

HISTORY OF ST. ELIZABETH'S CHURCH, 1842-2002

The first tide of migration, which poured across the Allegheny Mountains, following the establishment of our federal union, naturally followed the course of the principal waterways. These were the highways most accessible and least dangerous. In this first push westward from the Atlantic seaboard, the great cities along the Ohio River- Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville- were founded. Radiating from these centers and overflowing to inland points on smaller streams, the pioneers of America's central west soon began to penetrate and clear their way through the forest primeval in all directions.

Besides the problem of transportation at this time was the still prevailing danger of Indians, which loomed up as a great obstacle to migration into the western or mid-western interior. By the overthrow of Tecumseh's conspiracy in the Battle of Tippecanoe, November 4, 1811, about one hundred miles northwest of Cambridge City, the power of the Indians was broken in this section. This defeat of the forces of the great Indian chieftain, Tecumseh, opened to settlers the rich lands of north and central Indiana. Westward migration was made attractive by the cheapness of this newly opened territory. Until 1820 land could be bought in this locality from the federal government for \$2.00 an acre. After that for some time, the price was further reduced to \$1.25 an acre.

Almost twenty-five years had passed after the Revolutionary War before the first trek into the wilderness of interior Indiana was begun by the pioneer builders of our Hoosier commonwealth. In the 1810's, French fur traders from the north and adventuresome immigrants from Carolina began to people the Whitewater Valley in its eastern and western forks with white men. Coming up the west fork of the Whitewater River, immigrants ever pressing northward along its course, Lawrenceburg, Brookville, Connersville and Cambridge City and areas saw the advance of the pale face into the virgin forest of eastern Indiana. After 1815, when the second war with England was over, the stream of migration from the east to Indiana steadily increased. Thousands of men were ready to go into western lands where they could begin life anew by buying a farm at low cost. The war of 1812 had played havoc with trade and industry in the eastern states and crowds of men had been thrown out of employment. About this time European immigration moved into this new country founded upon the recognition of the rights of human liberty. These immigrants flocked to the United States, drawn by the promise of cheap lands, to escape the religious and political persecutions of European countries and the military oppression following the Napoleonic Wars.

THE CIVIL BEGINNING OF CAMBRIDGE CITY

The history of Cambridge City as an organized community began 166 years ago. The town having been laid out, the plat was recorded on October 26, 1836. Previous to this date, lands around the vicinity of the site of Cambridge City were occupied and settled as early as 1813. The first quarter section in this part of Wayne County occupied by white men was consequently bought four years after "The Twelve Mile Purchase" by the federal government. The first land grants from the federal authorities were in the now historic town of Vandalia, which was laid out in 1824 and located just west of the present Lincoln High School gymnasium. (The T intersection of Vandalia Ave. and E. Delaware St. was the hub of the old town of Vandalia.)

Several years after "The Twelve Mile Purchase", in 1809, found the Indians openly antagonistic to white men settling here among them. This naturally retarded the increase of the white population. Gradually this fear was overcome and the permanency of the little settlement was assured with the projected construction of the "National Road" at federal expense through this section of Indiana. The first contract was let in 1811 to build the road from Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling, West Virginia. The general route through Ohio and Indiana into Illinois was early settled. It was not until about 1828 that definite work was commenced along the sector of the road, which lay through eastern Indiana. This followed the appropriation for the extension of the work passed by Congress in 1828. This opening up of the site (*that is, making a clearing through the woods*) of the first western federal highway soon had its effect on the location of the forming town. The road through here was not completed until 1838. Places of business were opened in what is now East Cambridge as early as 1833, when the stores in old Vandalia began to move to the new business center of the settlement, just east of the present Whitewater Bridge spanning Main Street. It was only a short time, however, after the incorporation of the town in 1836, that business houses rapidly began to be opened on the westside of the Whitewater River. In a very few years numerous additions to the population of the then frontier community were made. The early settlers were no doubt influenced to settle here, among other reasons, by the notion that all settlements should be made close to or in a river valley. While the National Road was being pushed to completion by the General Government, the idea of canal building was already being debated back east. Up to this time in our country's history the thriving centers of population were almost all located on navigable streams. This summary brings us to the most flourishing period of Cambridge City's history. Up to the 1840's, Cambridge City was a struggling village, a primitive frontier town, seeing much of the Indians. At this point, because the history of St. Elizabeth's parish parallels the history of the city, it is proper to sketch out the establishment of Catholicism in Indiana.

THE DAWN OF CATHOLICISM IN INDIANA

The first Catholics in Indiana, as well as the first white men, were French Jesuit priests (The Blackrobes) who came from the old French mission of St. Joseph in Michigan. Indian tradition relates that these missionaries came into the country of the Miami Indians about 1675. Indiana thereafter became the pathway through the continent for French traders, hunters and trappers from Canada to the French Gulf settlements. Four years later, LaSalle followed the path of these first missionaries into upper Indiana.

The next center of Catholicism established in Indiana was Vincennes. It was also founded by the French as a trading post and military station guarding their commercial intercourse between Canada and the Gulf of Mexico. This was in fact the very beginning of settled French civilization in Indiana. Holy Mass was offered at Vincennes for the first time in 1702, according to the Quebec Annals. Three years later the French established a trading post and stockade at Vincennes as well as at the present site of the city of Ft. Wayne. The French Catholic missionaries at Vincennes did not begin complete records until some forty years later. Nevertheless, the year 1702 marks the real beginning of missionary work among the Indian tribes by the Jesuits following in the footsteps of their heroic and saintly predecessors in American, Jesuit missionary annals — Isaac Jogues, John de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lalemant and the rest.

The increase of the white settlers was slow at this period, but by the time of the outbreak of the Revolutionary War quite a little colony of French Catholics had occupied land in and around Vincennes. It was due to this circumstance that George Rogers Clark was successful in his capture of the Northwest Territory from the British, "In the name of the Continental Congress." It is a matter of record that Gen. George Rogers Clark would have had to retreat from Kaskaskia, but the influence and patriotic loyalty to Father Gibault who had prepared his parishioners for Clark's coming, having secured their support to the American cause in the Revolution. It so happened that but for two other Catholic men at this juncture, Clark would not have secured the surrender of the Northwest Territory. Except for the financial assistance of Oliver Pollock, an Irish merchant of New Orleans, Clark could not have marched from Kaskaskia. He furnished the supplies needed to enable Clark to continue his march and to such extent that it left him bankrupt when Virginia failed to pay his debts. Francis Vigo, the Italian merchant and trader deserves a place beside Pollock in American history for he also gave his all to the American cause.

The imperial Union Jack of Great Britain was hauled down at Vincennes. The control of this Northwest Territory changed hands and was delivered by General Hamilton to General George Rogers Clark on the soil of Indiana. This truly historical highlight in our national history took place within the walls of the old Catholic church at Vincennes, a log building located where the old Cathedral now stands, the cradle of liberty in the west, as St. Mary's in Maryland is in the east.

Missionary work in Indiana was of more or less sporadic character until 1834, due partly to the few Catholics living in the state and partly on account of the scarcity of priests. Up to this time the records show that some thirty missionaries had labored among the Indian tribes and visited Indiana's pioneer Catholic settlers, especially, around Vincennes and New Albany. When the diocese of Vincennes, now Indianapolis, was established May 6, 1834, only four priests resided in the state, Fathers Lalumiere, Picot, Badin and Father Ferneding.

EARLY CATHOLIC SETTLERS IN CAMBRIDGE CITY

It was at about this time, while no authentic records of the fact exist, we might well assume that the first Catholic people settled in the newly forming town of Cambridge City. Catholics already numbered among the populations of the neighboring towns of Connersville and Richmond and in 1842 the first reported visit of a Catholic priest to this town was made. We may assume that Catholics were among the number of those who settled in Cambridge City within a comparatively short time after it was incorporated in 1836. These first records are to be found among the parish documents, which are kept at St. Vincent's Church, Shelby County, and refer to the missionary activities of Father Bacquelin.

Up to the year 1828, people living in this vicinity were in contact with the outside world only by trails through the wilderness. The new frontier communities of Richmond and Connersville were the nearest points of civilization. In that year the clearing for the National Road was opened up through Cambridge City, giving this sparsely settled but growing community its first through highway to connect it with the prosperous and populous east. This National Road and the old State Road, one mile south of Cambridge City were the only improved highways in the state until the Whitewater Canal was opened to Cambridge City in October 1845. Only a few miles of any kind of road in any direction, except east and west, in the whole state meant little more than that a regular clearing of trees and stumps had been made.

Since the early 30's canal building was discussed and interest had increased throughout eastern Indiana. After several years' discussion, the state legislature of Indiana in 1841 granted a charter to the Whitewater Valley Canal Company to construct an extension of the canal, already begun further south in 1836, to a point as far north as Cambridge City.

On the 28th of July 1842, ground was broken at Cambridge City for what was up to then the greatest event in the history of this community. On that occasion an immense demonstration was held here and the largest crowd assembled for the groundbreaking ceremony, which had ever gathered within the limits of Wayne County. It is recorded that 10,000 or 12,000 people were here for the event. In the great gathering were people from points as far distant as fifty miles. The trip required half a week for some who came from counties such as Blackford and Wells, though but fifty or sixty miles north. Letters of congratulations and God-speed from several congressmen were read at the banquet, which concluded the history making events of that day. Among them

was a message from the statesman, Henry Clay. Three years later, in October 1845, the Whitewater Canal connecting Cambridge City with the Ohio River was completed. Cambridge City continued to be a construction center for canal builders and engineers until 1847 when the northward extension of the canal was finished at Hagerstown.

It was during this canal building period from 1841-47 that numerous Catholic men and their families, mostly Irish immigrants, following this public improvement as laborers, lived in shanties along the line of its construction. This was the first coming of Catholics in any considerable numbers to this community, which was then outgrowing its crude frontier days as a backwoods hamlet. This was the period of the first real growth or boom in Cambridge City.

THE FIRST PRIEST IN CAMBRIDGE CITY

So far as authentic records can be found, the first Catholic priest to conduct services in Cambridge City was Father Vincent Bacquelin, sometime during 1842. He had been stationed at St. Vincent's Church, a few miles below Shelbyville, Indiana, since 1837. This same Father Bacquelin was the first Catholic priest to offer Holy Mass in most of the parishes of the central section of Indiana, which date their origin back to the 1840's.

Among the oldest records on file at St. Vincent's Church near Shelbyville, Indiana, is found the account of three separate visits made by Father Bacquelin to the vicinity of Cambridge City in 1845. In his own handwriting it is found that on June 29, 1845, he was in Richmond. Again at the end of August in that year he was back in this neighborhood and the entry is made of the baptism, in Milton, on August 29, of Mary, the daughter of John and Margaret O'Brien, born July 24, 1845; the sponsors were John O'Neal and Mary Murphy. Evidently word of his coming was spread and another child was brought for baptism two days later. A baptism in Abington, a few miles south of Richmond, is recorded for September 2, 1845.

