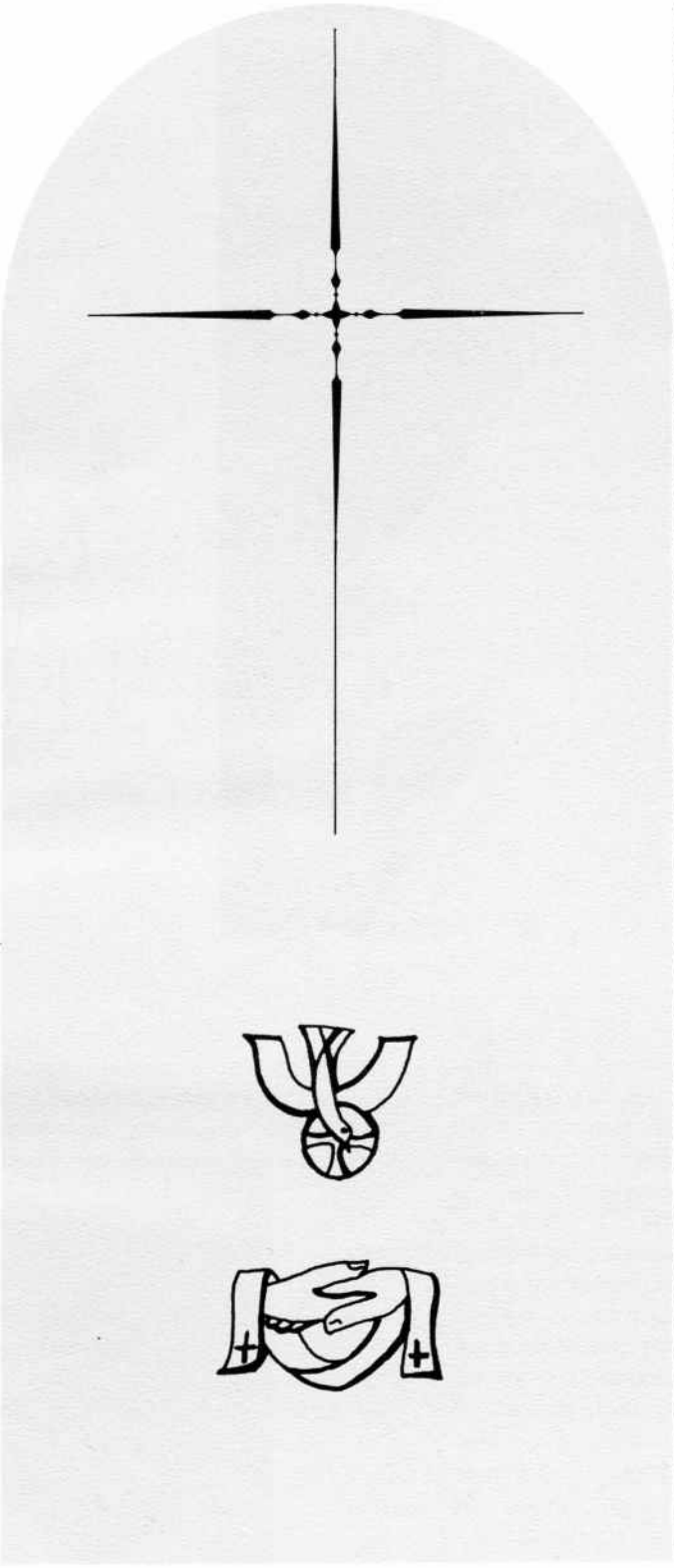


St. Cecilia Parish

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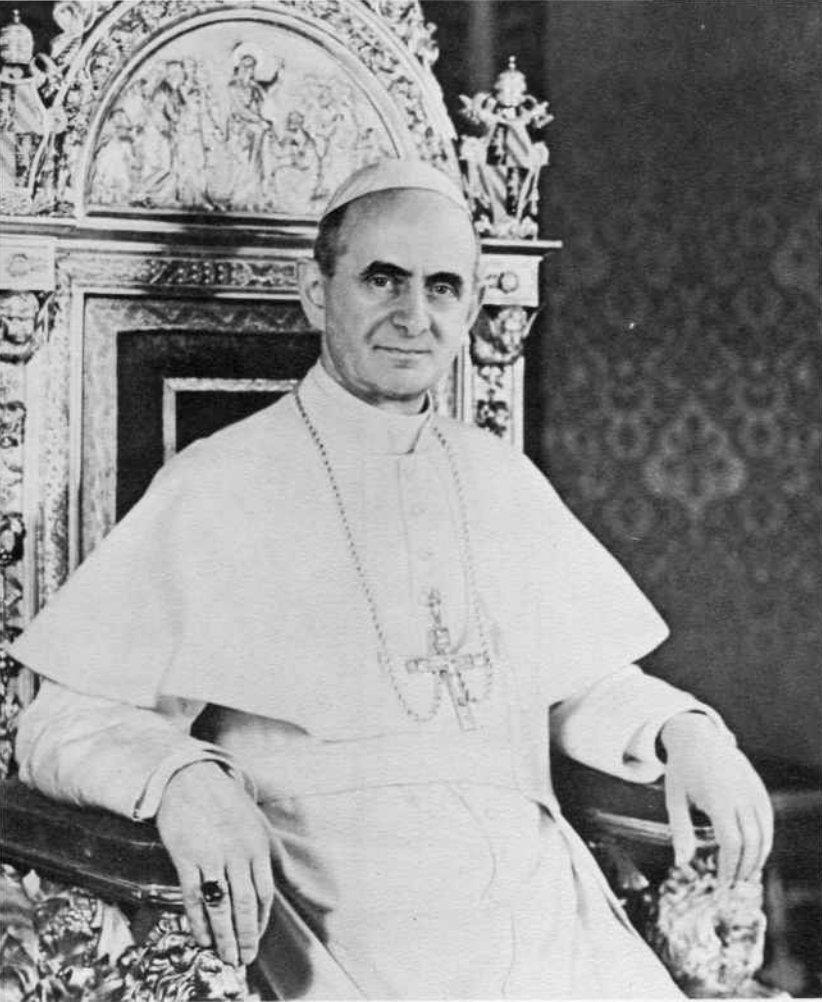
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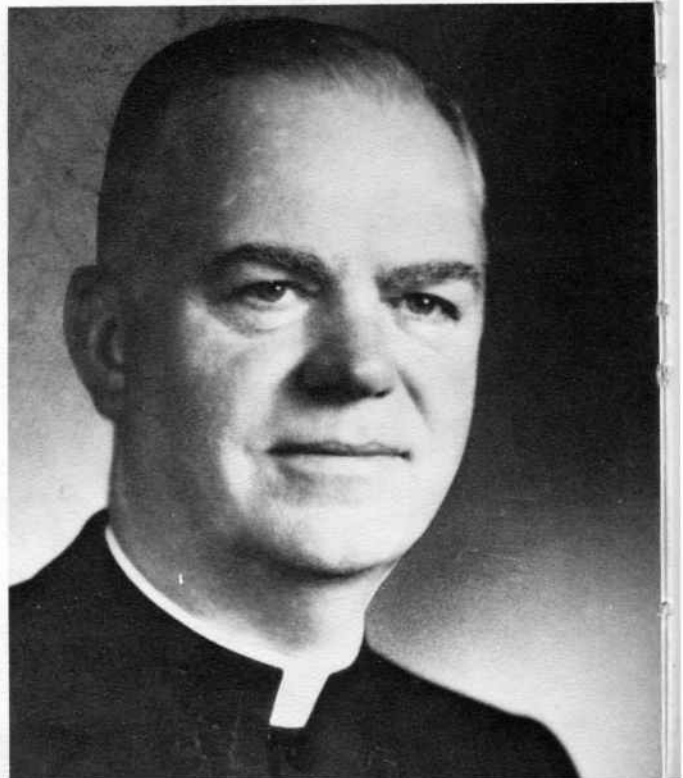
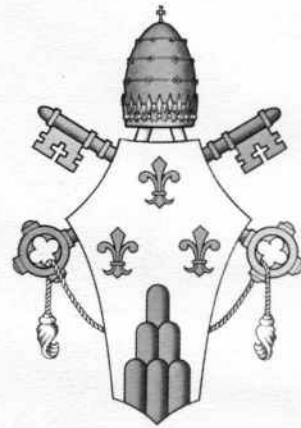
St. Cecilia Parish

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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*His Holiness
Pope Paul VI*



*His Eminence
John Cardinal Dearden, D.D.
Archbishop of Detroit*

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for
the brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psalms 132:1

Saint Cecilia Parish

PEOPLE MAKE OUR PARISH

An extraordinary church, its deeply-arched Romanesque doors opening on the comings and goings of busy Livernois Street in Detroit; its statue of St. Cecilia — patron of music — facing out across the cacophony and traffic noises of her inner-city parish, enters its second half-century this year.

Lifting its tower and fine wheel window high above the adjacent community, displaying on the apse dome within its proud painting of the Black Christ, the Church of St. Cecilia marked its Golden Jubilee on November 22, 1971. The anniversary was planned, in the spirit of St. Cecilia's, to serve not as a pause within, but rather as a celebration of its joyful day-to-day work of brotherhood and love.

"This Is Why We Have The Black Christ!"

This is why we have the Black Christ. We hope to shock people out of their ignorance of Christ. We hope to teach them whose pain this is in this city and country of ours. If any man can walk into our church and say 'My God! Christ is black! If he can take the next step and say 'Black poverty is Christ's; black frustration is Christ's,' we will have done what

we hoped to do . . ." With these words Father Raymond N. Ellis explained to angry letter writers the meaning of the newly unveiled painting of the Black Christ in the apse of his church in 1968, and to a somewhat startled public the creative purposes of St. Cecilia's toward a parish neighborhood at one time both middle class and white (the childhood parish of former Mayor James Cavanaugh) which had become during the 1960's primarily black. With the creation of the community called Ceciliaville, whose purpose was to delineate "from the city of Detroit a small section which could identify itself as a community," St. Cecilia's Church, with a membership of no more than two thousand expressed in 1968 its intent toward the forty thousand people within its parish boundaries. This intention was carried out in the months and years that followed with an extensive program of sports, skills-training, music, schooling, child care, food distribution and adult study which has served as a model to neighborhood planners across the nation, and which prompted the Reverend Paul F. Fetting to comment on the parish with pride which "walked and sang with a strength of family spirit that undoubtedly is unmatched by any church in the City of Detroit."



From tavern to tabernacle, this unlikely frame building served as birthplace for St. Cecilia's Parish

THE OLD ERA

But before the beautiful church had been built — before it had seen both prosperity, depression and its latest transfiguration as a well-spring of affection for a neighborhood that had not expected any — there was the first era, the old era, and the First Mass in the Roadhouse Church.

A Roadhouse Church

In May of 1921, quite near the site of the present St. Cecilia's at Grand River and Livernois Streets, stood a wooden tavern. Its siding, front porch and porch railing indicate that it once may have been a house. Closed by Prohibition, the building had stood tenantless since 1919. It was on Friday, May 13, 1921, that a brief notice appeared in Detroit newspapers telling how the tavern had been converted into a church. But the story, as vividly reconstructed by the writer of the Silver Jubilee booklet published by St. Cecilia's in 1946, really had begun a few days before.

On a May afternoon, a tired, disheveled, slightly dusty priest trudged down Livernois Avenue on a discouraging errand. Detroit was then in an earlier postwar building and housing shortage and this traveler was looking for housing. Not for himself but for Almighty God; a building where he could say Mass, hear confessions and conduct all of the other activities to which Catholic

This was 1921. Warren G. Harding was new in the White House; Ty Cobb was managing the Tigers . . . and Henry Ford was building thousands of "Tin Lizzies" a day in a factory in Highland Park, and in a manner previously thought suitable only for sausages.

It was a day of revolutionary changes in thinking and living . . . even of morals. Into this era of discord, material progress, monoxide fumes and flaming youth the Church was electing to thrust its presence, represented in the figure of the dusty priest in his worn black suit. In the weary lines of his face the passerby might have recognized the mixture of Father Patrick J. Dwan's birthplace, Tipperary, Ireland, and his home village, rustic Gagetown, Michigan.

Bishop Michael James Gallagher had chosen Father Dwan to start a new parish in the rapidly-growing Grand River-Livernois area. At the intersection of these two streets, he stopped. There stood the weather-beaten and empty roadhouse. Although built for a far different purpose, it looked of adequate size and construction to serve as a temporary church.

A Roadhouse Acquired

The owner of the roadhouse was reluctant at first to rent it to Father Dwan. He thought it unsuited for its purpose, and was unwilling to incur any expense



Reverend Patrick J. Dwan, the dedicated organizer and first pastor of St. Cecilia's

for its restoration. Moreover, he was anxious to sell the place. After some persuasion he agreed to rent it until he should find a purchaser. Father Dwan said he would take it as it was and asked his price. The owner declined to take any remuneration until they were established. If they had anything over he would charge seventy-five dollars — a month. This price was accepted and paid.

