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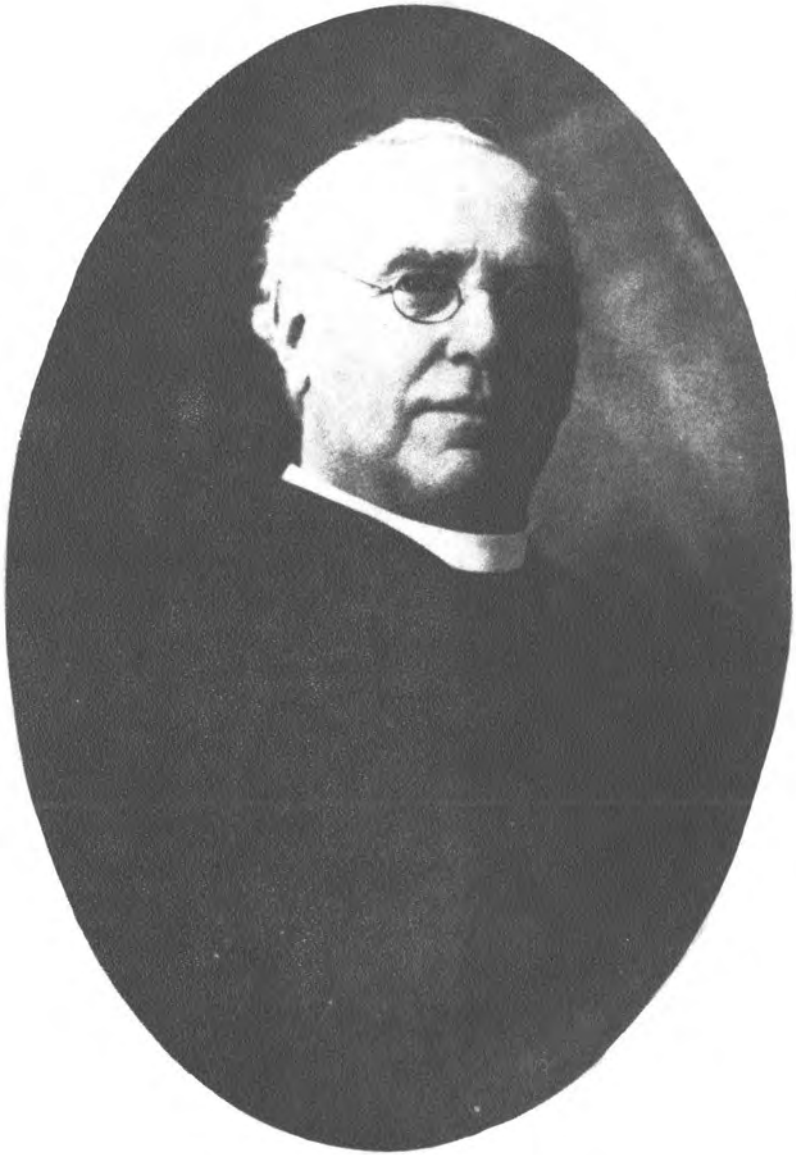
1876 • OCTOBER 17th • 1976



