



Strands of Thread

A History
of
St. Aloysius -
St. Jude Parish



By

Elizabeth Clifford

Teena Cherry

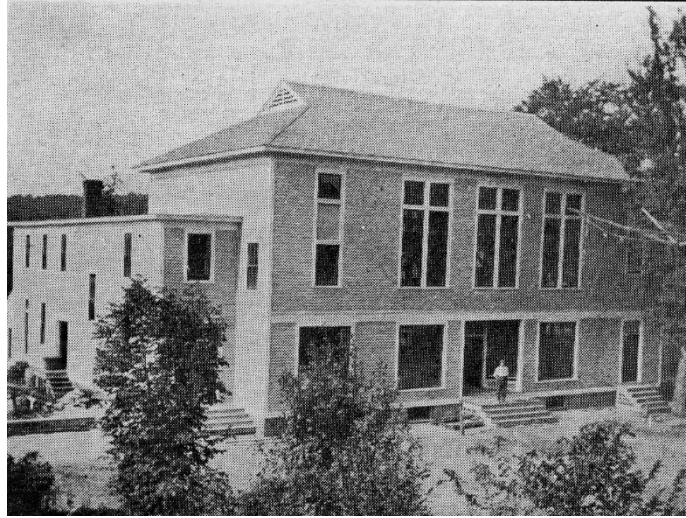
Mary Kennedy

assisted by Ron and Jane Giard

*“Strands of Thread woven together may stretch,
but will not break. Bind us together, Lord, with cords that cannot be broken.”*

The Early Life Of Village Catholics

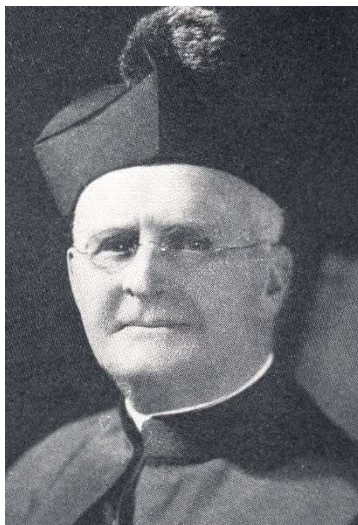
In the mid 1830's, the railroad construction crews, predominantly Irish, were at work in Rochdale as the great Western Railroad was being extended from Worcester to Springfield. By the 1840's, it was estimated that forty Catholics were regular church participants. Mass was celebrated in private homes – Mr. and Mrs. James Conlin's house located across from the Carleton Woolen mill, the home of Patrick and Mary Kennedy on Dale Street, and the Foley home on Foster Street. Later, the Village Hall, located just west of the Pleasant Street railroad bridge, was made available for Mass. and the conferring of the sacraments on a once-a-month basis. Father James Fitton and other Jesuits from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester traveled to Rochdale making the trip up Dead Horse Hill, Stafford Street, to celebrate Mass. Rochdale's Village Hall where Mass was celebrated once a month until St. Aloysius Mission opened in 1869. Later, St. Aloysius hall stood on the same site at the corner of Pleasant and Stafford Street. On the other weekends of the month, some village residents would hire a wagon and team on Saturday and drive to Worcester to do their trading. The Catholics among them would stop by the College of the Holy cross to go to confession before returning home. Other Catholic villagers would begin walking to the college early on Sunday morning to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. St. Aloysius Church has been described as the "traveling-est" church in the Diocese. In 1848, Mr. Benchley, a Grafton resident and a Protestant, donated land to the Grafton Catholics to build a church dedicated to St. Philip. In 1854, that church became too small to accommodate the growing number of parishioners. Meanwhile in Leicester, Caroline Nelson Russell, daughter of Rev. John Nelson of the First Congregational Church on the common, and wife of future Congressman John Russell, showed her own spirit of ecumenism and donated land and money to Leicester Catholics for their own church. St. Polycarp's in Grafton was dismantled and re-assembled on the newly purchased lot halfway between Leicester Center and Cherry Valley. It sat where the driveway to St. Joseph's is today facing east toward Worcester. It was dedicated to St. Polycarp. Catholics from Rochdale would still have to ride or walk to Cherry Valley by way of Henshaw Street to attend St. Polycarp's. Rochdale funerals were held in the consecrated ground at St. John's Cemetery in Worcester. Weddings were held at St. Polycarp's or at the College of the Holy Cross.



Rochdale Village Hall where Mass was celebrated once a month until St. Aloysius Mission opened in 1869. Later, St. Aloysius Hall stood on the same sight at the corner of Pleasant and Stafford Streets.

The long, arduous trek to and from St. Polycarp's in either the blistering heat of summer or the frigid cold of winter over muddy, rutted roads was a clear indication of the true faith of village Catholics and, also, of how much a church was needed in Rochdale. When, as in Grafton, the Catholic population of the town of Leicester grew, Leicester Catholics built St. Joseph's on the site. The boards, beams, and timber of St. Polycarp's were once again put on wagons and horse drawn, this time over hills, four miles south to Rochdale. Much like the generosity of Mrs. Russell, land for St. Polycarp's new location was provided by the Stone Family. A few decades earlier, Hezekiah Stone had given land to build Christ Episcopal Church for the Protestant families in Rochdale. In 1869, the Catholic Church was reassembled on a solid foundation of ledge and renamed "St. Aloysius." It remained a mission church until 1891. The first baby baptized there was named after the mission church, christened Aloysius Barton Kennedy. St. Aloysius began as a mission church of St. Joseph's from the time it was rebuilt in Rochdale until it was officially designated a parish. During that time, Father David McGrath, the first pastor of St. Joseph's Church, remodeled St. Aloysius at a cost of \$500.00. In 1891, the charge of St. Aloysius Mission was transferred to St. Roch's Church in Oxford Center under the direction of Father Patrick Hafey. He was responsible for administering to the needs of the people of Rochdale and Greenville. It is amusing to note the account books that Fr. Hafey kept. Each church, St. Roch's and St. Aloysius, shared expenditures equally. The work "portion" appeared on every line of the expense account. For example: Feb. 9, 1897 – J.J. Kennedy – barn good oats – portion \$1.29 Feb. 26, 1897 – Chaffee Bros. – shoeing horse – portion \$1.93 Every Sunday morning Fr. Hafey would arrive from Oxford by horse to Rochdale to say Mass. Finally, in 1904, Bishop Thomas Beaven, Bishop of Springfield, sent Father Cornelius Sullivan to Rochdale to form an independent parish.

