

SOWN ON GOOD GROUND



Centennial History of
St. Mary Cathedral Parish, Gaylord

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Sister Alice O'Rourke, O.P.

Gaylord, Michigan

1984



DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

POST OFFICE BOX 700
GAYLORD, MICHIGAN 49735

January 1, 1984

Dear Fathers and Parishioners
of Saint Mary Parish:

It is a joy to join with you in celebrating the Centennial
of our Cathedral Parish.

As we look back over a full century and more of Catholic
life in the Gaylord area, our feeling is surely one of gratitude.

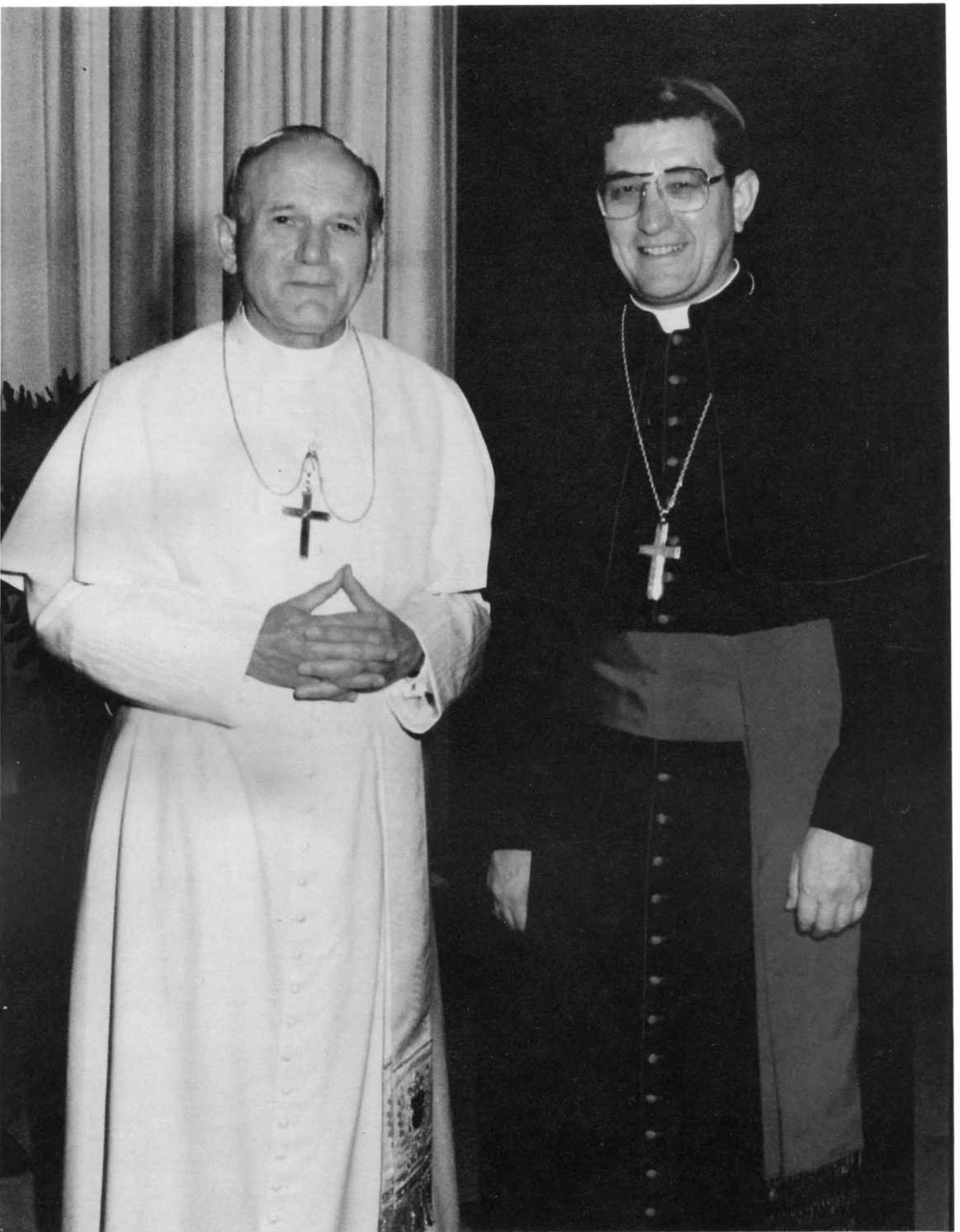
We are grateful to the early settlers of Otsego County, who
brought with them a strong faith and a determination to hand on
that faith to their children. We are grateful to the first
priests who visited this area from as far away as Bay City as well
as Cheboygan. We are grateful for the resident pastors, only six
in nearly one hundred years, as well as for the associate
pastors, who have served the parish faithfully and well. We are
grateful for the many Sisters who have had a large part in the
growth of school and parish life. And we are grateful for the
many, loyal and selfless parishioners who have enabled Saint
Mary's to become the solid, strong community that it is today.

With understandable pride we may say that the choice of
Saint Mary's to become the Cathedral Parish of the new diocese in
1971 was a most-fitting one, and the parish community has
responded to the new responsibility and challenge with its
customary spirit.

The Lord has done great things in Saint Mary's Parish over
the past century. May the next one hundred years of parish life
bring even greater grace and blessing!

Sincerely in our Lord,

Robert J. Rose
Bishop of Gaylord





Most Holy Father
The People of St. Mary Cathedral Parish
Gaylord and the Pastor
Bishop Robert J. Rose
humbly beg a Special Apostolic Blessing
as a pledge of divine graces and favors
on the occasion of their
celebration of One Hundred Years of Faith.

SS. Iustus Dominus Apostolicam Benedictionem
concedit. Ex Aedibus Vaticanis d. 30. XII. 1983

+ Antonijus de Zadoro Archiepiscopus
Blessing given by S. P.



On the foregoing two pages are a picture of Pope John Paul II with Bishop Robert J. Rose in November 1983 when Bishop Rose was making his ad limina visit; and a reproduction of the Papal Blessing given on December 30, 1983.

ST. MARY CATHEDRAL

606 NORTH OHIO AVENUE
GAYLORD, MICHIGAN 49735

February 1984

Dear Parishioners of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish,

"Remember how for forty years now the Lord, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert. . ." (Deuteronomy 8,2). These words are recorded in the Jewish Bible, the inspired word of God, for descendants and people of every age to capture something of the flavor of the God experience of a special people, the Chosen People of God.

This history of our St. Mary's Cathedral can be treated with reverence similar to the reverence accorded the Scriptures. It captures the journeys of many different peoples of varying races and nationalities. This story captures the interaction of the "old country" with a new nation as well as a "faithful people" with all who visit here. It is both a remembering and an interpreting of several journeys that join in one common journey in the name of the Lord.

The history of St. Mary's Cathedral could have begun with the words "Remember how for 100 years now the Lord your God has directed all your journeying in the upper part of the lower peninsula of Michigan. . ." Our parish has experienced many heroes, many great persons, much enthusiasm and a hospitality that identifies the presence of God that is everlasting. It is a special gift to have this opportunity to remember together.

Memory gives the meaning of eternity to a person as well as to groups of persons. Our remembering (re-remembering) has as its intention to recall in order that we might build on the very precious foundation provided by our ancestors. Even as this history recalls the ongoing journey of a special people it challenges you and me to continue this work of building up the Body of Christ. Some of our names are recorded here while others are missing. But all have had the call to walk in the name of the Lord and to be a part of this history.

On behalf of our parish family, I wish to express deep gratitude to Sister Alice O'Rourke, O.P. for this work of history and of art. Sister Alice, you have captured the spirit and faith of our parish family. I also wish to thank our Centennial Committee who have been faithful and thoughtful in calling forth this work.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is our parish patronness. No human has ever been more faithful or loving of the Lord. May our parish family as a family continue to enhance that faith and love of the Lord in one another.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Fr. Jim Suchocki

James A. Suchocki (Reverend)
Rector

The members of the St. Mary Centennial Committee wish to express their sincere thanks to the following people:

Sister Alice O'Rourke, O.P. for her dedicated work in writing this book;

Those who provided pictures for the book, especially parishioners who contributed early photographs; the editors of the *Herald Times* and the *Catholic Weekly*, and the Director of Communications of the Diocese of Gaylord, all of whom provided pictures and negatives of recent events;

Carl Heidl of Green Tree Photo Art for processing most of the pictures for printing;

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PREFACE

The preparation of this history of St. Mary Cathedral Parish has evoked deep appreciation of the founding families, who, much like my own ancestors, left a land torn by persecution and put down roots in the free land of rural mid-America in the late nineteenth century. Their faithfulness and courage helped shape the Church in the United States in their own generation. Their descendants and the new families who came in the 1960s and 1970s have preserved the Lord's message in their own times.

Many people have assisted me in this project. I am grateful to Father Jim Suchocki, Rector of St. Mary Cathedral Parish, for proposing that I write the history and for his enthusiastic support. The members of the Centennial Committee have given continual encouragement. Elizabeth Yakel and Father Dennis Morrow, archivists of the Archdiocese of Detroit and the Diocese of Grand Rapids, respectively, provided access to early records in the archives of those dioceses. Sister Judith Drew, O.P. and Sister Mona Schwind, O.P. guided me to materials in the archives of the Grand Rapids Dominican Congregation. They and the other sisters always welcomed me graciously on my visits to Marywood.

Locally, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Toms performed an unusually important task in reading onto tapes articles relating to St. Mary Parish and School found in issues of the *Otsego County Herald Times* from 1905 to the late 1970s. This provided me at the very beginning of my research with an overview of the parish into which other information began to fit. Mrs. Phyllis Pagel, secretary at the rectory, was consistently helpful and pleasant in directing me to materials in the archives of the parish. Bishop Robert J. Rose made available the records relating to St. Mary Parish from the Gaylord Diocesan Archives.

In interviews, Monsignor Francis Kaminski supplemented with his personal recollections the sometimes scarce written records. Rose Kondratowicz, Sister Casimir Zukowski, and Sister Wenceslaus Szocinski helped in a similar way. Father David Gemuend, Chancellor of the Diocese, provided details and perspective on the first years of the cathedral period.

Sister Elizabeth Farrer, S.S.J., a member of the staff of Community, Family and Children Services for the Diocese of Gaylord, designed the cover of the book. Many people provided photographs, most of which were processed by Carl Heidl of Green Tree Photo Art. Mrs. Helen Cook assisted in the final typing of the manuscript. Sister Mary Virginia Phillips, O.P., Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese, arranged for my use of equipment and space in preparing the manuscript for printing. She and the sisters at St. Mary Convent gave support throughout the project by means of their interest and prayers. The Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation granted me a sabbatical, which provided the time to undertake and complete this work.

Sister Alice O'Rourke, O.P.
February 1984

The author, a Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, is a native of Downs, Illinois. She has a B.A. degree from Rosary College; an M.A. in history from the University of Notre Dame; and a Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Berkeley. She has taught in the rural schools of McLean County, Illinois; elementary and secondary schools and colleges conducted by Sinsinawa Dominicans; and at Saginaw Valley State College in Michigan. She served as president of Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin, from 1977 to 1983.

CHAPTER ONE

Mission to the Indians in Northern Lower Michigan

The history of the Catholic Church in the area now served by St. Mary Cathedral Parish begins with French Jesuit missionaries. As in so many other regions bordering the Great Lakes, these redoubtable men ministered for more than a century to the Indian inhabitants who served the fur-trading interests of their French overlords. After a series of wars with other tribes, the Ottawa Indians lay claim in the latter third of the seventeenth century to the northwest portion of Lower Michigan (see map, p. 4). At missions established at places such as St. Ignace, the Island of Michilimackinac, and the Lake Michigan coast north from Little Traverse Bay, and on journeys into the forests, the Jesuit Fathers sought to reach and teach the Indians. Probably the best-known of these missionaries was Father Jacques Marquette, who, having been forced from the early Jesuit mission at LaPointe along southern Lake Superior, moved to St. Ignace in 1671.¹ In the two years between this time and the beginning of his famous journey into the Illinois Country, Father Marquette served the Indians around St. Ignace and had occasion to visit those to the south. According to legend, on one such visit in 1672 he supervised the erection of a large white cross (described by Father Gabriel Richard in a letter in 1799 to Bishop Carroll as "near 300 feet high") on the site of Cross Village, where a replica of this cross now stands (see picture, lower right).² Records on Mackinac Island, which often served as the Jesuit missionary center when St. Ignace was threatened, indicate the presence of a Jesuit school at Arbre Croche in 1696.³ The term "Arbre Croche," meaning the land of the "Crooked Tree," was once the name of a settlement and was also used as a generic term for the area from Cross Village to Harbor Springs (formerly known as Little Traverse Bay and later as New Arbre Croche), where strong winds from Lake Michigan bent the pine trees. About half way between the two settlements, near what is now known as Good Hart, was Middle Village, the probable location of Old Arbre Croche where the

Jesuits had their school (see picture, p. 2).

As the seventeenth century ended, the Jesuit missions, always subject to the vicissitudes of French politics, secular and religious as well as domestic and foreign, began suffering from consequences of wars between Britain and France, wars fought in America as well as in Europe. The appointment in 1694 of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac as Commandant at Michilimackinac led to a succession of events that weakened the missions associated with that post.⁴ Cadillac, whose hostility towards the Jesuits was well-known and whose mercenary motivation led him to overlook religious considerations, convinced his superiors in America and France that a fortified position on the Detroit River would more surely protect the fur trade from the English than the post at Michilimackinac. In 1701 he established a settlement at Detroit and proceeded with plans to assemble there the Indians from other parts of Michigan. As part of his plan he envisioned the assimilation of the Indians with the French. The Jesuit missionaries were opposed to his plan, both



Replica of Father Marquette's Cross, Cross Village



Church and Cemetery, Middle Village

in its immediate purpose of shifting the Indians to the Detroit area and, more especially, in its longer-range purpose of mixing the races, a situation which the Jesuits regarded as damaging to the Indians. The missionaries were unable to block Cadillac's plan, however, and by 1705 most of the missions that had looked to St. Ignace and Michilimackinac as their center had dwindled in influence.

During the entire eighteenth century, there was little that the Church could do to minister to the Indians. The disruption of tribal territories forced by Cadillac's plan, the succession of wars between England and France, the shifts in political jurisdiction as the French were ousted in 1763 and the English colonies achieved their independence in 1783—all of these developments prohibited the kind of settled life that was conducive to religious practices. A remnant of the Ottawa tribe remained in the Arbre Croche area, where they were intermittently served during the years 1740 to 1765 by Father Pierre du Jaunay, S.J.⁵ Not long after his departure, a further blow was struck when the hostility toward the Jesuits on the part of factions in France and elsewhere culminated in the universal suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773.

By the Treaty of 1783, the United States

was awarded jurisdiction over the territory that now encompasses Michigan; but the British did not withdraw from military posts such as Michilimackinac and Detroit until the signing of another treaty by the United States and Great Britain in 1796. In the meantime, ecclesiastical jurisdiction had also changed. The Michigan area was part of the Diocese of Quebec from its establishment in 1674 until the erection by the Holy See in 1789 of the Diocese of Baltimore, headed by Bishop John Carroll, and including all of the territory under the civil jurisdiction of the United States government. It was not until 1796, however, after Britain had specifically ceded the frontier posts, that Bishop Jean-Francois Hubert, Bishop of Quebec, acknowledged that full ecclesiastical jurisdiction over these areas resided with the Bishop of Baltimore.⁶

Though facing extraordinary burdens in administering his far-flung diocese, Bishop Carroll did not neglect the northwestern parts. Hardly had his jurisdiction over this region been clarified when he sought the assistance of some of the Sulpician priests who had fled France for the United States amid the disorders and persecutions of the French Revolution. On March 30, 1796, Bishop Carroll wrote to Father Michael Levadoux, who at that time was serving in the Illinois Country, to ask him to consider accepting the pastorate of Detroit, which then included most of what is now Lower Michigan. While reserving a final answer to that question because of his unwillingness to be separated from his fellow Sulpician, Father Gabriel Richard, Father Levadoux acceded to Bishop Carroll's second request to visit the Detroit area and report on conditions there.⁷ During his trip, which he described in a letter to Bishop Carroll in September 1796, he visited Michilimackinac, where according to his estimate two or three thousand people—English, French, and Indians—welcomed him warmly and expressed deep appreciation for his three weeks of ministering to them.

Eventually, Father Levadoux agreed to accept the Detroit pastorate, provided Father Richard could assist him. On a missionary journey to the north in 1799, Father Richard visited Arbre Croche where he found 1,300 Indians, only one of whom he thought had been baptized, and whose condition was truly pitiful because of the corruption suffered at

the hands of the fur trader. Similar conditions existed at Michilimackinac and at Sault Ste. Marie. The needs he saw led him to suggest to Father Levadoux that he, Richard, remain in these areas of northern Michigan.⁸ The needs of the Detroit area proper were too great for Father Levadoux to grant this request. Father Levadoux remained as pastor in Detroit until 1802 when he was forced by ill health to resign. He spent one year in Baltimore before returning to France, where he died on January 13, 1815.

Father Richard's interest in the Ottawa Indians of the Arbre Croche area did not end with his 1799 visit. Succeeding Father Levadoux as pastor of Detroit, where he served until his death on September 12, 1832, during a cholera epidemic, Father Richard periodically visited Arbre Croche, encouraged others to do likewise, and fought for the rights of the Indians under the various treaties negotiated between them and the United States government. All of this was accomplished in the midst of heavy responsibilities and some unhappy episodes in his major sphere of operation at Detroit.

Taking cognizance of the impossible task that Bishop John Carroll had in governing a diocese that covered all of the United States, the Holy See created four new dioceses in 1808—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Bardstown. The latter embraced the states of Kentucky and Tennessee and the territory north of the Ohio River from the western border of Pennsylvania to the Mississippi River. Benedict Joseph Flaget, one of the French Sulpician priests accepted by Bishop Carroll in the early 1790s, was appointed Bishop of Bardstown. His diocese, though admittedly much smaller than Baltimore had been, was still so vast that he could give little direct attention to the mission areas of northern Lower Michigan. It was not until the creation of the Diocese of Cincinnati in 1821, which included the territories of Wisconsin and Michigan, and the appointment as bishop of Edward Fenwick, a Dominican priest and a man with missionary interests, that pastoral activity in these northern regions was again directly encouraged by diocesan authority. During the eleven years of his bishopric (he died of cholera on September 26, 1832, during the same epidemic that had claimed the life of Father Richard), Bishop Fenwick continually

encouraged missionary visits to Arbre Croche by Father Richard and Father Vincent Badin and personally recruited missionaries on his trips to Europe. It was at his invitation that Father Pierre DeJean, a Frenchman, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, an Italian Dominican, and Father Frederic Baraga, a Slovenian, came to serve the Indians in the northern areas of Michigan.⁹ In 1829 Bishop Fenwick personally visited Arbre Croche; he was touched by his experience there and decided to appoint a resident pastor. His choice was Father DeJean, who, from his station at Mount Pleasant, had periodically visited Arbre Croche since 1827. Father DeJean obtained the services of two lay women, Miss Elizabeth Williams and Miss L'Etourneau, both of Detroit, to teach in the school that he established at a new location called New Arbre Croche (now Harbor Springs). Father DeJean remained at New Arbre Croche until May 1831.

Father Frederic Baraga, perhaps the best known of Bishop Fenwick's protégés, arrived in the United States on December 31, 1830. After Father DeJean's departure from Arbre Croche, Bishop Fenwick assigned Father Baraga to that mission and accompanied him for his installation on May 28, 1831. From then until he moved to the Grand River mission in the fall of 1833, Father Baraga continued and extended the work among the Ottawas that Father DeJean and earlier itinerant missionaries had so successfully begun.¹⁰ In addition to his ministrations at New Arbre Croche, Middle Village, and Cross Village, Father Baraga visited Beaver Island and Manistique, and ventured into the forests to the east, where, among various places visited, he established a mission at Burt Lake.

During his stay at New Arbre Croche, Father Baraga received occasional visits from Father Mazzuchelli, whom Bishop Fenwick had assigned to Mackinac Island in the fall of 1830, from which center he served Indians in Michigan and northern Wisconsin. These visits gave the two men the opportunity to serve as one another's confessor and brought mutual support in their arduous work. In his *Memoirs* Father Mazzuchelli records two such visits and reports details of both his and Father Baraga's missionary situations.¹¹

When Father Baraga began his work in the Grand River Valley in 1833, he was replaced



LOCATION OF INDIAN TRIBES, 1670-1700

at New Arbre Croche by Father Saenderl, a Redemptorist priest. Father Baraga's situation at Grand River was far from ideal, given the small number of Christian Indians among a larger number of Indians corrupted by fur traders; and he incurred the disfavor of persons of influence because of his opposition to the government policy of removing the Indians in order to open land to white settlers.¹² He departed from this mission in February 1835. After a few months in Detroit, he began his work in July among the Chippewa of the Lake Superior region, serving at LaPointe until 1843 and at L'Anse from 1843 to 1853. In that year he became Vicar Apostolic of Upper Michigan and in 1857 was appointed first bishop of the newly established Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie (now the Diocese of Marquette).¹³

Meanwhile, changes had occurred in both civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Holy See erected the Diocese of Detroit in 1833, a jurisdiction encompassing the Michigan and Wisconsin Territories, to which Frederic Rése was appointed bishop. He resigned his position in 1837 but retained titular authority. The diocese was governed by vicars until 1841 and then by Bishop Peter Paul Lefevre as administrator from 1841 to 1869. Michigan officially became a state in January 1837. In 1843, jurisdiction in the Wisconsin Territory was divided between the Diocese of Dubuque

and the newly erected Diocese of Milwaukee. When Father Baraga was made Vicar Apostolic of Upper Michigan, Bishop Lefevre of Detroit, Bishop John M. Henni of Milwaukee, and Bishop Joseph Cretin of St. Paul asked him to assume responsibility for the Indian missions along the shores of upper Lake Michigan and southern Lake Superior in their respective dioceses. Father Baraga gladly undertook this task at first, because he had worked in most of those missions; but later he found the responsibility increasingly burdensome.¹⁴

After Father Saenderl left in 1839, the work among the Ottawas in the northwest portion of the Lower Peninsula was undertaken by Father Francis Xavier Pierz. He in turn was assisted after 1845 by Father Ignatius Mrak, a future bishop of the Marquette Diocese. At the time he assumed his pastorate, Father Pierz found the missions well-ordered and the congregations in such good moral and spiritual condition that they could well serve as model communities. In addition to his sacramental functions, Father Pierz was interested in maintaining schools for the Indians, where they would be taught religion, reading, writing, spelling, ciphering, geography, sewing, and knitting. In 1843 there were 206 children



Bishop Frederic Baraga

attending the schools of the missions: 69 at New Arbre Croche; 54 at Cross Village; 27 at Middle Village; 16 at Burt Lake; and 40 at Manistique.¹⁵

With the departure of Father Pierz to the missions of Minnesota in 1852 and of Father Mrak a little later to the Grand Traverse Bay area, the missions at Arbre Croche were staffed on a temporary basis for three years. In 1855 Father Baraga as Vicar Apostolic gave permission to Father John B. Weikamp to establish a Franciscan community at Cross Village. By 1858 Father Weikamp had centralized the other missions at that location, and his community included four Franciscan priests and twelve Franciscan sisters. In 1884 the mission of New Arbre Croche (Harbor Springs) was assigned to the Franciscan Fathers of the Cincinnati Province.¹⁶ Father Weikamp remained at Cross Village until his death in a carriage accident in 1889. The mission at Cross Village was abandoned in 1896; in 1906 the buildings were struck by

lightning and burned.¹⁷

By the time of this sad denouement of the mission work in the Arbre Croche area, white settlers had moved into northern Lower Michigan and St. Mary Parish had been established in Gaylord. There was little direct connection between the work of the early Jesuits and the emergence of St. Mary Parish. As indicated above, some of the missionaries traveled into the forest areas to reach isolated Indian settlements, and it is possible that in their journeys they crossed part of the region now served by the parish. An indirect influence existed, however, as the written record of the labors of the Jesuits (the *Jesuit Relations*), and the memory of their work passed on by the Indians from generation to generation, served as inspiration to the nineteenth century missionaries in restoring the Indian missions and in serving the faith needs of white settlers as they began arriving in the area.

CHAPTER TWO

Parish Beginnings

1878-1892

Paralleling events in the history of the Indian missions in northern Lower Michigan in the nineteenth century were developments that brought white settlers to the area. At the opening of the century there were Catholics of French descent in the Detroit area, at Mackinac, and at scattered locations along the coasts of the Great Lakes bordering Michigan; by that time also there were a few Englishmen at Mackinac and Detroit, most of whom were Protestant, who had come during the time of English rule. Between the end of the American Revolution and the year 1800, the westward migration of families from eastern states had bypassed Michigan for the most part in favor of territories to the south. However, a combination of organizational, political, economic, and social circumstances in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century led to the expansion of settlement in Michigan and the eventual organization of Otsego County in 1875.

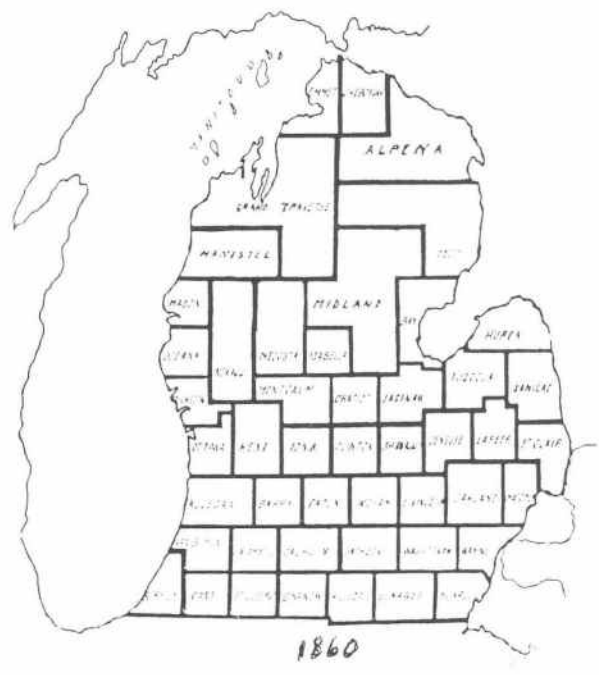
The organizational pattern for settlement beginning in southern Michigan was as follows: negotiation of treaties with the Indians whereby they ceded lands to the United States government; survey of lands according to the plan established by the Land Ordinance of 1785 for the Old Northwest; sale of land; and organization of counties and townships (see maps, p. 7).¹ As this pattern was developing, the territory that eventually became the State of Michigan passed through the stages of being a part of the Northwest Territory until 1803, when it became a part of the Indiana Territory; a separate Michigan Territory in 1805; and, finally, a state in January 1837.

Between 1815 and 1850 the migration westward, which had temporarily slowed during the War of 1812, gained momentum as it was aided by factors such as favorable land legislation, improvement of roads, initiation of steamboat transportation, building of canals beginning in the 1820s, closing of factories in the East due to the depression of 1837, and increase in immigration, especially from Ireland and Germany. By 1850 Michigan had

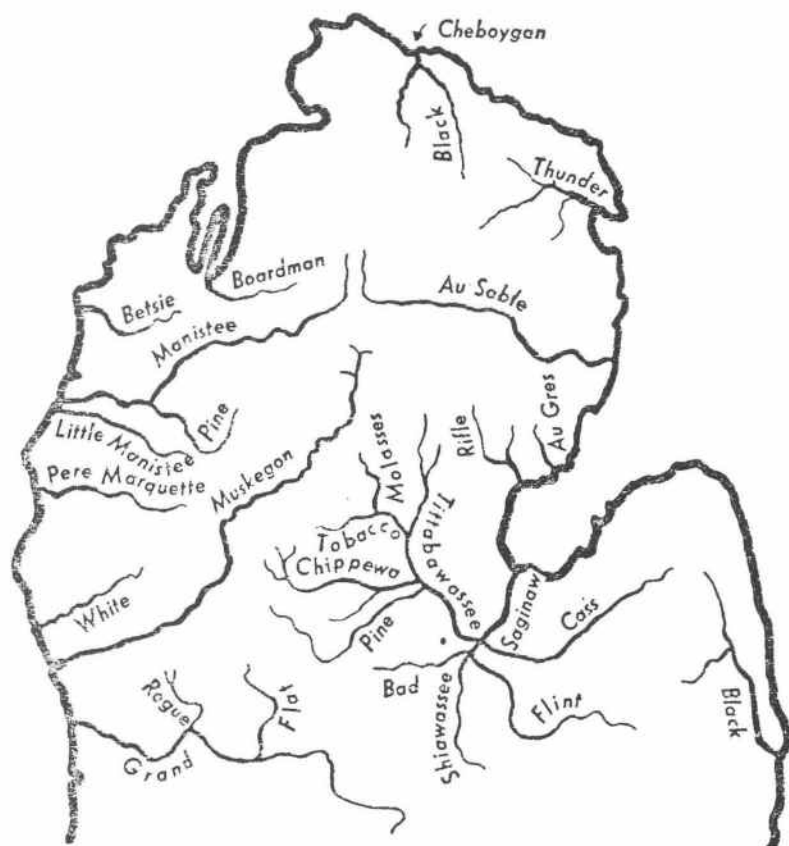
a population of approximately 400,000,² most of it located in the southern half of the state, as reflected in the progress of county organization. The development of northern Michigan would proceed with increasing rapidity in the next three decades, as profits of the lumbering industry lured developers to move into the pine forests of these areas. Interlocking developments supporting this movement included the following: rapid expansion of the railroads; continuation of a favorable land policy, including the low price of \$1.25 per acre and special land grants to railroads; growth of iron, steel, and other industries, especially with the impetus given during the Civil War in matters of advanced technology, centralized management, and effective mobilization of capital; and availability of workers with the beginning of great waves of immigration in the 1870s.