Then follows the earliest record of Catholicism in Cambridge City. This concerns the baptism, on November 28, 1845, in Cambridge City, of George Kimble, the son of Stephen and Elizabeth Kimble, born October 23, 1845; the sponsors were Wildelmus and Catharine Kelly.

With the coming of this missionary from a point some forty miles distant, began ten years of intermittent visits to the Cambridge City Catholics, holding services in private homes. The wide sweep of territory this early apostle of Catholicism in Indiana cared for made it impossible for him to come here more often than every two or three months. Besides Cambridge City, he visited Richmond, Indianapolis, Columbus and several other places where small groups of Catholic people had settled. A former pastor of our St. Elizabeth's Church — later Bishop Herman Alerding of Ft. Wayne, published a history of the diocese of Indianapolis in 1883, in which an interesting description of Cambridge City's first Catholic priest is given as follows:

"He was obliged to ride on horseback across streams and over roads often almost, and at times quite, impassable. He suffered fearfully at times between the termini of his route and in his visiting Catholics remote there from, in their illness. He seldom ate a morsel on his dreary trips, as he could not eat cold food, and as many of the curious, inquisitive and superstitious people along the routes regarded him with awe, having been taught that a priest was a kind of non-descript to be shunned, often expressing their surprise on failing to discover his fabulous horns. He would tell of the anxiety and suspense sometimes excited by his purposely wearing his hat in the house as if to conceal these appendages. They would ask him the most singular and impertinent questions, always manifesting a lively interest in his "family" affairs. To questions as to the residence of his wife he would reply that he carried her with him — in his saddlebags, which contained his priestly vestments, altar vessels, mass-books, breviary, etc.

"His diffidence often subjected him to needless privation when abroad, and except for the members of his own faith, who were few and far between, and generally poor, he was seldom the recipient of cordial hospitality, for the reasons mentioned. He frequently reached his home at Mr. Barrett's, in midwinter, at late hours, wet, cold, hungry and weary, his little sorrel mare covered with frozen mud, but he was never known to murmur or complain. On the contrary, he was at all times, gay and joyous, producing mirth and happiness in the family (Barrett's) who were fervidly attached to him and whose pleasure it was to anticipate and minister to his few and simple wants. Pettishness he seldom exhibited — ill temper or anger never."

Returning from a sick call, on September 2, 1846, he was killed in a wood near Shelbyville, Indiana. Thanks to J. L. Heinemann's researches in the Catholic history of this section of Indiana, the following account of the death of Cambridge City's earliest priest can be given. It was originally printed in the 1901-Year Book of St. Vincent's Church, the Shelby County parish in which Father Bacquelin was pastor at the time of his death.

The compiler of these historical notes, the account runs, called on Mr. John Hirshauer, Sr., residing now with his son on the pike near the county farm of Shelby County and on being questioned on the subject the following was elicited in detail:

"We were at Mass, Sunday, September 1, 1846, and after Mass, Father Bacquelin motioned to me and asked me where my father was, as he had not seen him at Mass, and I told him that father was sick. I will go and see him this evening, he said, as I have to call on the family of John Winter, whom he had recently buried and who lived some thirty rods from the Hirshauer homestead. Father Bacquelin came after Mass on horseback, took dinner with us, and on leaving, my father remarked that the priest's horse was skittish and that the stirrups were coupled too long, whereupon the priest said, that is all right. The Father called on the Winters' about four o'clock and left there are about 4:30 o'clock, taking a path through the woods that lay about eighty rods away, whilst we returned home. About half an hour after this the fourteen-year-old daughter of Mr. Downey came running to the Winters' and told them that there was a man lying in the woods hurt. They sent us (Hirshauer) word at once, and on entering the bridle path about forty yards we found the priest lying against a beach tree and he was bleeding from nose and ears and was unconscious. His head was bruised, and his horse was nowhere to be seen. We heard afterwards that the horse was caught at Cynthiana by Mike Bye and

Henry Kaehl. We carried the priest to our house, he moaned and repeated, 'My God, I come to You.' We sent to Dr. Houser, who lived one and a half miles from Manilla. When the doctor came he examined the hurt man and said, 'The man will die.' He thereupon bled him whilst we stood around the bed, which had been pushed to the middle of the floor. We sent word to Thomas Worland, who arrived at midnight. About that time the priest came to and asked for a priest. On being questioned as to how the accident occurred, he said that he had got into yellow jackets who attacked him and his horse, causing the horse to bolt and hurl him against the tree. He lapsed into unconsciousness from which he never came to, his death occurring about 3:00 o'clock in the morning. We secured a coffin at Manilla for \$10.00 and after dressing the dead priest in his priestly clothes, we started for St. Vincent's, placed the body in the church, where the people kept watch all night. Rev. Rudolph arrived at 7:00 a.m., after having ridden horseback from Oldenburg during the night. At 9:00 o'clock Father Rudolph said the Requiem Mass and preached the sermon, tears often times stopping him in his discourse.'

The grave of this man of God, who according to tradition first dispensed the sacred mysteries of Christ's religion in this community, is located in the cemetery adjoining St. Vincent's Church, Shelby County, Indiana. His tombstone bears the following inscription:

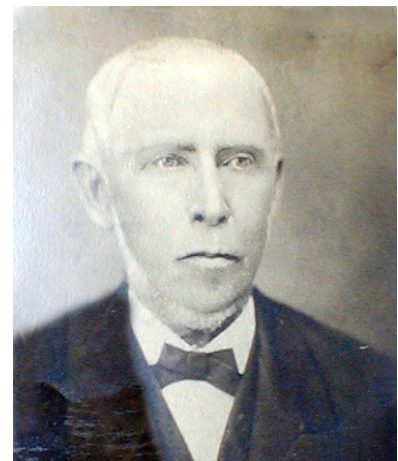
REV. VINCENT BACQUELIN
Born at
Clermont Ferrard in France
Dec. 1, 1811 - Died Sept. 2, 1846
Having spent 9 Years and 1 Month as Priest
in this parish
Consummatus in brevi
Explevit tempora multa. — Wisdom 4:13

Father Bacquelin visited Cambridge City for two years until he was replaced by the Rev. Michael O'Rourke. He resided in St. Paul's, Dover, in Dearborn County. He cared for the spiritual needs of the Catholics here for two years, making visits a few times a year. His duties in this diocese ended in 1846, when he returned to Ireland, his health being affected by the constant exposure and fatigue resulting from his missionary work.

The Rev. John Ryan, first resident pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Richmond, next took charge of the little flock. He was busily engaged in building the first St. Andrew's Church. This undertaking, no doubt, consumed his time and allowed him little opportunity to visit the scattered groups of Catholics here, in the neighboring towns, and along the right-of-way of the canal, being extended north of Cambridge City to Hagerstown at this time. No account of any action for the furtherance of his religious interests here is obtainable with the exception of the baptismal and marriage records of St. Andrew's. Father Ryan was moved from Richmond in July 1848, and labored in several parishes of this diocese until his death in 1894. His visits here were comparatively frequent and while no exact knowledge of their frequency is at hand, he may be considered the first regular pastor in charge of the Catholics of Cambridge City. Father Ryan's appointment as the first resident pastor in Richmond marked a decided step forward, indicating the growth of the Catholic body in Richmond and the territory surrounding it. It made possible more frequent pastoral visits here and consequently an increase of interest and participation in religious practices.

CAMBRIDGE CITY - THE HUB OF EASTERN INDIANA

With the opening of the Whitewater Canal in the fall of 1845, Cambridge City assumed an importance of unequaled commercial supremacy in this territory of the western frontier. By 1850 its population was 1,217. It was then located at the headwaters of the new canal and being so situated her commercial leaders commanded the transportation situation as far as handling of water borne traffic was concerned. In the territory between the canal, tied up with the thriving Ohio River, business centered at Cincinnati on the south and the Great Lakes to the north. It was the principal shipping and traffic point for all central and northern Indiana. For Chicago merchants had their freight hauled from the east down the Ohio to Cincinnati and thence via the canal to Cambridge City. The same held true for shipments and general traffic from Mississippi. Manufacturers of all kinds were fast being established and the little city grew by leaps and bounds. This was largely due to its unrivaled location situated at the junction of the National Old Trails Road, the canal and the railroad projected to connect the capital at Indianapolis with eastern Indiana. The Pan Handle Railroad was completed in 1853 and formed a link in the Pennsylvania main line operating between New York and St. Louis.



Rev. John Ryan

Since that time motor trucking and air transportation has virtually taken over the bulk of traffic and the railroads are fading from the scene.

Prior to the Civil War, the railroad first began to connect the state capital with Madison, an Ohio river port, and then eastward to Cambridge City. The Pan Handle was built to connect with the Whitewater Canal traffic to Cincinnati. This same line eastward from Indianapolis extending to Richmond connected with the railroad line just being built from Richmond south to the Ohio River at Cincinnati. All transportation schemes gravitated to the

most thriving and practical means of long distance transportation, namely the rivers and waterways. This explains how Cambridge City was in the center of Indiana's inland settlements shortly before the Civil War. Indiana increased in population during the 1821 -1837 period from 170,000 to 600,000.

These conditions naturally effected a rapid influx of the immigrants who began streaming into the United States from Catholic European countries during the 1850's. By the time of the War Between the States, Cambridge City had a population of about 1,800.

ST. ELIZABETH'S FIRST CHURCH

The Rev. William Doyle succeeded Father Ryan in the pastorate of St. Andrew's parish, Richmond, in 1848. This appointment carried with it the growing mission parish at Cambridge City. The new Richmond pastor's spiritual duties extended to the Connersville mission and all the other scattered towns in this vicinity. Father Doyle was an energetic type of man, active and robust mentally and physically. He was a priest of pioneer spirit, indefatigable and resourceful in his numerous undertakings.

Up to this time no property was held in the name of the Catholic Church here. Divine services continued to be held in the homes of the parishioners. The time had now come for the Catholics of Cambridge City to acquire more suitable accommodations for divine services. How many families made up the parish at this time is unknown.

No legal records of the Church's original purchase exists in the county court house because many documents and record books were destroyed during the "war" that prevailed between the towns of Centerville and Richmond when the county seat was removed to the latter place from Centerville in 1873. The parish archives have on file a document signed by John S. Newman, President of the old Indiana Central Railroad. On July 17, 1852, the pastor, Father Doyle, bought a lot immediately south of the elevated tracks of the Pennsylvania railroad and touching South Green Street as its eastern boundary. This was the first real estate owned by the Catholic Church in Cambridge City. (Note: The tracks were elevated about 1910. Also the location of the first church in relation to 2002 would be just south of the former Miller Dairy Corporation.)

