

- 1967 Summer—THE JESUITS LEAVE ST. MARY'S. . . The Jesuit superiors decide to move the Theologate of the Missouri province back to St. Louis. A large auction is held, the highlight of which is the historic bishop's chair, hand-carved in 1878 (*it would be returned to St. Mary's in 1978*). The place known as St. Mary's Mission and St. Mary's College is no more. Silence closes over the classrooms, the dorms, the refectory—and especially over the empty Immaculata where Our Lord no longer dwells in the tabernacle of the marble altar, and the voices of students and seminarians are no longer lifted for the glory of God. During part of these silent years, an old brother caretaker stays on in the Infirmary building. Gone are the black-cassocked priests and seminarians the townspeople had come to know and love so well. No more can the footsteps of hurrying students or the swish of seminarians' cassocks be heard in the halls. No more does the College bell ring out across the valley. St. Mary's—hallowed by lives of holy religious who had toiled here laboring in heat, in cold, in pioneer conditions—is left alone. And someone writes: "Time will tell. Maybe in a new role, the College will still play a meaningful part in the world."
- 1972 May 23—In a ceremony that takes place on the porch of the Faculty Building, the use of St. Mary's is returned by the Jesuits to the Prairie Band of the Potawatomi who had requested it be given to them. The land and buildings are given in trust for the purpose of developing them into an Indian cultural and educational center open to all tribes. Plans include a home for aged Indians, day care center, vocational school, and alcoholic treatment center. None of these plans materialize, and by about 1975, St. Mary's is again on the market.
- 1975-77 Parties interested in St. Mary's campus include the Kansas Police (to convert it to a training center), the local school district (to use it for a combined high school for Rossville and St. Mary's—the communities build new high schools instead), and local businessmen who have feasibility studies made for converting it into a business park. One businessman leases it from the Jesuits for about a year and a half, and sets up his office in the old Jesuit accounting office on the southwest corner ground floor of College building. He keeps the grounds mowed—they had been mowed only intermittently in recent years. His hope is to develop the property into apartments and business offices while retaining their character, and to make the historic Immaculata Chapel available for special functions such as weddings. He works to save the Chapel's stained glass windows—which one party wanted to buy and remove; and to keep out the "Moonies" who twice attempted to obtain the property—once representing themselves as a women's cultural group. None of this gentleman's plans for the property materialize.
- 1977 March—KATO Corporation of Phoenix, Arizona, purchases an option on the St. Mary's property. Job Corps is interested in buying it through KATO and setting up a training center for high-school dropouts. Concerned local residents call a town meeting and stop the purchase at the eleventh hour.
- 1977 Autumn—Traditional Catholics discover St. Mary's and begin attempting to interest the Society of St. Pius X in it. Priests come from what was then the U.S. District Headquarters on the East Coast and have a look at St. Mary's, but decline.
- 1978 January—Fr. Hector Bolduc, Superior of the new SSPX Southwest District, based at Dickinson, Texas, comes to Topeka to offer Mass and visits St. Mary's. He plants a Miraculous Medal in Our Lady's Circle and predicts that the Society will acquire the property. A novena is started.
- 1978 February—Representatives of the SSPX meet with KATO's representatives at the Mainstreeter Restaurant in Rossville. KATO's price tag is in the millions, and the little group in Topeka has fourteen dollars in their checking account. Fr. Bolduc says, "We don't want to buy it; we want you to give it to us!"
- 1978 May 22—His Grace Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre inspects St. Mary's, and especially admires the Immaculata Chapel. It is because of the magnificent church that he urges the Society to try to acquire St. Mary's for a traditional Catholic center. The chapel seems to him a symbol, raised up in the heart of America, and destined to favor the Catholic renaissance of our great country. Negotiations continue, and in the end, arrangements are made by which KATO donates their interest, and a benefactor pays the remaining amount asked by the Jesuits.
- 1978 June 23, 1978, Vigil of St. John the Baptist—St. Mary's College becomes the property of the Society of St. Pius X.

