

Grand Rapids, SS. Peter & Paul (Kent Co.)

09-022-H

520 MYRTLE ST NW
GRAND RAPIDS MI 49504-3277

(616) 454-6000 Rectory: 454-6025

SCHOOL: 1433 HAMILTON AVE NW
GRAND RAPIDS MI 49504
454-5611 FAX 454-4532

CONVENT: 1440 QUARRY AVE NW
GRAND RAPIDS MI 49504-3298
459-7810 (no longer in service)

PRIESTS WHO SERVED SS. PETER AND PAUL PARISH

Pastors

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| December, 1904 | Rev. Wenceslaus V. Matulaitis |
| February, 1912 | Rev. John A. Gervickas |
| November, 1917 | Rev. John A. Schmitt, adm. |
| August, 1918 | Rev. Anthony S. Dexnis, adm. |
| September, 1925 | Msgr. Anthony Volkert, adm. |
| October, 1925 | Msgr. Joseph A. Lipkus |
| July, 1961 | Msgr. Walter F. Jude |
| November, 1971 | Rev. Albert R. Bernott |
| June 30, 1981 | Rev. Kenneth H. Schichtel |
| January, 1992 | Rev. Thomas F. Boufford |
| September, 1993 | Rev. Dennis W. Morrow |

Assistants

Rev. John A. Gervickas (June, 1911-February, 1912)
Rev. Ignatius J. Kelmelis (October, 1917-May, 1919)
Rev. Louis Wojtys (October, 1920-1921)
Rev. B. Verbickas (April, 1925-October, 1925)
Rev. Joseph A. Jusevicius (July, 1927-September, 1927)
Rev. David M. Drinan (part time, March, 1931-September, 1935)
Rev. Thomas W. Ryan (part time, May, 1935-April, 1936)
Rev. Jerome S. Winikaitis (March, 1937-July, 1942)
Rev. Joseph P. Alksnis (July, 1942-April, 1943)
Rev. Albert R. Bernott (April, 1943-July, 1943)
Rev. David M. Drinan (September, 1943-October, 1943)
Rev. Herman S. Kolenda (October, 1943-May, 1944)
Rev. Joseph E. Sakowski (July, 1944-December, 1944)
Rev. Benedict J. Marciulionis (November, 1944-June, 1946)
Rev. Walter F. Jude (June, 1946-November, 1951)
Rev. Alphonse Kozlowski, O.F.M. (1950-52)
Rev. John Burkus (November, 1951-July, 1952)

Rev. Michael Kirkilas (July, 1952-August, 1952)
Rev. George Riauba (December, 1952-October, 1953)
Rev. Robert B. Gillespie (April, 1953-August, 1953)
Rev. Vincent Valevicius (Valis) (January, 1954-June, 1954)
Rev. Thomas N. Neis (June, 1954-April, 1956)
Rev. Ernest J. Bernott (April, 1956-June, 1957)
Rev. Albert L. Watson (June, 1957-June, 1960)
Rev. John B. Zvirblis (September, 1957-September, 1968)
Rev. Raymond B. Moeggenberg (June, 1960-June, 1965)
Rev. Edward J. Mike (September, 1965-February, 1968)
Rev. Delvin L. Tilmann (June, 1966-September, 1966)
Rev. Andrew P. Chrusciel (February, 1968-June, 1968)
Rev. Edward J. Mike (June, 1968-June, 1970)
Rev. Anthony Treska (September, 1968-February, 1970)
Rev. Vincent Valis (res., September, 1968-January, 1970)
Rev. Thomas L. Novak (June, 1970-August, 1972)
Rev. Anthony Treska (October, 1970-November, 1971)
Msgr. Edmund F. Falicki (res., June, 1975-September, 1976)
Rev. Anthony Treska (res., December, 1977-January 20, 1984)
Rev. Joseph J. Pettit (res., July, 1995-July, 1996)
Rev. G. Fredrick Brucker (res., August, 1997-July, 1998)
Rev. Eugene Okoli (res., February, 2000-July, 2003)

Louis Galinis and Anthony Chiplis were the first Lithuanian Catholics to arrive in Grand Rapids, about 1885. Gradually more and more Lithuanians came to the city, settling on the northwest side of what was becoming the second city of Michigan. The Lithuanian language was different from any of the others spoken in the city, and Bishop Richter decided that a national parish should be established for the growing community.

