



History of St. Hyacinth Parish

Diamond Jubilee 1906-1981 St. Hyacinth Parish,
Cleveland, OH, p. 9-18. CAP at Orchard Lake.

The Journey Begins...

Our history begins long before the actual formation of the parish community of St. Hyacinth.

After being dominated by politically aggressive neighbors, the kingdom of Poland was dissolved. By 1815, what was the former Polish kingdom was now divided among Russia, Austria and Prussia. But the people did not succumb. Their language and national traditions were zealously preserved and taught to the young. From home were forged bonds of family and national loyalty despite oppression, poverty and injustice. The burning desire for freedom was coupled with the conviction of the future restoration of Poland. During this crisis, the Catholic Church again formed the bond of union between Poles in whatever sector or country they lived. Their faith provided strength and hope in enduring the severe restrictions placed upon them.

Seeking fervently the freedom from political dominance of other nations, and relief from poor economic conditions, they looked eagerly at the vision of the land of the free and the home of the brave. For some the journey to the United States was adventure, for others relief from political or religious oppression, for others the opportunity to work for family and a future Poland. The thought of returning to their family and nation lightened their homesickness for familiar fields and country villages. Most never returned although their ties to country and family were never severed.

In the United States the immigrant Poles came to such Urban centers as Buffalo, Milwaukee, Detroit and Cleveland. As Industry grew in Cleveland and the area there around, immigrant laborers were needed, and they came to the city in large numbers to fill the rapidly growing job market. In the year 1856 the first iron mill was established, the Cleveland Rolling Mills located in the Newburgh area and this drew many of the early immigrants to work.

The Czech's who were among the first settlers, formed the first sizeable Slavic community in Cleveland in the years prior to the Civil War. It was natural for the Poles to seek out the company of fellow Slavs and they began to seek employment and settle in the area from East 55th Street and Broadway Avenue, across Kingsbury Run from Croton Street and only a mile distant from the rolling mill.

As the years passed the community grew and the concern arose for the pastoral care for the families of the Poles living in the area from Tod Street-(East 65th) and Fleet Avenue area. This region was still farm land, but the Polish settlement grew quite rapidly and the establishment of a Polish Catholic parish in Cleveland was necessary. The Parish, St. Stanislaus, first held church services in St. Mary's in the Flats, a wooden church building that the diocese loaned to the Catholic immigrant

groups until they built a church of their own.

Though much of the area north of the rolling mills was still undeveloped, in 1881, enough Poles lived in the vicinity to force the location of the first permanent St. Stanislaus Church building at Tod Street (E. 65th) and Forman Avenue.

The Cleveland Area became one of the leading manufacturing cities of the Midwest in the early 1870's. By 1880 it was obvious that more and more relatives and acquaintances were coming from Poland. In 1881, St. Stanislaus Church and the First Polish School were built. As the community grew the great waves of immigration were imminent.

The excessively great number of people kept increasing. New businesses began to start and the demand for housing grew. This growth extended in the years to come in all directions of the city. As the years passed the need for more convenient Schools and places of worship also grew. Many satellite communities developed and new parishes were also developed.

The St. Stanislaus area called "Warszawa" was the mother parish, later the area south of Warszawa, across the ravines at Harvard and Ottawa Roads and as far as East 71st Street and Grant Avenue became known as "Krakowo." The residents of this area, either farmed small plots of land, or worked in the industries in Warszawa. Because many of the residents engaged in farming and kept poultry, the settlement acquired the nickname, Goosetown. The large number of geese that were raised roamed at will, often hissing at or chasing passers-by.

Early settlers in Krakowo belonged to St. Stanislaus Parish and walked more than a mile to church each Sunday. In response to the community's request for a more convenient parish of its own, Sacred Heart of Jesus was created in 1889. The first permanent parish building was erected the following year.

