The Blessed Coincidence

Since Poland's baptism as a Christian Nation, two phrases — "Love of God" and "Love of Country" — have personified the history of Poland.

To Milwaukeeans of Polish descent, the two gold domes of St. Stanislaus Church represent this twin idea of God and country and have been transplanted into a physical and a spiritual reality.

This essence of Poland has been intertwined with the constant and courageous parish spirit of St. Stanislaus — and thus it was indeed a blessed coincidence that in the Year of Our Lord, 1966 - the Church in America and in Poland should celebrate at the same time - Poland, its Millennium of Christianity and St. Stanislaus, its Centenary of active parish life. How wonderful, how remarkable, how blessed that both should celebrate these two joyous occasions at the same time!

Catholicism is Poland's heart, its strength, it's very core. St. Stanislaus is the hearth-stone for all Milwaukee Poles, the "Mother Church" of all city parishes, established for Americans of Polish descent not only in Milwaukee but throughout America.

"Polonia Semper Fidelis"

The motto of Poland, "Polonia Semper Fidelis," which means, "Poland Always Faithful," could very well have been the motto of the parishioners of St. Stanislaus down through the past 100 years. The faith and loyalty of its members have made it a great parish, just as the faith and loyalty of the Polish people have made Poland strong and enduring for 1,000 years.

Poland has always been a predominantly Catholic country, and even now under Communist oppression it is considered by many to be the most Catholic country in the world. That strong faith that built parish after parish in this city and in the United States emanated from the Mother Church of St. Stanislaus, instilling profound pride in the part the Poles had played in making Milwaukee one of the most Catholic cities in America.

Christianity has been the abiding focus of Poland's strength for 1,000 years. The oldest Polish text in existence was a religious hymn, "Bogurodzica Dziewica," which means, "Mother of God, Virgin," forming the major words of the original Polish national anthem.
It is this unity of spirit, this intertwining of faith with living itself that has become the outstanding characteristic of the Polish people.

All in this great city of Milwaukee rejoice with St. Stanislaus Parish, and all, putting aside religious and ethnic differences, salute the Catholic Church itself as the force and focus for Milwaukeeans of Polish descent since the city's very beginnings.

In Poland, too, Catholic Poles join with Christian countries throughout the world to commemorate this abiding faith that endured for 1,000 years.

Indeed, what a blessed coincidence for all Poles in Milwaukee to recall once again the inseparable "Love of God" and "Love of Country," and to join with the world in this double celebration.

The Beginning

To write a history of St. Stanislaus Church is to write the history of the early Milwaukee Poles as well — for each and every one of these pioneers shared in the struggles and the accomplishments, the sorrows and the joys of the beginnings of this church.

The very structure of this church is a memorial to all Milwaukeeans of Polish descent, and the twin spires epitomize the indomitable religious spirit and the unwavering faith of those early Polish emigrants.

In essence, St. Stanislaus Church, clothed in historic dignity, stands as a noble record of the part that the Poles played in Milwaukee's early history. No Milwaukee street, it is said, no building, no commercial or industrial establishment exists, no political or civic office functions today, to which Milwaukee Poles have not contributed in some measure.

The Two Gold Domes

Love and pride surge in a great overflowing in Milwaukee's Catholics of Polish descent who views their Mother Church today. Going daily to and from their occupations, they are renewed in spirit and fortified in their faith by the sight of the two gold domes of St. Stanislaus, gleaming in the sun. This same sweet emotion engulfed the "Kaszuby," those early Polish fishermen of Jones Island, when they came in off Lake Michigan with a day's catch and glimpsed those two spires through the fog. This church of theirs signified everything hopeful in the New World — and this hope continues to be imbued in their descendants today.

Jones Island

A mile from the present church, marking its eastern parish boundaries, is Jones Island, where first the "Kaszuby" had settled. They were a handful of fishermen who had come from Puck, a fishing town on the Bay of Gdansk, and from the peninsula of Hel, in the Baltic. They chose Jones Island because the waters of Lake Michigan reminded them of the restless Baltic Sea.

A few years later, the "Kaszuby" were joined by others fleeing from the persecutions which followed the Russian-Polish revolution. At one time, around the turn of the century, there were some 3,000 Poles living on Jones Island. Most were freedom-seekers from the old grand duchy of Poznan, and
from East and West Pomorze, followed still later by others from Galicia, Wilno and Warsaw. Jones Island was almost completely a Polish community, and most of its inhabitants were loyal members of St. Stanislaus Parish until much later when the city took over the island as a harbor facility and forced them to seek housing elsewhere. The church remains — the island community has disappeared.

What a thrill it must have been, equaled only by the sight of the Statue of Liberty, when our grandparents — who emigrated by the thousands here in the 1870's and 1880's - first looked southward and then upward, to those two slim towers. How they must have wept with joy! Friends and relatives already here had written: "When you see St. Stanislaus Church, your journey will be at an end."