With the help of generous men and women who painted, cleaned and scrubbed it into some semblance of propriety, the place was made ready. An altar was erected in the large room to the left on the lower floor. Two small rooms at the right were made to serve as confessional and sacristy. There was an office under the archway and a cupboard to be used as a vestment case.

"... Beautifully, From His Heart."

On Sunday, May 15th, Father Dwan offered the Holy Sacrifice at the Roadhouse for some two-hundred and fifty persons who crowded the "nave," overflowed into the sacristy, or stood bareheaded on the long porch of the building. When he turned to talk to them after the Gospel, he spoke simply and beautifully from his heart. He caught them up in this new cause, and imbued them with a fervor of accomplishment they were never to lose. He told them how very mu

was to do, and filled them with a whole-hearted desire to do it.

The growth of the parish was exceptional. New subdivisions opening up in the neighborhood gave great impetus to St. Cecilia's. Before the year was over, one and one-half acres on Stoepel between Burlington (now Stearns) and Burlingame were purchased and plans were drawn for a two-story brick building to be used as a church and parish hall.

It was on December 21st of 1921 that Father Dwan was officially appointed first pastor to the new parish of St. Cecilia by Bishop Gallagher.

A New Building Is Started

The new building — familiar to us all today as the Activity Building — was started in the Spring of 1922 and was used for the first time as a church on November 19th.

Due to the wholehearted dedication of men and women of the parish and the various organizations such as the Holy Name Society, the Ushers Club, and the Young Ladies Sodality of that time, who had given their full support, Father Dwan was able to say in his report for 1923, "This building where we are saying our prayers, with everything in it, is paid for."

In September, 1924, the Holy Name Society held a National Convention in Washington, which attracted a hundred per

St. Cecilia's attended. Father Dwan was to accompany them. It was characteristic of that humble man of God that, though he had purchased a new suit for the occasion, he arrived at the station to meet his well-groomed traveling companions wearing his old one. His own new outfit he had given to someone he considered to have greater need.

Plans For A School

Having provided a suitable place for worship, Father Dwan turned all his energies toward the erection of a school. The site on Burlingame Avenue had been purchased in 1921. Early in 1924, ground was broken and building began. It was expected that the school would open in February, 1925. But Father Dwan was destined not to see it completed. Never in the best of health, and weakened by his excessive pioneering labors, Father Dwan went to the hospital and submitted to a serious operation. Against the wishes of doctors and nurses he returned to the rectory. This was December 23rd. He had to celebrate Mass and say "Merry Christmas" to his people. Many of the parishioners felt they were listening to his farewell sermon on Christmas Day, and so they were, for they were never to hear his grateful "God love you" again. He died late Tuesday evening, January 6th.

Father Fleming Welcomed

Whether or not he found it difficult to take up another's work, Father Fleming accepted the burden in his own gracious manner, and carried it shoulder high for seventeen strenuous years, until, at last, ill health forced his retirement.

St. Cecilia's School Opened

St. Cecilia's School finally opened in the Fall, after an August 31, 1925, first enrollment of five-hundred and thirty students. The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, had been engaged to teach, and the first teachers in the school were Mother Thomasine, and Sisters Claudia, Harriet,

Cecilia, Donata, Francis Borgia, Ann Pierre, and Joan Patricia.

The Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were first established in the United States when the Reverend Louis Florent Gillet, a Belgium Redemptorist, arrived in 1843 to establish mission chapels in and around Monroe, Michigan. Urged on by the pressing need to offer Christian instruction in Monroe for the children, and with the purpose of establishing a school, he founded the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, whose first convent was a log cabin, in 1843. The order was established with the aim of offering Christian education to the poor.

The Convent

Father Fleming had moved in 1925 into a flat on Stoepel and converted it into a rectory. He also bought additional lots across from the church. In 1926, Father Daniel Wholihan came as his assistant and helped him to celebrate St. Cecilia's fifth birthday. The same year he converted a four-family apartment at 6324 Burlingame into a new convent for the Sisters, who moved there from their first quarters at 6389 Webb. During the Summer of 1927, another unit of four rooms was added to the school.

A Deed Is Signed, A High School Opened

The deed for the property at Livernois and Stoepel, site of the present church, was signed in May, 1928. The price was \$29,500.

These were the days of anniversary dinners, choral concerts, Thanksgiving dances and other social activities. They served to weld the parish into one great family. St. Cecilia's was alive and growing by leaps and bounds. By the year 1930, school enrollment had reached nine hundred and fifty. On September 4, 1930, the St. Cecilia High School was opened. Sisters who taught High School when it opened were: Sisters Thomasina, Mary Rosary, Augustine, Francis Calre and Mary Elfred. Religion was taught by Reverend Father Wholihan in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. Father Juras spent two half-hours a week in each of the grades from fourth to eighth.

The school year 1932-33 showed an enrollment of approximately nine hundred and forty students. Financial difficulties caused the closing of all Detroit public schools on May 26th of that year. In 1933, total grammar and high school enrollment at St. Cecilia's reached its largest number with one thousand and eighty-three pupils.

High Academic Standards

St. Cecilia's School enjoyed a fine academic reputation. The high school offered such courses as: Religion, English, Latin, Higher Mathematics, U. S. History, Modern History, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geometry, Art Appreciation, Economics, Aeronautics, Bookkeeping, Shorthand and Typing. Music and Athletics also were given special emphasis, and such facilities as science lab, art room and gymnasium were provided to round out the school program.

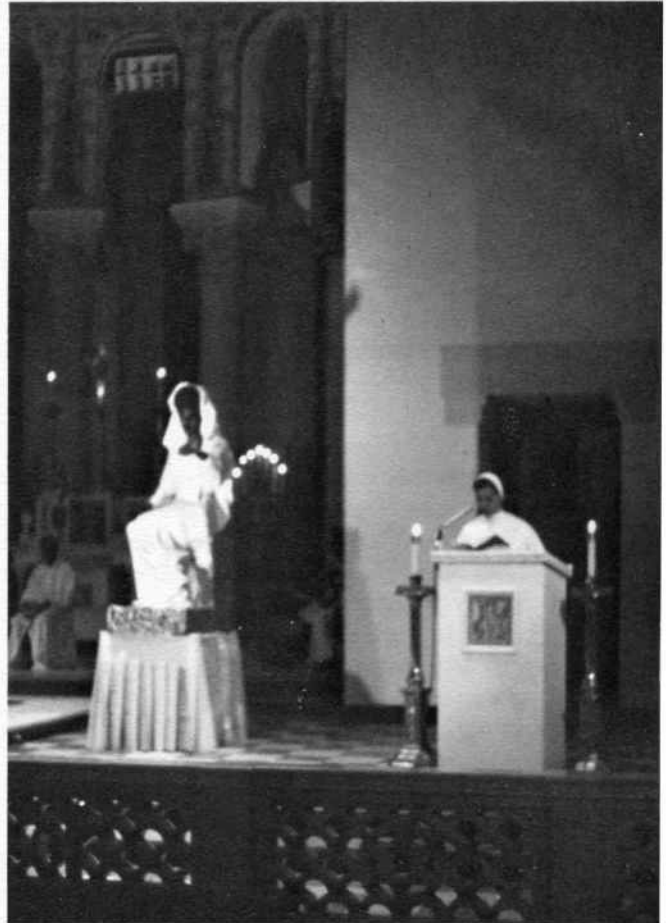
In 1936, enrollment dropped below the thousand-mark to nine hundred and eighty-six. The school enrollment was maintained at approximately eight hundred and fifty to nine hundred and fifty students over the years from 1936 to 1967. But during the 1960's the high school had to be phased out because of financial difficulties. The last high school graduating class was that of 1969.

Bishop Gallagher Lays The Cornerstone

The dinners, concerts, excursions, hard-time socials and even the fifteen thousand dollar bazaars held after the purchase of the church site in 1928, showed by their success the fine support the parish was prepared to give to make the new church a reality. Ground was broken on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1929, and the cornerstone laid by Right Reverend Bishop Gallagher the following October 27th, the Feast of Christ the King.

Father Fleming Studies Architecture

Before starting to build, Reverend Father Fleming had made a comprehensive study of church architecture. With the help of a building committee, Mr. Antonio DiNardo was selected as architect and the



The Black Madonna was presented to a hushed congregation when unveiled at a special Mass

Scenes from the Passion and our Lord's Last Days on Earth glow inspiringly from the stained-glass windows overlooking the priest at the newly renovated Altar



W. E. Wood Company as the builder. Father Fleming's preference in historic styles was the Romanesque of southern France, and this mode was beautifully realized in the new church which rose at Livernois and Stoepel.

The church was planned so that its main entrance, within its welcoming triple arch, would open on the most important thoroughfare — Livernois — with its sanctuary, sacristies and rectory being given the privacy of the less traveled street behind.

The church exterior is also in the Romanesque style. As in many of the best churches of the Romanesque period, the design is distinguished by restraint and the magnificent use of, light and shadow. Its unadorned square tower, topped by its octagonal cupola, can be seen as one approaches from either direction. To the left of the tower, the bulk and simplicity of two tall buttresses frame the main area of ornamentation — the arched doorway, colonnade frieze, and the great wheel window below a sculptured figure of St. Cecilia which enrich the front of the church.

The relationship of the three altars is perfectly expressed on the exterior by their separate apses. Through the seven openings in the central apse, light enters through the seven ambulatory windows in which are depicted scenes from the Passion, and the last days of Our Lord on earth. These windows were designed by Henry Lee Willet in his studios in Philadelphia, one of four different firms engaged at the suggestion of the architect to do the windows of St. Cecilia's.

On either side of the nave are the transepts, their altars dedicated to St. Cecilia and the Black Madonna. A carved marble communion rail separates the sanctuary from the nave. The original altar, of beautifully combined marbles and brilliant mosaics, was an important note of interest in the new church.

The Confessionals

Between alternate pairs of side buttresses are the confessionals, of wrought iron, with a circular window over each, also designed by Mr. Willet. Of medallion type, with richly colored borders, they represent Our Lord discussing intimately the sins, problems, and way of salvation with the children of men.

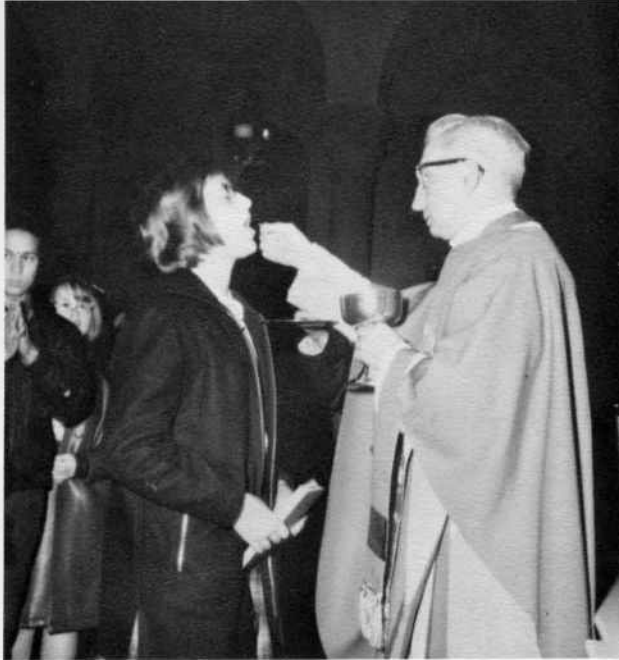
In the four large windows of the north transept are scenes from the ministry, miracles, and parables of Our Lord. In the south transept are the Munich windows, the work of the well-known Frantz Mayer. They consist of a series of medallions whose setting in a grisaille background sheds more light on the sanctuary.

In the twenty-two large clerestory windows, also done by the noted firm of Mr. Willet, have been depicted early saints and martyrs, with a predella under each containing subject matter from their lives — after the manner of the clerestory windows in Bourges Cathedral.

The large window over the organ was designed by Nicola D'Ascenzo of Philadelphia. The small ones in confessionals, baptistry and sacristy are from Detroit Stained-Glass Works.

So successful an achievement as the building of St. Cecilia's Church could only have been the result of the wholehearted cooperation of Father Fleming, the architect, Mr. Antonio DiNardo, the building committee, the W. E. Wood Company, and the hundreds of parishioners whose sacrifices made possible the realization of the dream.

The church, dedicated to St. Cecilia, was opened to the public on Christmas Eve, 1930. Fifty years later it stands as an impressive monument to the faith of the good people of the Grand River — Livernois section of Detroit.



