

Diamond Jubilee



Saint Augustine's Church

Rochester, New York

October

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*Diocese of Rochester
1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, New York 14621*

Office of the Bishop

September 1, 1973

My beloved Friends of St. Augustine's Parish,

I look forward to the day of celebration of your Diamond Jubilee when I shall be privileged to preside at the Eucharistic assembly gathered in the perfect act of thanksgiving to God for all His blessings during seventy-five years of your history.

Your celebration is a summary of days and years of His gracious providence. The usual ingredients that are found in the birth and growth of any parish are present in your historical record. The beginnings were humble, the sacrifices of the pioneers inspiring. Their great faith removed all obstacles which at times must have appeared like mountains.

We who survive to rejoice today bless the memory of those who have brought us to this moment. We renew our common effort as a community of faith to begin a new chapter in the history of St. Augustine's that will be inspiring reading for generations yet unborn.

Your devoted Shepherd in Christ,

+Most Reverend Joseph L. Hogan, D. D.
Bishop of Rochester



September 3, 1973

To the priests, sisters and parishoners of St. Augustine's Church,
Chili Avenue, Rochester, New York.

My congratulations, prayers and best wishes on the occasion of the celebration of your Diamond Jubilee.

It was my happy privilege to serve as assistant pastor at St. Augustine's from June 1961 to June 1966. These were very happy times for me. The priests, the sisters, the staff in the house (especially Elizabeth, who spoiled me immensely and which spoiling I thoroughly enjoyed), the parishoners, the special groups with which I closely worked - all these and many more made life at St. Augustine's not only happy but purposeful. Under the pastoral care of Msgr. Duffy, one could experience a people of God, living in a community and expressing an intimate love of Christ and neighbor.

"feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly according to God:"
(Pet.5:2)

There is an old saying that you really never get to know someone until you have lived with them. I do not quote this adage to validate what I am about to say, (there are numerous other sources from which my declarations can be substantiated) but I quote to provide the appropriate setting within which I make my remarks; ie, my personal relationship with Msgr. M. Duffy.

First and foremost, Msgr. Duffy is a great priest. His love for the Eucharist, our Blessed Mother, and God's Holy Word inspired me as a young priest. These qualities were by no means a facade which he "turned on" in the "appropriate" places and at the "right" times. They were so much a part of him that they spilled over into all facets of his life.

How he cared for his flock! While he would state at our staff meetings (we had them before it was fashionable) in the rectory that "we are just scratching the surface", he was cultivating every inch of his vineyard - the sick, the dying, the needy, the school, the catechetical program, marriage and convert instructions, the spiritual life of the parish, the Legion of Mary, and the fiscal operation of the plant, all of these received his undivided attention - coupled with all of these activities was his involvement in diocesan programs, community affairs and the missions plus his concern with the religious of the diocese made Msgr. a man of all seasons. All of these without a complaint, extending himself generously and joyfully.

Over and above his dedication to his priesthood and people, there are two qualities which I think overshadowed all others, namely his kindness and humor - no matter who called upon him, priest or layman, sister or religious, Msgr. Duffy always had time for everyone. His anecdotes, personal interest and the sincerity with which he dealt with people was in itself his invitation to come again, and everyone usually did often.

As you can see, my stay at St. Augustine's was more than just fulfilling an assignment. It was an experience which taught me how to be a better priest and appreciate all of God's holy people as they live out the Paschal Mystery in their own lives.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Reagan". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Fr. Michael Reagan



ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH IN 1898

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Rochester was growing rapidly. Growth was particularly fast in the western part of the city, and among those who settled in the new developments, there were many Catholics. They continued to attend the older parishes farther east: St. Patrick's Cathedral, SS. Peter and Paul's, Holy Family, and Immaculate Conception. But as time went on it grew increasingly difficult for them to reach these churches not to mention sending their children to schools connected with a church.

The Bishop of Rochester, Right Reverend Bernard J. McQuaid was aware of this problem and concluded that the people needed a parish of their own. Consequently in 1898, a mission chapel was built at Chili Avenue and Hobart Street. It was dedicated to St. Augustine, and Father Thomas F. Hickey, later to become the second Bishop of Rochester formally opened St. Augustine's Chapel by celebrating the first Mass and the chapel became a mission of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The problem of parochial schooling still had to be solved. Father Hickey studied the situation and found that twenty-three Catholic children of the neighborhood were attending nearby public schools or distant Catholic schools. The number was enough to justify the opening of a four-grade school, so the school was inaugurated in the Chapel itself. The students used movable benches which were taken out when Mass was to be celebrated. The teachers were Sisters of St. Joseph, and the first principal was Sr. M. Regina Flaherty.

By 1906 the number of Catholic families in the vicinity of St. Augustine's Chapel had increased to the point where Bishop McQuaid decided that it was time to make the Chapel a parochial church. In August of that year he named Father John H. O'Brien to be the first pastor. Not long after his arrival in October 1906, the small wooden church caught fire and suffered extensive damage. The new pastor decided that it would be wiser to build a new church than to attempt to rebuild the old.

