

## St. Mary Parish Brief History

### Introduction:

Illinois became the 21st state in 1818. May 6, 1834, Pope Gregory XVI divided Illinois between the Dioceses of Vincennes and St. Louis, and Bishop Dubourg of St. Louis was asked to care for the Catholics on the east side of the Mississippi.

### People and Events That Shaped St. Mary's:

**1838** - The Catholic Church History of Clinton County, Illinois, begins with the establishment of the first church erected by the Germans of Hanover (Germantown, 111.). It was known as St. Henry's Parish until 1867 when the name was changed to St. Boniface.

**1853** - The St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception congregation of Carlyle had its beginning as the second oldest parish in Clinton County. Prior to this time, the Catholic families residing in Carlyle and surrounding territory attended divine services at Germantown.

-The first holy Mass in St. Mary's parish was said by Father Francis Joseph Fischer of St. Mary's, Jasper County, at the Mound Farm, situated a little north of Carlyle; then owned by Mr. Tighe, and last owned by the August Krebs family.

-Fr. Fischer and 17 Catholic families in and about the present town of Carlyle wanted to build a church. The honorable Sidney Breese, for many years Justice of the Supreme Court, donated the block of ground on which the church was built. In 1853, Bishop Van De Velde of Chicago laid the cornerstone of a brick church. Contract for the new church was given to Messrs. Moses Richard and D.W. Norris. The funds needed to erect and complete the building were collected by Mr. Tighe and Peter Murphy. They ran out of money when the church was almost completed (needed a floor). Collections were made in St. Louis.

**1855** - The new church was dedicated. At this time, Carlyle was still attended for a while by Fr. Fischer, and then by the Jesuit Fathers Joseph Patschowski and Arnold Damen from St. Louis.

-The first pastor appointed to Carlyle was Fr. Roderick Heimerling, who, however, did not reside here, but merely visited the Carlyle mission from Galena, Illinois at regular intervals. Sick calls, etc. were attended by Fr. August Reineke of Breese.

**1858** - The first baptism at St. Mary's was of Henry Gerhard.

**Nov 1858** - The Franciscan Fathers, Capistran and Servetius, came from Teutopolis in Nov 1858 to conduct missions

**Dec 26, 1858-Apr 1859** - Fr. Jacob Aegidius Marshall (or Moeschall) was St. Mary's Pastor. Fr. Marshall remained but one year in Carlyle and was succeeded by Fr. Clemens von Sieghardt. Fr. Sieghardt was also in charge of the missions at Lebanon, Centralia, Odin, Salem and Vandalia.

-In the beginning, Fr. Sieghardt labored under trying circumstances, there being no school and no rectory. He stayed in a house close to church owned by Christopher Guithues, the County Clerk, paying \$4 a month. But the Congregation grew rapidly and it was not long before the energetic pastor had both a school and a rectory built.

**Apr 9, 1860** - Sidney and Mrs. Breese sold some of the land to the Church for a Catholic graveyard through the trustees Christopher H. Guithues and Anthony Hubert. These men signed it over to the Bishop, Henry D. Junker, on **July 14, 1864**. In **1862**, the Jesuits were requested by the Ladies' Association for the Improvement of the Carlyle Cemetery for 5 or 6 acres of Mound Farm. In reply, on August 25, 1862, the Jesuits agreed to sell the acres at \$40 each, but, "in order that this graveyard may be put on a level with the Catholic graveyard...one acre of it is to be a free gift." The deed was recorded Jan 6, 1863.

**June 10, 1860** - Bishop Van De Velde confirmed 28 at St. Mary's. The Confirmandi class consisted of: Henry Kuhn, Lucas Krebs, Henry Adam, Gabriel Ackerman, Stephen Giefers, Bartholomew Krebs, John Adam, Gottfried Haverkamp, Polycarp Sesten, Stanislaus Hoyer, Casimir Stolz, Cornelius Stolz, Michael Durbin, Carl O'Neil, and Anthony Conkle. Also, Mary Conkle, Catherine Burnside, Agatha Ansinger, Catherine Baquet, Anna Adam, Friederica Hoyer, Sophia Ollier, Theresa Ackerman, Anna Rohr, Louise Schmidt, Mary Adam, Barbara Schaefer, and Mary Durbin.

**1867** - Railroad building and sales of railroad lands brought pioneers into Clinton County. St. Mary's grew from 17 to 150 families. The first St. Mary's Church was too small to accommodate the parishioners, so Fr. Sieghardt built a beautiful new church, 120x66 feet. The cornerstone was laid on July 7, 1867, by Bishop Junker and dedicated on Sunday, June 4, 1871, by Fr. Reinecke, assisted by Fr. Sieghardt and Fr. Bartels of Germantown.