Monsignor Hebert shares the Sacrament of Holy Communion with parish youth

Memory Of The Middle Years

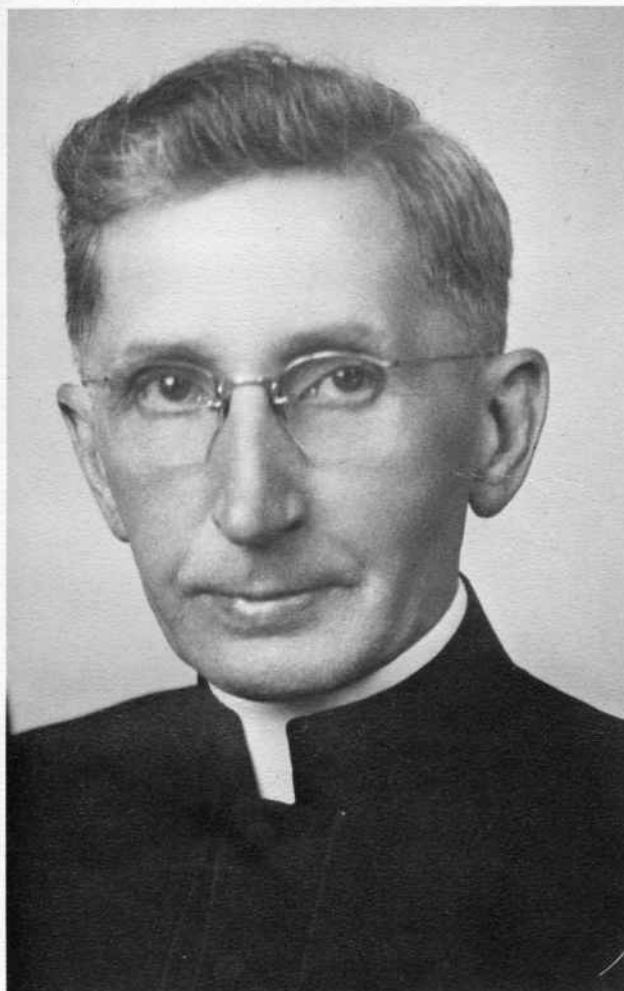
When Edward F. Mooney, Bishop of Rochester, was installed August 3, 1937, as successor to Bishop Gallagher, Detroit was made an archdiocese. The most urgent problem confronting the new archbishop was the financial predicament of the many parishes which had embarked on substantial building programs only to be caught short by the Great Depression. Fundraising became increasingly difficult as joblessness increased, and principal and interest payments fell into arrears.

It was in the wake of these devastating years, with St. Cecilia's heavily in debt because of the church building, that Reverend Alfred A. Hebert became pastor of the parish in 1942. Though small in stature, Father Hebert had a mind of extraordinary keenness, a wealth of energy and a great talent for organization. As he had done in all of his previous parishes, the first thing he did was to visit all his flock. For nearly two years he rang doorbells, making more than three thousand personal visits to the homes of the people of St. Cecilia's.

In Four Years — A Debt Paid Off

In little more than four years under Father Hebert's leadership the parish debt of four hundred and eighty thousand dollars was paid. In the years following Pearl Harbor — at a time when young men from the parish were going off to war and the nation's automotive industry was converting from the production of cars to tanks, trucks, and weapons — rising employment helped Father Hebert in his difficult task. Of the money raised, he was able to set aside an additional seventy thousand dollars toward a new convent, funded through a memorial drive for the soldiers and sailors of the parish.

Monsignor Alfred A. Hebert





Built as a memorial to the servicemen of World War II, this spacious brick building serves as a bright and cheerful home for St. Cecilia's Sisters

The Convent

Groundbreaking for the new convent took place in the Spring of 1952. The new twenty-six-bed-room convent was finally finished and occupied in October of 1953. A plaque on the front hall of St. Cecilia's Convent bears the words:

This convent is a memorial to those from St. Cecilia's who served God and country in World War II and also to all other benefactors of St. Cecilia's parish.

Characteristic of all Father Hebert's pastorates was his skill in making parishes financially sound, coupled with the ability to maintain and set high spiritual standards. His power in the pulpit was attested to by all who heard him. His interest in athletics won for him a place in the hearts of the young people of the parish. His greatest joy — Notre Dame won! His greatest sorrow — St. Cecilia lost! Very noticeable in him also were the delightful dry wit and humor and his great love of the Irish.

On August 28, 1949, Father Hebert was raised to the rank of Domestic Prelate. On April 6, 1964, the Right Reverend Monsignor Alfred A. Hebert celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a priest, looking back upon many years of devoted fruitful service in the Church with joy and thanksgiving for this special favor.

In 1965, Monsignor Hebert became Pastor Emeritus of St. Cecilia when he was succeeded by Reverend Raymond N. Ellis as pastor. On July 10, 1971, Father Hebert died at Carmel Hall, Detroit, of pneumonia. St. Cecilia's devoted parishioners extended a tribute of deep gratitude and love to their able, generous and devoted former pastor and friend.



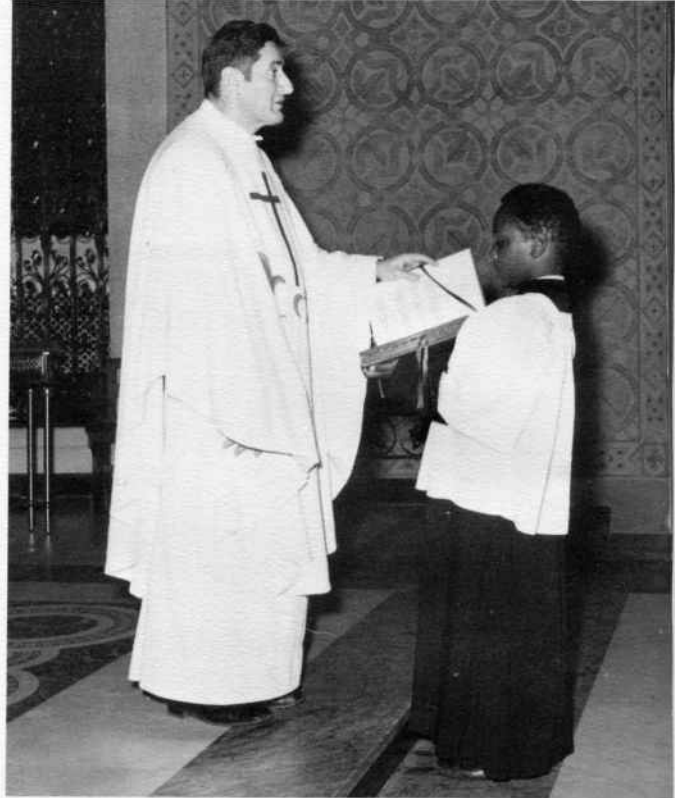
**"Behold how good it is – where brethren
dwell at one."**

Psalms 132:1





Father Ellis pounds out his column for "The Beacon"



Father Ellis serves as a shining example to his altar boys

THE NEW ERA

On June 23, 1965, when Father Ellis was appointed to St. Cecilia's, the shift from a white to a predominantly black neighborhood was taking place in the parish. Moves to the suburbs by many parishioners, coupled with highway construction (still in progress in 1971!) which demolished many homes, contributed to a decline in the number of communicants at St. Cecilia's Church. Worn facilities cried out for repair — costly repairs which Father Ellis found would deplete the funds of the parish. He bent his first efforts, nevertheless, towards restoring the smooth physical functioning of the parish.

Racial Ferment And Unrest

The times were beset with ferment, unrest and strife — the Watts riot in Los Angeles was to cost thirty lives in August and the Detroit conflagration was two Summers away. Father Ellis found crime, vandalism, racial friction, and despair in his changing neighborhood.

The rise and tragic death of John F. Kennedy, first Roman Catholic president, had left its mark on the country's heart. President Johnson, elected the previous November, had delivered his Great Society message to Congress in January; the next month the United States had bombed North Vietnam. In the

same month, on February 21st, Malcolm X was shot to death as he addressed his Afro-American Unity organization in New York.

Ecumenism

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Grace be to you all who are in Christ.

I Peter, 5:14

But as Father Ellis moved into St. Cecilia's Rectory, at least on the official level ecumenism was cutting across the boundaries of race, religion, and nationality. The Reverend Martin Luther King had conferred with Pope Paul VI in 1964. The Pontiff himself had completed trips to the Holy Land and India and planned a third to the United Nations. Archbishop of Detroit, John Francis Dearden, in the face of racial tensions, had organized the Archbishop's Committee on Human Relations (just as, about thirty years before, at the time of the auto labor strife, Archbishop Mooney had fostered the work of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists.)

But, most important, on December 8, 1965, Vatican Council II was to come to an end, the convocation which had brought back to the center of

Church life the priestly laity. Once again the idea had risen to the fore that the laity do not belong to the Church, but *are* the Church. It was in this spirit, with renewed emphasis on the building of the Body of Christ, on the participation of the laity and the acceptance of all people in Christ, that Father Ellis took up his arduous task.

A Record Of Concern

In his previous work with the deaf and with the blind, Father Ellis had proved himself a warm shepherd to his flock, bringing great practical sense as well as affection to bear on their special problems.

Father Ellis was born in Detroit on December 9, 1922, of Joseph and Rose Ellis who had come from Lebanon. He graduated from Annunciation High School in 1941 and attended Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit and Mount St. Mary Seminary in Norwood, Ohio.

He was ordained on May 22, 1948, by the late Edward Cardinal Mooney. He served as assistant at St. Henry Church in Lincoln Park until 1952, and as the first non-Polish priest at the Polish-American Church of Thomas the Apostle in Detroit.

In September of 1955, he was appointed as Assistant Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. In this post he became Moderator of the Detroit Association of the Catholic Deaf, bending his will to the first discouraging task of learning to "sign," until those who later saw him thought he had done it all his life. He soon began the Sunday morning televised Mass and the radio program "The Church Today." Under his direction, the Detroit Conference of Catholic Blind was also begun in 1958. Prior to this, at the direction of Cardinal Mooney, he began the Catholic day school program for retarded children, and, shortly afterwards, the catechetical program for retarded children. In 1960, he began the sign language class at St. John Seminary, graduates of which now work in various dioceses of Michigan.



Father Ellis greets an overflowing vestibule of loving parishioners

A Telephone Newspaper For The Blind

In 1962, Father Ellis became President of the Blind Service Center of Metropolitan Detroit (merged in 1965 with the Metropolitan Society for the Blind.) Under his direction a twenty-four hour "Telephone Newspaper" was established. An average of two hundred callers a day dialed their newspaper — taped by volunteers — for shopping hints, meeting notices, non-denominational religious messages, and other items not available on radio.

A Counseling and Referral Service was also organized for the blind, and Mobility and Orientation instructions to overcome the restriction of movement afflicting the blind were prepared. For those suffering blindness as well as deafness, the Helen Keller Group, a recreational and social program, was set up. Father Ellis measured his success by the degree of participation of blind and deaf people in the normal life of the community.

Father Ellis Installed

Father Ellis was installed as pastor of St. Cecilia's Parish at the eleven o'clock Mass, on June 27, 1965. The Dean of the North Central Deanery, Monsignor Stanley Fedewa, pastor of St. Gerard's Parish, officially installed the newly appointed pastor. Pastor Emeritus Hebert attended the ceremony.

Black Power, Love and Controversy

"Considering the deepest Christian truth that we all live in the same Body of Christ, there is no advantage Black people can obtain which is not to the advantage of all people. There is no hurt they suffer which does not hurt us as well. Their enrichment is ours, too. Their freedom frees all of us."

Father Raymond N. Ellis



Father Ellis leads his faithful flock from the pulpit

During the six years of his ministry at St. Cecilia's, Father Ellis touched countless people with his spirit of love. With his deep feeling for the reverence each man should feel for another, he brought militant blacks together. He met with Milton Henry, with the President of the Republic of New Africa, with people of Muslim faith, with Jewish people, Baptists, Protestants of all kinds, with many black people outside his own parish. "Reading Malcolm X's autobiography," Father Edward T. Olszewski, present pastor of St. Cecilia's, who joined Father Ellis as assistant in 1967, pointed out in a heartfelt tribute, "Father Ellis learned to appreciate him and love him as a brother. He saw interesting parallels between Malcolm's life and that of St. Paul. In Malcolm X he foremost saw a convert to the universal cause of brotherhood of men . . .

"He prayed every day for the Black Power Movement that it may not degenerate into black futility or fragment itself in hate," Father Olszewski wrote. "He referred to Black Power leaders as similar to organizing labor leaders of the past, who saw power structure use violent tactics to prevent the spirit of the American system, of our magnificent constitution from becoming a reality. Father Ellis was convinced that no individual black man can confront the white power system, and he emphasized therefore the necessity of Black Power, the right Black Power. He often quoted Pope John XXIII in saying:

'A man has the duty to demand and to claim his rights as marks of his dignity.' "

Ceciliaville: New Neighborhood Concept

Our mission is not to change a person's label from Jew or Moslem or Christian or Protestant to Catholic. We believe that man will be saved by coming into union with his fellow man." It was with this philosophy that St. Cecilia's, its membership representing only one-twentieth of the forty thousand persons within its parish boundaries, took upon itself

the task of beginning to create a loving and communicating neighborhood.