The Early Parish Years 1904 – 1924



Rev. Cornelius Sullivan, first pastor of St. Aloysius Church

Rev. Cornelius Sullivan, first pastor of St. Aloysius Church. He would later be honored with the title of “Monsignor” by Pope Pius XII. On November 11, 1904, Father Sullivan arrived in Rochdale. He was pastor for only one year, but during his stay he laid a solid foundation for succeeding priests. A beautiful house of worship already stood in place where the sacramental needs of people could be served. What was most needed was a home for the pastor, not only for his use, but as a meeting place for the parish. Although the parish treasury had very meager funds, Father Sullivan managed to “scraped together” enough money to purchase the land adjacent to the church for a proposed rectory. He never saw the fulfillment of his plans as he was reassigned in 1905. It was left to his successor, Father Michael Ahearn, to oversee the completion of the rectory. Father Ahearn availed himself of the sound and practical economical planning of his predecessor and the completed rectory has survived over 100 years with very few alterations and renovations. It remains a comfortable home for all who have resided here. Father Ahearn remained in Rochdale for five years until Father Thomas McDonnell replaced him. Father McDonald stayed but one year, followed by Father James Murphy who was also transferred after a year.



Rev. Michael Kelley poses with members of the parish baseball team and Rochdale team.

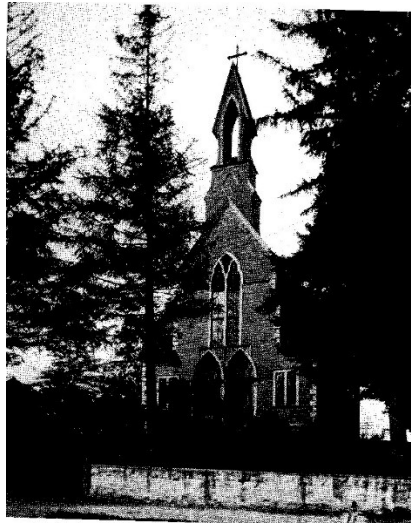
Father Michael Aloysius Kane Kelly came on board in June, 1912, and remained as pastor until his death in 1930. His tenure was the longest the parish has ever known. Father Kelly was a native of neighboring Spencer. He was raised on Main South Street with his four sisters, two of whom became nuns. Although slight in stature, Father Kelly was extremely energetic, hard-working, very compassionate, and dearly admired, not only by his parishioners, but townspeople as well. During his stay here, Father Kelly sponsored various athletic teams for the young people of the parish and served as their coach. He initiated a football team and somehow managed to acquire uniforms for the entire team. He sponsored the St. Aloysius baseball team. A lively Sunday afternoon's entertainment for townspeople was watching St. Aloysius battle their archrival, Cherry Valley. Father Kelly had a tennis court built on the north side of the rectory. Parishioners hauled loads of brick clay from the clay pit in the Merriam District and, after much manual labor, fashioned the most popular spot in the village for athletes and spectators alike. Dennis Bergin was asked to make some benches for the tennis court from which the sideliners could watch sets and keep score. When it was discovered that seating was needed in the village ballpark in nearby Rochdale Park, the tennis court, seats were removed to the park and new seats built for the tennis court. One of the original benches survived a "drowning" in Rochdale Pond and now "resides" on the lawn of the David and Kathy Israelian Fleming at 819 Pleasant Street. Father Kelly would later add sandboxes and swings to the area between the church and the rectory. Father Kelly's other interest was constructing and repairing radios – the crystal set! He was adept at anything electrical so that, when one called at the rectory, the visitor would find the pastor surrounded by wire, tubes, and tools that were needed to build a crystal set that would bring in far reaching stations such as KDKA in Pittsburg,

Pennsylvania. Sometimes Father Kelly would separate the earphones so that his guest could listen to the faint, scratch-sounding voices that brought the outside world to Rochdale. What a miracle! During Father Kelly's pastorate there were only two Masses celebrated each weekend, both on Sunday. The 8:00 am Mass was geared to children and the 10:00 am to adults. Because of the long fast requirements (midnight to Mass time,) communion was not usually served at the 10:00 am service. Catechism classes were held in the church between Masses, each class assigned a different pew in the church. The presence of the Blessed Sacrament assured that there would be no discipline problems during instructions. Mrs. Mary Fitzpatrick was the organist for the girls' choir at the children's Mass and Aloysius Kennedy was the organist at the adult Mass. His children recalled being pressed into pumping the organ bellows during Mass. Altar boys were also drafted to pump the bellows and "woe to him" who did not get the rhythm of the pumping organ correct and allowed a squeak or a squawk to escape! Automobiles were indeed a luxury in this era – perhaps only one or two families possessed one – so the mode of transportation was still by foot or horse or wagon. St. Aloysius was in the central part of the village with parishioners traveling from the Charlton line, Christian Hill, Cominsville, Carleton Hill, Greenville and Woodville. These distances ranged from a quarter of a mile to two or more miles. Benediction was held on Sunday evening. For many of the faithful this meant traveling back and forth twice a day in all types of weather. During the holy season of Lent, when devotions were held on Wednesday evening and the Stations of the Cross were held on Friday evening, the same trips were made. It was a way of life and, judging from the large attendance at these services, no one objected. Of course, there was no television, movies, DVD's or automobiles to distract the congregation. World War I was a trying time for both pastor and parishioners as so many young men left for foreign lands to fight "in the war to end all wars." News of death and casualties and the consoling of the bereaved families took a toll on Father Kelly. Adding to his concerns was a flu epidemic which took many lives. Father Michael Kelly poses with members of the parish baseball team and Rochdale team.

