



A SHORT HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S OF THE ASSUMPTION PARISH ROME, NEW YORK

St. Mary's Church grew out of the desire of Rome's German-speaking population to have a Catholic house of worship in the community. These Germans were immigrants who came to Rome to escape oppression in Germany. They found jobs working on the railroad and the Erie Canal. In 1840, when serious discussion began about the building of a Catholic Church in Rome, St. Joseph's Church in Utica was serving the Rome Catholics. In 1845, the German Catholics began meeting in the old Mansion House on South James Street, where Father Florian Schwenninger, from another Utica Parish – St. John's – came to say Mass about once a week.

In 1848, Rome's German Catholics decided to build a church. At a cost of \$900.00, they constructed a small wooden building on the corner of South James Street and Depeyster Street that could seat 400 people. Bishop McClusky of Albany appointed Father Schwenninger as the parish's first pastor. The church was named St. Mary of the Assumption.

The people worshiped in the small church from 1848 until 1870. St. Mary's had 23 different pastors during this time! Things at St. Mary's changed with the arrival of one of those pastors, Father Peter J. Smith (Schmidt). He immediately recognized that the parish was outgrowing the little church and its nearby school, which was in poor condition.

Since the parish had prospered with a larger congregation, Father Smith began a campaign to raise funds to build a new parish complex. A small section of land was purchased about when the land was surveyed, it was found unsuitable for the erection of a substantial brick edifice. The foundation would have cost far more to build than the planned brick structure.

The people were divided over the site and the project was abandoned. Towards the latter part of September, 1870, a meeting by the parish trustees was held, with several of the older, leading men of the congregation invited. Some of the parish favored building on West Liberty Street while the rest of the congregation favored a location closer to Canal Village, where a majority of the German Catholics lived. Even though a number of the members favored a parish vote on the location the Bishop of Albany, John J. Conroy, made a decision – the church would be built on West Liberty Street. This decision caused a split in the congregation, with the people favoring the Canal Village location breaking away to form the German Independent Catholic Society of Rome.

The people remaining faithful to the old congregation, led by Father Smith, purchased the land on West Liberty Street and laid the cornerstone of the new St. Mary's Church on May 18, 1871, the Feast of the Ascension. On July 27, 1871, the separated German families laid the cornerstone for their church, named St. Joseph's, on Ridge Street. In December, 1887, due to a lack of Catholic Priests, they transferred their allegiance from the Roman Catholic Church to the Anglican (Episcopal) Church. The members of St. Mary's Church decided to lease the M.E. Church (Zion Episcopal) for regular services until their new church on Liberty Street was completed.

In June 1871 the school below the railroad on South James Street was closed and the children temporarily sent to public schools. In September, a new school was immediately started behind the rectory on West Liberty Street. IT was completed in six weeks! The new school opened with 80 students. The teacher was Professor C. Falk, an experienced educator, and also the parish organist.

On September 17, 1872 a public auction of the original St. Mary's Church and school house on South James Street was held. Peter Schneible, Joseph Herbst and Francis Goldsmith purchased it. Mr. Schneible bought out the interests of Mr. Herbst and Mr. Goldsmith and proceeded to put a fence around the property. He planned to move the church onto land known as the circus lot, near the depot. Upon learning of his intentions, the people who resided on South James Street showed their disapproval by congregating in large numbers during the entire day, and loudly protesting the removal of the building by Mr. Schneible. The fence was torn down and carried away. A "clearing out" of the interior of the former church also took place. The crowds were both angry and sad toward what was happening to the former St. Mary's Church. During the course of the day the police arrested several people for assault and battery.

The story is still remembered by descendants of the original St. Mary's parishioners. The large crucifix removed from St. Mary's was displayed at the new St. Joseph's Church on Ridge Street and was subsequently turned over to Transfiguration Church when they purchased the property. The crucifix still resides at Transfiguration Church.

On September 22, 1872 the dedication of the new St. Mary's of the Assumption Church took place. People came from all over Central New York including Albany, Syracuse and Utica. The Church was so crowded that people had to be turned away. The dedication was conducted by Coadjutor Bishop Francis McNierney of Albany, Very Reverend Father Theodore Noethen, Vicar General of the Germans, acting as Priest; Very Reverend Father Gabriels, of Troy Seminary, as Assistant Priest; Father Delaney, of Utica as Deacon; Father Hermann Wibble, of Sand Lake, as Sub-Deacon; and Father John V. Smith to be relieved from active duties during the two and one-half ceremony.

In accordance with established custom of Catholic Church dedications, those who entered deposited a fee of \$1.00 per person at the door. Some people chose to leave larger amounts. The church, though not yet finished inside, presented a very inviting appearance, especially when compared to the former St. Mary's Church. Many generous donors from the congregation paid for the beautiful stained-glass windows.

