

July 2018

# Sacred Heart Church Centennial, 1883-1983

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/uscc\\_parish\\_histories](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/uscc_parish_histories)

---

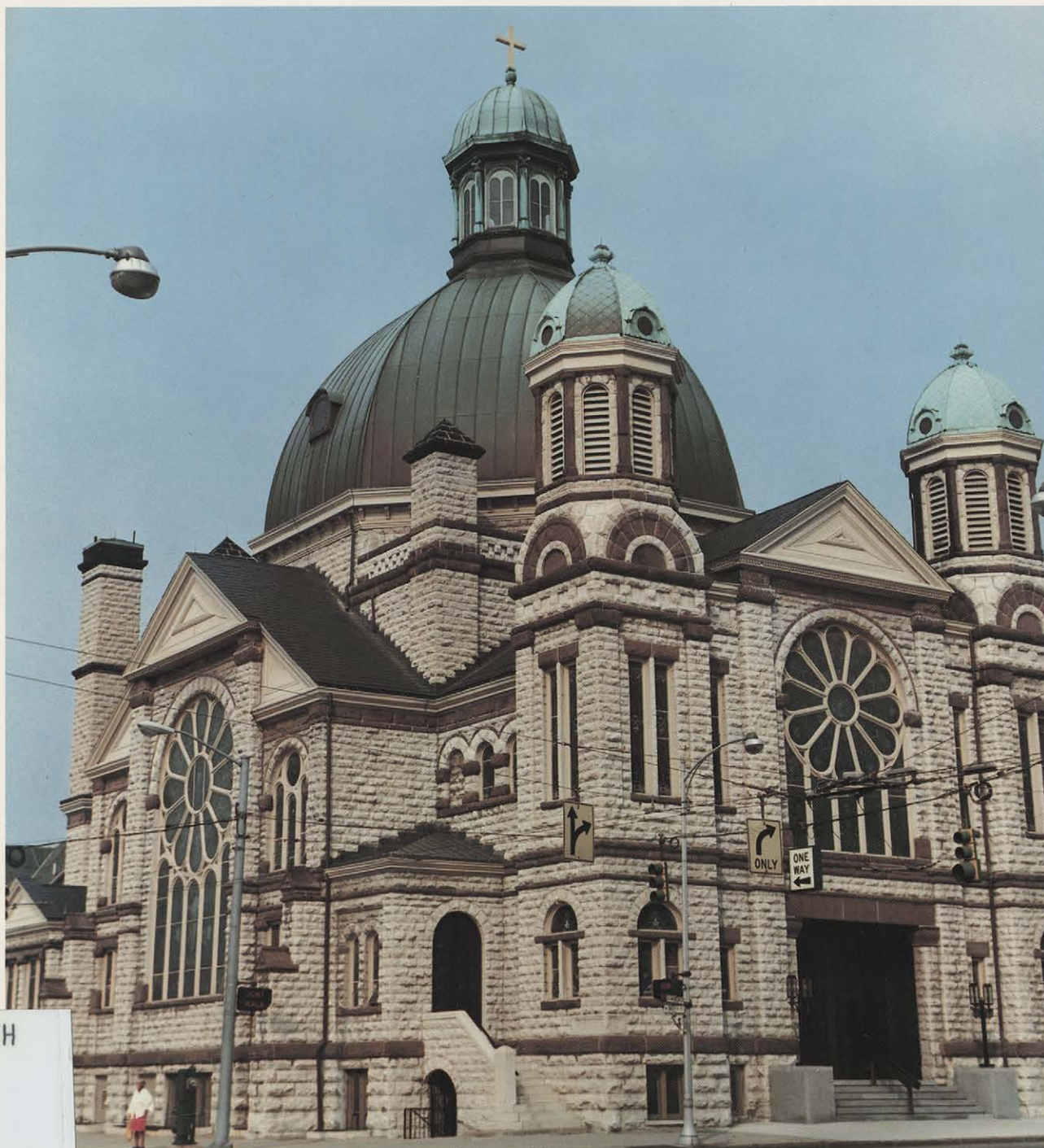
## Recommended Citation

"Sacred Heart Church Centennial, 1883-1983" (2018). *Parish Histories Collection*. 20.  
[https://ecommons.udayton.edu/uscc\\_parish\\_histories/20](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/uscc_parish_histories/20)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the U.S. Catholic Special Collection at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Parish Histories Collection by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact [frice1@udayton.edu](mailto:frice1@udayton.edu), [mschlange1@udayton.edu](mailto:mschlange1@udayton.edu).



# SACRED HEART CHURCH CENTENNIAL 1883 - 1983



US.CATH  
BX  
4603  
.D3  
S2  
1983  
OVERSIZE

Sacred Heart Church  
Fourth & Wilkinson Streets, Dayton, Ohio





## Statue of the Sacred Heart



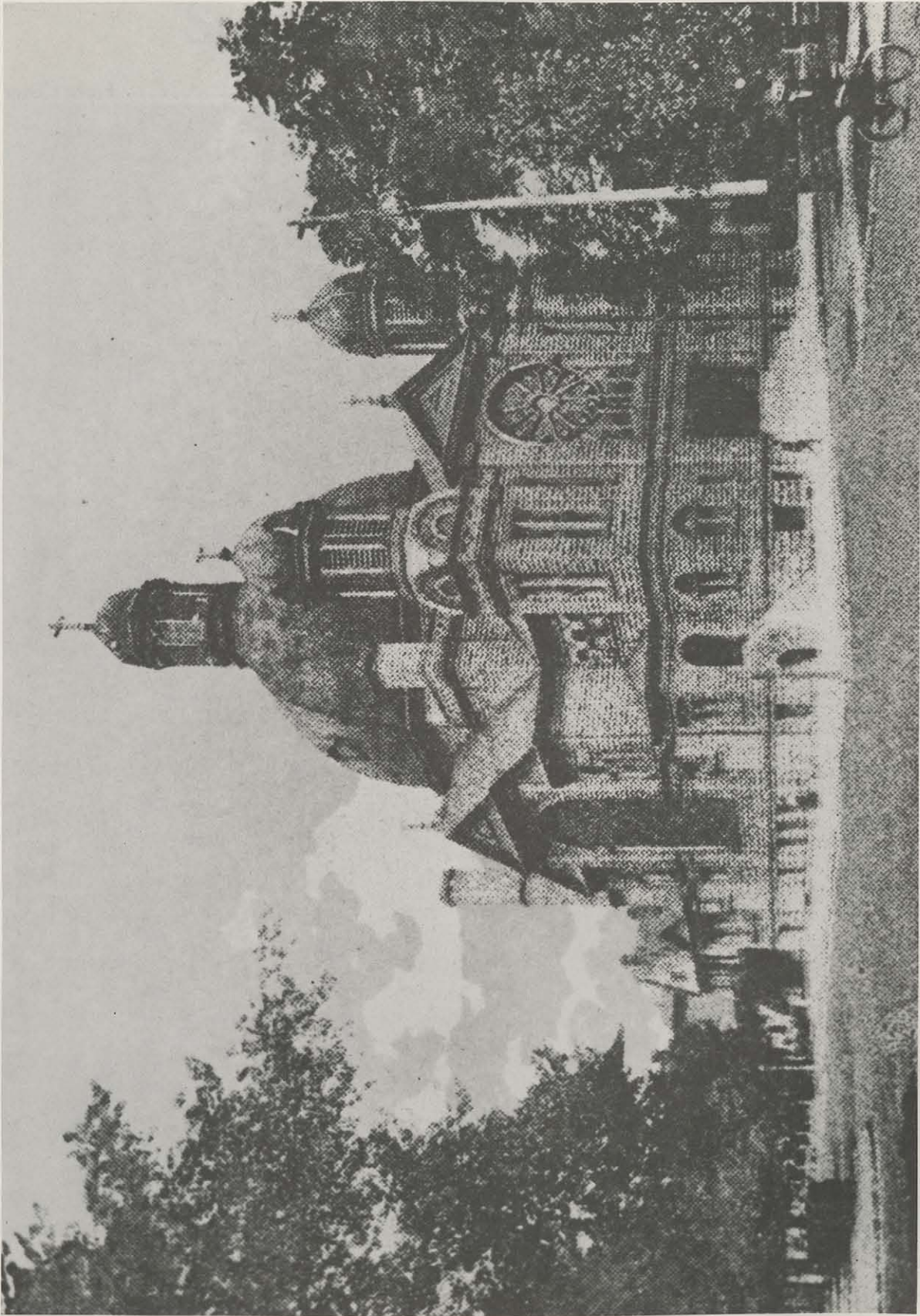
USCATH  
BX  
4603  
D3  
S2  
1983  
over size



# Table of Contents

Sacred Heart Church – 1972 .....	Front Cover
Statue of The Sacred Heart .....	i
Picture of Sacred Heart Church, Circa 1907 .....	1
Pope John Paul II .....	2
Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk, Archbishop of Cincinnati, Ohio .....	3
Most Reverend Nicholas T. Elko, Auxiliary Archbishop of Cincinnati, Ohio .....	3
A Message From the Pastor, Father Roger E. Griesse .....	4
Prologue .....	5
The Founder and First Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Father Hugh H. McDevitt, D.D. ....	7
A Brief History of Sacred Heart Church (A Description in Father McDevitt's Words) .....	8
Sacred Heart's Grand Choir .....	10
The Reverend Charles A. Hickey – Successful Pastor for Thirty-Three Years .....	11
A Picture of Sacred Heart Church, Circa 1920's and a Picture of the Original Sanctuary .....	12
Priest Sons of Sacred Heart Church .....	13
Chronology of Sacred Heart Church from 1883 to 1983 .....	14
Pictures of Church Activities .....	35
Parish Personnel .....	38
Sources of Information .....	39
Sacred Heart Church at Dusk .....	40
Interior of Sacred Heart Church, with Stained Glass Windows, "The Birth of Christ". ....	Back Cover