**1872** - The steeple was not put on until the fall of 1872. When the steeple was completed, the cross was 156 feet above ground. The old church was converted into a two-room school. The teachers were two laymen, August Ackerman and Henry A. Niehoff. They taught until the Sisters, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC), arrived.

**1873** - The Sisters started school on May 11 with 50 pupils in attendance. An advertisement in the Union Banner, June 4, 1874, stated that the Sisters teach the elementary school and give instructions in other required branches to girls and young ladies. The tuition was 75 cents a month. Besides teaching school, the Sisters nursed the sick in their homes and kept night watches with the dying. A new rectory was built, the old one being remodeled into a residence for the PHJC sisters. Since many parishioners lived in the country where the roads were often impassable, in 1883 the Sisters began to board girls for several months during the winter and spring in order to prepare them for their first Holy Communion. To defray the expense of adding three new rooms to the Convent, the Sisters conducted a house-to-house collection every year until the debt was paid.

**1874** - Fr. Sieghardt was transferred and died suddenly in St. Louis on Apr 6, 1876. Rev. John Molitor was appointed to succeed him. He was too ill and was soon replaced by Fr. Anton Demming. During Fr. Anton Demming's able pastorate of 30 years in St. Mary's parish (July 19, 1874-Mar 16, 1904), the congregation prospered both spiritually and materially **1878** - Four or five acres of land were purchased south of the cemetery for a house for the sexton, Eli Weber.  
-Silver Jubilee of the parish.

**June 27, 1878** - Death of Hon. Sidney Breese at Pinckneyville.

**Oct 20, 1878** - First official mission at St. Mary's by the Redemptorists. Sermons in German for the first 9 days and in English the next full week. (Notice the dates of the missions are on the large crucifix in the vestibule.)

**1880** - Fr. Demming visited Europe during summer of 1880. Franciscans took care of the parish during his absence (Frs. Raynerius Dickneite and Nicholas Leonard) .

**June 11, 1881** - Bishop Baltes confirmed 242.

**1881-1883** - Bishop Baltes commissioned Fr. Demming to establish a Mission Church at Beaver Prairie. Fr. Fresenborg, named as first assistant, gathered funds for this purpose. It was dedicated by Fr. Demming on Apr 24, 1884.

**February 1883** - As a precautionary measure against the spread of scarlet fever, St. Mary's school was closed several weeks.

-Fr. Demming was sent to Shawneetown to assist in relieving the distressed of the flood in Feb. 1883. During this time, Frs. A. Jele and John Meifuss helped out at St. Mary's.

**1884** - Catholic Knights of Illinois organized.

**Spring of 1884** - Fr. Cluse of Germantown blessed and broke the ground for the new church at Bartelso.

**Jan 7, 1887** - Belleville Diocese was established.

-Fr. Demming represented the southern Illinois priests in the division of the diocese (his train derailed at Mill Shoals, where he was given the Last Rites, but he was well enough to travel on)

**Oct 20, 1887** - Fr. Janssen, administrator of the diocese (later first bishop of Belleville Diocese), blessed two bells for the church (large one given by Wm. Sautman, the smaller one by the parishioners).

**Oct 21, 1887** - 117 confirmed by Bishop Janssen.

**May 15, 1890** - Confirmation by Bishop Janssen on Ascension Thursday - 81 confirmed.

**Oct 12, 1890** - Mission. Redemptorists Gruener and Weber preached German, and Braun and Weber the English sermons.

**1891** - Because of good wheat crop, \$8000 was collected to payoff some of the debt.

**1892** - It was during Fr. Demming's pastorate that the bigger St. Mary's school was erected in 1892 at a cost of \$20,000. Work of tearing down the old school started on March 21, 1892, and the new school was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Bishop John Janssen on Dec 29, 1893. Rev. John Abi Saab of the Marionite rite celebrated Mass on Mar 1 and 2, 1892.

-Fr. Demming donated Stations of the Cross for the Convent chapel.

**Dec 18, 1893** - Fr. Demming celebrated his silver jubilee of ordination to the holy priesthood. A large number of the Reverend Clergy participated as well as the entire parish.

**1894** - Sacristy was enlarged; a new baptistry built.

**Sep 1897** - Fr. Demming blessed the cornerstone for St. Joseph's Hospital, Breese.

**1890** - Fr. Demming went to Europe. Parishioners had the Grotto of Lourdes erected north of the church on the occasion of Fr. Demming's 25 years as pastor at St. Mary's. It was built by William Demming, Father's brother. Very Rev. W. Cluse, Vicar General, blessed the grotto on Dec 6, 1900.