On August 1, 1902, with the aid of Fr. Simon Ponganis of St. Adalbert's parish, a church committee was formed and struggled for two years to organize the parish without the leadership of a pastor. Fr. Ponganis would ride to the neighborhood by horse and buggy, celebrate Mass, and then return to St. Adalbert's. The parish was estimated to embrace 60 Lithuanian families and 170 single persons. Eight lots on the northeast corner of Myrtle Street and Quarry Avenue, N.W., were purchased for the needs of the parish. In the spring of 1903, excavation was begun for the church-school building. When the structure had reached window level, Fr. Ponganis was transferred from St. Adalbert's and everything stopped.

In 1904 Fr. Wenceslaus V. Matulaitis was officially appointed pastor of the new parish, and construction resumed. The parish by now had increased to 70 families and 200 single people. Between 1906 and 1912, the parish grew to 500 families. The parish registers indicate that on December 11, 1904, Monica Bendžiunas, daughter of Joseph Bendžiunas and Mary Dameikiutė, was the first child baptized in the new parish. The marriage of Francis Kareckas and Mary Pacevičiutė on February 20, 1905, was the first wedding performed. The *Liber Defunctorum* lists as the first parishioner death that of Antony Zilauskas on January 28, 1905, with burial on January 31.

For a time, church services were held in the SS. Peter & Paul Aid Society hall at 1408 Hamilton Avenue, N.W. The cornerstone for the combination church and school building was blessed by the vicar general, Msgr. Joseph Schrembs, on April 23, 1905.

He also solemnly blessed the chapel and the entire building on December 24, 1905. In 1907, Fr. Matulaitis oversaw the completion of the building, at a cost of \$10,000. The parish school opened on September 14, 1907, with an enrollment of 86 pupils. The building was completely converted into a school in 1924. The school, operated from its inception by the Dominican Sisters, had 300 students by 1912. In 1950, the parish numbered 450 families, with 347 students in the school. (Photo: Courtesy of Edward V. Gillis. Pre-1920.)

When the first three Dominican Sisters arrived in 1907, they occupied a portion of the school building that was much needed for school purposes. Even the church was used for a classroom on the weekdays, with a curtain drawn across the sanctuary. The pews doubled as desks, with hinged desktops. Fr. John A. Gervickas succeeded Fr. Matulaitis in 1912. On September 19 of that year, the first convent was purchased for the Dominican Sisters at a cost of \$2,600. Because the amount of room was insufficient, two Sisters had to sleep on the open-air porch. According



to the season, they felt rain or snow on their faces. They kept jars of hot water under the quilts during the winter. The Sisters also found themselves responsible for janitorial duties: stoking the furnace, papering walls, and scrubbing their classrooms on weekends. A pastoral residence at 1444 Quarry N.W. was also purchased in 1912 with the idea of its becoming an additional house for the Sisters.

On January 6, 1913, a house at 1343 Quarry Avenue, N.W., was purchased for a rectory at a cost of \$3,700. At the suggestion of two of its pioneer members, K. Zaleduonis and Stanley Barto, the parish bought 10 acres in a beautiful setting on Preston Avenue, N.W., for a cemetery on April 28, 1914. The cemetery was consecrated by Bp. Henry J. Richter on July 11, 1915. In 1917, a little storage building was erected on the site.