THE SECOND FOUNDING OF ST. MARY'S

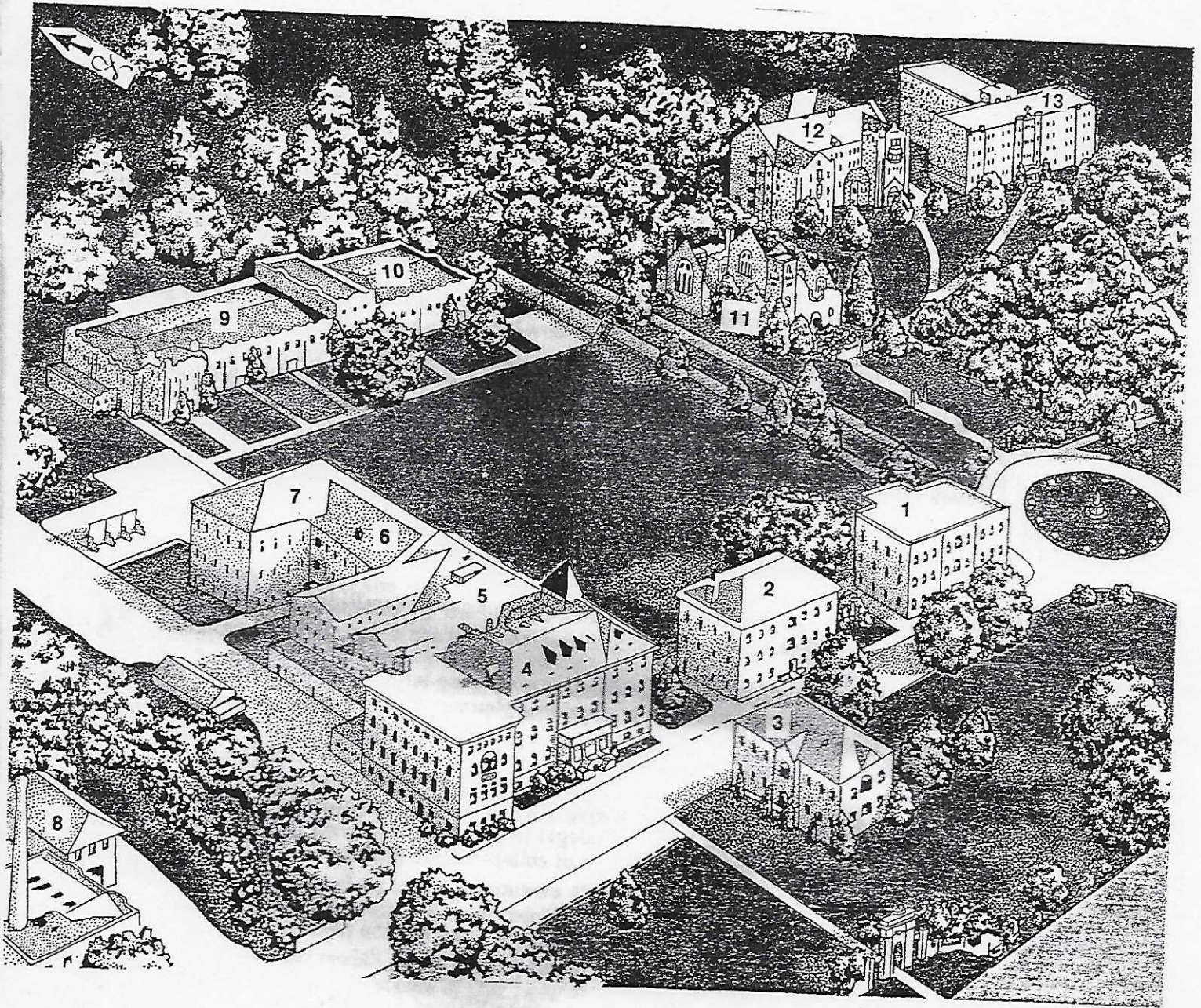
- 1978 Summer—There were only a handful of interested Traditionalists in the area when the Society acquired the St. Mary's campus, but immediately volunteers begin arriving from all over the country to help with the tremendous clean-up and repair work to be done. Families, confident that St. Mary's will become a traditional Catholic center and school, begin moving here. Early projected plans for St. Mary's include a seminary, retreat house, and of course a school. Fr. Bolduc, the first Rector, moves the SSPX Southwest District offices here. A temporary chapel is set up in the ground floor of the Library building, and also a "Restoration Office." The first building to be made habitable, and to have heat for the first winter, is the old Infirmary. Here, workers have their rooms and community dining room. The crew of volunteers begins making the long-abandoned buildings useable once again, and clearing the underbrush-choked grounds. (Although large areas such as the quadrangle had been mowed, with each season, the mowers had gone less close to the buildings, so that the brush had come out farther and farther from the walls.) Many are these pioneers' stories of discovering sidewalks hidden under weeds, or unsuspected doors hidden behind ivy (as in the case of the gymnasiums). They tell of the large snakes that came out and retreated as civilization returned.
- 1978 August 15—First public outdoor devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary since the acquisition of the property by the Society of St. Pius X.
- 1978 September 12—The first school of the new St. Mary's (a kindergarten) opens on the third floor of the Administration/Library building, south room. Two little boys are the first students; soon a little girl joins them.
- 1978 November 8—FIRE!—caused by an electrical short—destroys the almost-restored Immaculata Chapel. Volunteers have worked all summer repairing the roof (driving out of state to find matching roof tiles) and doing interior repair and painting. (There were no pews in the chapel—only the three marble altars—when the SSPX acquired St. Mary's; and replacement pews had not yet been installed in the chapel at the time of the fire.) The restoration of the chapel is almost finished when tragedy strikes. . . A spark from an electrical short causes fire to smoulder in a wall of the choir loft, and the Immaculata's agony begins. Discovered at 12:53 p.m., the fire is fought all afternoon by several area fire departments, and is one of the most hard-fought fires area residents can remember. It is at last brought under control between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. The roof is gone, the interior completely gutted, some of the priceless stained-glass windows broken. The walls and porch remain intact, and from her altar, Our Lady surveys the smoking ruins.