**Aug 1901** - School and church wired for electric lights. 1903 - Golden Jubilee of the parish.

**March 16, 1904** - The zealous priestly labors of Fr. Demming in the Lord's vineyard were ended by death on March 16, 1904. The entire community mourned his loss. On the day of his funeral, March 21, all business was at a standstill out of respect and love for a true priest, beloved friend and loyal citizen. The Rt. Rev. Bishop John Janssen, more than 50 priests, dozens of Venerable Sisters and between 1,500 and 2,000 lay people of all creeds were present to tender the dead priest a last mark of worldly respect.

-After the death of Fr. Demming, the affairs of the parish were in the hands of Fr. Dietrich, the assistant pastor, until the appointment of Fr. John Bernard Diepenbrock. He took charge of St. Mary's congregation on May 10, 1904, coming from Cairo, Illinois, where he had previously been stationed. The indebtedness of the parish was still considerable and Fr. Diepenbrock determinedly set to work to wipe it out. With a charitable contribution by Mrs. Julia Sparks, widow of the Honorable Congressman William Andrew Jackson Sparks, who presented him with the sum of \$8,000, and the generous offerings on the part of the congregation, Fr. Diepenbrock cleared the parish debt completely. Besides this amount, Mrs. Sparks also contributed \$1,000 towards three memorial windows in the sanctuary in memory of Rev. Demming, W.A. Sparks and Mrs. Alexander, her niece.

-St. Anthony's was begun in Bexton, later known as Beckemeyer.

**April 28, 1905** - The Cyclone

-The worst calamity in Carlyle's history hit on Friday, between 5 and 6 pm. Two terrific windstorms followed each other in quick succession. The first uprooted trees and caused considerable other damage throughout the city. Then followed a sudden mysterious quiet, lasting, however, only a few minutes, after which followed the cyclone. In less than a minute it had passed but not without having left ruin and destruction in its wake.

-In the path of the destructive cyclone fell St. Mary's beautiful church building. With the exception of the massive steeple and the north wall of the sanctuary, the entire structure was converted into a heap of ruins. Fortunately, the Blessed Sacrament remained in tact, since only the upper part of the main altar was damaged. The Blessed Virgin altar was totally, and the St. Joseph altar partially, demolished.

-In spite of the great loss to the parish by the destruction of the church, the hand of Providence was, nevertheless, in evidence. It was, namely, Friday before Whitsunday, and the children of the Solemn Holy Communion class were preparing for that occasion by making a three-day retreat. Shortly before the advent of the cyclone, the children, together with the Sister who was in charge, had left the church and returned to the school building. Had they remained in church a little while longer they would have been buried beneath the ruins of the crumbling structure. Some of the Venerable Sisters, who were at work decorating the altars at the time, also narrowly escaped death, or at least serious injury, having just left the church momentarily to get some flowers from their home when the cyclone whirled past.

-The serious loss was estimated at \$75,000 - the parish had \$10,000 worth of insurance. On the following Monday morning, over 100 men of the parish were busy clearing away the debris and preparing the site for the new building. Meanwhile, divine services were held in the hall over the school.

-The rectory and school were also damaged considerably. While repairs were made to the rectory, the pastor and assistant lived in the school basement. Repairs were made at a cost of \$3,000.

**July 11, 1906** - the Rt. Rev. Bishop John Janssen dedicated the new church, which had a seating capacity of approximately 1,000 and was erected at a cost of about \$60,000.

-The new church was strictly Romanesque of architecture, in the shape of a cross, and makes beautiful appearance within and without. It is 130 feet long, 54 feet wide in the center, 82 feet at projections; with 60 foot spires each side of the original 160 foot tower; and a baptismal font under the west spire and a stairway to the choir loft under the east spire. The concrete floor was sloped instead of level to make it easier for people to see the main altar. Two side altars, donated by Julia Sparks and Mrs. Alexander, and a beautiful marble main altar enhanced the sanctuary. Three artistic memorial windows, formerly in the old church, were placed above the main altar. Communion railings and the baptismal font were donated by the Married Ladies and Young Ladies Sodality. Seating capacity was almost 1,000, downstairs and in the choir loft. The walls and square pillars of the church are of rose-colored marble from St. Genevieve, Missouri. The floor of the church proper is covered with mastic tile, while the floor of the vestibule is of flexotile, similar to terrazzo. The steps of the sanctuary are of white carara (Italian) marble. The orange colored marble is of Tennessee tile and Spanish marble. The back walls of the Sanctuary are of Italian white and dark lined marble. The lower dark panels are from Africa and are irreplaceable.

-All the glass was made by the same family. It was originally ordered from Lewis Sealy, Sr., in Munich, Germany, and was installed in 1905. (After the fire of 1940 the broken parts were replaced by his sons, who were employed by the Frei-Art Glass Co. in St. Louis.) The pictures are of the Holy Family, St. Christopher (Patron of Travelers), St. Isador (Patron of Farmers), St. Bernard (Saint of Knowledge), St. Vincent de Paul (Saint of the Poor), St. Ann (mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary), and St. John with Christ as boys.