The Post War, Roaring Twenties And the First Fire 1924 – 1934

This was the decade that bade farewell to the sober aftermath of World War I and sauntered into the wacky, carefree decade of the Jazz Age. This atmosphere became prevalent in our parish with the advent of the Minstrel Show, an annual event enacted by the young people in the Village Hall. Father Kelly imported from the "west" – Springfield – a gentleman who coached and directed local thespians and the chorus, as well as soloists. Entertainment that today is racially insensitive was commonplace in the 20's and 30's. Dressed in typical end-man garb, bowler derby hat, white gloves, black face and all, the interlocutor (middleman), seated at center stage, bantered with each of his end men before his turn to sing. Many of the local townspeople were the butt of the jokes, but all accepted the barbs as goodnatured fun. The end men chose typical songs of the era to sing and dance such as "Tip Toe Through the Tulips," "Bye, Bye Blackbird," and "Ain't She Sweet." The chorus of young ladies, attractively dressed in "shirt waists" and skirts, added their charm and talent to the gala evening of song. The shows attracted a wide audience from surrounding towns. The religious and social life of this small community was contained within the village itself. The popular meeting places were the local churches, the post office (located in A.B. Kennedy's store, now Buddy's Spa), and Boardman's Store, later owned by Jack Kennedy. It was during the twenties that, earlier each summer, orphans from St. Paul's Cathedral were

brought to St. Aloysius Church with hopes that families would adopt them or, at the very least, take them for the summer to enjoy life in a good country setting. On a designated Sunday, the children were seated in the front rows of the church. There were a few adoptions, but many more children visited for summer visits. Many lasting friendships were a result of this sad and pitiful procedure. The famous week-long lawn parties came into being at this time. Booths, games of chance, and skill games for prizes were enjoyed by all. There was plenty of space to quench one's thirst with soft drinks and coffee and to enjoy hot dogs and hamburgers cooked to perfection by the ladies of the parish. Of course, on Fridays the menu offered alternatives to the beef and sausage. On February 3, 1928, a fire did about \$3,000.00 damage to St. Aloysius Church. Children sledding on Stafford Street discovered the fire and notified the fire department. The department confined the fire to the sacristy and prevented flames from spreading to the altar and the body of the church. Sacred vessels were saved by John Nelligan, principal of Rochdale Grammar School and Jack Kennedy, a local grocer and parishioner, but were unable to save the vestments. Father Kelly was ill and at St. Vincent Hospital at the time. Jesuits from the College of the Holy Cross had been saying Mass in Father Kelly's absence and they continued to do so after the fire while necessary repairs were completed. Father Kelly remained in poor health and was unable to continue his work in the parish. He died January 12, 1930, the only pastor to have his funeral at St. Aloysius Church. Interment was at St. Mary's Church in his hometown of Spencer. The women of the parish prepared dinner for the Most Reverend Thomas O'Leary, Bishop of Springfield, who presided at the funeral. They also fed all the attending priests from the Diocese. In 1929, Bishop O'Leary appointed Father Jeremiah J. McCarthy to succeed Father Kelly. Assuming his first pastorate, Father McCarthy was young, eloquent, vigorous, and ready to take on his first parochial responsibilities. One of his first tasks was to have the Sacrament of Confirmation conferred on a great number of people who, for some unknown reason, had been neglected for a long time. The entire middle of the church was reserved for the Confirmation class, ranging in age from twelve years old to married couples. Sister Rose Concepta SSJ, Father McCarthy's sister, was invaluable in offering her services in training the young people of the parish in their Catechism and preparing them for Confirmation. The physical appearance of the church property went through many changes during this period. Father Ahern had planted shrubs and blue spruce trees at the time the rectory was built. Over the years, the landscaping grew beyond its border and the front of the property resembled a jungle. Father McCarthy undertook to have the trees removed. Some of them ended up at the Gore Cemetery in Merriam District and are still there today, towering giants standing as ecumenical guardsmen. It was during the 30's that the church and rectory were painted a delicate shade of pink! It is dubious as to who gets the credit for the choice of color, but Father McCarthy wasted no time in having the property repainted a conservative white. Father McCarthy's first years as pastor coincided with the bleak and dismal Great Depression. Through his consolation and encouragement, he excelled in keeping up the morale of his people. Father McCarthy's positive outlook helped ease his parishioners through a particularly difficult time.

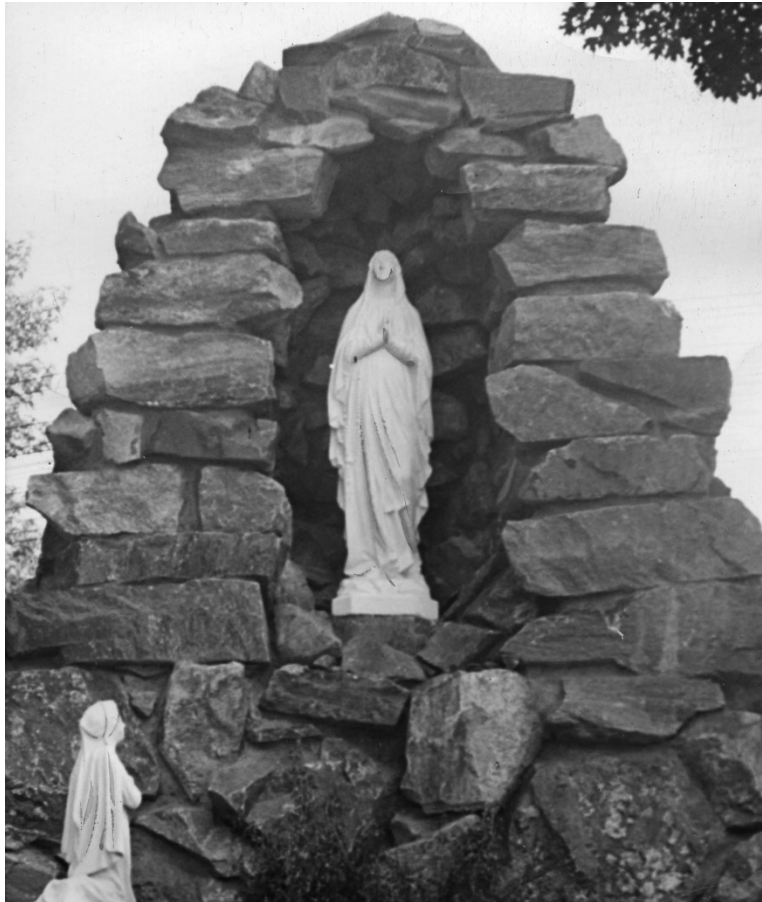


Two photographs of St. Aloysius Church: the first taken before the fire burned the steeple and the second as the Chapel in later years. The Massachusetts Historical Commission states: "St. Aloysius Church is the only major non-residential building to survive in the Rochdale Village area from the 19th century. Rectangular in form with a façade pavilion and narthex, this building has vertical lines, a high-pitched roof, and Gothic-arched windows and doors that are associated with Victorian Gothic. An additional vertical sweep to the design was lent by a Gothic-arched, open belfry, which originally rose above the peak of the roof of the main facade. Originally sheathed in clapboard, the church is now covered with wooden shingles. Quoins, which originally existed at the outer corners of the narthex and the façade pavilion, have been removed or covered by the present siding. A recent, one-story gable-front porch shelters the two main entrances and hides their Gothic arches."

