

# **St. Catharine of Siena Parish Historical Anthology**

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## *The First 75 Years*

This document celebrates the efforts of the founding families of St. Catharine of Siena parish in Westwood. Through their efforts and those of the generations since, St. Catharine parish has become the remarkable community it is today.

The first 75 years, originally captured in the popular Diamond Jubilee booklet, have been recreated and modified for use on the Web.

### **The Garden**

It was at the turn of the century, the year 1903. The village of Westwood had been annexed to the City of Cincinnati for seven years. Electric streetcars provided the transportation for the commuters to and from town. Narrow gauge railway tracks once wound their way from Brighton Corner, through Lick Run Valley, up the steep grade to the beautiful hills of Westwood, and on to Cheviot. But those six miles of track had been dismantled and were replaced by a standard gauge railway that no longer carried passengers.

In the early days Westwood was mainly farmland. West winds prevailed, driving the Mill Creek impurities away. Nature had been more than kind to the Western Hills with scenic beauty. However the approach to Westwood from the city was hampered. There was always danger in crossing the railroad yards. Three railways: the Big Four, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton were hazards to be crossed along with a narrow small bridge spanning the black, polluted waters of the Mill Creek.

Many accidents and casualties occurred in this area, discouraging a number of families from moving to the Western Hills area. Harrison Pike, which was the main road from the city, began at Brighton, crossed the railroad yard to State Avenue, and from Queen City Avenue went up the steep grade rounding the Fairmount hill. There were some skeptics who believed that the electric streetcars would never be able to make the hill. At the top of the hill, there were a few modest homes scattered about, a few small stores, and several palatial homes, especially the Werk Castle, at Dead Man's Curve.

Many years of history had traversed the two main roads in Westwood, Harrison Pike and Fairview Avenue (now known as Montana Avenue). Westwood Town Hall stood on the southwest corner and the Five Mile House (built in 1842 and operating today as Rondo's Restaurant) on the northwest corner. The old Westwood School occupied the southeast corner and Donnelly Hall, the site of the parish's first Masses, stood directly behind the blacksmith's shop on the northeast corner. This was the center of Westwood, and it was here that St. Catharine Parish had its very humble beginning.

## The Seed Is Planted

To trace our history, let us go back to the winter of 1902. On the first of January, Reverend Herman Ellerbrock, the pastor of St. Aloysius Bridgetown, called a meeting of the Catholics of his parish who lived in Westwood for the purpose of organizing a new parish. Owing to the increasing number of Catholics in his congregation and the extent of its territory it had become necessary to divide the parish. At the solicitation of Mr. Carl Kleve, Sr., a resident of Westwood, Mrs. Emma Fischer, a non-Catholic, donated a lot on Frederick Avenue (now Fischer Place) and Wunder Avenue for the purpose of building a new church in Westwood. The two streets had been constructed to give access to the lot from Harrison and Fairview Avenues.

When Father Ellerbrock was ordained, he said his First Mass at the tomb of St. Catharine of Siena, in Rome. From that time on, his devotion to St. Catharine grew. Hence when it came time to name the new Catholic parish in Westwood, he asked the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for, and received, permission to name the new church St. Catharine of Siena. Thus, St. Catharine became the first parish to break off from St. Aloysius in Bridgetown. She is the eldest daughter of the six parishes formed from St. Aloysius.

George Bertram, Adam Ries, and Thomas Flanagan were appointed to a committee to make a list of all the Catholics in the new congregation and Philip Steinmetz and Carol Kleve were appointed to assist the pastor in taking subscriptions for the new parish. Money for the new church was collected from that time on.

Monthly dues were collected regularly and turned over to the Treasurer. The pastor, Rev. Herman Ellerbrock, gave the church money collected at St. Aloysius' Church, Bridgetown; provided said money was placed in an envelope and marked, "For the Westwood Church." Several Euchres and lawn fetes were held under the auspices of the "St. Catharine Church Building Society" and such monies were deposited in the treasury, so that a year and a half later the Treasurer of the Society turned over to the Church Treasurer the sum of \$2,537.60.

On Saturday, August 21, 1903, Reverend Joseph A. Tieken, Assistant Pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Camp Washington, was commissioned by the most Reverend William Henry Elder, D.D., to investigate the feasibility of establishing a parish in Westwood. He was told to investigate possible boundaries of the new parish, the number of Catholics living in this area, and their acceptance of the financial responsibility of beginning a new parish. Mr. Carl Kleve, Sr., living on Montana Avenue, drove to Sacred Heart Church in horse and carriage, and brought Father Tieken to his home for a few days. From there Father Tieken carried out his investigation.

## The Seed Takes Root

Four days later, the first meeting of all interested Catholic men who desired to be members of the parish, took place at the home of Philip Steinmetz, 3036 Wardall Avenue. A heavy rainstorm came up, making some of the roads impassable and only eight men attended.

A second meeting was called on Sunday evening, August 30, at the same place. Thirty families were represented. Following the meeting, Father Tieken sent this report to the Archbishop:

*"The officers of the St. Catharine's Church Building Society, organized for the support of this proposed church, have supplied me with a list of families who would belong to the new parish. This list contains the names of sixty-seven families, where both parties are Catholic, fourteen families, where only one party is Catholic, and in addition to these the names of some twelve servants who would belong to the new parish.*

*Moreover, the men stated that since the list was made some new families had moved to Westwood who were attending church in Cumminsville or Fairmount, but would belong to the new parish. At present the cash on hand amounts to \$3,357.00.*

*On Sunday evening I took up a subscription and the amount was \$2,517.00. In addition to this there were several parties who had promised subscriptions (amounting to something over \$100.00) but as neither they nor any person authorized by them were present to affix their names to the subscription list, I did not include them in foregoing statement. Thus the total amount, cash and subscriptions, is \$5,874.00, and if you add to this amount promised by the fore said parties the total amount would be \$6,000.00. The subscriptions represent the donations of thirty-four persons; this would leave about forty-five families still to be heard from. It is my opinion after the church is built, the pastor will have no difficulty in obtaining his salary."*

On September 12, Father Tieken was formally appointed pastor. The next day, Sunday, a third congregation meeting was held at Donnelly Hall for the purpose of organizing the new parish.

Donnelly Hall, an old one-story brick building on the south side of Montana Avenue, east of Harrison Avenue, was offered by James N. Gamble, a non-Catholic, for the purpose of celebrating Mass on Sundays until the new church was built. At the time, it was a kindergarten classroom during the week and on Saturday evenings it was occupied by the Westwood Building Association. Previous to that it had been used as the Westwood School until the building was sold in 1870.

As a consequence, there was considerable work to be done on Sunday mornings removing kindergarten chairs, tables, sandboxes etc. to make room for the altar, which was stored in a corner during the week. However, the Catholics were so pleased to have a place for worship, they did not mind the inconvenience. Masses were at 7:30 a.m. 10:00 a.m. Typical of the times, both a German and English sermon were preached each Sunday. One Sunday the German sermon was at the 7:30 Mass and the English sermon at the 10:00 Mass, the next Sunday it was vice versa.

The elected church committee was as follows:

- Father Ticken, President;
- Fred A. Meyer, Treasurer;
- Thomas L. Flanagan, Secretary;
- George Bertram, Collector; and
- Adam Ries, Collector.