-All blocks holding the three large wooden statues are of Italian marble as are the smaller shrines of the Mother of Perpetual Help and the Infant of Prague. The two pedestals of St. Therese and the Guardian Angel are also Italian marble. The communion rail is of Italian carara marble with onyx pillars.

-The mosaic over the vestibule door depicting the four fountains coming from the mountain of the cross is a symbol of the four gospels coming from the mouth of Christ. The mosaics on the walls are titles taken from the Litany of Our Lady: Spiritual Vessel, Vessel of Honor, Tower of David, Tower of Ivory, House of Gold, Gate of Heaven. On the sanctuary walls, the mosaics are symbolic of the Seven Sacraments, with the exception of the first two on either end. These latter are in remembrance of the previous pastors of St. Mary's: Fathers Anton Demming, John Diepenbrock, John Bruns, Nicholas Dietrich, (although Fr. Dietrich wasn't a pastor, Fr. Hilgenberg wanted him remembered), and Bernard Hilgenberg. High on the side walls are the mosaics of our Flag, the State Flower, and the coat-of-arms of our Bishops: John Janssen, Henry Althoff, and Albert R. Zuroweste.

-The seats and woodwork in the church are of red Appalachian oak.

**1907** - Large pipe organ installed, costing \$1,700.

**1910** - Fr. Diepenbrock was instrumental in establishing the St. Mary's Hospital and Home for the Aged in Carlyle. Mrs. Julia Sparks bequeathed \$30,000 for that purpose and this sum was used to purchase the old Lucas mansion, to build the St. Mary's Hospital and Home. It opened to the public Aug 19, 1911, and was named St. Julian Hospital and Home for the Aged. It presently exists as the Carlyle Healthcare Center, Inc.

**Apr 5, 1919** - Fr. Diepenbrock died from pneumonia. His funeral took place on April 9. A Solemn pontifical requiem high Mass was celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Henry Althoff in the presence of 74 priests, a large number of Sisters and an immense concourse of lay people. Every store and business house was closed on the day of the funeral. Such was the esteem and respect in which the late Fr. Diepenbrock was held by his own dear parishioners, as well as by all his friends and fellow citizens in this community.

-From April 5 until October 15, St. Mary's parish was again in the hands of the assistant pastor, Rev. Father Dietrich, who was assisted by Fr. J.M. Mueller, from June until September, and by Fr. E. Niess from September until the middle of October.

**Oct 15, 1919** - Fr. John Bruns took charge of St. Mary's parish.

-Among his achievements since coming here were the rewiring of the church and the installation of new lights throughout, the erection of a beautiful shrine to our Lady of Perpetual Help, and the repletion of the sacristies with new and beautiful sacred vestments.

**June 16, 1920** - Fr. Bruns celebrated his silver sacerdotal jubilee.

**1924** - St. Mary's Convent was erected at a cost of \$25,000 for the Ven. Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ Sisters on the occasion of their golden jubilee-year at St. Mary's Carlyle.

**July 7, 1926** - Rev. Gerard H. Netemeyer was appointed to St. Mary's church as assistant. He was ordained to the priesthood by Rt. Rev. Henry Althoff on June 6, 1926, at Belleville.

**Apr 22, 1929** - St. Mary's received accreditation by the State of Illinois for its four-year high school.

-The history of St. Mary's parish would not be complete if it did not include at least a brief account of the untiring zeal of its former assistant pastor, Rev. N. Dietrich. Fr. Dietrich was assistant at Carlyle for nearly 32 years, serving under 3 pastors -Fr. Demming, Fr. Diepenbrock and Fr. Bruns. He came to Carlyle in 1891, after having been pastor of Cahokia for a short time. During his appointment to the assistantcy at Carlyle, he labored constantly side by side with the pastors of St. Mary's for the spiritual and temporal welfare of St. Mary's parishioners.

**Nov 27, 1930** - On this Thanksgiving Day, St. Mary's Church and the high altar were solemnly consecrated by the Right Rev. Henry Althoff, DD, Bishop of Belleville. On the same day, the parish also observed the diamond jubilee of the dedication of the first church, built in 1855, and the silver jubilee of the present beautiful and solid church, erected in 1905, after the second church had been destroyed by the cyclone in 1905.

-The Right Rev. Bishop arrived on Wednesday, at 4:30pm. He was met at the parish limits, about two miles west of Carlyle, by about 35 decorated automobiles and, amid the joyous ringing of the four bells from the lofty spire of St. Mary's church and gladsome music of the Carlyle Municipal Band, was escorted through the business streets of the city to St. Mary's Church.

