

# 100

1912 2012

## ST. ROBERT PARISH

### The Third Decade

1932-1942

- **May 8, 1932** - The campaign committee (for the new church) inaugurated the envelope system. Parishioners were encouraged knowing that their weekly contributions would be applied as partial payments on the subscriptions that each would make to the building fund. A general campaign for funds was delayed because of the Depression.

- **1934** - Marguerite Beck was professed as Sr. M. Deborah, O.P., and the first Dominican religious daughter of St. Robert Parish.

- **Summer 1935** - The rectory was moved 70 feet to the north to open up space for the proposed new church. Part of the space used for erection of the new church, that closest to Capitol Dr., had been used for a girls' playground.

- **Summer 1935** - An addition to the convent was begun and completed in September, costing \$50,000 and providing private rooms for the Sisters.



*Part of the crowd watching the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new church (convent and school in the background)*

- **December 19, 1935** - Fr. Reilly dedicated the convent chapel, that was moved to the far north end of the new addition, to the Mother of the Blessed Virgin, St. Anne. About 15 members of

the St. Anne Society were present for the ceremonies.

- **February 16, 1936** - The subscription committee wrote to parishioners: "The present St. Robert Church was completed in 1914; its seating capacity - with five persons in a pew - is 640.

The best estimate available indicates that the average attendance each Sunday is more than 3,500 persons ... the urgent need for larger church quarters is apparent. Some parishioners attend Mass at other churches due to lack of space ... to carry out the program as planned, it is necessary to immediately secure subscriptions in the amount of \$175,000 ... This amount and the proposed loan will pay for the church structure, and provide for a main altar, side altars, altar rail, Stations of the Cross, new pews, permanent light fixtures, organ and other necessary items, as well as the cost of converting the present church space into classrooms ... the program contemplates a complete church, not merely a building ... if we do not secure a complete church, our good Pastor will have to campaign from the altar for several years for funds ... a subscription campaign will begin Wednesday, February 19th and end February 29th to secure subscriptions for \$175,000."

- **April 26, 1936** - Ground was broken for the new church.



*Father Reilly turns the first spade of dirt at the groundbreaking ceremonies, April 26, 1936.*

1932 - 1942

St. Robert of Newminster Parish



*Archbishop Stritch blessing the cornerstone as it's lowered into place*

• **August 12, 1936** - Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch (later Samuel Cardinal Stritch of Chicago) laid the cornerstone of the new church. This stone was the first in this part of the country to be set in the Sanctuary of the church at the juncture of the apse and the transept. It was also the first cornerstone Archbishop Stritch blessed since his arrival in Milwaukee, November 1930. The cornerstone location is where the main aisle meets the beginning of

the Sanctuary (the location is several feet to the north of where the Sanctuary steps now meet the main floor of the church because of changes made to the sanctuary in the 1990 renovation of the church).

• **November 25, 1937** - Camilla Doucette married James Papin in the last wedding in the church/school building. Her parents, Camilla Manion and George Doucette, were the first couple married in the church/school building, November 26, 1914.

• **December 24, 1937** - The last Mass is celebrated in the church/school building Christmas Eve. The altar was an improvised one since the main altar had been moved to the new church to be temporarily used until the new imported altar arrived.



*Moving the altar to the new church*

• **December 25, 1937** - The first Mass was concelebrated at 5 a.m. in the new church by Fr. Reilly, and assistants Alphonse Wissink and Robert A. Kemp, and James Farrel Whelan, O.F.M., a priest son of the parish ordained in summer 1938. Six other Masses were celebrated that Christmas day with capacity crowds present.

• **December 27, 1937** - Virginia Druecker and Richard Voelz were married the Monday after Christmas in the first wedding in the new church.

• **May 8, 1938** - The new church was dedicated by Archbishop Stritch. Sixty priests and seven monsignors participated in the procession.

• **1938** - No diplomas, just promotion cards, were given to students completing eighth grade in spring 1938. In his address at the dedication of the church in May, Archbishop Stritch announced that St. Robert Parish would be a pioneer in the junior high school field by opening a ninth grade. In the fall, however, the ninth grade was not begun because the former church space was still being remodeled into classrooms, nurse's room and school office.



*Archbishop Stritch blessing the new St. Robert Church as he prepares to enter through the main doors, May 8, 1938*

• **Fall 1939** - The first ninth grade enrolled 30 pupils who studied Latin, English, general science, algebra, religion, art, music, and physical education. Home economics and mechanical arts were offered at Shorewood High School as an alternative to algebra.

• **Assistant Pastors during the Third Decade:** Rev. Harland C. Kuehn (1932-35); Rev. George H. Wollet (1932-34); Rev. Robert A. Kemp (1935-47); Rev. Alphonse A. Wissink (1935-39); Rev. Harold O. Prudell (1939-40); Rev. James A. Mehan (1940-56)

• **School Principals during the Third Decade:** Sr. M. Cyrinus Randerson, O.P. (1932-35); Sr. M. Amata O'Brien, O.P. (1935-41); Sr. M. Gracita O'Hara, O.P. (1941-47)

• **Parish Trustees during the Third Decade:** Treasurer Thomas C. Whelan (1917-53); Secretary James H. Fisher (1914-52)