Out of the parish, an area carved out of the northwest side of Detroit in the Grand River – Livernois section, and bordered on the North by Davison, on the South by Joy Road, on the East by Dexter and on the West by Oakman Boulevard, a dynamic community, centered at the church and based on the mutual interests of sports, music, learning, manual skills, and art was formed. Its name, worn proudly today in lettering on green jackets by youngsters of all beliefs and several races as they stroll the streets, is "Ceciliaville."

Basketball – It's Irresistible

At the center of Ceciliaville is the recreation area of what was formerly St. Cecilia High, headquarters for a year-round sports program. "There's something irresistible about the St. Cecilia Gym in Summer, especially if you happen to be a little basketball crazy," So began a Curt Sylvester article on the sports pages of the Detroit *Free Press* of August 4, 1971, a story which went on to point out that when the few hundred youngsters (and adults) who take to basketball were added to the few hundred more who favored track and football and the aficionados in the baseball program, there were upwards of fifteen hundred young athletes who make St. Cecilia's their Summer headquarters.

Under the original guidance of Father Ed Olszewski, a priest with a natural affinity for youth and former three-sport athlete at St. Ladislaus, who initiated the program as assistant to Father Ellis, and under the direction of Sam Washington, three-sport athlete at Western High and Ohio State football player who went on to play football in Canada and for nine years with the New York Titans (now Jets), the program has been an astounding success. The self-supporting and free sports program at Ceciliaville caused Mr. Sylvester to write, "(This) has to be one of the most successful community centers in the city of Detroit."

A Recreation Center Refurbished

The building which had served as an assembly hall and gym for St. Cecilia High School, empty after the school's closing in 1967 and in disrepair and vandalized, was renewed and restored with the help of business, neighbors, and parishioners. The young people themselves, some of them the same ones who had wrought mischief around the building during the doldrums of the Summer before, helped scrub and paint the center themselves. The work included the stripping, sealing, and varnishing of the gym floor, the painting of the locker room, the cafeteria, and the kitchen area. "The kids even . . . helped build cement block partitions in the abandoned locker rooms," Father "O" related. Once the center was in order "we opened the gym doors seven days a week to bring the boys and girls off the street. We set up craft and hobby shops. We gave kids a room with a jukebox for dancing and did all we could to keep them busy.

"But sport, basketball especially, was our greatest attraction for the boys. We offered them a chance to play seven days a week . . ."

Sam Washington At Work

During the Summer of 1971, Athletic Director Sam Washington, who often works a sixteen-hour non-stop day, supervised thirty-six basketball teams.

The caliber of play in the Men's League, comprising sixteen teams, makes participating N.B.A. players such as Dave Bing, Jimmy Walker and Spencer Haywood feel at home. Along with a large group of professionals, college players and former college players as well as high school stars lend glamor to the competition. Playing Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays, this League, the showpiece of St. Cecilia's basketball program, attracts an average of four hundred fans per game and their "psychological importance . . . to our total program cannot be overestimated."

The League for boys nineteen and under comprises eight twelve-man teams. Ceciliaville sponsors



Athletic Director Sam Washington, surrounded by the "kids" of the Championship Sweep Basketball team, Spring, 1969



A basketball team in action at St. Cecilia's gym

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Bible School — Sister Stella Marie, R.S.M.

two teams and the others are asked to get their own sponsors. Each team plays twice a week before about two-hundred spectators, and are also entered in fourteen games per Summer in the Boys' Club League.

All-white teams and a number of racially mixed squads fit in without comment in the generally all-black roster, with race no issue on the courts, Mr. Washington reports. "The idea is to get some of these kids exposure," he stated in a newspaper interview. "We have coaches coming from as far as California to look for players . . . We don't just get kids into colleges. We get some kids back into high school who have dropped out."

Self-Discipline

Strict self-policed rules on swearing or rough play, and proper care of their hand-me-down uniforms, are part of the responsibilities the young players shoulder. "You don't see one dirty word written on our walls," reports Father "O." "We haven't had a bit of trouble at the center in over a year," adds a member of the Detroit Youth Bureau. Vandalism at St. Cecilia's, a five-million dollar complex, has virtually come to a halt since Ceciliaville became a proud feeling as well as a word in northwest Detroit.

Football In June

Football is a big favorite in Ceciliaville. Beginning June 15th, candidates for four football teams practice every day at Hebert Field at 12:30 p.m.

The first team is entered in the CYO League for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. They are called the St. Cecilia Beacons, and the roster for the team is made up of forty-four boys drawn from Catholic or public schools in Ceciliaville.

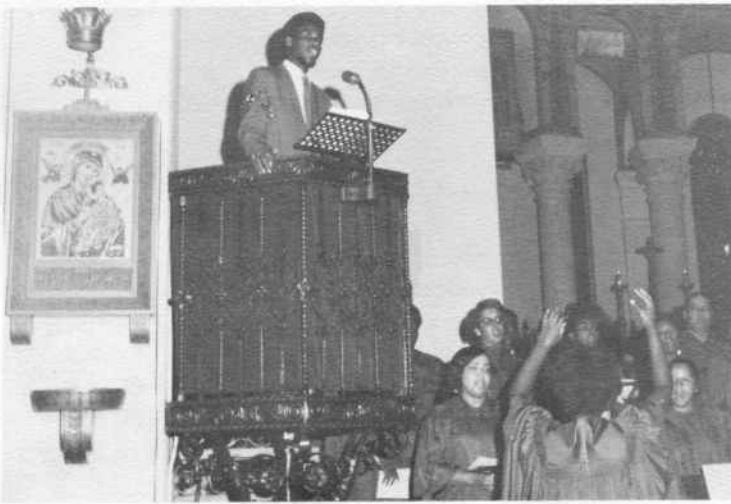
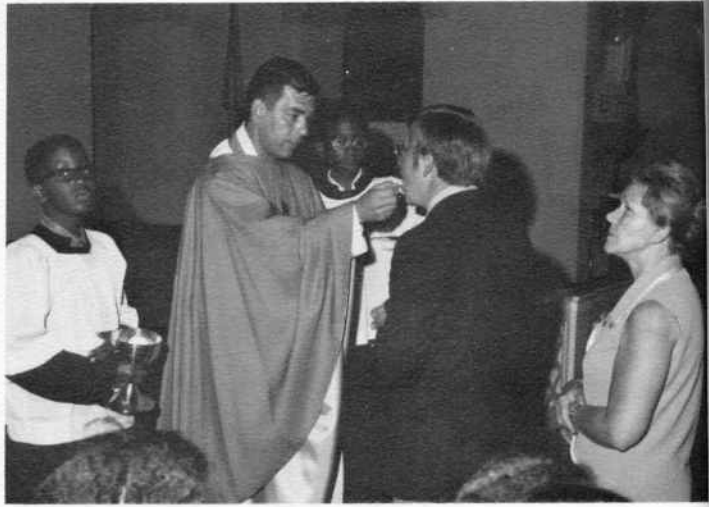
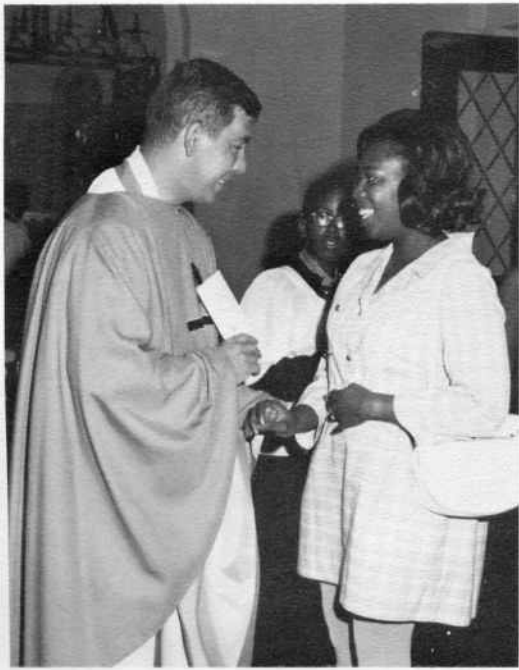
The second team, known as the Ceciliaville Beacons Junior Varsity, is made up of forty-four boys between nine and ten years of age.

The third team, comprised of forty-four boys ages eleven and twelve, is called the Ceciliaville Beacons Varsity.

A City Championship

The fourth team, called the Ceciliaville Beacons Senior Varsity, has forty-four boys between the ages of thirteen and fourteen. They won the city championship in the Fall of 1968.

The last three teams also play in the Detroit Junior Football League, and in August, 1971, one hundred and twenty boys participated in a three-day



*Joy, Brotherhood, and Love
are evidenced daily in the
Unity of St. Cecilia's Parish*



football clinic at the campsite of CYO on Lake Huron.

These teams practice all Summer, and in September practice sessions are entered into in earnest. The boys practice five days a week and play one game a week. The average number of spectators watching a senior varsity game is six hundred.

The Youth Corps And Head Start

Ceciliaville participates in another program for the formation of youth, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, or NYC. An employment program, it has proven most beneficial during the Summer months when school-age youths need help in finding work. Ceciliaville also contributes its facilities to the federally financed year-round Head Start program for children ages four and five.

Ceciliaville also furnishes supervision and training for twenty-five young people who take advantage of the Mayor's Committee on Youth Programs to earn a dollar and learn at the same time.

Scouting Program

Ceciliaville has a Scouting program that involves boys and girls from ages eight to twenty. The Girl Scouts have forty-two girls and seven adult leaders. Cub Pack 194 has thirty-five Cub Scouts and fifteen adult leaders, while the Boy Scout Troop 194 has combined with a neighboring scouting group and numbers eighty-five boys and twenty-five leaders.

St. Cecilia School Today

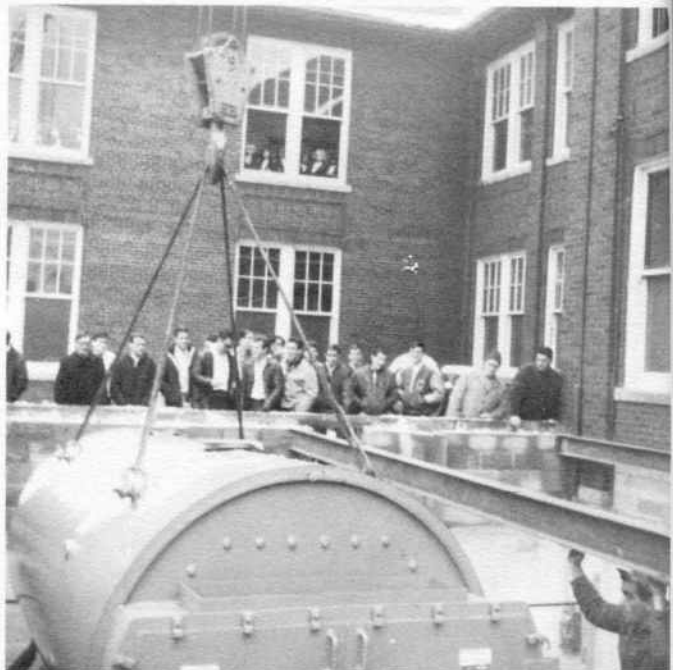
With the High School phased out in 1969, our school today encompasses the first eight grades with an enrollment of three-hundred. Grades one through three, four through six, and seven through nine form the three sections of the school. A non-graded program enables the child to be placed in a group of similar achievement level without regard to rigid grade groupings.

The Junior High program allows for the teaching of smaller groups throughout the entire school day and for such specialties as French, Art, Clothing and Typing.

St. Cecilia School is considered as only one part of the whole parish "thrust." "We are trying not to remain a Catholic ghetto within a black ghetto," the fact sheet on Ceciliaville declares. "In carrying out this pledge we hope to make ours a Catholic school in the best sense of the word. It will become so in the measure that we can produce men and women of vision and concern for the other parts of our community, especially for the poor and disadvantaged."

Twenty-five percent of the students are not Catholic. All of the students are taught to admire, esteem and emulate the great heroes of the black struggle for freedom and equality.

continued



A major improvement was the installation of a new boiler in January of 1967. The one it replaced had served the parish for thirty-six years.



St. Cecilia's School students benefit from the very best possible education in a non-graded framework allowing each to achieve at his own pace. About a fourth of the enrollment is non-Catholic.