The elected building committee, whose goal was to supervise the erection of the church-school building was:

- Fred A. Lamping,
- Philip Steinmetz,
- Henry Schwab,
- Nicholas V. Sticksel, and
- William E. Ward.

Following the congregational meeting, the Building Committee met. It was decided to engage Mr. Anthony Kunz, Jr. as the architect to draw the plans for the new building. It was not to exceed \$15,000.00.

Realizing the many difficulties in building a new church and knowing it could only succeed with God's blessing, the new parish adopted as its motto:

*"Pray, as if everything depended on God, work, as if everything depended on ourselves."*

On September 18, the church committee leased the residence of Mr. Alan Sanders, 2918 Montana Avenue for a rectory. Father Tiken occupied this for one year until September 18, 1904. One room of the residence was set aside as a chapel and by special permission of the Archbishop, Mass was celebrated there daily.

On Sunday, September 20, 1903, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated for the first time in Westwood in the old Donnelly Hall. Thirty-five people attended. The following Sunday Mass was again celebrated there.

On Friday, October 2, Donnelly Hall was condemned and declared unsafe for any meeting purposes. Hearing of the difficulties of the new parish, Mr. Alfred K. Nippert, president of the Westwood YMCA, sent word that for the time being, the Catholics of Westwood could have the use of the YMCA's reading rooms on the second floor of the Westwood Town Hall on Sunday mornings upon payment of \$1.00 a Sunday.

This kind offer was accepted and Mass was celebrated in these rooms regularly from Sunday, October 4, 1903 to September 18, 1904. Shortly after the offer was made the Westwood YMCA removed their quarters from the Town Hall. St. Catharine then leased the rooms from the City of Cincinnati. For nearly a year Mass was celebrated in this makeshift church of two small rooms connected by a folding door.

About the same number of people attended the first Mass at the Town Hall as at Donnelly Hall. Then Sunday after Sunday the number of members increased. The two rooms became overcrowded and the hallway adjoining them had to be used to accommodate everyone.

## The Root Sprouts

On Monday October 5, 1903 the Building Committee awarded contracts for the new building amounting to \$13,000. The congregation now numbered about seventy families. The burden was quite heavy for the members, but as Westwood was a fine location for residence, it was hoped that the new parish would grow rapidly. The next day, the civil engineer surveyed the ground and laid out the necessary stakes. The following day ground was broken for the new church and three weeks later, on October 29, the first brick was laid for the partition wall in the basement. Many of the men of the parish hauled the bricks from the cars to the grounds. The new edifice measured 78x53 feet. The church was on the upper floor and could seat three hundred and forty people.

On the same day, the Married Ladies Society gave an afternoon and evening Euchre at the Town Hall for the benefit of the new church. Admission was 50 cents in the afternoon and 25 cents in the evening. The evening crowd was so large that one half of the people could not enter the hall. One hundred and ten tables were used that night. From the Euchre the sum of \$526.97 was realized.

Although the new building occupied a great deal of time, parish spiritual needs had to be served. On November 11, 1903, the first marriage in the parish took place between Mr. Frank J. Krollman and Magdalena Bleh. The ceremony was solemnized in the priest's residence with a High Mass. Music was furnished by organist A. J. Boex and by the quartet from St. Lawrence Church, Price Hill.

A week later the cry of a new baby was heard, and on Saturday, November 19, (John) George, son of George Day and Emma Luebbe, was baptized at home. Ceremonies were supplied on Sunday, January 17, 1904.

The first congregational High Mass was celebrated on Christmas Day in the Town Hall. On this occasion the first St. Catharine Church choir of mixed voices, under the direction of Miss Louise Erni, made its appearance. The choir continued until Easter 1907 when the new regulation prohibiting women in the church choir went into effect. Work on the new building progressed rapidly and on November 15 the cornerstone was laid by the Most Reverend Henry Moeller, D.D. Coadjutor Archbishop of Cincinnati. It was a gala day. Fully 10,000 people attended the ceremony.

At 2:00 p.m. a parade of the Catholic societies preceded the ceremonies, moving from the Town Hall, marching over the principle streets of Westwood to the site of the new church-school building. A magnificent demonstration of the men and young men on this occasion was the means of bringing many non-practicing Catholics back to church. At the time the cornerstone of St. Aloysius Church was laid, a Mr. Joseph Boyd furnished the trowel. As St. Catharine was the first parish to break away from St. Aloysius, it seemed most fitting to use the same trowel for the laying of St. Catharine's cornerstone. Joseph Boyd refinished the trowel for this occasion.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 26, the work on the church building stopped, because of inclement weather and the subsequent severe winter.

As the church neared completion, it was decided to erect a rectory on the church property adjoining the church building. Work was resumed on March 19, St. Joseph's Day. It was also decided to hold a bazaar in the building before it was dedicated. All week it rained and the success of the bazaar was not as great as had been anticipated.

As our thoughts drift back to 1904, it is interesting to picture the surroundings of the church and the donated lot. At the time of the dedication, the church stood in the center of what was a cow pasture and the only building in the neighborhood was an old dairy farmhouse. Fischer Place and Wunder Avenue then existed merely on paper. The only sidewalks were old planks covered with mud most of the time. What is now Harrison Avenue and Fischer Place was a six-foot embankment, and on what is now Wunder Avenue was a gully 20 feet deep, spanned by a rustic bridge built by the men of the parish. All the building material for the church and residence was hauled over private property, which has been subdivided and built-up.

St. Catharine Parish was the first new parish to be started in Cincinnati in a long time. Thus, the older parishes gladly accepted the invitation to participate in the parade and dedicatory exercise. The big day arrived Sunday, September 13, 1904. But "man proposes and God disposes." At 9:00 a.m. a veritable cloud burst took place and continued until 11:00 a.m.

A parade was out of the question. Special streetcars from town with the societies and their bands of musicians began to arrive, but due to the downpour of rain, they were unable to leave the streetcars and were forced to return to the city. However, the more venturesome waded through the mud to the Solemn High Mass and the dedication by the Most Reverend William Henry Elder, D.D.

The red brick combination church and school with a bell tower faced Wunder Avenue. This structure housed the church on the second floor and four rooms on the first floor. The two front rooms were used as classrooms and the other two as living quarters for two sisters.

The May 5, 1905 Catholic Telegraph noted that the new St. Catharine Church "has the distinction of being the most highly elevated Catholic Church in Cincinnati and vicinity." After a discussion as to which was the highest point in Cincinnati, an interesting experiment was made. Scientific instruments were secured, and the heights of the various institutions were taken and compared with that of the new church. The results were as follows:

*The floor of the new St. Catharine Church is on the level with the top of the large water tower in Eden Park; it is as high as the center of the clock of St. George Church, Corryville; higher than the Mt. Auburn water towers, and as high as the roof of the Convent of Good Shepherd, Carthage.*

A large bell had been donated to the church by a family of the parish and was solemnly blessed on Sunday, October 9.

