

*St. John the Evangelist Parish
Celebrating 150 Years
1850-2000*





His Holiness John Paul II
cordially imparts his
Apostolic Blessing
as a pledge of divine protection and graces to the
Pastor and Parishioners of
Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church
Defiance, Ohio
on the occasion of its 150th Anniversary,
1850 - December 27 - 2000.

ex Archivis Vaticanis, J. 91.3000

Ioannes Paulus

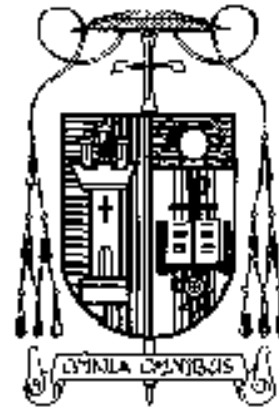
Archiepiscopus Eminentissimus Apostolicus



Most Reverend James R. Hoffman
Sixth Bishop of Toledo
February 17, 1961 to the Present
Second Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo
April 18, 1978 to February 17, 1981

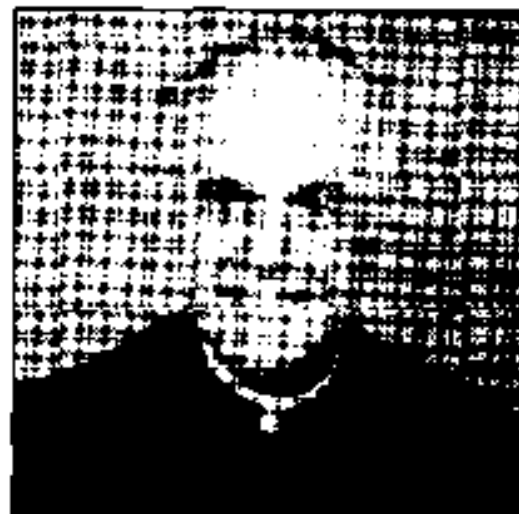
"Saint John the Evangelist Parish has been part of the saving work of the Holy Spirit for 150 years. The saints in your parish are the people who have tried their best to love the Lord and the Church: the sinners, probably the same people, have celebrated God's mercy for a century and a half. Just think of all the joys, sorrows, successes and failures, prayers offered and sacraments celebrated, in the lives of the families who call Saint John the Evangelist Parish their home."

Bishop James R. Hoffman



"I offer my special congratulations to all the members of Saint John the Evangelist Parish as you celebrate 150 years of spiritual life in Defiance, Ohio. During this Jubilee Year 2000, the Church has recognized many blessings which have been bestowed upon her people. I hope and pray that the people of Saint John the Evangelist Parish will recognize the blessings that have come through your parish community and be sure that I recognize the many blessings that Saint John the Evangelist Parish has been to the Church of Northwest Ohio."

Bishop Robert W. Donnelly



Most Reverend Robert W. Donnelly
Third Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo
March 14, 1984 to Present





Most Rev. Samuel Stritch (right)
Second Bishop of Toledo
1921 - 1930

Most Rev. Karl J. Altus (left)
Third Bishop of Toledo
1931 - 1950



Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs
First Bishop of Toledo
1911 - 1921



Most Rev. George V. Rehring
Fourth Bishop of Toledo
1950 - 1967



Most Rev. Albert H. Ottenweller
First Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo
1974 - 1977



Most Rev. John A. Donovan
Fifth Bishop of Toledo
1967 - 1980

THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISH DEFIANCE, OHIO

"It is doubtful if any parish in the diocese has contributed more to the good of souls than this parish. Few realize the importance of this parish in the early years of pioneer work. It cared for Missions and Stations over several counties. Without the help of those stalwart priests from this parish, the western part of the diocese may never have realized the status that it has today as far as Catholicity is concerned. It is so easy to think merely of today and forget yesterday. Tomorrow is another day but the place of this parish in our diocese should never be forgotten."

Reverend Lawrence A. Mossing, STD, in The History of the Diocese of Toledo, Vol. II

From the Diocese of Quebec, Canada; to Baltimore, Maryland; to Bardstown, Kentucky; to Cincinnati Ohio; to Cleveland, Ohio; and finally to Toledo--Catholicity followed a circuitous route around the continent avoiding that "uninhabitable" land around Lake Erie. Approximately 200 years before St. John's became a parish, the territory that is now the State of Ohio was part of a vast wilderness area populated by several Indian tribes. Efforts to convert them to Catholicism were made by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries who accompanied French explorers and traders. At that time, Catholics were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Quebec, Canada.

A granite marker on the east bank of the Aughize River commemorates the establishment of a French mission in 1670. The first white settlement was made by the French in 1680 just below the city of Maumee. But more than 170 years elapsed before a Catholic stronghold became apparent with the establishment of St. John the Evangelist Church. There were four reasons for this: First, the receding banks of lake Erie left behind undrained, swampy areas that bred the mosquito larvae which infested the area with the malaria that killed thousands of Irish canal workers. Second, there was a lingering British threat along the Maumee River that wasn't eradicated until after the war of 1812. And, third, the severity of the winters and the extreme heat of the summers created unbearable conditions.

After the war for Independence from Great Britain and the formation of the Northwest Territory in 1787, settlers poured into the Ohio country. The easiest route was through the Cumberland Gap of the Allegheny Mountains. Even though the Maumee River Valley linked the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi settlers chose this route to avoid the unhealthy conditions along the lake shore. Toledo at that time was described as a "mudhole", a title Cleveland had earned a few years earlier.

To accommodate the growing number of Catholics in the United States and the territories west of the Allegheny's, ecclesiastical jurisdiction was transferred from Quebec, Canada, to the infant Diocese of Baltimore. It was created the same year of the Northwest Territory, which would include the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. In 1789, John Carroll became the first American Catholic bishop, and settlers began to pour into the Northwest Territory through the Ohio River. Settlements dotted the riverfront landscape. When Ohio became the first state in the Territory in 1803, it was evident that the Diocese of Baltimore would have to be split.

A new Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky was created in 1808 for all Catholics west of the Allegheny Mountains and the Northwest Territory. Small, isolated settlements fanned out into the interior of Ohio. Cincinnati was fast becoming a busy river port town with shops and warehouses crowding the waterfront. Despite anti-Catholic sentiment, the townspeople built their own church in 1817. Four years later a diocese was created to accommodate some 10,000 Catholics scattered over the Northwest Territory, most in isolated woodland settlements, which hadn't been visited by a priest in years. Edward Fenwick, who had labored in the Ohio mission country for 10 years, was named Bishop of the Diocese of Cincinnati. With chalice and vestments, he and three priests trekked the wilderness terrain on horseback.

Bishop Fenwick died of an intense fever in 1832 after a whirlwind trip around his diocese that took him from Cincinnati to Sault-Sainte-Marie and back with many stops in between to visit priests and to administer the sacrament of Confirmation.

After 1833, the Diocese ministered to Catholics only in Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. With the economy of the state still clustered in the South along the Ohio River, the Ohio legislature decided to build two canals which would link Cincinnati to Toledo, and Marietta to Cleveland. John B. Purcell became the next bishop; and in 1838, he recruited two young French priests, Father Louis Amedeus Rappe and Father Louis De Guesbriand, for mission ministry in Ohio.

Only a trickle of settlers remained in northwestern Ohio after 1680. They were remnants of the early French settlers, soldiers who had fought with General Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers, and soldiers who were given land claims as payment for their services in the War of 1812. But it wasn't until the 1830's and the building of the Ohio canals that the real wave of migration to the area took place. Irish and German immigrants came to dig the canals and brought their families with them. With the completion of the Miami and Erie Canal in western Ohio, the Ohio River at Cincinnati was now linked to Lake Erie. Toledo, the northern terminal for the canal, became a new center for Catholic activity. By the 1840's, there were five Catholic centers throughout Ohio: Tiffin, Sandusky, Peru, Marywood, and Toledo.



