

FINAL REPORT

on

ST. JOHN'S NEW SCHOOL

December, 1964

and

Parish History

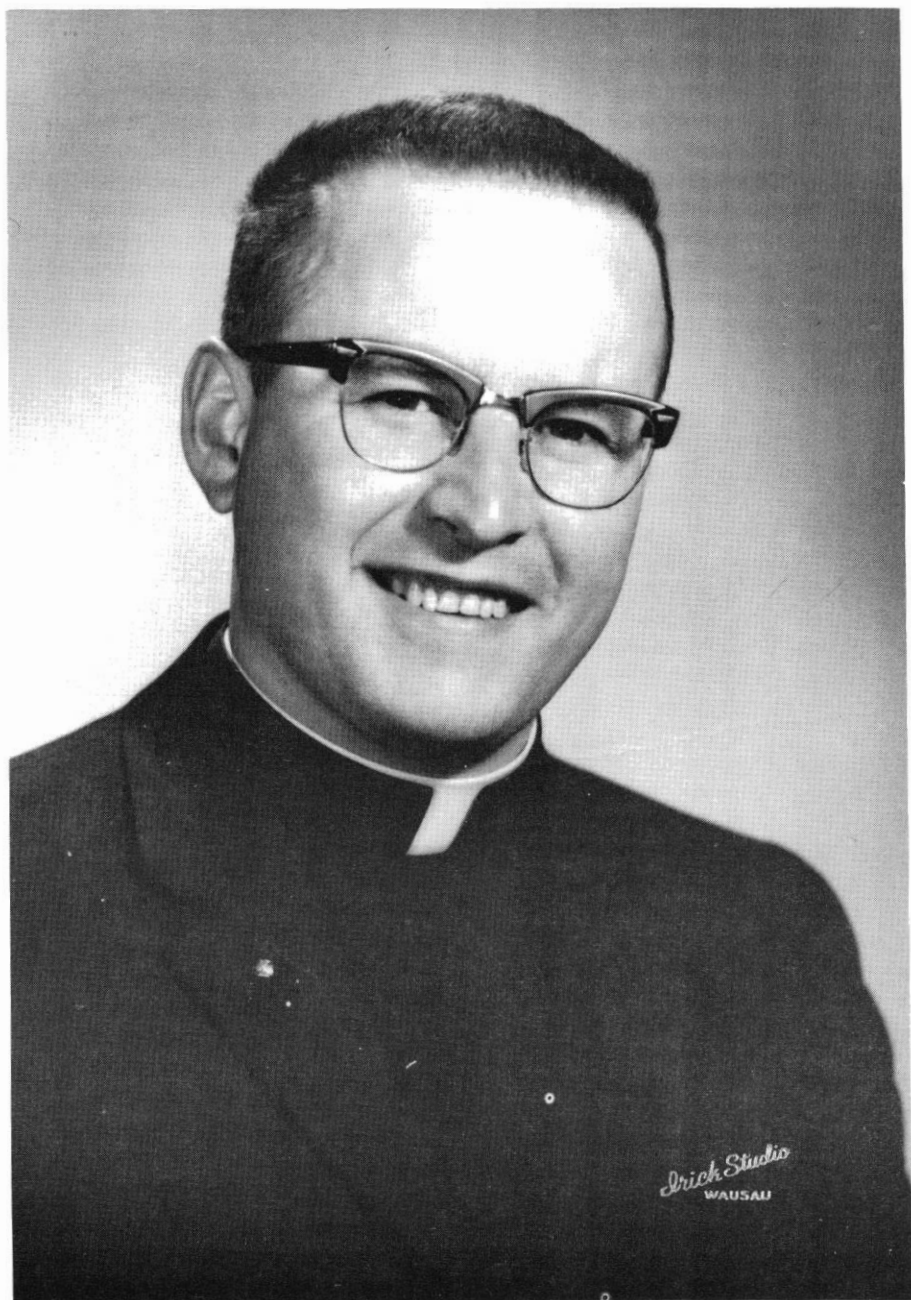
January 1957 to March 1st, 1965



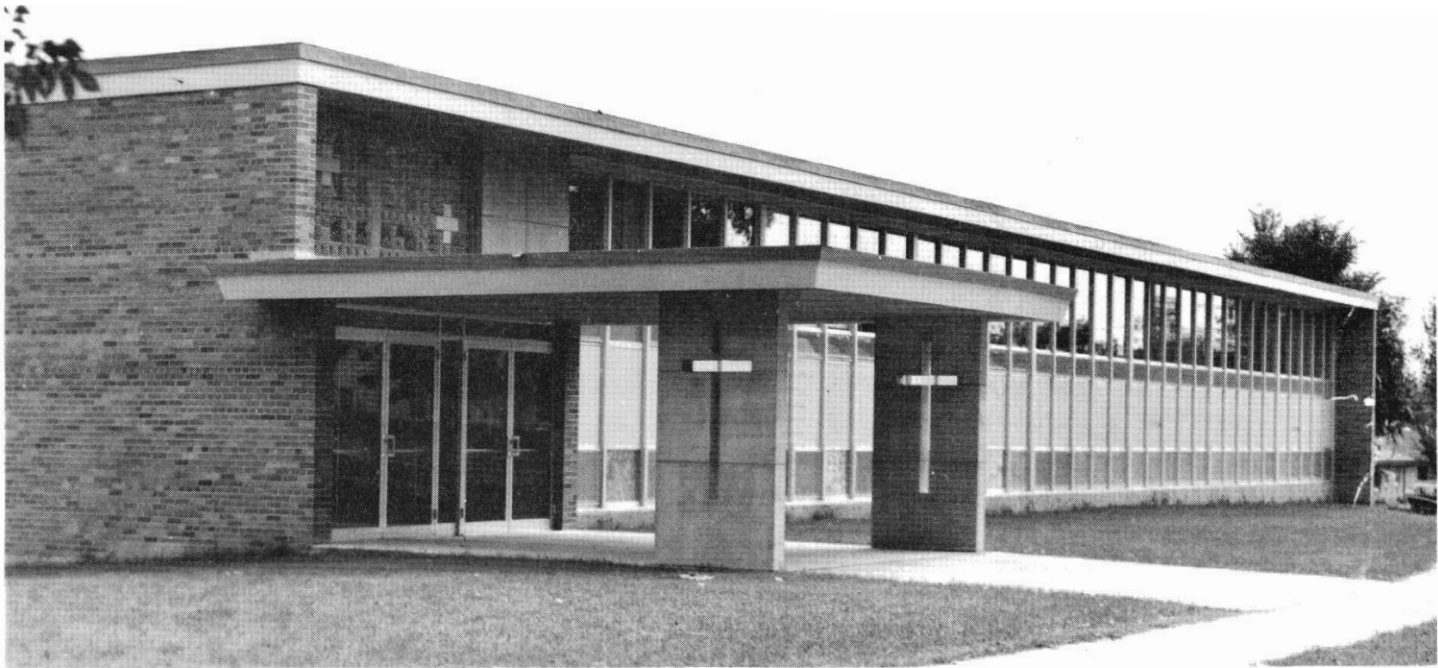
His Excellency, The Most Reverend Frederick W. Freking, D. D., Bishop of La Crosse