The architect, Mr. Joseph Oberlies, drew up plans for a building which would not only give ample church accommodations, but would provide better school facilities. The specifications provided for a basement-auditorium, a first floor divided into six school rooms, and a second floor occupied by the church proper, to which access was given by front and back stairs.

St. Augustine's second church and school, completed at a cost of \$35,000, was dedicated on July 28, 1907. Bishop McQuaid was present. Bishop Hickey delivered the sermon. Father F. O'Hern (later to become the third Bishop of Rochester) officiated at the solemn Mass.

In 1909 Father O'Brien built the present Rectory for \$7,300. He had been living in a house on Normandy Avenue. Two years later he purchased a house on Hobart Street and remodeled it as a convent for the Sisters. It was further enlarged on two occasions and was in use until 1949.

The neighborhood growth continued apace and in 1912 Father Joseph V. Curtin became the first assistant to Father O'Brien. In 1915 Father Daniel B. O'Rourke, newly ordained, took his place. In 1919 Father Charles Shay succeeded him for the next three years when Father Edward Lyons came as assistant.

Plans for the present church were started by Father O'Brien in 1921 and the cornerstone was laid by Bishop Hickey on May 11, 1924. The twenty-five families at the beginning of the parish had now expanded to seven hundred. Twenty-six years had passed since the first chapel had been built.

The present church, a buff-brick building with cast stone trim, is in modified late English Gothic style, and its facade, flanked on the left by a great bell-tower, has received much favorable comment from architectural experts. Inside, the side aisles and the side chapels are separated from the nave by arching piers of special brick. The vast sanctuary, finished in Tennessee marble, is dominated by a high altar of Botticino marble surmounted by a canopy and backed by a large tapestry. Above the canopy there is a rich stained glass window which bears the portrait of the patron of the church, St. Augustine. A wood crucifix hangs high above the sanctuary.

The Present Church Dedicated

The solemn dedication of the new church took place on February 1, 1925 with Bishop Hickey officiating. Mr. Charles Biesenbach, who had directed the choir at the dedication of the combined church and school in 1907, performed the same function at the inauguration of the third St. Augustine's Church.

St. Helen's Mission

The land off Chili Avenue west of the Barge Canal was developing rapidly, so that by 1929 Bishop John Francis O'Hern agreed with Father O'Brien that the new neighborhood should be given a mission chapel. The land was purchased for \$10,000 on Renouf Drive and the frame structure was completed by 1930 at a cost of \$9,000. St. Helen's Chapel remained in the care of St. Augustine's parish for the next ten years. Father J. Beecher Sullivan became the first pastor of the 175 families of St. Helen's parish.



St. Augustine's Bells

The bell tower of St. Augustine's in 1938 acquired three large copper bells. McShane of Baltimore cast all of them. The largest weighs 2,000 pounds, the second 1,000 pounds and the third 650 pounds. All three are pitched in the key of "F", with the notes "F", "A" and "C". Electric motors and automatic angelus machinery were installed by I. T. Verdin Company of Cincinnati.

The bells were not ordered by Father O'Brien, but came as a complete surprise to him, for they had been purchased while he was on vacation and presented to him on his return. Father Edward Waters, then assistant pastor, worked closely with the parishioners in effecting the surprise.

Bishop Kearney, fifth Bishop of Rochester, officiated at the ceremony. The bells were placed in the sanctuary for the occasion. Each bell was given a name, inscribed on its surface. The largest bell bore a cross and the words "St. Augustine, St. Augustine's Church, Rochester, N. Y., Aug. 28, 1938, Rev. John H. O'Brien, Pastor." The second bore the name "John the Baptist"; and the third, "Mary, Mother of God."

The blessing of the bells actually took place on September 4. Bishop Kearney was assisted by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles Shay and Father Patrick McArdle. Father Lawrence Casey was master of ceremonies and the then assistant pastors of the parish, Father Robert Fennessy and Father Edward Waters, aided in the rite. Fathers Louis Edelman, James McAniff, Orrin Feller, and William D'Arcy Bolger were in attendance along with four seminarians, John Malley, George Wood, William Nolan and John Hayes. After the Bishop concluded the ceremony with three strokes of the large bell, Father O'Brien presented the mallet to a parishioner, and then all the people filed into the sanctuary and sounded the bell. Thus blessed, the bells will compete with the distractions of the world by tolling out "the significant and assuring message of the power of prayer and the call to listen to the voice of God."

Father John M. Duffy, Second Pastor

Father O'Brien died on January 5, 1945 after a long illness. The great work of thirty-nine years was a challenge worthy of his beloved successor, Father Duffy. St. Augustine's parish had long since been recognized for its deep faith and generous love of the Church and had made possible the necessary units for an active parish life. The war had curtailed usual repairs.



Father Duffy gave his first attention to the school. New plumbing and heating systems were installed and other features added to improve the welfare of the children. The Rectory was redone to make available accommodations for three assistants and to provide adequate office space.

Several alterations were made in the church. The darkened glass in the clerestory was replaced with lighter glass. A new system of lights illuminated the sanctuary more effectively. A loudspeaking system was introduced. The wall behind the high altar was decorated, the altar canopy was renovated and a new tapestry was put in place in the dossal, chosen to blend with the new scheme of decoration. The next step was to purchase a new organ.

