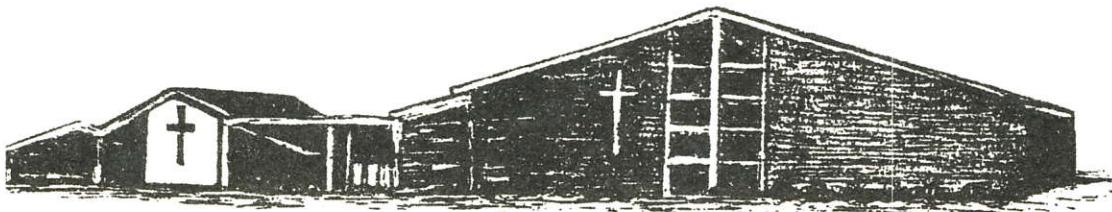
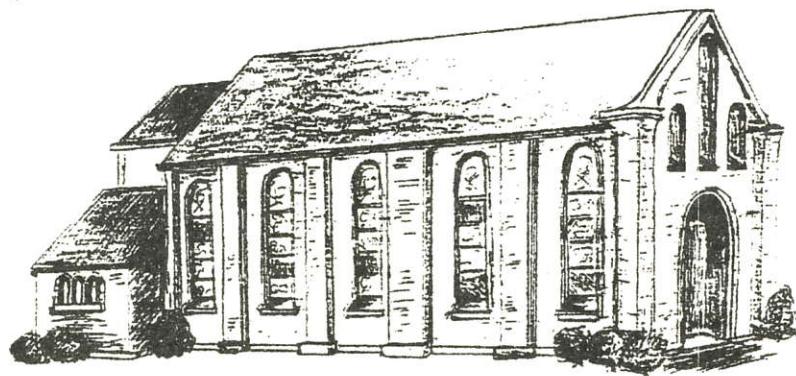
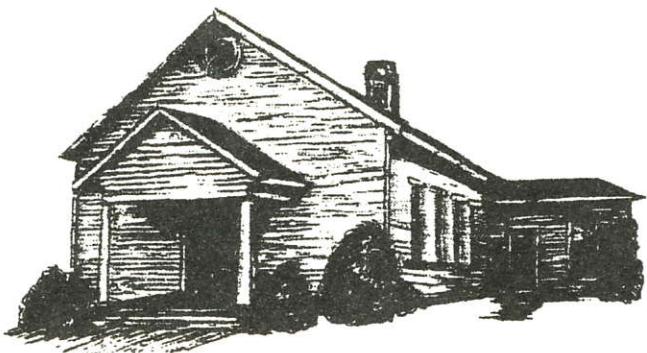


# *Our Lady of Victories*

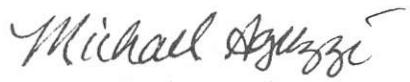
*Cleveland, Mississippi*



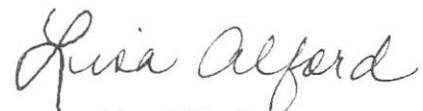
*A 75 Year Celebration  
1924-1999*

Information provided in this booklet is derived from many resources. Excerpts from Dr. William LaForge's "Fifty Year History", Chancery Office biographies, The Bolivar Commercial, Mississippi Today, former priest interviews, parish records, and past and present parishioners serve as the foundation for the information presented. In our very best attempt, statements are based on factual data.

We hope you enjoy taking a look back into our past. This history, "A 75 Year Celebration", is a direct result of many working together. Special thank you to Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church for the fond memories from our past and hope for a bright and promising future.



Michael Aguzzi



Lisa Alford



*Bishop John E. Gunn*

1911



*Bishop Richard O. Gerow*

1924



*Bishop Joseph E. Brunini*

1967



*Bishop William R. Houck*

1984

# *Our Lady of Victories*

*A 75 Year Celebration*

*August 15, 1999*

*Cleveland, Mississippi*

#### ON THE COVER:

The cover page depicts three different physical locations of Our Lady of Victories over the past 75 years. The top graphic was our first church located at 114 Collins Street near Downtown Cleveland. This facility served our parish from April 1924 until January 1939. The center graphic represents our second location at the corner of Court Street and First Street, occupied from January 1939 until October 1970. The bottom graphic illustrates our current location at Bishop Road.

Church sketches by Lisa Alford.

*Biographical Sketches of the Religious who  
have served  
Our Lady of Victories, Cleveland, Mississippi*

1912

1. Placide Gabrielli

Born: July 6, 1878, in Florence, Italy

Place of Ecclesiastical studies: Rome and Einsiedeln, Switzerland

Ordained: August 10, 1902, in Siena, Italy for the Diocese of Siena.

Came to Natchez December 13, 1912, and was appointed to Shelby,  
Miss. on the same date.

Left diocese via marriage license December 31, 1923.

Left: 1924



1924

2. E. Victor Rotondo

Born: March 27, 1887, at Villa Sta. Lucia, Frosinone, Italy

Place of Ecclesiastical studies: Abbey St. Andre, Bruges, Belgium-  
Louvain, Belgium

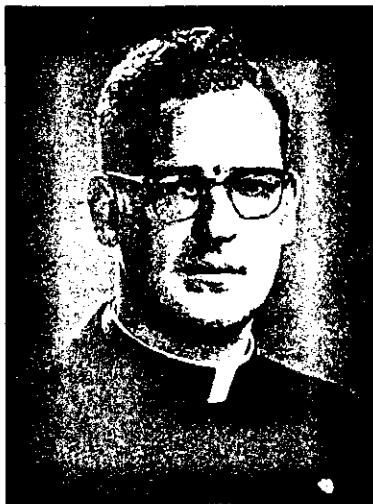
Ordained: August 6, 1910, at Abbey St. Andrew, Lophem, Belgium

**Came to Diocese in 1924 and was assigned to "Cleveland and Missions."**

In November of 1946, Father Rotondo was assigned as Pastor in Shelby.

During the early part of 1947, Father Rotondo suffered from poor health and was granted a year's leave of absence in order to travel to Italy. Father Dominic Downs, O.S.B. took care of the parish. By 1949 Father Rotondo feared that he would not be able to take up Parish work again and remained in Italy with the Bishop's approval and \$40.00 a month for support. Father Rotondo wrote that he wished not to be a drain on the Diocese and that \$20.00 would be sufficient. He also sought to have his American citizenship continued.

Father Rotondo died at the Villa Santa Lucie, Frosinone, Italy October 15, 1954.



1946

### 3. Peter Joseph Quinn

Born: June 6, 1901, at Ballaghlea, Ballygar, County Galway, Ireland

Place of Ecclesiastical studies: St. Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland

Ordained: June 12, 1927, at St. Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland

Came to the Diocese on November 4, 1927.

Father Quinn served in Jackson, Biloxi, Pascagoula, Vicksburg, and as Diocesan Director for the Boy Scouts and Youth Director for the Diocese.

In 1941, Father Quinn served as Chaplain for the U. S. Army. He received an honorable discharge on January 18, 1946, and was appointed to Leland as Diocesan Director for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. **He was assigned to Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland on November 27, 1946.**

His successive appointment in 1948 took him to St. Mary's in Jackson.

Father Quinn passed away on April 30, 1949.



1948

4. John Henry Niemeyer

Born: June 14, 1910, at Breese, Illinois

Places of Ecclesiastical Studies: St. Bernard Minor Seminary, St. Bernard, Alabama; Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Ordained: June 7, 1941, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Seneca, for the Diocese of Natchez.

Father Niemeyer served in Natchez, Bay St. Louis, Hattiesburg and Greenville. **He was appointed to Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland on September 17, 1948.** His successive appointments took him to Picayune, Leland, Shelby and Natchez.

In 1975, Father Niemeyer retired. He passed away at St. Dominic's Hospital in Jackson on March 8, 1997.



1951

## 5. Eamon Mullen

Born: August 19, 1918, in Carrigans, Ballymote, County Sligo, Ireland

Ecclesiastical studies: St. Patrick's College in Carlow

Ordained: June 7, 1942

Monsignor Mullen's appointments in the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson prior to Our Lady of Victories, included St. Peter's in Jackson and St. Joseph's in Greenville. He was named as Pastor to OLV on June 15, 1951.

After leaving Cleveland, Monsignor Mullen served in many capacities throughout the Diocese including Mississippi City, Meridian, Indianola, Leland, Vicksburg and Ocean Springs. He was appointed Dean of East Central Deanery; Chairman, Sacred Music Commission; named Domestic Prelate by Holy See; Dean of North Central Deanery, Diocesan Consultor, Promotor of Justice, Diocesan Tribunal; Member of Board of Advisors to Liturgical Apostolate; member of Personnel Committee of Senate of Priests and served in the Diocese of Biloxi following its establishment in 1977.

## **Photo not Available**

**1954**

### **6. James Joseph Curley**

**Born:** March 10, 1917, at Cappamore, Clonown, Athlone, County Roscommon, Ireland.

**Ecclesiastical Studies:** Summerhill College, Sligo and St. Patrick's College, Carlow.

**Ordained:** June 7, 1942, at Carlow.

Father Curley, in company with Fathers Thomas Williams, Eamon Mullen and Peter Paul Hession—four young priests who had been ordained in Ireland and had been waiting for quite a while to get passage to America—arrived in Newfoundland on October 24, 1942, and reached New York the same day. The Bishop, on account of the War making it so difficult to get transportation, had almost despaired of getting these four priests over from Ireland, but finally through a chain of efforts of various people, they were granted priorities and were used in the Diocese to great advantage.