- 1978 November 9—At 9:15 a.m., Fr. Bolduc offers Holy Mass on the porch of the still-smoldering Immaculata. He says, "Of course we're going to rebuild the church!" Beautiful even in death, the Immaculata awaits her rebirth. As Fr. Franz Schmidberger, Superior General of the SSPX has said, "The physical rebuilding of the Immaculata will be the outward sign of the spiritual rebuilding in our own hearts." By the Grace of God—her walls will rise again—for the Glory of God.
- 1979 Restoration work continues—One young worker, now a traditional Benedictine priest, recalls his arrival: *"In late spring of '79, I packed my tools in my pickup and made the long drive out here. It was quite an adventure. When I came through the stone gates of St. Mary's, I knew I was home, and I was overcome with an inward peace."*
- The restoration of the buildings was just getting underway, so there was plenty of work for the young carpenter! "I was given a place to live and a workshop with two other young men. Our workshop was in the basement of Bellarmine Hall and we were busy restoring the buildings that were most needed for school, which was to open that fall of '79."*
- "Loyola Hall was the worst. It was in the most exposed position on top of the hill to suffer from the weather, and there were so many windows out that birds had gotten in. It was a mess. Bellarmine was in good condition. However, there was a problem in that building with buckled wooden floors, which we had to replane."*
- He explains how they discovered the steam pipes under the Quadrangle by which the Jesuits had transferred steam heat from the Power plant all the way up the hill to Bellarmine and Loyola. (As that system was no longer operative, nor was it economically feasible to restore it, individual heating systems had to be installed in each building.) You shiver as he tells of buildings without heat, and of how he helped to install the boilers to restore heat to Canisuis Hall.*
- He also built furniture for the dormitories and helped restore plumbing in order to have hot water. Installation of the present cafeteria in the basement of Bellarmine Hall spelled the end of the workshop in that location. "We found charts in the cabinets of the room on the first floor of McCabe that told us it*

had been a woodworking classroom at one time, so we set up the present woodshop there." And he mounted the saw blade marking the entrance to the woodshop.