The New Organ

The beautiful oak case with a hundred odd gilded pipes in the choir hide the 2,092 organ pipes ranging in size from sixteen feet to the smallest size no bigger than a pencil eraser, arranged in thirty sets behind the casework. The pipes are made of wood, zinc, and lead-tin of varying percentages and all families of pipe organ tone - diapasons, strings, flute and reed are contained in the organ. The interior mechanism of the organ is controlled from a three manual and pedal console of tilting tablet type, placed in the center of the gallery. The wind for the organ is provided by a 7½ H.P. blower and the direct current required for the organ magnets is supplied by a 20 ampere generator both placed in the basement of the church.

On June 9, 1948, Father Duffy celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination. On May 6 the Holy Father had named him a Domestic Prelate, a rank which entitled him to be called, "Right Reverend Monsignor."

Monsignor Duffy's constant concern was the spiritual and physical needs of his people. His past experience as Superintendent of schools in the Diocese deepened his interest in the welfare of the students, and teachers and the school. Although always aware of the newer trends in education, he cautioned the teachers to be selective in choosing solid principles and emphasizing the three R's. Firmness with justice and charity was stressed in the handling of the children. The fundamental teachings of the Church were to be taught in the most effective way possible by the individual teacher so that the faith of the student would be the focal point of his life.

The late Dr. James I. Mooney best described Msgr. Duffy's solicitude for the sick. The doctor claimed that whenever he answered a night call for a seriously ill person, he found Monsignor there when he arrived and still there when he left.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that there was hardly a person within the confines of St. Augustine's during his pastorate, who would be unable to tell a story showing how he had sustained the family in time of trouble. Just as he shared their burdens, he also shared their joys - weddings, births, anniversaries, celebrations. The path to the Rectory was a well-trodden one.

Devotions

This was a period 1945 - 1965 of May and October devotions to the B.V.M., Stations of the Cross, Novenas, and Missions (at least every three years.) Passionists, Jesuits, Oblates of Mary and the Paulists were invited to give retreats. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was held every Friday closing with a Holy Hour and Benediction at eight o'clock.

Father Kohl

In 1959, Father Walter J. Kohl retired from St. Bonafice Church and came to St. Augustine's Parish. He helped with many of the duties involved with running a parish including giving religious instructions at various grade levels. His Golden Jubilee was celebrated in June 1972. A reception was held in the school hall and many parishoners and friends gathered with Father Kohl and his family to rejoice with him.

Developments

In 1949, it became evident that the convent on Hobart Street was inadequate for the 14 Sisters who occupied it. Besides being outmoded and crowded, it was miserably cold. They had to be a hardy lot to survive a winter there. Therefore, plans were drawn up for a three-story, modern convent to provide room for eighteen Sisters.

The old convent and the house next to it were torn down to make room for the new structure. During the fourteen months of construction the Sisters lived in two dwelling places owned by the parish; one on Lozier St. and the other on Hobart St. While building was going on, a drive for \$40,000 was launched by the men and women of the parish and the response was most gratifying. The convent was completed in June 1950 at a cost of \$140,000.

In 1952 the registration of St. Augustine's School was increasing according to the trends of those days. After consultation with the principal, Sr. Rose Xavier, S.S.J. and the Trustees, it was decided that the school should be renovated and additional space should be provided. The annex facing Chili Avenue was built. It was to contain two classrooms and two offices. The architect was Mr. Frank Quinlan. Another drive was set up for \$40,000. Work of renovation was begun just prior to the Easter Vacation of 1953, and on Tuesday after Labor Day of that same year, classes were resumed in the re-constructed building.

In 1958, a two-classroom structure was built on Hobart St. to provide room for increased registration. This building was constructed at a cost of \$35,000, and on the 15th of September the two eighth grade classes moved into their new quarters. (Later the eighth grade moved over into the main building into the present Jr. High Dept. and the two first grades took over the small building.

Bazaars every year brought in eight to ten thousand dollars. Twenty-five thousand dollars was saved yearly.

School Projects

In the late 60's and early 70's, the Mothers' Club under the direction of the principal, Sr. Anna Louise raised money to update the educational materials needed for the school.

They made possible a most attractive library of over 5,000 books and 500 film strips, that has been the envy of many visitors from other schools. (Mrs. Gerald DeGroot is full-time librarian). Also, under Sr. Anna Louise's guidance a Learning Center was started across the hall from the library. It is a bright, cheerful, beautifully decorated room containing all manner of interesting equipment such as filmstrips, cassettes, record players, microphones, and cyclo-teacher machines. (Sr. Joseph Andre De Mers was the co-ordinator for the Center, 1971-72.)

A series of Candy Drives were held by the school to buy a new piano for the school, choral risers for the children's concerts, and to install a new floor in the hall.

Four Media Fairs were held over a period of a few years. Books, records, audio visual materials, film-strips were put on display in the school hall. The people of the parish were encouraged to come in and browse through the newest available educational materials and hopefully donate some of it to the school in their name. The Library and Learning Center were partially replenished in this way.

