



St. Mary Magdalene Church, Chicago, IL.

Dedication of the new St. Mary Magdalene Church,
Sunday, May 2, 1954. CAP at Orchard Lake.

IT'S BIRTH—St. Mary Magdalene Parish at 84th and Marquette Avenue, was founded in 1910. Rev. Francis Wojtalewicz, pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church, requested a division of his parish, so that the people living North West at some distance might be better served. The apostolic Archbishop James E. Quigley was happy to erect a church to accommodate these people and have the Word of God taught them in the language they spoke and understood best.

Archbishop Quigley appointed the Rev. Edward Kowalewski pastor. This young, energetic priest built a combination building housing the church, school, sister's home and hall. He was keenly aware of every need of his parish both moral and physical. He was an excellent preacher and a good leader. He took great care in beautifying the church property and encouraging his people to do likewise. He bought trees and bushes by the carload and distributed them among his flock. To this day, the neighborhood is the finest in South Chicago due to his foresight.

IT'S TRIAL—Most of the men of the parish worked in the steel mills. During the depression the mills closed down and practically everyone in the community was jobless. Interest was due on the parish mortgage and the minds of men were wrought up because of family worries. The National Church built in the neighborhood tried to draw Poles from their true faith. At the height of all this, Cardinal Mundelein appointed Msgr. John Mielcarek to succeed Father Kowalewski in 1931. His understanding of the problems, combined with his attractive personality and his love for his flock carried him through those trying days and endeared him to the people. As it was the duty of Moses to lead his people through the desert, so Msgr. Mielcarek led his flock through the parish's most trying five years of its existence. Just as the promised land was in view, he was called to work in another field.

IT'S ADOLESCENCE—In the year 1936 Msgr. John Kozlowski, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, came to succeed Msgr. John G. Mielcarek. His experience as Superintendent of the Catholic School System forbode great things for St. Mary Magdalene School. He visited each class room daily and took a personal interest in each child. In spite of his poor health, Msgr. Kozlowski paid off all but one thousand dollars of the debt that burdened the parish for many years. He died January 27, 1947 on his sixtieth birthday. The parish lost a great priest, father and a friend.

IT'S MANHOOD — fter the death of Msgr. Kozlowski his eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch appointed the Rev. Peter P. Witmanski pastor. He wasted no time but began with repairing the buildings. The temporary church was painted and beautified; then came the school and sister's home. A Mission

was scheduled to repair and build up the moral fiber of the parish. The school children were encouraged to frequent the Sacraments daily and at present almost every child receives Our Lord before he or she begins school work. Less than a year after coming to St. Mary Magdalene Parish, the new pastor began to make remote preparations for the building of the new church. To clear the plot, the rectory was moved 150 ft. to the south. At the same time it was enlarged, not only to give suitable quarters for the priests, but also to provide adequate office space to care for the growing needs of the parish. It will be noted that the front of the rectory now conforms to the exterior of the new church. In 1950 the pastor showed us his hand made model of the new church.

THE NEW CHURCH

The house in which a man lives, its arrangements and decorations reflect the character of the owner or occupant. Is it not true, that we consciously or unconsciously, judge people by the home they live in? A church is the House of God. "My house is a house of prayer." It seems proper therefore, that His Church, His Home on earth (if it is to please Him) should visualize, as least to some extent, His character and that of the faithful who come to adore Him there.

The durability of stone can picture God's Eternity. Wisconsin Lannon Stone seems to portray well the beauty and everlasting purity of God. The style best suited to remind us of God's majesty and power seems to be the Romanesque. Its beauty and strength has withstood the attacks of ages. Moreover a church should be functional, i.e., a place of prayer, a place inspiring prayer, not merely a shelter for worshippers, not a glorified stable that tends to recall our Lord's Birth Place. It should be a home, a quiet, friendly, attractive place where man meets with his God. To be functional, a church should be acoustically correct. St. Paul said: "Faith comes by hearing." A church in which sermons cannot be easily heard or understood would but be a mockery of one of its prime purposes.

With all this in mind, the new St. Mary Magdalene Church was planned. Every line, every detail had to add to the attractiveness of this House of God. Its beauty had to be an invitation to every passerby to enter and visit with his God. Many changes, many corrections were made until the present plans were evolved.

The church is built of Wisconsin Lannon Stone. The roof is Spanish tile. The clear story windows are accessible for washing or repairs without the use of a ladder. A fireplace is provided for the blessing of fire on Holy Saturday. The Baptismal font is designed to keep Holy Water fresh and free from oil or scum. The ventilating system provides for a complete change of air every three minutes. Automatic controls keep the church building from overheating or from dropping in temperature.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the interior is the Masterpiece painted by the pastor's old friend, Mr. John Mallin. Its title is "ITE MISSA EST." It is a meditation on the Holy Mass drawing the eye and mind from the worshipper to the sanctuary, to the altar, to Christ. It greatly helps to bring out the fact that "My House is a House of Prayer."

This then is the alabaster box of St. Mary Magdalene filled with the sweet scent of fervent prayer and expressive of the love of the priests and people of this parish. This church we dedicate through the hands of our Beloved Cardinal to the greater glory and honor of God and His loving Mother on this first Sunday of May, on the seventh anniversary of the pastor ship of Fr. Peter P. Witmanski.

Rev. A. Komosa

"Come follow Me"

Rev. Leo Hinc,
Rev. Stanley Rozak,
Rev. Fabian Bednarski,
Rev. Edwin Ossowski,
Rev. Sylvester Wronka,
Rev. Henry Pobutkiewicz,
Rev. Jerome Kolberg,
Rev. Joseph Kucharski,
Rev. Clement Jagodziński,
Rev. Bernard Sokołowski,
Rev. Bruno Szczawiński,
Rev. Anthony Zemrowski, C.S.V.,
Rev. Thaddeus Jakubowski,
Rev. Eugene Postelanczyk,
Revs. Henry and Francis Wachowski
Rev. John Majewski

Vocations to the Sisterhood

The Felician Sisters

Sister M. Alexina,
Sister M. Benilda,
Sister M. Cesaria,
Sister M. D'Arc,
Sister M. Davida,
Sister M. Frederick,
Sister M. Glorianne,
Sister M. Honorentia,
Sister M. Josephine,
Sister M. Noela,
Sister M. Sylvana
Sister M. Tarcillia

The Sisters of St. Joseph:

Sister M. Regina

Sister M. Sylvina

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth:

Sister M. Bonfilia,

Sister M. DePaul

Sister M. Salvinia

The Sisters of Mercy:

Sister M. Glorianna

The Sisters of St. Benedict:

Sister Margaret Mary

The Resurrection Sisters:

Sister M. Clarence