

# *Celebrating* **150** *Years*



*Saint Mary Catholic Community*  
**by Robert J. Bedard**

# **Celebrating 150 Years**

**Saint Mary Catholic Community**

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## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR – 2004**

We pause and thank God for all those pioneering parishioners who remained faithful and faith filled during those early years of St. Mary's Parish, and build on their sacrifices and struggles. It is with joy that I see us focusing on the vision of Vatican II, continuing to keep alive our mission and vision. We rejoice and celebrate the mission of the Church that has been entrusted to all the baptized. A beautiful and caring parish is the sign of God's presence with us.

You the people of God, have shown that the work belongs to the whole Church. You have reached out together, welcoming one another, serving one another through prayer, and visiting the home bound and lonely. Many are participating in various ministries as Eucharistic ministers, lectors, and catechists; others are serving on Administration Commission, Education Commission, Christian Service Commission, Liturgy Commission and Parish Council.

At the Eucharistic celebration, we gather to celebrate what has happened to us during the week and we celebrate Christ's life, death and resurrection. As we celebrate the life of Christ with our life stories, we continue to enrich our own people and the surrounding community. For this we remember and give thanks. May God bless and keep each and every one of us.

Rev. Paul W. Bala



## **A MESSAGE FROM THE ST. MARY PARISH COUNCIL**

The official chronological history, which follows, is a parish endeavor to thoroughly document the creation of the St. Mary Mission and Church. The narrative covers the 150-year Sesquicentennial span from a pioneer mission church to a beautiful sanctioned parish located in Port Sanilac, Michigan, in the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw. We hope it will inspire and remind everyone of the trials and tribulations along with the indelible memories which St. Mary families experienced over the last fifteen decades.

The parishioners' sacrifices and generosity made this parish what it is today. We would be remiss, however, if we did not give commendable and proper credit to the missionary priests who endured many hardships, and to the assigned devoted pastors, who through great sacrifice and exemplary leadership led us to the pinnacle of achievement which we take great pride in today. May God Bless St. Mary Catholic Church and her parishioners as we move forward into the history of tomorrow from 2004.

## **MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

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## PRAYER FOR ST. MARY PARISH

### OUR LADY OF SEVEN SORROWS

**Loving God**, creator of all things,  
We praise you and thank you for your faithfulness  
to your people of St. Mary. Help us respect and  
accept our differences, so that we may be united as  
one people seeking to share your love with the  
world.

**Spirit of God**, source of wisdom,  
We worship you and thank you for your guidance in  
our community over the last 150 years. Give us  
courage and inspire us to grow and to share our  
gifts with one another.

**Jesus**, teacher and brother,  
We glorify your name and thank you for your example  
of how to love ourselves and others. Open our  
ears to hear your words, our hearts to embrace them  
and our will to put them into action.

**Mary**, Mother of God  
Our Lady of Seven Sorrows,  
Thank you for lending your name to our faith com-  
munity. Teach us the values you shared with your  
Son and show us the way to healing when sorrows  
come into our lives.

We ask this through Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.

Written by – Jane Birdsall, Ruth Ann Pries, Margery Vogel  
(For the Sesquicentennial Celebration)

# THE HISTORY OF ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

## PORT SANILAC, MICHIGAN

1854 - 2004

In writing a thorough composite history of St. Mary Catholic Church of Port Sanilac, Michigan, where do you actually start? One hundred fifty years have passed, and a number of facts and highlights can get a little fuzzy. Even though time can conceal much, and memories passed on over the generations can get distorted, the printed materials do tend to offer good highlights and an assemblage of facts. Notes jotted down by Catholic priests and parishioners over 150 years do substantiate specific details, and clear up any possible chance of losing the chronological history of such a great and vibrant mission and church. Every identifiable piece of documentation obtained and researched was scrutinized and crosschecked for authenticity and reliability.

A special thanks to the parish council for initiating the St. Mary history search. Members of St. Mary Parish, please commence to read the history of this great Catholic Mission and Church from May 10, 1854 to the present time in the year of our Lord, 2004, our "SESQUICENTENNIAL".

# FROM THE PAST

## **THE PAST**

The writings by Fr. Christian Denissen show the development of the Catholic Church in

Sanilac County. [Reference note: Fr. Christian Denissen's writings, while Pastor of St. Denis Catholic Church in Lexington for 17 years, and afterwards, is the best available document showing the development of the Catholic Church along the shore of Lake Huron. He was intimately involved with the St. Mary Mission Church while it was under St. Denis, and while being a dear friend and benefactor; he shared his personal love and faith with the St. Mary Parishioners. His writings were scanned for items pertaining to St. Mary's history, and paraphrased where appropriate. Fr. Denissen was quoted extensively in the Chapman Bros. 1884 publication of Churches of Sanilac County.]

As early as 1786, we find traces of Catholic missionaries, who visited Chippewa Indians and branches of 18 other tribes in southeast Michigan, encamped on the banks of the St. Clair and Black Rivers in St. Clair County. Fr. Denissen states with a good deal of probability, that some of these missionaries then and afterward visited the Indians in Sanilac County along the shore of Lake Huron. Though this is a mere supposition, it seems more or less a probability.

The first pioneer settlers arrived in Sanilac County around the latter part of 1833. Around the same time in 1834, Fr. Frederick Baraga, a missionary from St. Clair County, came to visit the Indians and pioneers in Sanilac County; but he stayed only two years. He probably was the last missionary to visit the Indians in Sanilac County. Other missionaries followed to provide religious comfort to the new settlers, which included Fr. Lawrence Kilroy of Port Huron. He became the first resident pastor of St. Stephen's of Port Huron, and remained until 1866, according to Virginia Kane. He visited Port Sanilac during this period, and held services in the home of William Griffith and John Mullen. Other visiting priests included: Fr. M. P. Wehrle of Marine City, and later Fr. A. J. Lambert of Marine City came to the area. Fr. Lambert held services in private homes and public halls in Sanilac County.

## **FIRST PIONEER CATHOLIC IN AREA**

The first pioneer Catholic to settle in Sanilac County was Isaac Lemon, a Frenchman, who took up land in the Worth Township area in 1837. It was between 1840 and 1850 that a few Catholics located here in the wilderness. Their numbers increased between the years 1850 and 1860; and for the most part



were of Irish descent, although a few French people were among the earliest settlers, stated Fr. Christian Denissen.

“The history of Port Sanilac and St. Mary Parish has its roots deep in the early settlement of Sanilac County, and particularly the locality once known as Bark Shanty Point” according to Oliver Raymond, in the Intercollegiate Press. He continued, “Around the year 1830, a group of lumbermen came to peel the bark from the hemlock trees to be used for tanning leather. They built a shanty to live in and covered it with bark. When leaving in the fall, they left the shanty standing and it soon became a landmark to the sailors on Lake Huron, and they called the place Bark Shanty Point.” This shanty was later used for some early Masses. Mr. Raymond states, “Sanilac Township was organized on April 3, 1848, and on January 1, 1850, Sanilac County came into being. It consisted of all the territory from St. Clair County north to the tip of the thumb of Michigan. The origin of the word Sanilac is not really known, speculation spread it was named after John Sanilac, a French trapper, or Chief Sanilac a Chippewa Indian”, as stated in the writings of Mr. Raymond.

In 1850, Bark Shanty Point, was a place of three shanties, but only one was covered with bark. After 1854, Sanilac Township began to settle rapidly, and the name of the village was changed in 1857 to Port Sanilac. The citizens had petitioned the Post Office Department to change the name from Bark Shanty to Port Sanilac.

In writing the history of St. Mary Mission and Church, the writer did not dwell much on Sanilac Township, Port Sanilac or Carsonville entities, which would be separate histories of their own over the last 150 years.

### **FIRST MASS MAY 10, 1854**

The first recorded Mass offered in the Sanilac Mission by Fr. Lawrence Kilroy, was on May 10, 1854. The mass was held in the home of William Griffith. In subsequent years, Mass would occasionally be offered by Fr. Kilroy and other priests in the home of John Mullen, Thomas Ford and other pioneers. Mr. Mullen, the leader of the new mission, always tried to get a priest to hold divine services. Fr. Kilroy, a dear friend, often obliged. The first official evidence of priestly ministrations in Sanilac County were recorded as a notation in the Almanac for 1855, that Fr. Lawrence Kilroy attends a religious service at “Bark Shanty”. Fr. Kilroy’s appointment to St. Clair County, and his move in 1857 to Port Huron enabled him to be closer to the Sanilac Missions, the missionary priest doubtless made many excursions

along the shore of Lake Huron. In 1855, there was a large Catholic group gathering in Sanilac County. The deed to the property that became the Mission of Port Sanilac's St. Mary was made in favor of Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere, by John Mullen on October 18, 1856, which included three acres of land for church and cemetery.

John Mullen provided his hospitality shanty at the disposition of the settlers for a meeting place. He also invited all visiting priests to be a guest in his home. Fr. Francis Krutel celebrated Mass in Mr. Mullen's home in 1859. Priests traveling to this mission area would also find hospitality in the home of Edward Allen, who settled in the Port Sanilac area in 1860.

### **HEAVY IMMIGRATION OF CATHOLICS FROM EUROPE**

There was remarkable growth of the Catholic population of St. Clair and Sanilac Counties between 1850 and 1860. This was due largely to the immigration of families from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Austria, Rumania, Scotland, Canada and Switzerland. Historical research has yet to uncover definite clues as to the origin of the expression used in World War II, **"Kilroy was here."** Residents of Michigan's Thumb have their own beliefs and/or explanations. Fr. Lawrence Kilroy is shown to have officiated at the earliest recorded Masses, baptisms, marriages, and burials throughout the Lake Huron and the Lake St. Clair communities. Fr. Kilroy once called the entire Thumb area his parish, since all of the older churches from north of Detroit to the top of the Thumb have been able to say, "Kilroy was here."

The death of Fr. Kilroy on July 16, 1891, at the age of 88, closed the earthly career of one of the noblest Catholic clergymen in the history of the Thumb and State of Michigan. His funeral on July 22, 1891, as reported in the Port Huron Daily Times, stated that attendees were from all parts of Michigan including bishops, priests, laymen and women of all ages. Over 400 carriages followed the remains to the cemetery. This was a tribute to a priest in every way fitted for the heroic work Divine Providence marked for him.

Fr. Kilroy was a relative of Virginia Kane, a parishioner of St. Mary's who provided information from her family history [Article on Fr. Lawrence Kilroy's history was covered by both Harold Schachern, Religion Writer for the Detroit News on July 15, 1961, and a similar article in the Detroit Free Press on July 16, 1961.]

## FIRST ST. MARY MISSION CHURCH 1864

In 1863, Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere appointed Fr. Van Den Driessche to serve as missionary to Port Sanilac. With the help of Fr. Gustave Limpens, they gave mission service to the area Catholics. In 1863, Fr. Kluck, Pastor of Ruth, offered his services to the Sanilac Mission Church, and Fr. Theodore Van Der Bom's name appears under the first marriage of the Mission. From Fr. Van Den Driessche first visit on July 13, 1863 and forward, all baptismal records of Sanilac County were maintained. He immediately began collecting funds for the building of a church. The collection of funds took eight years, as written by Fr. Christian Denissen.

In 1864, enough start-up money was on hand to begin the project. Under Fr. Van Den Driessche's guidance the first church to serve the Port Sanilac and Carsonville area was built in 1864, on a reserved corner of land donated by John Mullen. From the site at the top of a gentle sloping hill, arose a handsome frame church, which was ready for services the same year. The three-acre site was about three and one half miles west of Lake Huron in Section 5, on what is now M-46. This church had a spire 84 feet tall, which served as a landmark for Great Lakes sailors on Lake Huron.

With Fr. Van Den Driessche leading the way, other priests who, braving the hardships of inconvenient travel and other discomforts, made an occasional visit to the Sanilac Mission and soon knew the congregation. We find recorded visits in 1864, of Fr. Theoph Buyse and Fr. Theodore Van Der Bom; in 1865, Fr. L. Schneider; in 1866, Fr. T. Buyse and Fr. Theodore Van Der Bom; in 1867, Fr. J. Reichenbach. In 1867, Port Sanilac Mission of St. Mary was visited by Fr. R. Van Lauve, Fr. M. Train, and Bishop Peter Paul LeFevere of the Detroit Diocese. For the next two years, Fr. Buyse seems to have been the only visitor. In 1870, Fr. Joseph Kraemer made visits in September and October.

In the autumn of 1870, Fr. J. Peter Smedt, having been appointed resident pastor of Lexington, began to make monthly visits to the Port Sanilac Mission. This continued until January 1872, when he was transferred to Detroit. Fr. M. Canters was appointed pastor of Lexington and missions, in 1872. He gave his services to Sanilac County until autumn of the same year, but he only remained in Lexington for 8 months. (The village of Lexington was called Greenbush until 1846).

## **FIRST CONFIRMATION BY BISHOP BORGESS**

In 1871, with Bishop Caspar Borgess officiating, the first confirmation services were held for 62 persons in the new St. Mary's Of The Woods Catholic Church, which is what some folks called the Mission Church at that time. St. Mary Mission Church of Port Sanilac was not damaged by the disastrous fires of 1871 and 1881 in Sanilac County. It is important to know just how devastating these two fires were to the area, and to the St. Mary families.

## **THE DEVASTATING FIRES OF 1871 AND 1881 IN SANILAC COUNTY**

“The fall of 1871 was favorable for ridding the land of a thick blanket of fallen leaves, twigs, branches, logs and stumps, etc.” according to Neva Du Mond in Thumb Diggings. “So the farmers fired up numerous heaps of wood brush, which burned for several days. Eventually all the separate fires in the thumb came together as one, and then an enormous cyclone wind came from the west, and turned the entire territory into a flaming torch. It started in the far west of the thumb and went all the way to Lake Huron, and consumed everything in its path. Many men, women, children and livestock were killed, especially in Sanilac, Huron and Tuscola Counties. Men and women died trying to plow safety paths around their homes. Some buried their children by digging a hole in the ground, and covering them with dirt and sand with a makeshift air tube to save them. Others who had crock wells lowered their children into the wells for safety. Some folks secured some protection in Lake Huron, with clothing burned off their bodies, and others, trapped on their land, were burned to death beyond recognition.”

The next catastrophic fire began on September 5, 1881, (scripted by Neva DuMond) and “came with such a sudden swiftness as to virtually paralyze all with terror. One witness in describing the 1881 fire said, that soon after noon the wind which had been blowing steadily for several days, began to increase in volume and force. The wind became a tornado of fire and flames descended upon their victims so rapidly that nothing could escape. The sun was blocked out and it was total darkness around the clock. The devastation and suffering caused by this fire were so great that Governor David H. Jerome called a special session of the State Legislature in February 1882. It destroyed property of 3,231 families, 14,438 persons were made dependent upon public aid, and 1,521 dwellings were consumed, together with 1,480 barns, and an awesome number of domestic animals. Nearly 300 human beings perished by burning and suffocation.”

St. Mary's Church was spared the second time because the eastern part of Sanilac County had been mostly cleared for farming, with little forests left in the area to escalate the ravaged fury.

### **THE OLD CHURCH DOUBLED IN SIZE**

Other priests would be assigned to serve the Port Sanilac Mission, and outstanding among these is Fr. Christian Denissen. A recently ordained Belgium priest, Fr. Denissen was appointed to serve as pastor of St. Denis in Lexington, and stayed for 17 years, from 1872 to 1889. On Christmas morning, 1872, Fr. Denissen, made his first visit to the Port Sanilac Mission Church. In his following visits he became aware that the Port Sanilac Mission needed many improvements, especially with the growing membership of the congregation. It became apparent that the old church building had become too small. In 1882, because of the influx of Catholic families in the area, a decision was made to start an addition. The addition, which was commenced in 1883 and completed in 1884, doubled the size of the church. The newly expanded St. Mary Church was blessed by Fr. Denissen on November 28, 1886. For many years St. Mary's was by far the largest church edifice in Sanilac County. It is also important to state that, on Monday, June 25, 1877, in Section 5 of the Township of Sanilac, the St. Mary Cemetery was blessed by permission of the Most Rev. Caspar H. Borgess, D.D., Bishop of Detroit. The cemetery blessing was performed by Fr. Christian Denissen, Pastor of St. Denis, whose purvue St. Mary's was under as a mission church. In December of 1877, Port Sanilac and Sanilac County were overwhelmed by a snowstorm, which dropped 26 inches of snow, and paralyzed most of the Thumb. All church services were cancelled for over a week. [Writer's note: Much of the early history of Catholic missionaries and the advancement of St. Mary's mission was certified from newspapers and writings of Fr. Denissen who documented elaborate details. - In addition, a brief synopsis of St. Mary's history was summarized by Alfred Pietrangelo in the Catholic Weekly 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition in November 1988, under the banner the Church of Saginaw Prepares for its Future.]

From 1889 to 1890, Fr. Henry De Gryse was pastor of St. Denis. In 1891, the new pastor was pulled from St. Denis in Lexington when the parish became smaller, because of the end of the lumbering industry. St. Mary Catholic Church would become a mission of St. Patrick Church in Croswell, under Fr. James Walsh. The railroad from the south was routed through Croswell, so the parish center and pastor's residence was established in that town in late 1890. Fr. Tussanent Rose succeeded Fr. Walsh in Croswell, followed by Fr. Michael Esper in 1897, and Fr. Patrick R. Dunnigan in 1902.