As early as the 1850s advance agents of lumber companies had purchased timber land in the Otsego Lake region,³ although it was not until two decades later that lumbering operations began in earnest. The area was suited to logging by river driving because of its location between the upper reaches of the Manistee and the Au Sable Rivers. The extension of the Jackson, Lansing, and Saginaw Railroad northward from Bay City as far as Otsego Lake in 1872, Gaylord in 1874, and Mackinaw in 1881 (with its short spurs into the forests) made it possible to combine railroad and river transport (see maps, p. 8).⁴

Thus it was that white settlers reached the Gaylord area. The village, first known as Barnes after Orlando M. Barnes of Lansing, the secretary of the railroad, was organized in 1874 and shortly thereafter was renamed Gaylord in honor of Augustine Smith Gaylord of Saginaw, an attorney for the railroad.⁵ By act of the State of Legislature on March 12, 1875, Otsego County was organized from a portion of Antrim County. The same legislation decreed that the location of the county seat be determined by voters of the various townships at a special referendum on the first Monday of October 1876. Until such time,



The above maps are taken from an article by William H. Hathaway, "County Organization in Michigan," Michigan History Magazine, II, No. 3 (July 1918), 573-629.



Michigan Lower Peninsula Main Logging Rivers



The above maps, taken from a pamphlet by Rolland H. Maybee, *Michigan's White Pine Era, 1840-1900* (Lansing: Michigan Department of State, 1976) pp. 28 & 42, are reproduced with the permission of the Michigan History Division of the Michigan Department of State.

Otsego Lake was to be the county seat.⁶ The results of this vote were contested, the citizens of Otsego Lake alleging that ineligible voters had swung the vote in favor of Gaylord. The State Supreme Court ruled in favor of Gaylord and ordered the supervisors to convene there on November 10, 1877.⁷

Throughout the 1870s, Otsego Lake was the most populous area of Otsego County, serving as it did as the center of lumbering operations. In 1877 it had 350 inhabitants, contrasted with 50 for Gaylord.⁸ Gaylord's population was composed chiefly of tradesmen, retailers, and a few professional people. The Business Directory for 1877 lists the following: A.M. Hilton, express and station agent; Rev. Thomas Neild (Congregational); N.L. Parmater, physician; George H. Smith, general store; William H. Smith, land agent; A.J. Taylor, hotel proprietor. By 1879, with a population of 125, Gaylord's business list had expanded to include: Rev. A. Auken (Methodist); William L. Churchill, blacksmith; George B. Congdon, justice of the peace; W.H.H. Cooper, notary public and agent for Jackson, Lansing, and Saginaw Railroad lands; Daniel Cox, carpenter and builder; H.H. Crosby, justice of the peace; Charles Eddy, shoemaker; A.A. Fosdick, county surveyor; Jerome Fosdick, butcher; Charles L. Fuller, proprietor of *Otsego County Herald*; Fuller and Craven, druggists; C.W. Graham, carpenter and builder; E.A. Howard, barber; E.P. Kimberly, cooper; C.G. Kinkie, carpenter and builder; C.C. Mitchell, general store; N.L. Parmater, physician; W.J. Rogers, express and station agent; George H. Smith, general store; William H. Smith, land agent; L.H. Stevens, hotel proprietor.⁹ As lumbering operations moved northward, more direct involvement in lumber manufactures prevailed for a few years; but the diversity of occupations probably helped Gaylord to prosper, while other towns almost disappeared. Its status as the county seat also helped.

Until 1880 most of the people in Gaylord and Otsego Lake, as well as in the rest of Otsego County, were migrants from other parts of Michigan or from Ohio and states eastward. Of the foreign-born population in 1880 (574 out of a total of 1,974 for the county) about one-half were Canadian; there were 46 from England, 47 from Ireland, 24 from Scotland, 46 from Sweden and Norway, 93

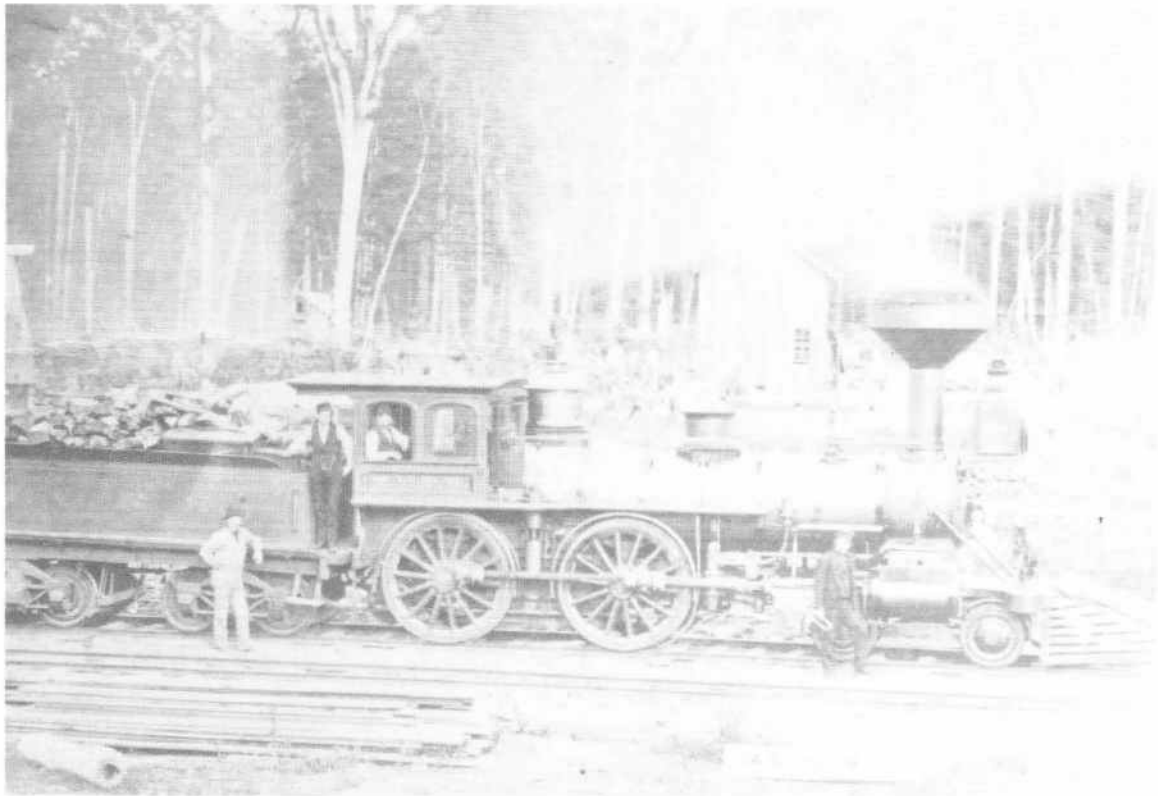
from Germany, and 21 Polish immigrants, most of whom were from Prussian-occupied Poland.¹⁰

Such was the setting from which the parish of St. Mary-Our Lady of Mount Carmel began to emerge.

The first priest to minister to the newly arrived Catholic families in the Gaylord area was Father Francis Xavier Szulak, S.J. (his name was sometimes spelled "Schulak," "Schulack," and "Shulak"), who began visiting Gaylord in 1878, if not earlier. In January 1876 Bishop Caspar Borgess had given Father Szulak faculties to minister to Polish Catholics in the northern portion of the Detroit Diocese.¹¹ Father Szulak had been born on December 17, 1825, in Niecica, Moravia. He entered the Society of Jesus on September 13, 1845. After his ordination,* he served as professor of natural history at the Jesuit Seminary at Tarnow, Poland. He emigrated to the United States in 1865 with the intention of working among the Polish immigrants. After a few years in Missouri, he moved to Chicago to teach at the Jesuit St. Ignatius College. For thirty-six years he combined teaching with missionary work among Polish settlers; the years from 1876 to 1887 were especially important for his ministry among the Polish in the northern counties of Lower Michigan. He returned to Poland in 1906 and died at a Jesuit House in Krakow on January 19, 1908.¹²

In his visits to Gaylord in 1878, Father Szulak arranged for the purchase of property for a church, acquiring in Bishop Borgess' name three lots in Block Two of Gaylord Village from the Jackson, Lansing, and Saginaw Railroad Company. The deed for the first two lots was dated September 3, 1878, and the price for the lots was one dollar (see reproduction of a portion of the deed, p. 12); the third lot was purchased on October 25, 1878, for thirty dollars.¹³ Upon receiving the following spring the deeds sent by Father Szulak, Bishop Borgess wrote to him, asking that he visit other places in the northern part of the diocese along the railroad line to see if there were Catholic families settled there. It is from this letter that one learns that there were twenty-eight Catholic families in the Gaylord area in 1878. From the 1880 census records, the names of the following families

*The date of his ordination is not available.



Gaylord in 1874



Otsego County Lumbering Scene

can be identified: Dipzynski; Karcynski; Kassuba; Kobylinski; Matelski; Merkiel; Nessel; Rolinski; Soldat; and Sonolewski.¹⁴ In 1881 Father Szulak purchased for \$25 two acres of land east of the Village from William and Elizabeth Merkiel, property which was to be used for a cemetery.

Bishop Borgess assigned official jurisdiction over the station at Gaylord and at other places along the railroad line between Bay City and Mackinaw to Father J.H. Schutjes, the pastor at West Bay City. In 1881 Father Schutjes and Father Szulak agreed that the latter would visit these stations four times a year. Bishop Borgess seemed relieved to hear of the formal arrangement, given some misunderstandings that had occurred elsewhere regarding Father Szulak's activities.¹⁵

The heavy burdens of administering the far-flung and increasingly populous Diocese of Detroit led Bishop Borgess to request the bishops of the Province of Cincinnati at a meeting in July 1881 to petition Rome for a division of his diocese. The bishops studied his proposal and at their November meeting recommended that he submit it through the proper channels. The Holy See approved the partition and on May 19, 1882, officially established the Diocese of Grand Rapids.¹⁶ Its territory encompassed the area "north of the southern line of the counties of Ottawa, Kent,

Montcalm, Gratiot, and Saginaw; and west of the eastern line of the counties of Saginaw and Bay, and adjacent islands."¹⁷ By January 1883 announcement had come of the appointment by Pope Leo XIII of the Right Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, the pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Cincinnati, as Bishop of Grand Rapids.

Bishop Richter had been born April 4, 1838, in Neuenkirchen, Oldenburg, Germany. He came to Cincinnati in 1854, where he studied at St. Francis Xavier College and Mount St. Mary Seminary of the West until 1860. He was then assigned to complete his studies at the newly established North American College in Rome. He was ordained there on June 10, 1865. Upon returning to the United States, he was assigned to teach at Mount St. Mary Seminary, serving there until his appointment as pastor at St. Lawrence. One of his friends, a classmate during seminary days at Mount St. Mary, described him as "pious, even ascetic . . . gentle, amiable and kind. A learned man, he made however no general doings about what he knew The priests will have a father, a counselor who in every respect, I dare say, will be firm and gentle and dignified in all his words and actions. He is indeed a Bishop such as the Church will want nowadays."¹⁸



Bishop Henry J. Richter, first Bishop of Grand Rapids

JACKSON, LANSING & SAGINAW R. R. CO.

Received for Record the 31st day of May A. D. 1899 and sealed

John H. Barlow Register

Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw R. R. Co.

SALE No. 461

DEED No. 210

Right Rec. Gasper Burgess

This Indenture, Made this Third day of September in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety eight.

by and BETWEEN JOHN N. DENISON, of Boston, Massachusetts, and JAMES F. JOY, of Detroit, Michigan, Trustees, acting under and by virtue of a deed of trust made by the Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw Railroad Company to said Denison and Joy, parties of the first part, and the JACKSON, LANSING & SAGINAW RAILROAD COMPANY, a corporation formed under and in pursuance of an act of the Legislature of Michigan, entitled "An Act to provide for the Incorporation of Railroad Companies," approved February 12th, A. D. 1855, party of the second part, and

The Right Reverend Gasper Burgess of Detroit Michigan

party of the third part, Witnesses:

That Whereas, The Congress of the United States of America by an Act entitled "An Act making a grant of Alternate Sections of Public Lands to the State of Michigan, to aid in the construction of certain Railroads in said State, and for other purposes," approved June 3d, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, did make a grant of lands to the said State of Michigan, to aid in the construction of certain Railroads therein mentioned, and among others of a Railroad from Amboy, by Hillsdale and Lansing, to some point on or near Traverse Bay, in the said State of Michigan, as will more fully appear by reference to said Act of Congress:

And Whereas, By an act of Congress entitled "An Act to extend the time for the reversion to the United States of the lands granted by Congress to aid in the construction of a Railroad from Amboy, by Hillsdale and Lansing, to some point on or near Traverse Bay, in the State of Michigan and for the completion of said Road," approved July 3, 1864, said grant was revived and extended, with certain provisions in said act named:

And Whereas, By an act of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, entitled "An Act to confirm the title of the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad Company to the property, rights and franchises, acquired by it of the Amboy, Lansing and Traverse Bay, Railroad Company," approved February 7th, 1867, so much of said grant as is applicable to aid in the construction of said line of Railroad north of Owosso, was fully vested in said Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad Company;

And Whereas, Said Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad Company has now become fully and completely entitled to the lands herein described, the same being part and parcel of said grant:

And Whereas, The said Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad Company has heretofore mortgaged or conveyed in trust the said lands, among others, to JOHN N. DENISON and JAMES F. JOY, for certain uses and purposes in the trust deed or mortgage expressed;

Now, Therefore, The said parties of the first and second part, for and in consideration of the sum of 6000

Dollars to them in hand paid by the said party of the third part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained, sold and conveyed, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said party of the third part, and to his heirs and assigns, FOREVER, All that tract or lots of land, being part of the land within the grant aforesaid, lying in the County of Alcona in the State of Michigan, and particularly described according to the Government survey, as follows, to wit: Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 in Block

Section 22 of Gaylord Village, according to the recorded map or plan of said Village

Bishop William H. Elder, Coadjutor to Archbishop John B. Purcell of Cincinnati, was the principal consecrator at the ceremony of ordination and installation in St. Andrew Cathedral in Grand Rapids on April 22, 1883. Bishop Borgess was also present and, as principal speaker at the banquet that followed the ceremony, he spoke of the history of the Detroit Diocese, especially that portion that was now Grand Rapids Diocese.¹⁹

On his first Confirmation tour of the northern portion of the diocese in the summer of 1883, Bishop Richter paid a visit to Gaylord. There on July 24, he confirmed fifty persons and dedicated the first Catholic church, the construction of which Father Szulak had supervised a year or two previously (the exact date is uncertain). Present also at the occasion were Father Szulak, Father J.H. Schutjes of St. Mary, West Bay City, and Father P.J. de Smedt of St. Mary, Cheboygan.²⁰ One may assume that the dedication was under the title of St. Mary, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, since these names were used interchangeably for several years. The church had 24 pews, seating 160 to 200 persons, according to figures in the annual parish reports from 1887 to 1900. Its value for insurance purposes in

1888 was listed at \$1,450.²¹

Information about developments at St. Mary Mission* between 1883 and 1886 is scarce. During that time Father Schutjes continued to exercise jurisdiction over Gaylord, but he delegated to Father Szulak responsibility for it and for other missions and stations "in the north." Father Schutjes was increasingly uneasy about the arrangement, as is evident from his note in his 1886 report to Bishop Richter: "Why those northern missions 150 miles away should be credited to West Bay City I cannot understand." In October 1887, jurisdiction over the mission was transferred to St. Mary, Cheboygan, at which time Father de Smedt, the pastor, or his assistant, Father Aloysius Webeler, began serving St. Mary on the first Sunday of each month.²²

Father Webeler reported to Bishop Richter in January 1888 that there were 113 families at St. Mary, of whom 95 were Polish, 12 English, 5 French, and 1 German. These figures reflect the significant increase in immigration that occurred during the 1880s, an

*The term "mission" is used in contrast to "station," which it had previously been designated, and "parish," which would be used beginning in 1888.



First church, center; first rectory, left; first school, right

increase that contributed to the growth of agriculture and industry. Of the total population of 4,272 in Otsego County in 1890, more than one-third were foreign born, including 630 from Canada; 177 from Germany and 129 from Poland.²³ Lumbering remained an important occupation in the southern part of the County, and in Gaylord itself occupations allied to lumbering, as well as other new operations, provided employment. In 1885 the town had three steam saw mills, two planing mills, a basket factory, a brick factory, and a flour mill.²⁴ For Polish families, agriculture remained the most important occupation, though they may well have supplemented it with lumbering during the winter time, as other farmers did; and they continued to seek lands in the central townships of Livingston, Bagley, and Dover.²⁵ No doubt the proximity to Gaylord with its Catholic church helped to determine their location.

Bishop Richter was well aware of the growing need for additional priests throughout his diocese. As part of his efforts to provide more adequately for emerging parishes in the northern region, he made arrangements during his trip to Europe in 1885 on the occasion of his *ad limina* visit to Rome to secure the services of several Polish priests.²⁶ This helped to relieve the immediate shortage and made it possible for the Bishop to provide a full-time pastor for the growing Catholic community in Gaylord. That first full-time pastor



Father Leopold Opyrchalski, first resident pastor

was Father Leopold Opyrchalski. He had been born in Poland in 1863 and had come to the United States as a young boy. He studied at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore and was ordained early in 1888. He began serving in Gaylord in late February or early March (Father Webeler of Cheboygan last signed a baptismal record on February 20, 1888; Father Opyrchalski's first signature was March 5, 1888).²⁷

One of the first concerns of the new pastor was to provide a residence for himself in Gaylord. He requested permission of the Bishop to build a rectory, such permission being granted in April of 1888, "provided you contract no debt."²⁸ Father Opyrchalski proceeded with arrangements for construction of the residence at a cost of \$1,100. The members of the parish, now numbering 150 families, were evidently generous in their contributions to defray this expense and the costs of purchasing two additional sets of vestments, surplices and cassocks for altar boys, several candlesticks, and an organ.²⁹

In addition to his responsibilities at St. Mary, Father Opyrchalski was assigned stations at Mullet Lake and Cheboygan (St. Laurence Polish Church), which he visited one Sunday each month. These two stations had a total of 34 families in 1888. Services at Gaylord were held on the other three Sundays of the month. Other pastoral responsibilities included administering the sacraments (41 baptisms, 18 first communions, and 5 burials are recorded) and teaching catechism. Father Opyrchalski also established the St. Stanislaus Society and the Women's Rosary Society; the former drew 25 members during its first year, while the latter had 69.³⁰

Father Opyrchalski was transferred to St. Mary Parish, Alpena, at the end of June 1889. He served there until 1900, followed by thirteen years as pastor at St. Joseph, Manistee. From Manistee he went to Cedar for four years, after which he spent five years at St. Hedwig in Bay City and three years at St. Josaphat near Saginaw. Ill health forced him to retire in 1927. He died at Mercy Hospital, Bay City, on October 16, 1931.³¹

Bishop Richter did not immediately assign a full-time pastor to replace Father Opyrchalski. The accomplishments of the young priest during his sixteen months in Gaylord had undoubtedly impressed his parishioners. The sense of impermanency created by frequent



Father Alexander Lipinski

changes of priests during the next three years must have been trying for these same people. The priests who served St. Mary during this period and the approximate dates of service as determined from signatures on the Parish Records were: Father Vincent Zalewski, July 1889—January 1890; Father Matthew Grochowski, February -November, 1890; Father Bruno Torka, O.S.F., March—June 1891; Father Alexander Lipinski, July 1891—September 1892.³² Father Lipinski was listed in the *Catholic Directory* as pastor (none of the others had been so listed), and he had evidently won the support of the people. As a native of Poland who had come directly to Gaylord from Europe in 1891, he was at home with the almost exclusively Polish parishioners. Their respect for him and their consternation at facing still another change of priests is touchingly revealed in a letter of petition from forty mothers of St. Mary Parish, addressed to Bishop Richter in August 1892.

The mothers begged the Bishop to allow Father Lipinski to remain in Gaylord, saying in part:

Our great concern lies with our children; they must be properly raised in the Catholic faith. Father Lipinski is giving our children the right guidance, and if he is permitted to remain here we shall praise and thank the Lord, for our parish will be the best in our new land. In our parish, most of us say the rosary, contribute to the church and do volunteer work, but if we have a new priest every year, we cannot make progress.

We will do anything to keep Father Lipinski. We beg of you, Your Lordship, please let Father Lipinski stay in Gaylord. (Original letter in German, translated by Helga Davidson of Gaylord)³³

This plea was not directly heeded, and Father Lipinski was transferred to Holy Rosary, Saginaw. He served there as pastor for fifteen years, followed by eleven years as pastor at St. Hyacinth, Bay City. He died on October 20, 1918.³⁴

Indirectly, however, the message from the Polish mothers at St. Mary may have touched Bishop Richter, for Father Casimir Skory, the priest who replaced Father Lipinski, would remain for twelve years. During that time he was able to provide the kind of stability for which the people yearned.

CHAPTER THREE

The Pastorate of Father Casimir Skory

1892-1904

Father Casimir Skory, the son of Casimir and Theresa Skory, was born in Poland on March 4, 1864. His family emigrated to Bay City when he was eleven years old. He attended the St. Stanislaus and St. James Schools in Bay City, after which he studied in Rome at the school maintained by the Resurrection Fathers and at the Gregorian University. Following his ordination on March 31, 1888, he was assigned to St. Stanislaus Parish in Chicago for two years and then taught for a short time at St. Mary College in Kentucky. Father Skory's mother and stepfather had meanwhile settled in Grand Rapids, and his mother's illness prompted him to request a transfer to the Grand Rapids Diocese. Bishop Richter, ever alert to opportunities to obtain the services of priests for his many Polish parishes, accepted Father Skory into his diocese in 1892. After two months as assistant pastor at St. Stanislaus, Bay City, Father Skory was assigned to Gaylord where he began his work as pastor of St. Mary Parish.¹

Among the one hundred or more families in the parish at that time were those with the following surnames (recorded by Father Skory as having been confirmed between 1883 and 1893): Basinski; Bielejewski; Borowiak; Budka; Burchard; Czerwinski; Dreffs; Duczkowski; Dipzynski; Furgat; Holewinski; Jaruzel; Jonas; Jozwiak; Kaczmarek; Kassuba; Kierczynski; Kobylczak; Kobylinski; Kolany; Kondratowicz; Kostowski; Kowalewski; Kujawa; Kuras; Latuszek; Lenartowicz; Lewandowski; Liwosz; Mackowiak; Matelski; Matusik; Merkiel; Nessel; Nowaczyk; Nowak; Radecki; Rolinski; Sierocka; Soldat; Switalski; Swiatek; Strzynski; Szocinski; Szerafinski; Waczikowski; Winiecki; Winiski; and Wojtkowiak.²

During the twelve years that Father Skory served in Gaylord, the town and county, as well as the parish, grew in population. Indeed, the whole nation experienced remarkable growth and development during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. Ex-



Father Casimir Skory

cept for the depression of 1893, the economy was generally good; and the occasional labor troubles, debates over currency and tariffs, and the foreign policy issues emanating from the Spanish-American War did not greatly affect the people of Otsego County. Of the issues with national significance, immigration was the one which had the greatest bearing on developments in this area. The liberal immigration policy that prevailed between 1880 and 1910 made it possible for almost seventeen million people to enter the United States. While most of these people settled in cities throughout the nation, the rural areas also gained in population as the immigrants and their large families swelled the numbers. In small ways Otsego County and Gaylord reflected this national pattern. By 1900, the county had a population of 6,175 as compared with 1,974 in 1880; Gaylord had grown from 292 to 1,561. The number of Polish among the foreign-born increased from 21 to 391 during those same years, a fact of significance to St. Mary Parish. The local economy continued to

diversify as timber was depleted and lumbering operations declined. In rural areas, potato production grew increasingly important, the acreage and the bushels produced doubling in size between 1890 and 1910.³ Gaylord's growth in population was accompanied by modernization such as the provision of a water works in 1881; a new brick courthouse costing \$25,000 in 1891; electric lights by 1898; a telephone connection by 1901. Schools, newspapers, fraternal lodges, an opera house, and several churches—Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist, as well as Catholic—provided for religious and cultural needs.⁴

The population served by St. Mary Parish reflected some aspects of the larger local picture. Between 1892 and 1899, the number of families increased from 140 to 204, all but 34 of whom were Polish; the remainder was made up of 20 English families (meaning English-speaking), 7 French, 5 German, and 2 Belgian.⁵ Most of the Polish parishioners were farmers, as had been the case earlier; of those who lived in Gaylord, the majority were employees rather than owners of various businesses and industries.

Except for the third Sunday of each month when he visited the missions at Mullet Lake and St. Laurence, Cheboygan, and the station at Lewiston (assigned to him in 1894), Father Skory offered one Mass at St. Mary on Sundays and week days. The Sunday sermon was given in Polish. After Mullet Lake and St. Laurence received a resident pastor in 1897, he was able to have Mass every Sunday in Gaylord; and in 1898 he started a schedule of two Masses on Sunday, one with a sermon in Polish, the other with an English sermon. He administered Baptism to 50 or more infants each year and occasionally to some adults. A First Communion class was held each year; the Bishop came for Confirmation ordinarily every other year. Father Skory helped to prepare the children for these sacraments through catechetical instruction on Sundays and, after a school was opened, by teaching religion classes there. The number of marriages ranged from 4 to 12 each year during his pastorate. The number of burials, averaging 18 a year with a high of 33 in 1893, reflects a high rate of mortality, especially among children, due to frequent epidemics of diphtheria, scarlet fever, and typhoid fever.⁶

In addition to offering Mass and administering the sacraments, Father Skory

fostered devotions among the parishioners by holding Benediction frequently, by leading the Stations of the Cross during Lent, and by encouraging frequent recitation of the Rosary.

Parish societies became increasingly important during Father Skory's pastorate. The practice of establishing mutual aid societies to support social welfare needs, a practice that was common throughout much of the nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was especially strong in Polish parishes, given the strength of that tradition in their native land. As mentioned earlier, the first such society at St. Mary in Gaylord, was the St. Stanislaus Society, established in 1888. In 1893 a society under the patronage of St. Casimir was organized for the young men of the parish. A third group, the St. Michael Society, was established in 1897. Supported by monthly dues, these societies provided insurance to assist families in case of illness, accident, and death. Their meetings provided times for sociability; the members often served at formal church functions, especially those attended by the Bishop, when they appeared in their regalia. They also sponsored some fund-raising activities to assist in meeting parish expenses and the needs of parishioners. Membership in the St. Stanislaus Society ranged from 40 in 1892 to 67 in 1903; St. Casimir Society had approximately the same numbers; St. Michael Society grew rapidly and by 1903 had 107 members.