The Great Depression and The War Years 1934 – 1944

The pastorate of Father McCarthy, from 1930 to 1945, was probably the most trying time for our parish and the people of Rochdale. Those years encompassed not only the depths of the Depression, but also the tear-filled, dark days of World War II. Money was scarce and times were hard, but people learned to do without and to cut back on their lifestyles. People were poor, but they did not realize the poverty because everyone else was in the same or similar condition. All the churches in the community helped those in the greatest need, and relatives and neighbors pitched in to help. With their complete faith in God and their reliance and trust in Him, the faithful had a beacon that shone toward a brighter ending to a horrible experience. As a forensic student at the College of the Holy Cross, Father McCarthy had been active in the debating society. He was considered an orator and a leading actor, taking part in all the college's productions. With his flair for the dramatic, he made his sermons come alive. His talent was more apparent in his post-Confirmation classes as they studied Bible history. He held his audiences in awe and admiration as he painted verbal pictures of text. Very few young people missed his midweek classes. Church Place in front of the church and rectory had been a public street crossing over the railroad tracks to Mill Street. This created a dangerous situation. The town fathers decided to close the street to through traffic and put a fence along the tracks. The four homes left across the street from the church property made an undesirable frontage to the church property. When, in the mid 30's, the houses came up for auction, Father McCarthy purchased three of them and had them dismantled. The cellar holes were filled in and blacktopped for a parking lot. Father McCarthy was unable to secure enough money for the fourth house which is still standing today. In September, 1938, a hurricane caused minor damage to the church. The following September, however, while painters were using blow torches to remove paint from the exterior of the church, the building caught fire and several thousand dollars damage resulted. The blaze destroyed the steeple and the cross and did considerable damage to the roof. The interior of the church sustained smoke and water damage. Valuable vestments, statues, altar linens, and sacred vessels were removed by Father McCarthy aided by Reverend George Stockwell of Christ Episcopal Church next door. (Ecumenism was prevalent even in those early days.) Mrs. Lena Bradley is credited with helping rescue some of the Stations of the Cross. The large pump organ, used for so many years, was damaged beyond repair. Father McCarthy purchased a new Hammond organ to replace it. Gone were the joys of being able to pump in the air to help provide the beautiful tones for the accompaniment as the choir sang all the old seasonal hymns. Weekly contribution envelopes were not introduced to the parish until the next decade. A system of seating came into being in the 30's. Parishioners could contribute a "pew rent" of \$1.50 each quarter of the year. For their contribution they would have their names placed on a card holder on a designated pew. This was to guarantee a seat no matter how late they arrived for services. At times there were uncomfortable glares at someone sitting in the wrong pew! Monthly Assessment was another means of collecting money for the parish. Collectors would have certain districts. The first of the month would visit each home for their donation of \$1.00 per adult. This money helped with current expenses. During the war year, Father McCarthy mentioned innumerable times how the boys who were in the service felt almost like his own sons. Some he had known all their lives. He wrote monthly articles for the village newspaper, *The Rochdale News*, and mentioned that the rectory door was always open. All service people were most cordially welcome to

visit him Father McCarthy came to us during the Depression years and, in spite of the many property renovations and unforeseen expenses, his frugality helped the parish wipe out a deficit and leave us with a tidy balance of \$28,000 in the bank. In June of 1945, Father McCarthy received his call to go minister to the people of Blessed Sacrament Church in Holyoke. (We were still part of the Springfield Diocese.) He had served the people of Rochdale so faithfully for over sixteen years.



The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes was donated by the Gallant Family in thanksgiving for their 6 children returning safely from World War Two.

The Post War Years 1944 – 1954

Father Francis Carroll had been ordained on June 12, 1924. He spent several years as a curate in local parishes. In 1945, while a curate at St. Leo's Church in Leominster, he received word that his first pastorate would be St. Aloysius. On the day that Father Carroll arrived for the first time in Rochdale, he turned on his car radio to hear the joyful news that peace terms in Europe had been signed. He mentioned many times later that it was such a beautiful way to start a new phase of his life by celebrating with his new