St. Mary's bells also were installed at this time. The largest bell, weighing 2,000 lbs., is called "Ave Maris Stella", Hall Star of the Sea. George Detterweich of Dunkirk, N.Y., donated the second largest bell, St. George, which weighs 1,000 lbs. The third bell is named St. Joseph, after the foster father of Jesus. The fourth bell is the smallest, named Saint Rose. The bells were used to remind people Mass would be starting shortly. Mozart's renowned Twelfth Mass was celebrated, and the ceremonies laid down in the ritual for this solemnity were fully carried out. The choir from St. John's Church, Utica, and an orchestra from Syracuse, conducted by Prof. Baumer, were present. Mr. J.C. Schreiber, Utica and Miss Pauline Ellsasser, of the Church of the Assumption Syracuse also joined the choir. Prof. C. Falk, organist of St. Mary's, demonstrated his eminent adaptability to the position he held. Miss Ellsasser sang a solo, Millard's "Ave Maria." The Rome Sentinel, in the September 24, 1872 edition, stated the music of the entire program surpassed in volume and excellence everything heard before in Rome on any similar occasion.

At 3 p.m. the same day, Confirmation was held at the church. The church was overflowing for the ceremony. The bishop administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 126 candidates, both children and adults, male and female. Father Wibble of Sand Lake, Rensselaer County, addressed the candidates in German, explaining to them their duty to God, their church and the world. The Bishop confirmed the candidates and gave his blessing to all in attendance.

In 1872, St. Mary's had a new brick church, a new school, a remodeled dwelling for the teachers, and a renovated rectory. The total cost of all property was \$68,723.23. Father Smith was dedicated to paying off the debt, often paying the interest on loans from his own savings, and for many years not taking any of his salary. The church grew and prospered under the guidance of Father Smith. On December 17, 1889, the pastor celebrated his silver jubilee as a priest. In July 1890, Sister Virginia celebrated her 25th Anniversary as a nun, and 14 years of service to St. Mary's Church. In 1893, a new brick schoolhouse was built to replace the wooden structure behind the church.

On September 15, 1895, Father Smith, having completed 25 years of service at St. Mary's, resigned. He returned to his native land, Germany. He never came back to America, but left a lasting monument – St. Mary's Church. Father Smith died November 12, 1908 in Germany.

Reverent Michael Rieger succeeded Father Smith. He was born in Bavaria but was ordained in Equador on July 20, 1890. He made the continuing reduction of parish debts one of the top priorities of his administration and by the end of his pastorate had succeeded in paying off many of the parish's largest debts. Father Rieger also donated the Stations of the Cross to St. Mary's Church.

In 1901 Father Rieger built a new rectory, which, like the church and school, was constructed of lasting brick. The following year the new convent was built, also of brick. But Father Rieger's health was failing. He knew he needed help for the growing parish. In July 1904 Father Alfred A. Roth was the first associate priest appointed to St. Mary's.

The year 1932 marked the 60th Anniversary of the building of the new Ste. Mary's Church and the 85th year since the founding of the parish. During the early 1930's many improvements were made to the church. These improvements included the redecoration of the church's interior, which was frescoed by Paul Kalies, the purchase of additional land for the cemetery, the construction of a new school, and the founding of the Assumption Club, which used the old school for a clubhouse. The church's exterior was treated with an impervious coating, which put a hard, protective surface over the now 60-year old brick. The parish's remaining debt was completely paid off by 1949.

Father Aubrey R. Seiter was assigned to St. Mary's in November 1949 and during his lengthy pastorate oversaw many improvements to St. Mary's. These included the electrification of the bell, new wainscoting, new front doors and a church patio. He also paved the church grounds and built a new garage. On November 4, 1954, the block on the east side of the church was purchased. In 1955, Father Seiter, with the aid of the women's societies of the parish, had new sound systems installed in the church and in the school auditorium. He has the school auditorium redecorated and installed florescent lighting in the classrooms. In 1957, work was begun on the construction of a new sacristy and renovation of the church. This was completed by May 1, 2058.

On Sunday, September 21, 1958 at 3:30 p.m., a fire was started in St. Mary's Church by a 12-year old girl, in search for a place to stay overnight. She lighted a candle in the

church's vestibule, opened the vestment doors, and accidentally touched a surplice with the candle's flame. This caused the vestments, and then the sacristy, to catch fire. Fortunately, the door from the sacristy to the sanctuary was closed and this prevented the flames from spreading further. The child was mentally disabled and reported in the newspaper accounts of the fire, to be "without good parental guardianship." Police records showed she slept in a city playhouse the night before the fire and under a porch in the city during the previous winter.

During 1958, the decorations on the four posts of the church's tower were taken down due to deterioration. In their place, lights on a time clock were installed to beautify the tower, which was newly shingled and strengthened. A fund drive was started to replace St. Mary's sacristy and for other church improvements. Funds collected amounted to over \$100,000.00 by January 1, 1959. As a result, the addition to the church, the new sacristy and renovations to the main altar were completed during the summer of 1959.