## **FIRST CHURCH CHOIR IN 1892**

The first church choir was organized at St. Mary in 1892 by Margaret Mullen, daughter of John Mullen, The first midnight Mass was said Christmas Eve, 1895. The stained glass windows for the Mission Church were purchased in 1911, and the church bell was acquired in 1914.

The St. Mary Mission in Port Sanilac then was directed by Fr. Ed. Kromenaker, who was Pastor of St. Patrick Church in Croswell from 1907 until 1917. During this period, Bishop Edward Kelley of the Detroit Diocese visited the St. Mary Mission Church for confirmation services in 1911.

In 1917, Fr. Alfred Hebert was assigned to St. Patrick's Church and the missions. Up until the turn of the century, Masses were said once a month in the Mission Church. By 1918, the Mass was said every third Sunday, and beginning in 1922, Mass was said every Sunday.

In 1921, Fr. Leo Roberge became Pastor of St. Patrick in Croswell and stayed until 1926, with Fr. Patrick S. McGuinness as his first assistant; Fr. Mc Guinness was later replaced by Fr. Lewis M. Dion. In 1926, Fr. Leo J. Zindler was appointed pastor of St. Patrick and the missions and remained until 1934. His assistants included: Fr. John J. Sullivan, Fr. John Larkin, Fr. Martin Gallagher, and Fr. Robert E. Rock, all of whom visited St. Mary Mission Church for services. Fr. Charles W. Burkhardt was appointed pastor of St. Patrick's of Croswell on December 14, 1934, and remained for four years. On September 9, 1938, Fr. Burkhardt left for university service, but retained the pastorship. This same year Fr. Herbert T. Zacharias assisted Fr. Rock who was named administrator of St. Patrick and the missions.

In the fall of 1938, Fr. Frank Piaskowski replaced Fr. Rock as administrator. In 1940, Fr. Zacharias was transferred with Fr. Piaskowski, and Fr. Kyran McGinn, and Fr. Marion Pawlowski were named assistants to Fr. Burkhardt, Pastor. In 1943, Fr. Sebastian Van Gessel became Pastor in Croswell and succeeded Fr. Charles W. Burkhardt. At the same time, Fr. Zacharias was reappointed as assistant to Fr. Van Gessel.

## ST. MARY CHURCH CANONICALLY CREATED

On December 4, 1945, St. Mary Catholic Church was canonically created by the Most Rev. William F. Murphy, D.D., the first Bishop of the newly formed Saginaw Diocese, officially making St. Mary Catholic Church a full sanctioned parish. He then appointed Fr. Herbert T. Zacharias as the first Pastor of St. Mary's. Helping the pastor establish a sound foundation for the new parish of St. Mary were Church Commiteemen: John Bacon, W.G. Cloutier, Joseph Nofs, William J. O'Mara and Ed Schillinger. In 1945, the Jack Ruttle home was purchased to be used for the rectory for St. Mary. Located on Chandler Street in Carsonville, it soon became the hub of parish activity. It should be noted that although the church is referred to as St. Mary of Port Sanilac, for years it was officially St. Mary's of Carsonville, since that was the official location of the post office at the time. Joan Maher recalls very vividly that: "The Sunday Masses in the old St. Mary's on the gentle-sloping hill were quite intimate, and everyone knew each other, and people spent a lot of time after Mass visiting. While the adults visited, the children ran around playing games and visiting. The early years on the old hill will be long remembered."

Dennis Schommer recalls going to the old St. Mary Church on the hill from his Grandmother Matthews' home and farm near the church. He would walk the long lane to a hole in the fence, where he would pass through to a path up the hill, through the cemetery and to the church. He remembers a large cross of dark wood surrounded by sweet smelling lilacs that was centered in the cemetery. In church he would look around at all the old stained glass windows with donor name plaques. The Stations of the Cross were colored images in silver and white frames. Near the front were vigil lights that flickered blue, green and red. There were two large, round stained glass windows, which accented the altar. The altar was beautifully carved and painted white with gold and pink trim." He continued, "Fr. Zacharias had what seemed to be a very long Mass; which was followed by benediction, with heavy incense which filled the church. After Mass, Dennis' grandmother and uncles would visit with parishioners and friends, and cover all the latest news and gossip. Young people often played and walked around the St. Mary Cemetery; they asked a lot of questions about the old St. Mary pioneers and parishioners who were buried there." Dennis and Patti Schommer were married in the new St. Mary's shortly after the church was dedicated. The life of the Schommers and their children look at St. Mary's as part of their family, and hold her dear to their hearts. Their grown children are now continuing this interest and dedication.

According to Florence (Baranowski) Husson, "Fr. Zacharias hired Margaret B. O'Mara as his housekeeper. When Bishop William F. Murphy and visiting priests would visit the residence, Fr. Zacharias would have

Margaret B. call Gertrude Baranowski and her two daughters, Florence and Louise, to come over and cook Polish meals. The Irish Bishop loved Polish food, and he was a frequent visitor."

### **OLD CHURCH MOVED TO NEW PROPERTY**

About this time in 1948, Bishop Murphy expressed his desire to have a church near the shore of Port Sanilac, since many summer visitors were finding it difficult to find a place to worship. St. Mary's parishioners again proved their faith and loyalty to the wishes of the bishop. Although it was difficult for the old timers to think of their beautiful church being moved, and the parish site changed, they realized that the bishop was seeking only the welfare of all the faithful. Therefore, on December 3, 1948, the parish purchased twenty acres of land within the village limits of Port Sanilac. In the spring of 1950, the old church was moved to the new property, and on May 24, 1950 the first Mass was offered in the old Church on the new site. The following was inspired by stories from old time St. Mary parishioners. According to Joan Maher: "During the period of moving the old church and setting it upon the new property, many of us can recall attending Mass at Fr. Zacharias' residence in Carsonville. Then we moved our Sunday Mass to the Carsonville School gymnasium." Another parishioner recalls how Fr. Zacharias would ask for help and you would do it, as he had a way of insisting on getting the projects accomplished. One parishioner bought a new tractor, and when Fr. Zacharias found out about it, he ask him to come over and help dig the basement for the old St. Mary's church at the new site; before the church was moved to the new location in Port Sanilac. He spent over a week of long hours helping with this project, and when he left to go home the new tractor looked dirty, muddy and old.

Before moving the old St. Mary Church to the new location in Port Sanilac, the majestic old lady of "86" years packed her bags and boxes, secured her windows and doors, tightened her belt around her waist and made her travels plans. As stated by Ken Maher: "In the spring of 1950, Bruno Brazinski of Royal Oak, and two men with a large truck and rig came to move the old St. Mary's Church from the gentle-sloping hill to Port Sanilac." "When they got it out on M-46, he remembered they had to cut a few trees down in order to straighten it out on the road. The spring rains came pouring down and the church got stuck in the middle of muddy M-46 by the old church hill."

"Once again they began moving the church and when they reached the ravine by Tom and Nancy Cozenza's place, about three quarters of a mile from the new location, the church got stuck again in the muddy gully from the continuing heavy rains." According to Ken Maher, "the heavy movers had to hoist the church up on blocks because it kept shifting and sliding as the road started to give way, and it



started to plunge toward the ravine.” He said, “The men were very afraid that they were going to lose the church.”

Finally, after calling for help and experienced reinforcements, including Jack Willis’ father, Harry Willis, Sr., a building mover and builder, “the movers with the rig got it across the ravine.” It took 10 days to cover around 3 miles to the new location. The difficulties encountered because of the size of the church and the conditions of the unpaved M-46, still brings fond and often humorous memories to those who witnessed the great move. During the route the church had many old friends watching and cheering along the way. When she arrived at the new site, she had a welcoming committee of church leaders giving her a big applause. During those 10 days, M-46 was closed to all traffic. It was not too long after the church moving that M-46 was paved.

The moving of the old church caused a major problem for one family in the parish. Maureen (Maher) O’Mara, recalls that her sister Kathleen’s wedding was approaching, the invitations had been sent out, and the old St. Mary’s Church was still stuck in the mud on M-46, just days before the wedding. Talk about extra stress, when they learned that the old church would not be in place at the new site in Port Sanilac, and ready in time for the wedding. Kathleen Maher O’Mara ended up getting married at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Sandusky, where her fiancé was a member.

### **BUILDING OF PRESENT RECTORY**

Bishop Woznicki, who succeeded Bishop Murphy in April 1950, was so pleased with the progress of the young parish, and the generous parishioners, that he told Fr. Zacharias to make plans to build a new rectory at the new site in Port Sanilac.

Fr. Zacharias looked forward to a new rectory, and after many delays and for various reasons the plans for the new rectory were approved, and the contract was let on July 15, 1953. The contractor for the new rectory was Merritt Ottis from Cass City, who agreed to build the new rectory for \$47,318.00. On May 29, 1954, the pastor moved into the new residence in Port Sanilac ----a few days over 100 years when the first Mass was said on May 10, 1854 in the new mission home of William Griffith. The Open House for the new rectory was not held until July 4, 1954. At the dedication, Fr. Zacharias said: “May our offerings, O Lord, be acceptable in Thy sight, and be to us a help unto salvation throughout the prayers of Blessed Mary, in whose honor this work is offered.” (Taken from the Secret of the Mass for Martyrs).

The rectory would serve initially not only as the priest home and parish office, but as an education and social center.

Some facts about the new rectory received from church members: The parishioners, both year around and summer, volunteered their services by painting the interior of the parish home, and included sanding and varnishing all the wood floors. Donald Husson did the entire tile in the new rectory basement. He laid the tile with a shuffleboard pattern built into the floor. After religion classes the children could stay and play shuffleboard. One summer family, Richard Teel, had a furniture store in Eaton Rapids, and they, along with some of their relatives donated all the new furniture needed in the rectory.

Many persons volunteered to help make this a true home for our pastors. Some parishioners came with their farm tractors to help clear some of the brush on the grounds. Fr. Zacharias believed in stewardship, and challenged everyone to give his or her time, talent, and treasure to the Lord.

Between the years 1951 to 1954, the work of developing the new property, and especially the landscaping, sidewalks, and the paving of the circle drive with asphalt continued. Two parking lots were also paved, and the old wood frame church was repainted and redecorated completely. During this period the parish also established a credit union in 1953, which was phased out in 1996.

The St. Mary organist for many years at the old location on the hill and the new church in Port Sanilac, according to Florence Husson, was "Bill Schumacker, who could make the keys on the organ fly. Parishioners would come to church 30 to 40 minutes early just to listen to the church music."

### **FR. DUGGAN OFFERED HIS FIRST MASS AT ST. MARY'S**

Father Robert J. Duggan, descendant of one of the founding families of the early Mission Church, was ordained by The Most Rev. Stephen S. Woznicki, D.D., Bishop of Saginaw, at St. Mary Cathedral in Saginaw, on June 6, 1953. He offered his First Solemn Mass in St. Mary Catholic Church in Port Sanilac the following day, according to Virginia Kane. He was assigned to his new parish, St. Brigid Church in Midland, and offered his second Mass at his new parish. Fr. Duggan was the first native son from St. Mary Parish ordained in the Saginaw Diocese. James Thornton from St. Mary, also became a priest for the Archdiocese of Detroit, but was ordained in Detroit, and all of his assignments were in that Archdiocese.

While Fr. Zacharias was pastor a number of rules were established according to Florence (Baranowski) Husson: "The altar boys had to learn all of their prayers in Latin, no cue cards, and if they could not learn the Latin prayers they could not serve. The young ladies would lay out Fr. Zacharias' vestments for Mass every day in advance for the entire week. Some days it would be green, red, purple, etc. and they had to be sure to lay out the right color for the right day."

"During this era, the St. Mary Annual Dinner was held at the roller rink at the Port Sanilac Harbor, as remembered by Florence Husson. It was family style and held in August when the farmers had their crops in, so they could donate the vegetables and other items for the dinner. The young ladies waited on tables, and the young men worked in the kitchen. It was chicken dinners in those days and most families helped out."

She continued: "There was always a Holy Hour every Thursday evening from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with Fr. Zacharias presiding. After services, Fr. Zacharias, Tom Mullen, John Kennedy and Charles Husson would go and play cards, and alternate from home to home each week."

### **FR. ZACHARIAS STARTS NEW CHURCH FUND**

On May 10, 1954, the Centennial Year of the first recorded Mass in Sanilac County a number of activities were celebrated at St. Mary's. In 1955, Bishop Woznicki visited the parish and saw the excellent progress the parish was making. He recommended that Fr. Zacharias begin preliminary plans for a new St. Mary Church. Fr. Zacharias and other active parishioners also realized that the old St. Mary Catholic Church was no longer adequate for the needs of a growing Catholic community.

The question came up at the time, why build a beautiful new church? The answer provided by the leadership of St. Mary's who advised Fr. Zacharias: "The Catholic Church traditionally builds beautiful buildings for the worship of God; because the church considers worship and honor given to God as the most important thing a human person can do. So naturally, the church tries to do the very best possible." "Secondly, a beautiful church is a help to all of us. For while we can conceivably pray in a barn, we can pray much better and more fervently in a place conducive for prayer --- namely, in a beautiful church." "So for the honor of God, let us all aid our Pastor, by prayer and financial aid, in building a new and beautiful church for St. Mary at Port Sanilac, Michigan." [The Times Herald of Port Huron on May 22, 1954, under Church Notes, covered the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Mary's in reviewing the important highlights of her history.]

Parishioners remember all those folding chairs up and down the aisles, and the ushers had to work really hard in those days. The decision was made to launch a 'New Church Fund'. Serving on the committee during this time of great challenge were Antoon Boekema, James Cox, Russell Herrick, Charles Husson, and Casimer Peplinski. However, Fr. Zacharias was not to see this dream fulfilled. He was appointed on September 10, 1956, by Bishop Woznicki, to start the new parish of Our Lady Help of Christians, in Saginaw. He will be long remembered for his energy, dedication, devotion, and spiritual leadership. He regretted leaving St. Mary, but with his love of God, and his loyalty to his Bishop he accepted this new assignment unequivocally. Fr. Zacharias retired from the Priesthood 27 years later in 1983.

Fr. Kenneth V. Povish, a native of Alpena, replaced Fr. Zacharias on the same date, September 10, 1956. Although he was in St. Mary's Parish for a short nine months, Fr. Povish is still remembered for his youth, ambition, zeal and wit, which touched both the parishioners and non-parishioners in the community. Fr. Povish was reassigned on June 5, 1957, and in later years he would become the Bishop of the Lansing Diocese. He will always be remembered as a Saintly Priest, and the parishioners were very sad when he had to leave.

### **APPROVAL GIVEN TO FR. FITZPATRICK** **BY BISHOP TO BUILD NEW CHURCH**

In the summer of 1957, Fr. Robert Emmett Fitzpatrick, also a native of Alpena, was appointed the third pastor of St. Mary Parish. He ingratiated the parishioners, and being a person of great vision, he saw and convinced others to see that this pioneer Catholic settlement should have a church second to none. Fr. Fitzpatrick's zeal touched the regular and summer parishioners alike, and they turned eagerly to assist him in this dream. By the end of 1958, St. Mary Parish was prepared to build. Bishop Woznicki gave his final approval to begin the new church building on June 23, 1959. The last people to wed in the old church were Elizabeth Marie Peplinski, the daughter of Mathew and Lucy Zmich Peplinski, and Leo Osantowske, the son of Leo P. and Mathilda Olszowy Osantowske on October 10, 1959.

The last funeral in the old St. Mary's Church was for Edward A. O'Mara, a descendent of one of the old settlers. Mr. O'Mara's internment took place on August 16, 1960.

"One thing about the old St. Mary's Church, you had to be on time for Mass, because the floors creaked badly with every step you took," according to Juliana Messing; "and everyone knew that you were late

and had overslept, and all heads turned to watch you walk in.” Also, she said “there were ‘men’ and ‘women’ Sundays and the men had to sit on the right side of the aisle and women on the left, and if you were on the wrong side, the ushers would quickly move you over.” The Holy Name Sunday was held once a month.

Maureen O’Mara stated that her only memory of the old St. Mary’s was the Nativity. She remembered one Sunday during the homily getting out of the pew in the back of the church and going up to the front of the church to look at the baby Jesus. “After looking at it for a while, instead of returning to my seat”, she said, “I went to sit with my Grandpa and Grandma Maher—they always sat in the second pew. As a small child, the Nativity was one of the few things I understood at Mass. After all, “she said, “the Mass was in Latin and the priest always had his back to the people.” She stated that, “I was so glad when the pictures of the priests were put up in the parish center, because I finally got to see what Fr. Fitzpatrick really looked like, since I only remembered his back.”

On July 22, 1959, the Booms Construction Company of Bad Axe was awarded the new church building contract for \$120,325.00, and the work began the following day. The cornerstone was blessed on Sunday, September 27, 1959 by Monsignor John J. Sonefeld, Vicar General of the Diocese of Saginaw.

Fr. Fitzpatrick and his building committee of the parish put together their wish list and followed through with recommendations for a majestic church. The crowning glory of the church was to be the new sanctuary of over twenty tons of marble designed and executed by the de Ranieri Company of Detroit, and imported from Italy. St. Christopher Workshop of Bremen, Indiana, was given the entire bronze contract for the electrical fixtures and the sanctuary. The windows were designed by Guy Cabral, the noted Parisian artist, and were executed by the Nobid Decorating Company of North Canton, Ohio. The beautiful oak pews were made by the Laird Furniture Company of Little Rock, Arkansas. In general, the finest furnishings obtainable were acquired.