The Rosary Society for the women of the parish served to foster devotion to the Rosary; it also brought the women together for social and charitable purposes similar to those of the men's societies. Membership in the Rosary Society hovered around 100 throughout Father Skory's pastorate. A counterpart for young women of the parish—the Society of the Immaculate Conception (a forerunner of sodalities)—came into existence in 1895 and by 1903 had 90 members. The English-speaking women of the parish organized an Altar Society in 1898, which provided opportunities for social gatherings as well as providing support for the needs of the sanctuary. Its membership remained fairly constant at about 34.⁷

Among Father Skory's other major concerns as pastor was the provision of a Catholic school. This effort, officially encouraged throughout the nation by the bishops, had already been anticipated by Father Lipinski,

who had purchased a lot in 1891.⁸ In 1893 Father Skory bought two more lots adjacent to the one purchased by Father Lipinski and a new school building was constructed that same year at a cost of \$1,875.⁹ The school opened in 1894 with 50 pupils taught by Mr. Kowalkowski. The school property was again enlarged in 1895 with the purchase of four more lots costing \$360. Between 1894 and 1905 the school had one lay teacher; from 1905 to 1909, two teachers were employed to provide for the increasing number of students, a number which had reached 120. Among the lay teachers during those years were Josephine Niemczewski, Cecilia Schneble, and Florence McDonald.¹⁰

Father Skory's careful administration of the parish extended to various other property matters. In 1896 and 1897 he directed improvements needed in the cemetery property that had been purchased in 1881 (see p. 11). The ground was plowed, a picket fence put in place and the lots numbered. In 1899 a small chapel was provided. Following these improvements, Father Skory invited Bishop Richter to bless the cemetery, the ceremony taking place on October 13, 1899.¹¹

During these same years, Father Skory began planning for his most significant undertaking, the construction of a new church. The small church built by Father Szulak in the early 1880s had long been inadequate in size, as the parish had grown from 30 or 40 families in the early years to more than 200 by 1898. Father Skory started collections for the new church in 1898, asking that each family pledge \$40 to be paid in three annual installments. At the end of the first year, \$688 had been collected; in 1899 the total had reached \$3,532. Anticipating having \$7,000 on hand by the spring of 1900, he engaged the services of Haug and Scheurman of Saginaw as architect and Henry Freuchtel of the same city as contractor. The existing church was moved across the street to school property and construction was begun on the new church that was to be about twice the size of the old one. The blessing of the cornerstone took place on July 18, 1900, with the Reverend C.J. Roche officiating as delegate of Bishop Richter. Winter and lack of funds interrupted construction for several months; but the project was completed during the summer of 1901, including the installation of the bell from the old church. Bishop Richter dedicated the new

church on September 15, 1901.¹²

According to the Parish Report for 1901, the cost of the building and its furnishings was \$17,770. The regular assessments covered most of this and special donations the rest. Among the latter were \$580 contributed by fourteen families* for the purchase of stained glass windows; \$375 for frescoes; \$48 for the sanctuary lamp; \$40 for water fonts; and \$700 for three altars from the Dubuque Altar Manufacturing Company, a donation of the various parish societies. In 1902 a tower clock ("the only clock in town") was added at a cost of \$530.¹³

It was undoubtedly a burden for the people of the parish to have to finance the total costs of the new church in so short a time, as well as maintaining their regular pew rent and offertory collections. Yet this kind of financing was expected by Bishop Richter, who was extremely reluctant to approve any borrowing. The fact that the parishioners were able to support the building of the new church in addition to the earlier school construction and cemetery improvements was a tribute to their devotion and generosity, as well as an indication of the management ability of Father Skory and members of the Church Committee who advised and assisted him in such matters.

Father Skory left St. Mary Parish in August 1904 for St. Adalbert Parish in Grand Rapids, where he was to spend the rest of his life. He could justifiably take pride in what he had accomplished in Gaylord. In addition to the building projects, so tangible as evidence of progress, he had faithfully discharged his responsibilities in the many other roles expected of pastors: minister of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and of the other sacraments; preacher and teacher; consoler, counselor, and friend. St. Mary was now on firm foundations—both literally and figuratively—as its leadership passed into the hands of Father Simon Ponganis.

*Those families were: Mrs. B.A. Hazard; Tomasz Kuras; Fred Schneble; Stanislaw Sobanski; Antoni Natomski; Jakob Kujawa; Jakob Holewinski; Stanislaw Kierczynski; Gocha Families; Jozef Ratza; Jozef Tyborski; Mackowiak Family; Latuszek Family; Nowaczyk Family.



Second St. Mary Church, constructed 1900-1901

View of Gaylord about the year 1905

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW, GAYLORD, MICH.



CHAPTER FOUR

Maturing Years, 1904-1935

Pastorates of Father Simon Ponganis and Father Francis Kaczmarek

The period from 1904 through 1935, which encompassed the two pastorates of Father Simon Ponganis, and the intervening time from 1907 to 1913 when Father Francis Kaczmarek served as pastor, were years when the nation as a whole witnessed remarkable changes and challenging events. Improvements in communication and transportation, especially the assembly-line production of cars that could be priced within range of a majority of families, helped end the isolation that people in rural areas had experienced. The generally stable economic period of the early years of the twentieth century was interrupted in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I in Europe. The war and America's direct participation in it beginning in April 1917 wrought profound changes throughout the world and greatly enhanced the position of the United States in world affairs. Immigration to the United States, which had peaked in 1914, was reduced because of the war and more drastically curtailed by legislation in the 1920s. The "Roaring Twenties" saw a decline in idealism, due in some measure to the disappointment of expectations that World War I would be "a war to end all wars," a war "to make the world safe for democracy." Artists and writers, dubbing themselves members of a "Lost Generation," were particularly disillusioned, and their influence contributed to the demoralization of the American people. The stress on material values, prominent in this decade of prosperity (though prosperity did not reach all levels), led to a subordination of human and spiritual values. Social disruption, intellectual currents, materialistic concerns led to a rebellion against traditional moral values, a rebellion manifested in fads and fashions and an increased degree of sexual libertinism. Finally, the onset of the Great Depression, triggered by the stock market collapse in 1929, posed the most serious economic threat that the nation had ever experienced.

Against this background of national and international events, the people of Gaylord pursued their lives, experiencing some trans-

formation of values and of ways of doing things, but perhaps not touched as greatly as those in other parts of the nation. (See excerpt from the 1913 *Michigan Gazetteer* for increasing number and diversity of business enterprises in Gaylord.) Throughout this time of transition, the Catholic people of Gaylord had able leadership from their pastors.

Father Simon Ponganis, who served as pastor for a total of twenty-five years, was born in Olita, Poland, on April 28, 1859. After preparatory work in Poland, he pursued theological studies in Rome. He was one of the men whom Bishop Richter met on his *ad limina* visit in 1885 and induced to come to the United States. That same year, on December 27, Bishop Richter ordained the young man at St. Andrew Cathedral in Grand Rapids. Father Ponganis served for a few months as assistant at the Cathedral and then became pastor of St. Adalbert Parish, Grand Rapids, where he remained until his appointment to St. Mary, Gaylord in August 1904.¹

Circumstances surrounding his transfer af-



Father Simon Ponganis

The Business Institute

1913

[See adv. in Educational Dept.]

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1913

Gay

MICHIGAN GAZETTEER.

Gaylord

669

Peterman J P & G H, John H Jackson
mngs, general store.
Wolverine Copper Mining Co, David L
Vivian supt.

GAYLORD.

Population, 2,000. The county seat of
Otsego county, is located on the M. C.
and R. C., G. & A. R. Rs, in Bagley and
Livingston townships, 119 miles north of
Bay City, 229 north of Detroit, and 63
south of Mackinaw City. It dates its
settlement from 1874, was incorporated as
a village in 1881 and was originally
known as Barnes. It is the trading
point for a prosperous agricultural sec-
tion and has Baptist, Catholic, Congre-
gational and Methodist churches, a \$27,-
000 high school building, a commodious
brick court house, 2 banks, an opera
house, municipally owned water works
and electric light plant, Masonic, I. O. O.
F. and K. of P. halls, cement sidewalks,
a weekly newspaper, the Herald and
Times, and a Board of Trade that is on
the hunt for industries that are looking
for a live town to settle in Gaylord's big
industries are the Dayton Last Block
Works, which turns hardwood timber
into last blocks and ten pins, the Gaylord
Manufacturing Co., making sleighs and
big wheels for use in the woods, a found-
ry, a grist mill and a motor car plant.
Tel. W. U. Exp., Adams and Am. Tele-
phone connection. W. S. Carpenter, post-
master.

Barnhart Wirt, lawyer and prosecuting
attorney.

Bolton & Co (Earl B Bolton), hardware
and plumbing.

Brodie & Qua (John M Brodie, Samuel E
Qua), hardware and farm implts.

BUCK SANFORD W, Cashier Gaylord
State Savings Bank.

Buck & Bolton (Sanford W Buck, Earl
B Bolton), potato shippers.

Butcher George, restaurant.

Carpenter Wm S, postmaster, jeweler
and agt Adams Exp Co.

Carr & Son (Del and Ernest), meats.

Chase Irvin, flour and feed.

Cook Albert A, general store.

Cook Nelson, grocer.

Costello John, potato shipper.

COMSTOCK ALMON B C, Pres Otsego
County Bank and Loans.

Czebran Frank, clothing.
Culliton Archie, drayman.
Dayton Last Block Works (Dayton, O),
F J Shipp genl mng.

DELMONT THE, W E Robinson Propr.
Strictly First Class in Every Respect.
Special Attention to Commercial Trav-
elers.

Demerest Mark M, grocer.

Doran Francis, clothes cleaner and pres-
ser.

Durfee Bruce, confectioner.

Durfee & Menzies (George Durfee,
Charles Menzies), Hvery.

Ehvwanger George W, grocer.

Galver Amiel L, photographer.

Garrar Orris W, lawyer.

Ford Elmer L, physician.

Ford Ruey O, physician.

Ford & Ford (Elmer L and Ruey O),
drugs.

Fox Harry E, drugs.

Fox James F, physician.

French Seth M, judge of probate and
abstracter.

Gawronski Frank, shoemaker.

GAYLORD BOARD OF TRADE, F A Lord
Pres, Guy Hamilton Vice-Pres, W S
Carpenter Sec.

Gaylord Electric Light and Water Works

GAYLORD FOUNDRY AND MACHINE
SHOP, A J Maddock Propr. (See page
1674.)

Gaylord Hardware Co (Wm Seyler, Harry
Pelton, Reuben Calster, Meille M Sex-
ton), hardware and agrl implts.

GAYLORD MANUFACTURING CO (Capit-
al \$25,000), S M French Pres, John
Yuill Vice-Pres, W C Shepard Sec, D
K Mitchell Treas and Mngr, Mnfrs of
Wagons, Sleighs, Drags, Etc. (See
page 1570.)

Gaylord Motor Car Co, John A Hixson,
pres, Herman Lundeen v-pres, Fred E
Cooke sec, J Lee Morterd treas, Guy
Hamilton genl mng.

GAYLORD STATE SAVINGS BANK
(Capital \$25,000; Surplus and Profits
\$13,000), Frank A Kramer Pres, B B
Bolton Vice-Pres, sanford W Buck
Cashier, Horace E Blodgett Assistant
Cashier. (See page 1527.)

Goldie Harry, lawyer.

Grant John W, baker.

Grosbeck John L, cigars and tobacco.

Guggelsberg Bros (John C and Leon B),
shoes.

660

Gaylord

R. L. POLK & CO.'S (1913)

Geer

HAMILTON JOHN F, Fire Insurance
(Fourteen Standard Companies), Rent-
als and Collections; reference Gaylord
State Savings Bank; Justice of the
Peace.

Hankes Milling Co (Detoskey, Mich),
George A Ford mng, wholesale flour
and feed.

Hannigan W H, vcl surgeon.

Harris Levi A, physician.

Haskell Nina, milliner.

HERALD AND TIMES, Glenn Russell
Mngr, Editor and Publisher. (See
page 659.)

HICKOK CHARLES F, Chief Warden
Forest Fire Protective Dept, Michigan
Hardwood Mnfrs Assn.

Higgins George, taxidermist.

Houston Wm F, dentist.

Humeston Frank W, forst.

Humphrey Bros (Stephen S), planing and
saw mill.

Hutchins Daniel H, potato shipper.

JOHNSON B PETER, Propr National Ho-
tel.

Kondratovitz John J, grocer.

KRAMER FRANK A, Dry Goods, Cloth-
ing, Shoes, Pros Gaylord State Savings
Bank.

Kramer Julius, tailor.

Kwapis Stanley, general store.

Leonard Forrest C, grocer.

LORD FORREST A, Publisher Otsego
County Advance. (See adv.)

McCoy Wm, grocer and saloon.

MADDOCK ALBERT J, Propr Gaylord
Foundry and Machine Shop. (See page
1674.)

Marshall Anthony L, lawyer.

Meacher George, fruit grower.

Merry Charles L, cigars and tobacco.

MICHIGAN HARDWOOD MNFRS ASSN,
Forest Fire Protective Dept, Charles F
Hickok Chief Warden.

Michigan State Tel Co, Eva Grant mng.

MINER GLENN RUSSELL, Publ'r Herald
and Times. (See page 659.)

MORFORD J LEE, Cashier Otsego Coun-
ty Bank and Treas Gaylord Motor Car
Co.

Morrish Arthur E, drugs and agt Am
Exp Co.

Myer H B, hides and junk.

NATIONAL HOTEL, B P Johnson Propr,
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tric Lights and Steam Heat.

Nevills Wm H, dry goods and millinery.

Nichols S G, potato shipper.

Noa & Swantek (Frank J Noa, Stanley
Swantek), meats.

Nowlin Frank, jeweler.

OTSEGO COUNTY ADVANCE, F A Lord
Publisher. (See below.)

Otsego County Agricultural and Mechan-
ical Society, A B C Comstock pres, A
H Van Doran sec.

OTSEGO COUNTY BANK OF COMSTOCK,
Quick & Morford (A B C Comstock,
Lottie J and Charles A Quick, J Lee
Morford), Responsibility \$75,000, J L
Morford Cashier. (See page 1527.)

OTSEGO COUNTY OFFICIALS, Judge of
Probate Seth M French, Sheriff George
A Durfee, Clerk Charles H Welch,
Treasurer A T Martindale, Register of
Deeds J J Munger, Prosecuting Attor-
ney Wirt Barnhart, Circuit Court Com-
missioner Anthony D Marshall, Com-
missioner of Schools Ray F Jennings
(Vanderbilt), County Surveyor D M
Hoffman.

Otsego County Telephone, J M Clark
(Onaway), mng.

Otsego Hotel, W A Hunt propr.

Parmater Bros (Leon C and Harry A),
grocers.

Pettifor Ernest, fruit grower.

Piehl D & Co (David Piehl), flour mill.

Powers Wm J, lumber and picture frames.

Publow Wm J, harness.

Putnam Del, grocer.

Putnam Jonathan, house mover.

Richards George G, phys and coroner.

Rollinski John, Hvery and bus line.

Sexton Mrs Lilla E, bazaar.

Sexton Melvin M, ice and coal.

Shannon Claude E, fun and undertaker.

Simmons Abraham, dentist.

Sisco Wm H, restaurant.

Slade C M, potash mfr.

Smith Harry N, moving pictures.

Stevenson Levi A, jeweler and optician.

Thompson Wm, cement contractor.

Townsend Willis L, lawyer.

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erything, New and Second-Hand Fur-
niture, Hardware, Implements, Bicycles
and Hardware Bought and Sold.

Van Dyne Mrs Archie, milliner.

Van Dyne Archie F, confectioner.

Walezak Valentine, dry goods and cloth-
ing.

WELCH CHARLES H, County Clerk,
William Wm A, shoemaker.

Yuill Bros (John and Thomas), general
store and saw mill, R D 3.

Yuill Ervin, potato slooper, R D 3.



Gaylord Car, 1912

fecting his adjustment to his new assignment. Bishop Richter had experienced some difficulties with Father Ponganis, including dissatisfaction with his handling of finances and concern about his efforts to block the establishment of a new Polish parish in Grand Rapids, territory for which would be carved from St. Adalbert Parish.² It seems likely that the latter problem in particular helped to account for the transfer of Father Ponganis to Gaylord. He contested the transfer and appealed to the Holy See through the Apostolic Delegate on grounds that his seniority entitled him to a parish of equal size to the one he was leaving, if not one of greater size. In 1907 the Holy See ruled in favor of Father Ponganis, who then obtained the pastorate of Holy Rosary, Saginaw.³

During the three years that had transpired while the case was pending in Rome, Father Ponganis seemed to ingratiate himself with members of the parish and with other townspeople,⁴ but he did not undertake any major changes in the parish. Given the stability that had been achieved under Father Skory and the completion of such major projects as the building of the school and the church, it may have been a good time for the people to "rest

on their oars."

Under a "temporary appointment," Father Francis Kaczmarek replaced Father Ponganis at St. Mary upon the latter's transfer to Holy Rosary, Saginaw, on October 1, 1907. Father Kaczmarek was born in Poland on April 2, 1878. When he was still a boy, his family emigrated to Bay City, where he attended St. Stanislaus School. He continued his studies at the high school and college at Orchard Lake and then completed his theological program at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee. After his ordination by Bishop Richter at Grand Rapids on June 29, 1901, Father Kaczmarek served as assistant pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Manistee from 1901 to 1905, followed by a few months at St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids and a brief period as pastor of St. Dominic Parish in Metz.⁵

During Father Kaczmarek's six years in Gaylord, the number of families in St. Mary Parish remained about the same, ranging from 204 to 225, over 90% of whom were Polish.⁶ Of the approximately 1,050 parishioners, almost 700 did not understand English; therefore, Polish was used almost exclusively in church services. Parishioners of other nationalities began to feel neglected, and for



Father Francis Kaczmarek

several years petitioned for help. In 1904 Bishop Richter had ordered that, at such times that he judged expedient, the old church building be used by Catholics of all nationalities other than Polish.⁷ There is no indication in available records that the Bishop's order was implemented during Father Ponganis' first pastorate. Concern for the minority families was again expressed in 1910 when discussion ensued on the possibility of establishing a separate parish for English-speaking Catholics, who would have the use of the old church. This proposal was not implemented, however, perhaps because there were fewer than fifty families involved. In 1911 the Bishop gave permission for the old church to be used as a meeting hall for church societies.⁸

There were two jurisdictional changes during Father Kaczmarek's years as pastor. The mission at Lewiston, which had been associated with the Gaylord parish since 1894, was assigned to Grayling in September 1908. In May 1910 Father Kaczmarek assumed responsibility for the station at Johannesburg that had formerly been under Grayling.⁹

Among the tangible accomplishments of Father Kaczmarek was the building of a new rectory, begun in July 1908 and completed in the spring of 1909. This project was associated with another major development—the staffing

of the school by the Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters. The old rectory was moved to a lot adjacent to the school and remodeled for the use of the sisters, thus providing housing, the absence of which had delayed their coming.¹⁰

The Grand Rapids Dominicans trace their beginning as a separate congregation to 1877 when Father George Ziegler of St. Francis Church, Traverse City, Michigan, requested of Mother Hyacinth of the Dominicans of Holy Rosary Convent on Second Street in New York City that she provide sisters for Michigan. She responded by sending five choir nuns and one lay sister. After the establishment of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Bishop Richter took an interest in the availability of sisters for his diocese and was instrumental in the creation of a separate province, the Province of St. Joseph, for the convents in Michigan in 1885. He also encouraged the separation in August 1894 of the Province of St. Joseph from the New York motherhouse and its establishment as an independent congregation under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mother Aquinata Fiegler, who was the major superior under the provincial structure, continued to serve in a similar capacity. The newly established congregation chose Mother Aquinata in its first election of a mother general in 1897, a position to which she was re-elected periodically until her death in 1915.* The Convent of the Holy Angels in Traverse City served as the motherhouse of the congregation until 1899, at which time St. John Home in Grand Rapids was so designated. The transfer to the present location at Marywood occurred in 1922.¹¹

The first four Dominican Sisters to serve at St. Mary School arrived in Gaylord on August 27, 1909. They were: Sister Raymond Hudzinski, who was the principal and the teacher of about 10 older children who were at the seventh and eighth grade levels; Sister Casimir Zukowski, who had 72 children in grades four, five, and six and also taught music and played the organ for church services; Sister Dolores, who taught 30 children in grades one through three; and Sister Juliana,

*Other mothers-general and their years of office have been: Mother Gonsalva Bankstahl, 1915-1919; Mother Benedicta O'Rourke, 1919-1927; Mother Eveline Mackey, 1927-1936; Mother Euphrasia Sullivan, 1936-1948; Mother Victor Flannery, 1948-1966; Sister Aquinas Weber, 1966-1972; Sister Norbert Vangness (Marjorie), 1972-1980; and Sister Teresa Houlihan, 1980-present.

who was the housekeeper.¹² Attendance at school was often irregular, especially among boys above the age of ten who helped with farm operations during busy seasons of planting and harvesting. This meant that grade levels often had to be repeated by these boys, some of whom remained in school until they were seventeen or eighteen years old. The lay teachers had found this situation a challenge, and so did the sisters when they arrived. Sister Casimir recalls the "testing" she experienced during her first year, as she dealt with young men almost as old as she, a testing she survived with some help from parents.¹³ Sister Raymond was soon able to provide a formal curriculum for some of the older students and in 1912 the first class of three—Walter Kowaleski, Rose Kondratowicz, and Martha Czapran—graduated from eighth grade.¹⁴

In July 1913 Father Ponganis returned to Gaylord as pastor of St. Mary. Father Kaczmarek replaced him as pastor of Holy Rosary, Saginaw, and remained there until his death on October 15, 1942.

The years of Father Ponganis' second pastorate from 1913 to 1935, in addition to encompassing the many changes and events sketched at the beginning of this chapter, were marked by important personal experiences for Father Ponganis and some significant developments in the parish. During the 1920s he toured Europe on several occasions to visit relatives and to recuperate from illness. Among the priests who served Gaylord during his absences was Father Thomas L. Noa (the future bishop of Marquette Diocese whose brothers—Walter, Frank, and Anthony—were active members of St. Mary Parish), who was at St. Mary from August to October 1921. Father L.A. Kuzius served as administrator from July 1923 to October 1924. After a recurrence of illness in 1925, Father Ponganis regularly was assigned assistants, including Father John S. Fons, 1925-1926; Father John E. Szydloski, 1926-1928; Father Francis Kaminski, 1928-1933; Father John Bozek, 1933-1935, and Father Francis J. Kupinski, summer of 1935. The visit to Europe in 1923-1924 included a stop in Rome, where on November 7, 1923, Pope Pius XI elevated Father Ponganis to the rank of monsignor. By the late 1920s he was serving as one of the deans of the diocese, responsibility of which office included presiding over



First Eighth Grade Graduates, 1912: Martha Czapran, Walter Kowaleski, and Rose Kondratowicz

clergy conferences.¹⁵

The number of families in St. Mary Parish remained fairly constant throughout the period, averaging about 220. This reflected the national trend of the leveling off of population due to decline in immigration and the increase in the number of families migrating from rural to urban areas. Otsego County in 1930 had a population of 5,554 as compared with 6,552 in 1910; there were 462 farm families in 1930, a decrease of 89 since 1910. Traditional liturgical and devotional practices continued; both Polish and English sermons were given; Stations of the Cross during Lent, May devotions, Pentecost Novena, Rosary devotions, and the annual Forty Hours devotion were popular. Week-long missions conducted by visiting priests were held more frequently than had been the case before 1910.¹⁶

Among parish societies, St. Stanislaus and St. Michael Societies continued to draw members, the latter gradually becoming the larger. While the purposes of the two groups were similar, there was some rivalry between them. St. Casimir Society had become defunct by 1905. In 1915 the Altar Society and the Rosary Society merged for a total membership

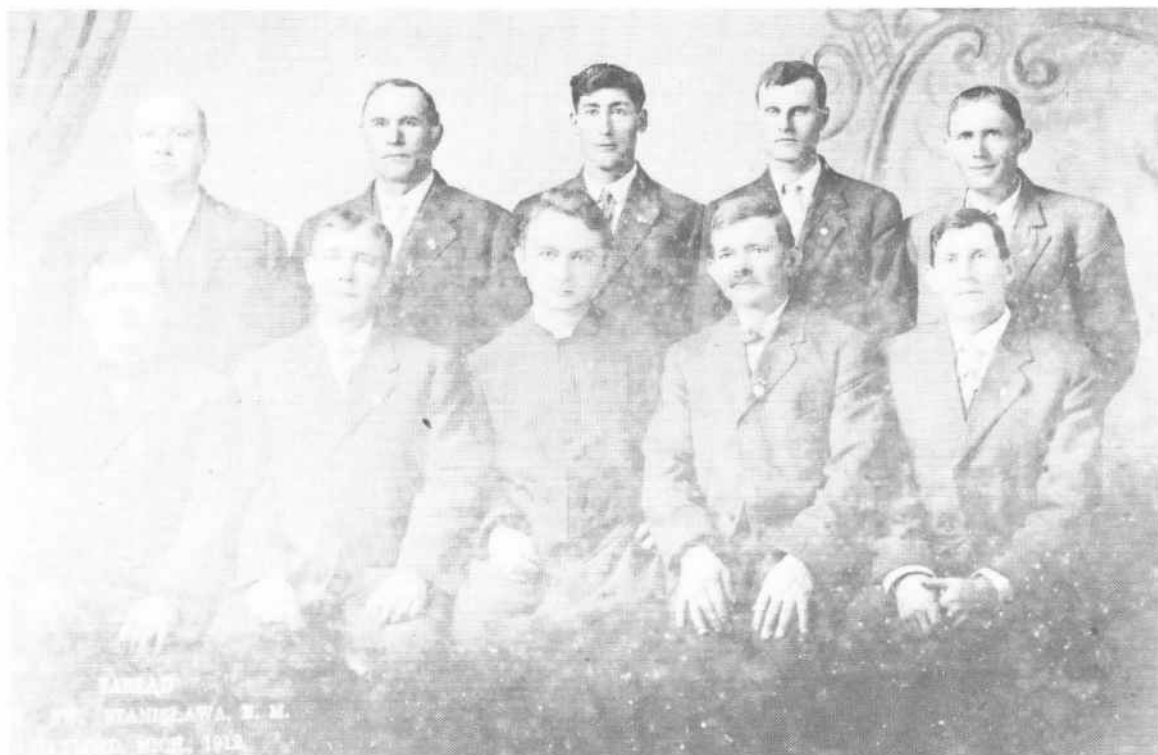
of 140 women. The Society of the Immaculate Conception or the Young Ladies' Society had a membership of about 30 each year. The Parish Report of 1916 contains the first reference to a chapter of the Third Order of St. Francis with a membership of 24.¹⁷

The description above suggests that parish life moved along in traditional channels, which was generally the case. But there were some events that interrupted the usual pattern. During Father Ponganis' second pastorate, there were three changes of Bishops in Grand Rapids Diocese. Bishop Richter died on December 26, 1916, after almost thirty-four years as Bishop. He was succeeded by Bishop Michael J. Gallagher, who had been serving as coadjutor bishop since July 5, 1915. Bishop Gallagher was transferred to Detroit on July 18, 1918, and Bishop Edward D. Kelly, an auxiliary bishop of Detroit since 1911, became bishop of Grand Rapids on January 26, 1919. After the latter's death on March 26, 1926, Bishop Joseph G. Pinten, bishop of the Diocese of Superior from 1922 to 1926, was transferred to Grand Rapids.

An event of great local interest occurred in February 1923—the ordination to the priesthood of Ladislaus Czapran, son of Mr.

and Mrs. Francis Czapran of Gaylord. The ordination ceremony in Grand Rapids at which Bishop Kelly officiated on February 11 was followed on February 13 by Father Czapran's First Mass at St. Mary Church. Among those present was Father Skory, who preached the sermon.

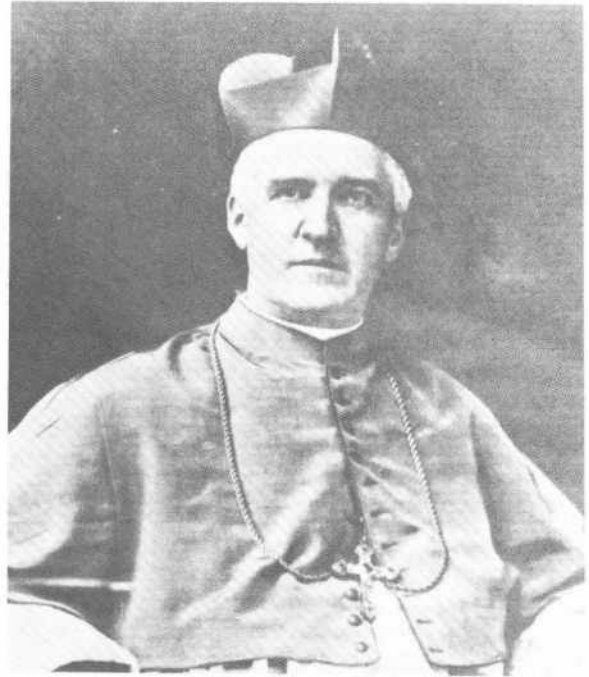
Normal events, such as many of the developments described above, preceded and followed the period of greatest consequence in the first three decades of the twentieth century—the First World War, which broke out in August 1914. Many of the early battles of the war took place in Eastern Europe in lands formerly Polish but since the eighteenth century divided among Germany, Russia, and Austria. The Polish people of Gaylord joined their counterparts elsewhere in collecting funds for relief of those in their homeland.¹⁸ After the United States entered the war in April 1917, activities became more intense. Red Cross drives in the school and in the community and a national drive by the Knights of Columbus for the moral and recreational welfare of service men met with success. A program for the re-establishment of a Polish nation under the "People's Committee of the Polish Army" received enthusiastic



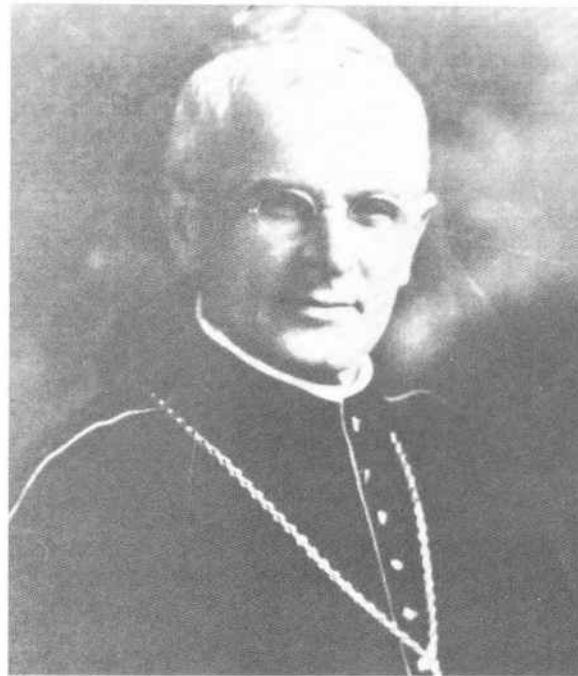
Officers of the St. Stanislaus Society, 1912: top row: William Mackowiak, Peter Latuszek, Stanley Nessel, Louis Nawrocki, Michael Kobylczak; bottom row: John Kondratowicz, Joseph Kowaleski, Father Kaczmarek, Valentine Mankowski, Melchior Miller.