The following is the deed description for this real estate:

THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH, That the INDIANA CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY, of the State of Indiana, in consideration of the sum of two hundred dollars to said Company in hand paid by The Right Reverend Maurice de St. Palais, Roman Catholic Bishop of Vincennes, of the County of Knox, State of Indiana, has bargained and sold, and by these presents does grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said Maurice de St. Palais and his heirs and assigns forever the following Real Estate situate in the County of Wayne and State of Indiana and described as follows, to-wit: All that lot or tract of land situate at the west end of Cambridge City and South of the National Road, beginning at a stone planted in the ground, marked with the letters N.E., which is made to represent the North East corner of said lot of land, thence west two chains and sixty-one links to a stake, thence south four chains and forty links to a stake;

thence east two chains and sixty-one links to a stone planted in the ground, thence north four chains and forty links to the place of beginning, containing one acre and fourteen hundredths, more or less, being a part of the northwest quarter of Section twenty-seven, township sixteen north, range twelve east. Reserving to said Railway Company the right-of-way on the south part of said lot so far as may be necessary for the construction and maintenance of said Railway as now located.

Together with all the privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging. TO HAVE AND TO HOLD THE SAME to the said Maurice de St. Palais and to his heirs and assigns forever and the said INDIANA CENTRAL RAILWAY COMPANY hereby covenants and agrees to and with the said Maurice de St. Palais, his heirs and executors, administrators and assigns, that it is the true and lawful owner of said premises, and has good right to sell and convey the same in manner aforesaid, AND FURTHER, that it will forever warrant and defend the same unto the said Maurice de St. Palais and to his heirs and assigns against the legal claims of all persons whatsoever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the Said Company have caused this Indenture to be signed by the President, attested by the Secretary and sealed with the seal thereof, this 17th day of July, AD. 1852.

Attest:

JOHN S. NEWMAN, President.

JOHN M. COMMONS, Secretary.

State of Indiana, Wayne County, ss:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared John S. Newman, the President of the Indiana Central Railway Company, and for and on behalf of said Company acknowledged the signing and sealing of the foregoing deed as his voluntary act and deed for the use and purposes therein expressed.

Witness my hand and Notarial Seal this 17th day of July, A. D. 1852.

JOHN M. COMMONS, Notary Public

Father Doyle converted the little, one story, frame dwelling standing on this property, and facing South Green Street, into a church, which measured sixteen by thirty feet.

The first church building is no longer standing. It was used as a parish hall for some years after the school was closed and eventually sold to a Mr. Stobaugh, who moved the structure to its present location on the north



Rev. William Doyle

side of Fourth Street, east of Foote Street. The building in 1930 was owned by an old parishioner of St. Elizabeth's, Mrs. Mary McGriff. Although tradition is the only source of information, it is reasonably certain that Father Doyle conferred the patronal name of St. Elizabeth of Hungary on the new parish when this first church was dedicated to the worship of God.

Father Doyle was born near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, August 31, 1820. In 1842 he entered the diocesan seminary at Vincennes. His education for the priesthood was pursued there and December 18, 1847, he was ordained to the priesthood in the Old Cathedral at Vincennes by Bishop Bazin, being one of the two priests ordained by the bishop during his short episcopate in this diocese. His visits to St. Elizabeth's were ended in August 1853, when he was transferred to Terre Haute. For thirty-six years this priest served the diocese in numerous appointments and finally died at the old St. Vincent's Infirmary, Indianapolis, August 7, 1883. He is buried in Holy Cross cemetery, Indianapolis, Indiana.

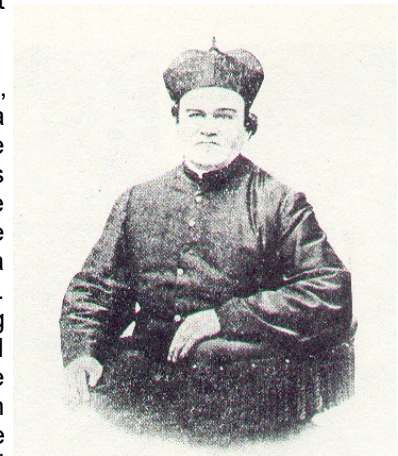
REORGANIZATION OF THE MISSIONS

By this time St. Andrew's in Richmond had largely increased in numbers and necessitated the undivided attention of its resident pastor. The bishop of the diocese at Vincennes, Bishop St. Palais, decided then to appoint a resident pastor to the Connersville parish and to divide the numerous mission churches, heretofore cared for by the Richmond pastors, with the new Connersville pastor. At that time only about thirty-five priests were in the diocese which numbered about 30,000 souls. The diocese then embraced the whole state of Indiana. The Rev. John B. Merle was appointed to the Richmond parish; the Rev. Henry Peters to Connersville as the first resident pastor in that city.

Some idea of the vast energy needed by the early priests of this diocese to care for the far-flung groups of Catholic people may be gleaned from the following notation found on a fly leaf of the Baptismal Register of St. Andrew's Church, Richmond. It is in the handwriting of Father Merle and states:

"It having pleased the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Vincennes to send instead of one, two priests to this region near the state of Ohio, namely me, the undersigned, and Rev., Henry Peters, so that I should reside at Richmond and he in Connersville, we were to divide the smaller missions as it pleased us. The Rev. William Doyle formerly attended besides Richmond, where he resided, Abington, Connersville, Liberty, Laurel City (rarely), Cambridge City, Hagerstown, and numerous public works at Pennhook (now Pennville), Hagerstown, Cambridge City, New Castle, Washington, and Brownsville, sometimes also Winchester. Now the missions are rearranged, so that to this parish belong the City of Richmond, where Mass is sung on all Sundays; the Town of Centerville where Mass is said every four weeks; the Town of Abington, where Mass is said every four weeks. Also Hagerstown and some scattered settlers and Catholic laborers on the canal. New Castle is visited by me as well as Winchester. There is no longer any one at Washington nor at Pennhook. — J.B. Merle, Pastor."

Reverend Henry Gebhardt Peters was born February 22, 1827, at Hagen, diocese of Osnabruck, Hanover, Germany. The family immigrated to America when Henry was seven years old. After arriving in this country the family came west and lived in Cincinnati. Through some misunderstanding the family was compelled to pay for their voyage across the Atlantic twice; this left the immigrants practically penniless. It became necessary then in a very short time for Henry, the oldest son, to find employment. For three years he worked in a printing shop. After the family moved to Vincennes he worked at rope making. When about twelve years old he was sent to a Sisters' school. The following year he was admitted to the college at Vincennes taught by Fathers' Bellier and Chasse. His further studies preparatory to his ordination to the priesthood were pursued under Father Dupontavice in the Vincennes Seminary. His ordination took place in the Old Cathedral, Vincennes, May 11, 1851. At the same time Father Merle, already referred to, was ordained. The Peters family had meanwhile moved to Madison where, in St. Michael's church, the newly ordained priest offered his first Holy Mass. At once his ministry was begun as an assistant to Father Contin in the river counties of Spencer, Perry, and Dubois, in southwestern Indiana. He became the first resident pastor at Fulda, in Spencer County.



Rev. Henry Peters

When Father Peters was appointed first resident pastor of Connersville he was twenty-seven years of age. While his pastorate at Connersville was to continue for twenty-one years, from 1853 to 1874, when his untimely death occurred, yet his supervision of parish affairs here lasted for only about half that period. The new missionary's field of labor was carved out of the wide area formerly cared for by the Richmond pastors. It encompassed a section twenty-six miles north to south, from Cambridge City to Laurel, and thirty-five miles east to west with Liberty and Rushville as the additional missions under his care. Within this big parish were to be found groups of isolated Catholic families. The ungraded and primitive condition of most of the roads, through the woods of Union, Franklin, Rush and Wayne Counties as well as the slow horse-drawn means of travel allow us to appreciate the extent of Father Peters' apostolic zeal when the amount of work he accomplished is reviewed. Naturally, most of his trips to the four outlying missions, each approximately a dozen miles from his

home station, were on horseback. It is reasonable to assume that regularly in his saddle bag were to be found the articles for administering the sacraments to the sick and dying as well as the vestments and other needs for offering Holy Mass. We are told that he commonly used a Mexican saddle. It is described as having a large cow horn in front and a high back. This form of saddle was very convenient for it could be opened out and even when resting on the horse's back its contents could be adjusted or articles could be removed without unstrapping the entire saddle from the horse.

In the wide circuit of Father Peters' pastoral duties radiating from Connersville, road conditions made the Cambridge City church the most accessible. For some fifteen years, communication up and down the Whitewater Valley had been going forward. After the opening of the canal to Cambridge City, the towpath and highway paralleling it saw ever increasing traffic on fairly well maintained roadbeds. The comparatively better traveling conditions leading to Cambridge City made it possible to make that trip in a vehicle instead of riding horseback. Conditions were such, however, that even on this route vehicular travel was often difficult. An incident is related about an attempt to drive to Cambridge City in a buggy. While on this trip Father Peters was halted by high water at Lick Run Creek, about five miles south of Cambridge City. It was necessary on that occasion to place the vehicle in the safe-keeping of some Catholic laborers who happened to be close by, and riding his mount without harness, except the bridle, so to continue his trip to Cambridge City.

The proximity of Cambridge City to Richmond where Father Peters' classmate was pastor naturally was an inducement to frequently visit that town, as well as the necessity of receiving the sacrament of Penance from time to time. Some semblance of parish life was now begun, when for the first time it was possible for the priest in charge to make frequent and regular visits. Father Peters was here on Sunday each month for Holy Mass and whatever spiritual needs the parishioners required. Very few if any of the faithful then were distributed around on the farms of the vicinity; nearly all lived in town.

That Father Peters was an active and persevering character, burning with zeal for God's glory and the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men is ably vouched for by the baptismal and marriage records he has left behind him, apart from the material progress developed in his various religious centers. The register of Baptisms still in existence at St. Gabriel's Church, Connersville, shows in his handwriting that from August 21, 1853, when he began the records of that parish, until the end of that year, that he had baptized 55. The Herculean efforts that he put forth in his widespread mission field show 155 baptisms in 1854; 110 for the year 1855; with slight fluctuations in the number each year up to 1862 when 144 baptisms were entered. In the ten years he was in charge of the mission here, a total of 1,284 were baptized by his hand at all his missions. It is to be regretted that no notation is given in the baptismal entries showing in which mission the various persons baptized lived. As a result it is well nigh impossible to determine which of the entries were Cambridge City baptisms or the exact number of them. The entries are practically all Irish, with a sprinkling of German members who were to be found amongst the best people of the parish.

The material cares facing Father Peters when he entered upon his duties at Connersville were many. Father Doyle had secured the first church property here but now it was necessary to immediately secure more real estate as the church property already owned did not have wide enough yard room surrounding it to allow for future expansion. Father Peters assumed the responsibility for the purchase of two lots without delay. The records in the Wayne County Recorder's Office show that a warranty deed was delivered to a John Ryan (probably Father Peters' purchasing agent) dated May 17, 1854, for the sum of \$385.00. This deal was for lots Nos. 1 and 2, block 17, and was recorded November 22, 1854, Book 19, page 189, W. R. S. R. Indenture for this transaction was made April 20, 1854. Standing on this newly acquired property was a small frame house, which was used as a school for two years. This house later was used as the pastor's residence until the year 1881, when the present rectory was completed and occupied. During Father Peters first summer in charge here he had an addition built to the rear of the little house which had been serving as a church. When the addition was finished the first church measured about 16x40 feet. During the incumbency of Father Peters the situation of the church property remained without further change.

