The founding of St. Joseph's Polish Roman Catholic Parish of East Chicago, Indiana, dates back to the year 1915. Towards the close of that year, a small number of Polish families, living in the eastern portion of the city of East Chicago proper, began to demand their own parish church. After final decisions had been reached about organizing a parish, some favored a church building, while others a parish school. The desires, however, of those people were not realized in the course of that year. The more zealous did not shrink from their undertaking. A census taken, revealed that the number of would-be parishioners was greater than anticipated.

The whole matter was brought to Father Peter Budnik of St Stanislaus Church at that time, for consideration; and he at once promised hearty support and cooperation. The fifth day of January 1916, Father Budnik called the first meeting of the future parishioners to the old Calumet Bank Bldg. Many were present "St. Joseph", was decided on as the patron saint of the parish. A decision about the building of a church and school had been made. An election of a councilmen's committee followed.

About the middle of August 1916, Father Budnik brought the matter to the attention of Most Rev. H. J. Allerding, then Bishop of the Diocese, who in turn appointed a pastor, in the person of Rev. Joseph Zielinski, at that time assistant to Father Budnik. Father Zielinski began his task with such zeal, which within one month eleven lots were purchased for the parish site, which were all, paid before the closing of the month of May, the following year 1917.

The next matter was the erection of the new church building which was to serve the purpose of a school at the same time. Intense sacrifice of the parishioners resulted in the erection of a Church, and in October 1917, the Rt. Rev. Bishop blessed the new building under the patronage of St. Joseph.

Father Zielinski wasted no time in opening class-rooms in the church building. He taught the children himself, being of course difficult to obtain teachers or nuns. The close of the year 1917 brought the parish Franciscan Sisters of St. Cunegunda of Chicago, IL, Sister Berchmans was the first sister appointed. She saw the parish grow, since she was superior for three different terms.
In the first minutes of this newly organized parish, dated October 8, 1916, we find the names of K. Radecki, Stanley Borkowski, I. Niedojadlo, M. Harubin, J. Majer, D. Tarka, W. Gruz, A. Elinkowski, J. Szmyt, I. Czerneda, R. Dzik, J. Balka, M. Kościelniak, and K. Porta. Besides the above mentioned, we also find on the lists, the names of such thrifty persons, as the Mrs. Burzyńska, Żywiec, Bobin and Sedlik.

Father Zieliński built the first church, rectory and convent.

The middle of February 1923, found Father Zieliński leaving the parish to St. Adalbert Parish of Whiting. Father John Biernacki succeeded him and carried on this noble enterprise. Within the five years of his stay, the number of parish societies increased and the growing demand for a new school terminated in a new building of four class-rooms.

July 16, 1927 the Rt. Rev. Bishop again changed the pastor of the parish. Father Biernacki accepted the post at Otis, Ind., the oldest Polish Roman Catholic parish in the Diocese of Fort Wayne, and Father Kondziela succeeded him as pastor of St. Joseph’s Parish. Previous to this appointment, Father Kondziela was Chaplain at Mercy Hospital.

Father Kondziela, a young energetic priest, saw the crowded sisters Convent, so he built on an addition to the sister’s home. There was a need for a hall, so that also was built. A number of the factories donated material and money toward this building. Col. Walter J. Riley donated $1,000.00. Our beloved Bishop, Most Rev. John F. Noll D. D. donated to the parish at this time $2,250.00.

In the spring of 1932, His Excellency, the Most Rev. Bishop Noll, chose to change pastors. Father Kondziela was appointed to Kouts, Ind., and Father Joseph Zobel was sent here from Michigan City, Ind. to carry on the work started by Father Zielinski. This was in the darkest years of the last depression. Father Zobel did a marvelous job keeping the parish intact and from going into the hands of receivers.

On July 8, 1939, the present pastor, Father Edward Wroblewski took over the reins. Having a desire to give St. Joseph’s parish, buildings of which they could be proud of, Father Wroblewski launched upon an improvement program. His Excellency, Bishop Noll, D. D. donated a $1,000.00 toward this project. When the rectory was rebuilt, the pastor donated $2,000.00; reasoning that he will benefit during his stay and that it will always be the home of the parish priest. Now for the Jubilee, some of the factories donated sums ranging up to $100 00. Each family was asked to contribute $25.00, so much so, that today the church, rectory, school and hall are already remodeled at an added indebtedness of only $5,000.00. The last, even though not the least, building to be remodeled is the Sisters Convent. This will be done as soon as conditions permit.

The estimated valuation of St. Joseph’s parish is now approximately $90,000.00. The present debt is nearly $30,000.00—in other words, one third of its valuation.

In the twenty-five years, the parish has had five pastors. Was blessed with one vocation to the Holy Priesthood, in the person of Father Joseph Smith, present pastor of St Hyacinth’s Parish,
Fort Wayne, Ind. Two young girls offered their lives to their Creator, and are today in the Convent of St. Francis of St. Cunegunda; Sr. M. Simplicita (Mroczkowska) of Cleveland, Ohio, and Sr. M. Theonhan’a (Rakowska) of Boy’s Town Nebraska. There were 421 baptisms, 131 marriages, and 165 funerals.

Much credit must be given each former pastor. Some of them did their own janitor work with very little pastor’s salary. They were real pioneers, willing to sacrifice health, money and personal comfort. The good people, who donated until it hurt, deserve a crown in heaven. Our Bishop, Most Rev. J. F. Noll, D. D. who always loved St. Joseph’s Parish, personally donated over that period $3,250.00.

May God bless all parishioners all benefactors. Let us hope, that with God’s help, St. Joseph’s Parish will grow, prosper, and aspire to still greater heights.