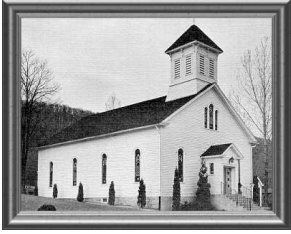


HISTORY OF SACRED HEART & ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH

composed by Frank Bott

The history of the founding of the Sacred Heart Parish of Weston - Nuremberg dates back to the arrival in Hazleton, Pa., of Rev. Nicholas Forve as pastor of the Holy Trinity German Church in June of 1887. This priest had been instructed by his superior, Bishop O'Hara of Scranton, to go to Hazleton and establish there a parish for the German-speaking people of that city, who were without a church of their own for services in that language. Shortly after establishing his parish, and in the course of his priestly work, Father Forve learned that a few miles to the southwest of Hazleton, in the villages of Derringer and Fern Glen, there lived many Catholic families---some of whom spoke the German language---but had no opportunity to hear Holy Mass or receive the Sacraments, since they were so far removed from Hazleton. With genuine priestly fervor and zeal, in horse and buggy, Father Forve began to make occasional visits to these people, and offered up for them the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, first in a private home, and later in a little red school-house at Derringer.

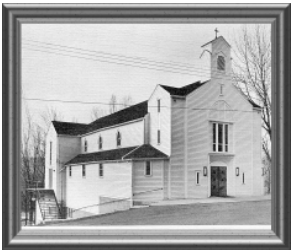


Soon the school-house proved inadequate, for now there came from the easterly side of Derringer Mountain, from a village called Hopeville (Weston), still more people to worship, when they learned of the visiting priest. As a result, Father Forve and his little newly founded flock decided to build a church for the convenience of all the Catholic people in the neighborhood. The village of Hopeville was chosen for the sight of the same, when one Mr. George Seiwell, a pioneer resident of the place, donated a large plot of his land to the Catholic people for their church.

During the course of construction of this building, Father Forve frequently read Mass for the people under a large apple tree on Mr. Seiwell's farm. Under the able guidance of Father Forve, and his committee, the foundation was laid by men of the parish who brought stones for the same from the neighboring mountainside. It is said that some of the committeemen of that time were: Erasmus Dashl, Peter Fedrigan, Barth Konschnik, Val Kollenz, Fred Logar, Stephen Margle and Batista Ponchary.



In late summer of 1888 the building was completed, and Father Forve, in the presence of other priests, and people from the surrounding villages, blessed and dedicated the new church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For several years thereafter this church served as the mission of Father Forve's church in Hazleton. On many occasions, especially on First Holy Communion days, Father Forve brought his own choir members with him to Hopeville, to sing during the Mass. While there is no record of the exact time that Father Forve ceased to minister personally to these people, it is believed that it was about the year 1898, for in that year was established the first resident pastor of Weston, in the person of Rev. Anthony Lipinski (deceased).



Before this appointment, however, and as early as 1888, a group of Catholic Tyrolean people, from the neighboring village of New London (Nuremberg), desired a place of worship for themselves, and a priest who could speak their language made plans for the erection of a church in their own neighborhood. Prior to this, services had been held for them in Wharmby's Hall at New London, whenever a priest from Hazleton was available. For the site of this building, a plot of land was likewise donated by a Mr. Fred Delzeit, Jr., said land within the boundaries of Luzerne, but bordering on Schuylkill County. Through voluntary contributions from members and personal loans Peter and Camillo Yannes, John and Joseph Marchetti, a simple structure was built and used by them for ten years. In 1898 additions were made to this building of a steeple, choir loft and pews. The bell for the steeple was donated by Charles D. Kaier and Sons of Mahanoy City. In that same year, records reveal that, while Father Lipinski was pastor, Father Forve was delegated by Bishop O'Hara to bless and dedicate this building to the honor of St. Joseph. From this time on, services were held in this building, occasionally by the resident priest of Weston, but more often by visiting priests from Hazleton.