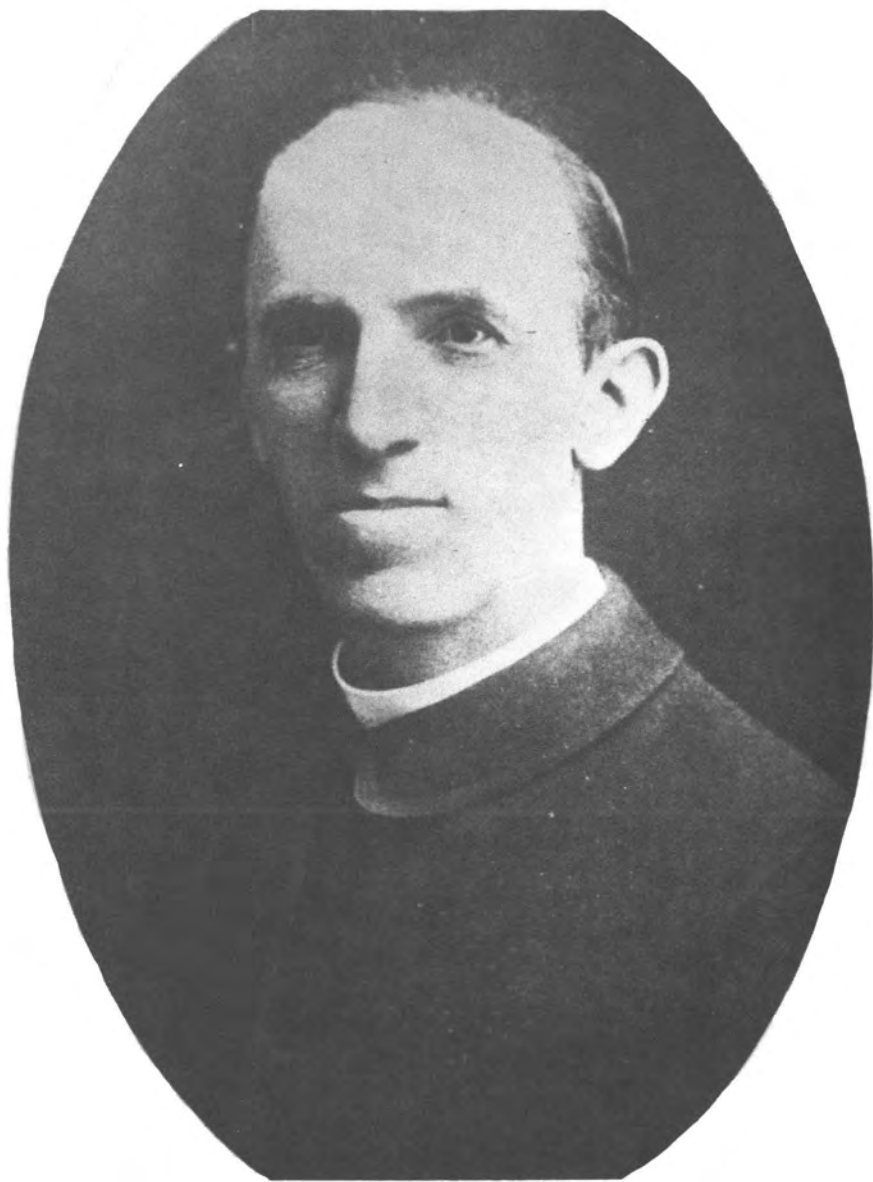
The Present Pastor
FATHER EDWIN METZGER

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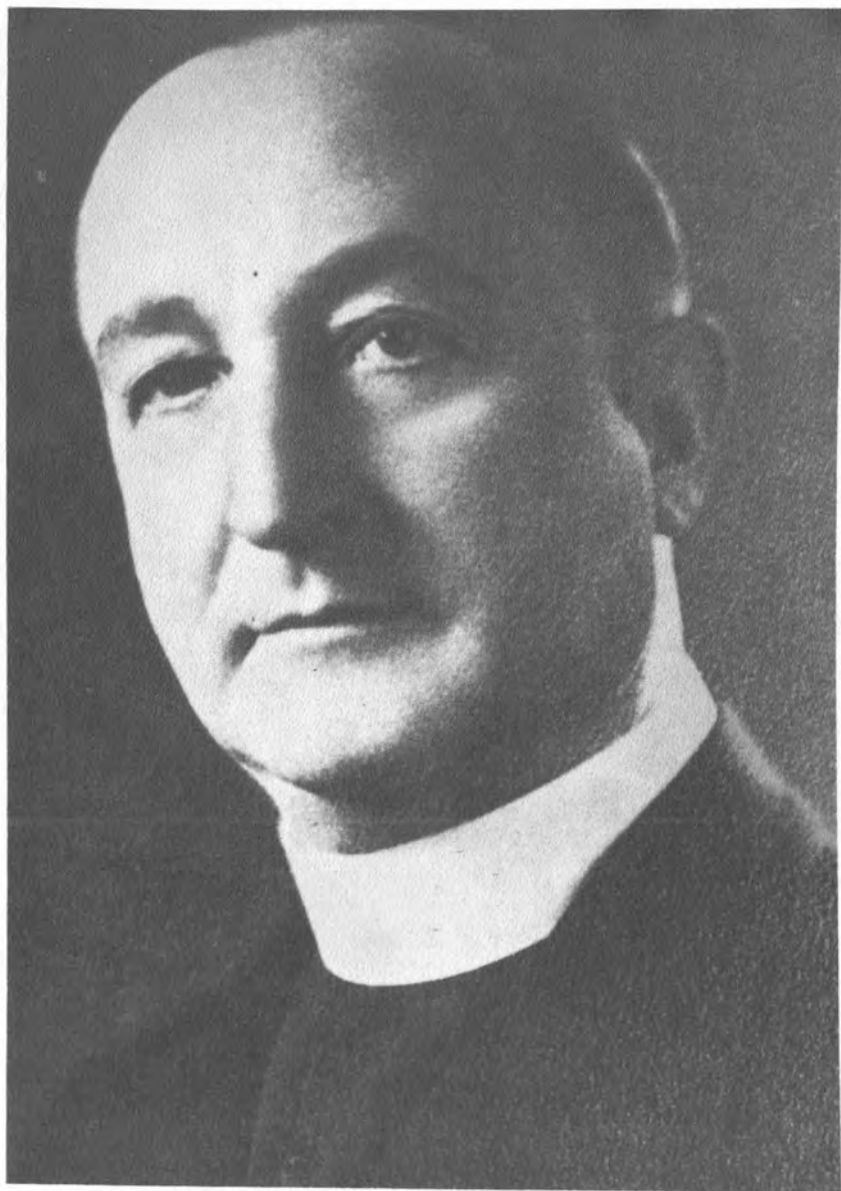
