

St. Sylvester Church  
50th

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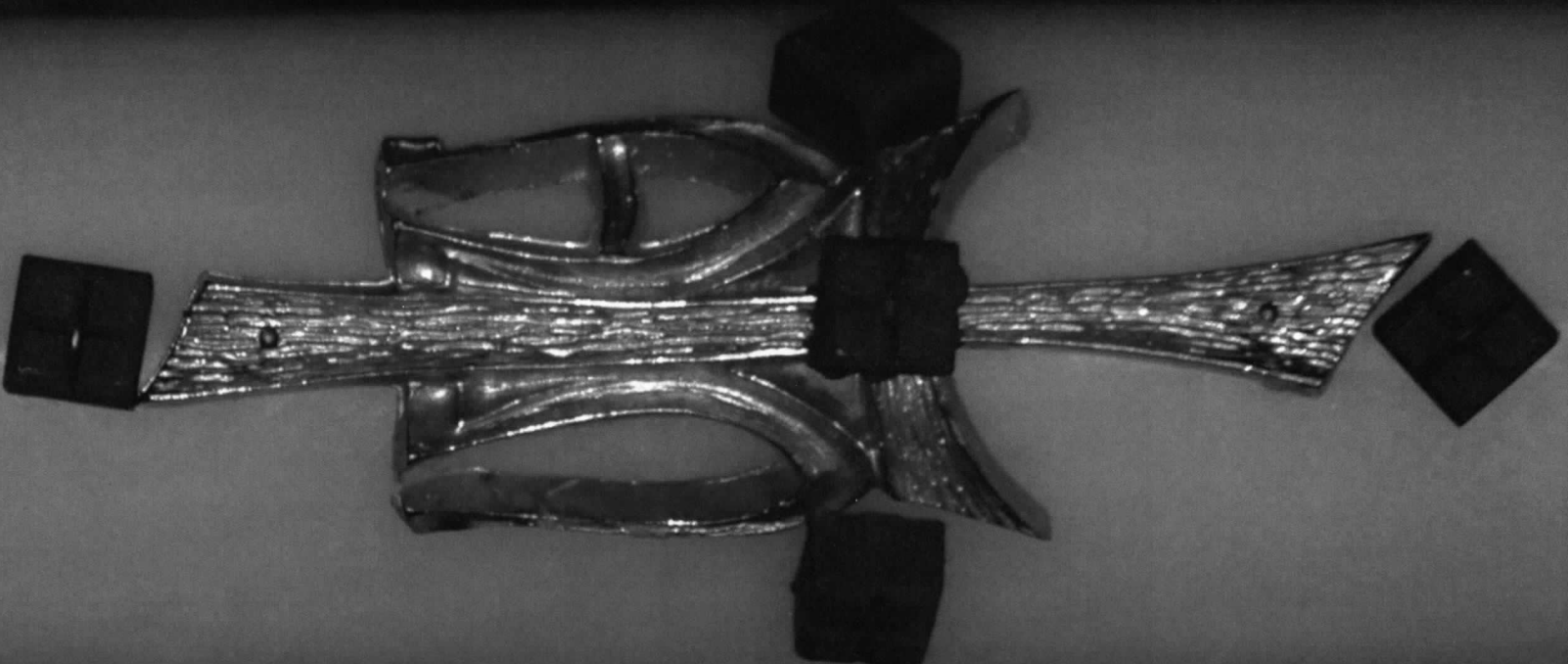
Anniversary

1959-2009



## **An anniversary prayer for St. Sylvester Parish**

Lord our God, from living stones –  
our clergy, religious, and lay faithful  
– you have formed the Church of St.  
Sylvester into a holy dwelling place,  
the Body of Christ, your Son. As we  
celebrate the 50th anniversary of our  
foundation as a parish, renew and  
deepen our communion with Pope  
Benedict XVI and the Church  
universal. We give you thanks for  
inspiring and sustaining our  
ancestors in the faith and pray that  
we may continue to build on the  
foundation we have received from  
them. May we bridge the generations  
of faith as we hear and proclaim  
your Gospel of Life, affirming the  
rights and dignity of all people,  
especially the most vulnerable.  
Through our openness to the never-  
failing presence and power of your  
Holy Spirit, and together in faith and  
service, may our parish be a  
sacrament, an effective and living  
sign of the coming reign of Christ,  
your Son, who lives and reigns with  
you and the Holy Spirit, one God,  
forever and ever. Amen.