On November 2, 1917, Fr. Gervickas was succeeded by Fr. Ignatius J. Kelmelis, who lived at St. Mary's rectory while Fr. John A. Schmitt, pastor of St. Mary's, acted as administrator. In August, 1918, Bp. Michael J. Gallagher, already appointed as bishop of Detroit, appointed Fr. Anthony Dexnis as pastor. During his pastorate the question of building a new church arose. The J.J. Wernette Co. was engaged as architect for the project, and construction took place between 1922 and 1924. (Photo at left: Dedication day of the church. Courtesy of Mrs. Agnes Dudek, of the Barstis family, mother of Fr. Stephen S. Dudek.) Because the corner lot on which the church was to be built was bedrock, dynamite had to be

used just to carve a boiler room out of the rock. A church basement was an impossible consideration. In due time the church was completed, at a cost of \$96,000. On



February 24, 1924, Bp. Edward D. Kelly dedicated the structure, which added a dignity and grace to the whole neighborhood. (Photo at left: interior of the church, 1950. Courtesy of Regina [Sakalauskas] Waldon.) The preacher for the occasion was Fr. H.J. Vaicunas of Chicago, IL. Fr. Dexnis resigned in 1925, and the bishop appointed Msgr. Anthony Volkert to administer the parish.



On October 30, 1925, Fr. Joseph A. Lipkus received his appointment as pastor of SS. Peter & Paul. On August 22, 1928, Bp. Joseph G. Pinten entrusted the parish school to a new order of sisters of Lithuanian descent, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During the hard years of the depression, the Sisters translated plays into Lithuanian and the school children performed them for eager audiences. This helped to pay the Sisters' salaries. (Photo at left: Church interior, wedding of John Paul Skrycki, Jr., and Julia Ann Prince, April 11, 1953. Courtesy of Julia Skrycki.)

In 1943 eight lots were purchased on Webster Street at the railroad tracks, and double tennis courts and playground facilities were constructed. On Sunday evening, November 26, 1944, the mortgage on the church was solemnly burned by the pastor in front of the Blessed Mother's altar during the novena service. The ashes were a symbol of appreciation of the help of the Mother of God during the twenty years from the construction of the church until the final payment.

On December 3, 1949, a new brick convent, designed by architects Harry L. Mead and Charles M. Norton, was completed at 1440 Quarry Avenue, N.W., at a total cost of \$64,000. The debt was fully paid within a year.

In 1945 a grocery store on the southeast corner of Myrtle Street and Quarry Avenue, N.W., had been acquired for the site of a new rectory. On March 1, 1953, the cornerstone of the new brick rectory was set in place at 520 Myrtle Street, N.W. The house was completed in March, 1954, at a cost of \$80,000. The architects again were Mead and Norton. An interesting feature of the rectory is the statue of Our Lady of Fatima above the front door. It was carved from Indiana limestone by Bedford, IN, sculptor George Hitchcock and donated to the parish in memory of Bernard Shukis.

Lithuanians have ever been proud of their devotion honoring the Blessed Mother. Lithuania itself boasts two major shrines dedicated to Mary: the chapel of the Aušros Vartai, or Gates of Dawn, in Vilnius; and the miraculous shrine of Šiluva. The deep

attachment led to the introduction of Lithuanian Perpetual Help devotions every Sunday and English devotions each Tuesday. Likewise, monthly devotions to St. Anne had to



be translated into Lithuanian. The parish boasted a roster of 450 in the armed services during World War II, and on December 3, 1944, dedicated a fieldstone grotto honoring Our Lady of Lourdes to the 15 "Gold Star" heroes from the parish during that war. (Photo: Robinson Studio, December 3, 1944. Courtesy of Agnes Dudek.)

Richard Koprowski was the architect for the new school, which was

completed in September, 1964.

Many improvements were completed at the parish in the early 1980's. Three school buses were purchased, in part with profits from some years of a very successful bingo operation. A new family center, school library, and garage addition was constructed on the west side of the parish school, as the alley between Quarry and Hamilton, from Webster to Myrtle, was vacated. The remaining private homes on the block bounded by the aforementioned streets were purchased by the parish, and demolished as they became vacant. In 1984, the parish church received a new and magnificent makeover, rendering it one of the true jewels among the houses of worship in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

To commemorate 600 years of Christianity in Lithuania, the local Lithuanian-American Catholic community had a beautiful crucifix erected in the parish cemetery in 1987. The sculptor, Jurgis Daugvila, designed the cross in the pattern of the renowned wayside crosses which help to give Lithuania its distinct character.