parishioners that long sought peace. Two of Rochdale's fine young men, having been prisoners of war serving time in German prison camps, had been released and returned to the states. When T. Sgt. Everett "Sam" Perry arrived home, the Rochdale Fire Department ceremoniously rode him around the village on their fire truck, promising to do the same for Pvt. Tom Monahan upon his return. Father Carroll had become accustomed to the roar of the passing trains during 8:00 am and 10:am Sunday Masses. As with pastors before and after him, the trains that ran along the track within yards of the church consistently interrupted sermons as if on cue. On one of Father Carroll's first Sundays at St. Aloysius, Pvt. Monahan arrived in town to the wailing of sirens and the honking of horns from the joyous townspeople, upsetting Father's composure and ending his thoughts for the day! The following morning, Father Carroll arrived at the Monahan home to "meet the fellow" who had caused all the commotion the previous day and to share in the happiness that abounded there. Mr. and Mrs. Clement Gallant of Wells Street had six stars on the service flag hanging in their window, indicating that six of their children were serving in the armed forces somewhere in the world. After the Armistice was signed and their five sons and one daughter safely home, their daughter Mary had a replica of the Shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes erected next to the church in thanksgiving for the safe return of her brothers and herself. The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes donated by the Gallant Family During the month of May for the duration of the war, the rosary was recited each night in the church. After the shrine was dedicated, the rosary was recited outside until the May flies took over and participants had to retreat to the merciful shelter of the church. Father Carroll was a great promoter of wearing May medals indicating one's devotion to the Blessed Mother. These medals were tiny, approximately one-half inch in size, and tied with a narrow blue ribbon. Father enlisted the aid of his faithful crew of young ladies to tie two or three hundred bows on the medals readying them for distribution the first day of May. It was not a difficult task, but, after a while, their fingers became numb. During Father Carroll's stay he sought the aid of the Sisters of St. Joseph to help with the CCD program. Various parishioners helped transport the five sisters to and from St. Peter's convent in Worcester each week. When Father Carroll suffered an illness, Bishop O'Leary appointed a curate to aid in carrying on Liturgical duties. Father James Clifford was young, vigorous, and very capable of filling Father Carroll's shoes, albeit temporarily. He made a lasting impression on those fortunate enough to know him and was the first of a large group of associate pastors to serve here. The first young woman to enter the convent from the parish was Lillian Messier, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Messier. She joined the Sisters of Mercy in February, 1944, and was a teacher, and, later, principal of Mercy Center on Chestnut Street in Worcester. Barbara Gumpright, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gumpright, entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Springfield in 1950. She spent her religious life in many capacities in the Springfield area. Dolores DiDonna became a Sister of Mercy in 1951. She taught in Worcester's parochial schools and was a guidance counselor at Marian High School for many years. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. James DiDonna who lived on Wells Street. In February of 1950, the Diocese of Worcester was created. Called to be the first Bishop of Worcester was the Most Reverend John Joseph Wright, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston. He became the youngest bishop in the United States at the age forty years. Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston was the officiating prelate with a crowd of ten to fifteen thousand witnessing the beginning of the many changes affecting the lives of all those in the Diocese. In May of 1952, Father Francis Rupprecht arrived to fill the vacancy left by Father Carroll who was transferred to Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Clinton. This was the era that the growth of our parish was probably the greatest both numerically and physically. On October 5, 1952, Father Rupprecht called a meeting of the women of the parish to form a Guild. The first meetings were held in the Parish House of Christ Episcopal Church, in members' homes, and even the cellar of the rectory. The first Christmas sale was held on November 6, 1953, at the Veterans' Hall in the

former Greenville School. Proceeds amounted to \$635.25. The first St. Patrick's day supper was held March 17, 1953 in the Parish House of the Episcopal Church. Our great need was finally fulfilled in October, 1953 when we acquired the vacant grocery store in Depot Square which was to become our parish hall. The Men's Club volunteered much time and manpower in helping to renovate the hall. The Ladies Guild made drapes and equipped the kitchen with appliances, utensils, and other necessities. Upon completion of the hall, the men's Club held a ham and bean supper. More than 230 people attended the dinner followed by dancing. This was the beginning of many social events by both church groups and town organizations in need of a place to assemble. A new tradition was begun during Father Rupprecht's tenure. At Sunday evening Benediction the statue of the Blessed Mother was blessed and carried in a candlelight procession to the home of a parishioner where it would stay for a week. Each night the rosary would be recited at the home where the statue resided. On October 31, 1954, the parish celebrated the 50th anniversary of St. Aloysius Church becoming a parish. Bishop Wright celebrated Mass and blessed the new parish hall. A reception and banquet was celebrated at Hillcrest Country Club. James Conlin, a longtime parishioner, gave a brief history of the parish followed by a speech by Bishop Wright. Father Rupprecht revealed his vision to see the parish expand, perhaps with a convent and school. He was always hoping for big things from his small parish. Bishop John J. Wright celebrates our 50th anniversary.



Bishop John J. Wright celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the parish in 1954.

And So A New Beginning 1955 – 1975

June 17, 1955 was a special day for our parish. One of our own became the first parish member ordained to the priesthood. Robert Forgit, son of Alice Forgit and the late Arthur Forgit was ordained to the Priesthood of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary by the Most reverend Matthew Brady, Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire. Father Forgit offered his first Mass at St. Aloysius Church with a reception in the church hall. Our parish hosted over 600 worshippers on November 13, 1956, at the first diocesan Rogation Sunday. Rogation Sundays began in France 1500 years ago and held for three days before Ascension Thursday for the purpose of obtaining a good harvest. The procession started at the church and marched to the farm of James Conlin, now the site of the Pine Ridge Golf Club, where Bishop Wright blessed the soil, see, tools and livestock as well as a litter of kittens presented to him by some local children. Bishop Wright also blessed sixty-one wayside shrines which were given to the Catholic Youth Councils of the Diocese. These signs were visible signs to people traveling throughout our Diocese “that land belongs to God.” That same year Father Rupprecht celebrated the 25th anniversary of his priesthood. He was honored at a reception given by the Ladies’ Guild.



Rev. Francis Rupprecht

He also took a trip to Innsbruck, Austria to commemorate his ordination in 1931. The 1950's had seen a large increase in the population of the Dawn Acres portion of the parish. The Dawn Acres development housed over 100 families. Father Rupprecht became the driving force to see how these new families could be best served by our parish. His thought was to have a Chapel to help the “overflow” at St. Aloysius Church. Little did he know how his plans would affect the future of the parish. In 1957, the parish bought the property owned by Denny Chlapowski at the corner of Pleasant and King Streets. The twelve-room farmhouse was to become the Chapel. Brick by brick, the house was transformed. The altar, pews, chairs

and statues came from churches in Millbury, Oxford, and Leicester. Father Rupprecht had an “old gold” drive which collected enough gold to pay for a new chalice in the new Chapel. When the renovations were completed, the congregation sat in one large room facing the altar, and still others in the hallway, and on the stairs. Those in the hallway and stairs saw the altar reflected in a large mirror that hung from the ceiling near the front door. The Chapel created from the farmhouse was consecrated on June 7th by Bishop Wright.