In April of 1960, Fr. Fitzpatrick announced to the parishioners that all the funds of \$100,000.00 were now gone. All members must continue to sacrifice for the new church, which was still a long way from being finished; because of building modifications, the final cost kept escalating.

When the fundraisers began to offset the shortfall in construction funds for the new church, all groups became very competitive, said Juliana Messing, and they all held numerous events. “The altar society was divided into four circles, depending on where you lived, and each group competed. A number of



donut breakfasts were held, and Bernadette Messing was famous for her mashed potato donuts. Some women didn't bake just one cake or a loaf of bread, they spent the entire day baking, and everything was sold."

Other fund raises were initiated, and held by different groups, including an Easter Feather party in the old church basement. "This was a bingo party with prizes being live turkeys, ducks, chickens, and because of Easter, rabbits. A large crowd was not anticipated according to Juliana Messing, but the basement was packed to over capacity. The party was scheduled to end at 10:00 p.m., but the people were having so much fun they wanted to go on longer. But the live prizes were nearly gone, so Gordon Messing offered to go home to the farm and get some more chickens, ducks and rabbits for the bingo winners, and the parishioners loved their prizes. The winners had small containers to carry their animal prizes home, and the event went on until late evening."

### **FR. FITZPATRICK SPENT ALL HIS ENERGIES ON THE NEW CHURCH**

Fr. Fitzpatrick devoted all his energies and capabilities to furnishing the new church while construction was underway, so that when the new St. Mary Catholic Church was completed, its interior beauty would equal its exterior majesty. "To have such a beautiful church in this small community is a tribute to the faith and generosity of its regular and summer parishioners," stated Fr. Fitzpatrick. Father was not only a gifted preacher, a priestly gentleman, a kindly and understanding pastor; but he was also a person of immense vision. He preached Sunday after Sunday, and regular and seasonal parishioners gave generously to assist him financially in this great endeavor and wonderful dream. Fr. Fitzpatrick said, "this new church was to honor St. Mary, the Queen of Heaven, whose name it bore so proudly. The new St. Mary's was to be a magnificent Catholic Church." (Writer's note: When parishioners have an opportunity, please take a casual walk around the church and St. Mary's Center, and read all the donor plaques on the numerous items purchased by dedicated benefactors. The altar, sanctuary, sacristy, windows, fixtures, and so many other valuable religious features---attesting to the past generosity of the full-time and part-time members of St. Mary Parish.)

The poor health and the long-time illness, which had plagued Fr. Fitzpatrick during his forty years in the priesthood, plus the heavy burden of building the new church took its toll; and resulted in a health breakdown. Bishop Woznicki reassigned Fr. Fitzpatrick in late April 1960.

Fr. Mason L. Vaughn was appointed pastor of St. Mary on April 27, 1960. He had been the pastor of St. Paul's Church in Onaway, when Bishop Woznicki of Saginaw sent him to be pastor of St. Mary, and to finish the great task, which Fr. Fitzpatrick had so beautifully conceived, courageously begun and all but completed.

On June 20, 1960, Elizabeth Messing and Norm Outlaw were married in the new church; and it appears to be the church's first wedding. The altar had not arrived yet and the background was not painted, but the wedding ceremony was held anyway for the happy couple.

The first funeral to take place in the new St. Mary Church was for Thomas Mullen, a direct descendent of one of the pioneer families who gave land for the first St. Mary Mission Church. He was buried in the church cemetery on August 29, 1960.

### **THE NEW ST. MARY CHURCH IS DEDICATED**

Fr. Vaughn supervised the finishing of the work on St. Mary's and on August 28, 1960, The Most Rev. Woznicki, Bishop of Saginaw, before a proud and grateful parish solemnly dedicated the new St. Mary's. Fr. Vaughn, a young and most dynamic person, did a spectacular job in the finishing touches of the new church, even though he was very busy with many other parish challenges and special diocesan assignments. Parishioners of all ages loved his enthusiasm, humor, high energy, personality and charisma.

At a noon ceremony and Mass on August 28, 1960, The Most Rev. Woznicki, D.D., stated: "It is with joyous heart and deep felt gratitude that we dedicate the new St. Mary's Church. Words alone cannot express our thanks to the parishioners, friends and benefactors who have made possible this beautiful House of God." [This dedication information was provided by Virginia Kane, who supplied a brochure of the event.]

"This church will be a sign of faith and proof of sacrifice for all who pass by and for all who worship within its walls. It is with these thoughts and with profound humility that we dedicate this church to Our Heavenly Father for whose glory it has been erected."

"And it is only fitting that we salute the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Our Divine Savior, whose name this church bears." The sermon at the Mass was given by Fr. Kenneth J. Povish, a former pastor

of St. Mary. The remarks were made by the Most Rev. Bishop Woznicki. The ministers of service included Msgr. Charles A. Roark, V.F., Assistant Priest; Fr. Corneilius N. McEachin, Assistant Deacon; Fr. Angelus M. Kopp, Assistant Deacon; Fr. Mason L. Vaughn, Pastor and Celebrant; and Fr. John B. Zwiers, Deacon of ceremonies.

The choir was under the direction of Mr. Franklyn McAfee, and included Seminarians of Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, and St. John Seminary in Plymouth. The organist was William Schumacher. The altar boys included: Thomas Kennedy, Dan Messing, John Kosal, James Fortushniak, Robert Fix, Paul Cloutier, Dale Ehrman and Bill Gruber.

### **FR. MASON VAUGHN RE-ENACTS MASS IN PIONEER HOME**

In the early 1960's, Fr. Vaughn had made it known that he wanted to say a Mass, if possible, in one of the original pioneer homes, to re-enact the holy experience of the early Masses which were said in the homes in the 1850's and early 1860's. He selected the home and farm of Gordon and Juliana Messing. In 1957 they had bought from Tom Mullen the original pioneer home and farm of John Mullen.

Fr. Vaughn scheduled an evening Mass for invited parishioners and neighbors of the Messing family. The dining room table served as the altar, and attendees and children followed Father's every move, which gave everyone a deep sense of spiritual and solemn togetherness. During the Mass the children stood around the altar table, fully mesmerized by Father's saintly movements during the Mass.

While at St. Mary's, Fr. Vaughn celebrated his Silver Anniversary, 25 years as a priest. Bruno and Gertrude Baranowski dug up a Christmas tree from the family farm, so that parishioners could put gifts under it for Fr. Vaughn. He later had the tree planted by the bell tower, where it is still growing. During this period, Fr. Vaughn had a Deacon who helped with parish activities. His name was Deacon Bill O'Shea. Everyone liked him and he got along with both the young and old folks of the parish. When Deacon Bill O'Shea left St. Mary's to be ordained a priest, Juliana Messing took his place as co-coordinator of Religious Classes.



## **BELL FROM OLD CHURCH INSTALLED IN NEW CHURCH**

The bell from the old church was placed in the imposing new tower adjacent to the new church. An electric bell ringing system was purchased by the Ladies Altar Society, and its daily ringing calls the parishioners forth to worship God.

The old St. Mary Church was razed during the winter of 1960 and spring of 1961. By April 1961, the old church was removed in its entirety from the property, but the wonderful memories will remain forever. The question has come up; whatever happened to all of the beautiful stained glass windows from the old St. Mary Church that were purchased in 1911? According to Maureen O'Mara from her family history, "the windows could be claimed by the families who originally donated them, and many were retrieved." The remaining windows, Harry Willis said: "were put in special containers and buried deep in the basement of the old church along with other church items, before it was razed and covered with dirt. Later, it was paved over with asphalt and is now the west parking lot.

## **ST. MARY CENTER IS BUILT**

In 1960, St. Mary's was in need of additional property for the future parish education facility, social center, offices and special events building. Kathleen Kennedy owned the land required, and she offered to donate 8 acres of land for \$1.00. Because the diocese owns church property, the sale was made in favor of Bishop Woznicki, of the Saginaw Diocese, as stated by Tom Maher. In 1968-69, the St. Mary Center was built, which was a high priority of Fr. Vaughn and the parishioners. Fund development for the center began in 1964.

In 1962, the parish leased (100 year lease) ten acres of land for the new St. Mary Cemetery, located in Washington Township, south of Carsonville. The old cemetery was reaching its capacity with departed saints of most of the founding families. A beautiful statue of the Pieta was secured for the new cemetery at the urging of Fr. Vaughn.

Maureen O'Mara recalls, "that growing up Catholic in Carsonville or Port Sanilac meant that you did not get to watch the Saturday morning cartoons on television. Catechism classes were held every Saturday morning starting at 8:00 a.m., and concluding with Mass at 11:30 a.m. In the days prior to the building of the parish center, classes were held in the church and rectory basement. The first grade met in the

sacristy; second grade in the room at the east end of the choir loft; third grade in the room at the west end of the choir loft; fourth and fifth grades met at the south end of the rectory basement; and sixth, seventh, and eighth grades met at the north end of the rectory basement. Mid-morning we would have a short break and all the children would want Fr. Vaughn to come and play with their group. The older children usually won, because Fr. Vaughn was quite good at shooting hoops!" Maureen also remembers, "that at least twice a month all the children would have to go to confession." She said, "I was in the fourth or fifth grade and my Uncle Bill O'Mara was my religion teacher, and it was confession day. I remember telling my Uncle Bill that I didn't have to go to confession, because my mother and I had gone the previous week. He politely informed me that I wasn't that good, and to get in line."

In 1970, Fr. Francis J. Murray was appointed by The Most Rev. Francis F. Reh, S.T.L., J.C.D., Bishop of Saginaw Diocese, to replace Fr. Vaughn as pastor of St. Mary Parish. Fr. Vaughn was pastor for ten years and had an enviable record of achievements. Fr. Murray was quickly accepted by the congregation, and continued many of his predecessor's dreams and developed several of his own. Fr. Murray remained for three years, until Fr. Henry C. Eickholt was appointed on March 22, 1973.

### **STUDENTS FROM RELIGION CLASSES WERE VERY ACTIVE**

"Many things were done with the students over the years, monthly Masses with the students doing the readings, being ushers and singing. Sometimes, said Juliana Messing, "on feast days we held events in the center, and the hall was decorated for the theme such as Valentine's Day. We had May Crownings on Sunday afternoons, and all the religion classes took part. The high school girls wore their long gowns and did the crowning of Mary. All the children carried flowers and were very reverent. The students sang songs, and took part in the Mass by being in the choir or as an altar server. At one time there were over forty altar servers, and the children's choir sang for First Communion and the monthly children's Mass. She said that she has fond memories of her fifteen years working with the students at St. Mary's Catholic Church. "Gordon and I have seen changes come and changes go, some good and some questionable, God willing, she said, we will see many more, some good and some questionable." "St. Mary's has been our home for religious needs for over forty-seven years, and all family members have been active in all parish activities."

"In the 1970's, a most memorable recreation took place on Palm Sunday, when a version of the Crucifixion took place," said Juliana Messing. "In place of the homily, John Willis, son of Jack and Grace Willis, played the part of Jesus, using square nails and an old heavy hammer. The local ambulance service

provided a stretcher, and John was in his element starting down the aisle amidst the palm branches. Since the donkey made by Nick Sertich, the maintenance person, would not hold him; he had to walk. It was very moving with folks saying loudly, "Crucify him" "Crucify him" to the sound of the hammer simulating the nailing of Jesus to the cross. People cried when they carried Jesus up the aisle on the stretcher with the lights dimmed, and sad sounds coming from the organ."

The home-made donkey, was first made for Christmas Eve, so that Mary could ride the donkey to Bethlehem. Even though the wheels went clickety clack all the way to the altar, it is still used on occasion today for special events.

### **ST. MARY FEAST DAY – OUR LADY OF SEVEN SORROWS**

Fr. Eickholt is affectionately remembered as having a quiet priestly personality, who guided St. Mary in a steady manner, with a strong love for the parish and her members. He brought the congregation of Port Sanilac, Carsonville, Deckerville, Forester, Applegate and other nearby towns closer together as the Family of God. In one of his Pastor's messages, he said: The St. Mary Parish Feast Day each year is September 15, "Our Lady of Sorrows Feast Day."

"This Parish of St. Mary is dedicated to God under the title of: The Seven Sorrows of Mary the Mother of God". He told us: "Many do not know what these Seven Sorrows are: The First Sorrow comes from the prophecy of holy Simeon, who said to Mary 'And thy soul a sword shall pierce'. The Second Sorrow: The flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. The Third Sorrow: The losing of the child Jesus in the temple for three days: And Mary said: 'Behold your father and I have sought thee sorrowing.' The Fourth Sorrow: The meeting of Jesus carrying the cross. The Fifth Sorrow: Witnessing the suffering and death of her Divine Son. "There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother." The Sixth Sorrow: The taking down of her Son from the cross and placed in the arms of His afflicted Mother. (This scene has been depicted in the famous Pieta's). And finally the Seventh Sorrow: The placing of the body of Jesus in the sepulchre.

He concluded with: "May God the Father who created you keep you one in Faith. May God the Son who redeemed you, keep you one in Hope. May God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you keep you one in Love." Fr. Eickholt left on July 12, 1979, to be pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Birch Run, Michigan. On June 28 of this year (2004), Fr. Eickholt celebrated his sixtieth year jubilee as a priest.

In 1979, Bishop Reh of Saginaw appointed Fr. George C. Garmyn as pastor of St. Mary Parish. Fr. Garmyn arrived on July 12, 1979, coming from St. Michael's Parish in Pinconning. Fr. Garmyn served for six years as pastor of the church, and the parishioners were greatly pleased and enriched by a beautiful new organ he purchased with generous donations from parishioners. He once said, "that his six years at St. Mary's were so fulfilling that the time just fled away." Under his guidance the parish center acquired a new modern kitchen and the church and rectory would be re-roofed. Fr. Garmyn retired from pastoral service on July 15, 1985.

### **NEW WING ADDED TO PARISH CENTER**

Fr. R. K. LeFleur came to St. Mary's on July 12, 1985, from St. Anthony, in Helena. He was appointed by Bishop Kenneth Untener, and looked forward to his new duties at St. Mary's. Again, the parish was blessed with a pastor who matched the wit, zeal and vision of former pastors. During Fr. LeFleur's tenure many things were accomplished at St. Mary Parish. The beautiful church was redecorated, and new high efficiency furnaces were installed in the church and rectory. He embellished the parish center by adding a new west wing to be used as an education center and meeting rooms.

Fr. LeFleur emulated the visions of our forefathers, trying to make St. Mary a melting pot of activity, bringing together the pioneers, retirees, the young and the newcomers all together as a harmonious parish community. His efforts, regretfully, were ended when Bishop Untener decided after nine years of service to St. Mary Parish, to transfer Fr. LeFleur to St. Cyril Parish in Bannister, on July 15, 1994. Fr. LeFleur was in residence at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Sandusky, until recently; and now resides in Saginaw. Fr. LeFleur, Fr. Vaughn, Msgr. Murray and Fr. Eickholt all live in the St. Francis Home in Saginaw.

Again the Holy Spirit shined down on St. Mary, by bringing to us on July 11, 1994, Fr. Ron Dombrowski, who came from St. Mary Church of Parisville, a visionary priest with the necessary talent and creative abilities to keep St. Mary growing as a parish community. His youth, high energy, spirit and enthusiasm were truly inspiring during his tenure. He accomplished many great things for the parish and brought sound business practices to the administration of the parish. Fr. Dombrowski had dual responsibilities, which included St. John Chrysostom Church in Forestville.

## **ST. MARY 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY AS A PARISH**

In Fr. Ron Dombrowski's September 10, 1995 message to the St. Mary parishioners on the Fiftieth Anniversary as a parish, wrote: "It is with great joy and jubilation that I write to you on this occasion of our Fiftieth Anniversary as a Parish. Our beloved parish of St. Mary is an integral part of our daily lives because it embraces the most treasured and personal part of our lives: OUR FAITH." "People have been gathering at St. Mary's for well over one hundred years, first as a mission and then as a parish.

As we reminisce about the past fifty years, many occasions and experiences may come to mind, and I know that each and every parishioner has many interesting stories to tell. Just think how many times the Sacred Scriptures were opened to people's hearts. Consider all the Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Reconciliation and Anointings of the sick that have taken place over the years; and the countless times that the Eucharist was celebrated, all these services showing our oneness as the faith community of St. Mary."

Our God has been good to us over the past years, and for this we are grateful. We humbly ask our God to continue to bless us as we prepare for the future, and embark on our next fifty years." [A recapitulation of St. Mary Parish fifty-year Canonical history was summarized by the Diocese of Saginaw's Catholic Weekly on Friday, September 8, 1995, Vol. 52-No. 40. The Sanilac County Jeffersonian also covered the 50 years as a parish from their files and a news release, in their September 4, 1995 edition, Vol. 137, No. 41.]

