

To  
Archbishop Daniel

in remembrance of  
Assumption Parish

West Indianapolis

James J. Divita

2 October 1994

## WORKERS' CHURCH

centennial history of  
The Catholic Parish  
of the  
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
in  
West Indianapolis

by  
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Professor of History  
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*To all those who handed on to us  
their faith in  
Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer,  
and their love for  
Mary, His Mother*

Professor Divita, a Marian College faculty member since 1961, is interested in the religious history of Indianapolis. Besides the diamond anniversary history of Assumption parish, he has written the histories of Holy Trinity, Holy Rosary, St. Christopher, and St. Anthony parishes, a construction history of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, and an anecdotal biography of Bishop Joseph Chartrand. He has been president of the Indiana Religious History Association since 1987.

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## IN MEMORIAM / WE REMEMBER FONDLY

Rene Abney by Larry Abney Family

Frank and Mary Angrick by Lola Springate  
George Springate by Lola Springate

William O. and Theresa Bates by daughters Mary Flake and Norma Miller  
Alberta Layton and Bonnie Miller by Mary Flake and Norma Miller

Chelsea Bault by Mom and Dad, Andrew, Zachary, Nana, aunts and uncles  
James K. Bault by wife and children  
The Boarman Family by Joe and Mary Boarman  
Herschel Bruce by Berniece Hill Bruce and Family

William and Katherine Bryan, William and Mary Byrkit by Fr. Francis Bryan  
Frank J. and Agnes Bryan, Joseph W. Bryan by Fr. Francis Bryan  
Lee and Mary Evans, Edward Evans by Fr. Francis Bryan

Frank and Mabel Freeman Butcher by their grandchildren  
Patrick F. and Marjorie Butcher McHugh Sr. by their children

Walter "Red" Byers by wife Juanita and children  
Charles Crawford by wife Margrete Crawford  
Margaret JoAnne Dawson by Norman and Becky Dawson Stone, Thomas B. Lynch  
John Fogarty Sr. and John Fogarty Jr. by Nellie Fogarty

Anthony and Catherine Cook Foltz, Emil and Martha Foltz Claus by Lois Claus Gutzwiller  
Paul A. Gutzwiller Jr. by Lois Claus Gutzwiller  
Joseph P. and Florence E. Egan Harmon by Gutzwiller Family  
Mildred Thomas Jaffe, Margaret Thomas McCarthy by the Gutzwiller Family

John Foreman by Arthur Foreman  
Gwen Hahn by husband John C. Hahn and Family

Jacob and Christina Hahn Family: Bertha, Carl, Christine, Jacob, John, Leo F., Margaret, and Rose; Leo F. and Laura Keen Hahn by Donald, Loretta Williams, Richard, and Leo J. Hahn

Edward and Delia Burke Hanley, Daniel M. and Anna Ryan Daly, Martin F. and Catherine Marie Daly Hanley Family, all schooled, married, and buried at Assumption, by their children  
Francis E. Hanley, missed by wife Evelyn L. Hartley Hanley and Family  
John J. and Hester Wilson Hartley, Thomas T. Wilson, Cecilia Wilson Darling, and all members of the Reed, Wilson, McCurdy, and Hartley Families by Mrs. Francis E. Hanley Family

Nolan and Marie Havens, never forgotten by their children  
Pauline Presley Kemper by friends

Evelyn E. Mueller King by her husband and children  
Martha H. Mueller by the Joseph W. King Jr. Family

Kathyrn and Harry T. Kohn by Dan and Elaine Kohn Huff  
Edward Loftus by wife Chauncey Loftus and Family

Thomas and Anna Lynch, Irish immigrants and founding family, by Angie Lynch Bowman  
Members of the Lynch and Hoff Families, John Hoff, Ann Lynch by all the members of the Hoff Family

Jeremiah and Rosanna Tobin McAndrews and Family (Anna, Mary, and John McAndrews, Thomas and Irene Rogers McAndrews, Anthony and Bobbie Ibold McAndrews, Paul and Rose McAndrews Love, Catherine McAndrews); John E. and Sophia Cross McAndrews Family (John C. McAndrews, Thomas B. McAndrews, Richard McAndrews, Josefa Marie McAndrews Beaudrault) by the whole McAndrews Family

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Lena Ruhl, Lawrence and Cecelia Mueller by Don Mueller and Ann Mueller  
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George and Julia Schanz by daughter Lorena Totton  
Derryl Totton by wife Lorena Totton

Frank and Ellen Schmidt, Mary Schmidt by Nelle Schmidt  
Anna and Freda Schwab, our sisters, by Lucille, Mary Jo, Joe, Agnes, Evelyn, and Otto  
Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Snyder and Families of Joseph, Charles, Louie, Rose, and Barbara by children  
Staab and Roembke Families by Harry and Mary Lou Roembke  
Helen Stafford, special lady who gave 45 years to the parish she loved, by Therese Stafford Laudick

All deceased members of the John Verkamp Family by grandchildren  
Thomas and Lauretta Luckett Family by children

Floyd and Corrine Wiggs by Rosalyn Wiggs Jones  
Millard, Elsie, and Jim Wills by family

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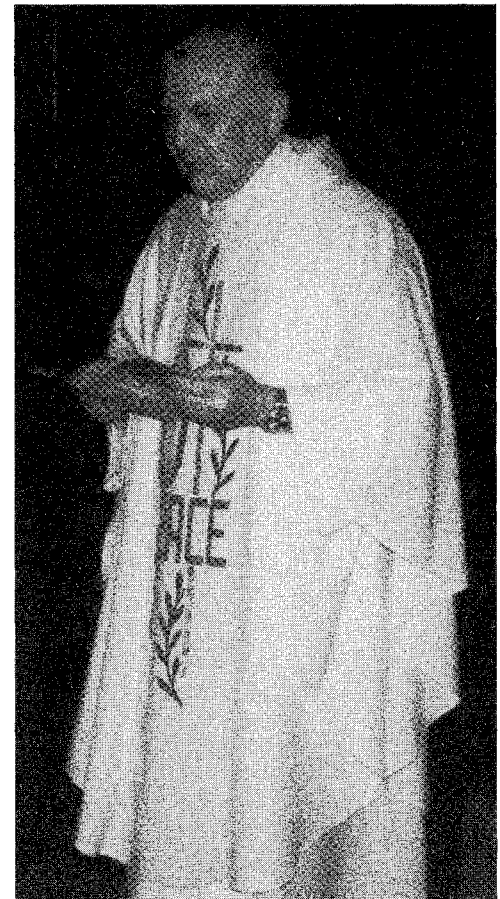
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## AN INVITATION FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR OF ASSUMPTION PARISH

THIS IS A HISTORY about people moving and forming a new community. The city of Indianapolis was expanding and industry and people began to move across White River into West Indianapolis. The new community was made up of people who were long time residents of Indianapolis and immigrants. They were for the most part blue collar workers living in modest homes. Over the years they would find employment in a meat packing plant, a shoe polish factory, the auto industry, an electric power plant, a waste treatment plant, or in the pharmaceutical industry. They worked together and lived next door to each other and shopped in the same stores, but something was missing in this newly formed community.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH recognized what was missing and began the move to establish a parish in the area. The Church would help give stability to the community and make the people more aware of God's presence among them. The Church gave the people a place where they could congregate and worship God, and have their spiritual needs met. The people could also get away from the pressures of life and be alone in a quiet place in God's presence. The Church helped satisfy the social needs of the people of the community. A school was built to provide an education for the total person, material and spiritual. The children received an education that prepared them for their place in the world and taught them about God, the basic moral principles, and the importance of discipline. The parish church and school brought together the people who lived in the valley and the people who lived on the hill.

I INVITE YOU to search these pages and discover a deep faith that helped these people cope with internal and external change. See how a community saw its neighborhood affected by expanding industry and a new road system. Read about the joys and sorrows of clergy, religious, and lay people connected with Assumption Parish.

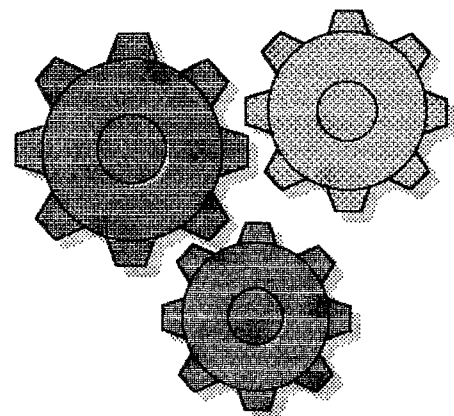
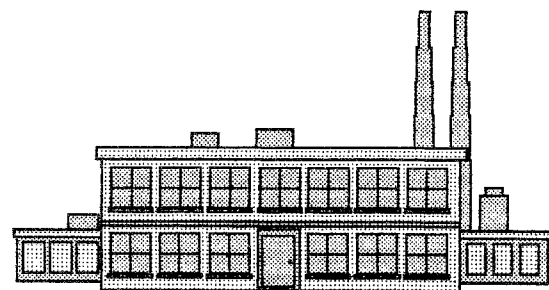


*Rev. John T. Ryan*



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## Why downtown Indianapolis is east of White River

When Indiana Territory, including present Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan, was organized in 1803, Vincennes on the Wabash River served as seat of government. Then when Indiana Territory was reduced in size (1809), Corydon in Harrison County became the seat of government. Although Corydon remained the capital of the new State of Indiana in 1816, legislators realized that the spread of population northward from the Ohio River would necessitate choosing a more centrally-located, permanent capital. The signing of the treaty of St. Marys (1818), which provided for the removal of the Miami and Delaware Indians from central Indiana within three years, facilitated their decision.

In 1820, the legislature at Corydon appointed a commission to explore the west fork of White River, a tributary of the Wabash, and choose a suitable site for a new state capital. The commissioners met at McCormick's cabin, near the present Washington Street pedestrian bridge across White River from the Indianapolis zoo. Different locations were considered, but they finally decided on a site where Fall Creek flowed into White River (then slightly north of the cabin).<sup>1</sup> The commissioners preferred the east bank because the ground was higher and drier as one moved away from the river. Here the mile square (bound by North, South, East, and West Streets) was platted in 1821. Four years later, the legislature assembled in Indianapolis for the first time.

## How the land west of White River became valuable

The state commissioners observed in 1820 that the ground on the west bank was marshy, low, and prone to flood. In normal summers, however, a good crop of corn could be raised in this river bottomland. Nicholas McCarty, Sr. (1795-1854), Virginia-born merchant who purchased almost all the land bound by the Terre Haute, Vandalia, and St. Louis rail line (later the Pennsylvania Railroad) on the north, Judge Harding and Raymond Streets on the west and south, and White River on the east, grew hemp on his "bayou farm" there. With the outbreak of the Civil War (1861-65), economic developers recognized that this acreage had greater value than its agricultural use. The state capital was becoming a major transportation and commercial center with a population of 18,000 in 1860 growing to 75,000 by 1880. Eleven railroads entered the city from

all directions; but because the main lines ran at ground level between Georgia and South Streets, they made the city noisy, dirty, and congested.

Realtor Nicholas McCarty, Jr. (1834-1916), son of the elder McCarty, managed the "bayou farm" for his deceased father's heirs. He thought that a set of tracks should be built connecting the incoming rail lines so that through-freight (an estimated 600,000 cars annually) could be diverted from the mile square. This belt line would anchor a new industrial corridor, provide a site for a much-needed stockyards, and facilitate residential development.<sup>1</sup> Of course, he proposed that the new line run through his property.

On 28 June 1873, the Indianapolis Belt Railway Company was incorporated. McCarty donated the right-of-way, 8,800 feet covering 20 acres. Work soon commenced on the grade south of the Vandalia tracks to Oliver Avenue, but workmen were quickly discharged because of the recession (the Panic of 1873). The right-of-way reverted to McCarty once the project failed.

Two years later, Republican attorney John Caven (1824-1905) was elected to the third of his five terms as mayor. On a cool September afternoon in 1875, he walked the abandoned embankment from the Vandalia tracks through weeds growing over his head to the banks of White River. There he sat for two hours pondering how the City of Indianapolis could profit from the expanding cattle business (it already was a major



Nicholas McCarty, Jr., father of West Indianapolis. Capitalists can dream and affect subsequent generations.

pork packer), enlarge its tax base, provide work for the discontented unemployed, and alleviate downtown traffic problems. The mayor returned home to write the Belt Road Message, which he delivered before the City Council on 17 July 1876. The City sold one-half million dollars in bonds to complete the belt rail line.<sup>2</sup> In November 1877, stockyards opened on McCarty property east of present Harding Street and Kentucky Avenue. On 17 October 1882 the belt line was leased to the Indianapolis Union Railway Company.

### How West Indianapolis originated

Workers at the Union Stockyards and nearby factories lived in a village called Belmont, located immediately northwest of the intersection of present Kentucky Avenue and Minnesota and Harding Streets. On 5 March 1882, county commissioners received a petition requesting incorporation of the town of West Indianapolis, population 471, bound by Johnson (now Minnesota), Belmont, Morris, and Harding. The petition was granted and David Johnson was elected president; Joseph McClain, trustee; John C. Williams, clerk; and Charles F. Reisner, treasurer.<sup>1</sup>

### What West Indianapolis was like as a city

The 1890 federal census reported that the town of West Indianapolis (called W.I. by its residents) had a population of 3,527 and was Indianapolis' largest suburb. Boundaries at the time of its incorporation as a city (1894) were generally the Vandalia tracks on the north, White River on the east, Raymond Street on the south, and Big Eagle Creek on the west.

McCarty's dream that the building of the belt line would lead to the economic development of the area became reality. Oliver Avenue, an 80-foot strip named for State Senator and physician Dandridge H. Oliver (1826-95), became a public way in 1873, the same year that construction began on the belt line.<sup>1</sup> Streets were platted from this thoroughfare and lots sold. Businesses soon opened along Oliver Avenue; but because of its low level, the district was nicknamed "The Valley."

The district to the west of Harding Street but north of Morris and the original W.I. was called "The Hill" because of its elevation. This land had passed from the United States Government into private hands in 1821, the year during which the mile square was platted. In



Mayor John Caven, who brought the City and businessmen together to build the Belt Railroad.

1874, 436 lots were laid out between Morris and Oliver, Harding and McClain (Richland) Streets by real estate agents J. Henry Kappes and Aegidius Naltner, and the heirs of William F. and Charles Kuhn.<sup>2</sup> Land along Big Eagle Creek and northwest of Oliver and Harding remained open for later development.

McCarty was also correct in believing that an industrial corridor would develop with the construction of the Belt Railroad. The major employers in the area before 1890 were:<sup>3</sup>

- 1) Union Stockyards, owned by the Belt Railroad, which also built the present Union Station in downtown Indianapolis (1888)
- 2) Indianapolis Car and Manufacturing Company, northwest of the stockyards to Hadley Avenue (now Kentucky)
- 3) Nordyke and Marmon Company, manufacturers of flour milling machinery, southwest corner of Morris and Hadley
- 4) Jenney Electric Company Works, adjoining Nordyke and Marmon on the west, along the main tracks of the Indianapolis and Vincennes (later Pennsylvania) Railroad
- 5) Standard Oil Company Stave Works, west of Nordyke and Marmon on the south side of Morris at River Avenue
- 6) Woodburn Sarven Wheel Company, West Indianapolis Works, east side of River Avenue, north of Morris Street
- 7) Indianapolis Abattoir Company, slaughterhouse and tallow manufacturer, 400 feet south of Morris, between Drover Street and White River

8) American Roofing and Clay Company, between Hadley Avenue and Indianapolis and Vincennes Railroad tracks south of Drover Street

9) J. J. Vetter, patent folding extension table works, west side of Drover Street north of Hadley

Public transportation was available to those who did not work in W.I., but were employed downtown or at Kingan and Company, meatpackers (on the east bank of White River at West Maryland Street). Street car "O" began its route at Richland and Howard, proceeded east on Howard to Reisner, then north on Reisner to Morris, east on Morris to Klondyke (present Division), north on Klondyke to Ray, east on Ray to Warren, north on Warren to Oliver, east on Oliver to River Avenue, northeast on River Avenue to River Street (present Henry), east on River Street to Kentucky, northeast on Kentucky to Maryland, east on

Maryland to Illinois, and then north on Illinois to terminus at Washington Street.<sup>4</sup>

Howard Street and Oliver Avenue, with their grocery and variety stores, were the major commercial streets in W.I. The political heart of the suburb was the two-story brick city hall, fire house, and jail which stood on the southeast corner of Morris and Harding. The city was divided into three wards and seven precincts. Republicans won most of the offices in the first city election (bribery charges abounded), and Alexander B. Tolin of Nordyke Avenue, livestock commission merchant at Union Stockyards, became mayor.<sup>5</sup>

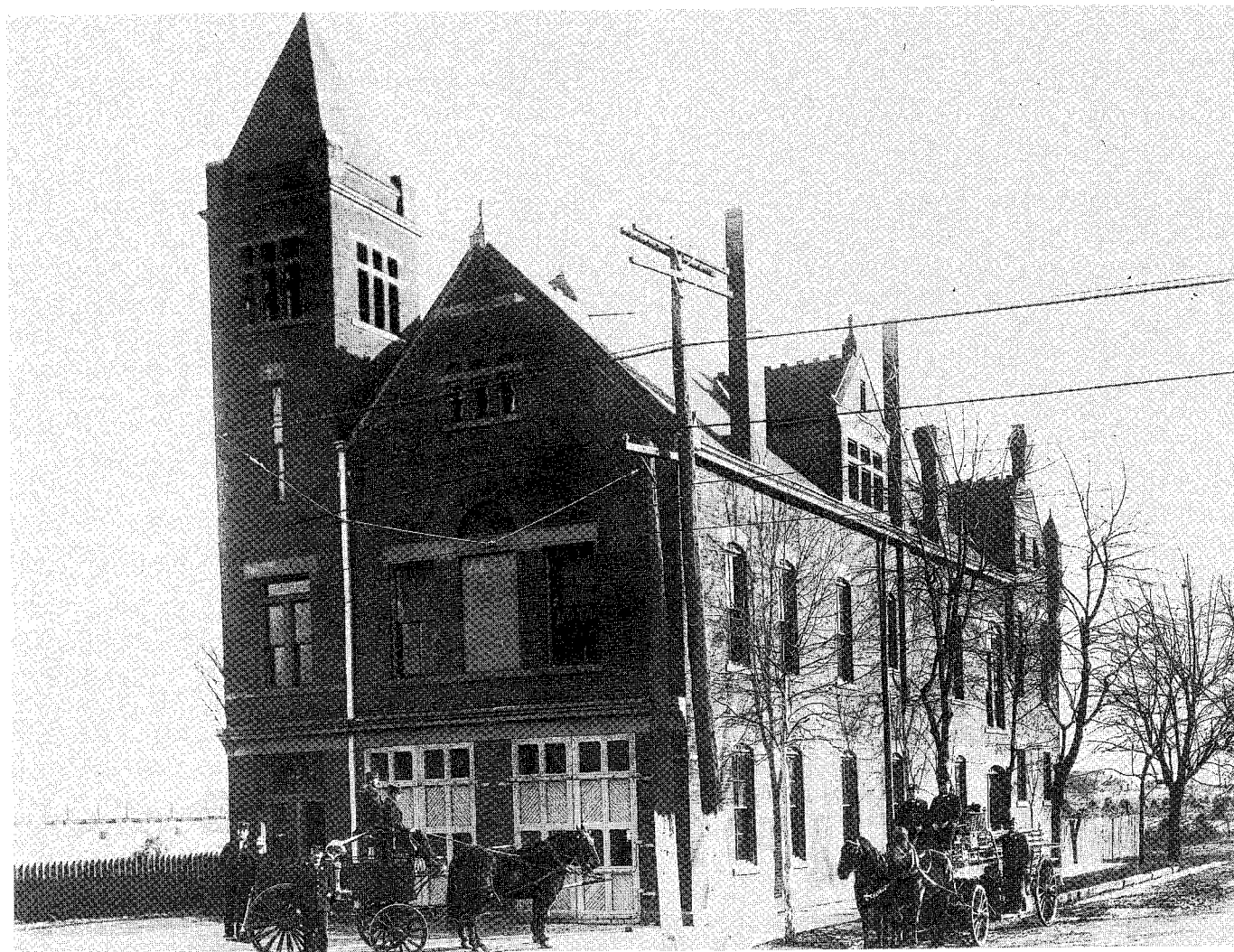
W.I. children attended four schools, its residents worshipped in at least a half dozen churches, and its thirsty patronized 16 saloons.

The four schools and the names given them after they were absorbed into the Indianapolis Public



Monumental arch entry to Union Stockyards, erected by the Belt Railroad and Stockyards Company. Impressive gateway to one of W.I.'s important employers in 1911. Bass Photo Collection negative 27393, Indiana Historical Society Library.





West Indianapolis city hall, a fire station in 1911, southeast corner, Harding and Morris Streets. Ghosts out of our past. Bass Photo Collection negative 26551, Indiana Historical Society Library.

Schools were Numbers 46 (Daniel Webster, Howard at Reisner), 47 (Thomas A. Edison, Warren at Ray), 48 (Nicholas McCarty, York and Lynn Streets in the "Little Valley"), and 49 (William Penn, Morris at Kappes). A three-room public library opened on the northeast corner of River and Morris in 1897.<sup>6</sup>

The churches serving W.I. in early 1894 were:<sup>7</sup>

River Avenue Baptist  
Second Christian—Shepard Street  
W.I. Church of Christ—William Street  
(now Blaine Avenue)  
Pilgrim Congregational—corner Woodburn  
(now Ray) and Warren  
Friends' Meeting House—860 West Morris  
W.I. Methodist Episcopal—William Street

Industrial towns normally possessed a large number of corner saloons at the beginning of the 20th

century. Stockyards and factory workers needed some place to quench their thirsts after long hours in hot temperatures. Saloons also served as social outlets, where workers could gather with their buddies. A strong temperance movement, however, existed in the religious community. When pointing out that W.I. had more saloons than churches, the local newspaper asked, "How do you like that proportion, my dear Christian brother?"<sup>8</sup>

Besides drinking, other problems which vexed W.I. residents were gambling, rowdy boy loafers, the smelly dump, the street car line not extended to Belmont Avenue, allowing baseball games on Sundays (Indianapolis rejected Sunday ball), and poor streets and sidewalks.

In 1896, Democrats won the W.I. elections. Popular desire to upgrade city services while reducing the



Public School #49 (center), addition (right), and Public Library branch #5 (left). Bass Photo Collection negative 24453, Indiana Historical Society Library.

cost of government resulted in discussion of annexation to the City of Indianapolis, where popular Democrat Thomas Taggart was mayor. On 15 March 1897, the Indianapolis City Council approved an ordinance which provided for the annexation of Brightwood, Haughville, Mount Jackson, and West Indianapolis. The local newspaper touted, "We have been taken in,"<sup>9</sup> a sentence in which W.I. residents would later find a second, unsettling meaning.

### How Assumption Parish came to be

In late 1837 Simon Gabriel Bruté de Rémur, first Catholic bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, appointed Reverend Vincent Bacquelin of Shelby County to minister to the Indianapolis faithful on a regular basis. Father Bacquelin's parish became St. John's at Tennessee (now Capitol Avenue) and Georgia Streets.

The impressive growth of Indianapolis after the Civil War made the Hoosier capital the largest city in the diocese. In 1878 Francis Silas Chatard (1834–1918), fifth bishop of Vincennes, took up official residence in the city. At the time Indianapolis was divided into five parishes, all located east of White River. The bishop soon recognized that the expansion of the city's

population and the rise of industrial suburbs necessitated the organization of new parishes.

Bishop Chatard lived at St. John's in an addition which he built onto the rectory. He appointed newly-ordained priests to assist at St. John's so that he could personally evaluate their fitness as future organizers of outlying parishes. Father Daniel Curran founded St. Bridget's in 1879; two years later, his brother Charles was appointed first pastor of St. Francis de Sales in Brightwood. Reverend Michael Collier began to organize St. Anthony in Haughville in 1886. He died three years later and was succeeded by Reverend Francis Dowd, who built the first St. Anthony's in 1891. The fifth of these capable assistant priests was Father Francis H. Gavisk (1856–1932), native of Evansville ordained in 1885. He was given the task of organizing a West Indianapolis parish.

W.I. was populated by natives of the Upper South and rural Indiana, but it had a sufficient number of Catholic residents, as well as anticipated growth, to make the organization of a parish feasible. On 8 November 1888, the bishop purchased lots 99 to 101 in Kuhn and Johnson's First West Indianapolis Addition from the Kuhn heirs. Two days later, he purchased lots 98, 102 to 104 from Melvina J. Kohl and her



Bishop Francis Silas Chatard. He raised the cross of Christ in West Indianapolis by founding a parish convenient to the faithful.

husband Alexander C. Johnson. The total cost of acquiring the seven lots on the east side of William Street (now Blaine Avenue) north of Morris Street was about \$2,500.<sup>1</sup> The site was attractive because it was located on the brow of the elevation which distinguished "The Hill" from "The Valley" in almost the center of W.I.

To raise funds for the new parish, Father Gavisk organized the St. Joseph's Society. Its first members were:<sup>2</sup>

Theodore Badger	William Kemp
William E. Badger	John C. Linnemann
Frank J. Beckman	William McDonald
John Joseph Beisel	Finley Massing
Oscar E. Black	Jacob P. Massing
Patrick Carey	John Roster
Emil Ebner	James Schmidt
James H. Gallagher	Joseph Starrett
John J. Gallagher	Albert Steiner
Henry M. Halbing	Morris Sullivan
Frank Kaschenreuter	

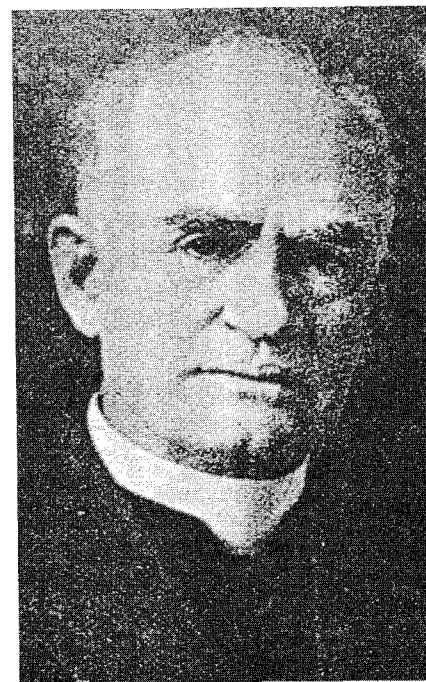
Beisel, Carey, and James Coyle actively solicited donations. Beisel, who acted as church treasurer, also had a personal reason to raise funds. His daughter, Mary Elizabeth Clouse, on her deathbed exacted a promise from him that he would not end his efforts until a Catholic church existed in W.I. She transferred a lot which he had given her to Bishop Chatard to be used

toward paying for the new church.<sup>3</sup> After the lot was raffled, the fundraisers began to sponsor lawn festivals to procure additional income.<sup>4</sup>

When Monsignor Auguste Bessonies (1815-1901), St. John's long-time pastor, returned to his native France to visit his family in 1890, Bishop Chatard appointed Father Gavisk administrator of St. John's. The priest's W.I. responsibility was turned over to Reverend Joseph Francis Weber.

Father Weber was born on 5 February 1865 at Spades, Ripley County, Indiana, the son of Frank and Josephine Hamerley Weber. He was reared in Cincinnati, where his father was a brewer. After attending the Jesuit college until age 17, he transferred to St. Meinrad seminary in southern Indiana. Bishop Chatard ordained him there for the Diocese of Vincennes on 15 June 1889. The new Father Weber was immediately appointed assistant at St. John, Indianapolis.<sup>5</sup>

The young cleric visited W.I. Catholics regularly from St. John's and celebrated three Masses each Sunday in a private house on Warren Avenue in "The Valley." The mule-drawn car fortunately passed the house, for in inclement weather the suburb's unpaved streets became dangerous and unsightly. Then Father Weber would arm himself with several shingles, which



Father Francis H. Gavisk. He began the organization of Assumption Parish.

he flung into mudholes to ensure his footing and protect his shoes and pants.

Because of little apparent progress toward organizing a parish, the number of Catholic families declined to 14. Yet when Beisel and others spread the news that Father Weber was renewing the effort to establish a parish, several families moved into W.I. Clearly the existence of W.I. Catholicism depended on adequate financial resources, but its future also depended on the building of a church and school.

The economic status of Father Weber's people is evident after analyzing this list of parishioners who lent a hand in constructing the church.<sup>6</sup>

Adam Beldy	Abraham G. Gish
John J. Beisel	Jacob Hahn
James Burns	Pat Harmon
Patrick Carey	Frank Kaschenreuter
John D. Cooney	August Lehr
Bernard Decker	Mary Hayes Mack
James Delaney	John Massing
Charles Dohrer	James Mohan
Michael Egan	Dennis Nelligan
Denis Fehringier	John B. Poirier
John Fernkas	John W. Reddeman
Edward Fitzgibbons	Edward Rosenthal
Thomas Fitzgibbons	Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Schell
William Fitzgibbons	William H. Smead
Anthony Foltz	Mrs. Oscar A. Soper
Henry A. Fox	

Adding the St. Joseph's Society membership list presented earlier, 35 of the names can be identified by occupation.<sup>7</sup>

barber	1	livestock broker	1
blacksmith	2	machine hand	2
boilermaker	2	post office worker	1
butcher	1	railroader	6
carpenter	7	saloon keeper	1
foreman	1	telephone operator	1
foundry worker	3	saw filer	1
laborer	4	varnishmaker	1

Undoubtedly, these individuals lived comfortably, but they possessed little of this earth's material surplus. So when Bishop Chatard requested that the priest raise \$800 to pay on the notes which purchased the Blaine Avenue property, Father Weber traveled to Cincinnati to lay the situation before his father. The elder Weber's donation encouraged local residents to dig deeply into their shallow pockets. Despite the uncertainty of recession (the Panic of 1893), they contributed over \$1,100 toward construction of a church. In early 1894, Father Weber let the building contract and purchased pews from a Methodist church.<sup>8</sup>

All W.I. residents must have welcomed the coming of a Catholic church because of its stabilizing effect on their community. In July 1894, an estimated crowd of 8,000 attended the parish festival, thought to be the largest gathering ever seen at a festival in this city.<sup>9</sup> Proceeds exceeded \$1,300 and a full \$600 was raised on the grounds, a rare occurrence when no admission was charged.

## When Assumption Church was dedicated

The elation of pastor and planning committee over the successful festival was matched by the joy at witnessing Bishop Chatard's dedication of the present church building on Sunday, 12 August 1894.

The Church of the Assumption was designed by Indianapolis architect Oscar D. Bohlen. He also designed the Majestic Building at Pennsylvania and Maryland Streets (first skeleton-type structure in Indiana), Murat temple (auditorium and tower), and St. Vincent's Hospital building on Fall Creek Parkway. The new church and its furnishings cost about \$7,000. Its exterior is Gothic style and its interior is light and cheery. The noteworthy artwork is a painting of the Blessed Virgin in the rose window above the altar. The building measures 40 by 90 feet and has a seating capacity of around 450.

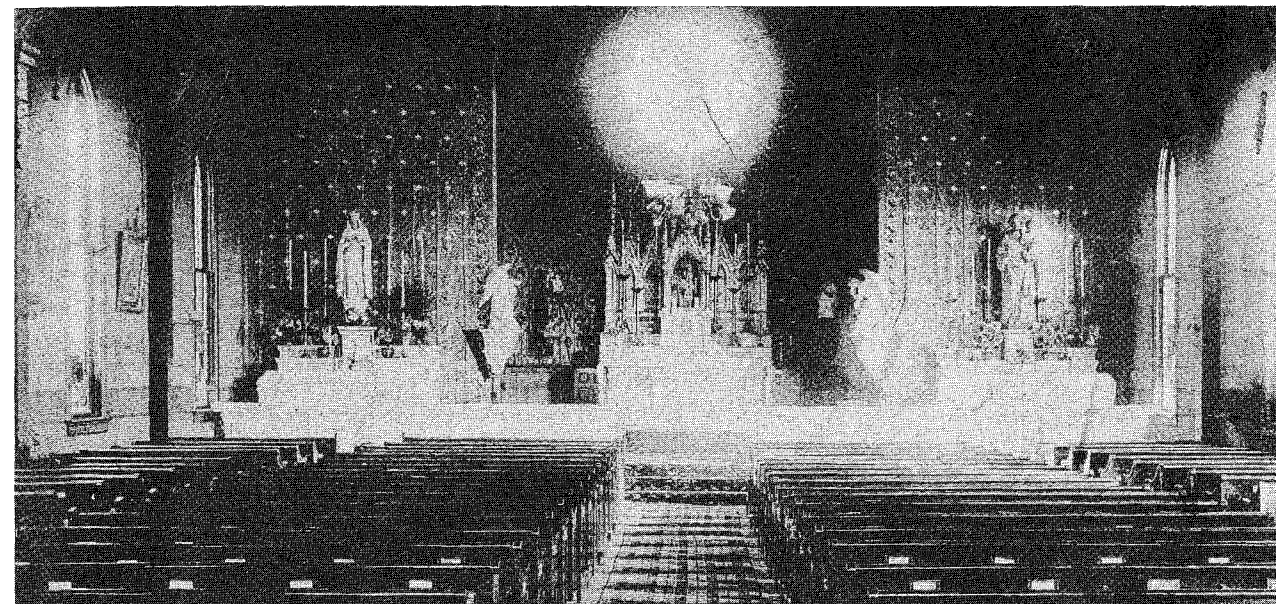


Father Joseph F. Weber in 1890. Our founding pastor devoted his entire life to Assumption parishioners.





Earliest photograph of Assumption Church, around 1900. Frame, stable, spiritual home to the working class. "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes (Psalm 118:23)." Bass Photo Collection negative 3122, Indiana Historical Society Library.



First view of Assumption Church interior. "When one steps inside, he is immediately struck by the lightness and cheerfulness produced by the interior arrangements." *The Catholic Record*, 16 August 1894.