# 2009

# St. Sylvester Church 50th Anniversary Mass

Sunday, June 7, 2009 – 10:30 A.M.

*Entrance Procession*

*Welcoming*

*Blessing of Water and Sprinkling Rite*

*Gloria*

*Opening Prayer*

*First Reading Michael Tyro*

*Palm*

*Second Reading George Eichorn*

*Gospel Acclamation*

*Gospel Reading Deacon John Skladanowski*

*Homily Archbishop Allen Vigneron*

*Prayers of the Faithful Gary Pace*

*Offertory Song*

*Eucharistic Prayer*

*Lord's Prayer*

*Sign of Peace*

*Distribution of Communion*

*Prayer after Communion*

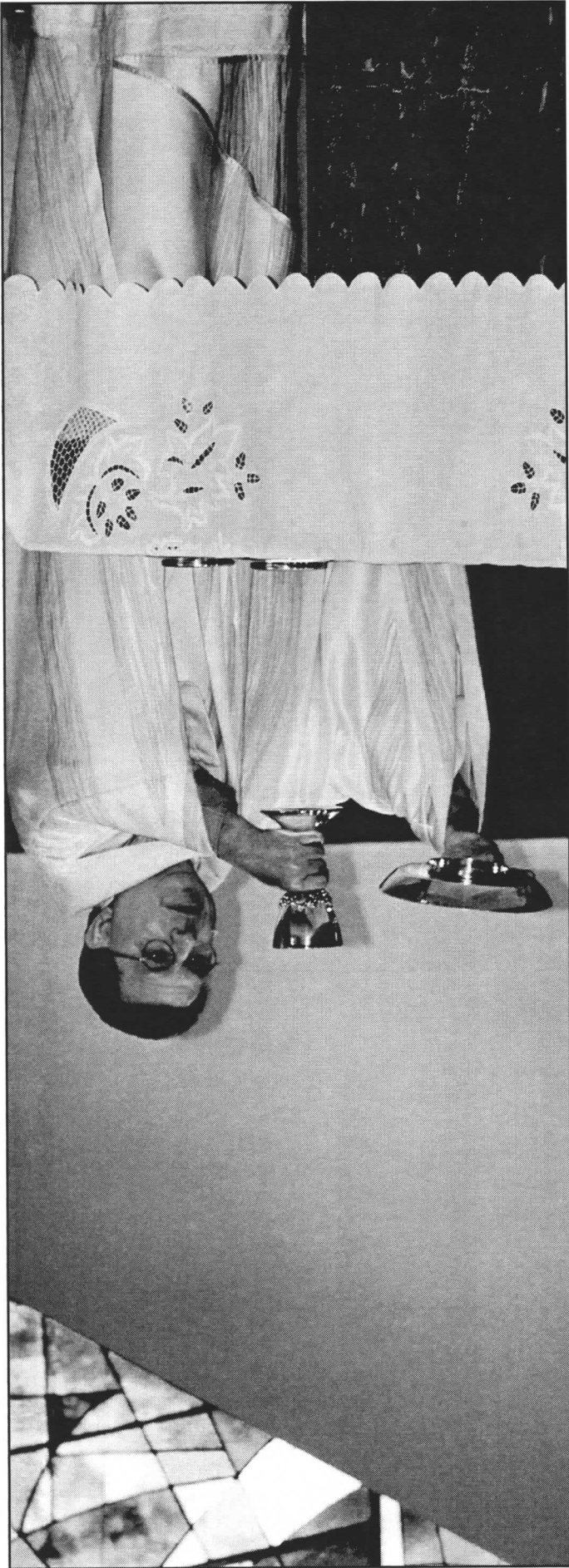
*Closing Prayer/Blessing*

*Dismissal*



PARI

The Polish Mission  
Orchard Lake, MI





# Those who have served St. Sylvester



*Fr. Bretz, Deacon Hardwick, Bishop Melczek, Fr. Esper and Fr. Schwiehofer.*

## PART TIME AND WEEKEND ASSISTANTS



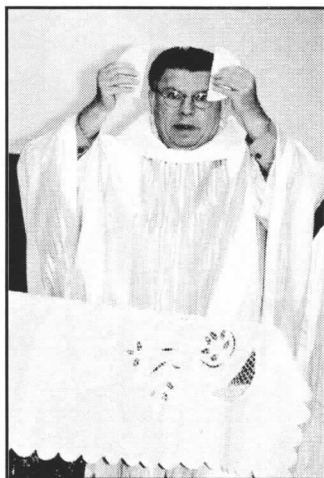
*Fr. Sonntag*

Rev. Arthur Krawczyk D.D. 1959-1960  
 Rev. Jerome Shanahan 1962-1965  
 Rev. William Cunningham 1964  
 Rev. Nathaniel Sonntag, OFM Cap. 1964-1973  
 Rev. William Doran 1965-1967  
 Rev. Leon Olszamowski, S.M 1979-1982

Rev. Francis Maguire 1997-1999  
 Rev. Matthew Kattady  
 Rev. Robert Keller  
 Rev. Arnold Messing  
 Rev. Thaddeus Ozog

## DEACONATE YEAR

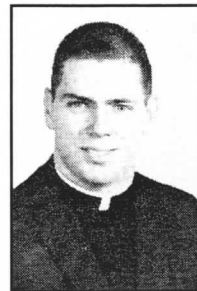
Rev. Frank Pollic, 1966  
 Rev. Richard Perfetto, 1965  