Father Peters was aided in his strenuous efforts put forth for his numerous missions by a strength of character and a knack for leadership made irresistible by a winning calmness, earnestness and singleness of purpose. His early death, being only 47 years old when he died, can be accounted for by the tireless manner he carried on his work during the years of his ministry in this locality.

By the year 1863 the increasing demands put upon Father Peters at home in Connersville and in all of his constantly growing missions demanded that some portion of his work be placed in other hands. Liberty, Rushville, Cambridge City, Laurel, and small groups at other intervening points had been regularly attended by him.

For several months, probably from September, 1863, to May, 1864, our parish was attached as a mission at St. Mary's Church, Richmond. The Rev. J. M. Villars was St. Mary's pastor then. Father Villars at once commenced to erect a new brick church. No doubt it was already planned by the energetic Father Peters. By spring of 1864 the foundation for the new church had been put in. At this point St. Elizabeth's received another change of pastors. However, before commencing the narrative of that episode it may be well to allude to the life and supposed supernatural manifestations centering on this same Father Villars after his death. He, like many of the early priests of this diocese, was a native of Brittany in France. His birthplace was the town of Chavanay, Department of Loire. At the time of his death, March 5, 1868, he was fifty years of age. His death in Richmond was surrounded by tragic and mysterious circumstances. In recent years reports have been rife that several persons were benefited materially and spiritually by prayers and good works offered to God through his

intercession. As a result, his grave in Holy Cross Cemetery, Indianapolis, has been a mecca for numbers seeking his supernatural assistance in their sufferings and difficulties. In how far these reports are authentic remains for further corroboration to verify.

During the pastorate of Father Peters, a new parishioner moved to Cambridge City who was to be of great service to the newly forming parish. Frank K. Ebert came to the United States from his birthplace in Hessacassel, Province of Hesse, Germany, in 1853. When he reached this country he was twenty-six years of age. Being a linen weaver by trade he first went to Baltimore, Md., where the linen industry was established, but not finding employment there in the linen shops he came out west to Cincinnati. After working there in a cooperage shop for about a year he came, in the spring of 1855, with a group of friends, to work in the Kettner Cooperage shop, then in existence in Vandalia on the outskirts of Cambridge City. In December 1859, Mr. Ebert in partnership with an Andrew Drischel, opened a grocery and store room later occupied by Reeservice Electric Shop. In about a half a year he sold his share of the business to Mr. Drischel and went into the grocery business for himself in the same place. The Ebert & Drischel Grocery was in the same location as Hickman's Jewelry back in 1980. Mr. Ebert was a staunch supporter of his faith and engaged actively in all parish activities. His home was frequently the stopping place for various priests in the early days. He lived here until his death in 1911.

Mr. Ebert had not been living here but a short time when a former schoolmate in Germany arrived in this country who was to be his wife and a leading member of St. Elizabeth's. Flora Halbieb, later Mrs. Frank Ebert, was born in Ebertsburg, Bavaria, May 31, 1826. When twenty-eight years old she came to America and after living with a sister in Baltimore, Md., for several months, came to Cincinnati. She was met there by Frank Ebert and they were married in St. Joseph's Church in that city September 9, 1855. In all probability their journey to Cambridge City was by way of the then new means of travel up the Whitewater Canal through Brookville and Connersville. We may well imagine the happy scene upon their arrival at the wharf in Cambridge City.

Mrs. Ebert was a distinctly unusual character, energetic, sincere, friendly — foursquare to all the world — a hard worker. She was a familiar figure in her husband's grocery store and took a large part of the responsibility for its management as well as the raising of their four children. Her membership in St. Elizabeth's parish was anything but nominal; she toed the mark and expressly expected those who were of her household or circle to resort to no half measures in living as Christians as well as doing for her Faith and her parish. She preceded her husband in death, passing away November 11, 1890. Both Mrs. Ebert and her husband are buried in honored graves in the local Riverside Cemetery.



Rev. J. M. Villars

THE FIRST RESIDENT PASTOR

Beginning with the appointment of the Rev. Joseph O'Reilly, our parish has continuously had a resident pastor. Father O'Reilly began his work here in May, 1864. He was a native of Ireland and had been a priest but a few years when entering upon his duties in this parish. The parish at the time of the coming of the first resident pastor numbered about seventy-five families living mostly in the town proper. As the baptismal entries indicate several missions were attended by the new Cambridge City pastor. The baptismal and marriage records extant in the parish archives were begun by Father O'Reilly. On the first page of the baptismal register written in Father O'Reilly's hand we find the following inscription: "Baptismal Register of St. Elizabeth's Church, Cambridge City, Indiana, containing entries made in Cambridge, Knightstown, Greenfield, Lewisville, and all points on the Central Railroad (Pennsylvania, Penn Central) between Indianapolis and Cambridge City; after September, 1867, contains, also, the children born in New Castle and Hagerstown, Middletown and vicinity. — J. O'Reilly, Pastor."

The first baptismal entry on this register is dated May 22, 1864, when Charles, born April 5, 1864, the son of Luke Kuhn and his wife, Brisea Sheible, was baptized. The sponsors were Englebert Sheible and Gertrude Seeburger. The first marriage record bears the date May 11, 1864, when Patrick Dagnan and Mary Broderick contracted matrimony in the presence of Patrick Sullivan and Teresia Garrity as witnesses.

The flourishing condition of the parish at this time is best shown by the comparatively large number of baptisms. In 1864, (May to December) there were 33 baptisms; in 1865 there is recorded 31; 1866, thirty-two; 1867, twenty-nine; 1868, fifty-one; 1869, forty-two. These were the baptisms at the home parish in Cambridge City apart from many at the various mission churches attended and show that at this time St. Elizabeth's was one of the leading parishes in point of numbers in the entire diocese of Vincennes.

In May 1864, the foundation for the new brick church was in, having been laid under Father Villars' direction. The first frame church had been moved back



Rev. Joseph O'Reilly

and faced east to Green Street. The frame rectory still remained just west of the site for the new church. The nation was then in the throes of the Civil War and due to the unrest and advanced cost of building no further steps were taken towards the actual building of the new church until the year following the cessation of hostilities in the South. Even then, of course, labor and building materials were costly but the pastor and his parishioners bravely went ahead with the undertaking and as far as can be ascertained the first brick church was dedicated in 1866 by Bishop de St. Palais, who came from Vincennes for this auspicious event. Father Bede O'Connor, O.S.B., at this time pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Terre Haute, accompanied the Rt. Rev. Bishop from Terre Haute. Very little is certain about further details of the event. However, in the course of the next few years, as we learn from the files of the Cambridge City papers, considerable work was done on the church building, showing the church was far from finished when the dedication took place.

Alongside of the many large brick structures then springing up in Cambridge City, the first brick church stood as a monument to the unselfishness and piety of the hard pressed members of the parish. The Catholic people then were mostly immigrant stock possessed of little of this world's goods and further hampered by the high costs and disturbance resulting from the Civil War. The conditions may be exemplified by the experience of one of the men in Cambridge City at that time that had been drafted into the federal army. That meant to shoulder arms or pay the sum of \$700 to the federal authorities. He chose the latter and after borrowing the sum of money, large indeed, in those days, he was years paying it out.

The new church building was, we are told, about the same size as the present church and had a small cupola over the roof just above the front entrance where the church bell hung. The roof was wood-shingled. The windows were plain window glass. The seats were of a conventional pew type. The inside walls and ceiling were plastered but never painted. A small vestibule was entered from the front door and a large altar stood in the middle of the sanctuary, and later, in Father Alerding's time, a St. Joseph's altar was installed.

No records are in existence about the struggles the little parish passed through in financing their new church home. In addition to whatever amount the parishioners surely subscribed, a note in the sum of \$900 was issued December 3, 1866, bearing 10 per cent interest and held as a mortgage on the church property by one of the parishioners, Frank K. Ebert. A note to the amount of \$1,130.00 bearing 6 per cent interest was issued to the Orphan Asylum of the Diocese of Vincennes, January 20, 1868, and was held as a mortgage on the new church. In the weekly paper published in Cambridge City during that time various small news items tell about fairs and dances and public lectures held to raise funds for the cancellation of the church debt.

About 1865 Father O'Reilly opened a parish school in the small frame church in use since Father Doyle's purchase of it. It now stood back of Green Street and faced Green Street. During the following three or four years the school was continued in this building. This one room parish school was taught by a Miss Mary Flanagan. Some thirty or forty boys and girls attended. After Miss Flanagan had been in charge of the school for about three years, Father O'Reilly decided to change the teacher and placed his brother-in-law, a Mr. Allhands, in the position of teacher. Mr. Allhands was not a member of the parish and so far as is known belonged to no church. As might be expected this created dissension. Just at this time, too, a commodious brick public school building was being built — Central School building on East Main Street. In view of these facts, it was not long until the parish school was discontinued, following Father O'Reilly's appointment to another parish, August 29, 1869. Father O'Reilly died at Beatty, Pa., in 1890.

The last entry in the parish records made by Father O'Reilly recorded a Baptism administered August 29, 1869. The next baptismal entry is dated October 31, 1869 and signed by the Rev. Vincent de Vilas. Father de Vilas assumed the pastorate during the early part of the autumn of 1869 and was the second resident pastor. As the records show, Father de Vilas baptized thirty persons in 1870. We are informed in Alerding's history that Father de Vilas remained until April, 1871, "when he suddenly departed from Cambridge City and the diocese, with a burning desire to be martyred for the faith." No account of his subsequent history can be definitely given.

Coming here after this unusual event to care for the spiritual needs of the faithful was the Rev. Denis J. McMullen, who resided at Rushville, twenty-eight miles away. He had been appointed first resident pastor in that parish three years previously. Father McMullen, as the baptismal and marriage records here show, visited Cambridge City once a month during July, August, September and October, 1871.

FATHER ALERDING'S PASTORATE

Two important events occurred during the year, 1871, having direct bearing on the future history of our parish. One was the shutting down of the Cambridge City Car Works. The other the coming of the Rev. Herman Alerding to fill the office left vacant by the sudden departure of Father de Vilas. Father Alerding, as will soon be shown, gave a new direction to the course of the parish life by taking the first steps toward changing the location of the parish buildings.

The first baptismal entry of Father Alerding is dated November 26, 1871. At this time Cambridge City was experiencing its first real setback commercially. A short time prior to the coming of the new pastor about 350 men had been thrown out of employment by the financial difficulties of the Car Works. A large order of freight cars, which the company manufactured, had been delivered. It was found when settlement was due that the receiving railroad could not pay for the cars. As a result of not securing a lien against the company when the contract was entered into, the local concern sustained a loss of about \$60,000. This resulted in the shut down of the plant.

