



A Short History St. Hyacinth Parish.

Souvenir of Dedication St. Hyacinth Church, Fort Wayne, IN.
December 5, 1954, p. 15-23. CAP at Orchard Lake.

The immigration of Poles into Fort Wayne began in the early 1890's. They settled, for the most part, in the Southeastern part of the city and attended St. Peter's Church. Since most of them did not understand German or English, they felt a need to organize a parish in which they could worship God in a language they understood. They, therefore, petitioned the Most Rev. Herman J. Aldering, Bishop of Fort Wayne Diocese, through the good graces of Father Thiele, pastor of St. Peter's Parish, to establish a church for the Polish speaking people. The Bishop, zealous for the salvation of souls, complied with their petition by the appointment of Rev. Emmanuel J. Wrobel as pastor.

Father Wrobel, admired for his great piety, came to Fort Wayne on July 14, 1910 and organized the parish on July 24, 1910. First services were held in the basement of the new St. Peter's School on August 21, 1910. The parish at that time consisted of 50 families and 450 members. A school was immediately started in the corridor, adjacent to the improvised church, to house one classroom and the first four grades with the upper classes destined to remain in St. Peter's School for many years. Ven. Sister M. Jolendis, a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, arrived on September 5, 1910 to take charge of the school and choir. Enrollment for the first year totaled 38 pupils. The present property was bought at a cost of \$3850.00. The first rectory was a rented house on Taber Street. St. Hyacinth and Christian Mothers Societies were organized in 1910. The first parish report was signed by the following trustees: Wladyslaw Rygowski, Kasper Krantz, Wojciech, Staszak, Jan Chodynski and Antoni Grzybowski. The following years of Father Wrobel's pastorate were ones of further organization and many activities. By the end of 1914 the parish was doubled in size and finances were stabilized.

On September 5, 1915 Rev. Michael Swiatkowski replaced Father Wrobel. Church Services were moved to the second floor of the old St. Peter's School, and another classroom was added to accommodate grades from 5 to 8 with the Ven. Sister M. Felicitas placed in charge. In 1918 a rectory was bought on the corner of Warsaw and Martin Streets for \$4500.00. During his tenure of office the debt, which remained on the Holton Avenue property, was liquidated.

Father Swiatkowski was succeeded by the Rev. Ladislaus Szczukowski on November 13, 1918. He held services in the old St. Peter's School until 1923 when the parish built a combination building, still standing, to house a church, school and a hall at a cost of \$31,664.78 and a rectory

and a convent for \$6875.00. Dedication of the new building took place Sunday, October 28, 1923. The teaching staff was supplemented with two more Sisters. When Father Szczukowski left the parish the debt on the new buildings amounted to \$34,500.00.

The Rev. John Hosinski assumed his duties on July 17, 1925 and served for two years. During his pastorate a new main altar was installed, a new loan was negotiated for \$15,000.00 to pay off an old one, the debt was reduced to \$31,500.00 and the Holy Name Society was organized.

On July 15, 1927 the Rev. John Wroblewski was assigned to St. Hyacinth Parish. He did extensive landscaping and reduced the debt by \$1000.00 while up keeping the spiritual side of the parish.

Rev. Michael Petzold became pastor on August 14, 1929 at the beginning of the great depression. The exodus from the parish began with people looking for employment elsewhere. By 1932 only 63 families remained. Yet, with the fewness of members and the consequent financial stress, the parish had a sizeable income and its spiritual life did not dim.

Rev. Julian Doktor arrived here August 15, 1932 while the country was in the middle of the darkest period of the depression. Most parishes in debt struggled to even pay their high interest rates, and St. Hyacinth Parish was no exception. However, even then, the parish life was sustained and quickened. Many activities were held to supplement the regular income. The Catholic Youth Organization was established, dominating the newly found organization in the athletic field for many years. The rectory oil Warsaw and Martin Streets was sold for \$3000.00 and the parish debt was reduced to \$28,700.00.