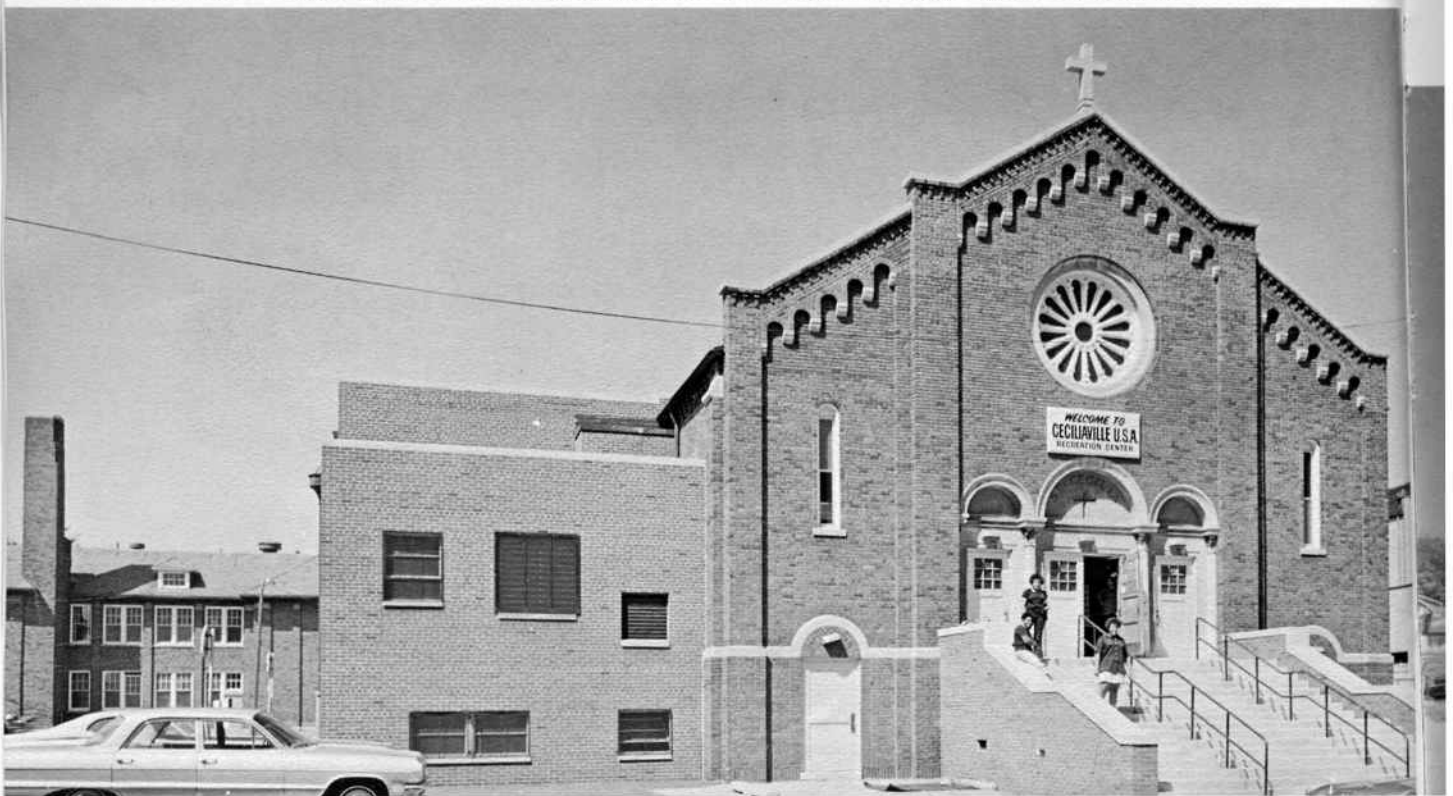


Fall Carnival annual event in Ceciliaville



St. Cecilia's Convent is a trim brick building designed for ease of maintenance

The Activity Building, constructed in 1922, originally served as a church for the people of St. Cecilia's





The beautiful white edifice that serves as a Rectory is amply supplied with windows that allow its inhabitants the inspiration of communion with God's miracles of nature

The plain exterior of St. Cecilia's School belies the exciting and diversified educational opportunities within for its polyglot of students





A big, big man, Father Olszewski is never too big to play with his children.

With its annual Music Festival, Ceciliaville hopes to become the Music Capitol of Detroit — the city known as the Jazz Capitol of the World



Malcolm X And Martin Luther King

St. Cecilia's was the first Catholic school in Michigan to recognize the greatness of Malcolm X. Though St. Cecilia's School was criticized for memorializing him with a school holiday four years ago, subsequent events have proved that we were right. In our school today both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King are honored with holidays and an appropriate program. We want to become that rarest of institutions: a black Catholic school.

A Festival Of Music

St. Cecilia is recognized throughout Western civilization as the patroness of music, and music as a common bond linking all men to one another. If our dreams come true, Ceciliaville will become the Music Capitol of Detroit, itself the Jazz Capitol of the World!

The St. Cecilia's Music Festival, also initiated under Father Ellis, was held for the sixth successive year in July, 1971. Interviewed in August of 1971, Sam Washington said, "just recently we had a Music Festival and we had ten thousand people here! I know that sounds like a lot, but that's counting the whole weekend. We had music outside and basketball inside. We started at nine o'clock in the morning and we went all day."

A prime fundraiser for the support of Ceciliaville's other programs, the Music Festival goes far beyond monetary needs to the pure joy in music made by friends and neighbors and artists from outside the community.

Chairman of the Music Festival Committee is the able Mr. James Tatum, who combines the skills of impresario, manager, and producer to bring off the Festival in splendid style. The rounding up of performers from both the professional and amateur ranks, and the supervision of the preparation of the St. Cecilia School parking lot and other areas for the overflow crowds are among the responsibilities of Mr. Tatum and his committee. Electronic equipment is lent for the event by the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department.

As interpreted by Donald Yarnevic, publicity chairman of the committee, the Festival "is an annual event presented as an expression of our love and for the sake of drawing people into greater unity through the medium of a common language . . . namely, music and dance."

Especially meaningful was the 1971 Music Festival, held July 17th through July 19th, and dedicated to the memory of Father Ellis, who had died only the month before, on June 3rd. He had initiated the Festival in the belief, in his own words, that "it was an organic, evolving way of bringing a people into consciousness of itself as a community and to gradually strengthen the communion of living awareness between persons."

Ceciliaville: A Thought About Boys

"We don't believe that the average youngster in Ceciliaville is a 'bad boy,' "states the information sheet put out by St. Cecilia's. "In spite of the high rate of juvenile offenses, it is still the rare kid who gets in trouble with the police. Our programming is not directed primarily toward the troubled and disturbed element in our city. It has been our experience that the delinquent youngster goes wherever the action is. His deepest need is to be accepted and to be profitably and pleasurably occupied. Our aim is to make Ceciliaville a beehive of activity; to keep all doors open; to invite everyone to join with us. The delinquent kids usually show up. They shed their weapons, don gym and play togs, and soon become absorbed into the main stream of whatever is going on. During the past year, for instance, thirteen youngsters who had dropped out of school were restored to junior and senior high schools throughout the area. In ten instances our athletic association underwrote tuition for these young people. One of these boys, who will graduate in June, has been offered a four-year scholarship to college."

In The Rectory: A War-Room!

As Ceciliaville became known around the country as a dynamic inner-city community, those who were in on the plans from the beginning thought back to the first days of organizing and hope, and to the original construction of that unique think-tank, the war-room.

"Have you heard about our war-room?" Father Ellis asked with engaging enthusiasm in his column of June 4, 1967. "In the . . . rectory basement we have a ten-by-ten foot model of Ceciliaville. To this room a constant stream of visitors has been coming to view our parish plan and to be challenged to participate with us in building a community in which each one will be able to achieve his full personhood . . ."

The big relief map to which Father Ellis referred was made by a close friend and valued thinker and philosopher, Father Frank Prokes, S. J., and his student crew from the University of Detroit. Displayed for easy reference on the walls of the room are statistical graphs they prepared showing in black and white and color the particulars of the parish.





Father Raymond Ellis, left, and Father Edward Olszewski, right, plan Ecumenical Lenten Services with Pastor Allen Kamens of Nordin Park Methodist and Pastor Dennis Wordmae of Hope Lutheran

The Synergic Complement

The issues pertaining to the parish that had been categorized and then measured for presentation on the graphs were the end result of research, study, and thought by Fathers Ellis, Olszewski, and Prokes and their collaborators. In their endeavor to create an exemplary parish and to help those about them to become a loving, all-embracing, priestly people, they were guided by the citations below:

"To be a man, therefore, is to be a person. But to be a person is to exist only as an appeal and a response to other persons. Without the other, an other who takes account of me, and for whom my free response means something, I do not exist. I can be myself only in your presence. But if I need you in order to be myself, you likewise need me. Each of us holds his 'personhood' as a gift from the other, so that to betray the other is always to betray oneself. As persons, we are each of us responsible to and for the other, and only in mutual fulfillment of this responsibility do we secure for ourselves a place in the real."

R. Johann, "Philosophy," *America*
(Sept. 29, 1962, p. 18)

"And what are the limits of a man's body? Surely his clothes belong to it since they perform the double function of protection and expression. What of his work tools, the articles he kept about him, his house, his much loved garden, what of the whole sphere of his life? Let us not be too fanciful, yet it is certain that the body goes beyond its mere anatomical limits. Fundamentally, it is limitless. It is the essence of man's earthly existence in visible form."

Romano Guardini, *The Last Things*
(Pantheon, 1954, p. 69)

"All human beings ought to reckon that what has been accomplished is but little in comparison to what remains to be done: Because organs of production, trade unions, associations, professional organizations, insurance systems, political regimes, institutions for culture, health, recreation or sporting purposes — these must all be adjusted to the era of the atom, and of the conquest of space: An era which the human family has already entered, wherein it has commended its new advance toward the limitless horizons."

John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*
(Paulist Press, 1963, No. 156)

"In the realm of psychology, indeed, complete rigidity as such is impossible. Every feeling, every image, every idea is connected with a living individual interplay of associated imagery, conscious or subconscious, which cannot be found in identical form in any two human beings. In psychology no two cases are ever quite the same. Only exterior events, tangible and measurable results, can be alike; every psychological mechanism must differ from every other by inexpressible and incalculable shades."

R. Omez, *Psychical Phenomena*
(Hawthorn, 1958, p. 51)

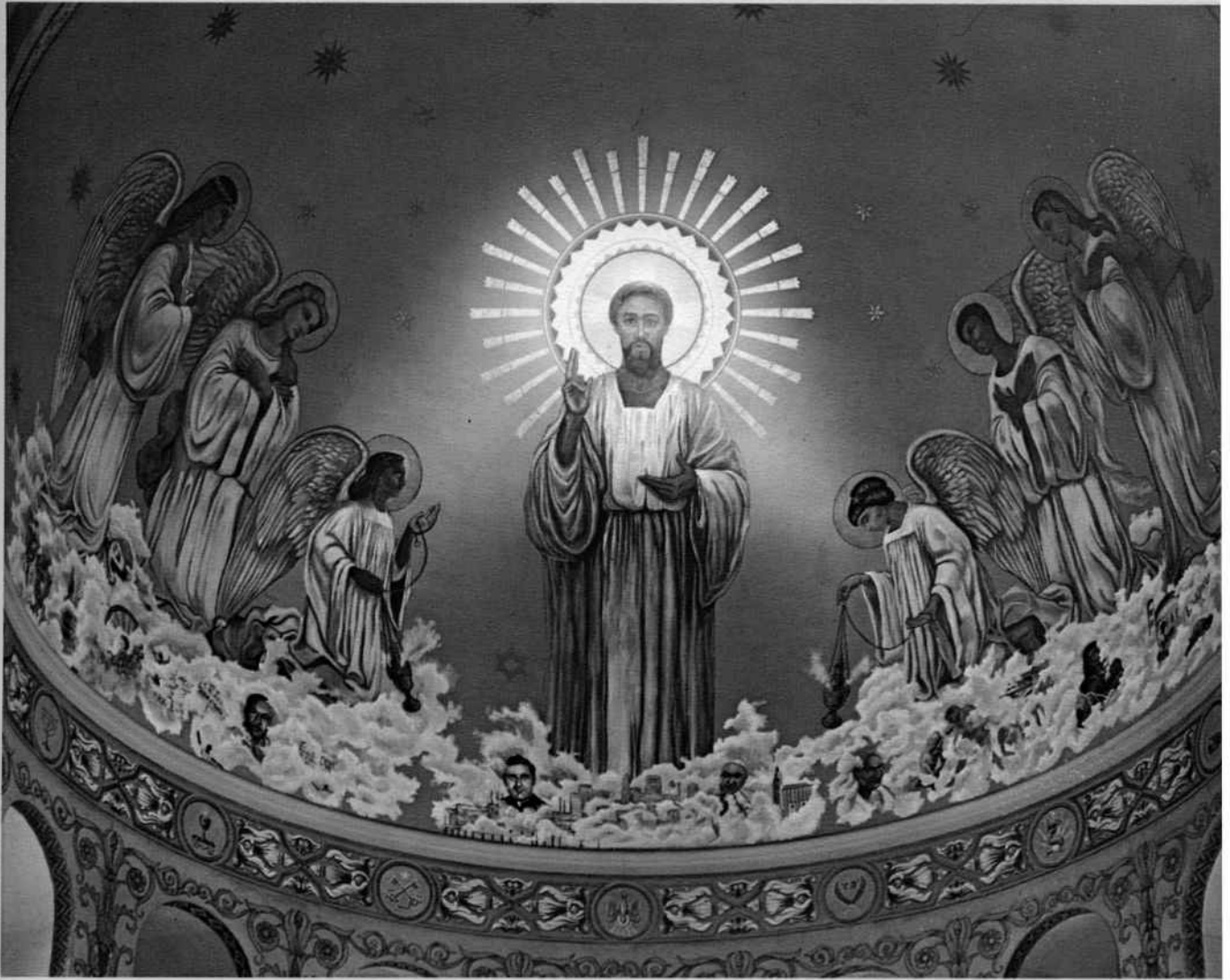
The above four citations (with additional bibliographical references) make up the guidelines for the principle of St. Cecilia's creative union, which we also call Synergic Complement.