Rev. Louis Amedeus Rappe
Pastor 1841-1846

Born in Northwestern France on February 2, 1801, Father Rappe came to America after the first eleven years of his priesthood were spent in his native land. His first task here was to learn the language; and after several months of daily study and practice, he succeeded to learn enough English to communicate adequately. He was assigned to the Toledo area, where he established St. Francis de Sales Church, and served all the Missions and Stations in Northwest Ohio, still a region of the Diocese of Cincinnati.

Sometime during the year 1841, Fr. Rappe rode on horseback into Defiance, still an insignificant village that counted less than 300 people. He said the first Mass there in the home of Timothy Fitzpatrick or Frank Weissenberger and preached a sermon in broken English. He continued to visit Defiance at infrequent intervals, as there were so many other settlements by this time.



Rev. Louis De Guesbriand
Pastor - 1846-1848

Father Louis De Guesbriand was sent by Bishop Purcell to assist Father Rappe in caring for the missions, including Defiance, and he may be called the second pastor of St. John's. In 1847 he reported that there were not more than 25 Catholic families, and along with Father Rappe, shared in the hardships and privations of the extensive Mission of Northwestern Ohio.

During the year 1844 the few Catholics in Defiance built a small frame church on the corner of Fifth & Jackson. Fr. Rappe wrote to Bishop Purcell: "I went to Defiance the fifteenth of January, (1845) and was very much gratified when I perceived a small frame church erected by the care and sacrifices of a few Catholic families of that place. I hope to celebrate the Holy Mass in it before Easter. I am pleased to tell you that everything has been conducted so well that it will be out of debt when finished. It is not a splendid building, but I hope that the Almighty God will have more regard for the good and pious hearts, which built up a humble temple for His glory, with much exertion than for a monument erected by pride, or without any hard sacrifice".

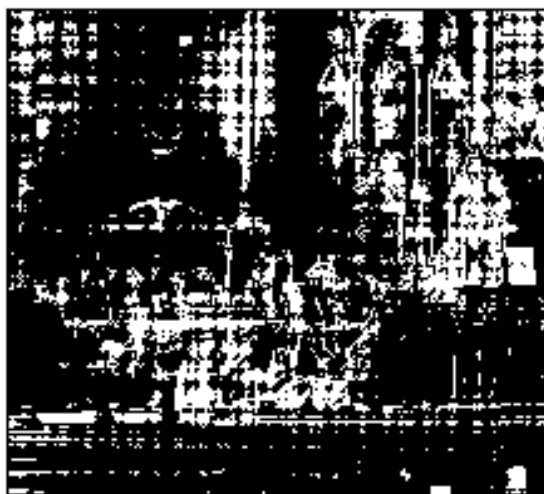
In 1847, the Diocese of Cleveland was created from the existing lands of the Diocese of Cincinnati. Father Rappe became its first bishop and Father De Guesbriand named Vicar General a few years later.

Between 1848 and 1849, the Mission of Defiance was cared for by Rev. Philip Foley, pastor of St. Francis De Sales. Between 1849 and 1850 Rev. Sebastian Sanner was made pastor of St. Joseph Church in Maumee and he took charge of the missions, including St. John's. By 1850, the pioneer period and the era of the traveling priest was over, as many towns took on an urban character. St. John's numbered about 225 parishioners and became an official parish, with the appointment of Rev. Louis J. Filiere as the first resident pastor. Now as the mother church in Northwestern Ohio, St. John's cared for all the missions and various stations in parts of Fulton, Henry, Wood, Williams and Paulding counties until they became self sufficient.

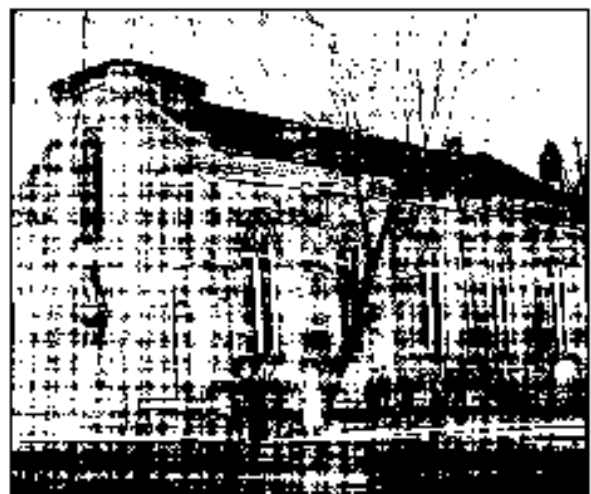
1850-1854 Rev. Louis J. Filiere

Father Filiere was named first resident pastor in November, 1850. It is interesting to note that Father Filiere was ordained by Bishop Rappe in September, 1850 and this was really his first assignment. It was really a tremendous and difficult work for him, as he was also to serve many Mission and Stations. The number of Catholics had increased to such a degree in the various parts of Fulton, Henry, Wood, Williams and Paulding Counties that a resident pastor was necessary at Defiance. Few people realize the importance of Defiance as a mission center. Perhaps this is due to the fact that history of the early missionary days is forgotten. But it should never be overlooked that Father Filiere served at least the Missions of Napoleon, Poplar Ridge, Delaware Bend, Hicksville, Archhold, Wauseon, Junction and Clarksville. By foot and horseback over trails that scarcely could be called roads, Father Filiere continued to serve the faithful in this section until his appointment to Providence in April, 1854.

St. John's reverted to the status of a mission parish. During the interim of the next 16 months, the parish was served by priests of the Precious Blood Order from their mission center at Mansfield Ohio. The Sisters of the Precious Blood started a Catholic school in Defiance in '854. Among the various priests who served the parish during this period, the parish records show the names of: Rev. Patrick Hennebery, CPPS, Rev. Rochus Schuele, CPPS, Rev. Nicholas Gates, CPPS, Rev. Jacob Rüngele, CPPS, Rev. Andrew Feibsmitt, CPPS, and Rev. Engelbert Ruf, CPPS.



Christmas Interior of St. John's Church



Exterior of the Second Church

1855-1858 Rev. Francis Westerholt

Father Westerholt replaced the Sanguinists in July, 1855. The work that was before him would perhaps discourage some. Father Westerholt was of great courage, fortitude and faith. Besides the Missions and Stations already served by Father Filice, he also took care of Antwerp, Mud Creek, and North Ridge. In September, 1855 Father Westerholt secured additional lots for a new church. In the summer of 1856 he had a new brick church, measuring 34 by 75 feet, underway and enclosed in the fall of that year. The interior of the church was not completed but was used out of necessity to serve the ever growing number of Catholics. The old church was now used as a school. The original school had become far too small to serve the number of pupils.



Rev. Francis Westerholt



Rev. Aloysius J. Hoefel

1858-1868 Rev. Aloysius J. Hoefel

Father Hoefel completed the interior of the church begun by Father Westerholt. He also purchased eight acres of land for a cemetery, and the lot on which to build a pastoral residence. For one year he continued to serve all the Missions and Stations formerly served by Father Westerholt. However, it became evident after that year that it was simply impossible for one priest to properly serve this vast territory due to the increase of Catholic families and an assistant pastor (Father James P. Molony) was appointed.

1868-1869 Rev. George Rudolph

Although here for only a brief time, the sacramental records show that Fr. Rudolph was quite busy with baptisms, marriages, and first communions, an indication of the growth of the city and the parish in the years after the Civil War.

1869-1878 Rev. Christian Viere

The parish was growing in size, now numbering 100 families. Since the congregation at this time was so large that it would necessitate a change in the church building, Bishop Gilmour gave the parish the choice of building a new church, or separating into two smaller parishes. The choice was to establish a new parish. St. John Church would be considered the German parish, and the new parish for the English speaking Catholics. In 1873 a new rectory was built on the lot purchased by Father Hoefel in 1858. It was a brick structure and cost \$4,000.

