

First Priest Arrived By Trolley

Catholics Boast 2 Parishes In City

By ETHEL SIMMONS
Staff Writer

A Catholic priest traveled to Birmingham each Sunday by trolley to serve the first parishioners of the city, who attended mass in a public hall used for dances and meetings.

It was Sunday, May 12, 1918, when the Rev. John F. Needham, pastor of St. Mary's in Royal Oak, where many Birmingham Catholics worshiped, celebrated mass on the second floor of the old Johnson and Shaw Hall on S. Woodward.

Other Catholic families in Birmingham went into Pontiac for Sunday services until the establishment of the local parish.

THE YOUNG people of the church gathered for catechism classes Wednesday afternoons in the Greenwood Ave. home of Mrs. T. J. Griffin. Meetings of parishioners were held that spring and summer at John P. Glendon's home.

Although he was in ill health, Rev. Needham continued to care for the needs of the Birmingham parish, then a mission of the Royal Oak Church. Later Father Maurice Chawke succeeded Rev. Needham as pastor of St. Mary's and of the mission.

In the meantime, in July, 1918, Joseph C. Donnelly, Joseph Braun, William Vhay and Thomas Lynch were busily engaged in selecting a site for a church, school, rectory and convent. A 300-foot corner lot on Harmon and Woodland was chosen and was approved by Bishop Kelly.

THE BISHOP also gave his authorization to the parish as Holy Name.

Until the church was completed, the altar was a collapsible one that stood in a corner of the Johnson-Shaw Hall during the week and was unfolded before Sunday mass.

Setting up the wooden frame altar and arranging the chairs was the duty of Alex Rocheleau, assisted by Bernard and Chariton DeLong.

Vestments were laid out for the priests by Mrs. F. J. Douglas and Mrs. V. M. Pollock.

THOSE WHO served mass included in the early days J. A. Rocheleau, J. A. Braun, Frank McHugh, William Vhay and Theodora MacManus. Ushers were John Hogan, Thomas J. Griffin, Russell Blackmer and Michael Fitzgibbons.

The Rev. Fr. William W. Ryan was appointed to the newly-formed parish as its pastor in 1921. A home on the church property at Harmon and Woodland was used as parochial residence.

Construction of Holy Name Church began in November, 1921, with Arthur Des Rosiers serving as architect and Charles E. Brady as head of construction. A solemn high mass dedicated the new church Sunday, April 30, 1922.

THE NEXT project, Holy Name School and an adjoining convent, reached completion in 1928. Nuns of the Order of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Monroe directed the school.

In 1931, Fr. Ryan became pastor of a new parish, St. Hugo of the Hills Catholic Church in Bloomfield Hills, when the Holy Name parish was divided. He was succeeded by the Rev. Fr. James W. Cotter.

With an increase in the size of the Birmingham parish, a second, assistant pastor was added, the Rev. Alex J. Brunett. After his death, the Rev. Lawrence W. Hamel became assistant pastor.

Holy Name's third pastor was the Rev. David J. Duncan, whose administration encompassed the 25th anniversary celebration and preparation of a \$200,000 building program.

A SCHOOL addition, estimated at \$425,000, was completed in the fall of 1950; an addition to the convent, costing \$45,000, opened in 1951.

Rev. Duncan retired from the parish because of ill health in 1952 and was succeeded by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Carroll S. Deady, who in turn left Holy Name the following year to return to duties as superintendent of parochial schools in Detroit.

The new pastor was the Rev. Eugene E. Paddock. In 1954, he launched plans to replace the old Holy Name Church building which had seen 28 years of service.

DESIGNED BY George Diehl and Associates at a cost of \$600,000, the church was to be built on the site of the original church and an adjoining parcel of land.

Opening services for the English Gothic structure were held Sunday, Nov. 20, 1955. Installation of stained glass windows, mosaics and other work were completed in 1957 and the church, seating 900 to 1,000 people, was formally dedicated by Edward Cardinal Mooney.

A \$275,000 project including additional classrooms, a new athletic building and cafeteria improvements was added to Holy Name School a few years back.

THE SECOND Catholic parish in Birmingham was established about 10 years ago when property for St. Columban's was purchased in 1953 and buildings constructed.