Quite naturally, during the early years of this parish, since there was no resident pastor in either place, records of baptisms, marriages, funerals, etc., were not registered here. From 1887 to 1896 no records are available, except perhaps at the churches in Hazleton from which place priests frequently came to serve these people. However, the very first records in our parish are these of 1896: First Baptism, that of Charles Walter Logar (died 1934), born November 3, 1896, of Frederick Logar and Mary (Baumann) Logar in Hopeville; sponsors were Peter and Marie Culk; baptism by the Rev. F. J. Pribyl. First Marriage recorded, that of: Joseph Bauer and Wilhelmina Lenhard of Hopeville; witnesses, Francis Baumann and Elizabeth Lenhard; officiating priest Rev. F. J. Pribyl. First recorded Death and Burial, that of: John Lorinz, age 14 years of Tomhicken, accidental death on November 26, and burial on November 28, 1896; this record is signed also by Rev. F. J. Pribyl. Unfortunately, the records do not reveal distinctly the first Baptism, Marriage or Funeral in the Nuremberg Church. However, it is reliably reported that the first marriage ceremony performed therein was that of Joseph Marchetti and Angela Marchetti, in 1890; witnesses Henry Marchetti and Barbara Libener, officiating priest Father Jeremundo,

About 1900, the names of both villages were changed, that of Hopeville to Weston, that of New London to Nuremberg, when it was learned that other post offices by those names existed in this state.



It is impossible to give an accurate list of the priests, and of the time they served these people, after the transfer of Father Lipinski from Weston in 1901. There were many, for the reason that the people preferred priests who spoke their own language, who, however, were not always available. There were times when there was a resident priest in each place; times when there was none in either. Under such conditions, a priest would come from Hazleton on Saturday and remain overnight in a private home. At Weston, Logar's home, and at Nuremberg, Marchetti's home, provided shelter for the priest. Following is a list of the priests and the approximate dates of the services here: Rev. C. VanWelden, 1901-1903. Rev. Joseph Kloss, 1903-1904. Rev. Fr. Wiesock, 1904-1905.

From 1905-1906 are found the names of Revs. J. J. Heffernan, Stephen H. O'Boyle, (who were then assistants at St. Gabriel's in Hazleton), F. Kabelka, Joseph W. Treitz. Rev. F. P. McNally, 1906-1909. The earliest financial statement available is that of 1906, and is under the signatures of Rev. F. J. McNally, Rector, Erasmus Dashl, Vice-President, Barth Konschnik, Secretary and Peter Fedrigan, Treasurer. During these years are found also the names of a few Stigmatini Fathers, among them Revs. Joseph Nardone, Tomerki and Lewis Luchi, and the name of Rev. D. J. Farrell, 1912-1914. Rev. Fr. Grywacz, 1914-1916, Rev. P. Vioszyk, 1916-1917.



In 1917 Bishop Hoban of Scranton appointed the Rev. Cyriac A. Staib, pastor of Weston. Father Staib seemed to understand his people very well and, from the very start, endeavored to remove their conflicting desires by urging very strongly a union of both churches under the one and same English-speaking pastor. Weston was chosen as the residence for him, since a house there had previously been bought, and Nuremberg was designated as the Mission Church. Much success and progress was then made in re-organizing both churches into one unit, having a common treasurer, and a standing committee of four (4) men selected from both churches. Father Staib, encouraged by the enthusiasm and wholehearted cooperation on the part of the people, labored here faithfully for the next three years, when he was transferred to Duryea in 1920, leaving behind him a well united and growing parish. Records reveal that in 1919, Bishop Hoban administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to a large class.



In August 1920, the Rev. Henry Diehl was appointed pastor of Weston-Nuremberg. The effective organization was strengthened even more by Father Diehl's untiring efforts during his long stay here from 1920 to June 1928. During this time, beautiful stations of the cross and other statues were erected in the churches, largely the donations of individual members. With all his priestly care of the ever-growing parish, Father Diehl found time to improve, materially and substantially, the church properties, by personally installing electric fixtures in both churches, and in the parish house in Weston. Much work was also done under his direction, with men of the parish, to provide an attractive and beautiful cemetery on the mountainside of Weston. During his time also was organized the Knights of St. George cadets.



Upon transfer of Father Diehl to Pittston in June 1928, The Rev. Joseph G. Oberholzer was given charge of Weston-Nuremberg parish. He, too, found this an ever-growing parish, and though his stay here was a short one, he, nevertheless, endeared himself to these people by the sincerity of his efforts in their behalf, especially in the care of the sick, and his concern for the wayward ones of his flock.