1878 - 1891 Reverend John B. Jung

The Reverend John B. Jung succeeded Father Viere in October of 1878. Born in Switzerland, he came to this country in 1871, after his ordination. During his tenure, he ministered to the St. John German Catholic congregation. The parochial school, established in 1850, now had 187 scholars, instructed by the Sisters of St. Agnes. His congregation grew to be one of the largest in the city. In addition to his responsibilities here as pastor, he also held the position as diocesan examiner of the clerical students and the junior clergy and was a member of the diocesan school board. In 1873 he was one of the founders and first officers of the St. Cecilia Society, an organization to promote genuine church music. Described as having a "sunny, happy disposition", Fr. Jung persevered in his duties despite ill health until 1891, when he retired.



Rev. John B. Jung



Rev. Joseph P. Gloden

1891 - 1914 Reverend Joseph P. Gloden

Father Joseph Gloden followed Father Jung in November of 1891. It was the beginning of a long and fruitful pastorate. Despite the enlargement of the church in 1880, it was still too small and unsafe. In the fall of 1894, the foundation was laid for the present church. It was 55 by 145 feet with a transept of 85 feet. On May 25, 1895, Bishop Horstmann laid the cornerstone, and the following day blessed three large bells intended for the new church. Modeled after Roman architecture, the beautiful new church was dedicated September 13, 1896 by Bishop Horstmann. The total cost of the new church was \$25,000. With a debt of only \$8,000, the church was paid off in a few years. Father Gloden personally donated a splendid set of the Stations of the Cross to the parish. St. John's was now truly one of the finest churches in the Diocese of Cleveland. (The Diocese of Toledo was only established in 1940.)

1914 - 1920 Reverend Leonard Plumanns

Father Plumanns energetically took up his duties where Father Gloden left off on May 31, 1914. One of the first endeavors of Father Plumanns was to build a new school. The expanding congregation dictated the need for the school. The school was completed by September 1915, at a cost of \$71,500. The new school was large enough to house eight grades, and a newly organized high school commercial class. He was then transferred to St. John's Church, Lima, in early 1920.



Rev. Leonard Plumanns

1920 - 1953 **Monsignor George H. Lang**

On February 7, 1920, Father George Lang assumed the responsibilities as St. John's permanent pastor. The beloved priest was appointed dean of the Defiance deanery, which included Defiance, Henry, Paulding and Williams counties in 1925. In 1929 a new parish house was completed at the cost of \$18,000. By all accounts, the most distinguished event of his stellar career came in 1938 when Pope Pius XII appointed Reverend Lang Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

Father Lang endeared himself to the members of his parish and the Defiance community by serving on the local hospital board for a number of years. He also began serving as chaplain for the Defiance chapter of the Knights of Columbus soon after his arrival. Because of his commitment to the Knights, they honored him by dedicating their chapter in his name.

The community of Defiance as well as the Diocese of Toledo mourned the loss of Monsignor Lang on April 26, 1953. He had fought heart illness for two years prior to his death. At the time of his death, the parish numbered 1981 souls.



Monsignor George H. Lang



Monsignor John J. Vogel

1953-1970 **Monsignor John J. Vogel Ph.D.**

Following the death of Monsignor Lang, Reverend Vogel was assigned pastor to St. John's. Reverend Vogel brought with him a myriad of experiences, including conducting open-air missions and that of history and philosophy professor at Mary Mansie College of Toledo. He also claimed the most memorable period of his career came as a street preacher from 1944-1949.

After only a year at St. John's, Pope Pius XII bestowed the honor of domestic prelate onto Reverend Vogel in 1954 with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. His tenure also included being selected as dean of the Defiance Deanery. He continued faithfully serving our parish until 1970. By this time, the number of parishioners had increased to 3,300.

In 1970, he was asked to retire at age 75. Always an enthusiast for history, he authored one book and an article in retirement; Indians of Ohio and "History of Wyandot County".

1970-1975 Reverend Donald Klaus

Having served as assistant pastor at St. John's from 1944-1954, Reverend Klaus was asked to return to Defiance as pastor in 1970. Always mechanically minded, Reverend Klaus is credited with fixing the clock tower after a 13-year silence during his associate years. He also invented a paper-folding machine for bulletins. Above all else, Reverend Klaus was focused on his mission of ministry. In his first homily as pastor of St. John's, he is quoted as saying "I'm here to help people get to heaven. Everything I do must be directed toward that." In 1975, Reverend Klaus was reassigned to St. Sebastian in Bismark.



Rev. Donald Klaus



Rev. Thomas Wehinger

1975-1981 Reverend Thomas E. Wehinger

Among his many pastoral duties, Reverend Wehinger headed up a special committee to investigate how St. John's might make parishioners and the community more aware of the quality education and resources available at the parish school. In 1980, the parish census indicated that parishioners totaled 2,855. In 1981, Reverend Wehinger was reassigned to St. Joseph in Maumee.

1981-1986 Reverend James K. Say

While pastor at St. John's, Reverend Say took on the monumental task of a fundraising campaign to refurbish the interior of the church. Following a \$95,000 goal, parishioners had the satisfaction of enjoying new walnut pews from Sander Woodworking, a new paint scheme of rose and burgundy, an altar light made by Ron Hasselschwert, and a tabernacle mural painted by Michelle Munt, among other improvements. It had been 33 years since a remodeling had taken place to this, one of the oldest parishes in the Diocese of Toledo.



Rev. James K. Say



Rev. Thomas E. Oedy

1986-1996 Reverend Thomas E. Oedy

Having served many years in youth ministry in Toledo, Reverend Oedy received his first pastorate at St. John's in 1986. Seeing his pastorate as more than an assignment, Reverend Oedy said, "I suppose I feel like a father of a family. If someone's in trouble I try and help them. You're involved with people at a real important time in their life-baptisms, marriages and deaths. And I think there's no question it is a privilege to be close to God. I'm serious about my spiritual life." According to the parish count of parishioners, St. John's had 2000 in 1990. In 1996, Reverend Oedy was reassigned to St. Mary in Edgerton and St. Michael in Hicksville.

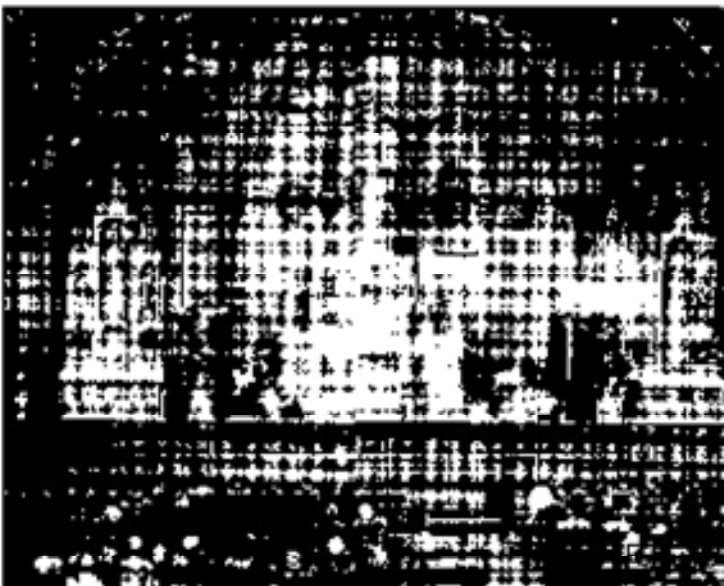


1996-present Reverend George E. Wenzinger

Returning to the home of his baptism, Reverend Wenzinger has completed a spiritual circle of sorts. He was born to Harold and Mary (Hauscr) Wenzinger on July 8, 1952 in Defiance, and baptized at St. John's on July 27, 1952. After the untimely death of his parents in a car accident on August 25, 1955, his godmother, Margaret Wenzinger and husband Carl raised Reverend Wenzinger in New Bremen, Ohio.

After graduating from Holy Spirit Seminary High School in Toledo, St. Meinrad College Seminary, and Mt. St. Mary's Seminary in Cincinnati, Reverend Wenzinger was ordained a priest on June 10, 1978. His first assignment was a homecoming to St. John's as associate pastor from 1978-1982.