The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Paul J. Monarski, Pastor of St. John's Parish



The Reverend James J. Hagmann, Assistant Pastor of St. John's Parish



The New St. John's School



Ground Breaking Ceremony, April 24th, 1960



Corner Stone Laying Ceremony, November 11th, 1960



Dedication Ceremony, September 24th, 1961



Bishop Treacy and Assisting Clergy at the Dedication Ceremony
(from left to right) Fr. Frank Sullivan, Msgr. Urban Baer, Msgr. Paul Monarski,
Fr. Edward Schneider, S. J., Bishop Treacy, Fr. Eugene Zimmerman, S. J. Fr.
Earl Burns, S. J. Msgr. James P. Finucan, Fr. Thomas Finnegan, S. J.



The First Faculty

Sister M. Calixta, Sister M. George, Sister M. Laetaria, Sister Thomas Marie.
Mrs. Marguerite Ryan, Mrs. Veronica Duffy, Msgr. Paul Monarski, Mrs. Lucy
Mezera, Mrs. Anna Tarrence.



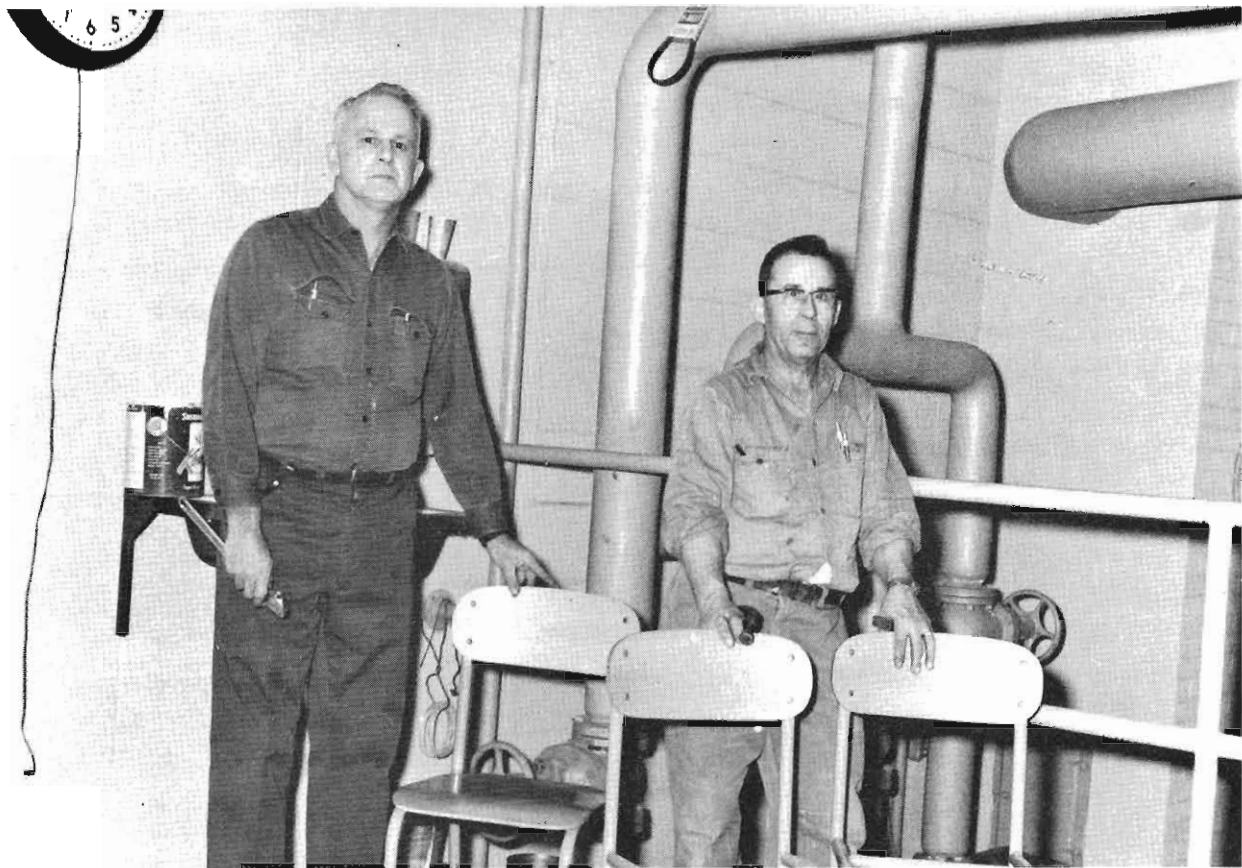
The Present Faculty

Sister M. Calixta, Sister M. Laetaria, Sister M. Angeleen, Sister M. George.
Mrs. Phyllis Brookens, Mrs. Mary Ivanell Bohringer, Mrs. Barbara Frommelt,
Miss Janet Harter.



