

St. Boniface celebrates 125 years of grace

By Teresa A. Parsons

Although he's lived in Windsor, Ontario, for more than 30 years, Father Edward Pappert, CSB, has always considered Rochester's St. Boniface Parish home. He grew up virtually around the corner from the church for which his grandfather, a mason contractor, laid the stone.

At St. Boniface School, Father Benedict Ehmann found a nurturing environment for his love of music.

Early in the century, his father and two uncles settled in the surrounding neighborhood with their families. So when young Benedict Ehmann started first grade, there were two others in his class with the same surname. "The sisters used to wonder how many more were coming along," he said.

For Sister Marie Clare Scheible, OSF, who grew up in a house at the corner of Cayuga Street and Mount Vernon Avenue, the parish is a repository of fond teenage memories of dances and shows and clubs where lifelong friendships were forged and where the seeds of her vocation were planted.

To some degree, the same must be true for at least 40 other priests and religious who gathered last Wednesday for a special celebration of the parish's 125th anniversary. Some were former parish staff members; others were former or religious who grew up in the parish.

They came from across the diocese and beyond — from New Jersey to Ontario. At 5:30 p.m., they shared a meal in the school's "Golden Room," then toured the parish buildings and regrouped at the church for Mass at 7:30 p.m. and a reception afterward.

But most of all they talked, reminiscing about parish history, family and friends.

Monsignor John F. Boppel's was one name that cropped up again and again. Appointed in 1907, he served St. Boniface as pastor for 38 years.

"He was a patriarch, like Abraham, just a fatherly, loving person," Father Ehmann recalled.

Father Pappert described him as "a timeless figure. Nothing would ever flap him at all," he said.

Not even Father Pappert's report card. During his high school days at Aquinas Institute, report cards were sent directly to the pastor.

"You'd have to go in and face Father Boppel and get your report card and then take it home and have the shock repeated," he said.

During Father Boppel's pastorate, there were also several memorable assistants. Shortly after he was ordained, Father George Schmitt was assigned to St. Boniface and served there for 17 years. In 1932, he left to found St. Anne's Parish.

Father Schmitt is also remembered as the "great theatre man" who founded the parish's Footlight Club.

"He would go to see the plays in New York and get the rights to them," Father Ehmann remembered. The club would then perform the play in the St. Boniface Club, better known as the German House.



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Former parishioners and staff at St. Boniface Church gathered to celebrate the parish's 125th anniversary. They are, from left: Sister Marie Clare Scheible, OSF; Father Edward Pappert, CSB; Sister Mary Elizabeth Wentworth, SSND; Sister Mary Locadia, SSND; and Father Benedict Ehmann.

Father Eugene Golding came to St. Boniface in 1928 to serve as chaplain of the Rochester State Hospital, the Monroe County Penitentiary and several other nearby institutions.

"Each Christmas Eve, he took a group of young parishioners to the penitentiary for caroling, Sister Marie Clare recalled. "We walked along the cellblocks, and some prisoners would tell us to shut up and others would tell them to shut up. It really made me appreciate Christmas."

Another associate pastor who carried on the parish's theatrical tradition and had an equally marked vocational influence on Sister Marie Clare was Father Charles Bauer.

He produced more than a half-dozen musicals with the Footlight Club, some of which he wrote himself.

Father Bauer also introduces the parish's first mixed sodality, an organization that spawned a number of offshoots. There was Bonny Club, for instance, which sponsored dances and parties. And there were the 10-17's, a group of about a dozen men and women who try to meet on the 17th day of the 10th month every five years.

Father Bauer's groups also played more than a small part in discerning a number of vocations. "It was like a mini-novitate," Sister Marie Clare said. "Father would encourage us to go to Mass every day. Then he'd encourage us to stay around afterward and talk ... When you look back at it, he really did plant a lot of seeds."

By no means secondary was the influence of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, originally invited to teach in the parish school by Father John F. Payer, the second pastor, in 1866.

"They were really altar parents, as the old expression goes," Father Pappert said. "When needed, they were motherly. More often I thought than needed, they were the disciplinarians. And certainly, they were

deeply involved in our education.