## **TIME CAPSULE BURIED**

An article by Kathleen Socha in The Catholic Weekly covered the burial of the time capsule at St. Mary on July 1, 2000, which will be opened in the year 2100. Parishioners of St. Mary Church concluded a parish millennium project by burying a time capsule that is to be opened in the year 2100. During his homily, The Most Rev. Kenneth E. Untener, D.D., Bishop of the Saginaw Diocese, told parishioners, "It was strange writing a letter that will be read in 100 years. Saying that his death will have occurred within that 100 years, he wondered what it would be like in the year 2100: What will the parish be like, the church of Saginaw? Would Catholics be in full communion with other faiths? Will another Ecumenical Council have been called? Will there be world peace?" One thing he was sure of, Bishop Untener said, was "that Catholics will believe that the Eucharist is the real presence of Christ."



Fr. Dombrowski, pastor, told a full house of parishioners some of the items placed in the time capsule: "Various jubilee coins from around the world including the new U.S. mint coins, and coins from the Vatican and Poland. There were also coins from 1945, the year of the founding of the parish, a bible, jubilee cards, letters from children of the parish, from Bishop Untener and Fr. Dombrowski. A recent parish directory, medals, crosses, a jubilee flag and one that was flown over the capital, a listing of various parish organizations and their officers, Eucharistic ministers, lectors and servers, two bulletins one from Jan. 2, 2000 and last week's June 24-25, 2000".

And Fr. Dombrowski also stated that the capsule includes: "a variety of pictures from events of the jubilee year: graduates, confirmation, First Eucharist, Pentecost 2000 and an ecumenical gathering in Saginaw. The last item placed in the capsule was a guarantee from the company that the capsule will not leak." During the Jubilee 2000 celebration, Fr. Dombrowski had a logo created for the Jubilee pictorial book, with the words "CHRIST YESTERDAY, TODAY, FOREVER!" Father concluded with: "Together with Mary the Star of Evangelization, we make our prayer through Jesus your Son who lives with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen."

Fr. Dombrowski was reassigned by Bishop Untener to St. Josaphat in Carrolton, Michigan on July 15, 2001.

REFERENCE: The new Parish of St. Mary Catholic Church was canonically created on December 4, 1945 by Bishop William Murphy of the Saginaw Diocese, with the first Pastor being Fr. Herbert T. Zacharias.

Bishops of the Saginaw Diocese since it was formed in 1938:

1939-1950 – Bishop William F. Murphy

1950-1968 – Bishop Stephen S. Woznicki

1968-1980 --Bishop Francis F. Reh

1980-2004 -- Bishop Kenneth E. Untener (Passed away on March 27, 2004)

# THE PRESENT

## **THE APPOINTMENT OF FR. PAUL W. BALA**

On July 15, 2001, Fr. Paul W. Bala was appointed by Bishop Untener as the tenth resident Pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church. Fr. Bala came from St. Pancratius in Cass City, and it did not take him long to become comfortable at St. Mary's. Fr. Bala was assigned dual responsibilities, which includes St. John Chrysostom Church in Forestville. Fr. Bala has continued the projects started by Fr. Dombrowski. His leadership style is pastoral, believing in everyone's God given talent; believing in their baptismal call to serve God and the parish community. It is his desire to allow members of the congregation to become more independent in the parish activities. Fr. Bala has taken the initiative to enhance the liturgical space in St. Mary, and is actively involved with the parish council and the commissions to renovate and update various areas of the church and the parish center. In the near future, several projects on the list will be announced. Under the guidance of Fr. Bala, the mission statement of St. Mary was created and approved.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Saint Mary's parish family is a Catholic faith community. We welcome all people to worship, to grow spiritually and to gather as family. As stewards and sacramental followers of Jesus, our ministries strive to set a Christian example and serve the needs of others through spiritual guidance, social and religious companionship, education and faith formation, community and parish activities. We are a faithful community of God, blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, demonstrating Jesus presence in our lives by sharing God's love with the world and spreading the light of The Word.

In Fr. Bala, you have a person with a great capacity for caring and a gentleness of appearance, because very few persons when first meeting him fail to be impressed with the fact: – here is a priest who is very intelligent, feels deeply, and acts honestly with conviction.

He brings his God-given gifts of honesty and acceptance of others. Fr. Bala, after being here as pastor at St. Mary for just over three years, has shown to be an outstanding example of what parishioners always cherish and respect in a PRIEST; who lives his life as an Apostle of Christ. He has dedicated his life to



enlightening others in the Word of God, and is a living example of a religious leader who projects love for others through the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church. His motto is always: **"KEEP THE FAITH AND ENJOY"**.

# TO THE FUTURE

## **WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF ST. MARY'S?**

There are few churches that can match the extraordinary record of religious programs and parish activities offered by St. Mary Catholic Church and its many supporting groups. With the deep rooted heritage, philosophy, and strong Catholic religious beliefs, St. Mary's Church has the credentials to be on the threshold of achieving a classification of greatness in the years to come, and the capacity to carry on the mission of Christ.

## **WE LOOK TO PARISH LEADERSHIP FOR GUIDANCE & DEDICATION**

Parishioners of the St. Mary community look to the lay members of the parish council, commissions and societies to carry out their responsibilities consistent with the guidelines recommended by the Diocese of Saginaw. Everything the St. Mary Church leaders say, write, or execute represents the St. Mary Parish position with the parishioners and surrounding communities. The church lay leadership are the ones designated to carry out the actions and duties necessary to assist and be advisors to the pastor in operating the parish. The lay leaders should try to respond quickly to all situations affecting the parish, the parishioners, and the community at large.

Very little has been untouched by the winds of change which have been blowing fresh breezes over the years . . . to the relief of many . . . to the dismay of some. We all know that we must accept this world . . . and grapple with its problems. We all realize that if we could see one hundred and fifty years into the future, we would scarcely recognize the world of tomorrow. Anymore than looking back to May 10, 1854, when the first Mass was celebrated by Fr. Lawrence Kilroy of St. Clair in the pioneer home of William Griffith, would we recognize the world of yesteryear?

St. Mary Catholic Church will be improving her facilities in 2004 and beyond, in order to enhance her already high quality religious programs and parish activities. St. Mary is very proud of the new thrusts in the programs being provided, and is extremely grateful for the energies and assistance of countless folks who serve the parish in numerous ways. St. Mary has established supportive and honest relationships with the area it serves: Port Sanilac, Carsonville, Deckerville, Applegate, Forester and other nearby towns. It has become an important part of her service to other communities.

At St. Mary we will continue to look for parish lay leadership that focuses on serving the people as Christ did: leaders who are willing to serve in a pastoral way, that enables' others to serve with their gifts and talents. The church looks for leaders who serve with a spirit of prayer, hope and dedication. Persons who are willing to reach out with love, compassion, care and conviction - - - challenging everyone to move toward the future, to the Kingdom of God.

### **A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LIFELINE**

St. Mary Catholic Church plays such an important role in the religious lives of so many persons that it can be truly called: “A Religious Community Lifeline.” Today, 150 years from its inception, St. Mary can look back with much pride on the years of steady, solid growth - - - in bringing the Word of God and Catholic religious beliefs to satisfy a community need.

The future holds a challenge to do new things, learn new things, and appreciate new truths while savoring the past and its many successful moments; but always keeping God in our hearts and minds.

The future will be exciting for the parishioners of St. Mary, as they look ahead to a new time: A time of Catholic doctrine and enlightenment, and a time of involvement; as well as a time to renew old friendships and to make new ones, a time to savor the history of the past and to be enthusiastic about the future, and a time for our personal faith renewal.

St. Mary Catholic Church is endowed with: “A HERITAGE OF PRIDE, AND A FUTURE OF CONFIDENCE!”

There is little we can do in life as Catholic lay persons, which will achieve more in personal comfort and satisfaction than to serve the Lord, Jesus Christ, through our Church. St. Mary is truly indebted to all of her members who have aided the parish in the past in such a generous, ambitious and dedicated fashion.

## **WE LOOK TO PARISHIONERS TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR FUTURE SUCCESS**

Her loyal followers provide the security and guarantee of future success and achievement in the years to come. St. Mary is essential to her service area, and it is assumed that the parishioners both full-time and part-time residents realize the depth and importance of this obvious need.

As St. Mary Parish advances into the future and continues to grow in stature, all church members will be proud of the active service and financial support they have given. St. Mary Catholic Church sees its future of increasing involvement with the communities, which encompass her. This is a response for our day and time . . . unique as St. Mary is unique, and maintaining a value system embracing the knowledge and truths bequeathed by former ages.

Innovation and change marked St. Mary's progress over the years. These efforts will intensify and continue as we move forward into the twenty-first century. By the year 2054, St. Mary's bicentennial, the active members of St. Mary Parish will look back with great pride upon this decade, having been instrumental in finding some sound answers to many of the problems now confronting the Catholic Church. Current members will be asked to provide the proper leadership, guidance and direction to help lead St. Mary Parish forward in the years ahead. St. Mary Parish has been very blessed with gifts of time, talent and financial assistance by her members in the past, and it is her hope that all parishioners can be counted upon for the same degree and more . . . as we move forward together into the twilight of time.

On December 19, 2002, the St. Mary Parish Council approved the following statement for the future, referred to as:

### **Vision for the year 2017...**

"Saint Mary's parish is a vital Catholic community. Its people, rooted in faith, live as Christians, promoting their spirit and message of Jesus. Its members provide a welcoming community for all people of all ages to come together as family for prayer, social gathering, and to nourish their faith. The parishioners use their God given gifts, talents and facilities for the good of the parish and the community. They join together with people of other beliefs for faith sharing, prayer, and works of charity."

## **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES IN 2004 TO COMMEMORATE THE SESQUICENTENNIAL**

### **Four-day Mission & Spiritual Renewal**

During the Sesquicentennial year, St. Mary's Parish sponsored many special events to celebrate the 150 years of her religious history. The following is a list of some activities.

- May: Sesquicentennial kickoff - reception after both liturgies
- June: Ice cream social
- July: Parish picnic
- August: Greater Detroit Catholic Gospel Choir

To culminate the final activities held to celebrate the sesquicentennial milestone of St. Mary's Church as a Catholic Faith Community, a special four-day mission and spiritual renewal was held.

The mission was presented under the title: WALKING TOGETHER...EXTENDING THE BOUDARIES OF THE CHURCH.

The goals were:

- Identify criteria for a vibrant church
- Provide time and space for reflection and prayer
- Celebrate our history/roots
- Identify reconciliation as a path to wholeness of self
- To deepen our sense of community
- Increase awareness of our spiritual responsibility of boundary to include other people/churches

The Mission Director was Fr. C. Michael Weldon, OFM (Doctor of Ministry), a Franciscan priest since 1981. The mission was held Thursday, September 16, 2004 through Sunday, September 19, 2004. A sample of his prayer sessions included: "Lord Jesus, in the dark desolation of your passion, you trusted

in your God and Father. You are always present in our hearts, and by your protecting care make even darkness as bright as day.”

“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God --- what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12: 1-2)

“Lord, now you let your servant go in peace: Your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.” (Canticle of Simeon)

### **St. Mary's Prayer & Meditation Garden**

Following the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, September 19, 2004, a special sesquicentennial dedication ceremony was held outside. Members of the parish participated in the dedication and blessing of the new St. Mary's Prayer and Meditation Garden. The garden is located south of the church and west of St. Mary's Center. A crimson maple tree was planted in the center of the garden, to commence the next 50 years of St. Mary's history, leading to the bicentennial celebration in the year of “**2054**”.

Fr. Bala led the parishioners in prayer and song to bless the garden, which will have many new features to be suggested by the parish members. The garden now includes 10 sculptured stone benches placed in a circle, for parishioners and friends to sit in a grassy knoll for meditation and prayer whenever they wish. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the participants released scores of helium filled balloons, to send thoughts, hopes, and prayers skyward to honor the Lord, Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, in whose honor St. Mary's was named. —

The 150-year celebration and dinner on Sunday, September 19, 2004 was attended by over 185 parishioners in the St. Mary Center, to conclude the activities of this milestone in history.

The beautiful decorations (candles and china paintings) were the opening for a sumptuous banquet dinner. Soothing music was provided all afternoon by Dan Allen, who played multiple instruments.



Maureen O'Mara chaired the festivities. And, as we continue to celebrate the history of St. Mary, may "God with us remain, through us the Spirit reign, that Christ be known to humankind."

The research executed to locate historical data for this publication came from numerous sources, such as documented publications, St. Mary's records, Archdiocese of Detroit archives, such as public records, publications and historical documents, Catholic Diocese of Saginaw historical records, libraries, museum, personal interviews, recollections and notes of parishioners, books, newspapers, magazines, etc. This was all assembled and dissected and integrated together to enrich this book, and to vividly bring to life the many wonderful events of the past, for St. Mary families to reminisce and cherish forever the Catholic memories of yesteryear.

**FINIS!**

## **SPECIAL EXHIBIT I**

St. Mary Parish is extremely proud of her many daughters and sons who entered religious life over the years, since the founding of the Church, as publicized in the Catholic Weekly on Sunday, May 25, 1952, under Port Sanilac Vocations from St. Mary's:

The following young women became Dominican Sisters: Sabina Campfield became Sister Mary Laurentine; Ella Dawn became Sr. Cypran; Margaret Maher become Sr. Lucretia; Mary Maher became Sr. Patricia; Nora McDonnell became Sr. Helen Marie; Theresa Groulx became Sr. Mary Immaculata; Agnes Peplinski became Sr. Richard Terese.

The following young ladies entered the Order of St. Joseph of St. Louis Missouri: Mary Maher became Sr. Esperance; Lynda Maher became Sr. Virginia Marie; Ella Mullen became Sr. Ignatia.

Theresa Collin became Sr. Bernardo of the Sisters of Charity of Providence.

Dorothy Golenberk became Sr. Grace of Our Lady of Victoryknoll.

Joan Maher, who entered the Mission Sisters of The Holy Spirit, and became Sister Theresa, is now stationed at St. Mary's as Director of Religious Education Pastoral Ministry, 2004. St. Mary Parish is very fortunate to have a person of Joan Maher's experience, intelligence and love for St. Mary back home, (now using her birth name). She really enjoys her ministry and the parishioners and children alike are very fond of her.

There are two men from St. Mary who became Priests: Fr. James Thornton, a Diocesan Priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit, and Fr. Robert Duggan, who was ordained at St. Mary Cathedral in Saginaw on June 6, 1953, by Bishop Stephen Woznicki of the Saginaw Diocese. He celebrated his first Mass at St. Mary Church in Port Sanilac.

## SPECIAL EXHIBIT II

The following was provided by Tom Maher, showing the first Annual Report of St. Mary

Parish for the year 1946:

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1946



## St. Mary's Church OF PORT SANILAC Carsonville, Michigan

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### FORWARD

This financial report is made as a tribute to St. Mary's Contributors who have generously offered time and means to promote God's kingdom on earth. Thus it is a highly successful one. We cannot overlook God's blessings and favors in this effort. We began the year with a debt of \$1,696.09 and not only paid it in full, plus the interest, carried the current expenses, but also solved the extraordinary expense of building a garage for the pastor's residence. We too, publicly acknowledge our gratitude to Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, who undoubtedly prompted the many donations we have received during the past year.

Let us remember that God's Blessings (material and spiritual) are usually measured by our own generosity towards HIM. We will receive in proportion as we give. GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.

May God continue to bless you and may you in return show yourselves more and more worthy in His sight.