School Lunch Culinary Personnel

Mrs. Albenia Sutton, Mrs. Margaret Gremore, Mrs. Marie Novak, Mrs. Sabina Strnad.



Custodians

Charles Draka and John Novey.



Flag Presentation, October 18th, 1962 by Mr. and Mrs. Wencil Lechnir. The Flag Pole donated by the Class of 1962.



Raising the Flag by Tom Peterson, Mike Novak and Bruce Cecka, after Dedication.

First Grade



Dining Room

His Excellency, Bishop Freking, about to bless the crowd who came to welcome him at the depot on his way to La Crosse for his Installation.



HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S PARISH FROM JANUARY 1957 TO MARCH 1st, 1965

Altho the members of St. John's Parish had just made the final payment on their new church at the end of the year 1956, they realized even then that another major building project confronted them, because more than 200 children were crowded in the four classrooms of the old school. Consequently, they decided at a parish meeting held on January 20th, 1957, to begin immediately to raise funds for the construction of a new school of adequate size and modern arrangement. Starting with \$2,468.43, which was the surplus in the New Church Fund, they raised more than an average of \$35,000 annually, mainly by personal contributions and parish activities, and succeeded to pay for the new school, which was built in 1960-1961, costing \$283,839, within a period of eight years. This is especially remarkable when we consider that during that same period of time the members of St. John's Parish were required to pay an assessment of \$12,000 toward the construction of the Cathedral in La Crosse, \$3,900 toward the building of the Newman Club in La Crosse, and \$11,216.90 toward the new Motherhouse of the School Sisters of Notre Dame at Mequon, Wis., besides the increased "overhead" connected with the new school, after it was built.

For these reasons we believe that the accomplishment of this feat, and how it was done, is worthy to be recorded along with other notable parochial events, which took place within the past eight years, in a special booklet, similar to those compiled for the same purpose in the past.

The sum of \$35,000 was raised in 1957 and about the same amount in 1958. Now because, by that time, there were 228 children crowded in the four classrooms of the old school it was considered high time to take definite steps to provide better educational facilities for the children of St. John's Parish. The first step taken toward that end was the appointment of a Building Committee, which was composed of the two parish trustees, Alfred Lechnir and Leary Peterson, along with Al Duve, John Pintz, and George Konicek.

Their first official act was to engage an Architect. On July 16, 1958 Carl Billmeyer, of Wisconsin Rapids, who had designed our New Church, was engaged to prepare plans for a school to meet the needs of our parish. At first many new school buildings in Wisconsin and Iowa were visited in order to get ideas suitable for our own plans.

In the meantime, several other ideas were discussed and suggested by members of the parish. A consolidated Catholic Grade School, merging St. John's and St. Gabriel's Schools, seemed to be favored by some. The purchase of St. Mary's Academy, which was being abandoned by the Sisters of Notre Dame, was urgently suggested by others. These suggestions were carefully investigated and studied and at a parish meeting held January 18, 1959 the Building Committee was officially charged to explore the possibilities of a merger of St. John's and St. Gabriel's Schools into one institution. On January 23rd, 1959, the Building Committee reported that they found such a merger impractical for a number of weighty reasons. However, some parishioners did not agree and continued to consider and discuss this merger favorably.

On account of this divergence of opinion, and also because of inadequate funds, it was decided to postpone the building of a school for another year. On July 5th, 1959, Rev. Mother of the School Sisters of Notre Dame sent notice that

she found it necessary to send only three Sisters for our school in the next September. Our protests were of no avail. It was necessary, therefore, to engage a lay teacher to replace that Sister. Accordingly, Mrs. Marguerite Ryan was engaged to fill that position, beginning in September 1959.

At the next parish meeting, held January 17, 1960, it was explained that the teacher situation, and the prospects of increased attendance at our school, made it necessary to start building a new one that year. Accordingly, our architect was instructed to have all plans and specifications ready, so that construction bids could be solicited from Contractors, and contracts awarded by March 15, 1960. This was especially necessary to determine as soon as possible how much of a building program our parish could afford. The plans for the new school originally included an auditorium-gymnasium. Since there was only \$106,000 in the building fund by that time it was feared that the cost of a gymnasium would make a large loan necessary and the interest cost too high.

Seven firms submitted bids on the general contract. Five of them bid on the plumbing, six on the heating and five on the electric wiring, of which the following were the lowest bidders:- For the General Contract, L. A. Bauer of Nekoosa, Wis., bid \$241,864. For the Heating and Plumbing, R. H. Lovold of La Crosse, Wis., bid \$64,210, and for the Electrical work, Pfaffins Electric Co., of La Crosse, Wis., bid \$20,858. These together with the architects fees and necessary equipment would bring the cost of the school and gymnasium to more than \$350,000, necessitating a loan of about \$250,000. Besides, it was quite possible that even these figures might be too low. The cost of building and equipping a gymnasium was estimated to be about \$100,000.