In June 1930, the late Bishop O'Reilly of Scranton transferred Father Oberholzer to Duryea and appointed the Rev. Joseph C. Ward pastor of Weston-Nuremberg. Several years had elapsed since Confirmation was administered, so on November 2, 1930, Bishop O'Reilly visited here and confirmed a class of 445 candidates. Again in 1933 he came and confirmed 125 children.

By 1933 the church buildings were badly in need of repairs, particularly the church of the town of Nuremberg, which could no longer accommodate the big crowd of people at Mass on Sundays. After much deliberation and planning, and with permission of Bishop O'Reilly, improvements to both churches were begun in September of 1935. John J. Hawley of Scranton was the architect, and Anthony V. Raymond, also of Scranton, was the contractor. Major improvements on the inside of the Weston church were: a niche for the altar, new electrical fixtures, texture walls, art-glass windows, and painting of the pews. Besides repainting the whole building, the entrance to the same was improved by a cement approach and a vestibule with swinging doors. The church at Nuremberg took on an entirely new aspect. After raising the small original building, 5 ft. 3 in., to the level of the road, additions on all sides of the building gave to the new church resulting lines in the form of a cross. Cloister aisle effect within enhances the beauty of this church. After the improvements had been made, the women's Altar Societies of both churches, from their own treasury, paid for the redecoration of all altars, statues and new furnishings for the sanctuaries of their churches. Several individual members and friends of the parish contributed to the cost of the art-glass windows and other beautiful furnishings of the altars. Then on Sunday, July 16th, 1936, with impressive ceremonies, both churches were rededicated by the Rev Msgr. C. A. McHugh, V. G., in the absence of Bishop O'Reilly. In 1933 improvements were likewise made to the cemetery, after a donation of land was made to the parish by the Coxe Bros. Estate. This same addition was blessed and dedicated by Msgr. Kane of Hazleton on August 15, 1922.



In June of 1943 Father Ward was transferred to St. Boniface Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. And was succeeded here by the Rev. G. Eugene Frank. Coming to the parish at the conclusion of World War Two, he found the parishioners to be in a state of uncertainty. The return of the young men from service found a surplus of labor and the exodus of many of them to the cities, adding to the difficulties of the local situation. However, the parish carried on under his able guidance as the problems of relocation after the war began to resolve themselves. It was shortly after the arrival of Father Frank that the Bishop's House of Charity began, a drive to supply the many needs of charity throughout the Diocese, and under his leadership the parish attained and oversubscribed the goals that had been set for it. Shortly after this, the parish was once again called upon to share in the obligations of a new home for the Catholic Charities of the Hazleton area. Again under his guidance, the parish contributed the share asked of it to assist in the construction of St. Joseph's Hospital in Hazleton.

After fulfilling his obligations to the extra-parochial affairs that had been placed upon him and the parish, Father Frank now turned his attention to the local problems. The Rectory, badly in need of renovation, was remodeled to some extent. Under his planning, the Sacred Heart Church had new flooring installed, and, through the generosity of the Altar & Rosary Society, new pews were placed in the church. The need for a place to hold parochial meetings was met by the excavation of the Weston Church, and finishing it so that adequate space was provided. At St. Joseph's Church the sanctuary and the altars were modified to present a liturgical aspect. The altar fittings, candlesticks, tabernacle and sanctuary lamp were donated through the kindness of societies and individuals, and the beauty of these have added to the dignity of St. Joseph's Church.

In 1952 the mines, the mainstay of the community for so many years, were closed completely. Many of the parishioners found themselves without jobs, and no prospects on the local scene of finding work to support their families. As a result, for the second time in a few years, there was a surge of parishioners out of the area to communities where work was available, particularly in the New Jersey and New York areas. However, with the strength and courage derived from ancestors who had traveled thousands of miles to obtain a decent livelihood, the parish began to become stable as employment was found to take up the slack caused by the closing of the mines.

The year 1954 saw another change in the pastorate of the Weston-Nuremberg parish when on November 12th Father Frank was transferred to Sacred Heart Church in Duryea. The years assigned to this man of God were rapidly drawing to a close, although apparently in good health, Father Frank died suddenly on April 2, 1959.