Your devoted Pastor,

REV. HERBERT T. ZACHARIAS

# PASTOR'S REPORT

## Receipts

Envelope Collections .....	\$ 3,065.35
Seat Offerings .....	1,135.25
Offertory Collection .....	1,539.18
Easter Collection .....	118.38
Special Parish Collections .....	428.55
Donations .....	1,150.46
Entertainments and Banquets .....	1,773.50
Interest and Dividends .....	80.08
Building Fund .....	818.45
Votive Offerings .....	112.76
Cash Received for Telephone Calls .....	7.55

TOTAL ..... \$11,375.45

## Diocesan Collections—

Indian and Negroes .....	\$ 31.50
Holy Land .....	15.45
Education of Seminarians .....	217.35
Holy Father .....	73.20
Propagation of Faith .....	127.30
Catholic University .....	54.80
War Relief .....	65.45

TOTAL ..... \$ 1,372.95

GRAND TOTAL ..... \$12,748.40

## Current Assets

Current Year Balance .....	\$ 1,561.14
Balance Jan. 1, 1945 .....	1,149.33
U. S. Bonds .....	2,908.60
	\$ 5,417.47

## Expenditures

Salary of Pastor .....	\$ 1,200.00
Extra Clergy Help .....	106.00
Automobile Allowance .....	106.00
Salary of Sexton .....	240.00
Salary of Housekeeper .....	446.80
Organist and Choir .....	11.36
Mass Wine and Altar Bread .....	80.16
Candles and Incense .....	128.75
Fuel and Light .....	536.32
Telephone .....	19.01
Insurance .....	32.00
Taxes and Assessments .....	6.00
Office — Stationery and Printing .....	55.91
Catholic Literature .....	21.28
Repairs on Church .....	211.35
Repairs on Pastor's Residence .....	529.04
New Furniture — Church .....	54.75
New Furniture — Pastor's Residence .....	634.32
Equipment and Supplies, Church and Rectory .....	320.23
Amount Paid on Principal .....	2,500.00
Interest on Debt .....	50.58
Diocesan Quota .....	192.80
Diocesan Collections .....	1,272.55
Forty Hour Expenses .....	45.80
Miscellaneous .....	22.72
Building of Garage .....	931.78
Festival Expenses .....	185.80

TOTAL ..... \$11,381.65

Balance for Year 1945 ..... 1,561.14

GRAND TOTAL ..... \$12,942.79

### **SPECIAL EXHIBIT III**

#### **St. Mary Parish Administration Commission**

Bill Coyne, Chairperson  
Margaret Kelly, Co-Chairperson  
Chuck Basler

Bob Bedard  
Art Birdsall  
Marianne McEachern

Joe Mooney  
Joe Sutherland  
Karen Travis

#### **St. Mary Parish Liturgy Commission**

Fr. Paul W. Bala, Pastor  
Agnes Camps  
Dan Dean  
Sue Downing  
Julius Dudzinski

Louise Jensen  
Joan Maher  
Kathleen Marschall  
Marc Mc Eachern  
Mary Ann Simmons

Al VanHoudt  
Kathy VanHoudt  
Margery Vogel  
Ed Wallman

#### **Christian Service Commission**

Fr. Paul W. Bala, Pastor  
Dianee Detgen, Co-Chairperson  
Maureen O'Mara, Co-Chairperson  
Linda Backus

Mary Calliea  
Agnes Camps  
Jan Gazdajka  
Joe Jurkiewicz

Betsy Rheaume  
Carrie Vakovich

#### **Education Commission**

Ruth Ann Pries, Chairperson  
Joan Maher, Ex-Officio  
Jane Basler

Louise Krease  
Rose Minchella  
Cynthia Mooney

Lois Schlichting  
Carol Super

## St. Mary Parish Special Activity Committee Chairs and Directors

Joan Maher, Religious Education Pastoral Ministry  
Maureen O'Mara, Youth Ministry  
Florence Husson, Women's Club and St. Mary/St. John Seniors  
Ed Wiegand, Men's Club  
John Downing, Vicariate Committee  
Gordon Messing, Cemetery Committee  
Gay Murphy and Maureen O'Mara, Legion Prayer Chain  
Cynthia Mooney, Service with Love  
Betsy Rheaume, Pro-Life  
Kathleen Marschall, Parish Secretary  
John Shanks, Parish Custodian

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND HEARTFELT THANKS

Special recognition and heartfelt thanks to the following persons who provided outstanding assistance in the initiation, development, coordination and preparation of this St. Mary Sesquicentennial History Book:

Mary Lou Bedard, for complete computer typing of book with the rewrites and revisions, special researching, and scripting analysis of the manuscript.

Jane Birdsall, member of the parish council, who convinced me to accept this challenge and handled coordination and liaison with parish council; and convinced Bob Bedard to accept this challenging request to write the St. Mary history.

Marianne McEachern, parish council liaison and book coordinator.

Joe Grimm, Detroit Free Press editor, writer, and author of several Michigan and Great Lakes historical books; for final proofing and analysis of manuscript. Joe is also a part-time member of St. Mary's Parish.

Susan (Bevis) Bedard, analytical developer for computer space correlation of copy contents, scanning, structural layout and burning of the CD's.

Maureen O'Mara and her sister, Jackie, for analyzing the copy conformity to grammatical rules, punctuation, and their inflections and functions with relationship to sentences.

Photographic Selection Committee and Final Printers Proofing:

Bob Bedard

Jane Birdsall

Jan Gazdajka

Joan Maher

Tom Maher

Kathleen Marschall

Marianne McEachern  
(Chairperson)

Margaret O'Mara

Maureen O'Mara



SIGN-OFF BY:

Robert J. Bedard, Bibliographer and Writer  
St. Mary Catholic Church  
Port Sanilac, Michigan 48469  
September 15, 2004

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND HISTORICAL REFERENCES . . .**

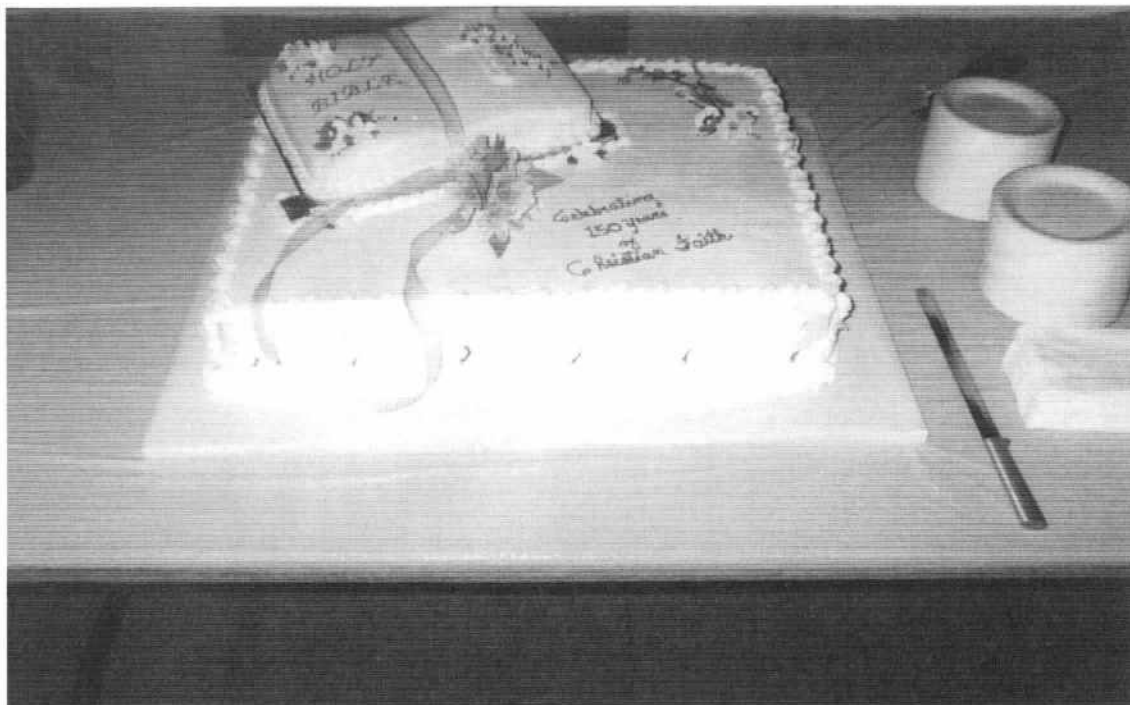
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- Ken Maher family history file on St. Mary Church
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*Special Note: The contents of this publication consists of the writer's extensive original composition; written materials with permission, submitted writings by parish members of St. Mary's Church for insertion; information from public domain documents; Fair Use and Practice materials of research, education and historical references; and verbal communication notes from parishioners. Every effort was made to provide proper credit where applicable.*

# PICTORIAL REVIEW



### BAPTISMS (1955 and 1956)

Richard Alexander Rinn .....son of Alex Rinn and Esmeralda Smith  
 William Bernard Colesa .....son of Bernard Colesa and Johanna Taylor  
 Sally Ann Knight .....daughter of Arthur Knight and Mary Prusik  
 Catherine Norma Handley .....daughter of John R. Handley and Sara Hardy  
 Theresa Marie Willis .....daughter of John Willis and Grace Marie Osantowske  
 Denise Hope Quinlan .....daughter of William Quinlan and Hope Lorentzen  
 Harold Edward Johnson .....son of Gerald Johnson and Marian Beauchain  
 Julia Marie Prusik .....daughter of George Prusik and Mary Lou Schommer  
 Gerald Eugene Rich .....son of Fred Rich and Elva Fletcher  
 Denise Marie Schillinger .....daughter of Hubert Schillinger & Gloria Gendreau  
 Darnell Michael Waun .....son of Keith Waun and Marguerite Smith  
 David Gerald Taylor .....son of James Taylor and Theresa Grifka  
 Nancy Carol Masinick .....daughter of John Masinick and Barbara Ann Healy  
 Russell Valentine Sade .....son of Robert Sade and Donna Schumacher  
 Marie Janine Sade .....daughter of Robert Sade and Donna Schumacher  
 Carol Susanne Cartier .....daughter of Stanley Cartier and Isabelle Gosdzinski  
 John Raymond Maher .....daughter of Kenneth Maher and Margaret Husson  
 Paula Jean Willis .....daughter of John Willis and Grace Marie Osantowske  
 Mary K. Gruber .....daughter of Fred Gruber and Veronica Chevalier  
 Cynthia Marie Rutz .....daughter of Andrew Rutz and June Summerville  
 Pamela Jean Colesa .....daughter of Bernard Colesa and Johanna Taylor  
 Michael Eric Bisco .....son of Ralph Bisco and Joan A. Schumacher  
 Albert William Brindley .....son of Wayne Brindley and Marion Kandell

### First Communicants (1955 and 1956)

Nancy Jeanne Bennett	Nancy Josephine Shanks	Mary Theresa Nicholas
Philomena Maher	Russell John Bright	Lawrence Edward Schommer
Mary Ann Quinlan	Michael James Fix	James Gordon Smith
Mary Catherine Rinn	Charlotte Ann Fortushniak	

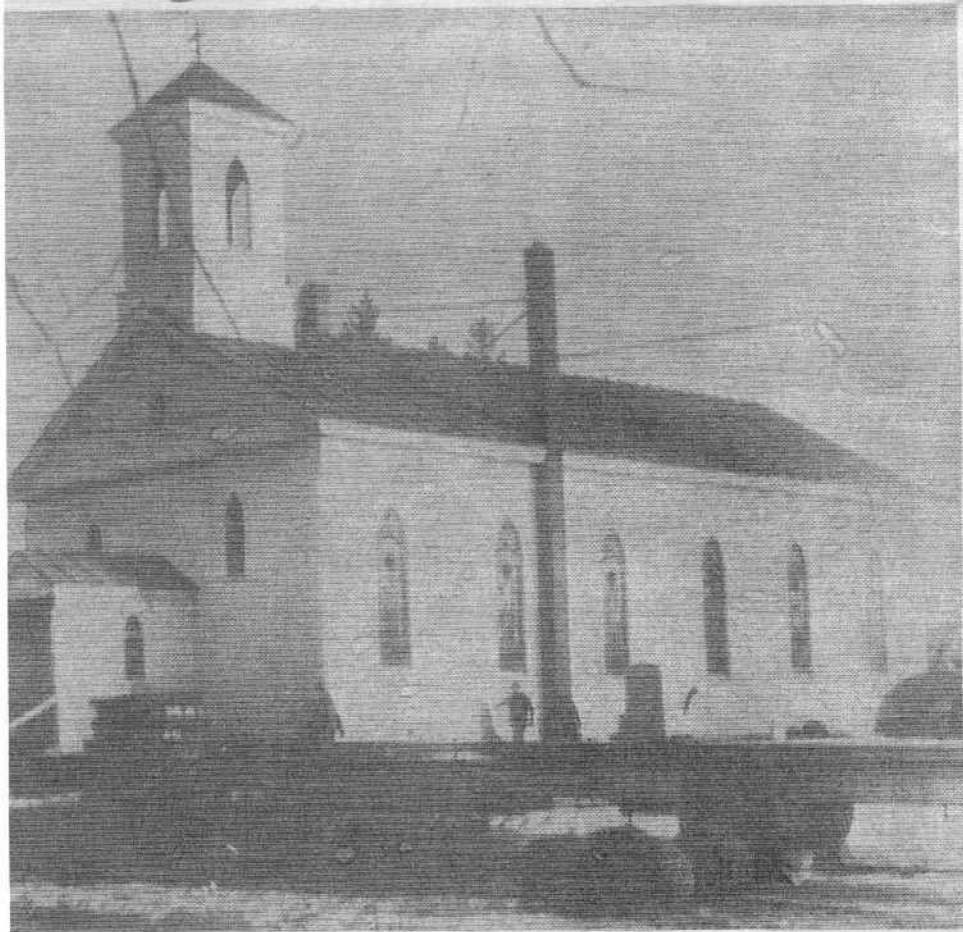


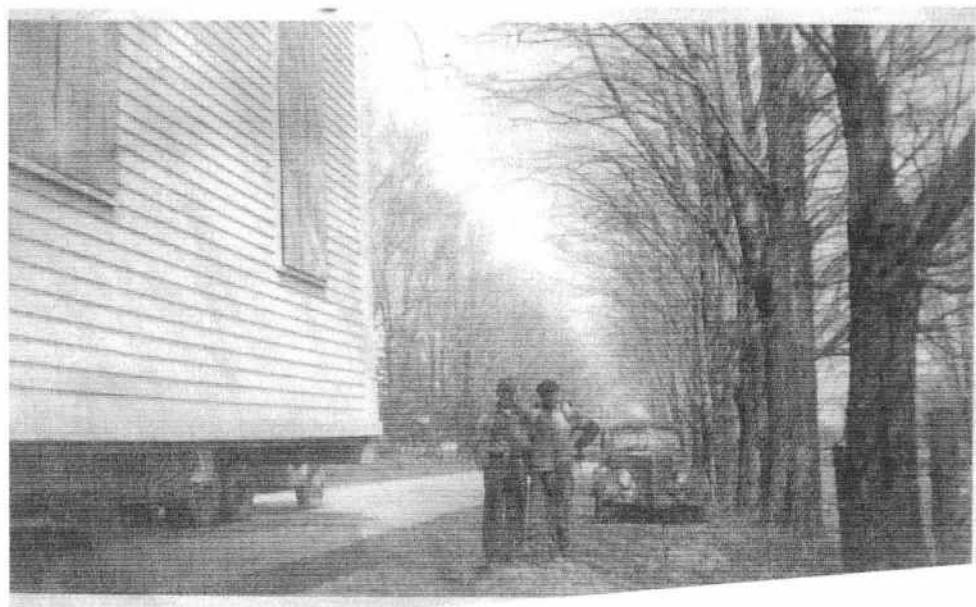






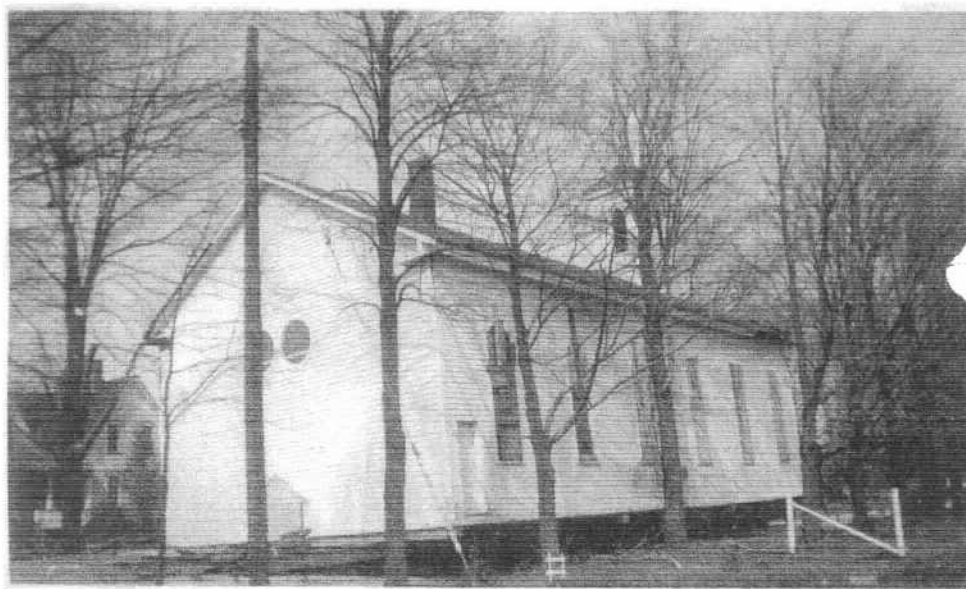
*'Going For Ride' This Week*

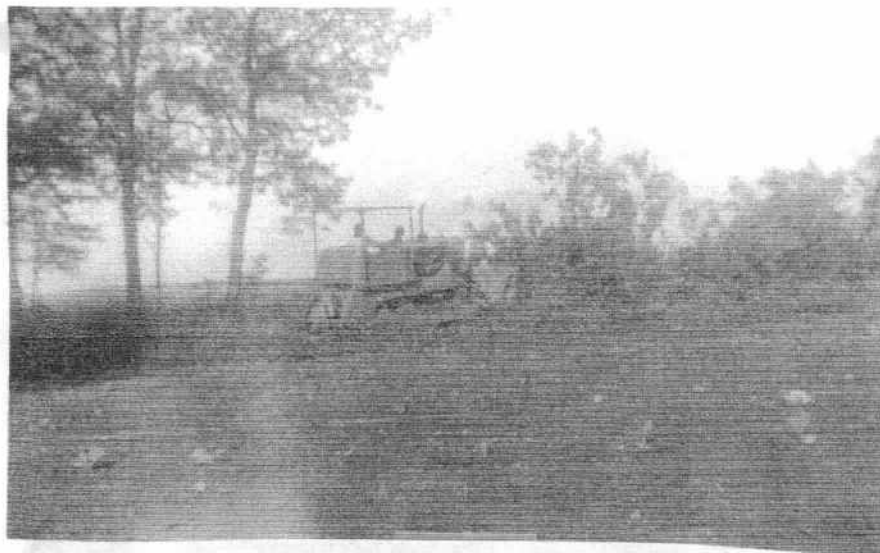
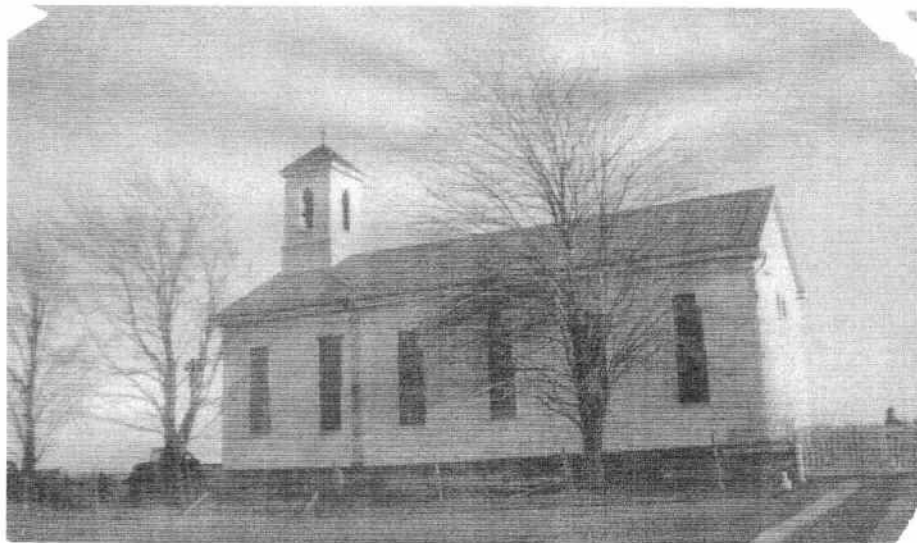