On July 15, 1959 demolition of several small stores located on the east side of the church was started but quickly halted. The Traveler's Insurance Company refused to grant the necessary Insurance policy to Father Seiter, who was acting as the project's contractor because he was not in the demolition business. Father Seiter had assumed the job after receiving a contractor's estimate of \$3,000.00 to do the work. Judging this estimate to be exorbitant, Father Seiter decided to oversee the project himself. Fidelity Insurance Company agreed to issue a policy for \$491.00 saying it didn't matter who handled the demolition. Father then hired his own carpenters and the building was completely demolished by October 10, 1959. It is now used as a parking lot.

In the Spring of 1961 work began to renovate the auditorium into a gymnasium. All new tile was installed throughout the basement of the school. The auditorium was sanded and two removeable basketball fixtures were installed.

In June 1963, the first parish picnic in many years was held at the Lake Delta Fireman Field with Francis Kenneally as General Chairman. All the parish societies cooperated in the event. A beautiful day, free rides for the kids, and "parish spirit" brought parishioners out by the hundreds. A profit of \$3,500.00 from the picnic and raffle was realized.

In 1964 a new tile floor was installed in the vestibule of the church. Another well-attended picnic was also held in 1964. A new room was created for recreation and pool tables in the basement of the recreational building.

1975 disaster struck St. Mary's when a storm damaged the roof and blew out the stained-glass windows from the church tower. The windows could not be repaired and replacement was too expensive, so it was decided to brick up the tower area where the windows had been. Protective glass was placed over the remaining stain glass windows of the church and new roofing for the sacristy area was installed. Also, in 1975, Mr. Frank Rees, longstanding parish trustee, died at the age of 92. After a month of mourning, Mr. Donald Kelley was appointed as new trustee.

In 1976 a small room was built inside the church to be used as a face-to-face confessional. The parking lot on the church's east side was leased to the city, to be used as a municipal parking lot. This was done to release St. Mary's from the responsibility of maintaining the lot. In the Spring of 1976, it was decided to close the Group Home that had been housed in the convent. The convent was renovated and four Sisters of St. Joseph moved in.

In February 1976, a German Festival was held featuring a German Bank and of course, German food! It went so well that another was held in August in the church parking lot.

The date June 18, 1984 is one that Father McGrath, then pastor of St. Mary's, will always remember. The Rome Catholic Junior High Graduation ceremony was in progress in the church, when a bolt of lightning struck the steeple during a storm. The heavy crucifix fell to the street and the steeple caught fire. The church bells and organ all suffered damage, primarily from water used to fight the blaze for over three hours. As part of the repair work the tower's wood shingles were replaced with copper and a new copper-clad cross was designed by parishioner Hank Murray.

Father Vincent Long arrived at St. Mary's Church December, 1986 to become Pastor, after the transfer of Father McGrath. Father Long initiated many projects to improve the church and buildings of St. Mary's Parish. The repairs to the four bells, installed in 1872 and blessed by the Bishop of Albany on August 15, 1872, was one of the larger projects. The working mechanism had deteriorated, and several of the bells could not be rung. Upon inspection of the bells, it was determined the parts required were no longer made so a new modern working mechanism would have to be installed. The Parish Council approved this, and subscriptions were started to raise the money to pay for the work. After several months of donations, and a showing of the movie "The Bells of St. Mary's," the amount needed was raised. The installation was completed, and on Easter Sunday, 1996, the bells were blessed and re-dedicated to all the parishioners, past and present, who made it possible.

In 1995, Sharon Verminski, a St. Mary's parishioner, began to restore the Stations of the Cross. The Stations were blessed and reinstalled during Lent in 1996. During this time, parishioner donations made repairs to the roofs of the church and rectory possible. The interior of the church was repainted and watermarks removed from ceilings.

1998 marks the 150th Anniversary of the founding of St. Mary's of the Assumption Church. Many events make up the celebration of this parish milestone. The Communion Class, under the direction of Adele Saeger, helped to make the 1998 May Crowning of our Blessing Mother an extra special ceremony.

On Memorial Day, 1998 Father Paul Mathis, current pastor of St. Mary's celebrated Mass at the Cemetery Chapel, the first to be held there in many years. On June 7, 1998, a Mass was celebrated in honor of St. Boniface, the Patron of Germany. The German immigrants who founded our church revered St. Boniface, and in his memory had a stained-glass window installed above the high altar when the church was built. The Confirmation Class provided the music, liturgy celebration and distributed flowers to the parishioners as a Sign of Peace. On August 2, 1998 a German Picnic was held at the Maennerchor (a German Social Club), in nearby Marcy. German music, food and games were enjoyed by all at the picnic, planned under the leadership of Toni (Antoinette) Belmont. On October 18, 1998 Bishop Thomas Costello will celebrate an Anniversary Mass at 11:30 a.m., during which this year's Confirmation class will be confirmed. A dinner dance at the Beeches Restaurant is also planned to complete the year of celebration.