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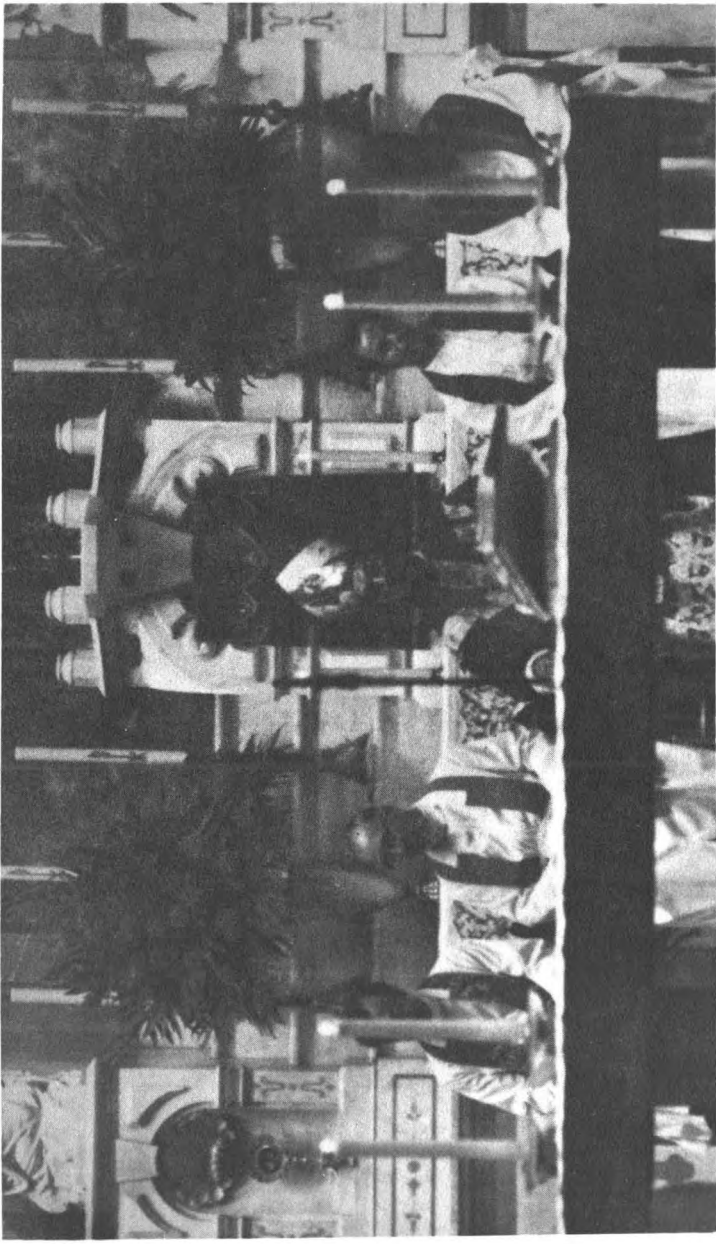
Second Pastor
REV. JACOB F. STAUB