The S.O.S. campaign was and still is a steady source of income. Contributors pay a dollar a week. Each week since 1971, a raffle is held in which the winner gets half of the proceeds and the school gets the remainder. Much has been accomplished with this money. Physical Education program was initiated, drapes and a rug were purchased for the Kindergarten and shelving was put in the store-room.

In his 75th year, in 1968, after 23 years of guiding his parishoners, Msgr. Duffy was retired in accordance with the rules of the diocese. He was invited by Father George Wood, pastor of Mother of Sorrows Church, to come and live with him in the parish rectory. Thus Monsignor was relieved of the burden of the responsibility of administering a parish. The people of St. Augustine's Church were most reluctant to lose him.

(In his 80th year, Msgr. Duffy celebrated his Golden Anniversary, June 1972, at the Mother of Sorrows Church.)



Father Tolster - Pastor

Father Edward Tolster was born in Rochester in 1915, the son of the late James and Della Stanton Tolster. He attended Immaculate Conception School, Rochester, and St. Bernard's Seminaries.

He was ordained May 18, 1940, by Bishop James E. Kearney. Prior to his pastorate at St. Augustine's Church, Father Tolster served as assistant pastor of St. Mary's, Canandaigua; St. Peter and Paul's, Elmira; St. Augustine's, Rochester; St. Agnes, Avon; St. Michael's, Lyons; and Our Lady of Good Counsel, Rochester. He also served as Pastor of St. Gabriel's, Hammondsport, and St. Patrick's, Prattsburg.

In June 1968, Father Tolster returned to serve St. Augustine's Parish for the second time. He had been an assistant at the time of the death of Father O'Brien and had served as administrator until Msgr. Duffy was appointed pastor in February, 1945.

As an assistant, he was lively, enthusiastic and very sports-minded. He had charge of the Youth Group and many members of that group, now grown and raising families of their own, remembered the good times he organized and carried out for them. They also remembered his booming voice calling "QUIET", when the rising crescendo of the teenage meetings reached intolerable proportions.

He was now to assume the role of pastor. While he was pleased to accept the responsibility of running this large parish, he found it an almost overwhelming task at times. He had had a heart condition and now discovered he also had diabetes. In addition to these problems, he suffered constantly from insomnia.

In spite of these difficulties, Father Tolster persisted in his efforts to unite the people of God. Being very ecumenical minded, he urged the parishoners to participate in prayer services with area churches.

Southwest Ecumenical Mission

Father Tolster met with the following ministers and priests the second Thursday of every month for five years to discuss common problems with the church. Rev. James Rockwell, St. Stephen Episcopal; Rev. Richard Rieger, Emmanuel Lutheran Church; Rev. Robert C. Root, West Avenue Methodist; Rev. Ferguson, Trinity Methodist; Rev. James Goins, Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian; Rev. Folke Ferre, Genesee Baptist; Rev. Gordon Gilbert, Calvary Baptist; Rev. Bruce Tucker, Westminster Presbyterian; Father Edward Zimmer, St. Monica's Church; Father Paul Wolrab, Our Lady of Good Counsel; and Deacon Charles Collins, St. Peter & Paul's.

He worked very closely with the Legion of Mary in visiting the sick. He said Mass every month for the elderly at Danforth Center. He studied the religious texts used by the teachers in St. Augustine's Parish in an effort to see that the children were getting a firm foundation in their religion. He worried about the youth and was always on the lookout for something that would appeal to them spiritually and bring them closer to God.

Improvements

Father Tolster had the rectory renovated inside and out. Siding was put on the outside and the porches were modernized. Meeting rooms were built in the basement.



In 1971, the office of Mrs. Robert Tenny, school secretary, was moved from the second floor to a newly built office next to the principal's office. The teachers' room was changed from the basement to the second floor and the nurse's office was set up in the basement. These changes facilitated matters of communications.

Monsignor Duffy had replaced some windows on the West side of the school. Father Tolster continued with that project, putting them also on the front of the school. This was a tremendous improvement both in the outward appearance and the physical comfort within.

Some of the very important improvements were brought about by the time and energy of the men and women of the parish who volunteered their services in the convent and the school. Extensive painting was done in both buildings, inside and out. About 150 desks were sanded and refinished.

Father Tolster had a great devotion to Our Lady. He was so impressed by Our Lady's shrine at Lourdes that he came home determined to erect shrines in her honor wherever he was pastor. He constructed one shrine to the Immaculate Conception at Hammondsport and one next to St. Augustine's Church. The statue was donated by Mrs. Joseph Murphy in memory of her husband.

Father Tolster's Death

Always an avid sportsman, he looked forward to the deer season. On Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23, 1972, Father went hunting in Ontario County with some of his friends. They found him dead a short distance from a deer that he had shot. He had evidently suffered a heart attack.

Before noon on that day, the church bells tolled for fifteen long minutes announcing the sad news that the Pastor of St. Augustine's had died. Father Robert Bradler, the assistant, quickly and quietly began to make the necessary arrangement for the funeral. A Mass was held for the repose of Father Tolster's soul at two o'clock that afternoon. News was spread by telephone and over two hundred parishioners left the festivities at home to offer prayers together in the church.