Rev. Joseph Smith took charge on July 4, 1940. Membership consisted of 85 families. He immediately started the Novena to Our Sorrowful Mother, which was canonically installed on November 14, 1954, thus popularizing the parish among the people of Fort Wayne. For four years overflowing crowds attended three Novena Services every Friday and, without doubt, brought new hope and life into the parish. Persons of other national origins began to join so that by 1944 the parish grew to 102 families. With income doubled he proceeded to make improvements and to reduce the parish debt by \$10,000.00. One of the most beautiful landmarks on parish grounds, which had to be razed to build the new church, was the Our Sorrowful Mother Grotto, built in 1940.

This trend continued during the time of the present pastor, the Rev. John J. Moskal, who was transferred from St. Adalbert's Parish, South Bend, on July 5, 1944. The remaining debt of \$18,700.00 was liquidated within two years and a fund was started for expansion purposes. In the meantime the combination building, rectory and convent were completely repaired and redecorated with the help of parishioners for the sum of \$23,000.00. A new Wurlitzer Organ was bought. School enrollment increased from 89 pupils in 1944 to 181 in 1954, and families increased from 102 to 215.

This increase in the number of families and school enrollment necessitated an expansion program. More space was needed for the school. Therefore, two small classrooms on the south side of the combination building were made into one by taking out a partition, and the two grades

were moved into the basement, which was improved at a cost of \$8,000.00. Since the basement classroom could be, at most, a temporary measure and more room was still needed, the Most Rev. Archbishop John F. Noll was consulted and gave his gracious permission to the parish in May of 1952 to build according to its needs. A Church Building Committee was appointed and held its first meeting on June 22, 1952 at which a decision was reached to build a new church and to change the combination building into a school. On January 4, 1953 a third Mass was started to accommodate more people.

Bids for the new church were opened April 19, 1953. The ground break-ing ceremony took place on April 26, 1953 and excavation began on May 4, 1953. On August 30, 1953 the Rt. Rev. Msgr. D. Lawrence Monahan, in the presence of many clergy and numerous laymen, blessed and laid the cornerstone for the new St. Hyacinth Church. On Friday, June 18, 1954, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles J. Feltes, Chancellor of the Diocese, consecrated the main altar after which two Novena Services of Our Sorrowful Mother were held, and then on the following Sunday, June 20th, the parish Masses and Services began in the new church.

The financial picture did not seem bright when the project was undertaken. The parish had \$42,000.00 on hand, and a debt-limit of \$100,000.00 was placed on the parish by the Ordinary. The cost of the new building was estimated at \$175,000.00. Therefore, \$33,000.00 was needed to even complete the building. With our backs to the wall a financial drive was started on November 15, 1953. The finance committee planned the drive carefully and executed it energetically; parishioners and friends responded with earnest cooperation. The goal was surpassed. Their success is an abundant proof of God's blessing and their staunch faith.

ARCHITECTURE OF ST. HYACINTH CHURCH

The new St. Hyacinth Church is the solution by the Architects of a program of requirements which set forth the demand for a Nave with a seating capacity of 360 people, a Parish Hall capable of seating 500, and an attendant Kitchen, Dining Hall, and other facilities at a minimum cost.

The building, located in a modest neighborhood on a plot of ground which would permit limited isolation, also had to be traditionally conservative to fit its surroundings. The ultimate design is a modest simplification of the more traditional Gothic form, wherein the dignity of ecclesiastical design has been achieved without the normal excessive cost usually involved in this style. Simplicity is the prevailing idea of the entire design. The Architects concentrated during the planning stage upon developing proper scale and the elimination of expensive ornamental details so that, as an end result, the building achieves an air of simple dignity and beauty.