 Rev. Raymond Van Deviere 1965-1966  
 Rev. James Wiethoff 1966-1967  
 Rev. Frank Fabian 1967-1968  
 Rev. Clement Machala, S.M.



*Fr. Schulte*

## PASTORS AND ASSOCIATES

Rev. Robert Bretz\* 1959-1973  
 Rev. Joseph Jacyna 1962-1964  
 Rev. Dale Melczek 1964-1972  
 Rev. William Lucken 1966-1969  
 Rev. Timothy Babcock 1968 -1972  
 Rev. Nicholas Zacherl 1972  
 Rev. Arnold Kosco\* 1972-1979  
 Rev. William Dowell 1973-1979  
 Rev. Leonard Sypinski 1973-1974  
 Rev. Joseph Hrabousky\* 1979-1980  
 Rev. Frederick Schwiehofer\* 1980-1994  
 Rev. Edward Waters 1980-1982  
 Rev. Thomas Slowinski 1982-1985  
 Rev. John Esper 1983-1984  
 Rev. Victor Roman 1984-1985  
 Rev. Lawrence Zurawski 1985-1986  
 Rev. Michael Nardone 1985-1993  
 Rev. Douglas Bignall 1993-1995  
 Rev. Stanislaw Obloj 1995-1998  
 Rev. John Vargas 1998-1999  
 Rev. Timothy Galos 1999-2004  
 Rev. Gary Schulte\* 1994—Present  
 \* Denotes Pastor



*Fr. Babcock*



*Fr. Lucken*

## VICAR IN RESIDENCE

Rev. Walter A. Hurley 1969-1972

## ADMINISTRATOR

Rev. Walter Stanievich 1994

## SEMINARIANS

James Commyn  
 William Promesso  
 John Wynnycky  
 Pat Connell  
 Bob Shafer



*Fr. Nardone*

## PERMANENT DEACONS

Rev. Mr. Ralph Hardwick  
 Rev. Mr. Lawrence Sullivan  
 Rev. Mr. Dan Darga  
 Rev. Mr. John Skladanowski



