchelder  
 Wilfred Bayer  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dennis J. Beke  
 Mrs. Helen Bender  
 Mrs. Sophie Bender  
 Charles Bentley  
 Mr. Roger W. Bergsma  
 Kathleen Berry  
 Mrs. Jennie Bialas  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Bialas  
 Mr. & Mrs. Fred Bialk  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Bialk, Jr.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Bielecki  
 Mrs. Helen C. Bielecki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Bielecki  
 Miss Susan T. Bielecki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter J. Bielecki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Bielecki, Jr.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Bilski  
 Karen Bilski  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Black  
 Mr. & Mrs. James J Black, Jr.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. Blaskis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Bolek  
 Mr. Gerald Bolek  
 Mrs. Rosemary Bolek  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gary R. Bolhouse  
 Mr. & Mrs. George C. Bolhouse  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Boris

Miss Jane A. Borkowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Borkowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald C. Bostwick  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles A. Botwinski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Botwinski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald & J. Bouffard  
 Darrell J. Bour  
 Dolores Bour  
 Mrs. Peggy M. Bovee  
 Mr. & Mrs. James & Chris Bowman  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Bozek  
 Mrs. Pauline Brach  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brand  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Breen  
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Brock, Sr.  
 Frank Broton  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Broton  
 Mr. & Mrs. Alastair Brown  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Brown  
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Brunette  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Bryk  
 Mrs. Stella Bryk  
 Mr. George Brzowski  
 Anne Buczynski  
 Mrs. Victoria Budnick  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Bukrey  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Bulkowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Bulkowski  
 Mrs. Patricia Bulkowski  
 Maribeth Burch  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Burch  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert & Kath. Burch  
 Mr. & Mrs. Emmet Burns  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald J. Burns  
 Mary Ann K. Burt  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thaddeus Buzalski  
 Carri D. Caldwell  
 Connie Rae Calvetti  
 Mr. & Mrs. Morris Campbell  
 Barbara Carey  
 Barbara L. Carter  
 Gus V. Carter  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Cebelak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Cegelis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Centilli  
 Mrs. Mary H. Cesarz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard M. Chapman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Chapman  
 Mrs. Dorothy Cheslock  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Chesney  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Childs  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gary Ching  
 Mrs. Estelle Choals  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Choroszuca  
 Mr. & Mrs. Zbiginiew Choroszuca  
 Anthony Choroszuca  
 Marian Christensen  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ted Chulski  
 Stella Chyrowski  
 Irene Ciapara  
 Mrs. Valeria Ciccarella  
 Mr. Alex Cimoch  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald P. Clifford  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Close  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Connor  
 Susan Contafi  
 Julia J. Corey  
 Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Costello  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard J. Covey  
 Elizabeth Cowman  
 Frank Cozza  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ned Cramer  
 Mrs. Rose Crapsey  
 Mr. Charles Crothers  
 Miss Jane Cwik  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Cwik  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Cwiklinski  
 Mrs. Helene Cwiklinski  
 Miss Stella Cwiklinski  
 Mr. John Cydzik  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Czarnopys  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Czarnopys  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Czarnopys  
 Darlene Czerew  
 Mrs. Elizabeth Czerew  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Czerew  
 Mary Jane Czerney  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Czerney  
 Mrs. Stella Czerney  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Czerney  
 Mr. Alfred Czurak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Czurak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Czurak  
 Mrs. Paula Czurak  
 Mary Czyzyk  
 Adam Daniel  
 Robert Daniel  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Daniel  
 Mr. Stanley Daniels  
 Mrs. Victoria Danilowicz

Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Danowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles R. Dauser  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frederick K. Dauser  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Dauser  
 Mr. Timothy Dauser  
 Miss Karen M. De Fouw  
 Miss Kathy L. De Fouw  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard De Fouw  
 Mr. Harold De Koster  
 Mr. & Mrs. Carl G. De Young  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Decker  
 Carol Depriest  
 Mr. & Mrs. Timothy J. De Regnaucourt  
 Mr. Eugene Derezenski  
 Mrs. Charlotte Deutsch  
 Mr. Stanley Dlugolenski  
 Mrs. Phyllis Dobrowolski  
 Josephine Dobrowolski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Dochod  
 Joseph Dochod  
 Mr. Leo W. Dodge  
 Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Dodyk  
 Mr. & Mrs. Anthony J. Domanski  
 David Domanski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph & S. Domanski  
 Mrs. Catherine Domasik  
 Miss Dolores Domasik  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph D. Dombrowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Dombrowski  
 Mrs. Stephanie Dombrowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Dominiak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Dominski  
 Mrs. Nancy Doolittle  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Downer  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Downer  
 Miss Kathleen Downer  
 Miss Margaret Downer  
 Miss Michelle Downer  
 Mr. & Mrs. Sylvester Downer  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Dray  
 Mrs. Antoinette Droski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Henry Droski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Droski  
 Mrs. Isabel Droski  
 Mrs. Helen Drzazgowski  
 Theresa Dubis  
 Mrs. Eva Duchnowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Dudick  
 Mrs. Cecilia Dutkiewicz

Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Dutkiewicz  
 Miss Shirley Dutkiewicz  
 Wanda Dymidowski  
 Mrs. Theophile Dzienis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dzierbowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Albert Dzierwa  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Dzierwa  
 Michelle M. Dzwonek  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Dzwonek  
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 Mrs. Barbara Eden  
 Virginia D. Edwards  
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 Mr. & Mrs. David Eskew  
 Mr. & Mrs. James J. Fagan  
 Mrs. Marion Falicki  
 Mr. Norbert Falicki  
 Mr. Robert Falicki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Faski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Ference  
 Mr. Wallace Ference  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Finkler  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Flak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Flis  
 Mrs. Virginia Flowers  
 Mr. & Mrs. James & Nadyne Foley  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Folkersma  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Ford  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Fortuna  
 Miss Mary Fortuna  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Fortuna  
 Mr. & Mrs. Barry Fox  
 Jo A. Fox  
 Mrs. Theresa Franckowiak  
 Mr. Frank J. Frankowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Frantz  
 Mrs. Michael Franz  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Fredricks  
 Rita A. French  
 Mrs. Kate Frydrych  
 Joanne Frydrych  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Gabert  
 Mr. & Mrs. James & Ruebe Gabus  
 Mrs. Helen B. Gasper  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Geiger  
 Christine Adele Gersch  
 Mr. Richard Gersch  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gersch  
 Mr. & Mrs. John A. Gervase, Jr.  
 Stephanie Giedzinski

Mrs. Frances Gieroch  
 Mr. & Mrs. William C. Gieske  
 Mr. Donald Gigowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gigowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Randy A. Gilleo  
 Margaret Gillis  
 Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Giluck  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Girschle  
 Miss Charlene Glaz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Norman Glaz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Glowacki  
 Mr. James Glowacki  
 Mrs. Mary Glowacki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Loren Godfrey  
 Mr. & Mrs. John F. Godisak  
 Mrs. Martha Godlewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Godlewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Godlewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Golczynski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Golczynski  
 Mrs. Anna Golubski  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Golzynski  
 Bernice Gorecki  
 Mrs. Anne Gorecki  
 Bernice Gorski  
 Eleanor Gorski  
 Geneese Gorski  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Gorski  
 Mrs. Jane Gorski  
 Rose Gorski  
 Mrs. Julia Gorski  
 Mr. Theodore Gorski  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Gorter  
 Mrs. Stella Grabinski  
 Mr. John Grabowy  
 Anna Gratz  
 Miss Mary Ann Gratz  
 Mr. Charles Grego  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Grego  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Gregorski  
 Mrs. Mary Gregory  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edmund Grinczel  
 Elizabeth Grinczel  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephan V. Grinczel  
 David Griskait  
 Mrs. John Griskait  
 Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Griswold  
 Mr. Francis M. Grodick  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Gryga  
 Mrs. Ana Maria Grygorczyk

Bernice Grygorczyk  
 Mr. & Mrs. Marion Gryszko  
 Mrs. Anna Grzeskowiak  
 Mr. Charles Grzeskowiak  
 Mr. Chester Grzeszak  
 Mrs. Pearl Grzybowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Gumowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Gumowski  
 Margaret Gumowski  
 Mr. Lawrence G. Gumowski  
 Mrs. Agatha A. Haga  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Haight  
 Mr. & Mrs. Harry L. Halicki  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Hamacher  
 Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Hammond  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Hanks  
 Mrs. Helen Hansknecht  
 Mr. Chester Haraburda  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jack Haraburda  
 Mrs. Jessie Haraburda  
 M. A. Haraburda  
 Mr. & Mrs. Norbert Haraburda  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Haraburda  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley E. Harasim  
 Mr. & Mrs. Henry Hare  
 Mr. & Mrs. Deacon Jack G. Harig  
 Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Harig  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gaylord Harig  
 Kathleen G. Harig  
 Mr. & Mrs. Fred Hatch  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerrit Heeringa  
 Julia A. Heilman  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Heitzman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Manuel E. Herrera  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Hespel  
 Mrs. Violet P. Heyboer  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Heynen  
 Rose M. Hickey  
 Mrs. Emma Hikade  
 Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Hill  
 Carol Ellen Hills  
 Margaret Hinzmann  
 Mrs. Howard Hoffman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Hornik  
 Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Horton  
 Helen Hotovy  
 Mr. & Mrs. Allan Howarth  
 Mr. & Mrs. James E. Howe  
 Mr. Martin Hughes  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Hulette