-The church, school, rectory, convent, business houses and residences along the route had been elaborately decorated in white and yellow and purple. White and yellow are the papal colors, purple the color of the episcopacy. The following gentlemen have been appointed on the arrangement committee: H.V. Murray, J.M. Krebs, and R.P. Farrell. The parade was in the charge of Sheriff Joseph Ragen, Sheriff-elect John D. Edinger, and A.W. Edinger. The committee in charge of decorating the parish buildings and grounds were H.A. Bruemmer, John Luepke and Ben Diekemper.

-The Bishop blessed the \$6,000 direct electric action, three manual pipe organ made by the Wick Pipe Organ Co. of Highland, Ill. The organ was then played for the first time by Prof. John Wick, organist of St. Paul's Church, Highland, Ill.

-The Bishop and clergy recited the Office of the Martyrs over the relics of St. Amandus and St. Justin, which were brought from Rome, and were placed in the altar during the consecration ceremony.

**Jun 14, 1934** - Fr. Bruns died.

**Sep 15, 1934** - The Rev. Bernard W. Hilgenberg was appointed new pastor. He was known as the Pastor of the Coal

Fields for his work with the immigrants scattered in Little Egypt coal camps. Thus he became proficient in 8 different languages. He'd also had to contend with the Ku Klux Klan in Southern Ill. His joy in making St. Mary's Church beautiful with the addition of more marble on the walls was interrupted by the horrible fire May 14-15, 1940, which almost totally destroyed the church.

#### **May 14, 1940 - A Day Of Grief For St. Mary's Parish**

The following is from Msgr. Hilgenberg's notes on the events of the fire.

- "I was ready to lock the front door of my home about 10:30pm when I saw a bright light on the walk of the rectory and, looking for a cause, saw flames coming from the little dome above the sanctuary. Fire departments of the town and neighboring cities were called - Beckemeyer, Breese, Centralia and others. But, by the time full force was turned on the fire, they were unable to reach the spot, as the fire was between the ceiling and the roof, which was of slate. By midnight, the church became a roaring inferno, when the ceiling began to give way. Then the fire worked towards the steeple where the four bells began ringing as soon as the current had been cut. ...The tower took fire by 1:00am Wed, Ember Day, May 15 ... The embers fell everywhere, eastward over the school, the sisters' residence and nearby homes. A crew of men was kept on both buildings and, were it not for the efficient work of the fire brigades, the school would have been set afire and other buildings as well. A fierce fire raged in the church itself until finally subdued by 4am. The entire tower was stripped of bells, the clock-ringing device and the beautiful organ. Many vestments and the large hand-carved statues were saved, but the new \$2,100 electric tower clock with the quarter-hour chimes and the large organ were demolished. The Blessed Sacrament, the vestments, altar equipment and everything in the sacristy were moved to the Pastor's residence. However, in the end, the sacristy remained intact as did the marble work and the marble altars and the new ones being put up. Seats were a total loss - stations and some statuary were badly blistered. The whole view of the interior was a calamity. Art glass windows were for the most part all broken. No one interested in St. Mary's slept a wink all night and the next day there was only Mass in the Sisters' house. The auditorium of the school was fitted with a salvaged altar to be used on May 16, and for some months to come. The expressions of sympathy were many."



**April 15, 1941 - Final Repairs.** The new bells were consecrated. Marbles from Africa, Spain and Italy were imported, as well as domestic marble from Tennessee and Missouri. European stained glass windows, mosaic pieces, and emblems taken from the litany of Loretta were other decorations.



**Feb 1949** - Fr. Victor Sulkowski came to St. Mary's as an assistant, replacing Rev. Fr. Leonard Goewert.  
**Oct 17-18, 1949** - The "Pilgrim Virgin," a hand-carved cedar wood replica of Our Lady in the shrine at Fatima, Portugal arrived.

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-Msgr Hilgenberg sent for P. Sanders, Architectures, and Dom Bauer of Belleville to check on the safety of the building - they came the next day and on May 16 and 17 two experts were cleaning off the top walls. The Kaletta Co. sent two men out to take care of the marble which was being stored in the sheds - they were able to save most of it, also the altars. Paul Sanders of the firm Johnston-Maack-Sanders was engaged as architect for the reconstruction of the church. The copper, iron, etc., was sold and the bell metal was shipped to the Bell Foundry in St. Louis to have applied on new bells. One bell was donated by a civic organization, the St. Joseph bell originally was donated by Henry Sautmann, and the St. Nicolaus bell was donated by Fr. Dietrich and Msgr Hilgenberg. The city furnished two watchmen day and night until May 20. Hundreds of sightseers came on Sunday, May 19.

### **Our Lady of Fatima Shrine**

-The newly erected Shrine at the head of the sunken garden at the Catholic Cemetery was dedicated and blessed on May 30, 1951, Decoration Day, followed by a Solemn High Mass offered by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Hilgenberg, Pastor of St. Mary's assisted by Rev. Victor Sulkowski, Assistant, and Rev. Joseph Mueller, Pastor of Marydale and Beaver Prairie. Mass was to be said there every year on Decoration / Memorial Day, a tradition kept alive through the years, weather permitting.