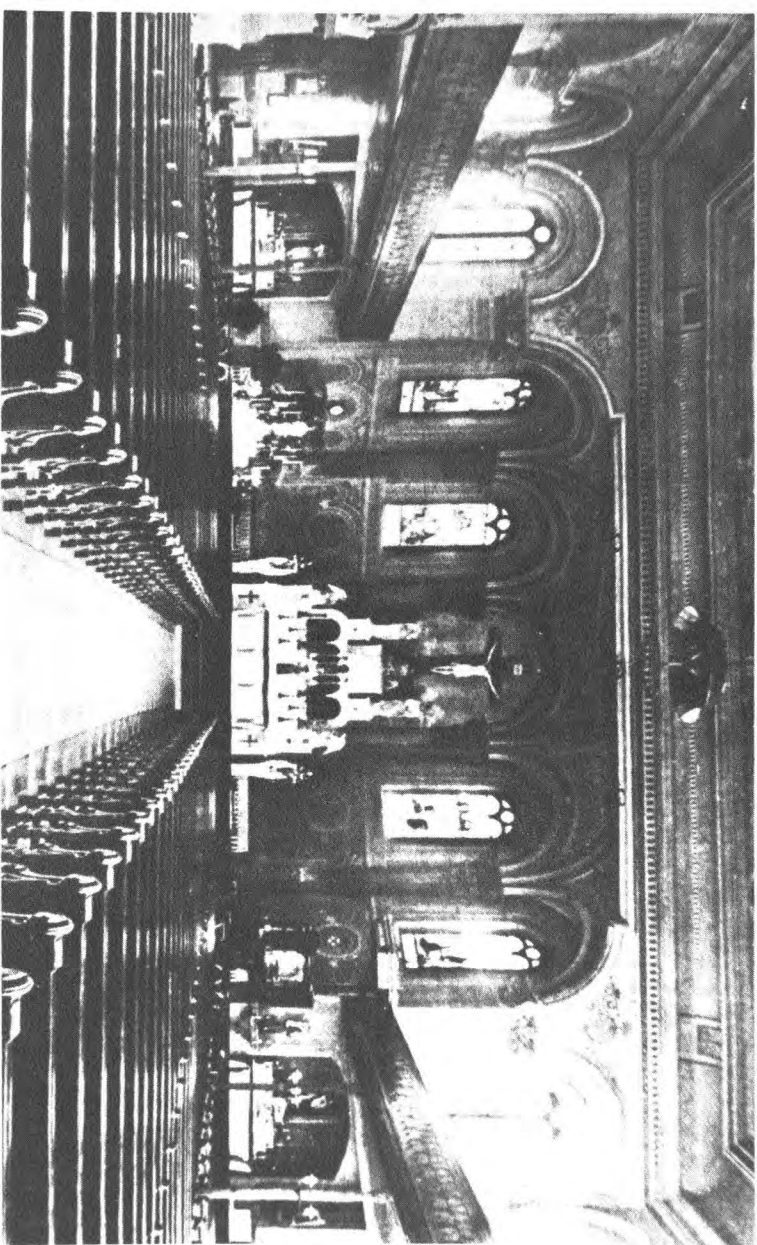
Third Pastor
MONSIGNOR F. WILLIAM STAUDER



Fourth Pastor
MONSIGNOR JOSEPH E. VOGT



Pictured at Holy Redeemer Parish Confirmation Ceremony 1974 — from left, Father Schnacky, Monsignor Vogt, Bishop Hogan, Father Blighion and Father Conboy.



INTERIOR OF HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH — AROUND 1917 WITH
SIDE GALLERIES

CENTENNIAL OF HOLY REDEEMER CHURCH BUILDING

1876 — 1976

The Church is people, and the people of the neighborhood of Hudson and Clifford Avenues in Rochester, New York, built, and furnished, and decorated, and improved, and repaired, and just plain maintained a large, unencumbered, towering building in which to celebrate the most sacred events of their lives. There were celebrations as unique as a once in a lifetime baptism or confirmation or first Mass, or funeral, and as common as scores of daily communions or monthly confessions. It is these people, each and every person who ever entered the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer with faith and hope, whom we thank for providing the church building to inspire our faith today. And it is to the people who will use the building in the years to come that we dedicate this booklet and to whom we entrust the mission of worship, education, community building, and service, that it is the privilege and the challenge of the Catholic Church in the modern world.