In 1996, he returned to St. John's again-this time as pastor. In 2000, St. John's celebrates its 150th anniversary as a parish. As part of the celebration, the parish embarked on one of the most ambitious renovation campaigns recorded. To date, the campaign has \$1.6 million pledged for renovation to the church, a new parish activity center, and an endowment fund for future capital improvements. Other anniversary activities have been ongoing during this year as well. The climax of our celebration takes place in October with a special mass as we rejoice in our storied past and our hopeful future.



ASSOCIATE PASTORS

The following priests served at St. John's
as Associate or Assistant Pastors.

+REV. JAMES MALONEY
1859-1861

+REV. A. MANGENHANN
1861-1862

+REV. J. P. CARROLL
1862-1865

+REV. JOHN HANNAN
1865-1866

+REV. DANIEL O'KEEFE
1866-1869

Pioneer members of the parish always remembered Father O'Keefe because he was instrumental in founding the St. Boniface Society in 1868, which continued to function until 1962, almost 100 years later. The purpose of the society was to put into practice the corporal works of mercy, which pertained to the sick and dying and to assist with the financial needs of the parish. They donated the large stained glass window of the Annunciation in the transept in 1895.

+REV. J. CONWAY
1869-1869

+REV. DOM ZINZMAYER
1870-1871

+REV. ANTHONY ELLERT
1872-1873

+REV. JOHN KLOTE
1874-1875

The services of these nine priests cover an interesting interval of 16 years. During this period St. John's parish was very small. But, the parish was staffed by two priests because it was originally founded as a mission center for Northwestern Ohio. Nearly all the parishes of this area were either founded by or were served at various times by the priests of Defiance. With the departure of Father Klate in 1875 this first line of assistants comes to an end. It was not resumed again until 60 years later with the arrival of Father Schill in 1935.

+REV. JOSEPH HIEFFLING, SVD
Winter of 1907

+REV. JOSEPH ALTEN
1912

Both these appointments were temporary. Father Hieffling came to assist Father Glodin who was ill. Father Alten came to Defiance in 1912 because at that time St. Mary's Junction was temporarily attached to St. John's as a mission.



Crass used in Eucharistic Processions



Parish gathering, possibly for Forty Hours Devotions



+REV. JOSEPH SCHILL

1935-1943

Serving as principal of the commercial high school and teacher of religion and history. Fr. Schill is remembered as a stern but approachable and nice person. He introduced the regular singing of Gregorian chant in the parish, and started the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization).



+REV. JOSEPH HARTMAN

1943-1943

Fr. Hartman's assignment at St. John's was very brief. While here, he did teach several classes in the high school.



+REV. SYLVESTER SCHMELZER

1943-1944

Raised on a farm, Father Schmelzer was a laid back, easy going and well liked person who related well to the students. He taught square dancing while at St. John's.



+REV. DONALD KLAUS

1944-1954

Returning later to serve as Pastor from 1970-75, Fr. Klaus is remembered for his kindness and visits to the sick, his love for the parish and involvement in the school and youth activities like CYO, Camp Fire Girls and Scouts. During Msgr. Lang's illness, Fr. Klaus assumed many of the responsibilities of the pastor. Many remember his famous Model T and how much he enjoyed his train collection set up in the rectory basement.



REV. FRANCIS CRAWFORD

1954-1959

Fr. Crawford organized a high school choir and obtained special robes for choir members. He was very involved in CYO activities helping to put on several parish plays, "Gay 90's Revue" in 1955 and "Waltz Time" in 1956.

***REV. JAMES STANISLAUS OZGA**

1959-1962 & 1963-1964

Instrumental in beginning the Guadalupe Society, he studied the Spanish language in Mexico to be able to serve more effectively and later went to Kenya, Africa as a missionary there until 1971. Well-liked; parishioners would look forward to his return visits during the summer.



REV. ROBERT HAAS

1962-1963

Fr. Haas was especially supportive during Msgr. Vogel, the pastor's illness.



REV. ALBERT MIORIN

1964-1967

Well-liked, a people person with lots of vitality, Fr. Miorin was very involved with CYO. Because of his work with the school children at St. John's, he went on for graduate studies and developed a counseling program for inner-city schools of the Diocese of Toledo.



REV. MARTIN B. NASSR

1967-1969

St. John's was Fr. Marty's first assignment after ordination. He was very personable, enjoyed people, and was especially involved with encouraging the teenagers in the parish to participate in TEC retreats and share their faith. He is remembered fondly for his music appreciation.



REV. DAVID J. BECK

1969-1972

"I am a different priest because of the people and experiences I have encountered at St. John's", Fr. Beck said during his farewell dinner. Spanish speaking, he opened a community center, LaCasa del Espiritu Santo, on Defiance's west end, and was involved with a program for migrant workers. He began a monthly celebration of Mass at the Leisure Oaks Nursing Home, a regular tradition which continues today.





REV. JOHN G. HEMSTREET

1972-1974

Fr. Hemstreet was a very knowledgeable person who enjoyed music, and was very precise in caring for sacramental celebrations. He was a strong supporter of Catholic schools.



REV. CHARLES J. DENNY

1974-1978

Fr. Chuck was especially liked by the school children for whom he would present puppet shows. He celebrated Mass regularly at the homes of shut-ins and at Defiance College, and is remembered as fun-loving, compassionate and down to earth. A spiritual person he helped organize the parish into small communities of faith.



REV. GEORGE E. WENZINGER

1978-1982

Son of the parish, he returned later in 1996 to serve as Pastor.



REV. JOHN FLECK

1982-1983

Strong on building community in the parish and trying to get parishioners to get to know each other, Fr. Fleck was very outgoing, and especially involved in the CMAS and their activities.



REV. GERARD RUFFING

1983-1985

A dedicated, pleasant, and gentle people person, Fr. Ruffing had a strong interest in revitalizing faith building of young people. He is also remembered as loving sports.



REV. DAVID KIRK

1985-1987

A compassionate solicitous person, Fr. Kirk visited the sick regularly and made efforts to share the importance behind the Sunday liturgy. After serving at St. John's, he went on to become an Army Chaplain, where he still serves today ministering to those in the military and their families.

The Sisters of St. Agnes (CSA) of Fond-Du-Lac, Wisconsin assumed responsibility of St. John's Catholic School in 1870 and served here until 1988. St. John's Parish is indebted to their community and the Sisters who were involved in ministry here during that time. Their tireless commitment and dedicated service to the children, parents and parish will always be treasured.

The Sisters of St. Agnes who served at St. John's:

+Catherine Spenthoff
 -Benedicta Michler
 +Eulalia Krowder
 +Julia Bell
 -Juliana Ries
 +Emerentia O'Connor
 +Silla Walz
 +Pulcheria Baronner
 -Cordula Quell
 +Otto Maurer
 +Rufina Schulmischer
 +Petronilla Malloy
 +Hilfruda Drelling
 +Gregory Walter
 +Alexa Schueler
 +Salome Darnieder
 +Friedrika Baier
 +Agatha Frank
 +Imelda Geimer
 +Agnes Von Lintel
 +Winifred Bumer
 +Justa Krygowski
 Claude (Mary Feldner)
 +Flora Guldau
 +Agnes Marie Schmitz
 +Herman Joseph Welget
 +Adela Smith
 +Gertrudis Ertzinger
 +Jane Zurbach
 +Felicitas Drelling
 +Rita Himmer
 +Helen Clara Hoffman
 +Nicola Hammes
 +Genevieve Weber
 +Augusta Eckel
 +Lamberta Fischer
 +Rosita Hamulade
 +Lambertine Gerber
 +Anella Schneider
 +Maura Schmidhammer
 +Thomas English
 +Cleopha Schoenemann
 +Eloeta Schmitt
 +Morenua Homering