He concludes, "I found the family spirit at St. Mary's a beautiful thing. We workers all ate at the same table; we prayed together. We were from all over the country and came for diverse reasons, but we realized that St. Mary's was the place where all our desires converged."

- 1979 July 16-23—The first Men's Retreat at St. Mary's since its re-opening is preached by Fr. Richard Williamson and Fr. Hector Bolduc. Twenty-nine men attend. It is 70 years since the first Jesuit retreat for laymen at St. Mary's College. From July 23-29 is conducted the first Women's Retreat, preached by Fr. Terrance Finnegan and Fr. Bolduc. Forty-four ladies attend. Summer retreats continue at St. Mary's for several years, until the seminary moves to Winona and begins offering retreats there.
- 1979 August 2—Statue of the Sacred Heart (weighing 2 tons) is hoisted to the top of a recently-built pedestal beside the altar marking the location of the sanctuary of the old log cathedral. This statue (F on map) came from Sacred Heart Church in St. Louis, Missouri, when the parish was closed and the contents of the church acquired by the SSPX.
- 1979 August 15—The first St. Mary's Pilgrimage, organized largely by the *Angelus* Magazine. About 2,000 people visit the site. Archbishop Lefebvre celebrates the Mass for the Feast-day and lays the cornerstone for the proposed re-building of the Immaculata. About 1,000 people are served at the catered banquet in the large gym. The small gym is used for "convention center" where book-sellers have traditional Catholic books on display. Michael Davies is guest-speaker at the Pilgrimage. He and Archbishop Lefebvre autograph copies of Davies' *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre, Vol. One*, just printed by the Angelus Press. At this Pilgrimage, Assumption Chapel is put into use.
- 1979 September 8—St. Mary's Academy officially opens, offering grades K-10. Grades 11 and 12 will be added over the next two years. There are about 88 students this first year. The Academy classrooms are located in Bellarmine Hall, and at this early date the school is co-ed. Boarding students are accepted from grades 7 to 12 (in later years the minimum boarding age will be raised to 9th grade).
- 1980 Good Friday—Academy students put on the first St. Mary's Passion Play, comprised of the Way of the Cross performed outdoors. It will grow into a full-length play.
- 1980 May 31, Saturday, Feast of the Queenship of Mary—During a severe storm with high winds and torrential rain the unsupported fire-eaten walls of the Immaculata collapse. The front wall crushes the ornate porch, which until now had been in perfect condition since the fire. During the following months, another windstorm will knock down the back wall; it falls outward, however, leaving the high altar and statue of Our Lady of Grace untouched. During these storms, part of the west side wall also falls in. Damage includes the crushing of the side altars. These difficulties contribute to delays in plans to rebuild the chapel.
- 1981 May—First graduating class of SMA—nine seniors graduate.
- 1981 Summer—Workers hasten to ready the College building for the opening of the new SMC. The third (top) floor of the west wing is divided into two classrooms; the second floor former "Domestic Chapel" is divided into three classrooms for the new College. The sounds of Gregorian Chant (from a tape player) echo through the halls as volunteers build in partitions, and do painting everywhere.
- 1981 August 31—St. Mary's College reopens. The spring graduation of the first class of SMA had pointed up the need for a traditional Catholic institution of higher learning. SMC is the second school of higher learning in the Society of St. Pius X, the first being the Institute of St. Pius X which opened in Paris, France, in 1980. Of the 11 young people who make up the first student body, 3 will continue on to make up the first graduating class of the new SMC.
- 1981 October 2, Friday, 10:45 p.m.—Three SSPX sisters arrive at St. Mary's after having left their motherhouse in France very early the same day. It is 133 years since the first Ladies of the Sacred Heart arrived at St. Mary's Mission! The first three Sisters of the new St. Mary's are: Sr. Mary Ste. Anne (an Australian, who will later return to Australia to make a foundation), Sr. Mary Jude (an