**Burning Dream**

And what a long and tiring journey it must have been in those days. They had little money, but because of a burning dream of a better life for themselves and their children, they persevered. They had endured persecution and deprivation, had often seen their loved ones jailed and tortured, and had been prevented in their own land from their right to worship God. What a great joy of attainment was their first glimpse of those twin spires! They signified freedom to worship, freedom to labor, freedom to live, and freedom to raise their families without fear of reprisal.

**Success Story**

This history of St. Stanislaus is indeed a "success story." It began with nothing but determination, solidarity and faith, and endures today as a monument of fulfillment and spiritual satisfaction for all Milwaukee Poles.

As we commemorate the centennial of St. Stanislaus with newly gilded domes and redecorated interior with its gold leaf and mosaics, it is interesting to note that the word "gold" played a significant part in its very beginnings.

*The original St. Stanislaus Church located at 5th and Mineral Streets. To the left: first school for Americans of Polish descent in America established in 1868.*

**Golden Inspiration**

A homesick cobbler from Poznan, Anthony Kochanek, longing for the familiarity of a Sunday Mass with a Polish sermon, attended a meeting of his countrymen one night. There were only a handful
at that meeting — men and women newly arrived from Gdansk, Poznan and Pomorze - determined to make a new life in the young city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A. The purpose of their coming together that night was to seek a way to found a church for the families of Polish descent.

Money was their problem. Not one of them was rich. Finding employment in a land where even the language was different had proved difficult, and most of them had spent their small life savings to make the trip to America. They were eager and hopeful, however, in their desire to start a parish of their own.

In the midst of the animated discussion of that first meeting, a man suddenly stood up in the back of the room and waved a hand for silence. He was Anthony Kochanek. Slowly and deliberately he drew from his pocket his most valued possession — his gold watch. He held it in his big hands for a moment, looked at it, and then raised it high on its chain for all to see...

"The only way to make our dreams come true is to begin right now," said he. "I will offer my gold watch to be raffled and the money earned from the raffle will become the nucleus of our church fund."

And so the dream was on its way to becoming a reality. The sum of $250 was raised from the raffle of Anthony Kochanek's gold watch and that amount was the sum and substance of the new parish treasury. If only that unselfish man could see what his gold watch helped to accomplish in the next 100 years!

**Early Beginnings**

Although back in 1866, those parish pioneers numbered only thirty families, they were loyal, hard-working, thrifty people, determined to find peace and contentment here. This was now their new home, this young flourishing community of Milwaukee, which had become a city just twenty years ago and was still enmeshed in its own growing pains.

Through much personal deprivation and a singular ambition, the Original Thirty managed to raise $4,000 which enabled them to buy a little church (formerly Lutheran) at 5th and Mineral Streets. They dedicated it to St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr.

**Unique Distinction**

This little church, coming quietly into existence, had the unique distinction of being the first Catholic Church for Milwaukee Poles, the first city parish, and also the first large parish for Americans of Polish ancestry in the United States. The only two churches which preceded it in America were the village churches in Panna Marya, Texas and in Polonia, Wisconsin. The first St. Stanislaus Church was made of brick and..."a small bell was quartered in a little tower atop the church. The windows were of Gothic style and numbered six on each side of the church. Above the altar was a painting of the Blessed Virgin. There was no sacristy, but near the altar was a cupboard for liturgical vestments."

The first pastor, Father T. A. Weglikowski, served his small flock less than a year — from March, 1866, to January, 1867. He was succeeded by Father John Jaster. The new parish was blessed by the Most Rev. John M. Henni, who only two years previously had been designated as the first bishop of the new Diocese of Milwaukee.
One wonders now, after 100 years, at the admirable dedication of those first parishioners! Only a few of them were formally educated; most were fishermen, laborers, tradesmen — yet they were caught up in the inspiring wave of progress and "betterment-for-all" that formed the strong spirit of early Milwaukee history. All wanted a richer life for their children and their children's children, and this determination, always aided by a strong religious faith, moved them relentlessly forward to bigger goals. It was almost as if God had looked down on them, smilingly, and had given an impetus to their ambitious dreams!

**The Children's Future**

They had their church. Now they wanted religion in their children's education. With no pattern to follow and with no precedent to guide them, they established the first parochial school in America for Americans of Polish descent. They felt that their children, those little members of the new St. Stanislaus, should be considered first before plans were formulated for a larger church for the growing parish. In 1868 then, just two years after they had pioneered in building a new church, they also pioneered in establishing a grade school. The school, a two-story frame building with living quarters for the pastor, adjoined the church.

Almost immediately they scored another first! The school's first teacher, Sister M. Tyta, of the Order of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, made history herself. She was the first Polish nun to teach in America.