Father Mathis has appointed Mrs. Barbara Thomas as new trustee for St. Mary's for a term of four years. She has the distinction of being the first woman trustee of St. Mary's Parish.

St. Mary's School

The exact date of the founding of the school is unclear. What is known is that St. Mary's had a school before the coming of Father Smith, as he describes, in one of his reports the schoolhouse that was in existence when he arrived. It was probably under the Franciscan Fathers, between the years of 1859 and 1867, that Catholic education received its start in our parish, for one of the early schoolmasters was George Baumer who came from the Assumption Church in Syracuse, which was also under the Franciscans. In those days the schoolmaster was usually the church organist.

The first schoolhouse did not amount to much. It was a wooden structure, two stories high and sadly in need of paint and repair. It was essentially a one-room schoolhouse, with all 130 students taught by one teacher! The students were crowded onto benches that were coarse and clumsy. The building's upper story was used as the living quarters for the schoolmaster, although it was only partly lathed and plastered. The only heat was from a stove, which would, presumably, be found cold in the morning. The only water was from the pump in the yard. This school was behind the church at the corner of South James and Depeyster Street.

When the new church was built on Liberty Street in 1871 this old school was abandoned and a new frame building behind the new church was used for classes. One teacher could no longer teach all the students. The need for religious instructors was great so Father Smith induced the Sisters of Christian Charity to come and take charge. He obtained a small wooden house for them where the present convent stands.

By July 1893, the wooden school was far too small. A movement was started for a new one. The old schoolhouse was taken down and subscriptions begun for a new building to be built of brick like the church. Construction was begun immediately. The school was completed in just two months' time. On September 29, a great crowd of people attended the dedication of the new edifice.

This was the school for the children for 33 years. As early as 1915, it was foreseen that the brick school would not meet the needs of the growing parish and efforts were made to accumulate a fund for another, larger building.

When Father Heisler came, he gave new impetus to this work. In 1925, sufficient funds had been obtained that work could be started. The first step was to appoint a committee of the representative laymen to take charge. This committee was composed of Joseph Rees, Chairman; John Metz, Peter Meyers, John Peterman, Patrick Grogan, George Tolnich, George Ellinger and Joseph Kieffer. It must be said to their credit that they left no effort too great to put to their task, no time too long to spend in discovering the best path to pursue. The building aptly speaks of their relentless labors.

Paul Huber of Syracuse, an architect who had a fine reputation as a planner of churches and schools, was chosen to design this building. Owing to the fact that Strandberg Brothers of Chicago was already engaged in building the new Rome Free Academy, the company was able to underbid all other bidders to win the contract for St. Mary's School. They sublet contracts to Jacob Durr for the plumbing; to Finster Brothers for the roof, to Juergens Electric Company for the wiring and fixtures; and to Paul Kalies for the decorating.

Father Heisler broke ground for the project on the 5th day of June 1925. Construction began immediately but it took a year to complete the building. By September 1925, the foundations were ready for the laying of the corner stone. The ceremonies were held on

Sunday afternoon the day before Labor Day. The entire parish and half of Rome were there despite rainy weather that shortened the planning program. The corner stone was laid by the Vicar General of the Diocese Rt. Rev. Daniel Doody of Utica. The sermon was preached in the church by one of the parish sons, Rev. Jerome McCarthy, in which he spoke stirring of the value of Catholic Education.

The new school which utilized fireproof construction techniques, was completed in June 1926, when suitable opening exercises were held. It was put into use the following Fall. The total cost of this school was, for building and furnishings, nearly \$150,000.00.

The Sisters of Christian Charity were in charge of the school from 1876 till 1927 when in order to concentrate their activities in a smaller territory they gave up all of their houses in this part of the province. From 1927 until 1975, the Franciscan Sisters from Allegheny served our school. In 1975, due to a lack of personnel, the Franciscan Sisters withdrew from the school, which had become a junior high school with grades 7 and 8 only. The school was closed in 1985, with the building now rented by BOCES for its educational programs.

St. Mary's Cemetery

In the very early days of St. Mary's, probably about 1950, the parish, under the leadership of its priests, purchased a small plot to use as the parish's cemetery. It was situated at the foot of Lawrence Street and was only about one acre in size.

When Father Smith came in 1970, it was evident to all that the old cemetery was far too small. So, on July 5, 1874, an organization was formed to secure a new and larger burial ground.

The group was known as the St. Mary's Cemetery Association and incorporated under the laws of New York State. The first officers were Present Casper Goetz; Vice-President, Michael Schneible; Secretary, Anthony Raffauf; and Treasurer, John Winklemeyer. Trustees were Matthew Schneible, John Peterman, Frank Schneible, Laurence Goetty and John Meyer.