He arrived in Mississippi on November 11, 1942, and was stationed temporarily at Vicksburg and then sent to Greenwood in December. He was transferred to Pascagoula. Father Curley moved to Biloxi in 1946 and then to St. Peter's in Jackson by 1948. During this time, Father Curley and Father Eamon Mullen got the approval of the Bishop to sponsor Radio Talks: "Faith for Life." By August of the same year, however, he was transferred to Pass Christian, and then sent back to Jackson in 1950. When Bishop Gerow was invited to have a private audience with the Holy Father, he was informed that he could bring others with him. Father Deignan, Father Curley and Monsignor Gmelch were included. In 1954 Father Curley was appointed as Pastor to Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland. He resigned in 1955 and left on March 16. By May, he was an assistant at the Parish of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. At the time of his death, June 10, 1978, he was Director of the Office of the Department of Pastoral Care at Incarnate Word Hospital in St. Louis.



1955

7. John A. Bryan

In 1941, John A. Bryan, a student at Carlow was recommended to the Bishop as a student for the Diocese of Natchez. He was accepted and was ordained to the Priesthood on June 2, 1946, in St. Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland.

He arrived in Mississippi on March 25, 1947, and was appointed as an Assistant to the Church of Our Lady of the Gulf at Bay St. Louis. Successive appointments included Clarksdale, Assistant Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for the Deaneries of Clarksdale, Greenwood, and Tupelo; and assistant in Hattiesburg and Biloxi. **Father Bryan was appointed Pastor of Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland on May 20, 1955.**

On May 11, 1955, the Bishop had received a letter from Catholic attorney, Mr. Feduccia, advising him of Fr. Curley's plans to purchase land. The Bishop approved if Fr. Bryan approved, but he preferred to wait and the lot was not purchased. They did, however, buy a jeep for \$500.00 to be used in the care of people living in rural areas. As Dr. McHardy would use the jeep, he too contributed \$100.00 towards its purchase. By 1956, Father Bryan established a Curia of the Legion of Mary and the Bishop was delighted. Father Bryan was also anxious to buy land for a school, but was unsuccessful. In June of 1958, Father Bryan was appointed Pastor at St. Patrick's in Meridian.



1958

8. Patrick Joseph Hannelly

Born: March 15, 1920, at Clooncundra, Castlerea, County Roscommon, Ireland

Adopted for the Diocese of Natchez in 1944 and was ordained at St. Patrick's College, Carlow on June 6, 1948. He arrived in Mississippi in 1949. Father Hannelly was appointed to Sacred Heart Church in Hattiesburg and later that year to Our Lady of Victories in Pascagoula.

In 1950, Father Hannelly became ill and for several months, was a patient at Foundation Hospital in New Orleans where he was visited by Bishop Gerow and Father Koury. He recovered and in 1955 was appointed to St. Elizabeth's in Clarksdale. **On October 2, 1958, Father Hannelly was appointed as Pastor at Our Lady of Victories Church in Cleveland.**

After leaving Cleveland, Father Hannelly was appointed to Canton, Waveland, Yazoo City, Crystal Springs, Laurel and St. Bernadette Parish in Waynesboro in 1977. On February 15, 1990, Father Hannelly passed away in Waynesboro.



1967

9. John Leonard

Born: August 17, 1920

Ecclesiastical Studies: St. Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland

Ordained: June 6, 1948, at St. Patrick's College

Came to the Diocese on December 19, 1948. He was assigned to St. Mary's in Jackson and then to Vicksburg, Bay St. Louis, Yazoo City, and Belzoni.

**On May 15, 1967, Father Leonard was appointed to Our Lady of Victories Parish in Cleveland. In September of the same year he was appointed as Newman Chaplain at then Delta State College.**

In August of 1976, Father Leonard was assigned to St. Mary's Batesville; and Mission, St. John the Baptist in Sardis. Other appointments include St. Francis of Assisi in Shaw in 1980 and in 1986, St. Paul's in Vicksburg. In September of 1992, Father Leonard retired.



1976

10. Michael S. Flannery

Born: July 30, 1940, at Limerick City, Ireland

Place of Ecclesiastical studies: St. Patrick College, Thurles, Tipperary, Ireland

Place of Ordination: Cathedral of Assumption, Thurles, June 14, 1964

Ordained for the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson and arrived in Diocese September 7, 1964.

Father Flannery was first appointed as Assistant at St. Mary's in Jackson and then to OLV in Pascagoula. In September 1971, he was assigned to Saltillo Mission in Mexico. Subsequently in 1974, Father Flannery was appointed Pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Rosedale. **By 1975, he was named Director of Campus Ministry for Delta State University. On August 1, 1976, Father Flannery became the Pastor at Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland.**

Successive appointments include Pro-Synodal Judge to the Marriage Court in 1977 and 1980. In 1981, he was appointed to St. Elizabeth's in Clarksdale and in 1983 he was appointed as Defender of the Bond, Pro-Synodal Judge. In September of that year, he undertook Canon Law Studies at the Catholic University of America and in 1984 Canon Law Studies in Ottawa, Canada. Other appointments have been Judicial Vicar, Administrator Pro-Tem in Brandon, Associate Chancellor, Diocese of Jackson, Vice-Chancellor and chaplain to the Carmelite Monastery. In 1988 he was elected to the office of Vice-Officialis for the Provinces of New Orleans and Mobile for a five year term, in 1994, Vicar-General and Moderator of the Curia, and appointed to the Priests' Council until 1996. Father Flannery continues in the Diocesan Chancery Office today.



1981

### 11. Bernard Christopher Haddican

Born: November 18, 1933 in Brooklyn, New York

Place of Ecclesiastical Studies: Cathedral College, Brooklyn; St. Joseph Seminary, St. Benedict, Louisiana; St. John's Seminary, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Place of Ordination: St. Mary's Cathedral, Natchez, MS, May 28, 1960

Ordained for the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson.

In 1960, Father Haddican was appointed Assistant to St. Mary's Cathedral, Natchez and Assistant to Our Lady of the Gulf in Bay St. Louis.

Successive appointments included Sacred Heart in Hattiesburg, St. Richard's in Jackson, and Assistant at St. Joseph's in Greenville. He was assigned the responsibility of Newman Center Chaplain at Oxford and Chaplain to the State Prison at Parchman while he was Pastor of St. Mary's in Shelby.

Father Haddican served as Pastor in Vicksburg and as area Chaplain for the Andrew Jackson and Choctaw Councils of the Boy Scouts. In August of 1977 he was appointed to St. Elizabeth's in Clarksdale and as the Dean of the Northwest Deanery. **On August 26, 1981, Father Haddican became the pastor at Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland.**

In 1984 he was also assigned the additional responsibility of Pastoral Care for Sacred Heart Parish in Rosedale. In 1990, he was appointed to Defender of the Bond in the Diocesan Tribunal. Father Haddican retired in February of 1991 and passed away on January 28, 1996.



1989

12. Thomas Lalor

Born: October 23, 1940 at Kilbeggan, Westmeath, Ireland

Place of Ecclesiastical studies: St. Patrick College, Carlow, Ireland

Place of Ordination: Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow, June 1966

Ordained for the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson. Arrived in the Diocese on September 1, 1966 and was appointed as an assistant at Nativity Church in Biloxi. In 1970 he was sent to St. Mary's Parish in Jackson and was a member of the Diocesan Board of Consultors for 3 years.

Father Lalor was an assistant Pastor and Administrator to St. Stephen's Parish in Magee and was a member of the faculty at St. Joseph's High School in Greenville. He also served as a faculty member at Cathedral High School in Natchez and Associate Pastor. **On July 1, 1989, Father Lalor was appointed Administrator to Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland.**

Subsequently, Father Lalor has been Pastor at St. Therese in Jackson and appointed Dean of Deanery I and a member of the Priests' Council until 1992. He was appointed as a member of the College of Consultors for two years and then in 1996, Father Lalor received the appointment as Pastor to St. Therese in Jackson for 6 more years.



1990

13. Charles Joseph Bucciantini

Born: September 24, 1946, at Natchez, Mississippi.

Place of Ecclesiastical studies: St. Joseph Seminary, St. Meinrad Seminary and Catholic University

Academic Degrees: B. A. (Philosophy) S. T. B.

Ordination: May 27, 1972, Natchez, Mississippi

Ordained for the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson and arrived in the Diocese on July 1, 1972.

By September, Father Charles was appointed to Our Lady of Fatima in Biloxi and then in 1975 to Clarksdale as associate pastor to St. Elizabeth's. In 1977 Father Charles was named as Approved Advocate and Auditor for the Marriage Court and to the Priest Council and Board of Consultors. Other assignments included Associate Pastor at St. Joseph's in Starkville and Pastor at St. James in Leland. **On January 17, 1990, Father Charles Bucciantini was named as Pastor at Our Lady of Victories in Cleveland. In 1991 he assumed the responsibilities as Sacramental Minister at Rosedale.**

In 1994 he was appointed Dean of Deanery IV. In 1996 Father Charles was reappointed Pastor at OLV and as Newman Chaplain at Delta State University. Today, Father continues as our Pastor and as Sacramental Minister to Sacred Heart in Rosedale.



### **Sister Mary Gianini**

Sister Mary Gianini entered the convent in the winter of 1953. She is the daughter of the late Phillip and Rose Aguzzi Gianini. She has one sister, Ann Mellott of Columbus, MS and one brother, Gus Gianini, Sr. of Cleveland.

She is of the Dominican Order and in her years of faithful service, she has served in the capacity of School Instructor at Catholic Schools across the nation from California to Illinois. At the present time, she resides at the Dominican Renewal Center in Riverton, Illinois near Springfield.

By Gus Gianini, Sr.



### **Deacon John S. Camara**

Deacon John Camara was born and reared in Fall River, Massachusetts and received his formal education at the University of Friedburg in Germany.