Michael J. Gallagher, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1916-1918



Edward D. Kelly, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1919-1926



Joseph G. Pinten, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1926-1940

support (Father Ponganis was honorary president and Francis Czapan was president) and raised \$511 for the cause. Ceremonies were held to honor the young men serving in the United States Army, such as the dedication by Bishop Gallagher in September 1918 of a Service Flag with seventy-two names. After the war was over and the peace treaties had been signed, the Polish people in Gaylord continued their support of their homeland, now recreated as a nation, by purchasing bonds.¹⁹

The decade of the 1920s was much less turbulent for the people of Gaylord than it was for those in some other parts of the nation. The area's relative isolation may have accounted for its escape from exaggerated changes in fads, fashions, and morality. The still dominant rural character of Otsego County meant that the prosperity experienced in some urban areas largely by-passed the local residents. The intolerance that prevailed in some rural areas elsewhere in the nation was not duplicated in this region. Klan influence was briefly evident in a cross-burning on the courthouse lawn in Gaylord in June 1924, an act that was roundly denounced by the editor of the newspaper as being counter to the friendly relations among Protestants and Catholics in the area.²⁰

A more serious development in the 1920s that had its roots in the anti-Catholicism that the Ku Klux Klan was helping to generate, was the effort to eliminate Catholic schools. Such a movement was attempted in Michigan in 1920 when an amendment to the state constitution was proposed whereby all private and parochial schools in the state would be closed. This proposal was soundly defeated in the referendum held on it at the November 2 election.²¹ During the next four years an effort of this kind succeeded in Oregon, though the United States Supreme Court eventually declared the legislation unconstitutional, and made some headway in other states. When it was revived in Michigan in 1924, the proposed amendment to be voted on at the November 4 election read as follows: "From and after August 1, 1925, all children residing in the State of Michigan, between the ages of seven years and sixteen years, shall attend a public school until they have graduated from eighth grade."²² When Monsignor Ponganis returned to Gaylord following his fifteen-months leave of absence (see p. 25), he was

appalled at the prospect of losing his school. Assuming that an article in the October 23 issue of the *Herald Times* indicated support for the amendment, he wrote a lengthy letter to the editor, which appeared in the next week's issue. While acknowledging that St. Mary's school building was in need of repair, Monsignor wrote about plans that were underway to remodel the building; he called attention to the fact that the curriculum at St. Mary was under the supervision of the State Department of Public Instruction, just as that of the public school was; he noted that graduates of St. Mary were often at the top of their classes at Gaylord's public high school. He closed his letter by saying:

By way of observation, I may add that neither in our church, nor school, nor on the street, are children or adults taught to hate their neighbor because of his religion or his race; nor are they encouraged to band together in order to harass, persecute, or to obtain an adverse legislation against those who differ from them in color or creed.²³

In the same issue the editor responded, first by firmly denying that he or anyone associated with the paper was urging support for the amendment. He denounced the efforts of those who were attempting to close religious schools, deplored the prejudice it showed, and pointed out that taxes for public schools would go up if the amendment passed. He named leaders of Protestant denominations and of educational institutions throughout Michigan who had spoken strongly against the proposal.²⁴ The referendum at the November 4 election resulted in the defeat of the proposed amendment by a two to one margin.²⁵

Monsignor Ponganis' strong reaction to the threat posed by the amendment was due to his concern not only about the parish's elementary school but also about possible consequences for plans then underway to open a high school. As early as January 1923, parish societies had begun sponsoring fundraising events in anticipation of remodeling the school building to meet state standards for establishing a high school; similar activities were held throughout the next two years.²⁶ In the spring of 1925, Monsignor Ponganis ob-

tained approval of the building plans from the State Department of Public Instruction, and work on the school building began in late June. It was almost a complete rebuilding rather than a remodeling, consisting of a new foundation, a full basement, brick walls for the exterior, new floors, and new doors. Monsignor projected a completion date of about October, which would mean that not many school days would be lost because the "potato vacation," the two weeks set aside for school children to help with the potato harvest, would immediately precede that date. The cost of the remodeling was \$15,000.²⁷

Insofar as the curriculum was concerned, the plan was to phase in the high school program one year at a time, an approach that would permit careful planning and would not draw away students already enrolled in the public high school. Sister DeLellis Wagner was assigned to plan and supervise the implementation of the high school curriculum, as well as to teach in the new program.²⁸ In addition to adding regular school subjects each year, the high school offered extra-curricular activities, such as music, drama, and sports. The first boys' basketball team was organized in 1927-28 when the first class was at the ju-

nior level. The boys wore suits purchased by their parents from Sears and Roebuck for \$3 each. A girls' basketball team was organized in 1930-31. Monsignor Ponganis took great interest in the basketball teams, as did his new assistant, Father Francis Kaminski, after his arrival in March 1928.²⁹

The first high school graduation took place on June 12, 1929, with the following members receiving diplomas from the hands of their proud pastor, Monsignor Ponganis: Sophie Kowaleski, valedictorian; Raymond Machowiak, salutatorian; Regina Gruszczynski; William Nowak; Stanley Amborski; and Louis Latuszek.

As the first class was nearing graduation, Sister DeLellis and Monsignor Ponganis sought accreditation for the high school from the State Department of Public Instruction. The visitors were satisfied with the program of instruction but found that space was inadequate, a fact that was already evident to the sisters. Construction of an addition of four rooms—one for assembly, the other three for classes—began in early July 1929. The cost of the new addition, which was ready for occupancy on October 3, was approximately \$20,000, a little less than originally anticipat-



School building after remodeling in 1925 and new addition in 1929. In the background is the high school building completed in 1954.

ed. Monsignor Ponganis got permission from Bishop Pinten to borrow some funds during the time of construction in order that the job could be finished. He was able to repay it quickly. Having satisfied the requirements set by the state, St. Mary High School was accredited in May 1931. A year later, the University of Michigan extended accreditation also, which meant that graduates of St. Mary could enter the University without having to take qualifying examinations.³¹

The satisfaction that the priests, sisters, and people of the parish must surely have felt in accomplishing the firm establishment of the high school may have been countered by worries brought on by the creeping economic problems of the Great Depression. The collapse of the stock market in 1929 had unleashed waves of economic hardship, which by 1932 had reached all parts of the nation. The Hoover administration called upon private charity and local relief agencies to respond to the needs of the unemployed. These agencies made valiant efforts; but as bread lines and relief rolls lengthened, local funds no longer sufficed. In rural areas such as Otsego County some of the impact of the depression was cushioned by the availability of food and the possibility of payment for other necessities through a kind of barter system. In St. Mary Parish, some of the parish-

ioners in lieu of the \$18 annual pew rent supplied wood for heating the church, rectory, and school building. In a letter to Mother Eveline, mother general of the Grand Rapids Dominicans, Monsignor Ponganis spoke of the difficulties he was facing as he asked for a moratorium on the payment of salaries: "Farmers have no money at all. We get neither pew rent nor masses. Potatoes are 13¢ a bushel and even at that price there is no demand."³² Parish receipts for 1932 were a little over \$6,000, down from \$7,350 in 1929.³³

The financial pressures took their toll on Monsignor Ponganis, who in 1932 took another leave of absence from early June to September to attend the Eucharistic Conference in Ireland and also to visit Poland. Father Kaminski was in charge of the parish during Monsignor's absence.³⁴ In August of the following year Father Kaminski was assigned to St. Mary Parish in St. Charles, Michigan; Father John Bozek came from St. James Parish in Grand Rapids to Gaylord as the new assistant in St. Mary Parish. The people of the parish and of the town were sorry to see Father Kaminski leave; during his five years in Gaylord he had assumed many responsibilities in the parish and in the school and had become a very popular figure.³⁵ Little did they know at that time that he would be returning in two years.



1931 Boys' basketball team. Top Row: Stanley Amborski, Edward Mackowiak, Louis Mackowiak, Casimir Mackowiak; Aloysius Szymanski, Clement Kwapis, Father Kaminski; Bottom Row: Louis Kierczynski, Edward Jozwiak, Walter Krzemien, Ernest Szymanski; Seated on floor: Harry Marcenkowski.



1934 Girls' basketball team. Top Row: Pearl Butka, Eleanore Dipzinski, Ellen Lynch, Evelyn Lynch, Elizabeth Piasecki; Bottom Row: Margaret Mackowiak, Julia Kwapis, Viola Kondratowicz, Louise Kwapis, Emilia Kwapis

CHAPTER FIVE

Broadening Horizons, 1936-1962

Leadership of Father Francis Kaminski

Father Kaminski was greeted warmly upon his return to St. Mary on August 22, 1935, replacing Father Francis J. Kupinski, who had served as assistant for three months after the transfer of Father John Bozek in May to Sacred Heart Parish, Grand Rapids. A few months later, on December 27, 1935, Monsignor Ponganis announced his resignation as pastor. The stroke he had suffered the preceding April had compounded already serious health problems, and as he completed his fiftieth year in the priesthood, he relinquished the responsibilities of pastor to Father Kaminski. Monsignor Ponganis remained in residence at St. Mary until his death on January 1, 1943.¹

Father Francis Kaminski was born on January 4, 1900, in Elgiszewo, Poland (German-occupied), the oldest of eight children of Francis and Johanna Jastrzemski Kaminski. The family, then including a second son and a daughter, emigrated to Ludington, Michigan, in May of 1908. Five more daughters were later born to Mr. and Mrs. Kaminski. Father Kaminski attended St. Stanislaus School in Ludington where he studied Polish, as well as English, his parents and he having spoken only German in their native land. The young man worked as a janitor at St. Stanislaus, earning \$5 a month during the summer and \$10 a month during the winter. He entered St. Joseph Seminary in Grand Rapids in 1916, where he remained for four years, completing the equivalent of the last two years of high school and the first two years of college. He pursued further studies in Montreal, including four years of theology at Le Grand Seminaire. He was ordained at St. Andrew Cathedral in Grand Rapids by Bishop Joseph B. Pinten on February 5, 1928. His first assignment, as noted in Chapter IV, was that of assistant pastor at St. Mary, Gaylord, in March 1928.²

Having spent five years at St. Mary, Father Kaminski felt very much at home as he began his work as pastor. By 1936, the economy of the nation had improved. New Deal measures to provide direct relief, create jobs, initiate business recovery, stabilize banking, and in-

crease prices of farm products had begun to show results. The improvement that the Gaylord area experienced was reflected in parish finances, as total receipts in 1936 were \$9,786, compared with \$6,738 just two years earlier. Relief from grave financial anxieties allowed for a few years of relative stability in the lives of parishioners before the onset of World War II and the remarkable changes that came afterwards.

As in the Church at large, traditional liturgical and devotional practices prevailed in St. Mary Parish. There were some changes, however, in parish societies. The role of the St. Stanislaus and St. Michael Societies as mutual aid organizations had changed, especially with the advent of the Federal Social Security program. Membership in these societies had declined sharply since 1930, and their activities had practically ceased. The organization of the Knights of Columbus Council #2781 on May 27, 1937, was a significant event leading to the revitalization of activities for Catholic men in the Gaylord area. This organization, which had been established nationally in 1882 and had become popular in many parts of the nation long before the Council was organized in Gaylord, had some of the same goals and practices as the older societies but greater emphasis on service to others. The tradition of support of individuals and groups in need and the sponsoring of social activities became well established during the first year. The charter members of the Council were: Reverend Father Francis Kaminski; Edward I. Lynch; John J. Beeler; Louis Dipzinski; John F. Noa; James P. Holewinski; Anthony F. Noa; Frank J. Noa; Paul Swantek; Harry E. Marcenkowski; Roman Kujawa; Albert F. Schotte; Bernard J. Smith; Edward Dennis; John F. Czarkowski; Edward A. Jozwiak; Sylvester W. Kobylczak; Edward E. Dreffs; Edward G. Walsh; Jacob Matusik; Walter S. Noa; Dr. William J. Jonecek; William J. Holewinski; John C. Amthor; Edward F. Borowiak; Alex E. Czarkowski; John George Marcenkowski; Walter Swantek; and Michael A. Slivinski. Offi-



Father Francis Kaminski

ten looked upon as the women's counterpart of the K. of C. The first officers, installed on June 24, 1937, were:⁴

REGENT	Mrs. Gladys Beeler
VICE-REGENT	Mrs. Frank Noa
HONORARY PAST REGENT	Mrs. Walter Nelson
CHANCELLOR	Mrs. Blanche Kowaleski
CUSTODIAN	Mrs. Hazel McClelland
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Miss Monica Kondratowicz
TREASURER	Mrs. Rose Noa
SCRIBE	Miss Helen Spreeman
RECORDING SECRETARY	Miss Rose Kondratowicz
TRUSTEES	Mrs. Helen Holewinski, Catherine Stark, Mrs. Ed- ward Lynch
MUSICIAN	Mrs. Lovelace
MONITOR	Mrs. Rose Kwapis
FIRST GUIDE	Margaret McCoy
SECOND GUIDE	Anna Dennis
INSIDE GUARD	Mrs. Martha Gwisdala
OUTSIDE GUARD	Mrs. John Marcenkowski
BANNER BEARER	Miss Violet Matusik

Still another major development in the matter of parish societies came in 1939 when women of several parishes in northwestern Lower Michigan met at St. Mary, Gaylord, on March 20 to organize a district of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.⁵ This event was part of an effort begun by the National Catholic Welfare Conference as early as 1920 to organize and direct activities of lay women for the good of the Church and for the women's own spiritual, social, and educational welfare. The movement did not become popular until the late 1930s, at which time bishops throughout the nation began to take leadership in establishing the organization in their dioceses. Parish, regional, and diocesan structures were capped at the national level by the National Council of Catholic Women, which provided information and suggestions for activities in the fields of religion, education, family life, social action, and international relations; it also sponsored programs, national conventions, regional institutes, and conferences.⁶ The organizational efforts in 1939 met with remarkable success and opened a new chapter in the lives of Catholic women, whose intellectual horizons were broadened and whose opportunities to look beyond their own small localities were enhanced.

The parishes represented at the March 20, 1939 meeting were: St. Mary, Gaylord, St.

cers for the first year, 1937-1938, were:³

CHAPLAIN	Father Francis Kaminski
GRAND KNIGHT	Edward Lynch
DEPUTY GRAND KNIGHT	John Beeler
CHANCELLOR	Joseph Latuszek
RECORDER	Edward Walsh
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	B. Smith
TREASURER	John Holewinski
LECTURER	Walter Noa
ADVOCATE	Walter Swantek
WARDEN	A. Noa
INSIDE GUARD	Edward Dreffs
OUTSIDE GUARD	John Marcenkowski
TRUSTEE—1 YEAR	Father Kaminski
TRUSTEE—2 YEAR	Paul Swantek
TRUSTEE—3 YEAR	Frank Noa

On June 24, 1937, some women of the parish organized the Our Lady of Grace Circle of the Daughters of Isabella, an organization of-

Thomas, Elmira; St. Mary, Grayling; St. Anthony, Mancelona; St. Joseph, East Jordan; St. Mary, Charlevoix; St. Matthew, Boyne City; St. Joseph, Roscommon; and Holy Cross, Beaver Island. The group elected the following officers for the district: President, Mrs. Walter Nelson of Gaylord; Vice-Presidents, Mrs. John Beeler and Mrs. Joseph Borowiak of Gaylord, Mrs. Thomas Cassidy of Grayling, and Mrs. Lucy Bover of Boyne City; Secretary, Miss Monica Kondratowicz of Gaylord; Treasurer, Mrs. Louis Strauss of Mancelona. Further organizational work took place on June 13, 1939, with the formation of a parish unit of the D.C.C.W. Officers elected for St. Mary were: Mrs. Walter Kowaleski, President; Mrs. John Holewinski, Vice-President; Mrs. Rose Kwapis, Treasurer; and Mrs. John Amthor, Secretary. At that same meeting, the group established committees to carry out the work of the N.C.C.W.; these committees were: Organization and Development; Extension of Religious Education; Committee on Youth; Library and Literature; Press and Publications; Shrines and Homes; Hospitality; Social Service; and Legislation.⁷

The improvement in parish finances by 1937 made it possible to undertake improve-

ments in the church building. During June and July of 1937 the interior was redecorated and some minor repairs were made on the outside.⁸

Another building project was forced on the parish in 1939-1940 following a fire in the convent. At about 5:00 p.m. on November 26, 1939, Sister Florian Kaiser discovered the fire, evidently caused by a defective chimney, alerted the other sisters, and called the fire department. There was some delay before the firemen arrived because, as the sister who wrote the annals described it, "This being deer-hunting season, every mother's son of them was out in the woods. The only help obtainable was men from the restaurants and such places around town."⁹ The fire was brought under control by 8:00 p.m., but the loss was almost total. Some furniture and clothes were salvaged but all were water-soaked. The building and furniture were covered by insurance, but the sisters' personal belongings were not. The Knights of Columbus sponsored a benefit card party in January to help replace what the sisters had lost.¹⁰

The sisters found housing in the Leonard home, one and one-half blocks east of the school. A new convent building was started



Interior of the second St. Mary Church

on December 6 and was ready for occupancy on April 30, 1940. At a cost of \$12,500, the new building had three floors and provided space for eight occupants.¹¹

The growing need for additional space for meetings and other activities of parish societies was recognized at this time, but it was not until the summer of 1946 that the parish was able to respond to this need. The men volunteered their services in digging a full basement under the church, bolstering it with steel pillars and girders, and pouring a concrete floor. The new space included a kitchen with modern equipment and an area that could be used for a dining hall as well as for meetings. The former parish hall, originally the first church, was sold for \$600, dismantled, and rebuilt as a house in Johannesburg.

World War II was the major reason for the delay in providing the new church hall. As the decade of the 1940s opened, the people of Gaylord as well as those elsewhere in the nation were following the progress of the war in Europe, which had begun on September 1, 1939, with the invasion of Poland by Germany from the west and Russia from the east. Given the Polish origins of most of the St. Mary parishioners, this event was particularly devastating and stirred overwhelming sympathy for Poland and her French and British allies. Most Americans hoped that the United States would not become directly involved; but prospects for remaining neutral faded rapidly as Hitler's Germany overran France and the Low Countries in the spring of 1940 and as Japan, allied to Germany by treaty, took advantage of opportunities to expand its power in China and Southeast Asia. President Franklin D. Roosevelt gradually led the nation into providing extensive material support for the Allies and assistance of the United States Navy in convoying supplies part way across the Atlantic. He succeeded in getting Congress to pass a bill in September 1940 to draft men into the Army, thus preparing for America's own defense and for a possible future offensive role. He sought to extract from the Japanese a promise not to aid Germany in case the United States went to war with her. By December 1941 negotia-



Top right: Old Convent after fire, November 1939. Center right: New Convent under construction. Bottom right: New Convent completed, April 1940

tions with the Japanese had reached a stalemate, and war seemed more and more imminent. The President had been convinced as early as 1940 that the United States would eventually have to enter the war if Hitler were ever to be defeated; but he was troubled by strong opposition to intervention on the part of some groups. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, ended this opposition, shocking the nation into a state of unity that nothing else could have provided.

Support for the war from the people of Gaylord was quickly forthcoming, especially after word reached them in February 1942 that Ralph Holewinski, a 1937 graduate of St. Mary High School, had been taken prisoner by the Japanese at Wake Island.¹² The number of young people serving in the Armed Forces increased steadily, as those enlisting were added to those who were drafted. By May of 1943 there were 150 men and women from St. Mary Parish in the Services, a fact that was formally commemorated in late May with the dedication of a Service Flag with 150 stars.¹³ The people of the parish and some of the high school students purchased war bonds, and elementary school children used their savings for defense stamps. In 1943-44, an astonishing total of \$32,000 was subscribed throughout the school for the Fourth Bond Drive.¹⁴ In June 1943, the ultimate price of war was brought home to the people of Gaylord as word came that Aleck Smolarz, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Smolarz, had been killed in action "on the North American Continent" (probably in the Aleutian Islands).¹⁵

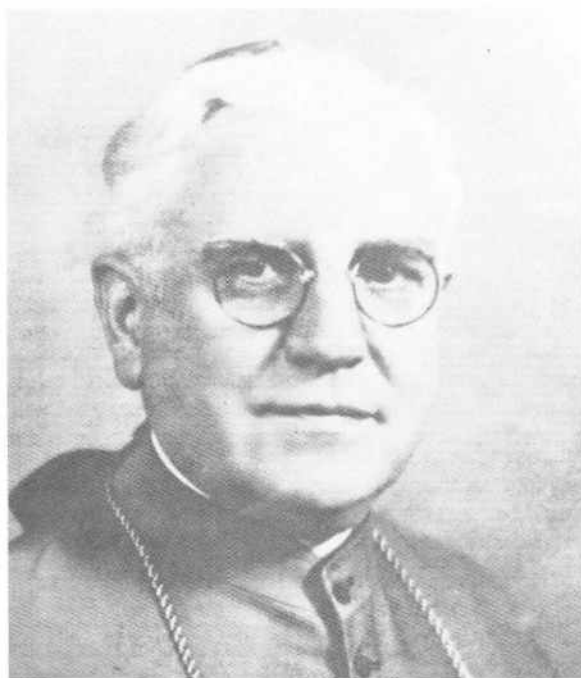
Among events unrelated to the war during these years was the death of Monsignor Simon Ponganis on January 1, 1943, at the age of 84, of complications following pneumonia. Bishop Joseph C. Plagens of Grand Rapids (he had succeeded Bishop Pinten after the latter's resignation in November 1940) was the chief celebrant of the funeral Mass at St. Mary Church on January 5. Among the priests who assisted were Father Kaminski, serving as Deacon, and Monsignor Thomas L. Noa, who preached the sermon. Bishop Plagens spoke after the Mass, lauding Monsignor Ponganis, especially for his love of people.¹⁶

Bishop Plagens died on March 31, 1943, having served a little more than two years as Bishop of Grand Rapids. Monsignor Noa, a

familiar figure to the people of Gaylord because of his visits to his brothers who lived in Gaylord, was designated administrator of the diocese until a new bishop was appointed.¹⁷ Bishop Francis J. Haas was bishop Plagens successor, being installed on September 26, 1943.

The end of World War II in August 1945 was greeted with celebration and thanksgiving in Gaylord, as it was throughout the nation. Once the report of Japan's surrender had been confirmed in the evening of August 14, there was pandemonium in the streets, as townspeople and residents of rural areas converged, making noise with whatever instrument was available. Some people gathered at the Honor Roll on the courthouse ground to note the names of men and women who would be coming home and praying for those who had lost their lives. Services of thanksgiving were held in the churches.¹⁸ A kind of euphoria prevailed for several weeks before some of the harsher realities of postwar adjustment came to be felt.

In general, the fifteen years from 1945 to 1960 were years of growth and prosperity, a time of remarkable advances in science and technology and of changes in occupational patterns. It was hardly a peaceful time, because there was continuing concern over events such as the Cold War, the Korean War, the Hungarian Revolution, crises in the



Joseph C. Plagens, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1940-1943



Francis J. Haas, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1943-1953

Middle East, the development of nuclear bombs, civil rights episodes at Montgomery and Little Rock, and the Soviet launching of Sputnik. The Church in the United States experienced growth, not only in terms of numbers but also in confidence, as some of the insecurities that had been engendered by immigrant experience had now been overcome.

Most of the above developments in the nation and in the Church had their counterparts in the Gaylord area. The population of Otsego County increased from 5,827 to 7,545 between 1940 and 1960, most of which increase occurred after World War II. The changing economy was reflected in the decline in the proportion of farm families from approximately 40% in 1940 to about 14% in 1960. Occupations such as construction work, motor vehicle sales and service, health related services, public administration, and management of restaurants, hotels, and motels became increasingly important.¹⁹ The increase in tourism, which would continue to contribute to the growth of Otsego County, helped to account for some of the shifts in occupation.

These changes had implications for St. Mary Parish. The number of families increased from 250 in 1945 to 430 in 1950. By this time, too, tourists were beginning to swell

the crowds at Sunday Masses during the summer. Beginning with the assignment of Father Edward Bielskas in 1947, Father Kaminski had an assistant pastor to help him meet the need for more Masses and other demands associated with the increase in parish population. Father Bielskas remained until 1950. Other assistants who followed until the 1960s were Fathers Leo Zielinski, 1950-1954; Michael Kirkilas, 1954-1955; Hugh McDonald, 1955; and Eugene Golas, 1956-1962. Throughout the 1950s, Father Kaminski regularly requested permission from the Apostolic Delegate for himself and his assistant to "trinate," that is, to offer three Masses on Sundays.²⁰ Beginning in 1955, sermons were no longer given in Polish.

The combination of the postwar "baby-boom" and the closing of small rural schools in Otsego County led to a dramatic increase in enrollment in St. Mary School from 195 to 472 in 1960 (approximately two-thirds in the grade school and one-third in the high school).²¹ The pressure on space and facilities led Father Kaminski to begin planning in 1949 for expansion of the school building, a project that was commended by Fred G. Stevenson, the High School Visitor from the University of Michigan in his letter of March 31, 1949: "If there is a prospect of continued growth of the school, as there seems to be, an addition to the building is necessary. I hope Father Kaminski's plan for an addition may be put into effect."²²

The parish had already begun a major

*Population of Otsego County 1880-1980	
Census Year	Population
1880	1,974
1890	4,272
1900	6,175
1910	6,552
1920	6,043
1930	5,554
1940	5,827
1950	6,435
1960	7,545
1970	10,422
1975	13,456
1980	14,993

*United States Census Reports for years indicated.

project of rebuilding the steeple and bell tower and providing a new roof on the church. This project, which was completed in October 1949, cost about \$38,000.²³ The need to defray the costs of this renovation, to begin to accumulate funds for the new school, and to develop adequate plans, postponed the beginning of construction for a few years. After employing McCready and Sons as contractor, the parish held a ground-breaking ceremony in May 1953 for the addition of eight high school classrooms and a gymnasium.²⁴ The project was near enough to completion by the end of May 1954 that the high school students could help with the moving into the new section before they left for summer vacation. Bishop Allen J. Babcock, who had become Bishop of Grand Rapids on March 23, 1954 (Bishop Haas had died August 29, 1953), officiated at the dedication of the new building on October 20, 1954.²⁵

The cost of the building and its new furnishings was approximately \$300,000. Almost one-third of this amount was covered by donations and fund-raising projects before and during construction; but it proved necessary for the parish to enter into short-term borrowing from the diocese and from local lenders to cover the balance. The generosity of parishioners made it possible to pay these debts in full by the end of 1957.²⁶

The increase in enrollment necessitated an increase in staffing during the 1950s, a staffing need that was met through employment of lay teachers (Mrs. Anna Nelson and Mrs. John Amthor were among the first lay teachers in the elementary school, beginning in 1951). The Grand Rapids Dominican Congregation was unable to provide more sisters because all of the schools staffed by the congregation were experiencing similar growth. Father Kaminski wrote frequently to Mother Victor Flannery, asking for additional sisters. Mother Victor's replies were always polite and showed concern about the needs, but she was unable to make definite commitments to increase the number of sisters assigned to the school, given similar demands from all quarters. She said in one letter: "I am trying to break them in two now to spread them around."²⁷

While the number of sisters could not be increased, those who were teaching were developing their professional competence through attendance at teachers' institutes and



Allen J. Babcock, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1954-1969

other conferences during the school year and through advanced studies during the summer. The principals of the school throughout the 1940s and 1950s—Sister Isadora Madry, Sister Robert Donahue, Sister Gervase Miller, and Sister Alphonse Mary (Helen) LaValley—strongly encouraged these activities.²⁸

The concerns related to staffing paled into insignificance when the elementary school burned on November 30, 1960. The fire, which may have started in a box of wastepaper near the rear exit, was discovered at about 10:50 a.m. Father Eugene Golas, the assistant pastor, who was teaching a class in the high school, went from room to room in the grade school, alerting the teachers, who were able to escort all of the 365 children safely out of the building. The local fire fighters, aided by the Grayling fire department, brought the fire under control by 1:00 p.m.; but the building was a total loss. The anxiety and discouragement over the destruction of the school building was mitigated by gratitude that no lives had been lost and by the kindness shown by the people of Gaylord and other communities. Reverend Jim Williams of the Congregational Church offered space for classes; Reverend Guenther Branstner of the Methodist Church offered to assist in any way he could. Administrators at the local public schools and at Catholic schools in Grayling,

Charlevoix, and West Branch offered books, equipment, and supplies.²⁹ Temporary locations for classes were established in the high school building.