-The Shrine was erected by the men of the Parish with the assistance of the Sexton, Ben Gehrs. The rocks for this purpose were gathered in Missouri and Arkansas. They are commonly known as "Sponge Rocks." These glass rocks are very scarce, and especially beautiful when glittering in the reflection of the sun. Through the courtesy of Norman Rehm and his sister of St. Genevieve, Missouri, the location of these rocks was made known to us.

-The interior is entirely furred with small glass rocks also gathered throughout Missouri and Arkansas, and a good number of pieces from the Petrified Forest of Arizona. To the right and left of the Altar are two plaques depicting scenes in the life of Christ. In the Altar at the lower right and left corners are two marble pelicans, which pieces were salvaged from the St. Mary's Church after the fire. Over the Crucifix in the center of the Shrine is a marble plaque with names of soldiers who died in the first and second world wars.

-The Sunken Garden was finished too. The Sacred Heart Statue is in the center, flanked on both sides by marble angels, with one small angel in front of the statue, in turn being flanked by flower vases. The Shrine is a memorial to those who gave their lives for their country. It is dedicated in honor of Our Lady of Fatima.

**Feb 1949** - Fr. Victor Sulkowski came to St. Mary's as an assistant to the Rt. Rev. Msgr. B. W. Hilgenberg, replacing the Rev. Fr. Leonard Goewert who went to St. Mary's, Centralia.

**May 29, 1952** - Msgr. Hilgenberg died. After Msgr. Hilgenberg's death, Fr. Vic became administrator of St. Mary's Parish.

When the Rev. Joseph A. Duehren was appointed pastor here, Fr. Vic left for St. Joseph's Church in Cobden.

-The Rev. Joseph A. Duehren, Dean and Pastor of Stringtown, was installed as our eighth pastor on June 26, 1952. Born in Columbus, Ohio, he was ordained in 1932 at the Pontifical Josephinum College, Worthington, Ohio, for the Diocese of Belleville. He began his priestly career as the assistant at the Belleville Cathedral Church. He served as assistant at Breese, Murhypsboro, East St. Louis and Waterloo, Ill. His first pastorate was at Madonnaville, Ill., from 1938-42. In 1942 he volunteered for chaplain duty, joining the famous 101st Airborne Division. As chaplain, he participated in all the Division's outstanding invasions of World War II in Europe. In February 1946 he returned to the diocese and became pastor of Stringtown, Ill., and Diocesan Dean of the Stringtown Deanery, until he came to Carlyle.

**May 16, 1954** - His Excellency, Most Rev. Albert R. Zuroweste, DD, Bishop of Belleville, celebrated a Solemn Pontifical High Mass at Mound Farm, the sight of the first Mass here, to mark 100 years for St. Mary's Church.

**June 13, 1957** - Fr. Duehren celebrated his Silver Jubilee of ordination.

**1958** - A new grade school was built under Fr. Duehren's direction, with an enrollment of 389 children. A kindergarten was added, thus increasing enrollment to 416 students.

-St. Mary's High School was closed with the opening of Mater Dei High School in Breese.

-Fr. Duehren was transferred to Sacred Heart Parish in DuQuoin.

**August 1966** - Fr. Victor Sulkowski returned to St. Mary's after nine years at Cobden and five at St. Theresa's Church in Salem, becoming pastor for the next 28 years. He was proud of the fact that, with the help of good trustees and church councils, he turned a parish that had financial problems into one that was in fine shape.

**1967** - Due to over crowding and under financing, the first and second grades were eliminated from St. Mary's Grade School. The public school absorbed them.

**July 3, 1968** - At 8: 14 pm, a devastating tornado hit the church property, with damage being in excess of \$50,000. Art glass windows were shattered; benches were thrown about like match sticks; and there was additional damage to the church roof, tower and interior. Also, the rectory roof was peeled off and the front porch was separated from the rest of the building. Six large trees were uprooted. Once again the deep concern of the parishioners was reflected in their untiring effort to clean up the rubble and to repair and modernize the buildings.

**1968** - The first church council was established, with Robert Coers as president. At the same time, Fr. Vic called for formation of an elected school board to handle the affairs of St. Mary's school. The two boards, each with seven members, merged into one tenmember board.

**October 1969** - Bishop Zuroweste dedicated a new school addition and parish center, connected to the school and adding space and versatility. The project was completed at a cost per sq foot of \$11.33. This cost included the basketball goals and the new kitchen equipment. Included was a 80'x100' gymnasium, a 35'x80' cafeteria, teachers' lounge, athletic gear storage room, large meeting room and large hallways. The new addition also included new toilet areas for both boys and girls. All but the gym is cooled by air conditioning. The general contractor was Bruemmer Construction Co. and Carlyle Lumber Co. of Carlyle.