For these reasons there was considerable doubt and divergence of opinion among the parishioners regarding the practicability of including a gymnasium-auditorium in our building program. To solve this dilemma the Pastor addressed the congregation on Sunday, April 3rd, 1960, as follows:

"The members of St. John's Parish will have to make a very important decision within the next ten days, if they wish to take advantage of the lowest bids that were submitted on March 15th, on the proposed construction of our parish school and gymnasium, because the final contracts must be signed by April 15th.

Now it seems that several conflicting suggestions have been made for the solution of our building problems, which have caused confusion in the minds of many, and for that reason have had unfavorable effects on the unanimous cooperative spirit among the members of the parish, which must prevail if any building program we decided on, is to be successful.

For that reason our parish Building Committee suggested that an effort be made by me to clear up the misunderstandings that may hinder the cooperation of all members of St. John's Parish with reference to our building program.

1. There seem to be still some members of the parish who think that a consolidated school between the two parishes would solve our problem. After much discussion and a number of meetings, it was decided that a consolidated Catholic School in Prairie du Chien is not feasible,

a) Because such arrangements tend to kill parish spirit, ambition, pride and initiative. It would hinder and make impossible many phases of parish life, such as choir, altar boys, First Communion and other functions.

b) From the experience of the few places which have that arrangement, we learn that it causes dissension, contentions, and general dissatisfaction.

c) The economic advantages expected from such arrangement seem to sound

logical when considered from a mathematical angle of dollars and cents, but when considered from the requirements of the Industrial Commission for the safety and well-being of pupils, and where the human element with regard to administration are considered, the savings seem doubtful.

d) Such a consolidated school would also involve providing living quarters for the principal, the Sisters, and a chapel to accommodate at least 600.

e) Finally, if every member of St. John's Parish, including your Pastor were in favor of a consolidated school, it would still not be possible for us to have it as long as the other parish would not be in favor of it, which seems to be the case.

2. It has been suggested that St. John's Parish purchase the buildings of St. Mary's Academy and use them for a grade school, and also continue to use them for a girls' high school now, and possibly also for a boys' high school later. Now, that suggestion was also investigated thoroughly.

a) Two architects have inspected the buildings and advised that although as they stand, they are sound and in good condition, the remodeling required for our purpose and for the safety and health of the children, as required by the Industrial Commission, would be prohibitive. In remodeling, it must be remembered that tearing down is as expensive as building up.

b) I inspected those buildings twice recently and got the impression that beyond those accommodations now being used as a high school for girls, there would be few that we could use for the grade school without considerable remodeling. The auditorium and chapel are much too small, and the gymnasium altogether inadequate for our needs.

c) We were informed that it cost close to \$3,000 per month to conduct the present girls' high school. It is certainly reasonable to assume that if our grade school were added, the cost would be greater. Now the very best income in the history of St. John's Parish was less than \$2,000 a month. Even if the church dues were doubled, we could not afford to pay the current expenses at St. Mary's.

d) A new furnace, which would cost \$11,000, is needed immediately. The newest building on the campus is 47 years old, and the oldest is 88 years old. It is certainly reasonable to assume that the maintenance of these buildings would increase in cost rapidly, and perhaps become impossible to maintain.

3. The third question is whether or not we should build the school and gymnasium at this time. A gymnasium-auditorium is quite desirable as a part of a parish plan, especially in these days. When we first planned our school the gymnasium was included; three years ago it seemed possible to build both for the cost of what the school alone will cost now, namely, \$250,000 and \$335,000 for both.

It seems to be the general experience that a parish project costing about \$1,000 a family can be safely undertaken. Anything above that could cause financial hardship. Now we have about 250 families in our parish. Therefore, a \$250,000 project is a safe limit of our financial ability. That seems to be particularly true when we consider that our debt will be \$150,000 on the school alone, and the interest on the debt from 5% to 6%.

Even so, there is another item to be considered. The prospects are that something will have to be done within a few years at most, about housing our Sisters. It may be sooner than we expect that that problem must be solved. The furnace in the school is 26 years old, and it may be necessary to spend a considerable sum on maintenance otherwise. If this problem of housing the Sisters must be solved at a time when we are still deeply in debt on the school and gymnasium, we would have a difficult time financially.

When we consider building the gymnasium now, we must consider not only the added cost of \$84,500, but also the long interest period, the maintenance and equipment, which taken all in all has brought us to the conclusion that it is unwise to undertake the building of the gymnasium at this time. We will have enough of a job to handle the financial cost of the school alone, and the Sisters' quarters as soon as that can be done. This is my studied opinion as administrator of this parish. I have discussed this with a number of people, including the Bishop, the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, Diocesan Superintendent of Schools and others.

Now there seem to be some members of the parish who are set on having a gymnasium. It has been impossible to determine just how many are of that opinion, so the Building Committee has suggested that we put the matter to a vote. Accordingly, at the Offertory, papers will be distributed to you on which you will find figures indicating the cost of the school, and also a quotation from a recent letter from Monsignor Hammes, in which the Bishop's opinion and his are explained on this matter, and finally a ballot. Every registered member of the parish can vote - husband and wife have one vote."

The following is a portion of a letter written to Monsignor Monarski by Monsignor George A. Hammes, who is the Chancellor of the Diocese of La Crosse, dated March 28, 1960:

"It is the advice of His Excellency, Bishop Treacy, and I concur in his judgment, that your parish undertake at the present time merely the building of the school without the gymnasium. Since your parish has approximately \$106,000 on hand in the Building Fund, there would be a net debt of about \$150,000. This amount your parish can safely handle, even if we keep in mind that within a few years provision must be made for the housing of the Sisters. We would like to see you have the gymnasium, because it provides a place for the youngsters to have their games and athletic contests, but it is somewhat of a luxury.