While in Cleveland, he served as Chief Executive Officer of Commonwealth National Life Insurance.

Married to the former Patricia Ann Kennedy, Camara is the father of three children. Deacon Camara was ordained on July 25, 1982, in the Diocese of Jackson with a Liturgical base at Our Lady of Victories. He passed away on April 30, 1997.

By Cammie Camara Balducci

## *Our Lady of Victories: A 75 Year History*

At the turn of the century, Bolivar County did not have a significant settlement of Catholics. Some of the first Catholic settlers were Italians who migrated here to farm, but they were not concentrated in a single area. Providing adequate pastoral care for this area posed a difficult problem for the diocese and the priests who were assigned the task. A single parish could not effectively serve the needs of this scattered population. Priests from neighboring established parishes were assigned to these Delta missions and attempted to serve the needs of the growing number of Catholics.

Early Catholic settlers gathered for Mass at the Doty home on Cleveland Crossing Road west of Cleveland. Photo courtesy of Aguzzi family.

However, primitive means of transportation and poor road conditions required physical stamina, perseverance, and a high level of dedication by the priests who did this work. For the laity, who were fortunate to see a priest once a month, it required strong faith and their own determination to overcome circumstances that were far from ideal.

Until 1912, when Masses were scheduled monthly, Cleveland received a visit from a priest only 4 or 5 times a year. Mass was usually offered in private homes as well as the Masonic Hall and Courthouse.



By 1923, Father Placide Gabrielli was assigned to these Delta Missions as attempts to build parishes in Merigold, Shelby, Rosedale, Shaw, and Duncan eventually failed due to frequent population shifts among Italian immigrants. Father Gabrielli, with the support of Bishop Gunn and the Extension Society, decided that Cleveland would serve as an ideal base for serving the missions because of its central location and status as a county seat. In addition, the growing number of Catholics in the Cleveland area (approximately 150) seemed to require the attention of a resident priest. This new parish would serve as a very large territorial unit, encompassing many of the existing missions, and gradually diminish in size as the missions grew stronger and were transformed into parishes.

Gabrielli purchased a 100' by 50' lot at 114 Collins Street near downtown Cleveland. A small frame church with three rooms attached for a rectory was completed by December 1923 at a cost of \$2,200.

After having sown the seed for the founding of our parish, Father Gabrielli left the mission pastorate in January 1924, having never utilized the newly constructed facilities.

This pastoral change coincided with the death of Bishop Gunn and the accession of Bishop R. O. Gerow who actually made the final decision that the pastor of the missions should reside at the new Cleveland location. The Bishop thus confirmed the appointment and residency of Rev. E. Victor Rotondo. Arriving on April 23, 1924, Rotondo became the first pastor of the newly established Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church.

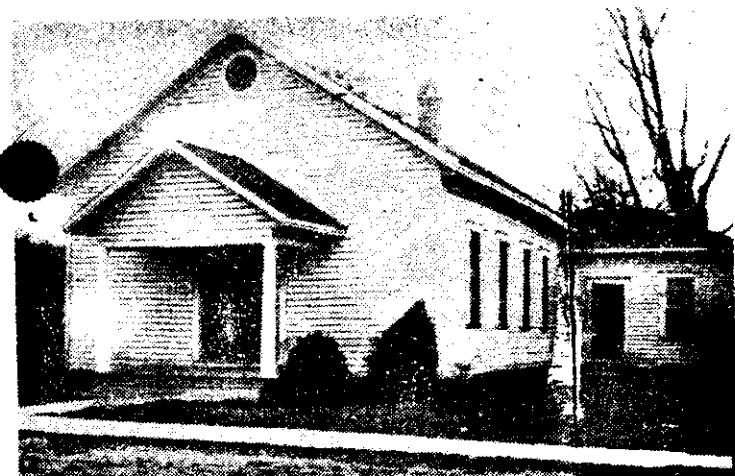
A vivid description by Father Rotondo depicts our church as he found it in April of 1924:

It was a very poor building, not painted, there was not even a cross to indicate that it was a Catholic Church; the material: cheap and ugly lumber. The lot was full of holes....No electric fixtures had been installed; they had to use small birthday candles. As soon as they entered into the Church, its appearance was even worse than the exterior. There were two ugly posts in the middle to sustain the roof, the lumber used was full of black spots, there were no pews, no altar; the back rooms intended to be the pastor's residence were no better: poor little bed, old furniture from the rectory at Shelby, books and kitchen tools mingled together; there was no water and lack of the most elementary conveniences.

The new pastor wasted no time in improving his parish. Rotondo purchased 12 pews and an altar setting from the

Duncan church and managed to make the church usable in just two weeks.

Gradually, electricity, plumbing, and a confessional were installed; the building was remodeled and papered on the inside and painted on the outside. The lot was cleaned up and a small garage was constructed. Members of the congregation contributed their time and labor in addition to \$1000 to bring about these improvements.



**Our Lady of Victories on Collins Street.**  
Reprinted from Catholic Action of the South.  
October 14, 1937

Conveniently located to downtown Cleveland and the railroad proved to have its advantages, but the lot suffered from poor drainage. Heavy rains would leave water standing for days and even weeks. Furthermore, Father Rotondo found the additional rooms built onto the church for the rectory to be unsuitable.

Consequently, he began to search new sites for parish facilities.

The first location selected was a 150' by 290' lot on the West side of Fifth Avenue near its intersection with College Street which was purchased for \$650. Bishop Gerow did not approve this location because of the greater distance from town.

Therefore, a second lot, (125' by 300') extending along First Avenue from Court Street to Shelby Street, was purchased with the Bishop's approval for \$2500 in 1927.

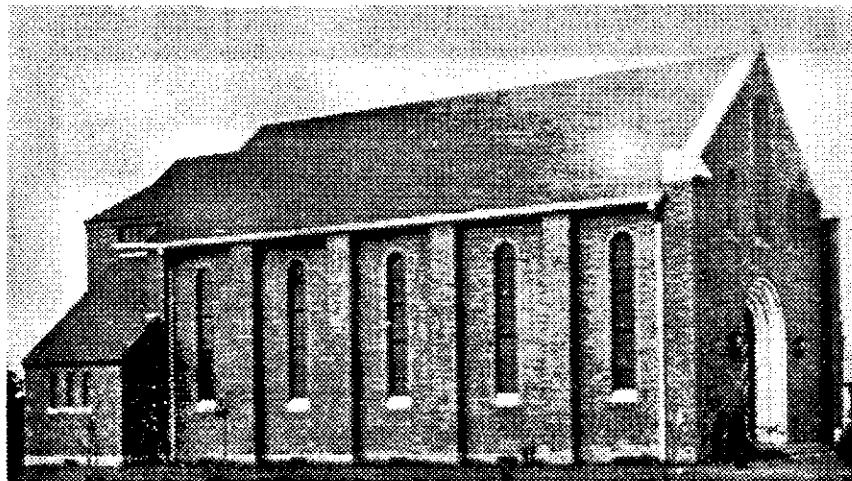
Within a year, a suitable rectory was constructed on the South end of the lot at a cost of \$5000. (This house still stands today on the corner of Shelby and First Avenue, facing South.) Bishop Gerow attended the dedication and opening of the new pastor's residence in August 1928, as did the "best of Cleveland and neighboring towns."

The completion of the rectory brought out the next obvious goal of constructing a church. A building fund was started in 1928 and grew slowly over the next decade. The accumulated savings from the sale of the first church to Foursquare Gospel Church, proceeds from the sale of the lot on Fifth Avenue, and \$2000 from the Extension Sociey provided

the capital for the erection of a new church on the North end of the lot facing Court Street. In 1938, a church seating 200 was completed at a cost of \$14,000. Bishop Gerow dedicated Our Lady of Victories on Court Street on January 8, 1939.

rectory, provided locations for religious education, parish meetings, and social events. It was named the Rotondo Center for the first pastor who nurtured the growth of our Parish for its first 22 years.

The pastorate of Father Hannelly



Our Lady of Victories on Court Street.  
Courtesy of Ned Fioranelli.

Numerous priests served rather brief terms in relation to Father Rotondo during the next 20 years. In 1946, Father Peter Quinn was assigned to Our Lady of Victories and was succeeded by Father John Niemeyer in 1948. Father Eamon Mullen followed in 1951, Father James J. Curley in 1954, and Father John Bryan in 1955.

At the close of Father Bryan's pastorate in 1958, a Parish Center, constructed between the Church and the

began in 1958 and by the early 1960's it was clear that the church on Court Street was too small to accommodate the growing membership of Our Lady of Victories. The City of Cleveland was growing toward the western edge of town where most of the Catholic population tended to be concentrated. In addition, the Church would soon need to undertake drastic remodeling to prevent the collapse of the walls. It was evident that other expensive repairs could not be avoided.

Debt on the Rotondo Center was fully paid off in December 1961, resulting in

Father Hannelly and a parish committee searching for a new suitable location. The new location, originally encompassing over 21 acres at our present site on Bishop Road, was purchased for \$40,500 in October 1962.

At a parish meeting on November 28, 1966, Hannelly called attention to the dangerous condition of the Church, noted further repairs, and reviewed the financial resources and growing potential of the Parish as recommendation for the construction of a new church. Parish members agreed to endorse this recommendation and pledge financial support for a new church on Bishop Road.

