

# 143

# 50th Anniversary

of

St. Michael's  
Church



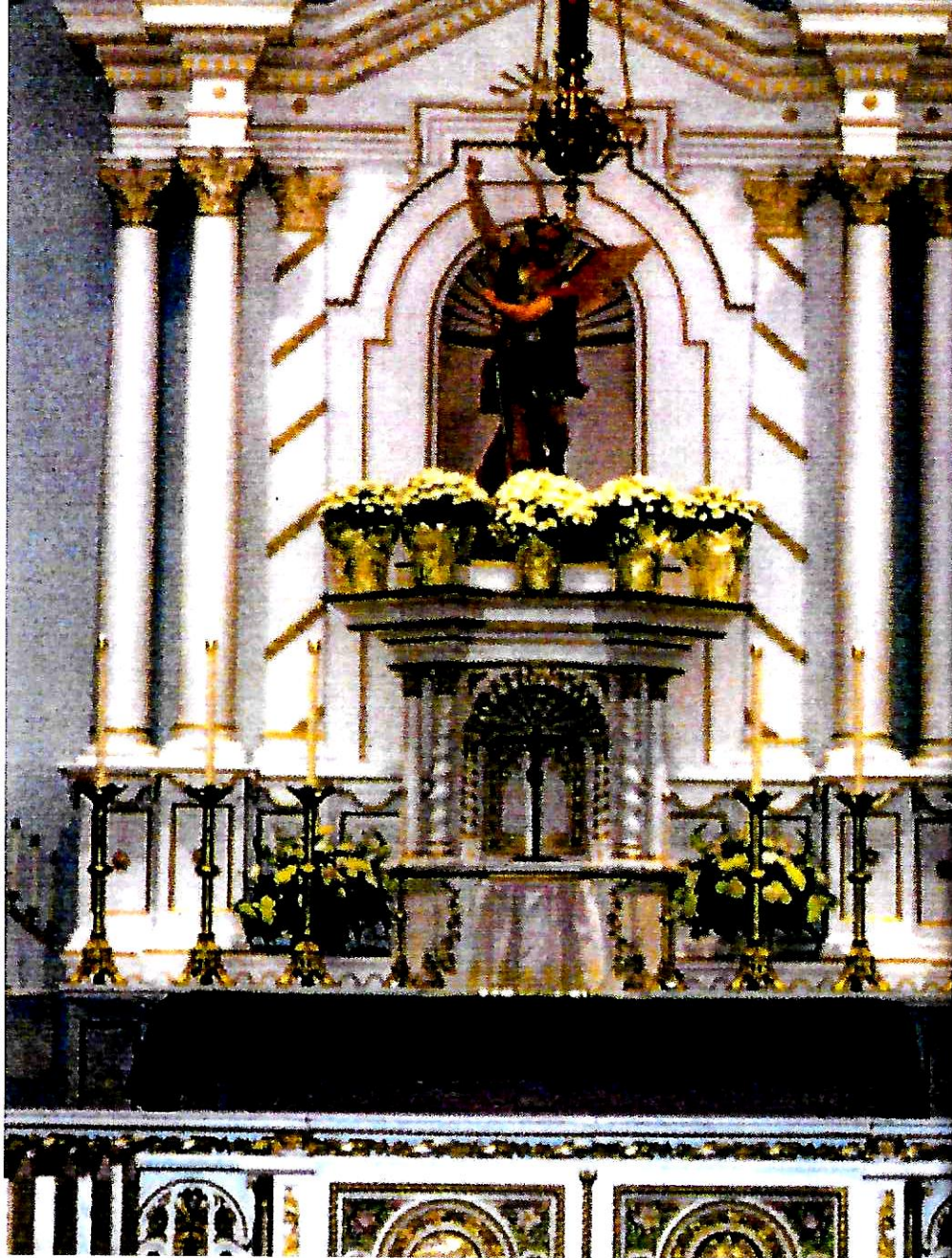
Commemoration of the  
**50th Anniversary**

of  
**St. Michael's Church**

DePere, WI







*The oldest independently operated Traditional Catholic Chapel in the United States is celebrating its Golden Anniversary on April 5, 2020!*

## **How did all this happen?**

Vatican II, which was a pastoral, ecumenical council, opened in Rome by Pope John XXIII. It lasted from 1963-1965. In the aftermath of this Council, changes were being made in the Church which were not keeping to the traditions of the Catholic Church, the one true church, founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ, which will last until the end of time.

On the following pages of this booklet you will learn the beginning history of St. Michael's. Memories of some families of the early founders, pictures of ceremonies and events, and listing of priests served as pastors.



*Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beemster are considered to be founders of St. Michael's.*

*"I have loved, Oh Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth".*

-- The Lavabo



*The priests who were at St. Michael's  
during these 50 years.*

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre  
Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais  
Bishop Bernard Fellay  
Father Beran  
Father Lawrence Brey  
Father Stanley Wasylik  
Father Louis Vezelis  
Father Francis Nugent  
Father Stephen Nogay  
Father Edward Bujarski  
Father Oscar LaPlante  
Father Conrad Altenbach  
Father Francis Hannifin  
Father Thomas Fouhy  
Father Simon Menezes  
Father Hector Bolduc  
Father Terence Finnegan  
Father Joseph Collins  
Father Eugene Barry  
Father de la Tour  
Father Philip Stark  
Father Lucian Pulvermacher  
Father Carl Pulvermacher  
Father D. Elias  
Father Mathias  
Father Michael Soosiah  
Father Francis D'Silva  
Father Christy D'Cruz  
Father Roger Sullivan  
Father C. Keyes  
Father Paul Francis  
Father Denis Lawrence  
Father Timothy McDonnell  
Father Gregory Hesse  
Father Ricardo Gonzalez  
Father Sergius-Maria Demartina  
Brother John Fox  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Sister Sabinus, O.P.  
Sister Mary Antonina, O.P.  
Sister Rita Lawrence, C.S.J.  
\*\*\*\*\*

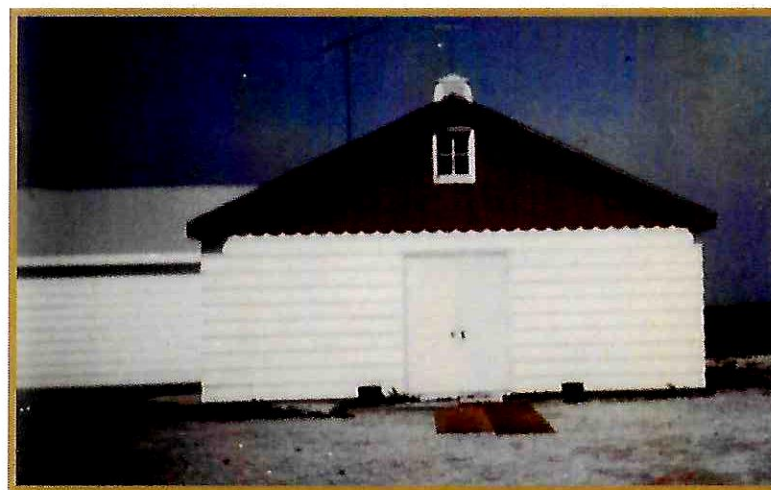
Father Pierre Duverger  
Father Daniel Themann

Father Thomas Asher  
Father James Peek  
Father Patrick Abbet  
Father Michael Goshie  
Father Joseph Wood  
Father Kenneth Dean  
Father Steven Reuter  
Father Rostand  
Father Steven McDonald  
Father Laurence Desautard  
Father Chavarrie  
Father Scott Graves  
Father Hugues Pierre Berge  
Father Thomas Hufford  
Father Daniel Dailey  
Father Joseph Haynos  
Father John Brucciani  
Father Todd Anderson  
Father Alphonsus Maria  
Father Matthew O.S.B.  
Father Frank Riccomini  
Father Gerald Beck  
Father Adam Portugal  
Father Jamey Rigi  
Father James Trummer  
Father Jurgen Wegner  
Father Timothy Sick  
Father Michael Goldade  
Father John Bourdeau  
Father Christopher Polley  
Father Richard Brueggemann  
Father Mark Staffki  
Father Andrew Dwyer  
Father John McFarland  
Father Steven Soos  
Father James Haynos  
Father Michael Harber  
Father Jonathan Kopec  
Father Nicholas McManus  
Father Thomas Buschmann  
Father Charles Ward  
Father John Young

*Remodeling of the old garage  
as the parish grew*



*First Chapel Building – 1972*



*Chapel in 1975 after a mother's room, confessional  
and larger sacristy were added.*





*A picture taken in 1987.*



*A picture of a large addition to the north, which was completed in 1992.*

As the news of a Traditional Mass Chapel in the Green Bay area grew, the 1992 building became too small and two Masses were offered each Sunday. A low Mass was celebrated at 6:30 a.m. and the high Mass at 8:30 a.m. These times remain the same today. A beautiful choir always sings at the high Mass.

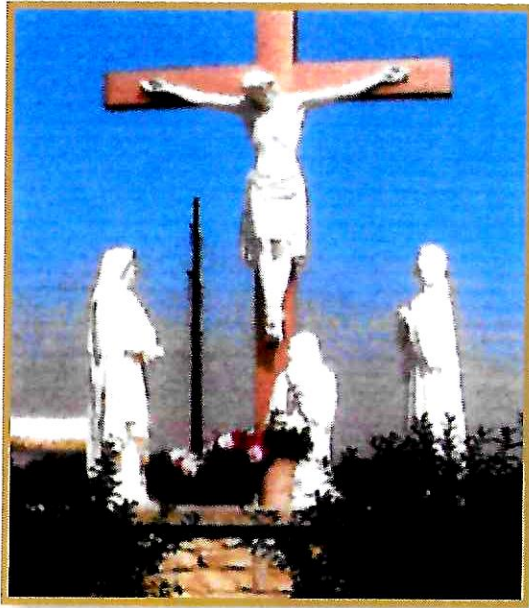


*On December 8, 1998, a cornerstone for a new church building was blessed.*

Many parishioners came forth with their God given talents and in less than one year, on September 29, 1999, the new church was dedicated!