This was a local forerunner of the depression soon to follow throughout the whole country. Two years later



Rev. Denis J. McMullen

January 1, 1871 to December 31, 1871, from all sources, totaled \$1,518.87. The amount paid as pew rent was \$680.25; the Sunday collections, \$136.71. During the first year of Father Alerding's time here, in December, a subscription was taken up for a new organ, which amounted to \$135.00. The organ was purchased from A. W. Fisher, a Dayton, Ohio, manufacturer in January 1872, at a cost of \$175.25. In preparation for the feast of Christmas in 1872, a new crib, costing \$18.55, was purchased and a gallery railing built at a cost of \$15.00.

During 1872 the financial records on hand show that a St. Patrick's Day lecture given by Father Alerding and largely attended, netted \$85.00.

A special collection for lightning rods was taken up by the pastor at both Masses on Sunday, June 2, 1872, which brought in \$57.10. In this collection a counterfeit was discovered and deducted, leaving \$56.10 for the new safety devices.

A collection was taken up by the Misses Kate Harrington and Dina Alerding to build a St. Joseph's altar, which netted \$45.20. A separate contribution of \$11.10 for this altar was made by the St. Joseph's Society. A plaster statue of St. Joseph, valued at \$20.00, was given by F. K. Ebert. New altar cards were bought for \$5.00; a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary for \$20.00, and the two adoring angel statues, for \$20.00. A payment of \$48.00 was made on the Ebert note. (Note: Those angel statues were disposed of by an interim pastor in 1970's and replaced other angels, which were donated to a southern mission at a later date. The only angels in use in the church at present date are the two holy water fonts in the back of church.) These were the most important expenditures on the records for that year, while other miscellaneous items were entered for repairs and furnishings for church and rectory.

A tax, as the record terms it, was levied in September 1872, on each seat in the church, and resulted in raising \$61.00. An assessment plan was introduced to raise money to pay off the parish debt. Various amounts scaled down from fifty dollars was levied on each family. The amount raised through this method was \$806.00. These records of Father Alerding are complete and minute in every detail, giving the full names of the donors and the amount each donated.

In the year 1873, a fair was held, April 22-28, in Carpenter's Hall (also known at one time as the Opera House), netting \$864.46. This money with the amount already accumulated was used to pay the balance of the note and interest due Mr. Ebert since 1866. The note was canceled May 1, 1873. Enough cash was in the treasury to pay off \$392.40 interest and \$130.00 on the principal of the note due the Diocesan Orphan Asylum since 1868. One thousand dollars still remained due the Orphan Asylum. So far as is known by tradition, Frank Ebert, Theodore Frohnafel and Henry Ingermann interested themselves in securing money from Europe, presumably from the Austrian missionary organization, the Leopoldine Society, which was a tower of strength to the church in this country during its struggles in the nineteenth century. It is said that \$1,000.00 was sent to the Bishop of the diocese about this time by this missionary society which was applied to the parish's debt to the Orphan Asylum. In this way the last of the parish's financial obligations on the first brick church were paid in full.

The closing down of the Cambridge City Car Works had been only temporary, lasting a year and a half. Following the unfortunate losses in the fall of 1871, the company passed through bankruptcy proceedings and was sold to a St. Louis firm in the autumn of 1872. This concern reopened the plant in the spring of 1873 under the name of the Indiana Car Company and had a capacity of 1,800 freight and passenger cars a year. General prosperity ensued, for this industry was Cambridge City's largest employment unit.

Now that Father Alerding's efforts to stabilize the finances of the parish had so well progressed, his

the panic of '73 began. This panic was caused by excessive speculation in railroad construction during the first great railroad building era in this country, during the twelve years immediately following the Civil War.

When Father Alerding arrived here he found very many of his parishioners out of work and that many were moving out of Cambridge City. Large numbers of his parishioners were going to Indianapolis, which was then experiencing its growth from a country town to a metropolitan center. The inventory of the incoming pastor disclosed a cash balance on hand of \$4.08 and an indebtedness carried on since the construction of the brick church amounting to almost \$2,000.00. Of this debt, \$730.00 was a balance due on a note of \$900.00 drawing 10 per cent interest (the usual interest rate following the Civil War). This note was issued December 3, 1866 to a member of the parish, Frank K. Ebert. There was an outstanding note of \$1,130.00 bearing 6 per cent interest to the Diocesan Orphan Asylum, January 20, 1868.

This was a serious situation for the youthful pastor to face, but with characteristic determination and prudence, the parish problems were soon set on their way toward solution. The records show, in Father Alerding's exact and careful manner, that the total receipts from



Rev. Herman Alerding

energies were turned to the problem of relocating the group of parish buildings. For several years following the erection of the new church in 1866, it was increasingly evident that the church surrounded by railroads was intolerable.

When Father Doyle bought the first property in 1852, no railroad was running through Cambridge City. The first railroad laid through Cambridge City was where the elevated Pennsylvania runs. It was completed directly in front of the first frame church and regular trains began to run past the church September 19, 1853. As time passed a situation confronted the members of the parish as they found themselves enmeshed by railroad tracks on all four sides and added to this the fact that the church buildings were standing between the passenger depot on the west and the freight depot to the east. In addition, about a block southeast stood the roundhouse where locomotives were repaired and overhauled. This disturbing condition was a gradual development in the town's expansion and could not have been foreseen by Fathers Doyle or Peters when they bought the ground and first parish buildings. Steam railroads were then a new means of transportation and the noise, smoke and depreciation of property alongside their right-of-way would be a big concern after several years.

Father Alerding's forward looking and practical mind saw that this condition must be changed. As soon as he had paid off the mortgages on the existing church, he at once looked to purchase ground for a new church location. That his selection was wise is today apparent.

There is among the parish official papers a warranty deed, dated August 4, 1873, witnessing that John J. Simmons and his wife Elizabeth, conveyed to (Rev.) Herman Alerding, for the sum of \$1,400, the piece of real estate beginning at the corner of Pork (now Maple) and Simmons Streets, and running north to the corner of Simmons and Pottawatomie Streets, (now West Parkway), thence west to the corner of Pottawatomie and Walnut Streets, thence west to the place of beginning. The deed excepted the three lots to the north of the property of Harry Bond. This purchase of new property was deeded to the Rt. Rev. Bishop of the diocese, Maurice de St. Palais, August 20, 1874, just before Father Alerding was transferred to St. Joseph's parish, Indianapolis. On this land the church buildings have stood for more than 125 years.

After this tract of land was bought on the northwestern outskirts of town, far enough away from the railroads, the zealous pastor set to work to collect money for its payment. To this end he went to different parishes of the diocese to collect money and was quite well received. The sum of \$350 was gathered together in this way and paid out as a first payment in the transaction. A note for \$1,000 was given to a member of the parish, Mr. Owen Tully, January 1, 1874, bearing interest at 10 per cent, as this amount in full payment had been turned over to Mr. Simmons from whom the land had been obtained.

During the three years that Father Alerding was here, a vast amount of work was done by him in Cambridge City, but likewise at the missions of Hagerstown, New Castle and Knightstown. At Hagerstown the few Catholics living there had Mass offered at the home of Mrs. Henry Presbaugh on appointed weekdays. At New Castle he built a new church as well as at Knightstown.

Besides these material accomplishments much was also done spiritually by this enterprising priest. His promotion of temperance societies was an outstanding work. His oratorical ability lent itself to good work here and in other nearby parishes. In Heinemann's history of St. Gabriel's parish at Connersville we read that Father Seepe, the pastor of that parish, arranged a public temperance meeting in the Fayette County court room which was addressed by Father Alerding. The evils of drink at that time were engaging the best efforts of pastors of our Catholic parishes. The drinking habits of the people were excessive since the early pioneer days. Temperance societies were established in nearly every parish and the men, young and old, were urged to take a pledge not to drink for various periods of time.

Father Alerding was born in Ibbenbueren, Diocese of Munster, Germany, April 13, 1845. When quite young he was brought to this country. After finishing his classical and theological studies at St. Meinrad Seminary he was ordained priest by Bishop de St. Palais, at St. Meinrad, September 22, 1868. His first appointment was as assistant to Father Chasse in Terre Haute, where he remained during the first three years of his priesthood. He was ordained when twenty-three and so was only twenty-six years of age when he arrived as pastor here. His three years in this parish gave unmistakable evidence of a future distinguished career in the ministry. He was appointed to the important parish of St. Joseph, Indianapolis, on September, 1874. This gave him a wide field to exercise his brilliant gifts and prepare for the high station he was called to when named by the Holy See as Bishop of the Diocese of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, August 30, 1900. He remained in that capacity until his death in the city of Ft. Wayne, December 6, 1924. The following account of the cornerstone laying ceremonies of the present St. Elizabeth's Church on Sunday, August 31, 1879, is copied from "The Wayne Citizen", a weekly newspaper formerly published here:

"The cornerstone of St. Elizabeth's new Catholic Church at this place was laid in accordance with the program published in our last issue.

"Several thousand persons witnessed the ceremony, fifteen cars having come from Indianapolis; nine cars from Richmond; seven cars from Muncie; six from Connersville, and three from Hagerstown. The ceremonies were quite imposing and notwithstanding the disorder elsewhere on our streets (a man was shot and killed that day), the utmost order and respect were manifested by the persons in attendance.

"The exercises were conducted by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Chatard, Bishop of Vincennes, assisted by Revs. Fr. Alerding and Curran of Indianapolis, McMullen and Seiberts, of Richmond, Seepe of Connersville, Logan of Greencastle and Kelly of Cambridge City.

"High Mass was celebrated in the old church at 11:00 A. M., by Father Kelly. In connection with this service, Bishop Chatard preached a short extempore sermon on the subject of Faith, and its incompatibility with the exercise of private judgment. He is evidently a man of great ability and is a pleasant, off-hand, forcible speaker. At the close of the

morning service, the Bishop and clergy retired to the parsonage and partook of an excellent dinner.

"At 3:00 o'clock Vesper services were conducted by Rev. Father Seepe of Connersville, after which the Societies were formed in procession on Green Street in the following order, viz: Hagerstown Band; Knights of Father Matthews Drum Corps; Father Fitzpatrick, of Father Matthews Commandery No. 3; Knights of Father Matthews Commandery No. 1; St. Patrick's Benevolent Society of Connersville; Ancient Order of Hibernians of Richmond; Hibernian Benevolent Society of Cambridge City; Total Abstinence Society; Holy Angels Society and the Bishop and Clergy in carriages.

"Arriving at the site, of the new church an immense crowd had already assembled, The first part of the ceremony was the blessing of the temporary cross standing in the place which the altar will occupy in the new church. This was followed by the laying of the cornerstone by the Bishop, in accordance with the forms prescribed by the Catholic church, in the course of which, the Bishop and clergy made the circuit of the entire church.

"After the laying of the cornerstone the Bishop preached a discourse from the text, "Our foundations can no man lay, but that which is laid, etc."