An Open House at the new St. Jude Chapel in 1963

A statue of St. Jude was donated by Mr. and Mrs. John Bosky. Regular Sunday Mass began on June 9th with a dozen boys and girls receiving their First Communion. Bishop Wright returned to the Chapel the following October to bless the statue of St. Jude. That same month was also the beginning of the annual Novena to St. Jude. In 1958, with work completed at the “farmhouse” Chapel, a new kitchen was installed in the parish hall, and a new side door was installed on the gospel side of St. Aloysius in compliance with fire codes. The first St. Jude’s Chapel, a farmhouse on Pleasant Street There were three sets of twins in the First Communion class at St. Aloysius Church in 1959.: Mary and Eleanor Bergin, Richard and Robert Frazier, and Karyn and Kathy LaPlante. Redecoration and renovations to the church were started in December of 1960 with hopes of having the work in the sanctuary completed by Christmas. Alas, this project was not completed until February of the following year! The summer of 1961 found the men of the parish once again with hammers in hand constructed seven new classrooms in the basement of the parish hall. These new classrooms, completed in October, allowed for smaller CCD classes and reduced the visual and noise distractions which had existed when classes were held in the church. It soon became apparent that the Chapel on Pleasant Street was too small for the overflow crowd on Sundays and plans were drafted for a new Chapel next to the existing building. Ground -breaking took place in the spring of 1963, and the Chapel was ready for its dedication by Bishop Bernard Flanagan on December 22nd of the same year. Another “gold drive” was conducted for several “gold-plated articles” needed for the new St. Jude Chapel. The original farmhouse was converted to CCD classroom space. Volunteers clearing out the cellar for even more classrooms have memories of the huge bats that they found behind every shutter. November 29, 1964 marked the end of the old and the beginning of the new. No longer were Masses to

be said in Latin but in the language of the people. There were also the introduction of lectors and changes in the laws regarding the Eucharist fast, from three hours abstaining from solid food to one hour, before receiving Holy Communion. The church was still the center of many social activities during the sixties. Our Lady of Fatima's statue continued her weekly visitations to the homes of various parishioners, a tradition that would continue until May, 1966. St. Aloysius had an active Brownie, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops as well as a very active Catholic Youth Council (CYC) which won first prize for one of their floats in the diocesan CYC parade. There were also baseball and basketball teams for the young people of the parish. One of the assistant pastors, Father William Gallagher, a native of Ireland, introduced young men of the parish to a new-fangled game called "Irish Football" or soccer. The first soccer games were played in a field on Dale Street across the railroad tracks from the church. The Ladies' Guild and the Men's Club sponsored a variety of activities including dinners and barbeques. Many will remember the whist parties and the dance at Hillcrest Country Club, and, of course, the annual night before the July 4th celebrations, which included a Horribles Parade. Along with the social activities, a devoted group of women in the parish kept the church and Chapel clean and tidy each week. It was evident that Father Rupprecht was a builder when at the opening of the Chapel he made the following statement: My ambition since ordination has been to build a church. Opening the Chapel satisfied that ambition, but hope for something bigger still persists." During these ten years, the parish saw 451 babies baptized and 106 couples exchange vows of marriage. This indeed was a decade in which many fundamental changes took place in our parish and in our lives. These changes not only reflected changes in the society in which we lived, but also the role our church and religion would play. Father Rupprecht finally let the men of the parish put down their collective hammers and paint brushes. No more building! The driveway and parking area behind the church was blacktopped, but the pastor did not ask the men of the parish to do the work. He hired someone. In response to the "Decree of Ecumenism" from Vatican II, St. Aloysius Church and Christ Episcopal Church sponsored their first joint service of Christian Unity. There were actually two prayer services held on consecutive Sunday evenings, the first at St. Jude Chapel and the second at Christ Church. All congregations were invited. Thus began a long history of ecumenism in Leicester. Nineteen sixty-five was the last year for our "night before the 4th" celebration – too much work for too few willing volunteers. The Ladies' Guild still held their bake sales, and, in August, held their first auction. In 1966, the same year the Vatican changed the Lenten regulations regarding fast and abstinence, Assistant Pastor Edward Mahan was transferred to Sacred Heart Parish in Hopedale to be replaced by Father Myles Quail. In 1967, we co-sponsored a Week of Christian Unity services with the Cherry Valley Methodist Church. Father Quail was transferred to St. Peter's in Worcester and Father John Kelley came to take his place. The same year the first parish council was formed. Council members were appointed by the pastor. Lay people would now have a voice in the running of the parish. Father Kelley introduced us to the concept of Folk Masses, the first one held on November 27, 1967. In May of 1967, Father Rupprecht asked parishioners to nominate the new parish council. There would be ten members from St. Aloysius and five from St. Jude's. The elections had no sooner taken place when we were notified that Father Rupprecht was being transferred to St. Mary's in Uxbridge. He would be leaving us after sixteen years. Father Rupprecht celebrated Mass at St. Jude's on June 19th and was feted at a party at Hillcrest Country Club. It was a sad farewell for the people of our church and Chapel. Our new pastor arrived with a last name most of us had trouble pronouncing, Father Chester Janczukowicz. He soon was "christened" Father Chester or Father Chet. His formal installation took place August 7, 1968, and was followed by a Mass of Thanksgiving and a reception in St. Aloysius Hall. The most dramatic physical change to take place in our church and Chapel took place in 1968. The large, ornate altars were to be replaced by simple table-like altars, and the placement of the