A cemetery was established on the parish grounds in 2004.

In 2016, the old church was converted into classrooms for catechism classes. Mrs. Beemster began a catechism program in 1979, which is continued to this day.



In the fall of 2019, Our Lady of Good Success Academy opened its doors.

*Over the past 50 Years at St. Michael's there have been:*

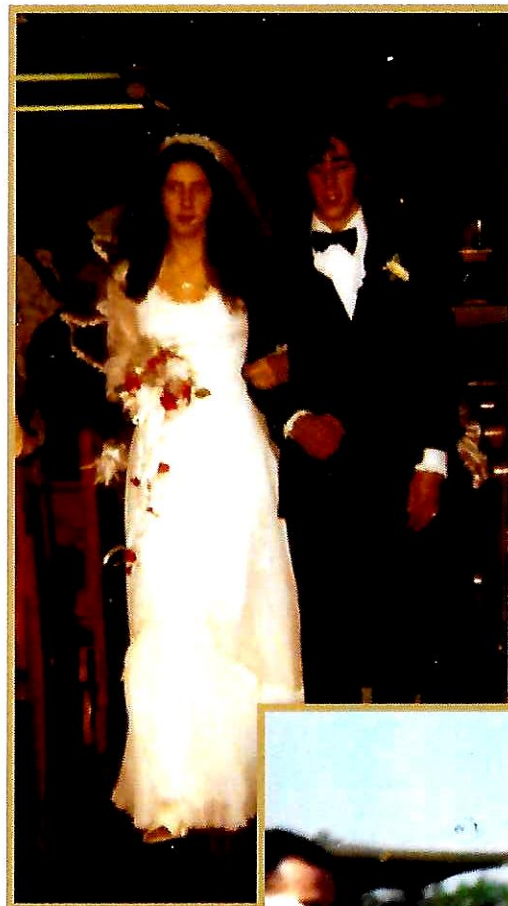


674  
Baptisms

412  
First Communions







145  
Weddings

581  
Confirmations



## 2 Religious Vocations



Fr. Timothy McDonnell

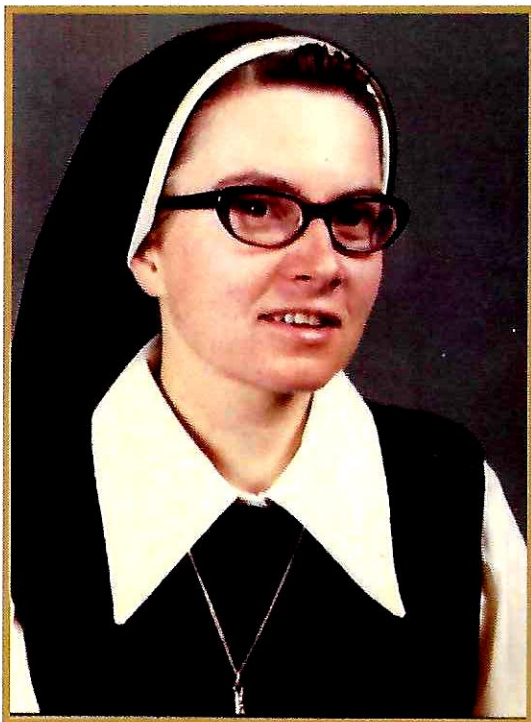


Fr. James Ullmer OSB



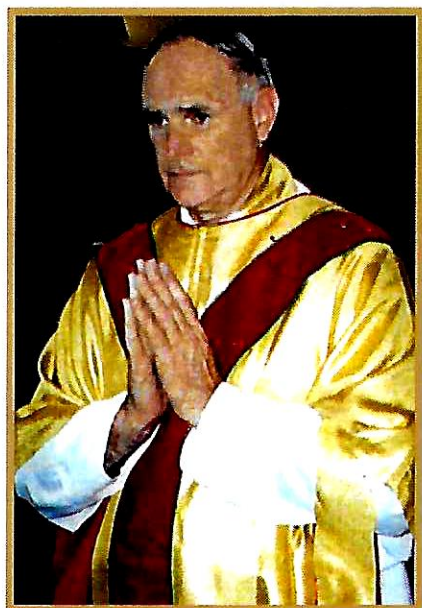
121  
Funerals





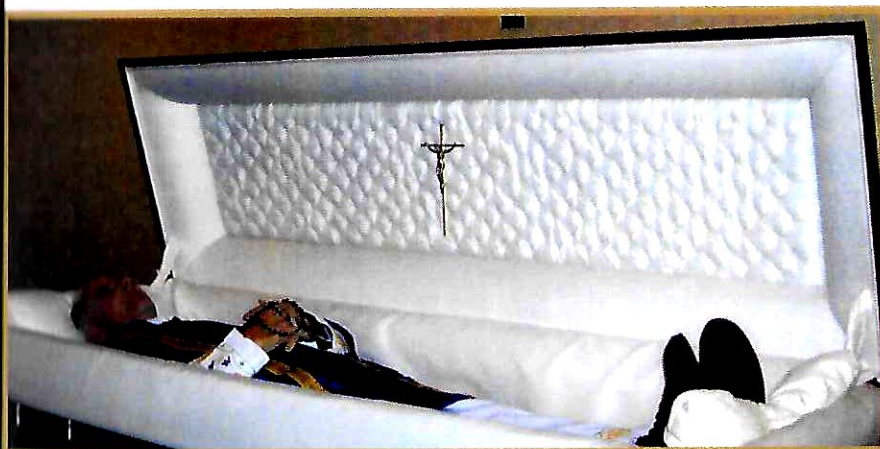
*Sister Rita Lawrence*

Sister Rita Lawrence moved back to Wisconsin to live with her mother, Mrs. Laverne Seliseen, when she couldn't accept the new changes that were being introduced in her convent after Vatican II. She was our choir director, catechism teacher, sacristan, flower arranger, and held many other job titles which made St. Michael's run smoothly from 1984 until her death on July 12, 2008.



*Father Bolduc*

Father Bolduc passed away on September 10, 2012, after being our priest for about 29 years. Since then St. Michael's Church has been a mission chapel of the Society of St. Pius X. Dedicated Society priests fly or drive to St. Michael's every weekend for a Saturday Mass and two Sunday Masses. Besides giving us the Sacraments, they are here on Holy Days, First Friday and First Saturday Masses, for baptisms, weddings, and funerals.



*Fr. Bolduc lying in state.*



*The Requiem Mass for Fr. Bolduc at St. Michael's Church with Fr. Finnegan-main celebrant, Fr. Cyprian and Fr. Elias assisting.*



Father Bolduc was very proud of America and served his country in the U.S. Army with a tour in Germany. He was also a member of several veteran organizations.



*Folding of the flag by the U.S. Army at St. Michael's – a very solemn ceremony.*

*After folding the flag, a 21-gun salute is given in honor of the deceased veteran.*



# *Memories*



*Presenting the U.S. flag to the Bolduc family before Father Bolduc's body was laid to rest in New Hampshire.*



## Early history of St. Michael's Chapel

by Mary Jo (Selissen) Gerrits



Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Selissen

We all realized what Vatican II was going to do to the Catholic Church. First, they took out St. John's gospel and then came all the English sing-a-long Masses. Then in 1968, the Cathedral held a meeting for the parishioners regarding the soon to be remodeled church. I attended this meeting with my dad, Lawrence Selissen. They showed us the architect's rendering and the fact that they were going to bulldoze the privileged main altar and put up the table altar.