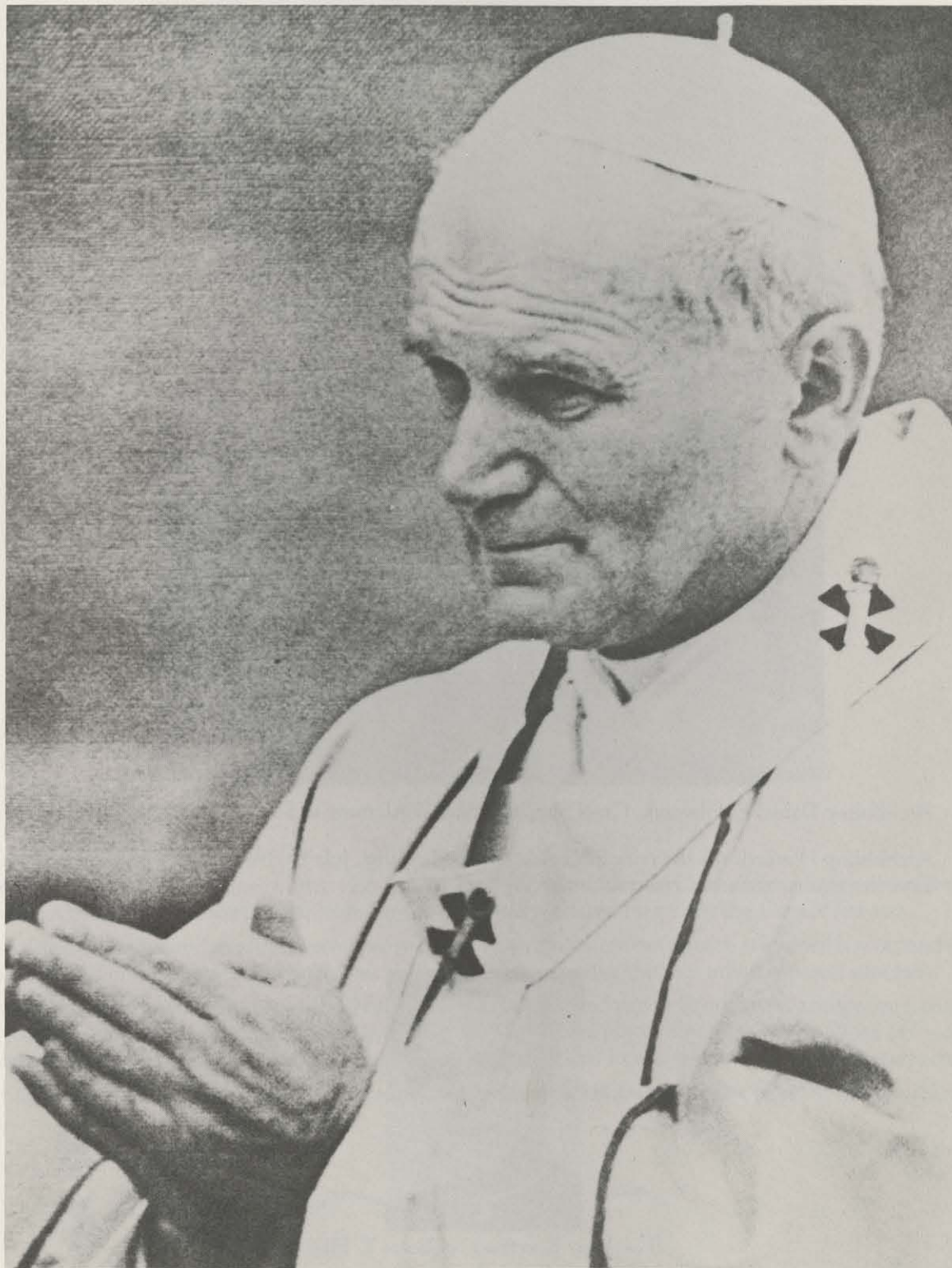


Church of the Sacred Heart  
Circa - 1907





# Vicar of Christ on Earth Pope John Paul II



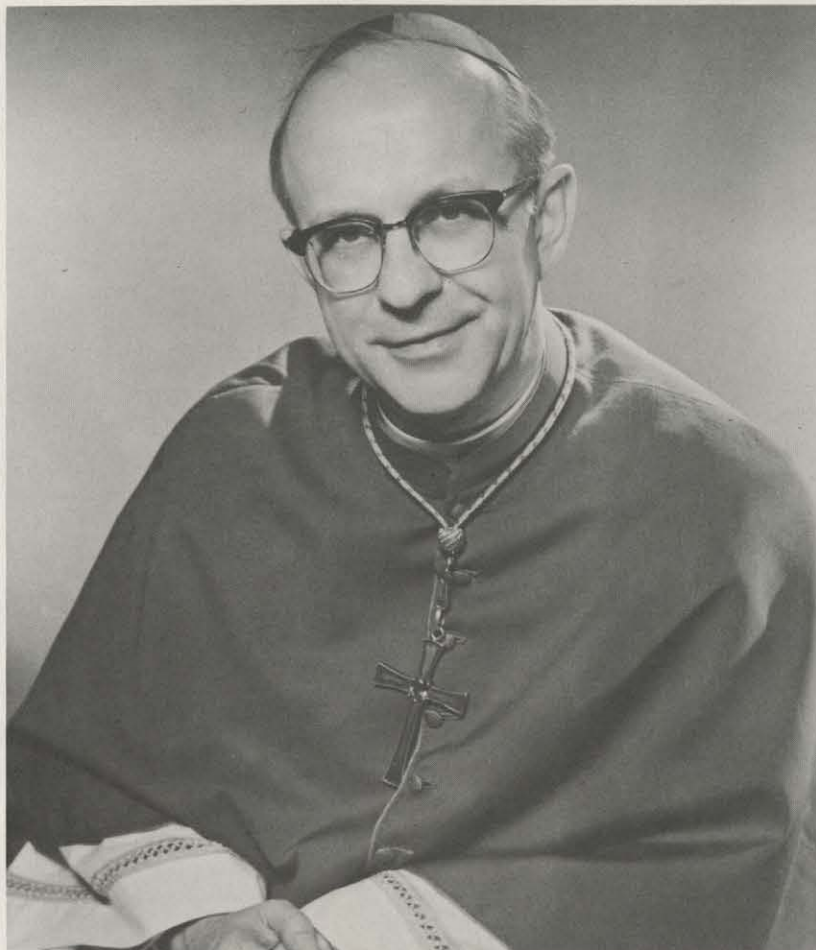




# The Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk

S.T.D.: Ph.D.

## Archbishop of Cincinnati, Ohio



Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, Chief Shepherd and an Alumnus of Sacred Heart Latin School.

Archbishop Pilarczyk was the principal celebrant and homilist, July 17, 1983, at 4:00 p.m. for the Centenary Mass at Sacred Heart Church.



The Most Reverend Nicholas T. Elko  
Auxiliary Archbishop of Cincinnati



## A Dedication Message From Our Pastor



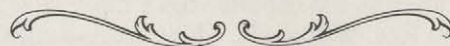
*Father Roger E. Griesse*

With gratitude in our hearts in this year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, we celebrate the One Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of our Parish, Sacred Heart, in the City of Dayton.

Now, one hundred years later, the downtown section of Dayton where our church is located has expanded to an industrial and commercial area which was revitalized through an ambitious urban renewal program.

Sacred Heart is not an ordinary parish. Though we do have limited parish boundaries, and we are a parish, we are really more of a service center, a landmark for the Church, a place of witness to the Word of God in the center of things in Dayton. The church provides a spiritual oasis in the midst of a bustling resurrected city.

May God continue to shower us with his bountiful gifts and graces now and in the future is our humble prayer.







## Prologue

On August 20, 1795, just seventeen days after the peace treaty between General Mad Anthony Wayne and the Indians was signed at Greenville, Ohio, four men purchased the land between the Mad River and the Little Miami River from John Cleves Symmes. The purchasers were all American officers in the Revolutionary War; namely, General Arthur St. Clair, General Jonathan Dayton, General James Wilkinson and Colonel Israel Ludlow. Daniel C. Cooper led several surveyors to the area on November 1, 1795 to mark out a road. Israel Ludlow laid out the town which he called Dayton in honor of Jonathan Dayton. Three streets in the town were named after Wilkinson, Ludlow and St. Clair.

In March, 1796, the first settlers of Dayton left Cincinnati in three parties. The first group consisted of the Thompson, McClure, Van Cleve and Gahagan families. They travelled on a pirogue up the winding Miami River. The boat trip from Cincinnati to Dayton took ten days. They landed at the head of St. Clair Street. What they found here was a great wilderness and two small Indian camps. The other two parties made the trip by land. The small band of settlers cleared the wilderness, built cabins and the new town of Dayton began to grow.

It is interesting to note that the early records show that just west of Wilkinson Street, where Sacred Heart Church now stands, there was a large corn field within an enclosure where every family was at liberty to till as much of the soil as he chose or needed. The small prairies surrounding the large enclosure were used as vegetable gardens (and so, Father Griese's vegetable garden behind the rectory has historic significance).

The history of Catholicism in Dayton is almost as old as the city itself. Robert Conway, the first known Catholic arrived in Dayton in 1831. However, it is believed on good authority that there were Catholics in the area prior to this time. During this early period (prior to the establishment of the first Catholic church) priests on horseback would visit one of the homes where the neighboring Catholics would gather for the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Early Catholic missionaries in the Dayton settlement include Fathers Edward Collins, Emmanuel Theirpont (founder of the first Catholic church, Emmanuel's in Dayton) Stephen Badin (the first priest known to have been ordained in this country) and Frederick Baraga. It is recorded that Father Baraga offered the first Mass in Dayton at the home of Robert Conway in May, 1831. The first resident priest in Dayton was Father Edward Collins who was sent here in 1833.

In 1836, Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati, appointed Father Emmanuel Theirpont to organize the first Catholic church in Dayton. It was to bear the name Emmanuel, which was the name of its priest-founder. Since the dominant language of our early Catholic settlers was German, it was to be a German speaking parish.

Ten years later in 1846, a second parish was founded in Dayton. It was to be an English speaking parish to accommodate the influx of Irish immigrants into the area. It was called St. Joseph's Church and was located on East Second Street.

Catholicism continued to grow in Dayton, so, in 1860, the third parish, situated east of Emmanuel, was established and was named Holy Trinity. Like Emmanuel, it was to be a German parish.

St. Joseph's too experienced a rapid growth. Accordingly, permission by the Right Rev. William H. Elder, coadjutor of the archdiocese of Cincinnati, was granted in 1883 to the assistant pastor of St. Joseph's parish, Father Hugh J. McDevitt to establish a new parish.



Edward Fenwick, O.P.  
1822-1832



William A. Elder  
1883-1904





*A visiting priest on horseback*

Thus Sacred Heart Parish came into being. It was the fourth Catholic church and the second Irish parish in Dayton.

The diocese of Cincinnati itself was established by Pope Pius VII on June 19, 1821. Originally it embraced all of Ohio and much of the old Northwest Territory. (Later it was cut back to include nineteen counties in southwestern Ohio). Edward Dominic Fenwick, a member of the Dominican Order and a missionary on horseback in the Ohio country, was selected as its first bishop. Pope Pius IX elevated the diocese to the rank of a metropolitan see, or archdiocese in 1850, while the Right Reverend John B. Purcell was the Ordinary. Since then all heads of the Cincinnati See have received the title of Archbishop. Eight bishops have preceded Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, the present Ordinary.



*The Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains at Cincinnati, Ohio built in 1845, it has been called "the finest building in the West".*



*John B. Purcell  
1833-1883*





## The Founder and First Pastor of Sacred Heart Church

Dayton, Ohio



*Father Hugh J. McDevitt, D.D.*

In July, 1883, the Most Reverend Archbishop William H. Elder appointed the assistant pastor at St. Joseph's Parish, Father Hugh J. McDevitt, D.D., to establish a new English-speaking parish in Dayton because of overcrowded conditions at Sunday Mass at St. Joseph's. Father Hugh McDevitt thus became the founding father and the first pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Dayton, Ohio.

He served as pastor of the new congregation for five years while the temporary place of worship was located at Gebhart's hall. He occupied rooms over a drug store at the southwest corner of Fifth and Jefferson Streets.

During the first four months of the founding of the congregation, Father McDevitt organized the first church wardens and the first church treasurer, Mr. F.J. McCormick was elected. The Altar-Rosary Society was organized, and the purchase of the corner lot on Wilkinson and Fourth Streets for the building of the church was made. Father McDevitt also organized a Sunday school for 168 children who were taught by two Sisters of Charity and several young women of the parish. A church fund association was established with members contributing monthly dues of 25 cents or multiples of this amount. This was later discontinued and the practice of having a special monthly collection introduced. Sacred Heart Church was among the first to establish this system.

Father McDevitt's First Communion group of 32 boys and 52 girls received communion on Pentecost Sunday, June 1, 1884. By the end of January, 1886, Father McDevitt announced that the property on Fourth and Wilkinson Streets had been paid in full, so early in 1887, plans for the church building were prepared by architect, Charles I. Williams. Father McDevitt carried out the plans for the church building, saw through the removal of houses on the property, followed by excavation and work on the church foundation. He announced his retirement in October, 1887, and was succeeded as pastor by Reverend Roderick A. Finnerty.

In 1926, thirty-nine years after he founded the parish, Father McDevitt visited Sacred Heart Church and celebrated Mass there. He had been stationed in the Portland, Oregon diocese where he founded ten parishes and did missionary work. His trip east was made in a Chapel car donated to the Catholic Extension Society by the late Peter Kuntz of Dayton. While in Dayton, Father McDevitt was a guest at the Gibbons Hotel and visited many of his former parishioners.





# A Brief History of Sacred Heart Church

Dayton, Ohio

It was Father Hugh J. McDevitt, assistant pastor at St. Joseph's Church, who first realized that the church was too small to accommodate all the English-speaking Catholics who attended St. Joseph's. And following an innocent suggestion to the Most Rev. Archbishop Elder, that an extra Mass be said on Sundays for the children, Father McDevitt was appointed to begin the organization of a new parish. Father McDevitt wrote a description of the founding of Sacred Heart, which was recorded on the flyleaf of the first announcement book of Sacred Heart Parish. The following are excerpts of an article which was written in February 11, 1932 in the Catholic Telegraph.

These are Father McDevitt's own words:

"It is quite possible that in after years when I shall have gone to my long rest in the grave, together with many of those now entrusted to my spiritual care, persons will be found who will be desirous of knowing something regarding the origin of Sacred Heart Parish and congregation. Since it is often very difficult and not infrequently impossible to trace organizations to the very first thing or things that gave rise to them either as a cause or as an occasion, unless some written record has been kept, I have thought that a brief account in writing concerning the origin of the new congregation would not be without some advantage. Hence these lines."

"For a considerable period previous to the organization of the Sacred Heart congregation, it had been a recognized fact that St. Joseph Church, on the East Second Street, was far too small to accommodate all the English-speaking Catholics of Dayton. But I dare say that had it not been for one thing, the Sacred Heart congregation might not as yet (1886) be organized. The thing or things rather are the side galleries in St. Joseph Church. Very soon after my appointment as assistant priest of St. Joseph Church (Oct. 12, 1882) I became impressed with the conviction that those galleries were not a fit place for the children to hear Mass from. This I mentioned on several occasions to the Most Reverend Archbishop Elder, and I urged the importance of this fact, telling him that I would gladly undertake, if he would grant permission, to say an extra Mass for the children on Sundays, so that they could hear Mass in the body of the church and not in those galleries. That I should have acted so might seem too officious on my part, and all I have to say in extra excuse for this is that I had only one thing in view and that was the real spiritual welfare of the children."