Hardly had the ashes cooled than men of the parish and other volunteers began clearing the rubble in anticipation of rebuilding. The winter months and the need for careful planning deferred the beginning of construction until August 1961, at which time the contractor, McCready and Sons, began work on the fourteen-room building. Insurance on the old building provided \$80,500 of the total cost of approximately \$285,000; the parish received permission from the chancellor of the diocese to borrow the balance of the funds from Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit.³⁰ Students and teachers continued to get along throughout the 1961-1962 school year with the improvised classrooms of the preceding spring. The only possibly favorable

thing about it was the relief everyone felt in moving into the new facility in September 1962. Bishop Babcock blessed the new building on September 19 and the school held open house on October 28.³¹

By this time, Father Kaminski had served at St. Mary Parish for almost thirty-three years of the nearly thirty-five years of his priesthood. He had gained the respect and affection of the people of the parish and those in the larger community. They did not take him for granted but found frequent occasions for paying tribute to him. His ordination anniversary on February 5 was generally celebrated each year, with special emphasis at certain times, such as the Silver Anniversary in 1953. A quiet observance was held on the actual anniversary date. A public celebration on Sunday, May 3, included special recognition at the morning Mass at which Bishop Noa (he had been named bishop of the Mar-



December 1, 1960: Six-year-old Ann Huff giving Monsignor Kaminski 26¢ in savings to help rebuild the school after the fire



New Grade School completed in 1962

quette Diocese on March 19, 1946) delivered the sermon and a banquet at 5:00 p.m., at which many tributes were offered.³² Another occasion of celebration came in the summer of 1956 when Pope Pius XII designated Father Kaminski as Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. Bishop Noa presided at the investiture on July 29, which was followed by an open house for the people of the community as well as the parish.³³ Still another honor came in the fall of 1959 when a visit to Rome with Bishop Noa pro-

vided Monsignor Kaminski with the opportunity of an audience with Pope John XXIII (see picture, below).

Several months previous to this audience, the Holy Father had announced his intention to hold an ecumenical council. The announcement was greeted with enthusiasm for the most part throughout the Church; but few people had any idea at that time of the impact the council would have on the Catholic Church and on the world in general.



Pope John XXIII and Monsignor Kaminski, Fall of 1959

CHAPTER SIX

Years of Change and Renewal

1962-1971

The major event in Church history in the 1960s was Vatican Council II. Long anticipated since Pope John's announcement of it in January 1959, the Council opened in Rome on October 11, 1962. During that fall and winter and at sessions the succeeding three years, the bishops of the world, assisted by their *periti*, examined every facet of the Church—its nature, membership, and mission; its government and its liturgy; its relations internally as affecting priests, religious, and laity; its external relations with other Christians, non-Christians, the secular state, and the world. In general, the basic dogmas underlying these matters were reaffirmed; but ways of interpreting them through liturgy, instruction, action, and discipline were substantially altered. The wide publicity given the proceedings stimulated interest throughout the world, creating a variety of fears and expectations; some people thought that all that they held dear was being challenged, while others hoped that a radical transformation was at hand.*

The first major document to receive approval was the Constitution on the Sacred

Liturgy. A vote taken on the preliminary draft before the close of the first session was overwhelmingly favorable; and the Document was formally adopted and promulgated the following year on December 4, 1963. The work of various liturgical conferences in the 1950s and actions of Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII had already brought changes in liturgical practices. This was especially true of the liturgy of Holy Week, in which changes had begun as early as 1952 and had been extended in 1956 to include the restoration of the procession as a major part of the liturgy for Palm Sunday; the offering of Mass in the evening of Holy Thursday; the inclusion of a Communion Service at the Good Friday liturgy; and the holding of Holy Saturday Services in the evening. These changes restored an order to the liturgy used in the early Church that corresponded more closely to the actual events of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. Still further alterations pre-dating Vatican Council II were changes in the laws governing the Eucharistic fast, permission for evening Masses on First Fridays and Holy Days (granted to St. Mary

*The Documents of Vatican Council II and the dates of promulgation were:

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy	December 4, 1963
Decree on the Media of Social Communication	December 4, 1963
Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (<i>Lumen Gentium</i>)	November 21, 1964
Decree on Ecumenism	November 21, 1964
Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite	November 21, 1964
Declaration on Christian Education	October 28, 1965
Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions	October 28, 1965
Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church	October 28, 1965
Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life	October 28, 1965
Decree on Priestly Training	October 28, 1965
Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity	November 18, 1965
Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation	November 18, 1965
Declaration on Religious Freedom	December 7, 1965
Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests	December 7, 1965
Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church	December 7, 1965
Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>)	December 7, 1965



Convent chapel as it looked in the 1960s

in June 1957), revision of the liturgical calendar, and inauguration of dialogue Masses (first celebrated at St. Mary on June 5, 1960.)¹

Among the significant changes made by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy to emphasize the centrality of the Eucharist was the use of the vernacular at Mass. Throughout the United States, the bishops coordinated their efforts to prepare for this change, awaiting official translations and giving instructions on ways of preparing the people. The first Sunday of Advent, November 29, 1964, was set as the mandatory date for use of the vernacular missal in parishes, a date for which the sisters' annalist at St. Mary Convent noted: "We are having the full liturgical changes in the Mass."² Changes related to the other sacraments and to Church music were forthcoming in the years following Vatican Council II, as the directives from Chapter III of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy were expanded, promulgated, and implemented. The restoration of the catechumenate and developments in the rites of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, Ordination, religious profession, and funerals would touch the lives of all the people of St.

Mary Parish, as well as those of Catholics throughout the world.³

On June 3, 1963, less than a year after he had opened the Council, Pope John died. His death saddened the whole world and brought tributes from every corner of the globe. In the four and one-half years of his reign he had begun building bridges across the chasms that divided nations and peoples; he had inspired within the Church an "opening of windows" to the world, a posture that the work of Vatican Council II was beginning to reflect. It fell to the lot of Pope Paul VI to guide the project that his predecessor had set in motion.

During the third session of the Council in the fall of 1964, the bishops completed the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, a document central to Vatican Council II. Other constitutions, decrees, and declarations extended elements that were contained implicitly or explicitly in the Constitution on the Church. Among those other documents, some of the most significant ones for parishes, directly or indirectly, in addition to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy already noted, were the Declaration on Christian Education, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, and the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life. The Decree on Eucumenism, which dealt with relations between Catholics and other Christians, and the Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions seemed not to have had as much significance for the people of Gaylord as they did for many people elsewhere.

The Declaration on Christian Education with its emphasis on the responsibility of parents for the education of their children, the importance of catechetical instruction, the special role of the Catholic school, and the importance of teachers—all of these topics served to affirm much of what St. Mary parishioners already held. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity also made explicit what was probably already implicit in the lives of the people—the conviction that all their works somehow redounded to the honor and glory of God and the realization that they owed active participation to their parish. Before Vatican Council II, however, responsibility of the laity in a collegial role had not been emphasized. The Dogmatic Constitution

on the Church made specific reference to this obligation as follows: "By reason of the knowledge, competence, or pre-eminence which they have, the laity are empowered—indeed sometimes obliged—to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage, and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who, by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ."⁴ The collegial role of the laity began to be implemented during the mid-sixties through creation of school boards and in the 1970s through the establishment of parish councils.

Another document of the Council that, indirectly at least, had important consequences for the Church in the United States was the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life. This document needs to be seen in the context of changes that were occurring in both secular and religious spheres throughout the world during the 1960s. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, people of developing nations struggled to catch up to the rest of the world in political, military, and economic power. The major world powers continued to exploit these tensions in the 1960s as they had done earlier; Southeast Asia became a major battleground in this testing of nerve. Within the United States, technological advances and social change tended to disrupt normal patterns of living. Various causes, such as opposition to the war in Vietnam, Draft Resistance, Civil Rights, Free Speech, and Women's Rights, found enthusiastic proponents and opponents. The children of the post-World War II "baby-boom" had reached college age and flocked into institutions in larger percentages, as well as larger numbers, than ever before, given the upward social and economic mobility fostered by New Frontier and Great Society programs. Many of the reform efforts in colleges and elsewhere took on religious overtones, as reform adherents attacked the immorality of war, especially as it was being carried on in Southeast Asia, racial discrimination, injustices based on sex, exploitation by Big Business, and the spoliation of the environment. The assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy during the 1960s also affected the

responses of young people in the United States.

The changes in the Church associated with Vatican Council II owed much to these profound alterations in human affairs. The Church had always been affected by a changing world, despite its efforts at times to seal itself off from it. In the 1960s under the prodding of Pope John and through conscious effort at Vatican Council II, it was opening itself more fully to the secular world. The combination of civil disturbance, foreign war, economic and social change, and changing regulations of the Church created tensions for most Catholics. The impact on religious congregations was serious. Invited, even commanded, to review the structure and renew the spirit of their religious communities, men and women in these congregations undertook personal and institutional self-examination and began adapting their regulations. Many of them discovered that their decision to enter the vowed life had not been one made maturely, and they sought dispensation from their vows. Similar responses occurred among the diocesan clergy in some places, and the issue of clerical celibacy exacerbated other problems. Impatience with the pace of change and the questioning of authority, attitudes manifested in society as a whole, also served as unsettling factors.

At the same time that the number of those leaving religious orders and the diocesan clergy was increasing, applications to novitiates and seminaries declined drastically. The confusion within religious orders may have acted as a deterrent to prospective members. The desire to serve others, a motivation that inspired many young people to embrace religious life or the priesthood, could now be satisfied in other ways, given the opportunities open to young and old for helping people in foreign lands or in the United States—projects sponsored by the Church through its lay volunteer associations and by the government through programs such as Peace Corps and VISTA. Given the pace of change since World War II, changes stemming from computer technology and its impact on communication, transportation, business procedures, and other ways of living, young men and women approaching adulthood in the 1960s had never known a world without flux; this made it difficult for them to make a commitment to a vowed life, whether in a re-

ligious order, in the priesthood, or in marriage.⁵

Since teaching was the major work of many religious congregations, the decline in their membership made even more difficult the already serious problem of financing the schools. This was true in Gaylord as well as elsewhere in the United States. Actually, the number of sisters assigned to St. Mary School remained fairly constant throughout the 1960s, but the increase in enrollment required additional staffing that could not be met by the Grand Rapids Dominican Congregation. Between 1962 and 1971, enrollment rose from 537 to 707; the number of lay teachers increased from 7 to 16. There were eight sisters teaching in the school each year from 1962 to 1968, a number determined in part by the size of the convent. After the addition of a new wing to the convent was completed in 1968, two more sisters were assigned. Ten sisters would be the maximum number in the school, though enrollment continued to increase for the next several years, reaching 800 in 1974.⁶

The financial consequences for the parish in its efforts to support the school were serious. Salary costs rose dramatically, chiefly because of the increase in the number of lay teachers but also due in part to the need of higher salaries for the sisters to support rising costs that their congregation had to meet. As the school began showing yearly operating deficits and parish contributions no longer covered the deficits, the school board, which had been established in 1966, considered the possibility of charging tuition.⁷ In 1969-1970 a tuition plan was introduced, one in which each family with one or more children in school was charged \$100.

A bright spot appeared on the horizon during the summer of 1970 when the Michigan Legislature passed the "Educaid" or "Parochiaid" bill, which promised financial aid to non-public schools. This would be accomplished through a purchase of services arrangement whereby public money would be used to pay a portion of the salaries of lay teachers who were teaching non-religious subjects in private or parochial schools. In anticipation of implementing the legislation, the state had appropriated \$22,000,000 for 1971-1972.⁸ The hope of parents and other parishioners for much needed relief from the burdens of supporting the increasing costs of

their schools was not to be realized. Opponents of Parochiaid forced a referendum on it in the November election in the form of a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would prohibit (a) use of public funds to aid any non-public elementary or secondary school; (b) use of public funds, except for transportation, to support the attendance of any students or the employment of any persons at non-public schools or at any other location or institution where instruction is offered in whole or in part to non-public school students; and any payment, credit, tax benefit, exemption or deduction, tuition voucher, subsidy, grant or loan of public monies or property, directly or indirectly, for the above purposes. Throughout the fall of 1970 there was intensive effort by both supporters and opponents to win votes for their position. Opposition to Proposal C, as it would be labeled on the ballot, came not only from Catholics but also from many other people in Gaylord who were concerned about the sweeping nature of the proposed amendment. The Editor of the *Herald Times* blamed the poor wording of Proposal C as making the issue explosive. The Superintendent of the Gaylord Public Schools concurred in that assessment, saying: "It seems inevitable and is most unfortunate that the longstanding spirit of mutual cooperation between Gaylord St. Mary and Gaylord Public Schools may be adversely affected by the controversy arising out of Proposal C. Since the proposal goes far beyond the issue of direct aid, patrons of St. Mary logically see it as a threat to their very existence, and the fact remains that only a future court decision can prove these fears to be right or wrong."⁹

At the November 3 election, Otsego County voters rejected Proposal C by a margin of 1,598 to 1,394; it was one of thirteen Michigan counties to defeat the proposal. However, the amendment passed in the state as a whole by a margin of almost 350,000 votes. The Gaylord Public School Board pledged to continue auxiliary services and the shared time program available to St. Mary School unless and until specifically ordered to discontinue them.

The major burden of financing the school thus remained with St. Mary parishioners. In February 1971, the school board sought direction through a questionnaire submitted to the members of the parish. The questions were as follows:¹⁰

- I. If it is not possible to retain both schools, do you favor closing (a) the high school; (b) the grade school?
- II. To increase funding, do you favor (a) an increase in tuition; (b) an annual fund drive for the school; (c) an increase in Sunday contributions; (d) other?
- III. If tuition is increased, should there be (a) a separate tuition for high school and grade school; (b) tuition assessed per family and per student?

Responses to the questionnaire showed overwhelming support for retaining both schools; an increase in tuition was recommended as the major means of additional support. On the basis of these findings the school board in April proposed an annual tuition of \$200 per family, plus \$10 for each student in the elementary school and \$25 for each high school student to a maximum of \$300 per family.¹¹

Aside from financing, there were other items of interest relating to the schools. Curricular opportunities for high school students were diversified by the inauguration in 1962 of a shared time program with Gaylord Community High School. Almost all St. Mary students participated in the program that allowed them to take certain classes at the public school. This also made it possible for St. Mary School to phase out the corresponding courses that it had been offering.¹²

Many activities that had become traditional in earlier decades persisted into the 1960s: student retreats; sodality meetings; May Crowning; Junior-Senior Banquet; dances; dramatic presentations; "Skip Day"; and commencement activities, including breakfast with the sisters after Baccalaureate Mass.¹³ Athletics continued to be the most popular of extra-curricular activities. The high school added football to its athletic program in 1967; and, although it took a while to field a winning team, parents and other parishioners took great interest in the program. Baseball continued to be a popular and often successful sports program. A girls' track team was organized in 1968, and girls' basketball was

revived in 1971. Boys' basketball, however, remained the sport of primary interest. The success or lack of it on the part of the varsity team was a matter of concern among people of the parish, especially the members of the Athletic Association. The issue became a heated one following a disappointing record in the 1968-1969 season, as pressure from the Athletic Association forced the resignation of the coaches, some of whom had also been teaching classes.¹⁴

More effective administration of the schools was made possible in 1961-1962 through the establishment of a separate principalship for the grade school. Sister Jean Catherine Bierscheid served in that position from 1961 to 1963, followed by Sister Michaela Schrems from 1963 to 1975. Sister Roch Alvesteffer succeeded Sister Alphonse Mary (Helen) LaValley as high school principal in 1962, serving until 1968. Sister Thaddeus Kowalinski was the next high school administrator for the period from 1968 to 1972. The Home and School Association, which had been organized in 1958 in keeping with diocesan directives, continued to function in the early 1960s as a forum for administrators, teachers, and parents to collaborate in their efforts to educate the children. The principle of collegiality promoted by Vatican Council II, as well as the experience gained through the Home and School Association, underlay the decision to organize a school board in 1966.¹⁵

The growth and diversification of the population of Otsego County, which was noted in Chapter V for the period from 1945 to 1960, continued as a characteristic of the 1960s, the 1970 census showing a population of 10,422 as compared with 7,545 in 1960. St. Mary Parish, which had been officially defined by Bishop Babcock in 1957 as encompassing all of Otsego County but a small section in the northwestern part, reflected this increase.¹⁶ A parish census conducted in 1967 showed a total of 859 families, about half of whom had moved into the parish since 1957.¹⁷ For the convenience of Catholic families living in the northern part of the county, Holy Redeemer Church at Vanderbilt was organized in July 1965 as a mission of St. Mary.¹⁸

The continuing growth in parish membership and the annual increase in the number of summer tourists led to the beginning of serious planning in 1969 for the building of a new church. In early March, Monsi-

gnor Kaminski announced that the Church Committee had undertaken this planning, saying: "We love this St. Mary's Church and we hate to give it up; but we need more room." While the site and the choice of architect were yet to be decided, the committee projected that the new church would be twice the size of the existing building, which seated 480. The plans would be subject to approval by a diocesan board.¹⁹ Implementation of the project was to be delayed for several years, as the parish worked through problems of school financing and as the creation of the new diocese of Gaylord with St. Mary as its cathedral parish changed the direction the planning would take.

Bishop Babcock died on June 27, 1969, and was succeeded on October 15, 1969, by Bishop Joseph M. Breitenbeck, who had served for four years as Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit. During the period 1962 to 1971, the following assistant pastors served at St. Mary: Fathers Robert Maternoski, 1962-1967; Paul Milanowski, 1965; Andrew P. Chrusciel, 1967-1968; Edward J. Mike, 1968; William Zink, 1968; Joseph Zaskowski, 1968-1969; Norman P. Droski, 1969; Vincent Kamarauskas, 1969-1970; and Daniel Quillin, 1970-1971.

Activities sponsored by parish societies and other Catholic organizations during the 1960s followed the patterns of the previous two decades. The associations established in the late 1930s—the Knights of Columbus, the Daughters of Isabella, and the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women—continued to provide leadership; and the Altar-Rosary Society, one of the oldest of the parish societies, remained active. The Knights of Columbus sponsored many functions for its members and their families—sports activities, picnics, dances—and engaged in fund-raisers, such as card parties, raffles, bingo, and smorgasbords, not only to provide a hall for K. of C. activities but also to support various charitable causes. The parish and the school were often beneficiaries of K. of C. donations, as well as Boysville and the Harbor Springs Indian School. A Fourth Degree Assembly was organized in October 1962 in conjunction with the Cheboygan Council. The Columbian Squires, an organization for young men, was established in 1964. The initial interest in it waned after a few years, and it was disbanded in 1970 (but was reactivated later).²⁰ The Our Lady of Grace Circle of the Daughters of

Isabella held annual bazaars to support its donations to the school and to other religious and charitable organizations. The Altar-Rosary Society continued its services in providing for the needs in the church sanctuary and in sponsoring small events, such as bake sales and raffles, to raise funds for the costs of altar linens, vestments, candles, and flowers. Major events, such as the fall festivals, were supported corporately by these groups or by the individuals within their membership.²¹

As St. Mary Parish moved into the decade of the 1970s, it had become a parish much different from the one that had existed ten years before—different in size; different in composition; different because of the changes in the lives of long-time residents, changes emanating from Vatican Council II and from the turmoil in society in the 1960s. Significant as these changes were, even more notable changes were to come as Gaylord became the see city of a new diocese and St. Mary became a cathedral parish.



Joseph M. Breitenbeck, Bishop of Grand Rapids, 1969—present



Pope Paul VI and Bishop Edmund C. Szoka on the occasion of one of Bishop Szoka's ad limina visits

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Cathedral Parish

1971-1980

News of the creation of the Diocese of Gaylord and of the appointment of its first bishop, Edmund C. Szoka, reached the hometown people on June 15, 1971, the word coming from the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Luigi Raimondi. At the same time, the Diocese of Kalamazoo was also established with Paul V. Donovan as the bishop designate. The Gaylord Diocese was to encompass the counties of Cheboygan, Emmet, Charlevoix, Otsego, Antrim, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, and Roscommon, which had formerly been part of Grand Rapids Diocese; and the counties Presque Isle, Montmorency, Alpena, Oscoda, Alcona, Ogemaw, and Iosco, formerly a part of the Saginaw Diocese. The Diocese of Kalamazoo was a product of annexation of Allegan and Barry Counties from Grand Rapids Diocese and of Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, Branch, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, and Calhoun Counties from Lansing Diocese. Other boundary changes switched Clare and Isabella Counties from the Grand Rapids Diocese to Saginaw Diocese and Washtenaw and Lenawee Counties from Detroit Archdiocese to Lansing Diocese (see map and chart of statistics, pp. 64-65).

The planning for the new dioceses had started in 1968. In response to concern expressed during Vatican Council II about the need for bishops to be close to the people, the bishops of Michigan established an ad hoc committee of three of their number to study the diocesan organization of Michigan. They were to consider such matters as population of the counties, number of Catholics, number of parishes, and distance of parishes from the diocesan see. The report of the ad hoc committee was forwarded to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, which in late 1969 approved it for referral to the Holy See through the Apostolic Delegate.¹ The Holy See acted favorably on the recommendations and in December 1970 recorded its action in *Annuario Pontificio*, the publication listing the official actions of the Pope.

When Bishop James A. Hickey, then Rector of the North American College in Rome, became aware of what was happening, he asked that further communication be halted. Having come from Michigan, where he had been party to the planning for the new dioceses, he was concerned that there had not been proper preparation for the announcement. He succeeded in preventing further distribution of the edition of *Annuario Pontificio* for the time being, and the public announcement was withheld until June. In the meantime, the bishops-designate for the two dioceses received their notifications. There was unhappiness among some of the laity about the process whereby the new dioceses had been created, one in which secrecy had prevailed and no consultation of the laity had been followed. In response to this criticism, John Cardinal Dearden, Archbishop of Detroit, explained that the process had begun as early as 1968, at which time there were no structures for such consultation.²

Bishop Edmund C. Szoka, son of Casimir and Mary Wolgat Szoka, was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on September 14, 1927. He attended St. Michael Elementary School in Muskegon and St. Joseph Seminary in Grand Rapids. He completed his college work at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit and then pursued studies in philosophy and theology at St. John Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 5, 1954, by Bishop Thomas L. Noa at St. Peter Cathedral in Marquette, Michigan. His first assignment was that of associate pastor at St. Francis Parish, Manistique, Michigan. From 1955 to 1957 and 1959 to 1962, he served as secretary to Bishop Noa and as chaplain of St. Mary Hospital in Marquette. He earned a degree in canon law at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, where he studied from 1957-1959. He became assistant chancellor of the Marquette Diocese in 1962, a position he held until 1970 when he was appointed chancellor. During that period he served one year as pastor of St. Pius Parish, Ishpeming, and seven years as pastor of

St. Christopher Parish in Marquette.³

July 20, 1971 was the official date of the establishment of the Diocese of Gaylord, as well as the date of the ordination and installation of Bishop Szoka. When he arrived in Gaylord, he was warmly greeted by Monsignor Kaminski, whose title was now Rector of St. Mary Cathedral (see picture, right). The official ceremonies, attended by 1,300 people, were held in St. Mary School gymnasium beginning at noon on July 20. John Cardinal Dearden was principal consecrator, assisted by Bishop Charles A. Salatka of Marquette and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph C. McKinney of Grand Rapids as co-consecrators. The Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Luigi Raimondi, was also in attendance. The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus from several councils served as Honor Guard. Priests of the diocese concelebrating with Bishop Szoka were: Monsignor Francis Kaminski, St. Mary, Gaylord; Monsignor Victor Gallagher, St. Mary, Grayling; Fathers Isidore Mikulski, St. Anne, Alpena; Ignatius O'Brien, St. Bernard, Alpena; Jerome Szydlowski, St. Matthew, Boyne City; Louis Van Bergen, St. Francis, Traverse City; Edwin Thome, Immaculate Conception, Traverse City; Ceslaus Klimowicz, St. Joseph, Manistee; Adolph Thillman, O.F.M., St. Francis, Petoskey; Linus Schrems, St. Anthony, Mackinaw City; Zigmunt Gaj, St. Ignatius, Rogers City; John Rushman, St. Joseph, East Tawas; James Suchocki, St. Joseph, West Branch; Francis Karl, St. Charles, Cheboygan; Earl Denay, St. Mary, Charlevoix; Thomas Dominiak, Indian River Shrine; and Leonard Gross, St. Francis, Traverse City. Judge Daniel F. Walsh was lector and commentator. Father David Gemuend of St. Francis Parish in Traverse City directed the music for a mixed choir of sixty voices. The organist was August Huybrechts, St. Francis, Petoskey. The ceremony included the laying on of hands by the consecrators and other bishops present; the placing of the Book of Gospels on the head of the bishop-elect; the prayer of consecration; the anointing; the investiture with ring, miter, and crozier. At the dinner at Hidden Valley following the installation, Father Ceslaus Klimowicz served as toastmaster. The speakers were Archbishop Raimondi, Cardinal Dearden, Father Louis Van Bergen, and Bishop Szoka.⁴

Bishop Szoka turned his attention immedi-

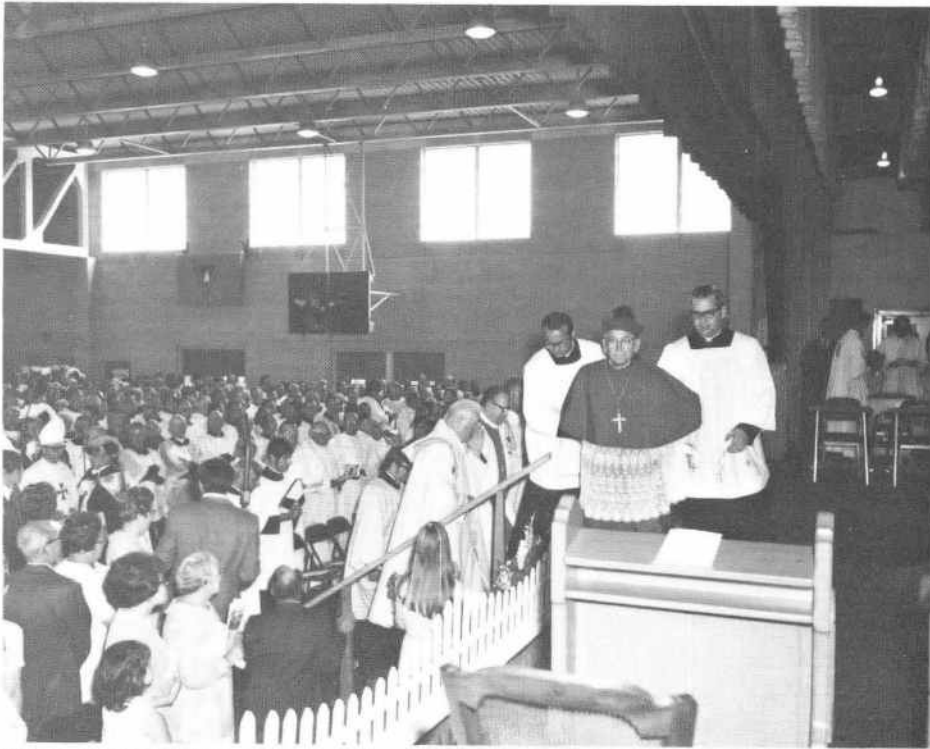


Monsignor Francis Kaminski and Bishop Edmund C. Szoka



Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Honor Guard

ately to the work of organizing the new diocese. He set up an office in St. Mary School. After residing for a short time at St. Mary Rectory, followed by a few weeks at the Sacramentine Monastery in Conway, he moved to 433 North Ohio Street in Gaylord. On September 1, he announced the establishment of a Department of Christian Education and the appointment of Father Thomas Neis, pastor of St. Mary Parish, Manistee, as Acting Superintendent of Education; and of Father Robert H. Bissot, pastor of St. Mary parish, Hannah, and Father Francis Partridge, pastor of St. Mary Parish, Cheboygan, as Acting Associate Superintendents. A letter from Bishop Szoka the same



Bishop Thomas L. Noa at ceremonies of ordination and installation of Bishop Edmund C. Szoka



John Cardinal Dearden, principal consecrator, imposes his hands upon Bishop Szoka; co-consecrators are Bishop Salatka to the Cardinal's right and Bishop McKinney to his left.

day announced his plans for a fall Confirmation tour.⁵ His next step was the establishment of a steering committee of priests to advise him on ways of organizing the diocese. Each priest was invited to list eight nominees in order of preference for such a committee. The members announced by the Bishop on October 29, 1971, were Monsignors Francis Kaminski and Victor Gallagher and Fathers E. F. Denay, Thomas Dominiak, I. J. Mikulski, Ignatius O'Brien, Jerome Szydlowski, Adolph Thillman, O.F.M., and Louis Van Bergen. A further announcement of November 1, 1971, reported the appointment of Father Ronald Gronowski as the Bishop's Executive Assistant. This same letter included the information that the Bishop had purchased for \$65,000 the eight-year-old building formerly known as "Teen Chalet" to be renovated for use as a diocesan office building. Funds for the purchase were available through doweries provided by the Grand Rapids and Saginaw Dioceses as part of the arrangement in establishing the two new dioceses.⁶

The Steering Committee for Diocesan Organization held its first meeting on November 3, 1971. Items for discussion were: the division of the diocese into regions; formation of a priests' senate; priests' salaries; a diocesan newspaper. At this meeting and others that followed, several decisions emerged, including the selection of a special edition of the *Catholic Weekly* of Saginaw as the diocesan newspaper; the organization of the diocese into seven geographical regions, in each of which the priests of the region would elect a vicar; the establishment of a presbyterial council in which all priests would be members and which would have an executive committee comprising the seven vicars, three elected members, and the Bishop.⁷ Many of these decisions reflected a need to reconcile differing procedures that had prevailed in the two dioceses from which the Gaylord Diocese had been formed and a desire to promote unity among the priests who had been drawn together from those same dioceses. The elections of vicars were completed by February 15, 1972, with the following results:⁸

Northeast Region:	Reverend Thomas Dominiak
Northwest Region:	Reverend Adolph Thillman, O.F.M.
East-Central Region:	Reverend Isidore Mikulski
West-Central Region:	Reverend Robert Bissot
Central Region:	Monsignor Victor Gallagher
Southeast Region:	Reverend James A. Suchocki
Southwest Region:	Reverend Ceslaus Klimowicz

Further organizational efforts included steps toward the formation of a sisters' council. At a meeting on January 30, 1972, to which all of the sisters of the diocese were invited, those present elected a steering committee to propose a structure for a council and to draft a constitution. The members of the committee were: Sister Lois Wozniak, R.S.M., Chairperson; Sister Rose Mary Charron, R.S.M.; Sister Hilda Sucher, R.S.M.; Sister Herman Marie, O.P.; and Sister Susan Ridley, O.P. By late spring the Committee had completed its work. The sisters adopted the proposed constitution and elected Sister Lois Wozniak as the first president of the Sisters' Council.⁹

In August of 1971, some of the women of the diocese who had been active in the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women when the area was part of the Grand Rapids Diocese sought and received Bishop Szoka's permission to establish a Gaylord D.C.C.W. By early fall they had organized their Council and had elected Mrs. Eileen Downey as president.¹⁰

The Bishop made further appointments in 1972, including those in August of Father David Gemuend as associate chancellor for general chancery matters, and of Father Ronald Gronowski as associate chancellor for communications and public relations. At the same time, Bishop Szoka made official, rather than acting, the positions of Fathers Neis, Bissot, and Partridge in the Department of Christian Education.¹¹ Still another appointment, one of particular interest to St. Mary Cathedral Parish, was made near the end of December when the Bishop designated Monsignor Kaminski as one of the vicars general for the diocese.¹²

As these organizational matters were progressing, the problems of space in St. Mary Church, now the "Little Cathedral," were becoming acute. The growth of population in Otsego County that had characterized the 1960s (see p. 46) had, if anything, become more dramatic in the early 1970s. In the first two years of the decade, the number of people increased by almost 1,200, and the population grew by another 1,800 in the next three years. Much of the increase was due to intrastate migration as concern over upheaval in urban areas to the south and east, especially the Detroit area, led people to move to rural regions in the north. Otsego County, already well-known as a tourist

area—fall and winter as well as summer—drew a substantial portion of these new residents. Success in the 1970s of new techniques for oil and gas exploration led to the development of energy firms in the County, thus improving employment opportunities for both old and new residents.¹³

Many of the new families who moved into Otsego County were Catholic and became members of St. Mary Parish (the Parish now encompassed all of Otsego County except a small section in the northwest that was part of Elmira Parish). During the decade of the 1970s, the number of families increased by 50% from 900 to 1350. From the standpoint of space alone, it was urgent that a new church be provided. The parish was also in need of improved facilities for meetings. The parish hall in the basement of the church that had been provided in 1946 was often not large enough nor flexible enough in its uses to provide for regular parish activities. These needs were summarized as follows in the brochure prepared for the fund-raising program that began in July 1974:¹⁴

A new church, hall, and rectory are long overdue. We are all aware of the tremendous overcrowded conditions in our present church. We know the toll that time and the elements have taken on our present church. We appreciate also the inadequacy of our church from the standpoint of the liturgical changes that have taken place. It has also been felt that we need a parish hall to better serve our people. Finally, we should have a new more adequate residence for our priests which will also serve as the parish administrative building.