They wouldn't even listen to the parishioners and, in fact, stated the plans were made and the contractors were hired. This was a



Mr. Peter Peot and three of his daughters

railroaded job on us and they were going to bring all the Diocese in line by first "remodeling" the Cathedral. I was told I would have to get married at the side altar. Ken and I got married at St. Boniface and had a partial Latin Mass.

The summer of 1968, my dad spent a lot of time on the phone and on our front porch with Fr. Bujarski, Horton Roe, both classmates of my dad, and other priests trying to get a traditional movement started. Dad knew lots of people and worked with Pete Peot, Alma Beemster's brother, and members of the John Birch Society. The Peots also grew up at the Cathedral church. Henry and Alma Beemster, Beemster Electric, had many contacts and Henry's brother was a White Father, from whom he got a lot of old vestments and linens, which Alma had her seamstress fix and remake when we started the chapel. John White worked for Beemster Electric and lived in the house directly below what is now the priory. So, John told Henry about this property and Henry and Alma purchased both houses and a garage workshop on the property. In the summer and fall of 1969, work was started to make a chapel of the garage.

That summer we all drove to Peshtigo to attend Latin Mass at Fr. Bujarski's church. He was due to retire soon and didn't want to become our pastor, thinking he wouldn't get his retirement from



the diocese if he did this. He did say Mass for us in the basement of this priory. Present were Henry and Alma Beemster, Lawrence and Laverne and Paul and Delores Selissen, Ken and Mary Jo Gerrits, John White, and occasionally David and Kris Selissen and Ed and Vi DuQuaine.

Ken did the framing for the chapel and Beemster Electric employees did the electrical work and helped with the paneling. Henry and Alma gathered statues and the crucifix, stations, candlesticks, etc. so we could open our chapel. I don't remember the date we first used the chapel-sometime in the very late 1969, as I was pregnant with Amy.

We did have a choir. Horton Roe on his portable organ with Paul and Lawrence Selissen and Alma Beemster and myself. Amy was born February 5, 1970, and even though we could not get her baptized here, Mrs. Beemster said she would always consider Amy as the first baby of our church.

The Beemsters found Father Beran, and we had eight priests including Father Bujarski from 1970-1973, then Father Altenbach came and stayed until 1980. My dad knew Father Altenbach because my dad and Horton Roe sang with Horton Roe's choir at St. Mary's and they would occasionally go to Milwaukee to sing there. I am not sure, but I believe it was Father Altenbach who first started baptizing babies here as our Laura was baptized here.