Perhaps some would have taken a deep breath and a rest after such remarkable work, but not the visionary men and women of St. Stanislaus. They began forthwith to make plans for a new and larger church, under the direction of the Reverend John Rodowicz, who had succeeded Father Bonaventure Buczynski.

Through all this, one must not forget the urgency of the times. New Polish emigrants were arriving in Milwaukee daily, the vanguard of that great horde of Europeans who swarmed over America from 1870 to the 1920's, and stayed to leave their imprint on our life and culture. Already the little St. Stanislaus Church was bulging at the seams!

The parishioners, with unswerving confidence, went ahead with their plans. They bought land on the slope of a nearby hill and commissioned Leonard Kowalski, an architect from Warsaw, to design a new church.

**Cornerstone Is Blessed**

In July, 1872, amidst great celebration, Archbishop Henni blessed the cornerstone of the present St. Stanislaus Church at Grove (now 5th) and Mitchell Streets. A chronicler wrote: "The weather was warm. People came from all parts of the city. Around the structure were booths, at which were sold various articles and refreshments. Proceeds from these booths totaled $1,000."

How did these single-minded parishioners do it? An early church historian says: "As always, the community worked together to raise the necessary funds for the soon-to-be- erected church. Each parishioner was assessed $30. John Polaski, a Civil War veteran, sold a cow for $50 so that he might contribute his share to the fund. A few of the parishioners gave their lands as security
for the $20,000 church mortgage."

Shortly after the church was completed, Anthony Malek organized the first choir in the parish. A new organ, costing $4,000, was purchased.

**From 30 to 1,000!**

It is estimated that there were about 1,000 parishioners at St. Stanislaus at this time, representing 400 families, a tremendous increase since the Original Thirty. The parish grew rapidly as more and more Poles emigrated, bought homes and began to raise families. It is interesting to note here that church records show there were 96 marriages in 1882, a record unequaled even in our present day! The glowing letters written by the Milwaukee Poles to persecuted friends and relatives in Poland about the new life must have made Milwaukee and St. Stanislaus Parish sound like a paradise.

**The Renowned Company K**

The sense of cooperation which enabled the early parishioners to build a new church also carried over into their involvement in city life. They adopted the city and state as readily as they accepted the precepts of the Constitution of the United States. As years went by, they no longer thought of themselves as Poles from Poland, but simply as Americans of Polish descent. A fine example of this spirit was the organization in the 1870's of the first Polish military unit in the United States, the renowned Company K, or Kosciuszko Guards. This famous company, which performed valiantly in two World Wars, was originally created in the parish and composed almost entirely, in the early years, of men from St. Stanislaus. Company K drilled weekly in the parish hall for 11 years.

Father Xavier Kralczynski, a Capuchin from Warsaw, succeeded Father Rodowicz as pastor in 1875. After less than a year, he was replaced by Father Hyacinth Gulski, who had fled from the risings in his homeland. Father Gulski is remembered for founding St. Hyacinth Parish, for in the years that followed, the influx of emigrants from Poland and other European nations was doubling the size of Milwaukee and made a second parish necessary.

His successor, Father Hipolit Gorski, who served from 1884 to 1894, was responsible for renovating the interior of St. Stanislaus. An early historian, paraphrasing Caesar Augustus, commented: "He found the church brick but left it marble." During his pastorate, the spires were covered with copper, a new organ was installed, and the floors of the school and church were raised. Since the parish population had increased so steadily, a new parish school, next to the church, also was built in 1889.

During this time, the Milwaukee Catholic Diocese, as well as the city itself, was profoundly affected by the physical and social changes that expansion brought. Other Polish Catholic churches (founded on the east and south sides of the city during this period) relieved some of the religious burden for St. Stanislaus. Large edifices such as St. Stanislaus, St. Hyacinth and St. Josaphat reflected the dedication and generosity of the Polish emigrants. By 1906, also, according to city records, 65 percent of Milwaukee's population was Roman Catholic.
A Magnificent Church

Father Paul Szulerecki became the eighth pastor of St. Stanislaus in 1895. During his time the church was renovated again and more marble was installed. This was in truth a glorious period for the loyal and dedicated parishioners — for St. Stanislaus was now indeed one of the most magnificent churches in America.

It was during Father Szulerecki’s pastorate that bells were purchased for the twin towers. Four big bells, weighing a total of six tons and inscribed with the names of the donors, were placed in the towers. Today these same bells, still the largest set of bells in the city, ring out daily.

In 1914, well-established as the "Mother Church for all Milwaukee Poles," St. Stanislaus received a singular honor. Its new pastor that year was a prelate of the Church, Bishop Edward Kozlowski, the first Auxiliary Bishop of Milwaukee. An account of his welcome was recorded: "A parade formed at St. John Cathedral where he was consecrated. He was greeted with music, and the streets along which the parade passed were lit with torches. The carriage which took him to his new duties was pulled by a team of four horses. The church was filled to capacity ... and his first sermon as Bishop and Pastor of St. Stanislaus left a lasting impression on all present."