The Church Committee, enlarged in 1973 by members appointed by Monsignor Kaminski, became the building committee; its members were: Leo Hickey, General Chairman; Fred Hooker; Albert Kassuba; Alex Kowaleski; Edward Kuras; John Mankowski; George Pсарis; Dr. James E. Robb; Anthony Zimbicki. Bishop Szoka took an active role in the planning also, though he sought to reinforce the concept that the building program was primarily a parish project. By the spring of 1974, the building committee had chosen the architectural firm of Mayotte, d'Haene, and Crouse of East Lansing, Michigan. The

property on which the Cathedral would be built lay northwest of the school grounds. Eleven acres of it had been purchased in 1959 from the NU-Way Supply Company; six more acres were donated in 1960 by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Mackowiak in memory of his parents and an additional parcel of six acres was purchased from them; six lots were added by purchase in 1966.¹⁵

In late June of 1974, the chief architect, Bernard J. Mayotte, submitted the architectural design for a church that would seat almost one thousand people, for the church hall that would adjoin it, and the rectory/administration building.¹⁶ As the stages of letting bids, choosing a general contractor and sub-contractors, and beginning the actual construction proceeded throughout the remainder of 1974, the parish began a fund-raising campaign. With the architectural design and projected costs at hand, the campaign, organized by the firm of John V. McCarthy and Associates of Detroit, was launched in July of 1974. The program leaders from the parish were: Monsignor Kaminski, Honorary Chairman; Leo Hickey, General Chairman; Lucille Duczkowski and Gene Niedzwiecki, Co-Chairpersons; and as Group Leaders, Stephanie Almon, Richard Beachnau, Betty Dembny, Richard Diebold, Terry Distel, Bernard Dreffi, Jean Dreffi, Marion Dreffi, Ted Dreffi, Angela Enders, Ralph Galbraith, Lewis Jensen, Mable Jensen, Lawrence Kassuba, William Kelly, Joe Makarewicz, Geraldine Norton, Dorothy Nowak, Ronald E. Peck, Doris Pсарis, George Pсарis, Clarence Purgiel, Raymond Slivinski, Roman Switalski, Pauline Switalski, Katherine Tomaski, Ken Tomaski, Ophelia Townsend, Richard Townsend, and Anthony Zimbicki. The original estimate of costs for the new church, hall, and rectory was \$950,000. Of that amount, the parish already had \$155,000 on hand and the diocese pledged \$25,000 a year for six years for a total of \$150,000. A balance of \$645,000 was optimistically set as the goal of the fund drive.¹⁷

As word was circulated about the cost of the project, several people wrote to Bishop Szoka to raise objection about the "million-dollar" cathedral. In responding, the Bishop noted that it was primarily a parish responsibility, that the parish had been planning a new church for several years, and that the \$150,000 from the diocese was only a modest

contribution.¹⁸

Construction on the three buildings proceeded well at first,* and the cornerstone of the Cathedral was blessed and laid on July 20, 1975, in a ceremony at which Bishop Szoka officiated (see pictures, p. 54). The fund-raising drive was also going well, as the total amount pledged for a three-year period reached the initial \$645,000 goal by July 1975, and payments on the pledges were on schedule. Unfortunately, the effects of inflation, a national and international phenomenon brought on by the oil crises in the mid-seventies, began to take their toll. Also, more detailed planning showed the need for a larger budget for interior appointments than had originally been projected. Finally, difficulties with the roof required replacement of the original materials and led to lengthy litigation with the general contracting firm.** Eventually, all of these problems required an increase in expenditures for construction from \$950,000 to \$1,680,000; the need for borrowing added interest charges of \$225,000. The increased financial burden that this represented for St. Mary Cathedral Parish was alleviated in part through additional contributions from the Diocese and some special gifts, such as donations from the priests of the Diocese. The total from these various sources, including the original diocesan pledge of \$150,000, was approximately \$400,000.¹⁹

Meanwhile, the building of the Cathedral neared completion. Mass was first offered in the new church on Saturday, May 8, 1976, and the dedication took place on Tuesday, July 25, 1976. The ceremonies included a Mass for the people at 10:30 a.m., concelebrated by John Cardinal Dearden, Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati, and Bishop Szoka; and the Mass of Dedication at 4:00 p.m., concelebrated by Bishop Szoka, the visiting bishops from Ohio and Michigan, including Bishop Thomas L. Noa, retired Bishop of Marquette, and Bishop

*The general contractor was William E. Schultz Company of Eastport, Michigan; Rambusch Studios of New York, with Robert E. Rambusch as designer, was chosen for interior appointments; the electrical contractor was Lancaster Electric Company of Gaylord; and Hector Bourie, Inc. of Cheboygan, Michigan, was the mechanical contractor.



Bishop Szoka, assisted by Father David Gemuend, presides at blessing of the cornerstone



Members of the Building Committee—George Psaris, Edward Kuras, Leo Hickey, Albert Kassuba, and John Mankowski—pose with Monsignor Kaminski and Bishop Szoka

James A. Hickey, Bishop of Cleveland; and Monsignor Kaminski and other priests of the Gaylord Diocese. Wayne Wyrembelski, who had recently joined the St. Mary parish staff as director of music and liturgy, conducted the choir. As part of the Liturgy of the Word, Cardinal Dearden gave a homily in which he stressed the unique place a cathedral holds among church edifices—as that which identifies a diocese, as a symbol and sign of the presence of a bishop, as the place in which the chair of the bishop (the “cathedra” from which he teaches) witnesses to unity of doctrine, and as the link through its bishop

**Eventually, St. Mary Cathedral Parish was awarded a settlement for roof replacement at a 20% cost to the architect and an 80% cost to the contractor. St. Mary assumed responsibility for 75% of the cost for the roof ventilation system, the architect for the remaining 25%.

"with all the other diocesan churches throughout the world, and uniquely with the Church of Rome and the Holy Father."²⁰

Following the homily, Archbishop Jean Jadot, Apostolic Delegate, presided at the dedication rite. After the congregation sang the Litany of the Saints, the Archbishop

poured chrism on the middle of the altar and on its four corners; at the same time four priests anointed the walls of the Cathedral in designated places. The relics were posited in the altar, followed by the incensing of the altar. At the conclusion of this part of the rite, the Liturgy of the Eucharist began.²¹



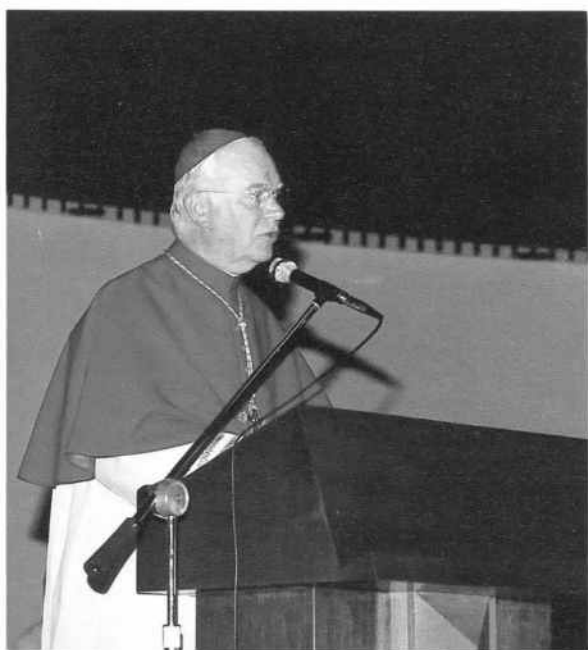
Aerial view of cathedral, hall and rectory as construction neared completion



Cathedral and Parish Hall



Interior of the Cathedral



John Cardinal Dearden delivering the homily at the Mass of dedication of the Cathedral



Wayne Wyrembelski directs the choir at the Mass of dedication



Father James Brucksch, Leo Koscielniak, Archbishop Jean Jadot, and Deacon John Ladd watch as Father David Gemuend posits the relics in the altar



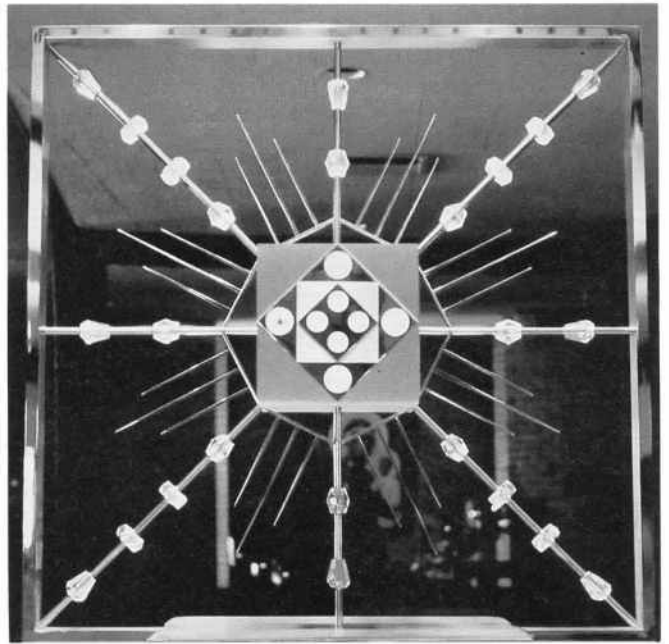
Father David Gemuend and Father Jim Holtz incensing the altar at the Mass of dedication



Speakers at the dinner following the dedication Mass on July 25, 1976, included Bishop Edmund C. Szoka, upper left; Monsignor Francis Kaminski above; and Leo Hickey, chairman of the building committee, lower left.



Part of the sanctuary with the Bishop's chair to the left



Tabernacle



Baptismal Font and Holy Oils



One of the Stations of the Cross

The day of dedication concluded with a dinner in a festive tent on the Cathedral grounds. Father Isidore Mikulski was master of ceremonies for the program. In reference to the "fifth Birthday party" theme, which several people had used, Father Milkuski noted that "five years ago we had a big party in Gaylord—a broke bishop and 80,000 people who didn't know each other."²² The program included brief remarks by Mrs. Ted Birgy, President of the D.C.C.W.; Sister Mary Ann Barrett, O.P., President of the Sisters' Council; Father Edwin Frederick, President of the Presbyterial Council; Leo P. Hickey, Chairman of the Building Committee; Monsignor Kaminski; Archbishop Bernardin; and Bishop Szoka.²³

St. Mary Cathedral Parish had much to be proud of and grateful for on the "fifth birthday" of the diocese. Some of the parishioners, however, felt nostalgic about moving from "Old St. Mary's" to the new church, a feeling that Helen Murdick, a local columnist, described in these words: "They have worshiped in 'old' St. Mary's for so many years . . . Their babes have been christened and confirmed and married in the Church with the steeple, and now this is a whole new chapter. Such times are not entirely easy . . ."²⁴

The following July (seemingly a favorite month for important events at St. Mary) Bishop Szoka officiated at the consecration and installation of the Cathedral bells. Some consideration had been given to transferring the bell from the old church, the one cast in 1884 for the first church, to the Cathedral, thus providing a continuity with the past; but ultimately that did not prove feasible. The new bells were three in number, weighing a total of more than 1,600 pounds. The inscrip-

tion on the largest bell read:²⁵

Bell of the Cathedral Church

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Diocese of Gaylord

Consecrated 1977 by

The Most Reverend Edmund C. Szoka

First Bishop of Gaylord

In addition to the responsibilities that Monsignor Kaminski and his parishioners had in planning and supervising the construction of the Cathedral and in collecting funds to pay for it, the years from 1971 to 1977 were filled with other obligations and new developments. For the first three years of the Cathedral period, Monsignor had no regular assistant or associate pastor, though Father Adalbert Narlock and Father Stephen Reckker rendered assistance during those years by offering some of the weekend Masses. Father Narlock often officiated at baptisms, marriages and funerals at Vanderbilt. Bishop Szoka frequently celebrated Mass on week days as well as on Sundays. Father Anthony Machcinski was assigned to St. Mary Cathedral Parish in May 1974 and served until the end of June 1977, when he was transferred to St. Joseph Parish, Manistee, as associate pastor. Father William Rabor assumed the position of associate pastor at St. Mary from June 30, 1977 to September 1979. Father Albin J. Gietzen also served during much of the same period from October 1977 to July 1980.²⁶

Changes in the liturgy that had been decreed in a general fashion in the documents of Vatican II were elaborated during the late 1960s and the early 1970s by existing Vatican offices, by special commissions appointed by Pope Paul VI, and by World Synods; once the changes were promulgated, it was the responsibility of the National Conferences of Bishops to direct their implementation. After a process of catechesis involving coordination among the bishops, workshops for priests and for teachers of religion, and instruction of the people through Sunday sermons, the rites of Anointing of the Sick and the Sacrament of Reconciliation were implemented in the early 1970s. During this



Rectory/Administration Building on a winter day

same time lay persons continued the practice begun in the 1960s of assisting at Mass by serving as lectors and commentators and, beginning in June 1978 at St. Mary, as special ministers of the Eucharist. Originally reserved to men at St. Mary, the position of lector was opened to women in May 1979 and that of special minister of the Eucharist, in July 1979. The issue of "Communion in the hand," a practice permitted by the Holy See as early as 1969 if petitioned by a National Conference of Bishops, was resolved in 1977 in favor of allowing it in the United States. As the changes were being implemented, many of the older devotional practices remained popular, such as Forty Hours Devotion, Rosary, Benediction, First Friday, Stations of the Cross, and First Saturday devotions.²⁷

Another development that owed its initiation to Vatican Council II was extension of lay participation in decision making, especially through the creation of a parish council. Parishes in the United States had always had some committee or group of lay people charged with advising the pastor on financial matters. Harking back to the trusteeship controversy of the early nineteenth century, at which time trustees in some parishes attempted to control pastoral appointments as well as purse strings, the powers of such groups were restricted to assure that the leadership role of the pastor was not undermined. The emerging parish council model was designed to provide participation of the laity in a variety of activities and responsibilities in addition to the financial.

Organization of St. Mary Parish Council began early in 1978. The membership of the first council as announced in June was as follows: Monsignor Francis Kaminski, Rector; Reverend Albin Gietzen, Associate Pastor; Reverend William Rabior, Associate Pastor; Richard L. Beachnau, President; James Cotant, Vice-President; Eugene Niedzwiecki, Secretary-Treasurer; Robert Borowiak; Albert Kassuba; Louise Koscielniak; Michael Lebrato; John Mankowski; H. Charles Nelson; Ronald Peck; Grace H. Rowley; Conrad Schaffer; Terence Distel, Ex-Officio; Richard Townsend, Ex-Officio; Leo Hickey, Consultant.²⁸ The Council began a lengthy process of developing its constitution and by-laws and early in September 1978 submitted a draft to Bishop Szoka. In response to his sug-

gestions, the Council revised the draft and returned it to him in late November. After further review by the Bishop and interaction between him and the officers of the Council, the documents were approved in May 1979.²⁹

Meanwhile, the Council organized the various commissions—Education; Liturgy; Christian Service; Social; and Financial—and these groups began assuming the responsibilities delegated to them. The Finance Commission and the Council itself became very busy in their efforts to deal with the growing financial problems of the parish. In their report to the parish on August 6, 1978, Monsignor Kaminski and Richard Beachnau, President of the Parish Council, summarized the status of the Cathedral Building Program, showing the costs of construction and actual and projected interest charges as reaching a total of \$1,905,000 by July 1, 1980; collections from the fund drives and scheduled pledge payments were shown as approximately \$1,560,000 for that same date, thus leaving a building program indebtedness of \$345,000.

In other parts of the report, figures for parish operations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1978, showed a deficit of \$105,013, which brought the accumulated deficit to \$226,319. Most of this was due to school costs, which continued to grow. Although tuition was increased in 1975 to a range of from \$250 to \$350 per family, followed by an increase in 1977 to \$300-\$450, and in 1978 to \$350-\$550, the income from this source fell far short of what was needed, partly because some of the tuition remained unpaid, but mostly because expenses continued to climb. Salaries accounted for most of the increase and past-due obligations for employee retirement also added to the deficit.³⁰

The Parish Council continued to monitor the financial situation and to comply with Bishop Szoka's request for regular reports on what progress was being made toward reducing expenses and increasing income. The choice between reducing school costs through closing some grades or increasing the parish subsidy was resolved in favor of increasing the subsidy, as the Council moved toward a decision to undertake a Stewardship Drive. At its meeting on April 15, 1980, the Council approved the initiation of the drive under the direction of John V. McCarthy and Associates whereby families of the parish would be

encouraged to increase substantially their Sunday contributions in order to retire the remaining debt on the Cathedral buildings and to reduce and eventually eliminate the cumulative deficit.³¹

In the midst of the many developments described above, the parish found time in 1977 to celebrate the centennial of the service of the Grand Rapids Dominicans in Michigan, a milestone that was commemorated wherever the sisters had missions. The main celebration at St. Mary took place on Sunday, April 17, 1977. Bishop Szoka celebrated the 9:00 a.m. Mass with Monsignor Kaminski and Father Anthony Machcinski assisting. At this Mass and other functions, the people paid tribute to the Grand Rapids Dominican Congregation in general and to the more than one hundred fifty sisters in particular who had served in Gaylord during the sixty-eight years of the grade school and the fifty-two years of the high school (see list of sisters, pp.88-93).³² Though the number of lay teachers continued to increase during the 1970s, the sisters served as administrators throughout most of the decade. The principals of the high school were: Sister Thaddeus Kowalinski, 1968-1972; Sister DeLellis Wagner, 1972-1973; Sister Rita Wenzlick, 1973-1976; Sister Joyce Ann Hertzog, 1976-1978. In the fall of 1978, William Harrison became the first lay principal of St. Mary High School, serving for two years. In the grade school, Sister Ann Walters succeeded Sister Michaela Schrems as principal for the period 1975-1979. She was followed by Marlene Peplinski for the 1979-1980 school year.

Another major celebration took place the following year on Sunday, February 5, 1978, as parish and diocese honored Monsignor Kaminski on the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. Prior to the main celebration, the *Herald Times* published a commemorative issue with articles and pictures illustrating various periods in Monsignor Kaminski's life and including also the tributes of businesses and institutions throughout the geographical area that the Diocese of Gaylord encompassed. Bishop Szoka's article, which was also published in the Gaylord edition of the *Catholic Weekly*, captured the sentiments felt by the thousands of people whose lives Monsignor had touched in his forty-eight years in Gaylord. The Bishop remarked on Monsignor's personal warmth; his love for the

Church, for the parishioners, for the children; his leadership in providing the physical facilities of the parish—convent, school buildings, Cathedral complex; his abiding interest in the programs of the schools, both academic and extra-curricular; his leadership role in the establishment of various diocesan offices. After acknowledging all these traits and accomplishments, the Bishop singled out Monsignor's faith as his greatest asset: "Monsignor Kaminski is a man above all of faith—a deep, abiding, all-consuming faith that is as total and as natural in his life as eating or drinking."³³

The Gaylord City Council adopted a resolution expressing appreciation of Monsignor "for the years of dedicated and energetic services rendered." The Otsego County Board of Commissioners resolved that Monsignor be likewise commended and that the week of February 5 through 11, 1978, be designated Monsignor Kaminski Week.³⁴

The formal celebration of the Golden Jubilee included a Mass celebrated by Monsignor at 10:30 a.m. for St. Mary Cathedral parishioners and a 4:00 p.m. Mass for the diocesan observance of the Jubilee. Bishop Szoka gave the homily at both Masses, using some of the themes that he had included in his written tribute. A banquet at the K. of C. Hall followed the afternoon Mass.³⁵

Monsignor was deeply touched by the many-faceted celebration, as is evident in his general thank-you letter addressed to "my beloved Parishioners, Friends, and Fellow Citizens," which read in part:³⁶

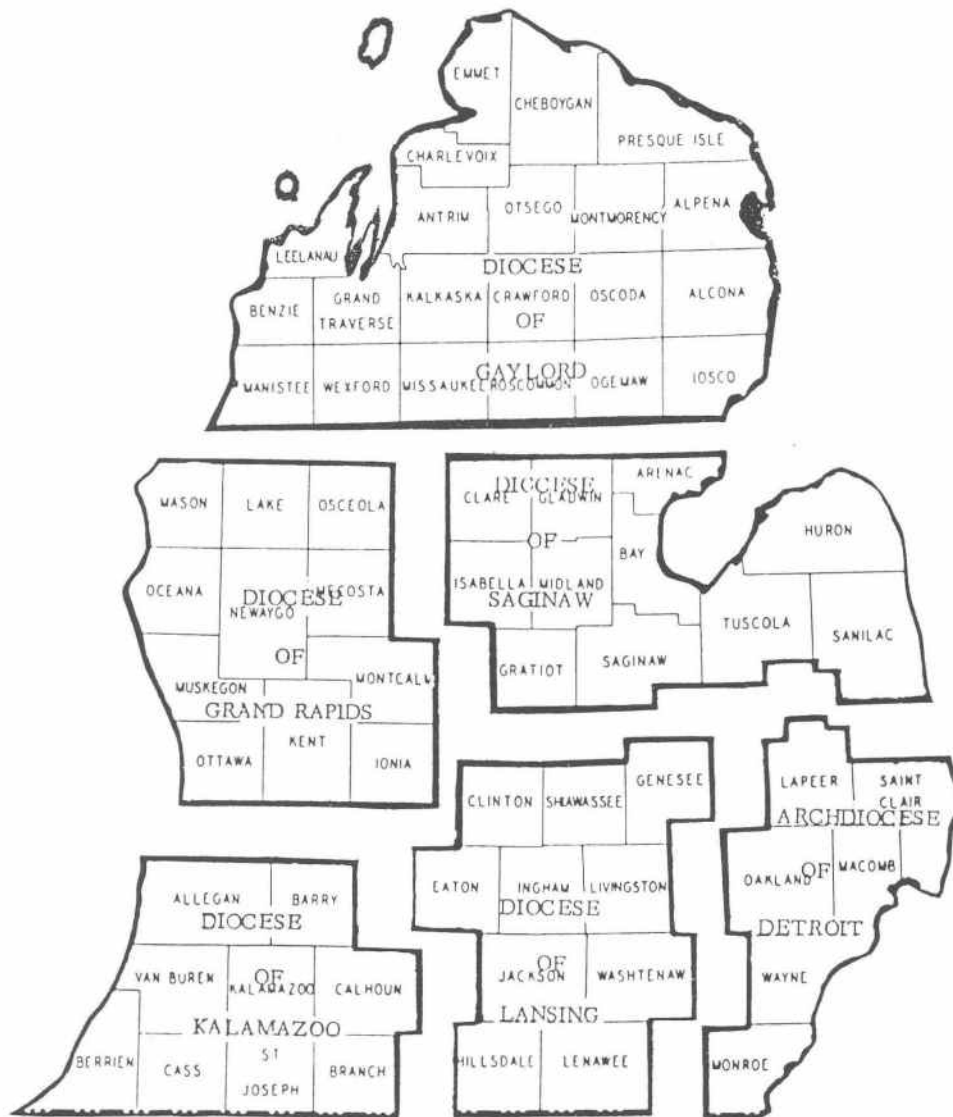
You made it a great day by your wonderful cooperation under the fine leadership of your efficient anniversary committee. The two special Masses, morning and afternoon, the homily by our Most Reverend Bishop, the singing of our choirs, the sumptuous banquet in the evening, the loads of beautiful cards with many different expressions of wishes, your generous gifts, everything was something beyond my fondest expectations. You were truly GREAT!

The burdens of parish administration in no way lessened during the next two years—if anything, the responsibilities and concerns increased as the parish continued to grow and activities multiplied. Monsignor began to

experience some health problems in 1979, which made it increasingly difficult for him to attend to the duties that fell to him. In view of this situation, he and Bishop Szoka entered into consultation early in 1980 about Monsignor's retirement as Rector of the Cathedral. The decision was made official on June 25, 1980, as the Bishop accepted Monsignor's resignation and made his retirement effective in mid-July. The Bishop asked Monsignor to announce this decision at

the Masses on the weekend of June 28 and 29.³⁷

At his Masses on the first week end of July, Monsignor Kaminski requested that there be no party or purse of any kind on his retirement. He expressed the hope that the people would contribute to the Stewardship Drive instead.³⁸ The difficulty that the people experienced in abiding by his wish was mitigated by the realization that he would remain in residence at St. Mary.