August 1, 2003, was a sad day for SS. Peter & Paul. The beloved Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, who had taught in the school and served the parish so faithfully for 75 years, retired and returned to their motherhouse in Pittsburgh, PA. Illness and age had taken their toll, and the Order was no longer able to supply any Sisters even for part-time parish visitation ministry. Sister Therese Marquis, O.S.F., was the last Franciscan assigned to Grand Rapids. The parish convent which they had occupied was soon after leased to the Diocese of Grand Rapids, renovated, and as of January 14, 2004, occupied as the Diocesan Tribunal.

The care of the parish cemetery had been entrusted to Mr. Bernard S. Barto by Msgr. Walter F. Jude in 1961. Mr. Barto was the son of Stanley Barto, longtime funeral director and parish pioneer, who had been instrumental in the acquisition of the cemetery property in 1914. Bernard's son, Gerard B. Barto, became sole proprietor of the Barto & Son Funeral Home after his father's death, and continued with the care and development of the cemetery for over 30 years. After his death on December 26, 2004, care of the parish cemetery was transferred to the Diocesan Cemetery Office, bringing all the Catholic cemeteries in the metropolitan area under one governing authority.

With the consensus of the parish pastoral council, finance council, and board of education in early January, 2009, Bp. Walter A. Hurley gave his approval to close SS.

Peter & Paul School after 102 years of service. Only 59 students were enrolled on the final day of school, which was Friday, June 5, 2009.

Vocations:

Lipkus, Msgr. Joseph A. (1921)
Viesnoraitis, Rev. William V. (1933)
Popell, Msgr. Charles W. (1938)
Alksnis, Rev. Joseph P. (1942)
Bernott, Rev. Albert R. (1943)
Salatka, Most Rev. Charles A., D.D. (1945)
Bernott, Rev. Ernest J. (1948)
Dominiak, Rev. Thomas M. (1961)
Vainavicz, Rev. Anthony C. (1961)
Walke, Rev. Alvin T. (1962)

Six Marywood Dominican Sisters have been natives of the parish: Sisters Anthony Clare Adamaitis, Mary Rosalina Gregaitis, Mary Esther Juskaitis, Mary Euphemia Popell, Mary Rosalita Prusevicz, and Marie Dominica Viesnoraitis. There have been four Sisters of St. Francis: Sisters Mary Gregoria Bernott, Mary Rosanne Kavalauskas, Mary Francine McDonald, and Mary Esther Taber. Mother Mary Marcelline Bernott became the foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family in Brazil. Sister Mary Florence Salatka, R.S.M., and Sister John Francis of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart also hail from the parish. Brother Robert, O.P., was with the Dominicans in Washington, D.C., in 1950. Brother Thomas Tomasunas, O.F.M. Cap., served with the Capuchins in Maryland and in Pennsylvania.

BERNOTT, Sister Mary Gregoria, O.S.F. (Irene Lucy Bernott.) The daughter of Anthony and Marcella Bernott, she entered the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God in 1937. Taught at elementary schools at SS. Peter & Paul in Grand Rapids (1948-53, 1968-83, including six years as principal), St. Gabriel's in Pittsburgh, Detroit, St. George's in Cleveland, and East St. Louis. Education and music have been her primary occupations. She returned to a variety of tasks at the motherhouse in 1983, then served again for about five years at SS. Peter & Paul until finally moving back to Pittsburgh in 2003.

KAVALAUSKAS, Sister Mary Rosanne, O.S.F. Her brother went by the name of John K. Francis. She died December 13, 2009, at the age of 90, in her 60th year of religious life.

POPELL, Sr. Euphemia, O.P. (Mary Clare Popell.) Born 1908, entered Dominican Sisters in 1926. Taught at Munger; St. Francis, Traverse City; Catholic Central High School, GR; St. Joseph, Bay City; Sacred Heart, Mount Pleasant; Marywood Academy, GR; St. Joseph, Saginaw; and St. Mary, Saginaw. She was on the staff Muskegon Catholic Central High School when it opened its doors in 1953, principal at the newly constructed SS. Peter & Paul High School in Saginaw in 1956, and administrator-principal of the newly consolidated All Saints High School in Bay City in 1968. Died September 21, 1998. Buried at Resurrection Cemetery, Wyoming.