The second satellite community of Warszawa was situated to its northeast, near Tod (E. 65th) Street and Francis Avenue. The Poles who settled in this district in the 1880's were most likely employed at the nearby Empire Plow Company, or in the industries that lined the edges of Kingsbury Run to the north of the community. This region was known as "JACKOWO."

75 Years ago, a group of Catholic Poles residing in the region known as Jackowo, petitioned Bishop Ignatius Horstmann to organize a new parish community. Two reasons prompted them to do so: the crowded conditions of St. Stanislaus Parish, and the distance their homes were removed from the church. Bishop Horstmann received their petition favorably and on the 20th of December, 1906, appointed Rev. Louis Redmer, as the pastor of the new parish for which the patronage of St. Hyacinth was chosen.

The parish was organized during a period of business depression, but due to the untiring effort of the young and energetic pastor, and the help of Fr. Francis Kolaszewski, pastor of St. Stanislaus, and the willing cooperation of the parishioners, the work of organization was successfully accomplished. Among the first and most generous parishioners who participated in giving their utmost help were Stanislaus Grodek, Adam Jarzembowski and Stanislaus Gawryszewski.

On the 4th of August, 1907 the corner stone of the combination church/school building was blessed. It was on Christmas Day of the same year that Mass was celebrated for the first time in the new building. School had commenced on the 15th of January, 1908.

On August 23, 1908, Rt. Rev. Paul Rhode, the first Bishop of Polish descent in America solemnly dedicated and blessed the church and school.

The first sacrifice of the Mass for the congregation of St. Hyacinth was offered at St. Edward's Church and then for about a year services were conducted at St. Lawrence Church.

The original site for the building of St. Hyacinth Church was across the bridge over Kingsbury Run on Grand Avenue, but the Board of Education then offered the congregation its unused land in the area of Francis Avenue and East 61st and 63rd streets. The congregation bought about 10 of the lots on which would stand the church, school and rectory. The lots cost \$10,000, the building \$20,000 and the rectory \$6,000.

A Vision Becomes a Reality

The Rev. Louis Redmer organizer and first Pastor of the Parish carried on his pastoral work from the 20th of December 1906 to the 29th of April, 1920. He died while on his visit to the Holy Land. He was buried in Alger, in Africa. Then the Bishop John P. Farrelly appointed Rev. Joseph M. Sztucki as Fr. Redmer's successor. Father Sztucki began his pastoral work on April 29, 1920.

Shortly after the arrival of Fr. Sztucki, the parish purchased nine additional lots for \$10,000. There was no Sisters' home and therefore, in 1920, a central heating plant combined with the Sisters' home was built.

In 1925, due to the overcrowded conditions in the school building, an auditorium and six additional classrooms were built. In April, 1926, the Most Rev. Theodore Kubina, Bishop of Czestochowa in Poland was present in Chicago for the Eucharistic Congress and was asked by Fr. Sztucki to officiate at the blessing of the School building.

Shortly after, a lot of twenty acres was purchased for \$6,000. The addition of this piece of land added to the beauty of the church property making it possible for the future building of a new church and Sisters' home. It also provided a spacious playground for the school children and ideal grounds for the annual church carnivals.

Due to the rapid development of the parish community the church proved to be too small. It was also discovered that elder parishioners found it inconvenient climbing many stairs to reach the church. There arose, then, a need for a new, larger and more convenient place to worship. The dream of a beautiful new church with a tower and facilities to accommodate young and old became a vital concern of Fr. Sztucki, and many of the parishioners. The heavy church debt of previous years did not permit materialization of the plan.

However, in January of 1947, Fr. Sztucki, following the publishing of the parish financial report, announced that the last debt, incurred during the severe depression, had been paid. Now the desire of generous parishioners for a new church could soon be fulfilled. Therefore, the Pastor requested that each family contribute \$50.00 towards a church building fund. The announcement stirred the enthusiasm of all and the money was willingly given. The first large offering, amounting to \$200 came from the Rosary Society. Other societies and clubs followed the fine example.