Map of dioceses in Lower Michigan after the establishment of the Gaylord and Kalamazoo Dioceses

	Detroit	Lansing	Grand Rapids	Saginaw	Kalamazoo	Gaylord
Counties	6	10	11	11	9	21
Population	4, 872, 525	1, 487, 610	890, 408	635, 083	785, 600	288, 556
Catholics	1, 521, 256	265, 913	147, 672	157, 560	83, 000	66, 600
Parishes	326	83	76	102	46	59
Missions	6	7	24	18	19	24
Priests:						
Diocesan	683	147	126	119	58	70
Religious	422	34	63	28	19	11
Sisters	3, 000	680	623	396	250	178
Hospitals	11	5	2	2	3	3
Area in Sq. Miles	3, 901	6, 218	6, 795	6, 955	5, 337	11, 171

Chart of statistics on the dioceses of Lower Michigan, enclosed in letter from Bishop Breitenbeck, June 15, 1971, to priests of the Grand Rapids Diocese

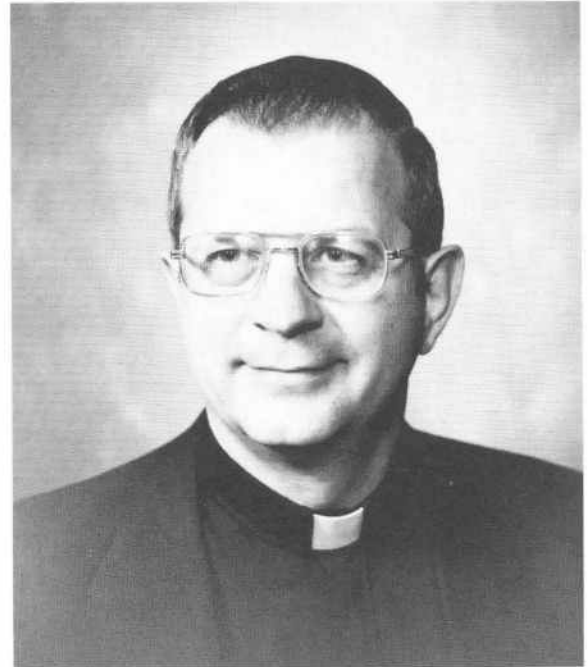
CHAPTER EIGHT

Continuity and Change

The Cathedral Parish in the 1980s

At the time of the notification to Monsignor Kaminski of the acceptance of his resignation, Bishop Szoka also sent word to Father James A. Suchocki, Pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Manistee, that he was assigned as Rector of St. Mary Cathedral, effective July 23, 1980.¹ Father Jim was born on May 1, 1936, in Carrollton, Michigan, the eldest of five children of Alex and Florence Kruska Suchocki. He attended St. Josaphat Elementary School in Carrollton and St. Joseph and Sts. Peter and Paul High Schools in Saginaw, graduating from the latter in 1953. His college work included two years at the University of Notre Dame, after which he studied at St. Mary College Seminary at Orchard Lake. He completed his seminary studies in Rome from 1957-1963 at Gregorian University while in residence at the North American College. He was ordained on December 19, 1962, by Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor at the Church of Christ the King in Rome. After a few weeks as associate pastor at St. Mary Cathedral in Saginaw, he was assigned to St. Paul Seminary, where for seven years he taught mathematics and was spiritual director. During these years he assisted in some of the local parishes and served as spiritual director for a religious community. In 1970 he became pastor at St. Joseph Parish in West Branch, one of the parishes that was incorporated into the new Gaylord Diocese in 1971. When the regions of the new diocese were organized, he was elected vicar of the Southeast Region. In the summer of 1972 he was assigned pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Manistee. While retaining this position, he served as pastor-in-residence at the North American College in Rome from October 1, 1978, to May 31, 1979. During his pastorate at St. Joseph, Manistee, he acted as vocations director and deacon program moderator for the Gaylord Diocese.²

Bishop Szoka officially installed Father Jim as Rector of St. Mary Cathedral at the 5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, July 26, 1980. The ceremony of installation included a reading of excerpts from the Vatican Council II Decree



Father James A. Suchocki

Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, the document in which the office is described as one which bishops share with pastors, or in the case of a Cathedral Parish, with the Rector. The excerpts stressed the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, and ways in which such duties might be discharged. Following this reading the Bishop presented Father Jim with the keys to the church; with the Holy Scriptures, on the basis of which the Rector would "preach the truth in patience and in love, in season and out of season"; with the baptismal shell, a symbol of the Sacrament of Baptism; with the purple stole, symbolic of "taking charge of the tribunal of God's mercy"; and with the Holy Oils for use in rites for catechumens and for the Anointing of the Sick. Upon the conclusion of this ceremony, Father Jim led in the celebration of the Eucharist.³

For Father Jim, the first several months as Rector, in addition to being filled with pastoral activities, were months of becoming acquainted with parishioners, discovering the

ordinary and extraordinary matters that needed his attention, and of learning ways of dealing with parish concerns. With the help of parish leaders, some of these matters were soon being addressed effectively. Before the period of adjustment was over, another major change occurred for the Cathedral parish when Bishop Szoka was appointed Archbishop of Detroit.

Although Bishop Szoka had received word from the Apostolic Delegate on March 16, 1981, of the impending appointment, he had the honor of being called to Rome by Pope John Paul II, who on March 28 personally notified the Bishop of his appointment. The new Archbishop, in a message published in the *Michigan Catholic* on April 3, described the session with the Pope as "a deeply moving experience which I will never forget." He expressed his belief and trust that God would support him in the face of the challenges of the new position and his gratitude to John Cardinal Dearden, the retiring Archbishop of Detroit, who had extended friendship, kindness, and guidance to him during his ten years as Bishop of Gaylord. He concluded his remarks by saying:⁴

For the past ten years, I have served as the first bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord. I will leave this beautiful diocese in northern Michigan with the best memories a bishop could have. These have been the happiest years of my life. While I am already beginning to feel the sadness that is part of leaving Gaylord, I am also experiencing the excitement of the new challenge in Detroit. I look at the past with grateful memories and to the future with great hope.

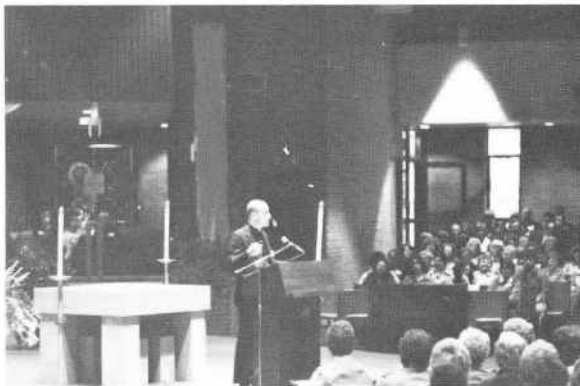
In the next few weeks before Archbishop Szoka's departure for Detroit for his official installation on May 15 and the public ceremony on May 17, many tributes were paid to him by those who were aware of his work in the Gaylord Diocese. The systematic way he had proceeded in the early stages of organizing the diocese (see pp. 52-53) continued during the middle years as he added the new offices of Worship and Communications and the Department of Priestly Life. He had worked closely with Monsignor Kaminski and the members of St. Mary Cathedral Building

Committee in overseeing the construction of the Cathedral, parish hall, and rectory and was justifiably proud of the new complex.⁵

On Friday, May 8, people from various parishes throughout the Diocese joined Archbishop Szoka at his farewell Mass in St. Mary Cathedral, a Mass he concelebrated with priests of the diocese. The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus formed an honor guard for the entrance procession; various choirs of the Diocese assisted in the singing; representatives of diocesan groups formed the offertory procession. In his farewell remarks, Archbishop Szoka attributed to God the marvelous happenings in the development of Gaylord Diocese. He advised the people to "keep alive the great spirit you already have. Nourish it, feed it, sustain it, make it grow even more." He asked the people to welcome the new bishop, whoever he might be—"to love him, to listen to him, to let him lead you, to cooperate with him." He concluded his remarks with an expression of thanks and a plea for prayers for him as he assumed his new responsibilities in Detroit.⁶

At St. Mary Cathedral Chapel on May 15, the Diocesan Consultors elected Father David Gemuend administrator of Gaylord Diocese for the period from May 15 until the appointment of a new bishop. Father Gemuend, who for eight years had been chancellor and vicar general of the diocese, was regarded as well-qualified for discharging the office of administrator, an authority similar to that of a bishop except for restrictions on making innovations within the diocese and on actions that would prejudice the rights of the diocese or of the future bishop. At this same meeting, Father Gemuend named Father Dennis Stilwell as vicar general; he would continue to serve as head of the marriage tribunal and as pastor of St. Matthew Church in Boyne City and of St. Augustine Church in Boyne Falls.⁷

Parish affairs throughout the summer and early fall of 1981 proceeded in an atmosphere of waiting for word about the appointment of the new bishop. The news finally came on October 9 at the time that many people of the diocese were assembled in St. Mary Cathedral for the Call to Ministries Conference. Father Gemuend, who had reported at the beginning of the session that he had no news to relay, received a telephone call within the hour from the Apostolic Delegate's office in Washington, D.C., notifying him that Father



Call to Ministries Conference, October 1981; Father Joseph Champlin is addressing the group

Robert J. Rose had accepted the appointment as Gaylord's new bishop.⁸

Bishop Rose, one of three children of Urban Henry and Maida Glarum Rose, was born February 28, 1930, in Grand Rapids. He attended St. Francis Xavier Elementary School and St. Joseph Seminary in Grand Rapids, followed by two years at *Seminaire de Philosophie* in Montreal. He pursued theological studies at the Pontifical Urban College in Rome from 1952 to 1956. He was ordained by Clement Cardinal Micara in Rome on December 21, 1955. After his return to the United States, he served from 1956 to 1966 as faculty member at St. Joseph Seminary, teaching Latin, Greek, French, German, music, and chemistry. During this period he earned a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Michigan. The next three years he was dean of the college division of St. Joseph Seminary, followed in 1969 by appointment to the position of director of the newly established Christopher House, a residence for seminarians attending Aquinas College. In 1971 he was appointed Rector of St. John Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan, the first diocesan priest to serve in this position, one which had formerly been held by Sulpician priests. From 1977 until his appointment as bishop, he served as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Muskegon Heights in the Grand Rapids Diocese.⁹

Bishop Rose's ordination and installation took place at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 6, 1981, in St. Mary Cathedral. Archbishop Edmund C. Szoka as Metropolitan for the dioceses in Michigan came from Detroit to serve as principal consecrator; he was assisted by Bishop Joseph M. Breitenbeck and Auxil-

iary Bishop Joseph C. McKinney of Grand Rapids as co-consecrators. John Cardinal Dearden and fifteen other bishops were also in attendance at the ceremonies, the official rites of which were similar to those at the time of Bishop Szoka's ordination and installation (see p. 50). The ring presented to Bishop Rose as one of the insignia of his office was a gift of his former parishioners at Sacred Heart Parish, Muskegon Heights. The musical accompaniments under the direction of Wayne Wyrembelski, director of music and liturgy for St. Mary Cathedral, were provided by choirs from five parishes of the Diocese.

In his remarks at the end of the Mass, Bishop Rose told the congregation that he felt the love and support of all as he took up his new work. He thanked the Holy Father, Archbishop Szoka, Cardinal Dearden, Bishop Breitenbeck, and Bishop McKinney; he expressed gratitude also to his family and his former parishioners. Among excerpts that he quoted from letters of well-wishers was one from a youngster who wished him "the very best as bishop," hoped he would have fun as bishop, and congratulated him on "finally making it!"¹⁰

During the period from July 1980 through December 1981 in which St. Mary Cathedral received a new rector and a new bishop, there were other changes in personnel in the parish. Father Albin Gietzen, who had served as associate pastor since 1977 was transferred in July 1980 to St. Stephen Church, Lake City, as pastor. Father James McLaughlin was assigned to St. Mary in August 1980, but because of illness he did not arrive until February 1981.

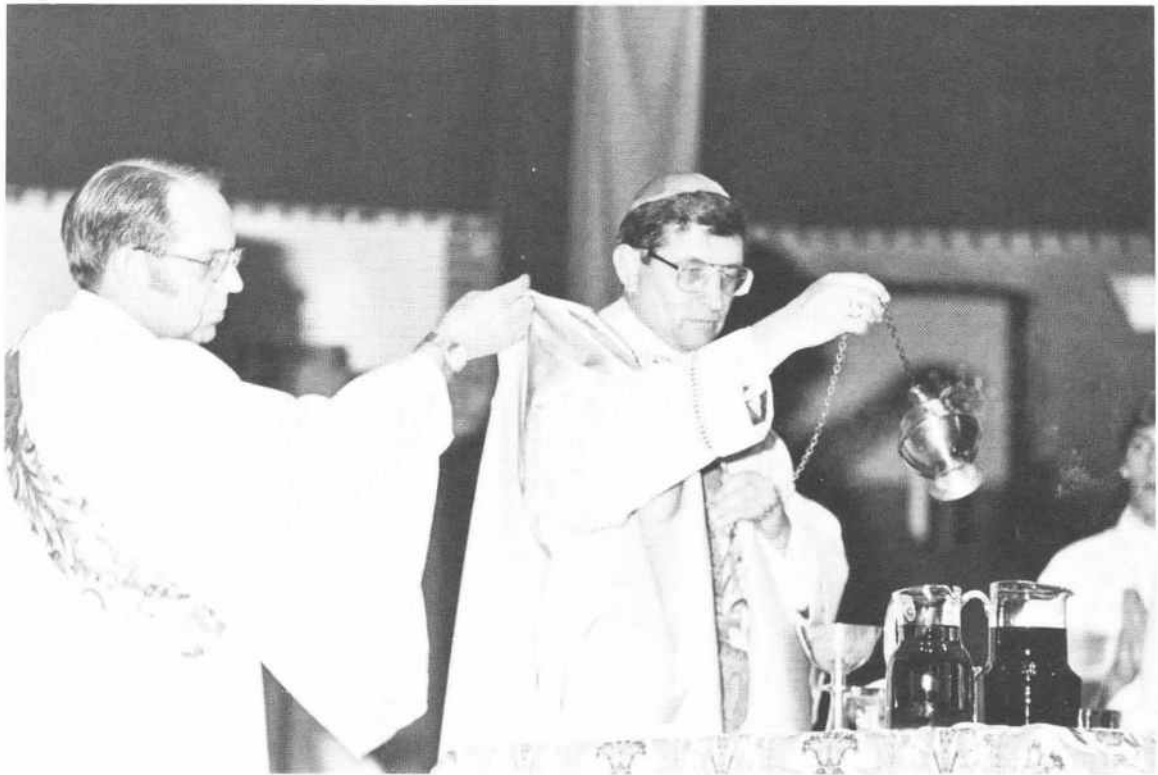
In September 1981, the parish welcomed as associate pastor Monsignor Victor P. Gallagher, who had been pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Elk Rapids. Sister Maureen Lewis, S.S.J., who had joined the parish staff in August 1979 as full-time secretary, was appointed administrative assistant in September 1980. Two Grand Rapids Dominicans became part of the parish ministry team in September 1981: Sister Tereska Wozniak was appointed to a new position, pastoral assistant; and Sister Mary Jane Fedder, CCD-Religious Education Coordinator, a position held on a part-time basis for a few years previously by Mrs. Angela Lebrato. Changes in school administrators also occurred during this period: in



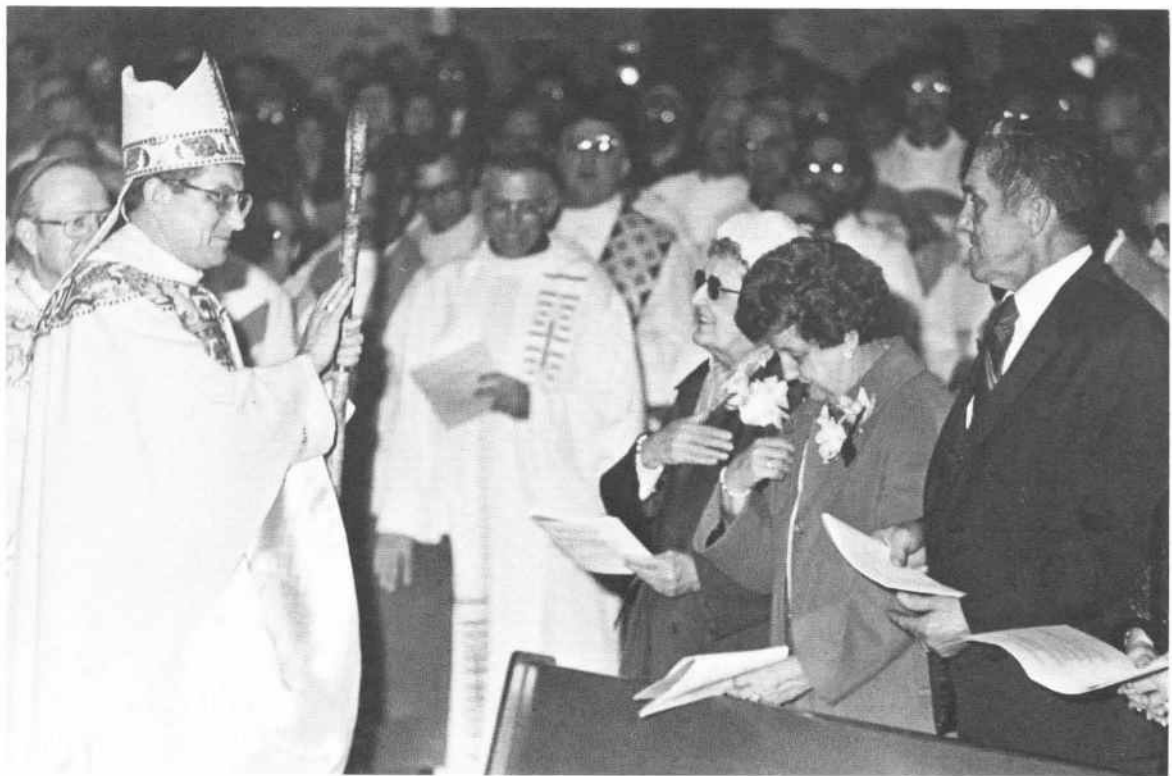
Consecrating Bishops at ordination and installation of Bishop Robert J. Rose, December 6, 1981: Archbishop Szoka, principal consecrator, center; Bishop Joseph M. Breitenbeck, left, and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph C. McKinney, right, co-consecrators.



John Cardinal Dearden at the laying on of hands at Bishop Rose's ordination and installation; Archbishop Szoka is at the right in the picture



Bishop Robert J. Rose incensing the gifts at the Eucharist, December 6, 1981; Deacon John Muggenburg is assisting



Bishop Rose blessing the congregation as he leaves the Cathedral following his ordination and installation

September 1980 Sister Lois Wozniak, R.S.M., was appointed principal of the elementary grades, succeeding Marlene Peplinski, who had served one year; and Richard Theisen replaced William Harrison as high school principal.¹¹

Sister Tereska's responsibilities as pastoral minister included general duties expected of team members and more specific responsibilities, such as: visiting the sick and the elderly; leading Bible Study groups and other adult education sessions; counseling; planning retreat days; and assisting in the instruction of parents who were having children baptized or whose children were about to receive the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Her experience and that of Father Jim and the associate pastors in instructing persons interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church led them to consider implementing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The genesis of this rite was the statement in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican Council II, urging the revival of the rite of the catechumenate that had existed in the early church. The document elaborating the rite was published in Latin in 1972 and was translated into English in 1974. Some parishes in the United States had begun to implement it shortly thereafter, but it was not until the 1980s that the new rite became recognized widely as a significant means of catechesis. (The new code of canon law, effective November 27, 1983, now mandates the rite.) Under the direction of the leaders and with the participation of other members of the parish, the candidates are led through a four-stage process of inquiry (precatechumenate), sharing tradition and developing community (catechumenate), the call to conversion (illumination), and celebration (mystagogia).¹² This program was first implemented at St. Mary Cathedral Parish in 1982-83, beginning on October 20 and culminating during Holy Week with the full initiation of twenty-four new members into the Church. Many people besides those asking for membership were part of the process: the group leaders who shared their stories as a way of encouraging the catechumens; sponsors of the catechumens; persons who had lapsed in their faith; and those who wanted to know more about the Church. Thus the revitalization provided by the experience spread

beyond the core group of potential converts.

As a way of communicating information about RCIA and encouraging its implementation throughout the Diocese, the Diocesan offices of Liturgy and Education sponsored a workshop on October 12 and 13, 1983, directed by Father James Dunning, who had been instrumental in initiating the program in various parts of the United States. In addition to Father Dunning's step-by-step analysis of the process, the workshop also featured a presentation by teams from parishes that had already begun the new rite. In the wake of this successful workshop, St. Mary began its second year of RCIA on October 19, 1983.

By the early 1980s, the liturgical reforms mandated by Vatican Council II for the Mass, the sacraments, and other religious ceremonies had been implemented almost fully throughout the United States. For the most part, the people of St. Mary Cathedral Parish, as well as Catholics elsewhere, were comfortable with the changes and had found them bringing deeper understanding of their faith. Some parishioners were concerned about the lessening of participation in traditional devotions, though many of the latter were still practiced. Three days of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, formerly called Forty Hours Devotion, continued annually as Eucharistic Days in a newer form recommended by the Church. The decline in the number of people participating in the Rite of Reconciliation became a concern locally as well as worldwide, prompting a diocesan study that began as the 1983 Papal Synod took up the subject.

Parish activities continued to flourish. Long-established societies, such as the Altar Rosary Society, the D. of I., the K. of C.,* and the Athletic Association sponsored social activities for their members and some fund-raising events for church needs or other charitable purposes. A senior citizens' group established in the 1970s and first called SEN-YEARS

*A new assembly of Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, the Mt. Carmel Assembly, including Knights from Gaylord, Grayling, Boyne Valley, Mio, and Kalkaska, had been granted a charter in October 1976. Shortly after it was organized, the assembly began sponsoring Corporate Family Communion, a practice that continued in the 1980s.



Bishop Rose at Confirmation, May 21, 1982; Antonia Dreyer, foreground, is sponsor for her niece, Dawn Nowak (hardly visible); Father William Rabior, left, and Father Jim Suchocki, right, are assisting Bishop Rose

Club, remained popular. The Parish Council, in addition to the activities described on pages 61-62, assumed responsibility for coordinating events, including major fund-raisers, which involved the whole parish. Diocesan organizations and offices sometimes held their regular meetings and special events at St. Mary Parish Hall. The Cathedral was the setting for formal ceremonies at which the Bishop officiated, such as ordinations and the Blessing of Oils during Holy Week.¹³

Education of the children and young people of the parish remained a priority for St. Mary. The high school continued to offer its regular program of academic subjects, supplemented as it had been since 1962 by courses available at Gaylord Community High School under the shared time program. The school board, or the Board of Total Education as it was now known, because of its assuming responsibility for the CCD-Religious Education Program as well as for the schools, considered adding a kindergarten to the elementary grades. The Board and Parish Council approved this proposal on condition that there would be at least 40 children prepared to enroll, a condition that was not met in 1982. Early in 1984

the proposal was being reconsidered, and there seemed to be a good prospect of implementing it.

Sister Lois Wozniak, principal of the elementary school, and Thomas Grange, who had replaced Richard Theisen as high school principal in 1983 (see page 75), reaffirmed the philosophy of education at St. Mary as it had been expressed in earlier years. They saw Catholic education in the 1980s as "an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded" and as "a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole person, especially for the formation and education in the faith." The principals also emphasized the role of the Catholic school in sharing the responsibility of education with parents and in seeking through its teaching ministry to strengthen bonds among family, school, parish, and community.¹⁴ The high quality of education at St. Mary School was illustrated in the results of tests in reading and mathematics taken in the fall of 1983 by students in the fourth, seventh, and tenth grades, wherein St. Mary students scored significantly above state averages.

Children attending public elementary



Bishop Rose, assisted by Father Jim Suchocki, at the blessing of palms, March 27, 1983

schools received religious instruction through CCD classes organized by Sister Mary Jane Fedder and taught by volunteers on Monday evenings throughout the school year. There were 304 children from 195 families enrolled in the program in grades 1-8 in 1983-84. The pre-school program, started by Mrs. Sheila Simpson in the fall of 1980, continued to provide instruction for 3- to 5-year-olds each Sunday morning during the 10:00 a.m. liturgy.

The struggle to support this total education program, especially the schools, did not cease. The Stewardship Drive helped the parish to meet its annual obligations.¹⁵ Tuition was usually increased every other year and by 1983 reached a range of from \$470 for one child to \$970 for four or more children per family; non-parishioners were assessed twice the amount. To the annual July or August festival was added another major fund-raiser, a dinner-dance in January or February at the K. of C. Hall for which patrons paid \$100 per person. The proceeds from the fund-raisers, increased tuition, and occasional large donations, together with the increase in Sunday collections prompted by the Stewardship Drive (an increase by 1982 of approximately \$1,300 per Sunday), provided resources for the

gradual reduction in the building debt and for holding the line on the school deficit. By January 1983 the building debt was \$244,000, down from \$344,000 in March 1981.¹⁷

Building concerns included those related to the use of the old church. The former rectory had been sold to the law firm of Jackson and Rolinski for use as offices shortly after the priests had moved into the new rectory.¹⁸ But various proposals for the use of the church had not yet culminated in a transaction by 1984. Some of the uses considered were: as a museum; as a summer theater; as offices for Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG); for a Head Start Program; for Alcoholics Anonymous; as an arts center; as a County Commission Library; as an historical site; and as a Christian Service Center.¹⁹ Concerns on the part of those negotiating for St. Mary included the appropriateness of the uses to which the church would be put and a price that would be considered adequate. As time went on, the condition of the building deteriorated, and it seemed likely that costs of renovating and repairing the structure would be substantial. In the fall of 1980, Father Jim and Leo Hickey arranged for an appraisal of the property. The evaluation of between

\$70,000 and \$80,000 seemed satisfactory to a potential buyer; but the transaction did not receive approval of all parties concerned.²⁰

In addition to the financial responsibilities relating to parish needs, St. Mary, as all other parishes and missions in the Diocese, assumed its share of costs for diocesan administration and various programs that the Diocese supported, including the day-to-day operations of the bishop's office and the chancery, other diocesan offices, and eight national collections. Each year, beginning with organizational tasks in March and April, followed by solicitation in May and June, the parishes throughout the Diocese conducted the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). Quotas for St. Mary had ranged from \$28,800 in 1975 to \$54,000 in 1983. In some years, contributions from parishioners exceeded the goal; in other years, the parish had to supplement the collection with other funds.²¹

Father Jim's responsibilities of administering the multiple activities noted above were lightened somewhat in the fall of 1983 with the appointment of Richard Theisen, formerly the high school principal, to the newly created position of associate parish administrator. Under the direction of Father Jim, some of Mr. Theisen's duties were: to function as purchasing agent; to serve as overseer of

buildings and properties, including their use and maintenance; to meet regularly with the Parish Council, the Finance Commission, and the Cemetery Board as a non-voting advisory member; to promote liaison among parish groups; and to assure that various parish records were adequately kept.

Some changes in associate pastors occurred in 1981 and 1982. Father James McLaughlin was assigned pastor of St. Wenceslaus Parish in Gills Pier in November 1981. On July 11, 1982, Monsignor Victor P. Gallagher died after a short illness. Father Martin Toolis served for two months during the summer of 1982. Father Anthony Machcinski returned to St. Mary as associate pastor in August 1982. Monsignor Kaminski remained active in the parish, offering Mass and visiting parishioners. Father David Gemuend, chancellor and vicar general of the diocese, regularly offered Mass on Sundays and week days. Also valuable were the services of the deacons. John V. Duhoski, a native of St. Mary Parish, the son of Joseph and Ann Duhoski, served during the summer of 1981 as he prepared for his ordination on July 19 of that year, an event for which Archbishop Szoka returned to officiate, since there was no new bishop yet for the Diocese. William Zwiefka came in July 1983, serving as deacon until his ordination



Sister Lois Wozniak, R.S.M., Principal of the Elementary School



Thomas Grange, Principal of the High School

by Bishop Rose on November 25 and then remaining as associate pastor for several months. Also ordained with Bill were Thomas A. Kaiser and Gerald F. Micketti, the first time there had been more than one man ordained in the Gaylord Diocese at the same ceremony.²²

Bishop Rose celebrated Mass in St. Mary Cathedral on Sundays whenever his duties did not take him elsewhere and also during Holy Week and on special feasts, such as Christmas and Easter. His role in other parish activities was generally as an interested participant. He left the responsibility for running the parish to Father Jim. The Bishop's gentle spirit, yet sure leadership in diocesan affairs were evident in his work with priests, sisters, and laity, both on an individual basis and through various organizations representing those groups. In these relationships he displayed his commitment to "collegial leadership," a style involving consultation, openness to ideas, and communication of information needed for decision-making. He was especially conscious of the ways in which the Church had changed in the two decades since the beginning of Vatican Council II and of how the changes had altered the leadership responsibilities of priests and bishops. He urged the priests to be faith leaders as well as administrators; to be leaders in coordinating ministries and in developing a pastoral plan for their parishes; and to be guardians of the rights of the people. Beyond the parish, the Bishop saw important roles for priests in the wider community, such as providing visibility at public functions; organizing works of charity; and exerting influence, personally and through instruction of the people, on issues of public justice and public morality.²³

As indicated in preceding pages, the Parish Council and its affiliated commissions were involved in most matters related to the functioning of the parish. Often these were matters directly or indirectly involving finances. During the fall of 1982, the Council, under the leadership of Michael Lebrato, the president, began considering ways of "getting out from under" the psychological burden created by the concentration on finances. The first step was the holding of a workshop for members of the Council on November 9, 1982, at which Father James Heller of the Saginaw Church Ministries Office directed

the group in responding to three questions: (1) What is the function and purpose of the Parish Council and its commissions? (2) What are the specific activities of the Parish Council and its commissions? (3) What should be the relationship of the Parish Council to its commissions?