During the World War I years, the parish presumably had reached a high peak of accomplishment and its people had surely witnessed the reality of their dreams: a fine, beautiful church, and a bishop as pastor. In short, they should have rested on their laurels and enjoyed what had been accomplished. But resting was unheard of at St. Stanislaus. Perhaps that is what made the parish singular and unique among parishes. It was simply that progress — goals, more new goals, constantly higher aims — had become a St. Stanislaus habit, a way of life.

Bishop Kozlowski died within a year of his appointment and was succeeded by Father Louis Jurasiński, a graduate of Marquette University, a well-loved and generous pastor who served faithfully until 1935. A mark of his parishioners' love for him was that, during the Depression of the early 30's, they continued to go ahead with work on the church and the school. During his tenure, a four-story school building was erected, which was later to house a new parish high school.

Following Father Jurasiński’s death in 1935, Monsignor Michael J. Wenta was appointed pastor. Well-known in Milwaukee educational circles, it was he who carried out Father Jurasiński's dream of a parish high school. Father Jurasiński had realized the need for a co-educational Catholic high school on the city's south side, and had already initiated a three-year course in the new school building.

Monsignor Wenta's Era

During Monsignor Wenta’s era, a fourth year was added to St. Stanislaus High School, as it was then called. Again the parishioners of St. Stanislaus had pioneered!

Forerunner of the present Notre Dame High School, St. Stanislaus High School was indeed a tribute to the church's continuing dream of new goals and higher achievements. Today it is significant that just as St. Stanislaus is a "Mother Church," Notre Dame High School is no longer simply a parish high school but now attracts students from over sixty-five parishes.
An excellent orator and a man of wide learning and culture, Monsignor Wentz was fondly called "silver tongue." He is particularly remembered for establishing a strong and active Catholic Youth Organization. Realizing that young people are the lifeblood and the future of a parish, Monsignor Wentz worked hard to make our CYO an exceptional group. In his time, it became a model for other parishes to follow. A young curate at St. Stanislaus during these years was the Reverend Roman Atkielski, now Auxiliary Bishop in the Milwaukee Diocese. St. Stanislaus was his first assignment.

After Monsignor Wentz's death in 1940, the scholarly Monsignor Bernard Kobelinski became pastor. Before entering the priesthood, he had received a "magna cum laude" degree from Marquette University, and later was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy at Rome. While he was pastor, the high school classrooms were remodeled, modern laboratories and equipment installed, and the interior of the church was decorated.

However, these were the dreadful war years for the people of St. Stanislaus. Hitler attacked Poland in 1939, and as a result everyone had a beloved friend or relative living in the Nazi-occupied homeland. The war was uppermost in everyone's mind and the church was crowded day after day with deeply anxious parishioners, asking for God's aid. This fostered an almost unprecedented unity of spirit among Milwaukee Poles and the parishioners joined with other parishes to send aid and comfort to those in the war-torn country.

**7th Largest Polish Center**

As the war continued, and more of the young men of the parish left for military service, the weekly St. Stan's News, that lively church bulletin, was born and continues to this day, reflecting the interests and spirit of the parish. The comings and goings of its people, the activities of an always busy parish, are faithfully recorded here each week. Milwaukee at this time was the seventh largest Polish center in America and there were 120,000 Milwaukeeans of Polish descent in the city.

Following Monsignor Kobelinski's death eight years ago, the pastor and guiding light of St. Stanislaus has been a man possessed by a magnificent dream — our own Monsignor Raymond A. Punda. Like the individualistic parish pioneers, he had a single-minded goal - to make the Centennial Year of St. Stanislaus the most remarkable one in the church's illustrious history. That goal is now a reality. As with his forebears, however, there will be more goals, bigger dreams, and higher aims. He is that kind of man!

**Present Pastor**

Monsignor Punda has called St. Stanislaus "home" for all of his priestly life. After his ordination at St. Francis Seminary on June 3, 1939, Father came directly to St. Stanislaus as a curate under Monsignor Wentz. He left it only once to serve as an Army Infantry Chaplain in the Pacific for four years during World War II. Upon his return from service in 1946, he was appointed president of Notre Dame High School by Archbishop Kiley. In 1950, he also earned nation-wide fame as the author of the novena prayers of the renowned Our Lady's Crusade For Peace.

To a parish still recovering from its personal ordeal in World War II, the Centennial celebration became a welcome new goal. With characteristic Polish integrity, each and every parishioner rallied behind their pastor in these years of centennial planning. Enthusiastic and eager to plunge into a
new project, they backed him wholeheartedly in the huge work of renovating St. Stanislaus Church both inside and outside. There were many delays and setbacks, but parish spirit and solidarity remained constant.