The Cemetery Association purchased ten acres with a frontage of 373 feet, part of the Michael Bell farm on West Liberty Street. George W. Chase surveyed the new land and laid it out in lots. Roads were built and trees and shrubs planted. On October 13, 2874, Bishop McNierney solemnly dedicated it.

In the Spring of 1902, Mrs. Mary F. Schillner, widow of George Schillner who had recently died, made a gift of the present chapel in memory of her husband. Architect George C. Schillner drew up plans for the building, which took about three months to complete at a cost of about \$4,000.00. This was but one of the many gifts made by the Schillner family to the parish.

With the construction of the Barge Canal and the change in the roadbed of the New York Central Railroad in 1915, then pastor Father Lauer believed that the original cemetery and those buried there would be threatened with neglect. So, at considerable trouble and expense, he had all the bodies removed from the old cemetery and reburied in the new one.

Under Father Heisler, an additional ten acres of land was purchased from a Mrs. Ganger. This land adjoined the cemetery property on the north and west. In 1965, Father Seiter

purchased more land on the north side of the cemetery to accommodate the parish's future needs. An addition was built onto the caretaker's house at the cemetery in 1975. Mary Zorn, along-time parish secretary and organist, used this addition as an office.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fusco are the present cemetery caretakers.

The past 150 years have been good to St. Mary's of the Assumption Church. Throughout its history the parish has been nurtured through the efforts of clergy and lay people alike. Many sacrifices have been made by parishioners to not only build St. Mary's Church but to maintain our inheritance for the generations to come. May God continue to bless St. Mary's and all that gives so willingly of their time and talents.

APPENDICES

Original Parishioners who donated to build St. Mary's Church

Cornellius Schibel	Joseph Kieffer
Louis Kapfer	Matthew & Mich. Schneible
Andrew Gossman, Jr.	Joseph & Schwartz
Donat Metzger	Frank Schiedel
Frank Frewer	Joseph & Maria Ritzel Zimmer
Joseph Lechner	Amelia Beck
Joseph Straub	Simon Ulrich
Valentine Schneible	John Staub & Frank
Frank Herbst	Teresa Schneible
Valentine Finster	Peter Schneible
Henry Schibel	George & Magdalen Benner
Michael Schneible	Joseph & Teresa Herbst
Lawrence Cole	Herman & Apolonia Oeinck
John Bartley	Anthony & Mary Oxner
Peter Bauer	Michael & Franciska Schillner
William Schwartz	Joseph & Mary Cuper
Joseph Balzer	John & Helen Winkelmeyer
Joseph Schwartz, JR.	John Moshiser
Joseph Acker	Lorenz & Margaret Goetty
Joseph Kieffer	Joanna Moshiser
Alois Mertz	John & Susanna Herr
Joseph Sigel	Michael & Catherina Schneible
Louis Kieffer	Jacob & Maria Schilling
Xaver Miller	John & Elizabeth Petermann
Lawrence Alter	John & Ottilia Meyer
Frantz Cisbauer	John & Elizabeth Baumer
Henry Miller	Adam & Barbara Herbst
Andrew Sigel	Joseph & Maria Straub
Joseph Ritzel	Frederic & Catherina Stahlberger
Martin Petermann	John & Maria Isenegger
George Frewer	Adam & Barbara Herbst
George Beek, Jr.	Franz & Maria Leopold
Sebastian Schilling	Caspar & Anna Maria Stroble
Martin Mertz	Joseph & Elizabeth Copia
Charles Garline	Jacob & Catherina Eisemmenger
Leopold Wunsch	Peter & Catherina Cole
Frances Goldsmith	George & Elizabeth Meiser
Anna Goldsmith	Joseph & Eliza Durhemer
Peter Rothmund	Marguretha Gossman
Margaret Rothmund	Franz & Crsentia Hengge
Nicholas Kapfer	Barbara Schmitt
Joseph Kapfer	Leopold Meyer, Sr.
Cuseb Bauer	Georg Hofmeister
Michael Windhager	Joseph & Barbara Burg
Andrew. Gossmann	Andrew Gossman, Jr.
Joseph Hofmeister	Teresia Hann
	Louis Kiefer

Francisca Millberger
 Teresia Kraemer
 Margaretha Bauer
 Peter Staub
 Salone Schiebel
 Joseph & Anna Mammosser
 Rebecca Straub
 Joseph & Anna Maria Hess
 Hermann & Teresia Frewer
 Anton Jacob & Maria Leffart
 Martin & Anna Maria
 Peter Bauer
 Martin & Rachel Miller
 Peter & Catherine Toepp
 Peter & Josephine Meyer
 Friedrich & Louisa Haack
 Thomas & Eliza Edwards