Sister Mary Virginia Phillips, O.P., associate chancellor of the diocese, Sister Anne LaHaie, R.S.M., director of school services, and James Cotant, county prosecutor, who served as reflectors at the workshop and who summarized the evaluations of the members, presented their findings at the Parish Council meeting on January 18, 1983. The chief needs cited in the evaluations were to strive for consensus on the nature and purposes of a council; to set goals; and to provide more time for prayer. Sister Virginia recommended that the Council engage an outside facilitator to help provide new directions.²⁴

Agreeing to implement the recommendation of engaging an outside facilitator, the Parish Council invited Timothy Fallon of Human Service Training, Inc., Kalamazoo, to present a pastoral planning proposal at the February 15, 1983 meeting. Mr. Fallon spoke of the need for shared vision, a strategy to achieve that vision, and the development of skills to reach the goal. He cited more specific needs of clarifying the role of the Parish Council and of communicating more effectively with parishioners. In a written proposal submitted on March 3, Mr. Fallon suggested two goals, the first of which he would address in his proposal. Those goals were (1) to form St. Mary's staff and Parish Council into a community of servant leaders able to direct a long-range pastoral planning process for the Cathedral; and (2) to develop a long-range pastoral planning process for St. Mary Cathedral, which would involve parishioners in goal-setting, implementation, and evaluation. Ultimately, the staff of the Cathedral parish and the Parish Council members would be leading the way in the mission of the Church to teach, to serve, and to sanctify its members.

After outlining objectives for achieving the first goal, Mr. Fallon projected a calendar of activities whereby those objectives might be achieved. These activities included a two-day retreat for staff and Council members to begin the process; separate study sessions for staff, executive committee, and Parish Council; two workshops for the staff and the



Father Jim Suchocki and Stella Majchszak at the celebration of Father Jim's twentieth anniversary of ordination, December 19, 1982

Council; meetings of small groups of five or six members each, such meetings to be held following the workshops and study sessions; separate sessions for staff, executive committee, and Parish Council to evaluate progress and to make plans for the next phase.²⁵

The Parish Council approved the proposal and began the program in August 1983 with a two-day retreat. The other sessions were held very much as planned during the fall and winter months.²⁶ Informal responses of the members taking part in the program indicated a growing enthusiasm about the prospects for achieving the goal of their becoming servant leaders in pastoral planning for the Cathedral parish.

The foregoing description gives some sense of the hopes, dreams, and challenges of St. Mary Cathedral Parish as it entered its centennial year. The official opening of the celebration came on January 1, 1984, as Bish-

op Robert J. Rose issued the following Proclamation:²⁷

With great joy on this January 1, 1984, we open the centennial celebration of St. Mary Cathedral Parish. As we look back on the past one hundred years of parish life, we experience a deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God. We are grateful for the gift of faith, so carefully preserved and handed down to us by the first Catholic settlers of this county. We are grateful for the continued growth of this parish, not only in numbers, but in family spirit and living service. Through the intercession of our Lady of Mount Carmel, to whom this parish is dedicated, may this centennial be a time of renewal in faith and love, so that the next century of parish life may be equally filled with the grace and blessings of our loving Father.

CHAPTER NINE

“One Who Hears the Word of God . . .”

The story told in the preceding pages suggests analogies with the parable of the sower, found in Matthew, Chapter 13, thus accounting for the choice of the title, *Sown on Good Ground*. The phrase conveys ideas of rootedness, of receptivity, of continuity, of bridging the past, present, and future. It does not suggest that there were no struggles, but rather that such struggles were acknowledged and overcome, the seeds bearing fruit for present nourishment and for future planting, the harvest yielding gains of a hundred- or sixty- or thirty-fold.

The history of St. Mary Cathedral Parish records the rootedness in their faith of the founding families as they rerooted themselves in their new environment; their receptivity to the ministry of their pastors, who preached God's word and led them in the practices of their faith; their struggles in the face of adversity; their assimilation of new ways, yet with preservation of continuity; their appreciation of what came before, along with an openness, albeit sometimes reluctant, to what was yet to be.

The first twenty years of the parish's history, 1884-1904, was a time of establishing roots, while weathering many adversities. The next thirty years marked a period of stability in parish life, despite national and international crises, such as World War I and the Great Depression, and the changes in technology during those years that affected ways that people lived. Throughout the years from 1904 to 1935, St. Mary Parish remained almost exclusively Polish, a fact that may help to explain the continuity of devotional practices. In general, the largely rural character of Otsego County contributed to the homogeneity of the parish, a homogeneity already shaped by a common ethnic background; social stratification, though present, was not a pronounced feature. Education through its own parish school became and remained a stabilizing factor. The stance of the Church as a whole was one that encouraged continuity in doctrinal teaching, church discipline, and devotional practice.

The stability that was engendered by eth-

nic, social, and religious factors may have become a kind of inertia, an inertia that was slow in giving way to changes building somewhat imperceptibly during the 1940s, becoming more widespread and recognizable in the 1950s, and bursting into conscious realization in the 1960s. In addition to the effects of its material destruction and its transformation of political power realities, World War II initiated rapid technological changes that eventually had great impact on economic and social life. It was no longer possible for anyone to ignore the changes. In the United States, the growing distance from immigrant experience also contributed to different responses among the people. The Church could no longer remain isolated from the changes. It adjusted its practices in small ways during the 1950s and made major changes during the 1960s under the leadership of the bishops assembled at Vatican Council II.

Locally, St. Mary Parish experienced changes stemming from the developments outlined above and from the migration into the parish of people of differing ethnic and social backgrounds. During the 1970s, the decrees of Vatican Council II and the regulations of succeeding papal documents required continuing efforts at implementation. Adjustment to the changes was difficult in most places; at St. Mary Parish in Gaylord, the challenge of implementation was enhanced by the continuing growth of the parish, the growing financial problem of maintaining its school, and its change in status to that of a cathedral parish.

The excitement in hearing the announcement of the creation of the new diocese with Gaylord as its see city; the preparations for the installation and ordination of Bishop Edmund C. Szoka, its first bishop; the impact on the parish of various developments in organizing the diocese; the building of the new Cathedral with all of the stages of planning, construction, and fund-raising—all of these episodes engaged the attention and energy of parishioners. These developments came during the same years that liturgical directives and a new emphasis on collegiality

required adjustments in ways of worshiping and serving. In this decade of the 1970s, members of long-established families continued to provide lay leadership, but they were joined in increasing numbers by parishioners who had recently moved into the Gaylord area. The adjustment to one another of the two groups did not always proceed smoothly, and indeed there was often pain. Yet there were also growth and adaptation to the bewildering succession of changes that the decade had brought.

The early years of the 1980s, though filled still with multitudinous activities associated with the life of the parish, brought opportunities for reflection and reassessment, for internalizing the changes of the previous twenty years, for searching for new directions. Through the increase in the number of professional staff members and the growth in experience of lay persons in positions of parish responsibilities, leadership was more readily available to help parishioners assimilate, understand, and appreciate what had happened in the Church since the early 1960s and not only to be open to what the future might hold but also to help shape that future. Among the developments in St. Mary Cathedral Parish that seemed to hold promise for shaping the future were the inauguration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a program that has great evangelizing potential, and the search for a new model of parish

council, one in which pastoral leadership would be emphasized rather than leadership in managing finances.

Throughout most of its first century, St. Mary Parish has been blessed with pastors who have provided strong leadership. Many people of the parish have personal memories of Monsignor Simon Ponganis, who served as pastor for a total of twenty-five years, and even more have heard of him through their parents. Monsignor Francis Kaminski—assistant pastor for five years, pastor for thirty-five years, and rector for nine years—has accomplished the unusual feat of becoming a legend while still very active in the parish. These two pastors have been such a fascination that many parishioners lack awareness of the services of two earlier pastors, Father Casimir Skory and Father Francis Kaczmarek, a situation that some of the preceding chapters may help to correct. In the 1980s, Father James Suchocki has brought to his position as rector of the Cathedral Parish a style of leadership that accommodates the emergence of shared responsibility for dealing with present realities and for designing plans for the future.

St. Mary Cathedral parishioners of 1984 are reaping the harvest of seeds sown in generations past. As they move into a new century, they are aware of the heritage of faith they have received and are conscious of their responsibility for maintaining that heritage and bequeathing it to future generations.

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14. *Ibid*, 1943-1944, *passim*.
15. *Otsego County Herald Times*, June 24, 1943.
16. *Michigan Catholic*, January 7, 1943; *Otsego County Herald Times*, January 7, 1943.
17. *Otsego County Herald Times*, April 8, 1943.
18. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1945.
19. United States Census, 1940, 1950, 1960.
20. ASMP, Letters from Apostolic Delegate.
21. *Annals*, 1945-1960, *passim*; *Catholic Directory*, 1945-1960, *passim*.
22. Marywood Archives, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
23. *Otsego County Herald Times*, July, October, 1949.
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25. *Ibid.*, May, October 1954
26. ADG, Letter from Father Kaminski to Bishop Haas, July 20, 1953; Letters from Father Kaminski to Bishop Babcock, August 23, 1954 and December 28, 1957.
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28. *Annals*, 1950-1960, *passim*.
29. *Otsego County Herald Times*, December 1 and 8, 1960; *Annals*, 1960-61.
30. ADG, Letters from Monsignor Kaminski to Father Popell, January, February, and December, 1961.
31. *Otsego County Herald Times*, September 6, October 25, 1962.
32. *Ibid.*, February 5, April 23, and May 7, 1953.
33. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1956.

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2. *Annals*, December 1964.
3. "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 20-24.
4. "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," *Ibid.*, pp. 394-395.
5. Sister Alice O'Rourke, *The Good Work Begun: Centennial History of Peoria Diocese* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1977), pp. 139-140.
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7. *Annals*, May 1966.
8. *Otsego County Herald Times*, October 28, 1970.
9. *Ibid.*, October 21, 1970; October 28, November 11, 1970.
10. *Otsego County Herald Times*, February 17, 1971.
11. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1971.
12. *Annals*, 1962-1974, *passim*.
13. *Ibid.*, 1950-1970, *passim*.

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16. ASMP, Letter from Bishop Babcock to Monsignor Kaminski, November 27, 1957.
17. ASMP, Summary of 1967 Parish Census.
18. ADG, Letter from Bishop Babcock to Monsignor Kaminski, July 30, 1965.
19. *Otsego County Herald Times*, March 5, 1969.
20. "History of the Knights of Columbus," pp. 23-36.
21. Interview with Rose Kondratowicz, December 20, 1983; Information from Frances Strzynski, President of Altar-Rosary Society.

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2. *Ibid.*, June 23, 1971.
3. *Western Michigan Catholic*, June 18, 1971; *Michigan Catholic*, April 3, 1981.
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6. *Ibid.*, September 8, October 29, November 1, 1971.
7. *Ibid.*, December 1971, *passim*.
8. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1972.
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10. *Catholic Weekly*, Gaylord, May 22, 1981.
11. ADG, Letter from Bishop Szoka to priests, August 10, 1972.
12. *Ibid.*, December 29, 1972.
13. United States Census, 1970, 1977, 1980; *Otsego County: The Heritage Years*, p. 63.
14. ASMP, Fund-Raising Brochure.
15. ASMP; ADG.
16. ADG, Letter from Bernard J. Mayotte, June 28, 1974, with enclosures.
17. ASMP, Fund-Raising Brochure.
18. ADG, Letters, 1974, 1975, *passim*.
19. ASMP; ADG.
20. *Catholic Weekly*, June 30, 1976.
21. *Ibid.*, July 23, 1976.
22. *Ibid.*, July 30, 1976.
23. *Ibid.*
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25. *Catholic Weekly*, July 22, 1977.
26. ASMP, Letter from Bishop Szoka to Monsignor Kaminski.
27. *Ibid.*, Sunday Bulletins, 1974-1979, *passim*.
28. ADG, Letter from Parish Council to Bishop Szoka, June 23, 1978.
29. *Ibid.*, Letter from James Cotant to Bishop Szoka, September 7, 1978; Letter from Bishop Szoka to James Cotant, October 13, 1978; Letter from James Cotant to Bishop Szoka, November 28, 1978, and March 21, 1979; Letter from Bishop Szoka to James Cotant, March 22, 1979.
30. ASMP, Letter to parishioners, August 6, 1978; Sunday Bulletins, August 17, 1975, August 21, 1977, August 27, 1978.
31. ASMP, Minutes of Parish Council Meetings, 1978-1980, *passim*.
32. *Annals*, April 1977.
33. *Otsego County Herald Times*, February 2, 1978; *Catholic Weekly*, February 3, 1978.
34. *Otsego County Herald Times*, February 2, 1978.
35. *Catholic Weekly*, February 10, 1978.
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1. ADG.
2. ASMP, Sunday Bulletin, December 19, 1982.
3. *Ibid.*, Pamphlet for Ceremony of Installation, July 26, 1980.
4. *Michigan Catholic*, April 3, 1981; *Herald Times Supplement*, May 14, 1981, p. 5.
5. ADG.
6. *Herald Times Supplement*, May 14, 1981, pp. 3, 12.
7. *Catholic Weekly*, May 22, 1981.
8. Information from Father David Gemuend, Chancellor of Gaylord Diocese.
9. *Catholic Weekly*, October 16, 1981; *Herald Times*, December 3, 1981.
10. *Catholic Weekly*, December 11, 1981.
11. *Annals*, 1980-1981; Sunday Bulletins, 1980-1981, *passim*.

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17. *Ibid.*, Finance Committee Minutes, January 4, 1983.
18. ADG.
19. ASMP, Parish Council Minutes, September 2, 1980.
20. *Ibid.*, January 6, 1981.
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22. *Ibid.*, Sunday Bulletins, 1981-1983, *passim*.
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- Sister Helen LaValley (Alphonse Mary). Principal of school, 1956-1962. Interview, September 25, 1983.
- Sister Wenceslaus Szocinski. Grand Rapids Dominican Sister, native of Gaylord. Interview, October 6, 1983.
- Monsignor Francis Kaminski. Assistant Pastor, Pastor, Rector, serving St. Mary Parish for more than fifty years. Interview, November 4, 1983.
- Rose Kondratowicz. Long-time resident of Gaylord, one of first class of eighth-grade graduates, 1912. Interview, December 20, 1983.

GRAND RAPIDS DOMINICAN SISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED
ST. MARY SCHOOL OR PARISH IN GAYLORD

<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	
Raymond Hudzinski	1909-1918; 1920-1924 1927-1928
Casimir Zukowski	1909-1914; 1926-1927
Dolores	1909-1910
Juliana	1909-1910
Edward Szturmowska	1910-1913
DeLellis Wagner	1925-1937; 1970-1974
Benita Gwisdala	1925-1926; 1939-1941
Cunegunda Zukowski	1925-1926; 1939-1940
Isadora Madry	1926-1929; 1941-1946
Evangela Ronning	1926-1927
Wenceslaus Szocinski	1926-1937
Barbara Zucker	1926-1927
Placida Basinski (Mary)	1926-1927
Fidelis Reicha	1926-1927
Ferdinand Bauer	1927-1928
Edwin Bozek	1927-1928
Julia Link	1927-1930
Augustina Gierszowski	1928-1929
Henry Suso Lerczak	1928-1931
Brendan Donovan	1930-1931
Hilary Pulaski	1930-1931
Annella Michalski	1930-1931
Anthony Johnson	1931-1937

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	Perpetua Davis	1931-1933
	John Marie Bronersky	1931-1934; 1939-1940
	Margaret Marie Laux	1931-1934
	Ida Walters	1933-1934; 1969-1972
	Mary Jane Flannery	1934-1935
	Dorothea Morio	1934-1937
	Florian Kaiser	1934-1940
	Eusebia Topolinski	1934-1937
	Elvera Vanasses	1934-1938; 1949-1950
	Rosella Poirier	1937-1938
	Rose Kathleen Carroll	1937-1938
	Leonissa Housten	1937-1938
	Theodore Mary Brzeczkiwicz	1937-1939
	Marie Elegia Timm	1937-1940; 1944-1947; 1953-1954
	Theophane Benkert	1938-1939; 1950-1957
	Alexandra Gallagher	1938-1940
	Delphina Pietrusinska	1938-1939; 1955-1960
	Bede Frahm	1938-1940
	Florentine Shell	1940-1942
	Robert Donahue	1940-1943; 1946-1950
Pelagia Litkowski	1940-1942	
Peter Verona Kolenda	1940-1949	
Rose Carlita Breitenstein	1940-1942; 1967-1969; 1974-1977	
Andrew Szturmowska	1940-1946	
Leo McDonald	1940-1942	
Carola Jones	1942-1943	

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	Celine Jacques	1942-1944
	Jovita Pekarchek	1942-1944
	Stanislaus Souwlewski	1942-1944
	Andrea Zahm	1943-1946
	Helen Bolger	1944-1946
	Edna Weber	1944-1945
	Ludmilla Schmidt	1944-1945
	Thomas Edward Kennedy	1945-1950
	Imeldina Franckowiak	1945-1949
	Emeline Hessmann	1946-1948
	Ann Lucille McGowan	1946-1947
	Angelica St. Onge	1946-1948
	Lorraine Gibson	1947-1948
	Bryan Brady	1947-1949
	Diana Mlynarchek	1947-1949
	Alban Fredette	1948-1950
	Gertrude Marie McCue	1949-1950
	Urban Klees	1949-1950
	Vincent Marie Callahan	1949-1953
	John Therese Kusba	1949-1950
John Anne Paquette	1949-1950	
Theodosia Foster	1949-1950	
Gervase Miller	1950-1956	
Marie Emile Rivard	1950-1953	
Louisa Mogdis	1950-1954; 1974-1984	
Ann Estelle Adams	1950-1952	

	Name	Years Served
Sisters:	Edward Mary Houlihan (Teresa)	1950
	Edward Aloysius Theisen (Elizabeth Rose)	1951-1952
	Rose Miriam Visner	1952-1953
	Norbert Vangsness (Marjorie)	1952-1953
	Margaret William Coyne (Nancy)	1952-1953
	Arlene Wizner	1953-1955; 1957-1958
	Jeanne LaFleche	1953-1954
	Anna Plamondon	1953-1954
	Rosalita Prusevicz	1953-1954
	Rosaria Franckowiak	1953-1958
	Francesca Gietzen	1954-1957
	Lamberta DePore	1954-1956
	Josita Wilson	1955-1957
	Ethelberta Moore	1955-1957
	Leone Boucher	1955-1957; 1960-1961 1963-1972
	Rose Imelde DeHaus	1955-1956
	Alphonse Mary LaValley (Helen)	1956-1962
	Luella Blanchard	1956-1957
	Benedetta Bray	1956-1957
	Verona Wangler	1956-1958
	Fidelia Zepnick	1957-1959
	Marie Albertus Gray	1957-1962; 1969-1972
	Monica Kress	1957-1958
Cyrena Hansen	1958-1961	
Rose Seraphine Sagorski	1958-1960; 1963-1966	
Ronald MacDonald (Mary Alice)	1958-1960	

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	Kenneth Marie Wenzlick (Rita)	1958-1960; 1973-1976
	Gertrude Ann Goyette	1958-1963
	Francis de Sales Warren	1959-1960
	Ellen Therese Charron	1960-1961; 1970-1971
	Mary Edward Plamondon	1960-1961; 1975-1983
	Hyacinth Czolgosz (Geraldine)	1960-1963
	Jean Catherine Bierscheid	1961-1963
	Maurita Reynolds	1961-1962
	Madonna McEvoy	1961-1962
	Roch Alvesteffer	1962-1968
	Eileen Marie Prueter	1962-1966
	Rose Angela Leirich	1962-1967
	Celine Jacques	1962-1965
	Michaela Schrems	1963-1975
	Juliette Belanger	1963-1966
	Thomas Bernard Richard	1965-1966
	Thomas More Connolly	1966-1967; 1972-1975
	Rose Elizabeth Powers	1966-1968
	Marie Ida Obey	1966-1967
	Jacinta Belanger (Rose Mary)	1966-1967
	Jamesine DeCaire	1966-1968
	Thea LaMarre	1967-1975
	Thecla Nietling	1967-1972; 1973-1974
	Joanne Toohey	1967-1968
	Ann Walters	1975-1979
	Leah Marie Kennedy (Patricia)	1968-1969
	Thaddeus Kowalinski	1968-1972

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	Florentine Shell	1968-1969
	Margaret Marie Knieper	1968-1970
	Anne Breitag	1968-1969; 1975-1976
	Marie Rachael Guevara	1968-1970
	Jeanne d'Arc Ploof	1969-1972
	Ann Henry Keeler	1969-1970
	Lydia Korson	1969-1970
	Ann Magdalen Reicha	1969-1970; 1971-1984
	Rita Barreras	1970-1971
	Maureen Sheahan	1970-1971
	Alice Clare Shine	1970-1974
	Josine Schafer	1971-1973
	Thomas Mary Courtright	1971-1972
	Reparata Faubert	1972-1973
	Peter Mary Korson	1972-1973
	Joyce Kolasa	1973-1983
	Doris Faber	1973-1974
	Timothy Weisler	1973-1974
	Dorothy Jonaitis	1974-1982
	Mary Ann Barrett	1975-1979
	Joyce Ann Hertzig	1976-1978
	Lucianne Siers	1976-1978
	Marie Celeste Miller	1977-1978
	Michelle Day	1978-1979
	Nancy Iverson	1978-1979
	Carmelita Switzer	1979-1983
	Mary Jane Fedder	1981-1984

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	Tereska Wozniak	1981-1984
	Rose Karasti	1983-1984

SISTERS OF OTHER CONGREGATIONS WHO HAVE SERVED ST. MARY
SCHOOL OR PARISH IN GAYLORD

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years Served</i>
Sisters:	Louise Herde, C.S.J.	1971-1974
	Maureen Lewis, S.S.J.	1979-1982
	Lois Wozniak, R.S.M.	1980-1984
	Alice O'Rourke, O.P. (Sinsinawa)	1983-1984

VOCATIONS TO WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES FROM
ST. MARY PARISH, GAYLORD, MICHIGAN

Sisters Who Entered the Grand Rapids Dominican Congregation

Sister Cleopha Kondratowicz

Sister Sophia Latuszek

Sister Anthony Tomaski

Sister Clarabel Merkiel

Sister Ann Eugene Piasecki

Sister Wenceslaus Szocinski

Sister Emily Merkiel

Sister Isadora Madry

Sister Christine Jozwiak

Sister Janice Mankowski

Sister Agnes Mary Wojtkowiak

Sisters Who Entered the Felician Sisters Congregation

Sister Mary Geraldine Smolarz

Sister Mary Julianna Nowak

Sister Mary Daniel Jurek

Sister Mary Paphnutia Jurek

Sister Mary Lauriana Gruszczynski

Sister Mary Barbara Burzynski

PASTORS, ST. MARY PARISH, GAYLORD

<i>Name</i>	<i>Years as Pastor</i>
Father Leopold Opyrchalski	1888-1889
Father Alexander Lipinski	1891-1892
Father Casimir Skory	1892-1904
Monsignor Simon Ponganis	1904-1907; 1913-1935
Father Francis Kaczmarek	1907-1913
Monsignor Francis Kaminski	Pastor: 1936-1971 Rector: 1971-1980
Father James Suchocki	Rector: 1980-Present

ASSISTANT AND ASSOCIATE PASTORS, ST. MARY PARISH, GAYLORD

<i>Name</i>	<i>Years at Gaylord</i>
Fathers:	
L.A. Kuzius (Administrator)	1923-1924
John S. Fons	1925-1926
John E. Szydloski	1926-1928
Francis Kaminski	1928-1933
John Bozek	1933-1935
Francis J. Kupinski	1935
Edward Bielskas	1947-1950
Leo Zielinski	1950-1954
Michael Kirkilas	1954-1955
Hugh McDonald	1955
Eugene Golas	1956-1962
Robert Maternoski	1962-1967
Paul Milanowski (Temporary Asst.)	1965
Andrew P. Chrusciel	1967-1968
Edward J. Mike	1968
William Zink	1968
Joseph Zaskowski	1968-1969
Norman P. Droski	1969
Vincent Kamarauskas	1969-1970 (Feb.)
Daniel Quillin	1970-1971
Anthony Machcinski	1974-1977; 1982-1984
William Rabior	1977-1978
Albin J. Gietzen	1977-1980
James C. McLaughlin	1981
Monsignor Victor P. Gallagher	1981-1982 (July)
Father Martin J. Toolis	1982
William Zwiefka	1983-1984

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS, 1984

Parish Council

Reverend James A. Suchocki, Rector, Ex-Officio
Reverend Anthony Machcinski, Associate Pastor
Reverend William Zwiefka, Associate Pastor
Michael Lebrato, President
Preston Odette, Vice President
Sandra Romanowski, Secretary
Edward Burzynski
Albert Kassuba
Art Smith
James Szymanski
Clement Veeseer
David Parsell
Charles Simpson
Donald Wojtkowiak
Terry Distel, Representative of Board of Total Education
Leonard Grabinski, Representative of Board of Total Education
Sister Virginia Phillips, O.P., Representative of Religious

Members of Commissions of the Parish Council

Finance Commission

Donald Wojtkowiak
Patrick Mankowski
Clarence Purgiel
Jack Weston

Worship Commission

Preston Odette
Reverend William Zwiefka
Sister Tereska Wozniak, O.P.
Wayne Wyrembelski
Julia Kowalski
John Mankowski

Christian Service Commission

Ronald Berg
Ann Sera
Cathy Brewster
Sister Tereska Wozniak, O.P.
Rita Fedorowicz
Mary Niedzwiecki
Dianna Hennig

Social Commission

Ron Grendel
Sharon Grendel
Art Smith
Marcia Smith

Other Organizations

Board of Total Education

Terry Distel, President
Mary Ellen Tholl, Vice President
and Secretary
Leonard Grabinski
Dr. James E. Robb
Robert Borowiak
Reverend James Suchocki,
Rector, Ex-Officio
Sister Lois Wozniak, Principal
of Elementary Grades, Ex-Officio
Thomas Grange, Principal of the
High School, Ex-Officio
Sister Mary Jane Fedder, CCD-
Religious Education, Ex-Officio

Altar-Rosary Society

Frances Strzynski, President
Theresa Ralston, Vice President
Rose Strzynski, Treasurer
Florence Borowiak, Financial
Secretary
Mary Wenzel, Recording Secretary
Carrie Lewandowski, Trustee
Angeline Nowak, Trustee

Third Order of St. Francis

Carolyn Grenke, Prefect
(Vice Prefect to be elected)
Margaret Newton, Secretary
Marion Byrne, Treasurer

Other Organizations (continued)

Home and School Association

Janice Pandell, President
 Margot Natter, Vice President
 Cathy Brewster, Secretary
 Diana Hlywa, Treasurer

Senior Citizens

Louis Foley, President
 Harvey Ralston, Vice President
 Marie DeLong, Secretary
 George Schorr, Treasurer

Athletic Association

Marleah Muzyk, President
 Joseph Smilowski, Vice President
 Ann Switalski, Secretary
 John Tobin, Treasurer
 Dr. Gregory Mellon, Trustee
 Carl Essenmacher, Trustee
 Patricia Nelson, Trustee

Knights of Columbus Council #2781

Chaplain	Msgr. Francis Kaminski
Grand Knight	Jack Lovelace
Deputy Grand Knight	Jerry Abel
Chancellor	Gerald Koenigsnecht
Recorder	Joseph Hickerson
Financial Secretary	Leonard Butka
Treasurer	Ben Dreffs
Lecturer	Harry Rudeen
Advocate	Ray Burzynski
Warden	Richard Diebold
Inside Guard	Ray Slivinski
Outside Guard	Ben Kucharek
Trustee	Frank Moore
Trustee	Robert Peffers
Trustee	Ted Dreffs

**Daughters of Isabella
Our Lady of Grace Circle**

Past Regent	Mary Niedzwiecki
Regent	Agnes Moore
Vice-Regent	Vera Jean Hickerson
Financial Secretary	Marilyn Diebold
Recording Secretary	Jean Drown
Treasurer	Dorothy Nowak
Chancellor	Betty Dembny
Monitor	Mae Ann Gierke
Outer Guard	Mabel Foley
Inner Guard	Helen Holewinski
Scribe	Barbara Weston
Organist	Mary Ellen Tholl
Custodian	Marcy Aphel
Second Guide	Chris Collins
First Guide	Florence Dowker
Banner Bearer	Bea Towler
First Yr. Trustee	Angela Enders
Second Yr. Trustee	Rita Roznowski
Third Yr. Trustee	Irene Cook

PATRONS

The Most Reverend Robert J. Rose

Reverend James A. Suchocki

Right Reverend Monsignor Francis Kaminski

Mr. and Mrs. Curtis E. Toms

Albert and Ann Kassuba Family

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lewandowski and Family

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Assembly #1718

St. Mary's Knights of Columbus Council #2781

In Memory of Stanley and Veronica Dreffs Family

Carrie Pitt

Harold and Norma Elgas

Robert and Helen Audrain

Harry and Irene Marcenkowski

Dixie Merrithew

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