The Reverend Joseph F. Meier was appointed by Bishop Hannan to succeed Father Frank and was installed as pastor of Sacred Heart and St. Joseph Parish on November 13, 1954 by the Right Reverend Msgr. Dennis J. Kane. On February 25, 1955 was begun what has been the source of many of our graces, the Perpetual Novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Since its inception, the novena was conducted each Friday night.



One need that was outstanding in the parish was for a new rectory. The rectory had proved to be inadequate for the needs of the parish. And at a meeting of the parishioners, a new home for the priests was planned. With this in mind, the Skoff property adjacent to the church in Weston was purchased on June 23, 1955. The existing home on the property was razed in the summer of 1957 and a new rectory was begun on September 9, 1957. The contract for the new rectory amounted to \$42,600.00 and it was signed by Vincent Raggi, AIA, of Dunmore, Pa. This major undertaking of the parish was looked upon by some as being too much of a burden for the size of the parish, but the cooperation shown by all resulted in the retirement of the debt incurred three years after the construction had begun. This is a remarkable tribute to the faith and generosity of the parishioners of

St. Joseph's and Sacred Heart. The rectory was completed and occupied May 27, 1958. The furnishings of the rectory were provided for by the members of the Holy Name Society, the Sacred Heart Altar & Rosary Society, St. Joseph's Altar & Rosary Society and St. Joseph's Sodality.

Another problem that faced the parish was the care of the cemetery. With so many individuals and families having left the area, and unable to arrange for the care of their plots, the cemetery began to show the lack of attention that should have been lavished on the last resting place of the loved ones who had founded the parish. A survey was taken among the parishioners as to the feasibility of the establishment of a Perpetual Care Fund to maintain the cemetery in a proper manner. The result of the survey was overwhelmingly in favor of such a plan, and as a result the Perpetual Care Fund was instituted on May 30, 1958.

The slow reversal of the economic scene began to have its effect on the parish as once more it began to forge ahead. The increase of parishioners began to make itself felt in the need for more parking facilities, especially at St. Joseph's, where the situation was desperately in need of a solution. To relieve this situation, a plot of land 525' X 50' was purchased opposite St. Joseph's Church. This was rough mountainside and it was necessary to remove a great deal of rock and earth to provide the necessary space for parking. This project was completed April 20, 1958.

Two years later it became evident that the two regular Masses on Sunday were no longer adequate to care for the parishioners. Each of these Masses was filled to capacity and beyond. To accommodate all, a third Mass was added on October 9, 1960, with the 8:45 Mass being reserved for the school children and their parents. This extra Mass enabled the children to have full time instruction each week.

The renovation of the interior of Sacred Heart Church next occupied the attention of the parish as the effects of time began to take their toll. In June 1960 the entire church was replastered, with marble sills and new doors being installed. The major change took place within the sanctuary, which was completely renovated, and a new addition made to the sacristy. The new altars of the church were donated by the Altar & Rosary Society and the communion railing by the Holy Name Society. These new appointments, in addition to a new tile floor, and the redecoration of the church, transformed Sacred Heart Church into a simple but beautiful sanctuary, dedicated to the honor and glory of God.



The same year an addition was made to St. Joseph's Church to provide a kitchen for the hall already provided. This has proved to be an invaluable asset to the social life of the parish. The following year the Grotto, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, was built at St. Joseph's. This beautiful stone shrine has already become a landmark of the area. The Grotto was donated by the Holy Name Society and St. Joseph's Altar & Rosary Society. The statue was donated by a generous friend. The Grotto was dedicated on Sunday, May 14, 1961.

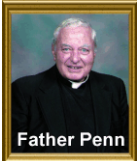
In preparation for the Jubilee celebration twenty-five years ago, it was decided to renovate the sanctuary of St. Joseph's Church and to improve the lighting in both churches. To carry out these plans, new altars were installed, the sanctuary was paneled in a matching blond oak with a carved reredos and baldachino. These appointments were donated by the Altar & Rosary Society of St. Joseph's Church. The altar railing, designed to accentuate the tile floor, was donated by the Holy Name Society. The pulpit was donated by the Sodality of St. Joseph's.



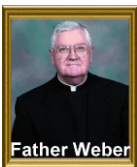
In 1966, Father Meier was transferred to St. Boniface Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA., and was succeeded by the Rev. Carl G. Ulrich. The parish rectory in Nuremberg was sold in 1967 to Joseph Yurcho. The choir loft in St. Joseph's Church was remodeled.