May 11, 1950





**Clearing ground for the church in Port Sanilac**







## CONFIRMATIONS — 1956

### GIRLS

Nancy Jeanne Bennett	Johanna Taylor Colesa	Sharon C. Erdman
Elizabeth T. Cosenza	Marlene R. Fagan	Rosemary Krawczyk
Kathleen A. Maher	Patricia K. Sweet	

### BOYS

Ralph L. Bisco	Kenneth S. Cartier	John Lee Shanks
John Dornbach	Bernard Colesa	Paul E. Cloutier
James W. Fortushniak	William G. Gruber	Robert J. Fix
Kenneth M. Maher	Dennis E. Shanks	Joseph Krawczyk
Robert K. Ziegler		John J. Sweet





MAY • 66



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Mary Watson, Blanch  
Kennedy, sisters of  
Father Duggan  
1953. First mass at  
St. Mary's, H. Sanilac  
1953

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Feb. 18, 1925

## St. Mary Church

ST. CLAIR, MICHIGAN

Dear Mrs. Ferguson:

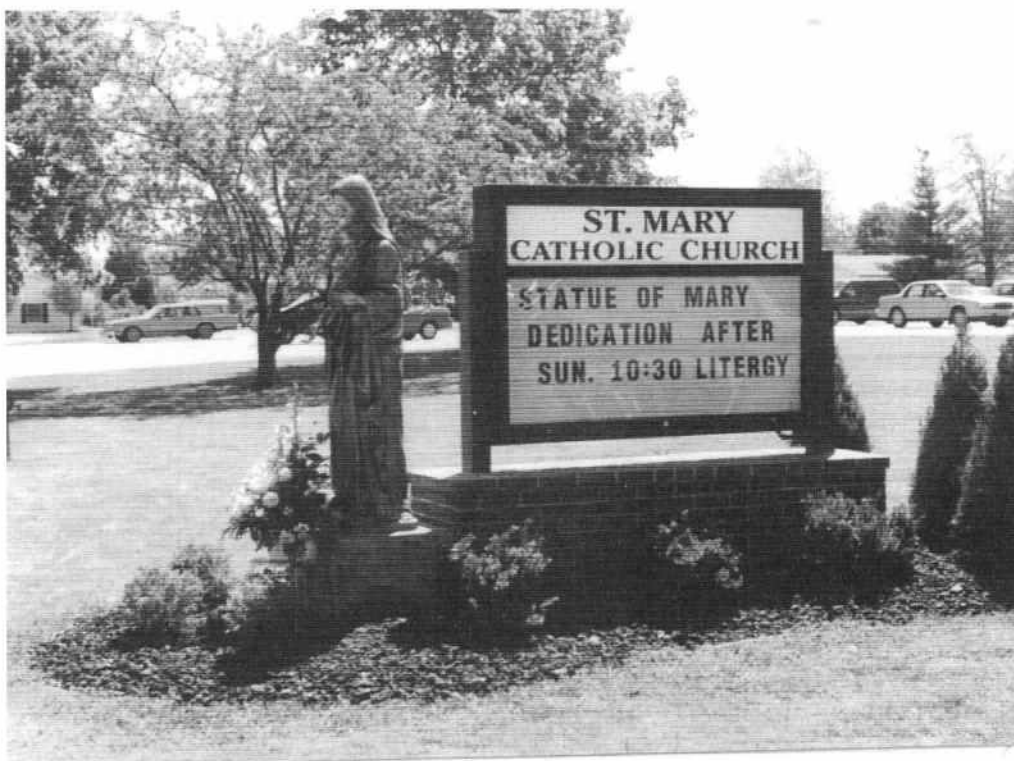
Frank Mullen donated 2 acres of ground to Church used as a cemetery.

A double row of sheds - about 40 - were built (about 1878) parallel, extending north and south with open ground between the rows to drive in and out. The opening of the sheds faced each other. The sheds were then auctioned. But the sheds and ground remained the property of the church. The ground on which the sheds were built, was part of the 2 acres, and on the west side of same. The sheds were taken down about 1915.

A double enclosed shed was built in the extreme north east corner of ground. I think Pat O'Mara and Father Peter Esper built and owned this shed. About year 1915 I sold this shed to Tony Gross and it was moved to his farm next to church and east. I thought the church owned it - it was not long till there was much commotion - Pat O'Mara was going to the sale - there was much talk - I said nothing, and soon I settled with Pat.

Frank Brown was born 1872, and says that Father De Smit was there. Will be glad to answer any question if you ask it.