"I do not for an instance blame Reverend Father O'Donohue, who was then pastor of St. Joseph, because there never was a priest better motivated than he, but only on this point his views and mine differed. Anyhow, the Archbishop said that he would speak to Father O'Donohue about the matter; and so he did in July, 1883. In that interview one thing brought up another. Father O'Donohue wisely urged that really the proper thing to do was to build another church, and that as soon as possible. The Archbishop was convinced that this was true, and acting on the suggestion of Father O'Donohue, appointed me to undertake the work – to rent a hall as soon as possible, and to begin the organization of a new parish."

"When I spoke to the Archbishop on several occasions as above stated, about the side galleries in St. Joseph, I did not for a moment dream that my having done so would lead to a movement so important. I owe that it was with a feeling of fear that I told the Most Rev. Archbishop that I was willing to undertake the work."

"The Sunday after this charge was committed to me, the announcement was made in St. Joseph Church that a new parish was to be organized and a new church to be built for it. It was soon determined that it should be the Sacred Heart Congregation in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The first contribution for the new church was given by the Little Sodality of the Sacred Heart of St. Joseph Church. The sodality was composed of the little girls of the Sisters' School. It was my wish that the first offering for the new church should come from these innocent children. They gave me \$42.00."

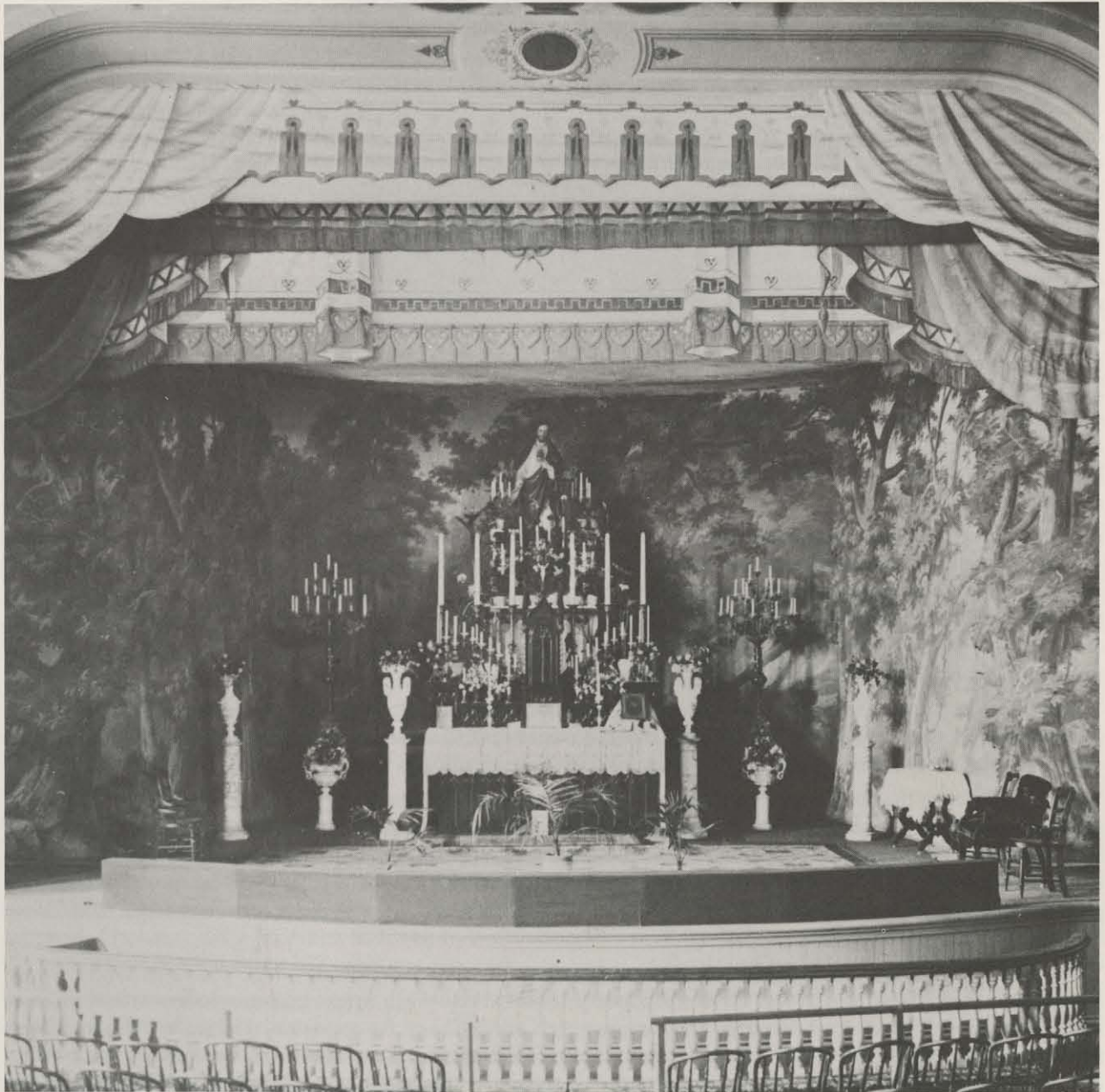
"The new congregation assembled for the first time on Sunday, July 22nd, 1883, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene. The place chosen was Gebhart's Opera House on East Fifth Street between Jefferson and Main. I had the happiness to say Low Mass for the congregation on that day. As yet, no place for meeting had been rented, and Mr. Lawrence Reist, who was then manager of the hall, let us have it free on that occasion. Four days later, July 16, 1883, this hall was leased to the congregation for \$1,400 per annum. The signers said lease were Warren M. Gebhart, of the first part, and Thomas Legler, Michael Gibbons, C. P. Sweetman, Pius





Alhoff, Michael Ohmer, Francis McCormick, and Rev. H.J. McDevitt, the church committee, of the second part. The hall continued to serve as the place of worship for five years."

"After most careful deliberations, it was finally determined that the very best location obtainable for the new church was the northwest corner of Fourth and Wilkinson Streets, and that the dividing line between St. Joseph and Sacred Heart Parishes should be Main Street, Fifth Street, and Wayne Avenue. On October 24, 1883, the foresaid property was bought by the congregation for \$19,000, payable in three payments, and that is, within three years. The corner lot was bought from Mrs. Turner, the mother-in-law of ex-Sheriff Charles Freeman, to whom, in her name, \$5,000 was paid on October 24, 1883. This parcel of land was cleared by this payment. The middle lot was bought from the Garet estate, and thus the third lot from Casper Garet and wife. The entire property measures 115½ by 105½ feet."



*First Altar of Sacred Heart Church at Gebhart's Opera House, Fifth Street 1883*





# Sacred Heart's Grand Choir

by Martin J. Kelly



Father F. Joseph Kelly  
First Choir Director and Organist  
of Sacred Heart Church

In the realm of superb musical expression, perhaps nothing has surpassed the excellence of performance that was achieved during the 1890's at Sacred Heart Church. The personification of that excellence was the magnificent grand choir of 40 voices that had been organized and trained during the 90's, under the able direction of the late Rev. F. Joseph Kelly (1872-1953). His tenure as choirmaster and organist was prior to entering the seminary in 1897 in order to prepare for the priesthood.

It was an era in which perfection excelled beyond the ordinary, and it is fitting that the choir be recalled during this centennial observance of Sacred Heart Parish. They are now a part of the historical narrative and truly represented the embodiment of all that was beautiful in the presentation of quality church music, whether it be the ancient Gregorian Chant or the operatic.

Father "Joe", as he was affectionately known to his immediate family and close friends, became interested in music while still a child, and was further encouraged by his parents in this regard. Following his graduation in 1890, from St. Mary's Institute (University of Dayton) he commenced advanced music studies at the Cincinnati College of Music. In 1892, while still at this institution Mr. Kelly began the recruitment of members for the Sacred Heart choir. Upon his graduation in 1893, he dedicated his entire effort towards perfecting it.

When the new church was dedicated November 10, 1895, Mr. Kelly prepared the music program for that event.

In August, 1897, forty-two members of the choir gathered at the old Kelly home on South Main St. to bid Mr. Kelly a fond farewell with a surprise reception prior to his departure for Holy Angels Seminary at Niagara Falls, New York. In 1902, he was ordained at Chicago by Bishop Muldoon. He died in 1953.



This formal official portrait of Sacred Heart's Grand Choir appeared many times in flyers, programs and newspapers whenever the choir performed. The Dayton Daily News published it for the last time, April 24, 1932, recalling the days when parishioners heard the Masses of Haydn, Mozart and Gounod sung with resounding magnitude. Possibly some of the choir members are still remembered today by older parishioners. They are:

Front row, left to right: Mayme Barret, Cecilia Ritzler, Josephine Unverferth

2nd Row: Mary Carbery, Anna L. McGrath, Etta Butz, F. Joseph Kelly (organist), Rebecca Wall, Florence Unverferth, Ella Currigan

3rd Row: Joseph Bucher, Frank B. Moorman, Lilian Unverferth, Charles Moorman, Margaret Froose, William Flynn, Joseph Pauley, Katherine Barret, Joseph Abel, Stella Bathelemy

4th Row: John Dickman, Carrie Weigand, Carl Metz, Hugh Wall, Kate Helfrich, Louis Kelly, John O'Connell, George Metz, William Bueker





## The Rt. Reverend Msgr. Charles A. Hickey Successful Pastor For Thirty-Three Years

*From the Dayton Daily News, Saturday, November 1, 1902*

“**S**acred Heart Church as it stands today in all its magnificence represents the faith and generosity of a devoted people no less than the earnest life work of the pastor, Reverend Charles A. Hickey, who since becoming the pastor of the church has been wonderfully successful with the church. His earnestness and his devotion to the cause of the church to which he was appointed, and to the people who make up his flock, has won him their hearty support in everything he has undertaken.”

“Pastor and flock will rejoice indeed and it will be a day of happiness when divine services will again be held in the newly decorated church – rejoicing not only that the church is complete, but humbly thanking God that the opportunity has been vouchsafed them to glorify His name in the magnificent temple of worship erected to His glory and the glory and honor of the Sacred Heart of His Son, Jesus Christ the Savior.”

Monsignor Charles A. Hickey served as pastor of Sacred Heart Church for thirty-three years, which is the longest term of any of the pastors. He saw the church through its early years of growth, including the establishment of its two schools. Monsignor Hickey retired in 1924 and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio where he served at Good Samaritan Hospital. He was succeeded in 1924 by Father Martin M. Varley, a native son of the parish.

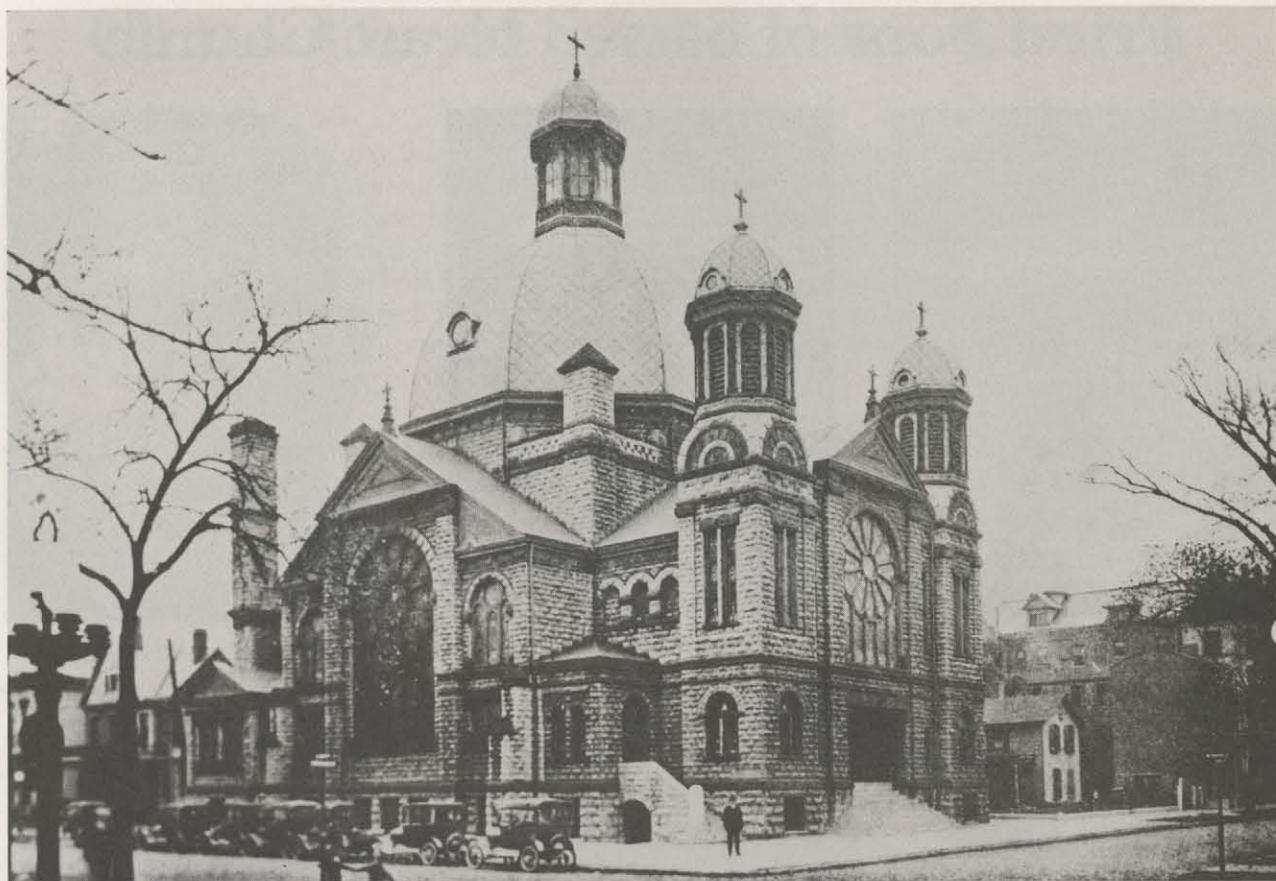


*Third Pastor, Reverend William Hickey brother of Rev. Charles A. Hickey. Rev. William Hickey served as pastor, from April 26, 1891 to August 9, 1891.*