Concerning the various alternatives that have been suggested in your building program, we do not think it feasible at the present time to have a combined school between the two parishes, and that it is highly impracticable to think of taking over the existing St. Mary's Academy for your school purposes. It is certain that the Industrial Commission would require such extensive remodeling and repairs, that you would spend more than the cost of your combined school and gymnasium in order to bring this building up to standard requirements. Then you would still have an old building with very expensive annual upkeep."

The Ballot distributed to be returned by Sunday, April 10th, 1960, read as follows:

Should St. John's Parish build a SCHOOL & GYMNASIUM at a cost of about \$335,000, beginning this spring? (Use X to mark) YES _____ NO _____

Should St. John's Parish build a GRADE SCHOOL ONLY at a cost of about \$250,000, beginning this spring? (Use X to mark) YES _____ NO _____

Name _____

Be sure to sign your NAME or your ballot will not be counted.

The results of the voting on the above were as follows: 193 ballots cast, 161 in favor of a school only, 24 in favor of a gymnasium also, 7 expressed no preference, 1 not signed.

That being settled, the ground breaking ceremony took place on Sunday, April 24th, 1960, after the 10 o'clock Mass. Construction work began May 2, 1960, but problems appeared right from the beginning. Because the measurements of the Surveyor's Plat at City Hall did not coincide with the actual building site, the contractors had difficulty in locating the footings according to the architect's plans. This problem seemed quite serious at first, but after a conference with the architect, who came by plane from Wisconsin Rapids in a short time, the difficulty was solved satisfactorily. However, many more problems and difficulties were encountered during the period of construction, which was first estimated to require eight months, but actually took sixteen months. All contractors involved in these difficulties were reasonable and made every effort to give satisfaction, but some of their workmen caused much trouble and aggravation to us and their employers.

The cornerstone, or more properly, the date stone, was placed November 11, 1960, with little ceremony, because it had to be done when the workmen were ready for it. This stone was donated by the Tri-State Monument Company of La Crosse, Wis., through the courtesy of their local representative, Anton Laskaskie. A list of the contributors to the new school building up to that time was placed in the stone along with a few more memorabilia. Many hindrances of various kinds and conditions caused the work to drag along through the whole winter, in fact, the building was not completed until August, 1961. However, everyone who came to inspect the school when completed was well pleased with the job. There were nine classrooms, an office, two teachers lounges, a dining room and a kitchen, a boiler room, four toilets, and six store rooms. The school was planned to accommodate up to 400 pupils. It is well built in every respect and modern in its arrangements and facilities.

St. John's new school was dedicated by His Excellency, Bishop John P. Treacy, in the afternoon of September 24th, 1961. There were short services in the church at which His Excellency commended the members of St. John's Parish for their interest in, and sacrifices for, Catholic Education, as well as for their generous support of diocesan building projects. He was then led in procession to the new school for the blessing and dedication ceremony at which he was assisted by the following clergymen: Father Edward J. Schneider, S. J., assistant at St. Gabriel's Church, as deacon; Father Eugene E. Zimmerman, S. J., of Campion, as subdeacon; Msgr. James P. Finucan, Chancellor, as master of ceremonies; besides Msgr. Urban Baer, pastor of St. Wenceslaus; Father Frank Sullivan, assistant pastor at Eastman; Father Earl L. Burns, S. J., pastor of St. Gabriel's Church; Father Thomas A. Finnegan, S. J., of Marquette High School, Milwaukee, and Msgr. Paul J. Monarski, pastor of St. John's Parish. The ceremony was concluded with Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament in the church.

Because we could not get permission from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to participate in The National School Lunch Program in time, the kitchen was not equipped when school started in September, 1961. That gave us plenty time to procure the necessary cabinets and other furnishings besides installing all the required equipment. Charles Draka, our regular janitor, and Johy Novey, did most of the work involved. All who have seen the kitchen, including the ladies who work in it, agree that the kitchen leaves little to be desired. It is ideal. The first cooks were Mrs. Marie Novak, Mrs. Norma Benish and Mrs. Helen Mezera. They established a reputation that made the lunches served in St. John's School the talk of the town. After the first year the day students at St. Mary's

Academy asked to be permitted to have lunch at St. John's School also, which is the situation now, so that about 250 children take lunch at school daily. Some days the number reaches over 300. Mrs. Novak and Mrs. Benish had to give up their jobs on account of their health, and Mrs. Mezera found another all-year-round job, so that now Mrs. Albena Sutton, Mrs. Marguerite Gremore and Mrs. Sabina Strand are the present cooks. They have continued the excellent work, and maintained the high reputation, of St. John's School Lunch Program.

Classes in the new school started on Tuesday, September 6th, 1961, with 225 pupils attending. Each grade had its own classroom, and, altho another Sister had been sent to us by Reverend Mother, there were only five teachers, four Sisters and one lay teacher. However, three teacher's aids were added to the staff to provide supervisory help to those teachers who taught two grades. Mrs. Anna Tarrence was engaged to help Sister Calixta with the 7th and 8th grades. Mrs. Veronica Duffy helped Sister Mary George with the 5th and 6th grades, and Mrs. Lucy Mezera helped Mrs. Marguerite Ryan with the 3rd and 4th grades. With that arrangement the teacher had to deal with only one grade at a time, while her aid supervised the other grade in study, recitation, or written work. Sister Thomas Marie taught the 1st grade and Sister M. Laetaria, who had come to us recently, taught the 2nd grade.

This arrangement worked very well for one year, until a few people with problem children in school blamed the school, specifically the lack of a certified teacher of every grade, for their children's difficulties. Unfortunately these few were able to persuade others, whose children were not doing as well in school as their parents expected, that the trouble was not so much with the pupils, but more with the lack of proper teachers. This impression spread and the expression of it grew in vehemence.

