

CHAPTER 4

TIME TO CELEBRATE

1999 was a very important year in the history of our church, marked by special events. St. Joseph began a year long celebration of the centennial of its church building starting with a parish mission January 1999. This was followed in May with Bishop Michael McAuliffe blessing and consecrating with sacred chrism the new altar as well as the presider's chair.

On May 22 the parish celebrated the 100th anniversary of the laying of the church cornerstone with a renewal of the blessing. On June 13, 1999, the parish had a centennial "Homecoming" celebration with a Sunday Eucharist, dinner, entertainment including children's games, and a display of historic pictures.



Ricky Donelson, Magician



Sisters, Singers



Sr. Marlene, Director



Ferd Dames, Trapper

On August 1, 1999, Church Day at the County Fair, the parish choir joined with choirs from other churches in town.

On September 1999 the church steeple, damaged in a storm, was repaired, gilded, and repositioned. The statue of St. Joseph with the Christ Child was also repaired, repainted, and replaced in its niche in front of the steeple.



St. Joseph and Steeple Cross

And so the parish continues to build for the future while honoring its past. The church's year-long centennial celebration also coincided with a fund drive for a \$300,000 addition to Farischon Hall. As the funds grew, plans were made to start the construction process. The contractor and design engineer met with the parish's building committee nine times to get the right specifications for the parish's needs now and for the future. In September 1999, a project expanding the church hall was begun. The 65 by 90 square foot addition, designed and built by Heimer Construction, Taylor, includes plans for five classrooms for the parish school of religion, a medium size multipurpose room with kitchen facilities, offices for the pastor, the pastoral minister, and the parish secretary, as well as a workroom. Handicapped-accessible restrooms were also in the plans. The hall addition was planned with no steps. A gently sloped hallway will lead from the street level up to the original multipurpose room, making the entire building accessible for people with disabilities. The multipurpose room also will provide a place for weekday chapel (Husar). In September 25, 1999, the second annual SeptemberFest parish fundraiser was held for the building fund for the new Farischon Hall addition.

One of the most beautiful features of the new hall is to be the reinstallation of two antique stained glass windows from the chapel of the old St. Elizabeth Hospital, Hannibal. These windows depicting Christ the King and a guardian angel with child will be placed in the front of the building and will be illuminated at night. Lights above the windows will illuminate them at night. They depict Christ the King and a guardian angel with a child. Also retained from the old hospital will be the grotto and statue. The parish's tradition of recognizing needs and sacrificing to meet them continues.

Across town, on the north end of Palmyra, the original layout for the parish cemetery established in 1878 included a place in the center for a memorial to all the people who would be laid to rest there. It took 122 years, but the memorial was made possible through a bequest from parishioner, Martha Boudreaux. Plans called for a 6,830 pound monument with a five foot deep concrete foundation and two layers of rough cut marble. Above is to be a polished black marble slab on which quotations from scripture readings frequently used at funeral Masses are to be inscribed. Above that is to be a white stone with the date of the cemetery's founding, as well as

the words of final commendation, “Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. Let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.” Rising above the base to a height of 12 feet, four inches will be a large cross, with the IHS insignia. With plans for the hall addition and cemetery monument in place, and a series of other projects improving the church properties completed, the centennial year came to a close with the parish revering the past and embracing the future.

St. Joseph Parish capped off a year of celebration in honor of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of St. Joseph Church on December 5, 1999. Bishop John R. Gaydos presided at an anniversary Mass which he offered for all the departed souls who were baptized and married in the church, and the departed priests and religious who have served there over the years. “You spent this year contemplating God’s grace as it has been manifested in this holy place for 100 years,” he said in his homily. “Maybe we, too, should now spend this moment looking ahead.” He called on the parishioners to continue to grow as Gospel people, to continue to give thanks for all that has been, and to say “yes” for all that is to come. “Success is 90 percent preparation,” the bishop quipped. “The rest comes from time, energy, and perseverance—all of which were characteristics of parish’s founders. Happy anniversary and a blessed future,” he concluded. One of the general intercessions at Mass was in thanksgiving for the generosity of the people who gave the present parishioners the church.

Father Daniel Lueckenotte, pastor; Fr. John J. Lakers OFM, a retired associate professor of philosophy at Quincy University; Father James Wheeler OFM, associate pastor of St. Francis Solanus parish, Quincy; past pastors Father Leonard S. Misey (now pastor of St. Boniface parish, Brunswick, and St. Raphael parish, Indian Grove) and Father Frank Westhoff (now living in Columbia); Hannibal Deanery Dean Father William Flanagan, pastor of Holy Rosary parish, Monroe City; and other priests from nearby parishes celebrated with the bishop.

The Knights of Columbus provided an honor guard. Leo “Bud” Rothweiler, a server at St. Joseph since 1931, was the cross bearer. Sisters and brothers who had served in the parish and members of the altar society also participated. The bishop presented Fr. Lueckenotte an apostolic blessing from Pope John Paul II in honor of the church building’s centenary. After the service, members of the parish and guests assembled in the parish hall. Young parishioners were the servers. A special dessert shaped as a gothic church was served, a gift from a Lutheran church member, Mrs. Wanda Bunker. Church-related items from the past century were placed on display in the hall (Nies, Palmyra 1,3). It was truly a celebration of a time, a place, a faith.



**Centennial Mass Celebration
December 1999**



Aerial View of St. Joseph Church

This history is a partial record of a church, St. Joseph Catholic Church, and a place, Palmyra, MO, and the faith of its people who many years ago when the land was a frontier

wilderness saw a need and built a faith community. It is a record of the hard work and sacrifices of men, women, and children who built a church in service of the Lord. As Father Lueckenotte noted the parish's first worshipers had acted upon the need for their faith to be passed down to future generations. "It's awesome when you think about it," he said (Nies, Palmyra Parish). In 1999, the people of St. Joseph looked with pride at their 134 years as a parish; their 100 years in the present church building. Through Baptism each member shares responsibility for continuing the Lord's work. As church family each is called to support the other with the gifts given by the Holy Spirit, and to proclaim his Word through good example and service to all God's people. Those many years ago, the founders of this parish saw a need to have a sacred place to pray as a community, gather for the Eucharist, and celebrate. Upon their faith was built the church building which still stands proudly today. Upon their faith a parish continues to thrive and grow in love and service to the Lord.

History is being made now in this time and place and will continue. May this record of the past serve as inspiration to the generations of the future who will walk into this house of worship to praise the Lord. May God continue to bless all the people of St. Joseph.