



History of St. Adrian's Parish.

Centennial Jubilee of St. Adrian's Parish, DeLancey, PA.
CAP at Orchard Lake.

The parish of St. Adrian's Church, celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding, looks back on its existence with pride. It is situated on a picturesque hilltop in Adrian, (post office box DeLancey, PA) Jefferson County, Pennsylvania.

In its early stages Adrian was a larger, more congested community. The town's beginnings lay with the mine opened of the same name on the Young Township site in 1886 by Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal & Iron Company. A financier named Adrian Georg Iselin took an active interest in the lives of the coal miners. Along with Adrian Georg's Roman Catholic wife, Eleanora O'Donnell Iselin, a church was constructed in 1889. In addition to the church, the Adrian Hospital was opened on February 11, 1889. The Iselin family went on to found many of the coal mining towns of the region, many of which, are named in honor of family members.

The progress of St. Adrian's church was due chiefly to the great zeal of the priests in charge. Its spiritual founder was none other than the famous Father Wienker, whose genius is credited the founding of many parishes in this locality. On November 24, 1889, Adrian's first church was dedicated. The building was a small wooden structure on the same site as the present Church. This building served until it was damaged by a heavy windstorm in 1891. It was immediately reconstructed and rededicated on November 30, 1892. A substantial part of this building is what remains today. To the side is a red brick building which was the church rectory. On April 15, 1895, Fr. Wienker. was reassigned and Fr. Joseph Zubrzycki came to St. Adrian's Parish. The first parochial school was opened on October 1, 1892; eighty children were enrolled. In 1898 a six-classroom school building was erected, each room being led by a devoted Sister of the Order of Mercy. The Sisters of Mercy convent building (residence) was built in 1904. The first graduating classes were in 1908. The administration was significantly broadened by Fr. Zubrzycki, enrollment swelled beyond three hundred and sixty and in 1914 the first class graduated from an acceptable three-year high school course. The beloved work of Fr. Joseph Zubrzycki ended with his death in 1928. He had served St. Adrian's spiritually and intellectually for 33 years.

Rev. C.A.J. Smelko, the first Adrian man ordained a priest, returned to serve until his death in 1932. During that time the three-year high school term was discontinued. In 1933 Rev. Pulaski introduced a two-year high school term. 1935 marked the beginning of a better suited four- year accredited high school when Fr. Bowes succeeded Fr. Pulaski. Fr. Bowes efforts were rewarded when in 1939 the graduating class departed with fully accredited diplomas for the first time. State education requirements were fulfilled with an enlarged faculty, reputable library, science classes and extensive

equipment. By 1939, St. Adrian's school was a monument to its first priests.

In 1941 the coal mines of R&P C&I Co. were closed in the town of Adrian. This began a decline of the 250 or more homes that once stood on the hill. Some 36.5 million tons of coal had been removed by the immigrant mine workers. The town was purchased by Mr. Nick Kovalchick of Sykesville. Priests during this time were Fr. John Keating and Fr. James Daily.

Fr. Stephen Dobosiewicz, on June 12, 1955, saw the last graduating class of St. Adrian's school pass. That same year, the Sisters of Mercy left St. Adrian's convent. The remaining students finished at S.S. Cosmas & Damian school or Punxsutawney Area High School.

Following this three priests served St. Adrian's. They were: Rev. John DeSanti, Rev. Francis J. Johnston and Rev. Thomas Geddes. St. Adrian's became a mission church to S.S. Cosmas & Damian, in Punxsutawney, in 1966. Priests who served were: Rev. Joseph Wiley, Rev. Patrick Healy, Rev. Robert Murray, Rev. Anthony Bevak, Rev. Thomas Miller, Rev. Jerome Simmons, Rev. Thomas Wagner, Rev. Emil Anderson, Rev. David Findlay, and a deacon Rev. David Rubino.

The people of Adrian purchased the town and its houses with 193 acres of land from the Kovalchick's in 1973 for \$160,000.

Then, no longer a mission church to S.S.C.D., Fr. Joseph Bobal was installed as priest of St. Adrian's serving from 1976 until 1980. At this time the parishes of St. Joseph's in Anita and St. Anthony's in Walston were put under the charge of Fr. Bobal as well. St. Adrian's rectory was no longer used when the rectory of St. Anthony's was chosen for the priest's residence. On August 7, 1980 the brick convent and school buildings were razed. The parish was led by Fr. Andrew Karg from 1980 to 1985. During this time many improvements were made to the church, the rectory, and Zubrzycki Hall (in DeLancey). In 1984 a gravel parking lot was put down over the foundations of the old school and convent. Fr. Joseph Czarkowski served the three parishes from 1985 to 1989.

April 15, 1989 Fr. Charles Sheets was installed as priest of St. Adrian's, St. Anthony's and St. Joseph's.

The people of St. Adrian's congregation are very proud to celebrate the 100th anniversary and look forward to serving God in this place for many years to come.