In the meantime, Mrs. Marguerite Ryan decided to accept a teaching position at the public school beginning in September, 1963, so, Mrs. Ruth Paulus was engaged to teach the 4th grade in her place. And, because the 3rd grade for 1963 was an unusually large class, a teacher for that grade was sought also. The one we had hired decided in August not to come, so, on account of the lateness of the season, three teachers taught the 3rd grade temporarily from September until mid November. Finally, with the help of Mr. Ambrose Carberry, the County Superintendent of Schools, we got Mrs. Coleen Stuttgen to teach the 3rd grade. She remained until the following June.

There were now only two teachers who taught two grades in our school. The pastor thought that this arrangement would be satisfactory, certainly not detrimental, for another year, until the debt on the new school would be paid. With the \$35,000 which the parishioners had paid into the building fund annually, the financial burden of four certified lay teachers could be borne without much difficulty. However, unfavorable criticism of, and dissatisfaction with, the teacher situation continued never-the-less, and increased the vehemence, so that the pastor decided that something had to be done about the matter. If St. John's School was scholastically below standard on account of our teacher arrangement, that would have to be remedied somehow, if not, the members of St. John's Parish had to be thoroughly convinced of that fact and be satisfied, because the financial status of the parish was such that hiring a certified teacher for eight grades was impossible while the parish was in debt to the extent of \$30,000, and the parish revenue remained as it was.

First of all the pastor established the fact that, despite the criticism by some of our own parishioners, St. John's School was not sub-standard or inferior. On the contrary, our school was rated as among the better schools of the diocese and city. This was the judgement of the Sister Inspector from the Diocesan Department of Education, who assured us, that altho a certified teacher for every grade was definitely the ideal, a great many schools of our country were operating quite satisfactorily without the ideal number of teachers, and that according to her judgement, St. John's School was doing very well. She pointed out that this fact could be proven by the results of the Iowa Basic Skills Test which our children had just completed. It was found that according to the results of this test St. John's School rated considerably above the National Norm and also above the Diocesan Norm which is even somewhat higher than the National Norm. Besides this, statements were obtained from the Principals of the local Public High School, Campion, and St. Mary's Academy, regarding the relative scholastic standing of students who graduated from St. John's School, and those from other schools, all of which were very favorable and some even highly complimentary. These statements were read to the congregation, and are still on file among other parish records.

While this did convert many to the conviction that St. John's School was at least standard in scholastic rating, considerable damage was done in the minds of some children by the unjust criticism they heard from their elders which had unfavorable effect on their attitude toward their teachers, which in turn, was detrimental to the teacher-pupil relationship in many ways and consequently to the work done by the school, so that it seemed more and more necessary to concede, if possible, to the demands of those who were still not satisfied with anything except a certified teacher for every grade. That was finally accomplished in this manner.

It was evident that some of the unfounded criticism of the school was due to the fact that many parents did not know what was really going on in their school so the pastor decided to organize a Home and School Association hoping that through it the parents would take opportunity to learn firsthand what was being done in school, and to bring about a better understanding and cooperation between the parents and the teachers. He also hoped through it to find ways and means to procure and support the arrangement of a certified teacher for every grade.

As the first step to that end, a general meeting of all parishioners interested in our school was held in the new school on December 18th, 1963, at which the nature and purpose of the Home and School Association was explained. The plan was unanimously accepted, a constitution adopted, and the first officers elected, to wit: Mr. Leary Peterson, president; Dr. Robert McWilliams, vice president; Mrs. Arnold Mara, secretary; and Mr. Albert Duve, treasurer. At a subsequent meeting of this executive board with the teachers and the pastor the school problems were discussed and evaluated. Among other things it was decided to use the organization of the Home and School Association as a means to solve the teacher problem of St. John's School. Accordingly, Mrs. Arnold Mara was appointed chairman of the Program Committee; Albert Duve, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; Dr. Robert McWilliams, chairman of the Teacher Procurement Committee; and Robert Halverson, chairman of the Membership Committee. These in turn selected their co-workers and began immediately to plan the agenda for the first official meeting of St. John's Home and School Association, which was held in the new school on January 28th, 1964. First on the program was a talk by the pastor

on the grave importance of cooperation between the parents and the teachers of their children. Next the chairman of the Teacher Procurement Committee reviewed the teacher problem and suggested, as the only practical solution, to have a certified teacher for every grade. Then the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee pointed out that to support such a program it would be necessary to increase the revenue of the parish by raising the church dues from \$1.00 to \$2.00 a Sunday. After some discussion, this suggestion was unanimously adopted by proper parliamentary procedure. Thereupon, the chairman of the Membership Committee accepted the membership dues of \$1.00 a family, as suggested in the meeting.

At the next meeting held on April 8th, 1964, the Teacher Procurement Committee was authorized to negotiate with prospective teachers and enter into contracts with them subject to diocesan regulations and the pastor's approval. The Ways and Means Committee offered a report on the church dues paid since the raise to \$2.00 a Sunday which showed that while there was a notable increase in the Sunday collections only one fourth of the parishioners had actually increased their church dues so far. It was stressed again that the wholehearted cooperation of all in this matter was absolutely necessary for the success of the recently adopted "teachers program."

At a final meeting of the school year, new officers of St. John's Home and School Association were elected for the next scholastic year. Dr. Robert McWilliams was elected president, Donald Lochner, vice president, Mrs. Marguerite Ryan, secretary, and Robert Halverson, treasurer. The Teachers Procurement Committee reported that two qualified teachers had been engaged and two more were expected to sign contracts shortly. Sir Bernard A. Kennedy, K. S. G., former Superintendent of School of Prairie du Chien, and Mr. Ambrose Carberry, the Superintendent of Schools of Crawford County, assisted the Teacher Procurement Committee considerably in their work. The Ways and Means Committee urged that, since the members of St. John's Parish were now committed to fulfill their part of these contracts, all should be reminded again by letter that their financial support was absolutely necessary for the success of the Home and School Association program. This was done and the letter was delivered to every household of the parish by the ladies when they made their annual "dinner collection" for the new school.