The buildings surrounding the church are peopled by men and women who care for our community. The Convent building is called Redeemer House, and is a home for alcoholic men who have received treatment, and for their supervisors. The School provides classrooms for Ibero-American Action League students and teachers; an office for the community builders of Group 14621; and a hall for parish and neighborhood events like religious education, prayer groups, and Bingo. Concordia Hall provides much space for other Ibero-American programs.

And from the church building itself, Sister Susan Altpeter, and Sister Aida Sansor, the pastoral assistants, Sister Mary Louise Woznick, the religious education coordinator, go forth with the good news of Jesus Christ. And so do Stanley Napierala and the members of the parish council, and Father David Heinsler and Father Robert Ritz and Juan Ruiz and members of the parish Spanish Committee. Father Howard Geck preaches by his example and word. They build upon the memorable pastoral work of our immediate predecessors, Father Paul Schnacky, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and the late Monsignor Vogt.

The following chapters will help us think about the past and plan for the future. "THE BUILDING" was written with the help of Robert Vogt and Father Schnacky; "THE PEOPLE" was written by Father Bradler, who graduated from Holy Redeemer School and said his first Mass in this Church; "THE SOCIETY" was written by Father Joseph Jankowiak STD who teaches Social Ethics at St. Bernard's Seminary and assists on the weekends. I am very grateful to these people, because they inspire an attitude of hope that is bigger than all of us: an openness to the grace of the Lord God, through Jesus Christ His Son and our brother, in the power of their spirit.

Father Edwin Metzger

THE BUILDING

The following account is taken from the **Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser**, Monday, July 31, 1876:

The laying of the cornerstone of the new Catholic Church on the northeast corner of Hudson and Clifford Avenues is remarkable, especially to those who remember that 15 years ago the site of the Church and all the land in the vicinity was under cultivation and nobody dreamed that the city would be extending itself there in this generation, much less that a stately structure in rich architectural style would be springing up in the meadow of that day.

In 1867 the plain church which the grand one now in process of construction is to supercede, was built. But although man can worship his Creator as devoutly in a small Church as in a great, the former has become inadequate to the wants of the congregation which had grown and prospered wonderfully . . .

The architect of the new Church is C. Knebel; ex-Alderman John Mauder has the contract for the mason work, and Dorschel and Stade are to do the carpenter work . . . The plan of the building is of the Greek cross form: the material brick. The whole length is 160 feet, width 58 feet in the body, while the wings extend 20 feet each making its width at the wings 98 feet. The side wall will stand forty feet high above the water table. Two towers stand at the front, one at each corner, the brickwork of each to be 90 feet high, and the whole, including spires 196 feet. The spires will be octagonal and pear-shaped, somewhat resembling minarets on the mosque of Saint Sophia. [Actually, the pear-shaped domes are a feature of Bavarian Church architecture familiar to many of the parishioners of the time]. The towers are 18 feet 18 inches square, and the walls 28 inches thick. The estimated cost when finished is \$50,000 . . .

The cornerstone was laid July 30, 1876, and the church was dedicated October 28, 1877.

The church building remains substantially the same after 100 years. Lights were changed from gas to incandescent lamps, and then to the present mercury vapor. Walls were washed and painted and redecorated. The two gallery balconies that appear in older pictures, where the two large paintings are now over the side entrances, were covered over by Monsignor Stauder. But one of them, above the Clifford Avenue entrance, is still used for storage of the Christmas stable and figures.

The change with the most impact for us today and in the future, was the remodeling of the sanctuary in 1968 by Monsignor Vogt. Monsignor Vogt read the directives on liturgy from the Vatican Council II, observed and investigated the changes in other churches, prepared the congregation by sermons and bulletin announcements, and then engaged the Donald Woerner firm to extend the sanctuary platform, remove pews in the center and front, construct a free standing altar of sacrifice, and cover the platform with the present gold rug. The large pulpit was removed and a smaller pulpit on one side and a lectern on the other, were installed for the proclamation of the

word of God. When the old pulpit was removed, a bare undecorated space was left on the wall. Monsignor Vogt, himself traced the design and painted and gold-leafed the area to match the other.

Plans are now being drawn up by staff and parishioners to remodel the sacristy into a parish meeting room, and to use the Hudson Avenue vestibule as a chapel for daily Mass.

Our predecessors, laity and priests, from one hundred years ago right up to the immediate past, have left us with a building that will seat over 800 people, and is an uplifting symbol of worship, community, and service for the lively neighborhood around Hudson and Clifford.