## *Memories from Amy (Gerrits) Soquet*

Unfortunately, I don't have very many memories from being a little girl at all. I really don't remember much until about second grade, and those are only a few things.



*The Ken Gerrits Family*

For instance, I remember telling my teacher I was confirmed, but I do not remember Confirmation.

I do remember having Mrs. Beemster for catechism one year in the room off of the dining room in the priest's house. I also

remember being in Aunt Jeanie's class in the old house. It was before it was "remodeled" at all. We sat on the couch in the living room overlooking the ravine on the side of the property.

I also remember having Sunday Mass in the afternoons for a while. During that time, we would go to either Grandma Selissen's house or Aunt Jeanie and Uncle Ron's house to have choir practice with Aunt Betty (Sister Rita) (the children's choir) before going to Mass.

I also remember high school catechism class in the basement of the priest's house with Mrs. Merriman. We only had about six of us, if I remember correctly. I guess one thing that I do remember is that we were very creative with classroom space.



## *Memories from Cindy (Mooren) Vander Heiden*

I don't remember attending any church before St. Michael's. My earliest memories are all at our beloved parish. It was my "normal," so I didn't realize at the time how blessed we were to have such a rare treasure.

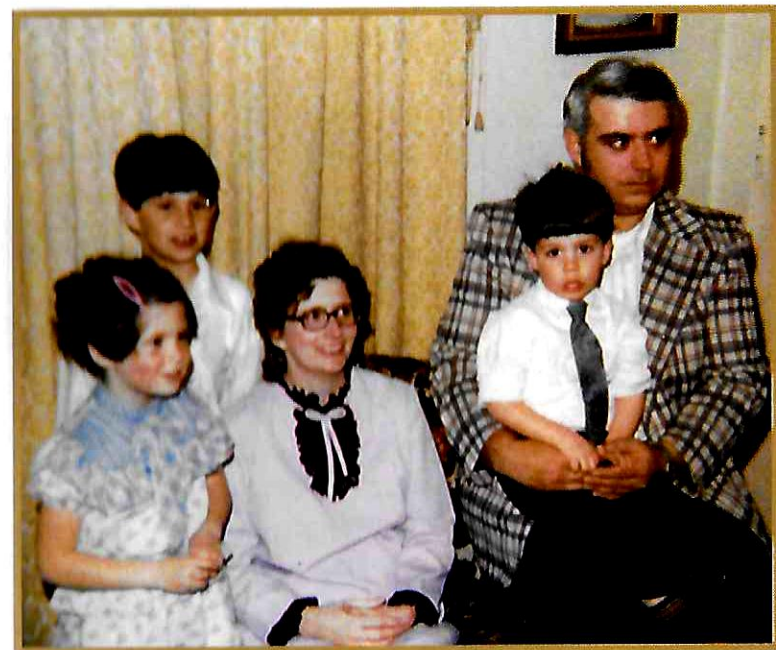


*The Ron Mooren Family*

However, I remember a conversation I had with my dad when I was an adult, and he told me that he was attending the Novus Ordo Mass while they were implementing the changes, and it never felt right to him. The first time he attended St. Michael's, he said it felt like home. So, I don't know the exact reasons as to why they came to St. Michael's, or how they heard about it, but I know why they never left.

## *Memories from Kathy (Selissen) Paque and David Selissen*

In 1968, a small group of men in the Green Bay and De Pere area of Wisconsin were deeply concerned about all these changes since the Second Vatican Council. They met with Bishop Wycislo expressing their concerns. There was a teenage mass going on at St. Agnes Church. Many other changes were happening in churches all over the diocese. Also, around this time there were five priests teaching at Premontre High School who denied the virginity of the Blessed Mother and the divinity of Our Lord. And the Bishop did nothing.



*David Paque family*

When these men met with Bishop Wycislo, he refused to listen to them and he went ahead with implementing the "new ideas." David remembers the real reason these men went to see the Bishop was because the new Mass changed the words of the Consecration which made the Mass invalid. The Bishop did allow



one church in the diocese to say a Latin Mass, but that was soon discontinued.



*David Seliseen family*

Mr. Henry Beemster along with Mr. Ed Duquaine, Mr. Lawrence Selissen and Mr. Peter Peot were trying to get a traditional movement started. Mr. Beemster's main reason for working so hard at this project was that the Roman Latin Rite Mass for all times would always be available for any one who wanted to come.

Mr. Beemster was a successful businessman and was very generous in helping our priests and nuns. One of Mr. Beemster's employees, Mr. John White, lived in the house directly below what is now the rectory. His parents owned the land on which our St. Michael's Church stands. This land was for sale at this time and Mr. Beemster purchased it. On this property were two houses and a garage workshop.

The diocese was never in favor of St. Michael's, but because it was operating on private property, they had no authority to close it down. And now after 50 years we still have a thriving parish!