The Home and School Association continued to function effectively with regular quarterly meetings and well planned programs. At the first meeting of the new scholastic year held on September 17th, 1964, the new faculty of St. John's School was introduced to the assembly. They are now as then, Sister M. Calixta, teacher of the 8th grade and Principal of the school, Miss Mary Ivanell Bohringer, teacher of the 7th grade, Sister Mary George, teacher of the 6th grade, Miss Janet Harter, teacher of the 5th grade, Mrs. Barbara Frommelt, teacher of the 4th grade, Mrs. Phyllis Brookens, teacher of the 3rd grade, Sister M. Laetaria, teacher of the 2nd grade, and Sister M. Angleen, who replaced Sister Joan, teacher of the 1st grade.

Enough of the members of St. John's Parish increased their church support sufficiently to meet all of their parish financial obligations, including the final payment of the debt on the new school by the end of the calendar year 1964, so that St. John's Parish was once more entirely free of debt which has not been the case during most of its history.

The financial report on the new school building program as given in this booklet shows that a considerable portion of the building fund was acquired by parish activities. These were of various kinds. The most lucrative of them were the parish dinners and bazaars. The Holy Name Men and the ladies of the parish cooperated with the parish bazaars, but the ladies, under the leadership of Mrs. Andrew O. Novak, worked practically all of the time on some fund raising project, the success of which was, of course, also due to the cooperation of the other members of the parish. It is already evident that a new era has begun with regard to fund raising also. Whatever the methods chosen from now on, it is certain that they will have to be at least as successful as those in the past in order to meet the anticipated requirements of the future.

There were, of course, other noteworthy events during the past eight years of St. John's parish history, that deserve to be recorded. Our church was decorated for the first time during the month of July in 1959. The work was done within two weeks by the Murphy Brothers of Dubuque, Iowa, for \$2,500. The work was kept plain but became beautiful. However, it will need to be renewed soon.

On August 23, 1962, Bishop Treacy appointed Father Myron Meinen, originally from Tilden, Wis., as Assistant Pastor of St. John's Parish. It was intended mostly that he serve as assistant to Father Passehl, the Director of The Brothers of St. Pius X at De Soto, Wis., but, because the Brothers could not afford to support an assistant director, Father Meinen was sent here. Because he spent more than half of his time at the monastery his services to St. John's Parish were very limited. On October 25th, 1962, he was called to serve as Chaplain at St. Mary's Hospital at Sparta, Wis.

The graduates from St. John's School in 1962, donated funds for a flag pole to be placed in front of the school. Accordingly, a forty foot steel flag pole was fabricated and installed near the front entrance of the school by Charles Draka and John Novey. Mr. and Mrs. Wencil Lechnir donated a new fifty star American Flag for it in memory of their son, Lt. William Lechnir, who lost his life in the service of his country in World War II. This flag was presented, dedicated, and raised, in a special ceremony on October 18th, 1962, at which the entire school assisted.

On June 17, 1963, the pastor of St. John's Parish observed the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and the 35th anniversary of his pastorate at St. John's, by offering a High Mass of Thanksgiving, which was attended by a number of his parishioners. Despite his protestations against any other public observance of the occasion, he received many expressions of prayerful good wishes and a generous purse, as a token of good will from many of his parishioners and friends in Prairie du Chien and a few other places. We wonder if such a double anniversary will ever be observed by any future pastor of St. John's Parish. It is at least until now somewhat of a record.

On July 3rd, 1963, Father James J. Hagmann came to St. John's Parish as Assistant Pastor. He had been appointed on June 12th, but was permitted to take three weeks vacation before taking up his duties here. Father Hagmann was born May 4, 1932, in Eau Claire, Wis. He attended Sacred Heart grade school there, high school and college at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and finished his preparation for the priesthood at St. Francis Major Seminary in Milwaukee. He was ordained May 24, 1958, at Holy Cross Seminary by His Excellency, Bishop Treacy. His first appointment was to serve as Assistant Pastor at Holy Name Parish in Wausau. After about three years he was appointed assistant pastor at St. Mark's parish at Rothchild, Wis., where he remained for two years until 1963.

During these five years he also taught religion at Newman High School and the Newman Club in Wausau, Wis. At St. John's in Prairie du Chien, he took over the work done by Father Eugene E. Zimmerman, S. J., of Campion, faithfully and ably for more than nine years, hearing confessions, offering the 5:30 Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and helping with convert instructions, also substituting for the pastor during his occasional absence. With Father Hagmann assisting the pastor in practically every phase of parish work, it has become possible to give St. John's Parish more and better pastoral service. There are now four Masses on all Sundays and Holy Days, and two Masses on every week day. A parish bulletin is issued every Sunday. Every phase of parochial work is given regular and careful attention so that the fullest benefit of religion may be available to every member of the parish.

In sympathetic reaction to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963, Mrs. Gertrude Bohonek and her sons, Felix and Robert, donated an American and a Papal flag to be placed in the sanctuary of the Church in Memory of our late President. The flags were blessed and dedicated at a special memorial service in church on Sunday, February 23, 1964. A short time later, Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, sent to Mrs. Bohonek and sons, grateful acknowledgement and appreciation, in the name of the Kennedy family, for the presentation of the flags, and for the memorial service in the church.

