



100  
ST. ROBERT PARISH

## The First Decade

1912-1922

• **June 13, 1912** - Articles of Incorporation signed and filed. The papers were notarized by Milwaukee County June 21, 1912, and a certificate of incorporation was issued by the State of Wisconsin July 16, 1912.

• **June 16, 1912** - Fr. Farrel Patrick Reilly, commissioned by Archbishop Sebastian Messmer to investigate a suitable location for a new east side parish, met with a handful of people at an informal meeting in the Village Hall at the corner of Oakland Ave. and Lake St. (now Capitol Dr.). Following this meeting it was decided to purchase a parcel of land on Mineral Springs Rd. (now Capitol Dr.) and Maryland Ave. in the Village of East Milwaukee (now Shorewood).

The purchase price was \$10,094.84, the sum being owed the Archdiocese.

• **The name St. Robert of Newminster** was chosen by a vote of the new congregation at the June 16, 1912, meeting. The parish had been incorporated on the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and it was suggested that this would be a good choice since Mary's help would be needed to finance the building program. Rev. Robert J. Roche, pastor of Holy Rosary Church and friend and benefactor of Fr. Reilly and the new parish, introduced his choice of a name in a novel way. He promised to contribute a specified amount for

certain names: \$100 for Holy Family, \$200 for St. Martin, \$300 for St. John the Baptist, \$400 for St. Gabriel the Archangel, \$500 for St. Robert, Abbot. Fr. Roche's popularity (many of the new parishioners were Fr. Roche's parishioners from Holy Rosary Parish) and the \$500 for the building fund were deciding factors. St. Robert received 35 votes.

• **1912** - Trustees: Treasurer - Walter F. Lynch (1912-1917), Thomas C. Whelan (1917-1953), Secretary - Peter McGee (1912-1913), Walter Weber (1913-1914), James H. Fisher (1914-1952).

• **January 11, 1913** - The *Catholic Herald Citizen* reported the establishment of St. Robert Parish and announced that "a \$25,000 church and school will be erected for the congregation ... on Mineral Springs Rd. between Farwell and Maryland Ave., for which a subscription is being taken up. Building operations will not be started until \$18,000 has been secured."

• **1913** - A series of events were held to raise money for the building fund: January 4 - a Card Party at Holy Rosary Hall; January 8 - Hard Times Party at the Lighthouse Squadron Armory, East Milwaukee (northwest corner of Oakland Ave. and Capitol Dr.); January 30 - elaborate chicken dinner, Cathedral Auditorium. The proceeds from these events were given to the committees that organized the first bazaar, an event that was planned with the help of Holy Rosary parishioners over a period of months. The bazaar was held at the St. John Cathedral auditorium April 8-13. Approximately \$13,000 was raised.

• **May, 1913** - construction of the foundation of the new Church/School building is begun.

• **July 6, 1913** - the first Mass for the new congregation was celebrated in a small wooden



Rev. Farrel Patrick Reilly  
1878-1958  
Founding Pastor  
St. Robert Parish

1912 - 1922

St. Robert of Newminster Parish

building hastily erected in one day on the southeast corner of Mineral Springs Rd. and Maryland Ave., next to the abandoned tracks of the "dummy" line railroad. 150 persons attended.

- **July 27, 1913** - Archbishop Messmer presides at the laying of the cornerstone of the new building.
- **October, 1913** - The small wooden church was razed and the congregation moved to the north side of the street where Mass was celebrated in the basement of the new building until the upper floors were finished.
- **March 29, 1914** - Easter Sunday - Archbishop Messmer dedicates the new building. Mass was held on the first floor. The basement was used for a parish hall. Fr. Reilly lived on the second floor.
- **September 15, 1915** - 43 students entered the new St. Robert School in grades 1-4. The Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa were hired by the parish to administer and teach in the school.
- **1913** - Altar Society was organized, the first society founded in the new parish. Although the first meeting was September 30, 1913, the work of the Society had begun when the first Mass was celebrated July 6, 1913 and Sara Clark (Mrs. W.W.) decorated the altar in the wooden church.
- **1913** - St. Anne Society, a women's group, founded to support the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Church.
- **1914** - Fr. Reilly called for an organization of men to be called the St. Robert Holy Name Society. All men of the parish would receive communion as a body on the second Sunday of the month. The St. Robert Society received its charter in the national organization November 29, 1915.

• **June 2, 1914** - The School Society is organized to prepare classrooms for four grades to begin in September, 1915, and to purchase blackboards for two classrooms,

two clocks, two teacher's desks, two teacher's chairs and general school supplies.

• **1914** - A choir had been formed by the time the Church/School building was dedicated in March, 1914. Harry Meurer was the music director and Francis H. Schmitt was the organist. The first permanent organist was Theresa Wilhelm. The choir was formerly organized May 29, 1914.

• **November 26, 1914** - George Doucette and Camilla Manion were the first couple to be married in the Church/School building.

• **1917** - Fr. Reilly moved into a new parish house March 19, 1917. The Rectory was located on Farwell Ave., north of Atwater Rd. (formerly Mineral Springs Rd.).

• **1920** - The 11 students in the first eighth grade class were graduated from St. Robert School in June. Sr. Aloysius Reilly, O.P. was the first principal of the school, serving from 1915-1926.

• **1920** - The home of parishioner Edgar Weirich, 1277 N. Prospect Ave. (now 3921) was purchased for use as a convent for the Dominican sisters who taught at St. Robert School. The sisters had been living at St. John Cathedral Convent and riding the #10 streetcar to Atwater Rd. (now Capitol Dr.) and Downer Ave. Four sisters and a postulant moved into the convent in September, 1920.

• **1921** - Francis H. Schmitt became the volunteer organist and choir director.

• **1921** - Parent Teachers Association organized. The group became known as the Home and School Association after affiliation with the Milwaukee Archdiocesan League of Home and School Associations.

• **June 11, 1922** - Rev. William Restle, first priest-son of St. Robert Parish, was ordained.



*The first Mass was celebrated in a small wooden building hastily constructed on the south side of Mineral Spring Rd. (Capitol Dr.) in July, 1913.*



*July 27, 1913 - St. Robert parishioners gathered under parasols, buggy tops and covered touring cars to join in the cornerstone laying of the new Church/School building. Archbishop Sebastian Messmer presided at the ceremony.*