## *Memories from Bev (Belleau) School*

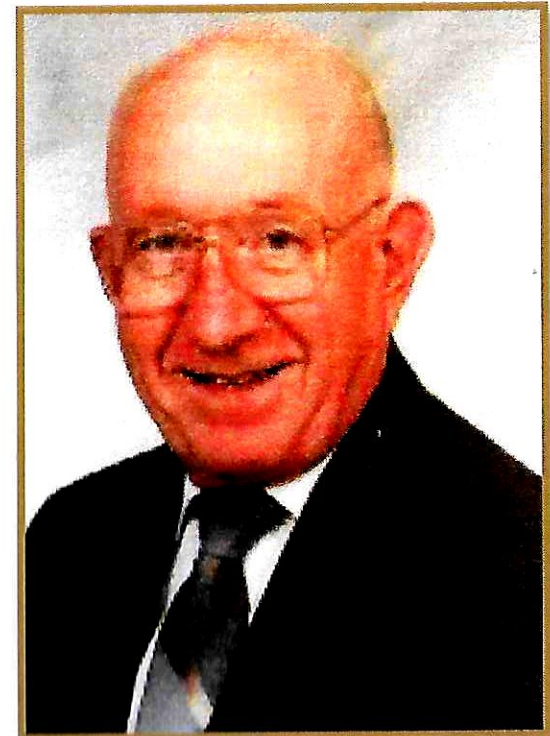
I fondly remember my dad as (in my eyes) the smartest man I ever knew. He was a voracious reader and, through his decades of reading good religious and political publications (shelves of the American Opinion magazines) and later the John Birch Society's New American magazine, he was a true-blue conservative.

Bill's dearest friend was Peter Peot (Alma Beemster's brother), who was our church usher for many years. Every Sunday was time for the two of these great minds to get together to discuss religion/politics and what in the world is happening to our Catholic Religion and church, over games of cribbage and a few old fashions.

I loved to hear them discuss things. Very early they knew things were amiss in the church and, by 1970, my dad told us kids he couldn't in good conscience allow us to attend our local parish church anymore.

I genuinely felt that my dad's and Pete's discussions led to Pete sharing concerns with Alma and her husband, Henry.

Henry Beemster in his great modest, humble way, felt that that must be why God had allowed him to make so much money



*Remembering a major church member, Bill (Red) Belleau, a Green Bay pharmacist, and my dad.*



through Beemster Electric and it was his great forethought and generosity that gave us a place to worship, though he naively thought this extreme move of having a chapel constructed for only the "true Mass" would only be needed for a few short years!

I recall a few Masses maybe in the priest's residence basement, kneeling on pads on the floor. I remember all those years in the first church on folding chairs and the ugly yellow fly catching tape hanging from the ceiling. But what a beautiful altar and statues!



*From Left to Right: Greg, Bill, Charlie, Bev & Paul Belleau*

I can still hear Father Altenbach's booming voice with the same lecture week after week, as he tried to reach that first-time listener of the Mass carried on the radio.

But I thank God for all the blessings he has bestowed on St. Michael's and especially that I was confirmed by Archbishop Lefebvre, himself, in 1978.

## *Memories from Linda (DeJardin) Seidl*

The changes in the church after Vatican II were gradual and slow so the people wouldn't notice. First the music, then the table, priest facing the people, removal of communion railing, allowing Saturday Mass to fulfill Sunday obligation, but the final straw was allowing Communion in the hand.



*Peter and Emma DeJardin*

The older generation of people were upset at first. But if the priest said it was ok and they liked the priest, it was alright with them. The middle-aged people just said they were not going to travel 30-40 miles when we have a perfectly good Catholic Church two miles away. The younger ones soon forgot the traditional way.

There was a group of five families who came from the Luxemburg, Wisconsin area who purchased a "Blue Bus" and Mr. Andrew Bouche drove the bus to St. Michael's every Sunday. Of those five families, some have passed away and there are only two people who still come faithfully to St. Michael's. How sad is that?



The families in this area found out about St. Michael's from Andrew Bouche. He started working for Mr. Henry Beemster. Andrew was my mother's brother-in-law and he told her about it. Within a few weeks she went by herself to check out St. Michael's. She said when she heard the traditional music when Mass started, she cried. She knew she was now "Home." She then spread the word but only a few would listen, and I thank her everyday for her persistence. She was a great mother and had a true love for our Blessed Mother!



*The Andrew Bouche Family*

Neighbors and family members used to argue with my mom saying there is no difference. But their conscience must have bothered them somewhat because they were always the ones to bring up the subject of the Church.

My mom even had the local priest come and argue with her. She never backed down. She knew her faith – MY HERO!!

My mother also made hundreds of rosaries!