*Father Charles A. Hickey, fourth pastor of Sacred Heart Church – 1891 to 1924. He died at Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, O. after almost 67 years in the priesthood.*







Sacred Heart Church – Circa 1915



Original Sanctuary





## Priest Sons of Sacred Heart Church



**Monsignor Martin M. Varley**  
 Ordained: Sept. 16, 1910  
 St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral  
 Cincinnati, Ohio  
 First Mass: Sept. 17, 1910, Sacred Heart  
 Church, Dayton, Ohio  
 Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, 1924 to  
 1942  
 Died: January 17, 1962



**Father John Dillon, S.M.**  
 Ordained: May 25, 1918  
 Died: 1946



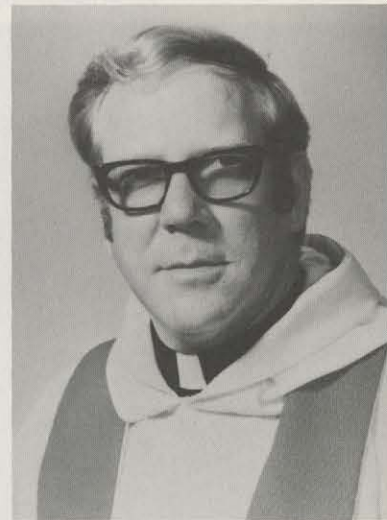
**Monsignor James P. Snead**  
 Ordained: June 3, 1939, Portland, Oregon  
 First Mass: June 4, 1939, Sacred Heart  
 Church, Dayton, Ohio  
 Died: November 13, 1974, Palmer, Alaska



**Father Charles Hollencamp**  
 Ordained: May 18, 1940, St. Monica's  
 Cathedral, Cincinnati, Ohio  
 First Mass: May 19, 1940, Sacred Heart  
 Church, Dayton, Ohio  
 Present Assignment: Asst. Pastor, Sacred  
 Heart Church, Dayton, Ohio



**Father John Fackler**  
 Ordained: 1946  
 First Mass: 1946, Sacred Heart Church,  
 Dayton, Ohio  
 Present Assignment: Pastor, St. Mary's  
 Church, Pinckney, Michigan



**Father Lawrence Wack**  
 Ordained: May 21, 1960 at the  
 Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio  
 First Mass: May 22, 1960, Sacred Heart  
 Church, Dayton, Ohio  
 Present Assignment: Pastor, St. Thomas  
 More Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

**Father Bernard Steuve**  
 Retired University of Dayton





## Chronology of Sacred Heart Church

- 1883 **P**ermission to establish Sacred Heart Parish was granted on July 3, 1883, by the Right Reverend William H. Elder, coadjutor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, because of the crowded conditions at St. Joseph's Church. The Reverend Hugh J. McDevitt, assistant pastor at St. Joseph's was appointed to found a new English-speaking parish. On Sunday, July 22, 1883, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, Father McDevitt first said Mass for the new congregation at Gebhart's Opera House, which was located on East Fifth Street between Jefferson and Main Streets. This location served as a place of worship for the fledgling parish for five years. During this period, church membership grew from the original one hundred families to two hundred fifty families.
- 1887 **P**lans to build a permanent church were formulated early in 1887 by a building committee appointed by Archbishop William H. Elder. Ground was purchased at the northwest corner of Fourth and Wilkinson Streets at a cost of \$19,000. The lot measurements were 105 ft. x 115 ft.
- In the fall of 1887 ground was broken and the building of a Romanesque style church was begun. The combination of Byzantine massing with Classic and Romanesque details was to make it one of the architectural wonders of Dayton. The first contribution for the new church came from the Little Sodality of the Sacred Heart at St. Joseph's Church. The amount was \$42.00, a humble beginning.
- On October 19, 1887, Father Hugh McDevitt retired as pastor of Sacred Heart Church. He transferred to the Portland, Oregon diocese. He was succeeded by Father Roderick Finnerty who was appointed on November 1, 1887 to be the second pastor of Sacred Heart. During his four years as pastor, the construction of the new church was his primary concern.
- 1888 **O**n June 6, 1888, the cornerstone of the new church was laid. Archbishop Elder officiated at the ceremonies and a Pontifical High Mass was celebrated. The Reverend John M. Mackey preached the sermon, while the Reverend Dr. Henry Moeller (who was destined to succeed Archbishop Elder as Archbishop of Cincinnati) was master of ceremonies and Mr. T.A. Legler was the master mason. Other prominent clergy present included the Reverends Goetz, Haynes, Cuzck, Stuckenberg, Dennis Mackey, Fromiller, Kemper, Meyer, Harks, Hocker, Haynes, Kallenburg, Drufner and Lasance. (The last was to gain national prominence as an author of religious books.)
- The church is constructed of Dayton limestone and trimmed with Berea brownstone. The dimensions are: 92 ft. x 115 ft. It is two stories high; the first story being a basement or undercroft, while the upper floor is described as a clearstory with a height of 75 ft. It has an imposing Romanesque style architecture, which is rarely seen in this country.
- The furnishings in the church were for the most part donations. The stained art glass windows were gifts of several prominent families whose names are inscribed in the lower portion of the window. The total cost of the windows was about \$6,000.00. The three white altars, costing about \$17,000 were also donated. The same can be said of the rose window above the sanctuary (\$1,000 cost). A steam boiler was installed to heat the building (\$2,500) while the building was lighted by both gas and electricity. A large number of non-Catholics contributed funds toward the cost of the building.
- 1889 **O**n July 2, 1889, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated on a portable altar on a stage in the basement of the new church. Father Roderick A. Finnerty, the pastor, was the celebrant, assisted by the Reverends Isaac Hocker, Michael J. Loney, who were the deacon and sub deacon, respectively. Incidentally, the latter, Father Loney, was to become Sacred Heart's first assistant pastor. Mass continued to be said in the basement of the incompleated church until 1893.
- 1891 **F**ather Roderick A. Finnerty resigned as pastor, effective April 26, 1891, due to failing health. Father Finnerty died, December 10, 1893 in Cincinnati, Ohio and is buried at St. Joseph Cemetery,





Cincinnati. Father William Hickey was an interim pastor until August 9, 1891. One week later, on August 16, 1891, his brother, Reverend Charles A. Hickey, was appointed as the fourth pastor of Sacred Heart Church. Father Hickey worked with great zeal and dedication for the completion of the church. His pastorate lasted thirty-three years, which is the longest tenure of office up to the present time (Father Griese, however, is still going strong!)

1892 **T**he interior construction of the church was resumed in March, 1892.

1893 **I**n 1893, the altars, communion railing, confessionals and pews were set in place. On September 3, 1893, Mass was said at the main altar for the first time. However, the body of the church remained undecorated until 1902. The first girl infant to be baptized in the new church was Margaret Sacksteder in August, 1893. The first child baptized was Francis McEntree.

1894 **T**he installation of a pipe organ at the cost of \$4,157.00 took place in 1894.

1895 **T**he stained glass windows were installed at the cost of \$4,709.33, through donations of several families of the parish.

On Sunday, November 10, 1895, the official dedication of the new church for Sacred Heart Parish took place with ceremonies performed by Bishop J.P. Maes of Covington, Kentucky. Rev. John F. Hickey, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Cumminsville, preached the sermon.

1897 **T**he bell of Sacred Heart Church is the largest in the city. Its weight exclusive of hangings is 4500 pounds. It was consecrated December 12, 1897 by the Very Rev. John B. Murray, President of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary. The daily pouring forth of its deep melodious voice is an impressive and welcome event amid the bustle and turmoil of the active business district.

1899 **T**he printed financial statement for the year 1899, issued early in 1900, bore the happy tidings that the church was free of debt.

1901 **S**acred Heart Church, in its career, has sheltered many large and devout gatherings. Perhaps the most edifying, certainly the largest assemblage that ever gathered within its sacred walls, was that which assisted at the Midnight Mass, January 1, 1901, when a great multitude, filling every available space from chancel rail to gallery, devoutly observed the advent of a new century.

1902 **B**y November 1, 1902, thanks to the untiring efforts of its pastor, Father Charles A. Hickey, the interior decoration of the new church was finally completed. Father Hickey had wisely engaged the services of two prominent artists, Charles Svendsen (1871-1959) of Cincinnati, Ohio and G. Gloscio of Indianapolis, Indiana, to do the painting and decorating of the church interior. This project took more than two months to complete. Because both men had studied art in Rome, Italy for many years, this style of art was graphically reflected in the magnificence of their work. The decorations were planned to be in harmony with the same style of architectural design found in the church. The pews were revarnished and the altars and other furnishings were retouched after the major interior decorating was completed.

Also at this time electrical wiring was installed and the interior illumination was increased. An immense chandelier, which hung from the dome, was fitted with special lights and was lowered to diffuse more light into the body of the church. Over 200 incandescent lamps were imbedded in the artistic stucco work around the arches that supported the dome.

The color scheme of the walls was cream shading into a deep olive green at the base which formed a wainscoting around the church. The colors were painted in delicate tones to highlight the paintings, religious symbols and emblems included in the decorations. The sanctuary decorations were the same Roman style as those found in the cathedrals and great churches of Italy. The altars were white and gold covered with a handsome canopy. On the arch above the sanctuary entrance was emblazoned Our Lord's solemn entreaty: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart!" On a scroll, above the





St. Joseph side altar (Epistle side), was a picture of the Holy Family. While above the Blessed Virgin Mary's side altar (Gospel side) was a picture depicting Our Lord's apparition to Blessed Margaret Mary Aloccoque, who was the foundress of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the League of the Sacred Heart. Truly the interior of the church was a thing of beauty and splendor.

1902 *Paintings in the church done by artist, Charles Svendsen*

To the left of the sanctuary and in the wing of the church a painting representing the "Return of the Prodigal Son", and as a companion piece, just opposite, is a beautiful study of "Christ Blessing the Little Children". In the right wing of the church two beautiful paintings, "Christ's Charge to Peter" and a copy of Hofman's "Gethsemane", oils on canvas were executed.

In the panels of the dome, four key events of Jesus' life were magnificently painted. The first is the "Annunciation", representing the Angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary announcing to her the will of the Almighty and the coming of Christ of whom she was to be the Virgin mother; secondly, the "Resurrection of Jesus from the Tomb", thirdly, the "Ascension of Christ into Heaven", and lastly the Penecost - "Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles". The four paintings were well balanced in the four remaining panels of the dome by artistic decorative studies of cherub heads and a dove representing the Holy Spirit, encircled by clouds. The roof of the dome was finished by a trellis of pink roses and vines. Above the choir loft on the ceiling was a lovely painting of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, placed there as an inspiration to the choir members. In the center of the arches which rise from marble pillars supporting the dome were the pictures of the four evangelists: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

Artist, Charles Svendsen, who painted the religious oil paintings on canvas, was one of Cincinnati's prominent artists. He attended the Cincinnati Art Academy and later studied with several master painters in Paris, France. He also studied in Europe for several years, concentrating on the study of religious paintings of the old Cathedrals of Europe. He also was the artist who painted a large religious painting in St. Xavier's in Cincinnati, Ohio. Charles Svendsen was a life-long resident of Price Hill, Cincinnati, and a practicing Catholic. He died on his 88th birthday in 1959.

Mr. G. Giloscio did the remainder of the painting and decorating in the interior of the church. He was known as a fresco artist of rare ability. He was born in Italy and educated there in the study of art. His studies included the art centers of France and Italy and he spent several years painting in Milan, Verona, Venice and five years in France.

Also in 1902, ground was purchased at the northwest corner of Fourth and Perry Streets where a four-room school building was constructed. The Sisters of Charity were chosen to staff the school and four sisters were assigned there immediately. Prior to that time, catechism classes had been conducted for the children in the church basement by lay catechists.

