

## **The Past Teaches Us How to Live for the Future**

I've always loved history, because it teaches us so much about where we've been but also how to learn from the past to get to the future.

With respect to those who have gone before us, if you think about it, there is so much to be inspired about. Just look through the history of our own parish.

As people moved into the area, it goes without saying a number of these people were Catholic. And so in April of 1855, the first Catholic Mass in the area was held in Hastings, held in a home near Lakeville. Saint Patrick's of Inver Grove Heights was formed in 1856, and in 1858 an area priest, Fr. Felix Tissot, offered Mass in Rosemount in a home, which became known as the Rosemount Mission. By the 1860s, various Masses were being held in the area. And as the decade wore on, the Rosemount Mission would become the parish of Saint Joseph's.

The Lakeville and Rosemount mission was combined by Fr. Anatole Oster, a German priest, in 1868. The location was to be the intersection of Dodd Road and the future Pilot Knob Road and Town Line Road. The land was purchased from a family, Thomas and Mary Hyland for \$100. The church was financed by votes from mission members to be repaid with 10% interest. \$2360 was raised toward construction. On Sunday, August 30, 1868, the church was dedicated to Saint Joseph and a Mass was said on a temporary altar.

What's neat with that first parish is how parishioners literally built it. Most workers listed were parishioners. Parishioners also pitched in for lightning rods to protect the church, and paid for the Saint Joseph statue. By July 1870, the church was pretty much ready, financed and built largely by the people of God here in Rosemount. The only drawback was getting there, as it was halfway between Rosemount and Lakeville, though by 1876 All Saints would be built in Lakeville or Fairfield as it was known back then.

In 1880, a major storm destroyed the church. And so the parish moved to the Temperance Hall (now the sight of Carbone's, a bar), while the second church was built in town. On September 15, 1888, the first festival was held at the Temperance Hall. (Though we have a liquor permit for tonight's). Along with that, it wasn't long before the parish started having card parties as well as fundraisers, and bazaars.

As time went on though, the parish again needed to grow. And people, knowing this, wanted to help. For instance Parishioner James Tierney died on January 15, 1907 at the age of 84 years. When James died he left an estate worth about \$50,000. Among his public bequests was \$1000 to the new Cathedral in St. Paul and \$10,000 to aid in building a new Catholic Church in Rosemount. With parishioners helping, and fundraising, over the next two decades that fund grew \$35,000 by 1922. The total cost though would be north of \$60,000; \$61,972 to be exact. Adding on the heating and the plumbing and electrical work and it was \$81,669. The cornerstone was laid in 1924, the first Mass on Christmas Eve, and the parish dedicated in May of 1925. Parishioners

paid for the altar as a gift, \$1500. And in the years that followed, there were numerous fundraisers to support the church. They included dinners, bake sales, ice cream socials, and a series of card parties. The parish held an annual bazaar. A chicken supper was served beginning at 5:30 p.m. until everyone was served. The dinner was priced at 50 cents a plate for adults and 25 cents for children.

And speaking of children, as the parish grew, in the 1950s it was decided that the time was right for a school. A building committee approved the school, and Fr. James Furey left the parish to find a staff for it asking for prayers. They were answered when he returned with the Sisters of Saint Agnes. Again, parishioners stepped up to help with the school, with many parishioners helped to build it. Classes began in the fall of 1954. It was enlarged in 1957, costing \$113,000. Eventually in the 60s, a convent was built. In the 70s, new heating and electrical systems along with redecorating were \$135,000. And by the late 1990s, it was determined a new parish would probably need to be built because the population kept growing.

That beautiful sanctuary is where we gather today for Mass. Ground was broke after Mass offered by Bishop Richard Pates in July of 2002, and on October 5, 2003, our first Mass took place following a procession from the old to the new church. Five years down the road, our school was added onto our campus.

What this history, which was taken largely from the extensive work done by parishioner Jerry Mattson, goes to show you, is that through the decades time and time again, people have taken ownership of their parish through a spirit of generosity.

This weekend, we celebrate that history with the release of the history of our parish.

At the 8:30 a.m. Mass, we'll be honoring Mrs. Ann Loch and a number of parishioners who joined her in helping to make our history book, "Looking to our Future Through the Windows of our Past" a reality. Having been given an advanced copy, I've found the quality of the production and detail of research to be incredible. The book was truly a labor of love, and it teaches us so much about the history of our parish. I know you'll find it inspiring to read about the incredible sacrifices made by so many, and year by year find a similar theme: how people demonstrated time and time again a love for their parish and sacrificed so much to make Saint Joe's a vibrant and thriving parish that brought people closer to God and closer together as the people of God. The book really inspires us to look at all that those who were in this parish have done to make our parish thrive, and to learn from them about how to continue to build and grow our parish as we love and serve God and one another.

I'd like to personally thank Mrs. Ann Loch and her husband John, along with Jerry Mattson for his tireless research so we can remember and also learn from our history. A big "thank you" as well to all the members of the 150th Anniversary Committee, and to you for continuing to make history for all you do in support of your parish. As I've said, it's such an honor to be part of a warm and welcoming parish family where people sacrifice and give so much and live out their faith day in and day out. Truly people don't

just look to our history as stories to remember, but look to those stories as ways to guide us into the future by giving selflessly of our time, talent and treasure.

Have a blessed week!

Fr. Paul