A Pontifical Concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial was offered Monday, Nov. 27, for Father Tolster, in St. Augustine's Church. Principal celebrant of the Mass was Bishop Joseph Hogan. Father Edward Shamon, a classmate of Father Tolster, delivered the homily. Other concelebrants were classmates and close friends.

The evening before, a concelebrated Mass of Christ the High Priest was offered at the church. Principal Concelebrant was Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey. The Guard of honor, standing in the middle aisle, were the Ministers and Priests from the twelve churches who were members of the South West Ecumenical Ministry. Father Albert J. Shamon in his eulogy said, "His passing diminishes our Diocese. The bells toll not for him, but for us - for every good pastor, every good priest, every priestly priest in an inestimable blessing to a Diocese.

When the sun, like a flaming monstrance at evening benediction, goes down below the horizon, he is not set; the heavens glow for fully an hour after his departure. When a good, good priest sets, a part of the Diocese remains luminous long after he is gone out of sight. For when he goes, he leaves behind him much of himself in the hearts of those who love him and were blessed by him in life. Such a priest does not ever die here forever."

A New Type of Pastorate

For the second time within five years St. Augustine's Parish of 1089 families was coming under new leadership. Bishop Hickey was consulted. A meeting was set up by the Parish Council in the school hall Dec. 14, 1972, and a delegation of priests was sent to discuss alternative types of pastorates. Bishop Hickey, Father Brent, Father McDonald and Father Lawrence Murphy were present. The Bishop had many good things to say about the parish and the neighborhood. He spoke with confidence and knowledgeability for he had made his home on Woodbine Ave. for the last five years and had become a familiar sight in the neighborhood. Father McDonald, the co-ordinator for the Southwest Region, had made a survey of the integrating area and revealed some rather startling facts. The surrounding parishes had been experiencing many difficulties, people were moving, attendance at church was down considerably, all were in financial difficulty. In a lesser degree these problems were shared at St. Augustine's Parish.

He suggested taking a hard look at St. Augustine's problems and making some long range developmental plans. He pointed out the large number of elderly people who own their own homes, the equally large number of young people living in this large residential neighborhood. The school, he said, was a considerable financial drain on the parish. The medium income was estimated at \$11,000. Many parishoners had retreated to the suburbs.

In the discussion at this point some parishioners maintained that there was a leveling off of the exodus, a few were returning to the parish and many had taken a realistic view, deciding to accept the opportunities of an integrating neighborhood.

Father Brent and Bishop Hickey suggested that the parish might like co-pastors rather than the traditional pastor and assistant type of leadership. They did not seek to influence the decision in either case but only wished to explain the two roles and then allow the people to decide which would best fulfill the needs of St. Augustine's Parish.

It was pointed out that in the traditional role, the pastor had to wait until he had been out in the priesthood for many years. Up until that time he usually worked under the supervision of pastors who might have allowed almost no decision making on his part. It was rarely possible for him to reach his full potential under such conditions. When he finally became pastor, he was usually left in that position as long as he lived. In some cases this was less than satisfactory. In others, of course, it was a great source of strength and stability.



Co-Pastors

Co-pastors would be young, have at least a combined fourteen years of experience. They would be compatible in their interest, views, and ideas and would have the opportunity and possess the vigor of implementing them. The authority would be shared. They would study the parishes available and then make a joint application for the one that interested them. Their length of service would be limited. Because the program is new, it is being evaluated from time to time.

The Personnel Board would review the needs of the parish and the qualifications of the applicants and give their recommendations to Bishop Hogan who would make the ultimate decision.

There were many questions and much open discussion at this meeting. The majority of the forty or fifty present were warm to the suggestion of co-pastors in the light of what had been presented.

The following Sunday Father Bradler, who was made Administrator after Father Tolster's death, told the people what was happening and informed them that a meeting of the Parish Council was to be held in the church during the week to vote on the type of pastorate desired. He invited and urged everyone to come, hear more about it and express their views. About 200 interested people came and listened, questioned, discussed and finally voted for co-pastors. A few minutes later the Council voted the same.

In both cases it was almost unanimous. A letter was sent to Bishop Hogan telling him of the decision.

Finally after weeks of anxious waiting the announcement came that Bishop Hogan had made the final selection of co-pastors. The priests were Father McCabe and Father Miller.

Father Paul J. McCabe, born in Auburn, N.Y., attended St. Bonaventure University and St. Bernard's Seminary and was ordained in 1959. He served in St. John's Parish, St. Monica's and Corpus Christi parishes in Rochester and served as chaplain at Notre Dame High School, Elmira.

Father Neil R. Miller was born in Corning, N.Y. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries and was ordained in 1961. Father Miller served in St. Michael's Church, Lyons, N.Y., St. Agnes, Avon, N.Y., St. Mary's in Watkins Glen and St. Lawrence's Church in Rochester.

Father McCabe and Father Miller arrived on February 15, 1973. The people welcomed them enthusiastically and were very impressed by their outgoing and friendly manner. Both priests spoke of how pleased they were to be at St. Augustine's and expressed the sincere wish to serve the people.

Within a few weeks after their arrival, having seen some of the problems of the elderly and noting the large number of elderly, Father McCabe and Father Miller asked for a Pastoral Assistant. They explained, at a Parish Council Meeting, that they would like a nun who would have the necessary qualifications to handle the assignment.