At 9:30 A.M. the bishop began the dedication ceremony at the church door. He first proceeded around the building to bless it, and then entered to bless the interior. After the doors were opened to admit the congregation, Mass was celebrated by Father John Schorno, O.S.B. (1863–1920), prefect of St. Meinrad seminary; Reverend Meinrad Toelle (1859–1939), ordained that morning; and Reverend Mr. Francis W. Wolf (1867–1931).

Bishop Chatard preached the sermon. He emphasized that, with the earlier ceremony, an ordinary building had been given a special character. In this house of God, parishioners can be granted pardon for their sins, partake of the Bread of Life, and receive the other sacraments. He exhorted parents to teach their children that the church is a sacred place.<sup>1</sup>

The musical program was particularly fine that morning. Margaret Mack was organist. The choir was composed of Katie McCarthy, Katie Griffin, and Mrs. Thomas Cantlon, sopranos; Annie Curley and Lizzie Murdock, altos; A. Behringer and Thomas Cantlon, tenors; and A. Strack, bass. *Ave Maria* was sung by Hattie Neighbors and *Ave Verum*, by Mrs. Thomas Cantlon.

The hand-pumped organ installed in Assumption Church was manufactured by August Prante and Sons of Louisville. August's father Joseph had built the first organ in St. Ferdinand Church, Ferdinand, Indiana, in 1856. August (1844–1900), born in Westphalia, Prus-

sia, resided in St. Meinrad, Indiana, in the 1880s and built organs there at the same time Father Weber studied at St. Meinrad seminary. Only four organs built by August and his sons Nicholas and Anthony are extant. All were built for Catholic churches: St. Joseph, Owensboro, Kentucky (1889), removed to a private residence in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 1987; Assumption's organ, now in disrepair and silent for a decade; St. Michael, Madison, Indiana (1897), restored in 1980, but not used because the church building is closed; and St. Philip Neri, Louisville (1899), featured during a recent organists' convention.<sup>2</sup>

The major donors to the Church of the Assumption came from outside the parish. The white Gothic altar was a gift of Joseph A. Rink (1858–1923), cloak and fur manufacturer at 30–38 N. Illinois Street. His residence at 2105 N. Meridian Street was one of the finest in the city. He would again be involved in W.I. affairs when he headed the Board of Public Works, which constructed the levee along White River after the disastrous 1913 flood. Edward J. Brennan (1849–1938), Irish-born medical doctor at 240 N. Tennessee (now Capitol), presented the Way of the Cross. Michael O'Connor (1836–1916), wholesale grocer at Maryland and South Meridian Streets, donated Mass vestments.<sup>3</sup>

Assumption parish ranks tenth among Indianapolis' parishes according to foundation date. Its church is the oldest frame Catholic church in the Hoosier capi-



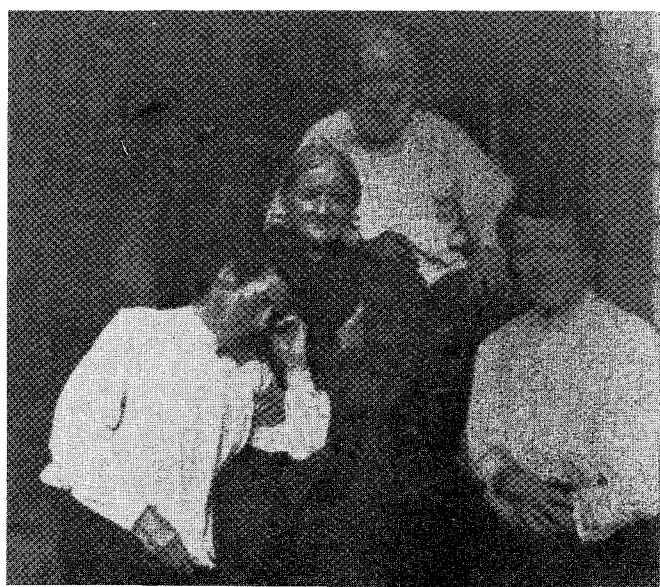
tal and the city's fourth oldest Catholic church structure in continuous use (after St. John, St. Bridget, and Sacred Heart).

### Where the name "Assumption" comes from

In the year 431, bishops of the Christian world assembled at Ephesus in present-day Turkey to discuss the relation of Mary to Jesus. Followers of Bishop Nestorius of Constantinople preached that Mary was the mother of Christ but could not be entitled "Mother of God." Insisting that Jesus was true God and true man, the bishops solemnly declared that Mary was *Theotokos* (Mother of God).

Three years later, in 434, an Armenian lectionary (book of Mass prayers) was published. Modeled on the lectionary used in Jerusalem, it listed 15 August as the "Day of Mary, Mother of God." By the 6th century a church had been built on Gethsemane outside Jerusalem marking the traditional burial site of Mary.

John Damascene, 8th century homilist and saint, reported that Emperor Marcian wanted to possess Mary's body. At the Council of Chalcedon (451) the emperor asked Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem about its location. The bishop replied: "Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles, but that her tomb, when opened, upon the request of St. Thomas, was found empty; whereupon the Apostles concluded that the body was taken up to heaven."<sup>1</sup>



Edmund Fogarty (top), his wife, and two daughters. Born in Ireland, he hauled logs to the Assumption Church building site.



Jeremiah "Darb" McAndrews. In 1905 he lived on shady acreage between Howard and Lambert Streets on the east bank of Eagle Creek. Fresh air, picnics, swimming place. Today an ugly truck parking lot sparkling with broken glass.

Emperor Maurice (582-602) ordered that 15 August be observed throughout the Empire as the "Dormition (falling asleep) of Our Lady." Pope Theodore I (642-49) introduced the feastday at Rome and it spread throughout western Europe. It was called Dormition, *Transitus* (passing), or Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Throughout the Middle Ages and early modern times, Gregory of Tours, Anthony of Padua, Albert the Great, Bernardine of Siena, Robert Bellarmine, and Francis de Sales believed that Christ had favored His mother by assuming her physical body into heaven. Even during the great craze of collecting relics of the saints, no one claimed to possess a portion of Mary's body.

In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, that Mary had been preserved from sin and corruption. If this favor had been granted Mary, then her physical assumption logically followed. Interestingly, Bishop Francis Silas Chatard, an admirer of St. Francis de Sales, originally approved naming the West Indianapolis parish "Immaculate Conception,"<sup>2</sup> but sometime during summer 1894 changed it to "Assumption."

The traditional belief in the Assumption became an article of faith after World War II. Pope Pius XII

polled the world's bishops and found nearly unanimous belief in the Assumption. Then on 1 November 1950, like the Council of Ephesus centuries earlier, he recognized Mary's special relationship to Christ by declaring that Mary, "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."<sup>3</sup>

### How Father Weber financed construction of rectory and school

Soon after dedication of the church, Bishop Chatard suggested that a rectory and school ought be constructed for Assumption parish. We have no evidence of financial support accompanying the episcopal suggestion.

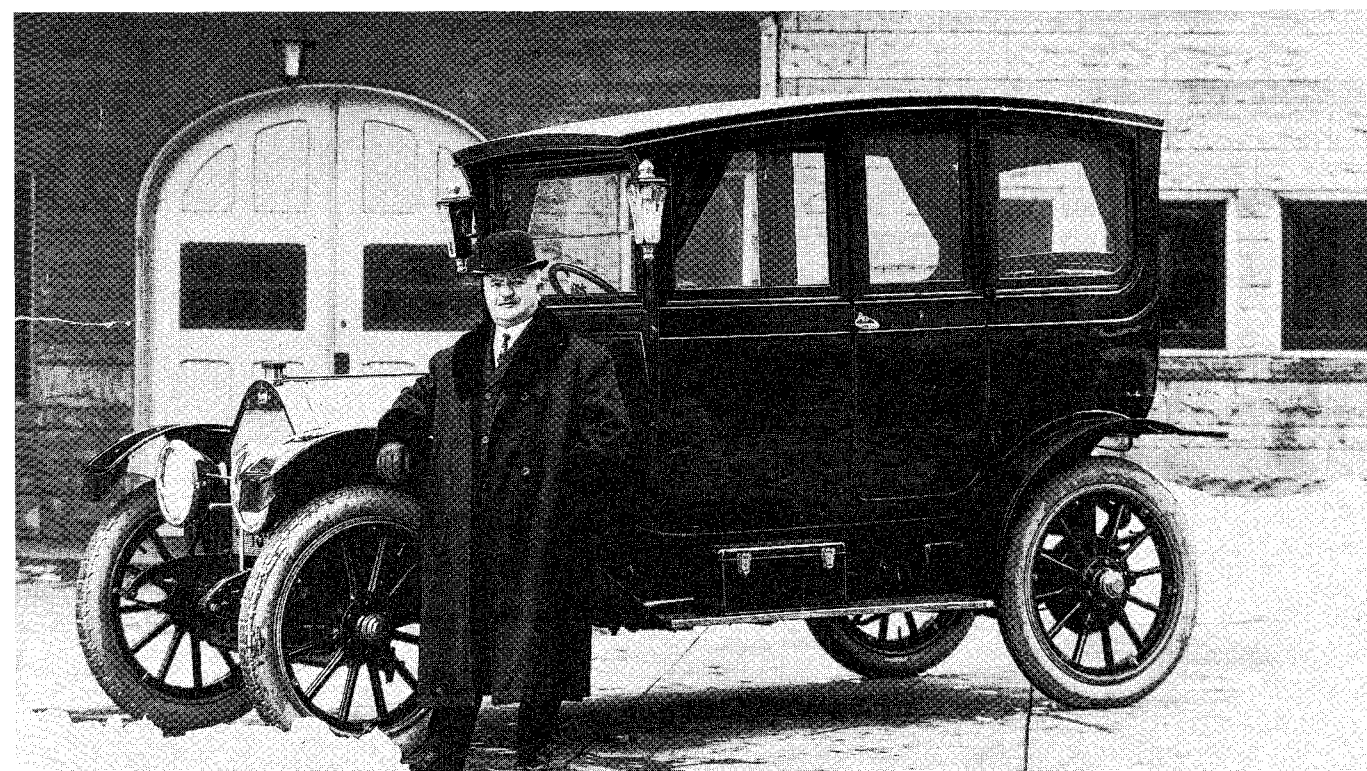
W.I.'s pastor once again requested assistance from his father, Frank Weber. After inspecting the plans for the new rectory, the elder Weber agreed to finance and furnish the building. The rectory was completed in late November 1894, three months after the church dedication. Father Weber moved from St. John's and enjoyed his first meal, on Thanksgiving, in his new home. His father and sister Ida also moved into the rectory. This arrangement continued until 28 June

1898, when Frank Weber died in an upstairs room of the rectory while preparing to visit his native Bavaria.<sup>1</sup>

To finance a school was a greater challenge. The bishop expected that the pastor would purchase a frame building across from the rectory; but, after consulting his lay advisers, the pastor decided to approach the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana, with a request that they finance and staff a Catholic school in distant W.I.

Mother M. Scholastica Stockman, O.S.B. (1846-1921), superior general at Ferdinand, was not at all receptive to Father Weber's proposals. At the time the sisters normally limited their missions to the towns south of Jasper between Evansville and New Albany. All of these schools were owned by their parishes or the local county.

Disheartened, Assumption's pastor happened to meet Benedictine Father Basil Heusler (1860-1942), pastor of St. Joseph's in nearby Jasper. Father Basil thought that a Benedictine sisters' mission in a large urban center like the Hoosier capital would be a good way to interest more young women in the sisters' community. He encouraged Father Weber to present his request before Father Eberhard Stadler, O.S.B. (1830-98), Ferdinand pastor and the sisters' chaplain



Joseph A. Rink, wealthy businessman and Assumption benefactor, stands before his Cadillac parked near his mansion at 22nd and Meridian Streets. His brother Charles married Father Weber's sister, Ida, at Assumption Church in 1901.



(1871–86). Father Weber later reported that he carried Father Eberhard's word to Mother Scholastica, who immediately called in her advisers. "At once they concurred in the recommendation of Father Eberhard."<sup>2</sup> Today's feminists would consider this incident a good example of the use of clerical power in a male-dominated Church.

Although documentation does not completely verify such a dramatic turn of events, it is true that Father Weber soon obtained plans for a school from Oscar D. Bohlen and sought the bishop's approval.<sup>3</sup> Bishop Chatard accepted the drawings on condition that the classrooms and sisters' living quarters be enlarged to avoid overcrowding. "He said since you were coming here to establish a school of your own," Father Weber informed Mother Scholastica, "it would be to your advantage to erect a suitable building at once which would compare favorably with others."<sup>4</sup> Enlargement raised the cost of the building to \$11,300.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1895, thirteen months after the church dedication, four Benedictines, with Sister Au-

gustine Sturm, O.S.B. (1860–98), as principal, arrived to open school for 65 scholars. Neither Father Weber nor Mother Scholastica could have foreseen that this act inaugurated a fruitful, century-long Benedictine presence in populous Indianapolis.

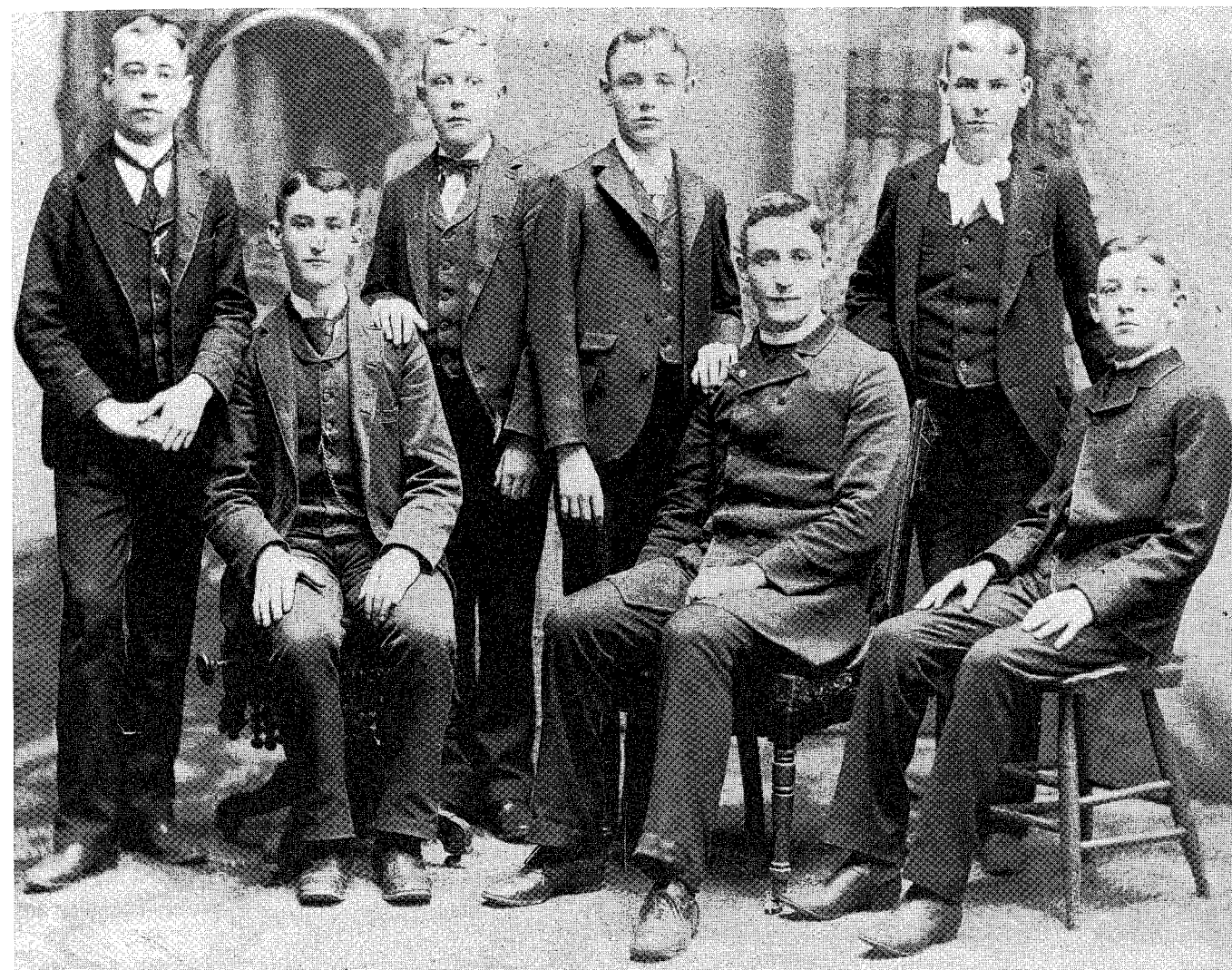
### *Why the parish grew*

Membership and school enrollment indicate that Assumption parish underwent impressive growth between the opening of the church in 1894 and the onslaught of the Great Flood of 1913. Beginning with an estimated 300 parishioners, membership reached 850 in 1910; 202 school children enrolled in 1910.

The original school contained several 20 x 20 foot classrooms on two floors, an attic, and sisters' quarters in the northeast corner.<sup>1</sup> The Sisters of St. Benedict owned the building and, on 10 September 1896, Bishop Chatard signed a quit claim transferring lots 103 and 104 (land under the school) to Mother Scholastica.<sup>2</sup>



*Assumption School built by the Sisters of St. Benedict. More solid and elegant than neighborhood public school buildings. Never forget the contribution of the religious to Catholic education.*



*Father Weber (third from right) and young men of Assumption Parish ca. 1900.*

If the sisters had been concerned about the bishop's insistence that they build a larger, more expensive school than first anticipated, the increasing enrollment soon transformed the bishop into a realist. The number of sisters assigned already increased to 5 in 1896. The Sisters of St. Benedict procured designs by Gault and Gault, Terre Haute architects, for a rear addition to the school. The firm estimated the cost of the three-story addition at nearly \$24,000, construction of a boiler house at \$1,887, and repair to the existing building (probably conversion from gas and coal oil to electric lighting) at \$500. The contract was signed on 30 March 1909.<sup>3</sup> The construction of the school addition containing more classrooms and an auditorium and the purchase of the lower playlot along Harding Street (1911) marked the last major change in parish buildings and property until 1962.

Industry continued to develop in W.I. Union Stockyards and the belt railroad's repair shops remained important employers, but probably W.I.'s leading industry was Nordyke and Marmon.

In 1876 Nordyke and Marmon (then called "Quaker City Works") moved from Richmond, Indiana, to buildings owned by Artemus Hadley on the southwest corner of present Kentucky Avenue and Morris Street. This location, adjoining tracks of the Indianapolis and Vincennes Railroad, permitted easy access to raw materials and fuel and allowed easy shipping of the milling machinery manufactured there.

Nordyke and Marmon also founded the Jenney Electric Company in 1885. It helped spread the use of electricity by building dynamos and electric light plants. This subsidiary was named after Charles D. Jenney of Fort Wayne, inventor of an arc light. Ulti-



mately Nordyke and Marmon sold its subsidiary to General Electric.<sup>4</sup>

Then in 1902 Nordyke and Marmon began the manufacture of another new invention, the automobile. It began large scale manufacture of the Marmon car in 1905 and entered it in its first race at the Indianapolis Speedway on 19 August 1909. Ray Harroun drove a Marmon in the Ten-Mile Free-for-All Handicap in 9 minutes, 47 seconds, winning first place. Marmon won the Wheeler-Schebler trophy at the track the following year. Then on 30 May 1911, Harroun won the 500-mile race by driving a Marmon Wasp 74.61 mph.<sup>5</sup> By 1919 Nordyke and Marmon had plants on both sides of Kentucky Avenue and employed over 5,000 workers.

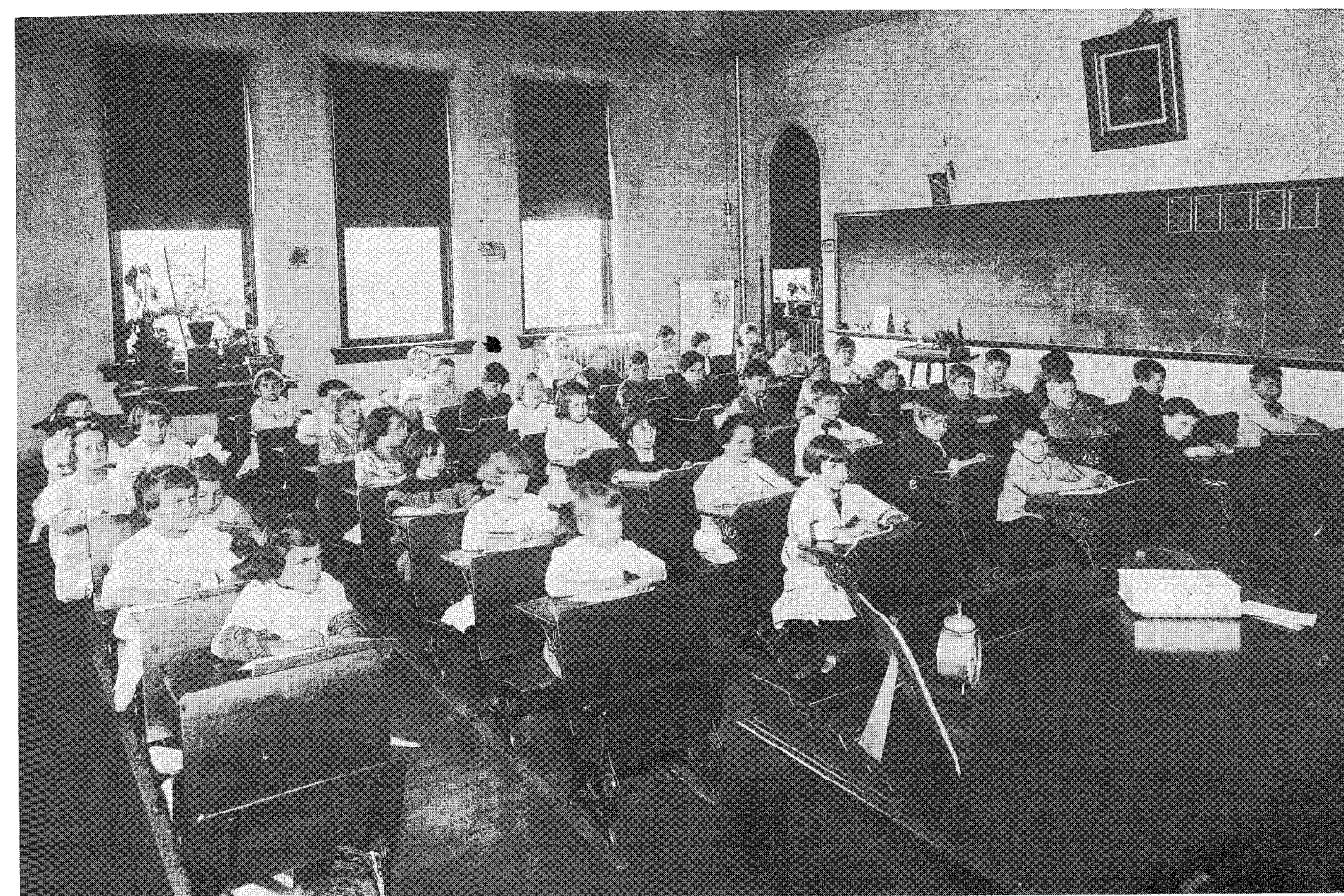
Two other significant employers moved west of White River to W.I. during this time. Piel Brothers Starch Company moved from Dakota and Morris to 1515 Drover Street in 1906. Parry Manufacturing

Company, wagon and carriage works, was located on the present site of the United States post office main branch (South Illinois and Henry). By 1911 it relocated northwest of Oliver Avenue and White River and built the Marion car there.<sup>6</sup>

Bishop Joseph Chartrand (1870–1933), coadjutor to Bishop Chatard, recognized that further industrialization of W.I. and Decatur Township was attracting a larger Catholic population. Since the late 1880s, Franciscans from Sacred Heart parish had served St. John the Baptist mission in Valley Mills.<sup>7</sup> Around the turn of the century, Father Weber had also ministered there from Assumption. Then in 1917, the bishop assigned seventeen Assumption families and the territory west and south of Big Eagle Creek to the new St. Ann's parish in Mars Hill. With that decision Assumption parish received its present boundaries—incidentally coterminous with the boundaries of W.I.



First Communion class of 1901. Identified in the first row are James Heidlberger (left), John Butler (third from left), Michael McGinty (fourth), and Leo Holland (fifth). Jessie Walsh is in the second row (left). In the third row are Mary Staab (center) and Teresia Kurtz Commons (right). Elizabeth Brogan Hofmann is second from left in the fourth row. In the fifth row are Ida Hughey Lines (second from left) and Bertha Bortlein Phillips (fourth). Ceremony and dress-up show respect for the Eucharist.



First Grade classroom, 1913.

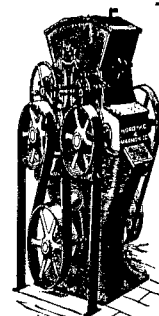


Nordyke-Marmon, the Belt Railroad, and unpaved Harding Street looking east from Assumption School in 1920. The industrial heartland of the Hoosier capital. Bass Photo Collection negative 69852F, Indiana Historical Society Library.



# NORDYKE & MARMON CO.

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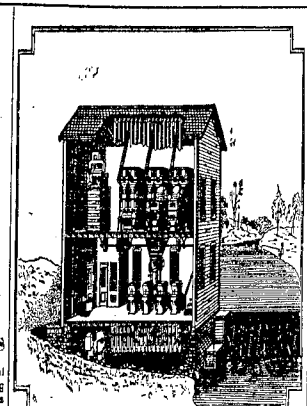
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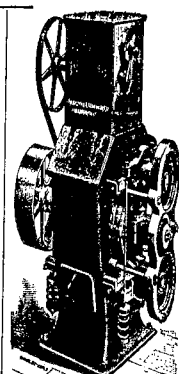


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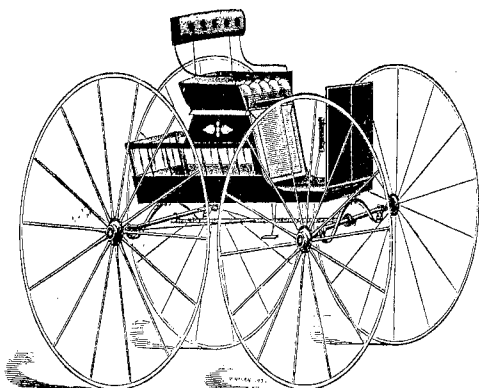
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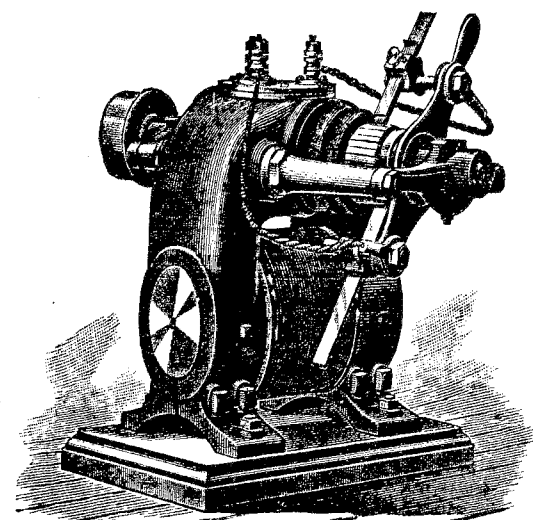
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SPRING WAGONS.

For several years past we have made and sold more than ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND VEHICLES YEARLY, which fact tells its own story.

PARRY M'FG CO., INDIANAPOLIS.

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## JENNEY • ELECTRIC • MOTOR • CO.

... INDIANAPOLIS, IND. ...

Indianapolis, March 26, 1913.

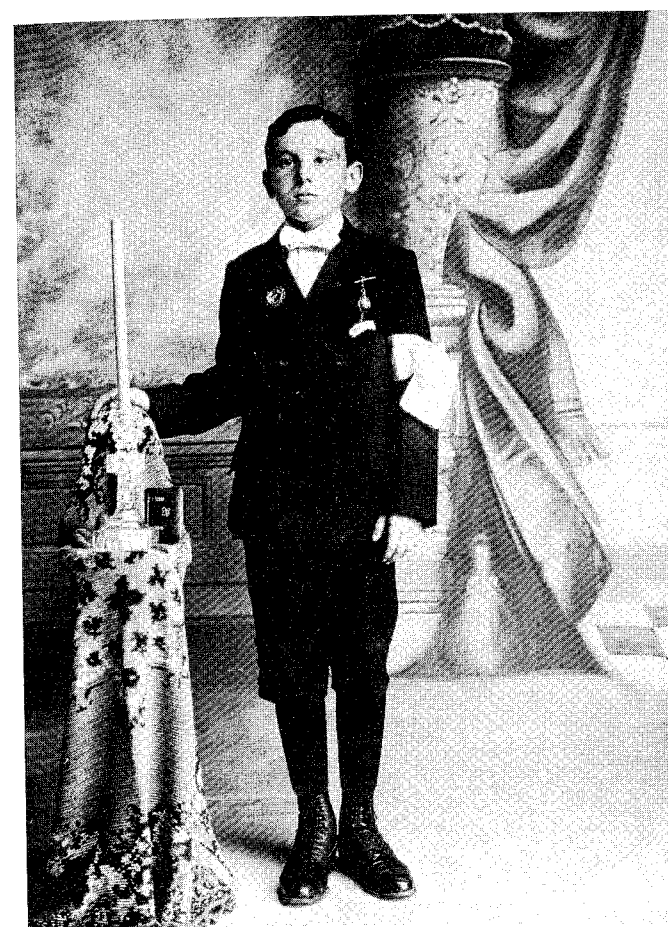
To Our Patrons:

## WE ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS —AND OUR— WHOLESALE CITY WAGONS

are making the usual daily deliveries to meat shops, wherever flood conditions will permit.

Rumors of a serious accident, involving loss of life, in our establishment are entirely without foundation.

## KINGAN & CO. Ltd.



First Communicants Tom McGinty in 1907 and Edith Goedeker (Kempe) in 1915.

## When Assumption parishioners nearly disappeared under water

At the very moment these words are written during summer 1993, television newscasters are reporting the flood devastation along the Mississippi River from Dubuque to Cairo and along the Missouri River from Kansas City to its mouth at St. Louis. Thousands have been forced to abandon their submerged residences and literally hundreds of thousands of acres of crops are innundated. Bridges have been closed and some lives have been lost. The reasons for the flood and resultant destruction are two. A low pressure in a weather system stalled for weeks over Iowa and Missouri produced massive daily rainfall. After saturating the ground, water ran off into rivers which human-kind narrowed, channelized, and encroached upon by building homes and businesses on normal flood plain.

Eighty years ago, in 1913, W.I. fought its greatest battle with White River. Flood waters stood 6 to 20 feet deep<sup>1</sup> after the earthen levees gave way. Although

the levees built years earlier by Nicholas McCarty, Jr., had been raised two feet, some river bank property owners relocated them and narrowed the current. Then the City built bridges so short that their approaches acted like dams during highwater and restricted the flow.

The occasion for the Great Flood was a stationary front which dropped almost seven inches of rain between 23 and 27 March 1913. A comparable amount of rain had fallen before in an equal length of time, but never before had such a heavy rainfall been so general from Fort Wayne to northern Kentucky in so short a time.<sup>2</sup> Local runoff did not decrease before waters from upstream appeared. White River flooded in 1875 and 1904; but the 1913 flood crested at slightly over 24 feet, 7 feet higher than the record level of 1904.<sup>3</sup>

Highwater on the White River helped raise the levels of Fall Creek, Pogue's Run, and Big Eagle Creek. All rail traffic into Indianapolis was interrupted. The water pumping station and power plants on the river banks were flooded. Fresh water was cut



off and electric and gas supplies in large sections of the city were threatened. Streetcar service was suspended. The Washington Street bridge and the Vandalia and Vincennes Railroad bridges were swept away.

The most serious threat of flooding occurred along the west bank of White River from Michigan Street south to the mouth of Eagle Creek. By 25 March, Eagle Creek was from  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile wide, flooding the southern portion of W.I. Then late that afternoon, Mayor Lewis Shank notified Fire Company 19 at Morris and Harding Streets that the levee at Morris Street was beginning to give way. Within a few minutes water began to flow into the station, and by the time the firemen hitched horses to their two wagons, water was waist deep. The lower floor of the fire station ultimately had water 9 feet deep<sup>4</sup>—and it's a half mile from the river.

At that point, when Father Weber and parishioners on "The Hill" looked eastward from parish property, they observed that all W.I. from the Vandalia tracks to Eagle Creek was flooded. The business district along Oliver Avenue and the Belt Railroad tracks as well as homes on the west side of Harding at Howard were under water. The concrete steps of Morris Street Christian Church, northeast corner of Morris and Blaine, served as a riverside dock.



Oliver Avenue homes under water during the Flood of 1913. Noah would have felt comfortable in W.I. "Indianapolis Floods" negative 4113, Indiana Historical Society Library.

The levee break at Morris Street left over 3,000 families homeless and resulted in over \$1,000,000 in property loss. Father Weber immediately opened the church and school and alerted the sisters and parishioners on "The Hill" to welcome the homeless. Three hundred women and children were housed in parish buildings and as many as 800 persons were fed there daily. The rectory was turned into a station for the Red Cross and headquarters for the Indiana National Guard. The pastor and parishioners paddled out to rescue the stranded from rooftops and trees, and worked diligently to reunite separated members of families. Father Weber promised that no one would become a fatality because of neglect. "We'll have nothing dead but rats!" he exclaimed.<sup>5</sup> For his efforts the pastor was dubbed the unofficial "mayor of West Indianapolis" and was called "Father" by Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Among those who personally aided flood victims at Assumption were Rabbi Morris M. Feuerlicht of Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation; United States Representative Charles A. Korbly; Police Captain George V. Coffin; Captain Robert H. Tyndall of the National Guard; businessman Henry R. Danner; Father Gavisk of St. John's; and State Senator Henry A. Harmon (1866-1928).<sup>6</sup>



Harding and Howard Streets, looking north. Water higher than your kitchen table.



