

## Rev. Simon J. Kilar



Father Simon J. Kilar was born October 25, 1896 in Rymanow, Poland, the fourth of nine children of Francis Kilar and Julia Zmarz Kilar. When he was five years old, his family came to the United States and settled in Newark, New Jersey. Young Simon attended St. Stanislaus Elementary School and graduated at the age of thirteen. His home life was spent in a true Christian and Polish-American atmosphere. His schoolboy life was a "symphony of activity and hard study." Many a wooden crate or a box was dismantled for his creations.

It is a proven fact that the mystery of the priesthood attracts many young souls to the Altar of Christ. Thus the 13-year-old youth chose for himself what God wanted him to be, "His Tool." He undertook high school, college and theology studies at Orchard Lake, Michigan, and remained there until his ordination by Bishop Michael J. Gallagher, On June 20, 1920. He offered his first Solemn High Mass in his parish on July 4, 1920, in the presence of his beloved parents and family.

Glowing with the experience of his Ordination and First Solemn Mass, Father Kilar returned to Detroit and received his assignment as an assistant at St. Florian, St. Stanislaus, Assumption of B.V.M., and St. John Cantius.

On September 23, 1925, Bishop Gallagher appointed him founding pastor of Transfiguration Parish, giving him the authority to establish a Polish parish in the northeastern section of the City of Detroit. It was a huge enterprise that demanded not only pastoral zeal, but acute administrative ability as well.

Father Kilar is a member of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America and the Priests' Conference for Polish Affairs, Detroit. He is likewise trustee and a loyal alumnus of Orchard Lake, one of the founding fathers of the annual Founder's Dinner, and an enthusiastic supporter of the Friends of the Seminary. He has been instrumental in raising substantial funds for the Shrine-Chapel of Our Lady of Orchard Lake and the St. Mary's College Residence Hall.

On May 29, 1965, our Pastor was a 1965 recipient of the eighteenth "Fidelitas Medal" — a distinction awarded annually by SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, St. Mary's College and St. Mary's Preparatory.

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