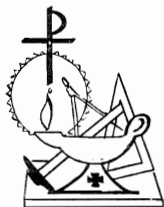
On June 14, 1964, Father Gregory Lucey, a newly ordained priest of the Jesuit Order, whose parents are members of this parish, offered his First Solemn High Mass in St. John's Church. His brother, Father J. Roger Lucey, S. J., assisted him as deacon. Among the other distinguished guests, besides the members of his family, was Governor John Reynolds, a close friend of Patrick J. Lucey who is now our Lt. Governor. This was the only "First Mass" celebrated in St. John's Church in the history of the parish. However, there are definite prospects for more, beginning in the very near future. Five young men of this parish are preparing for the priesthood now. Frater Ludolph (Lawrence Mayer) who is at St. Norbert's Monastery in De Pere, Wis., will probably be ordained this year. James O'Kane is a Scholastic of the Jesuit Order, teaching at Pine Ridge, South Dakota; his brother Jerry O'Kane is a Jesuit Novice at St. Bonifacius, Minn. Brother Justin (Richard de Ranitz) is at the Dominican House of Studies in River Forest, Ill., and William Grelle is studying philosophy at Holy Cross Seminary in La Crosse. Seven young ladies of St. John's Parish are Sisters in religion. Sister M. Gerelda, (Ruth McKillip) and Sister Miriam Thecla (Mary McKillip) are School Sisters of St. Francis; Sister M. Armena (Mary Balk), Sister M. Henriann (Alice Lechnir) and Sister Ann Denise (Sharon Benish) are School Sisters of Notre Dame; Sister M. Thaddene (Doris Check) is a Franciscan Sister of Dubuque, Ia.; and Sister Marie Laboure (Charlotte Scheckel) is a Sister of St. Francis of P. A. These are the only Sisters from the parish living now, but there were more before, who have died. The picture with reference to vocations to the religious life is probably the brightest it has been in the history of the parish.

The liturgical changes ordered by the Second Vatican Council as set forth in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy were duly explained to the people and rehearsed beginning in September 1964, so, that by the first Sunday of Advent all liturgical changes prescribed up to that time were introduced, and now that the first Sunday of Lent is near, when more changes go into effect, the members of St. John's Parish are again ready to observe everything as prescribed. Sister Mary George, our organist and directress of our Childrens' Choir and of the High School

Sodality Choir, has done very well to get these groups trained for these liturgical changes. Our Adult Choir of mixed voices, which sang at Midnight Mass last Christmas, under the direction of Mr. David Krieg, may not have the opportunity to sing again for some time because approved polyphonic music may not be readily available. However, we are certain that our adult choir will be willing to start practicing all over again if, and when that becomes necessary.

Because it took some time to prepare this booklet, after the annual parish financial report was issued, we got almost two months into the new epoch of St. John's history. We consider this the beginning of a new era, first because one building project has just been completed and another is already in the planning stage, the construction of a new convent; secondly, the liturgical changes will have very definite effects on our parish life; and thirdly, because a new Bishop has been appointed to the diocese of La Crosse, which will certainly have very important effect on the history of St. John's Parish for some time to come.

Just as we were about to write the concluding paragraph of this booklet we learned that His Excellency, The Most Rev. Frederick W. Freking, D. D., would be installed as Bishop of the diocese of La Crosse on Wednesday, February 24. Accordingly, a demonstration of welcome was planned and later given to His Excellency by about 400 people at the Burlington depot the day before his installation, during the five minutes that his train stopped here on the way to La Crosse. We were told that His Excellency was very much pleased with the "warm welcome" he received from a portion of his flock at Prairie du Chien, his first stop in his new diocese. We were able to get a picture of His Excellency as he was about to bless the crowd from the steps of his train as it was leaving to continue on its way to La Crosse. No doubt Bishop Freking will be actively involved in future events of the history of St. John's Parish and we feel certain that he will have the wholehearted cooperation of the members of St. John's Parish in all matters and at all times.



FINAL REPORT ON THE NEW SCHOOL FUND

RECEIPTS

By Regular Contributions from Parishioners-----	\$ 160,375.84
By Special Contributions-----	23,642.23
By Parish Activities -----	79,196.34
From the General Treasury of the Parish -----	17,250.00
From Interest on Funds Invested -----	<u>6,391.93</u>
TOTAL RECEIPTS-----	\$ 286,856.34

EXPENDITURES

Architects' Fees-----	\$ 17,667.00
Insurance and Ads for contract bids-----	267.80
General Contract -----	167,021.29
Heating and Plumbing Contract-----	49,801.30
Electric Wiring Contract -----	15,632.55
School Furniture and Equipment-----	6,461.97
Wardrobes and Utility Cabinets-----	4,140.00
Kitchen Cabinets and Equipment-----	4,203.47
Asphalt Paving on Playground-----	4,321.55
Dirt and Landscaping-----	439.00
Interest on Loan of \$ 100,000 -----	12,489.78
Miscellaneous-----	<u>1,394.22</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES-----	\$ 283,839.38
SURPLUS BALANCE -----	\$ 3,016.96

SPECIAL DONATIONS

By Class of 1962-----	A Forty Foot Flag Pole
By Mr. and Mrs. Wencil Lechnir-----	Five by Eight U. S. Flag
By Msgr. P. J. Monarski - all Crucifixes and Holy Water Fonts-----	\$ 50.00
By Msgr. P. J. Monarski - Playground Basketball Equipment-----	152.73
By Frank Stark - Two Basketballs-----	10.00
By Frank Stark - All Furniture for Teachers' Lounges-----	286.00
By Rosary Confraternity-----	Principal's Office Desk and Chair



Compiled by -
The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Paul J. Monarski, Pastor



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