During this time, the parishioners helped Father Punda celebrate his Silver Jubilee in May, 1964, cheerfully climbing over lumber and bricks and around scaffolding to get to the big reception. They rejoiced with him when Pope Paul VI made their beloved pastor a papal chamberlain on August 23, 1965. Although he has the title of Monsignor, he prefers to have his parishioners call him Father.

Sadly, there was one hurdle in the centennial planning that even parish determination could not overcome. Father Punda had gone to Poland in the summer of 1959 with a most heartfelt desire to invite the Primate of Poland, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, to come to St. Stanislaus in 1966 as guest of honor at its centennial anniversary celebration, thus linking it with Poland's own Millennium of Christianity into a "Blessed Coincidence." Although the Cardinal accepted the invitation, he was forced to cancel his trip to the United States and to St. Stanislaus due to the political situation in Poland.

**Alive and Flourishing**

Despite this disappointment, the parishioners of St. Stanislaus are beaming with pride today as they view what has been accomplished after six years of work — their beautifully redecorated church. For 100 years St. Stanislaus has been a leading parish, and it continues to be alive and flourishing. All agree with Monsignor Punda that "it is up to us as present members to set the tone and pace for the next 100 years, both in spiritual as well as material ways."

This year the new interstate expressway will cut through the hill sloping down from St. Stanislaus so that daily in the next 25, 50, or perhaps 100 years, the twin gold spires of St. Stanislaus will cast their long shadows across that concrete artery. Let us hope that those shadows will be a subtle influence on the lives of millions who will speed by, causing them to glance up, if even for a brief moment, at those two shining testaments of the Catholic Poles' love of God.

Looking back over the years at what has been accomplished, it is evident that the parishioners of St. Stanislaus have been unique. It is they who are, and have always been, responsible for the solidarity, faith, and forward-thinking that year by year improved and beautified this church.

The present-day men and women of the parish share in the pride and glory of all who went before them. They rejoice today with those whose hands - those thousands of hands — seemingly still warm these historic stones. Their mark is still there. May they rejoice with us as we look up proudly at those two gold spires shining in the sunlight of the present!

**The Spirit of Renovation**

It is more than a coincidence that the beautifully renovated St. Stanislaus should reflect the spirit of restoration in the Catholic Church today. Each alteration and design was planned with the modern liturgy in mind.

As always, through the years, St. Stanislaus has kept up with the times. Since 1866, progress has been the keynote, the abiding heartbeat of this very active parish. In this age of liturgical revival,
therefore, it is not extraordinary that this great church should embody the physical symbolism of modern Catholicism.

This shining and golden monument stands completely renovated today after almost seven years of arduous planning, hard work and sacrifice. Despite fire, weather, and other setbacks, all who were involved, including the tradesmen, caught the spirit of St. Stanislaus priests and parishioners and worked feverishly to complete the entire restoration in time for this summer's centennial celebration.

Monsignor Punda first voiced his desire to renovate St. Stanislaus before his visit to Poland in 1959. At that time he invited Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski to the Jubilee in 1966. This thought — to rebeautify and readorn the church for his visit, as well as to mark its 100 years — caught the enthusiasm of each and every parishioner. Their church has always been to them a great source of pride. "Only the best," they told Father Punda, "after 100 years, St. Stanislaus deserves the finest that is possible!"

Aided by such loyalty, Father proceeded with the plans. A centennial campaign was begun in the fall of 1959, and a pledge committee welcomed pledges from parishioners amounting to one hour's wage per week. Later, a Memorial Gifts Program was initiated. The response to both was most heartwarming.

**Work Started On Towers**

In the spring of 1960, which was also the year in which Poland's millennium celebration began, work was started on the towers.

The complete modernization plan combined the latest in skills and materials, while still retaining the original structural dignity of the church. The architects, Mark F. Pfaller Associates, worked closely during every detail of the operation with the ecclesiastical artists, the Conrad Schmitt Studios. Every facet of the restoration, step by step in the ensuing six years, required the concentrated attention of Monsignor Punda and the cooperating talents of Bernard O. Gruenke, President of Conrad Schmitt Studios, and Mark Pfaller, Jr. All were in agreement that the finished St. Stanislaus should only be altered in a manner that would enhance its traditional beauty.

Keeping this aim always in mind, their careful artistry, skill and imagination produced the alterations, slowly and gradually in the many months that followed, while all Milwaukee watched the work progress.

They began at the top. All the old and rotting wood trim, some of which had been in place since the church was first built, was removed from base to cross and replaced with stone.

Age had taken its toll, although, according to the engineers, the general structure of the church was excellent and showed evidence of sound and careful workmanship throughout. All mortar between the bricks was completely ground out, and the entire exterior of the church and towers was newly tuck pointed. A new tile roof was installed the following year.