St, Mary's Church Pastors

1. Rev. Florian Schwenninger
1848 – June 1849
2. Rev. Jacob Moschall
July 1849-Aug. 1850
3. Rev. F. Joseph Kopp
Aug. 1850-Feb. 1851
4. Rev. Joseph H. Herbst
Apr. 1851-Apr. 1852
5. Rev. William Tappert
July. 1952-Aug. 1854
6. Rev. John Constantine Weber
Sept. 1854-Nov. 1854
7. Rev. Henry Feddermann
Dec. 1854-Apr. 1855
8. Rev. J. C. Weber
Apr. 1855-Jul. 1855
9. Rev. Joseph Maley
July 1855-Dec. 1855
10. Rev. Joseph Raffainer
Dec. 1855-Oct. 1856
11. Rev. Anton Heimo
Oct. 1856-Dec. 1857
12. Rev. T. Laurent Schneyder
Dec. 1856-Nov. 1857
13. Rev. Maurus Ramsauer, O.S.B.
Nov. 1857-June 1858
14. Rev. Phil Joe. Nichola, Minorite
July 1857-Mar. 1859
15. Rev. J.C. Weber
Mar. 1859-Sept. 1859

16. Rev. Francis Rombouts, O.M.C.
Oct. 1859-Apr. 1860
17. Rev. Ladislaus Korten, O.M.C.
Apr. 1860-Aug. 1860
18. Rev. Clemens Mutsaers, O.M.C.
Sept. 1860-Nov. 1861
19. Rev. Pius Kotterer, O.M.C.
Jan. 1862-Jan. 1864
20. Rev. Leopold Mozygember, O.M.C.
Jan. 1864-Mar. 1865
21. Rev. Francis Neubauer, O.M.C.
Apr. 1865-June 1867
22. Rev. Alexius Rodenberg, O.M.C.
July 1867-Dec. 1867
23. Rev. Anton Carius
Dec. 1867-Aug. 1870
24. Rev. Peter J. Smith
Sept. 1870-Sept. 1895
25. Rev. Michael Rieger
Sept. 1895- May 1917
26. Rev. George S. Heisler
May 1917-July 1935
27. Rev. William J. Ullrich
July 1935-Oct. 1949
28. Rev. Aubrey R. Seiter
Nov. 1949-Jan. 1973
29. Rev. Daniel W. Heintz
Jan. 1973-Mar. 1981
30. Rev. Thomas J. McGrath
March 1981-Dec. 1986
31. Rev. Vincent P. Long
Dec. 1986-Nov. 1997
32. Rev. R. Paul Mathis
Jan. 1998-

Associate Pastors

1. Rev. Alfred A. Roth
July 1904-June 1911
2. Rev. John P. Lauer
June 1911-Sept. 1917
3. Rev. William J. Ullrich
Sept. 1917-June 1923
4. Rev. Paul Hemmer
June 1923-July 1929
5. Rev. Ambrose J. Ruppert
July 1929-Sept. 1932
6. Re. J. Norbert Lutz
June 1930-Apr. 1935

7. Rev. Edward F. Doyle
Sept. 1932-
8. Rev. Martin Tracy
Apr. 1935-Aug. 1935
9. Rev. Edward W. Simpson
Sept. 1935
10. Rev. Wilfred Doherty
Oct. 1936
11. Rev. Roger Bowen
12. Rev. Robert J. Long
13. Rev. Charles E. McCarthy
14. Rev. Harry Surber
15. Rev. Donald J. Slimbaugh
Apr. 1945-Feb. 1950
16. Rev. Frederick Cummings
Oct. 1945-May 1952
17. Rev. Lawrence A. Horton
June 1950-July 1955
18. Rev. Edgar M. Holihan
May 1952-April 1953
19. Rev. Robert F. Fenske
Apr. 1953-June 1954
20. Rev. Richard M. Stuczko
June 1954-Feb. 1956
21. Rev. Joseph D. Segrue
July 1955-Sept. 1961
22. Rev. Peter J. Wlnewisser
Feb. 1956-Sept. 1966
23. Rev. Francis Walczyk
Sept. 1961-June 1963
24. Rev. William Guckert
June 1966-Sept. 1970
25. Rev. Joseph Moskal
Sept. 1966-Sept. 1970
26. Rev. George Wurz
June 1967-Oct. 1969
27. Rev. Jerome F. Weber
Oct. 1969-Sept. 1972
28. Rev. Robert D. Dwyer
Sept. 1970-Sept. 1972
29. Rev. William P. Gleba
Sept. 1972-Nov. 1977
30. Rev. John F. Harrold
Sept. 1973-Nov. 1977
31. Rev. James P. Lang
Nov. 1977-July 1981
32. Rev. John P. Felon
Aug. 1981-Sept. 1985
33. Rev. Robert C. Weber
July 1986-July 1998

Pastoral Associates

1. Sr. Marilyn Vassallo
1979-1980
2. Sr. Elizabeth Dolne, C.S.J.
1982-1986
3. John Davies, C.S.C.
July 1987-July 1998

A Few Clergy Tales

Father Michael Rieger was assigned to St. Mary's in 1895. He was born in Bavaria, but ordained in Equador on July 20, 1890. After he became involved with political and religious troubles in that country, he was arrested and condemned to die. He escaped and along with several nuns, journeyed several hundred miles through jungles. He eventually made his way to New York City, where he met Father Smith and was invited to come to Rome. A man who loved flowers, he was so charitable that when he died in 1917, there was barely enough money saved to bury him.

