



**The History of St. Mary's Parish, Ware, Mass.**

Srebrny Jubileusz Parafii Najświętszej Maryi Panny w Ware, MA. 1905-1939, p. 33-39. CAP at Orchard Lake.

In the South central part of the state of Massachusetts, in Hampshire County, in a scenic region, lies the town of Ware, surrounded by wooded hills. The town numbers about 8,000 inhabitants.

The Ware River, flowing through the town, furnishes water power to the local industries, chief among them being the three large textile manufactories.

The town of Ware with its time-honored buildings makes a very pleasing impression on newcomers who visit the town. It was in the olden days a famous stopping place for the stage coaches.

In front of the Town Hall stands a large monument with a plaque on which is engraved the names of all who served in the World War. Among them are the names of many Poles.

Ware has three Catholic Churches. One of them, an imposing edifice, is the Polish church of St. Mary's, dedicated September 8, 1907.

St. Mary's Parish was organized in the year 1905. The church, built of red brick, measuring 60 by 130 feet, with a tower 130 feet high, was built at a cost of 137,000 dollars.

On the 22nd of December, 1904, there came to this settlement two missionary Fathers, the late Father Joseph Fux and Father Oswald Loretan, the present pastor of a neighboring parish in Bondsville, Mass. The late Father Fux was named the first pastor of the local parish.

The first religious service for the Poles was conducted on January 1, 1905, in the lower part of All Saints' church and for the subsequent two years the religious services took place there. Funds were soon being collected for the construction of a new church. The first collection for this purpose netted 300 dollars, the second campaign brought in 2,000 dollars for the new structure.

On the 16th of May, 1906, excavations were begun on a lot near South Street and on the 27th of October of the same year, the ceremony of the blessing of the corner-stone took place with a large number of the faithful from Ware and the neighboring localities taking part. In 1907, the church structure, built in the Roman-Gothic style, was completed.

In 1923 there were three large bells purchased and installed in the central tower. In the same year the lower church was remodeled and made into eight class rooms. The Poles of Ware at present number about 2700 people.

The immigrants, for the most part, came from the Southern part of Poland, from the counties of Dabrowa, Tarnow, Rzeszow and Jaslo.

The newly organized parish was under the able leadership of the zealous Father Fux. The great strain of the work, however, soon began to tell on the health of this zealous priest and he was forced to take a few months' rest in Europe in 1909. After this he resumed his work in the parish but it was not to be for very long. His health again gave away in 1912, and he again sought to regain his health in Europe. The surgical operations which he underwent did not restore him to health and after several months' illness he died in Europe on September 6, 1913.

News of the death of the well deserved and affectionately endeared pastor filled the hearts of the parishioners with grief. They had lost in the person of Father Fux their best spiritual protector.

In 1913, Father Oswald Loretan was named pastor of the parish and remained in that position until 1926. During his administration the parish purchased three dwelling houses in the vicinity of the church at a cost of 6500 dollars, with the intention of possibly utilizing these buildings for school purposes. At present, two of these houses are occupied by the Sisters in charge of the school and one of them is rented.

Under the direction of Father Loretan, there was raised for patriotic purposes in the year 1916 the sum of 13,000 dollars.

Among the most noteworthy donations were those of 500 dollars each of the Otis Company and the Geo. H. Gilbert Manufacturing Co. and the donation of 1,000 dollars of Matthew Paige, former director of the Ware Trust Company.

About 30 Poles enlisted in the American Army during the War and a few volunteers went to the Polish Army in France.

In the year 1923, Father Michael Kolbuch, M. S. a missionary, came to this town from Poland. He founded here the monthly magazine entitled, "The Messenger of the Blessed Virgin of LaSalette" which at present numbers over 25,000 subscribers throughout the country.

Father Michael Kolbuch through his untiring labors has endeared himself, not only to all of parishioners, but he also has very many friends in other circles.

In 1924 Father Joseph Piszczalka came to these shores from Poland and for two years acted as assistant pastor in this parish.

In 1926, when Father Oswald Loretan was appointed pastor in the parish in Bondsville, Father Piszczalka succeeded him as pastor in this parish.

In November 1927, Father Michael Kolbuch was made pastor of St. Mary's Parish. His first assistant was Father Anthony Lozinski, at present assistant to Father Ladislaus Sajek in Beausejour, Manitoba, Canada. The present assistant pastor is Father Peter Jaworski, M. S.

There is found here the administration office of "The Messenger" and "The Almanac of the Blessed Virgin of La Salette."

"The Messenger" is edited by Father Michael Kolbuch M. S. and Father Francis Slusarz M. S.

Father Michael Herbut, M. S. when not engaged in his missionary work resides in the parish. The parochial school, founded in 1924, is housed in the lower part of the church. The parochial school has eight grades and is attended by 300 children. The school is in charge of eight Sisters of the Order of Immaculate Conception of New Britain, CT.

The parish numbers 400 families. The appraised value of the church property is over 500,000 dollars. The present rectory is the former residence of the manager of the Otis Company. It was purchased in 1927 for 22,000 dollars.

In the rear of the rectory is a large building formerly a spacious garage and at present remodeled into a parish hall. This hall has a stage and can seat an audience of 400 people. It has a heating system and serves as a gymnasium as well. The rectory is surrounded by a beautiful lawn and flower beds. The estimated value of this property is about 60,000 dollars.

The parish cemetery was procured during the administration of the late Father Fux at a cost of 800 dollars and comprises about 20 acres of land. At present Father Kolbuch M. S. began to improve the cemetery grounds. The plans for the improvement of the cemetery extend over a period of ten years at a cost of 16,000 dollars.

Father Kolbuch is untiring in his priestly efforts. He has already organized many societies. The societies founded by him are: The Polish Women's Alliance, the Polish Roman-Catholic Union, the Society of Falcons, the Society of St. Stanislaus Kostka, the Drum Corps and St. Mary's Alligators.

Among the persons of note who have visited this parish in Ware are the late Archbishop John Cieplak of Poland, who preached an impressive sermon to the Polish people on the twentieth of January, 1926 and Senator David Walsh who delivered a speech in the Town Hall on the occasion of the celebration of the Tenth anniversary of the Independence of Poland.

The following are the societies that exist in the parish:

1. The Society of the White Eagle
2. The Altar Society
3. The Rosary Society
4. The Third Order of St. Francis
5. The Society of the Children of Mary
6. The Society of St. Stanislaus Kostka
7. The Polish Roman-Catholic Union
8. The Polish Women's Alliance
9. The Polish Falcons
10. Drum Corps
11. St. Mary's Alligators