+Euphrasia Wettstein
 +Pancratia Von Fehll
 +Urban Smith
 +Gilberta Laudy
 Mary Zita Lang
 +Priscilla Lutiguan
 +Aveline Frank
 +Louis (Bertrand) Laurent
 +Alma Desch
 -Liliosa Ring
 +Agatha Morella
 +Petronilla Mannebach
 M. Theresia Langertels
 +Pius Thein
 Rosaria (Mary) Erbert
 +Agnes Cecile Wiesner
 Evangelina Kudric
 +Viola Goetz
 +Dorinda Altschaeff
 -Lettitia Daly
 +Thekla Sander
 +Theodine Hammes
 +Lueticia Moorman
 +John Baptist Saja
 +Mary Constance Busch
 +Berita Schaf
 Paden (Sarah) Sander
 +Carol Marie Malloy
 Donalric (Helen) Mueller
 +Mary Alfred Becker
 Evelyn Drelling
 +Consolata Waslager
 +Milburga Hohman
 M. Robert (Rita) Little
 +Jane Frances Bueter
 Alrose Roessler
 +Ambrosine Pfeifferle
 Ronald Wellbrock
 +Henrita Herr
 +Baronnes Harzany
 +Georgita Schenk
 Mary Grace Ollinger
 Leone Theresia McCarthy
 +Thomas Aquinas Mulvey

Adrian Stummers
 Florita Fleck
 +Lucinda Kohlmann
 Mary Paul Unverdorben
 +Francesca Beecher
 Mary Frances Schug
 Helen (Josephine) Goebel
 Frances Terese Belanger
 Dolores Baier
 +Serena Humbel
 +Mary Magdalen Heindlein
 Jos. Gerard (Agnes) Kircher
 +Fugenia Ankenbrink
 Alicia Davissou
 +Agnesia Harber
 Donelda (M. Beth) Wilhelm
 Habelhedra (Ethel) Miller
 Marcus Gmeinder
 Thomas More (Rose) Walters
 Clementine (Lucille) Bortzau
 Charitas (Bette) Curtius
 Thaddeus (Felice) Federspiel
 Josephu (Judith) Smits
 +Eleanore Desch
 F. Romana (Agnes) DeYoung
 Eva (Loretta) Meidl
 Luana (Mary Ann) Welling
 +Luella Salbawlek
 +Romana Statz
 Agnes Scott
 +George Marie Winkel
 Mary Ann Scherer
 Mary Hornung
 Ruth Ann Baudry
 Joan Marie Mark
 Frances Agnes Sonntag
 +Helen Mirsberger
 Sharon Pollnow
 Rene Rucke
 Mary Cullen
 Monique Heller
 Beatrice Lindsay
 Jean Andrejowski



Sr. Agnes Kheher



Sr. Ambrosia Pfeifferle



Sr. Claude Feldner



Sr. Agnes Scott



Sr. Beatrice Lindsay



Sr. Consolata Wasinger



Sr. Agnes Cecile Wiener



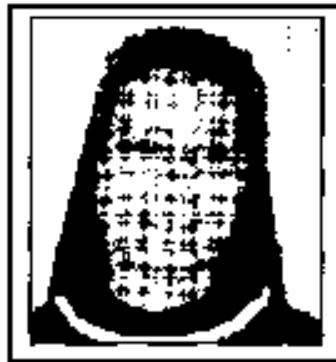
Sr. Benita Schaf



Sr. Dorinda Altschaeff



Sr. Agnes Marie Schultz



Sr. Carol Marie Malley



Sr. Ethel Müller



Sr. Evangelina Kodric



Sr. Florita Fleck



Sr. Georgia Schrenk



Sr. Evelyn Drelling



Sr. Francesca Bercher



Sr. George Marie Winkel



Sr. Felicitas Drelling



Sr. Frances Agnes Sonntag



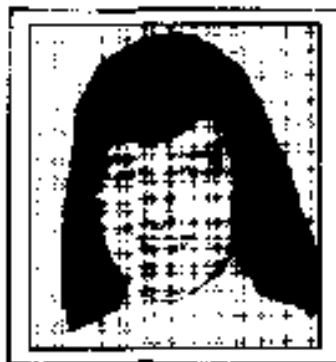
Sr. Gilberta Landy



Sr. Felice Federspiel



Sr. Frances Teresa Belanger



Sr. Helen Mbsberger



Sr. Irene Lengerich



Sr. Inno Zittbach



Sr. Josephine Goebel



Sr. Henrietta Herr



Sr. Jean Andrewjeski



Sr. Judith Smith



Sr. Herman Joseph Weigel



Sr. Joan Marie Mark



Sr. Lambertia Fischer



Sr. Imelda Colmer



Sr. John Baptist Shoja



Sr. Letitia Daly



Sr. Loretta Middi



Sr. Mary Erbert



Sr. Mary Ann Wellag



Sr. Louise Bertram



Sr. Mary Hornung



Sr. Mary Beth Wilhelm



Sr. Luetta Mootman



Sr. Mary Alfred Becker



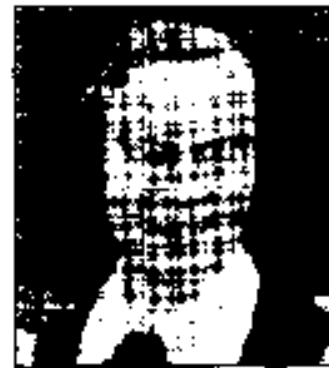
Sr. Mary Constance Basch



Sr. Marcus Gmeliner



Sr. Mary Ann Scherer



Sr. Mary Frances Schug



Sr. Mary Grace Ollinger



Sr. Monique Heller



Sr. Rene Boeke



Sr. Mary Magdalen Heintz



Sr. Padua Sanders



Sr. Rita Little



Sr. Mary Zita Lang



Sr. Petronilla Mannebach



Sr. Romann Stetz



Sr. Milburga Hohmann



Sr. Pius Theis



Sr. Rose Walters



Sr. Rusita Handibode



Sr. Serena Hummel



Sr. Thekla Sanders



Sr. Ruth Ann Baudry



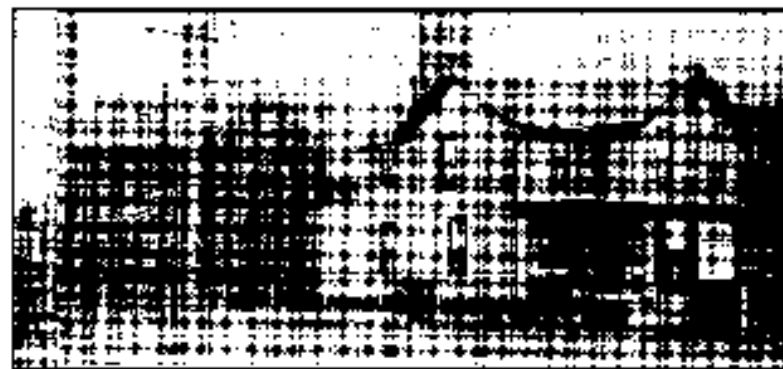
Sr. Sharon Pollnow



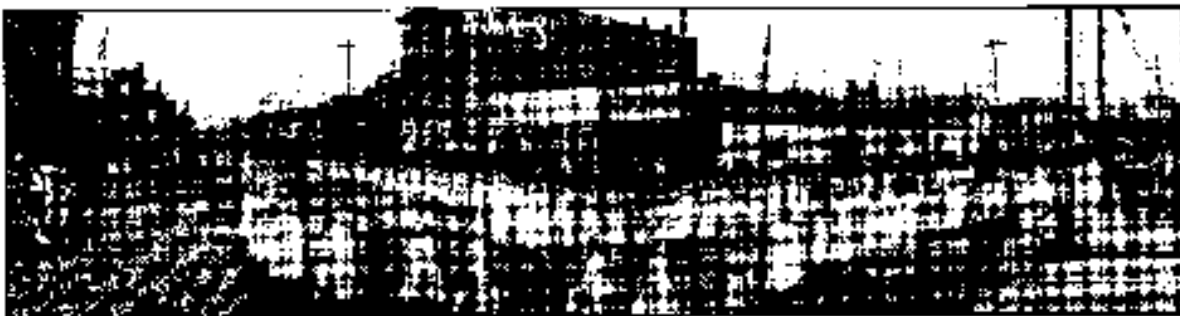
Sr. Thomas Aquinas Malvey



Sr. Helen Mueller



Sisters' Residence on Jackson Street



Children from St. John's escorting Bishop Schrembs, 1912

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE PARISH

St. John's Parish has cultivated the faith and vocational call of eighteen men to ordained priesthood,
fifty-one women and one man to vowed religious life,
and six men to ordained deaconate.