"The sermon was preached from an elevated platform covered by an awning, supplied with seats, tables, etc., and tastefully decorated with flowers and pictures, among which was a beautiful picture of St. Elizabeth, in whose honor the church is named. On this platform, were seated with the organ, the St. Elizabeth's church choir, which under the leadership of Mr. James Harrington, discoursed sweet music, performing the "Te Deum", "Lucia Creator" and various other pieces, in excellent style.

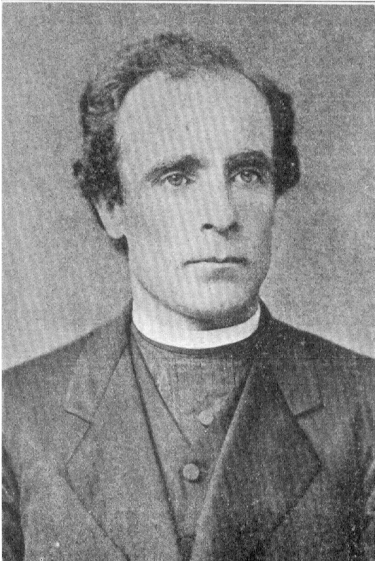
"The following articles were deposited in the cornerstone, having been previously sealed up in a tin box:

1 — The Weekly Union, a New York Total Abstinence paper on Catholic principles; 2 — Wahrheits Freund, of Cincinnati; 3 — Central Catholic, of Indianapolis; 4 — Cambridge City Tribune; 5 — Wayne Citizen; 6 — Indianapolis Sentinel; 7 — Acts of Incorporation and Ordinances of the Town of Cambridge City, with the names of the present officers of the same; 8 — Catalog and Tenth Annual Report of our Public Schools, with a historic sketch of the same; 9 — U. S. Postage Stamps of different denominations furnished by Postmaster Mosbaugh; 10 — Names of Building Committee and Trustees of the new church; 11 — Names of the principal business men of town; 12 — One each of various coins used in the U. S. and Europe and an Irish coin of the 12th century presented by R. Griffin; 13 — The manuscripts, papers and coins taken from the cornerstone of the old church; 14 — Photographs and other articles.

"They hope to have the building enclosed by cold weather. They have contracted with Mr. Herbst of Dublin, for the brick at \$4.50 per thousand. The size of the church is 40x80 ft., including sanctuary, which is semicircular in form. The length is 95 feet. The building will be roofed with slate."

Now that the work of establishing the new parish religious center was officially begun, all hands were directed to the speedy completion of the new house of God. Members of the parish supplied much of the lumber used in the framework. The Kleiber family furnished the heavy oak timbers used across the ceiling and which they hauled to the building site from their timberlands south of Milton, some five miles distant.

FATHER KELLY ERECTS THE NEW BUILDINGS



Rev. John B. Kelly

When the Rev. John B. Kelly arrived to succeed Father Alerding, the parish numbered approximately ninety or one hundred large families. The first entry of Father Kelly in the baptismal files is dated October 22, 1874. The country at that time was still feeling the effect of the panic of '73 and so nothing was done immediately about the building of the new church and rectory, proposed by the parish for the new location on Pork (now Maple) Street.

Until the times had become more settled, Father Kelly left no stone unturned to build upon the structure, faith and parish religious life so handsomely promoted and inspired by his immediate predecessor. His vigorous efforts to promote temperance among his parishioners is noteworthy. He arranged temperance meetings at frequent intervals. These public meetings were held in the town hall. The program usually consisted of one or two speakers and songs accompanied by organ music. His promotion of social and dramatic clubs amongst his people, his stimulation of racial pride and Americanism amongst his foreign born congregation are still spoken of in terms of those who lived here during the time of his ministry in this parish.

Father Kelly was a typical Saggarth Arron (man of God), of the 1850's. His unbending determination to direct those committed to his spiritual charge in the paths of Christian virtue and worthy citizenship made a deep and lasting impression. The story is commonly told of how he would use his gold headed cane on truant school boys he would occasionally chance upon, whether Catholic boys or not. He was a highly intelligent type, withal, approachable and lovable. Respect for his office as Christ's ambassador in the work of saving

souls was never overlooked.

During these years an uniformed parish organization known as the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society was active. Their regalia were kept in the gallery of the church and when St. Patrick's Day and other parade days came, the society made a dashing appearance parading through the streets of Cambridge City. On such days, the parades were followed by speaking and entertainment, usually in Carpenter's Hall (also known as the Opera House, which is no longer in use, on Main Street).

Dramatic and Literary clubs functioned during Fathers Alerding's and Kelly's time. The literary club had a library in the St. Bernard Hotel (the old Conlon home place). This long, two story, frame structure which stood facing the east side of Jones Street, between Second and Third Streets (the latter nicknamed Irish Street), was the site of the men's club meetings.

After about four years had been spent at the head of the parish, during which time careful plans had been made for the new parish buildings, the years of the panic of '73 gradually lengthened and better times slowly returned. In the old Cambridge City papers in the early months of 1879 were noted many short notices for bids on contracts for the new church soon to be put up on the lots bought six years previously.

The members of the parish were enthusiastic in their support of Father Kelly. Most of the work of excavating and the hauling of the stone for the foundation were done by the parishioners.

In the Cambridge City paper, of May 12, 1880, we read that the work had gone forward so rapidly that the plastering was about to be started. In just twelve months from the time of the cornerstone laying the church was completed and ready for dedication to the worship of the Creator.

Again it is possible to give a quotation from "The Wayne Citizen", the local weekly of a century ago. The article in the issue of Friday, September 3, 1880, runs as follows:

DEDICATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The public buildings of a town have much to do with the popularity of the place, and none are more attractive than beautiful and imposing churches. The general public is, therefore, especially interested whenever a society, the aim of which is improvement in the morals of the community, erects such a building. Hence the unusual interest in the dedication, on next Sunday, September 5, 1880, of the St. Elizabeth Catholic Church of Cambridge City.

The cornerstone of this church was laid with appropriate ceremonies on Sunday, August 31, 1879. As completed, with the exception of the spire, it is now the finest building in town. It is large enough to comfortably seat 350 to 400 people, and if crowded will hold without especial discomfort, many more. The walls are modern and substantial and all the work on it has been done with a view of permanency. An accurate description of the interior would not especially interest any but those who are acquainted with the nomenclature of that branch of the church and we will omit it, especially as most of our readers will have constant opportunity to see for themselves. It is sufficient to say that the interior is tastefully and finely finished, without gaudy show, with the single exception of the windows, which are extremely dazzling with their brilliant colors from stained glass. The sacred statues, monograms, high altar, sanctuary, tabernacle, etc., are done principally in pearly white, black and a modicum of gold and scarlet. When supplied with the paraphernalia of service the ministerial department will, however, lose something of its simplicity. The auditorium, we have reason to believe, from tests witnessed, will prove to be, acoustically, the best in town.

The brick work was done by Richard Cornell; the carpenter work by Allen & Meckel; the plastering by B. L. Row, of Germantown; frescoing by W. A. Lay & Co., of Cincinnati, and the altar painting by John C. Adams. The entire work

is a credit to designers, workmen and contractors, and the windows furnished by the members, whose respective names they bear, are especial marks of the liberality of the parishioners of the St. Elizabeth's Church.

The cost of the building thus far is about \$8,000 and with the continued energy and system of Rev. J. B. Kelly it will not be long until there will not be a vestige of debt remaining upon it.

THE DEDICATION

will take place on Sunday, September 5, with the following order of exercises:

1. Solemn High Mass at 10:30 a.m. at which Right Reverend F. S. Chatard, Bishop of Vincennes, will preach the dedication sermon. For the purpose of preserving order, and securing an appreciative audience, an admission fee of 25 cents will be charged at this service.

2. Vesper service at 3:30 p.m.

3. Free lecture by Bishop Chatard, in the evening, time to be announced at Mass. Dinner will be furnished at the old Church and on the grounds of the new Church for 25 cents. Proceeds for the benefit of the new Church. The Hagerstown Cornet Band, and the Muncie Band will furnish music for the occasion. All trains will arrive at 9:45 to 10:00 o'clock a.m. An immense crowd will be present, inclusive of numerous Catholic societies from other towns and an effort will be made to secure order commensurate with the occasion.

The week after the dedication exercises, in the issue of "The Wayne County Citizen", September 10, 1880, the write-up of the day's happenings appeared as follows:

DEDICATION

The dedication of the new Catholic Church, on Sunday last, passed off to the entire satisfaction of church members and community at large. The number of persons in attendance was not so large as the laying of the cornerstone, but it was large enough — including seventeen car loads of persons from abroad — and was, beyond all comparison, more quiet and orderly than on the former occasion. Indeed, we have never seen so large a crowd with so little disorder. We did not see or hear of a quarrel, or a case of intoxication, during the day. This was no doubt due to the precautions taken by our town authorities and those of the church and to the absolute closure of saloons during the day and night.

The dedication ceremonies were quite imposing. Solemn High Mass was celebrated in the forenoon by Rev. Father T. X. Logan of Terre Haute, assisted by Rev. Fathers McMullen and Seibertz of Richmond, Seepe of Connersville, Fleischmann of Brookville, and Macke of Rushville.

The dedication sermon was preached by Rt. Rev. F. S. Chatard, Bishop of Vincennes, who complimented the brethren on the completion of the handsomest church of its size, in the diocese. In regard to the sermon, we can only repeat what we said on a former occasion; that the Bishop is "evidently a man of great ability and a pleasant, off hand, forcible speaker."

Of one feature of the exercises, the church has just reason to feel proud. We allude to the music by the choir, unassisted by any voice outside of Cambridge City. We do not believe that there has been finer music by amateurs or professionals, on any similar occasion, and it is a matter of some pride to our citizens that the choir is home taught, and that at least a portion of its members have received their musical instruction in our Public Schools.

The attendance at this service was large, but not uncomfortably so — owing to the wise forethought of the pastor in charging a fee for admission, and thereby securing an appreciative audience. Vespers services were held at 3:30 p.m. at which Bishop Chatard delivered to an audience, filling every seat, every foot of standing room in the building — an interesting lecture, on the historical evidences of Catholic Christianity, derived from works of art and the catacombs of Rome. Hundreds of persons partook of the dinner prepared for the occasion and hundreds more would have done so, if the provisions had not unfortunately failed. We have no exact information as to the financial proceeds of the dinner, but learned that they were quite satisfactory, and large enough to afford material assistance to the church, for whose benefit the dinner was provided."

Since the rectory was not yet started to be built, ample room was found next to the church on the ground now occupied by the rectory to serve dinner under a big tent to the immense crowd on hand. At this time no houses were built up around the church property, while to the north and west, stretched out fields of corn. The hitching racks for the convenience of the parishioners who drove to church were located across the street, near where the late Russell Worl's home now is, as well as alongside the church on the west.

Among the many interesting relics of former times in the life of the parish is preserved a large printed cardboard sheet containing an itemized list of contributors to the new church. The list is headed with the sum of \$600.00 given by Father Kelly. The roster contains one hundred and ninety three names with a total amount of \$4,584.00 paid by members of the parish and \$141 .50 given by outsiders.

