



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, New Chicago.
Indiana Poles in the Bicentennial Year of the United States
1976, p. 3-4. CAP at Orchard Lake.

The Beginnings of Assumption Church in New Chicago, Indiana is the same as for all settlers of Polish origin. For them, fifty-nine years ago, New Chicago meant a new home, a new opportunity of making a living, a new life for themselves and their families in a hospitable land.

They applied themselves to hard work, and earned their jobs by literally the sweat of their brows. They prospered according to the standards of the world from which they emigrated.

But material prosperity was not sufficient for them. They had spiritual needs and wanted these needs to materialize. They were Poles by birth, raised in the Roman Catholic Faith of their fathers and their fathers' fathers. They were sons and daughters of a nation recognized as always faithful to their beliefs. Their dream was to have their own church, their own parish.

They began to talk about it among themselves. The one who spoke most often about it was Simon Dziubla. Meeting his compatriots after a Sunday Mass in neighboring Hobart, Indiana, he spoke to them of forming a committee and starting their own parish. These talks bore fruit. A meeting was held on St. Joseph's Day, March 19, 1917; And 33 families pledged themselves to start a parish. The following were elected: Albert Przeniczny, Chairman; Joseph Kolczak, Vice-chairman; John Glen, Recording Secretary; Apolinary Szewczykowski, Financial Secretary and John Kolczak, Treasurer.

Work began immediately. An old, abandoned school building was rented. Church vestments were bought. Mr. Dziubla and Mr. Przeniczny, as leaders of the group, petitioned His Excellency Herman Alerding, Bishop of the Fort Wayne Diocese, for permission to establish a new parish. Permission was granted and the Reverend A. Kahelek, pastor of the neighboring parish celebrated the first Mass on the First Sunday in Advent in 1917. The parish was dedicated to the veneration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Lack of space in this book will not permit us to mark step-by-step the work done to establish this parish on a solid foundation. We state only the milestones in its progress:

In May 1918, The Reverend Ignatius Gapczynski was assigned pastor of the parish.

In December 1918, The Reverend Anthony Gorek became pastor. It was during his pastorate that the land was acquired on which the present church has been erected. The same energetic committee bought an old building which was remodeled into a church. The first church building was blessed in May, 1918, by the Reverend Peter Budnik, pastor of St. Stanislaus Parish in East Chicago, Indiana.

In 1921, The Reverend Michael Gadacz became pastor. The committee purchases sufficient land to build a rectory and a hall which was later remodeled into classrooms.

The Reverend Michael Petzold became pastor in September 1926 and served the parish to 1929. From 1929 to 1933 Reverend Francis Libert was pastor.

On March 19, 1939, the Feast of St. Joseph, The Women's Rosary Society sent a committee to the Bishop requesting his permission to build a new church: Mary Dziubla, Anna Janiczek, Frances Lalus, Mary Lach and Helen Dziubla. His Excellency Bishop John Francis Noll, not only gave them permission, but thanked them for their interest and enthusiasm for the project and he pledged \$2,000.00 towards the new church building fund.

On July 6, 1939, The Reverend Valerian S. Karcz was appointed pastor. His first and most important project was to build a new church. This he began and completed in his first year as pastor. The church and a school was consecrated by the Most Reverend John Francis Noll on August 6, 1940. The second project to be realized was the Sisters Convent which was built in 1945. The parish school was staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Blessed Kunegunda.

Since the growing parish needed a bigger school, additional classrooms were built, enlarged, and modernized. In 1959, a dream came true for the people of the Assumption Parish who for many years dreamed of a Parish Hall - a place to assemble, to hold meetings and socials and where the youth of the parish could spend an evening in their own company. Villa Rose Hall was purchased, and a complete reconstruction and renovation took place.

In 1964, four additional lots were purchased for use as a playground for the children and a parking lot for the people of the Assumption Parish.

During the pastorate of Father Karcz, a Holy Name Society was organized, High School religion classes for the youth of the parish, The Ushers Club, St. Cecilia Choir, Ladies Rosary Sodality and the Home and School Association.

The school was closed in 1967 because of the declining enrollment of children.

Father Valerian Karcz retired from the parish on September 30, 1975.

Reverend John A. Murzyn was appointed pastor on October 1, 1975.

In December of 1975, new outside doors were put in. During the summer of 1976 the septic tank system was brought up to date.

The parish has been blessed with vocation; there have been two ordinations to the priesthood and eleven nuns and two brothers in the religious orders.

In September of 1976 a Pre-School Early Learning and Development Center was opened for 3 and 4 year olds.