*Deacon Skladanowski*



# St. Sylvester Church now and then

*Pastoral Council 2008/2009*

*P parish groups 50 years ago*

Michael Tyro

President

Lorraine Marks

Vice President

Fr. Gary Schulte

Pastor

Deacon John Skladanowski

Pastoral Associate

Gary Zilli

Education Commissioner

Nancie Whaley

Worship Commissioner

Michelle Falcitelli-Plesco

Christian Service Commissioner

George Eichorn

Stewardship Commissioner

Steven Fallon

Vicariate Representative

Jule Nolte

Representative at Large

## *Pastoral Team*

Fr. Gary Schulte

Pastor

Deacon John Skladanowski

Pastoral Associate

Gary Pace

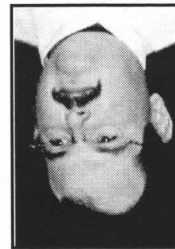
Music Minister

Anita Houghton

Director of Religious Education

Jackie Palmer

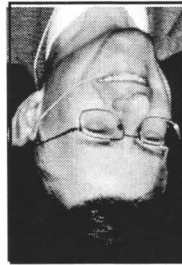
Christian Service Coordinator



Mike Tyro



Steve Fallon



Gary Pace



Bereavement ministers



Christian Mothers Altar Society



Holy Name Men's Club

John Zytell

President

1st Vice President

John Stellini

Secretary

Henry Vercellone

Treasurer

Christian Mothers Altar Society

Helen Kitchens

President

Vice President

Mary Grace Schuette

Recording Secretary

Phyllis Shirley

Treasurer

Ushers Club

John Kolar

President

Frank Trombley

Secretary

Church Committee

Henry Birko

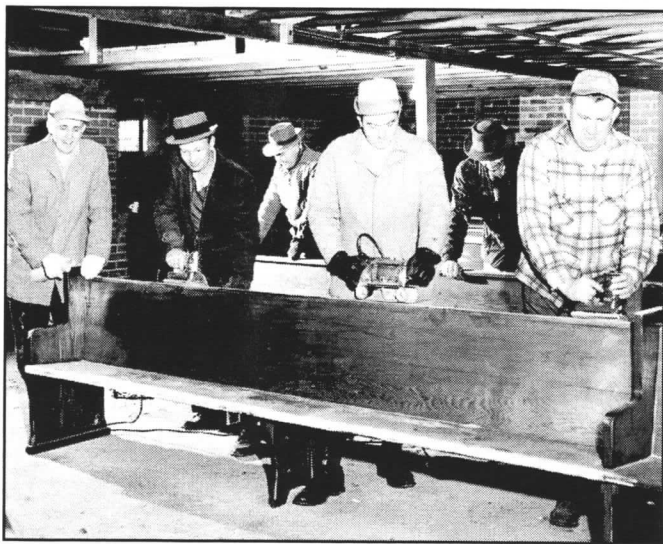
Norman Vohs

Garland Hartsig

Frank Ventura

Walter Wojciechowski

# In 50 years, parishioners hold



*Parishioners prep the pews for their new church.*

grew in that first year. In October, the first parish bulletin, the *St. Sylvester Weekly*, was published. It was a one-page bulletin with parish notes and announcements on one side and the parish boundary printed on the back.

Also in the fall of 1959, a local builder allowed Fr. Bretz to use a home on Aline Drive as a temporary rectory. While Sunday Mass was held at Rinke School, daily Mass was celebrated in the basement of the temporary rectory.

In those early days, the church needed many things and they were donated by the parishioners and local businesses – a chalice, vestments, a temporary altar and tabernacle, chairs used at Mass, flowers and statues of saints.

To raise funds to build a church, the burgeoning parish held two fundraisers, the Get Acquainted Parish Dance and the Property Fund Drawing. Both were a success. The goal from the drawing was to raise \$10,000 and the parish exceeded its goal by raising \$10,064, a large sum of money in the late 1950s. The Parish Dance continued as an annual affair for years.

The Christian Mothers Altar Society was formed in Aug. 1959 and was affiliated with the Confraternity of Christian Mothers. They took care of altar linens and flowers. They also had a sick and vigil committee, sponsored card parties, fashion shows, festivals, bake sales, candy sales, rummage sales and held the annual Mother and Daughter Breakfast.