Careful study and cautious proceedings regarding building plans were accelerated because of an earthquake that rocked the Church on Sunday, June 4, 1967. The tremor caused the frightened congregation to seek safety outdoors. The

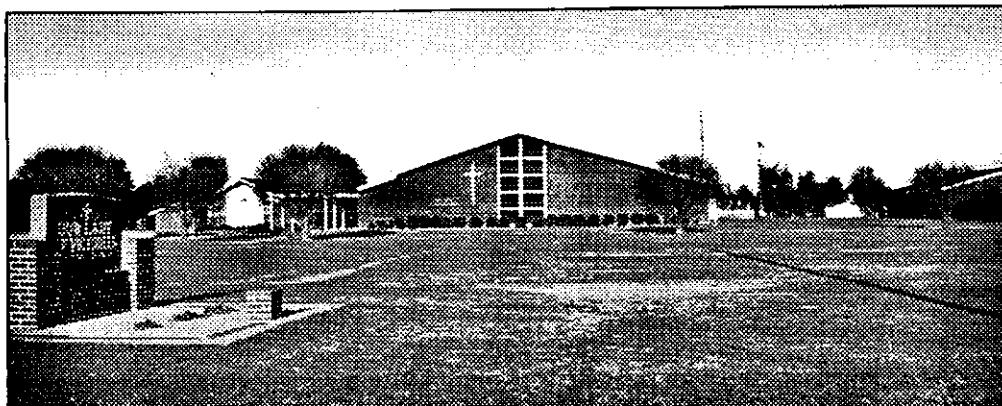


**Groundbreaking Ceremonies**

April 1969- Participants L to R: Dana Wilson, Larry LaForge, John Battistelli, Leslie McGovern, Ned Fioranelli, Martin King, Mandy Fioranelli, Sam Langston, Jr., Victor Aguzzi, Lewis Bailey, Albert Rocconi, Fr. John Leonard, George Ferri, Dominic Rizzo, Joe Aguzzi, Kelly Garvey

need for a new church was unavoidable and church services were moved to the Rotondo Center, as the Church itself deemed too dangerous for use.

Father Leonard and the Parish Council finalized plans for a new church and construction began in April 1969. Our present structure, which seats 400, was completed in 1970 at a cost of \$198,000 with original parking lot and driveways. Bishop Joseph B. Brunini dedicated the new Church in October 1970.



Separate locations for the Church and Rotondo Center and rectory soon persuaded Leonard and the Parish Council to proceed with similar facilities at the Bishop Road location. Construction on a 7 room rectory was completed in March 1974 at a cost of \$40,000.

Financial burdens for these new facilities were eased by the sale of six acres of the Bishop Road lot for \$50,000 and the sale of the old church property for \$50,000. Thus, a construction began on a new Parish Center at the Bishop Road location in January 1975.

Nearing completion on July 9, 1975, setbacks occurred by a fire of unknown origin. Contractors began anew and the project was completed by December 1975. The new center, 6000 square feet at a cost of \$165,000, was dedicated by Bishop Brunini on March 17, 1976.

At the milestone of Our Lady of Victories Golden Anniversary, the Parish enjoyed spacious facilities to serve the liturgical, educational, and social needs of a growing membership as well as the housing needs of its pastor.

In August 1976, the pastorate of Our Lady of Victories was assumed by



*Firemen battle blaze at Catholic building*

## Parish hall destroyed

*Fire engulfs almost-completed building*

Father Michael Flannery followed by Father Bernard Haddican in August 1981.

John Camara was ordained a deacon on July 25, 1982. He was the first deacon to be ordained in Our Lady of Victories.

Father Tom Lalor served as an administrator from July 1989 to January 1990, when Father Charles Bucciantini, the first Mississippi-born priest, served Our Lady of Victories.

Physical improvements such as a Marian Grotto, new parking lots, driveways, and a parish van have been added in the 80's & 90's. In the mid 1990's, the Parish Hall was dedicated to Father John Leonard.

In 1996, Our Lady of Victories was the host parish for "100+ Years of Catholicism in Bolivar County." Other

parishes participating were Shaw, Rosedale, and Mound Bayou. Among special guests for this celebration were Bishop Houck and Msgr. Canonici. The day consisted of a special Mass and a dinner in the Parish Hall.

## **Centennial Plus: Bolivar County Catholics celebrate Catholicism**



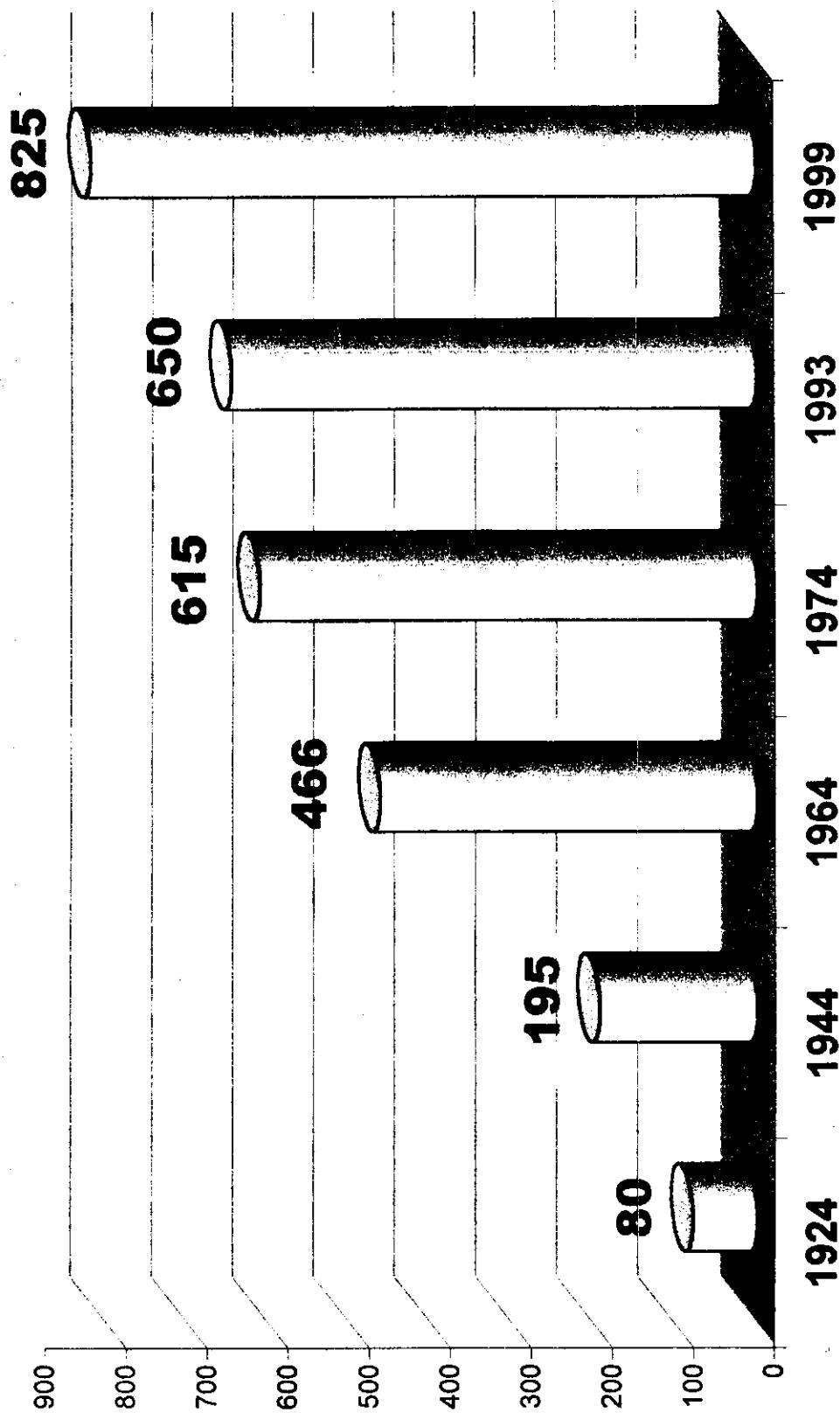
Our Lady of Victories has seen steady growth over the last 2 decades. As new industry moves to the area, Delta State University continues to grow, and other opportunities develop, so does our parish. The population growth of Our Lady of Victories strongly reflects the population growth of the Cleveland/Bolivar County area.

One of the most evident, enduring characteristics of Our Lady of Victories

over our 75-year history is the diverse ethnic congregation. The legacy of the Italian immigrants, whose strong faith held fast and laid the foundation for Our Lady of Victories, is still visible today in their successive generations. In addition, numerous other ethnic groups including Lebanese, Hispanic, Phillipino, German, French, and African American have contributed greatly to the character of the congregation.

As the millenium approaches, the unity of Our Lady of Victories is evident in the lives of its parishioners. As we celebrate the past 75 years, a clear vision emerges for the future.

*Our Lady of Victories  
Parish Membership Growth*



## Liber Baptismorum in Ecclesia

No.	Nomen Infantis	Tempus Nativitatis			Tempus Baptismi			Residentia Via	Nomina Parentum Nomen Patris Nomen Matris
		Dies	Mensis	Annum	Dies	Mensis	Annum		
1	Sharp Jr. Ray Frank	9	Apr. 1923	25	Dec. 1923	25	Dec. 1923	Hollandale	R. F. Sharp Sr. Madeline Smith
2	Belenchia Rosa	29	Nov. 1923	28	Dec. 1923	28	Dec. 1923	Shelby	Nano Belenchia Ersilia Tarsi
4	Di Matteo Henry	3	July 1923	1	Jan. 1924	1	Jan. 1924	Broyle, miss.	Raffaele Di Matteo Ernesta Fabbri
9	Malatesti Paul James	1	May 1924	4	May 1924	4	May 1924	Shelby miss	Giovanni Malatesti Mary Mangialardi
5	Mangialardi Francesco Vincenzo Nino	4	May 1924	4	May 1924	4	May 1924	Shelby miss	Giuseppe Mangialardi Maria Mangialardi
4	Di Angelo James Rocco Robert	10	Dec. 1923	4	May 1924	4	May 1924	Shelby	Rosario Di Angelo Domenica Nutella
5	Giannucci Rosaline Giandomina	17	Febr. 1924	4	May 1924	4	May 1924	Shelby	Margherita Giannucci Maria Mici
6	Territti Mary Virginia Italia	28	Apr. 1924	11	May 1924	11	May 1924	Shaw	Giandomina Territti Pasquale Napoli
7	Aguzzi Vittorio Giulio Giuseppe	23	March 1924	11	May 1924	11	May 1924	Pleasant	Gaspare Aguzzi Crisilda Pisanelli
8	Rizzo Domenico Pietro	5	Dec. 1923	11	May 1924	11	May 1924	Pleasant	Pietro Rizzo Caterina Gasbriandi

On May 11, 1924, the first baptisms were recorded for the newly formed Parish.