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY & COLLEGE 1981



CURRENT NAME—YEAR CONSTRUCTED—FORMER NAMES

1. LIBRARY BUILDING	1890-91 & 1961	"Juniorate," "Votel Building"
2. COPPENS HALL	1883	(Also used for Administration, 1978-90) "Old Classroom Building" (Also known as "Library Building" in the 1930's)
3. CONVENT	1889	Former Jesuit Infirmary
4. COLLEGE/FACULTY BUILDING	1870 & 1917	(Also known as "Administration Building" in the 1930's)
5. CANISIUS HALL (Assumption Chapel)	1920	First known as "Science Hall" in the 1920's and 30's
6. SUAREZ HALL	1886-87	Once known as "Senior Buildings" in the days of old SMC
7. McCABE HALL	1887 & 1898	Once known as "Senior Buildings" in the days of old SMC
8. POWERHOUSE	1898	
9. BIG GYM	1909	Once known as "Senior Gym" in the 1920's and 30's
10. SMALL GYM	1914	Once known as "Junior Gym" in the 1920's and 30's
11. WALLS OF THE IMMACULATA CHAPEL	1907	Burned 1978
12. BELLARMINE HALL	1925-26	First known as "Recitation Hall," later as "Rodman Hall"
13. LOYOLA HALL	1907	Always known as "Loyola"

American who will become Mother Mary Jude, Mother General of the Order), and Sr. Mary Augustine (a native of France who will later be appointed novice-mistress at the American novitiate of the Sisters). The convent, furnished by generous benefactors is ready and waiting for the arrival of the Sisters.

- 1982 Fall—school year begins with the boys' and girls' schools separated for the first time. At this time, the co-ed lower school and the boys' school are "up the Hill" in Bellarmine, as well as the boy's dorm which is in Loyola Hall. The girls' school is in Coppens Hall, and the girls' dorms are also "down the Hill" in Suarez and Canisius Halls. (The college men's dorm started out in the Faculty/College building in 1981, but, with the beginning of the '82 school year, the college boys are also in Loyola, and the Faculty/College dorms are given over to College girls.)
- 1983 January—Fr. Herve de la Tour, native of France who has been teaching at the Society's American Seminary in Ridgefield, Connecticut, is appointed the second Rector of St. Mary's.
- 1983 March—Fr. de la Tour inaugurates a new publication: *CRUSADE*, a monthly newspaper (of about 8 pages) for America's Catholic youth. (In 1984, it will develop into a bi-monthly magazine.)
- 1983 Spring—Through the efforts of SSPX seminarians from Ridgefield, Connecticut, who are visiting St. Mary's during their Easter break, the stone from the collapsed walls of the Immaculata is removed from the ground around the chapel ruins. Particularly, the porch area is cleared of rubble, and the stonework of the platform is repaired. (Soon, the doorway to the chapel is sealed.) This work allows the porch to be used for an outdoor altar during processions.
- 1983 Summer—St. Mary's organizes the first of several "Girls' Trips to France." Twenty American young ladies visit chapels of the Society, famous cathedrals, and traditional convents.
- 1983 July—A boys' camp is held at St. Mary's; priests and seminarians from Ridgefield come to oversee the thirty campers.
- 1983-84 New sewage disposal system and ponds are built—the work done largely by parishioners and campus maintenance staff under the direction of the professional planners. State officials inspecting the project have high praise for their work.
- 1984 May—First St. Mary's College graduation since its re-opening. Four-year Bachelor of Arts certificates are awarded to two men (William Dredger and Greg Geeslin) and one woman (Elizabeth Oberg)—the first woman ever to graduate from St. Mary's College! (Although the College has only been operating for 3 years, each graduate either had had one year of college before coming to St. Mary's, or completed the 4-year course in 3 years.)
- 1984 Spring—First Academy camping trips—the boys one week, the girls the next—this first year to Philmont, New Mexico.
- 1984 October, Feast of Christ the King—First procession of the Blessed Sacrament "in town." Formerly all processions were conducted only on our campus. Now, the custom of carrying the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of the town—a regular occurrence from the days of old St. Mary's—is revived by Fr. de la Tour. Stops are made at homes of parishioners where flower-decorated altars are set up for Benediction on front porches. Emblems of the Holy Eucharist are made in flowers and colored sand on the streets along the route. The procession returns to campus for a final Benediction in the chapel.
- 1985 May—Archbishop Lefebvre, who has visited St. Mary's several times, returns and confers the sacrament of Confirmation. (It is his last visit to St. Mary's to date [1990] of this writing.)
- 1985 Summer—The big switch—the boys' and girls' schools and dorms are swapped. The girls move up the hill and the boys move down, an arrangement which works much better for all.
- 1986 August—The outdoor Passion Play, formerly held every year or two as an Academy project in Holy Week (the last being in 1984) becomes a part of the annual Pilgrimage and a parish project.