Black Madonna, the symbol of the Mother of Life for St. Cecilia's parishioners, shares her transept with the firmament of heaven

"Continue to love each other like brothers, and remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

Hebrews 13:1, 2



The Black Christ is attended by angels of all nations in this inspired and inspiring painting commissioned by Father Ellis and created by parishioner DeVon Cunningham



An atmosphere of Christian Brotherhood permeates the sanctuary of St. Cecilia's

A special Mass was offered on October 17, 1966, when Father Ellis consecrated the remodeled Altar

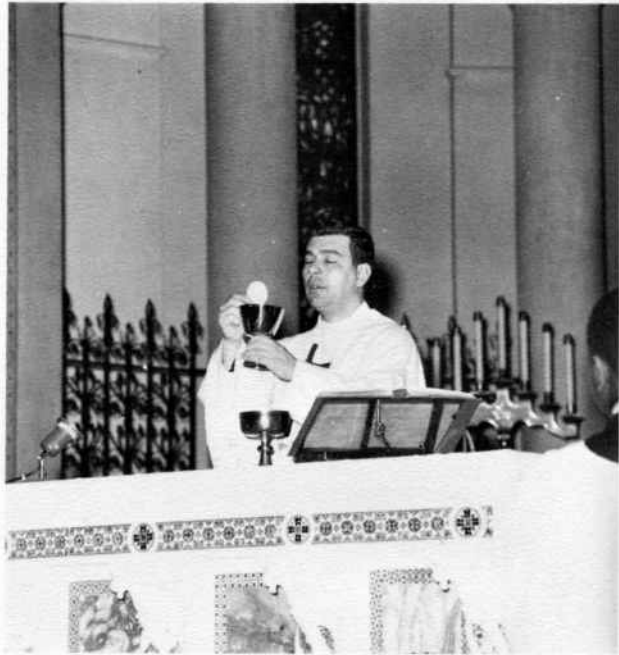


From Model To Real

The war-room still stands, but in the year 1971 the actual fact of Ceciliaville and its accomplishments has caused the many visitors to turn their attention from the war-room to the streets outside the rectory. Envisioned as a program dealing directly with the neighborhood in all its aspects — it is not irrelevant that one of Father Ellis' first efforts was a plan to help the businessmen in his neighborhood and another with a program for better street lighting and garbage removal — and to deal directly with youth with a bare minimum of bureaucracy — "Each dollar for light enables a boy to see; . . . each dollar for water provides him with necessary showers . . ." — Ceciliaville has attracted world-wide attention for its workability as well as its theoretical vitality. Individuals in the hundreds and dozens of groups come each year from as far away as Australia, Holland, and Germany to see for themselves the results of the Ceciliaville approach to neighborhood life. In June, 1969, four nuns were sent to be indoctrinated in inner-city work here, and upon leaving were assigned to work in racially divided Cairo, Illinois. In June, 1970, Ceciliaville people traveled to Sinsinnawa, Wisconsin, to help orient three hundred and fifty Dominican Sisters working with black communities in several states. What is done in Ceciliaville influences many other communities around the world.

A Philosophy To Pass On

"What would you do if you were the Mayor of Detroit?" Mr. Thomas Brennan, out-going President of the State Board of Education, asked Father Ellis this question after a three-hour visit to the war-room in May of 1967. "I would probably establish a place like Ceciliaville and use it as an exemplar of city life," Father Ellis replied. ". . . it contains practically all of the human problems present in urban areas in the U.S.A. Besides this, we have a small nucleus of very receptive and vibrantly alive people . . . we can add dozens upon dozens of people from outside Ceciliaville who will donate their gifts to us in a creative relationship aimed at producing the ideal urban community. If it can be done here then it should be possible to be done elsewhere. There will be no instant success. We must look to a long, painstaking, oftentimes agonizing process of development . . ."



Father Paul Rybicki blessing the Holy Sacrament at Communion Mass

Parishioners extend the greeting of peace to one another





DeVon Cunningham braved the heights of a scaffold to paint St. Cecilia's famous mural. Here Father Olszewski watches the work in progress

PERIOD OF TRIAL

Detroit Erupts In 1967

Three months later, as Ceciliaville was becoming a reality, Detroit, which had become the symbol of hope in race relations in America, turned into a nightmare of shattered illusions. Rioting, burning, and looting began on Sunday, July 23, 1967, and six days later there were forty-one dead, five thousand homeless and the property damages ran into approximately five hundred million dollars, symbolized by the almost total destruction of Twelfth Street.

Some of the newspaper, magazine, and television stories about the disturbances featured a picture of the pale stone statue of Christ at the Sacred Heart Seminary. During the violence the face and hands of the statue had been — quite carefully — painted black.

A Black Christ

While the violence swirled around St. Cecilia's, leaving it an oasis of relative peace, the imprint of the week's incredible events was left on every mind.

In August of the following year, when noted artist and parishioner DeVon Cunningham asked Father Ellis if he could hold an art exhibit on the

parish grounds with proceeds to go to the school, Father Ellis asked him instead to paint a large mural with a Black Christ on the dome of the church apse. "He agreed immediately. Today, we both laugh about it . . .," Father Ellis wrote in his column later, adding that he had, until that moment, never seen any of the artist's paintings. "I accepted him on faith. DeVon himself confessed the Spirit painted the face of Christ for him."

Tied to the Scaffold

The thirty-three year old Mr. Cunningham painted the powerful bearded face of the Black Christ without one mis-stroke, in a few hours, despite the fact that he had tied himself to the scaffold because of fear of heights. As the entire parish riveted its attention during September on Denny McLain and the Detroit Tigers moving game by exciting game toward their first American League pennant since 1945, and, in October, on their four-three victory over Bob Gibson and the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series, Mr. Cunningham continued his work under the curved dome, holding on to the scaffold rail with one hand and painting with the other. The completion of the mural took approximately two months.



The Choir adds the harmony of its voices to Mass at St. Cecilia's



Talented organist, Robert Slaughter, provides accompaniment for the musical portions of services





This UPI photo told the world about the Black Madonna being created by DeVon Cunningham, shown here with Father Ellis

An Unveiling Makes History

Perhaps the biggest and most joyful event ever to take place in St. Cecilia's Church, the unveiling of the Black Christ, took place on a beautiful Autumn day at the seven o'clock evening service on St. Cecilia's Day, Friday, November 22, 1968. First-comers arrived as early as five o'clock in the afternoon, Channels 4 and 50 were given last minute television interviews. Radio commentators had played up the coming event. Despite warnings, St. Cecilia's could not have prepared for the throngs that eventually crowded in. Extra chairs brought over in haste from the Activities Building were promptly filled and people soon spilled up the aisle and crowded shoulder to shoulder at the rear of the church.

The force of the event, a sense of splendid history in the making, seemed to sweep up the three choirs and the congregation as they, accompanied by Anderson White's forty-piece orchestra and two church organs, filled the high vaults of St. Cecilia's with such music as had never been heard there before.

The Lights Come Up

Brief introductory remarks by Father Ellis were followed by the darkening of the church. Mercy High School Choir from the loft began to sing "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." On the curved apse dome, hidden lights directed on the unveiled face of the Christ were slowly brought up and the compassionate features became clear, then wider

lighting revealed the tall robed figure, the angels below to each side and the surrounding panorama.

As described by Alex Poinsett in the March, 1969, issue of *Ebony* magazine, which had the face of St. Cecilia's Black Christ on its cover, "Black, White, Indian, and Chinese angels hover in the massive mural seventy-five feet overhead. Swirling about them are storm clouds from which peek . . . greats . . . Mahatma Gandhi and Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, the two Kennedy brothers and Pope John XXIII. English and Swahili declarations of 'Freedom!' and 'We Shall Overcome!' neon-light the heavens. Over here is a firing squad and a slave leashed to his master. But over there is a clenched fist. An Atlas moon rocket trembles . . . on its launching pad, its . . . majesty in shiny contrast to the nearby grime-encrusted skyscrapers of Detroit. Towering . . . over all the symbolism is a purple-robed, twenty-four foot portrayal of Christ — not as a white man — but as the black ruler of the universe."

The absolute silence of the crowd which greeted the scene was commented on by many later. When the apse was fully lighted, Father Ellis introduced the artist, DeVon Cunningham. Spontaneous applause turned to an ovation as the crowd stood. Mr. Cunningham spoke movingly about the lone woman with babe in arms he had painted among the other world figures. He had kept her anonymous, he explained, to represent the greatness of all women. The Mayor of Detroit, Jerome Patrick Cavanaugh, then spoke briefly about the Kennedy brothers and the spirit of Christ as it moves in political figures of integrity.

Milton Henry Speaks

Last to speak was Mr. Milton Henry, black militant and revolutionary, a Muslim and close friend of the late Malcolm X. As it had with Mr. Cavanaugh, the warm crowd rose to its feet in enthusiastic greeting for Mr. Henry, who spoke about the spirit which motivated Malcolm X. Malcolm would have been proud to be in the same picture with Christ, Mr. Henry declared, as Christ is honored in the Koran as a great prophet.

Sincere embraces in the Peace greeting which followed were a fitting preparation for the reception of the Holy Communion. Mrs. Winifred Horn then sang "Precious Lord." The Mass was brought to a close with joyful pomp by the three choirs assembled together before the altar. Accompanied by the orchestra, they sang Wilhousky's rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." When it was over no one wanted to leave. Several minutes passed before the spell was broken and the crowd moved forward to congratulate Mr. Cunningham in the sanctuary where he received them.

"Contemporize The Gospel"

"Faith is not found in the sky but in a person who smiles at you, reverences you . . . Christ in man is hard to resist."

Father Raymond Ellis

Father Ellis had, in 1966, planned the remodeling of the altar. On October 17th of that year the altar table proper, disengaged from the old altar shrine and placed free-standing at the center of interest in the sanctuary, was consecrated. The Reverend Monsignor Canfield of Sacred Heart Seminary performed the ceremony assisted by Father Ellis.

This refurbishing of the sanctuary might have stood for the fresh view brought to church traditions by Father Ellis and Father Ed Oszewski, as assistant and then pastor, as together they renewed the liturgy and parish functions in the light of openhearted faith.

The Black Madonna

After the unveiling of the Black Christ, Father Ellis commissioned artist DeVon Cunningham to create the statue of the Black Madonna for the altar of the

north transept, where the graceful figure stands today, her creativity as the Mother of Life depicted in the semi-abstract scene on the wall of the shrine behind her. With the Black Christ, this fine Madonna has attracted the curiosity and then tribute of many hundreds who have visited her.

Black Funeral Vestments

Funeral vestments, at the time they were changed to white by the hierarchy, were kept black by Father Ellis at St. Cecilia's — he wished it understood that black is an equally splendid sign of the resurrection, joy and hope.

The spirit of the marriage ceremony as performed at St. Cecilia's has drawn young couples in increasing numbers to the church. In St. Cecilia's, the rosary is prayed in a most contemporized form, saying the Hail Mary and including our petitions as they come up in our times of greatest need. Baptisms are held during the Mass, thus including, so to say, all the parishioners present as the Godfather or Godmother of the baptized child.