(Date indicates year of ordination or profession of vows.)



Ordination of Rev. Bernard Boff, 1961



Ordination of Rev. John Stites, 1976



First Mass of Rev. George Wenzinger, 1978



First Mass of Rev. Richard Klisner, 1950



Rev. Max Walz, CPPS, 1893

Frank & Mary (Kellis) Walz, parents
Sr. Sills, CSA, sister
Michael & Frank, brothers



Msgr. Max Walz, 1919

Michael & Mary (Weber) Walz, parents
Cletus, Leo, Anthony, Augustine, brothers
Onilla (Schura), Ambrosia (Imber), Cecelia, Mary, sisters



Msgr. Michael Walz, 1935



Rev. Julius M. Kitter, 1904

Charles & Mary (Bohmann)
Kitter, parents



Rev. Richard Kissner, CPPS,
1950

Carl & Jennie (Krumel)
Kissner, parents
Albert, Carl, Paul & James,
brothers
Mary Siebenaler, sister



Rev. Richard Rauth, CPPS,
1936

Peter & Bertha (Wilhelm)
Rauth, parents
Leonard, brother
Mildred Jacob and
Bernadine Smith, sisters



Rev. George Forst, 1899

George & Lena (Singer) Forst, parents



Rev. Joseph Rathla, CPPS,
1925

John & Mary (Griesshaber) Raible, parents



Rev. Paul Solbert, OFM, 1926

Charles & Mary (Weaner) Solbert, parents
Maynard, Charles, John, Harman, Anthony,
Francis, Robert, brothers
Myrtle & Mary, sisters



Rev. Albin Bauer, CPPS, 1929

Joseph & Olympia (Emmert)
Bauer, parents
August, Carl, Henry &
Emmert, brothers
Olga, Erna & Pauline, sisters



Brother Matthew Jacob, CPPS

Martin & Jenny (Burns) Jacobs, parents
Francis, Ralph, Harold, brothers



Rev. Clarence Kroeckel, 1930

John Phillip & Wilhelmina
(Schackow) Kroeckel, parents
Helen Blue, Mildred Carusa,
Justine Hubenberger, sisters



Rev. Charles Froelich, CPPS,
1942



Rev. James Froelich, CPPS,
1955



Rev. Bernard Boff, 1961

Andrew & Anna (Dresch) Froelich, parents
Robert, Harold, Donald, Franklyn, brothers
Rosemary, sister

Carl & Hazel (Rosset) Boff, parents
Robert, brother; Agnes, sister



Rev. Michael Schelling, 1974

Clyde & Marlon (Roedel)
Schelling, parents
John, brother



Rev. John Siftes, 1976

Floyd & Anna Margaret
(Hiller) Siftes, parents
Floyd (Skip), Robert, Keith,
Thomas, brothers



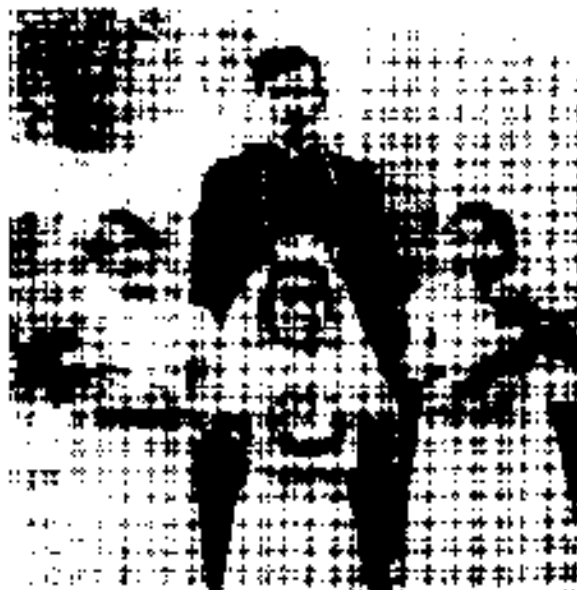
Rev. George E. Wenzinger,
1978

Harold & Mary (Hauser) Wenzinger, parents
Raised by Carl & Margaret Wenzinger, godparents
Harold & Mary's children: Mary Jo, James,
John and Thomas
Carl & Margaret's children: Ronald, Janet, Gerald,
Linda, Beverly, and Kenneth

Rev. John C. Kehres, S.J., 1950
 Leo P. & Leonora (Hengstler) Kehres, parents
 Charles, Paul, William, Fred, brothers
 Mary Rita, Elizabeth, Theresa, sisters



First Mass of Rev. James Froelich, CPPS, 1955



First Mass of Rev. Charles Froelich, CPPS, 1942



Bishop Schrembs at St. John's, 1914



Father Gloden in his garden, 1912



Sr. M. Genevieve Beez
 Maryknoll Mission Sister, 1921
 John & Wilhelmina (Weber) Beez, parents
 Joseph & Norbert Beez, brothers
 Genevieve Seiber, sister



Sr. M. Appollonia Damb & Sr. M. Matrons Damb
 1881, CSA 1903, CSA
 Adam & Sophia (Openick) Damb, parents
 Valentino, brother
 Elizabeth Goller & Mrs. Fred Stocking, sisters



Sr. M. DeSales Ashbacher, CSA 1909
 John & Walburga (Smith), parents
 Ida, Anna, Kate, Helen, sisters



Sr. Florentine Eck, CSA 1896
 Alloysius & Elizabeth (Wislocky) Eck, parents
 John, Joseph & Carl, brothers
 Theresa, sister



Sr. Marcelina Hoff, CSA 1921
 John & Mary (Schmitz) Hoff, parents
 Edmund, Lawrence, Alphonse, brothers
 Stella, Monica, Veronica, Angela, Dorenda,
 Marcella, & Lucia, sisters



Sr. Victorine Hengstler, CSA 1896
 John & Mary (Korn) Hengstler, parents
 Anna, Clara, Mary Christina,
 Elizabeth & Leonard, sisters
 Leo, brother



Sr. Bertina Desch, CSA, 1917



Sr. Digna Desch, CSA, 1917



Sr. Eleanore Desch, CSA 1923

Hieronymus & Augusta (Herr) Desch, parents of Sisters Bertina, Digna, & Eleanore Desch
Joseph & Adilbany, brothers; Theresa, Anna, Margrner & Frances, sisters



Sr. Alma Desch, CSA, 1906

Joseph M. & Margaret (Herr) Desch, parents
Joseph, John, Aloysius & Leo, brothers
Mary, Clara, Elizabeth, Eva,
Rosella & Agnes, sisters



Sr. Pascal Fisher, OSF

Arthur & Theresa (Kelly) Fisher, parents
Gertrude, Madolina & Annahelle, sisters
Leo, brother

Sr. M. Fidelis Froelich, CPPS, 1916

Sr. M. Antoinella Froelich, CPPS 1925



Sr. M. Beatrix Froelich, CPPS, 1905

Jacob & Helena (Pabl) Froelich are parents of these sisters,
all members of the Precious Blood Community
Isidore, Linus, Andrew & Paul, brothers
Hilda, sister



Sr. Faustine Masanz, CSA, 1921
John & Barbara (Pinker) Masanz, parents
Mary, Anna & Antelia, sisters
Fred, brother



Sr. Mary Jean Masanz, CSA, 1926
Fred & Clara (Moser) Masanz, parents
Joseph, Leo, Paul, brothers
Agnes, Mary, Catherine & Jean, sisters



Sr. Julianne Meyer, CSA, 1936
Joseph & Edna (Reinhart) Meyer, parents
Donald & Eugene, brothers
Agnes & Ann, sisters



Sr. Mary Felicitas Pfirtman
Sister of Precious Blood
Francis & Margaret Helen (Lisca) Pfirtman, parents