The twelve ensembles, statues of the twelve apostles set in stone along both walls of the outside church, were renovated and a stone archway cut above each to depict a beautiful and stately grotto. New copper flashings and gutters were installed around the entire building.
Because the twin towers rise 200 feet from the ground, work on their restoration was extremely dangerous. Monsignor Punda devised a unique plan whereby the towers were made removable for repairs as necessary. The architect said this plan was a "first" in his experience in church construction work. The twin towers — each with eight columns, a dome and a ten-foot cross — were removed. During 1961 and 1962, the twin domes and the smaller one in the rear of the church sheltering the "Mass bell" were constructed of heavy steel covered with quarter-inch welded aluminum, then covered with 23-carat gold-leaf. All of the work was done at ground level. This phase was completed on a dramatically memorable day, September 12, 1962 — significantly, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. That morning the golden towers were swung up into place by a huge crane equipped with a special 200-foot boom. Hundreds stood on the sidewalk to view this feat of engineering while motorists created a traffic jam as they halted to watch in fascination.

A Conversation Piece

For some years previously, the two clocks on the towers had been out of commission. A new automatic mechanism was installed to make the bells in the towers ring again. The eight clock faces were completely restored. The metal numerals, which were set into a wood background, were removed, and the clocks' faces rebuilt of stone with new carved-in numerals. Finally, to complement the gold domes, the clocks' hands and numerals were covered with the same gold-leaf.

By now, the restoration of St. Stanislaus and the two spires had become a conversation piece indeed. Visitors to the city made a special tour to Fifth and Mitchell Streets to see the gleaming towers close at hand.

Work on the interior of the church received a temporary set-back when a fire destroyed the left side altar on January 8, 1962, and smoke damaged the entire church considerably. The fire was discovered, however, and quickly put out by parish priests before the firemen arrived, preventing more extensive damage.

In July of 1963, the rectory was moved to temporary quarters while its entire interior and exterior were completely renovated and remodeled. A new ambulatory and the Madonna Chapel were built, connecting the rectory with the rear of the church.

That fall, the entire front portico and entrances to the church were completely redesigned, and built of stone and granite. In addition, the narthex was widened and lined with marble and the ceiling raised in the form of a cross vault.

During this period, too, the west portion of the church basement was dug out to provide additional facilities for the high school. This particular work completed a job started some ten years previously when the priests of the parish, assisted by volunteers, literally dug out the front portion of the basement by hand.

Now that the exterior of the church neared a finishing date, the priests, architects and artists met weekly to formulate plans for beautifying the interior of St. Stanislaus.
Modern Ecclesiastical Theme

The Conrad Schmitt Studio had long been at work designing patterns for the new stained-glass windows. They depict no story or symbolism, as was customary in church windows designed 100 years ago; rather, they reflect a modern ecclesiastical theme in keeping with the laity's participation in the Mass. The purpose of the windows is to create an aura of beauty and warmth, to contribute rather than to detract from our complete absorption in the modern liturgy.

St. Stanislaus' windows are indeed a tribute to the artistry of Mr. Gruenke. Although this unique method had been used experimentally in Europe, he was the first to perfect the facet technique and bring it to the United States. Composed of colored glass slabs, the windows are fabricated in pieces approximately one inch thick. The pieces of glass are cut by hand, chipped with a hammer, and faceted — following a study of the exact lighting dimensions and colors — so that natural sunlight, entering the church through the glass, becomes a diffused prism. The result is a flowing and softly dramatic "holy light" which adds to the reverence and beauty of the church's interior.

The four tower bells were automated in November, 1965, ringing out with the news that St. Stanislaus was now two-thirds on the way towards readornment. The huge bells, considered to be the largest in the city, are 71 years old. Formerly the bells were adjusted to swinging only at a 90 degree arch, but the restoration allows them to swing a full 180 degrees. On a clear, quiet day, when the wind is blowing in the right direction, it is said they can be heard for a distance of ten miles.

The completed interior of the church radiates a dignified grandeur. The purpose was to restore and maintain the interior's architectural beauty. The present renovation preserves the harmony and simplicity of its clean structural lines.

In keeping with the golden aura which personified St. Stanislaus, Golden Roman travertine marble was selected for the pillars and walls of the interior. A new main altar, built from portions of the marble and bronze of the old one, was moved forward in the sanctuary in accordance with the new liturgy. It is set sixteen feet forward and slightly ahead of the proscenium arch to bring it closer to the people.

Except for refurbishing, the historic rood beam above has been left intact. In the early part of this century, many of St. Stanislaus parishioners still lived on Jones Island, where the church's pioneers had originally resided. Records confirm that at one time there was a terrible flood, probably a seiche, and the entire island was inundated. Many lives were lost in the catastrophe; those who survived donated the rood beam to their church as a permanent memorial of thanksgiving.

The marble and gold pulpit is now thirty feet to the west of its former position. Two communion stations are all that remain of the old communion rail, thus minimizing the visual barrier to the main altar. The sanctuary itself was extended fifteen feet to give a better view and to increase the feeling of participation.