## The First Branch

The sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, answered Father Tieken's request for two teaching sisters. On Monday, September 26, 1904, the St. Catharine Parochial School opened with an enrollment of twenty-eight pupils, increasing to a total of fifty-five pupils by the end of the year. Sister M. Loretta was placed in charge of the two schoolrooms. She was assisted by Sister M. Germaine. The following year, an additional schoolroom was opened to accommodate the increasing number of children. The children's first public performance was held at the Town Hall. The performance was entitled "Children's Songs and Children's Plays." Each year two productions were presented one in the fall and one in the spring.

Soon after the dedication of the church, the members of the parish organized the various church societies. The Guardian Angel Society and the Young Ladies began on Sunday, October 2. The St. John's Men Society and the St. Ann's Ladies Society were organized two weeks later. The Young Men's Sodality followed on Sunday, November 13. On Christmas morning, following Mass, the Christmas crib was blessed and in the afternoon, all the children gathered around the large Christmas tree in the schoolroom and sang carols. Year after year one carol was never omitted, "Ihr Kinderlein Kommet." The "Question Box" was inaugurated. Questions were placed in a box in the vestibule of the church preceding the first Sunday of the month and at the afternoon services the pastor would answer any questions concerning the faith and practices of the Catholic Church.

The financial report of St. Catharine Church was published and showed the young organization in a flourishing condition. It covered the period from October 1, 1903 to January 1, 1905, and showed that the total amount of money raised during the period was \$16,841.16. \$14,000 was borrowed. The cost of constructing the church had risen to \$17,995.15 of which \$17,691.65 had been paid. The neat little pamphlet mentioned the parochial societies and published the parish regulations.

The congregation numbered seventy-six families. There were fifteen baptisms, thirteen First Communions and four deaths in the parish. The boys numbered twenty-six and the girls twenty-nine in the school.

During the year of 1905 Fischer Place was graded from Harrison Avenue to the east line of the church property and likewise Wunder Avenue from Fischer Place to the north end of the property. In March, the first mission was given by Father Chrystom Theobald, O.F.M. The first week was for the women, the next week for the men. The Baptismal Font was installed. It was a donation in memory of Margaret Enger.

On January 1, 1906, the second annual financial report was issued. The receipts for the year amounted to \$7,239.64; expenditures \$6933.47. This young congregation of scarcely one hundred families had been doing remarkable work. After erecting a beautiful church and rectory, the debt of bonds was only \$14,000.

As the parish grew, more schoolrooms were needed. This necessitated purchasing a lot on St. Catharine Place to build a residence for the Sisters. The rooms in the church building formerly occupied by the Sisters were converted into classrooms.

In June, the first public exhibit of the work of the school children was held. Monthly exam papers of each child were bound in individual covers and drawings of the boys and the sewing and fancywork of the girls were displayed. The exhibit continued each year on the last Sunday in June for many years.

Realizing the need for a recreation facility for young people, it was decided on February 7, 1907, to establish two clubrooms in the basement of the church building. The men and young men of the parish responded and worked evenings plastering walls, cementing floors, and painting. In June, the Siena Clubrooms were formally opened for the young men of the parish and as meeting rooms for the various church societies.

In the spring, Mr. Dan Schwegal had taken charge of the choir and continued as organist until August 1916 when he left the parish to assume new duties as a teacher in one of the schools in Wisconsin.

September of 1908 marked the beginning of an epoch in the history of northwestern Cincinnati. Harrison Avenue Viaduct was opened and a new era dawned on that section of the city lying west of the Mill Creek. The Harrison Avenue Viaduct Souvenir Book described it: "Here, within easy access of the center of the city, we find a location, unsurpassed for health, marvelously beautiful in all its surroundings, free from the smoke and smell of the city. Nature willed the winds in this vicinity should blow from west to east, and while we congratulate our eastern sister suburbs on their many beauties, we regret the air they breath cannot be transmitted direct from the fields and meadows of eastern Indiana and the woodlands and hills of western Ohio but must first pass through Westwood and the factory district of our city. The viaduct, aside from eliminating all danger of railroad accidents, places the suburb beyond the reach of high water and its consequent inconveniences."

But the Harrison Avenue Viaduct was not the only road construction being completed. During that year, the remainder of Wunder Avenue (from the north line of the church property to Montana Avenue) was graded and the whole of Wunder Avenue from Fischer Place to Montana Avenue was surfaced with crushed stone. Cement walks and steps were laid about the church property.

## A Shoot Breaks Off

In 1911, when the Model Ts began to roll off the assembly line, more and more people moved to the Western Hills. In March, St. Martin Parish in Cheviot was organized. One hundred and nine families left St. Catharine Parish to join the new St. Martin Parish. This move caused quite a disturbance as some parishioners felt that they were just about becoming a good size parish and already had organized a New Church Fund Society. In May, a combined mission with St. Martin Parish was held at St. Catharine Church.

The year 1914 was a time for celebration, the tenth anniversary of the dedication of the church. A pamphlet published that year contained the early history and an account of the foundation and progress of the parish for the benefit of the members not acquainted with those early years. It closed with a poem written by Father Tieken prefaced by: "Let us face the future with confidence and always live up to the motto of the parish. If we do this, then we need not worry and ask ourselves the question: What will the future bring? For,

*Useless our guessing, with God let it rest,  
Armed with His blessing, we wait His behest.  
Accepting whatever, His wisdom may send,  
With earnest endeavor, and brave to the end."*

*Christmas 1914, Rev. Jos. A. Tieken*

This year World War I began. The German language was banned from church services and schools and many people of German ancestry were labeled "pro-German." Although our country had not entered the war, there was quite a bit of unrest.

Living up to the parish motto, two more projects were begun. First, the St. Catharine Free Library was established. It contained some six hundred books of instruction and information concerning the teachings of the Catholic Church and books on the questions of the day, as viewed from a Catholic standpoint. Second, the St. John's Men's Society placed a depository for Catholic magazines and books donated for free distribution among the Catholic hospitals and institutions in the city. Both were placed in the downstairs vestibule of the church.

The Siena Club made arrangements with the Cincinnati Board of Education for the use of the gymnasium of the Westwood School on Wednesday evenings during winter months. One of the regular physical instructors in the city schools had charge of the calls composed of Siena Club members. On the same night the Young Ladies Sodality began a class for fancywork, embroidery, crocheting, knitting and plain sewing, using the Siena Clubroom.

After nine years as organist and choirmaster, Mr. Dan Schwegal left Westwood in 1916 and Mr. Joseph Siewert took over the playing the organ and training the choir, at the tender age of sixteen. Joe was well qualified for the position, having studied piano with various professors at the Conservatory of Music. In 1917, he entered the Army. At the end of the war, he continued his studies at the Bordeaux University. Upon returning home, he again assumed the position of organist and choirmaster.

In 1917 the United States entered World War I. Many young men were called to serve in the Armed Forces. It was then that the few remaining members of the Siena Club asked permission to publish the Siena Club News, an eight-page paper containing parish happenings, local news and letters from the young men of the parish in the service. In turn, these papers were sent each month to the men in service.

While fighting raged half a world away the government rationed food and gasoline at home. War gardens, drives for Liberty Bonds, and meatless days were encouraged. Extra prayers and services for peace were held throughout the country. A beautiful silk service flag made by the Ladies of the St. Clare Tabernacle Society was presented to the church in August 1918.