Kentucky Avenue and Morris Street, looking north. Flood waters lifted a home from its foundation and floated it into the street.





*City of Indianapolis,  
March twenty-sixth, nineteen hundred thirteen*

*Your devotion to the lives of others, your  
splendid behavior, your exemplary bravery and  
your heroic service to your city during the flood,  
compel the admiration of men.*

*The Board of Public Safety of the City  
of Indianapolis, take this opportunity to com-  
mend you for this service.*

*Wm. E. Davis  
W. Resoner  
Jessie S. Sisloff*

The City of Indianapolis recognized our Sisters of St. Benedict for assisting flood victims.

On 29 March, the flood waters began to recede. Fear spread that unsanitary conditions and overcrowding would lead to an epidemic. Dr. and Mrs. J. Frank Potts personally cared for 18 of the 186 homeless sheltered on Blaine Avenue between Assumption rectory and Morris Street. Three nurses staffed a field hospital in Assumption school.<sup>7</sup> To assist refugees return home, the parish community helped to remove filth and replace warped and twisted boards if houses were salvable. A committee of prominent citizens organized to collect funds to refurnish homes of the stricken. Members were Judge Frank B. Ross of Probate Court; Father Weber; Mrs. Samuel M. Ralston, wife of the governor; Mrs. Joseph B. Kealing, wife of the city corporation counsel; Mrs. Meredith Nicholson, wife of

the Hoosier author; Mrs. Henry Rauh, wife of a prominent Union Stockyards businessman; Charles Warren Fairbanks, former vice-president of the United States; Judge Clarence E. Weir of Superior Court; industrialist Frank H. Wheeler; and Mrs. Louis (Eliza A.) Blaker, superintendent of Indianapolis Free Kindergartens. The committee set a first goal of refurnishing 200 houses, whereupon Father Weber collected 20 pledges immediately and guaranteed 100.<sup>8</sup>

Today the Great Flood of 1913 is a romantic memory. The houses which were repaired or reconstructed have melded into the earlier building stock of frame structures. Industrial production halted briefly, but soon resumed to respond to the demands of World War I. The flood's greatest physical legacy are the levees which the City's Board of Public Works subsequently constructed along White River from 38th Street to Big Eagle Creek. They make the repetition of a water catastrophe less likely.

### When war came to Assumption parishioners

On 6 April 1917, Congress authorized President Woodrow Wilson to declare war on Germany. Although military conflict began in Europe soon after the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914 and American lives were lost when a German U-boat torpedoed the British passenger liner Lusitania in 1915, British propaganda and unfortunate German acts like unrestricted submarine warfare on the high seas and promises of American territory to Mexico forced Wilson's hand.

Nordyke and Marmon began manufacturing airplane motors. Patriotic civilians began buying Liberty bonds. Everyone stopped studying German. Many attended the special parades downtown. All followed their newspapers once the first of a million American troops landed in France in spring 1918. Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel salient, and Argonne forest became household words.

Almost seventy Assumption parishioners enlisted or were drafted to serve their country.<sup>1</sup>

James C. Ahern  
John J. Ahern  
Francis A. Ahern  
Pervil E. Austill  
Henry Baecker  
George Bauchers  
Edward Bauer  
Herman Bauer  
Fabian Biemer

Fred G. Blomeyer  
Robert J. Brown  
Roy J. Burgers  
Thomas E. Burnett, Sr.  
Frank Cardis  
James G. Clark  
Leo G. Cleary  
Hugh Commiskey  
Paul Commiskey

William Conners  
Harry Connell  
John Curtis  
Eugene Daly  
Francis A. Denk  
George Deters  
William Downey  
Gus H. Ernest  
Frank Ervin  
Hugh Fitzgibbons  
B. T. Gaughan  
John A. Gaughan  
Maurice Gehl  
Charles (Carl) Hahn  
Leo Hahn  
Leo Harmon  
Fred J. Heidelberg  
James C. Hinton  
William Holland  
Joseph Johantgen  
Claud Johnson  
William Johnson  
Harry Korbowiz  
Robert Lawler  
William Lawler

John Lynch  
Thomas Lynch  
Charles McCann  
Michael McGinty  
Thomas McKern  
Thomas McNulty  
C. Marion  
John Mitney  
T. Murphy  
Joseph Murray  
James O'Connor  
John O'Connor  
Joseph Porten  
Bernard H. Ruhl  
Henry L. Ruhl  
William Ryan  
J. A. Salb, M.D.  
Harry Sherer  
Thomas Smead  
P. R. South  
Dan Sullivan  
Warren Terry  
Ralph Wiegand, Sr.  
Walter Zapp

Dealing with loneliness and heartbreak which accompanied separation from loved ones preoccupied parish staff. Fortunately, the intervention of fresh American troops helped give the Allies a military advantage over the Germans, who had already lost almost 2,000,000 soldiers over the four-year period. At 11 A.M., on 11 November 1918, the armistice went into effect, silencing machine guns in the trenches and the roar of tanks on the battlefields of the Western Front. American dead numbered 115,000. Unfortunately, their sacrifice did not lay the foundation of a fair, defensible peace settlement which could endure for more than twenty years.

### When Assumption Parish was identified with West Indianapolis

During his forty-year tenure as pastor, Father Weber never concerned himself solely with the spiritual welfare of his people. Love of neighbor and the virtue of justice caused him to strive to improve the environment in which parishioners and their neighbors lived. Over the decades, municipal authorities became very familiar with Assumption's pastor. He frequently appeared before them to appeal for the paving of streets, the erection of street lighting, the extension of streetcar lines, and the laying of sidewalks. The business community was also acquainted with him. When he decided that downtown ice companies overcharged their W.I. customers, he organized the United Ice Company at 1101 Harding and served as its president in 1914.<sup>1</sup>

A second flood crisis faced W.I. in August 1916. Fear that the newly constructed levee could not forestall the onslaught of the raging waters led to the evacuation of "Valley" residents. Assumption school again served as a refugee center for several families. Most of the children found living in the school such an adventure and Father Weber's hospitality so gracious that they cried when they had to return to their own homes.

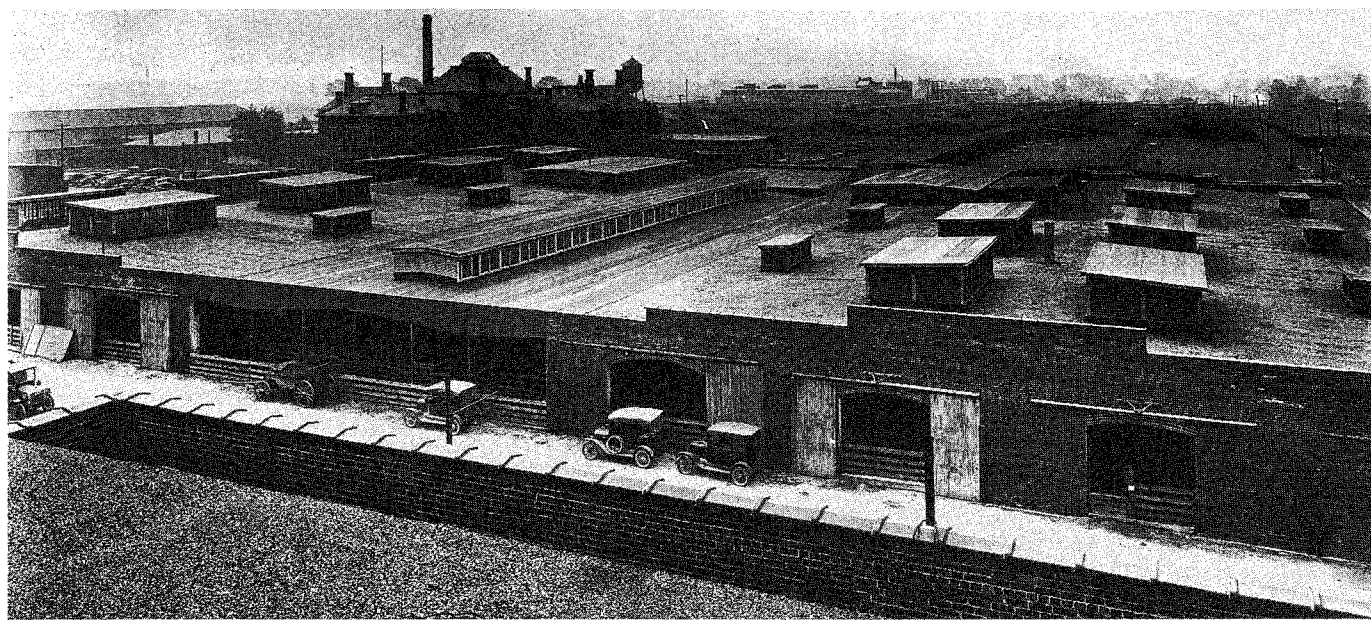
The term "air pollution" was seldom spoken in Father Weber's day, but W.I. residents could see and smell it. This was no surprise in a district with a starch plant, stockyards, and slaughterhouses; but the major culprit was known as Sellers farm, the southwest corner of Harding and Raymond Streets. The City of Indianapolis purchased the farm for use as a dump in 1873, before W.I. existed. After the incorporation of the suburb, Mayor Tolin requested that the state board of health investigate the source of the odors. From night soil and decaying animal carcasses, was the answer.<sup>2</sup> When the City Council did not take any action, residents complained that W.I. was as attractive as many other localities around the Hoosier capital, but visitors will say: "West Indianapolis is all right when you get into it; but oh, my! that awful dump."<sup>3</sup>

W.I. residents contended with the city-created nuisance until after World War I, when the City decided to build mule stables and transport city-wide garbage to W.I. A delegation met with Mayor Charles W. Jewett and presented 5,000 signatures on a petition asking that the 1897 ordinance annexing W.I. be repealed. If W.I. was not given the same consideration as other neighborhoods, then W.I. should be permitted to protect its own property values.<sup>4</sup>

City officials denied that they neglected to protect the interests of W.I. residents. After all, they profited handsomely from the building of the levee at public expense. Then former State Senator Harmon, a member of the delegation, pointed out that he had introduced the dike legislation in the legislature to protect industry, not private homes.<sup>5</sup> Officials responded that the problem with mule stables would soon disappear when storage for motorized equipment replaced them.

In regard to dumping, the Enterprise Civic League had wagon drivers hauling night soil arrested and fined for creating a nuisance. League President Frank Turner called a meeting in Assumption hall to discuss disannexation. He, Father Weber, and several others decided that, if dumping continued, they would present petitions for disannexation. They already col-





Union stockyards and hotel in the 1920s. Tough on your nose. Bass Photo Collection negative 71243F, Indiana Historical Society Library.

lected 4,000 signatures and promised to gather another 1,000 in a few days.<sup>6</sup>

Pressure for disannexation resulted in the sanitary commissioners announcing that a new garbage reduction plant would be constructed on Sellers farm. The City Council majority promised to consider an anti-odor ordinance in six months, if a committee could not recommend ways to reduce odors. Committee members for W.I. were Councilman Heydon W. Buchanan, Father Weber, Harmon, and attorney J. Stephen Fullen. Representing business was Samuel E. Rauh, president of the Belt Railroad and Stockyards Company; John Kingan of Kingan and Company; and E. C. Merritt, general manager of Indianapolis Abattoir Company.<sup>7</sup>

Father Weber outlined W.I.'s moderate demands. "We had no desire to drive any plant out of our community, but we wished only to require the owners of these plants to put in up-to-date equipment that does away with those unbearable odors."<sup>8</sup> As of this writing, W.I. residents and their industrial neighbors still seek ways to co-exist comfortably.

### When the Ku Klux Klan was welcome in West Indianapolis

Assumption parishioners loved their pastor. One of them recently delivered a large photograph of Father Weber to the Centennial Committee. The creases

around the edges revealed that it once had been framed. How many parishioners fondly display large portraits of their pastors today?

When Father Weber fell ill from exhaustion during the Great Flood of 1913, the secular press reported that he was "sorely missed" and that the five priests sent to W.I. "combined could not replace" him.<sup>1</sup> In 1914, at the time of his silver anniversary of ordination, the secular press term him "one of the most popular clergymen in Indianapolis" and used words like "esteem" and "hero."<sup>2</sup>

Father Weber celebrated his jubilee with a Solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving on 16 June 1914. Reverend Francis A. Roell (1864-1945) of Richmond was assistant priest; classmate Joseph Bauer (1865-1948) of Armstrong, Indiana, deacon; Reverend Henry P. Fein (1865-1916) of Greensburg, subdeacon; and Franciscan Conventual Raphael Huber (1883-1963), Holy Trinity parish in Haughville, master of ceremonies. Coadjutor Bishop Chartrand preached the sermon.<sup>3</sup> That evening the Murat Theatre orchestra entertained guests at a reception in Assumption hall. Parishioners and friends presented a new Cole automobile to the pastor. He expressed his appreciation in characteristic form, saying that his new auto would surely guarantee a golden jubilee of ordination!

All this adulation for a Catholic priest, his devotion to public causes, his contact with Indianapolis' prominent citizenry, and the apparent ordinary relations between W.I.'s Catholics and non-Catholics must be



The Mayor of West Indianapolis

"Only those of us who live among and know the poor can appreciate the great suffering and the great need of assistance . . . They are all good at heart and it is the fault of society, mainly, that they are placed in such a position that they can not help themselves when calamity falls upon them." Father Weber, 4 April 1913.

"Father Weber came here as a young priest forty years ago and founded this parish and built it up against many bitter odds of adversity. Today we see here a fine established parish with a fine calibre of Catholic people in whose homes and lives the ideals of Christ's Gospels are exemplified and souls are led to heaven." Father John Joseph Brogger, O.F.M., in his sermon at Father Weber's funeral Mass, 17 July 1935.

balanced by noting the postwar concern over the corrupting impact of modernity, traditional Protestant suspicion of Catholicism, and the influx of newcomers with short memories into W.I. Otherwise, the next several paragraphs describing animosity in the community seem illogical.

The Ku Klux Klan was chartered in the State of Indiana on 13 August 1921. By 1924, an estimated 38,000 residents of Indianapolis were Klan members. Since the Klan program and social activities appealed exclusively to middle-class and lower middle-class Protestants, we can conclude that probably one-





Young Ladies Sodality picnic in 1914. Our best effort at identification is front row left to right: 1) Florence Gehl; 2) Father Raphael Huber, Franciscan Conventual who assisted Father Weber on occasion; 3) Annie Linne; 4) Rosalie McAndrews (Love); 5) Anna McGinty (Desjean); 6) Helena Foltz; 7) Mary Sullivan; 8) Miss Beckert; 9) Marie Gish (Zapp); 10) Winnefred Gordon; 11) Miss Gehl; and 12) Helen Cleary (Gaughan). In the back row are 1) Mary Murray (Ball); 2) Nora Murray (Haney); 3) Mary Sullivan; 4) Mary Fitzgibbons (Lindamon); 5) Barbara Hirth; 6) Mary Hirth; 7) Marie Wolf (Millie); 8) Miss Staab; 9) Anna Wolf; 10) Catherine Daly (Hanley); and 11) Mary Deter. Surely a good time was had by all.

quarter of the target group were members. Cadle Tabernacle, just outside downtown, was considered the center of Klan activity.

According to a scholar who studied their residential patterns, Klan members were heavily concentrated in Brightwood, east of Woodruff Place, Fountain Square, Old North Side, just south of Crown Hill cemetery, Haughville, and W.I. He found 3,400 members in the area bound by West Washington Street, White River, and Big Eagle Creek—nearly the boundaries of Assumption parish.<sup>4</sup>

In oath and literature, the Klan was a hate group. It singled out Catholics, Blacks, and Jews as alien threats to "100% Americanism." Catholics were subject to job discrimination and business boycotts. Even their high school basketball teams were excluded from playing with public high school teams.<sup>5</sup> While taking a strong stand against immorality, crime, and the use of liquor, the Klan just as strongly supported racial segregation

and the end to all immigration. Klansmen and women intimidated their enemies by wearing white sheets, hoods, and masks, organizing silent, torchlit parades, burning large oil-soaked wooden crosses in the night, and threatening violence.

On some occasions intimidation became actual violence. In summer 1923, a man stabbed three people attending the festival at St. Anthony's, Assumption's northern neighbor. He turned in his knife at Klan headquarters. A year later, in April 1924, an arson fire destroyed the mother church of Indianapolis Catholicism, St. Vincent's in rural Shelby County, after a Klan rally.<sup>6</sup>

Catholics—"a curse to humanity and freedom of conscience" according to one Klan speaker—challenged the Klan when the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.), an Irish Catholic organization, decided to sponsor its traditional, annual St. Patrick Day parade on 17 March 1923. The A.O.H. county president called on all Catholics, no matter what their ethnic

origin, to participate in this year's parade "as a special protest against the un-American action of the Ku Klux Klan and similar societies" which attack and deny the right of civil and religious liberty in this country.<sup>7</sup> One speaker that evening was Hoosier-born Patrick H. O'Donnell of Chicago, founder of the anti-Klan American Unity League (AUL).

Catholic Church authorities took no official stand on the Klan. Bishop Chartrand never commented on public policy. Following his lead, we have no public utterances from Father Weber, defender of W.I. interests as recently as late 1922. We do know, however, that the pastor invited O'Donnell to speak in Assumption hall around Labor Day 1923,<sup>8</sup> and soon thereafter permitted the AUL executive board to meet at Assumption.<sup>9</sup> Former State Senator Harmon was financial secretary to the AUL in Marion County.

Catholic opposition to the Klan was not limited to a parade and meetings. Evidence of boycott and petty violence exists. An alleged Klan member owned a movie theatre on Oliver Avenue, and Catholics did not patronize his establishment.<sup>10</sup> A garage in the 1400 block of Morris Street posted a sign which boasted of its "100% Gasoline" in imitation of the Klan slogan. Seven bricks were hurled through its plate glass window at four in the morning.<sup>11</sup> When Klanners marched down Capitol Avenue in spring 1924, the fire department (with its Irish Catholic component) ran its trucks frequently through the line of marchers in answer to what it admitted later were false alarms.<sup>12</sup>

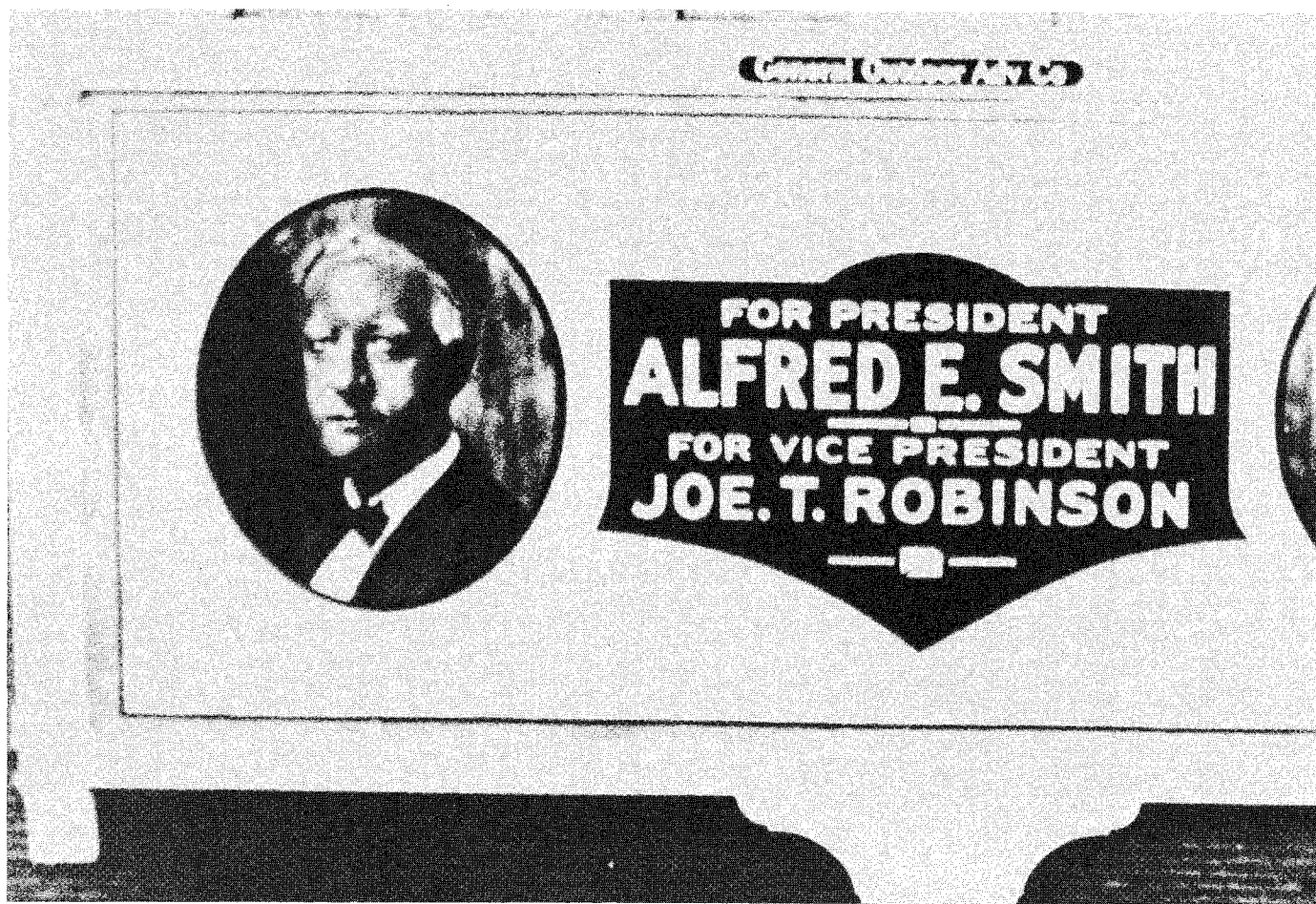
Once an unemployed man, who remembered Catholic generosity during the flood, phoned Father Weber to beg for fuel to heat his house. Just a few weeks earlier, the pastor had recognized this man among the Klansmen who ambled up Blaine Avenue chanting "Kill da Katlicks." Nonetheless, Father Weber ordered that two tons of coal be delivered to the man's house.

Mayor Lew Shank wanted to control the public demonstrations of the Klan—which he disliked. He was concerned that religious differences and secret organizations would affect law enforcement. A bill was introduced to outlaw the wearing of masks except at Halloween; but, although the *Indianapolis News* endorsed it, the City Council rejected the bill in mid-June.<sup>13</sup> "I am not going to stand for any trouble in the administration between Kluxers and Catholics or between any others," he declared.<sup>14</sup> Since the law required that all outside fires within city limits be placed in steel containers, he supported a Public Safety Board ruling against burning crosses.

The first confrontation between the Shank administration and Kluxers over cross burning occurred in W.I. The Public Safety Board personally advised Reverend J. Luther Jones of Westview Baptist Church, Jones (now Westview Drive) and Belmont, that the fireworks display permit that it issued him did not authorize the burning of a cross. On the evening of 10 July, an 18-foot burlap-wrapped, oil-saturated wooden cross was carried into church grounds and placed in the hole already prepared for it. After responding in the affirmative to a Klan speaker's question whether they were "100% American," the crowd of 7,000 began to shout "Light it." When police forbade the ignition of the cross, Reverend Jones addressed the angry Klanners. He reminded them of their pledge to uphold the laws. Then he offered to head a caravan of cars, carry the cross west on Morris Street until, passing city limits, they could conduct a cross-burning ceremony freely. Later, some hotheads returned to Rhodius Park near the church to set three smaller crosses ablaze.<sup>15</sup>

The 1924 and 1925 elections demonstrated the political power of the Klan. Mayor Shank was badly defeated by Klan candidate Ed Jackson in the primary election for governor. Jackson went on to defeat his Democratic opponent. The Klan supported John L. Duvall as mayor of Indianapolis. A majority of those elected to the Indiana House of Representatives was favorable to the Klan. Bills were introduced to make mandatory in public schools a daily reading from the King James version of the Bible; to establish a state textbook commission which would approve all textbooks used in both public and parochial schools; and to require that only graduates of public institutions could qualify for a teacher's license.

No popular revulsion or effective Catholic counter-moves brought the Klan down. It was destroyed by the immorality, crimes, and hypocrisy of its leadership. In spring 1925, Klan chief D. C. Stephenson was charged with rape and murder, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Angered that Governor Jackson did not grant him a pardon, he began to reveal the private faults of the politicians. Jackson was indicted for bribery, and Duvall was convicted of violating the Corrupt Practices Act (1927). Protestant Hoosiers concluded that womanizers, cheats, and crooks operated an organization which supposedly upheld goodness and honesty as true American values; but no one claimed that religious and racial bigotry, which was a root of the Klan phenomenon, had been discredited in Indiana.



Billboard during the campaign of 1928 showing Alfred E. Smith, Democratic governor of New York and first Catholic to run for the office of President of the United States. Smith received 563,000 votes to Herbert Hoover's 848,000 in Indiana.

### How parishioners spent their time

Three technological innovations—automobile, motion picture, and radio—helped revolutionize social life in Assumption parish after World War I.

Henry Ford's automobile gave parishioners unprecedented mobility. If you wished to check out downtown sales or attend a show, horse or street car were your means of transportation. Few traveled out of the city except by train or interurban, because unpaved roads made travel dirty and dangerous. Now auto transportation was available and the better-off might actually purchase a Chevrolet or Marmon built in the neighborhood. Downtown was only minutes away and the joy ride in the country on Sunday afternoons became a popular pastime. Undoubtedly, Father Weber was concerned about couples sitting closely in the rumble seat—or even worse, becoming acquainted in the back seat!

The movie attracted audiences to theatres on Mor-

ris Street and Oliver Avenue. Children especially looked forward to the Saturday matinee. Films starring cowboy hero Tom Mix and the "it" girl, Clara Bow, were very popular. In 1923 the motion picture industry responded to criticism that it romanticized sexual activity and criminal violence by deciding to enforce a national moral code.

The first permanent radio station in Indianapolis began broadcasting in 1924. Crystal sets and headphones yielded to the table model and then the living room radio console. Those who believed that the car and the movie undermined family life looked to the radio with its wholesome entertainment as a way to rejuvenate the home circle.

Parishioners could also relax, play ball, use the community house and swim, or picnic in Rhodius Park. Prominent businessman George Rhodius was the son of German immigrants George R. and Maria Rhodius, who settled in Indianapolis in 1859. The elder George served in the Union Army during the

Civil War and died in 1867, but Maria opened a number of restaurants and built the four-story Circle Park Hotel. At the time of her death in 1905, she was considered one of the city's best business women and had accumulated substantial downtown real estate. She sent son George to study at Notre Dame, but he did not graduate. He could not settle down, associated with women of ill repute, and was declared insane in 1907. Dead from apoplexy two years later, Father Gavisk of St. John's officiated at his funeral and burial in Crown Hill cemetery. A failure in life, Rhodius had impact after death. He bequeathed to the City of Indianapolis some \$38,000 to enlarge and beautify parks. "I recommend that it be done with the end of giving breathing space to the poor element of our city." It should perpetuate the Rhodius name, "this being my native city and the city where my mother lived and we both loved it and wished only for its good."<sup>1</sup> In 1913 the City used his legacy to purchase a swampy 33-acre site in W.I. and named the new park in his memory.

In summer 1924, Bishop Chartrand appointed the recently-ordained Reverend John Charles Riedinger (1882-1971) to be Father Weber's first assistant. This native of Yorkville, Indiana, people-oriented like his pastor, worked with youth at Assumption for ten years. To supplement the Father Weber Council #274, Young Men's Institute (YMI), organized in the 1890s to provide a social outlet and insurance protection for young men, Father John organized the Catholic Young People's Social Club. Its highly successful dances and plays attracted attention beyond parish boundaries. In 1934 the Social Club presented a three-act farce, *The Absent Minded Bridegroom*, directed by Charles Johnson, Jr., and starring Herbert Gilligan and Carl Boehm.

Father Weber always kept his rectory open to any parishioner who wished to pass the time of day conversing with the pastor. He saw a close relation between spiritual ministry, financial stability, and social life. He once reported to Bishop Chartrand that "everybody belongs to something" at Assumption.<sup>2</sup> The men's Oneida Club raised substantial sums for the parish. Another active group was the "400 Social Club" for both male and female parishioners. One of the plays which the Social Club's Married Ladies presented in 1932 was a modern version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, a three-act comedy directed by Father John with Mrs. Henry J. Denk, Mrs. Frank Butcher, Mrs. Michael Hanley, Mrs. Thurman Fox, and Mrs. Thomas Fitzgerald in leading roles.

Parish children always knew that their pastor was

their friend. Father Weber was delighted when the Sisters of St. Benedict organized a school orchestra. (It performed at the Married Ladies play!) He once kept a burro so that he could give the children rides in the school yard. Father Weber liked to brag that he had tried out for the Cincinnati Reds and had turned down their offer in order to enter the priesthood. His physical agility lent credence to his boast, for the children found him awesome whenever he played baseball with them.

Parish men would gather in the unpaved school yard for a serious, competitive stone throwing contest. The pastor liked to challenge the best of them, and soon he enjoyed the reputation of being W.I.'s champion stone hurler.

The pastor dabbled in real estate and high-risk financial ventures. He purchased houses in the neighborhood and sold them to Catholic families, and persuaded parishioners with extra change to invest in several schemes from backing oil exploration projects to an electric vibrating machine which purported to cure all diseases including cancer. Trust in him and the ordinary speculative fever of the prosperous 1920s resulted in several parishioners risking their funds and not always showing a profit.

The priests on Blaine Avenue were always ready to help those in need. They might be politicians who wanted to probe public opinion on some issue in W.I. The suppliant could be a distressed wife or mother, who unhesitatingly awakened Father Weber during the night to ask that he drive downtown to plead the case of a loved one who had run afoul of the law. Perhaps the most notorious incident was his agreeing to testify as a character witness for the Chicago gangster Roger Touhy. Father Weber claimed that Touhy was framed in the John "Jake the Barber" Factor kidnapping case. Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Elmer Ritter (1892-1967), who was elected diocesan administrator upon the death of Bishop Chartrand, did not appreciate a Catholic cleric's involvement in this celebrated trial. In early 1934 the bishop cited the rule that a diocesan priest could leave his diocese only with episcopal permission—and then promptly refused to give Father Weber his permission.<sup>3</sup>

Parishioners still remember Assumption's founding pastor as a kind, but sometimes overgenerous father-figure. Once during the Great Depression, Father Weber spotted on the street a man who was not as well dressed as he. They exchanged clothes and the pastor returned to the rectory attired in his newly-acquired rags. He was always ready to give a few dollars





The cast of the play *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1932. Top row (left to right): Edith Reed, Martha Claus, Mabel Butcher, Lettie LaFave, Mrs. George Burns, Theresa Bates; bottom row (left to right): Elizabeth Hofmann, Catherine Hanley, Mrs. Thurman Fox, Mrs. Thomas Fitzgerald, Ruth Denk, and Lindy Connell.

to a needy someone or to guarantee a bank loan with his signature so that a parishioner could open a business with a questionable future. Yet parishioners noted his fondness for his dog "Boozer" (an appropriate Prohibition name!), who had the run of the rectory, and such high regard for "Weber" (no kidding!) the cat, that whenever the animal occupied his favorite chair he would avoid disturbing it by sitting in a less comfortable one.

### Who staffed Assumption School during the Weber pastorate

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, owned and staffed Assumption school. The following sisters were assigned to teach the children in grades

1 to 8 or to keep house for the teaching sisters there during the time of Father Weber. The asterisk denotes a deceased sister. The name of the principal is given in bold print.<sup>1</sup>

- Sr. Augustine Sturm (1895-98)\*
- Sr. Placida Castrop (1895-1902)\*
- Sr. Cunigunda Jochim (1895-96)\*
- Sr. Anastasia Schutzius (1895-99)\*
- Sr. Stephana Pohl (1896-1910)\*
- Sr. Caroline Welte (1896-1902)\*
- Sr. Clara Wagner (1898-1902)\***
- Sr. Baptista Haberkorn (1899-1900)\*
- Sr. Irene Karcher (1900-01)\*
- Sr. Henrietta Schepers (1901-03)\*
- Sr. Eleonora Moeller (1901-04)\*
- Sr. Placida Castrop (1902-06)\***
- Sr. Fintana Ringeman (1902-17)\*
- Sr. Armella Elsner (1902-20)\*
- Sr. Lucia Schmitt (1903-15)\*
- Sr. Felicitas Halter (1904-07)\*

- Sr. Florentina Ackerman (1906-07)\*
- Sr. Catherine Sturm (1907-08)\*
- Sr. Seraphine Kordes (1908-14)\*
- Sr. Regina Mosby (1908-15)\*
- Sr. Agnes Rosenbaum (1909-10)\*
- Sr. Cornelia Frey (1909-14)\*
- Sr. Augustine Dusch (1910-12)\*
- Sr. Meinrada Lex (1910-12)\*
- Sr. Aurelia Schnell (1912-14)\*
- Sr. Camilla Halter (1912-15)\*
- Sr. Claudia Backert (1912-13)\*
- Sr. Placida Castrop (1914-20)\***
- Sr. Victoria Bumm (1914-20)\*
- Sr. Calista Godecker (1914-15)\*
- Sr. Prisca Loesch (1915-25)\*
- Sr. Elizabeth Schmitt (1915-19)\*
- Sr. Bernadette Merkley (1915-17)\*
- Sr. Cleta Benken (1915-16)\*
- Sr. Pauline Kelly (1916-18)\*
- Sr. Flavia Neu (1917-23)\*
- Sr. Germaine Libs (1917-18)
- Sr. Hyacinth Schneider (1918-26)\*
- Sr. Delphine Koressel (1919-23)\*
- Sr. Columba Neusch (1920-26)\***
- Sr. Constantia Dieters (1920-21)\*
- Sr. Albertine Striegel (1920-21)\*
- Sr. Jeanette Uebelhor (1920-28)\*
- Sr. Mary James Fals (1921-23)\*
- Sr. Camilla Halter (1923-24)\*
- Sr. Aurelia Schnell (1923-29)\*
- Sr. Tarcilla (Tharsilla) Moeller (1923-24)\*
- Sr. Armella Elsner (1924-26)\*
- Sr. Gerald Wiederkehr (1924-26)\*
- Sr. Edwarda Seberth (1924-25)\*
- Sr. Veronica Ackerman (1924-26)\*
- Sr. Bernice Kavanaugh (1925-26)
- Sr. Armella Elsner (1926-27)\***
- Sr. Benedicta Schnell (part 1926-27)\*
- Sr. Germaine Libs (part 1926-27)
- Sr. Wilfrieda Effing (1926-27)\*
- Sr. Columba Neusch (1927-36)\***
- Sr. Armella Elsner (1927-31)\*
- Sr. Hyacinth Schneider (1927-31)\*
- Sr. Lucille Mandabach (1927-28)
- Sr. Luitgard Hassler (1927-37)\*
- Sr. Bernice Kavanaugh (1928-36)
- Sr. Paschal Schulte (1928-30)\*
- Sr. Cecilia Murtaugh (1929-40)\*
- Sr. Sylvester Will (1930-37)
- Sr. Therese McFall (part 1930-31)\*
- Sr. Annette Mandabach (1931-32)
- Sr. Anita Zinkan (1931-32)\*
- Sr. Valencia Wildeman (1931-36)
- Sr. Ebba Limberger (1932-44)
- Sr. Joan Weinzapfel (1932-36)\*
- Sr. Mary Teresa Speer (1934-35)\*

Although this list indicates turnover in personnel, some sisters served Assumption children for long periods. The school was headed by seven principals in 40 years. Sister Placida taught for 7 years, then became principal for 4 years, and returned 8 years later for another 6-year term as principal. Her service at Assumption extended over a quarter century, from 1895

to 1920. Sister Columba was principal almost continuously for 16 years, from 1920 to 1936. Sister Armella served most of three decades, from 1902 to 1931. Sister Fintana was missioned at Assumption for 15 years; Sister Stephana, for 14 years; Sisters Lucia, Hyacinth, and Ebba for 12 years each; and Sister Prisca, for 10 years. Sister Veronica Ackerman, at Assumption (1924-26), was reverend mother (general superior) of the Sisters of St. Benedict (1898-1902). In 1914, Assumption principal Sister Seraphine Kordes was elected reverend mother, a position she held until 1949. The retreat center at Ferdinand is named in her memory.