Several sisters applied for the position and finally Sr. Marietta Hans, R.S.M. was selected. She began September 1973, joining the

parish staff of Sr. Mary Joan Gleason, Religious Education Director, and Sr. Mary Daniel, elementary school principal.

Parish Council Adds Another Committee

The Human Development Committee was formed in June of 1973. The members of the committee had seven sessions of intensive training. The purpose was to examine the problems of the parish and neighborhood, analyze them and do research on them and then to zero in on each problem individually. Mr. Henry Maher was elected president.

Parents' Organization

The Parents' Organization was formed in the Spring of 1973 to relieve the financial strain caused by the school. Curt Sanger was elected the first president and it was decided that Bingo should be started for increased revenue. Much time, planning, and preparation went into this project. In early June, Saturday night became Bingo Night at St. Augustine's School Hall. By September the profits from Bingo had paid up the initial investment.

Societies

There have always been societies and clubs at St. Augustine's Parish. Father O'Brien had Annual Events that enlisted the cooperation of many people: the Ice Cream Social on the lawn between the Rectory and School, the Turkey Supper at Thanksgiving time in the school hall, the Breakfasts for the First Communicants, the Variety Shows and Dramas at Convention Hall and the Family Theater.

In Monsignor Duffy's era as well as Father Tolster's there were many groups operating: Rosary Society, Holy Name, Youth Group, Choirs, Mothers' Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Men's Club, and Women's Club.

They had Christmas parties, card parties, mixed adult parties, Halloween masquerades, baked food sales, rummage sales, fashion shows, picnics, cabin parties, dances, roller skating parties, car washes, antique shows, Communion breakfasts, Mother and Daughter, as well as Father and Sons banquets.

Hundreds of people who worked, directed or led the various activities for the common good must, of course, remain nameless. Their reward was and is the satisfaction of a goal accomplished and people served.

School Board

St. Augustine's School Board was formed September 8, 1967. It was composed of seven lay people, the Pastor and the Principal of the school. It has since been reduced to five members. Edward Farrell is the newly elected president.

The Board conducts business that sets broad policy for the operation of the Parish School and operates under a constitution and a set of By-Laws.

Parish Council

Parish Council was formed in January 1972. The purpose of the Council, as stated in the constitution, is to engage the parish in the total apostolic mission and to promote participation of the laity in the administration and operation of the parish. Ron Powell is Chairman, Carl Lowenguth, Vice-Chairman.

To facilitate the purpose of the Council the following committees were made active: Parish Life, Religious Education, Liturgy, Administration, Communication, and The Human Development Committee.

The Parish Council is the leading organization in the parish. All the other organizations are working groups of the Council through which its programs are effectuated.

Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary was formed in 1948, became affiliated in 1951. It was formed for the spiritual sanctification of its members and to assist the pastor in spiritual works of mercy. The original members included Anna Meng, President, Clara Smalt, Martha Shapley, Anne Messe, Mary Hasselwander, Marian Flanigan, Beatrice Lawton and Josephine Ewing. They visited the sick, welcomed new parishoners, brought children from 44 and 16 Schools to St. Augustine's School for religious instruction.

On March 13, 1956 Msgr. Duffy thought it would be good to get the young men and women working together in the Legion. He suggested that good things like marriages and vocations might come out of it. Mr. Edward Farrell formed the second group and was elected President. Father Albert Ryan was moderator. Miss Geraldine Crowley, who has served with The Legion for over 15 years says, that there were a few vocations but not many marriages.

In January 1957 another Legion group was formed. This time it was for the high school boys and girls. Mr. Albert Bergeron was elected President and Father Ryan was the moderator.

Assistants

Assistants don't always get the recognition they deserve. They go about their assigned tasks, working behind the scenes usually with the youth, always with the sick and elderly, never looking for or expecting any material recompense.

Most who served at St. Augustine's Parish must remain unsung heroes. There are good things to remember about each and everyone of them.

Rev. Leonard Kelly, whose family lived in the parish served here and went on to do great work with C.C.D. in his parish in Fairport. Father Robert Fennessy lived with and knew well the gruffness of Father O'Brien and recognized it as a facade. (Father O'Brien had a special regard for the poor and was constantly doling out benefits to them.) Father Francis Donoghue is remembered for his sermons. He told it like it was. There was no beating about the bush. Father Walter Fleming had good rapport with the youth and would treat them to a party at his cabin in the hills. They might have to chop wood before they ate the steak but it was fun. Father Albert Ryan ran some dances and tried constantly to see that the girls followed proper dress code in church. Girls could often be seen trying to duck past him if they were in jeans. Father Michael Reagan was, like the others, a good priest and an excellent entertainer. He directed really top quality singing groups. He also liked to ride in police cars. He is now Chaplain at Elmira Reception Center.

Father Elmer McDonald who had been in the Navy, in the Korean War, was doing fine as an assistant but left to set up a little competition to the West. He started a parish, St. Christopher's, outside of Spencerport.