1903 **T**he school building was completed in 1903 and was dedicated on September 8, 1903 by the Reverend Daniel Buckley. Father Joseph Shee delivered the sermon. Roy Sacksteder and John O'Connor were two of the first graduates of Sacred Heart School.

1904 **E**nrollment increased so rapidly that it was necessary to expand the size of the school program. Property at the southeast corner of Maple and Perry Streets was purchased and a second school building was built at this location. It was completed in the spring of 1904 in time for the new school year.

Also during 1904, the residence of J.A. Makley, at 217 West Fourth Street was purchased. It was converted into a rectory and is used in that capacity to this day. The Sisters of the Parish then moved into the former priest's home which was located on the north side of the church on Wilkinson Street.



*Sacred Heart Church Rectory, 217 West Fourth Street*





*Sacred Heart School – Fourth & Perry Sts.*



*Sacred Heart School – Maple & Perry Sts.*





1904 Archdiocese records note that "the close proximity of the church to the business district, with a consequent steady rise in the valuation of adjacent property placed the parish at a serious disadvantage when it faced the obligation of purchasing, piece by piece, the ground necessary for those indispensable requisites of a well-ordered parish, viz. school, rectory and teachers' residence. The experience of Sacred Heart Parish, in this respect, exemplifies the wisdom of another recent Diocesan regulation; that no new parish may be established without purchasing, at the outset, ground sufficient for these requisites."

At a cost of \$4,896.00, the Makley property was remodelled for a rectory. Upon its occupation as such, the former rectory was given over as a residence for the Sisters, who, up to this time, had lived with the Sisters of St. Joseph's Church. The various improvements involved resulted in the announcement, in the Financial Statement for 1904, of a debt of \$32,500.00.

1905 In the summer of 1905, the Sisters' residence was substantially improved with an additional story, a re-modelling of the interior, the installing of electric light and a hot-water heating system. The cost of these improvements was \$2,585.00.

1908 In observance of the Silver Jubilee of the Church, a High Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated July 22, 1908, and on the following day a High Mass of Requiem for the departed members of the parish.

1909 The happy information that the financial statement for the year 1909 conveyed that the parish was once more free of debt.

1910 The southeast corner of Third and Wilkinson Streets, in the same block with the church, was in December, 1910, chosen as the site for a new Post Office and Government Building. This event had the effect of increasing the value and creating a demand for property in this vicinity. With a view, therefore, to forestalling the unpleasant circumstance of an undesirable tenant, the lot north of the church on Wilkinson Street, 51 feet by 115½, was purchased, January 20, 1911, for \$16,000.00.

#### 1913 *Introduction – The Dayton Flood*

In March, 1913, Dayton was the scene of a great flood, one of the nation's notable calamities. On Tuesday, March 25, at six o'clock a.m., the Miami River burst over its banks and continued rising till midnight of the same day. The height reached by the angry waters was 31 feet, a distance of 13 feet above the flood level. As the river makes an almost perpendicular deflection in the center of the city, the result was that a section covering twenty blocks north and south and as many east and west, was inundated. The waters did not recede until Thursday evening March 27, and in the lower parts of the city, several days later. Fully 80% of the members of Sacred Heart Parish resided in the flooded district. As the city never before experienced such a disaster, the nearest approach to it being the flood of 1866, when the water did not rise so high by ten feet, many did not take seriously the alarm sounded by the ringing of the church bells throughout the city early on the morning of the flood, nor the tentative warning of the newspapers the previous evening. As a result, in many instances little or no effort was made to save portable property by carrying it to the second story of the home before the rushing waters rendered this effort impossible. In a considerable number of cases, even this precaution proved unavailing, as the angry element invaded the upper story as well.

A sum of \$8,400.00 was distributed among the depressed people of Sacred Heart Parish after the flood. This amount was the portion allotted to this parish of a fund placed at the disposal of Archbishop Moeller by the generous charity of the faithful in our own and other dioceses throughout the country. The cost of repairing the damage to the church caused by the flood, was \$4,054.00.

On Easter Sunday, March 23rd, Sacred Heart parishioners went to Mass in the rain. The unusual aspect of this rain, however, was that it did not stop raining until Dayton was caught in one of the most disastrous floods in America's history. By the evening of March 25th, the swirling flood waters engulfed Dayton in a sea of water from ten to twenty feet deep. The downtown area was hit the hardest which meant that Sacred Heart Church and school were in the midst of the main stream of the flood. Old flood





*One of Dayton's many public school buildings and the Sacred Heart Church*

pictures of the church and school show that the half-way mark of the main floor of both buildings. Only the globes of the street lamp posts are visible above the water, except for floating debris which contained parts of houses, furniture and the carcasses of horses and other animals. (In the Rectory, the flood waters covered the "toe-strips" on the second floor!)

The panic in the flood district was intensified by the fires, more than a dozen which broke out in a single block as gas lines exploded. Sacred Heart was not far from this inferno. Imagine the terror that must have gripped Father Hickey, the pastor, as he attempted to protect the church's property, including the Blessed Sacrament. He suffered a personal loss when his horse was drowned in the seething waters.

Margaret Kirk, a former parishioner, recalls some interesting and devastating facts about that gruesome period. The flood waters reached the Stations of the Cross in the interior of the church. The wooden floor was damaged extensively by the water, but later was able to be repaired. The Mass books kept in the pews were water-soaked, but later they too were dried out and used again. To prevent the spread of disease, the health authorities ordered that strong disinfectants be used in cleaning the interiors of buildings. At the time, she was a student at Sacred Heart School and she recollects that the school was closed down for a long time, while the mud and debris was cleaned up. While the church interior was being cleaned and repaired, Mass was said in the church basement.

1924 **F**ather Charles A. Hickey retired as pastor, after faithfully serving his flock for thirty-three years. He was transferred to Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati to serve as Chaplain. He was later elevated to rank of Domestic Prelate. He died in Cincinnati on Aug. 30, 1953.

1924 **F**ather Martin M. Varley, native son of the parish succeeded Father Hickey as pastor. He was born in Dayton, Ohio, Nov. 8, 1887, and was baptized in Sacred Heart Church Nov. 20, 1887. Prior to his appointment at Sacred Heart he organized the new parish, St. Bernard in Winton Place, Cincinnati, Ohio where he served as pastor for five years.

1926 **R**everend Hugh J. McDevitt, founding father of Sacred Heart Parish, visited Dayton from Portland, Oregon.





1936

After seventeen years of fruitful labor which was recognized and rewarded by the late Holy Father, Pius XI, Father Varley was elevated to the rank of Domestic Prelate and member of the Papal Household. Ceremonies were held at Sacred Heart Church, Sunday, August 24, 1936, the investiture being conducted by Archbishop John T. McNicholas, assisted by Msgr. Albert Burke.

## Rank of Monsignor Is Given Fr. Varley

Newspaper text was as follows:

Top, left to right, Msgr. Albert Burke, Archbishop John T. McNicholas, Rev. Edward Creager and Msgr. Martin M. Varley. Bottom, Msgr. Varley, Msgr. John Hickey, Cincinnati; next in line, Msgr. Charles Hickey, Cincinnati, former pastor of Sacred Heart Church; Msgr. Robert Sherry, Cincinnati, and Msgr. George Rehring, Cincinnati.



Rev. Martin M. Varley, pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Fourth and Wilkinson Sts., was elevated to the rank of monsignor of the Roman Catholic Church, Sunday at 3 p. m. in the church by Archbishop John T. McNicholas.

The ceremony was attended by many members of the clergy of the Cincinnati archdiocese, sisters from the Loretto, Saint Elizabeth Hospital and Good Samaritan Hospital and by members of the congregation and friends of Msgr. Varley, who crowded the church to capacity.

In the investiture Archbishop McNicholas was assisted by Msgr. Albert Burke, Cincinnati, and Rev. Walter Creager of Milford. Msgr. Burke was designated to be a monsignor at the same time as Msgr. Varley, but the title has not as yet been officially conferred on him. He is a former pastor of Corpus Christi Church, Dayton.

Msgr. Varley was notified some weeks ago that he was to be created a monsignor by Pope Pius and Sunday afternoon the papal brief of notification was read by Rev. Francis A. Reardon, Cincinnati, former pastor of Corpus Christi Church.

Following the ceremony, Archbishop McNicholas gave a brief talk. Rev. Frank Varley, Cincinnati, a cousin of Msgr. Varley and former pastor of St. Joseph Church, Dayton, gave the benediction and was assisted by Revs. Henry Lehman and Edward Deppenbrock.

Among the prelates who attended the ceremony were Msgr. Charles Hickey, Cincinnati, but for many years pastor of Sacred Heart Church, immediately preceding Msgr. Varley; Msgr. John Hickey, Cincinnati, and brother of Msgr. Charles Hickey; Msgr. Robert Sherry and Msgr. George Rehring, both of Cincinnati.

Msgr. Varley's elevation to his present rank gives Dayton two monsignors, the other being Msgr. Charles Ertel, pastor of Holy Family Church.

Msgr. Varley has been pastor of Sacred Heart Church for the past 12 years and is one of the most popular of Dayton priests. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Varley of 1147 Highland Ave.





*Sacred Heart Church, circa - 1920's*

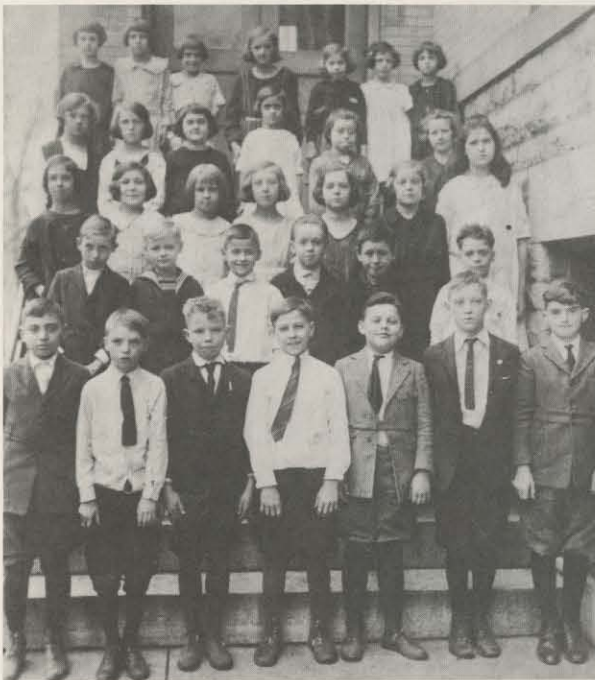


*Sacred Heart School - 1907*





1916 Sacred Heart  
Music Class



1921 Second & Third  
Grades, Sacred  
Heart School



1924 Sacred Heart  
School, 8th Grade



1927 First Communion:  
or Al Brannon, Altar  
1928 Boy; Father Martin  
M. Varley





1938 Monsignor Martin M. Varley and First Communion Class, 1938 – Joe Brannon first row left.



1943 First Communion Class, May 16, Bob and Dick Brannon, Msgr. M. Heyker

1947 Graduation Class, Right – Sister Rosemary Wack, S.N.D. 2nd from right – Sister Mary Jo Egan, S.C.







- 1942 **M**onsignor Martin M. Varley, was transferred to St. Raphael's in Springfield, Ohio. A Farewell Reception was given in honor of Msgr. Varley on January 28, 1942 at the Loretto Auditorium. A special program was given by members of the parish and music was provided by the Sacred Heart Choir. A talk entitled "The Priest", was given by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles A. Ertel. Others participating in the program were, Honorable Frank Krebs, Henry Hollencamp, Julia Gavin. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Martin M. Varley gave a farewell address and the program concluded with the "Star Spangled Banner".

Monsignor Martin M. Varley was succeeded by Father Matthias F. Heyker, who served as pastor until 1952. Father Heyker was named Monsignor.

- 1952 **M**onsignor Matthias F. Heyker was succeeded by Father Leo M. Walsh.

- 1952 **O**n June 6, 1952, Father Leo M. Walsh, the pastor, announced that an outdoor shrine, depicting the apparition of Our Lady to the three children at Fatima in 1913 would be built. Its mere presence he said would exert a wholesome influence upon the many people who would pass the shrine daily and would help spread the Fatima devotions in Dayton. The statue of Our Lady was constructed of concrete and was to be encased in glass to protect it from the elements. The rural scene also included the three children and the sheep they were tending when Our Lady appeared to them. A wrought iron grill was planned to enclose and protect the shrine.

On July 16, 1952, the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, the formal dedication of the Fatima Shrine took place amid one of the largest crowds ever assembled in Sacred Heart Church. The Church overflowed with parishioners, both present and past ones, visitors from other parishes and also many non-Catholics. The 4:00 p.m. services opened with Father Walsh leading the congregation in the recitation of the rosary. Next special prayers to the Lady of Fatima were said. Then, Monsignor Harry J. Ansbury, Dean of the Dayton clergy, preached a sermon on Fatima devotions. Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament closed the services in the church. The clergy and lay people in attendance exited the church to the outdoor shrine.