- 1987 January—Boys of St. Mary's Academy re-assemble—on the Gospel side of the sanctuary of Assumption Chapel—the altar that has been in storage and which matches the altar on the Epistle side. This newly added altar becomes the St. Therese altar.
- 1987 Fall—Academy enrollment, which has been running a little over 200, jumps to 300-plus. College enrollment is 25 students, also an increase over the previous year.
- 1987 December—The very large statue of Our Lady of Grace, which was on the high altar of the town's Immaculate Conception parish prior to its being redecorated some years ago, is given to St. Mary's. Too big for our chapel, it is eventually installed in the hallway of the girls' dorm.
- 1987-88 The small gym is refurbished by the men of the parish and Booster Club—blue bleachers are built and installed.
- 1988 Families have been moving to St. Mary's steadily for several years to take advantage of the schools and spiritual opportunities. They now number over 200 families.
- 1988 May—This year's Academy graduating class numbers 31 students. The College's graduating class this year numbers 7 with two-year Associate of Arts diplomas.
- 1988 Pentecost—The first parish "Pilgrimage" takes place, giving students and families the feel of a traditional pilgrimage on foot. On a round-trip walk of about two and one-half miles, groups of pilgrims band together under their banners and pray the Rosary, say litanies, and sing hymns. The three-block-long procession has as its destination our cemetery of Our Lady of Peace where Fr. Schmidberger, Superior General of the SSPX, blesses the new 15-foot tall white cross that marks the cemetery.
- 1988 St. Mary's observes the 10th anniversary of its acquisition by Society of St. Pius X, and the 140th anniversary of its founding by the Jesuits as an Indian mission. Newly-consecrated Bishop Richard Williamson takes part in the tenth annual August Pilgrimage and the Passion Play.
- 1989 February 12—Fr. Ramon Angles, of the Society and a native of Spain, arrives. He will assume his duties as third Rector of St. Mary's on July 1.
- 1989 April 15—Library Open House. Through the efforts of many helpers, the library has at last been thoroughly organized and the books, all of which have been donated since 1978, are now sorted and shelved; the giant job of cataloging them still lies ahead! (For more information, see the 1961 entry describing the Library building.)
- 1989 May—Graduating class of SMA numbers 40 seniors (one more than the local public school's class). SMC graduates 7 students with two-year certificates.
- 1989 May 21—Second parish "Pilgrimage" to our cemetery, in spiritual union with the Chartres pilgrimage in France. The marble statue of Our Lady from the high altar of the Immaculata has been carefully taken down, and placed in a stone shrine built by men of the parish at the cemetery. Also this year, the Corpus has been placed on the large cross at the cemetery.
- 1989 June 24—Paul Tague, '82 Alumnus of SMA, is ordained to the Holy Priesthood by His Excellency Bishop Richard Williamson at the Society's St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in Winona, Minnesota. He is the first priest-alumnus of St. Mary's Academy.
- 1989 Summer—Many renovations take place on campus in preparation for the next school year, particularly in the College Building, which is completely reorganized; many rooms are repaired and repainted. The CRUSADE Magazine office is moved from the top floor of the Library building to the first floor of the College building. Historical photo project in the College Hall is completed by early August.
- 1989 September 5—The '89-90 school year opens with a Solemn Pontifical Mass celebrated by his Excellency Bishop Richard Williamson, followed by an academic ceremony. The Academy has 328 students enrolled. The recently re-organized College numbers 34 full-time students, 21 part-time, and 18 evening students. The largest number ever—73—are taking classes in the College.