It was in Oct. 1959 that the Holy Name Men's Club was formed. The club took on the job of caring for many of the needs that arose from a growing new parish. Through the years, they sponsored things like men's and youth baseball leagues, altar boy outings, the annual Father and Son Breakfast, athletic and playground equipment for the school, retreats and cared for the Christmas Nativity.

The sun was out on Nov. 15, 1959, when enthusiastic parishioners gathered at noon for the groundbreaking ceremony for a temporary church, now called the Fr. Bretz Center. Fr. Bretz was the first to plunge the chrome shovel into the dirt. The Rev. Arthur Krawczyk was also there. Fr. Krawczyk, who helped build St. Martin de Porres Church in Warren and later became a bishop, was a weekend assistant at St. Sylvester in 1959-1960.

A church dedication ceremony was held in the temporary church on Aug. 20, 1960. Archbishop John Dearden, the Primate of Archdiocese of Detroit, celebrated the dedication Mass along with Frs. Bretz and Krawczyk. Parishioners built the altar in the new church, along with the main altar platform. Eventually, a rectory was built along 12 Mile Road.

Within the first year, the parish's St. Vincent DePaul Society was formed to help with works of charity within the parish. They distributed food, dispersed Catholic literature and held annual clothing drives.

Following World War II, Detroit's population exploded and people began to migrate to the region's young suburbs in the 1950s. The Archdiocese of Detroit expanded with the people.

The Archdiocese bought the Theut Farm on what is now 12 Mile Road and Campbell Drive in Warren for \$45,740. In June 1959, this parcel was turned over to the Rev. Robert A. Bretz, who was assigned to St. Clement Church in Center Line, and the future parishioners of St. Sylvester Church. There were 506 families in those early parish boundaries.

On a bright and clear Sunday, July 19, 1959, Fr. Bretz celebrated two Masses for 662 parishioners at a temporary site, the auditorium of Frank Rinke Elementary School, now Macomb Christian Academy. But in order to prepare the auditorium for the Mass – setting up and taking down chairs, setting up the temporary altar and other duties – many hands were needed. It was then that the Ushers Club was formed and continues today. At the first Sunday of Masses at Rinke School, the Ushers collected from \$471 for the new parish.

Sunday masses continued at Rinke School as the parish



*The first Holy Name Men's Club.*



*The first Choir.*





# Key to St. Sylvester's success



*St. Sylvester's temporary church, now the Fr. Bretz Center, was dedicated on Aug. 20, 1960.*

With the new church building, parish religious activities began to flourish. About 400 people attended the first Our Mother of Perpetual Help service in 1960. In 1961, the church's first 40 hours adoration was held. The first parish missions were held in April and May 1961. A statue of Our Blessed Mother was donated and parishioners erected an outdoor shrine. The parish's social activities began to bloom. Men's and women's bowling teams were formed. The first parish picnic was held July 22 at Utica Amusement Park. Then, the Young Adults Club, or later known as the St. Sylvester Skyliners, held its first meeting Sept. 5. This club was for singles between the ages 18-28.

The need to educate the children became apparent early on as the parish broke ground for a school on Oct. 21, 1962. The school was dedicated in Sept. 1963, and to accommodate the Oxford Dominican Sisters who taught at the school, the convent was built nearby. The first principal of the school was Sr. Ambrose, now who is renamed Sr. Frances Mary. The current outdoor Marian Shrine between the church and the rectory was a project undertaken by the boys and girls in the school. They were asked to sacrifice a penny a day to raise funds for the three-year project. It was completed in 1967. The school closed in 1971, as the result of the failure of Michigan Proposal C, which ended funding for religious schools. After that, it was used for Religious Education programs. The building and convent were sold to Warren Consolidated Schools in 2005.