*Our Lady of Fatima – Outdoor Shrine*

Darkness was turned into daylight as spotlights illuminated the shrine and reflected Our Lady in a radiance of light. Father Walsh entreated the group, "Don't just look, but stay and pray!"

Since May, 1952, First Saturday, twelve hour long Fatima devotions had been held in Sacred Heart Church. Now plans were made to broadcast the devotions to the public. Loudspeakers were installed at the outdoor shrine. With the help of the Knights of Columbus, volunteers were found to lead the prayers in the church and captains were chosen, one for each hour of the twelve hours.

- 1953 **R**adio Station WING inaugurated a Rosary Hour broadcast on Monday, August 3rd. The broadcast originated from Sacred Heart Church and was scheduled for every weekday evening, Monday through Friday, from 6:45 to 7:00 p.m. The fifteen minute broadcast consisted of special prayers to Our Lady of Fatima, a brief explanation of the mysteries of the Rosary before the recitation of each decade and choir music appropriate to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Father Walsh announced, on September 25, 1953, that a memorial to the late beloved pastor and builder of the church, Monsignor Charles A. Hickey, would be erected. The memorial would consist of a glass-enclosed baptismal room in the rear of the church. The room would also serve as a nursery room where parents with infants or small tots could attend Mass. A bronze plaque in honor of Monsignor Hickey's dedicated service to Sacred Heart Parish for more than a quarter of a century was to be placed in the memorial room. When Father Walsh announced the project, he stressed "that the memory and name of the saintly pioneer priest must not be forgotten" in this parish.





1954 **O**n August 3, the daily broadcast of the Rosary by station WING marked its first anniversary. A large number of listeners throughout southwest Ohio sent fan letters to the station in grateful appreciation. The Rosary with its appropriate meditations continued to be broadcast from Sacred Heart Church every evening, Monday through Friday, at 6:45 p.m.

On September 24th Father Walsh announced that a Catholic library for the benefit of parishioners and prospective converts would be opened in the church. Within a month the library was set up in a room in the rear of the church. Members of the Catholic Youth Society were put in charge of the books. The library was open after the Sunday Masses. No charge or rental fee was required.

1956 **O**n March 25, Palm Sunday, Radio Station WING began a new weekly radio program of religious instruction at the suggestion of Father Leo M. Walsh. The program was scheduled for 26 weeks and was presented every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. The Dayton Council 500 Knights of Columbus sponsored the program. Father Edward Connaughton, then Superintendent of Archdiocesan schools in Dayton, was the moderator. He was assisted by the late Father Hugh Wagner, then of the Catholic Charities Office.

It was announced on August 3rd that the daily broadcast of the Rosary from Sacred Heart Church still continued to be one of the outstanding programs of Station WING after three years being on the air. And so, it was scheduled to begin its fourth year of daily broadcasts.

On November 23, 1956, provisions were made for blind Catholics in the area to attend a 9:30 a.m. Mass each Sunday at Sacred Heart Church. A special motor pool service under the auspices of the American Red Cross supplied portal-to-portal service to blind persons who wished to go to Mass.

1957 **O**n June 3, 1957, Father Walsh announced that Sacred Heart Church would become the first church in the Dayton deanery to schedule a 5:30 p.m. Mass each Sunday. Special permission to do this had to be received from the Ordinary because traditionally in this archdiocese no Sunday Mass was scheduled after 12:15 p.m. Father Walsh explained that he had received many calls about a Sunday afternoon Mass from travellers passing through Dayton. These were people who had come from areas where Sunday afternoon Masses were held for those Catholics who found it difficult to attend a morning Mass. This was particularly true in industrial areas.

1958 **F**ather Leo M. Walsh retired as pastor of Sacred Heart Church due to failing health and was succeeded by Father J. Paul Fogarty.

On July 4, 1958, the daily broadcast of the Rosary from Sacred Heart Church over Station WING was terminated after five consecutive years of broadcasting.

The 75th anniversary of the founding of Sacred Heart Church was observed with a Solemn High Mass on Sunday, July 20th, 1958, offered by its then pastor, Father J. Paul Fogarty.

1959 **S**acred Heart School closed its doors for the last time in June, 1959. It was announced on May 29, 1959, that Sacred Heart Grade School would close permanently at the termination of the school year because of the lack of students. The enrollment that year was 147 pupils; however, only ten lived within the parish boundaries, fifty-three were from St. Joseph's and Emmanuel's and eighty-three from Vandalia. The two school buildings continued to be used as temporary classrooms for Chaminade High School freshmen until the new Chaminade building was constructed.

During August 1959, the green dome of Sacred Heart Church was given a face lifting, when a new copper facing was installed. This was the first major repair work done on the dome roof in 67 years. The estimated cost of the work was \$23,000.

1960 **T**he Reverend Monsignor Martin T. Gilligan replaced Father J. Paul Fogarty as Pastor of Sacred Heart Church.

1963 **O**n Easter Sunday, April 22, 1963, parishioners were informed that Sacred Heart Church was planning an extensive remodeling program with an estimated cost of \$250,000. Monsignor Gilligan said Archbishop Karl J. Alter had approved initial plans for renovation of the landmark church. Work





on the exterior of the church was to begin in 1963 and would include sandblasting and painting. It was also reported that approximately 2,500 persons attended Masses every Sunday and as many as 1,000 had visited the church daily during Lenten season.

Monsignor Gilligan was assigned to start St. Luke's Parish, in Beavercreek.

He was succeeded by Monsignor J. Raymond Schroder, the former director of Catholic Charities.

- 1964 **J**anuary 24, 1964, the City of Dayton purchased the former Sacred Heart School building located at Perry and Maple Streets for a sum of \$85,000. The building with its adjoining playground was within the boundary of the Mead-Perry urban renewal project. And so, the city demolished the four-room building which had been constructed in 1904 and had served not only as a parish grade school but also in late years as a Latin school for the Dayton area, and finally as an annex for Chaminade High School and as a school of religion for retarded children.

Next the second school located at Fourth and Perry Streets which had served the parish for more than fifty years was sold to the city of Dayton for \$50,000. It was razed by December 18, 1964 to make way for an urban renewal development. The building had been built in 1902 on what was once the Scheub property. It was constructed for less than \$12,000 during the pastorate of Father Charles A. Hickey. Sacred Heart was the third downtown parochial school to discontinue operations during the latter 1960's because of lack of students.

- 1965 **O**n May 21st, 1965, Monsignor Schroder announced that adults in the Dayton area who have not received Confirmation would be able to receive the Sacrament in Sacred Heart Church on Pentecost Sunday, June 6th. Bishop Paul F. Leibold administered Confirmation in the church at 3:30 p.m.

- 1966 **T**he Sacred Heart Rosary-Altar Society had a busy schedule throughout the year. Twenty-four members took charge of the weekly "Kaffee Klatsch" from 8 a.m. until noon in the Church Undercroft. This social activity helped to bring members and strangers closer together and provide an opportunity to become acquainted with the priests of the parish. "Kaffee Klatsch" continues to this day.

On Mondays, women provided refreshments for the regular convert class. Wednesdays were scheduled for 15 members to sew altar linens, collars for stoles, curtains, cancer pads and bandages. Fridays were set aside for at least six women to take turns cleaning altars. One member took care of all vigil lights and cleaned and filled candleholders. Two women embroidered baptismal robes to be presented by the Society to each person receiving the Sacrament of Baptism in the parish church.

A group of six women visited the funeral home when a woman parishioner died. The Society also provided for a monthly High Mass for all living and deceased members and following the death of any member. They also furnished all flowers for the altar.

Members also took part in activities of the Dayton Deanery Council of Catholic Women. In 1966 the membership totaled 150. Of this number 70 were considered active. A large percentage of the remaining were elderly and could not take an active part in the work.

- 1967 **E**cumenical Thanksgiving services were scheduled involving three area churches of Dayton, November 19, 1967. The services were held at St. John's Lutheran Church, 141 South Ludlow Street. Participating in the service was Monsignor J. Raymond Schroder, then pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Rev. Willard Borchers, pastor of St. John's Church and Rev. Frederick Speakman, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

- 1968 **T**he Montgomery County Historical Society designated Sacred Heart Church an official landmark. It was included in the "Landmark Committee Report, June 1, 1968, A Study and Evaluation of the Significant Structures and Sites of Montgomery County, Ohio".

Father Roger E. Griesse replaced Monsignor Raymond Schroder as pastor of Sacred Heart Church.





1970 *Aging Church to be Renovated*

Sacred Heart Church, the gray stone church that has served Catholics in downtown Dayton since the 1880's, will undergo extensive remodeling this summer. Rev. Roger E. Griesse, pastor, estimated the cost of interior remodeling to be between \$100,000 and \$150,000. There have already been exterior repairs made to the historic structure which escaped urban renewal plans.

For the past several weeks, parishioners have been able to view preliminary plans which include changes in the sanctuary or altar area and the entrance and vestibule.

The old church, showing signs of age with peeling plaster and worn out kneeling benches, has a certain comfort and "old church" feeling for Catholics who prefer the traditional.

Father Griesse promised this would not change. "It will still be the same old dear Sacred Heart Church and not a white-washed barn."

People familiar with the parish have climbed the eleven steep steps leading into the church from Wilkinson Street. Although there will be the same number of steps, they will be better spaced, and the stairway located farther into the church. There will be vestibule improvements, including the removal of the nursery. Other changes parishioners will notice up front "Where the action is" explained Father Griesse. Statues of the Virgin and of St. Joseph will be moved to where the present confessionals are now (they'll go in the back) and the Sacrament Altar Chapel will be moved to where St. Joseph now stands. Although not yet purchased, an electronic organ will go up front along with the choir. All is in accordance with the new order of the Mass, Father Griesse said, which concentrates on the front of the church. With a new split style communion railing, communicants will also have the option of standing or kneeling to receive communion.



*Church interior, 1970*





"The architect for the project is Albert V. Walters of Cincinnati. The general contractor is Leo B. Schroeder."

The possibility that the congregation would have to meet someplace else for Mass, was brought up and one offer came from the Rev. Willard H. Borchers at St. John's Lutheran Church, who has offered his church for Catholic services. "Perhaps we could mesh our times for services," Father Griesse commented, "but we're not sure yet."

On June 26, 1970, it was announced that Father Roger E. Griesse, pastor, would supervise the church renovation, which he called the "Resurrection" of Sacred Heart. While Sacred Heart Church will become a "beautiful secure church building . . . ready to serve more generations of people of Greater Dayton," Father Griesse emphasized that the project "will not destroy the church and he noted that the project will not be "unduly expensive." Total "rule of thumb" estimate of repairs and renovations, he said, is around \$270,000.

A thermal system built under the sidewalk to eliminate snow and ice, installation of new heating and air-conditioning; improvements in the basement and new stairwells was included in the renovation plans.

The new furnishings were estimated to cost about \$50,000 to \$80,000. The church was expected to be reopened the first part of February 1972.

1971 **O**n March 12, 1971, it was announced that the long-planned repair and renovation of Sacred Heart Church was about to begin. After the 5:30 p.m. Masses on Easter Sunday, Sacred Heart Church closed its doors so the remodeling could begin. The architectural firm of Walters & Walters of Cincinnati planned the renovation. The project was expected to take five or six months. Sealed bids on the project were to be opened April 13th.

Father Roger Griesse announced on March 19, 1971, that the congregation of Sacred Heart would move to the Loretto Chapel, 125 West Fifth Street on Easter Monday. The Dominican Sisters at the Loretto gladly offered facilities of their Chapel.

Sacred Heart Parish continued daily exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from after the 12:05 Mass until Benediction at 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The Saturday evening Mass continued at 5:30 p.m. and the Sunday schedule remained the same, with Masses at 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 12:15 and 5:30 p.m.

On April 26, 1971, an auction was held in the church basement to sell the surplus religious articles that the church would no longer need. It was hoped the church could realize at least \$15,000 from the auction towards the cost of renovation. Everything from candles to confessionals, to wooden pews, statues, crucifixes, incense burners and many other items were sold. Many people bid for items for sentimental reasons.

The church had two confessionals and several hundred pews, several statues and the stations of the cross which lined the walls for sale.

1972 **T**he church rededication was planned for ceremonies to be held sometime in the spring of 1972, with Archbishop Paul Leibold officiating.

Father Griesse, announced that the completely remodeled church would re-open Sunday, March 12th, 1972. The extensive remodeling of the church took almost one year.

On December 19th, 1972, two days after his installation as Archbishop of Cincinnati, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin came to Sacred Heart Church for the U.S. World Centenary and the Diocesan Centenary of dedication to the Sacred Heart. He also came to Sacred Heart four years in a row to celebrate Easter Mass.