### What Father Griffin thought of Assumption Parish

In fall 1934, Father Weber became seriously ill and spent several weeks in St. Vincent's Hospital. He re-entered St. Vincent's for a throat operation, but early on Saturday evening, 13 July 1935, he died at age 70.

The body of Assumption's founding pastor was waked in his school and church. At 10 A.M., Wednesday, 17 July, Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated by Monsignor Francis B. Dowd (1862-1942), pastor of old St. Joseph's. Classmate Joseph Bauer, chaplain at St. Vincent's, was deacon; classmate Andrew Schaaf (1861-1945) of Brookville, sub-deacon; and Benedictine Andrew Bauer (1871-1949) of Mariah Hill, master of ceremonies. Bishop Ritter gave the absolution, assisted by Father J. Adam Urich (1863-1939) of Morris and Father John C. Riedinger of Greenfield, Assumption's first assistant pastor.

In attendance were dignitaries of Church and State—a fitting tribute to the impact of Father Weber's life work: a half-dozen monsignori, Benedictine Abbot Ignatius Esser of St. Meinrad, Mayor John W. Kern, Police Chief Michael F. Morrissey, Fire Chief Fred C. Kennedy, and County Treasurer William E. Clauer. Nearly fifty religious of various communities were present. Finally, parishioners, Father Weber's converts, and many ordinary lay people filled every seat in church and overflowed onto Blaine Avenue.

Father Weber was laid to rest in Holy Cross cemetery. His pallbearers were trustees Nicholas Porten, Nicholas Staab, Timothy D. Danaher, Henry Foltz, Leo Harmon, and John Callahan. Father Joseph A. Laugel (1909-73), newly-ordained priest who succeeded Father John as Assumption assistant in 1934, conducted the graveside service.<sup>1</sup>

Within a month of Father Weber's death, Bishop

Ritter appointed Reverend Patrick Henry Griffin (1879-1962) second pastor of Assumption parish, effective 1 October 1935. A native of Indianapolis, Father Griffin was educated at Manual High School, St. Mary's College in Kansas, and Mount St. Mary of the West Seminary at Norwood, Ohio. Auxiliary Bishop Denis O'Donaghue (1848-1925) ordained him in old St. Patrick's Church in Indianapolis on 11 June 1905. Bishop Chatard appointed him assistant pastor at Holy Trinity, New Albany, and in 1907 transferred him to St. Simon, Washington. The following year he moved to St. John, Indianapolis, then to St. Bridget (1913) and Holy Cross (1918). After a short stint as an army chaplain, Father Griffin pursued graduate study at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Then in 1920 he received his first pastorate, St. Bartholomew, Columbus.<sup>2</sup>

From 1921 until his appointment to Assumption, Father Griffin served outside of the diocese with the Catholic Church Extension Society in Chicago. Founded in 1905, Extension sought to develop missionary spirit among Catholics and provide financial support for churches in poor localities in the United States. Father Griffin became field secretary, and in 1925 general manager of *Extension* magazine (monthly circulation almost 300,000) and vice-president of Extension's board of directors. He kept in contact with Indianapolis through regular family visits.

At first Father Griffin found it difficult to adjust to lowly Assumption parish and W.I. He thought that his education and past parish and Extension experiences ought qualify him for a greener field of labor. Of his intellectual abilities, he was particularly proud of his

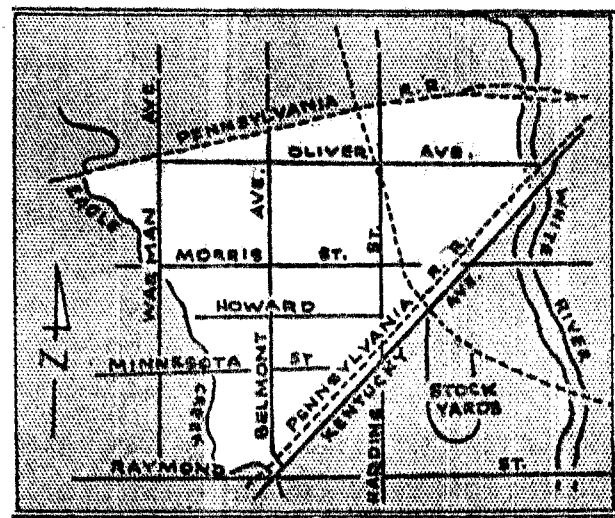
knowledge of Latin. Assistant priests appointed to Assumption always knew that he would test their proficiency in Latin conversation and upbraid them for not being fluent in the Church's official language. It is said that only one assistant survived the Latin ordeal with flying colors—an earned doctorate who had taught at the college level.

Assumption's second pastor remained at his post for 26 years. He slowly realized that his health (past tuberculosis and diabetes-weakened eyesight) would not permit him to shepherd a larger parish. His own physical situation made him particularly sensitive to suffering, and so he was especially concerned about visiting sick parishioners. Forced to make his rounds on foot or by riding the street car (he was unable to drive a car because of his poor eyesight), he soon became a familiar sight on the streets of W.I.

Father Griffin was very concerned about the parish's spiritual life. He personally gave good example by spending many hours in church each day reciting the Divine Office and saying his rosary. When he discovered that only one high-school age student in the parish attended a Catholic high school, he acted to persuade parishioners that they should provide their teenagers the academic and moral benefit of Catholic secondary education. He strove to reach couples who had entered a marriage unblessed by the Church. Whenever a parishioner died without the benefit of the Last Sacraments because those at bedside had not called him, he used the pulpit to berate the whole congregation for its laxity.

Sensing that parish-sponsored functions had a strong political and social side, Father Griffin sought to redirect parishioners to a spiritual purpose. His pet projects were the Holy Name Society for men, the Altar Society for women, and the Young People's Club. Holy Name Communion Sunday sometimes attracted as many as 65 men. The organization worked hard to raise money for the parish school's athletic program, and joined the Altar Society in conducting monthly card parties.

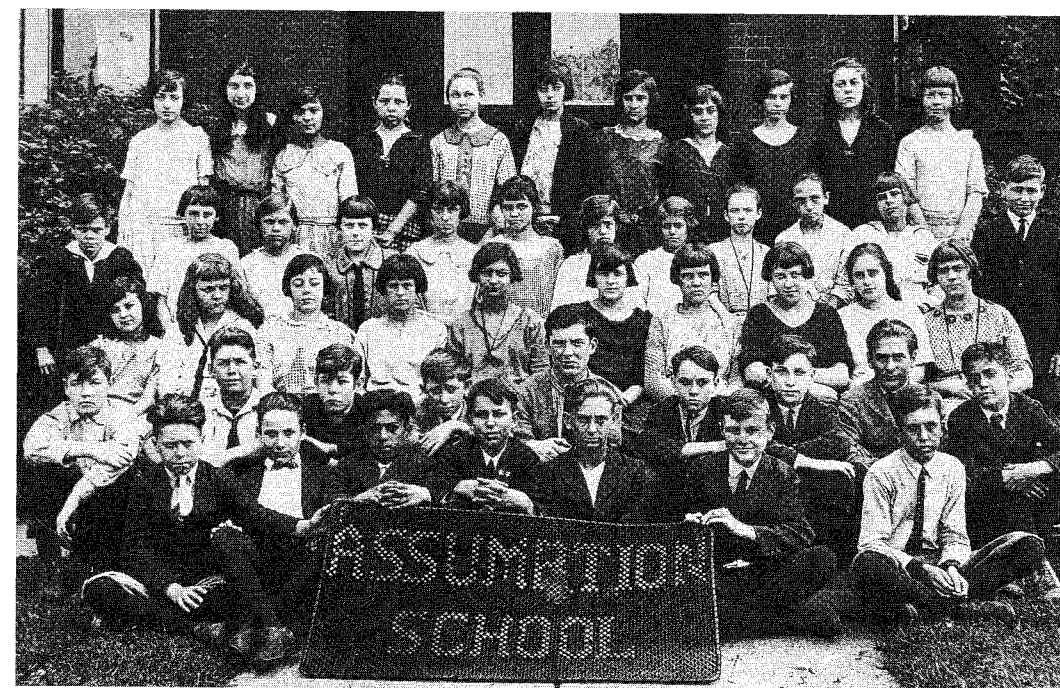
Delivering sermons and other public addresses especially delighted Father Griffin. Parishioners thought that he was long-winded on Sunday mornings, but no one questioned his rhetorical ability. Some remembered an announcement on his first Sunday as pastor: "Masses are at 6, 8, and 10—and I mean 6, 8, and 10, for I am never late." On 10 June 1938, he addressed the graduating class at the first Indianapolis commencement of Marian College. Undoubtedly he began punctually.



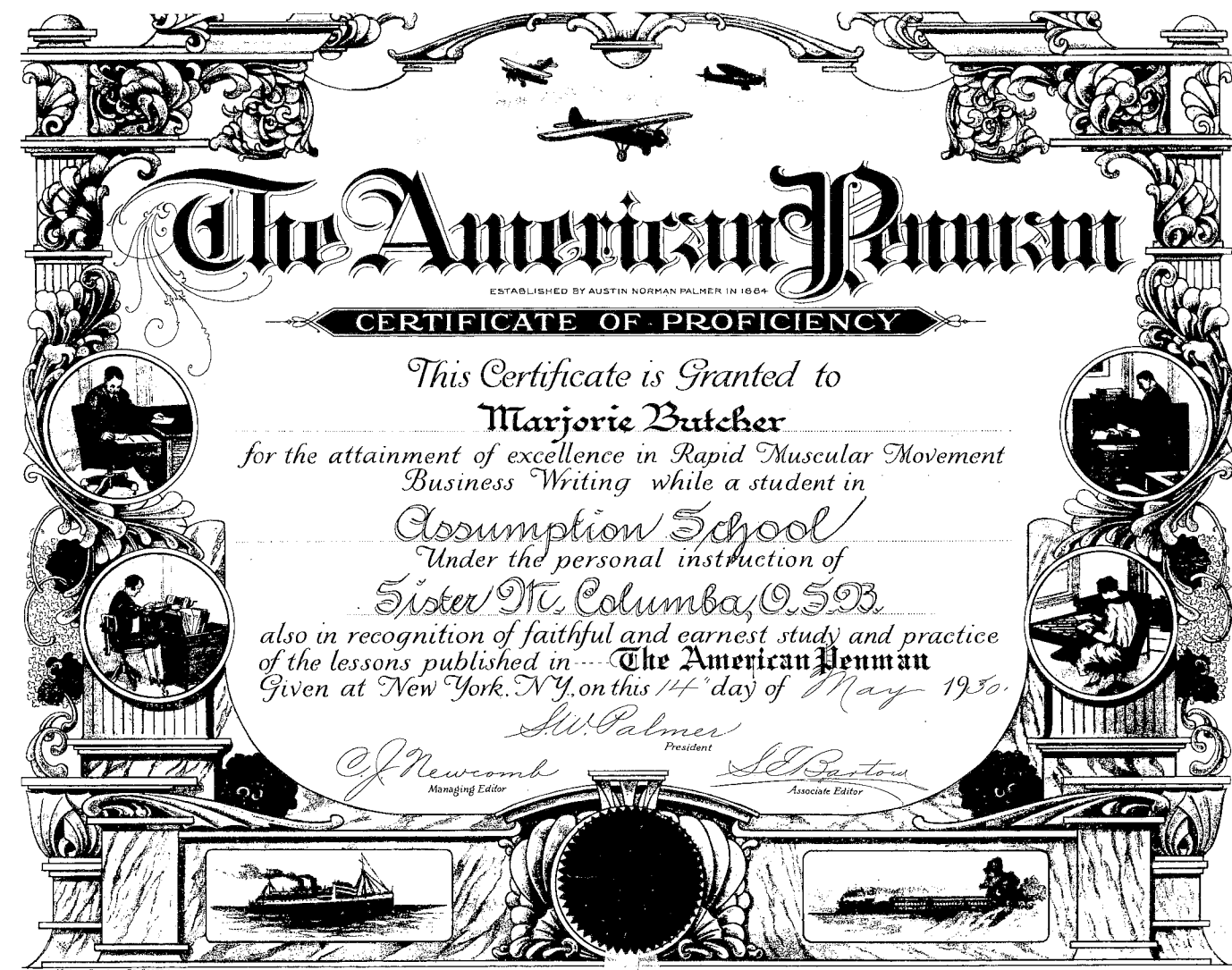
This is where WI is located.



The Sisters and Graduates of Assumption School in 1923. Seated along the north side of the school are: front row (left to right), Sr. Jeanette, Sr. Bernice, Sr. Columba, Sr. Aurelia; back row (left to right), Sr. Mary James, Sr. Camilla, Sr. Tarcilla. The class numbered 31 girls and 18 boys.







Palmer penmanship certificate, 1930. The Sisters wanted every child to write proficiently.

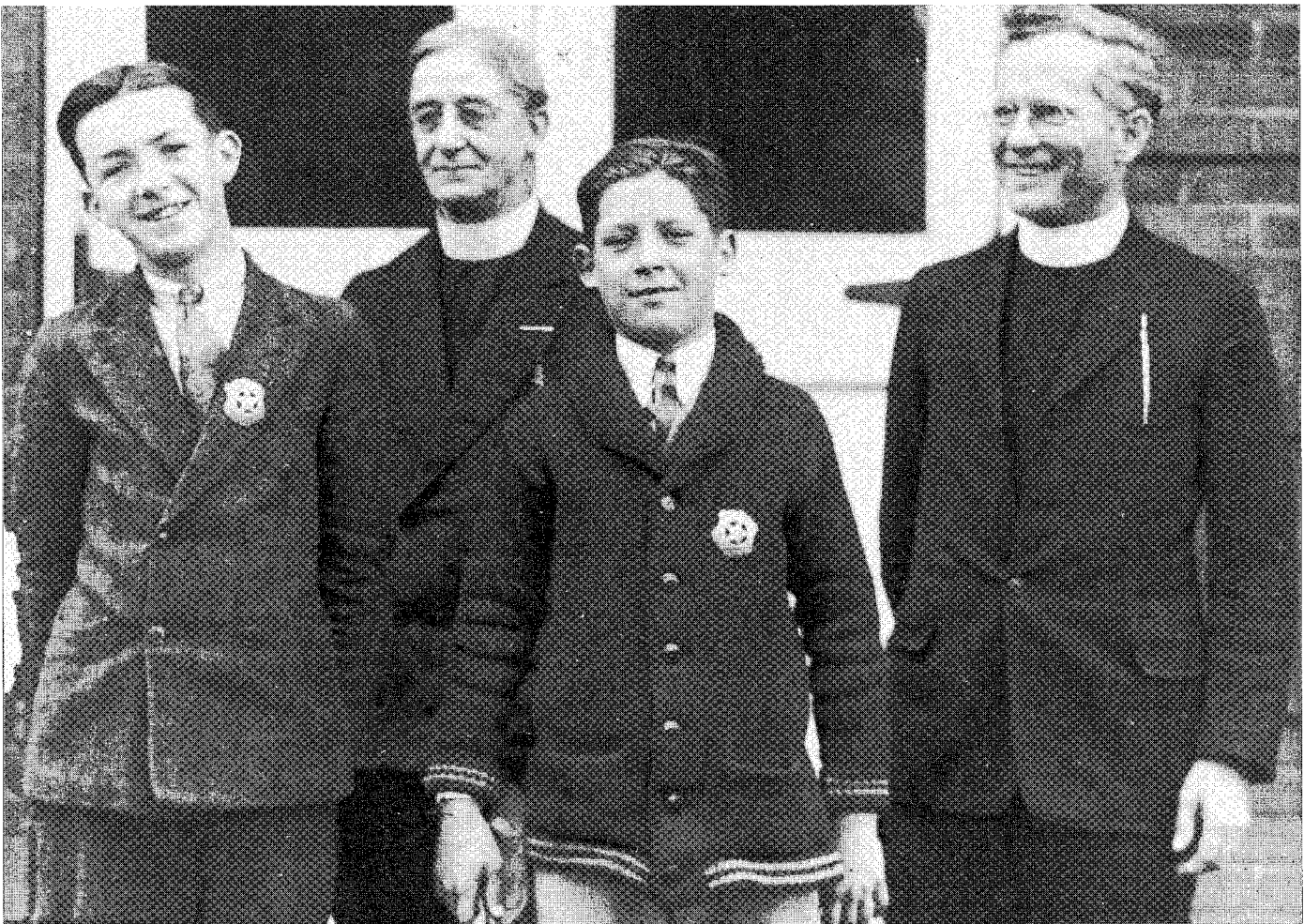
# How parishioners coped with depression and war

On 24 October 1929, the value of stock quoted on the New York Stock Exchange dropped precipitously. Between December 1928 and September 1929, stock values had doubled, attracting thousands of small investors who used life savings or borrowed funds "to play the market." During November 1929 stock values declined 40% and many investors suffered major losses. After a brief rally in the first half of 1930, leading industrial stocks plunged to 25% of their original

value. From 1929 to 1933, stock values dropped \$30 billion.

The Stock Market Crash was the opening event in the Great Depression. Orders for goods and international trade dried up, resulting in massive lay-offs of workers. Unemployment soared to over 30% of the work force by 1933. The impact of the Depression on parishioners and neighbors is well demonstrated by looking at the major employers in W.I.

Nordyke and Marmon expanded to 1,500,000 square feet of plant extended over 60 acres in 1919. Its assembly line facility stood on a 21-acre site east of Kentucky Avenue north of the Belt Railroad. It



Vinnie Martin, Father Weber, John Gilligan, and Father John Riedinger at school entrance, ca. 1933.

was lengthened from 370 feet to 850 feet in order to produce 3,500 cars annually after World War I. The company introduced Delco coil ignition in 1920 and optional four-wheel brakes in 1923. Its touring car showed classic workmanship and sold for \$5,000 in 1921. After closing its milling machine division and devoting itself solely to automobile manufacturing in 1926, Marmon reached its peak production when it marketed affordable as well as luxury models. In 1929 the company sold 22,300 cars, primarily the straight 8-cylinder Roosevelt, priced at under \$1,000. Marmon also produced a magnificent 9.1 litre, 16-cylinder automobile with a \$4,925 price tag in 1931. Alas, the continued decline of the stock market and the rise of unemployment placed Marmon products out of reach of both ordinary and rich buyers, and in 1933 this pillar of the W.I. economy collapsed.<sup>1</sup>

Martin-Parry Corporation, 1100 West Henry (near Oliver Avenue and White River), manufacturer of

commercial auto bodies, became part of General Motors Corporation in 1930 and began the manufacture of Chevrolet truck bodies.

Fred Duesenberg manufactured fine cars in his factory at Washington and Harding Streets. In 1928, he produced the Model J, which was bigger, faster, more elaborate, and more expensive than any other car in America. It weighed 4,980 pounds, could reach 116 miles per hour in high gear, and cost up to \$18,000. The expression, "It's a Duesy," meant classic perfection. Few could afford such superb workmanship because of the Depression, and the company collapsed in 1937.<sup>2</sup> Indianapolis was yielding to Detroit as a major automotive center.

Parish membership statistics reflect economic shifts. In the prosperous 1920s, some parishioners moved to better neighborhoods. Membership peaked at 1,023 and school enrollment at 250 in 1922, and then declined to 923 and 225 in 1930. About 20 fami-





Assumption School children in 1932.

lies moved to rural areas in the early 1930s because of the Depression, but most parishioners remained in their present homes (if they could meet their mortgage payments). In 1940, membership reached 1,260, but parishioners were aging: school enrollment dropped to 185 in the same year.<sup>3</sup>

Parishioners helped make the 1930s a Democratic age. "Brother, can you spare a dime?" became the anthem of the hard times until replaced by "Happy days are here again," the campaign song of presidential candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt in November 1932. Democrats swept all before them: Paul V. McNutt became governor in 1933, Reginald M. Sullivan became mayor in 1930 and 1938. Roosevelt was reelected president in 1936 because he continued to promise solutions to the Depression.

The international situation, however, began to

overshadow domestic concerns. In the same year Father Griffin became pastor at Assumption (1935), Adolf Hitler began the rearmament of Germany. Three years later, the *Fuehrer* annexed Austria and part of Czechoslovakia. Some in W.I. still thought little about the German invasion of Poland (1939), the occupation of France (1940), and Britain's standing alone against Germany until Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union (1941). Public opinion changed radically when the Japanese attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands on 7 December 1941, and the United States became directly involved in both Pacific and European theaters of operation.

W.I. industry strongly supported the war effort. For example, Stewart-Warner, which acquired the 22-acre, 550,000 square-foot former Nordyke-Marmon



The Class of 1936: front row (left to right), James Snyder, Helen Lux, Elizabeth Noone, Kathrine Kashman, Peggy Prieshoff, Mary Jo Schwab, John Fernkas; second row (left to right), Alfred Willow, Charlotte Padgett, Maxine Austil, Alice Rose Gambrall, Natalia Barnhart, Mary Eloise O'Conner, Robert Bower; third row (left to right), first two unidentified, Lucille Welch, Eleanor Wheeler, Thomas Burnett; fourth row (left to right), Art Foltzenlogel, James Reed, Father Joseph Laugel, Father Patrick H. Griffin, Harry Cangany, Ralph Smith.

plant at 1514 Drover in 1937, produced field stoves, assemblies for aircraft engines, and aircraft heaters among other military items.<sup>4</sup> Marmon-Herrington Motor Truck Company, which purchased the defunct Duesenberg plant in the same year, manufactured tanks and other motorized vehicles for overseas use.<sup>5</sup> Local workers produced everything from four-wheel drives to airplane propeller blades!

Catholics contributed heavily to the military and naval strength of the United States during World War II. The Diocese of Indianapolis (at this time all of Indiana south of Indianapolis) had a Catholic population of almost 175,000. Of that number, 10% (over 16,000 men and some 400 women) were in the armed forces. Nearly 400 were killed in action. Who would think, like the Klan only a decade earlier, that Catholics were not patriotic and loyal Americans? According to a list which Father Griffin prepared at the request of Bishop Ritter, the following parishioners, both men and

women, answered their country's call during World War II:<sup>6</sup>

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Joseph L. Abel         | Frank Chaszer        |
| James W. Agan          | Joseph Chaszer       |
| Lucian Allgood         | Maurice Clark        |
| Donald Austill         | Francis M. Cleary    |
| Joseph Bardash         | Louis W. Coberly     |
| Robert Bardash         | Leo Commiskey        |
| Frederick Blomeyer     | Carl E. Daly         |
| James P. Broderick     | Michael A. Daly, Jr. |
| Joseph Broderick       | Daniel Danaher       |
| Lloyd A. Brown         | Timothy J. Danaher   |
| Harold Bryant          | Joseph Deter         |
| Maurice M. Buckel      | Edward Evans         |
| John L. Buckel         | Frank Faust          |
| Robert M. Buckel       | William Fitzgibbons  |
| Neil Buckley           | Dallas Fetter        |
| William F. Buckley     | Joseph Fitzpatrick   |
| Barney Burnett         | Richard Folger       |
| Thomas E. Burnett, Jr. | Frances Foltz        |
| Robert Burns           | Arthur Foltzenlogel  |
| Robert Campbell        | Arthur Foreman       |
| Harry Cangany          | Leonard R. Fort      |



PROMOTED TO

GRADE, JUNE, 19

ASSUMPTION SCHOOL

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

MONTHLY REPORT

Name

Margorie Butcher

1929 1930

GRADE 8

STUDIES	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
Daily Mass						19	20	20		
Days Absent						1	0	0		
Chris. Doctrine						100	98	100		
Deportment						90	92	92		
Reading						96	94	95		
Spelling						100	100	100		
Composition						70	72	74		
Grammar						80	74	95		
Writing						82	84	100		
Arithmetic						60	72	74		
Geography						82	90	92		
U. S. History						87	96	98		
Civics						90	90	92		
Physiology						94	90	100		
Neatness--Order						100	100	100		
Drawing						80	84	85		
Bible History						80	85	86		
Home Work						100	100	100		
Average										
Dues Paid	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

100 Perfect; 90 Excellent; 80 Good; 75 Fair; 70 Poor.

After reading report, please sign for respective month on back of this card.

Raymond D. Fort  
Hugh J. Gallagher  
Joseph M. Galvin  
Robert Geisendorff  
Emmett Gilligan  
James E. Gilligan  
Lawrence Goedecker  
Eugene F. Haley  
Charles D. Hancock  
Bernard M. Hanley  
Daniel E. Hanley  
Francis E. Hanley  
Joseph Hanley  
Robert E. Hanley  
Paul Highbee  
Frank Hines  
Bernard Hoff

James L. Hofmann  
John P. Hofmann  
Clarence Holland  
John F. Holland  
Lawrence Holland  
Eileen Holland  
Lester Isaacs  
John C. Joyner  
Robert Joyner  
John W. Korbowiz  
Frank Kratoska  
James Kratoska  
Joseph Kratoska  
Richard Kratoska  
Harold Lehr  
Clement Lynch  
John C. McAndrews

Joseph E. McAndrews  
Thomas McAndrews  
Charles J. McCann  
Charles McElfresh  
Lawrence McNulty  
Herbert J. Marley, Jr.  
John P. Mick  
Herbert Miles  
John D. Miles  
LeRoy J. Miller, Jr.  
Paul Miller  
Charles Monaghan  
Robert Morgan  
Donald Mueller  
John Mulvihill  
William P. Murphy  
Charles R. Newman  
Robert Nolan  
Charles Padgett  
Joseph T. Peay  
Lawrence John Peay  
Hobart E. Powers  
Edward Rash  
George Reid  
Joseph Reid  
Earl R. Reuter  
Jean Roembke

Robert J. Schaedel  
Thomas Schaedel  
Andrew Schantz  
William J. Schreiner  
Delbert Seal  
Charles Sherman  
Harry Smith  
Joseph Snyder  
Frank South  
Wilbur Stout  
James Sweeney  
Lawrence Thornbrough  
Robert Vandiver  
Gerald Viles  
Darwin Wagner  
Edwin Wagner  
James Washburn  
Paul Wathen  
Robert J. Weidman  
Alfred J. Werner  
Rolland E. Wernke  
Alfred Whitlow  
Thomas Whitlow  
Walter Wiedman  
James Wilkinson  
Thomas Wilson  
Leonard Wren

Of these 131 sons and daughters of Assumption parish (approximately 13% of parish membership, higher than the diocesan percentage), eight were casualties: Robert Burns, Frank Faust, Leonard R. Fort, James L. Hofmann, Richard Kratoska, Joseph T. Peay, James Sweeney, and Thomas Wilson. The repetition of family names in the service list shows that several mothers were called on to send more than one son to the armed forces.

On the home front, the war brought food ration cards, gasoline shortage, presidential fireside chats over the radio, victory gardens, civil defense, savings bonds, Movietone news, canned goods and clothing drives, and Gold Star mothers.

No parishioner could pick up the *Star*, *News*, or *Times* without finding mention of Casablanca, Churchill, Mussolini, Anzio, D-Day, Remagen bridge, Dachau, and Yalta. They were on the same page as Bataan, Jimmy Doolittle, Iwo Jima, Tojo, MacArthur, and the battleship Missouri.

In Indianapolis citizens voted for Governor Henry Schricker and Republican Mayor Robert H. Tyndall. The last interurban train left the city, the first jet engine came off the Allison assembly line. Soft coal smoke and soot blackened public building and home alike.

The great effort to defeat Germany, Italy, and Japan resulted in an intense rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union after 1945. Assumption



The Class of 1944. Top, Leo Hahn; first row, J. Alderson, E. Mueller, J. Roembke, I. O'Connor, L. Reid, M. Porten, J. Crampton; second row, B. Kratoska, J. Milli, D. Korby, B. Winter, J. Cashman, A. Schwab, J. Limp; third row, S. Frazier, M. Daly, D. Noone, C. Bryan, T. Gambrall, P. Jenkins, J. Bridgewater.

parishioners found that they continued to live in a tense, competitive age, but one which was also in the throes of an economic boom stimulated by a backlog in consumer demand and by returning servicemen's buying power.

### Who staffed Assumption School during the Griffin pastorate

Benedictine sisters from Ferdinand continued to staff Assumption School through the retirement of Father Griffin in 1961. Decades of pupils and their parents knew Sister Sylvester (8 years' service between 1930 and 1950), Sister Ebba (12 years between 1932 and

1944), Sister Valencia (19 years between 1931 and 1956, 4 of them as principal), and Sister Bernarda (17 years between 1935 and 1960, 15 of them as principal). In this list, the names of principals are in **bold print**.<sup>1</sup> An asterisk marks deceased sisters.