In September 1918, "autoless" Sundays were ordered due to the shortage of gasoline. By October, the Spanish influenza epidemic had taken many lives throughout the nation. All churches, schools, theatres, saloons, soda fountains and ice cream parlors were closed.

Wild rejoicing occurred with the news of the signing of the Armistice on November 11. However, the flu ban was not lifted until the 13th. In a few days, the flu epidemic reoccurred and schools were again closed from December 2 to January 2, 1919.

The last issue of the Siena Club News appeared in May. It had served its purpose. Almost all the young men had returned from the war. However, the people of the parish did not want to be deprived of the monthly parish news. It was decided that the monthly paper should continue under the title, St. Catharine Parish News. Advertisements were solicited and a nominal charge of five cents a copy was set to defray the cost of printing. The first issue made its appearance in June.

In December of 1918, the blessing and unveiling of the bronze Honor Roll was held in the vestibule of the church.

## A Twig

In every age the young men of a parish need recreation and guidance. Father Ticken recognized this and heartily supported The Siena Club, which supplied both.

In the winter months, the young men had their clubroom on the church grounds. There was a pool table, and card tables for Euchre or just an exchange of conversation. When furniture was needed an appeal went out to the parishioners. In need of money, they used their talents in a Minstrel Show and two plays. With the Young Ladies Sodality they sponsored one of the largest and most successful social events the parish had seen. It was held at the Hotel Alms. Bridge, "500," Euchre and Lotto were games provided, and in another room there was dancing all evening. In later years, bowling entered their list of activities. The Siena Club had four teams of their own and in time joined a league with the married men.

In the summer months, athletics, especially baseball, consumed their time. The club also rented a camp on the Big Miami River near Miamitown. In October 1918, the club lost the lease of their camp but were fortunate in securing a bigger, better and more up-to-date house just three doors away belonging to Dr. Minges. It was leased for two years with the option to purchase. Many outdoors sports were available there: fishing, swimming, hunting, boating, tennis, horseshoes, etc. At the dances on Wednesday evenings, special dances were featured such as the "Kiss Waltzes." Just for fun there were pie eating contests and hayrides. A wagon would be rented in Westwood for the hayride to camp. However, on the return to Westwood, everyone had to walk up the nine-mile hill, as it was too heavy a load for the horses.

Recalling the early days of baseball, the Siena Club team, under the title of St. Catharine Baseball Nine, won most of its games. The team joined the Catholic Baseball League. Stolen bases, no-hitters, home runs, good pitching and fielding all resulted in many victories. In 1924 the club organized a basketball team. The Siena Club members always manned a booth at the annual Lawn Fete.

On January 16, 1921, the first meeting of the Building committee was held. The committee consisted of Father Ticken, president; Adam Wuest, secretary; Carl Kleve, William Bohnert and Fred A. Lampking, committee member. Few realize the time, the attention and the work these men gave to the planning of the new church and new school. Meetings were held frequently and often lasted to the midnight hour and yet not a single member missed any of the meetings, unless prevented by sickness or absence from the city.

In April, the design for the new church (present church at the corner of Fischer Place and Wunder Avenue) was submitted by the architects, Crowe and Schulte, and was unanimously accepted at a meeting of the parish. And in February of the following year, contracts were awarded for the building of the second St. Catharine Church. On March 5th, Father Tieken turned the first spadeful of ground on the site of the new church, and Father F.H. Bene, chaplain of St. Joseph Maternity Hospital, preached the sermon. Prior to the lying of the cornerstone, the parishioners were asked to show their loyalty and love for their parish by decorating the front of their homes with flags or bunting on the day of the cornerstone installation. In doing this, they would also show their neighbors that they rejoice and take pride in the building of their new church. Moreover, the non-Catholics would be incited by curiosity to attend the celebration and swell the crowd.

On June 18, 1922, the Reverend William D. Hickey, Vicar General, laid the cornerstone. The contents included a short history of the parish, the names of the president of the United States, the governor of Ohio, the mayor of Cincinnati, the archbishop of Cincinnati, and the pastor and members of the church and building committee of St. Catharine's. This was written on parchment paper, placed in a glass tube, securely sealed, and placed in a copper box.

The day itself turned out to be a beautiful day with Mass in the morning and a parade beginning at 2:30 p.m. The parade started at Harrison Avenue and Fischer Place then went to Ratterman, to Lischer, to Eggers, to Harrison, to Boudinot, to Wardall, to Epworth, to Urwiler, to Hazelwood, to Montana, to Wunder and then back to the site of the new church.

The celebration was twofold. In addition to the lying of the cornerstone, Father Tieken's twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination was observed by presenting him with a cash gift. Father responded that he would comply with the parishioners' wishes and would not apply the gift to the building fund but that he would use a portion of it to purchase a plot of ground in a cemetery for the deceased pastors of St. Catharine Parish.

However, all was not roses. When Father Tieken went to the bank to borrow the money for the building of the new church, the bank informed him that the amount he requested was a great deal and they could not lend him that much.

Not to be deterred, he asked each member of the building committee to sign the notes. They knew Father was a good manager but there were many months of Sundays when they were counting on the members of the parish to be generous with their donations.

The new St. Catharine Church, built of Indiana limestone, was dedicated on Sunday, July 1, 1923 by the Most Reverend Henry Moeller, D.D. The three altars were consecrated a week prior to the dedication.

Prompted by his desire that the members of the parish, who had been very generous in their donations toward the building of the new church, should all be able to witness the dedicatory services and assist at the first Mass celebrated in the church, Father Tieken insisted that the dedication be made strictly a religious affair and that no parade be held or anything sold that day.

The cost of the church building was \$187,500 and the cost of the church furnishings was \$33,000 (exclusive of the organ.)

Placed in the three altars were relics of St. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, who was martyred in 190; and St. Martina, a noble Roman Virgin and Martyr. The baptismal font from the old church, which had been used in baptizing 2500 people, was moved into the baptistery of the new church. It remained in the service of the parish until 1950 when a new font was donated by the St. Ann's Ladies Society.

In the evening of the day of dedication, the great beauty of the church's interior was demonstrated when during solemn vespers and benediction, all the electric lights were used and illuminated every inch of the high vaulted ceiling, the niches, statuary and altars.

On Monday, Father Tieken offered Mass in the new church for the living and deceased members of the congregation who had contributed to the church fund. The fourth of July Mass was one of special thanksgiving for the blessings that had been showered on the parish, and the following Sunday was set aside as the general Communion day for the parish. The children received Solemn Communion at the 7:30 a.m. Mass.

The architecture of the new St. Catharine Church is French 12<sup>th</sup> century Norman Gothic. The edifice is of Bedford stone and the roof of slate. The church is 140' long and 88' wide.

There are two towers, one 67' high and the other 58' high. Over the main entrance is a sculptured image of St. Catharine of Siena. On either side of the status is a panel, one bearing the coat-of-arms of Pope Pius XI and the other coat-of-arms of the Most Reverend Henry Moeller, Archbishop of Cincinnati at the time of the church's construction.

Plans for the new school building started immediately after the dedication of the church. The school was to be made of the same material as the church.

On October 20, 1923, Sister M. Loretta died. She had been intimately connected with St. Catharine Parish for nineteen years. The children of the parish gave the stone statue of the Sacred Heart in her memory.