## Rededication Ceremonies, Sunday, March 12th, 1972, 4:00 p.m.



Archbishop Paul F. Leibold, enters church flanked by Father Roger E. Griesse, pastor of Sacred Heart and Father Richard Born, Assistant Pastor.



Archbishop Paul F. Leibold and Father Roger E. Griesse during ceremonies.



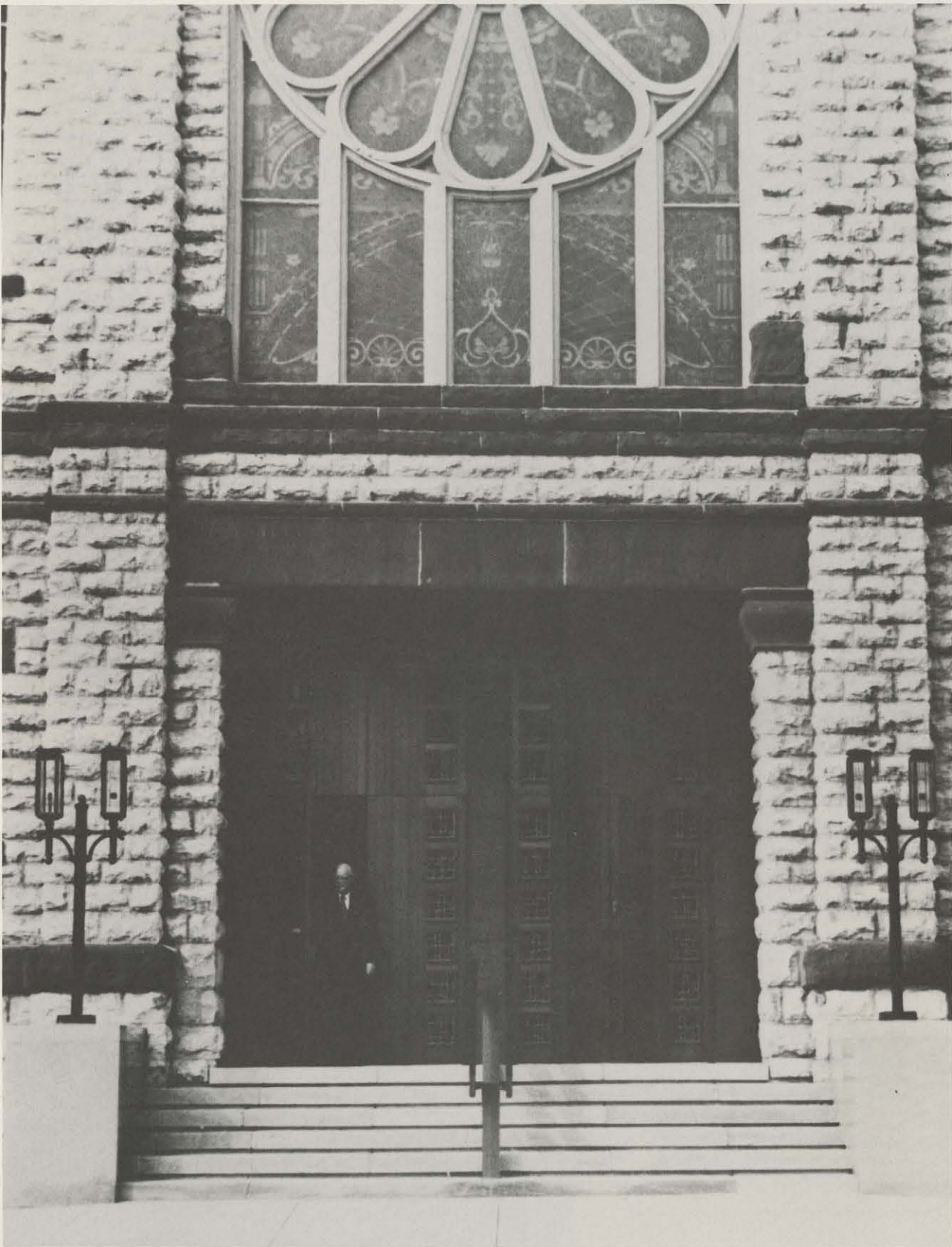
### Church Blends Old and New

Sacred Heart Church in downtown Dayton was rededicated Sunday by Archbishop Paul F. Leibold, marking completion of a \$500,000 remodeling program. Pictured at the ceremonies with the archbishop are the pastor, Father Roger Griesse, at the prelate's left, and the assistant pastor, Father Richard Born. The renovated church is a blend of the traditional and modern. The church, built in the latter part of the last century, retains its huge stained-glass windows, one of which is pictured here. (Text reset from newspaper caption.)

Archbishop Paul F. Leibold was principal concelebrant of the first Mass in the renovated church which was held at 4 p.m., Sunday, March 12th. Concelebrants with him included the pastor Father Roger E. Griesse; Father Richard A. Born, assistant pastor; Father Harry J. Gerdes, assistant at Our Lady of Mercy and a former assistant at Sacred Heart, and priests who are sons of the parish, including Father Charles H. Hollencamp, Father John Fackler of the Diocese of Lansing, and Father Lawrence J. Wack of Cincinnati. The Mass was followed by a dinner in the church undercroft.

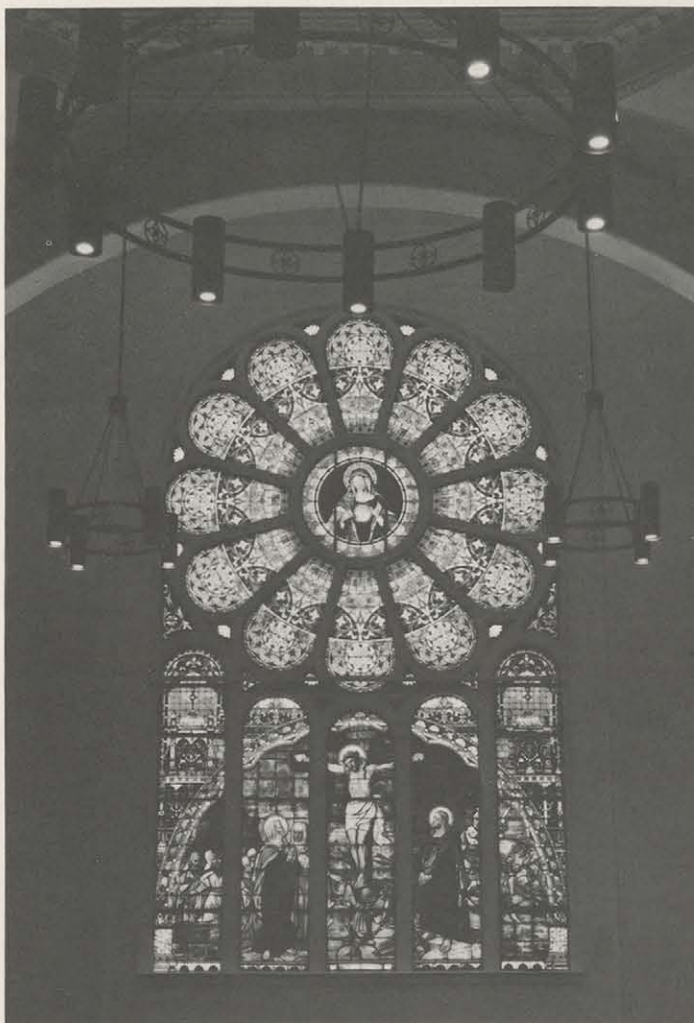
Admission to the Mass and rededication of the church which was blessed by Archbishop Paul F. Leibold was by ticket only. The renovated church is a blend of the traditional and modern. The church which was built in the late 19th century retained its huge stained glass windows.





March 12, 1972





North wall of interior church after renovation. Original stained glass windows, new chandeliers.

*"How lovely is  
your dwelling place,  
O Lord of Hosts"*

*Psalm 83:2*



New sanctuary, following renovation, March, 1972





1979 "Our Howard Goes Home"  
(reprinted from the Parish Bulletin)

"Our dear Howard Weaver, who served Sacred Heart Church for 34 years as chief of maintenance and head janitor, died Monday at 6:20 a.m. Father Morgan received the call and relayed it to me in the sacristy. I was able to change the scheduled Mass intention so that I could offer it for the repose of Howard's soul even before his body grew cold. Thursday evening we had his coffin placed in church, a privilege usually reserved for bishops and priests, and concelebrated Mass for him at 7:30, in addition to the three of us, Monsignor Schroder, former pastor, came up from Cincinnati to join us in the Mass.

Howard was a good dear man, loyal and faithful to God, to his Church, and to the job he had. He refused days off, vacations and raises, always saying that he didn't need it. 'Where would I go? This is my whole life!' He even bought cleaning equipment for Sacred Heart Church out of his own pocket. The only time he came near to being angry was when I pressed him for bills for these things, since the church was responsible. (He could be stubborn about this!)

I spoke with him shortly before he died (and gave him absolution after his act of contrition). He spoke of the Blessed Mother and of St. Therese, the Little Flower. He was not afraid, but, rather, glad to go to God. His faith, his spirit of prayer, his love of the Blessed Sacrament and of our Lady, and his great simplicity and detachment are all qualities all of us should imitate. GOD REST HIM!"



*Jesus have mercy on the soul of*

**HOWARD P. WEAVER**

Born December 8, 1895

Died December 10, 1979

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

Thursday, Dec. 13th, 7:30 PM

Sacred Heart Church

FINAL RESTING PLACE

Calvary Cemetery

ARRANGEMENTS

Hoynes Funeral Homes

O Gentlest Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on the soul of thy departed servant. Be not severe in Thy judgment but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames, and do Thou O merciful Savior send Thy angels to conduct Thy departed servant to a place of refreshment, light and peace— Amen

PIETA by Michelangelo

PICTURED IN ITALY





1980 **M**ore than two hundred people gathered at Sacred Heart Church on June 4, 1980, to attend the funeral Mass of Elias Joseph Barauskas (more commonly known as "Rags"). The Mass which was televised by CBS was concelebrated by Father Roger Griesse, pastor, Father Charles Hollencamp, assistant pastor at Sacred Heart and Father Walter Katarskis, pastor of Holy Cross Church.

Elias was a downtown "street character" who acquired the name "Rags" because he literally dressed in rags and even his feet were covered with overlapping rags. He wandered endlessly day and night throughout the downtown area, rarely begging, just going from place to place. He also spent considerable time in the Public Library reading. One of his favorite newspapers was the Wall Street Journal. He also read Dante's "Inferno" and Milton's "Paradise Lost". He seemed indifferent to his material welfare and reluctantly accepted small amounts of money from those who wished to help him. While he was visiting one of the downtown restaurants, he suffered a heart attack and died at the age of 62.

To say the least, his mere presence and strange behavior evoked adverse sentiments from those who saw him downtown. To some, he brought out sympathy, to others, mere disgust and revulsion; but to still others there was a strange inexplicable aura about him. He was no ordinary bum. He possessed piercing blue eyes and was wont to stare at certain people passing by him. It was as though he was trying to communicate some silent message. He rarely spoke to anybody, except when newpeople forced him to be interviewed. He was well-known to downtown Daytonians because he lived on the streets and no one could overlook his strange attire.

At the beginning of the funeral Mass, Father Griesse said, "The man we bury today was known to the whole community and was unknown to the whole community." The latter remark was prompted by the fact "Rags" died incognito. Nobody knew who he was or where he had come from. It was only a happenstance that unlocked his past. He had no criminal record, but his fingerprints matched those of a man who had been in military service during World War II. That man was Elias Joseph Barauskas.

Father Charles Hollencamp delivered the homily and told the mourners: "He was a man who did not put importance on material things. I believe he was here in Dayton providentially. I believe his very walking the streets had a purpose, whether he believed it or not. He brought us all a message! It was a message that can be interpreted in different ways. Some saw him as a prophet, others as a lunatic, some as just a bum. He was dirty, unkempt and mysterious . . . Over the years, he walked and walked and walked - with rags, dirty rags on his feet . . . his poor weary feet. As the years went by, he came to be known as "Rags". I understand he did not like that name, but it was a name of love, of endearment to those who gave it to him."

Father Hollencamp also stressed that there was a symbolism in Rag's rags. He spoke of the rags of racism, the rags of pornography, the rags of unemployment that oppress so many of us. As regards "Rags" Lithuanian heritage Father Hollencamp remarked: "Since 1940, Lithuania has worn the rags of communist aggression . . ." A choir from Holy Cross Lithuanian Church sang at the Mass.

During the Mass a lone pigeon hovered on the stained glass window of the Sacred Heart above the sanctuary. It entered through an open window, as the service began. It remained strangely still during the whole ceremony, until the moment Father Hollencamp left the sanctuary to come down the steps to "Rags" coffin for the final obsequies. The pigeon immediately flew across the area and went up into the dome over the coffin. When Father Hollencamp completed the rites, the pigeon returned to the Sacred Heart window, as if on cue. Strange behavior for a bird at a solemn ceremony! The fact that it was a mere pigeon and not a dove gives it a closer relation to Rags' lowly estate.