Sr. Columba Neusch (1927-36)\*  
Sr. Luitgard Hassler (1927-37)\*  
Sr. Bernice Kavanaugh (1928-36)  
Sr. Cecilia Murtaugh (1929-40)\*  
Sr. Sylvester Will (1930-37)  
Sr. Valencia Wildeman (1931-36)  
Sr. Ebba Limberger (1932-44)  
Sr. Joan Weinzapfel (1932-36)\*  
Sr. Bernarda Dugan (1935-36)\*  
Sr. Edith Alvey (1936-37)\*  
Sr. Dennis (Dionysia) Hertz (1936-38)\*  
Sr. Lucille Mandabach (1936-49)



Sr. Norberta Crays (1936-37)\*  
 Sr. Mary Vincent Hormuth (1936-39)  
**Sr. Bernarda Dugan (1937-49)\***  
 Sr. Delphine Koressel (1937-40)\*  
 Sr. Adrian Dauby (1937-49)\*  
 Sr. Valencia Wildeman (1937-45)  
 Sr. Lucy Jochum (1938-39)  
 Sr. Mary Lambert Buss (1939-43)  
 Sr. Mary Gervase (Mary Dolores) Gaesser (part 1939-40)  
 Sr. Aurelia Schnell (1940-44)\*  
 Sr. Mary Grace Vogel (1940-42)\*  
 Sr. Leocadia Mueller (1942-43)\*  
 Sr. Adelaide Schwartz (1943-44)\*  
 Sr. Wilma Davis (1943-46)  
 Sr. Carolyn Payne (1944-45)\*  
 Sr. Mary Leo Boeglin (1944-45)\*  
 Sr. Marion Walsh (1944-49)  
 Sr. Leocadia Mueller (1945-47)\*  
 Sr. Vincetta Wethington (1945-46)  
 Sr. Mary Patrice Lynn (1945-47)  
 Sr. Anita Zinkan (1946-47)\*  
 Sr. Mary Lawrence (Martha Marie) Tempel (1946-48)  
 Sr. Mary Ellen Wildeman (1947-48)\*  
 Sr. Mary Jude Bouvy (1947-50)  
 Sr. M. Majol (Dorothy) Wargel (1947-50)  
 Sr. Stephen Newton (1948-50)\*  
 Sr. M. Clement Scheessele (1948-49)  
**Sr. Sylvester Will (1949-50)**  
 Sr. Cornelia Frey (1949-51)\*  
 Sr. Johnette Finis (1949-50)  
 Sr. Mary Carol Messmer (1949-50)  
**Sr. Valencia Wildeman (1950-51)**  
 Sr. Pia Troesch (1950-51)\*  
 Sr. Christopher Pope (1950-52)\*  
 Sr. Amata Alvey (1950-51)  
 Sr. Theodore Goebel (1950-51)\*  
 Sr. Clarice Huber (1950-51)  
**Sr. Pia Troesch (1951-53)\***  
 Sr. Eulogia Rowekamp (1951-53)\*  
 Sr. Valencia Wildeman (1951-53)  
 Sr. Celeste Muth (1951-52)\*  
 Sr. Jeannette Tenbarger (1951-55)\*  
 Sr. Johnette Finis (1951-52)  
 Sr. Celine Meyer (1952-56)  
**Sr. Valencia Wildeman (1953-56)**  
 Sr. Mary Lambert Buss (1953-54)  
 Sr. M. Clement (Freida) Scheessele (1953-55)  
 Sr. Elizabeth Schmitt (1953-56)\*  
 Sr. Bernette Wildeman (1954-56)  
 Sr. Mary Leah Baehl (1955-56)  
 Sr. Mary Norbert (Margaret) Boarman (1955-56)  
**Sr. Mary Benedict Livers (1956-57)\***  
 Sr. Bernarda Dugan (1956-57)\*  
 Sr. M. Majol (Dorothy) Wargel (1956-57)  
 Sr. M. Gregory (Norma) Gettelfinger (1956-57)  
 Sr. Jacinta Uhl (1956-57)  
**Sr. Bernarda Dugan (1957-60)\***  
 Sr. Stephen Newton (1957-60)\*  
 Sr. Juanita Marchino (1957-58)  
 Sr. Fortunata (Mary) Seghers (1957-59)  
 Sr. Madonna Helmer (1957-58)  
 Sr. Andrea Biever (1958-60)\*  
 Sr. Mary Hugh Sasse (1958-59)  
 Sr. Cordula (Ann Janette) Gettelfinger (1959-60)  
 Sr. Notburga (Anna) Bauer (1959-60)\*  
**Sr. Stephen Newton (1960-62)\***

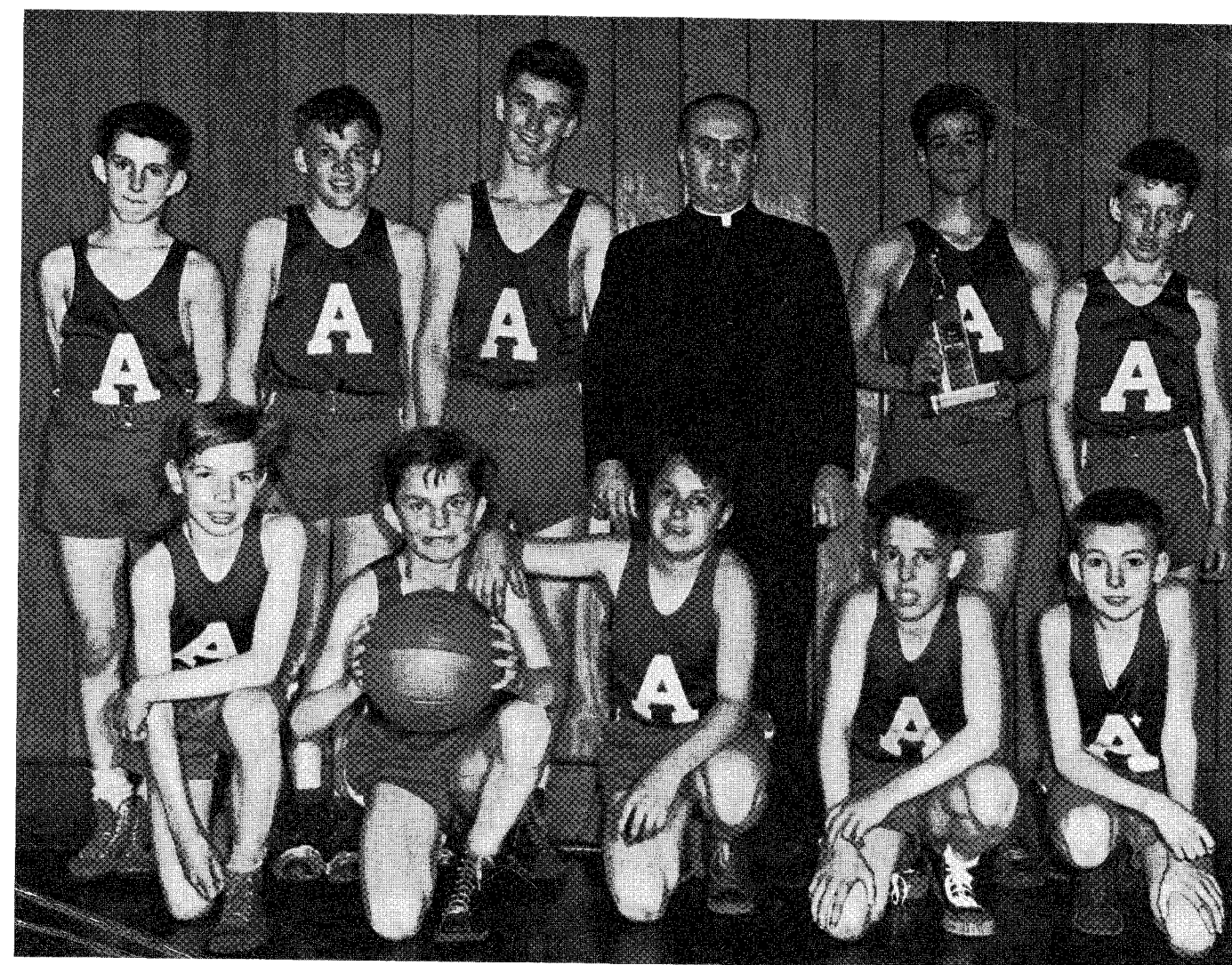
Sr. Mary Xavier Mueller (1960-61)  
 Sr. Laurretta Wolf (1960-61)  
 Sr. Fortunata Seghers (1960-61)  
 Mrs. Josine Zimmer (1960-61)

Assumption parish played a role in the establishment of Our Lady of Grace convent in Beech Grove, Indiana. In the early 1920s, the Benedictines of Convent Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand considered opening a girls' academy in Assumption School (Sisters of Providence already operated St. John's and St. Agnes Academies; Sisters of St. Francis ran St. Mary's Academy). Bishop Chartrand, however, pointed out the need for a parish school at Assumption.<sup>2</sup> In 1939 the City vacated Wilkins Street east of Blaine Avenue; the southern 25 feet of the street were added to the sisters' property.<sup>3</sup> Then on 8 June 1954, Archbishop Paul C. Schulte (1890-1984), who succeeded Archbishop Ritter in 1946, and Mother Clarissa Riehl of the Sisters of St. Benedict struck a deal. Assumption School property, appraised at around \$50,000, would be transferred to the Archdiocese in exchange for 30 acres of land which the Archdiocese owned in Beech Grove.<sup>4</sup> Here the Ferdinand community established a new foundation, Our Lady of Grace, which opened the girls' academy which had been proposed 30 years earlier.

After 1956 staff appointments to Assumption School were made in Ferdinand with the concurrence of the prioress in Beech Grove. All Benedictines were permitted to continue membership in the Ferdinand community or affiliate with Beech Grove. Then in April 1961, the Ferdinand Benedictines granted independence to Our Lady of Grace convent and transferred Assumption School and all missions in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to the jurisdiction of Beech Grove.



Sisters Domitilla Donahue and Norberta Crays, O.S.B., daughters of Assumption Parish.



Assumption basketball team, 1946. Front (left to right): Jack McKay, Bill DeHoff, Joe Wagner, Jackie Botus, Tom Lynch; rear (left to right): Edward Gaughn, Bob Luckett, Jas. Roberts, Father Edward Finnerty, Carl Accomando, and John O'Donnell.

## How Father Griffin dealt with fire and finance

Assumption's spectacled, second pastor was well-known around the city for his special mission to the men of the Indianapolis Fire Department. For almost twenty-five years he served as their chaplain, and even undertook special study to understand proper fire fighting techniques and the use of various fire fighting equipment. Sometimes in the quiet of the night the signal bells which sounded in the fire station at Morris and Harding could be heard in the rectory. He would then awaken his assistant priest no matter what the hour with the request that he be driven to the site of the important fire. If for some reason his assistant was unavailable, he would grab his straw hat and board

public transportation to the fire. If the fire site could not be reached by public transportation, he would phone the pastor of the church nearest to the fire to inform him of the situation. Directly or indirectly he tended to the spiritual needs of injured firemen and fire victims.<sup>1</sup>

Fund raising did not seem to be a problem for the pastor. Continued from Father Weber's time was the annual festival, the special project of Assumption's assistant priests. Later Reverend Edward P. Finnerty (1913-57), appointed assistant in 1944, organized the Fish Fry, now an Assumption tradition. Father Griffin used the ample collections during World War II to finance redecoration of the church in 1949. To enlarge the small sanctuary, he removed the adoring angels which flanked the altar. He replaced the sanctuary car-

peting, tiled the aisles, installed new pews (he boasted about their rubber-covered kneelers) and radiators, removed some statues, and repainted the Stations of the Cross. The rectory was kept in good repair and he restored many of its furnishings.

In 1955, Father Griffin reported parish membership at 1,096 and school enrollment at 170; in 1960, the comparable statistics were 908 and 149. Adjusting to this decline, the pastor cut expenses and decided on a conservative fiscal policy. The parish would just live within its means, and no expenditures would be undertaken unless the funds were already on deposit in the parish savings account. He promised parishioners that he would not burden his successor with debt, and indeed he kept his promise. His thriftiness led him to remove the bell which Bishop Chatard had blessed in September 1894 because repairs to the steeple would cost \$1,200. The bell rested in the school yard until it inexplicably disappeared. To save electricity, he never illuminated the large chandelier during church services. Once a visiting priest turned on all the lights in church, and parishioners marveled that the chandelier was not out of order as had been rumored. The best illustration of his no-debt policy was the pastor's reluctance to renovate the sixty-year-old convent and remodel the school with its next-door lavatories. Father Griffin contended that any expenditure on the structure was an irrational waste of resources, because highway construction within parish boundaries and the removal of parish families to better neighborhoods would reduce school enrollment.

## How West Indianapolis changed after 1960

"W.I. is the industrial center of Indianapolis," declared a newspaper writer in 1962.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, industrial development and good transportation have played a role in W.I. life since its inception.

To give residents better access to jobs and reduce traffic delays at the area's railroad crossings, the City built a major viaduct for the Belt Railroad tracks over Morris Street east of Harding Street in 1947, thanks to chiropractor Walter Hemphill, longtime president of the Enterprise Civic League. Soon thereafter, the City contemplated widening Harding Street and rerouting Indiana highway 37 as a west bypass of the central business district. It was to be the automotive counterpart of the rail bypass (the Belt Railroad) constructed 75 years earlier. The proposal, however, called for the

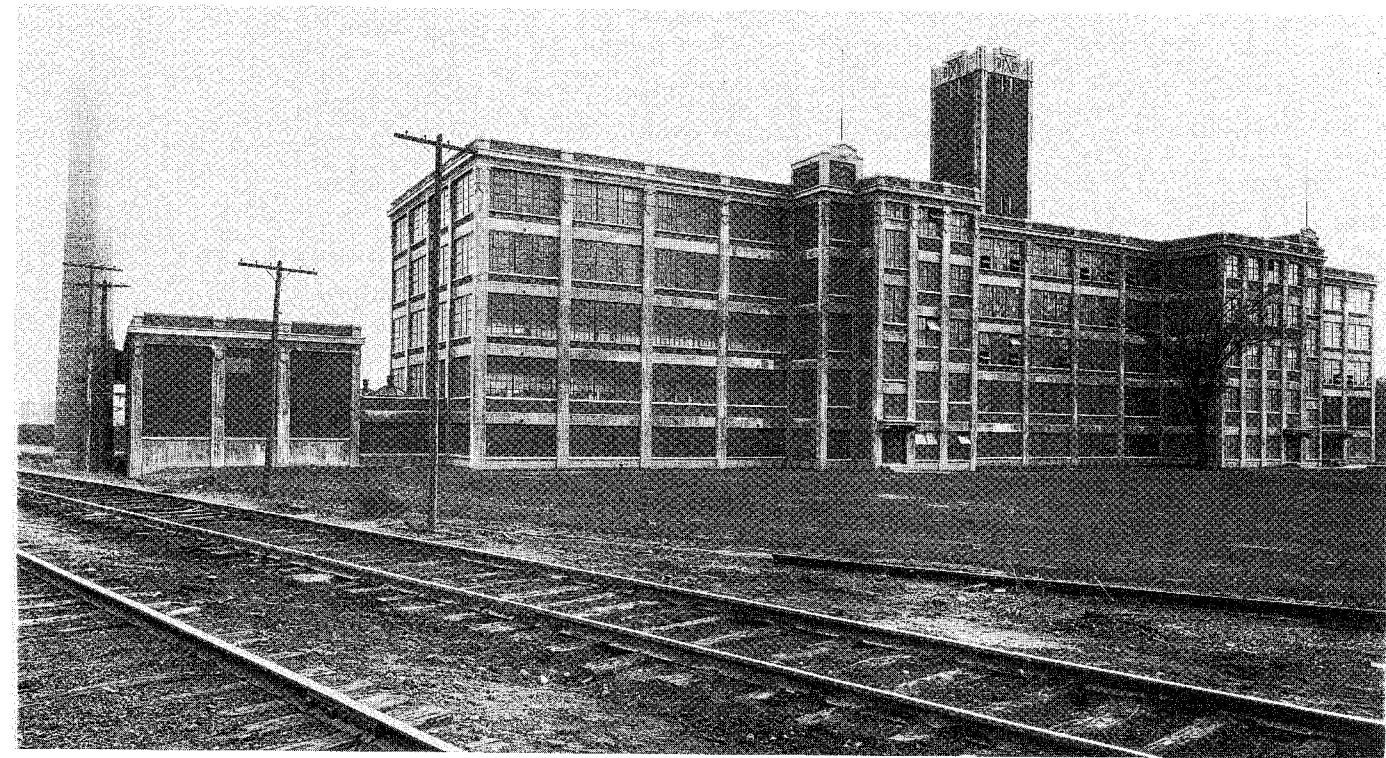
removal of all housing and commercial establishments immediately east of Assumption Church.

Then the national interstate highway system, approved during the Eisenhower administration, preempted the proposed Indiana 37 bypass. Interstate 465 would serve as a beltway around Indianapolis much farther west than a bypass through W.I. Interstate 70, however, was to run across country from Maryland to Utah, its route through Indianapolis affecting W.I.'s better housing lying between Rhodius Park north to Oliver Avenue. Through the 1960s, parishioners and their neighbors vacated houses built as recently as 10 to 15 years earlier to make way for the great highway. I-70 crossed White River into the Valley south of the Chevrolet plant and was constructed through the Bottoms only 2 blocks north of Assumption Church. Blaine Avenue now deadended into an alley.

After 1960, economic stability gave way to economic change. Marmon-Herrington, manufacturers of trolleys, buses, and trucks, moved to Lebanon, Indiana, in 1963.<sup>2</sup> Best Foods closed down its Shinola shoe polish operation. This nationally-marketed product had been manufactured in the S. M. Bixby and Company plant at 1437 West Morris since 1925. CPC Specialty Products succeeded Best Foods, but continued to use the old plant to manufacture Rit dye and as a distribution center for Knorr soups. Stewart-Warner, which employed 1,000 and made Indianapolis the aircraft and ordnance vehicle heating capital of the world in 1957, moved to Tell City, Indiana, in 1988.<sup>3</sup> Several trucking outfits and commercial enterprises along Oliver Avenue closed their doors. An effort to revive the



Morris and Harding Streets, looking east at time of festivities marking the opening of the Belt Railroad underpass, 1947.



Belt Railroad tracks and the Bixby plant. Shine 'er up. Bass Photo Collection negative 74567F, Indiana Historical Society Library.

Oliver Avenue business district in 1982 was handicapped by expansion of the Chevrolet plant.<sup>4</sup>

Eli Lilly and Company, pharmaceuticals manufacturer and one of the City's major employers, purchased the property of Union Stockyards in 1973 and acquired the old Nordyke-Marmon site at Morris Street and Kentucky Avenue. Local jobs were lost because Lilly employed professional research and development people who did not reside in W.I. The company expanded its facilities on both sides of Kentucky Avenue almost continuously after the mid-1970s, and by 1990 employed 3,000 there. Traffic congestion caused by semi-trailers and employee-driven autos choked the neighborhood. The old plan to widen Harding Street from Kentucky Avenue to the I-70 interchange was revived, Mayor William Hudnut pointed out, "so that commuters will have easier access to the interstate."<sup>5</sup> When the pharmaceutical firm asked the City to vacate 3,400 feet of Kentucky Avenue, a major diagonal artery, between Morris and Harding, it sought to forestall public opposition to its proposal by insisting on confidentiality. For a year the City negotiated secretly to demolish at least 40 houses in order to provide a bypass for a vacated Kentucky Avenue.<sup>6</sup> During this writing all housing on the west side of Harding Street between Morris and Minnesota

and on the south side of Morris Street west of Harding was bulldozed to widen streets. The reconfiguration of the Morris-Harding intersection demanded the removal of fire station #19 to River Avenue near Ray Street and the closing of the popular, 65-year-old McClarny's Restaurant, which occupied a half-century old community landmark adjoining the fire station.

Census statistics show the impact of economic change and new traffic patterns on parishioners and their neighbors. Between 1960 and 1970 the population of W.I. declined by about 15%; in the next decade, the number of residents west of Harding Street declined another 9%. Residents who could afford better housing—and those who lost their housing—moved to newly developed residential areas like Eagledale in Wayne Township, northwest of the city, or southwest out Kentucky Avenue into Decatur Township.

Those who remained appeared to be in greater need of community social services. In 1939 American Settlement, 617 West Pearl Street, relocated to 1917 West Morris Street and was renamed Southwest Social Center. Faced with eviction, the center received strong support from the Rotary Foundation, which built the present facility. Dedicated in 1957, it was renamed in 1971 for its long-time director, Mary Rigg.<sup>7</sup> Almost





Oliver Avenue looking west from White River in 1913. Bass Photo Collection negative 33058, Indiana Historical Society Library. Same view today (below).



one-half of the residents around the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center were over age 65 or under 18.

A black minority has resided north of Minnesota Street in W.I. since the late 19th century. Its institu-

tional symbols are a church and school at the intersection of Kappes and Miller Streets. The First Baptist Church of West Indianapolis was founded in 1887. Across the street was Samuel Coleridge Taylor Public School #83, one of the ten racially segregated elementary schools run by Indianapolis Public Schools from the Klan era until the early 1950s. At first the percentage of blacks in the neighborhood increased, but after 1980 the number of blacks declined by 25%. Today about 4% of the residents on the Hill are African-American.

### When Vatican II and clergy shortage affected Assumption parish

Bobbysoxers, Frank Sinatra, "American Bandstand," and Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, "The Shadow" on radio and Milton Berle on television, long skirts and crinolines, the Pusan perimeter. Indianapolis elected its

first Catholic mayor, Al G. Feeney (1948), and would choose Catholics again in electing Philip L. Bayt (1956) and John J. Barton (1964). The decade of babyboomers gave way to the decade of the 1960s: political assassinations, Tonkin Gulf resolution, civil rights demonstrations, Pope Paul VI and Nikita Khrushchev at the United Nations, and Unigov. Parishioner Melvin Sink was a Vietnam War casualty.

The decade of the 1960s also initiated a time of change for the universal Catholic Church. In 1962, Pope John XXIII convened the world's bishops in the Second Vatican Council, the twenty-first general or ecumenical gathering of the leaders of the Church since Christ founded it almost two thousand years earlier. Adjourned by Pope Paul VI in 1965, the Council sought better ways to communicate Christ's message to the Modern World. Pope John called this purpose *aggiornamento* (updating). The bishops discussed many of the notions formulated in the theological and liturgical classrooms up to that time. Old ideas were questioned and many new approaches were adopted. Clergy examined their beliefs, role, and commitment, and some became disaffected with celibacy and resigned the ministry. Meanwhile, priesthood and religious life became less attractive to young men and women. The laity, who had long been taught that the Church was immutable, were assigned greater responsibilities in church matters, were exposed to new positions on moral issues like birth control, abortion, and divorce, witnessed new liturgical practices, and participated in ecumenical activities. Some embraced the innovations enthusiastically, while others were alienated or bewildered.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis felt the full impact of Vatican II change. In 1970 Archbishop George J. Biskup (1911-79) succeeded Archbishop Schulte, who had represented Indianapolis in the Council. During the nine-year Biskup episcopate, the number of diocesan and religious priests in the Archdiocese dropped by 20%. Diocesan priests alone declined from 283 to 236. Of the 11 second priests assigned to Assumption parish between 1954 and 1971, five resigned the ministry.<sup>1</sup> The number of parishes with resident pastors fell from 144 to 130.

Parishioners were undoubtedly unaware that a major chapter in their history concluded on 20 May 1961, when Father Griffin resigned as pastor and was appointed chaplain of St. Paul Hermitage at Beech Grove.

I have received more than customary cooperation from the people of Assumption congregation. I requested the Arch-

bishop to be relieved from my position as I was physically unable to perform all the duties incumbent of the pastorate.<sup>2</sup>

Eleven months later, on 28 April 1962, Assumption's second pastor died at age 83 after almost 57 years of priestly ministry. Archbishop Schulte celebrated a Requiem Mass in Assumption Church. The firemen assigned to the stations at Morris and Harding Streets and Maryland Street and Senate Avenue stood at attention at the corner of Morris and Harding to salute the hearse bearing their long-time chaplain's body to Holy Cross cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

Vatican II changes, along with W.I. economic and social changes, affected Assumption parish profoundly. Father Griffin was the oldest working priest in the Archdiocese at the time of his retirement from Assumption. Apparently archdiocesan authorities, faced with a growing clergy shortage, considered this parish in a declining neighborhood to be one that a first-time pastor, a priest in the twilight of his ministry, or one suffering from physical infirmities could handle adequately—as Father Griffin and his assistant priest had traditionally done. In 67 years (1894-1961) Assumption parish had had two pastors; in the next 20 years it would have six pastors. Of these six pastors, two retired because of illness and one died while ministering at Assumption. In the four years between 1977 and 1981, the parish had three pastors. No second priest regularly resided there after 1971. Parish membership of 900 (1961) declined to 580 (1968) and to 431 (1974).

Archbishop Schulte appointed Reverend Anthony Lawrence McLoughlin the third pastor of Assumption parish, effective with Father Griffin's retirement on 20 May 1961. Born on 9 June 1905 at Carbondale, Illinois, Bishop Chartrand ordained him at St. Meinrad on 26 May 1931. Father McLoughlin had extensive pastoral and military experience before coming to Assumption. He was appointed assistant pastor at Assumption, Evansville, upon ordination. Bishop Ritter transferred him to St. Patrick, Indianapolis (1934) and to St. Simon, Washington, Indiana (1935). Three years later, he became instructor and assistant chaplain at Ladywood School in Indianapolis. Then in 1940, he left this girls' high school to become chaplain in the United States Army and saw front line action in the Philippines. Upon his return to the Archdiocese (1946), Father McLoughlin became administrator of Mary, Queen of Peace parish in Danville and chaplain at Veterans Hospital in Indianapolis. Ten years later, Archbishop Schulte appointed him pastor at St. Pius in Troy, St. Nicholas in Sunman (1960), and then to Assumption.<sup>4</sup>

Father McLoughlin found that his predecessor's conservative fiscal policy compelled him to spend substantial sums to repair, renovate, or remodel neglected parish buildings.

The school and convent, constructed between 1895 and 1909, demanded a \$50,000 renovation. On the advice of architectural engineers, the convent attic and the third floor of the school (which contained the parish auditorium) were removed. Classrooms were located on the first floor; an assembly hall, on the second. A kitchen and meeting rooms occupied the ground floor. The convent was remodeled over two floors, indoor plumbing was installed in the school, and the school yard was blacktopped.

Father McLoughlin also turned his attention to the rectory and the church. The 1894-vintage frame rectory was sided, the church exterior was painted, and

a new shiny cross was positioned on the steeple.<sup>5</sup> The pastor obtained a large wooden crucifix which he mounted on the north wall of the newly redecorated church interior.

On Sunday, 18 November 1962, members and friends of Assumption parish were invited to inspect the recent physical changes. The pastor sponsored an open house featuring a buffet-style roast turkey and ham dinner in the new school hall.<sup>6</sup>

Almost exactly one year later, on 22 November 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Since Kennedy was the first Catholic president of the United States, news of the assassination doubly shocked Assumption parishioners. They decided to erect a new metal flagpole in front of the parish school. On 17 May 1964, Msgr. James P. Galvin (1914- ), archdiocesan school superintendent, dedi-

#### ASSUMPTION'S ASSISTANT AND PARTTIME CLERGY BEFORE 1981

**Reverend John C. Riedinger** (1882-1971), ordained by Bishop Joseph Chartrand on 10 June 1924 at age 42, and assigned assistant to 1934; pastor of St. Michael, Greenfield (1934), St. Ann (1938) and Little Flower, Indianapolis (1942) until retirement in 1966

**Reverend Joseph Laugel** (1909-83), ordained by Bishop Joseph E. Ritter on 22 May 1934 and assigned assistant until 1939; pastor, St. Mary, Greensburg (1962) and St. Vincent, Shelby County (1973)

**Reverend Francis E. Reeves** (1902-72), ordained by Bishop Chartrand on 21 May 1929, assistant from 1939 to 1940; pastor, St. John, Dover (1949) and St. Mary-of-the-Woods (1957)

**Reverend Bernard M. Burgert** (1906-71), ordained by Bishop Chartrand on 17 May 1932, assistant from 1940 to 1942, when he became a military chaplain during World War II; pastor, St. Charles Borromeo, Milan (1948) and St. Joseph, Shelbyville (1953)

**Reverend Earl Anthony Schmitt** (1907-94), ordained by Bishop Ritter on 11 June 1935, assistant from 1942 to 1943; transferred to the diocese of Evansville (1944); pastor, St. James, Haubstadt (1949) and St. John, Vincennes (1951-77)

**Reverend Anthony A. Hillman** (1910-56), ordained by Bishop Ritter on 11 June 1935, assistant from 1943 to 1944; pastor, American Martyrs, Scottsburg (1947) and St. Nicholas, Ripley County (1955)

**Reverend Edward P. Finnerty** (1913-57), ordained by Bishop Ritter on 30 May 1939, assistant from 1944 to 1952; pastor of St. Martin, Siberia (1952)

**Reverend Charles Kraeszig** (1927- ), ordained by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte on 3 May 1952 and assigned assistant until 1954; now retired in Florida

**Reverend Ralph E. Hoffman** (1924- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 30 May 1950, assistant from May to July 1954; incardinated into the diocese of Nashville, Tennessee (1956)

**Reverend Raymond McGinnis** (1917- ), ordained by Bishop Ritter on 30 May 1944, taught at Ladywood, St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, and Marian College; assistant from 1954 to 1955; now retired in New Albany

**Reverend Joseph Klee** (1923- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 18 May 1948, assistant from 1955 to 1961; presently pastor of St. Mary of the Rock parish near Batesville, Indiana

**Reverend James Doherty** (1929- ), ordained by Bishop Martin J. O'Connor, rector of North American College, on 8 December 1955, assistant from 1961 to 1967; his undertaking graduate studies resulted in temporary assistants assigned each summer

**Reverend Herman G. Lutz** (1932- ), ordained by Bishop O'Connor on 20 December 1958, assistant pro-tem in summer 1961; presently pastor of St. Paul's in Sellersburg, Indiana

**Reverend John Meeks** (1937- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 5 May 1963 and assigned assistant pro-tem in summer 1963

**Reverend John O'Brien** (1937- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 3 May 1964 and assigned assistant pro-tem in summer 1964; fifth pastor of Assumption (1973-77)

**Reverend James Wilmoth** (1939- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 2 May 1965 and assigned assistant pro-tem in summer 1965; presently pastor of St. Michael parish, Indianapolis

**Reverend Kenneth Beckert** (1940- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 1 May 1966 and assigned assistant until September 1966

**Reverend Lawrence Voelker** (1940- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 1 May 1966, instructor at Latin School and assistant at Assumption from 1967 to 1968; presently pastor of Holy Name parish in Beech Grove, Indiana

**Reverend Edward Johnson** (1941- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 19 May 1968 and assigned instructor at Latin School and resident at Assumption until 1970

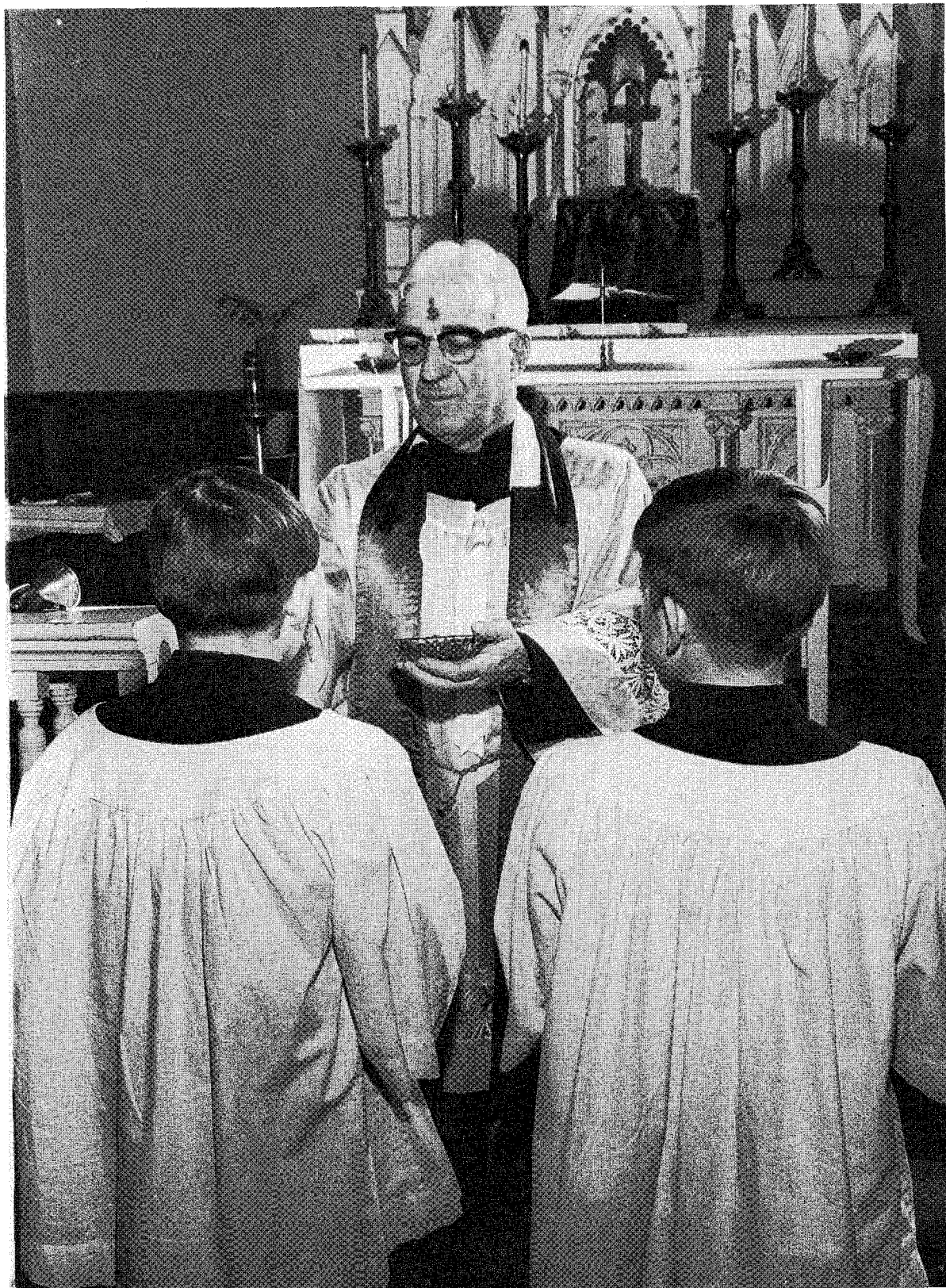
**Reverend Raymond F. Boehm** (1931- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 3 May 1957; principal, Shawe High School, Madison (1967-69); assistant from January to September 1971

**Reverend Michael Carr** (1940- ), ordained by Archbishop Schulte on 7 May 1967, assistant in 1980



Graduation class of 1960. First row (left to right), Philip Havens, unidentified; second row (left to right), unidentified, Richard Kratoska, Terry Loftus, Val Muylle; third row (left to right), Janet Joseph, Trena Marie Mervar, Joyce Gay, unidentified, Helene Kempe; fourth row (left to right), Mary Ann Hahn, Mary Ann Kramer, Virginia Fogarty, unidentified; fifth row, Father Patrick H. Griffin, Father Joseph Klee.





Father Anthony McLoughlin distributes ashes to servers Mark Boarman (left) and Frank Springate on Ash Wednesday, 1967. "Remember man, that thou art dust . . ."

## ASSUMPTION VOCATIONS

(deceased or presently in ministry)

**Reverend Dunstan McAndrews, O.S.B.**, born 8 November 1906 in Indianapolis, professed as a Benedictine 6 August 1928, ordained 6 June 1933. Attended Assumption School. For 30 years he taught Latin, physical education, and history at St. Meinrad Seminary. From 1967 to 1976 he was chaplain at the Precious Blood convent, New Riegel, Ohio. Well-known as a physical fitness buff and a tuba player. He celebrated his golden jubilee Mass at Assumption, 12 June 1983.

**Reverend Francis E. Bryan**, born 9 October 1936 in Indianapolis, the son of Frank J. and Agnes K. Bryan. Attended all eight grades at Assumption School. Ordained 6 May 1962 by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte at St. Meinrad, first Mass at Assumption on 13 May 1962 with pastor and assistant clergy as archpriest, deacon and subdeacon (McLoughlin, Klee, and Doherty). Assistant at St. James (1962) and Holy Name, Beech Grove (1972); chaplain at St. Paul Hermitage, Beech Grove (1968); instructor at Chartrand High School (1962) and Latin School (1963), assistant superintendent of education (1972), Marian College theology instructor (1974) and chaplain at Marian College (1977-94).