NEW HOLY NAME CHURCH OPENED IN 1955 ON ORIGINAL SITE
English Gothic structure was formally dedicated in 1957.

in 1954. The pastor for the new church serving 450 Catholic families within the boundaries of Maple, Woodward, Starr and Crooks roads was and is the Rev. Thomas M. Kenney.

An old-time barn-raising spirit pervaded for the construction of the rectory and church.

Men met evenings and Saturdays to paint the interior of the 11-room brick rectory at 2200 Dunstable. Twenty women, headed by Mrs. Thomas Gleason, began a sewing group. Draperies for the parish

house were made, as were linens for the altar.

WOMEN ALSO volunteered to wash the rectory windows after the paintings were finished, and Mrs. Peter Duane Tibbits, Jr., directed a rummage sale that raised \$500.

Mass was held in the chapel of Little Flower High School and Upton School until the new church on 14 Mile and Melton was ready.

Mrs. Albert Ferguson and Mrs. William Hollyer were copresidents of the Altar Society, and Edward

Lynch headed the Ushers Society. Working on projects for the church construction were Max J. Ege and Hugo Cloutier, who started the building fund drive; Peter Duane Tibbits, Jr., who leveled the site for the rectory and church before groundbreaking; and Thomas Gleason who selected lumbers for the altar he would build.

The blessing of St. Columban's Church was presided over by Cardinal Mooney in March, 1955. The school, on Dunstable near 14 Mile, was constructed in 1958.

Council Unites Churches

By LARRY EVOE
Staff Writer

The Birmingham Council of Churches is a comparatively new organization in the community.

Formed as an offshoot of an inactive ministerial association in 1947, the council has grown from a strictly Protestant organization to a group that also includes representatives of the Catholic and Jewish faiths.

The council became active largely through the efforts of the YMCA's executive secretary, Ed Kirbert. The group took over the books and records of the ministers' organization which had not functioned since the early years of World War II.

Under Kirbert's direction, a schedule of monthly meetings was established so pastors of the various churches could discuss mutual problems.

EARLY MEMBERS of the council included First Presbyterian, First Methodist, First Baptist, Embury Methodist, St. James and Christ Church Cranbrook Episcopal churches, Franklin Community, Townsite Community (Congregational), Church of the Nazarene, Kirk in the Hills, Our Shepherd and Ascension Lutheran churches.

The council members, although they are all ministers, priests or rabbis, belong to the group as individuals rather than as representatives of their respective churches.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at a local restaurant. Speakers are brought in from surrounding areas and the council discusses fellowship, planning of events, and common church problems.

Dr. Glen Harris, First Presbyterian Church, served as the first council president. He was followed by Dr. Arnold Runkel of the First Methodist Church.



DR. GLEN HARRIS



DR. HOMER ARMSTRONG

THE COUNCIL CONCERNS itself with the religious affairs of the young people of the community and sponsors periodic youth activities.

Through the YMCA, a combined church-Y basketball league was formed in 1947 and is still playing a full schedule today. The council feels the basketball program gives young men and boys an opportunity to enjoy a competitive sports program.

Community-wide programs which the council sponsors includes union services on Good Friday and Thanksgiving mornings. For the first time in 1964, four of the down-

town churches conducted joint Lenten services.

THE CHURCH group also takes an active part in the annual Michigan Week observance and last December the council was the principal backer of the "Freedom Festival March" on behalf of civil rights.

The current council officers are Dr. Homer Armstrong, First Baptist Church, president; Rev. William Lovejoy, First Methodist Church, secretary-treasurer; and Rev. Robert W. Boley, Beverly Hills Methodist Church, program chairman.

Doorstep Mystery Went Unsolved

An unsolved mystery concerned a wooden box used as a doorstep at the rear of the Methodist Church on Mill street (West Maple) in 1883.

It was an ordinary looking wooden box and after its use as a doorstep for many years, it was coming apart and was in a general dilapidated condition.

The caretaker of the church, Ira Chatfield, removed the box from its resting place and noticing something peculiar about it, began to

knock it apart.

WHAT HE FOUND was most surprising. Carefully packed with paper, the box contained a jeweler's anvil, 375 watch crystals of assorted sizes, a lot of clock springs, clock keys, a gold ring with the set removed and numerous other articles.

How did the box get there? Exactly how long had it been there? Nobody ever knew.



ST. COLUMBAN'S WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1953
Parishioners helped with construction.