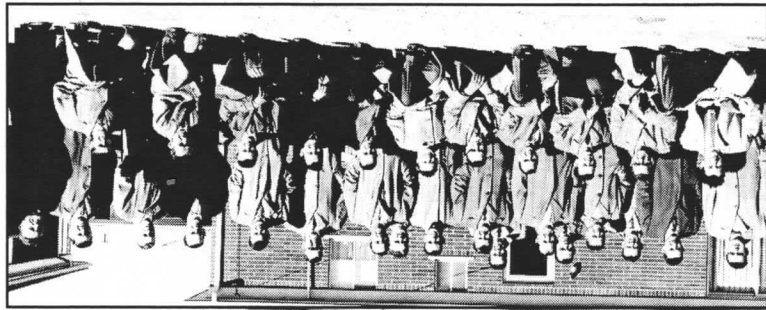
The Vatican II Council began to change the way parishioners celebrated the Mass in 1964. One of the biggest changes was the Mass was no longer prayed in Latin, but celebrated in English. The first Mass in English occurred Nov. 29, 1964. As the parish grew larger, a new church was needed. On Sept. 12, 1965, a ground breaking ceremony was held on the site of the current church. Archbishop Dearden dedicated the new church on Christmas Eve 1966. The church's architecture is an example of early post-Vatican II churches.

The Church has a dominant bell tower, which contains three bells. The three bells were donated by parish groups – the large bell, dedicated to Our Mother of Sorrows, by the Christian Mothers Altar Society; the medium bell, dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus, by the Holy Name Men's Club; and the small bell, in honor of St. Sylvester, by the Royal Teen Club. The bells ring the Angelus at noon and 6 p.m.

By the early 1970s, things were changing. Guitar Masses, communal penance services and more lay involvement in the Mass and church activities were just a few things that happened at St. Sylvester. Eventually, the church's founding pastor, Fr. Bretz, left in 1972, and the parish embarked on further implementing Vatican II changes under the new pastor, the Rev. Arnold Kosco. Fr. Kosco left in 1979, and the Rev. Fred Schwiehofer eventually became pastor in 1980.

In 1987, the arduous task of renovating the church was undertaken. The Committee for Community Worship was formed and they spent hours reading liturgical documents, visiting other parishes and attending many meetings. As a result of their labor, the church was renovated to include a daily Mass chapel, a Blessed Sacrament chapel for private prayer (both inside and outside the Church proper), and an area to gather for hospitality.

As the 1980s led to the 1990s, Fr. Fred, as he was known by his parishioners, would leave in 1994. He was succeeded by the Rev. Gary Schulte, who continues as pastor today.



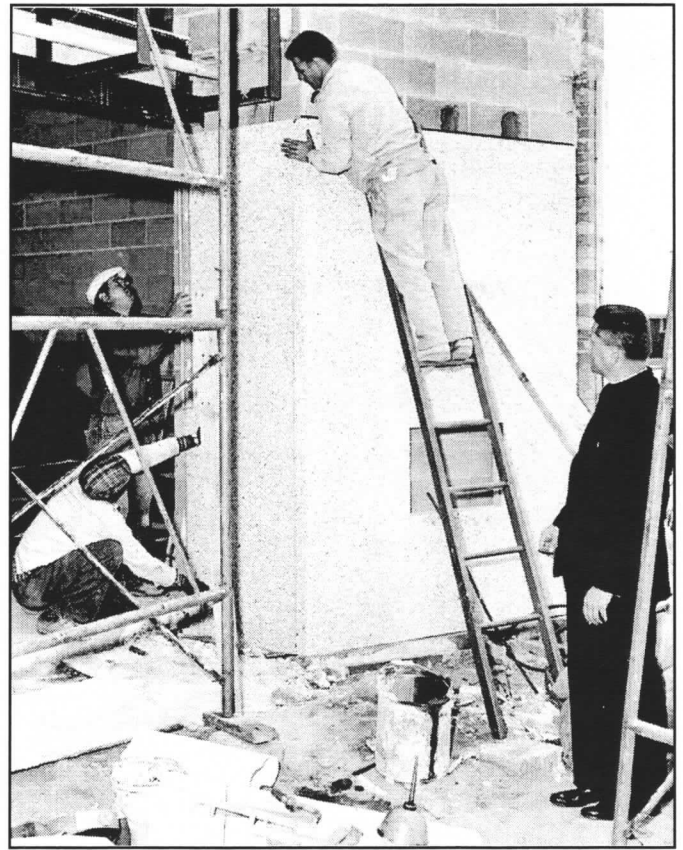
*The first Ushers Club.*



# Images of the past



Altar boys pray on Holy Thursday 1969.