The baptismal font has now been placed in the former south sacristy, which has been converted into Our Lady's Chapel with a new altar, ceiling and wood paneling. This chapel, which has a seating capacity of forty, is used for all early weekday Masses and as a crying room and baptismal chapel on Sundays. It is dedicated to Our Lady of Czestochowa.
The tone of the ceiling of the main church was lightened to highlight its carved gold-leaf figures. These include six Madonna types - Fatima, Lourdes, Queen of Peace, Our Lady of Grace, Immaculate Conception, and Our Lady of the Rosary. Between them are the symbols of the Litany of Loretto and also decorative angels holding shields.

The entire floor of the church is carpeted in a modern acetate fiber which wears well and will not show soil. The old pew ends are restored, and new oak pews are spaced wider than formerly.

The most recent of the new installations are the beautiful mosaic Stations of the Cross. They were designed by the Conrad Schmitt Studios and executed in Rome by the Italian artist, Cassio, who is in charge of all Vatican mosaic work.

It is interesting to note that all of the interior and exterior work was done with the best and most modern materials. The construction is expected by its careful executors to endure for another 100 years.

The renovation of the church was finally completed with the installation of the new exterior Madonna Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa. It was donated by the parishioners as a lasting memorial to the Blessed Coincidence of the Centennial of the Parish and the Millennium of Christianity in Poland. It is believed to be the largest mosaic image of the Miraculous Virgin in the world. The Christ Child's hand is raised in blessing over the tens of thousands who pass daily as they approach one of the busiest crossroads in the city.

Dozens of devotional lights burning day and night represent the special petitions of the faithful of the city in seven-day vigils. Many who pass by kneel and pray, heeding the words of the shrine's inscription:

"Ascend Mortals To This Mountain Top
For Here Through Mary, You Shall Obtain Salvation."

A Glorious Finale

A Jubilee Novena of Thanksgiving commemorating both the MILLENNIUM of Poland and the CENTENARY of the Parish began, appropriately enough, on Friday, August 26, the Feast of Our Lady of Czestochowa, patroness of Poland. Parishioners, former parish members, and friends were invited to participate in this nightly observance lasting nine days.

The spiritual highlight of the entire week was a Mass concelebrated by the Archbishop, the pastor, and the priest-sons of the parish.

On the following Sunday, September 4, at 4 p.m., Forty Hours Devotions were held to celebrate the closing of the Jubilee Novena. The Most Reverend Roman R. Atkielski, Auxiliary Bishop of Milwaukee and former curate of St. Stanislaus, was the celebrant.

Perhaps the most heart-warming portion of the celebration was the reception accorded on August 31 to Bishop Ladislaus Rubin of Rome, who made a personal visit to St. Stanislaus at this momentous time. He came as official emissary, carrying the blessings of Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, who had been unable to make the trip in person.
As a glorious finale to the entire nine days of celebration, the pastor and his assistants turned hosts. Families and friends of St. Stanislaus, past and present parishioners — thousands, ranging from young people to the aged — joined together on the parish grounds to enjoy a jubilee dinner and social as a conclusion to the spiritual observance.

The Notre Dame High Story

Almost 60 years ago, Father Louis Jurasinski dreamed an impossible dream - a Catholic high school. He fostered it with a firm faith accompanied by hard work, and in time it became a reality — Notre Dame High School.

Father Jurasinski possessed an astute and scholarly mind and he saw the establishment of a Catholic secondary school to be related to future success of the youth on Milwaukee’s south side. This fortress of higher learning would serve to instill and to inculcate that encouragement and those principles synonymous with such an undertaking. In 1932, with difficulty, that inevitable ingredient of anything great — St. Stanislaus High welcomed 71 freshmen to pioneer in its halls of learning. These "pioneers" occupied two classrooms of the four-story building that housed both grade and high school. These numbers mounted over the years. At the present time there are over 700 students representing 65 parishes of the Archdiocese being taught by over 40 full-time and part-time religious and lay teachers.

Pioneer Projects

The pioneer spirit of Father Jurasinski caught fire and things began to happen. A year after the first freshman class was enrolled, two sophomore classes were added. A biology lab was established that year, and it became the cradle of the Science Department. September, 1934, saw the school swing open its doors to a Junior Class. These students proudly possessing their title of "staunch pioneers," left no stone unturned to establish a library, the heart of all learning halls. Students and parents then became persistent in their pleas for adding a fourth year to the high school and in September, 1935, a senior homeroom welcomed 31 students. Chemistry was added to enrich the curriculum. This year saw a four-year art course offered to the future Raphaels and Michelangelos.

The first capped and gowned graduates received their diplomas in June, 1936. Four years of "togetherness" had created a strong bond between the members of this first class. Although their day by day association was at an end, their friendship did not terminate. This desire to continue associating with one another led to another pioneer project in 1939 — the St. Stanislaus High School Alumni Association. That year also the school publication, The Stans-Lite, was awarded an honorable rating of ALL-CATHOLIC by the Catholic School Press Association. Since that time under the nameplate of Notre Dame News and News Wing, the school paper has also merited this award.