Father Richard Mattie, who was an assistant at the same time as Father McDonald, and Father Emmett Davis are remembered as very quiet priests who accomplished a great deal. (Father Mattie left to be a Chaplain in the Navy.) Father Robert Bradler, Chaplain of the Fire Department, was liked for many reasons, one of which was that he could be heard by everyone. People would say, "I like that Father Bradler - you can hear everything he says." Father Hayes was a boy from the parish so he was doubly welcome. Father Richard Nangle was also a real addition but he left much too soon.

Cooks at the Rectory

Miss Elizabeth People came in the 50's and catered to the whims of pastor and assistants for several years. She was not only a cook but she had her own little public relations bureau. She knew everybody in the parish and sending cards for different occasions became a nightly ritual. She retired shortly after Father Tolster came.

Mrs. Dorothy Seiler carefully prepared the special kinds of food and the exact amounts that were called for in Father Tolster's prescribed diet.

The Sisters of St. Joseph

When St. Augustine's Convent first opened in 1913 the following Sisters were assigned to the house: Sister Louise, Principal, Sr. Agnita, Sr. Melita, Sr. Aiden, Sr. Paula and Sr. St. Clare.

Sister St. Clare remained for twenty-five years. She taught the first grade, "the baby" grade as she called it, for twelve years. In 1972 she was guest of honor at the 50th anniversary of some of her first grade "babies". Sister St. Clare's singular devotion and dedication over the years is but one example of the 143 Sisters who have been serving St. Augustine's School for seventy-five years, - completely hidden lives for the honor and glory of God. The only reward they hoped for was the happy, full Christian lives of the students they were training. The influence they had in the early years of children must not be underestimated. The lives of these ladies will ever be an inspiration and glory to the Church in our times.

Sister Magdalen Marie

Sister Magdalen Marie, an artist in the kitchen, has been at St. Augustine's Convent since 1953. Even in the convent a neat delicately served luncheon refreshes the soul of a tired teacher and gives her energy to return to the classroom. A good cook is a real treasure.

Sister Georgetta

Sister Georgetta Nier came to this parish in 1955. She taught school for 12 years at St. Augustine's School before retiring. On August 18, 1973 she celebrated her 65th year in the convent. Although sister no longer teaches school, she finds more than enough to keep her busy for the convent really houses two communities now.

Financial Expediency

Five sisters from Good Counsel parish have joined the sisters at St. Augustine's Convent. They commute daily to Good Counsel. Their convent was sold in 1972 because of the declining number of sisters occupying it.



School Principal

Sister Mary Daniel Bovenzi became principal of St. Augustine's School in August 1972. She had previously been principal of Christ the King for nine years. She is a great believer in the basics of education and strives to follow the progress of every student in the school. Under her guidance, the boys and girls will continue to reach out for the academic success that has been achieved in the past.

Lay Teachers

Within a few years of its founding, St. Augustine's School began to supplement its religious faculty with lay teachers. The first, Miss Elizabeth Lavin, was soon joined by Miss Helen Burgess. A few years (in the 20's) later Miss Aileen Thelin joined the faculty. She kept a firm hand on the students for several years. Miss Marie Sellinger taught the Fifth Grade. Over the years, as religious vocations no longer kept pace with the growth of diocesan schools, this proportion of lay to religious has increased until in the school year 1972 - 1973, they number 13. These qualified and dedicated men and women, working in cooperation with the sisters to form a unified, dedicated faculty, contribute much to the efficient, happy atmosphere of the school.

Missionaries

Monsignor Duffy's love for the missions was made manifest by his initiating and encouraging many projects for the missionaries from St. Augustine's parish serving in foreign lands. Missionaries would come to the parish frequently to speak of their work and solicit donations. India, Africa, Chile, Bolivia, and the Phillipine Islands were represented by priests and sisters seeking help to carry on their work.

A St. Patrick's Day card party was held each year for 15 years beginning in 1945. The proceeds, well over five hundred dollars annually, was sent to Father Michael F. Kavanagh, S. J., who was serving the lepers in India.

Another dedicated group of women under the leadership of Mrs. Marcian Scheg rolled bandages for the sick afflicted with leprosy for ten years. Thousands of bandages found their way to foreign hospitals.

Mrs. Joseph Weckesser and some of her friends held small card parties in their homes regularly and sent the proceeds to her son, Father James Weckesser, a missionary in Chile.

Music

Music has always played a very important part in both the school and church functions. In 1907, the choir was under the able direction of organist, Mr. Charles Biesenbach. He was followed by Miss Leary, Marie Haslip, and Hugo Maul . . . to name a few.

Sister Marion Gundell (1948-1956) directed the High School Choir composed of girls from many of the high schools, both Catholic and Public. They sang at 11:00 o'clock High Mass one Sunday a month, at parish weddings as requested and for special events as First Masses, Jubilees, Communion Breakfasts, etc. (The sisters were not permitted to attend weddings in that period so the girls were on their own.) A Stephen Foster Musical Show was put on in 1950 for the members of the parish.

Sister Edwina Teresa Hester had the choir for five years, until 1961. Sister Beatrice Ganley had it for 2 years 1964-66, and Mr. Richard Nezda, a teacher in the Jr. High Department from 1966 to 1967. Mr. Nezda had a Choral Group made up of students from the 5th to the 8th grades. Two concerts a year were given to which parents and friends were invited. The singing was very sophisticated for that age group.

