

History of St. Michael Parish, Haverhill, MA

Saint Michael's Church. Golden Anniversary Souvenir Book 1910-1960



The history of St. Michael's Parish in Haverhill, Mass., differs very little from other Polish Parishes in America. According to our records the first Polish immigrants came to Haverhill about the year 1893. They came here from Poland oppressed at that time, by three merciless conquerors namely, Germany, Russia and Austria. They came here seeking security, the freedom from want and the opportunity of a better life; freedom to worship God according to their conscience and in their own language.

They were poor in material things, but rich in Faith. That indomitable Faith banded them together and inspired them to lay the foundations for the future St. Michael's Church.

At first the Poles attended the local English speaking Parish of St. James, where too, from time to time, they received the spiritual ministrations from visiting priest of Polish extraction, such as Fathers John Chmielinski, pastor of St. Mary's in So. Boston, Alexander Ogonowski, pastor of Holy Trinity in Lowell, and Francis Wojtanowski, pastor of Holy Trinity in Lawrence, Mass.

By 1900 the number of Poles grew to such proportions, that they formed their first Society, January 13, 1901, under the patronage of St. Michael the Archangel, looking forward to the day when they could have their own Church with a resident Polish Priest.

On September 6, 1908 under the direction of Fathers John Chmielinski and Alexander Ogonowski as Chairman a parish committee was organized with the approval of His Eminence Cardinal O'Connell, to consider the purchase of property for the new Church. They proceeded methodically and on May 15, 1909 acquired the parish grounds on the corner of High and Swasey Streets, from John A. Swasey and Lillie Dupre.

October 30, 1909 is a memorable day in the history of the parish because of the appointment of the Rev. Alexander Syski as the first resident pastor.



Rev. Msgr. Alexander Syski, 1st Pastor

The ceremonies of breaking ground for the new Church took place May 3, 1910. The architect was Harrison and the Contractor J. Roche. The first Mass in the new edifice took place January 1, 1911, with the Rev. Father Doherty, pastor of St. James Church in Haverhill as celebrant. The solemn dedication and blessing of the New Church was performed by the Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, Most Rev. John Anderson, September 17, 1911, at which time, the pastor Rev. Dr. Alexander Syski addressed the congregation in beautiful Latin and Polish and somewhat weaker English.

The present rectory which was formerly the Church of the Disciples of Christ, was bought and remodeled in 1913. Previous to this, Father Syski was renting an apartment for rectory purposes in the immediate vicinity. Shortly after that, on May 15, 1913 the Rev. Dr. Alexander Syski was appointed pastor of St. Adalbert's Church in Hyde Park,

Mass., and the Rev. Alexander Broszkiewicz was assigned as local pastor by His Eminence, William Cardinal O'Connell.



Rev. Alexander Broszkiewicz, 2nd Pastor

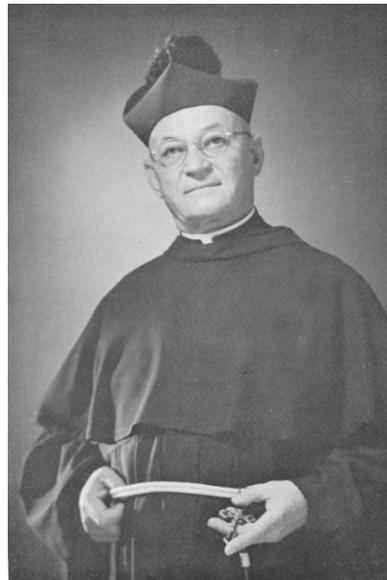
'Father Broszkiewicz spent a long and a fruitful pastorate in Haverhill, namely 23 years, when he decided to return to his native country Poland, where a few years later he became a martyr for God and his Country, murdered by the cruel Nazis of Germany at a concentration camp in Dzialdowo, during the II World's War. The third Pastor the Rev. Ignatius Limont, who came here in 1936, a good and saintly priest continued wholeheartedly the excellent work in the parish until the Fall of 1939, when ill health caused his early demise. After the death of Father Limont, the Rev. Assistants from Holy Trinity Parish in Lawrence, Mass., rendered yeoman service to the people here until the Spring of 1940.



Rev. Ignatius Limont, 3rd Pastor

It was then that His Eminence William Cardinal O'Connell called upon the Franciscan Fathers to assume in full the administration of the parish. Responding to this invitation, the Very Rev. Lawrence M. Cyman Minister Provincial of the Franciscan Fathers appointed the Rev. Method M. Szymanski O.F.M. Conv., with the approval of His Eminence the Cardinal, to be the first Franciscan and fourth Pastor of St. Michael's. He began his duties as Shepherd of the Flock May 5, 1940.

In a short time he gained the hearts and the minds of all the parishioners. His experience as a former missionary, chaplain and pastor were the main factors in obtaining those objectives. When he first came here there were only two Masses on Sunday; after a short while he added a third but that too proved inadequate, and after New Years he added a 4th Mass in order to accommodate all the people who flocked to the Church for Divine Services in the first year of his pastorate here.