The next immediate concern was the building of a new rectory. For the following several months the pastor continued to live in the little frame house next door to the old church building in the south part of town. In the issue of "The Wayne Citizen" dated September 23, 1880, we read: "Meckel and Allen have closed a contract for building a Catholic parsonage and in this place to be located on the southeast corner of the church lot. It is to be built of brick. The size of the main building is to be 24x30 feet. Two stories with an addition 12x20 feet — seven rooms. Work has begun." In this issue of the same paper of February 10, 1881 is found this notice:

"The new parsonage of the Catholic Church is sufficiently completed to be occupied and on yesterday, February 9, 1881, Rev. J. B. Kelly moved into his new home."

For sometime after the parish moved into its new buildings the old church was used as a meeting place for social events. Eventually it was sold to the Big Four Railroad and used as a passenger depot and freight house until destroyed by fire about the year 1900. At the present time, no trace is to be found of these buildings, even the site is covered by the earth-mound which supported the elevated tracks of the main line of the Pennsylvania

Railroad.

At the time of his appointment to New Albany, Father Kelly had reduced the debt on the new group of parish buildings to about \$3,000.00. He had canvassed personally amongst his parishioners for funds and had been successful in selling some of the old parish property south of Main Street, which assisted considerably in the financial liquidation. The seven years Father Kelly spent here, were his first years in the priesthood.

TO THE END OF THE CENTURY

Father Kelly's work as pastor here was terminated on All Souls Day in 1881. At that time he departed to fill his appointment as pastor of the much larger parish of the Holy Trinity in New Albany, where he remained until his death in 1905. His successor was the Rev. Andrew Oster. During his four years as St. Elizabeth's pastor, he was very successful in the face of a congregation dwindling in numbers. He furnished the church with its first furnace; new Stations of the Cross were installed as well as a new organ and the pews. About \$500.00 on the principal of the \$2,100.00 debt still due to Frank Ebert since 1873 was paid. We thus see that the furnishings of the church were very incomplete until the pastorate of Father Oster.

In 1883 the parish acquired its own burial grounds. On the opening page of the old account books for this parish cemetery, Father Oster has written: "On the 17th day of August, 1883, two acres of ground were bought from Moses Myers for five hundred dollars for a Catholic graveyard. One hundred dollars were paid cash and a note for four hundred dollars, payable in two years from date was given to Moses Myers. The necessary work to prepare the ground for the intended purpose was due by the members of the congregation. On the 23rd of September the first lots were sold." "May it be only a resting-place for saints. —A. Oster." "P.S. Rev. Seibertz blessed it on All Souls Day 1883. Rev. Ryves made the speech." This cemetery was situated about a mile northwest of Cambridge City on the west Hagerstown Road.



Rev. Andrew Oster

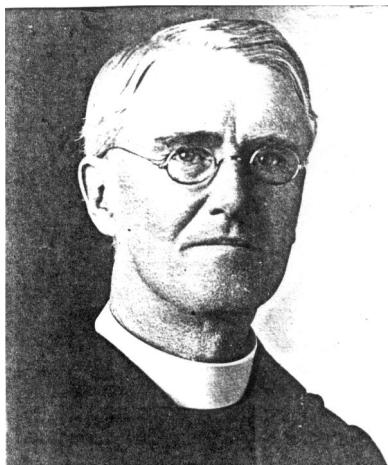
Father Oster was born in Mommenheim, Alsace, February 23, 1852. His early training in the classics and his philosophy course were pursued in Strasburg. He made his studies in theology at St. Meinrad Seminary near Evansville, Indiana, and was ordained a priest in Indianapolis by Bishop de St. Palais, May 25, 1875. Before coming to this parish he had served as assistant pastor two years at Holy Trinity Church, Evansville; from July, 1877, to August, 1881, as assistant pastor at the Old Cathedral, Vincennes; for a few months prior to coming here, he had been pastor in St. Mark's Parish, Perry County. When Father Spelman was sent here as pastor in 1885, Father Oster was moved to the parish in Columbus, Indiana.

July 2, 1885, Father Edward J. Spelman took charge of St. Elizabeth's Parish.

At that time the congregation had been reduced to fifty-two families. The eight or ten years just prior to this had found a continuous exodus of some of the best families to the more rapidly growing centers of population in this vicinity, such as Indianapolis and Richmond. The numerical strength of the parish probably reached its lowest ebb during this pastorate.

The note due for the purchase of the Cemetery was canceled on August 17, 1885. In 1899 a section of the church property was sold to Harry Bond. This consisted of the lot just north of the present property limits, and had a frontage of sixty feet on Simmons Street. The amount received for the transaction was \$300.00.

Father Spelman was a consistently zealous worker for the good of religion and was of a character beloved by the children of the community. He is often spoken of as an ardent student of astronomy. In an upstairs room in the rectory he had the most modern equipment, on a small scale, to study the heavenly bodies. His daily reports to the weather bureau over a long period of time while here were considered official.



Rev. Edward J. Spelman

Father Spelman was born in Cincinnati, September 28, 1850. His ordination to the priesthood took place at New Albany, Indiana, April 3, 1873. During the next two years he was assistant pastor at St. John's, Indianapolis, after which he became pastor at Rushville until July 26, 1880. Sickness forced his resignation at that time and it was not until about a year later that he was able to resume the practice of his ministry. His next appointment was to Brownsburg in April 1881, where he remained until coming here.

When in June 1905, Father Spelman was appointed first resident pastor of the New Castle parish he had been pastor of the local parish twenty years, the longest period any pastor remained here in the history of the parish.

EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Rev. James A. Coulter arrived to take up his duties as pastor in September 1905. At this time the parish had somewhat increased in

numbers, although not to any great extent. It had however, a number of substantial members well qualified for leadership in parochial affairs and ready for cooperation with the new pastor. Father Coulter unhesitatingly undertook a vigorous campaign to promote the spiritual and material well being of his parish. As a result of several efforts to raise funds for the complete renovation and redecoration of the church, this work was accomplished. Artists and architects from the House of Gaul, in Indianapolis, were placed in charge of the work.

In August of the year 1910, Father James Shea succeeded Father Coulter and under his direction the parishioners found a loyal, patient and persevering worker, ministering to the spiritual needs of his flock.

After but three years, in December 1913, the Rev. Michael J. Gorman assumed the duties of pastor of St. Elizabeth's Church.

The parish societies consisting of the Sodality and the Holy Name Society came in for special fostering on account of the invigorating and regulating influence they exert upon the spiritual life of the men and women of a parish. The parish financial records show that due to his able management money matters were placed on a sound basis with a nucleus on hand to provide well for future improvements and maintenance.

An important event during this pastorate was the transfer of all bodies from the parish cemetery during the summer of 1915 and the sale of the property in 1919. It had been found after the cemetery was acquired that it was located in clay soil and was unsuited for burial purposes. After permission had been obtained from the Bishop of the diocese and the State Board of Health, the bodies were all removed, some being transferred to the local Riverside Cemetery, while many others were shipped to distant points. In all, about one hundred bodies had been buried in the cemetery during the thirty-six years it was in use. The site of the cemetery was sold to Omer E. Taylor for two hundred and fifty dollars, January 31, 1919.

In July 1921, Father Gorman's executive and general abilities caused him to be appointed to the exacting and arduous position of organizer and superintendent of a new school for boys, which the state council of the Knights of Columbus had initiated. The Gilbault Home for Boys, a few miles south of Terre Haute, has continued with increasing success due to Fr. Gorman's initial guidance.

The Rev. John Schenk filled the pastoral office here from July 1921, to September 1924. This was during the period of unrest following the World War and when the Ku Klux Klan was creating discord and ill feeling amongst large bodies of American citizens. Father Schenk's attitude as pastor of the local parish during these trying times was exemplary and won for himself the respect and esteem of people of all classes in the community.

The Rev. John Rodutsky was appointed pastor September 23, 1924. For four years he labored for the greater honor and glory of God and with his appointment to Chrisney, Indiana, July 1928, Rev. Charles F. Walsh took up the work of so many able and worthy predecessors.

In the autumn of 1928, the rectory was entirely renovated. Many changes were made in the architecture and equipment as well as an addition being built to the rear of the rectory. The fullest co-operation of the good people of the parish was seen in the complete success of the Homecoming Picnic held at Manlove Park, just south of Cambridge City, Sunday, August 11, 1929. This event was held to observe the fiftieth anniversary of the cornerstone laying of the present church. A huge crowd attended and at least a thousand were served at the dinner and evening meal.

The financial returns on the Homecoming Picnic made it possible to rearrange and decorate much of the church interior in the autumn of 1929. The sanctuary railing was lowered, the altars were rebuilt, new bulls eye windows were installed in the sanctuary walls to permit more daylight to enter and the walls were redecorated and restored.

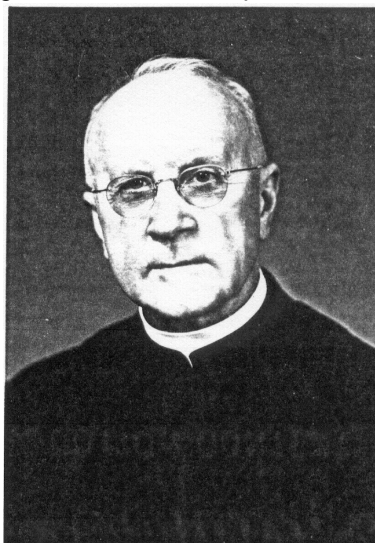
In 1930 the membership of the parish was composed of people living in a little over eighty households, about evenly distributed on farms, and in this and neighboring towns. This balanced condition of membership makes it possible to be optimistic about the future growth of the parish.

Rev. Francis Kull followed Father Walsh's four-year stay here with a two-year pastorate. Other pastors in order through 1952 included Fathers Albert Shad, William

Davis, James Moore, Jerome Bennett and Bernard Shea. Father Bennett administered to the faithful here for 12 years with Rev. Francis Reeves serving



Rev. Michael J. Gorman



Rev. Charles F. Walsh



Rev. John Schenk

for slightly over one year (1941-42) when Bennett was chaplain of a Civilian Conservation Corp camp. Rev. Shea served only a few months, followed by Rev. Donald Coakley until 1958 when Rev. William O'Brien took over for two years. Rev. John Herold served St. Elizabeth's from 1960 until his death in the fall of 1968.

Redecorating of the church and rectory inside and out were made at various times in the past 50 years, but probably the most noted changes occurred from 1968 to the present. Father Paul English was St. Elizabeth's pastor from 1968 to 1973. Besides being the start of the ecumenical movement worldwide, the local parish undertook a building expansion. Groundbreaking ceremonies took place for a new Social and Catechetical Center on June 25, 1972 on lots to the rear (north) of the church and rectory. Known as the Parish Center it was opened in October 1972. The one story steel and brick structure has 4,980 square feet of space, including modern kitchen facilities. Sliding floor-to-ceiling partitions convert the spacious dining room and large meeting area into smaller rooms for small group meetings or religious school classrooms. J.S. Sweet Co., Inc., of Cambridge City, was builder of the Center.