Mrs. Nannette Hulst  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gary Humphrey  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gary Hurley  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Idziak  
 Mary Idziak  
 Louise Ignasiak  
 Mrs. Mary Ignasiak  
 Mrs. Mary Ignasiak  
 Mr. Edwin Ignatowski  
 Mrs. Lottie Inglat  
 Betty J. Jaarda, Jr.  
 Mrs. Mary Jablonski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Jachim  
 Elizabeth Jackowski  
 Isabelle Jackowski  
 Louise Jackowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Jagloski  
 Mary E. Jaglowski  
 Eleanore Jalowiec  
 Eugene Jalowiec  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Jalowiec  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Jarema  
 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Jarmosco  
 Mrs. Mary Jarmosco  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Jarmosco  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Jaroch  
 Rose Jarosz  
 Sophie H. Jarosz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley F. Jasinski  
 Carolyn Jaskiewicz  
 Martha Jaskiewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Jastremski  
 Bernadette Jatal  
 Chester Jatal  
 Mrs. Frances Jaworwicz  
 Sally Jaworwicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ted Jaworski  
 Theodosia Jaworski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Adam Jendrasiak  
 Mrs. Clara Jendrasiak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Everett Jendrezak  
 Michelle Kay Jermanski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Jermanski  
 Mrs. Anne V. Johnson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Cowlin S. Johnson  
 Miss Opal Johnson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Johnson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard I. Johnson, Jr.  
 Rita Ann Johnson  
 Mr. Joseph Jozwiak

Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Judd  
 Melvin Judd  
 Mrs. Charlott Judson  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Junewick  
 Mr. & Mrs. Philip Jung  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Junghans  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Juskewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Juskewicz  
 Alice Kaanta  
 Mr. Charles Kahns  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Kalinowski  
 Mr. Bronislaus B. Kaminski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Gene Kaminski  
 Lottie Kaminski  
 Miss Natalie Kaminski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Kaminski  
 Thomas Kanoza  
 Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Kaplanowski  
 Miss Rose R. Kaplanowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Daniel E. Karamol  
 Mr. Stanley Karas  
 Miss Gertrude Karasiewicz  
 Ronald Karasiewicz  
 Miss Theodora Karasiewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Karasiewicz, Jr.  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard A. Karasinski  
 Gertrude Karatkiewicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Henry Karczynski  
 Nancy Karczynski  
 Mr. Eugene Karp  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Karpinski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Chester Karpowicz  
 Miss Diane Karpowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Karpowicz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Karpowicz  
 Anna Karston  
 Mr. & Mrs. James Karston  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Karston  
 Therese Karston  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Karston  
 Mrs. Gertrude Kasnia  
 Mrs. Helen Kasprzak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Katip  
 Miss Sharlyn Katip  
 Mr. & Mrs. Albert Kawecki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Kay  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley J. Kaye  
 Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Kaye  
 Mrs. Marie Kazmierski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Kemp

Mrs. Shirley Kettlehake  
 Miss Josephine Kielek  
 Mrs. Alina Kierwiak  
 Gus Kiliszewski  
 Mr. Joseph Kiliszewski  
 Mrs. Sophie M. King  
 Mrs. Betty Jean Kirkwood  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ben Klekotka  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ervin Klekotka  
 Mr. & Mrs. Alger Klimas  
 Angeline Klocko  
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis B. Klocko  
 Mr. & Mrs. Peter Klocko  
 Sophie Klocko  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Kohane  
 Mrs. Helen Kolasa  
 Mr. & Mrs. Randy J. Kolehouse  
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 Mary Wozniak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Wozniak  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Wrona  
 Anna Wroblewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Albert Wyrawa  
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Wysocki  
 Mr. Christopher C. Wysocki  
 Edward Wysocki  
 Edward J. Wysocki

Mr. & Mrs. James M. Wysocki  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Wysocki  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Wysocki  
 Julian Wysocki  
 Mrs. Rose Wysocki  
 Mr. & Mrs. Walter Wysocki  
 Mrs. Anna Wysoczynski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Julius Yob  
 Mrs. Bernice Yovish  
 Mr. & Mrs. Mark Zagaroli  
 Mrs. Anna Zakarzewski  
 Mr. & Mrs. George Zalenski  
 Mrs. Wanda Zalenski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Zalewski  
 Mrs. Evelyn Zamiara  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Zamiara  
 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Zamiara  
 Alex Zarembo  
 Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Zaskiewcz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Constantine Zdybel  
 Leon Zdybel  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Zemaitis  
 Mr. & Mrs. David Zielinski  
 Mrs. Katherine Zieziul  
 Mrs. Gertrude Zils  
 Debra K. Zils  
 Mrs. Emily Zimmerman  
 Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Zimmerman  
 Mrs. Mina Zimmerman  
 Mr. Joseph Zimnowski  
 Mrs. Cecilia Ziomkowski  
 Mr. Joseph Zobro  
 Mrs. Louise F. Zobro  
 Mary Ann C. Zobro  
 Miss Eleanor Zomberg  
 Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Zoppa  
 Joseph Zoppa  
 Mr. & Mrs. John Zukowski  
 Florence Zurawski  
 Jennie Zurawski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Zurawski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Zurawski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Frank Zych  
 Mrs. Lottie Zych  
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas M. Zych  
 Mrs. Wanda Zylstra  
 Bernard Zyskowski  
 Dorothy Zyskowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Zyskowski  
 Jean Zyskowski  
 Miss Kathleen Zyskowski  
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Zyzyk