Fr. Bretz watches the construction of the school.



Priests just wanna have fun...



St. Sylvester School procession in 1969.



Setting up Rinke School for Mass in 1959.



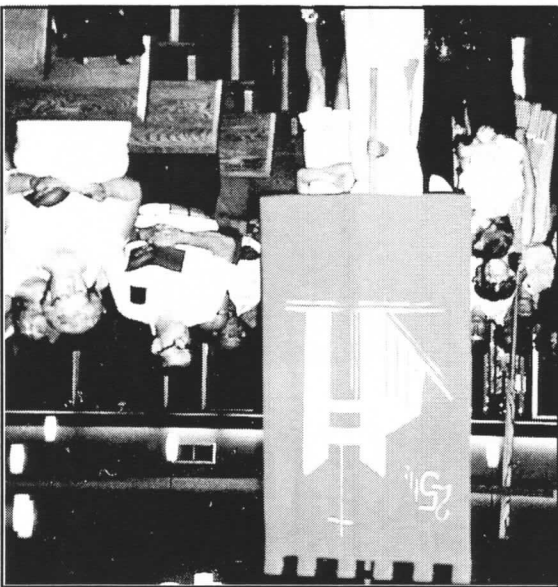
Religious Education classes at Rinke School in the early 1960s.



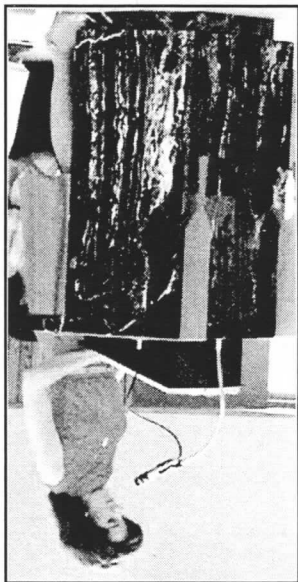
# Snapshots at 25 years



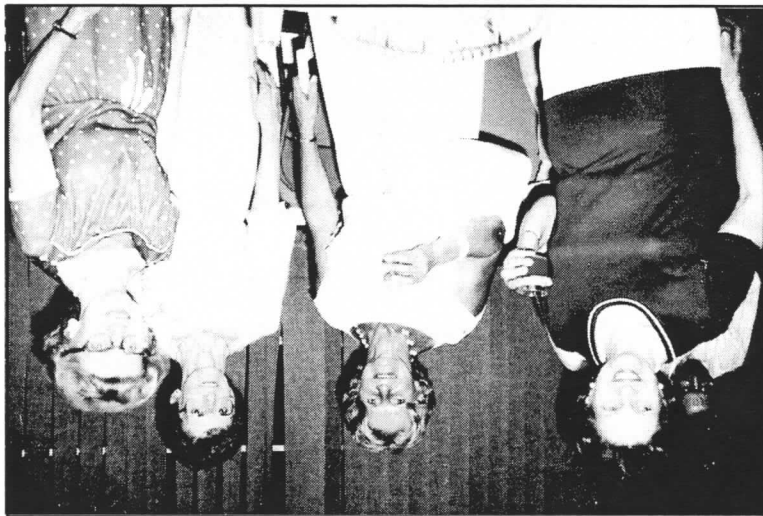
*The entrance procession at the 25th Anniversary Mass.*