Sincerely  
Ed J. Kromenaker  
1907-1917











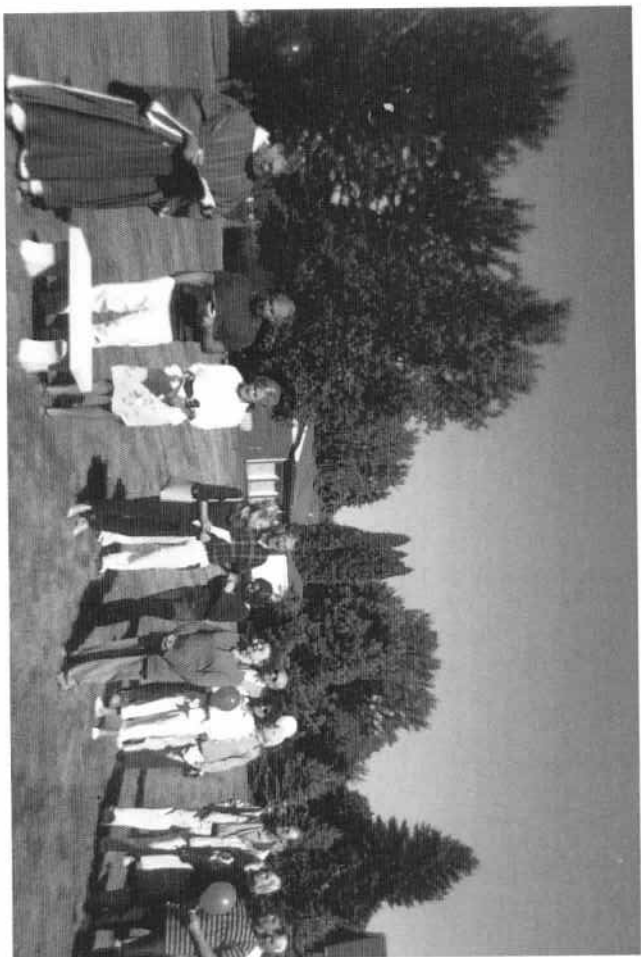
**Rectory built 1953-1954**











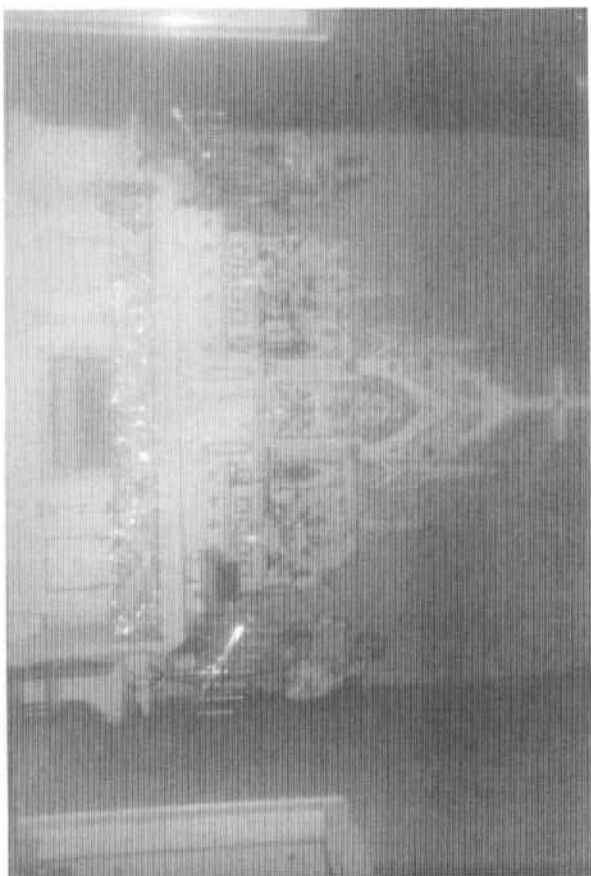


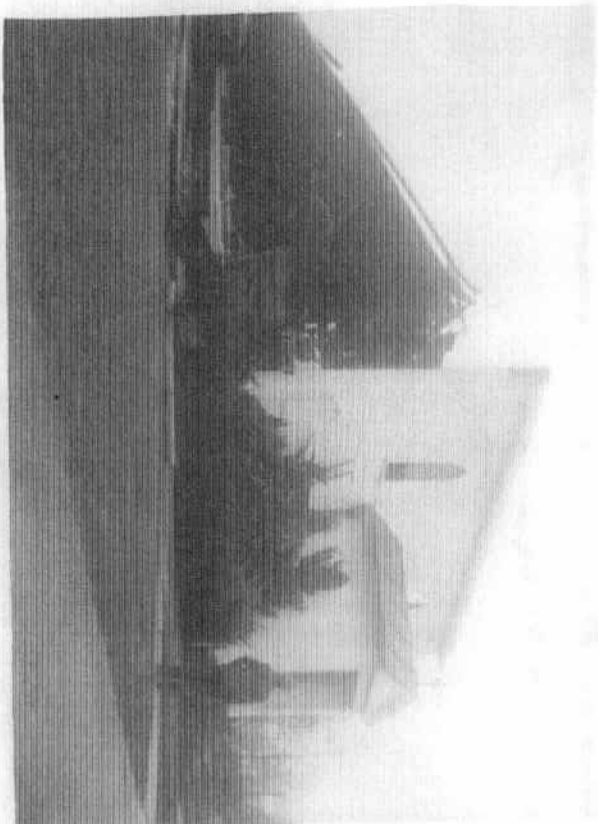




**St. Mary of the Seven Sorrows**  
**1854-2004**

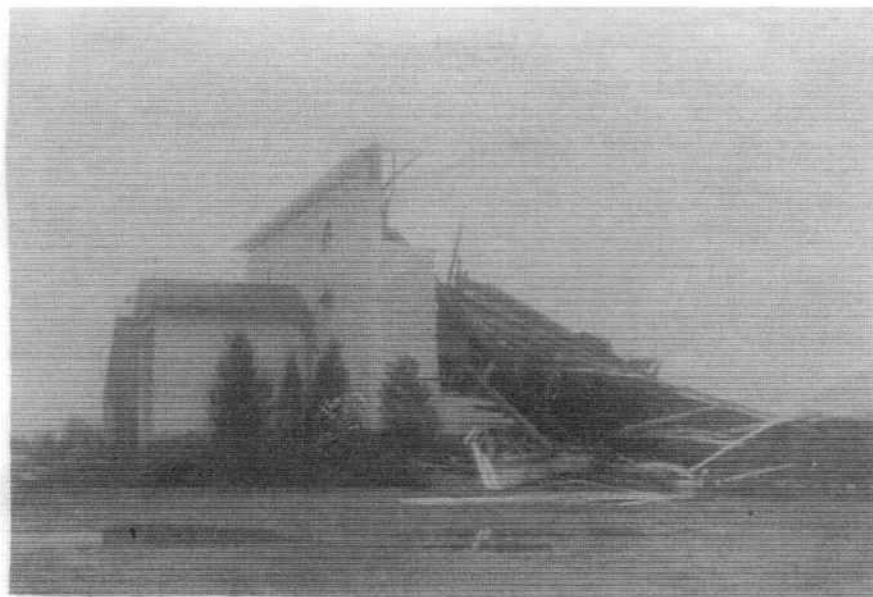






JUN 21 \*

**Tearing down first St. Mary Church**



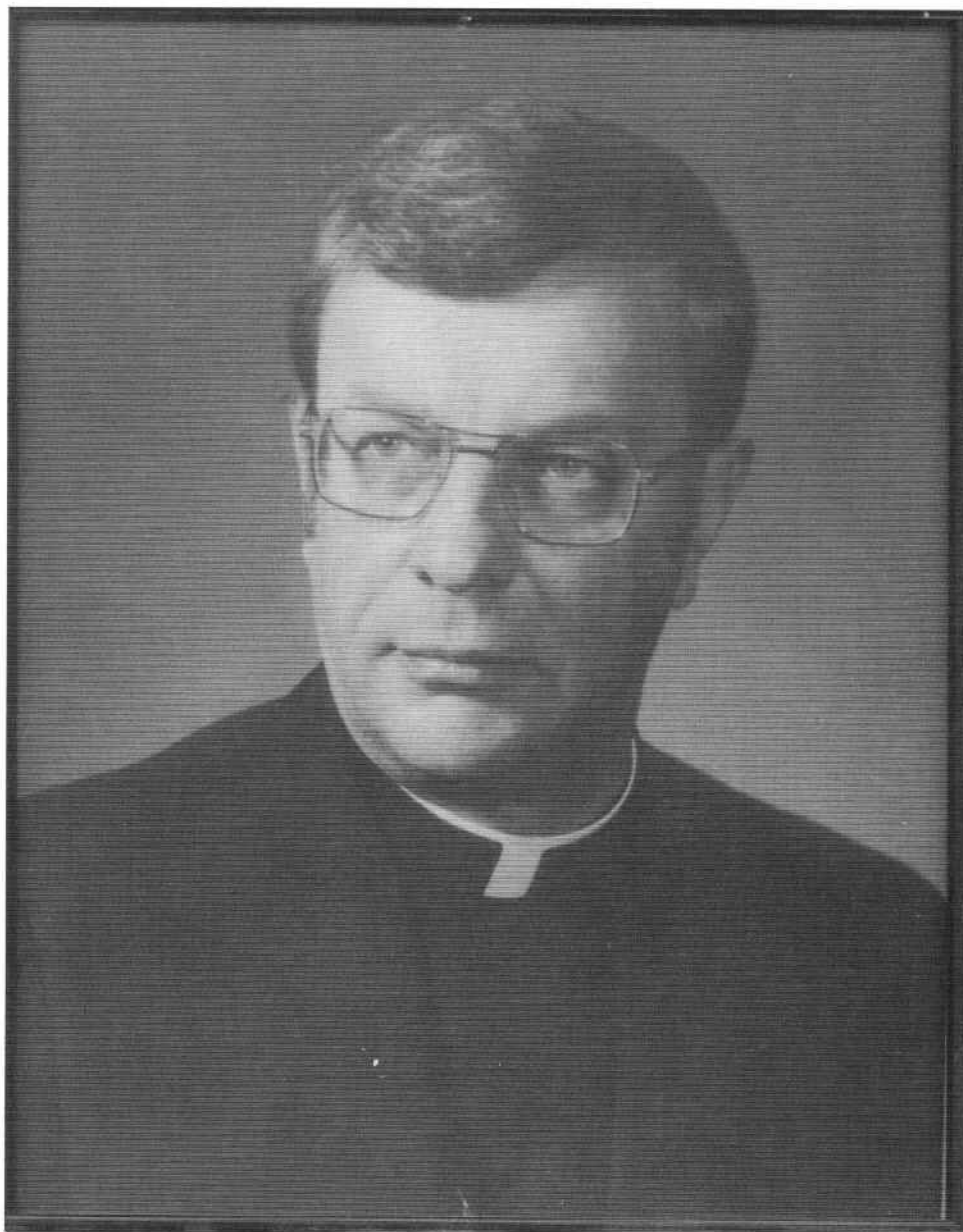
JUN 71



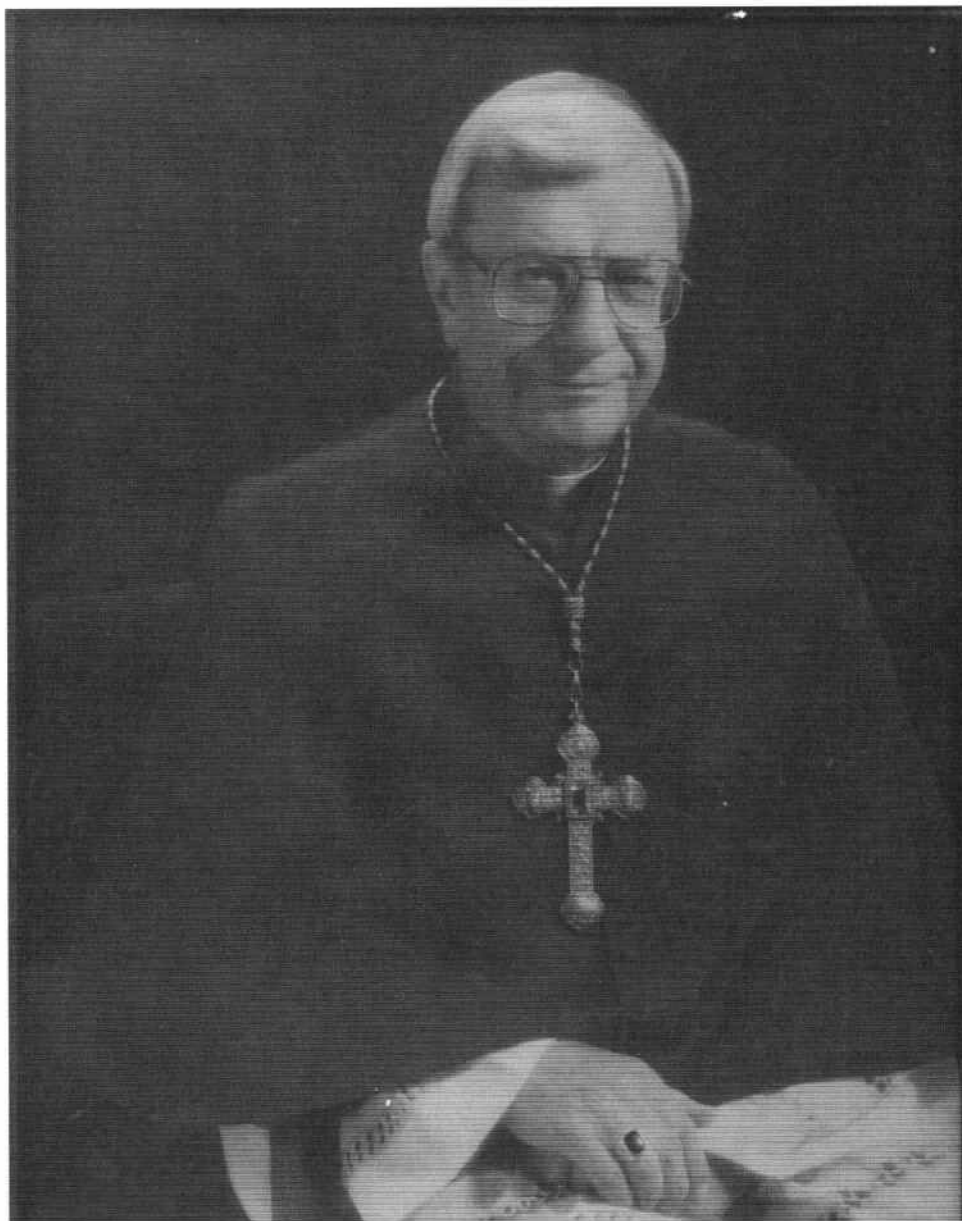




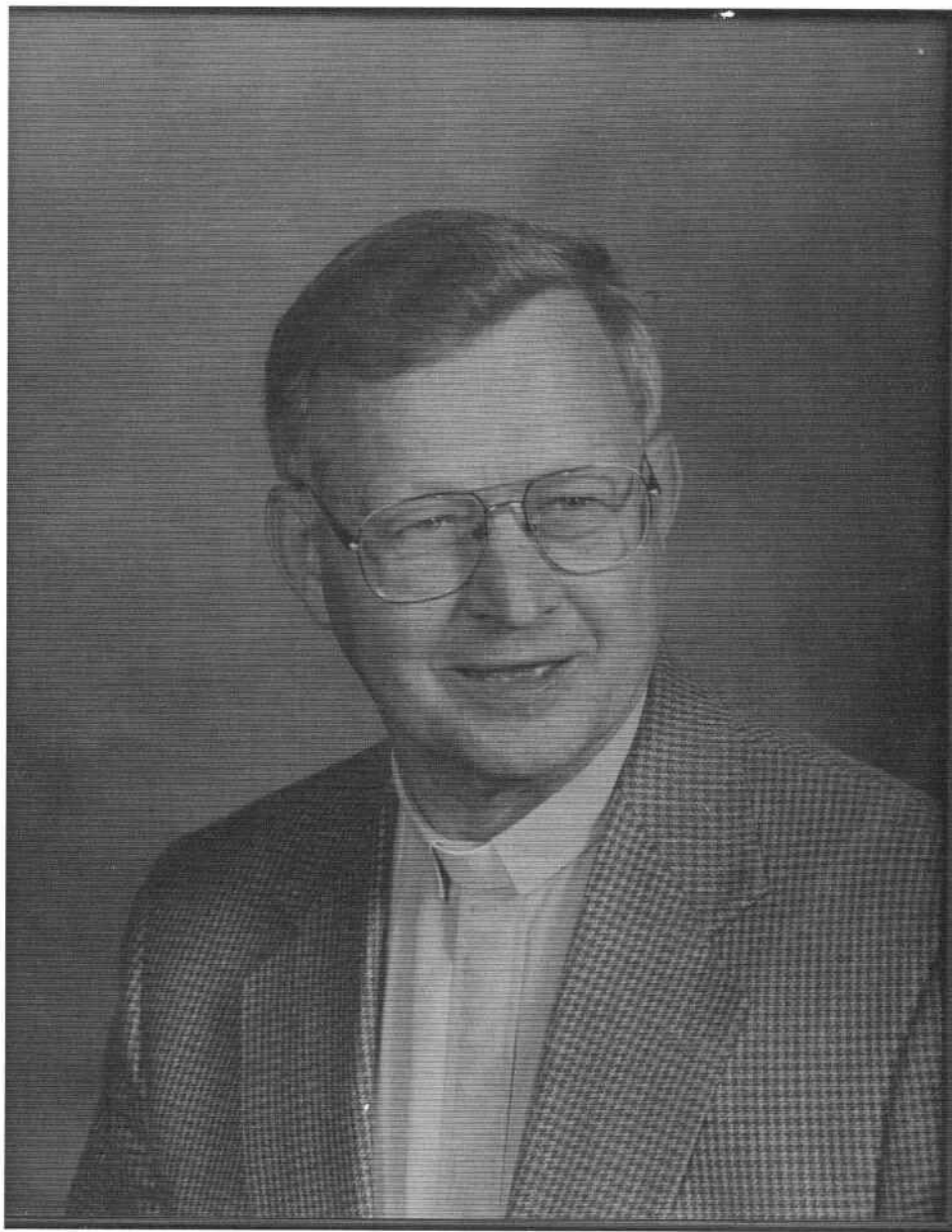




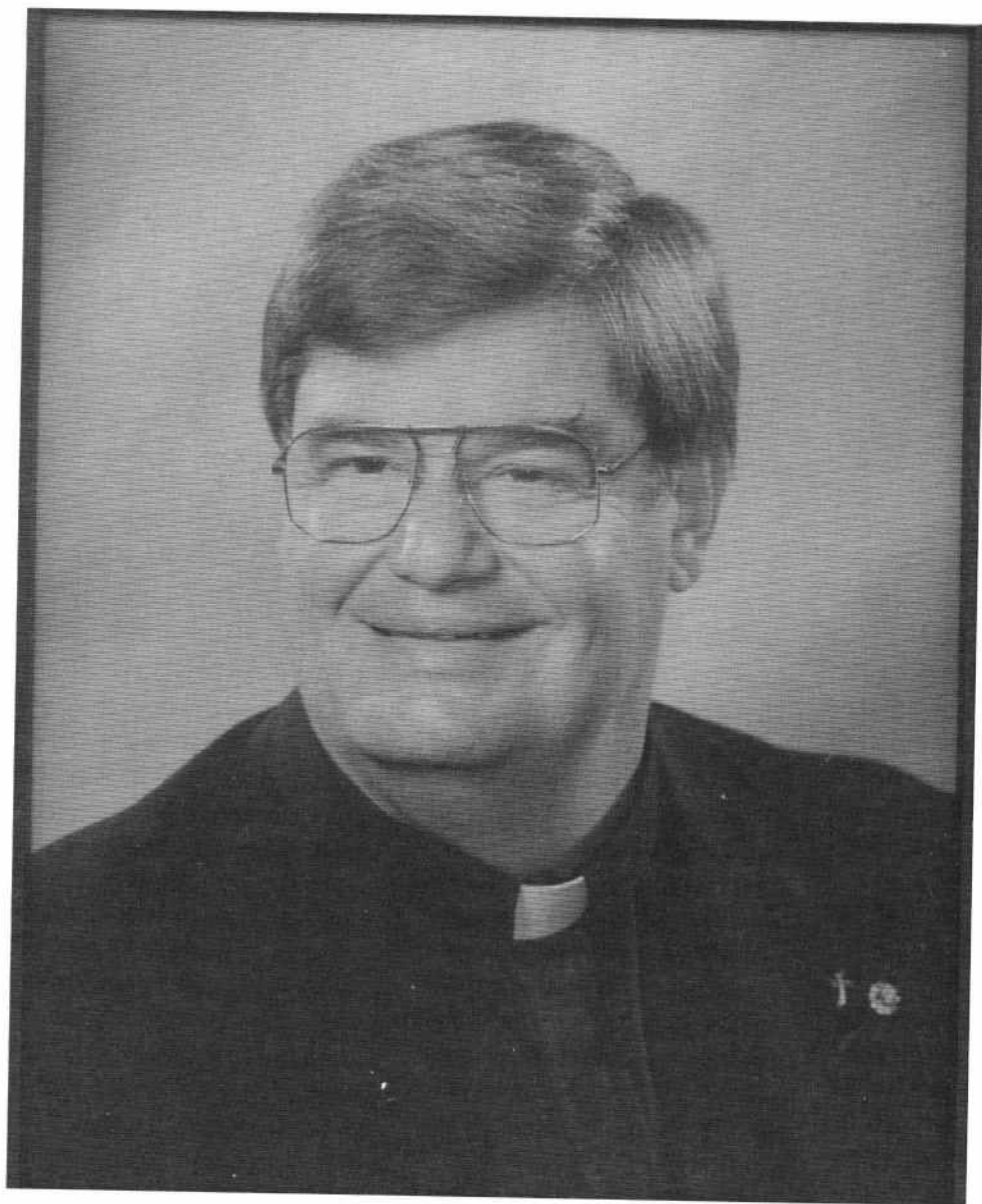
Bishop Povish



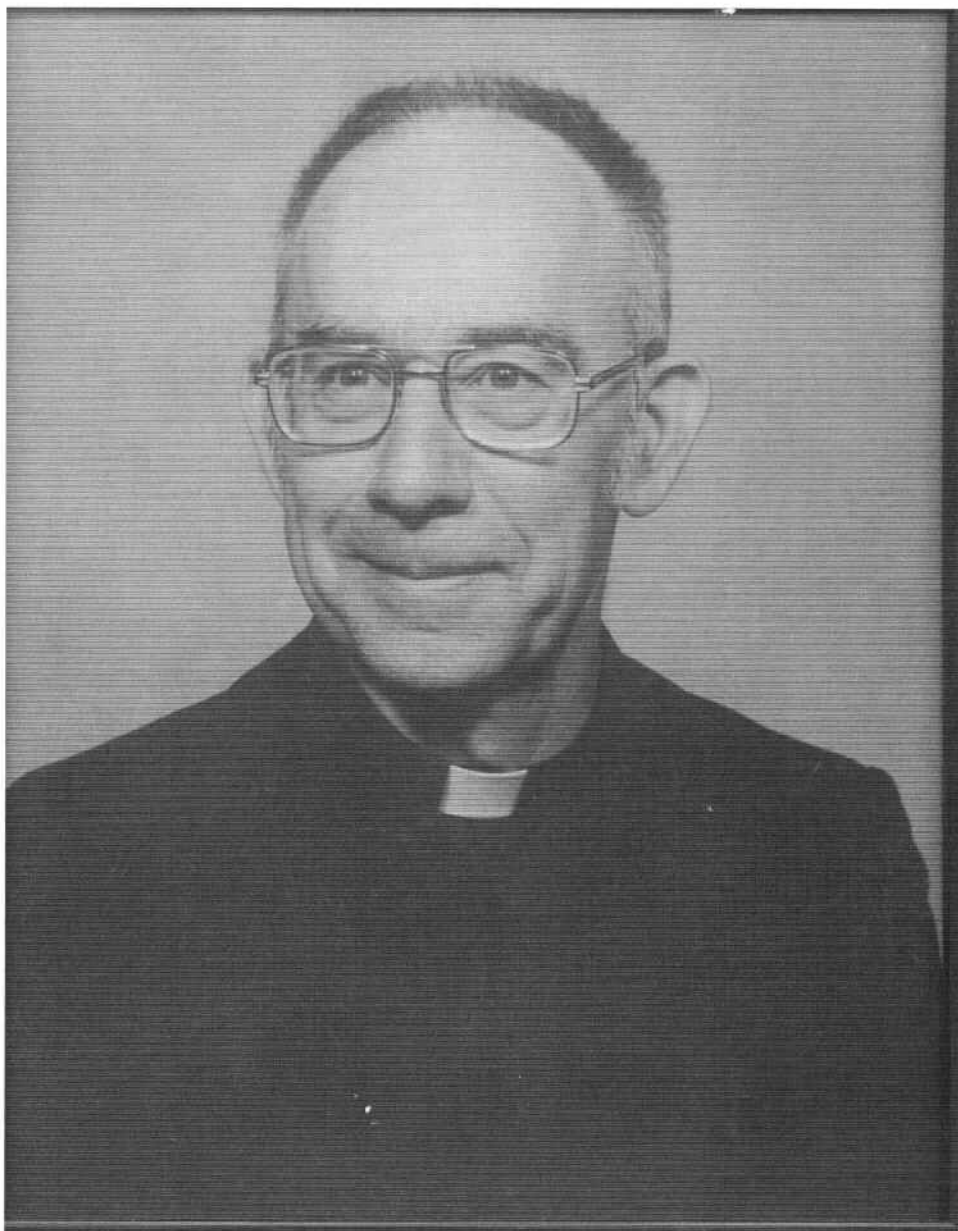
Bishop



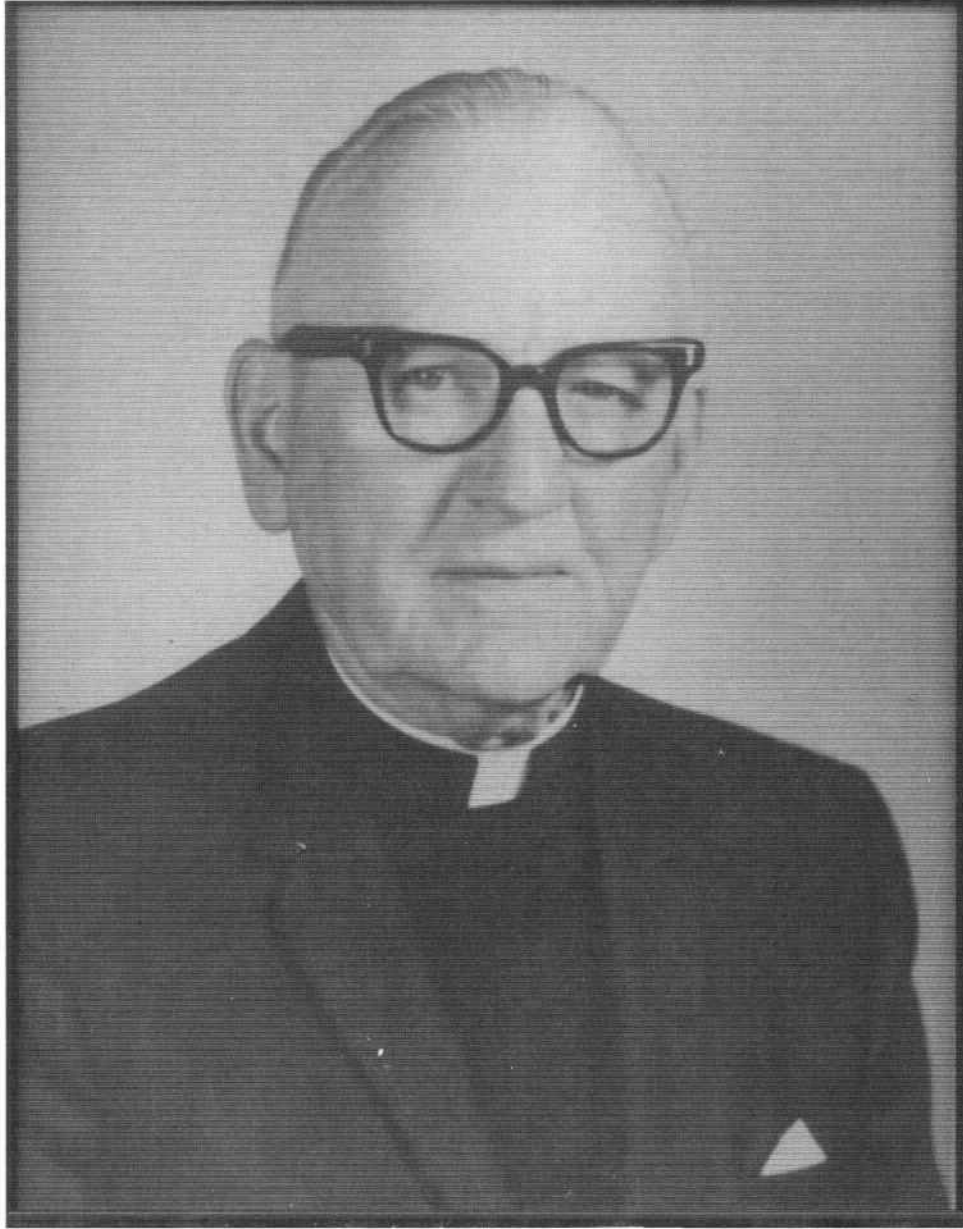
Fr. Bala



Fr. Dombrowski



Fr. Eickholt



Fr. Fitzpatrick





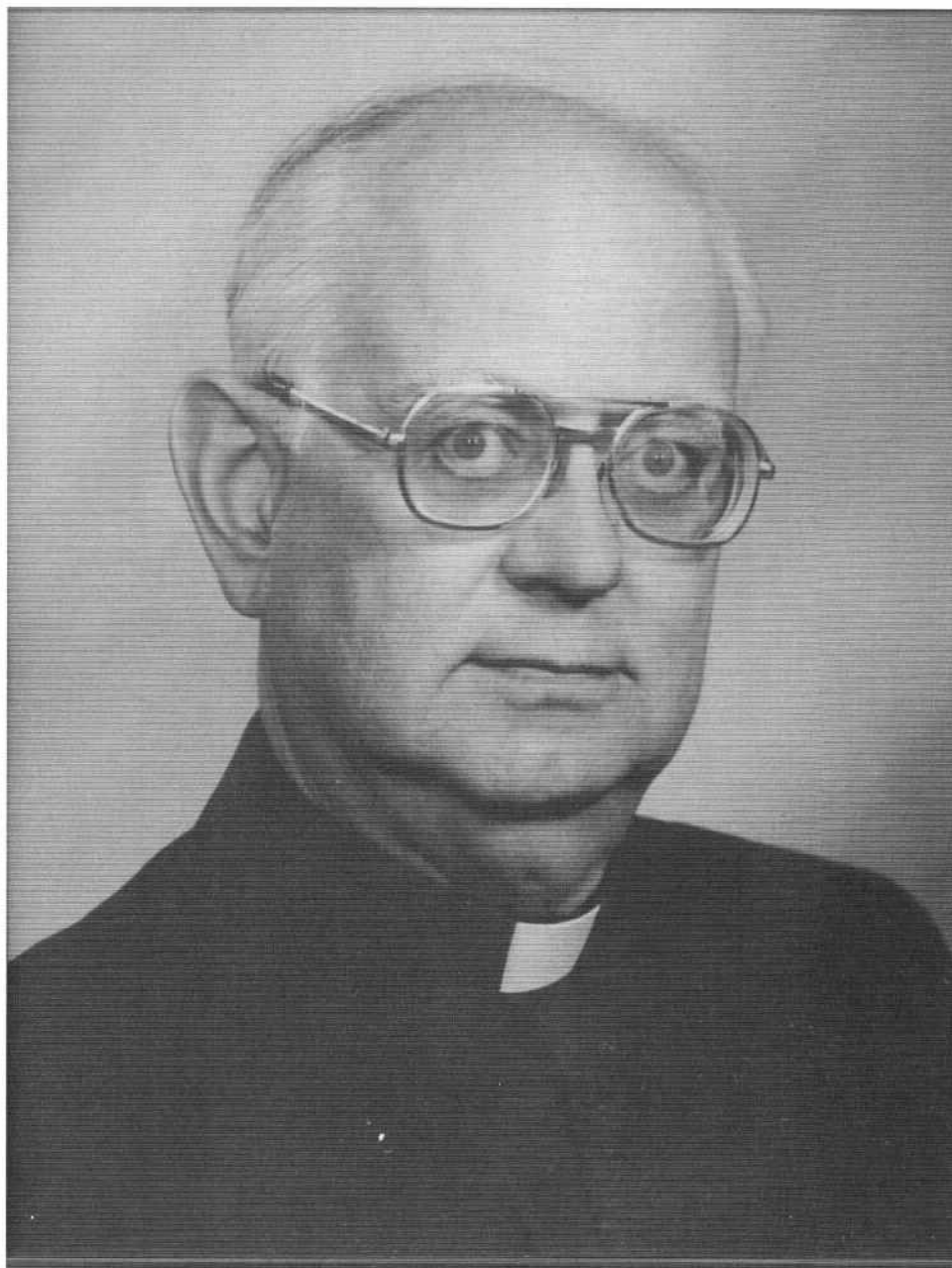
Fr. Garmyn



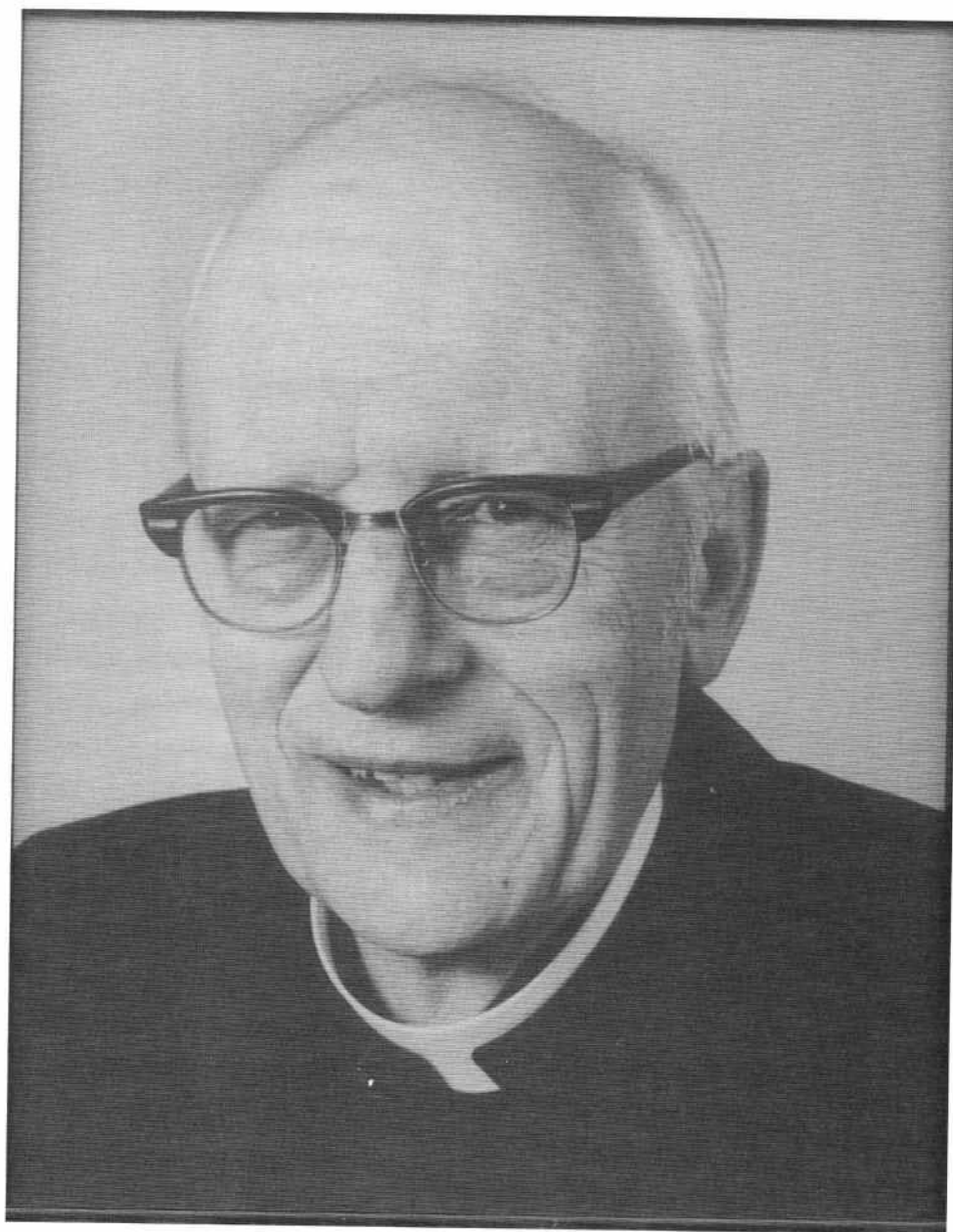