The Principals Four

"Take me to your leader," is the request heard today when someone desires to meet the "helmsman" of any operation. The "big 4," the helmsmen of this Operation — Notre Dame High School — were men of rare leadership who served the needs of their time.
Pioneer Principal

Father Louis Jurasinski was a magnanimous though unostentatious priest steeped in simplicity. He braved the storms that battered his seedling enterprise with undaunted courage. He asked much of his parishioners and they gave him much because they loved much. Death came to this principal in 1935, and the vacancy he left was filled by Monsignor Michael J. Wenta.

Orator and Principal

For five years, Monsignor Wenta steered St. Stanislaus' students toward their many goals. He met the students' need for counsel with his silver words of sincerity that admonished, congratulated, encouraged and guided those who were so dear to him. Instinctively, these young hearts felt drawn to him and revered him as their spiritual father, benefactor and friend. Monsignor Wenta proudly referred to St. Stanislaus as "my school." He died on April 14, 1960.

Scholarly Principal

On May 19, 1940, Rev. Dr. Bernard Kobelinski assumed the duties of principal. Almost immediately his sterling qualities of scholarship, loyalty, kindness and good will became apparent.

During his years as principal, he kept pace with the constant challenge of change. Not only did he improve the physical equipment and facilities as needed but also encouraged a high degree of scholastic endeavor and achievement.

Principal For Changing Times

September 18, 1946, proved to be a memorable day. The students began the day as Stansmen and ended it as Notre Dameans. It was on this day that Father Raymond Punda, newly appointed president of Notre Dame High School, announced the school's new name — Notre Dame. Since that memorable September day, Father Punda has become Monsignor Punda. His title of president has changed to principal. What has not changed is his constant devotion to the cause of Catholic education. Monsignor Punda has steered Notre Dame during changing times. On occasion change has beat upon established school policies like a turbulent wave, and then again has coasted calmly into the harbor of acceptance. Monsignor Punda has exercised equal courage in accepting or rejecting educational trends.

The togetherness that marked the beginnings of the school has become truly prominent since Monsignor Punda has taken over. He has developed a deep sense of loyalty among the students not only for each other but also for the school. It is a kind of spirit that permeates every school activity. It has aptly been called the "Notre Dame Spirit" and is imbued in every student. Monsignor Punda fondly refers to his student body as "one big happy family," which it truly is.

"Gravissimum Educationis," the document on education, has aptly summarized the role of the school in the light of Vatican II. Notre Dame's principal has used these statements as a blueprint in determining school policy during these changing times.

"Among all the agencies of education the school has a special importance. By virtue of its very purpose, while it cultivates the intellect with unremitting attention, the school ripens the capacity..."
for right judgment, provides an introduction into the cultural heritage won by past generations, promotes a sense of values, and readies for professional life. By creating friendly contacts between students of diverse temperament and background, the school fosters among them a willingness to understand one another. Moreover, the school sets up a kind of center whose operation and progress deserves to engage the joint participation of families, teachers, various kinds of cultural, civic, and religious groups, civil society, and the entire human community."

School Sisters

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have served in the high school's center of operation since its very beginnings. Their daily life reflects their loyalty and magnanimity. They have contributed much to the Spirit of Notre Dame. These dedicated religious have teamed with lay teachers and administrators to teach youth to seek, to recognize, and to possess the Truth.

"Times They Are A-Changing"

Progress wears an ever changing face, and so the Jubilee Year, 1957, witnessed the renovation of the entire school building, the addition of facilities, and the purchase of new equipment. What a challenge to find your way around the "new" building, where careful planning utilized every available inch to fill the needs of modern education and increased school population!

Community Service

The contribution of Notre Dame High to its home city during the past 34 years is immeasurable. Through its portals have passed almost

5,000 young men and women trained to take their places in the civic, professional, religious and social life of Milwaukee. Notre Dame has been justly proud of her graduates who have proved a credit to their school, their community, their country, and their God.

A Dream Fulfilled

Notre Dame has been a living monument to the foresight and hard work of its administrators, faculty members, students, and their parents. The school flourishes today because they dared:

To dream education’s impossible dream
To fight sloth - her hard-to-beat foe
To bear building’s unbearable sorrow
To run risks that only brave hearts could know
To set right a student gone wrong
To help others be better than they are
To try though work-worn and weary
To reach their unreachable star.

This was their quest
To follow their star
Through paths that seemed hopeless
Too distant, by far
They knew that unless they'd be true
To their glorious quest
That their hearts would lack peace
When laid to their rest
And our world has been better for this
That these men and women still strove
With their last ounce of courage
To reach their unreachable star
- Notre Dame.