Rev. Francis Kull

The air-conditioned Center not only serves the needs of St. Elizabeth's but is also available to other churches, organizations, clubs, etc. for meetings or social activities. The interior of the church was redecorated and pews refinished and the floor carpeted during the late sixties and early seventies. Also, altars of the sanctuary were modified and a new central altar was constructed which faced the congregation, adhering to the mode of the time.

The Second Vatican Council of the Church urged that each parish establish a Parish Council. The Council was to consist of men and women elected by their fellow parishioners to assist the Pastor in the daily decisions and operations of the parish. In 1978 the Parish Council was established in St. Elizabeth's.

Rev. Robert Willhelm succeeded Father English in 1973 but serious illness forced retirement in 1976. Rev. Harold Knueven,

of St. Gabriel's, Connersville, served as administrator, 1976-1977 with various pastors in charge until Rev. Henry Brown was appointed here in the summer of 1977.

An improvement to the St. Elizabeth church and rectory was completed under Father Brown in June of 1980. The Parish Council deemed that the 100-year-old church needed an exterior face-lift.

Both church and rectory were sandblasted, tuckpointed and siliconed, the trim painted and new downspouts were installed on the church. Truly a beautiful dress for the Centennial Celebration. Father Brown was reassigned in July 1980 to Holy Name Church, Beechwood, Indiana.

Rev. John Luerman became the pastor of St. Elizabeth Church on July 9,



Rev. Albert Shad



Rev. William Davis



Rev. James Moore



Rev. Jerome Bennett



Rev. Bernard Shea



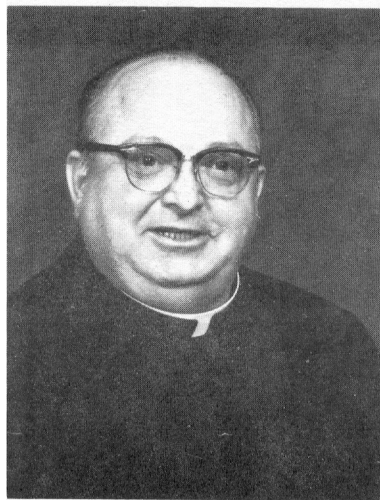
Rev. Donald Coakley



Rev. William O'Brien



Rev. John Herold



Rev. Paul English



Rev. Robert Wilhelm

1980, just in time for the 100th anniversary of the construction of the church. He continued the exterior renovation of the church by having Lexan installed over the stained glass windows and replacing the shingles on the church roof. The worn out furnace was replaced with a much more efficient gas fired boiler.

Extensive renovation of the rectory was started shortly after Fr. Luerman arrived as the new pastor. Changes included a completely new kitchen and carpeting throughout the house as well as modernizing the upstairs bedroom and bathroom. After these rectory improvements, Fr. Luerman started redecorating the interior of St. Elizabeth Church contracting with Diedam Decorating Co. of Kentland, Indiana. The renovation included repainting of the entire interior of the church in warm gold and white colors, mauve carpeting, new sanctuary lighting, a public address system, and air-conditioning. A majestic figure of the Risen Christ with the cross background added to the beauty of the sanctuary. The redecoration of the church was completed on January 27, 1984. The next year, a magnificent sounding nine rank, 474 pipe organ crafted by W. Zimmer and Sons of Charlotte, North Carolina, in consultation with Michael Rathke, was installed. The Dedication Recital of the Zimmer Organ, Opus 363, was presented by Michael Rathke on December 1, 1985. Now the interior renovation of the church was truly complete.

Next Fr. Luerman turned his attention to the parish financial condition. In 1990, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis established the Catholic Community Foundation to promote the value of planned giving and endowments to provide for the financial well being of individual parishes. Desiring to keep St. Elizabeth Parish financially strong, Fr. Luerman in 1991 established the "St. Elizabeth Catholic Church Endowment Fund". The purpose was to provide a means of general support for the parish. The parish endowment fund continues to flourish and the parish is in excellent condition financially. This allows the parish to continue its mission work of spreading the Gospel, providing for the material needs and improvement of St. Elizabeth Parish, and making

available funds for needed parish groups and activities.

When the Parish Center was constructed in 1972, it was necessary to use all of the existing property. In 1986 Fr. Luerman had the opportunity to purchase the Bond property immediately north of the Center. And then, in 1995, he again had the opportunity to purchase two other pieces of property extending north to West Parkway Drive. So now St. Elizabeth owned the entire block extending from Maple Street North to West Parkway Drive and from Simmons Street West to North Walnut Street. The parish was back in possession of the original properties first purchased by Fr. Alerding in 1873. With the addition of these properties to the north, the Church was able to have off-street parking for the first time and an asphalt parking lot was constructed. In September 1996 the parish again contracted with the J.S. Sweet Co., Inc to remodel the original center and to add an addition to provide more classrooms, restrooms, a bridal room and office. The dedication and blessing of the new addition, named the "Father John H. Luerman Learning Center", took place on June 15, 1997. In 1998, the outside of the church was completely re-landscaped with all of the old plants and trees removed and new flowering plants and bushes installed.



Rev. John Luerman

The property immediately South of the church had been in a sad state of disrepair for several years and when it was offered at a tax sale in January 2000, the church bought the property with the idea of providing additional parking, especially for the handicapped. However, after Fr. Luerman's retirement, the project was temporarily placed on hold.

Fr. Luerman officially retired as pastor on July 2, 2001 after 21 years of pastorate giving him the distinction of having the longest continuous pastorate in the history of St. Elizabeth Church.

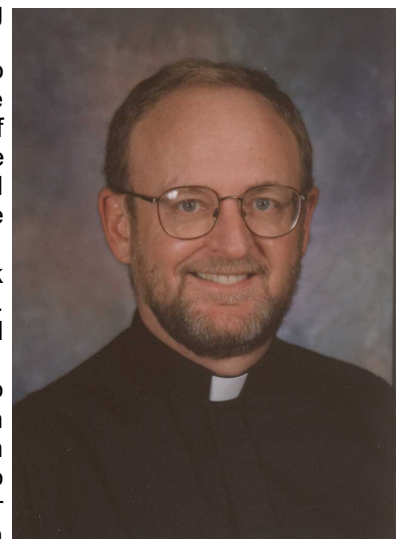
Rev. William Ehalt assumed the pastorate of St. Elizabeth's Church on July 2, 2001. Fr. Bill was born March 15, 1952 in St. Louis, Missouri. He is a second career priest. He left his career at Dow Chemical and started studying at St. Meinrad. He was ordained June 5, 1999. Fr. Bill's first position as a priest was as an Associate Pastor, Prince of Peace, Madison, Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and part-time chaplain at Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School where he taught religious education and coached tennis. Fr. Bill, as he is called, was officially installed by Archbishop Daniel Buechlein on February 9, 2002, with a Mass and reception. Shortly after his arrival Fr. Bill created a part-time position for parish secretary filled by Barb Ringwald. In December 2002 a part-time DRE position was created filled by Terry Bowman. Since his pastorate at St. Elizabeth he has overseen the 150th Anniversary Celebration of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. He temporarily covered the sacramental responsibilities for St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville from February 2002 to June 2002. Due to the decline of men going into the priesthood some parishes have been closed or have been assigned Parish Life Coordinators or priest are responsible for more than one church. In July 2002 Fr. Bill was given the sacramental responsibility of St. Anne's in New Castle, IN, and St. Rose in Knightstown. Our weekend Masses were reduced from three to two Masses. We now have a Mass on Saturday evening at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. At the present time we have approximately 269 families and 683 parishioners in the parish.

In 2003 the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Social Club ceased to be active. Events such as Canal Days, Thanksgiving dinner and Mass for senior members of the parish, Holiday Brunch, Pancake Brunch on Palm Sunday, Parish Picnic, etc... continue to go on with the leadership of strong parishioners and the support and work from members from the parish.

In January 2003 a renovation committee was formed and plans were made to renovate St. Elizabeth of Hungary. In the spring of 2003 work began on the roofing of the three towers on the Church by Chomel & Sons, Inc out of Connersville, IN. Existing roofing was removed and scalloped bottom 1/4" slate on the three towers. The three crosses on the top of the towers were reclad with 16 oz. copper. The 8 vents in the main bell tower were also clad. The work was done for \$46,150.00.

While work was being done on the church, the rectory received some work as well. June 2003 new double hung windows were installed in the rectory. Alside Soffit & Fascia along with new gutters were install on the rectory and church.

In the September of 2003 St. Elizabeth contracted with Bovard Studio, Inc to restore the stain glass windows in the church. October 2003 all of the stain glass windows were removed from the church and taken to Bovard Studios in Iowa to be restored. The existing outside portion of the windows remained to keep the weather out. July 2004 the windows were returned in all their grandeur. Once the new stain glass windows were in place the old Lexan protective window was removed and new protective covering, 1/4" Plate Glass was custom fit with ventilation for the window, was installed. For the first time in several years the beautiful stain glass windows could be seen from the outside. The work was done for \$128,269.00.



Rev. William Ehalt

The next part of the renovation for the church was moved inside. It was decided to cut down the front pew on

both sides of the isle. This added space allowed for wheel chair bound parishioners to sit in front of church. It also made for more room in the front of church for funerals. In September 2004 Diedam Decorating Company, Inc. was contracted to renovate the interior of the church. The decision was made to canvas the church walls. This was to prevent any cracks from showing through and give a better painted surface. A brass rail was added to the choir loft and the existing wainscot was removed and replaced with oak paneling. The stations of the cross, St. Elizabeth, The Virgin Mary, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus statues were all removed and taken to Diedam Decorating Company's workshop where they were stripped down and repainted. The stations of the cross were returned just in time for Easter 2005. During the renovation inside the church scaffolding was in place and the congregation were still able to have Mass in the church on weekends. Week day Mass was held in the center. Diedam's work was done for \$129,703.78. Diedam Decorating Company was finished inside the church January 2005. New carpet was put in throughout the whole church and ceramic tile was installed at both entrances in January 2005.

Fr. Bill Ehalt accepted the position of Pastor at St. Michael Parish in Brookville in July 2005. Fr. Joseph Rautenberg blessed us with his acceptance of administrator of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Fr. Joe was born on July 26, 1947 and Ordained June 9, 1973. Fr. Joe is also sacramental minister for St. Anne, New Castle and St. Rose, Knightstown, while continuing as the archdiocesan consultant on ethics/bioethics. A deep cleaning of the rectory, including the ventilation, and replacement of the carpet in the upstairs bedrooms prior to Fr. Joe's arrival. In September 2005 the position of Director of Music Ministries was developed and Michael Rathke was hired. In July 2006 Susan Yanos took over the position of DRE.

In late August 2006 renovation took place in the rectory. The downstairs office, off the kitchen was converted into a bedroom. The existing bathroom was enlarged and stretched into a wider bathroom, larger shower area, and large closet/storage area. Completion of the work was in mid-November.