Father John P. Lauer was assigned to St. Mary's in June 1911 to replace Father Roth. He was born in Germany, but received his education at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, N.Y., where he was ordained June 10, 1911. Father Lauer assumed many of the duties formerly performed by Father Roth due to Father Rieger's illness. He initiated many improvements in the church. Father Lauer was very conscientious, and his zeal was insurmountable. In following his line of duty, while making a sick call during the winter, he fell from his cutter and injured himself. He suffered the loss of a leg that was frozen and caused him years of suffering. In 1917 he was transferred to the pastorate of St. Joseph's Church, Oneida, N.Y. Father Lauer died in 1958 and is buried next to Father Rieger, outside the chapel in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Father Aubrey Seiter was assigned to St. Mary's in November, 1949. His first big task was to build another church – St. Joseph's Church in Lee Center – which was completed in 1952

In October 1962, associated pastor Father Winnerwisser established "Contact," a parish youth group for which he was moderator. It proved very popular, and at the end of 1962-1963 school year, had an enrolled membership of 216 teenagers. During 1963, a room in the old school's clubhouse was remodeled into a game room for the members of "Contact." Money for the project was paid for by "Contact" from revenue received from dances held during the year.

Vocations

Saint Mary's had a good number of vocations to religious life as part of our long and rich history.

1. Rev. Edward Donnelly, son of James and Catherine Donnelly, was ordained July 1880. He celebrated his first Solemn Mass at St. Mary's. He died in 1898. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Mary's and he was buried in St. Peter's Cemetery.
2. Rev. Adolf (Anthony) Bernholtz, son of August Bernholtz, OMC, was ordained July 14, 1907. He celebrated his first Solemn Mass at St. Mary's on July 23, 1907.
3. Rev. Bede (Frederick John) Hess, OMC, son of Joseph and Catherine Hess, was ordained July 26, 1908 at Innsbruck, Austria. His first Solemn High Mass

was celebrated at St. Mary's later that year. The Franciscan Fathers elected Father Hess on August 18, 1932 to the office of Father Provincial.

4. Rev. Dominick (Leo) Kimmel, OMC, son of Henry and Josephine Kimmel, was ordained June 19, 1921 at St. Anthony's Seminary, Rensselaer, N.Y. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass at St. Mary's, June 27, 1921.
5. Rev. Jerome McCarthy was ordained December 1, 1918 at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, N.Y. He is the son of James S. and Antonette McCarthy. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass at St. Mary's on December 8, 1918.
6. Rev. Bernardine (Gerald) Golden, OMC, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Golden, was ordained on June 11, 1938 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Albany, N.Y. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass on June 12, 1938 at St. Mary's Church.
7. Rev. Peter Singleton was ordained in Syracuse, N.Y. for the Diocese of Da Nang on May 21, 1966. No further information is available.
8. Rev. R. Paul Mathis, son of Raymond and Helen Mathis, was ordained in Syracuse, N.Y. on May 13, 1972. He celebrated his first Solemn Mass on May 14, 1972 at St. Mary's Church. He is currently servicing as Pastor of St. Mary's Church, and we give thanks to the Lord for allowing Fr Mathis to celebrate our 150th Anniversary with all of us.
9. Rev Harold F. Dunn, son of Wilfred and Celest Dunn, was ordained May 28, 1978 at St. John's Church, Cromwell, Ct. Fr Dunn is a member of the Society of the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass at St. Mary's on June 4, 1978.
10. Rev. Peter Schneible, OSF was ordained September 9, 1989 at St. Camillus's Church, Maryland. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass on September 10, 1989 at St. Mary's Church. He is the son of Arthur and Beatrice Schuler Schneible.
11. Rev. William Kernan, son of William and Dolores Hemmer Kernan, was ordained June 25, 1993. Bishop Robert Brom, Diocese of San Diego California ordained him. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass at St. Mary's Church on July 11, 1993. Father Kernan's mother is a relative of a former Assisstance at St. Mary's, Father Paul Hemmer.

Girls Who Have Entered Religious Orders

1. Sister Arcadia (Theresa Machenschalk) was received into the order of the Sisters of Christian Charity at Mallinkrodt Convent, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in January, 1884.
2. Sister Tehgahkwita (Margaret Bezold) entered the Sisters of Christian Charity, October 28, 1887.