Those baptized were

Vittorio Giulio Giuseppe Aguzzi & Domenico Pietro Rizzo.

Taken from the Regesta Paroeciae  
(Parish Register)

1922 ~ 1934

Oct. 5-1924 Our Lady of Victories - Cleveland.	
Julio Gabucci 10-	Dina Baldoni 12
John Pettinari 12	Beresa Pettinari 10
Primo Santucci 11	Gilda Mangialardi 11
Henry Sbarbati 11	Lisette Pandolfi 13
Charles Santucci 10	Pasquina Bari 12
John Feduccia 11	Rose Camire 10
Julio Mancini 11	Mary Guerrieri 16
	Angelina Guerrieri 12

The first First Communion Class at Our Lady of Victories.

Registrum Confirmatorum Ecclesiae

Dioecesis

Nomen Confirmati	Nomen Patrini	Nomen Confirmati	Nomen Patrini
Shelby May 11 <sup>th</sup> 1925 - Boys -	- Girls -	Cleveland May 12-25 - Boys -	- Girls -
Joseph Liguizetti (John)	Lorraine Perino (Isabel)	Julian Mancia (John)	Augustine DiNardo (John)
Vincent Rogers (Joseph)	Josephine Rogers (Elizabeth)	Augusto Minardi (John)	Angelina Feduccia (John)
Franz Lubertini (Frances)	Elma Sacco (Frances)	John Pettinari (James)	Reignardino
Primo Malatesta (Charles)	Katherine Rogers (Lorraine)	Joe Feduccia (Charles)	Piambino Mayland (There)
Robert Lechner (Joseph)	Elizabeth Mercer (Mary)	Elmo Tragi (Paul)	Mary Guerrini (Margaret)
James O'Donnell (James)	Rose Liguizetti (Margaret)	Henry Barbato (Samuel)	Lena Baldone (Mary)
Salvino Baldacci (John)	Inez Feretti (Alice)	Angelo Ferri (Joseph)	Angelina Guerrini (Tita)
Luigi Seghezzi (Victor)	Ella Mangialardi (Mary)	Lionel Michie (William)	Linda Conner (Mary)
Giuseppe Lubertini (Joseph)	Virginia Crapetti (Caterina)	Giuliano Gabucci (John)	Vida Tragi (Mary)
Alfred Tarsi (Paul)	Mary Pongetti (Angelina)	Primo Santucci (Peter)	Jesuza Pettinari (Caterina)
Eli Mangialardi (Sam)	Mary Sacco (Rosa)	Charles Santucci (Peter)	Rosa Lamia (Margaret)
Vermon Lubertini (Tolmo)	Edith Klined (Agnes)	Sam Brunetti (Antonio)	Pasquine Boni (Joseph)
Victor Bramucci (Padino)	Wm. O'Donnell (Mary)	Malvina Alberti Augustinelli (Peter)	Epolet Martini (Mary)
Tom Nocarini (Charles)	Charles Santucci (Peter)	Margarito Flores (Paul)	Maria Maggio (Field England)
Father Deane (Fernando)		Robert Martini (Peter)	Rosa Gentile (Mary)
Giusto Malatesta (James)		Mario Leonida (Paul)	Frances (Amelia) Jones
Joseph Brifulus (Eugenio)		Charles L. Johns (Peter-Victor)	
John Crapetti (Peter)		Mario Baldone (Paul)	
Elm Sacco (James)		Anthony Feduccia (Salvator)	
John Turino (Hector)		John Feduccia (Victor)	
Carlo Malatesta (Paul)			
Victor Seghezzi (Joseph)			
Charles Curcio (James)			
Ed Malatesta (Joseph)			

11<sup>th</sup> May 1925  
Baptismal

Confirmandi die 11<sup>th</sup> May  
John + John + John + John

## Liber Baptismorum in Ecclesia

No.	Nomen Infantis	Tempus Nativitatis			Tempus Baptismi			Residentia Via	Nomina Parentum Nomen Patris Nomen Matris
		Dies	Mensis	Annum	Dies	Mensis	Annum		
1	Sharp Jr. Ray Frank	9	Apr.	1923	25	Dec.	1923	Hollandale	R. F. Sharp Sr. Madeleine Smith
2	Belenchia Rosa	29	Nov.	1923	28	Dec.	1923	Shelby	Nino Belenchia Ersilia Tarsi
3	Di Matteo Henry	3	July	1923	1	Jan.	1924	Broyle, miss.	Raffaele Di Matteo Ciricella Fabbri
4	Malatesti Paul James	1	May	1924	4	May	1924	Shelby miss	Giovanni Malatesti Mary Mangialardi
5	Mangialardi Francesco Vincenzo Nino	4	May	1924	4	May	1924	Shelby miss	Domenico Mangialardi Maria Mangialardi
6	Di Angelo James Rocco Robert	10	Sec	1923	4	May	1924	Shelby	Rosario Di Angelo Domenica Muterello
7	Giannuci Rosaline Giorammina	17	Febr	1924	4	May	1924	Shelby	Nicola Giannuci Maria Mici
8	Ferretti Mary Virginia Italia	28	Apr.	1924	11	May	1924	Shaw	Giuliano Ferretti Pascualina Mazi
9	Aguzzi Vittorio Giulio Giuseppe	23	Mar	1924	11	May	1924	Cleveland	Nicola Aguzzi Aristia Ferrelli
10	Rizzo Domenico Pietro	5	Dec	1923	11	May	1924	Cleveland	Pietro Rizzo Concetta Gagliardi

On May 11, 1924, the first baptisms were recorded for the newly formed Parish.

Those baptized were

Vittorio Giulio Giuseppe Aguzzi & Domenico Pietro Rizzo.

## *The Knights of Columbus*



## *Rotondo Council 5556*

The Knights of Columbus was founded in 1882 by a 29-year-old parish priest, Father Michael J. McGivney, in the basement of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Connecticut. Today, more than a century later, the Knights of Columbus has become the largest lay organization in the Catholic Church. Currently, there are over 1.6 million Knights of Columbus—more than ever before in our Order's history.

The Order has been called "the strong right arm of the Church," and has been praised by popes, presidents and other world leaders. The Order continues to break all previous records for charitable contributions and volunteer service. In the past decade, the Knights donated nearly \$1 billion to numerous charitable causes and nearly 400 million hours of volunteer service.

These ideals are upheld on a local level by a growing organization. Before the establishment of a local council, a number of men from Our Lady of Victories Parish were members of the Greenville or Clarksdale Councils and functioned as a local K of C Club in Cleveland.

Devoted efforts resulted in a charter for Father Rotondo Council No. 5556 being granted on April 20, 1964.

### CHARTER MEMBERS:

Rev. Patrick Hannelly  
W. F. Laforge  
Victor Aguzzi, Sr.  
Sam Danna  
Leslie McGovern  
L.T. Michie  
Ned Fioranelli  
Dick Miller  
Martin King  
Mario Barbatì  
Rudy Battistelli  
Albert Rocconi, Sr.

Charles Feduccia, Sr.  
Lawrence Feduccia  
George Ferri, Jr.  
Armand Fioranelli  
John Homan  
James McGowan  
James Rocconi  
Frank Roncali, Jr.  
Francis Aylward  
Wendel Chudy  
Joseph Correro, Sr.  
Ned Aguzzi  
Joe Aguzzi

Albert Ferri  
Fred Fioranelli  
John Holland  
John Janous, Sr.  
James Pambianchi  
Tony Rizzo  
Julius Rocconi  
John Rogers  
William Smith, Jr.  
Elio Tarsi, Jr.  
Roger Wyatt  
A. K. Abide, Jr.  
Dominic Rizzo

Countless hours have been put into promoting the mission of the Church, both in the Church and community. Knights serve various lay ministries in the church as lectors, ushers, Eucharistic ministers, and religious education instructors. The council continuously donates funds to worthy causes such as Priest Education, the mentally retarded, and Parchman inmates. Donations have also been given to local individuals needing assistance because of property loss or serious health problems.

Fraternity among members is visible on a daily basis. Visits to hospitals and sending get well cards to those who are ill have become routine practices. Social events such as dances, bocci competition, softball, and monthly social meetings all promote the bond these members hold.

Another important bond yet to be broken is the bond these members hold with their families. Our council boasts several generations of family involvement. Members' wives are also extremely supportive of the ideals of the Knights.

Currently, with membership of 166, Cleveland Council #5556 remains dedicated to the principles of the Order and determined to continue and expand those activities which have characterized its history.