Betty Coleman of Dayton spearheaded a "Rags Memorial Fund" after his death, and arranged for his funeral. Many people contributed to the fund and a considerable number of Masses were said at Sacred Heart for the repose of his soul. Even in death, with his true identity disclosed, "Rags" remains an enigma wrapped in a mystery.

The memory of his ever walking form bedecked in rags still haunts downtown Dayton. Was he a saint? Was he insane? Was he a mere bum? Or was he all three wrapped in one?

**SPECIAL NOTE:** "Rags" funeral and interment at the Dayton National Cemetery, at the Veterans Administration Center, was televised on the Charles W. Kuralt Show, CBS.

Newspaper text was as follows:

*June 4, 1980, Dayton Daily News*

*The man called "Rags," who teased the imagination as he wandered Dayton's streets for the past six years in tattered clothes, was buried today. It was a grand and ceremonious funeral for Elias Joseph Barauskas, who was described by the Rev. Charles Hollencamp as "a trudging, hunched-over question mark, who walked and walked and walked."*

*About 200 persons were on hand at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, 217 W. Fourth St., to bid farewell to the man who collapsed and died May 5 with only a dime on his person. Seventeen days later he was identified as Barauskas, a wanderer from Connecticut.*





In addition to Father Hollencamp, Rev. Roger Griesse of Sacred Heart, and Rev. Walter Katarskis of Holy Cross Church, 1924 Leo St., helped officiate at the funeral Mass.

After prayers and playing of "Taps" at the Dayton National Cemetery, Barauskas, 60, was buried in Section 19, Grave 2257, at the Veterans Administration Center.

An American flag covered the gray flocked velvet casket during the ceremony, and it was later handed to Betty Coleman, a West Dayton woman who planned the ceremony.

Mrs. Coleman, 36, of 1472 Fotip Lane, who begins a new job next week as a paramedic with the Dayton Fire Department, sat solemnly in the front row of the church, next to John Schaefer, 66, the genealogist who helped track down the street character's real identity.

"I talked to him but I never knew him," Mrs. Coleman said shortly before the service. "But I feel this is something that had to be done. He deserves it."

During his homily, Father Hollencamp said, "Perhaps it was his feet that struck us most. Over the years he would walk and walk, around and around, with rags, dirty rags on his feet . . . his weary feet. I understand he did not like the name 'Rags,' but it came to be a name of love, of endearment, and when Daytonians called him Rags, they said it in affection."

The priest said, "He was a man who did not put importance on material things. I believe he was in Dayton providentially. I believe his very walking the streets had a purpose, whether he believed it or not. He brought us all a message."

The highly ceremonial burial Mass was held in the church that Barauskas had more or less adopted as his parish. On Sundays he would often be seen standing in the lobby outside the church.

Father Griesse said Barauskas had often been invited in but until today had been there only once, on last Ash Wednesday.

Father Griesse told the mourners, "On the first day of Lent, Rags came in and he knelt down, and Father Hollencamp put ashes on his forehead. Ashes are the constant reminder of the passing nature of life, the coming of eternal life."

*Caption: Honor Guard escorts coffin to altar of church*

1981 On December 13, 1981, Father Griesse asked for parishioners' help in bringing in old photographs, new items, books, and other records pertaining to the history of Sacred Heart Church, to be used for the composing and printing of a simple centenary booklet. Father announced that the centennial celebration of the founding of our church would be held in July, 1983.

1982 On Sunday, June 6th, 1982, members of Sacred Heart Parish and friends celebrated the Fortieth Anniversary of Father Roger E. Griesse's priesthood. After the 12:15 p.m. Mass, a dinner was held in the Undercroft in his honor. The dinner and reception were a complete surprise.

On Sunday, August 22, 1982, Father Griesse announced that Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin was appointed the new Archbishop of Chicago. Father wrote a letter of congratulations in the name of Sacred Heart Church and promised him our prayerful good wishes in his new and very heavy responsibilities. He responded with a personal note of thanks. (Archbishop Bernardin was installed as Archbishop of Cincinnati, December 19, 1972.)

It was announced on Sunday, September 12, 1982, that the new air-conditioning system was almost completed. Total cost of the project was \$27,194.00. The work was done by the Butler Air Conditioning Company.

Auxiliary Bishop, Daniel E. Pilarczyk was named Archbishop of Cincinnati. He was installed as Archbishop, December 20, 1982 at the St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral in Cincinnati.

Father Griesse announced, December 5, 1982, that a date had been chosen for the celebration of the Centennial of Sacred Heart Church. He had asked Archbishop Pilarczyk to be the principal celebrant and homilist of the Centenary Mass which will be celebrated on July 17th, 1983 at 4:00 p.m. Father also mentioned that Archbishop Pilarczyk is a natural choice since he is our Chief Shepherd and is also an alumnus of Sacred Heart Latin School.

Father also mentioned that after a discussion with the committee last year that all agreed to keep the celebration spiritual, simple and parochial. There would be no mailing lists, or sit-down dinners or speeches or special collections. The celebration is planned to be an act of gratitude to God for the great graces coming from Him through this parish and its people. A modest booklet is in preparation.

1983 *Centenary Celebration*

On July 17, 1983, the Centennial Celebration of Sacred Heart Church was held at the church with the celebration of a Centenary Mass at 4:00 p.m. A reception followed in the church undercroft. Principal concelebrant and homilist was the Most Reverend Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk.





1976 First Ecumenical  
Recognition Service  
honoring Public  
Safety Services  
Personnel: Asst. Fire  
Chief, William G.  
Hockaday, Sheriff,  
Bernard Keiter,  
Chief of Police,  
Grover O'Connor  
and Father Roger E.  
Griese, May 19.



1969 Wedding Mass of  
Robert and Patricia  
Weghorst Oct. 11.  
Father Roger Griese  
officiating.





## Rosary Altar Society



## Father Lawrence Wack Ordination May 21, 1960







## Pastors of Sacred Heart Church

*Father Hugh J. McDevitt*  
*Father Roderick Finnerty*  
*Father William Hickey*  
*Monsignor Charles A. Hickey*  
*Monsignor Martin M. Varley*  
*Monsignor Matthias F. Heyker*  
*Father Leo M. Walsh*  
*Father J. Paul Fogerty*  
*Monsignor Martin T. Gilligan*  
*Monsignor J. Raymond Schroder*  
*Father Roger E. Griesse*

## Sisters Who Have Entered Religious Life From Sacred Heart

*Sisters of Charity*  
*Sister Gertrude Saum*  
*Sister Marie Therese, (Eleanor Weidman)*  
*Sister Imelda Zilinkas*  
*Sister Martin Marie Mischler*  
*Sister Mary Egan*  
*Sister Marie Canice Evans*  
*Sister Elizabeth Davis*  
*Sister Dorothy Ann Reboulet*

*Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur*  
*Sister Rosemary Wack*  
*Sister Mary Damian*

*Carmelite Sisters*  
*Sister Regina Wack*





## Sacred Heart Church Parish Personnel

Pastor: *Father Roger E. Griesse*

Assistant Pastor: *Father Charles Hollencamp*

Associate Pastor: *Father Harry R. Morgan*

Organist: *David Zengel*

Parish Secretary: *Barbara Smith*

Parish Staff: *Mary Jeter*

*Cecilia Clark*

*Rocky Branson*

Phones: Rectory - 461-5450

Undercroft - 461-9249

Address: Church, Fourth & Wilkinson Streets, Dayton, Ohio 45402

Rectory, 217 West Fourth Street

Parish Council: *Thomas Hulse, President*

*Patricia Hulse, Secretary*

*Richard Brannan*

*Ida Fackler*

*R. Raymond Hunt*

*Melba Hunt*

*Marie Kutz*

*Timothy McCrate*

*Earl Volk*

*Melvin Wagner*



*Father Charles Hollencamp, Assistant Pastor*



*Father Harry E. Morgan, Associate Pastor*





## Sources of Information:

*Archives of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*

*Sacred Heart Church Archives*

*Parish Weekly Bulletin*

*The Catholic Telegraph*

*The Dayton Daily News*

*St. Joseph Parish Archives*

*Margaret Gottschlick, Assistant Researcher*

*The History of Dayton, Ohio by Harvey Crew*

*The History of Dayton & Montgomery County by Rev. A.W. Drury*

*The History of Dayton, Ohio, by Charlotte Reeves Conover*



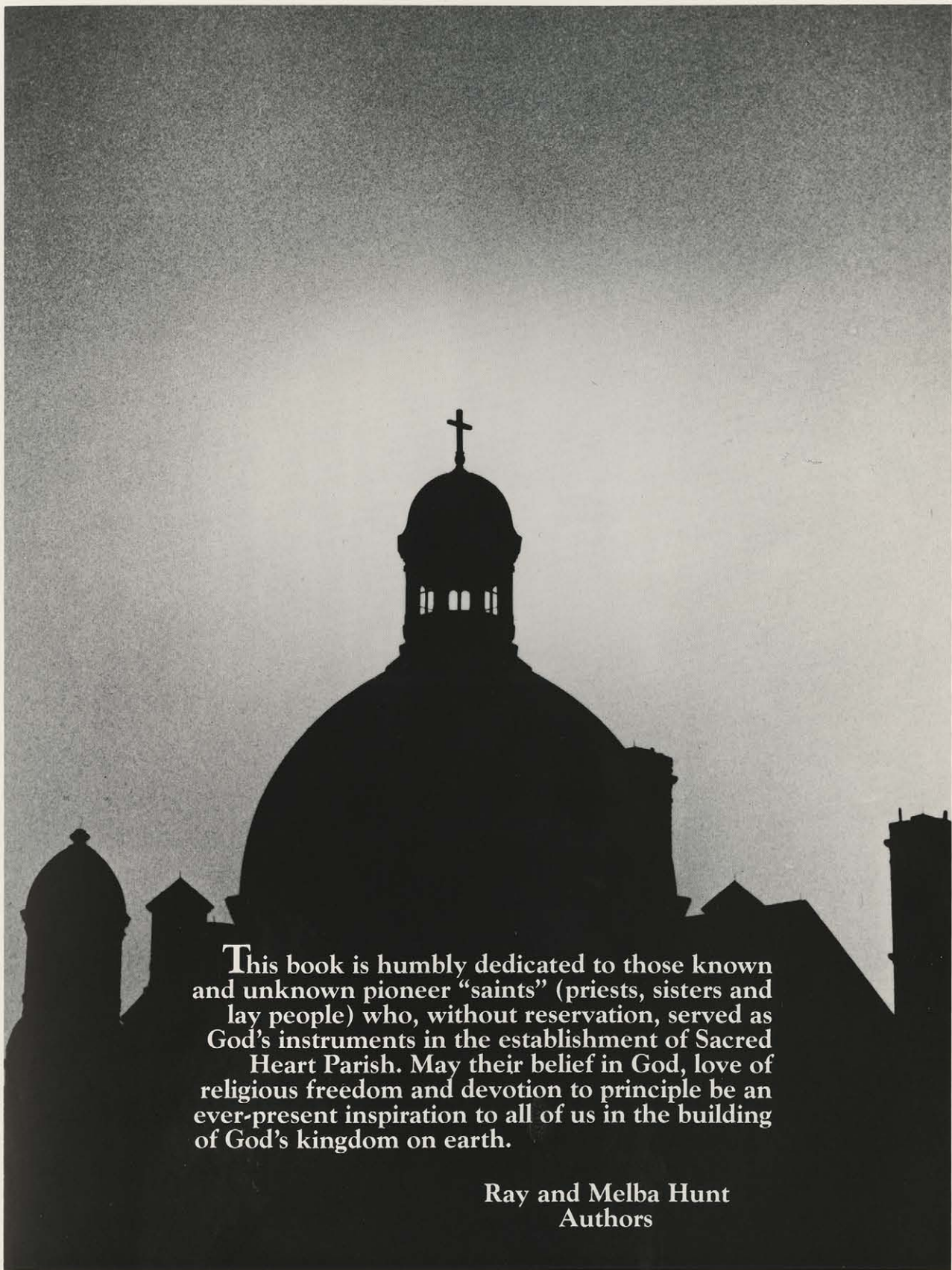
*Pictures copied by Edmund W. Trissell*

*Many other people have offered bits of information  
and pictures for which we are most grateful.*

*We extend our sincere apology for any errors or omissions.*

*Printed by Hammer Graphics Inc.*





This book is humbly dedicated to those known and unknown pioneer "saints" (priests, sisters and lay people) who, without reservation, served as God's instruments in the establishment of Sacred Heart Parish. May their belief in God, love of religious freedom and devotion to principle be an ever-present inspiration to all of us in the building of God's kingdom on earth.

Ray and Melba Hunt  
Authors





UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON LIBRARY  
R701956526