In 1924, the contract for a new church organ was awarded to Votteler-Holtkamp-Sparing Company of Cleveland, Ohio. The cost of the organ, casework and installation amounted to \$10,620.18. To help in defraying the cost, organ pipes were sold for \$5 (some large ones for \$100) and 25-cent donations were solicited from the parishioners after the Masses on Sundays to become patrons and have their names appear in the Dramatic Club's program sponsored by the choir.

The incentive to have a new organ installed for the dedication of the new church was uppermost in the minds of the choir. They continued with their efforts to raise the necessary funds presenting three performances in 1922. Proceeds from these performances and a donation of \$100.00 showed a total of \$1,011.99 for the year. This type of entertainment not only aided the cause but also gave enjoyment to the parishioners, togetherness and fun for the performers, and a new area of endeavor for our parish. By 1924, the choir had presented three more plays. On July 20, the new organ was used for the first time.

In 1925 and 1926, the Young Ladies Sodality presented two operetta, "*In India*" and "*The Egyptian Princess*." The Westwood Dramatic Club was formed by the enthusiastic choir members and gave two shows in 1926 and 1927. And over the years there were many productions, some to raise funds and others for just plain fun.

## Another Twig Grows

Once the dedication of the new church had taken place, the front part of the red brick church-school was dismantled. In its place a new addition approximately 86 feet across and 27 feet deep connected to the old building was built, thus forming a "T-shaped" building. This addition contained four modern classrooms and a stairway leading to the former church which was converted into an auditorium with stage.

Before replacing it in the new school building, the cornerstone of the old church was opened and found to contain various U.S. coins bearing the 1903 date, a copy of the Catholic Telegraph, the German Weekly Wahrheits Fund, an account of the cornerstone installation, and a short history of the parish.

On March 9, 1924, the new school was opened for inspection. More parking spaces were needed for the ever-increasing number of automobiles. Hence the parish purchased the property adjoining the church property, facing the Westwood Commons. The plot was 63' along Fischer Place with a depth of 327'. Four frame buildings of four rooms each were on the site. The purchase price was \$15,000.00.

In June of 1924, The Most Reverend Archbishop Moeller officiated at the dedication of the new St. Catharine School and confirmed a class of 85 children and 10 adults. About 30 priests assisted at the dedication. In his sermon, His Grace stressed the need of high school education under Catholic auspices and informed the children graduated from St. Catharine that they would all attend Elder High School as soon as Elder's addition was completed. (Elder was coeducational until 1927!)

In September of 1924, the new school and auditorium were opened. It was completed at a cost of \$2,762.10. The next year, the Free Library was moved to the basement of the new church, beneath the large tower. Its motto was "*No fees, no fines, no formalities.*" Also in 1925, Father Joseph H. Scumacher was welcomed as the first assistant pastor assigned to our parish.

In 1926 the property owners along Fischer Place, east of Wunder Avenue to the Westwood Commons, asked the city if they might privately improve the area. The request was granted with the church's part of the improvement costing \$1,638.50. Pew rent now was \$10.00 a year, \$5.00 to be paid in October and the balance in April. Members renting seats in September had preference. After that, all those desiring seats wrote their name and the number of seats they desired on a card. These cards were then placed in a box and drawn to determine who would occupy the remaining seats.

An increasing enrollment in the school brought more Sisters for teaching to the parish. This presented the problem of where to house them. The decision made was to build a new rectory connected to the new church and convert the former rectory into a convent. The four frame buildings had to be removed or sold within two weeks in order to begin work at that time. The Siena Clubroom was transferred to the rear basement room formerly used by the various societies for board meetings. The former clubroom in the

front basement was equipped as a modern classroom. By September of 1927 the rectory had been completed and the priests moved in. The Sisters moved from their residence on St. Catharine Place to the former rectory on Wunder Avenue, north of the school building. An addition was made to the rear of the house, 47 1/2 feet in length and 29 1/2 feet in width. The lower floor of the convent served as a community room with a large enclosed porch. The second floor provided nine sleeping rooms. With the school year about to begin the playground was graded and the whole property seeded.

In February 1928, the St. Catharine Parent Teacher Association was organized, with a membership of sixty-eight people and Mrs. Alice Brielmeier as president. And in April, a reliquary containing a relic of St. Catharine was placed on the St. Joseph altar. On September 23, the Silver Jubilee of the parish was celebrated with Mass and a banquet and dance at the Hotel Alms. Father Tieken was also honored as pastor of St. Catharine parish for 25 years and given the keys to a Willys-Knight sedan. Tribute was paid to Mrs. Emma Fischer and to other non-Catholics who assisted in the founding of the St. Catharine parish. Mrs. Fischer was one of the guests at the gathering of some 350 members of the parish.

So that it would no longer be necessary to have two grades in one room, the room used by the Siena Club was converted into a modern classroom. A frame structure standing at the rear of the school building then served as their clubroom. It was also used by the school doctor and nurse as an office.

For 10 years the depression tightly held the nation. The shortage of money affected almost everyone, including our parish. In 1930, however, the church bought additional property to enlarge the playground, 25 feet on Wunder Avenue and 15 feet on Meyer Place. Cement sidewalks were laid on Meyer Place.

The opening of the Western Hills viaduct in 1932 encouraged more families to move and build in Westwood. Most families now had an automobile and the Western Hills became more attractive and was not too far away.

The P.T.A. began serving First Friday breakfast (hot chocolate and rolls) and selling milk at recess to the school children. A school library was started and the auditorium was painted and redecorated. Shelves and closets were built in the classrooms and the schoolyard was resurfaced. All of these were the products of an active P.T.A. In 1938, the P.T.A. began serving hot lunches at noon for the school children.

Another change in the name occurred as the Young Men's and the Young Ladies Sodality combined to form the Young People's Sodality. Membership in the St. Ann's Married Ladies' Society was opened to all women of the parish. It has been open to married women only.

Adult education had its beginnings at St. Catherine's in 1938. Questionnaires were circulated to determine the interest of the parishioners. As a result of the questionnaire, a question and answer series was arranged. Guest speaker addressed topics ranging from

art, culture, and the Constitution, to Catholic Action, socio-economic problems, and evolution.

A bronze screen was erected in the choir loft at a cost of \$5000.00. Utilized as a screen for the organ pipes, the bronze work also depicted the seven sacraments in symbols and was so arranged as to bring out the beauty of the rose window when the setting sun cast its final rays through the stained glass.

Through untiring efforts, suggestions and work of Mr. Henry Himmelman, a parishioner, and Sister Catherine Cecile, the first school orchestra was organized in 1938, and a year later, the school band.

When Mr. Himmelman attended any affair, you were assured of a lot of fun and a happy time. He was an energetic, talented musician, and a lover of children.

The school band made its first appearance at the Holy Name parade and its second at the new Bridgetown School dedication. They also played at the formal opening of LaFeulle Avenue connecting Harrison Avenue with Queen City.

The P.T.A. furnished the uniforms and music stands, and the Men's Society donated \$75.00 for drums and other special band instruments and additional uniforms. On the day of the annual Holy Name parade, boys from the band took up a collection at the church doors after the Sunday Mass in order to raise more funds. Fifty-four boys and girls formed the band. Mr. Herman Ritter, manager of the Fillmore Music Company, was appointed band director.