3. Sister Veridiana (Carrie Scharback) was received into the Sisters of Christian Charity during the year 1890.
4. Sister Christina Joseph (Anna Laubheimer) entered the convent upon returning to the old country in the year 1889.
5. Sister Ludmilla (Mary Magdalen Baltzer) was received into the order of the Sisters of Christian Charity, August 113, 2897.
6. Sister M. Bernadette (Rose A. Wunsch) entered the Franciscan Order in Syracuse, New York in 1903.
7. Sister Roselda (Geraldine Rose Affolter) was received into the Order of Sisters of Christian Charity, September 8, 1915.
8. Sister Andrew (Agnes L Kirk) entered the Order of the Sisters of Christian Charity, July 15, 1927.
9. Sister Mary Gerald (Antoinetta Charlotte Stieber) entered the Third Franciscan Order, OMC, August 15, 1927.
10. Sister M. Arthur (Hazel Galvin) entered the Franciscan Order OFM, February 1931.
11. Sister Rosemond (Marjorie Butler) daughter of Edward T. and Theresa Butler, was received into the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, August 15, 2931. Deceased June 23, 1997.
12. Sister Mary Anthonise (Emma Reese) entered the Sisters of St. Joseph's.
13. Sister Mary Joanita (Margaret Nellenbach), daughter of Joseph and Mary Nellenbach, was received into the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, August 15, 1933.
14. Sister M. Barbara Evelyn Maurer) entered the Order of Sisters of Christian Charity.
15. Sister Gertrude (Gertrude Schroth) daughter of John and Mary Schroth. She was received into the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany August 15, 1936. She died March 12, 1985.
16. Sister Dorothy (Marion Foster) daughter of Albert C. and Adelaide Forster, was received into the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, August 15, 1939.
17. Sister Mariam Regina (Ruth Schneible) daughter of Peter J. and Louise Schneible, was received into the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, December 8, 1946.
18. Virginia Dunn, daughter of James and Ellen Dunn, entered the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary July 1952.

19. Eileen Dunn, daughter of James and Ellen Dunn, entered the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in July 1956.
20. Mary Ann Dunn, daughter of James and Ellen Dunn, entered the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in July 1963.
21. Janice Schuler, daughter of Philip and Dorothy Bailey Schuler, entered the Order of St. Joseph's of Carondelet about 1953. She died December 13, 1970.
22. Ann Hayes, OCD, daughter of James and Claire Hayes, entered the convent September 1978 in Oklahoma and took her solemn vows July 14, 1984. She graduated from St. Mary's, Rome Catholic High School and Sienna College in Albany, New York

Sisters of Christian Charity who Taught at St. Mary's School from 186-1927

Sr. Gabriel Koch	Sr. Tehgahkwita Bezold
Sr. Virginia Liesmanns	Sr. Flodoberta Dahm
Sr. Conradine Leisse	Sr. Marie Huhn
Sr. Damiana Westerwoth	Sr. Maria Baecker
Sr. Romana Haneke	Sr. Alphons Volmer
Sr. Dafrosa Reber	Sr. Sigismunda Finke
Sr. Victorine Utz	Sr. Aloyse Lohmann
Sr. Evangelista Stortz	Sr. Achatia Dillmann
Sr. Potamiana Nuemberg	Sr. Godoleva Michels
Sr. Gorgonia Lohmann	Sr. Carmen Lower
Sr. Reinolda Wegesinn	Sr. Wendelina Philipp
Sr. Alexandrine Bremeke	Sr. Alexa Bertram
Sr. Hedwig Kelchtermann	Sr. Quirille Kaiser
Sr. Reginalda Pfeifer	Sr. Luciana Burkhart
Sr. Symphoriana Impink	Sr. Hedwig Griesmer
Sr. Fabia Sieffert	Sr. Anita Gothier
Sr. Benina Lahr	Sr. Onesyma Trinter
Sr. Angeline Albermann	Sr. Hiltrudis Reiner
Sr. Trudberta Franz	Sr. Mary Tholl
Sr. Margaretha Koester	Sr. Eberharda Zieske
Sr. Bertina Kessler	Sr. Lorenza Humel
Sr. Christinia Dombrink	Sr. Mara Vogel
Sr. Bonosa Beil	Sr. Rosaria Schuster
Sr. Eustolia Hillebrand	Sr. Wilmina Gehringer
Sr. Clodesinda Schmitt	Sr. LaSalle Merkel
Sr. Egina Besche	Sr. Seraphia Betzler
Sr. Rogata Kroessel	Sr. Evangela Curran
Sr. Luitgardis Boennighausen	Sr. Procula Lang

This parish history was compiled and written by Mrs. Emma Arcuri as part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations, 1998