Sister Constantia and Sister St. Luke from 1968 to 1971, also led the choirs. Sister Anna Louise Staub took over when Sister St. Luke left in 1971. Sister not only had the Choral Groups, one called "The Augusteens", who performed admirably at concerts and Christmas Parties, but the entire school was taught to sing the High Mass. She was a familiar sight in the middle aisle in church as she directed the singing of the congregation.

Choir

Mr. Lootin is now the organist in church. Al Saia is choir director. There are approximately fifteen members in the choir. It is a mixed choir of professional-like quality, which adds dignity and solemnity to the 10:45 Mass on Sundays.



Folk Group

The Sun Folk Group was started in 1971 by Dennis Ciazza, Michael Ciminelli and Mark Macaluso. With their guitars, excellent voices, interest and enthusiasm they started singing at the 9:30 Mass. With five or six members in the beginning, they gradually swelled to 30 members. They were so well received that they have recently made a record which will be sold to the parishioners and the profits returned to the parish.

Important People

Ushers are very important people as are lectors and altar boys. Because of the large number of them, they too must remain nameless even though they add immeasurably to the ceremonies. Many of them have assisted for a very long time. Horace Pullman, the head usher, has been an usher over 35 years. Several ushers have also served as auditors or trustees. The first woman trustee was appointed this year, Mrs. Margaret Hoffmaster.

Epilogue

Thus 75 years have passed since the first Mission Chapel was erected on Chili Avenue. Throughout the years there was a steady and healthy growth in the parish even as there was in most other Catholic parishes throughout the United States. Cermonies, rituals, long confessional lines, standing room only at Masses, St. Augustine's Parish knew them all, but "times, they are a changing".

The upheavel within the last several years brought about by the changes within the entire church as well as the changes within the neighborhood has affected St. Augustine's parish. However, the parish is still a viable entity with a great potential for meeting the greatest challenge it has ever had. It has forces to meet that challenge, if they can be vitalized. With proper spiritual motivation anything can be accomplished for God and man.

Two young, dedicated and zealous priests have been assigned to the parish. They have come to continue the building and renovating and they, too, are preserving what is good and selecting the best from what is new. Willing hands and hearts, at every age level can provide the manpower to go forward and make St. Augustine's church a beacon light in the Southwest area. St. Augustine's is strong because the foundation was strong. May it continue to grow on that strong foundation, be a blessing to all, and a sign of the presence of Jesus in the neighborhood. The realization must come that:

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
Only one great fellowship of Love
Throughout the whole wide Earth.
American Spiritual

PRIESTS ASSIGNED TO ST. AUGUSTINE'S

PASTORS

1906 - 1945	Rev. John H. O'Brien	
1945 - 1968	Rev. John M. Duffy	
1968 - 1972	Rev. Edward J. Tolster	
1973	Rev. Paul J. McCabe	
	Rev. Neil R. Miller	Co-Pastors

ASSISTANTS

Rev. Elmer J. McDonald
Rev. Richard Nangle
Rev. Richard Mattie
Rev. Robert Bradler

Rev. Joseph V. Curtin
Rev. Daniel B. O'Rourke
Rev. Charles F. Shay
Rev. Edward Lyons
Rev. Edward McKay
Rev. Thomas Brennan
Rev. Leonard Kelly
Rev. Thomas J. Quinn
Rev. Edmond F. O'Neill
Rev. Edward J. Waters
Rev. Robert Fennessy
Rev. L. Emmett Davis
Rev. Francis Buechel
Rev. Leo E. Hastings
Rev. Lawrence W. Sansom
Rev. Wm. Lammers
Rev. Richard G. Stanton
Rev. Edward J. Tolster
Rev. Daniel R. Sullivan
Rev. John Hayes
Rev. Donoghue
Rev. William M. Thomas
Rev. Walter E. Fleming
Rev. Albert V. Ryan
Rev. Michael L. Reagan
Rev. James E. Tierney

*PRINCIPALS AND/OR SUPERIORS
ASSIGNED TO ST. AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL*

- *Sister Regina Flaherty, Principal 1898-1899
- *Sister Anne Marie Hynes, Principal 1899-1909
- *Sister Louise Dowd, Principal 1909-1912; Superior 1912-1918
- *Sister Leonilla Murphy, Superior 1918-1924 and Principal
Sister Scholastica McNicholas, Superior 1924-1930 and Principal
- *Sister Edith Cunningham, Superior 1930-1936 and Principal
- *Sister Theonilla Cowan, Superior 1936-1942 and Principal
- *Sister Adelaide Marie Kelleher, Superior 1942-1948 and Principal
Sister Rose Xavier Davis, Superior 1948-1954 and Principal
- *Sister Clara Marie Enright, Superior 1954-1960 and Principal
Sister Mary Grace Buckley, Superior 1960-1966 and Principal
Sister Anna Louise Staub, Superior 1966-1972 and Principal
Sister Mary Daniel Bovenzi, Superior 1972 -- and Principal

- *deceased