**Reverend Bede Steven Peay, O.S.B.**, born 8 June 1954 in Indianapolis, the son of Willard R. and Doris J. Furnish Peay. Attended Assumption School and Public School #49. Studied at Greenville College in Illinois and entered Benedictines at St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania (1977). Ordained 22 May 1982 by Bishop William G. Connare of Greensburg, Pa. First Mass at Assumption, 6 June 1982, concelebrated with two former pastors (Reine and O'Brien) among others. Master's degrees from St. Vincent's and University of Pittsburgh; Ph.D., St. Louis University (1990). Academic dean and assistant professor in homiletics and historical theology at St. Vincent's.

**William Lee Reuter (1925- )**, baptized in Assumption Church, 27 December 1939, son of Henry William and Grace Lee Downing Reuter; married Nita Kirsch in St. John, Indianapolis; ordained permanent deacon by Bishop Andrew J. McDonald in the Cathedral of St. Andrew, Little Rock, Arkansas, 15 November 1986.

**Sr. Clementina Gallagher, S.P.** (1866-1920), a native of Lafayette, Indiana, entered the St. Mary-of-the-Woods community in 1884. Her parents, James H. and Ann Smith Gallagher,

moved to Indianapolis three years later, lived on Marion Avenue, and were charter members of Assumption parish.

**Sr. Josephine Baskerville, O.S.B.**, entered the Ferdinand community in 1903 and died in 1965.

**Sr. Domitilla Donahue, O.S.B.**, professed in the Ferdinand community in 1916, transferred to the Beech Grove community in 1961, and died in 1969.

**Sr. Norberta Crays, O.S.B.**, born in Loogootee, IN in 1895, entered the Ferdinand community from Assumption in 1916, professed in 1919, taught at Assumption during semester I, 1936-37, and died in 1971.

**Sr. Assunta Highbaugh, O.S.B.**, entered the Ferdinand community in 1931, transferred to Grand Terrace, CA in 1972.

**Sr. Generose Kohn, O.S.B.**, born in Dubuque, IA, daughter of Harry R. and Katherine Peipel Kohn, graduated from Assumption School, entered the Ferdinand community on 4 September 1938, professed 10 August 1940, now retired.

**Sr. Mary Rose Kohn, D.C.** (1926- ), born in Dubuque, IA, younger sister of Sr. Generose Kohn, O.S.B. Attended Assumption School, graduate of St. John's Academy, Indianapolis (1943), novice in the Daughters of Charity (1945), vows (1950), B.A., Fontbonne (1951), M.A., Xavier of New Orleans (1957), and Ph.D., Montreal (1963); studied language in Berlin (1971) and Paris (1972); academic dean, Marillac College (1964-73), curriculum director, Marillac High School, Northfield, IL (1975-83), teacher in Brazzaville, Congo (1984-87); presently engaged in the formation of Daughters of Charity seminary sisters and teaching in the major seminary, Mbandaka, Zaire, Africa.

**Sr. Catherine Louise Boehm, O.S.F.** (1913-91), graduate of Assumption School and St. John Academy commercial course, employed at St. Francis Hospital, Beech Grove; entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Mishawaka, Indiana (1938), perpetual vows (1946); superb seamstress, once stayed up all night to make a miter for the visiting Hungarian Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty.

**Sr. Magdalene Roberts, O.S.B.**, entered the Ferdinand community in 1955, transferred to Belcourt, ND in 1963, and died there in 1991.

cated this flagpole to Kennedy in the presence of Assumption school faculty and children.

Paint brush and hammer are important tools at every parish, but the subject of a pastor's ministry is still the people. In the McLoughlin pastorate, youth was especially important. Since he was Catholic chaplain in the 38th Division, Indiana National Guard, the priest was able to acquire several pieces of army surplus equipment at Camp Atterbury south of Indianapolis. A telescope and some tents particularly fascinated the children. To improve communication with their parents, he founded the Parent-Teachers Organization (PTO) during the 1961-62 school year. To provide parish-centered youth activities, Father McLoughlin was interested in developing a strong Catholic Youth

Organization (CYO) program. A major CYO social event and fund raiser was the Mardi Gras ball, started in 1960. Presiding at the dance were Assumption school children sponsored by various neighborhood businesses: Rita Radersdorf and John Fogarty (1960), Mary Catherine Cocomise and Denis Reid (1963), Debra Viles (1965), Agnes Kratoska (1966), Catherine Hanley (1967), Kathleen Buckley (1968), and Brenda Lee Miles (1970). Father McLoughlin also set up a wood working shop in the old boiler house, hoping to organize a youngsters' manual arts program. Here he spent many happy hours in the company of his Great Dane "Dag" tinkering with the machinery.

A heart ailment prevented Assumption's third pastor from continuing to serve his people. In May 1968,





Assumption School after the removal of the third floor, 1962.

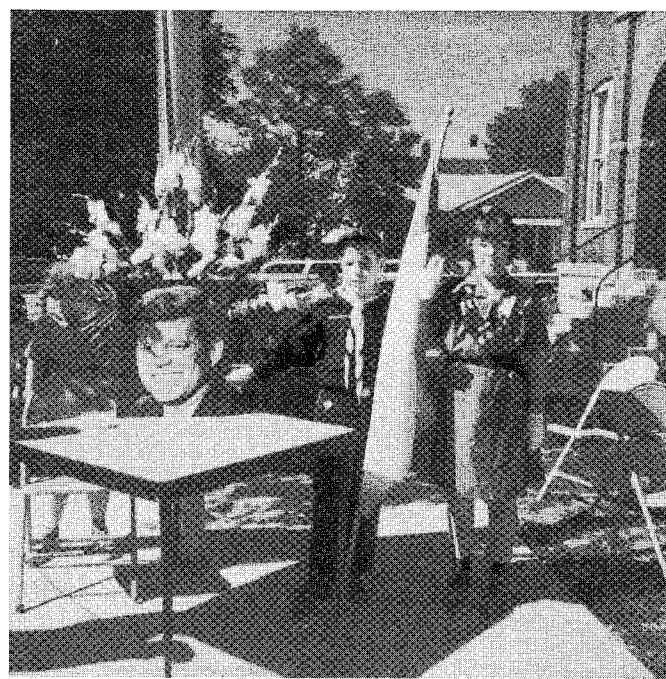
he submitted his resignation to Archbishop Schulte. A few months later, parishioners raised in the church a window plate recognizing Father McLoughlin's "dedicated and unselfish work" only a few feet from the wall plaque honoring Father Weber and the window plate in memory of Father Griffin.<sup>7</sup>

Monsignor Francis Joseph Reine (1914-89), recently resigned third president of Marian College, succeeded Father McLoughlin. An Evansville native, Msgr. Reine was educated at St. Meinrad seminary (1928-36), received a bachelor's degree in theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, and the licentiate and doctorate in sacred theology from Catholic University in Washington. Bishop Ritter ordained him in Oldenburg, Indiana, on 9 June 1940. Assigned to Holy Angels, Indianapolis, he taught theology at Marian College (1942). Then he was assigned to the new Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish, New Albany, and taught religion at Providence High School (1951). Named the first priest-president of Marian College in 1954, he presided over the state's first Catholic coeducational college for 14 years. His personal title of "monsignor" stemmed from two Vatican honors: papal chamberlain (1958) and domestic prelate (1964). He became Assumption's fourth pastor on 1 June 1968.

One of Msgr. Reine's early, sad tasks was to complete funeral arrangements for his predecessor. On 20 October 1968, Father McLoughlin died suddenly at age 63 while eating lunch with a priest-friend in his lakeside cottage near Sturgis, Michigan, his boyhood home. Archbishop Schulte presided at the Mass celebrated by the retired pastor's priest-brother, Reverend Amos McLoughlin (1902-78), pastor of St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute. Assumption's third pastor was buried in Calvary cemetery.<sup>8</sup>

Msgr. Reine continued Father McLoughlin's renewal of the parish plant. He changed the floor plan of the rectory and redecorated the interior of this old structure to create a cheery work area as well as residence. Renovation of the church interior was a greater challenge, for the layout of the sanctuary in a 75-year-old church was to harmonize with the updated liturgy emanating from Vatican II. After removal of the altar donated by Joseph A. Rink in 1894, the pastor erected a new altar facing the people and affixed Father McLoughlin's wooden crucifix to the back wall of the apse. Parishioner John P. Mick made the two new Holy Water fonts, and parishioner Joe Boarman designed and made the altar, tabernacle altar, lectern, and bases for the Virgin and St. Joseph statues.

"Father Reine" (as his parishioners called him)



Our Scouts salute the fallen President at the dedication of the new school flagpole, 17 May 1964.

#### WITH BROOM AND SHOVEL

Three women kept the priests of Assumption parish well-fed in a clean environment. Miss Edith Johnson was housekeeper for Father Weber; Miss Mary Murphy, for Father Griffin; and Mrs. Bessie Loftus, for Father McLoughlin and Msgr. Reine. The structure housing the parish heating plant also served as a residence for the Pierpont, Bardash, and Verkamp families, who provided janitorial service during Father Weber's pastorate. Parishioners also remembered that an old negress, Suzie, lived behind the rectory and assisted Father Weber's housekeeper.

was a man with a ready smile and a firm handshake who filled his days at Assumption with a wide range of activities. He was well-known for remembering names and always showed interest in what you and your family were doing. His own bouts with hypertension made him particularly sensitive to suffering and illness, and he made a special effort to visit shut-ins and the hospitalized of the parish. He was never farther away than the telephone—which provided him access to his people and friends and gave them direct access to him.

Assumption parish was involved in the larger church and civic communities. Msgr. Reine welcomed deacon Edward F. Dhondt from St. Meinrad seminary during the 1968-69 pastoral semester, a program de-

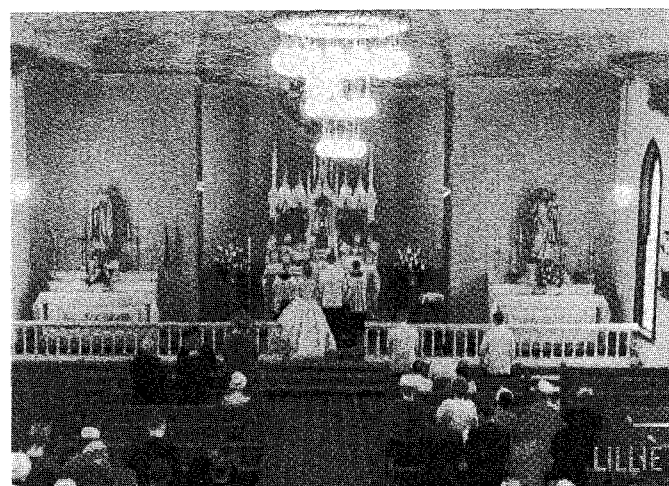
signed to provide deacons with parochial experience before ordination.<sup>9</sup> The parish participated in the neighborhood "Upswing" program in summer 1968, and the pastor faithfully attended the luncheon meetings of the Westside Exchange Club in McClarney's Restaurant banquet room. This author spoke about his faculty study tour of Yugoslavia before the Exchange Club at the pastor's invitation in 1973.

On a beautiful Sunday, 5 October 1969, Archbishop Schulte presided at a Mass of Thanksgiving which Msgr. Reine and former assistant priests concelebrated in the Church of the Assumption to mark the parish's diamond jubilee. Msgr. Charles P. Koster, pastor of St. John's, Assumption's mother church, was homilist. McClarney's Restaurant catered dinner for



Msgr. Francis J. Reine and the First Communion class of 1969.





Assumption Church interior in 1963 (above) and 1970 (below).



several hundred parishioners and guests in the school hall after Mass. Monsignor Downey Council, Knights of Columbus, donated \$500 toward the cost of the jubilee. The parish's first history, financed by the Wills family, was published that day.

On 5 July 1973, Msgr. Reine became pastor of the larger and wealthier St. Christopher parish in Speedway.

I leave Assumption with a heavy heart, because for the past five years I have been very happy here with you . . . You and so many others of the community have proved to me that W.I. is a great place in which to live.<sup>10</sup>

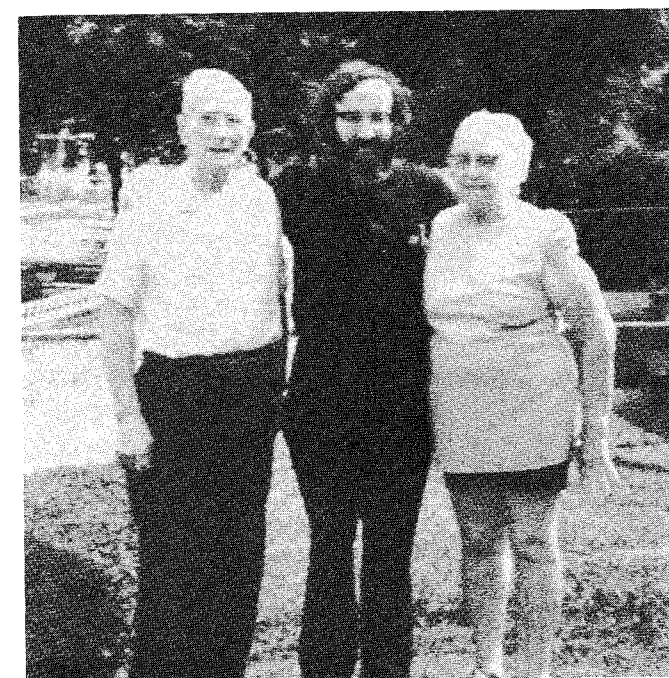
Archbishop Biskup appointed Reverend John Patrick O'Brien (1937- ) fifth pastor of Assumption parish. Archbishop Schulte had ordained this native of Indianapolis at St. Meinrad on 3 May 1964. He served as assistant in Greensburg, Clinton, New Albany, and Terre Haute before his appointment to the W.I. pas-



Archbishop Paul C. Schulte exits Assumption Church after the diamond jubilee Mass accompanied by Msgr. Charles Koster (center) and Msgr. Reine, 1969.

torate. His mother Clare resided with him in Assumption rectory.

Father O'Brien accepted Vatican II notions on the role of the laity in the Church, the liturgy, and ecumenism. He organized Assumption's first parish council to assist him in setting policy for the parish. At its first meeting, on 21 April 1974, the council elected Bill Murphy president; Clare O'Brien, vice-president; Marie Padgett, secretary; and Father O'Brien, treasurer. Joe Boorman succeeded Murphy the following year. In church the pastor improved the microphone system and moved the tabernacle and statues to the sides. The parish council, however, rejected a proposal to commission lay ministers of the Eucharist on the grounds that the parish was too small to necessitate laity distributing communion. Parishioner John P. Mick installed a new sign in front of church, and he and son Michael built the ramp at the church entrance to provide easy access to handicapped and elderly parishioners. The Westside Ministerial Association sponsored a successful ecumenical prayer service in Morris Street Free Methodist Church on 2 July 1975. Father O'Brien was the featured speaker. The pastor hosted an ecumenical service in Assumption Church on Good Friday, 8 April 1977. Participating were Wash-



Father John O'Brien embraces longtime parishioners Claude and Alberta Miller.

ington Street United Methodist, River Avenue Baptist, Morris Street Free Methodist, and Blaine-Belmont United Methodist Churches. In 1976 the City awarded a citation to the Altar and Rosary Society for its contribution to the local celebration of the American Revolution Bicentennial.

Financially, Father O'Brien and the council continued some old events and introduced some new activities to maintain popular interest and produce income. On 27 October 1974 about 200 people attended Mass and buffet lunch to mark the parish's 80th anniversary homecoming. Claude and Alberta Miller continued to prepare the main course at the parish fish fry—as they did annually for 27 years. David Gambrall, Ray Lamb, and Mike Lucas were chairmen of the fish fry and festival in 1977. Various Altar Society activities, bingo games, sale of bequeathed property, and an indoor spring festival (1977-81) helped raise money to offset the parish's major expense: upkeep on the buildings.<sup>11</sup>

A colorful funeral in the Irish tradition occurred at Assumption during the O'Brien pastorate. A dozen family members began fighting in church when one of them was accused of stealing a valuable ring off the finger of the corpse. The pastor had to order the servers to safety until the battle ceased.<sup>12</sup>

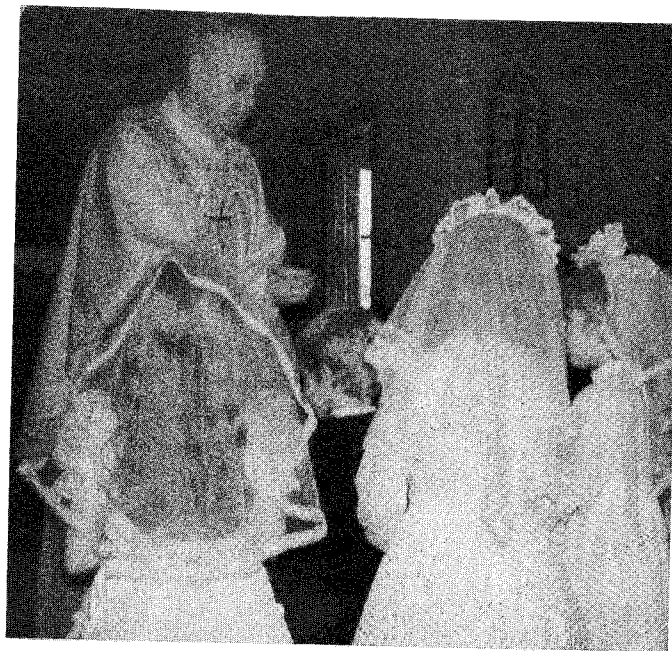
On 30 November 1977 Father O'Brien became pastor of St. Bernadette parish, Indianapolis. Archbishop

Biskup appointed Reverend Robert J. Ullrich (1923- ) sixth pastor of Assumption parish. Born in Bellevue, Kentucky, but educated in Our Lady of Lourdes school on Indianapolis' east side and graduated from Cathedral High School, Father Ullrich was ordained by Bishop Mariano S. Garriga in the cathedral of Corpus Christi, Texas, on 11 October 1953. After 20 years' service there, he returned to the Hoosier capital and was incardinated into the Archdiocese on 23 February 1977. He celebrated his first Mass at Assumption several months later, on 7 December. He continued to serve as chaplain at Winona Hospital and assumed chaplaincies at two nursing homes while ministering at Assumption.

Father Ullrich's pastorate was complicated by his chaplain responsibilities and his health situation. Pondering the costs of maintaining parish property while membership was decreasing, he decided to move from the rectory and informed parishioners that he intended to recommend that the Archbishop close the parish. In late 1979 he resigned to devote most of his efforts to the chaplaincies. "I have done this for personal reasons as well as good of Assumption Parish," he wrote, reporting that his successor, Reverend Thomas E. Lyons, would have only Assumption as his full-time duty. "My prayer is that all of you will continue to come to Assumption Church and continue to support this grand old parish. I thank all of you who have given of your time, talent, and money to keep



Father Robert Ullrich baptizes John Mick III on 15 October 1978.



Father Thomas Lyons distributes First Communion on 21 October 1979.

Assumption Parish alive."<sup>13</sup> Father Ullrich departed Assumption with all bills paid and \$400 in the bank.

Father Lyons (1918-90) was born on Indianapolis' southeast side and learned to swim at Rhodius Park. Ordained by Bishop Ritter at Oldenburg on 3 March 1944, he served as assistant in Vincennes, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Connersville, and Clinton. From 1960 to 1973 he was pastor in Siberia and Aurora. Then as pastor at St. Anne, Hamburg, he witnessed the devastation of the parish plant in 1974. Thereafter he was always referred to as "the tornado priest" because he had exerted superhuman strength to rescue the tabernacle from destruction. Msgr. Francis R. Tuohy (1935- ), archdiocesan administrator after the resignation of Archbishop Biskup, appointed Father Lyons seventh pastor of Assumption parish in mid-July 1979. By the end of the year he was too ill to function and Father Michael Carr (1940- ) assisted him until he decided to retire from the active ministry due to illness in spring 1980. Father Lyons fulfilled his life dream of visiting Rome and Assisi a few months later.<sup>14</sup>

Reverend Charles Andrew Noll (1914-81) was installed as eighth pastor of Assumption parish on 2 August 1980. Born at Indianapolis, he attended school at St. Joan of Arc, St. Meinrad, in Rome, and at Catholic University. The nephew of Msgr. Raymond R. Noll (1881-1959), longtime vicar general and rector of the Cathedral, Father Noll was ordained by Bishop Ritter,

along with Msgr. Reine, at Oldenburg on 9 June 1940. He taught at Cathedral High School (1947-59), and was pastor at Starlight (1959) and Brownsburg (1965) before his appointment as Assumption pastor and IUPUI chaplain.

On 10 May 1981, nine months after his installation, Father Noll died in Wishard Hospital. Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara (1921-92), who became fourth Archbishop of Indianapolis in 1980, concelebrated Father Noll's funeral Mass in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral before burial in the Priests' Circle, Calvary Cemetery.<sup>15</sup> Despite his very short tenure in W.I., parishioners remember Father Noll as a friend of youth who enjoyed a lively pizza party and swimming at Rhodius Park. He liked to walk the neighborhood, talk with the neighbors, and even converted a few of them. Above all, this personable man gave laity the feeling that although their parish faced declining membership, their efforts at serving God, each other, and humankind in W.I. were worthwhile.

Archbishop O'Meara asked Reverend John T. Ryan, Indianapolis West dean and pastor of neighboring St. Anthony parish, to administer Assumption after Father Noll's death. This temporary responsibility has continued for over 10 years. Father Ryan nurtures the faith community which Father Noll inspired.



Father Charles A. Noll. Promise of new parish life.

## How Vatican II affected religious education at Assumption Parish

The decline of priestly vocations affected the staffing of Assumption parish. The decline of religious vocations affected the financial condition of Assumption school. A new popular attitude toward formal Catholic education affected school enrollment. The times called for new ways to bring Jesus to the little ones.

Many early Catholic schools around the state were conducted by lay men and women until the number of sisters was sufficient to replace them. St. John's school in Indianapolis, for example, was taken over by the Sisters of Providence in 1859.

At Assumption this development was reversed. Sisters of St. Benedict opened the school in 1895, but in 1960 (before Vatican II) the first lay teacher, Mrs. Josine Zimmer, appeared on the staff. The Beech Grove Benedictines always provided a religious to serve as principal and sometimes assigned a sister-housekeeper there too. After 1961, 2 sisters and 2 lay teachers normally staffed Assumption school. A year later, the first lay man, Ralph McCombs, joined the faculty. With few exceptions, lay faculty remained for only one year. The names of principals are in **bold print**.<sup>1</sup> An asterisk denotes a sister who is deceased.

Sr. Stephen Newton (1960-62)\*  
 Sr. Sophia Dick (1961-67)  
 Sr. Mary Bernard Knust (1961-63)\*  
 Miss Kathy Delaney (1961-62)  
 Miss Rosalie McGlooin (1961-62)  
 Sr. Mary Constance Kleeman (1962-66)  
 Mrs. Edna Cocomise (1962-69)  
 Mr. Ralph McCombs (1962-63)  
 Sr. Rosalia Reising (1963-65)\*  
 Mr. Daniel Land (1963-64)  
 Sr. Benigna Stallman (1964-65)\*  
 Miss Anne Shearer (1964-65)  
 Miss Ardella Gootee (1965-66)  
 Sr. Wilfrieda Effing (1965-67)\*  
 Sr. Carmelita DeVoy (1966-67)  
 Miss Mary Ellen O'Brien (1966-67)  
 Mrs. Rose Vester (1966-67)  
 Sr. Mary Linus (Joan) Wargel (1967-69)  
 Sr. Scholastica Harpenau (1967-68)\*  
 Miss Cynthia Mahin (1967-68)  
 Sr. Anselm Krebs (1967-69)\*  
 Miss Ellen M. Sullivan (1968-69)  
 Mrs. Mary Smith (sem. I, 1968-69)  
 Mrs. Carol A. Krause (sem. II, 1968-69)  
 Sr. Mary Carol Koetter (1969-70)  
 Sr. Dolores Fritz (1969-70)  
 Sr. Anna Marie Megel (1969-70)  
 Mr. John Fitzgerald (1969-70)  
 Miss Carol Lanning (1969-70)

Enrollment during school year 1969-70 was 77.

Reverend Gerald Gettelfinger, archdiocesan school superintendent (now bishop of Evansville), recommended that schools in western Marion County—Assumption, St. Ann, St. Joseph, St. Anthony, and Holy Trinity—consider consolidation or merger in order to conserve limited resources in the face of declining enrollment.

The first proposal was the merger of Assumption and St. Ann's schools. Sister Regina Verdeyen, S.P., invited Assumption children to participate in St. Ann's program the next year, but the invitation was received coolly. Then in fall 1969 a proposed merger of St. Joseph, St. Anthony, and Holy Trinity schools was given serious consideration. Holy Trinity refused to join until 1976, but Assumption, with the strong support of Msgr. Reine, accepted merger. In the 1970-71 school year, All Saints School, the consolidation of Assumption, St. Joseph, and St. Anthony schools, began to operate in the former St. Anthony school building. Assumption was assessed 10% of the operating budget. On the consolidated faculty would be at least one teacher from each of the formerly independent schools. In this way the children would relate to at least one familiar adult face in the consolidated school. Benedictine Sister Dolores Fritz of the Assumption staff taught at All Saints (1970-76). She was succeeded by two former Assumption staffers, Sisters Norma Gettelfinger (1976-78) and Mary Vincent Hormuth (1978-80).

All Saints School has had five principals in the almost quarter century since its inception. They are:

Sr. Donna Watzke, S.P. (1970-78)  
 Debra Yovanovich Williams (1978-81)  
 Kathleen Tichenor (1981-88)  
 Paul T. Loviscek (1988-93)  
 Darlyne O'Brien (1993-)

Some Assumption children continue to attend the consolidated school, but some parents decided that they preferred keeping their offspring closer to home. These pupils transferred to William Penn School #49 on the corner of Morris and Kappes Streets. In 1976 an addition to the building was constructed. Then in 1992 Indianapolis Public Schools opened a brand-new building at the east end of Rhodius Park, close to its former site and only a few blocks from the former Assumption school.

Although it no longer operated an independent school, the parish was still responsible for education. In 1990 the parish paid an education subsidy of almost \$23,000 to All Saints School and Cardinal Ritter High School.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the number of parish



children in the public school necessitated the establishment of a religious education program which has continued until today. The faculty in 1975 were<sup>3</sup>

Miss Marjorie McHugh  
Mrs. John P. Mick  
Miss Marie Padgett  
Miss Denise Walker

Mrs. Earl Carver  
Miss Amelia Mick  
Mr. Robert Fuller  
Sr. Mary Cecile

In the 1980s this program was supplemented by scheduling Bible study sessions offered by Sister Monica Withem, S.P., pastoral associate.

After 1970, a parish concern was how to utilize a vacant school just remodeled in the early 1960s and increase income. After 1971 the Indianapolis Day Nursery Association leased the building. During the O'Brien pastorate the parish council discussed leasing the lower playlot east of the school and possible utilization of the school by the Midwest Mental Health Center, then housed at the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center on Morris Street. In 1976 the Day Nursery's rent was nearly doubled. Four years later, the Indianapolis Pre-School Centers, Incorporated, used the premises rent-free in return for assuming maintenance expenses. In 1981 the agreement was renegotiated and Pre-Schools contracted to pay rent as well as pay custodial services.<sup>4</sup>

After Father Ryan became administrator, the parish council seriously considered selling property which the parish itself did not use. In 1987 the former school was sold to avoid substantial demolition costs. In the next year the lower playlot was sold to adjoining Continental Lumber Company for \$60,000.<sup>5</sup> Then in 1989 Father Ryan was notified that Assumption parish would receive a substantial bequest from Charlotte M. Weindel, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes parish on the east side who died at age 93.<sup>6</sup> A former gas company employee, she divided her estate among various charities and Catholic center-city parishes. The property sale, the Weindel bequest, and an improvement fund drive permitted the erection of a social hall behind the rectory, the construction of a privacy fence to separate the former school from the parish parking lot, and the improvement of the church building.

### How Assumption Parish fares under the Ryan administration

The end of the decade of the 1970s appears to be the nadir of Assumption parish morale. On 25 January 1979 the West Indianapolis Neighborhood Congress (WINC), founded in 1971 to represent the interests of

the broader community, met at Assumption with Reverend Robert A. Mohrhaus (1931- ), Archbishop Biskup's chancellor, and Father Ullrich to discuss parish problems. The WINC vice-president appealed to the Archdiocese to continue to operate the parish since it was a major stabilizing factor in W.I. Some 60 to 75 others, however, used the occasion to blame the decline of parish and neighborhood on the quality of parish services and what they deemed the inattention of their clergy.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting with the archdiocesan chancellor called official attention to parish conditions, but it did not solve any immediate problems. In 1980 the publicity chairman of the spring festival requested that the Catholic Communications Center help the parish publicize the event because "All proceeds desperately needed for every day church expenses."<sup>2</sup> In the following year an official of the Evangelical Orthodox Church, whose members were purchasing much of W.I.'s available real estate, inquired whether Assumption Church was for sale. The business officer of the Archdiocese responded that it was not for sale—at present.<sup>3</sup>

The appointment of Father Noll and the coming of Father Ryan and the Sisters of Providence began the rehabilitation of the Assumption community despite continued rumors that the church was slated to be closed and the parish suppressed.

Reverend John Thomas Ryan (1930- ) became Assumption administrator on 8 July 1981. A native of St. Andrew parish in Richmond, Indiana, Archbishop Schulte ordained him at St. Meinrad on 3 May 1956. His first assignment was assistant at St. Anthony, Indianapolis, where he would return as pastor 14 years later. In the interim he ministered at Immaculate Heart of Mary (1958) and at St. Catherine (1968), Indianapolis. In 1970 Archbishop Biskup appointed him

#### DONORS OF SACRED FURNISHINGS

Holy Water fonts—John P. Mick I  
Sacred Heart of Jesus statue—Wills family in memory of their mother Elsie Marie Wills  
Infant Child of Prague statue—Mr. and Mrs. Edward A. Garr commemorating their wedding  
St. Joseph statue—in memory of Mae Leppert from her family  
Blessed Virgin statue—in memory of George Springate from his family  
Baptismal font—in memory of deceased members of Reidy, Burnett, and McCoy families



While enjoying Sister Monica's birthday party, Father Bryan discreetly carries away the Sunday collection bag. Photograph by Charles J. Schisla.

parttime chaplain at Central State Hospital and to his first pastorate, St. Anthony.

Besides serving St. Anthony and Assumption parishes, Father Ryan has also served the Archdiocese in several important positions. In 1971 he became Indianapolis Central dean and, with reorganization, Archbishop O'Meara appointed him Indianapolis West dean in 1981, a position he held for 12 years. He was also first coordinator of the Archbishop's Annual Appeal (now called the United Catholic Appeal), the major archdiocesan fund raising drive.

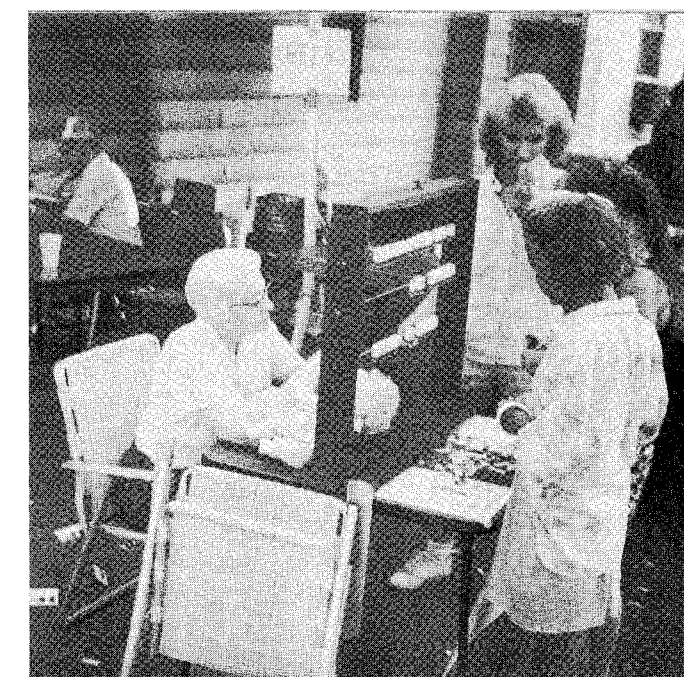
Sister Monica Withem, S.P., became pastoral associate under Father Ryan. Indianapolis-born, she attended St. Philip Neri school and St. Agnes Academy. After entering the Sisters of Providence at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, in 1933, she taught elementary school and spent 11 years in Peru, South America. Upon her return to Indianapolis, Sister Monica became involved in administration and adult education. She applied for a pastoral position with Father Noll, who needed assistance because of his IUPUI responsibilities. He accepted her application, but he died before she could assume the position. Father Ryan confirmed Father Noll's arrangements. Sister Monica celebrated her golden anniversary in religious life with Mass in the parish church (1983). She, like Father Ryan, is a mainstay of Assumption parish.

Sister Mary Frederick Fields, S.P., parish minister, is a native of Washington, Indiana. She entered the Sisters of Providence on 6 January 1940, and taught the primary grades at St. Anthony and other Indianap-

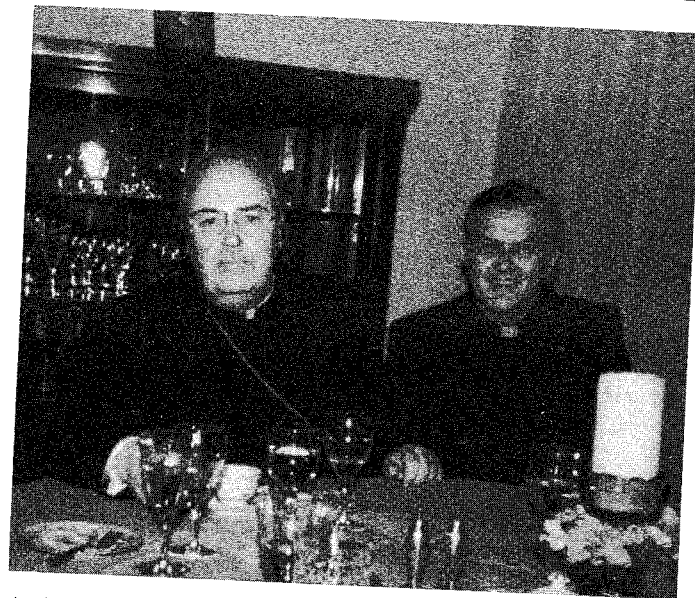
olis schools. She served with Sister Monica at Assumption until 1993, when ill health forced her to return to the motherhouse.