Rev. Method Szymanski OFMC, 4th Pastor

During his regime many accomplishments were attained both in the spiritual and material line. New Boilers were installed in the Church and the rectory. Rubber kneelers in the benches for the comfort of the faithful. Statues in the Church. But the pride and joy of both the pastor and the parishioners was the artistic paintings and decoration of the interior of the Church. Many other minor and major repairs and innovations were effected for the good of the parish.

May 4, 1941 was a memorable day in the history of the parish for it was on this day that Rev. Francis Strykowski, a native son of the parish celebrated his First Solemn Mass and imparted his priestly blessing. The preacher for that occasion was the Rev. Pastor Method M. Szymanski.

In September 1948, Father Szymanski was transferred to Holy Trinity Parish in Lawrence, Mass., and his place was taken by the Rev. Phillip Kotlarek O.F.M. Conv, former pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Peabody, Mass. During his pastorate here for 9 years, the same outstanding management, service and improvements of his predecessors were continued, such as: new stained glass windows in Church, a new metal fence around Church property, the beautiful Blessed Lady Grotto in rear of Church, and many others.



Fr. Phillip Kotlarek OFMC, 5th Pastor

In August of 1957 Father Szymanski was reassigned to Haverhill at St. Michael's by his Superiors and Church Authority, to the great satisfaction of all. Needless to say that that the same zeal, the same good service, the same efficient administration continues.

This year, November 6, 1960 we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Parish. It is only fitting that at the close of half a century of the service to God, that St. Michael's celebrate with joy and exultation this Anniversary.

In the first place we offer our thanks to Almighty God for all His blessings during these 50 long years. Secondly, we express our sincere thanks and pay tribute to the zealous priests and curates for their labors and sacrifices for this parish.

Finally, we pay honor to the old pioneers, organizers and builders of this Church for their great Faith and generosity. Most of them have gone to their Maker for their just reward; few have been fortunate enough to celebrate this feast with us. May God bless them with many more years.

May we urge you the present parishioners and you the younger people to follow the good example of your forefathers in the practice of your God given Faith, the love of God, your neighbor, your Country. This beautiful Church is your Church. Love it and cherish it. It is your inheritance. May you be worthy of the same of true descendants of the noble organizers of our Beloved St. Michael's Parish. God Bless You!

Historical Data

- 1893 — First Poles arrive in Haverhill, namely, Paul Dalengiewicz, Paul Orlovski, Anthony Namowicz, John Simonowicz.
- 1896 — Adolf Radulski.
- 1897 — Jan Kowalewski, Julian Radulski, Julian Oswieczynski.
- 1901 — St. Michael's Society organized with Michael Narchon, President; Michael Kolodziej, Vice President, Adolf Radulski, Treasurer; Roch Rutkowski, Secretary.
- 1905 — First Parish Committee formed: Rev. Alexander Ogonowski, Chairman; Adolf Radulski, President; Joseph Warchol, Treasurer. Casimir Fila, Secretary.
Collectors: Vincent Radulski, Tomasz Kozak, Valentine Dzioba, Anthony Sudol, Ladislaus Dymski.
- 1909 — Purchase of land, corner High and Swasey Streets.
- 1909 — Parish Committee: Joseph Warchol, Walenty Pirog, Casimir Fila, Walenty Dzioba, Wojciech Dolecki, Jan Wojdyla, Wojciech Janiec, Andrew Dolecki, Ladislaus Dymski, Adolf Radulski, Joseph Kopec, Wojciech Warchol, Frank Kata, Jan Studol, F. Anuszewski.
- 1909 — October 30, Rev. Alexander Syski appointed by William Cardinal O'Connell, as first pastor of St. Michael's Parish.
- 1910 — Breaking of ground for new Church, May 3.
- 1911 — January 1, First Mass in new Church, by Father Doherty.
- 1912 — May: purchase of Disciples of Christ Church, remodeled for Rectory.
- 1913 — May 15: Rev. Alex Syski is transferred to Hyde Park, Mass., and the Rev. Alexander Broszkiewicz becomes the second pastor here.
- 1936 — Rev. Alexander Broszkiewicz resigns as pastor and returns to Poland. Rev. Ignatius Limont is installed as pastor.
- 1939 — Father Ignatius Limont resigns because of fatal illness.
- 1940 — His Eminence William Cardinal O'Connell invites the Franciscan Fathers to take over the administration of the parish. On May 5, 1940 the Rev. Method M. Szymanski O.F.M. Conv. is installed as the 4th pastor of St. Michael's Church.
- 1941 — Rev. Francis Strykowski celebrates his 1st Solemn Mass.

1948 — Rev. Method M. Symanski is transferred to Holy Trinity Parish in Lawrence, his successor is the Rev. Phillip Kotlarek O.F.M. Conv., the 5th Pastor.

1957 — August 15, Father Method Szymanski returns to Haverhill as the 6th resident pastor.

COST OF BUILDING NEW CHURCH	\$ 14,865.00
-----------------------------	--------------

PURCHASE, REMODELING RECTORY	\$ 5,000.00
------------------------------	-------------