Sr. M. Edmund Scherer, CSA, 1939
Joseph & Amelia (Masanz) Scherer, parents
James & Edmund, brothers
Cecelia Ann, sister



Sr. Mary Ann Schlegel, CSA, 1923
William & Mary (Demann) Schlegel, parents
Maria, sister



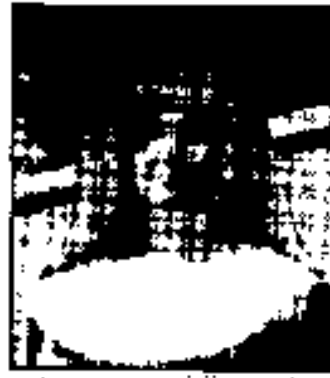
Sr. Ruth Schwab, CSA, 1929
Oswald & Josephine (Thome) Schwab, parents
Francis Peter, brother



Sr. Genevieve Seibert, 1952
Missionary Sisters of Sacred Heart
Robert & Gertrude (Weber) Seibert, parents
Robert, Michael, John, Joe & George, brothers



Sr. Agatha Heinrich, CSA, 1929



Sr. Frances Cecile Heinrich
(Dominican)

Joseph & Emma (Klingele) Heinrich, parents of Sisters Agatha and Frances Cecile
Marie, sister



Sr. Thomasine Hoeffel, CSA, 1905



Sr. Rosemary Hoeffel, CSA, 1913

Joseph L. & Maryann (Schwaesinger) Hoeffel, parents of Sisters Rosemary and Thomasine
Victor, Gerald, Harlan, Trevor & Archie, brothers
Rae, Cecilia, Irene & Jewel, sisters



Sr. Monica Justinger, CSA, 1969

Virgil & Rosemary (Wisda) Justinger, parents
Janet, Judy & Marilyn, sisters
John, brother



Sr. Mary Lucy Kieffer, 1944
Sisters of Notre Dame

Clarence & Mary (Meyer) Kieffer, parents
Margaret Reineke, sister



Sr. Clarence Kroeckel, CSA, 1918

Joseph & Anna (Barr) Kroeckel, parents
Robert, Joseph, Louis, Paul, Donald, brothers
Agnes, Beatrice, Stella, sisters



Sr. Lucille Selbenick, CSA, 1932



Sr. Dorothy Selbenick, U.N.A., 1933

Jerome & Ollie (Myers) Selbenick, parents of Sisters Lucille & Dorothy
Renaud, Paul & Richard, brothers; Evelyn, sister



Sr. Michael Weber, CSA, 1906



Sr. Monica Weber, CSA, 1911



Sr. Caroline Weber, CSA, 1903

John G. & Mary (Guentner) Weber are the parents of Sisters Michael, Caroline, & Monica Weber.
Benjamin L. Frederick, Leo, George, Michael, Benedict, brothers



Sr. Stella Walsh, CSA, 1885

Frank & Mary (Kalis) Walsh, parents
Rev. Maximilian Michael, Frank, brothers



Sr. Francis de Sales Westrick, CSA, 1923

Jacob & Anna (Ashbacher) Westrick, parents
John, Vincent, Bernard, Quinn, Francis, brothers
Cecilia Hoff, Julia Ryan, Dorothy Swary, & Lucille Kline, sisters



Sr. Lucilla Kahl, CSA



Sr. Felicia Kahl, CPPS

Casper & Anna (Zinnerly) Kahl, parents
Frank, John, Joseph, brothers; Tillie, Margaret, sisters



Sr. M. Frances Brenner, RSM
John & Elizabeth (Siker) Brenner
Albert, Frank, George, Joseph, brothers
Otilia, Mary, sisters

PHOTOGRAPH INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING:

Sr. M. Consolata Duck, CSA

Sr. Gertrudis Michenfelder, CSA
John & Anna (Pinker) Michenfelder, parents
Raymond, brother; Marie, sister

Sr. Praxedes Weikinger, CSA
John Weikinger & Agnes (Baclunann)
Weikinger

Sr. M. Walburga Schmitt, CSA

Sr. M. Alberta Wolsiffer, CSA

Sr. M. Martha Schmitt, CSA
The two Schmitt sisters are daughters of
Joseph & Anna (Streit) Schmitt

Sr. M. Louisa Wolsiffer, CSA

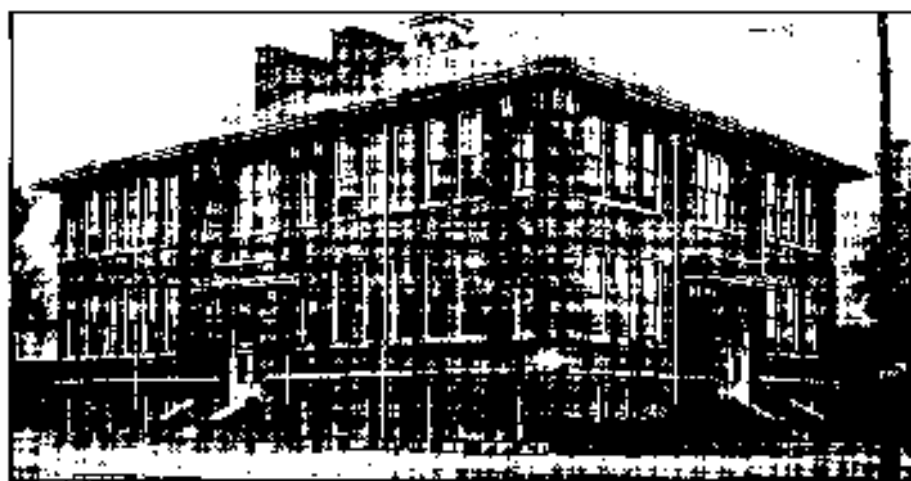
Sr. Falsola Wolsiffer, CSA

Sr. Victoria Wolsiffer, CSA

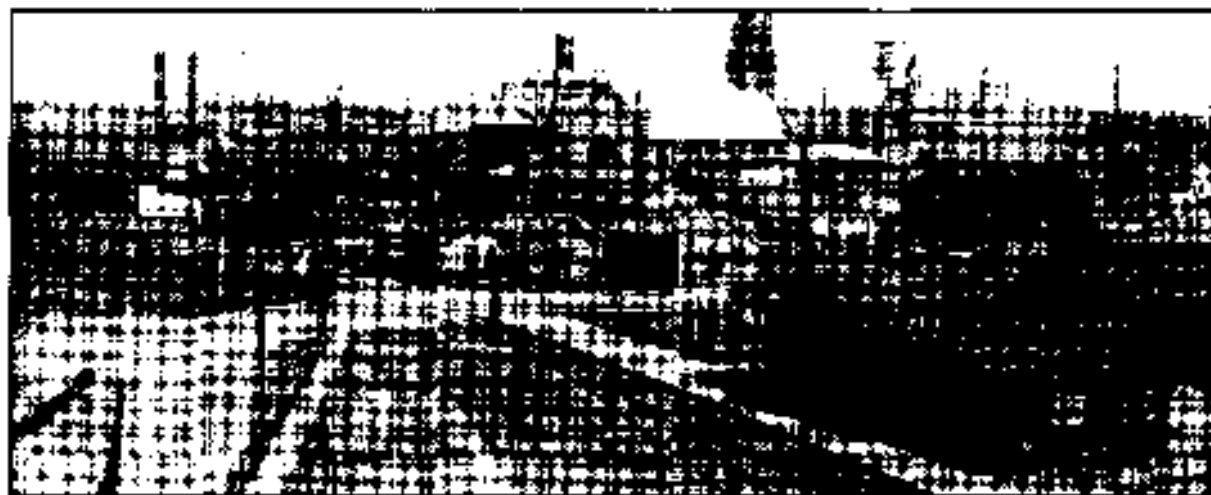
Sr. Ida Singer, CSA
Philip & Margaret (Froehlich) Singer

All four Wolsiffer sisters are daughters of
Frederick & Caroline (Korn) Wolsiffer

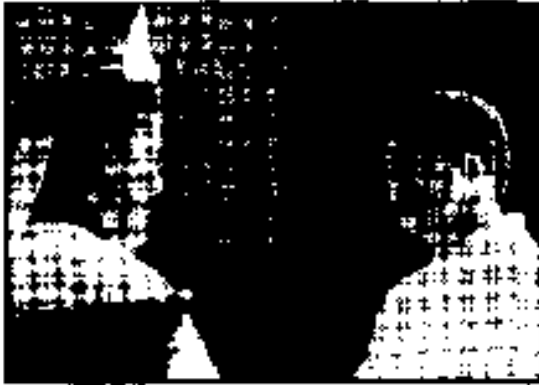
Sr. M. Anselm Streit, CSA
Matthias & Anna (Schlenbach) Streit



St. John's Catholic School with original windows



Small homes once facing Fifth Street were eventually moved to other locations.