*The choir led the music at the 25th Anniversary Mass.*



*One of the lectors reads at the 25th Anniversary Mass.*



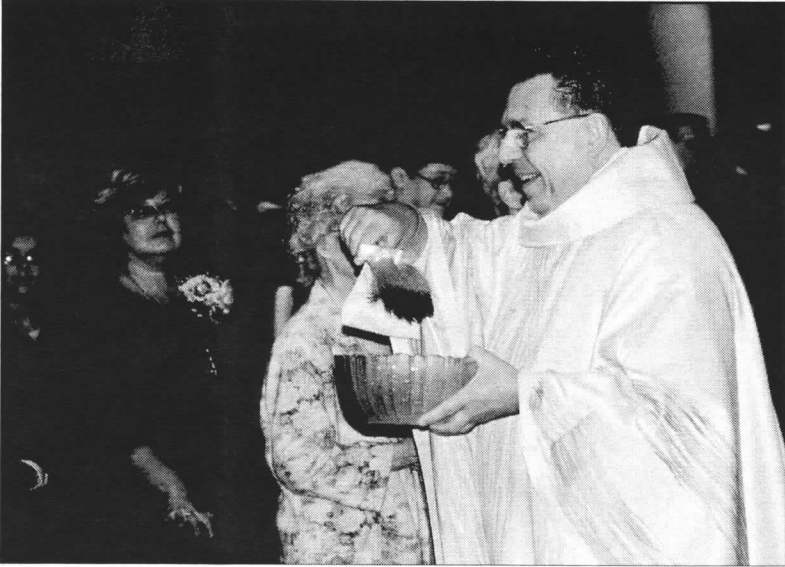
*Some of the original parishioners at the 25th Anniversary reception.*



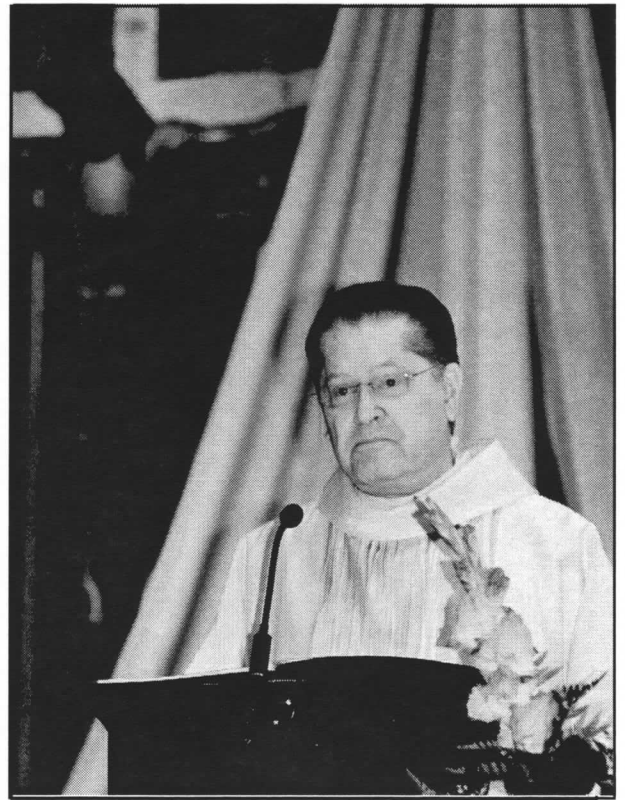
*Sr. Frances Mary OP, the first principal of St. Sylvester School, has a laugh with Lorraine Jarmaga at the 25th Anniversary reception.*



# *St. Sylvester Church in recent years*



*Fr. Gary blesses parishioners at Mass.*



*Deacon John gives a Homily.*



*Pick a winner...*



*Parishioners enjoy the parish festival.*



*Dorothy Opalewski enjoys the annual corn roast.*



*Got pierogi! Ladies Guild Pierogi Sale.*





**ST. SYLVESTER, POPE**  
 314 A.D. - 335 A.D.

St. Sylvester, a Roman priest, was chosen Pope in 314 A.D. He baptized the great Constantine who released the Christians from the catacombs by his Edict of Toleration in 312 A.D. St. Sylvester initiated the building of famous churches, notably the Basilicas of St. Peter and of St. John Lateran. The first ecumenical council was called by him. Known as the Council of Nicaea, it drew up the Nicene Creed. This creed proclaims that Jesus is true God of true God consubstantial (one in Being) with the Father. St. Sylvester died in 335 A.D. His feast is kept on December 31.







**50th Anniversary Committee**

**Mike Tyro**

*Chairman*

**Bob Baranski, George Elchorn, Darin Lenhardt, Jackie Palmer,**

**Gregory Piatt, Linda Reiterman and Nancie Whaley**

*Members*

**Gregory Piatt**

*Editor*