In 1940 the sixty-one-member band made its first appearance at Crosley Field, playing for the Cincinnati Reds. At the end of the year the Western and Southern Life Insurance Company presented eight American flags to the school band. Another flag was added by the Green Township Veterans and their Auxiliary.

The 1930s brought in new liturgical fashions as the first gothic vestments were used in the church and the "War to End All Wars" began in Europe. Approximately one hundred of our young men and women served in the armed forces. The rationing of the food, gasoline, tires and sugar, the blackouts, and Civil Defense programs all changed parish life. Fewer social activities took place and time was devoted to helping the young men and women in the service of our country.

The parish sold defense stamps, Liberty and War bonds. First aid classes were held. Those with skills knitted squares for afghans and crocheted socks and sweaters. Parish groups cooperated with the Westwood Civic Association giving farewell parties for the inductees at the Westwood Public Library. Others made cookies for the U.S.O. once a month and sent cartons of cigarettes and boxes of candy to parishioners in the service. Some re-strung old rosaries and sent them to the chaplains. The P.T.A. purchased a \$1000.00 War Bond and six wheel chairs for the Ft. Thomas Convalescent Hospital. They also had the distinction of giving the largest donation of cakes, cookies and Easter

eggs to the U.S.O. on Easter Sunday. During World War II nine men from the parish gave their lives for their country.

In September of 1943, Mother of Mercy high school opened its doors to the girls of our parish. In the same month, Mr. Herman Ritter, who was director of St. Catharine Band, was forced to resign. Mr. Himmelman willingly accepted the leadership of the band.

On Sunday, July 2, 1944, at 4:00 p.m. Father Joseph Tieken was invested as a Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. The parish honored him with a banquet at the Hotel Alms on the following Sunday. Two hundred and twenty-five parishioners and friends attended. Monsignor Tieken was presented with a cash gift from the parish and a beautiful testimonial. The speaker of the evening was Mr. Carl Kleve who had lived in the parish since its beginning 41 years earlier.

A new era began. Parish activities flourished. The painting of the schoolrooms, cafeteria and auditorium during the summer months was paid by donations from the school children. The P.T.A. published the first program booklet and entered the school lunchroom into the Government Lunchroom program. A "Talks on Marriage" series was given in the auditorium by Father Paul F. Leibold, then Chancellor of the Archdiocese. The St. Ann's Ladies Society became part of the National Council of Catholic Women. On Sunday, June 15, Monsignor Tieken celebrated his golden jubilee, 50 years in the service of God. This Mass was the high point in the 43-year history of the parish. All the efforts and energies of every parish organization were directed toward this event. Preceding the Mass there was a procession from the school, to the rectory and then to the church. Archbishop McNicolas presided from the pontifical throne. The St. Catharine Choir, under the direction of Mr. Joseph Siewert, sang for the occasion, with Frank Punk, Al Suhre and Bert Vollman as soloists. The offertory prayer was set to music by Otto Bissmeyer, a member of the choir.

The reception in honor of Monsignor Tieken began at 5:30 p.m. and lasted until 9:30 p.m. Father, with his two sisters, Rose and Clara, and his brother William, received the people on the porch of the Sisters home.

On August 12, 1948, death came to this beloved pastor, Monsignor Joseph A. Tieken, in Good Samaritan Hospital, following surgery. At the time he was one of the oldest priests in active service in the Archdiocese. He was 74, in his 52nd year of priesthood, and 45th year as pastor of St. Catharine Church. Monsignor Tieken was buried on the church plot in St. Joseph's Cemetery, in Price Hill.

Monsignor is still remembered for his annual tree party on Christmas afternoon, picnics for the choir, ushers and church committees. He moved others by his interest in the Siena Club and the Society to Aid the Missions. Possibly his most unique effort was the annual egg collection for St. Francis Hospital at Easter time.

## **A Change Of Seasons**

On September 1, the parishioners welcomed Father William P. O'Connor, the new pastor. In his first address to the parish, he said, "We have had to be a militant nation more than once. All of us are soldiers of Christ, many of us soldiers of Uncle Sam as well." Father O'Connor, a veteran officer in both armies, was the epitome of eager service to others for the sake of God. Father was strictly military in his demeanor. Men who had known him in the service were always dropping in to visit him.

Inspections were the order of the day as on Saturday mornings the presidents of the P.T.A., the Holy Name Society and the St. Ann's Ladies Society inspected with Father the entire parish complex from basements to third floors. If everything was not in order, the maintenance man was called to task. Father also asked the women of the parish to volunteer to clean the church in the spring.

On November 1, 1949, Father O'Connor became ill and died. "The members of St. Catharine Parish knew Father as their pastor only a short time; but in the space of a little more than a year, he proved himself to be a real inspiration. His priestly virtues of kindness, patience and charity were evident to all." He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Dayton, Ohio, his hometown.

The St. Catharine of Siena Post #1626, Catholic War Veterans, was organized. From a humble beginning of fifteen members, it grew to almost one hundred and fifty members, the largest in Ohio, throughout the year. Father Emil Heiring was the first post chaplain. Due to Father O'Connor's untimely death, the post approved the application to the National Catholic War Veterans to change the name of the post to the Reverend William P. O'Connor Post with the proviso that it be sponsored by St. Catharine of Siena Parish.

On February 26, 1948, Father Heiring organized the St. Catharine Youth Association. Membership was opened to all young parishioners and included a grade school committee, chairmen of recreation, athletics and social activities, teenagers, members and representatives of the Sodalties, Boy Scouts, Cubs, Girl Scouts, Brownies, Siena Club, Sonodiers and Catholic Youth Council. Picnics at Gutzweiler's Grove and Harvest Home were given for the benefit of the Association.

In September 1948 the St. Catharine Youth Association, at the suggestion of Frank Feldhaus, began publication of the S.C.Y.A. News to publicize the athletic and other activities of that organization. Shortly thereafter on the insistence of Father O'Connor, this was changed to the weekly St. Catharine News in order to publish timely announcements and parish activities. These were edited and mimeographed by Robert J. Brodbeck for 16 years and were the forerunners of our present-day weekly bulletin.

Nine members of the Junior Sodality and the Sonodiers organized a girl's baseball team and joined the Westwood-Cheviot Girls Club League. The team was under the capable coaching of Frank Feldhaus. Another team in 1948 won nine straight games. The Youth Association flourished for seven years.

While our thoughts are with the youth of our parish, let us return to 1926. In that year the Girl Scouts make their first appearance at St. Catharine School. Then, having been interrupted by the Depression and World War II, an appeal was once again made for leaders and a reorganization program was inaugurated in 1948. The Boy Scout Troop was chartered on July 16, 1928 and re-chartered on February 28, 1937. Mr. Joseph Hellman served as scoutmaster for five years. Over the years the Scouts have been very active. In 1947 the Sonodiers (Society of Our Lady of Fatima) was formed. In 1948, the Catholic Youth Council unit was introduced for single men and women, ages 18 to 25 years. In 1957, realizing the urgent need for adult help in providing the financial support and direction for the athletic and social activities of St. Catharine's youth, a group of parishioners organized the "Dad's Club." Funds were raised so that football, basketball, baseball, soccer, track and wrestling could be offered for the boys. The girls had volleyball, basketball, softball, soccer and cheerleading. Mr. Tom Gargan served as president for six years.