Staff photos by James Salley

### Farmers' convention?

Judging from all the pick-up trucks (top photo) parked in front of the Joe Aguzzi home on Bishop and Yale Ext. Thursday a passer-by could have presumed that local farmers were holding another American Agriculture Movement meeting. However a spot check revealed that area farmers like Joe Aguzzi (at left) were utilizing their culinary talents to prepare spaghetti for last night's annual spaghetti dinner at the Knights of Columbus Hall.



## ***Our Lady of Victories Altar Society***

The Altar Society has played an important role in the life of our parish for many years. This organization, composed of women of the parish, is one of the oldest parish organizations. The chief function of the Altar Society was to tend to the linens, vestments, and other liturgical needs. Altar Care Committees of 4 – 6 ladies were assigned each month to care for the altar and tidy the church.

According to early reports, which date back to 1940, the Altar Society served additional functions including visiting the sick and donating food to the needy at Thanksgiving and Christmas. It fully supported the Diocesan Orphanage in Natchez and offered spiritual bouquets and prayers for those in distress.

Special projects included:

- Staffing vigils on Holy Thursday
- Furnishing the church rectory and parish center
- Sponsoring children's Easter egg hunts
- Co-sponsoring the children's Christmas party with the K.C.'s
- Bringing gifts to new born babies
- Providing a nursery during Sunday Masses
- Promoting the retreat movement
- Building a parish library

These ladies played an essential role in the development of the Religious Education Program by transporting the nuns who taught in the program and providing refreshments for Vacation Bible School. A breakfast was sponsored by the Society each year to honor graduating seniors in addition to a welcome back party for Delta State University Catholic students. Meals were also provided for priests' meetings and annual socials for the Parish.

Society funds were raised through raffles, box suppers, bingo games, bake sales, and chicken and spaghetti dinners in order to support their many projects. Additional funds were collected from the sale of Christmas cards, magazines, and fruitcakes.

This organization served an important social function to the parish as well. Part of the meeting was set aside for refreshments and socializing. The Altar Society was also a channel for adult religious education because at most meetings, the pastor would give a brief lesson on Understanding Christianity.

According to Jane Henry, a longtime member, the group once met in the rectory behind the old church on Court Street before the Rotondo Center was built. Winifred Bland added that the ladies served lunch once a month to the Exchange Club and club members looked forward to the Catholic ladies lunch.

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1961

### Altar Society Honors Senior Members And Graduates

The Altar Society of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church honored the senior members of the society, and 1961 Catholic graduates Sunday morning at the church.

Rev. P. J. Hannelly bestowed the Papal blessing at mass upon the following senior members: Mrs. W. F. Williams, Mrs. James Michie, Mrs. Lawrence N. Feuerla, Mrs. C. L. Johns, Mrs. John McGovern, Mrs. Grace Feuerla, Mrs. Sam Camine, and Mrs. J. J. Janoush.

Following mass, breakfast was served in the Rotonda Center to the above, and the following seniors and their parents.

John Camine, Elizabeth Danner, and Sandra Patterson, all of Broadview; Bill Smith and Frank Roncalli, Jr., both of Cleveland and Marie Houghman of Drew.

The name eventually changed from Our Lady of Victories Altar Society to Our Lady of Victories Ladies Sodality, but the organization remained basically the same. Successful fundraisers in these later years included the Tasting Luncheon with a cookbook booth in the fall; and a food and crafts booth in the spring at the Cleveland Crosstie Arts Festival.

In the early 1980's, a scholarship program was added to provide a parishioner graduating high school with a \$250 college scholarship.

The Ladies Sodality remained active until 1990. According to the last president, Vicki Fioranelli, as the pastoral council concept emerged, the duties of the Ladies Sodality were handled by pastoral council ministry groups. In May of 1990, the organization decided to take an inactive status. Since that time, the altar care committees and the scholarship program have continued to function. The ladies of the parish continue to work diligently through pastoral council committees to promote the overall growth of our parish.

The Catholic Ladies Sodality planning the Annual Tasting Luncheon. Members are from left: Louise Janous, Eileen Rocconi, Pat Tibbs, Bena Barbat, Margaret Aguzzi, Jane Mosco, Jean LaForge, Brenda Aguzzi.  
Courtesy of Vicki Fioranelli. (1985)



NEW OFFICERS — Serving as officers of the Altar Society of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church for 1971-72 are, from left, Mrs. Paul Towne, president; Mrs. Vicki Aguzzi, vice-president; Mrs. Henry Mosco, secretary; and Mrs. William J. Fair, treasurer. — Staff photo



## *Our Lady of Victories Catholic Youth Organization*

Despite our efforts, the exact date of the original charter of the Cleveland Catholic Youth Organization has not been determined. The best estimation of actual CYO activities began in the 1950's. The forerunner of the CYO was established as the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary and became the vehicle for the Catholic youth in Bolivar County to meet one another. There were monthly meetings and socials that rotated between Shaw, Shelby, and Cleveland. Numerous dances and fund-raisers were held among the youth of the area churches. One such activity involved the girls preparing deliciously filled lunch boxes which they then decorated. The boys bid on the lunch boxes with the understanding that the winning bidder shared it with the girl who made it.

In the early 1960's, the CYO was active in Our Lady of Victories with monthly socials and yearly attendance at the State Convention. Parents volunteered for each activity as sponsors and chaperones. Shaw, Shelby, and Cleveland organizations continued to work together and occasionally were invited to participate with the Leland and Greenville organizations.

Throughout the years, the CYO has played in CYO vs. K of C softball games, donated to Hurricane Camille victims, built floats for display in the Cleveland Christmas Parade, and competed in state CYO softball and volleyball tournaments. These youth have participated in Holy Thursday plays, Youth Masses with socials following, commentating, ushering, serving as altar servers, and helping with activities for Vacation Bible School. Local members have also served as officers of the Diocesan Catholic Youth Organization.



Cleveland CYO team: June 25, 1967

First Row L to R: Jerry Rocconi, Michael Rizzo, Buddy Rocconi, Keith Michie, Donald Rocconi. Second Row: Vic Aguzzi, Jr., Monty Barbat, George Fioranelli, Randy Richard. Third Row: Phillip Rizzo, Ronald Aguzzi, Terry Rocconi, Billy LaForge

## CONVENTION IN BILOXI 1968

Back Row: Lucia Henry, Connie McClellan, Yvonne McGovern  
Front Row: Carol Rocconi, Kathleen Aguzzi, Mary Claire McCarty, Charlotte Rocconi



Page 4 Friday, August 11, THE BOLIVAR COMMERCIAL



State CYO champions

The Our Lady of Victories Catholic Youth Organization Softball team recently won the State CYO Tournament Championship held in Jackson by defeating Oxford 12-12 in the title game. Cleveland also defeated Natchez 16-5 and Oxford 11-1 earlier in the tournament. Team members and coaches are from left, front row April Livingston, Presley Gainspold, Tara Kiser, Gina McNeil,

Amber Aguzzi, Amy Livingston and Ashley Stevens. Back row from left: assistant coach Ronnie Aguzzi, Michael Mengarelli, Adam Tyrol, Brian Lott, Michael Antic, Matt Rocconi, Jeffrey Farnell, Jeffrey Cappuccino, Michael Lott, Caesar Garrett and coach Gary Gainspold.

1995 State Champs

Halloween carnivals for the parish children, caroling for St. Jude, visiting Parchman inmates, collecting canned food for the needy, and volunteer work for Saltillo rank high among the CYO's services to our parish and community.

Many of our current parishioners have been active in the CYO through the years. Some of them who served as officers and members in their own teen years have also been sponsors in their adult years. They had the advantage of seeing both sides of the spectrum and have equally enjoyed their participation. The youth of our parish certainly serve an important role in fulfilling our parish society.

DeAnna Whitten



Youths gather food for needy

STAFFORD, BIRMINGHAM, LEXINGTON, BIRMINGHAM, and NASHVILLE in connecting sections of Circuit No. 10, and TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, in section 10, and JACKSON, MEMPHIS, and NASHVILLE, in section 11.



## Catholic Students Association

The organization serving Catholic students at Delta State has had several names including: Newman Club, Nathan House Newman Club, Newman Federation, and Catholic Student Association. By any name, the organization's mission throughout the years has been to foster spiritual, intellectual, and social interests of the Catholic students at Delta State. As part of the national Newman Club organized in 1893 at the University of Pennsylvania, the Catholic Student Association provides fellowship and promotes spiritual values among students.

It is supervised by the resident priest of Our Lady of Victories, as well as lay parishioners and faculty members. Each year the parish sponsors a Welcome Back Supper for DSU students and for a number of years a Catholic Mass was held on the campus chapel. A group of leaders are elected and schedule activities for each semester. Presently, the officers and chairmen make the group more active and visible.

(Left to Right)

Rebekah Haire,  
Andrea Marconi,  
Joey Valencino  
Jeffrey Ericson



1999-2000 Officers  
President- Jeffrey Ericson of Yazoo City, VP- Andrea Marconi of Memphis, Sec- Rebecca Haire of Cleveland. Sponsors: Vicki Fioranelli & Keith Fulcher, Priest: Rev. Charles Bucciantini Diocesan Youth Director: Rev. Joe Tonos of Jackson

The Catholic Students Association serves a wonderful purpose in college life among Catholic students. It allows them to get to know each other on a social and spiritual basis, which is ever important in the lives of young adults.

Mrs. Vicki Fioranelli

## *Our Lady of Victories*

### *A 75 Year Celebration*

#### "Quotable Quotes from the Past"

"I was born and reared in Cleveland—thus, Our Lady of Victories has always been my church. The members were truly devoted and I praise how they try to teach their children. Father (Eamon) Mullen (1951-1954) always had to have someone to get him out of bed each morning for Mass- usually Dr. McHardy did the 'Wake-up'."