altars changed. No longer would the celebrant have his back to the congregation. The priest would face the people while celebrating Mass. The sanctuary was now completely changed, a new altar, new baptismal font, a new tabernacle, and removal of the altar rail. At the time the interior of St. Aloysius Church was completely redecorated by contractor and parishioner Vincent Bergin in keeping with the new simplicity of design in the sanctuary. Mr. Bergin was uncomfortable with the idea of destroying the old altar so Fr. Chet enlisted the services of James Conlin who owned the farm in North Oxford on Pleasant Street. Legend has it that Mr. Conlin also had second thoughts about dismantling or burning the altar so he dug a large hole in one of his fields and buried the altar. The farm later became the Pine Ridge Golf Club. According to Father Kelley: *"If any of you play golf at Pine Ridge and pray for and make a particularly difficult shot, you now know why!"* In 1969, the parish again gave thanks as another of our young women answered God's call. Dale Rushton, daughter of Fred and Dorothy Rushton, entered the cloistered order of Regina Laudis at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut. Sister Anne Rushton became Reverend Mother Anne Dale Rushton O.S.B. on September 14, 1991. She celebrated her fifty-fourth anniversary as a cloistered sister of the order in 2023. Father Kelley was transferred in June and, in July, we welcomed Father Charles Dumphy who was the Diocesan Director of the CYO. Father Dumphy was to reside at St. Aloysius and help Fr. Chet with Masses and confessions. Father Dumphy was with us only a few months, transferred the following February. It wasn't until June that Father George Hill took us residence at St. Aloysius. More changes in the Mass occurred. February, 1970 saw the beginning of Saturday evening Masses. The New Order of the Mass was implemented that Easter Sunday and with it the use of the monthly missalette. The parish bought Dr. Coleman's property adjacent to the church property in May. This allowed for a much-needed expansion of the parking lot behind the church. At the end of November, Father Chet was transferred to St. Mary's in Jefferson. The parish said goodbye as it had welcomed him, with a reception in the church hall. We welcomed Father Martin Manahan as our new pastor. Under the direction of Father Manahan, the classrooms in St. Aloysius hall were again renovated. New dividers were installed upstairs to separate the various classes. The children in grade 1 were taught at home by their parents that year. The hours for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as "confession" was known, were moved from mid-afternoon Saturdays to thirty minutes prior to the Saturday evening Mass. It was hoped this would encourage more people to participate in the sacrament. In September, Father Hill and Father Anthony Marteka were assigned as assistant pastors. Father Marteka brought back the Folk Mass – every Sunday at 9:30 am Mass at St. Jude's and at the 11:00 am Mass at St. Aloysius. The parish council was restructured in April, 1972. The parish was divided into four districts with two representatives from each district. That was also the year Bingo socials came to the parish. We joined the rest of the town in June at an outdoor Ecumenical Service celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of Leicester. Father Marteka was assigned to Campus Ministry fulltime and moved to Sacred Heart Parish in Worcester that same month. In 1973, Father Manahan became pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Worcester and Father Edmund Gannon came to Rochdale for a six-year stay. Following the suggestions of Vatican II, and under the tutelage of Father Gannon, the first group of extraordinary ministers were elected and installed in the parish. In addition to his pastoral duties, Father Gannon was on the staff of *the Catholic Free Press* and many of the *"Flotsam and Jetsam"* columns had a familiar ring to them, although he would never admit we were the subject of these stories. These ten years saw the decline of the parish as the social center of our lives. The Ladies' Guild continued to have fundraisers, including their Christmas Bazaar, but slowly through the decade the parish suppers disappeared, the CYC became inactive, and the choir disbanded. People's lives and interests changed and so did the structure of the parish. We did, however, have 340 baptisms and 108 marriages during this time. Some things don't change.

A Quiet Time 1975 – 1984

Father Gannon's six years with us was a time of adjustment. He helped us understand the "new Mass," the ecumenical movement, and so many other changes which had or were taking place during the years of Vatican II. Many meetings and adult classes were held to help us make the transition from the old to the new church. Father Richard Trainer, who was, at the time, Deacon Trainer, came to assist Father Gannon for a short time. When he went back to the seminary, Father Aiden Walsh joined us, and stayed from May of 1975 to June of 1976. When Father Walsh was transferred, Father Stephen Johnson was assigned as assistant pastor. Father Johnson stayed with us eight years – longer than any assistant in the past forty years. During his tenure, he saw four pastors come and go. He was the "constant" in our parish during those years. He was also the last assistant pastor to serve the parish. Father Steve worked closely with the youth of the parish, reactivating the CYC. Many of us remember the weekend retreats for high school students at Barlin Acres. It was also he who introduced Steubenville, Ohio to the parish. Although the annual trip to Steubenville did not become a yearly event until Father Dunkley arrived, Father Steve did introduce a number of young people to this prayer-filled experience in the mid-west. Father Gannon was reassigned in January, 1979 to St. Paul's Parish in Blackstone. Father John Reynolds came for an eighteen month-long pastorate. It was during his stay that the parish celebrated its 75th anniversary. The occasion was marked by a concelebrated Mass of Thanksgiving on November 25, 1979. Father Reynolds left in July, 1980 due to illness to be replaced by Father Cyril LeBeau. Father LeBeau was with us a little longer until January 6, 1984. Father Thomas Teczar served the parish from January 6th to November 30, 1984. He had extensive renovations and redecoration of the rectory done. Parishioners were invited to an Open House and buffet to see the updated rectory. The population of the Dawn Acres area did not grow as had been anticipated between 1954 and 1984. St. Jude never became a separate parish.



The altar at St. Jude's Chapel

The need to bring the two congregations closer together became apparent. We did not need five buildings to heat and maintain. Father Teczar set up a special meeting in February, 1984 to determine the extent of repairs needed on the parish's many properties. The committee came back with a long list and Father

Teczar called an Open Parish Forum in March. This meeting was to discuss the programs, buildings and liturgy and, in general, the future direction the parish should be taking. The consensus was that in the long term there should be one church, one parish hall, and one rectory. Father Stephen Johnson In March, 1984, Father Steve Johnson said his farewell Mass and was honored at a reception in the church hall . (In 2009, Fr. Johnson returned to Leicester as pastor of St. Joseph's Church. He was much loved by his parishioners there. He died in 2011 after a long illness. The courage and faith he showed during his battle with cancer, served as a inspiration to all who knew him.) In April, the parish council voted to bring back the parish suppers. The first was a spaghetti feast in May. The same months the Sacrament of Reconciliation was changed to the first Saturday of the month or by appointment. On November 30th, Father Teczar abruptly left his pastorate and Father Stephen Pedone was assigned as temporarily. The decade ended on a note of uncertainty. We had no pastor and many questions remained regarding the direction the parish would take. There were 258 baptisms and 131 weddings during these 10 years.



The first St. Jude Chapel fashioned from a farmhouse next door to the site of the chapel.