It was in the capacity of teacher and later as rector of St. Gregory Seminary that Monsignor Roddy spent twenty-one years of his priesthood. With such a background of interest in the training and education of youth, Monsignor Walter A. Roddy came to St. Catharine Parish as pastor in 1949. The next year the parish inaugurated perpetual adoration. During the first few years, two people were assigned on an hourly basis for adoration during the daytime only, and then later on it was extended around the clock. This continued for nine years. But because of the problems of looting and vandalism, together with the fear that some people had of being out at night, the perpetual adoration was discontinued. Also during 1950 the current baptismal font, carved from Siena marble, was donated to the parish by the St. Ann's Ladies Society.

In September of 1951, one half of the auditorium was converted into two classrooms. Small meetings could be held in the remaining part although there was not enough space to hold card parties or other large meetings.

## Another Limb

The parish purchased the Kohl property at 2849 Fischer Place, across the street from the rectory. Meetings and card parties were held in the house on the property.

In 1952 work began on the addition to the existing school building. It was added to the east of the present school and was made of Indiana limestone to match the rest of the parish buildings. The building which housed the Siena Club had to be torn down to make way for the addition.

In July of 1953 the Golden Jubilee of the parish was celebrated. The church interior was decorated and the old bell was replaced with three church bells from the tower of Holy Trinity Church, which had been razed. The largest of the three bells was named St. Mary. It weighed 3,400 pounds, measured 57 inches in diameter, and had been cast in 1867. The next largest was named St. Joseph. It weighed 1,800 pounds, measured 47 inches in diameter, and was cast in 1854. The smallest, named St. Pius, weighed 1,100 pounds, measured 39 inches, and was cast in 1852. Parishioners donated their jewelry to the parish and a beautiful chalice of gold, silver and jewels was presented to the parish as a jubilee gift.

The Jubilee Mass on Sunday morning was observed at a General Communion Sunday for the whole parish "as in sincere gratitude and appreciation we turn to God and thank Him for his help and strength." There was also a special edition of the Parish News on this Sunday, omitting all advertising and giving brief statistics of the church's style of architecture, altar, statues, paintings, windows and stations. Important dates, pictures of the buildings and a list of the assistant pastors and vocations from the parish were included. The Most Reverend Karl J. Alter presided at the Episcopal throne, the Right Reverend R. Marcellus Ewagnger offered the Mass and the Reverend Alfred Stritch gave the sermon.

Gratitude was expressed to all the priests who were the minor ministers at the morning and afternoon ceremonies; to the Right Reverend and Very Reverend Monsignor, the Reverend Fathers and to the Sisters. Appreciation was expressed to the choir, the servers, the ushers and the school children and last, to the ladies of the parish who assisted in the preparation and the serving of the dinner for the priests.

The opening of school was delayed a few weeks until the new addition was completed. It was finally dedicated on Sunday, November 29. The two-story school addition included a kitchen and cafeteria in the basement, eight classrooms, and an office, giving the school a total of fourteen classrooms. The enrollment in school totaled five hundred and twenty children.

The 1950s sped by and everything seemed to change. After three years, the Korean War came to an end. Forty-nine parishioners had served in the armed forces. Three parishioners were given U.S. Treasury awards for selling the most Defense Stamps. For the remainder of the 1950s, the Glenmary Sewing Group was formed, and the members of the Ladies Society began embroidering and distributing "Baptismal Robes" to all

children baptized at St. Catharine's. The school adopted the uniformity of dress for the girls-a navy jumper and a white blouse.

On December 25, 1961, Pope John XXII officially convoked the Second Vatican Council. He called together over 2,000 Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and consultants. The purpose of the Council would be to increase the Catholic faith, to renew the morals of the Christian people, and to adapt church discipline to the needs and modes of the times. Four sessions were held, one each in 1962, 1963, 1964, and 1965. All aspects of Christian living were considered and many changes were recommended. Some people decried the apparent loss of identity by the church, while others praised the Church's response to the Spirit and the signs of the times.

Changes as they filtered down to the parishes were many. Greater participation by laity in what was once thought to be the private domain of the priest was probably the most dramatic change. Parish Councils and Commissions, lectors and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist were all the product of these changes. New rites for all the sacraments were decreed to increase lay participation.

St. Catharine Parish grew and adapted to these changes. Growth and change are never without pain, so these were difficult times as well. Some older forms of devotion continued as many families responded to the parish program for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

In February 1963, the Rosary Altar Society became the St. Catharine Women's Society. It opened its membership to all the women of the parish.

Once again the auditorium had to be converted into classrooms, using half the space and also the front basement room (the former kitchen). The girls' uniforms took on a new look from plain blue to plaid. The P.T.A. donated the Visual Education TV System in the classrooms. This included nine new sets, two converted sets, a master antenna, the installation, and the insurance.

In 1964, a new convent was built on the site of the old Kohl home on Fischer Place. And, because of crowding and financial difficulties the first grade of school was eliminated and the CCD program was inaugurated with classes on Saturday morning.

On February 28, 1964, Monsignor Roddy celebrated his Golden Jubilee. This day began with Solemn High Mass at 2:00 p.m. A special music program had been arranged with Frank Pund, Ron Hall and Robert Satzger. An informal dinner was served at the Western Hills Country club for Father's immediate family, classmates and special guests. Following the dinner Father received and greeted the parishioners from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the school cafeteria. On Tuesday of that week, a banquet was given at the Sheraton-Gibson Hotel for the whole parish.

After a few years of inclement weather and declining support from workers, it was decided to have the "Summer Fund Drive" in lieu of the annual festival.

## Still Another Branch

With the enrollment of more children extra classrooms were needed. A contract was awarded for the building of a new auditorium-gymnasium, a music room, a kitchen and four classrooms just north of the old church-school.

In 1965, the building was completed, and in May it was officially dedicated. Four performances of the play "Our Lady of Fatima" were presented by an all-parish cast. This was the first use of the new stage and auditorium.

In October 1966, Mr. Joseph Siewert, organist and choirmaster, celebrated 50 years at St. Catharine. He had played for thousands of Masses and ceremonies and trained between 500 and 600 boys in the church choir. Some members had been with him from the very beginning. Also this year St. Catharine Parish formed its first Parish Council. Lay ministry developed at St. Catharine's as members of the Women's Society began visiting regularly the nursing homes within the parish.

In March 1967, all Western Hills residents who desired to join with their neighbors in prayer for the protection of our service people in Vietnam and throughout the world, and for Divine guidance of our leaders, were invited to join St. Catharine Parish to "Pray for Peace." The first meeting was held at the Westwood Town Hall. It was interdenominational and emphasized the power of prayer as a force in this troubled world. The meetings were held every second month on Sunday from 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. at a different church for two and a half years.