~ Rose Camise Geeslin

---

"Our church was full of Rocconi's, Rizzo's, Aguzzi's, and Ferri's—mostly Italian. Glad I had black hair like they did. Everybody thought I was Italian—pleased me! I remember Father (Patrick) Hannelly's (1958-1967) actions. When preaching, he could stand on his tiptoes and would pound his fist and get harder and louder."

~ Mary Pate

---

"In the 1950's and 60's, I was a member of Sacred Heart Church in Rosedale. I will always remember loading up in a station wagon full of children from Gunnison, Rosedale, and Pace and attending Bible school in the summer when the nuns would come. I remember Fern and Margaret Aguzzi, Stella Fioranelli, Eileen and Elizabeth Rocconi, and Sarah Garvey (as well as many others) handing out popsicles, helping the nuns take us to Mass, and trying to maintain order. Little did I know that I would marry a person I went to Bible school with and rear my children at OLV. Thanks for the "memories" on this 75th Anniversary of our parish."

~ Vicki Bassie Fioranelli

---

"Cherrie (Fioranelli Pambianchi) and I were singing in the choir loft when she turned to me and said, 'I am going to marry that man sitting right down there.' She picked out her future husband, Jim Pambianchi, from the congregation."

~ Albina Aguzzi Barbat

---

"The priest I remember the most is without a doubt the very Irish Father Patrick Hannelly. His love for the Church and the congregation would often show itself in the form of 'fire and brimstone' sermons. He would often get very loud and it seemed as if he could bring down the fragile walls of that beautiful Court Street church all by himself.

Father Hannelly was a frequent visitor to our house and he loved our dog, Chip. Chip would go visit Father Hannelly, too, and Father would feed the dog meat—even on Fridays. Some older witnesses to this thought it was wrong for him to do this, but Father Hannelly took great delight in their distress over the dog's spiritual well being. Father would always know me in the confessional. With his Irish accent, he would start in on me with a series of questions. 'Did ye fight with your brother and sister?' 'Did you talk back to your parents?' and then, 'And did ye feed Chip meat on Fridays?' I was always so embarrassed that he knew who I was and I wondered if we'd somehow get in trouble for talking about that dog in the confessional."

~Lisa Miller Alford

---

~Excerpts from the diary of Joseph E. Rocconi ~In Church (1941-1942)

*Joseph E. Rocconi and his wife, Giustina Paolosini Rocconi were among the earliest members of Our Lady of Victories Church. They are the parents of Albert Rocconi, Jimmy Rocconi, Vera Rocconi Ferri (deceased), Aldo Rocconi (deceased), and Julius Rocconi (deceased), all of our Parish. Other children include Rose Rocconi Santucci and Edith Rocconi Santucci (deceased) of Leland, Clara Rocconi Cocilova and Mike Rocconi (deceased) of Shaw, and Richard Rocconi (deceased of Greenville. Many of their descendants are presently members of Our Lady of Victories.*

"After the Church is built, it needs, as any house does, to be furnished, and this is the duty indeed of the parishioners. So in accord with the Pastor we decided to give yearly, as our duty to the church, \$1.00 for each bale of cotton picked during the year. But only a few kept their promise, anyway with the good will of those who kept their word, we are furnishing little by little the House of God."

"...I gave a Crucifix to be placed over the Altar, it cost me \$53.00, then seeing too much empty space over the Altar, I decided that I would give another present to be put on the sides of the Crucifix."

"...Thus I have in the Church (not to boast about it, but just for the record) up to date the above mentioned Crucifix, the Angels of Brother Angelico, a bench which cost \$30-\$35.00, then a colored window, paid \$250 plus \$20 to have it installed. That's what I donated for the new Church in our Congregation of Cleveland, Miss."

--Submitted by Jeanette Tarsi

"My elementary and high school days in the late 50's and early 60's were spent at the Church on Court Street. The first priest I remember was Father Hannelly. I can remember each Sunday watching him at the altar thinking if he yells or gets anymore upset he will have a heart attack right there. Father Hannelly would get so upset during mass talking about the teenagers going to see "bad" movies. No Elvis movies were ever rated so that we could see them. He also fussed about the cheerleaders and majorettes wearing those "short" skirts. His head would turn blood red. I remember my mother telling me about the earthquake that shook the Church so badly during mass that people crawled out screaming! As an adult I was active in the Church. I taught the first Communion class for 12 years. I was one of the first women to serve on the Pastoral Council. Women were not well received. The men had always done everything."

"Although we moved in 1984, I still get a warm feeling when I come to Mass here. I always say, 'I am going home.' OLV will always be my home parish. Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts. Have a nice celebration!"

~ Nancy Wells Jackson

---

Father Bryan and my husband, Jim, were close friends. One Saturday afternoon Jim went to confession. After he finished, but still while he was in the confessional, Father asked him about some fishing lures. Father was going on his annual trip home to Ireland and wanted to take some fishing equipment to his relatives. After a lively conversation about various sizes and colors of lures, Jim came out of the confessional to face a very curious line of parishioners waiting to go to confession!"

"Father Peter Quinn came here after Father Rotondo. He had just come out of the army and was loved in this Parish."

"When Father Bryan was here, any family that so desired could have their homes blessed and dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Father Bryan brought you a picture. We had ours framed and it still hangs in my home."

"Papa was not feeling well at home so Father Hannelly came out to see him and bring him Holy Communion. Papa asked for his Last Rites. At that time you only gave the Sacrament to someone if they were dying. (I'm glad this has changed.) Father Hannelly told him he really didn't need it—that he would be fine. Papa told him, 'Well, I've asked for it. If I die before I receive it—it's all your fault!' Father Hannelly went home and after a little while he came back and anointed my father. He said he didn't want it on his conscience if anything happened. The next day my father was brought to the hospital and he very peacefully passed away. Father preached all of the above at his funeral."

~Mrs. Cherrie Fioranelli Pambianchi

---

"People I remember who played a big role in Our Lady of Victories: 1) Miss Mary Elslander—our last history stated there was no one left in Merigold from the Belgian settlement—Miss Mary was there. She ran a room and boarding house and she later became Father Peter Quinn's housekeeper. She took wonderful care of him. When he left Cleveland she went with him and stayed until he died. 2) Bill LaForge—Bill brought so much knowledge to us. He held several classes for us. My fondest memory of him was one Saturday afternoon at confession at the Church on Court Street, Bill was kneeling in the back pew close to the Holy Water. Suzanne (his daughter) was about two or three years old and while Bill prayed, she cupped her hands and drank most of the Holy Water. 3) Mary Katherine Gerrard—she conducted our choir for years, asking everyone to take part. 4) Kelly Garvey—Both Kelly and Sarah have been a great asset to our Church. My fondest memory of Kelly is the day of the earthquake...there was a big crack in the church...when the earthquake hit we all thought the Church was falling in...Kelly stood in the back of the Church and yelled, 'Don't panic!' 5) Claire McHardy—Claire is very knowledgeable about the Church...Over the years she has had the answers to so many of my questions."

"I have attended Mass on Collins, Court, the Center and Bishop Road. The cooperation between our members has been wonderful—the fairs we had on Court Street—picking up the nuns from Clarksdale to come and teach our CCD classes—the Tasting Luncheons—the Altar Society—were all great successes."

~Jane Michie Henry

---

"Some of my fondest memories date to the days when I was an altar server at Our Lady of Victories Church on Court Street. I particularly recall one September Sunday when we had a deluge rain...something like 7 inches...Jimmy Rocconi came by our house at 304 S. Second Avenue in a boat. He picked up my Dad, two sisters, my brother Quinn, and me. My dog, Bob, swam along beside the boat...he always went to Mass with us and if someone went early Mass at 7 a.m., he would go then and then come back for the 10:30 Mass with whomever went at the time. Well, I was the altar server the day of the deluge, and Monsignor Paul Cononici from Shaw was a substitute priest that day. Having no air conditioner, the door to the sacristy on the west side of the church was open. Bob came right in the sacristy and into the sanctuary, climbed the three steps to the top of the altar, and shook off all the dirty brown water he had absorbed while swimming over...the water splashed all over Monsignor's vestments and left lots of brown spots on the white garment...Bob went to more masses than I ever did in the 14 years of his life...When he died in October, 1964, Father Hannelly wrote his obituary in the Sunday bulletin."

~Jody Correro

---



Serving In  
Mississippi  
since 1837

## Catholic Diocese of Jackson

P.O. Box 2248  
Jackson, Mississippi 39225-2248

237 East Amite Street  
601-969-1880  
FAX 601-960-8455

May 19 1999

Dear parishioners of Our Lady of Victories:

It gives me great pleasure to pen these few lines of congratulations to the parishioners of Our Lady of Victories on the occasion of your seventy fifth anniversary as a parish faith community. It is a great milestone to celebrate. I congratulate you on this very special occasion and pray God's blessing on you as you enter the third millennium.

I give thanks to God each day that he gave me the privilege to minister in your midst for five years. I was greatly impressed by your faith. For me it was a wonderful faith filled experience and you taught me a lot for which I am grateful. You became a part of the fabric of my life and wherever I go I will bring that memory with me. I have many fond memories of my days at Our Lady of Victories, memories which time will not erase. I guess if I were to recall one memory, my most outstanding one would have to be the parish renew which was conducted in 1980.

It is with deep regret that I cannot be present for your celebration, but I will be with you in spirit. I pray God's blessing on you the parishioners of Our Lady of Victories. I pray that your faith will grow and increase and that you will be an inspiration to all you come in contact with over the years. It is my hope that by your living of the Gospel values that others will be drawn to follow your example and that you will be a source of evangelization to others and that they will see Christ in you by the way you live. May the Holy Spirit be a source of inspiration for you. May the mother of the lord (under whose patronage the parish is dedicated) lead you into the new millennium as a guiding light for all to see.