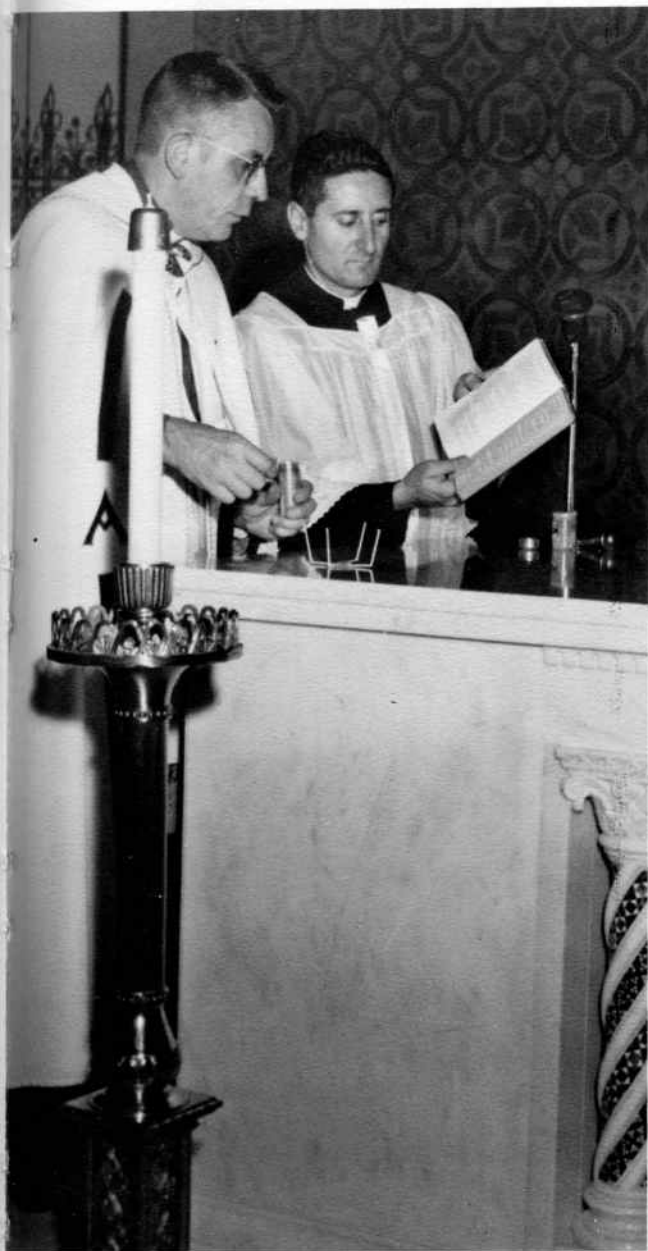
Rectory And Convent Are For The People

The Saturday evening meal at the rectory, as opened to the people and revitalized in recent months by Father Oszewski, is a true Agape. Members of the parish, black and white, enjoy this meal in a spirit of love and togetherness with the priest. Father "O" has also placed part of the convent (now available because of the reduced number of Sisters) at the disposal of the people for meetings and other uses.

"What Does That Mean? . . ."

"Contemporize the gospel," Father Ellis often said to the group who met with him to prepare the Sunday liturgy. "What does that mean to the factory worker who has to put up with the arrogance of a white foreman? Or the woman whose husband left her to raise six children alone? Or the man who doesn't know how to cope with his kid who's hooked on dope? . . ."

Father Ellis' door truly was open, and to everyone: "Phone calls, doorbells, visitors from near



Monsignor Xavier Canfield and Reverend Raymond Ellis prepare to concelebrate Mass for the consecration of the new Altar

and far, beggars and alcoholics, visits to prisons and jails, the sick and the crying . . ." as was later written of him. He spent his own income to help the poor. In every person he saw Christ. With patience, kindness and sensitivity he dealt with each human so that "even if you did not think so before, you became important to yourself, because you were important to him." Father Ellis believed that love can apply, and can heal every wound.

The Cursillo

The Cursillo, intense community formation weekends, assumed importance during Father Ellis' pastorate. Men and women of the parish who attended the Cursillo came alive to the great reality of Christ in our midst, drawing them together in a single body, showing them that no one knows to what extent he is living by the strength and love that flows into him from others.

Bible School

I n September, the Bible Study Group held each Summer, will enter its sixth year of lectures and discussions, conducted in the spirit that the Bible is as "contemporary as today's newspaper," and with the realization that more has been learned about the Bible in the past fifty years than was known in the five hundred years before. An impressive library of commentaries, translations and teaching material, including the first volumes of the Anchor Bible, belonging to Miss Edna Alee, teacher and scholar, serve as source materials.

The members are especially grateful to Father Olszewski, who has been working with the group for the past three years. Mrs. Olivia Johnson, our capable hostess, provides us with delicious refreshments, and Mrs. Luta Huff has been our gracious president for the 1971 Bible School.

Appreciation is also due Mrs. Ruth Reardon and the Legion of Mary who were our first sponsors.

The Legion Of Mary

T he Legion of Mary is an organization of laymen and women dedicated to the work of the Church in a person to person apostolate. It is at the disposal



The Nicodemus Club



Sister Miriam Francis serves refreshments to Nicodemus Club members

of the parish priest for "any and every form of social service and Catholic action" which he may find suitable and useful for the welfare of the Church.

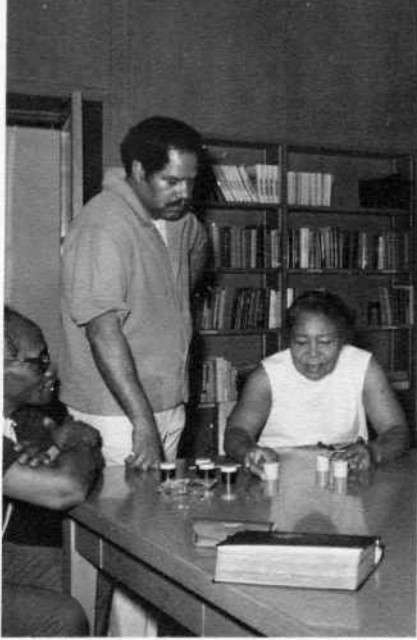
It was founded in Dublin in 1921 by Frank Duff, who still lives, a man in his eighties and actively engaged in the Legion apostolate still. It has spread to nearly every country in the world and a great deal of credit must go to a young Irish girl, Edel Quinn, who was appointed to establish the organization in the vast territories of East and Central Africa. She encountered great obstacles in this pioneering work and in spite of wretched health, established Legion branches and many councils as far as Mauritius in the Indian Ocean and she mobilized thousands of Africans in the service of the Church. She worked here for eight years and died at the age of thirty-seven on May 12, 1944, in Nairobi where she is buried. The Diocesan Process, the first step towards her beatification, has been set in motion by the Archbishop of Nairobi.



Members of the Ushers Club

The Legion of Mary in Ceciliaville, known as the Immaculate Heart of Mary Praesidium, held its first meeting in December, 1944, and has functioned continuously since then. At this writing there are fifteen members who meet each week to pray together, report on the work assigned, and to plan and discuss works which are to be done. A work assignment is given each week and these works are varied: visitation of the sick and shut-in in homes, hospitals and nursing homes. Broadstreet Medical Center is visited nearly every week and once a month, Mass is celebrated, an event the patients anticipate with real joy.

ST. CECILIA
USHER



Wyatt Jones and Director Wendell Brown in conference

The Legion conducts a pre-school Bible School where little children learn about the elements which make up our ecology and through them are brought to a knowledge of God and His goodness and greatness. Legionaries are actively involved in the work of the Nicodemus Club, transporting people to and from the meetings and taking part in the class discussions.

Each year, a PROJECT is worked out: Community Formation; Family Worship; etc. These projects call for the visitation of most of the homes in the parish community — not just Catholics — and these projects generate many works: visitation of the lapsed Catholic; baptism and First Holy Communion; invalid marriages. It is our aim as Legionaries, to meet the social and spiritual needs of the people in our community and we pray to our Blessed Mother and ask her to help us in the work of bringing souls to Christ.

Father Olszewski regularly says Mass for the shut-ins at Broadstreet Medical Center. The members of our parish's Legion help. Each year, the Legion arranges a Mass for the shut-ins. Patients are brought from Broadstreet Medical Center and from homes in the community so that they can attend Mass in church. A meal is served after, and it is a joyful occasion for all of us. An Auxiliary function is held each year and a Day of Renewal for new members to our parish family is also held annually.

Some of the most active members of the St. Cecilia Legion of Mary are: Therese Fryer, Ruth Rearden, Paula Payne, Rose Ruby — just to mention a few. They are very active in the occupations mentioned above.



The late Reid Hall, former President of the Nicodemus Club

More Nicodemus Club members





Donald Yarnevic, a parish commentator, left, and Minister DeVon Cunningham at the lectern. Center: Usher Prince Edwards, and Father Paul Rybicki. Below, left, Youth Choir; right, Minister Tony Wilson



A Parish Is People

A familiar and warmly welcomed figure at St. Cecilia's is Sig Zech, our maintenance engineer. A Jack-of-all-trades without equal, he is also a fine cook, a master of the culinary arts, who, on little or no notice, can whip up mouth-watering menus for large crowds.

The parish is most fortunate in having ministers and laymen who help in the distribution of Holy Communion and who at the same time take leadership roles in other important aspects of parish work. Mr. Wendell Brown, Director of the Nicodemus Club; Mr. Tony Wilson, President of the Vincent de Paul Society; Mr. Wyatt Jones, a most spiritual man and leader in the Cursillo movement; as well as DeVon Cunningham, artist; and Mr. Don Yarnevic, our spirit-filled commentator, all serve as ministers to the grateful parishioners of St. Cecilia Church.

Parish societies flourish in the anniversary year of 1971, with the Altar and Rosary Society, Boy Scouts of America, Legion of Mary, Nicodemus Club, St. Vincent de Paul Society and Athletic Club among the most active. Others are the National Council of Catholic Women, Girl Scouts, Parent Teacher Association and Altar Boys.



Father Bob Holmes preaches



Sister Julita Maria Williams

Tragedy entered the life of the parish when a sniper's bullet took the life of Sister Julita Maria Williams as she sat at the drapery covered window of her convent room on February 16, 1971. Sister Julita, thirty-seven, had devoted her energies and fine talent to teaching the young and the retarded. A native of Detroit, she was seeking her master's degree in special education for the retarded at Wayne State University while teaching the program for the retarded at Presentation School.

May we keep ever green the memory of our devoted Sister who offered the lamp of her mind to light young minds less fortunate, and who gave up her life for our people.

Two Priests Are Doubly "Fathers"

In February of 1970, an exciting new "family" was formed in Ceciliaville consisting of two priests and one twelve-year-old boy named Rod Williams. In a flat across from the church the two Basilian priests, Father Bob Holmes and Father Paul Rybicki, had started what they hoped would grow into a larger family of troubled boys in need of a home.

The priests, who met in a camp for under-privileged boys in Toronto, had decided then that "there had to be something better than reform school for these kids." A ten-year wait was to separate them from their goal. After a failed attempt to set up their "home" in Toronto, they wrote Father Ellis for help. His answer was to urge them to live in Ceciliaville for a while to see whether they wanted to stay. Though they had visited several group homes, they had never worked with black young people before, and they were therefore delighted when their experiences at Ceciliaville

turned out to be warm from the first. Very soon "every kid in the neighborhood was dropping in," they said. It was noticeable that the Ceciliaville concept had helped prepare the way for real friendship between white man and black boy.

A Tutoring Program

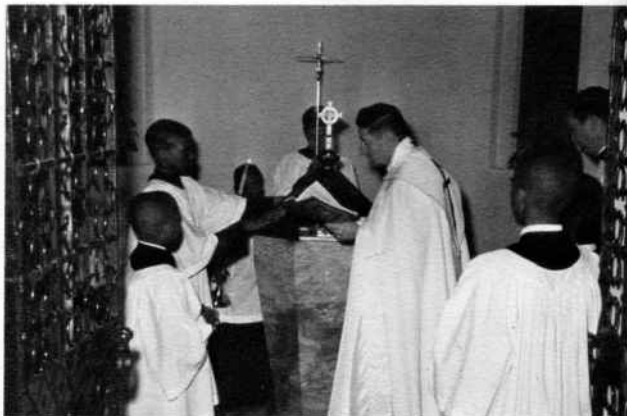
While waiting for the Wayne County Juvenile Court to send them their first "son," who turned out to be fine-looking Rod Williams, the priests set up a tutoring program still active today. Those tutored are youngsters having difficulties with their work in Catholic Central High or Martin de Porres High School, where Father Holmes teaches physical science. Within two months, teachers in the schools reported marked change for the better in the work of the youngsters being tutored.

A House Needs Scrubbing

Meanwhile Catholic Central High-schoolers busied themselves scrubbing down and painting the run-down house across from the church which was to be the new "home." Parishioners chipped in rugs, curtains and needed furnishings.

When Rod arrived he turned out to be an active fourth grader who loved rock 'n roll and couldn't stand still when he listened to it. Rod was given his own room and chores. Every evening his new "fathers" played games with him — usually word games so that he could brush up on his vocabulary — and the weekends were reserved for trips. "We want to give our boys some stability, some home life," the young priests said. Rod's presence "enhances our lives," they added.

Their lives have been further enhanced in the months between by the arrival of three additional sons, who have joined Rod in the home that love built.