## *Memories from James & Karen Wocho*



*Karen our Songbird*

Both Jamie and I were raised attending the Tridentine Rite Mass; myself a singer at Mass, weddings, etc., Jamie a long-time Altar Server under a very reverent Norbertine priest. In the aftermath of Vatican II, the stirrings of my soul

began, upset over raucous music, irreverence for the Eucharist, uneasiness about the liturgy. Summer 1973, a dear friend asked me to sing for her daughter's wedding, introducing me to St. Michael's for the first time, followed by lending me the book "The Great Sacrilege," which I read cover to cover. Then, I was asked to sing for the funeral of a friend's 17-year-old son, bringing me back to St. Michael's and the beautiful sublime Requiem Tridentine Rite Mass. I asked Jamie to accompany me to Mass there the following Sunday. I will NEVER forget his look, and his words after the Mass ended – with tears in his eyes, he exclaimed emphatically, NOW I AM HOME!! He helped Fr. Altenbach in the printing of his "New vs Old Mass" brochures and remarkable book. I helped by singing in the choir, two of our five children confirmed at St. Michael's by saintly Archbishop Lefebvre HIMSELF in 1978, one in 1982, then seeing our beautiful new church built under Fr. Bolduc's tutelage. This is our HOME, our Church – the Tridentine Mass the most beautiful thing this side of heaven! So grateful to the very holy, dedicated priests who now faithfully provide their services to us.



## *Memories from Pauline (Andresen) Potratz*

By the grace of God, Charles and Katherine Andresen recognized the errors in the church in the 1960s. With the Elmer Zarling family, they began to search for the true Mass and sacraments. Joined by the Delbert Stenson family and the rest of the Robert Zarling, Sr. family they banded together in prayer.

At this time, Leo Zarling was building a new house for himself and his parents. A decision was made to build a chapel in the basement of the new house with hopes of finding a traditional priest to say Mass and provide sacraments. It was at this time the group learned of St. Michael's.

Someone from the group would drive to St. Michael's every Sunday to pick up the priest and bring him to Oshkosh for Mass. After Mass another member of the group would drive the priest back to St. Michael's. This practice continued until Father Altenbach became the priest at St. Michael's. Father Altenbach would travel from Milwaukee to St. Michael's each week and on his way back to Milwaukee, would stop in Oshkosh.

The Oshkosh group outgrew the basement chapel and, in 1974, most of the group chose to drive to St. Michael's.



*The Charles Andresen Family*

## *Memories from Marty Stenson*

I was only 8 years old when my parents made the decision to leave St. Mary's in Oshkosh and the new Mass. Some of the changes that I remember and was often talked about by my parents were the altar change, the priest facing the people, the Mass being said in English, the introduction of band instruments such as guitars playing during Mass, the parish priest (Father Vanderheiden) began to refer to himself as Padre.



*The Delbert Stenson Family*

People would ask our parents: Are you going to that renegade church? How come you don't come here anymore? Why would you drive one hour to church when you have a Catholic Church two blocks from your home?

There were a number of families from our Oshkosh area that believe in tradition as my parents did. The Don Holland family, Jacqueline Wagner, the Charles Andreson family, the John Zarling family, Leo Zarling, James and Maggie Jungwirth, the Watson family, Valarie Sitter, the Luedtke family, Ed and Rose Penzenstadler, Judy Weisheipl, and Mr. and Mrs. Binner.



From 1971 to 1973, Father Altenbach would drive from De Pere to Oshkosh and say Mass in the afternoon at our St. Pius X Chapel in the farm house basement of Leo Zarling. In 1973, Father Altenbach discontinued saying Mass in Oshkosh and some of the families followed our parents to St. Michael's.

John Zarling was the person in Oshkosh to learn about Father Altenbach and the Traditional Mass being offered at St. Michael's. The Zarling family started St. Pius X Chapel with Father Altenbach's approval in 1971, but two years later in 1973 it closed. Then without hesitation some of the faithful from St. Pius X decided to attend St. Michael's in De Pere.

Our family didn't socialize too much but the people that we did see remained good friends. To this day, a number of my grade school friends from St. Mary's stay in touch with me and we continue to be good friends. I feel very blessed by God to have been provided with parents that recognized the errors of Vatican II and were strong in their beliefs in the face of a changing Catholic Church.

## Memories of Huey and Karla Sigl

They lived on a little farm north of Seymour, WI. They attended Mass at a Catholic church in the little town of Navarino, WI. They only went to one Novus Ordo Mass and never went back.



*This is a picture of Karla and her mom, Mrs. Davidson, who also came to St. Michael's.*

Huey served Mass many times during the early days of St. Michael's. Huey always fought for the true faith.

Karla remember going to Mass at Peshtigo. In September of 1972 their son, Steve, and Steven Biersteker were baptized by Father Stephen Nogay.

Early parishioners' names that popped into her mind were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beemster, Doc Darney, Bill Belleau, Ed Duquaine, Lawrence Selissen and Walter Laes.

## Memories from Mrs. Evelyn Merriman

Mrs. Merriman remembers that Mr. Beemster always liked carrot cake, and she made sure to bring him a carrot cake at our August picnics.

She also remembers Mrs. Joyce Kinjerski, who would bring her accordion to the picnics and play songs (mostly polkas) to entertain the picnickers.



*Mr. and Mrs. Ira Merriman*



## *Memories from a family who wants to remain anonymous*

I want to write to defend my parents, the Catholic church before Vatican Council II, and the Latin Tridentine Mass before 1962.