**Fr. Laurence Kilroy**

**Ancestor of present day parishioner, said Mass in homes and first church of St. Mary—in 1850-60's**

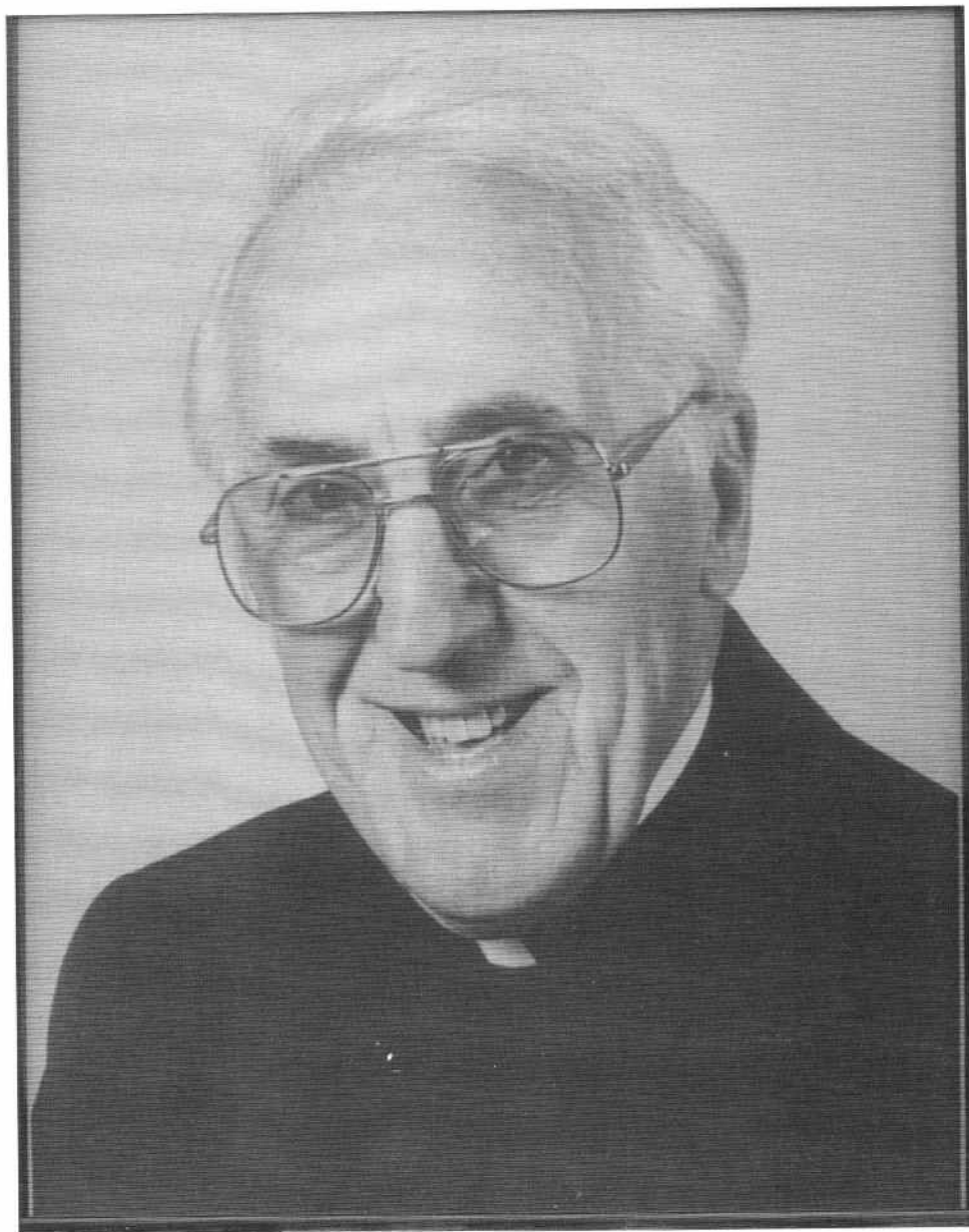
Fr. Kilroy



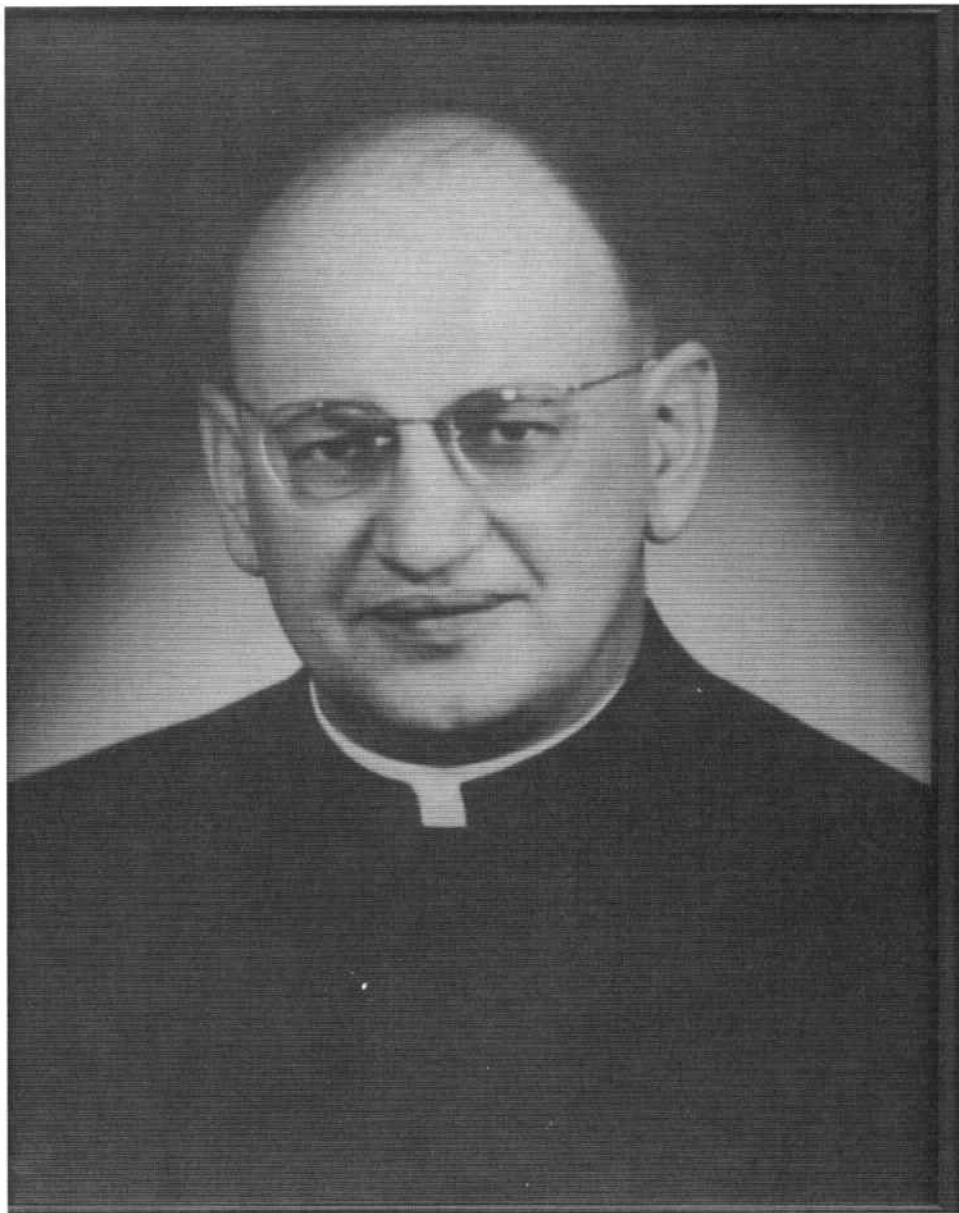
Fr. LeFleur



Fr. Murray



Fr. Vaughn



Fr. Zacharias



FR. H. EICKHOLT

Fr.Eickholt 1953

In writing a thorough composite history of St. Mary Catholic Church of Port Sanilac, Michigan, where do you actually start? One hundred fifty years have passed, and a number of facts and highlights can get a little fuzzy. Even though time can conceal much, and memories passed on over the generations can get distorted, the printed materials do tend to offer good highlights and an assemblage of facts. Notes jotted down by Catholic priests and parishioners over 150 years do substantiate specific details, and clear up any possible chance of losing the chronological history of such a great and vibrant mission and church.