"I think if you talk to any of the alumni of the school, they'll all eventually come up with the name of Sister Pauline," Father Pappert added. "She was the music teacher. She taught Latin with a German accent, so at a very young age we were all 'trilingual.' We got such basics from her gradually that we developed into people who like to sing. I know when we had 'Forty Hours' those rafters would just ring with the congregational singing."

Although the term "ministry of the laity" had hardly been coined when he was a child, lay persons were not forgotten in Father Ehmann's recollections.

He credits St. Boniface's reputation as "a great singing parish" to the training of Philip G. Kreckel, a noted composer and arranger of choir music who served the parish as organist for many years.

Among Sister Marie Clare's favorite memories are what was once the biggest event of the year — the celebration of St. Boniface Day during the first week of June.

"They used to shut off the streets and have a parade," she said. The men's and women's parish drill teams would perform in their blue and silver-white uniforms. If a parish man was going to be ordained to the priesthood, parade participants would march to his home and escort him to the church under raised sabres.

"Then there'd be the High Mass with the ordination," she said. "Afterward we'd come back to the school for some bellywash (soft drinks)."

Among the most prominent, but absent guests at last week's reunion was the old St. Boniface Church building, which was destroyed in the infamous fire which broke out on Wednesday, November 6, 1957, at 4:20

Continued on Page 8

AQUINAS INSTITUTE THEN AND NOW



School spirit — that feeling of pride and loyalty that students feel for their school — springs from many sources. Winning teams is almost always a producer of school spirit. Other student activities, like band, dramatics, debating, can instill it. Over its sixty years Aquinas has never lacked such a spirit and the 1985-86 school year has made its unique contribution.

Two very successful blood drives this year did spark school spirit according to Mrs. Toni Owens, moderator. "Students give blood out of a sense of community spirit," she added. This spring students gave 78 pints of blood. There was the feeling that the fall blood drive may have helped save the life of a fellow student injured in a car accident. Tom Bonacci, Jon Schwab and Cindy DiChario and many other students helped to organize the drive and see it through to a successful conclusion.

An eleven year-old tradition, Activity Day, continues today at Aquinas. Originated by the late Mr. Steve Centron, Activity Day is intended to foster homeroom and class unity as students compete in a whole range of activities, from softball to sack races to weight-lifting. Everyone, even those of limited athletic ability, can participate and make a contribution, according to Mr. Bob D'Ettore, director. He believes it is one of the biggest events we have, and students think about it and plan it from the beginning of the school year.

A Jump Rope A Thon in which 70 students raised over \$2000.00 for the American Heart Association generated a lot of school spirit, D'Ettore added.

I-390 between Lyell and Ridgeway Avenues is cleaner today because of Aquinas students participating in Megaclean on Sunday, May 4. An estimated 60+ students, boys and girls of all grades, pitched in on the project. Jackie Meija, Student Council secretary, felt the project made them aware of the importance of "the school supporting a community activity."

As his high school days come to an end, Alan Toth, Student Council President, feels that his senior year was "the greatest in four years." Somehow, everything this year came together to produce a spirit at Aquinas he "would remember for a long time."

Next Issue — The Aquinas Band

Paid for by Aquinas Institute

"FOR THE GOOD TIMES"

U.S. Government Inspected

Available at your favorite Market or Neighborhood store

Zweigle's

Famous for Quality Sausage & Meat Products Since 1880

ZWEIGLE'S TEXAS & WHITE HOTS

ZWEIGLE'S INC.
651 Plymouth Ave. No.
Phone: 546-1740

YOU CAN'T BEAT THE FLAVOR!

PICNIC PAC
TEXAS MEAT BRAND
FRANKFURTERS
SPECIALLY CALLED
WHITE HOTS
MILDLY SPICED

THE 1986 DIOCESAN DIRECTORY IS HEAVEN-SENT!

Now Available at **COENNT**, **Logos** and **Trant's** Bookstores.

or mail the coupon below to:

Official Directory, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Enclosed please find my check for \$ _____ to cover the cost of _____ Directories.	1986 Diocesan Directory Prices: \$12.00 Single Copy \$21.50 Two Copies \$25.00 Three Copies \$10.00 Each Additional Copy
--	---

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make Checks Payable to Courier-Journal Directory