PRUSEVICZ, Sister Rosalita, O.P. (Frances Prusevicz.) Born in Hooversville, PA, she served as a Dominican Sister for 82 years. She earned a B.A. in education

from Aquinas College, and then a Master's in theology in 1956. She taught school for 45 years. She died December 19, 2009, at the age of 98, and is buried in Resurrection Cemetery, Wyoming.

SALATKA, Sr. Mary Florence, R.S.M. (Elda Therese Salatka.) Born November 27, 1919. Entered Sisters of Mercy September 7, 1946. Died May 31, 1999. Buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

TOMASUNAS, Br. Thomas, O.F.M. Cap. (Edward Tomasunas.) Born in Grand Rapids on June 25, 1926, son of John Tomasunas and Helen Zemaitis. Brothers: Albert (+), Charles (+), John (Sophie) (GR), William (Newaygo). Sister: Mary Kumko (GR). Served in U.S. Army, October, 1944-February, 1947. Professed in Capuchins on February 28, 1955. Served in various posts in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Noted as a generous and skilled tailor, cook, sacristan, and instructor for younger friars. Died at St. Francis Medical Center, Pittsburgh, PA, on Friday, June 15, 2001. Funeral at St. Augustine's Church, Pittsburgh, on Monday, June 18, 2001. Buried in friars' plot, St. Augustine's Cemetery, Millvale, PA.



(Photo: SS. Peter & Paul Rectory, on Google, December 16, 2013.)



(Photo: SS. Peter & Paul Convent, on Google, December 16, 2013.)

**SLIDE PROGRAM OF
SS. PETER & PAUL PARISH,
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

Monsignor Joseph Schrembs of St. Mary's Church solemnly blessed the church and school building of SS. Peter & Paul parish on Christmas Eve of 1905, but school did not open in the building for another two years, until September 14, 1907. This seems to be one of the earliest pictures of the building and of the students. Many parishes had their origins in buildings such as this, with church on the second floor and school on the first.

St. George's Aid Society began at a meeting in December, 1903. Since three of the men at the meeting were George Kanton, George Oleka, and George Zemaitis, the membership settled on the patronage of St. George for their society. St. George was popular among Lithuanians since he is frequently portrayed in art as a knight slaying the dragon, very similar to the Lithuanian national emblem, the *vytis*. In 1907 the Society's hall was completed and occupied. This is what it looked like then.

And this is what it looked like in 1953, after the salesman who sold asphalt siding to half the west side sold it to St. George's, too.

What's the occasion? We don't know. Some of the people have been identified. Back row: Peter Medlin, Louis Abromaitis, John Taber, and two unknown men. Second row down: J.A. Bernott, Stanley Gregor, Mary Slapakauskas Pratapas, Mary Abromaitis, Mary Muskelanas Paura, Stanley Paura, and Matthew Bagdon. Next row down: Alice Abromaitis at the left, Agnes Abromaitis at the right, with the three in the center unknown, including the man, who seems to be a choirmaster or teacher of some kind. In the front row are Anne Reklaitis Naujalis, Lucy Abromaitis, and Emily Dovidaitis Morris.

Fr. Anthony Dexnis became pastor of SS. Peter & Paul in August of 1918. He was a big man, and was noted for his wonderful tenor voice. Even when he was in the seminary in Vilnius, he was often borrowed from his studies to sing at major ceremonies at the cathedral there. To his energy and zeal we owe the construction of our parish church. Very soon after the church was dedicated, Fr. Dexnis left the parish. Rumors circulated that he had run off with parish funds and left the parish to pay for the church. The truth is that it is likely that there were no parish funds; and that this magnificent church building was simply a great drain on the finances of a very poor congregation. Fr. Dexnis subsequently labored back in Lithuania for a time; and then spent his retirement years with his priest-nephew in East St. Louis, Illinois, where he died in 1949. The nephew, whose name was the same as his uncle's, Antanas Deksnys, became the bishop in charge of all Lithuanians outside their homeland.