In 1969, Father Ulrich was transferred to a parish in the Poconos and was succeeded by Rev. Francis Kramer. Father Kramer was pastor for a very short period. In 1972, he was transferred to a parish in the Poconos. He is now deceased.



Father Kramer was succeeded by Rev. William Penn. Father Penn realized the inside of both churches needed to be painted. He organized a group of volunteers and the job was completed in a few months. After a short stay, he was transferred and succeeded by Rev. Joseph Weber.



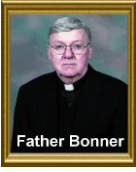
Father Weber did an excellent job fulfilling his obligation in the parochial affairs of the parish. In St. Joseph's Church, the stain glass windows were replaced. In 1977, Father Weber was transferred to Good Shepherd Church in Drums, PA., and was succeeded by Rev. Francis Corcoran.



Father Corcoran made minor repairs to both churches. In the rectory a heat pump was installed. Father also had a magic touch with flowers and had a beautiful rose garden on the side of the rectory. On June 19th, 1983, Father Corcoran celebrated his silver jubilee. A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church, followed by a dinner at Carmen's Country Inn. 1983, Father Corcoran was transferred to Lady of Lourdes, Montoursville, PA. He was succeeded by Rev. Martin Gaiardo.



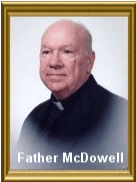
Father Gaiardo was only here a short time when he found both churches were in need of extensive repairs. He started with St. Joseph's Church by completely replacing the old roof, guttering and down spouting. The interior of the church was completely painted, including the pews, stations and several statues. New rugs were installed in the aisle and altar areas. Beautiful stained-glass doors were installed in both front entrances to the church. A new awning was installed covering the main entrance to the church. The rear door was replaced leading to the fire escape. New circulating fans were installed and new vestments were purchased. The painting of the church was done by volunteers and the new doors, awnings, fans and vestments were donated by members of the parish in the name of the deceased members of their families. The Sacred Heart Church also was completely painted, new front doors, circulating fans and new carpeting were installed. The work was performed by volunteers and many of the items were donated by parishioners in the name of deceased members of their families. Father Gaiardo was transferred in 1985 to Our Lady of Grace Church in Hazleton. He was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Bonner.



Father Bonner realized many of the repairs were still to be completed. He added new lighting to the rectory basement and the C.Y.C. building. A new furnace was installed in the rectory and an awning enclosure to the side door. The old roof of the church was replaced, the parking lot was completely repaved and a new cement walk was installed in the rear of the rectory.

On September 10th, 1988, Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's Parish celebrated their 100th Anniversary. The celebration began at 5:00 P.M. with a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Sacred Heart Church. The Most Rev. Francis C. DiLorenzo, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, was the principal celebrant. The choir, children and several parishioners participated in the ceremonies. The celebration continued with a dinner and dance at the American Legion Hall, with two hundred parishioners in attendance. James Palushock served as toastmaster and the Rev. Martin Gaiardo, a former pastor, presented a bouquet of flowers to Josephine Marchetti, the oldest parishioner, who dedicated most of her life to the church. Highlighting the dinner program was a recitation by Frank Bott, the general chairman of the anniversary celebration, who gave the history of the parish.

In 1991, Father Bonner had a chapel constructed in the basement of the Sacred Heart Church, and it was used for daily Masses for many years. It is now the location for classes for our yearly First Holy Communion children. In 1996, the furnace in St. Joseph's Church had to be moved to meet government specifications. Father Bonner retired on July 1st, 1998. He was succeeded by Father Patrick McDowell.



Father McDowell added a parish web site - <http://sacredheartandstjosephsparish.com> - and soon met with the ladies and men of the parish to re-organize our Altar & Rosary and Holy Name Societies. At the request of the Altar & Rosary Society, the votive stands were restored in both churches. Our two societies have taken the responsibility of sponsoring our various yearly fund-raisers, breakfasts and the annual September Social Picnic. At the request of the Diocese, a Pastoral Council was formed to work together with our Finance Committee, and a Cemetery Association was recently formed. Last year new roofs were installed on both our churches. A building & maintenance committee was formed a couple years ago, and they planned and carried through with the re-surfacing of the Sacred Heart parking lot. About three years ago, our parish core team had their first meeting with core teams from St. John Bosco (Conyngham) and Good Shepherd (Drums) to form a cluster committee, overseeing the necessary changes involving our three parishes. At the present time these teams, serving as an implementation committee, are meeting regularly to carry out the plans put forth by our Diocesan Planning Committee.