Randall Redington, Deacon - 1983
Mary Ellen, Wife



Charles R. Baker, Deacon - 1997
Ruth Ann, Wife; Children: Lisa, Charles,
Laura, Anne-Marie, Nathlom

Our parish, St. John's, was founded by brave people who tamed the wilderness and planted the seeds of the Catholic faith, along with the seeds of the fields, to provide the foundation for the church in the entire Defiance area. The people of St. John's helped the Irish and the English-speaking people of German descent to start St. Mary's Parish. And in our recent past St. John's has been enriched by the influence of our Hispanic parishioners. The faith that inspired our people to adapt, change and meet new needs also inspired eighteen men to be ordained priests, fifty-one women and one man to enter religious life, and six men to serve as ordained deacons. It is in this spirit of faith and courage that our parish looks to the future with hope, taking seriously the call of the Gospel to build the body of Christ and form a community of faith here at St. John's. Our many parish activities and programs, spiritual formation, and responsibility for educating our youth enable us to make efforts to conform to the radical love that Jesus taught by word and example to be witnesses to all of Jesus' presence in our midst.



Chris Mendez, Deacon - 1976, Betty, Wife,
Children: Chris, Sally, Andrea, Renee, Robert



Donald Meyer, Deacon - 1993, Clara, Wife,
Children: David, James, Michael, Beth, Catherine, Joseph

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Scripture study groups, RENEW, St. John's Catholic CCD Program from early childhood through high school, St. John's Catholic pre-school through eighth grade in-school education program, Christ Renews His Parish women's spiritual life program, Men's Renewal of the Heart, the Guadalupe Society, Be-Friender Ministry, First Saturday and First Friday devotions, prison ministry, Men's Fellowship Breakfast, funeral dinner ministry, Christian Lifestyles gathering, Engaged Encounter, Liturgical and Sacramental Teams, ministry to the sick and shut-ins, are all evidence that our parishioners take seriously the call of the Gospel to "go out and proclaim the good news, to serve, to share, and to build up the Body of Christ".

The Hispanic Church has much to contribute to the entire community of believers, and St. John's Parish has been enriched over these past 40 years with the influence of our nearly one-third Hispanic parishioners. There are traditional values that have characterized the Hispanic family for generations. A marked degree of love and appreciation of children and family, a deep reverence and compassion for the elderly, a spirit of hospitality and celebration, and a devotional spirituality which recognizes "Papacito Dios" (Daddy God) and which places emphasis on Our Lady of Guadalupe are all characteristics of their cultural heritage.

During the late 50's and early 60's, numerous Mexican-American families relocated to our Defiance area, finding employment in the various factories here. Several Spanish-speaking priests assigned to St. John's took a particular interest in ministry to the migrant families and to the Hispanic parishioners who were registering at St. John's. In 1972, under the guidance of Father David Beck, the Guadalupe Society of St. John was organized. The Society is still in existence and although it isn't as active as it was nor has the large membership as it did in the past, the goals remain the same: to unite all members' families, to understand better the Catholic faith, to remain faithful to this religion and the Church, to preserve the Latin American culture for the next generation, and to live with one another in peace, unity and brotherhood.



St. John's has been very involved in ministry to the local migrant worker camps also, helping to catechize and evangelize, providing sacramental ministry and religious instruction. Bishop Albert H. Ottenweller, while missioned as a priest in the local Leipsic area, was very instrumental in developing programs for the migrant and Hispanic families. Many of the Sisters of St. Agnes stationed here at St. John's were also involved in this work. And a similar ministry continues today with some of our parishioners committed to visiting the camps regularly during the summer months, teaching religion, praying and worshipping with the workers and their families. Father James S. Ozga, who was stationed here from 1959 to 1962, was particularly interested in ministry to the Hispanic community. In 1962, he was released from diocesan duties to study Spanish in Mexico City, returning here the following year to resume his duties. He is remembered for his strong missionary zeal and for his firm challenges to the Hispanic community to become more involved in their Church.

In the early 70's, the Cursillo movement was an integral part of parish life here. This three day retreat experience, a short course in Christianity, was the predecessor of the Christ Renewal Parish program. Because the Cursillo movement originated in Spain, it is richly spiced with Spanish terms, but is a program not limited to Spanish-speaking people, although several of those early Cursillo weekends were conducted in Spanish. Masses in Spanish were also celebrated here regularly; and there were four Hispanic deacons ministering either here or at St. Mary's. Juan Saucedo and Ovelto Valle are both retired now and living in Texas. Ignacio Contreras is deceased, but his wife, Diamantina, still lives here in our parish. Chris Mendez, ordained in 1976, is still actively serving here and has the distinct honor of being the first deacon to ever be ordained from St. John's.

As the blended Irish, German, Hispanic community of faith now formed here at St. John's Catholic Church, we are blessed with the cultural heritage of each of these rich traditions, and of the Hispanic Catholics who worship and are involved here now.

This important historical moment in the life of our parish, celebrating 150 years as a Roman Catholic Christian Faith Community, during the 2000th anniversary of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, provides an opportunity for reflection as we ponder our future. Considering how our spiritual predecessors built this parish complex and faith community with great sacrifice, love and dedication, we are making efforts to continue that tradition to enhance our church buildings for the needs of the present and for future congregations, and to continue to grow spiritually as a parish. We pray that our mutual efforts will be successful and that God will always be the center of our lives as we join together in the Spirit of Jubilee 2000 and "open wide the doors to Christ."

Looking ahead, our parish and the others of our Defiance Deanery face a number of challenges, including the dwindling number of priests, declining parish membership and concerns for economic stability and future financial development. A plan to address these issues has begun and is anchored on a point of universal agreement. Parishes have been arranged in county clusters and have agreed to improve and enhance ministry through cooperation and collaboration. The Defiance County parish cluster includes St. John and St. Mary, both in Defiance; St. Mary in Junction; Immaculate Conception in Marysville; St. Michael in St. Michael Ridge; and St. Stephen in The Bend. These parishes will actively explore ways its member parishes can work together and make better use of resources so that the Church of the future will continue to be strong and viable.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, APOSTLE

Patron of our parish, Feast - December 27

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

St. John figures in all four Gospels as one of the earliest of the twelve apostles. He and his brother James, both Galilian fishermen, were called by Jesus "sons of thunder." John was a privileged witness of many significant moments in Jesus' life, including the raising of Jairus's daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony in the Garden. By tradition, John is also identified as the author of the Fourth Gospel, written most likely toward the end of the first century. If not actually written by his hand, the Fourth Gospel is certainly the product of a community that traced its identity and spirituality to the apostle John, referred to throughout the Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

He was supposedly known for delivering the same short sermon, regardless of the occasion or circumstances: "Brothers and sisters, love one another." When members of his congregation asked whether they couldn't, sometime, hear a different message, he answered: "When you have mastered this lesson we can move on to another."

**GRATEFUL APPRECIATION IS EXPRESSED TO THOSE WHO
COLLABORATED ON THIS PROJECT:**

Fran & Mary Hire
Pam & Jeff Lightle
Deacon Don Meyer
Helene Nolan
Sr. Barbara Roho, CDF
Rev. George Wenzinger
St. John's Parishioners who provided photographs, memories, & resources

SOURCES USED FOR THIS PUBLICATION:

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