This is a First Communion class, sometime between 1918 and 1925—probably before the new church was dedicated in 1924. They are on the north side of the school, between the school and the convent, which seems to have been a favorite place for such pictures. Fr. Dexnis is surrounded by 55 children, 25 boys and 30 girls. Unfortunately, no one kept a register of First Communions for those years, so we cannot begin to name these youngsters.

Here's the church, probably in the spring of 1923. The big rose window frame is waiting to be lifted into place. Marvel at the skill of the tradesman who built all this using wooden scaffolding.

Fr. Lipkus' sister Rose married Casimir Rinkus on September 3, 1923. Here is a picture of the wedding party. The man directly behind the bride is Mr. Raila, the organist. Mr. Blaskis is just above Fr. Lipkus' right shoulder. Simon and Mary Shukis, Father's other sister, are at Father's right. The best man and maid of honor were Vincent Yusas and Magdalen Kudirka.

Our church was dedicated on February 24, 1924. This is what it looked like in 1970, which is almost exactly how it looked in 1924! The big rose window was removed after less than 15 years, as we'll see from another photo.

This is the interior of the church at the time of its dedication. Note that the frescoes and other decorations have not yet been done. The old pews were even less comfortable than the ones we have now.

Štai kareiviai! Here's a 1925 photo of the Knights of the Vytautas Aid Society, in uniform in front of their club at Hamilton and Crosby. The giant at left is Vincas Niksas. In back of the club building on Crosby can be seen the house where Abp. Salatka grew up.

On July 8, 1926, a saint visited our parish and administered the sacrament of confirmation to a whole class of youngsters, among whom was the future Abp. Charles Salatka. This is Archbishop, now Blessed, Jurgis Matulaitis-Matulevičius being received by a delegation of parishioners that day at Union Station. From the left are Fr. J. Maculonis, a Marianist father; Fr. Lipkus, J. Kurant, Abp. Matulaitis, A. Blaskis, A. Vaivada, J. Kaman, J. Slavickas, and J. Kvietkauskas. The little girls are S. Grigaliūnaitė and L. Reklaičiūtė.

We don't know the ladies' group or the occasion, but they were dressed up in their Sunday best. If this was about 1927 or 1928, as it seems, the priest with Fr. Lipkus might be Fr. Joseph Jusevicius, who was ordained for our diocese but then spent the rest of his life in Omaha, Nebraska.

At the time of the 25th anniversary of the parish in 1929, this photo was taken of the school and of the student body. Fr. Lipkus and Fr. Alfonsas can be seen at the far left, and some of the Sisters are here and there, making sure their young charges don't move and spoil the picture.

I would be very remiss if I did not entertain you with pictures of my family. The Third Order of St. Francis had no doubt been inspired both by the presence of the Franciscan Sisters, who arrived here in August of 1928; and by Fr. Alfonsas Kozlowski, the Franciscan who preached a mission here in March of 1928 and remained associated with the parish off and on until his sudden death at a funeral Mass about 1952. The Third Order had the blessing of Fr. Lipkus, who is seated here with Fr. Alfonsas. Standing are my great-grandfather, Pranas Mikulenas, and M. Reklaitis. The ladies are Magdalena Teberis Mikuleniene and V. Morkeviciene. Down in the corner of the photo was a printed note, "Photo by Wallace."

This was a proud moment for SS. Peter & Paul, as its first native son to be ordained a priest celebrated his first Mass in the parish church. Here is Fr. Bill Viesnoraitis and his entourage on the front steps of the church in February, 1933. His ordination, along with that of his classmates Frs. Earl Denay and Charles Nugent, took place in our church on Sunday, February 12. This scene is likely the next day, or perhaps the following Sunday. At the far left you can see Fr. David Drinan. Fr. Lipkus is just behind Father Bill in the center. At Father Bill's right is his deacon, Fr. Adalbert Radawski; and at his left is his subdeacon, Fr. Anthony Arszulowicz. Is that Father's dad, Matthew Viesnoraitis, holding the processional cross?