- 1989 Christmas—Redecorating begins in the Assumption Chapel (for more details, see the 1920 entry under Canisius Hall). Drapes and carpet are replaced in the sanctuary; gradual installation of new light fixtures begins, and gilding of border in ceiling panels is started.
- 1990 St. Mary's Academy and College parish numbers 250 families; over 1,000 people attend Sunday Mass here during the school year.
- 1990 January/February—St. Mary's acquires a six-rank pipe organ from a Catholic college that has closed.
- 1990 February—First issue of *Alma Mater*, Alumni and news magazine for SMA&C, is published.
- 1990 February—Two new recessed confessionals are built in the doorways to the old Jesuit kitchen.
- 1990 Lent—Our maintenance crew and parishioners design and build a choir loft in the back of Assumption Chapel. It accomodates the new organ, and beneath are two more new confessionals and the baptistry, of which the Bishop Meige window is now a feature.
- 1990 April 2—FIRE IN THE POWERHOUSE!—The old smokestack has become too dangerous; it is to be demolished along with the shell of the Powerhouse. Ductwork is being removed prior to demolition when a spark from a cutting torch smolders and ignites a wooden ventilator on the roof. As local fire-fighters put out the roof-top fire, white smoke pours from the old stack for the last time.
- 1990 Spring—SMA's Soccer team is the first varsity team at the Academy to have a winning season, with a record of 5 wins, 2 losses, and one tie, finishing third in a 12-team league!
- 1990 May—New Communion rail is finished in time for Confirmation ceremonies.
- 1990 May 22—Demolition of the Powerhouse begins.
- 1990 May 24, Ascension Thursday—Bishop Williamson confers the sacrament of Confirmation at St. Mary's.
- 1990 May 24—The 110-foot high smokestack, a long-time campus landmark, falls before the wrecking ball.
- 1990 May 25, Friday—Bulldozing begins behind the Immaculata to prepare the work site for rebuilding the Chapel! Surplus dirt will be moved to the low area behind the gyms to level that area for a future football field.
- 1990 May 26—SMA graduates 28 new alumni. Bishop Williamson is special guest.
- 1990 June 13—An early-morning thunderstorm hits during 7:30 Mass; the tower of the Immaculata is struck by lightning for the second time in a year (on the previous occasion last fall, a small part of the top cornice on the south-west corner was knocked out); this time the top arch of the west side of the tower falls.
- 1990 June 23—Todd Angele, '84 graduate of SMA, is ordained by Bishop Fellay at Winona, our second priest-alumnus.
- 1990 July 27-31—"Stuff-a-thon" and mailing of nationwide fund appeal for help in rebuilding the Immaculata.
- 1990 July 31—The Administration office moves to the College Building; the Bookstore moves into the former Administration space in the Library Building; the old Bookstore room in Coppens is to be converted into the Academy's chemistry lab.
- 1990 August 10-12—Marian Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Fatima, and outdoor Passion Play; the last Pilgrimage and Passion Play were held in 1988.