First Priest Arrived By Trolley

Catholics Roast 2 Parishes In City

By ETHEL SIMMONS
Staff Writer

A Catholic priest traveled to Birmingham each Sunday by trolley to serve the first parishes 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, was the first Birmingham Catholic to be ordained. A visiting priest celebrated mass on the second floor of the old Johnson and Shaw Hall on S. Woodward.

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

THE YOUNG people of the church gathered at the church on Wednesday afternoon in the Greenwood Ave. home of Mrs. T. J. Griffin. Meetings of parishioners were held that spring and summer at John F. Gordon's home. Although he was 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 Chauke succeeded Rev. Needham as pastor of St. Mary's and of the mission.

In the meantime, in July, 1918, Joseph C. Donnelly, Joseph Brown, William Vay and Thomas Larrill were busy trying to select a site for a church, school, rectory and convent. A 300-foot lot on Harmon and Woodward was chosen and was approved by Bishop Kelly. BISHOP KEATON gave his authorization to the parish as Holy Name.

Until the church was completed, the altar was a collapsible one that was used in the Johnson-Shaw Hall during the week and was unfurled before Sunday mass.

Setting up the wooden frame altar was the job of the young men, who were churchmen of the day. The young men were organized by Alex Bechtel, assisted by Bernard and Charles DeLong. The altar was placed on a platform in the newly-formed parish as its pastor in 1921. A house at the church property at Harmon and Woodward was used as parish residence.

Construction of the Holy Name Church began in November, 1918, with Father Desiree serving as architect and Charles R. Brady as head of construction. A solemn high mass dedicated the church Sunday, April 26, 1922.

THE next year, Holy Name School and an adjoining convent, reached completion in 1923. Mass of the Order of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in France directed the school. In 1923, Fr. Ryan became pastor of a new parish, St. Hugo of the Hills Catholic Church in Rosewood 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. Grummet. After his death, the Rev. Lawrence W. Harnell became assistant pastor. Holy Name's third pastor was the Rev. David J. Dunay, whose administration encompassed the 75th anniversary celebration and preparation of a $25,000 building program.

A SCHOOL addition, estimated at $125,000, was completed in the fall of 1960; an addition to the convent, costing $40,000, opened in 1961.

J. Dunay retired from the parish because of ill health in 1962 and was succeeded by the Rev. Mary Carolyn B. Brady, who turned over the Holy Name church to the order of sisters and school to the order of sisters and school to the order of sisters and school to the order of sisters.

In 1963, the new pastor was the Rev. Eugene K. Paddock. In 1964, he launched plans to replace the Holy Name Church building which had served 28 years of service.

DESIGNED BY George Duch and William Frey of the church was to be built on a site of the original church and adjoining parcel of land. Opening services for the English Gothic structure were held Sunday, May 30, 1965, installation of site and glass windows, mosaics and other work were completed in 1967 and the church, costing $100,000, was formally dedicated by Bishop Cardinal Edwin O'Connell.

A $250,000 project including all diocesan 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 1920 years ago when open space for St. Columbanus' was purchased in 1920 and buildings constructed in 1954. The pastor for the new church was Rev. Michael J. Koscielniak.

Women were made, as were initials for the altar.

WOMEN also volunteered to wash the rectory windows after the paintings were finished, and Mrs. Peter Dianne Tichibin, Jr., directed a rummage sale that raised $400 in the chapel.

The cornerstone of St. Columbanus' Church was raised over by Cardinal O'Connell in March, 1954. The school, on Dunstable 14 Mile, was constructed in 1956.

Council Unites Churches

By LARRY EVE
Staff Writer

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

Formed as an offshoot of an active 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 larger part of the efforts of the YMCA's executive secretary, Fr. Kureck. The group took over the book committee's membership organisation which had not functioned in the years of World War II.

Under Kureck's direction, a schedule of monthly meetings was established to pass on the various church's annual dinner met problems.

EARLY MEMBERS of the council included: First Presbyterian, First Methodist, First Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Zion, First Jewish Congregation, Mount Olive, Mt. Carmel, St. Mary's Episcopal Churches, Blessed Sacrament, Community, Benevolent Association, Episcopal, St. Paul's Catholic Church, and many other local 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 Thursday of each month at a local restaurant. Speakers also have been from among ministers, priests and rabbis, neighboring churches, planning of events, and common church problems.

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

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 Uncovered

An unsolved mystery concerning a wooden box used as a depository near the rear of the Methodist Church on Mill Street (West Maple) in 1883.

It was an ordinary looking wooden box and after a step to an address over the front steps, it was coming down the street and was in a general dilapidated condition.

The caretaker of the church, Mr. Chaffee, removed the box from its street corner location to the rear of the church to see if anyone might have noticed it.

Nobody ever knew.

WHAT HE FOUND was most surprising. Carefully packed with paper, the box contained a jeweler's series of gold, crystal, and other assorted items.

A bell, a clock, and a radio with the set of cymbals used on the street corner.