With prayerful best wishes to all of you and may the Lord hold you in the palm of his hand.

Sincerely yours in Christ

*Michael Flannery*  
Rev. Michael Flannery

Believe it or not...

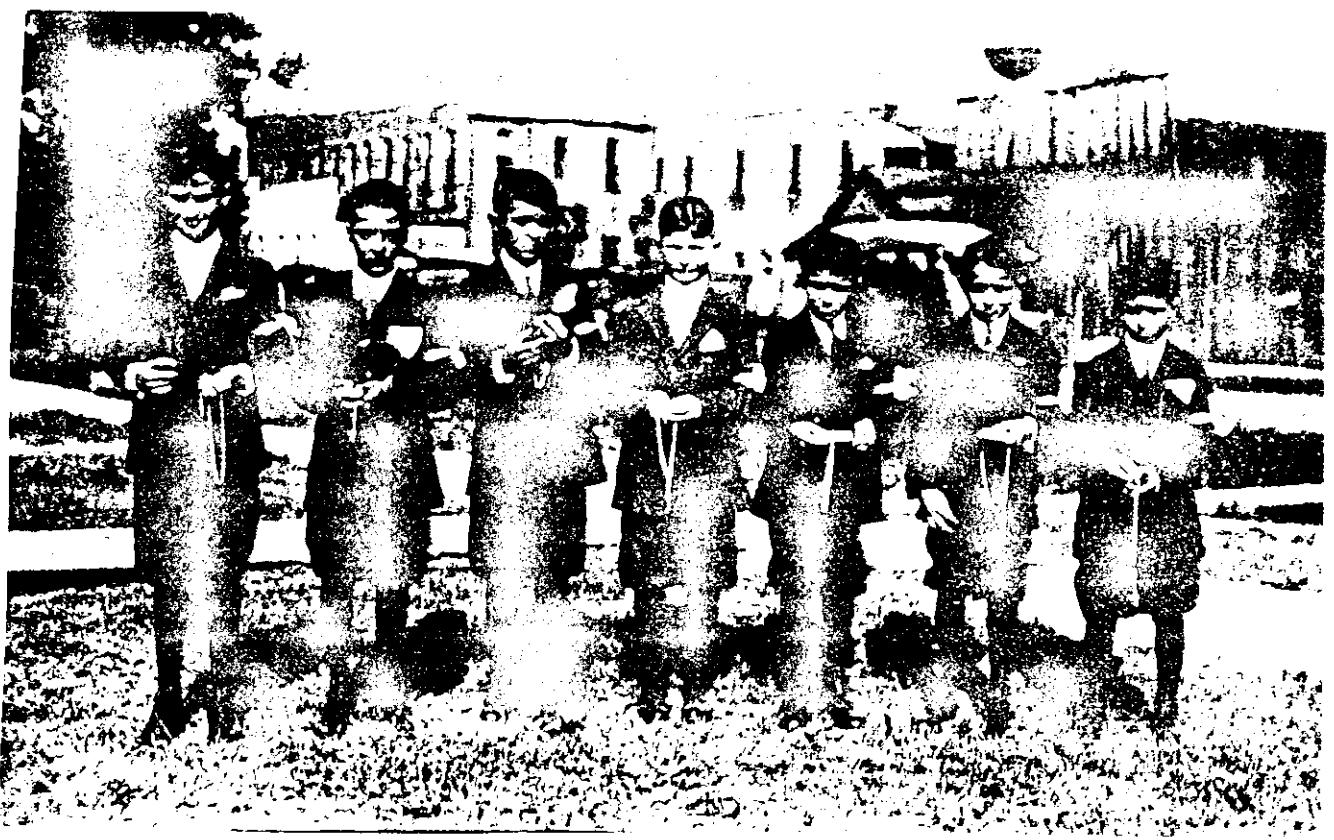
In 1943, the Von Trapp family gave their first concert in the United States at Delta State Teachers College (now Delta State University). They had escaped from their home in Austria when the German Army invaded that country at the beginning of World War II. Their escape was made possible by a Catholic Convent group which helped them get across the Alps into Switzerland. Their escape was later the foundation for a very popular movie "The Sound of Music," which Julie Andrews starred in.

After settling in Stowe, Vermont, upon their arrival in the United States, they began a musical tour in 1943, which started with their performance in Cleveland. Their first performance was on Friday at DSU. Since they were to perform on the following Monday night at Ole Miss, they stayed through the weekend on the DSU Campus. The Baroness and I spent most of Saturday visiting in the office in Cleveland Hall, so on Sunday morning she asked if I would like to go with them to Our Lady of Victories for their Sunday service. Father Rotondo had arranged to have his service early that day so that the Von Trapp Family, who traveled with their priest, could have the use of the church at ten o'clock.

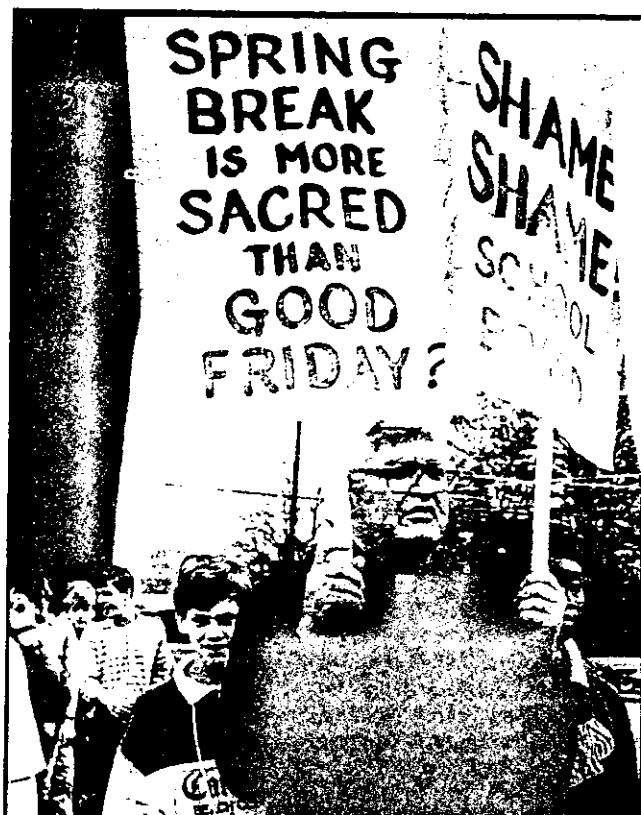
So on that Sunday, Father Rotondo, Mary Catherine Gerard (who taught at DSU and was organist at the church) and I sat in Our Lady of Victories and heard the Von Trapp Family Singers do the entire mass. It was an experience I shall always treasure.

Eleanor Walters

*Eleanor Walters*



The boys of the first First Communion Class, 1924.



Father Hannelly with Theresa McGovern on the front walk of OLV on Court Street.

Father Haddican shown outside  
Our Lady of Good Help protecting

The First Communion Class of 1947  
with Father Quinn in front of the Rectory  
on Shelby Street. (left to right:  
Jeanette Ferri, Patsy Rizzo,  
Jackie \_\_\_\_\_, Rosalie Ferri,  
and Sylvia Feduccia)



May Crowning, Our Lady of Victories  
on Court Street, early 1950's.



The cornerstone of the Court Street  
church is being laid as Father Rotondo



KC OFFICIALS — Newly elected officers of the Father Ronondo Council, 5556, Knights of Columbus, Cleveland area, are from left, Dr. William F. Laforge, left, district deputy who was install officer handing the gavel to Ned Fioranelli, new grand knight. Other officers are, from left, Victor Aguzzi, deputy grand knight; David Work, treasurer; Sam Langston Jr., warden; Henry McLean, chancellor; and Ben Bailey, recorder. Not shown is Frank Koncas Jr., financial secretary.



### Father Flannery honored

Father Michael Flannery, who has assumed his duties as priest of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, was honored at a covered dish supper in the Parish Hall to welcome him to the church. Chatting with him are from

left, Victor Aguzzi, chairman of Building Committee; Cathy Bisop, Altar Society president; Father Flannery, and Ned Fioranelli, Parish Council president.

Staff photo by Doug Steppen



## Briefs



### CYO members win awards

Twenty-two members of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Youth Organization and six adult advisors recently attended the CYO State Convention in Jackson. The theme of the convention was "We Are the Light of the World." The local CYO group won Most Outstanding CYO, which is given to the group which displays the greatest effort in the three primary objectives of message, community and service. The group also won first place in the statewide advertising campaign and second place in the state softball tournament. The convention consisted of both group workshops and nationally recognized motivational speakers. Bishop Houck presented the awards. Attending the

convention were: (first row, left) advisor Jamey Gainspoletti, Ashley Shivers, Allison Roncali, Amy Roncali, Presley Gainspoletti, Christen Aguzzi and Paul Rizzo; (second row, left) Matt Rocconi, Christal Grimmett, Valerie Rocconi, Tara Waller, Melissa Rhodes, Gina Montesi and Michael Lott; and (third row, left) advisor Gary Gainspoletti, Louis Lara, advisors Donna Gaines and Barbara Allen, Brian Bishop, Dennis Barfield, Blake Tyler, Jeffrey Capoccacia, Coleman Grimmett, Brian Lott, Michael Antici and advisors Joni Tyler and Pat Montesi. Not pictured is Amy Livingston. Gina Montesi was appointed chairperson of the diocesan CYO council.



Sister Mary Gianini with  
her "catch of the day."



Father Charles takes a moment  
to chat with Santa.