Our parish has had two parishioners enter the priesthood. The first was Father Victor C. Yannes, who was born and raised in Nuremberg, son of Camillo and Philomena Yannes. His early education was received at Holy Trinity German School in Hazleton, PA. Later he entered Villanova Seminary, where he was ordained a priest in June, 1915. He said his First Mass in St. Joseph's Church, Nuremberg, Pa. July 4th, 1915. He served as priest in New York and New Jersey and Pecos, Texas, Deming and Messila in New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, devoting himself to teaching Spanish children. Father Yannes died in El Paso Hospital March 2nd, 1950 and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery, El Paso, Texas. A requiem Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church, Nuremberg on Saturday, March 10th, 1950.



Father Michael H. Marchetti, the second young man to enter the priesthood from our parish, was born June 16th, 1945, son of Leon and Marie (Enama) Marchetti. His early education was in Nuremberg Grammar School and then in West Hazleton High School.

He received his college education at University of Scranton (B.S.) And Pierce Junior College, Philadelphia (A.B.S.). He spent four years in the US Air Force.

His seminary training was at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, MA and St. Pius X Seminary, Dalton, PA. He was then ordained April 24th, 1982 at St. Peter's Cathedral, Scranton by Bishop J. Carroll McCormick, D.D.

Father Michael's first assignment was St. Mary of Mount Carmel, Dunmore, PA in 1982. He was then transferred to St. Mary of Assumption Church in Old Forge in 1983. His last assignment as assistant pastor was Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace in Hawley, PA in 1988.

Father Michael was given his first pastoral assignment in 1991 at St. Joseph's Church in White Mills, PA, where he remained until being assigned to Holy Name of Jesus Church, Scranton in 2002. Next he was made pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Montoursville, PA in 2007. In 2009 he was assigned to St. Joseph's Church in Wyoming, PA and Our Lady of Sorrows Church in West Wyoming.



Miss Loretta Lescowitch, who was born December 6th, 1915 and baptized December 19th, 1915 in St. Joseph's Church, Nuremberg, daughter of Leopold Frank Lescowitch and Elizabeth Saudner Lescowitch, immigrants from Hungary, entered the Sisters of Christian Charity convent in Mendham, New Jersey, with the name "Sister Leopoldine" on August 21, 1935. She became a novice on August 21st, 1938 and made her profession of Final Vows on August 20th, 1944.

On Saturday, June 26th 2010, following the directives of the Diocese of Scranton, St. Joseph's Church in Nuremberg will close it's doors for the last time, after the celebration of the 4:00 P.M. Mass by Rev. Patrick McDowell and concelebrants Rev. Joseph Weber, Rev. Jack Lambert and native-son Rev. Michael Marchetti, along with Deacon Robert Roman. The doors will be locked for the final time by our oldest active parishioners, Joseph & Antoinette Palushock and the Blessed Sacrament will be transferred to Sacred Heart Church in Weston.

Our parish is 122 years old, years that have seen it struggle to remain alive in its infancy, isolation, poverty and hardships in its youthful years, years that have brought strength, honor and dignity in its mature years. In all these years there has been a constant devotion to God and to Country that was the goal of pioneer parishioners who came to this country seeking that which they were deprived of in the land of their fathers. This history, brief, lacking many details, is not meant to be a completely detailed account of all the events that have transpired in the past 122 years. Many are not mentioned at all, but the purpose of the parish has been at all times to give greater honor and glory to Almighty God and to assist in the salvation of souls. May the events that have been mentioned be a source of many memories for the older members of the parish, many of whom have been closely associated with them, and may prove to be a source of inspiration to our younger parishioners, serving as an example to them of the wonderful and sacrificial deeds of those who went before them providing much that they might worship Almighty God in beauty and dignity. May they in turn take up the burdens and carry on the good work so well established by those who have gone before, so that the future generations may look back on them with love and honor that we today confer upon the pioneers of our parish!