THE PEOPLE

One man alone could not build a city or a railroad. One man alone would find it hard to build a house or bridge. "Shoulder to shoulder" is a maxim men have used for ages to call forth the cooperation of their fellow men. Progress is not the product of one man. Rather it is the result of a people who generation after generation, strive to assure the continuation of righteous living and thinking for the greater honor and glory of God.

This year, the Bicentennial year of our country, we celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the present Holy Redeemer church building. This is truly a remarkable event in our parish history. The church building is important and majestic. But the church itself is the people who love and work together to achieve the goal of happiness one day with God the Father in heaven.

In all the documents since the Second Vatican Council the meaning of "church" is always understood as "the people of God." So it has been throughout all these years people both religious and lay working together to make this place a truly great parish.

It all began when this area was outside the city limits. The parishioners of St. Joseph's Church in 1861, seven years before the Diocese of Rochester was established, intended to erect an orphanage on the present site of the parish buildings. A census of the area showed a strong population of Germans living there. It was decided to forego the plans for building the orphanage and to think instead of erecting a parish church-school building. In 1867, Holy Redeemer was dedicated as a church, the fifth built by German Catholics and the tenth Catholic church in the city.

Many outstanding Redemptorist Fathers who were serving St. Joseph's Church in the heart of the city shared their time and talents in caring for the needs of the newly formed parish.

In 1869, Father Fidelis Oberholzer was appointed the first resident pastor. Father was a strong capable person who labored for many years alone during the pioneer days of the parish. He was a true priest of Christ and well loved by his people.

The same year brought the School Sisters of Notre Dame, a group of dedicated religious women who were known as great teachers and disciplinarians. They built strong Christian character, virtue, and love of God and neighbor into the lives of their students. The early sisters were women of strong character and love, who met the trials of life with patience and resignation. Many a person today

is better and richer in truth because of the good sisters. After the closing of the school in 1975, the School Sisters of Notre Dame left the neighborhood after over a hundred years of service.

In 1880, Father Francis Rippin was the first boy of the parish to be ordained a priest. Since that time many young men and women have entered into the religious life.

Upon the death of Father Oberholzer in 1902, Father Jacob Staub, a boy of the parish and at that time its assistant pastor, was appointed the second pastor. Father Staub was a priest outstanding in his genuine love of the poor and his intense interest in the welfare of the laboring man. To bring his people together, and to provide opportunities for social events and to keep young people off the streets, Father had Concordia Hall erected. Throughout the years it remained a great place for people to meet people, a place to enjoy religious, social and recreational activities.

During these early days we encounter names like Edelman, Fisher, Walz, Kleehammer, Bopp, Albrecht, and Vogt (the parents of our fourth pastor) — loyal parishioners who worked with their priests to lay the foundations of a parish that would serve generations to come.

After the death of Father Staub in 1932 the bishop appointed Monsignor William Stauder as its third pastor. Monsignor who labored thirty-two years among the people of the parish was a warm and kindly person. Throughout the years he felt that it was his role to be with his people, to share their joys and sorrows. A deep reverence for Christ in His poor characterized his priestly career of nearly fifty years. During this period we see people like the Schoenherrs, Webers, Warths, Englerts giving generously of their spare time for the good of the parish. We see people like Joseph Stoecklein who along with Father Albert Geiger established the Aljo Club, well known for years as a place to come and enjoy a good time. We meet people like Sister Mary Robertine Prosser, S.S.N.D., the school principal for fifteen years; Margaret Vay, Bertha Martens the catechist, and the faithful old janitor, Bert.

Upon the death of Monsignor Stauder on October 26, 1955, the bishop sent as his successor, a priest well known in the parish, Monsignor Joseph Vogt. Monsignor Vogt, who was to be pastor until his retirement in 1975, was a quiet humble priest who went about his daily duties without fanfare. He was small in stature, but, had a commanding influence for good in the area. He was always around when the people needed him. He loved his people, especially children. It was he who first formed the "Angel Choir" which still continues to serve the parish under the direction of Mrs. John Miller, a charter member of the Choir.

Shortly after the arrival of Monsignor Vogt the neighborhood began to show evidence of radical social change. Many of the old-time Germans died, and the second and third generations of Germans moved to the suburbs. Many of the Lithuanians and Ukrainians who had shared the neighborhood for so many years with the German people also moved out of the area. Many of the businesses and industries of the neighborhood also closed down or moved away.