In September of 1967, a parish-wide census was conducted involving two hundred and forty one members as workers. After sixty-four years the parish consisted of:

- 2,344 families (or households)
- 7,151 parishioners
- 894 Catholic elementary school students
- 258 public elementary school students.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati sponsored a major new program, called "Project Commitment," in the field of human relations and our Christian responsibility. The purpose was to motivate the community to take part in the development of practical solutions of the human and community problems in our city. Many of the parishioners participated.

Although our auditorium-gym and four classrooms building had been built only three years before, another classroom was needed. During the summer months, the new kitchen had to be converted into a classroom and a school counselor was added to the staff. To protect the school premises from trespassers, a chin-link fence enclosed the schoolyard. A nucleus of sixty-five persons helped in making the Study Weeks of "Synod 71" in the parish a success. Chairmen and co-chairmen headed the discussion committees for each

of the 11 topics. From January 5 to March 9, people of all ages met and discussed the documents.

In January 1972, an open-door service for the Westwood United Methodist church's anniversary and a gift pair of candelabra started something beautiful among several Catholic and Protestant churches in the Westwood-Cheviot vicinity. Warmly expressing these congregations' feelings of a unity under God, the brass candelabras from St. Catharine parishioners were presented by Father Roddy, to the United Methodist church as an anniversary gift for its altar. Inscribed on one candelabra is "In ecumenical love, St. Catharine Roman Catholic Church, January 16, 1972." Engraved on the other is "That we all might be one in Jesus Christ, 75th Anniversary." From the beginning grew a series of Christian unity services in January of each year with the host parish alternating from parish to parish.

In June, Monsignor Roddy requested retirement and was named "Pastor Emeritus" and Father Charles Caserta, the assistant pastor, was appointed administrator. And on October 4, 1971, the Italian Dominican Sister St. Catharine of Siena was declared Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI.

1971 was a peak year for enrollment in the school. Twenty-nine teachers were on the staff besides the student counselor, the music teacher and remedial teachers. In 1972, the figure dropped to 25 and each year afterwards one less teacher has been needed. In 1976 and 1977 the total teachers numbered 21, five sisters and 16 lay teachers.

The Meals-on-Wheels program was inaugurated this same year. A hot noon meal and a light evening meal was delivered six days a week, with a double delivery on Saturday. The program involved 75 workers with a limit of 24 meals being prepared and delivered. St. Catharine Parish was the first to make this meal program available in the western area of Cincinnati.

On Friday, February 4, 1972, Monsignor Walter A. Roddy died at St. George Hospital as he was repeating the last sentence of the prayer of the sacrament of the Anointing of the sick. Those who knew him knew him to be truly a man of God. His quick wit, subtle humor and deep humility were a few of the many gifts he had and shared with others. He was buried in St. Joseph's cemetery on the plot reserved for the priests of St. Catharine Parish.

On April 27, Father Ralph C. Bange, a native of Hamilton, Ohio and ordained in 1947, assumed the responsibilities and leadership of St. Catharine Parish as its fourth pastor. At the same time he continued as Assistant Principal at Elder High School until the end of the school year.

In May 1972, two sons of the parish celebrated their Silver Anniversary of ordination: Father George Hellman, O.F.M., and Father Pius Winter, O.F.M. On June 14, Father Bange celebrated his Silver Jubilee of Ordination. Mass was celebrated at 7:30 p.m. followed by a reception arranged by the parish societies for him and all the parishioners.

1972 was a year of renewal for St. Catharine's in many ways. The Archdiocese issued a new set of guidelines for parish councils so the Constitution and By-laws of St. Catharine's Parish Council were revised, largely under the direction of Father John Kummer, resident associate at St. Catharine's and teacher at Elder High School. The spiritual life of the parish took a new emphasis. A group began meeting weekly for shared prayer; scripture readings and Benediction preceded Parish Council meetings; penance services and Masses for the sick and elderly were celebrated.

In September 1973, the 70th Anniversary of the Parish and the 50th Anniversary of the second church were celebrated. An open house was sponsored by all the organizations for the entire parish. Tours of the church, school, rectory and convent were conducted, culminating in the auditorium where each organization had a table and a member present to explain its purpose and function and to stimulate the interest of parishioners in becoming members.

Also in 1973, the Prayer Circle was started. People were requested to notify the Prayer Circle of their petitions, and the members of the circle would pray for them. Thirty-one parishioners volunteered and five months later, there were fifty-two volunteers and two circles were formed. By the end of the year, seventy members were praying for the various needs of the parish.

In 1976 St. Catharine Parish experienced one of the significant changes of the Second Vatican Council when Sister Bernetta OSF (right) joined the staff as the first female pastoral minister. For fifteen years Sister ministered to the sick and the elderly at home, in hospitals and nursing homes. In 1991 Sister Ann Christopher SC (left) succeeded her in this position. Sister also did marriage preparation ministry, the women's society and parish mission outreach.

In October 1977, the Increased Parish Support Program reminded the parishioners that once again there was need for an increase in parish support as the parish's second commitment drive began.

## **The Tree In Full Bloom**

1978-our Diamond Jubilee Year! What better reason for celebrating! Seventy-five years of struggle and toil, happiness and joy, births and deaths, all part of life and this is the year the Lord has designated to bless us!

In January 1978, the good news echoed throughout the parish-the school building debt had been paid, in full. The old "Debt Retirement" envelope was put aside for awhile and in its place, "The Diamond Jubilee Project" envelope was substituted. Many parishioners had already contributed generously and work had begun on a new pipe organ. The original pipe organ was badly in need of repairs. So a contract for a new pipe organ to replace it was awarded to the Schantz Organ Company of Orville, Ohio, for \$99,244.00. Another severe winter, deep snows and freezing temperatures forced everyone to limit lighting and heating. Meetings were cancelled and games postponed, all in an effort to conserve energy.

In March, the Women's Society sponsored a spiritual celebration for the Jubilee Year with a parish "Evening of Recollection" by Father Jeremy Harrington. The St. Catharine Holy Name Society celebrated a Diamond Jubilee dance in the spring.

On the second Sunday of Easter, April 2, at 7:30 p.m. a beautiful and impressive Service of Dedication, the Solemn Blessing, and the Dedicatory Recital of the new pipe organ was given. The Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk officiated at the blessing and Mr. Michael A. Mantz, our organist of seven years, played the "Liepzig Chorales" by Johann Sebastian Bach, a collection of 18 compositions, bringing forth the crisp tones and voicing of the new organ.

Seventy-five years after its founding, St. Catharine Parish celebrated two milestones. First, the school building debt from construction projects during the previous two decades was finally paid off. Secondly, the parish decided to replace the original pipe organ, which was in very poor condition, with a new state-of-the-art instrument. The Schantz Organ Company provided the new organ, which had 44 ranks and 2400+ pipes, at a cost of almost \$100,000. The new organ was blessed and dedicated at a special concert on April 2 of the Jubilee Year.

On October 15, Archbishop Bernardin celebrated The Mass of Thanksgiving with the present and former clergy and religious of the parish in attendance. A dinner reception was held at The Farm after the liturgy that evening. The parish hosted a special homecoming reception for parishioners and friends the following week.

During the summer months, the P.T.A. members have been busy preparing a faculty lounge in Room 110, a former classroom in the front of the school building. The faculty now numbered 26, including music and remedial teachers and the school enrollment was 634.