The changes in the Catholic church after Vatican II to the Novus Ordo (New Mass) were deceitful. As the Novus Ordo became more obvious in our parish(es), it was clear that someone or something was trying to destroy our traditional beliefs and the true Catholic Church.

The changes occurred in my parish around 1967-1968. We were told the church needed to change with the times. I was about 8 or 10 years old then. Physical changes took place in our church over the course of about a year or two. Our old beautiful altar was torn out. As was the Communion rail. The Tabernacle was moved. The crucifix was replaced with "The Risen Christ." And the list goes on.

Our parents fought the changes in the Church and school, but didn't have more than a couple persons on their side. Families tried to protect the innocence of their children and traditional values of Faith. Families were forced to go with the Novus Ordo in the new church/schools or put their children in public school or home school.

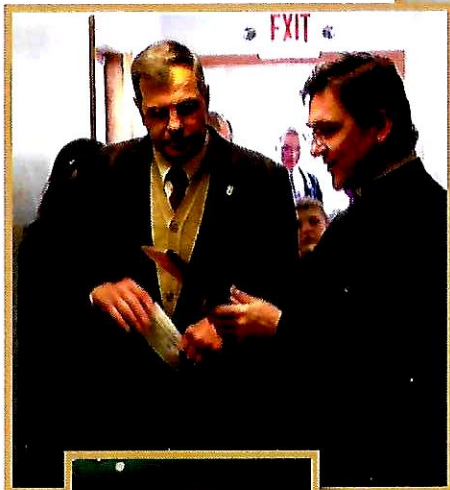
The changes we encountered hurt us each personally, in different ways. We lost friends – fellow Catholics. The changes happened so fast. Our parents went looking all over town for an old priest and the "Old Mass." We did this for one year, and finally dad found someone who attended Mass at St. Michael's, so we went.

## *Ceremonies & Events*



*SSPX priests who have been assigned  
as pastor here 2012-2020*

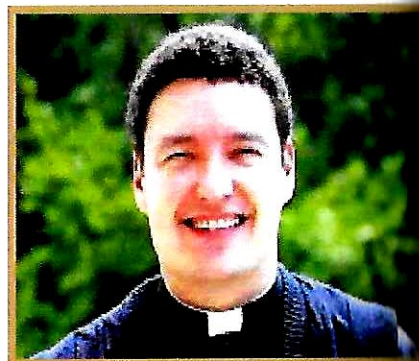
Fr. Brucciani



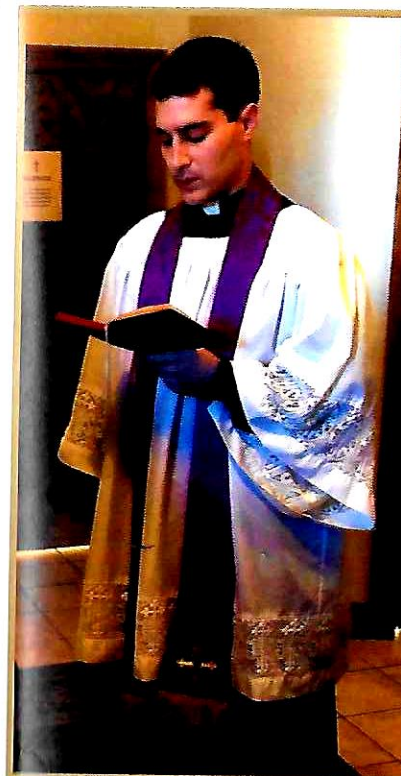
Fr. Duverger



Fr. Themann



Fr. McDonald



Fr. Rigi



Fr. Dwyer



Fr. Stafki



# Events at St. Michael's throughout the year



St. Joseph's Day  
(2012)



Our Lady of Good Success Feast February 2

May Crowning (2014 & 2018)







*First Communion (2016)*



*Church Picnic  
(1999 & 2000)*



*Mrs. Beemster*

*Vi Peot*

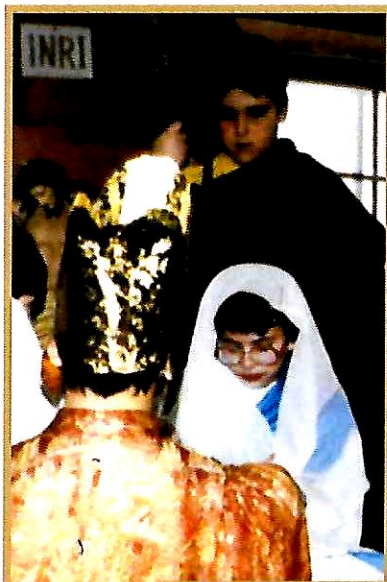


*Corpus Christi Procession (2012)*



*Christ the King Procession  
(2010)*





1985

# Christmas Plays



1984



2012



*Young Adult Outing (July 2018)*



*Parish board members with Fr. Stafki and Fr. Monkenberg from an Argentina Mission (2018)*





*Fr. McDonald and Bishop Tissier de Mallerais (2015)*



*Fr. Dwyer, Bishop Fellay, and Br. Stanislaus (2019)*