**1970** - Fr. Vic announced the closing of St. Mary's school. Saturday grade school religion classes began at St. Mary's school, which later changed to Monday evenings, but are now on Wednesday evenings. Community Unit #1 leases the classroom section and shares the parish center with the parish.

**July 1970** - St. Mary's High School building razed.

**June 1972** - The Poor Handmaids decided to reassign the Sisters who had been in St. Mary's; thus ended a tenure of some 98 years.

**April 24, 1974** - A violent hail storm hit Carlyle, shattering the art glass windows of St. Mary's Church and doing extensive exterior damage. This time, with the replacement of the windows, heavy plate glass was used to reinforce the windows



and serve as protection to prevent further damage.

-St. Mary's chose to initiate a sports program in August of 1974 which flourishes today, thanks to many volunteers.

**1980** - A vote was taken of parishioners for reopening the parochial grade school for St. Mary's parish. A majority of the parishioners expressed the opinion that it was not feasible or desirable to reopen the parochial school at this point in time.

-To comply with new Church liturgical practices, St. Mary's added a new altar to allow the priest to face the people during Mass. Encased in that altar is a Stage II relic, a bit of the cloth that was wrapped around Christ's Cross - protecting it during the time it was missing from the Church. The Baptismal Font was brought to the front of the Church. Carpeting was added in the vestibule and down the aisles. The Last Supper artwork was moved from the Main Altar, and the light green glass which covered it was removed. This art was created by Maximilian Schneiderhahn, a renowned sculptor from St. Louis. The mosaic placed in the cavity made by moving the Last Supper from the Main Altar, and donated by Mrs. Ann Christ, was created by Arno Heuduck.

-In the space between the convent and the church, where the old school building was razed, Fr. Victor Sulkowski followed the wishes of a benefactor and engineered the building of a fountain and shrine honoring our Blessed Mother and the Sacred Heart. Containing a statue of the Sacred Heart hand-carved from Bedford stone by parishioner/professional artist Gene Jantzen, the Shrine was built in the shape of the Rosary in honor of the Blessed Mother. Three sets of shrubs in front of the Statue were symbols of the Trinity. This was designed by Fr. Vic and Mr. Joseph Bruemmer.

**Sep 1993** - Fr. Victor Sulkowski's Golden Jubilee celebration turned into somewhat a sort of a roast. One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation by St. Ann's Altar Sodality of a quilt depicting his activities as a priest of 50 years and his pastimes. It proved to be a fitting climax to a "great evening" for a man who had given 30 plus years to the St. Mary's parish.

**1994** - Since the celebration of this 50 years, Fr. Vic had been in ill health. He died Friday, June 3, 1994, at St. John's Mercy Medical Center in St. Louis. Newly consecrated Bishop Wilson Gregory led a contingent of concelebrants who officiated at the Mass of Resurrection held here Tuesday morning at St. Mary's church. Burial was in St. Mary's cemetery.

-Catholic Knights and Ladies of Illinois gave the convent a facelift, painting and repairing the rooms.

**June 6, 1994** - Rev. Fr. Jerome W. Feldmann, Pastor of St. Teresa of Avila, Marydale, and St. Felicitas, Beaver Prairie, was appointed Temporary Administrator at St. Mary's.

**Dec 15, 1994** - Rev. Fr. George Mauck was named new pastor. Fr. Mauck, who served St. Joseph's Church in Olney and St. Joseph's in Stringtown from 1986-1994, came to Carlyle after attending the fall session of The Center for Continuing Formation in Ministry at Notre Dame University.

**Mar-Dec 1995** - The Rev. Fr. Daniel Friedman served St. Mary's as a temporary parochial vicar.

**1995** - Published first St. Mary's church directory with pictures of parishioners and their addresses and a church history.

**April 1996** - A survey was undertaken to consider reopening the parochial grade school for St. Mary's parish. The survey concluded that it was not feasible to reopen the parochial school at this point in time. Survey was conducted by Meitler Consultants, Inc., who have done similar surveys across the Nation.

-In the spring of 1996, Lucille Rohr retired as coordinator of our Parish School of Religion (PSR) program for grades K-8. After the closing of St. Mary's parochial school in 1970, Fr. Victor Sulkowski asked Irma Huelsmann and Lucille Rohr to organize the PSR program at St. Mary's. They worked together to coordinate the program from its inception. For the past 30 years, with the help of many parishioners, this program has been instrumental in passing on the Catholic faith to our children. Sr. Mary Dietz, SSND, served the parish as Director of Religious Education (DRE) from 1996 to 1999. Sr. Geraldine Neier, SSND, took over from Sr. Mary as DRE in 1999. She is joined in residence by Sr. Marina Langhorst, who volunteers time at the Carlyle Healthcare Center.