Later in 1949, Architect, Paul J. Ellsworth Potter, at the request of the pastor, submitted a building plan and an estimate of \$150,000. In January 1950, the approval of Archbishop Edward F. Hoban was secured for the erection of the new church.

Ground blessing ceremonies conducted by Fr. Sztucki were held on July 2, 1950. In this year a carnival was held to swell the building fund. Due to the efforts of the parishioners and local merchants, the carnival was a financial success.

The Archbishop delegated Father Sztucki to bless the corner stone on March 11, 1951. Father Joseph Rutkowski, pastor of St. Hedwig's, delivered the sermon. Father Rutkowski was a former assistant at St. Hyacinth Parish.

An Undying Commitment

Due to the scarcity of building materials, work on the new edifice progressed slowly. At this time a fund-raising committee was organized and solicited parishioners in their homes. Funds necessary to complete the task were raised, in the amount of \$225,000.

Special tribute must be given to the families, societies, organizations and clubs which not only contributed money generously, but also purchased the altars, windows and other church furniture.

The new Church building was completed in May of 1952. The occasion became doubly memorable for a group of children who received their first Holy Communion on that day. The closing ceremonies were climaxed by the solemn blessing of the Church and the celebration of the first Pontifical Mass by Archbishop Edward F. Hoban on May 22, 1952.

In the year of 1954, Fr. Joseph Sztucki became a Monsignor, this took place on January 17. In 1956 before the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Parish Msgr. Sztucki had the interior of the church painted.

Two weeks before the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Parish and Msgr. Sztucki's 40th Anniversary of his priesthood, God called him for his heavenly reward. Truly he was a chosen child of Mary, for it was on the feast of Our Lady of the Snows, August 5, 1957 that he left our midst to receive his hundredfold reward.

On September 4, 1957, Rev. Joseph C. Rutkowski was appointed our Third Pastor. Fr. Rutkowski was not unfamiliar with our parish, for he served as our Assistant beginning in 1928. He spent many years of his early priestly ministry teaching catechism in our parish school and making many visits to the homes of the parishioners which gave him a unmatched familiarity with our parish community. Father also was the director of our Silver Jubilee celebration in the year 1932. After six years he was named pastor of St. Hedwigs in Lakewood, only to return to St. Hyacinth in 1957 as our pastor.

During the next 16 years, Fr. Rutkowski continued the development of our parish community and labored with zeal, love and devotion in behalf of the soul entrusted to his care. Under his leadership, the spiritual and physical growth of the Parish was immense. Fr. Rutkowski built no monuments of stone as the two pastors before him, but he built the more important monuments of God's graces on the souls of our parishioners.

In January of 1973, Fr. Rutkowski retired at the age of 70 from full time pastoral care, but he still is very much a vital part of our community when he returns each week for the Sunday Polish Mass as well as for many other parish events.

On Sunday, May 21, 1978 Father celebrated his Golden Jubilee of his priesthood. This was a joyous occasion for all.

For Continued Growth

On January 15, 1973, Bishop Clarence G. Issenmann appointed Rev. Fr. John S. Deka as the Fourth Pastor of our parish community. Fr. Deka began his pastoral care with a sincere effort to maintain the now smaller, second and third generation parish. Working without an assistant, he had to open doors to the laity to help him with the work of the parish.

Father Deka strongly believes in the Parish community as a shared responsibility. With his spiritual guidance, and cooperation on everyone's part, he strives to accommodate the young as well as the elderly, the traditional and the modern, working together as creative Christians in a contemporary world.

Under Father Deka's direction programs of continued religious education for adults are being developed and many opportunities are available for all to share their abilities for the continued growth of the spirituality in our Parish. This 75th Jubilee celebration under the supervision of Fr. Deka, is an example of the many ways, each individual shares themselves with the others and recognize the uniqueness of our community.