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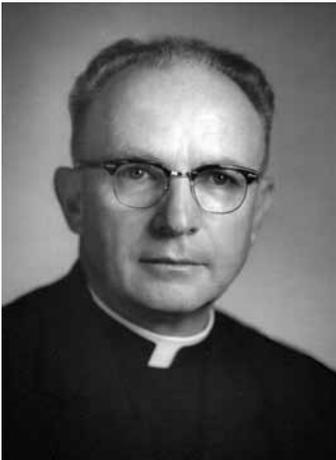
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ST. ROBERT PARISH

The Fifth Decade

1952-1962

- **1954** - The Mary Missioners were founded in the Marian Year to encourage mission work. The members met monthly to sew for the missions.
- **June 1955** - the last ninth grade class was graduated from St. Robert School in anticipation of the opening of Dominican High School in the fall.
- **September 1955** - Dominican High School began operation. Sr. Viviana Roe, O.P., former principal of St. Robert School, was vice-president of the high school corporation. The first Sisters to staff the school lived at the St. Robert Convent.
- **In 1955-56** two temporary classrooms were organized in the school hall to accommodate the burgeoning school population.



Rev. Gerald E. McGinnity was assigned as administrator of St. Robert Parish in June 1956.

- **June 1956** - Rev. Gerald E. McGinnity was appointed administrator of St. Robert Parish.
- **1956** - Msgr. Reilly, because of age, was unable to maintain his rigorous schedule. The parish purchase a home at 4067 N. Farwell Ave. and Monsignor and his housekeeper of more than 40 years, Mary Fuerstenberg, moved to the home.
- **In June 1957**, an advisory board was appointed to study plans for additions to parish buildings.

• **In August 1957**, the homes at 4045 and 4049 N. Farwell Ave. were purchased and offered for sale (without land) to the highest bidder. Subsequently, the property at 4053 N. Farwell Ave. was also purchased.

• **October 1957** - Children received First Communion on the Feast of Christ the King.

• **On October 20, 1957**, a solicitation for the proposed expansion was made in a two-hour period. The goal of \$350,000 was oversubscribed. The campaign brochure proclaimed "The Time for Action is Now, The Time for Reflection is Past." The bulletin gave a rationale for the expansion: "increasing school population has taxed our present facilities to the limit ... provide additional office space ... and sleeping facilities (rectory) ... a shrine in front of the sisters' home ... two houses acquired to the north of the property on Farwell Ave. ... will be razed and the land used to provide badly needed parking facilities and additional playground for school children ... redecoration to restore the church to its original beauty."

• **November 1957** - Msgr. Reilly was moved to the Alexian Brothers Hospital, Oshkosh.

• **1957** - As plans were being solidified for the construction of the school addition, the property to the north of the school, 4040 N. Maryland Ave., was purchased from parishioners Richard and Ruth Rice. Their daughter, Patricia Rice Matthews, said the purchase was necessary to allow the construction to proceed. Ordinances required that there be more parish property beyond the north wall of the new addition than the parish owned. The home subsequently became the home of the parish maintenance engineer Norbert Gard and his family, and thereafter, for several years, was a rental property belonging to the parish.

• **February 1958**, ground was broken for the school addition and for a tunnel that would connect the school to the church. Work was begun the first week in March.

1952 - 1962

St. Robert of Newminster Parish

- **March 17, 1958** - Msgr. Reilly suffered a broken hip. Mary Fuerstenberg went to Oshkosh to help care for Monsignor.

- **April 5, 1958** - Msgr. Farrel P. Reilly, founding pastor of St. Robert Parish, died at Mercy Hospital, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on the vigil of Easter.

- **April 9, 1958** - Priests of the archdiocese, civic officials, and parishioners attended the funeral for Msgr. Reilly at St. Robert Church. Archbishop Albert G. Meyer presided. Monsignor had requested that no sermon be delivered. Msgr. John Grasser, pastor of Holy Rosary Parish, said in his remarks that "the monument Monsignor Reilly left - St. Robert Parish - was sermon enough."

- **September 12, 1958** - School opened but because of the construction classes were held half days until September 21. Two eighth grades remained in the temporary basement rooms until October 20.

- **January 1, 1959** - Construction of the school addition was completed. The sixth and seventh grades moved in to the new addition during Christmas vacation. The addition contained a gymnasium and stage, shower rooms and eight classrooms. Because of a disastrous fire at Our Lady of the Angels School, Chicago, it was decided to proceed with additional remodeling of the school immediately. The gymnasium became the multi-purpose room - a parish meeting area; a new kitchen with a dishwasher room, and girl's shower rooms were added. The original parish hall was remodeled into health, music, choral and mimeograph rooms, a small meeting room with kitchen equipment, bookstore, lavatories, and a janitor's workshop.

- **1959** - The cost of the addition and remodeling the school was \$1,200,000. By the end of 1959 the entire



A Dominican Sister stands in the front doorway of the convent looking over the excavation for an addition to the convent.

original building had been renovated and made fire-resistant.

- **1960** - The property at 4067 N. Farwell Ave., purchased as a home for Monsignor Reilly in 1956, was sold.

- **April 12, 1962** - Ground was broken for the addition

to the convent. By the time the project was commenced, the shrine that was described in the campaign brochure became an addition to the living space.

- The rectory addition included a general waiting area adjoining the business office, a record vault, supply room, four conference-office rooms, and a confessional. The construction also provided for a cloistered garden between the church apse and rectory.



Early 1950s - St. Robert's Dominican Sisters learn to use an adding machine. Sr. Aquin Adams, O.P., is in the front row - middle.

- **Sunday, October 7, 1962** - Archbishop William E. Cousins presided at Solemn High Mass in the newly redecorated St. Robert Church in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the parish founding.

- **In the early 1960s**, Fr. McGinnity asked men who were parishioners to read parts of the Mass in English. The reader stood at a microphone located outside the communion railing near the statue of the Sacred Heart.

- **Pastors during the Fifth Decade:** Farrel P. Reilly and Gerald E. McGinnity.

- **Assistant Pastors during the Fifth Decade:** James A. Mehan (1940-56), George J. Schumann (1942-59), Leo M. Lambert (1947-48), Robert Graves (1948-50), Edward E. Carroll (1950-55), Thomas R. Leahy (1955-56), Edward E. Murphy (1956-63), Robert J. Berghammer (1957-60), Patrick A. Dowd (1959-64), Peter J. Cary (1960-68), Raymond Callahan (1962-68).

- **Principals during the Fifth Decade:** Sr. M. Viviana Roe, O.P. (1947-53), Sr. M. Aquin Adams, O.P. (1953-59), Sr. Marie Robert Letford, O.P. (1959-65).

- **Parish Trustees during the Fifth Decade:** Thomas C. Whelan (1917-53), James H. Fisher (1914-52), Francis G. Daley (1953-69), Anthony J. Benzing (1952-60), Steven E. Keane (1960-76).