Two priests were regularly assigned to assist Father Ryan with the Sunday Mass schedule at Assumption. Msgr. Charles P. Koster (1917-87), pastor of St. John's (1969-78) and chief judge of the Archdiocesan Tribunal, ministered to Assumption parishioners from 1981 to 1986. Reverend Jack W. Porter (1927- ), associate at St. John's (1979-93) and now Archdiocesan Archivist, also served Assumption (1987-88). Other clerical faces are familiar on weekends. Reverend Francis E. Bryan (1936- ), chaplain at Marian College (1977-94) and a son of Assumption parish, still owns the family home on Morris Street; he ordinarily celebrates the Saturday afternoon Mass. Msgr. Charles E. Ross (1913- ), retired pastor of St. Pius X parish, Indianapolis, substituted for Father Bryan when he was ill or on sabbatical (1991-92). The president of Cardinal Ritter High School and archdiocesan vocations director, Reverend Joseph F. Schaedel (1948- ), substitutes for Father Ryan on those rare Sundays when the administrator is absent. Father Schaedel, appointed moderator of the curia in 1994, is also a descendant of the McGintys and Noones, long-time Assumption families, and was baptized by Father Finnerty in Assumption Church.

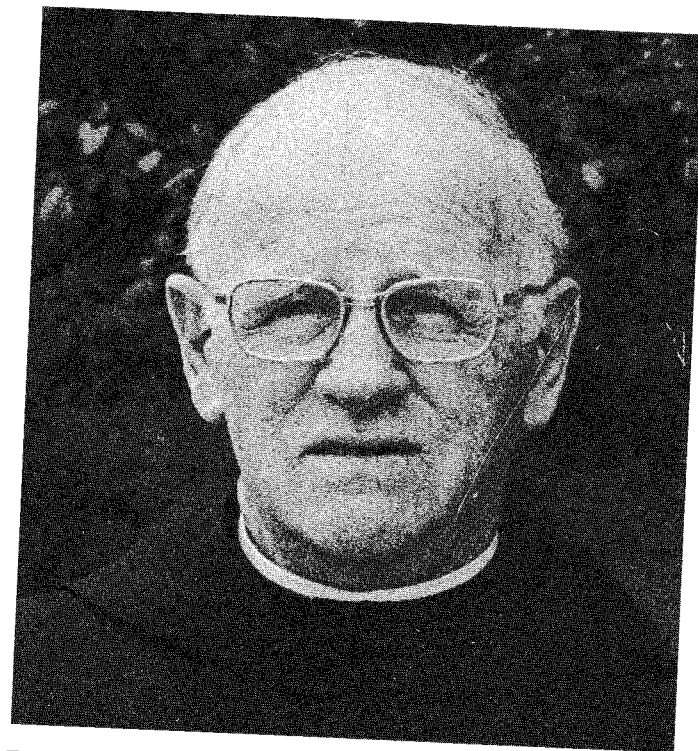
New staffing contributed to parish stability and continuity in many big and little ways. Archbishop



Sister Mary Frederick Fields, S.P., presides over a friendly game of "Pick-n-Win" at the parish festival.



Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara enjoys the hospitality of Father Ryan and the Sisters in Assumption Rectory.



Father Dunstan McAndrews, O.S.B., celebrated Mass marking his golden anniversary of ordination at his home parish, Assumption, with Monsignors Koster and Reine in 1983.

O'Meara evidenced this new spirit when he visited Assumption for the first time on 14 December 1981. He saluted the small West Indianapolis parish as a sign of Christ's presence in the neighborhood. He recalled that Father Ryan, as dean on the westside, had greeted

him upon his arrival at the airport. On his subsequent drive down I-70 to city center, he noticed Assumption's white steeple and said to himself, "Now that's the first church I've seen. I bet it's Catholic!" Parishioners also felt the change. Marie Padgett claimed that recent priests had jobs outside the parish so "there wasn't a daily Mass anyway. Since the sisters have been here we have communion offered twice a day!"<sup>4</sup>

Mass and the sacraments were different. The antique Prante organ, in need of repair, fell silent. The Benedictine sisters of Beech Grove donated their Wicks electronic organ to Assumption. Franciscan Brother Bob Rensel from Sacred Heart played the new organ at Mass until he was reassigned in 1982. When organist Pam Stout moved away, parishioner Monica Rose King, ten years old, took over the keyboard and even chose hymns appropriate to the Mass theme. She continued as parish organist even after enrolling in college (1990).<sup>5</sup> Eucharistic ministers, once thought unnecessary, were certified at Mass on 20 June 1982. Six years later, Father Ryan introduced the present Mass schedule of 5 on Saturday afternoon and 9:30 on Sunday morning. Another Vatican II innovation, anointing the sick during Mass, took place in late 1989.<sup>6</sup> Then two years later, the traditional confessional gave way to a new reconciliation room (built by Joe Boarman) in the southwest corner of church.<sup>7</sup>

The parish council was revived, with Michael Mick (1984), Joe Masner (1988), and Larry Abney (1991) as presidents. At the same time Assumption joined the Urban Parish Cooperative, an archdiocesan agency which seeks to aid center city parishes which face physical problems.<sup>8</sup>

Despite parish change, the Altar and Rosary Society remained intact and also served as a stabilizing factor. Members continued to pray the Rosary and arrange for the celebration of Mass for deceased parishioners. Members willingly served lunch to mourners after a funeral. In the late 1950s, the Society initiated the annual Mothers' and Daughters' Breakfast on the first Sunday in May. Parish women receive communion in a body and then crown the statue of

#### ASSUMPTION PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL 1994

Larry Abney, presiding	Pat McHugh
Mary Allard	Isabel Montes
James Bault	Velia Montes
David King	Rev. John T. Ryan
Tim McCarthy	Sr. Monica Withem, S.P.

the Blessed Mother. While Assumption school operated, the fathers and sons of the parish cooked and served the breakfast (women still remember the year when the eggs were overcooked to a bright green consistency!). One year Congressman Andrew Jacobs, Jr., and his mother were guests. After the school closed, the traditional breakfast continued at various restaurant locations; in recent years the breakfast has been catered in the parish hall.

Besides bake sales and fashion shows, Altar and Rosary continues to sponsor an annual spiritual retreat. In early 1950, Reverend James D. Moriarty (1915-91) invited parish women to spend a weekend at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, then located at the Good Shepherd Convent, 111 West Raymond Street. Before Vatican II, 43 parishes sponsored these annual retreats; today 9 parishes, including Assumption, continue the opportunity. Compared to other parishes, Assumption has always had the highest percentage of its women participating in the program at Fatima Retreat House (since 1963 at 5353 East 56th Street).

For several years, Assumption sponsored an annual Thanksgiving Homecoming Dinner during the week preceding the Thanksgiving holiday. Friends and family members now resident in other parishes were invited to return for this cost-free get together (of course, free-will offerings were graciously accepted).

In the 1970s, young residents of W.I. from all religious affiliations formed a Youth Group organized by John P. Mick II and supported by the Bault, Allard, King, Lamb, Fuller, and other families. With spiritual, athletic, service, and social goals, the Youth Group's activities included home Masses, Bible study, and an-



Assumption A.L.I.V.E., youth group, stuffs Easter baskets with small gifts and candy for the parish's sick and shut-ins. An opportunity to develop Christian, spiritual, and social values in our everyday lives.

nual holiday food drives for the needy. Members always enjoyed playing softball, volleyball, and table tennis. For three years, the Youth Group staged a live performance of the nativity of the Lord for parishioners who attended the midnight liturgy on Christmas Eve. A new youth group, A.L.I.V.E. (Awake, Learning, Inspired, Vocational, Enduring), formed in 1993 to undertake numerous projects and raise money for the parish centennial. Led by Marge McHugh, A.L.I.V.E. convenes in church every Wednesday and Thursday evenings for private prayer and the rosary.

Ecumenically, the parish staff and members continued their participation in services held jointly with neighborhood congregations. In 1982 the Thanksgiving Day Prayer Service was conducted at Assumption. Two years later, Belmont-Blaine United Methodist Church, 1501 South Belmont, hosted the service. Participants were to bring a can of food or a staple for the Mary Rigg Pantry. An offering was taken up to feed the starving masses of Ethiopia. The following year the Thanksgiving service was held at the Morris Street Free Methodist Church, the offering used to insulate the home of a poor senior citizen in the neighborhood. An ecumenical Good Friday service was held at Assumption in 1985 and the Women's World Day of Prayer was conducted at River Avenue Baptist Church in 1993.<sup>9</sup>

Financially, an annual fish fry-summer festival near Assumption Day continued to be the parish's major revenue-producing activity. Net profits ran from around \$4,600 (1984) to over \$9,000 (1992). Festival chairpersons were Ray Lamb and Mary Johnson (1984, 1986-87); Mary Ann Masner (1989-90); Mary Allard, Masner, and Billie Turner (1991); and Allard, James Bault, and Turner (1992-93).

Proceeds from the sale of unused parish property not only built the social hall but also upgraded the church. The frame structure was sided (1988), stained glass windows were repaired (1989), the interior was plastered and painted (1991), new outside doors and predominantly blue carpeting installed (1992). In 1990 the parish had over \$24,000 invested with the Archdiocese and was debt-free.<sup>10</sup> The next year the company which the Archdiocese hired to rate the physical condition of center city parishes gave Assumption an A-1 rating.<sup>11</sup>

Assumption membership slipped from 320 (1981) and 255 (1986) to 145 (1990). In fall 1991 the *Indianapolis Star* leaked recommendations emanating from the future parish staffing committee of the Archdiocese.<sup>12</sup> Despite its comparative well-being and real evidence





Evelyn Mueller King (class of 1944) visits with her third grade teacher, Sister Ebba, at Ferdinand in 1992.

that it was a faith community, but because of clergy shortage and its small membership, Assumption parish was singled out for closing. Parishioners took the news badly. If this parish was suppressed, a respectable portion of its members would not be able to attend Mass conveniently. The closest church was almost three miles away, too far to walk through factory areas and across railroad tracks.<sup>13</sup> Complicating the situation, if you did not drive, you would be doubly isolated: public transportation did not serve W.I. on Sundays. Parishioner Dolores A. Mick spoke for parishioners when she wrote: "Closing Assumption would be a tragic mistake for the future growth of the Catholic Church in West Indianapolis."<sup>14</sup>

In early 1992 four parish stalwarts (L. Abney, M. Allard, J. Hanley, and D. King) met with the committee members to present reasons why Assumption should not be closed. The parish staff encouraged parishioners to write either Reverend David E. Coats (1948- ), archdiocesan administrator after the death of Archbishop O'Meara in January, or Reverend Jeffrey H. Godecker (1943- ), committee spokesman. On 17 June Father Godecker met Assumption parishioners in the social hall to tell them why their church should be closed. Again parish staff encouraged parishioners to inform archdiocesan authorities "why Assumption should not be closed."<sup>15</sup> Like the parishioners' meeting with Father Mohrhaus 13 years earlier, both sides came away unconvinced by the arguments of the other.

On 9 September 1992, Bishop Daniel Mark Buechlein, O.S.B. (1938- ) of Memphis was installed as fifth Archbishop of Indianapolis. He informed all that



Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein meets Assumption parishioners at the Indianapolis West Deanery reception at St. Anthony's, 13 October 1992. Left to right: Velia Montes, Isabel Montes, Fr. Ryan, Archbishop Buechlein, Michele Allard, and Mary Allard. Photograph taken in happier days.

he would make no major decisions during the first year of his episcopate so that he would have time to study the various issues facing the Archdiocese. At the end of his first year the Archbishop announced a new strategic plan for the Archdiocese, but the *Star* found little worthy news in the plan and concentrated on the unresolved issue of parish closings. Assumption parishioner Betty Seal reportedly commented: "I just wish someone would end this anxiety of not knowing from one week to the next whether I'm going to have a church to go to."<sup>16</sup>

Archbishop Buechlein, while responding with criticism of the *Star* religion editor for his disappointing coverage of the strategic plan, publicly stated that Assumption would not be closed before its centennial celebration.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, the Archbishop transferred Father Godecker from assistant chancellor to archdiocesan director of religious education; also, he asked the new Indianapolis West dean, Reverend James R. Wilmoth (1939- ) to prepare a proposal to employ two fewer priests in his deanery without recommending the closing of any church. At Assumption the scare of 1991-92 became the reprieve of 1993. *Deo gratias*.

### Whither the future

"We will not abandon communities or neighborhoods simply because a majority of the Catholic population

has moved away," Archbishop Buechlein told a news conference.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, if the Archdiocese is serious about evangelization as a preoccupation of the Church and unwilling to abandon the center city and its people, then Assumption parish has a future. From 1990 to 1993, 28 baptisms of infants, children, and adults have taken place there. During the same four years, 8 marriages and 24 funerals have been recorded. Observing weekend Mass attendance, clearly more than 145 look to Assumption for worship. According to the 1993 parish census, the parish really numbers 115 households and 234 members, including some Hispanics. If that is the size of its membership, then Assumption is larger than SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and is one of seventeen parishes (out of 41) in Marion County with a membership below 1,000. The spirit of both workers and visitors at the summer festival is lively and intense. Maybe it reflects their wish that the Cross of Christ in W.I. not be hauled down after a century. Even singing at Mass is respectable despite the lack of organ accompaniment.

This week the buildings immediately east of the church are on the verge of a visit from a giant bulldozer. The company which emitted such malodorous fumes to disturb worshippers in Father Griffin's day is gone. So is the lumber company which purchased the school playlot. All below "the Hill" will disappear as Harding Street is widened to accommodate through-traffic and Lilly employees heading to plant or home. The shell of what was once Father Weber's icehouse and now a scrap metal dealer on the east side of Harding probably will remain because environmental authorities will not sanction the pave-over of a chemically-hot spot.

The needs of the area's population bring clients to Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, but decline in the number of residents darkens the future of every nearby business establishment. Abandoned industrial and commercial property becomes an eyesore. Except for a restaurant, hardware store, and corner grocery, small enterprises on Howard Street have closed. W.I.'s

### PARISH MISSION GIVING PER CAPITA IN 1993

Assumption	\$5.02	Holy Trinity	3.71
Christ the King	4.68	St. Mark	3.48
St. Joan of Arc	4.66	Holy Rosary	3.30
St. Luke	4.30	St. Monica	3.15
St. Anthony	3.92	Holy Spirit	2.68

source: *Criterion*, 21 January 1994, 20.

major grocery stores are Bud's Super Market, Oliver and Division in the Valley, and Safeway Supermarket, near Morris and Belmont on the Hill. Very few houses are boarded-up, however, because residents own most W.I. housing. Parishioners believe that old homes are well-maintained because they are owner-occupied, while rental property, especially that managed by realty companies, is subject to tenant abuse and economic exploitation. City planners have studied, cataloged, and inspected W.I. several times over the years. They propose some new commercial areas and moves toward economic revival, but their most important goal seems to be the preservation of the present, adequate housing.<sup>2</sup>

Religion appears well in W.I. Churches which serve residents are

Shout the Victory Christian Center, Drover and Oliver  
First Hispanic Baptist, 625 Division  
Grace Community, 939 Division  
River Avenue Baptist, 1060 River Avenue  
Liberty Church Apostolic Faith, Ray and Warren  
Blaine Avenue Holiness, Blaine and Howard  
Holy Trinity Evangelical Orthodox, 1427 Blaine  
Gospel Assembly, 1723 Howard Street  
The Lord's Table, 1814 Howard Street  
Union Baptist, 1401 Shepard  
Our Saviour Missionary Baptist, 1408 Shepard  
First Baptist of West Indianapolis, Miller and Kappes  
Belmont-Blaine United Methodist, Miller and Belmont  
Westside Assembly of God, Miller and Belmont  
Morris Street Free Methodist, 2302 West Morris  
Westview Baptist, Belmont and Westview Drive  
Rhodius Park Baptist, 1805 W. Wilkins  
Full Gospel Missionaries Pentecostal, 860 S. Belmont  
New Life (in the former Parkview Christian Church, built in 1959 for a congregation organized in 1896, Assumption's former neighbor on the northeast corner of Blaine and Morris), 849 S. Belmont at I-70  
Friendly Church of the Nazarene, 833 S. Holmes Avenue  
Beulah Baptist Church, 1002 S. Warman

Education is alive too. Older public school buildings have been closed, remodeled, or replaced with new facilities. New schools stand at Oliver and White River Parkway, and at Wilkins and Reisner. Expansion proceeds north of School #46 on Miller Street. Rhodius, Ross-Claypool, and McCarty Parks never want for snow sled users, baseball players, or climbing children. In 1986 a new W.I. branch of the public library was constructed across Morris Street from its old Carnegie-style building.

Through all the obvious changes, W.I. remains a working class neighborhood dominated by industry and penetrated by lines of transportation. One can easily reside in the shadow of Chevrolet, CPC Specialty Products, Indianapolis Power and Light, Chrysler

Corporation Indianapolis Foundry, Reilly Industries, the City's trash disposal plant, Lilly, and National Starch. Lilly's impact on the district has already been recounted, but National Starch and Chemical at 1515 Drover appears to be the greatest nuisance. Every day it mills 85 truckloads of corn to be used in over 400 products from paper and food to cosmetics. According to the City's air pollution control division which tracks complaints received, National Starch is the city's ninth leading polluter. It is not unique, though, because six of the city's top ten polluters are located in W.I. or adjoining neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>

So dear reader, together we have looked back at W.I.'s Workers' Church to see the present more clearly and to outline something of the future. Of course, other historians, parishioners, and neighbors will perceive the history of Assumption parish differently, for they bring varied experiences to its story. What I have recounted in the previous pages began with research 25 years ago but better understood today, richer because parish developments in the last quarter century demand comprehension of essentials. Knowing some pastors personally and collecting parishioners' recollections never handicap insights.

California earthquake, a record low temperature of minus 27 for one day, and the abrupt end of Communist government in the Soviet Union show that change is inevitable and unpredictable. Yet one aspect of the Workers' Church has remained constant. The significance of Assumption parish in West Indianapolis is preserved in the lives of thousands of Catholics who have answered "I do" or have heard the words "I baptize you" or "I absolve you" or "may he rest in peace" within its venerable church—or responded with a respectful "yes, sister" in one of its school rooms. To them the tall white steeple topped with the shiny cross on Blaine Avenue off Morris Street means spiritual home.

\* \* \*

### THE CENTENNIAL EVENTS MARKING "100 YEARS OF LOVE"

January 2, 1994—Opening Mass 9:30 A.M.  
February 23 to 25—Repent, Renew, & Rejoice: a mission by Fr. Bede Peay, O.S.B.  
June 12—Mass for all Assumption graduates 11 A.M.  
August 12 and 13—Assumption's Annual Fish Fry  
August 15—Feast of the Assumption  
October 2—100th Anniversary Mass 11 A.M.  
January 1, 1995—Closing Mass 9:30 A.M.

Text to this point was completed on Sunday evening, 16 January 1994. No word or phrase written in the above section entitled "Whither the future" has been altered since that date.

\* \* \*

### Epilogue

At 5 P.M., Saturday, 29 January 1994, Father Bryan entered the sanctuary of Assumption Church to celebrate the Mass of the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The gospel reading of that day, Mark 1:21-28, inspired a homily on authority. Returning to their seats after communion, parishioners were taught another lesson about authority. Father David E. Coats, vicar general of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, appeared from the sacristy to read a letter from Archbishop Buechlein. Assumption parish would be suppressed in January 1995, its territory added to St. Anthony parish, and its church reduced to the status of chapel (open only for baptisms, marriages, and funerals). At 9:30 A.M. Mass the following day, Reverend Frederick C. Easton (1940- ), vicar judicial of the Metropolitan Tribunal, concelebrated with Father Ryan before reading the Archbishop's letter. In his homily, the administrator elaborated on several points, one being the difference between obedience to and agreement with authority.

Meanwhile back at the Catholic Center, 14th and Meridian, Archbishop Buechlein held a rare Sunday morning news conference to announce the closing of Assumption and St. Bridget, a black parish at Martin Luther King Jr. and St. Clair Streets.

The public announcement during the weekend of 30 January was the climax to a series of moves at the archdiocesan level. A task force of church, civic, and business leaders recommended the closing of Assumption, St. Bridget, and St. Patrick in Fountain Square. Father Godecker presented this recommendation to the Council of Priests, which, according to canon law, the Archbishop must consult before ordering the closing of any parish (canon 515, paragraph 2). Members of the Council of Priests are:

Archbishop Buechlein, president  
Suzanne Magnant, archdiocesan chancellor  
Father Coats, vicar general  
Rev. Paul Koetter, chairperson; ministry personnel, Indianapolis  
Rev. Thomas Amsden, Greensburg  
Rev. Wilfred Day, Brownsburg

Rev. James Farrell, Jeffersonville  
Rev. Bernard Head, St. Mary-of-the-Woods  
Rev. Stanley Herber, Greenfield  
Rev. Richard Hindel, O.S.B., Bristow  
Msgr. Richard Kavanagh, retired, Indianapolis  
Rev. Patrick Kelly, principal, Cathedral High School, Indianapolis  
Rev. Robert Mazzola, Richmond  
Rev. John Meyer, Madison  
Rev. Hilary Ottensmeyer, O.S.B., ministry to ministers program, Beech Grove  
Rev. Joseph Schaedel, archdiocesan vocations director, Indianapolis  
Rev. Donald Schmidlin, pastor, St. Matthew, Indianapolis  
Rev. Myles Smith, Bloomington  
Rev. Daniel Staublin, Tell City  
Rev. Lawrence Voelker, pastor, Holy Name, Beech Grove  
Rev. James Wilmoth, pastor, St. Michael, Indianapolis

They met with Father Ryan, Assumption administrator; Reverend Kenneth E. Taylor of St. Bridget; and Reverend Patrick A. Doyle and Sister Jean Marie Cleveland, O.S.F., of St. Patrick, all of whom opposed the recommendation. Two votes were taken after discussion. Council members decisively approved the closing of Assumption and St. Bridget parishes, but rejected the closing of St. Patrick parish.

Traditionally the Catholic Church in Marion County has exhibited its institutional strength by organizing parishes. Pope Paul VI once described the parish as "the school of the word of God, and the table of the Eucharistic bread. It is the house of fraternal love; it is the temple of communal prayer." In less eloquent terms, the parish is an outreach program to provide convenient access to Mass and the sacraments, a financial base for Catholic education, and a social vehicle for good works. During his long episcopate (1878-1918), Bishop Chatard established 14 parishes in concentric circles around the mile square and authorized mission stations in Pike township (Augusta), Franklin township (Acton), and Decatur township (Valley Mills). Bishops Chartrand and Ritter organized seven parishes (1918-46).

Indianapolis' Catholic population increased impressively after World War II. Archbishop Schulte established 18 new parishes and suppressed one parish, old St. Joseph at College Avenue and North Street (1949). This was the first closing since the end of the three township missions. St. Joseph parish was organized in 1873 and its church built in 1880. In 1912, St. Mary's, a German national church, was constructed within sight of St. Joseph's and now replaced it. The former church was used for bingo games and archdiocesan offices until sold for a proposed badminton court

and then for development as apartments or senior citizens housing. Today it stands vacant. Archbishop Schulte promised to place his next new parish under the patronage of St. Joseph, and indeed he fulfilled his promise when the new St. Joseph's was organized near the airport. The pews from the old church were transferred to the new church. At the end of the Schulte episcopate (1970), 43 parishes existed in Marion County.

In the four decades after the closing of old St. Joseph parish, only St. Francis de Sales parish in Brightwood disappeared (1983). It was founded in 1881 and its church built in 1913. Its very small membership was burdened with a very large debt. Parishioners opposed to closing attempted to engage Archbishop O'Meara in conversation while in the communion line. Ultimately the Archdiocese transferred the vacant church to Martin University (1987).

Since Archbishop Buechlein assumed office, St. Catherine and St. James parishes have merged to form Good Shepherd parish (1993). St. Catherine was founded in 1909 and its daughter parish, St. James, in 1951. St. Bridget was founded in 1879 and its church dedicated on 1 January 1880. Its parishioners were told



Centennial Committee stalwarts assemble in the sanctuary, February 1994. Front row (left to right): Bryan McHugh, Velia Montes, Kevin McHugh, Dolores Mick, Sr. Monica; back row: Jim Divita, Marjorie McHugh, Becky Stone, Fr. Ryan, Amelia Titsworth, Isabel Montes, and Charlotte Sweet.



to join the smaller, racially-mixed Cathedral parish by mid-1994. The former church is to become the spiritual center for IUPUI's commuter students.

Assumption parishioners reacted to the decision to abolish their faith community during its centennial year with anger, disbelief, resignation, and bewilderment. For more than a century, outside impersonal forces have made decisions affecting W.I. and Assumption parish. The decision of 1994 was another milestone in that long tradition of impotence. For example, several days after Parish Council President Larry Abney and Amelia Titsworth met with Father Coats to express strong parishioner opposition to the late-January announcement, the vicar general informed the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council that although Assumption parishioners "are understandably disappointed, he was impressed by the spirit of acceptance by most parishioners. He said they seem to understand the reasons."<sup>1</sup>

In February, the archdiocesan weekly newspaper published this author's letter opposing the Assumption closing.<sup>2</sup> Footnotes citing his sources have been added to the published text. After studying available documentation he wondered:

- 1) how the archdiocese is giving priority to evangelization<sup>3</sup> by closing down parishes;
- 2) how one squares the statement that the archdiocese will not abandon neighborhoods simply because Catholics have moved away<sup>4</sup> with the recent justification that, since center city parishes formerly served

38,000 but now serve 12,000, parishes should be closed;<sup>5</sup>

3) how one answers the charge that the church is really a middle-class suburban institution with the claim that it stands with the poor<sup>6</sup> when convenient, regularly-scheduled Mass is taken away from a lower middle-class neighborhood;

4) how unspecified 'human resources' apply to the closing of Assumption, since financial considerations and clergy shortage are said not to apply<sup>7</sup> (Assumption is debt-free, maintains an adequate plant, and already shares its priests);

5) how to justify the acceptance of recommendations from an anonymous task force of church, civic and business leaders<sup>8</sup> over the objections of Assumption Parish's priests and without consulting its parish council;

6) how the principals' recommendation to close 20 public schools<sup>9</sup> fits Assumption's neighborhood where three public schools (#46, 47, and 49) are either brand-new buildings or are in the process of expansion;

7) how the notion that Protestant congregations move away but Catholics cannot put their churches on wheels<sup>10</sup> squares with the fact that more than a dozen Protestant and Orthodox congregations presently exist within Assumption's boundaries.

On the evening of the day that this letter was published, Father Bede Steven Peay, O.S.B., concelebrated Mass with Father Ryan to close the three-day mission which he had conducted for parishioners. Then with

obvious emotion, he remembered W.I. and Assumption parish:

My grandparents came to Indianapolis from New Albany, built a home at 1727 W. Morris Street and joined Assumption Parish all in 1914. My father and his brothers received the sacraments, their education, and grew up here. My grandmother remained a member of the parish until her death in 1983, this was home to her. It has been a special place, a religious home to my family for eighty years. Though raised in the Free Methodist Church up the street, I thought of this as a Church home, too. I was received into the Catholic Church here and celebrated my Mass of Thanksgiving here when I was ordained. This is my parish.

To hear of the closing of this place of prayer and service was indeed a shock. To see the home where I grew up being torn down and now a grass plot was also a shock. Things change, God doesn't. Buildings, organizations come and go, but the sense of family, the memories, the good work done here will live in the children of this parish forever. In all of us there will always be an Assumption.

God never lets us down. He will always provide for us. I have taken as the 'theme verse' for my life Romans 8:28, 'We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.' Hold on to that truth. Our God calls us to higher things and it could just be that the spirit which has pervaded Assumption all these years is needed elsewhere and you all might be catalysts for change in the parishes where you will go. The closing is a trial, but it's not insurmountable. We must not lose heart, our sense of charity or our loyalty to our bishop and the archdiocese of Indianapolis. The Church is bigger than our parish. We are called upon now to persevere and grow in faith; with God's help we can and will take everything that comes . . . 'in everything God works for good.'<sup>11</sup>

And so passes into religious history the Workers' Church, the Parish of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in West Indianapolis, organized in 1894.<sup>12</sup>

## THE ARCHBISHOP'S LAST WORDS

A little past 6:30 on Saturday afternoon, 16 April 1994, Archbishop Daniel Mark Buechlein visited Assumption Church for the first time. Father Ryan and Father Bryan accompanied him down the center aisle while the 60 attendees sang "This is Holy Ground."

After a short opening statement, "I am not in a position to change the decision" to close Assumption Church, the archbishop turned to Father Ryan as moderator. "Leave your anger at home," the priest reminded parishioners, "we are here to listen and discuss." Then the archbishop opened for questions.

"What's the reason for closing us?" "The Catholic population in center city has dropped from 38,000 to 12,000." "But didn't you say publicly that a drop in the number of people would not lead to abandoning the inner city?" "I'm not abandoning it. You're going to St. Anthony's." "Who did you consult before deciding to close Assumption? Did you consult anybody from here? Hopefully, the next time you think about closing a parish, you will consult the people." "I was advised by a large task force. Father Ryan delivered an eloquent defense of your parish before the Priests' Council. And what parish would ever recommend that it be closed?" "Isn't closing small parishes contrary to evangelization? What's your standard for 'small' anyway?" "Evangelization is very important, but I have an overview of the whole Archdiocese, and it's just not good management to keep Assumption open. I'll probably have to open two new suburban parishes in the near future." "If it's a matter of priest shortage, we'd accept just one Mass on weekends instead of two. Couldn't we remain a parish since we're not a financial drain on the Archdiocese?" "No, you would just postpone the inevitable. Not good staffing." "Closing this parish is like divorce. I'll have to get used to another parish." "We hope your faith will carry you forward." "For a hundred years this building has served us." "You should not be so attached to buildings. To be Catholic is more important than any building." "But you are abandoning West Indianapolis to the Protestants." "I do not see it that way. Assumption will become a chapel and we will continue our presence by conducting baptisms and funerals here."<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the hour, Archbishop Buechlein hurriedly departed through the sacristy door.

<sup>1</sup> For a reporter's account of the same meeting, see *Criterion*, 22 April 1994, 1. The Archbishop elaborated on his position in his weekly column, *ibid.*, 29 April 1994, 2.

# ENDNOTES

## Why downtown Indianapolis is east of White River

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1910), I, 5-6.

## How the land west of White River became valuable

<sup>1</sup> Dunn, I, 257; *Indianapolis Star*, 9 January 1916, 1, 7.  
<sup>2</sup> *Indianapolis Sentinel*, 18 May 1881, 4-5. Since he was also a state legislator, Caven is listed in *A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1980), I, 59-60.

## How West Indianapolis originated

<sup>1</sup> Dunn, I, 440. The best recent account of W.I.'s early years is Greg A. Watts, "West Indianapolis in the Beginning," *Westside Enterprise*, 15 February 1989, 1.

## What West Indianapolis was like as a city

<sup>1</sup> Assumption parish real estate abstract in the files of the business office of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis (hereafter cited as BOAI). Also see Oliver entry in *Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly*, I, 298.  
<sup>2</sup> Assumption parish real estate abstract. BOAI.  
<sup>3</sup> List based on review of the appropriate maps in *Insurance Maps of Indianapolis, Indiana* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., 1887).  
<sup>4</sup> Route reported in the *City Directory* for 1898.  
<sup>5</sup> Dunn, I, 440.  
<sup>6</sup> *West Side Herald*, 13 June 1895, 1, and 11 February 1897, 8.  
<sup>7</sup> Names listed in the *City Directory* for 1894. For another but slightly different list, see *West Side Herald*, 5 January 1895, 2.  
<sup>8</sup> *West Side Herald*, 26 November 1896, 8.  
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 March 1897, 8. An overview of West Indianapolis soon after its annexation appeared in *Indianapolis News*, 15 November 1902, 27.

## How Assumption Parish came to be

<sup>1</sup> Deeds in the Assumption parish real estate folder, BOAI.  
<sup>2</sup> List included in three-page anonymous history of Assumption Parish, written around 1930. Indianapolis Archdiocesan Archives (hereafter cited as IAA).  
<sup>3</sup> Charles Blanchard, ed., *History of the Catholic Church in Indiana* (Logansport: A. W. Bowen & Co., 1898), II, 82.  
<sup>4</sup> *Catholic Record*, 18 April 1889, 4.  
<sup>5</sup> Priests' personnel file. IAA.  
<sup>6</sup> Anonymous history, Assumption. IAA.  
<sup>7</sup> Names checked in the *City Directory* for 1894 and in Blanchard, II.  
<sup>8</sup> *Catholic Record*, 15 March 1894, 8.  
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 August 1894, 8.

## When Assumption Church was dedicated

<sup>1</sup> *Catholic Record*, 16 August 1894, 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Michael D. Friesen, "The Prante Organbuilding Family," *The Tracker*, July 1993, 8-17.

<sup>3</sup> Blanchard, I, 303. The pastor's sister, Ida Weber, married Rink's brother Charles at Assumption Church in May 1901. See Parish marriage record and *Indianapolis News*, 7 June 1932, 7. For Brennan, see *Indiana Sentinel's* 1891 publication, *Indianapolis and Its Resources*, 80, and *Indianapolis Star*, 18 September 1935, 12.

## Where the name "Assumption" comes from

<sup>1</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, II, 6.  
<sup>2</sup> *Catholic Record*, 25 January 1894, 8, and 8 February 1894, 5.  
<sup>3</sup> Encyclical *Munificentissimus Deus*. For further discussion, see Emil Neubert, *Mary in Doctrine* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1954), 238-43; Paul E. Duggan, *The Assumption Dogma* (Dayton, Ohio: International Marian Research Institute, 1989), 23-34; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, II, 6; and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, I, 971; IV, 1017; IX, 210-11.