Thirteen scholars—four boys and nine girls—graduated from SS. Peter & Paul School in 1934. The girls are M. Kukta, A. Parauka, E. Undraitis, S. Alksnis, A. Jacevicius, M. Gaubas, E. Jadvinskas, H. Bartnick, and S. Meskauskas. In the front row are W. Radzevicius, L. Edkins, Fr. Lipkus, J. Salatka, and J. Baura.

This picture comes to us courtesy of the Grand Rapids Public Library. This is the old store that used to be on the site where the rectory is now. In front is a Schulze bakery truck. Interesting for us is that we know that the photo was taken as part of a WPA project about 1936, and the large rose window on the front of the church has already been bricked in.

The novena honoring Our Lady of Perpetual Help was begun in our church in March of 1937. Here is a picture of the east side altar after the icon of Our Lady was solemnly enshrined.

St. Anne's novena began here in July, 1941. This is a picture of St. Anne's altar at about that time. You can see the staircase of the pulpit at right, and the stenciling above the statue which says, "Good Saint Anne, pray for us."

World War II brought its sadness to the doors of our parish church. This is the funeral of Lt. Gerald Barto in 1949, who was killed in action in France on August 9, 1944. The priest is of course Fr. Lipkus. The server facing the camera is now the pastor of Spring Lake, Fr. Anthony Vainavicz.

Another view of the funeral shows not only the presence of the military and of many parishioners, but also helps us to see a bit of the interior of the church in 1949.

Lt. Barto had married his wife, Helen, in June of 1943. She is shown here at the communion rail, receiving a rosary in memory of her husband from mission preacher Fr. Mazukna and from Fr. Ben Marciulionis, assistant in the mid-1940's.

This seems to be at the time of the same mission. Here are the Vytautas knights again, on the west side of the church. From left to right, we can see Frs. Joseph Sakowski and Ben Marciulionis, with John Taber at his left. Over on the right are Fr. Lipkus and Fr. Mazukna, the mission preacher.

We know that the decorative painting of the church was done after 1929, because a photo taken that year does not show the frescoes or the other details. This 1944 photo of the interior displays the art work that remained until the mid-1960's. It is still there, but covered over because of its deteriorated state.

Winter was tough for scooter riders. This is little Robert Orent, son of George and Josephine, shading his eyes from the sun. Since he was born December 14, 1941, it seems this picture must have been taken about 1945 or 1946. In the back you can see the old convent—in fact, even though it served as the convent from 1912 through 1948, this is the only picture we have of it! Thanks to Jerry Adamaitis for sharing it with us.

The present convent was built on the site of the old convent in 1948-49. You can see the corner of Mrs. Viesnoraitis' house at the left. The Sisters moved into the rectory on the southwest corner of Quarry and Myrtle while their new residence was being built. Fr. Jude, the assistant, slept on a bed in the school office; Msgr. Lipkus perhaps stayed with relatives nearby.

The old house at 1343 Quarry N.W. served as the rectory from January, 1913, until the present rectory was built. It bears the cornerstone date of 1952, but seems to have been occupied only about 1954. Harry Mead and Charles Norton were the architects, as they were for many parish buildings around the diocese from the early 1920's through the early 1960's.

Happy Valentine's Day in the mid-1950's. Recognize anyone? It's Aldona Genautis, Helen Kaminski, and ??.

Here's the Lithuanian choir, about 1955. In the back are the men, from left to right: Jonas Paovys, Pranas Zilaitis, Vladas Matulis, Stasys Snabaitis, Antanas Kovera, Antanas Maskeliunas, Alfredas Puodziunas, Pranas Kestauskas, Kostas Stasiunas, and Stasys Ivanauskas. The ladies in the front row, from left to right: Mikalina Maskeliuniene, Anele Lukoseviciute, Agnes Totoraitis, Veronika Paoviene, Frances Jurgel, Mary Salatka (our long-time organist), Ona Puzeriene, Jean Oksas, Janina Puodziuniene, Ona Kareckas, and Petrone Seniuniene.

The jubilee committee of the Vytautas Aid Society posed for this 1960 photo on their golden anniversary. In the back row, left to right: Joseph Gelwich, Dan Meconis, Ray Matthews, Sr., Anthony Martinaitis, John Kavalas Francis, Jerry Adamaitis, and John Chapla. In the front row: Anthony Childs, Walt Tursky, Joe Galinis, Joe Matulaitis, and George Orent.