**"Those of the faithful who are consecrated by Holy Orders are appointed to feed the Church in Christ's name with the word and grace of God."
— Vatican Council II**

Various events of the Easter Vigil of 1968 are here depicted: Father Ellis blessing fire, Father Ellis and the altar boys gathering about the Baptismal font, a Baptism stole being received by a convert, the paschal candle, the blessing of water, and the parishioners enjoying camaraderie at the ensuing party





A MIGHTY PRIEST IS GONE

Father Ellis: 1922-1971

"Suddenly, traumatically and almost violently — a mighty priest was gone." The opening words of a memorial tribute by the Reverend Paul F. Fetting expressed the shocked sorrow of family, friends, co-workers, parishioners, and neighbors of St. Cecilia, as well as people well beyond the parish, at the sudden death by heart attack of Father Raymond N. Ellis. He died on June 3, 1971.

To this crisis, the most serious in the history of St. Cecilia Church, all concerned had to bring their innermost faith and strength.

As preparations for the funeral moved forward, prelates, dignitaries, and friends from a wide area made plans to converge on St. Cecilia's in an outpouring of affection and tribute.

The Funeral Mass

The Funeral Mass was held June 8, 1971, in St. Cecilia's Church. Mrs. Rose Ellis, mother of Father Ray, was present with members of her family.

John Cardinal Dearden, the Archbishop of Detroit and chief Concelebrant, stood in the sanctuary flanked by two hundred diocesan priests who had gathered to pay final tribute to a fellow priest. The Most Reverend Thomas J. Gumbleton, D.D., and the Most Reverend Walter J. Schnoenherr, D.D., were Concelebrants of the Mass. The Cardinal and Concelebrants all wore black vestments, carrying out Father Ellis' refusal to believe that only white is a sign of the resurrection.

Two thousand people jammed the church while the overflow spilled out onto the sidewalk. Others who gathered in the parking lot across the street listened to the eulogies through the outdoor loudspeaker system set up for the occasion. The local CBS and ABC-TV stations had their camera crews present.

In his fine tribute, Father Edward Olszewski quoted the first address Father Ellis made to the people of St. Cecilia's as their pastor, on June 27, 1965. "The priest knows his role only if he knows the secrets of God's inner life . . . and knows the identity of the people he serves." Father Olszewski reminded his readers that Father Ellis within a relatively short period had gotten to know his parishioners by name. "To know you well, Father Ellis had said, "I must know your name."





*Father Ellis at the
Feast of Pentecost, 1969*

In another part of his first address Father Ellis had said, "The priest will be a success only in the measure that his people become the 'People of God,' the people for others! The priest's task is to form his people according to the pattern of Christ.

"The priest is a public man: utterly, completely given over to the people of God. In his service to you, he will find his joy . . . and his sorrow.

"Priests have told me of the great cost to live as a public man. The door is always open. The more one gives of himself, the more is asked . . . until all is given away . . .

"As I assume the burdens and the joys of pastor of the people of God in St. Cecilia's Parish, I commit myself to the task of setting the example to you of being for others . . . I will live for you so that you will live for each other, and all of us will live for God the Father.

"For this, let us pray for each other."

Father Olszewski's tribute went on to say that Father Ellis' fulfillment of his priestly mission resulted in "one big continuous family party in which all participants — black or white parishioners — cultivated loving contact with one another, drawing strangers of all kinds of faith into an intense unity when walking into St. Cecilia's Church . . ."

The tribute recalled Father Ellis' pleasure at DeVon Cunningham's explanation of his Black Christ, given on Channel 7 TV, October 30, 1968, while the painting was still in progress. Mr. Cunningham said that he had painted Him in the classic lines of Pantocrator, a Greek word for the "Ruler of the Universe." Father Ellis had been pleased to hear that he was not painting Him in a literal or historical fashion. Said Father Ellis in his column:

"We are not denying that Jesus was a Jew. Nor are we claiming that Jesus was a black man. In fact, we are not at all interested in showing what Jesus WAS. We are simply trying to show something of what he IS . . . TODAY."

" . . . where you otherwise would not go."

The Homily, at Father Ellis' Funeral Mass delivered with eloquence by Reverend John Markham, was based on the Gospel according to St. John 21: 15-19. What Jesus said to Peter —



*Feast of Corpus Christi
— May 25, 1967*



"... when you grow up, people will lead you where you otherwise would not go," — Father Markham said, was also said by Jesus to every Christian and to a Christian named Father Ellis.

Pointing out that he was assigned to a Polish church, that he was then assigned to talk to the deaf, then to a black community — Father Markham said, "He went and followed the Spirit where he otherwise would not go.

"He came to the black community. He studied the black culture . . . You know of the day after this dedication (of the Black Christ) . . . Do you know of the hundreds of people who did not understand? Do you know of the hundreds of people that he urgently tried to explain that black absorbs all colors, so it is right that Jesus be black. He went where the Spirit led him, and my friends, he went where he otherwise would not go . . ."

The Theology of Garbage

In her unusual and vivid tribute, Sister Mary Camille, R.S.M., quoted Father Ellis' unique "Theology of Garbage." "Egg shells are nothing other than eggs which have given their all on behalf of man. Garbage is a sign that other creatures of God have died that man might live more abundantly. Coffee grounds, bones, empty bottles, orange peelings, apple cores, watermelon rinds and all the other assorted things that make up the contents of the average garbage can, they all tell the same story: Death, self-gift, emptying oneself on behalf of others. A religious person will never be far from Christ or the meaning of his life and death when he is busy with garbage . . ."

"The Spirit wants us to be . . ."

In one sense, while at the very height of his powers and absorbed in his endless tasks, Father Ellis, "the busiest priest in Detroit," wrote his own true comment on his life's work:

"We have our problems," he wrote in his column *From the Desk of the Pastor* in the *Beacon* for Sunday, July 13, 1969. "Some people, with a great flourish, resign from the Church because of our teachings of Christianity. Others seek refuge in Churches which are not so demanding in the ways of love . . . But in spite of all these things we will conquer because we believe the Spirit wants us to be. We are content to be His creation."



Father Olszewski conferring with Mr. Al Hibbitt and a group of youthful workers at Hebert Field

FATHER OLSZEWSKI RETURNS

A Plea Granted

A strong plea by the St. Cecilia's Parish Council was answered in the affirmative by the Vicar when Father Edward T. Olszewski, who had been sent as pastor to Visitation Church in January, 1971, where it had been hoped he could pioneer another neighborhood based on the Ceciliaville concept, was allowed to return full-time to St. Cecilia's to continue the vital work of the parish.

Father Olszewski was installed at a combined ceremony which included a thirty-day memorial Mass for Father Ellis, a Lebanese custom. His death on June 3rd was re-commemorated on July 4th, a month later, at the same time that the new pastor was installed.

The warmth of the greeting for Father "O" expressed the people's joy in getting for their pastor the man they knew and loved so well, close friend and assistant to Father Ray, who in his four years of service at St. Cecilia's had already established himself as friend, advisor, co-worker and initiator of programs under the Ceciliaville banner.

As described the following day by Nancy Manser, Religion Writer of *The Detroit News*; "Applause rang out and became a standing ovation when Father Francis J. Granger, vicar of the West Inner City Vicariate, installed Father Olszewski as the new pastor. 'No words of mine are needed after that,' said Father Granger, smiling. 'God bless you all.'

"More applause came as Father "O" . . . embraced Parish Council members Clifford Snyder and Bill Dorsey when they gave him the church keys and scriptures. Watching from the front pew were the families of Father Ellis and Father Olszewski."

A Portrait of Father Ellis

At the same ceremony, a portrait of Father Raymond N. Ellis, placed with the other illustrious portraits in the mural of the Black Christ, was also dedicated. Painted by artist DeVon Cunningham, who had done the original mural and sculpted the church's Black Madonna, the portrait was placed in a space that seemed to have been waiting for it just to the right of Christ.





Father Olszewski administers the Sacrament of Holy Communion to elderly shut-ins at Broadstreet Medical Center



Patients at the Medical Center eagerly anticipate their Masses led by Father Olszewski

Father "O" Addresses His Parish

Addressing his parish for the first time as pastor, Father "O" declared that the spirit of Ceciliaville is going to live, to continue. "We're going to have Father Ellis here in a greater capacity than ever before. Together we are going to love, to be servants with one another and love one another and so find the truth that will bring us to the freedom and independence everyone desires."

Placing Father Ellis' picture in the mural was not to create an idolatry, he said. Rather, "the whole concept of the mural is a spirit of unity, of cooperation, the desire to bring all things to Jesus who is the center of unity."

A Modern Man, A Modern Priest

A strapping six foot-four-inch sportsman and former crack athlete at St. Ladislaus, Father "O" had played a key role in establishing the all-embracing sports program for Ceciliaville under Father Ellis. Of his many fine abilities, his talent for the enjoyment of and formation of youth was first to be appreciated by the people of Ceciliaville. The young people, who call him

simply Father "O," found that action was his motto, and, happy to say, it was theirs, too! Cook, teacher, preacher, friend, and Father, all rolled into one — a meeting of the minds with someone of the stature of Father "O" was a memory to cherish.

Work With The Deaf

Father Olszewski was born in Detroit on April 17, 1933, and ordained June 4, 1960, by Archbishop John F. Dearden. He attended Sacred Heart Seminary; St. Mary's, Orchard Lake; and St. John's Provincial Seminary, spending three years of his seminary training working with the young deaf at Boysville.

After his ordination, he was assigned to St. Vincent's in Pontiac, attending the Catholic Deaf Workshop at De Paul University in Chicago and also sharing in the government-provided program for another workshop at Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. He served as moderator for the Catholic Deaf Teen Club and also as chairman of the newly formed organization of Religious People who Work for the Deaf in the Metropolitan Detroit area. Father's other assignments were: Assistant at St. Florian in Hamtramck from 1961-1965 and his appointment to St. Stanislaus Parish in Detroit.



The white-haired gentleman, second from right, is Mr. Walker Cisler, Chairman of the Board of Detroit Edison. The others are happy priests and parishioners of St. Cecilia's at the Dedication of the Skill Center

CECILIAVILLE CELEBRATES

By its very nature a Christian People is a celebrating community. Faith in Jesus Christ gives the Christian a profound awareness of God's boundless love for His people. The Christian knows that the Father has not hesitated to give us even His own Son as our Brother and Savior; the Christian knows that the Lord Jesus died so that we might live; the Christian knows that the Spirit truly is moving all over this world — building us into the very Body of Christ and drawing us into unity. The Christian knows that he has been called to give witness to Christ's resurrection; he knows he has been called as a servant of the Lord for the sake of drawing all men into the unity of God's love. This is why he celebrates. God loves us — and so Ceciliaville celebrates as a people intensely blessed by God's loving truth. Ceciliaville has heard the Word of God preached with great power. Ceciliaville understands that faith comes through hearing the Word of God — that the Word of God comes alive in us through the power of preaching in the true Spirit.

And Ceciliaville responds to the Word with all the unique beauty of the people. Here we are coming to experience a freedom that is really ours. Our tongues and even our hands are being unbound. Drawing upon the deep riches of our beautiful culture (black and white together) we yearn to praise the Word with all that we are and all that we have.

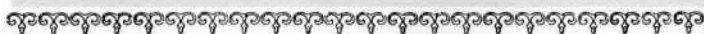
Just as the Lord has freely given Himself in all that He is to us, so we are becoming free enough to be ourselves and to give ourselves in all that is ours.

As we gather for the celebration of the Eucharist, we realize that our relationship is both to God and to one another.

We realize that to be a community, we must know one another. And so we announce the names of everyone who shares in the liturgical acts — the celebrant, readers, acolytes, ushers, giftbearers, and even our guests.

No doubt, the reason why the peace-greeting at Mass is so intense here in Ceciliaville is because we know one another; we are brothers and sisters — members of one family.

We bear one another in our hearts — our hopes, sorrows, and joys and bring one another's needs to the Lord in prayer.



family RECORD

BIRTH

BAPTISM

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

CONFIRMATION

GRADUATION

SPECIAL EVENTS

MARRIAGE

ANNIVERSARY

DEATH

In Memory of
Joseph Ellis, Reverend Raymond N. Ellis and Louis Ellis

Mrs. Rose Ellis

Miss Helen Ellis

Mrs. Lucille Redwitz

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Ellis and Family

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Howard

Mrs. Louis Ellis and Family

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Khoury and Family

Memorials

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. Bennett
Mrs. J. Benninghouse
Fr. Richard J. Cassidy
Mr. Alvin C. Gailliard
Alphonsia Guilford
Rev. Albert M. Hutting
Mrs. Olivia Johnson
Mrs. Ruth Nikrant
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Noble
Mrs. Gessie Smith, Memorial for Clyde Smith
Mr. Vincent Stefani
Mrs. Martha Studnicka



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