## How Father Weber financed construction of rectory and school

<sup>1</sup> For Frank Weber's obituary, see *Indianapolis News*, 29 June 1898, 7; and *Indianapolis Taglicher Telegraph*, 29 June 1898, 4.  
<sup>2</sup> Anonymous history, Assumption. IAA.  
<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Mother Scholastica on 5 June 1895, Father Weber informed her that he had obtained Father Eberhard's support and Bishop Chatard's approval for the Benedictine-run and financed school at Assumption. IAA.  
<sup>4</sup> Weber to Mother Scholastica, 20 June 1895. IAA.  
<sup>5</sup> Bids and costs in D. A. Bohlen & Son, Architects, to Mother Scholastica, 20 July 1895. IAA. William P. Jungclaus Co., 317 Massachusetts Avenue, was the general contractor.

## Why the parish grew

<sup>1</sup> Architectural drawings in the Bohlen collection of the Indiana Historical Society Library (hereafter cited as IHSL).  
<sup>2</sup> Assumption parish real estate folder. BOAI. On how to record the deed, see Sister Augustine to Mother Prioress, 11 September 1896. IAA.  
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* J. C. Gault assured Mother Scholastica in a letter on 15 April 1909 that he "will save you all I can in the building." Assumption file, Monastery Immaculate Conception Archives, Ferdinand (hereafter cited as MICA).  
<sup>4</sup> *Nordyke & Marmon Company: An Institution*, 20-22, 28-29. This company pamphlet, published in 1920, can be found in IHSL.  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43, 53-54.  
<sup>6</sup> Margaret Wolfer, "Social History of the 'West Indianapolis' Section of Indianapolis, Indiana," typescript in IHSL, 2.  
<sup>7</sup> John Kervan (1822-88), Irish-born Decatur township farmer, donated land at Valley Mills for a church. Blanchard, II, 820. For baptisms, marriages, and burials from the St. John the Baptist mission between 1888 and 1897, see Valley Mills folder, IAA.



### When Assumption parishioners nearly disappeared under water

- <sup>1</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 27 March 1913, 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Hal P. Bybee and Clyde A. Malott, "The Flood of 1913 in the Lower White River Region of Indiana," *Indiana University Studies*, 22 (October 1914), 126.
- <sup>3</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 25 March 1913, 12. Normal river level was around four feet. *Ibid.*, 13. A United States Department of Agriculture publication reported that the crest was 19.5 feet on 1 April 1904 and 25.7 feet on 25 March 1913. C. E. Norquest, "Flood in the White River of Indiana, March, 1913," Alfred J. Henry, *The Floods of 1913* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 72.
- <sup>4</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 30 March 1913, 23.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 March 1913, 3.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 March 1913, 1; 31 March 1913, 10.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 11; 29 March 1913, 19.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 April 1913, 1.

### When war came to Assumption parishioners

- <sup>1</sup> *Yearbook of the Diocese of Indianapolis 1919*, 48.

### When Assumption Parish was identified with West Indianapolis

- <sup>1</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 12 June 1914, 12.
- <sup>2</sup> *West Side Herald*, 9 February 1895, 1.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 August 1896, 8.
- <sup>4</sup> *Indianapolis News*, 18 July 1921, 1, 3.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 2 August 1922, 1, 10.
- <sup>7</sup> *Indianapolis News*, 13 October 1922, 1, 10.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

### When the Ku Klux Klan was welcome in West Indianapolis

- <sup>1</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 31 March 1913, 5. For similar praise in the church press, see *Catholic Columbian-Record*, 25 April 1913, 1.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 June 1914, 12.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* and *Indianapolis Evening Sun*, 16 June 1914, 3. Roell's first name is reported as William in both newspaper accounts.
- <sup>4</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-30* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 152.
- <sup>5</sup> See Stanley Warren, "The Other Side of Hoosier Hysteria: Segregation, Sports, and the IHSAA," *Black History News & Notes*, November 1993. This situation ended in 1942.
- <sup>6</sup> For the St. Anthony incident, see *Tolerance*, 2 September 1923, 5, and editorial in *Indiana Catholic and Record*, 20 July 1923, 4. Catholic opinion was that the Klan would save its own. The assailant pleaded not guilty to a charge of assault and battery with intent to murder and was found not guilty. Marion County Criminal Court order book 71, case 55966, p. 66. For the St. Vincent fire, see Bette Lux, *Church of St. Vincent, Prescott, Indiana, 1837-1982: a Bit of History*, 10.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 March 1923, 1.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 August 1923, 8.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 September 1923, 8.
- <sup>10</sup> *Fiery Cross*, 20 July 1923, 1.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1924, 1.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 May 1924, 1.
- <sup>13</sup> *Tolerance*, 1 July 1923, 3. For the favorable editorial, see *Indianapolis News*, 19 June 1923, 6.
- <sup>14</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 25 July 1923, 1.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 July 1923, 1, 2; *Indianapolis News*, 11 July 1923, 3.

### How parishioners spent their time

- <sup>1</sup> *Indianapolis News*, 23 December 1909, 4. Other significant articles on Rhodius are *ibid.*, 20 December 1909, 1, 4, and 13 May 1912, 15; *Indianapolis Times*, 18 February 1962, 6.
- <sup>2</sup> Assumption parish report for 1922. IAA.
- <sup>3</sup> Newspaper clipping, undated but probably from January or February 1934, entitled "Testimony Forbidden" with Weber's photo, in Marjorie

Freeman Butcher's scrapbook in the possession of her daughter Marjorie McHugh.

### Who staffed Assumption School during the Weber pastorate

- <sup>1</sup> List provided by Benedictine archivist Sr. Mary Kenneth Scheessele assisted by Sr. Jan Youart, O.S.B., to author, 9 July 1993. MICA.

### What Father Griffin thought of Assumption Parish

- <sup>1</sup> *Indianapolis Times*, 15 July 1935, 1; *Indiana Catholic*, 19 July 1935, 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Priests' personnel file. IAA.

### How parishioners coped with depression and war

- <sup>1</sup> G. N. Georgano, ed., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Motorcars 1885 to the Present* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1968), 365.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.
- <sup>3</sup> Assumption parish reports for 1922, 1930, and 1940. IAA.
- <sup>4</sup> *Indianapolis Times*, 11 November 1937, 1; *Indianapolis Star*, 4 December 1938, 17.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 December 1938, 11.
- <sup>6</sup> *Military Personnel from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis: The Chancery office, 1945), 12, corrected by crosschecking names against a framed list which hung in Assumption Church in 1969.

### Who staffed Assumption School during the Griffin pastorate

- <sup>1</sup> List by Scheessele and Youart. MICA.
- <sup>2</sup> Chartrand to Mother Seraphine, 3 October 1923. MICA.
- <sup>3</sup> See City Council resolution #43693, 9 July 1939, Town lot record 1024. The northern 25 feet was sold by Ritter to John E. and Rose A. Callahan, 9 March 1942. Assumption parish real estate folder. BOAI.
- <sup>4</sup> Preparing appraisals of the value of the school were John W. Roberts to Sr. Salesia, 5 February 1954, and Charles M. Brown to Mother M. Clarissa, no date. Assumption parish real estate folder. BOAI. Also see Sr. M. Frederica Dudine, *Castle on the Hill: Centennial History of the Convent of the Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Indiana 1867-1967* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1967), 41, 145, and 229.

### How Father Griffin dealt with fire and finance

- <sup>1</sup> Fred W. Fries wrote an article for the *Criterion* entitled "Chaplain's badge earmarked for Firefighters' Museum" after Father Griffin's death.

### How West Indianapolis changed after 1960

- <sup>1</sup> James Hetherington, "West Indianapolis: friendly neighbors are nestled among industrial giants," *Indianapolis Times*, 18 February 1962, 6.
- <sup>2</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 17 November 1962, 30.
- <sup>3</sup> *Indianapolis News*, 26 January 1957, 14; *Indianapolis Star*, 27 September 1988, section C, p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 April 1982, 3F; *Indianapolis News*, 31 May 1982, 25.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 August 1990, A-1.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 October 1990, D-1.
- <sup>7</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 25 January 1942, part 4, p. 15. For an inadequate obituary of Rigg, see *Indianapolis News*, 19 June 1971, 19.

### When Vatican II and clergy shortage affected Assumption Parish

- <sup>1</sup> A recent check of their whereabouts today in the St. Meinrad Seminary Alumni Directory reveals that they are a government information officer in Washington, a Baltimore police official, a sales manager in Florida, a real estate manager in Indianapolis, and a director of staff working with disabled in Buffalo.
- <sup>2</sup> Griffin farewell in *Assumption Parish Bulletin* (hereafter APB), 14 May 1961.
- <sup>3</sup> *Criterion*, 4 May 1962, 1, 9.
- <sup>4</sup> McLoughlin's baptismal certificate confirms his birth date given here, not 6 September 1906 as reported on his memorial card. Priests' personnel file. IAA.
- <sup>5</sup> *Criterion*, 3 October 1969, 1.

- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 November 1962, 12.
- <sup>7</sup> APB, 14 July 1968.
- <sup>8</sup> *Criterion*, 25 October 1968, 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Dhondt was ordained for the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana on 24 May 1969. Well-liked at Assumption, parishioners scheduled a reception in his honor soon after his ordination.
- <sup>10</sup> Reine farewell in APB.
- <sup>11</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 24 September 1977, 21.
- <sup>12</sup> These two paragraphs based on *Parish Council minutes*, 21 April and 20 October 1974; 19 January, 16 February, 20 April, and 15 June 1975. For the Millers, see *Indianapolis News*, 21 August 1976, 7.
- <sup>13</sup> APB, 1 July 1979.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 October 1980.
- <sup>15</sup> *Criterion*, 15 May 1981, 3.

### How Vatican II affected religious education at Assumption Parish

- <sup>1</sup> List by Scheessele and Youart. MICA. Also list of 1956-70 appointments by Sr. Mary Seghers, O.S.B., Our Lady of Grace archivist.
- <sup>2</sup> Parish report attached to APB, 23 September 1990.
- <sup>3</sup> O'Brien to Assumption parents, 12 March 1975, copy in Mick scrapbook.
- <sup>4</sup> Leases and agreements; letter from Melvin J. Jackson to Harry Dearing, 16 October 1981, all in the Assumption parish real estate folder. BOAI. Also *Parish Council minutes*, 9 June, 7 July, 4 August, and 29 September 1974.
- <sup>5</sup> Two deeds, O'Meara to Robert L. and Norma J. Soots, 6 October 1987, and O'Meara to Continental Lumber Company, 29 March 1988. Assumption parish real estate folder. BOAI. Also APB, 17 January 1988.
- <sup>6</sup> *Indianapolis News*, 19 May 1988, D-7.

### How Assumption Parish fares under the Ryan administration

- <sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Mohrhaus to Msgr. Joseph Brokhage and Members of the Personnel Board, 29 January 1979. IAA.
- <sup>2</sup> Mrs. John P. Mick to Catholic Communications Center, 7 April 1980, in Mick scrapbook.
- <sup>3</sup> Archdeacon James B. Ellison, 1805 W. Howard, to Archdiocese, 11 April 1981, and Harry Dearing to Ellison, 15 May 1981. Assumption parish real estate folder. BOAI.
- <sup>4</sup> *Criterion*, 21 May 1982, 12.
- <sup>5</sup> For Father O'Brien's earlier concern over the Prante organ, see David Mannweiler, "Organ Gathering Dust Needs the Right Touch," *Indianapolis News*, 19 February 1974, 21. For developments during the Ryan administration, see *Criterion*, 21 May 1982, 12; 26 August 1983, 2; APB, 19 August 1990.
- <sup>6</sup> APB, 3 December 1989.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 August 1991.

- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 April 1985.
- <sup>9</sup> For notices of these services, see *ibid.*, 31 October 1982, 18 November 1984, 31 March and 24 November 1985, and 28 February 1993.
- <sup>10</sup> Parish report attached to *ibid.*, 23 September 1990.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 December 1991.
- <sup>12</sup> Carol Elrod, "Archdiocesan plan could close at least 6 parishes in city," *Indianapolis Star*, 26 September 1991, 1; *Indianapolis News*, 24 February 1992, A-1 and A-6.
- <sup>13</sup> The committee recommended that parishioners attend St. John's from which Assumption had been detached in 1894. It is located in the central business district 2.8 miles away, has limited parking, and serves primarily visitors, office workers and shoppers. St. Anthony Church is 2.4 miles away by way of Wilkins, Belmont, Oliver, and Warman.
- <sup>14</sup> *Criterion*, 4 September 1992, 5.
- <sup>15</sup> APB, 24 May 1992.
- <sup>16</sup> Gregory Weaver, "Archbishop's plan for future fails to address church closings," *Indianapolis Star*, 9 September 1993, A-1.
- <sup>17</sup> *Criterion*, 17 September 1993, 2.

### Whither the future

- <sup>1</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 9 September 1993, A-2.
- <sup>2</sup> Among these studies are WINC's "West Indianapolis Neighborhood Congress Subarea Plan" (September 1979) and the Department of Metropolitan Planning reports entitled "WINC Subarea Data Inventory" (October 1974) and "West Indianapolis/Harding Street Neighborhood Plan" (April 1992).
- <sup>3</sup> *Indianapolis News*, 18 March 1943, part 2, p. 1; 10 November 1992, D-3; and *Indianapolis Star*, 1 August 1993, A-12.

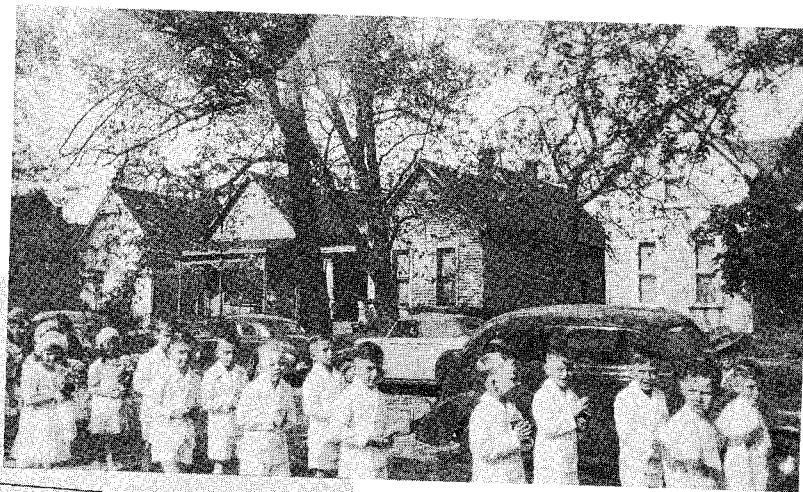
### Epilogue

- <sup>1</sup> *Criterion*, 25 February 1994, 1.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>3</sup> "Accountability Report 1993," *ibid.*, 14 January 1994, 13.
- <sup>4</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 9 September 1993, A-2.
- <sup>5</sup> *Criterion*, 4 February 1994, 1.
- <sup>6</sup> Logical deduction from goals 4 and 5, "Strategic Plan for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis," *ibid.*, 10 September 1993, 15-16.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 February 1994, 1.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> In a letter to the author on 12 March 1994, Father Bede wrote out his remarks to complete the author's notes on the occasion.
- <sup>12</sup> For feature articles on the Assumption closing, see Scott L. Miley, "Members of church keep the faith in face of promised closing," *Indianapolis Star*, 22 April 1994, B-1; and Judith Cebula, "Life goes on at dying Assumption," *Indianapolis News*, 22 April 1994, B-1.

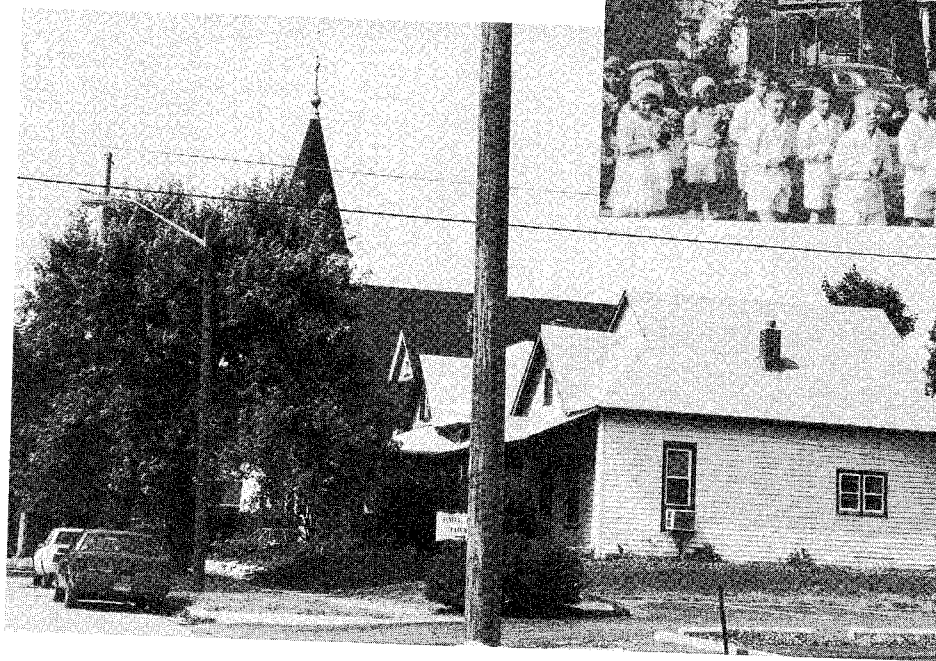


Assumption Parish charter members Anthony J. and Catherine Foltz and their children: (standing) Martha, Mayme, Laura, Anna, and Caroline; (sitting) Ben (left) and David (right). Anthony helped haul the original pews and contributed to the purchase of the church bell and various furnishings.

### THEN AND NOW . . .



First Communicants and our neighborhood in Father Griffin's day (above). The view north from Morris Street in summer 1993 (left).



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Sometime in the last 30 years, much of the historical documentation and old sacristy goods of Assumption parish were dispersed or trashed. No account book or traditional chalice has been located in rectory or church, although some ancient photographs and press clippings obtained from former parishioners have been placed in a rectory file. Baptismal and marriage records, as required by canon law, are extant, but no death records exist before 1935. When an anonymous history of parish origins was written, presumably by Father John Riedinger around 1930, his factual data shows that account books and parishioner lists existed. At the time I wrote the diamond jubilee history (1969), framed lists of World War II veterans existed. Parish sources of Assumption history have apparently been destroyed by unaware clergy, zealous housekeepers, and/or post-Vatican II enthusiasts.

Two pastors and seven assistant and parttime clergy who remain priests and ministered to Assumption parishioners before 1981 are still living in early 1994. All of them received a letter asking for their parish memories in writing or by phone call. Only one, an assistant, responded by writing a note at the bottom of my letter. He declined to provide information because what he could tell me was "not fit to print" because of Father Griffin's bizarre personality.

Fortunately, parishioners preserved memories in mind and in photographs, and some saved Sunday bulletins and minutes of meetings. They are indispensable. The ones collected for me to consult were:

#### *Assumption Parish Bulletin*

31 March 1963, 7 February 1965, 7 August 1966, 27 August to 10 December 1967 passim, 14 July 1968, 26 May 1973, 25 June 1978, 10 December 1978 to 8 August 1993 passim.

#### *Parish Council minutes*

April 1974 to September 1975, 18 April to 20 June 1978, 10 October 1984 to 9 July 1986 passim.

#### *Rosary and Altar Society minutes*

13 September 1982 to 3 January 1983.

Pastors' annual reports to the Chancery before 1957 are filed in the Archdiocesan Archives. The first Assumption report was submitted in 1906, but the 1907 and 1923 reports are missing. Apparently the Chancery did not receive reports from any pastor for 1924 to 1928. The Chancery retains reports submitted since 1958. A file on Assumption parochial matters was maintained in the Chancery vault when I conducted research; but since Father Jack W. Porter became archivist all such files have been consolidated with parish files in the Archives. Real estate and legal papers are found in the Archdiocesan business office.

The archives of the Ferdinand and Beech Grove Benedictines provided assignment lists and other relevant material as shown in the endnotes. The list of sisters' assignments varies from the list in my 1969 parish history because housekeepers and resigned sisters were included in the recent corrected list.

Parishioners also made available scrapbooks containing various newspaper articles and advertisements which reported parish activities in the *Westside Enterprise* between April 1979 and June 1993.

The staffs of the Indiana Historical Society Library, the Indiana State Library, and the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library directed me to appropriate historical photographs, directories, and clipping files in their collections. Scholarly studies and standard reference sources are listed in the endnotes. Stineman and Porter's necrology entitled *Catholic Clergy in Indiana* was very useful. Catholic Cemeteries Association personnel provided me with other death date and grave site information. Lastly, I thank Jack Fink and the *Criterion* staff for graciously permitting me to borrow microfilm of diocesan newspapers.



## PRAY TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR PEACE!

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.  
 Blessed art thou amongst women  
 and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.  
 Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
 pray for us sinners now  
 and at the hour of our death.  
 Amen.

*The Mick Family*  
 John II, Laureen, John III, Elizabeth, Angela, Catherine

## In Grateful Memory to Assumption Church and School

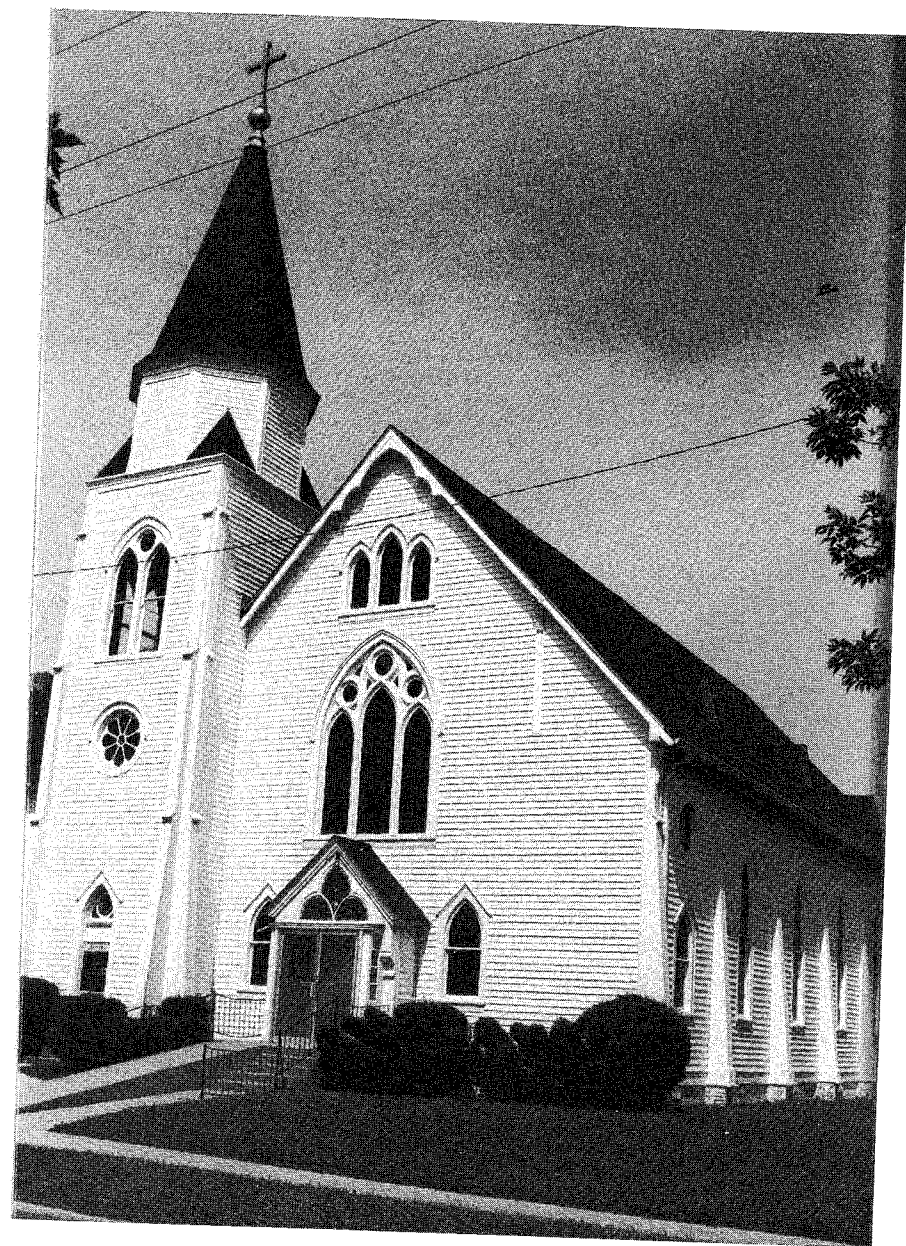
*The William J. Mick Family*  
 (William, Brenda, Caitlin, and Stacy Mick)

## CONTRIBUTORS

of information through writing, research, interview, translation, providing leads and scrapbooks, saving Sunday bulletins, submitting photographs and maps, and checking records.

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 Rev. Francis E. Bryan  
 Sr. Marie Pierre Buttell, O.S.F.  
 Hal P. Bybee  
 Rev. Simeon Daly, O.S.B.  
 Larry and Judy Dennin  
 Rev. Joseph W. Dooley  
 Msgr. John J. Doyle  
 Sr. Frederica Dudine, O.S.B.  
 Paul E. Duggan  
 Jacob Piatt Dunn  
 Rev. Frederick C. Easton  
 Charlotte R. Evans  
 Sr. Margaret Flynn, D.C.  
 Nellie Fogarty  
 Paul G. Fox  
 Fred W. Fries  
 Michael D. Friesen  
 Dave Gaughan  
 G. N. Georgano  
 Rosie Porten Griffin  
 Lois Claus Gutzwiller  
 E. Hanley  
 James Hetherington  
 Elaine Kohn Huff  
 Kenneth T. Jackson  
 Sr. Mary Eileen Kelly, S.P.  
 Edith Goedeker Kempe  
 Pauline Kemper  
 Evelyn Mueller King  
 Nelson A. Locke  
 Joseph E. McAndrews  
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 Marjorie McHugh

Marjorie Butcher McHugh  
 Dunstan McNichol  
 Lilian Mahan  
 Helen Fitzgibbons Mahan  
 Clyde A. Malott  
 Dolores Mick  
 Claude and Alberta Kuze Miller  
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 Margaret Nelson  
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 C. E. Norquest  
 Marie Padgett  
 Rev. Bede Steven Peay, O.S.B.  
 Rev. Jack W. Porter  
 Msgr. Francis J. Reine  
 Rev. John T. Ryan  
 Rev. Joseph F. Schaedel  
 Sr. Mary Kenneth Scheessele, O.S.B.  
 Charles J. Schisla  
 Rob Schneider  
 Sr. Mary Seghers, O.S.B.  
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 Rev. William F. Stineman  
 Charlotte Padgett Sweet  
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*Assumption Church in its centennial year. Within your walls our faith community made Jesus present in West Indianapolis.*

## PARISH ROSTER 15 MARCH 1994

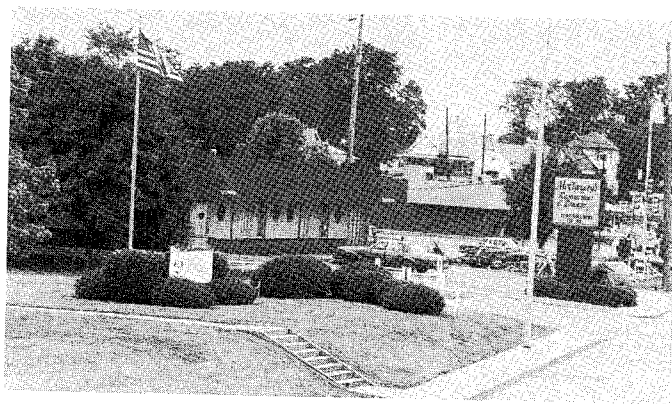
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 Stacy  
 Brian  
 Maria Alejos Rodolfo  
 Jack and Mary Allard  
 Marci Allard  
 Mendee Allard  
 Michele Allard  
 Megan  
 Sandra Anderson  
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 Robert and Donna Ashcraft  
 Lisa  
 James and Julie Bault  
 Sean  
 Stephanie  
 John Bault  
 Joann Bault  
 Luke  
 Richard and Natalie Bault  
 Andrew  
 Zachary  
 William and Margaret Beineke  
 Charles and Janet Blake  
 Joseph and Mary Boarman  
 Robert and Tamara Bridgewater  
 Mary Ann  
 Samantha  
 Berneice Bruce  
 Carrie Bruce  
 Dennis Bruce  
 Frank  
 Kevin Bruce  
 Sara  
 Michael Bruce  
 Timothy and Judy Bruce  
 Cortney  
 Clayton and Gladys Carroll  
 Joann Coffin

Brenda Coffin  
 Jennifer  
 Olga Compton  
 Jessica  
 Margaret Crawford  
 Mary Crider  
 Danny  
 Katherine Cummings  
 Monica Davis  
 Ricardo and Marki Delgado  
 Maria  
 Sarah  
 Sonja  
 Robert Dorney  
 Sophie Dowling  
 Nellie Fogarty  
 Dorothea Ford  
 Carleton and Jerry Froedge  
 Cecil George  
 Joan Gootee  
 Bradley  
 Darrell and Thecla Gossett  
 Carle Rae  
 Megan  
 Katrina  
 Mindy  
 Clark and Rosalyn Griffin  
 Donald Hahn  
 John Hahn  
 Evelyn Hanley  
 Regina Hanley  
 Richard Hanley  
 Robert Hawkins  
 William and Catherine Hickman  
 Robert Hickman  
 Jan Hubbard  
 Julie  
 Jill  
 John



Shirley Jennison  
 Timothy Jennison  
 Iris and Betty Kelly  
 Myron and Marcella Kerr  
 David and Caroline King  
   Megan  
 Joan King  
   Bridget  
   Emily  
   Teresa  
 Joseph King  
   Daniel  
   Monica  
 Dolores King  
 Maureen King  
 Stephen and Deane Lampert  
   Stephen Jones  
   David  
   Lisa  
   Brian  
 Sam and Bonnie LaRussa  
 Lorraine Locke  
   Desiree  
   Derek  
   Damon  
   Tasmara  
   James  
 Terrill and Mary Loftus  
   Jennifer  
   Jason  
 Frances Lowe  
 William J. and Mary Ann Masner  
 Josef Merz  
 Dolores Mick  
 Velia Montes  
   Melissa  
 Isabel Montes  
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 Geneva Muse  
 Timothy McCarthy  
 Woodrow McCoy  
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 Peggy McElfresh  
 Bryan McHugh  
 Kevin McHugh  
 Marjorie McHugh  
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   Sean  
   Gregory  
 Michael McHugh Jr.  
 Patrick McHugh

Timothy and Billie McHugh  
   Loren  
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 Don McKool  
 Biss and Geneva Napoleon  
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 Therese Squires  
 Melvin and Hilda Staley  
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 Joseph and Evelyn Stout  
 Lillian Strong  
   Edward  
   Leroy  
 Charlotte Sweet



McClarney's Restaurant in June 1993. Closed in fall and demolished in spring 1994. A favorite eatery of parishioners, who will long remember its fried chicken and pies home-style.

Grace Terry  
 Amelia Titsworth  
   Kaylee Ann  
 Gregory and Kathleen Totton  
   Rebecca  
   Eric  
 Lorena Totton  
 Mary Trackwell  
 Mary Jo Turner  
 Billie Turner  
   Joseph  
   William  
 Lorraine VanArsdale  
 Susie Waltz  
   Shawn

Thomas and Josephine Whitlow  
 Mayme Willoughby  
 Tina Willoughby  
   Patty  
 Millard Wills  
 Robert Wills  
 Robin Wilson  
 Andrea Wolsifer  
   Roderick  
 Michael and Nancy Wurz  
   Renda Staten  
   Terri  
   Annah

### SCHOLARS BEYOND PARISH BOUNDARIES

Many Assumption School graduates moved from W.I. when vocational opportunities or improved economic status permitted the change.

Henry G. Backer (1898-1984), son of German immigrants, attended Assumption School, Ben Davis High School, and Indiana University. He graduated from Indiana University Medical School with honors (1924), and interned at Methodist Hospital. Then Mother Seraphine Kordes, O.S.B., who had taught the young doctor as an eighth-grader at Assumption School, prevailed upon him to establish his practice in Ferdinand, Indiana. Every Friday afternoon he drove up to the Motherhouse to visit the sick and infirm sisters, whom he treated gratis. He always carried home several loaves of convent-baked bread, never wasted because he and his wife Frances parented twelve children. Available to patients both day and night in a wide area around Ferdinand, he ordinarily was paid with fruit, vegetables, or livestock. He delivered 3,500 babies between 1925 and 1959.<sup>1</sup>

Josefa McAndrews, a graduate of Assumption School and St. Mary's Academy, volunteered to work for one year as a lay missionary in Alaska (1964). There she met and married correctional officer Paul Beaudreault and raised eleven children. She also worked as a librarian, graduated from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks (1984), and was president of the Fairbanks Right-to-Life. When she died at age 53, her niece Angela Stroud arranged for a speaker phone hookup between St. Nicholas Church outside Fairbanks and Assumption Church. At 10 p.m., on 23 October 1991, 40 mourners gathered at Assumption to attend the Alaska funeral Mass by joining in the prayers and singing the hymns. At the proper time Sister Monica distributed communion to the congregation, a spiritual family togetherness made possible through modern technology.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Backer and Mrs. Beaudreault are only two examples of the many Assumption pupils who contributed to their families, workplaces, professions, and Church. Graduates, we are proud of all of you.

<sup>1</sup> Sr. M. Frederica Dudine, *Castle on the Hill*, 230; also *Ferdinand, Indiana: A Sesquicentennial History*, 9, 66, 135-36.

<sup>2</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, 29 July 1979, section 5, p. 1; and 9 November 1991, D-8.

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