A parish which was once German in origin is now made up of people of many nationalities and cultures. As the song says, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world." We at Holy Redeemer are the luckiest people in the world because we are of many backgrounds and cultures working together to further the kingdom of God.

THE SOCIETY

"You, too, are living stones, built as an edifice of spirit, into a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ."

— I Peter 2:5

Those words of Peter were cited recently by Bishop Hogan in his Pastoral Letter, "Living Stones," which exhorts all of us in the Diocese of Rochester to be vibrant Catholics, living heralds of the Good News in our 20th century.

In October of this year of 1976, we celebrate joyfully the Centennial of the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer. It is an occasion not simply to be grateful for a magnificent edifice of brick and mortar, but more accurately to review the faith history of a believing community over a span of 100 years.

If stones could in fact speak, or the famous twin towers could share their perspective, they would speak to us of both growth and challenge, for many changes have occurred since the laying of the cornerstone in 1867. During the past century Holy Redeemer Church, and its neighborhood have passed through three phases: rural, urban and changing-city.

The view 'from the towers' was a heart-warming one. In spite of two World Wars, the Hudson Clifford neighborhood was a vibrant, expanding reality, with the church surrounded by business firms, a variety of public schools and strong family units. The first half of the 20th century would certainly have to be considered the "Golden Age" of Most Holy Redeemer Parish, at least from the point-of-view of economic development and physical growth.

Two major upheavals occurred during the middle of Monsignor Vogt's pastorate, namely the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) and radical neighborhood restructuring. His sense of the Church prompted him to establish the parish council in the early 1970's, in keeping with the instructions of the Vatican Council.

The unsettling 1960's witnessed not only a grass-roots upheaval in the Church but agitation for civil rights, and race rioting. The old rural parish, grown in size and influence in the first half of the 20th century was faced with the need to rethink its redeeming mission to the neighborhood in the latter half of the century.

The Hudson-Clifford area was now beset by problems of urban renewal; racial and ethnic tension; mounting crime; inadequate housing; inflation as threatening the elderly and median and low-income wage earners; and various other welfare problems. In short, Holy Redeemer Church was no longer a beloved sacred home where a homogeneous neighborhood of loyal believers flocked to worship in stately splendor. Was it not now being called to play the role of a

redeeming pilgrim, reaching out to a heterogeneous neighborhood, filled with the poor and the aged, the alienated and the frustrated?

After 20 years of loyal and distinguished service, Monsignor Vogt retired in 1975, remaining in residence almost until his death on Easter Sunday 1976. Father Edwin Metzger succeeded him as the fifth pastor of the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer. Faced with the realities of a school and convent which were both closed down, as well as dwindling Sunday church attendance, Father Metzger has continually sought ways to adapt the faith-tradition of the old rural German parish to the realities of the inner-city neighborhood in the 1970's. With the aid of Sister Susan Altpeter, he has begun to reach out to the concrete needs of the people in the Hudson-Clifford area, on the basis of joint decision-making. The parish is becoming accustomed to new terms and concepts like "parishioner input," "the staff," "parish clusters," "resource personnel," etc. If we (the total Holy Redeemer Parish Family) are to discern the "signs of the times," and develop a creative outreach to the local community, it can be done only by study, prayerful reflection, dialogue and co-operative effort. Church supports include the Urban Vicar, the Director of the Office of Black Ministries and the Director of the Spanish Apostolate. Civic associations with whom we cooperate include: the Senior Citizens of Model Cities; Group 14621; Action for a Better Community; the Ibero-American Action League; Project Poder. The healing, redeeming presence of the Risen Lord comes not only from private prayer and public worship, but also from the fleshing out of that faith in concrete deeds, often carried out through agencies designed to meet specific needs.

Our view from the towers is now complete but not finished. To be truly living stones is to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the past, but also to face the present and future resolutely, with faith, hope and love, certain that a loving Redeemer whose goodness and joy animated our founding fathers, will again revitalize us and enable us to be vibrant members of the pilgrim, missionary church necessary today.

CENTENNIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The remaining pages are dedicated to the people whose generosity and support have helped to make this booklet and celebration a reality.

We are grateful for the lives, the friendship and the contribution of the people of Holy Redeemer Church. It is the sacrifice and continued interest of such caring people that allows us to carry on our ministry and outreach in the neighborhood.

Faithful financial support has enabled our mission of worship and prayer, counseling, education and community concern. Most of all, we will always be grateful to God for the goodness of His people here. God has blessed us.

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