**1997** - Adopted our sister parish, Santa Catarina Mita, in Jutiapa, Guatemala. We've had delegates join two diocesan trips

to Guatemala, where they met St. Catarina's pastor, Fr. Stuardo Castanasa Lopez. He visited us in 1998 and 1999. We've been able to help them with their pastoral needs, school and clinic through our monthly collections and we've sent school supplies and musical instruments.

**Jan-Aug 1997** - The Rev Fr. Mark Stec served St. Mary's as temporary parochial vicar.

**1998** - We solicited pledges from our parishioners to support the diocesan Future Full of Hope Campaign, helping the diocese reach \$50,000 over its goal.

-We display baskets at the church doors in which to collect canned goods for Carlyle's food pantry. And we started an Easter basket program and Christmas Giving Tree to help families during those holidays.

-Parishioners made pledges to finance tuck pointing the church, which was arranged by HMG of Carlyle and performed by the Bert Lafferty Co.

-Msgr Charles Nebel filled in for Fr. George Mauck who was recuperating from brain surgery.

**Feb 28-Mar 3, 1998** - Mission held at St. Mary's, led by St. Mary's native, Fr. James Van Dorn, OSF

**May 31, 1998** - First parish golf tournament.

**1998** - Sold parish house once occupied by church caretaker and it was moved a few blocks. Site is now a parking lot for Zieren-Day Funeral Home. Garage was sold to neighbors Paul and Jan Kauling.

**1999** - Second parish golf tournament held. We also held a picnic for the parish in the Fall.

-Fountain was deemed too expensive to repair and was taken out. Landscaping was changed but Sacred Heart statue was kept as a shrine area.

**2000-** Dance for parishioners held in church gym.

#### Parish Pastors

Rev. Fischer - 1853 - 1855 (from St. Marie)  
Revs. Arnold Damen and Joseph Patschowski (from St. Louis)  
Rev. Roderick Heimerling - 1855 - 1858  
Rev. Jacob Marshal - 1858 - 1859  
Rev. Clement von Sieghardt - 1859 - 1874  
Rev. Anton Demming - 1874 - 1904  
Rev. John Diepenbrock - 1904 - 1919  
Rev. John Bruns - 1919 - 1934  
Msgr. Bernard Hilgenberg - 1934 - 1952  
Rev. Joseph Duehren - 1952 - 1966  
Rev. Victor Sulkowski - 1966 - 1994  
Rev. George Mauck - 1994 to present

#### Parish Assistants

Rev. B. Fresenborg - 1881 - 1883  
Rev. John Ferdinand Meifuss - 1883  
Rev. Thomas Day - 1884 - 1886  
Rev. Felix Faerbers - 1886 - 1887  
Rev. Ben Reusch - 1887 - 1890  
Rev Nicholas Dietrich - 1890-1891, 1894-1922  
Rev Peter Jansen - 1891-1893

Rev Aloys Hahn - 1893 - 1894  
Rev Joseph H. Orlet - 1922 - 1926  
Rev Gerhard Netemeyer - 1926 Rev Fuertges  
Rev Aloysius Olliges - 1935 - 1939 Rev John Venegoni  
Rev F. X. Heiligenstein  
Rev Raphael Drone  
Rev Leonard Goewert  
Rev Victor Sulkowski  
Rev Joseph Orford  
Rev Stanley Schlarman  
Rev Raymond Orlet  
Rev Henry Engelhardt  
Rev John Vogt  
Rev Ted Bauman  
Rev Robert Flannery  
Rev Chuck Tuttle  
Rev Edward F. Schaefer  
Rev Anthony Rochel  
Rev Dan Friedman  
Rev Mark Stec

**Information for this write-up was obtained from** the histories compiled by Sister Roselda, PHJC; Fr Melvin Vandelloo; and Mrs. Sylvia Henken. Other sources: Msgr Bernard Hilgenberg's, Fr. Joseph Duehren's and Fr. Victor Sulkowski's journals. The Carlyle Reveille. Union Banner and The Messenger. St. Mary's Diamond Jubilee booklet, 1853 - 1928; souvenir booklet - St. Mary's Parish Golden Jubilee of Venerable Sisters of Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, 1924; and booklet from the Dedication of St. Mary's Parochial School, Sept 14, 1958. St. Louis Cathedral booklet. Interviews with Mrs. Ann Christ, Fr. Jerome Feldmann, and Fr. Iffert. Members and articles of the Clinton County Historical Society office. Dave Rodden. John Hudspeth and Jean R. Van Dorn. Photos are from St. Mary's archives. This report was updated by Jean R. Van Dorn in March 2000.