The exterior finish is a choice of face brick and lime-stone trim, calculated to emphasize the main entrance and the carved marble statue of St. Hyacinth, mounted high on the bell tower facade, which serves as a background for it. The sloping roofs are covered with an imposing clay tile in shingle from which will have life time durability, thereby minimizing maintenance throughout the years. Similarly all of the other materials exposed to the exterior have a durability which will require little maintenance.

The interior of the Church has been designed in a low color key; namely, in ashlar pattern of grayish concrete block walls, symmetrically divided by cherry colored wood arches ascending to a wood ceiling, stained in golden brown, to achieve the appearance of great height. Although the color of the wood arches and ceiling enrich the monotone of the concrete block walls, the Church itself is subdued so that the High Altar is the focal point as it should properly be.

The hall, with its adjoining kitchen, two rest rooms and five storage rooms, has three entrances through spacious vestibules. Ventilation is handled by five fans: the public address system is permanently installed with speakers in the ceiling. The decorating scheme is in two-tone of green and coral colors with matching floor tile in a basket weave pattern.

SANCTUARY AND CHURCH FURNISHINGS

The altar and other sanctuary furnishings are substantially the Church itself. Considerable thought and study was given this matter to choose an appointment where the sacrificial offering of the Mass would be in the form of an altar which was liturgically correct and architecturally sound. We may dwell on the thought that these furnishings were created individually for St. Hyacinth Church.

The altar is made of Botticino marble with a retable of Rosso Collemantina marble carved in Italy. The altar is backed by a reredos, unique in form, made of selected oak and with a prescribed finish that brings it in harmony with the sanctuary walls and ceiling. This in turn is surmounted by an oakwood canopy, suspended by two bronze hangers, with decorations symbolic of the Eucharist. Rising high above the altar is a hand carved wood corpus attached to an oakwood cross, giving the crucifix dignity in keeping with the main altar.

Mounted on the frontal of this altar is the monogram PX, which is the monogram of Our Lord. In addition there are two fish with simulated water, which is the early Christian symbol of the Greek word "Txous", meaning, "Fish". To the early Christians this was an emblem of profound significance, expressing the fact of salvation only through Jesus Christ.

The tabernacle is made of genuine bronze, complying with all liturgical requirements. It is anchored through the marble mensa as a precaution against theft. The matching candlesticks are of the same design, also of genuine bronze, polished to a golden lustre.

The communion railing is of oakwood and hand wrought bronze in a design that is most complimentary to the main altar and the character of the sanctuary architecture.

The statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph in the side shrines are specially modeled of carved pinewood, stained and lacquered to agree with the finish on the corpus of the crucifix of the main altar. These statues are mounted on hand wrought genuine bronze grilles executed by artists of the first order.

The Stations of the Cross are of carved pinewood, also stained and lacquered to harmonize with the other pinewood carvings in contemporary design. They are of correct proportions and conform to the architectural lines of the Church.

The Via Matris Stations are made of composition, but even these were given much study before arriving at a relief which would dignify the purpose of these stations.

The Baptismal Font is made of Botticino marble fitted with a bronze cover chosen for its simplicity and dignity of design.

The outdoor relief of St. Hyacinth, mounted on the front of the tower, is an original relief which is at home architecturally on the building and emphasizes the important attributes of the saint who is garbed in Dominican robes. You will note that he carries in his hands a ciborium and a statue of the Blessed Virgin with simulated water at his feet, depicting his flight from the Tartars over the river Dnieper. It is executed in white Biancodura marble which will withstand the elements fully as granite.

All of the above furnishings were erected in collaboration with the Studios of Daprato of Chicago and New York.

In all other effects and furnishings, procured from the St. Christopher's Workshop of Bremen, Indiana, the same simplicity and dignity of design prevails. The lighting fixtures, baptistery gates, kneelers, sedilia, lectern, credence tables, holy water fonts and holy water dispenser are good examples of fine workmanship, all executed in genuine bronze with the exception of the fixtures which are done in brass.