June 7, 1964. Laying of the cornerstone of the new school. The two servers are Robert Green and John Turuta. The priests are Fr. Raymond Moeggenberg, Msgr. Lipkus, Msgr. Albert Kehren of Sacred Heart parish in Muskegon Heights, and Fr. Jude.

September, 1964. School is in session in the new school. There are 33 children just in this picture. Now our classroom maximum would be 30, and we wish we could do that!

Winter of 1964-65, the first for our new school. Five houses along Hamilton Avenue were torn down for the new school. It would be 20 years before the parish would be able to purchase the rest of the block.

Msgr. Jude and the 1969 First Communion class. 44 children.

Here's the school faculty in 1970. In the back row we have, left to right, Sister Mary Jerome, 6th grade; Mrs. Bernadette Pilukas, 3rd grade; Sister Mary Concepta, 2nd grade; and Sister Mary Ona, 5th grade. In the front row are Sister Mary Loretta, 1st grade; Sister Mary Regina, who was in residence; Sister Mary Gregoria, 4th grade; Sister Mary Amy, 7th grade; and Sister Mary Marguerite, 8th grade teacher and principal.

The 1970 graduating class poses with Sister Mary Marguerite, their teacher and principal.

Lest we forget, here is one of the major improvements to our parish cemetery, which was established in 1914. The chapel was built in 1972, and has served us well now for 30 years.

Here's the faculty about 1975. In the back row: Sister Mary Ona, 7th grade; Mrs. Pilukas, 3rd grade; and Sister Mary Agatha, teaching a combined 5th and 6th grade. In the front row: Sister Mary Amy, 8th grade teacher and principal; Sister Mary Gregoria, 4th grade; and Sister Mary Loretta, teaching a combined 1st and 2nd grade.

Here's the parish council in 1975. In the back row: Rusty Virkstis, Bob Barto, Mrs. Julian Collins, and Fr. Al Bernott. In the front row: Julian Collins, Agnes Rinkevich, and Joe Rinkevich.

The Third Order of St. Francis members in 1975 were Mrs. Barbara Baltrusaitis; Mrs. Michael Alksnis, standing; and Mrs. Joseph Wingate.

Organized in 1919, by 1975 St. Agatha's Society could count only a few active members. In the back row, Stephanie Kryger and Nellie Mohn. In the front row are Edna Vainavicz, Anne Szeiva, and Aldona Genautis.

Fr. Kenneth Schichtel has the distinction of the second-longest pastorate of SS. Peter & Paul after Msgr. Lipkus—nearly eleven years, from 1981 to 1992.

The renewal of our parish church in the mid-1980's left it looking like this in 1987—very different from the earlier photos, to be sure, but applauded by so many of our visitors for its warmth and grace.

The school faculty in 1987. You can recognize some of the faces even now, although all of these teachers have since gone elsewhere.

Photo gallery:

All photos courtesy of Agnes Dudek. Photo top left dated 1920, school in background, apparently the First Communion class, Clara Barstis 2nd row far right, Fr. Dexas at center left and unknown priest at right. Photo top right dated 1923, children dressed up for a program, posing in front of the school on Quarry, 2nd row from bottom 6th from right is Agnes Barstis as Sweet Pea, 2nd from right is Mary Sremba, 1st on right is Helen Barstis as Violet, the children all dressed in colorful crepe paper costumes. Photo 2nd row down left, an infant funeral in front of the church school, dated 1920's? but possibly earlier, taken by Kosciuszko Studio Co. at 83 Stocking St., but street numbering changed in 1912.



Photo 2nd row at right, the church on dedication day, February 24, 1924, Fr. Dexnis in biretta, presumably Fr. H.J. Vaicunas of Chicago, the preacher, at center, and Dominic Barstis at right. Photo below, at the church on dedication day, left to right, unknown, Fr. Dexnis in biretta, Fr. Vaicunas, Dominic Barstis, unknown, unknown.