Changes 1984 – 1994

We had not been lost in the diocesan paper shuffle. A new pastor was appointed January 18, 1985. Father George Dunkley was formally installed February 16th. Our new pastor added new meaning to the word "collaboration." There was not a parish undertaking in which one felt anything but a total "win" situation. Steubenville, Ohio became a household name in our parish and many of our young people have fond memories of the annual trip to Steubenville. The February record hop and the "Lord's Day meals" with the sharing of song, food, God's word, and companionship continued in to 90's. Father Dunkley formed a feasibility/needs committee to study the many repairs needed on our buildings. The committee would also decide what should be done with the farmhouse at St. Jude's. As it turned out, St. Jude House, as it was

called, was put to good use in the summer of 1985 as it was used to provide housing for the first of our summer interns. Cathy Jacques and Margaret Case came to work with the young people of the parish and do home visits. In June, 1985, the family and friends of Paul Bergin, who had cared for the church properties for many years, started a Building renewal Fund. This was a much-needed fund as several of the buildings needed major repairs and improvements. In August, 1985, when Cathy and Margaret went back to school, St. Jude House was sold to Atty. George Leary and his family. Father Dunkley hired parishioner Pauline Thibeault in September as part time coordinator of the religious education program. At a joint meeting of the Parish Council, Building committee and Finance Committee in March, 1986, it was decided that the parish could best be served by restoring the existing buildings, St. Aloysius Church, the rectory, St. Jude Chapel, and St. Aloysius hall. Monies from the sale of St. Jude House went into capital repairs and improvements. The Chapel was reroofed, brush and trees removed around the building, and the parking lot expanded. At St Aloysius Hall, the windows were repaired and the exterior and interior repainted. The ladies' Guild donated new curtains. The rectory was resided after much discussion regarding green or black shutters, and new storm windows were installed in the rectory. Truly, "the Lord does provide!" The estate of Lucien Bienvenue, known to all as Frenchy Welcome, bequeathed \$42,000 to St. Aloysius Church and \$42,000 to St. Jude's Chapel for much needed capital repairs and improvements. It was evident that, after many years of use, St. Jude Chapel needed extensive refurbishing. The Chapel was closed for renovation inside and out in May of 1987. This work took the greater part of the summer. On August 29th, a Mass of Thanksgiving was concelebrated by Bishop George Reuger and Fathers Dunkley, Janczukowicz, Manahan, Johnson and Pedone. The Chapel was opened just in time for the annual Novena in honor of St. Jude. At the same time the work was taking place at St. Jude's Chapel, the building committee received a list from the Diocese of approved architects and designers regard the work needed at St. Aloysius Church. The rectory received a new front porch, and a new steel door was installed on the lower level of St. Aloysius Hall. As necessary as buildings are, a parish is its people and their commitment to God. Wayne and Rachel Jyringi completed a course for couple-to-couple ministry in April, 1987, to assist the pastor in preparing couples for the Sacrament of Marriage. Lois Shafer came aboard as a summer intern that May. Lou was a master's degree candidate in Christian Ministry. His work concentrated in the areas of home visitations and youth ministry. RENEW became part of our parish life that October. RENEW meant just that, a means by which parishioners were able to "renew" their spiritual lives as individuals and as members of the parish community. It was a year that proved to be very beneficial to many members of the parish family. It was so successful that small groups continued to meet after the formal year of RENEW in the Diocese was over. Early the following year, the building committee met with a structural engineer who had inspected St. Aloysius Church and found serious structural deterioration in the building. The "leaning walls" appeared to have been leaning since the building was first erected on the site 119 years ago. A committee was formed in April, 1988 to oversee the renovation of St. Aloysius Church. A new intern, Ernest Kilzer, came to the parish in May, 1988, and Lou Schafer, who had completed his degree, returned in mid-June to give Father Dunkley much needed and much appreciated help. Also in June, the parish wished Harold and Eva Bouchard a happy 70th wedding anniversary. The parish hired Lou Schafer as a full-time pastoral assistant in September. St. Aloysius Church, which had been moved four times in its history, twice in Grafton, then Leicester, then Rochdale, was closed in November, 1988 so that the interior walls could be opened to study the support beams and the structure of the building. All services were to be held at St. Jude's Chapel until work at the church was completed. The committee met several times with structural engineers, church architects, Diocesan officials. and with Father Dunkley discussed how to get the most renovation for the least money. The committee and the parish received sad news on June 4,

1989. Bishop Timothy Harrington directed Father Dunkley not to move ahead with the renovation of St. Aloysius Church. The church was to be closed. After an open meeting with parishioners, and after several meetings between the committee and Diocesan officials, Bishop Harrington gave his approval that a small chapel of convenience in the sanctuary of St. Aloysius could be established and other necessary repairs to the church building could be made. With fewer and fewer young men being ordained as priests, the need for permanent deacons became evident and one of our own answered God's call. Al Desautels was accepted for training as a permanent deacon in the Diocese of Worcester and was one of eight men accepted into the program in 1989. The summer of 1990 was a time of further transition for the parish. Bishop Reuger came to the former St Aloysius Church to bless the chapel of Convenience and rededicate the building as a place to hold daily Mass. Father Dunkley was reassigned on June 29th to St. Patrick's Church in Whitinsville. We welcomed Father Peter White as pastor on June 29, 1990 and, in August, said farewell to interns David Emrich, Michele Houmis and Lou Schafer. September, 1990 brought a change in the Mass schedule. There would be one Mass on Saturday evenings and two Sunday Masses. That fall came a directive from the Chancery that all vigil candles had to be removed from Diocesan churches. Fire insurance would not cover any loss sustained due to fire by candles. This was upsetting to many parishioners who found comfort in this devotion. Father Peter introduced us to another way of sharing our blessings with those less fortunate than ourselves. Father shared with us the story of the "empty stable." Monies left at the crèche during the Advent season were to be given to Jeremiah's Inn, a men's shelter in Webster Square, Worcester. We also continued our support of the Refugee Apostolate in Worcester by taking tags from a "Giving Tree" and purchasing gifts for needy family members. Father asked us to replace the tags with a handmade ornament which would adorn the chapel Christmas tree for the Christmas season. In 1990, Father also added yellow ribbons with the names of young people from the parish serving in the Middle East conflict. Work continued on the chapel of convenience. The ceiling was lowered and a new heating system was added which would allow the building to be used year round. The hall portion of the old church was used for CCD classes in 1991. Al Desautels was ordained a permanent deacon by Bishop Harrington in April of 1992. Al would remain a parishioner of our parish but would serve the people of Our Lady of the Angels in Worcester. A special Liturgy of Thanksgiving and a reception were held for Al and his wife, Mae, in June. Ovila Forgit, brother of Eva Bouchard, died in June, 1992. He was the first baby baptized in St. Aloysius Church after it became a parish on November 12, 1904. As we entered 1993 and looked forward to our 90th anniversary, Father Peter and the parish council felt we needed a cohesive, unifying mission statement to help guide the parish into the 21st century. The council, along with other members of the parish, spent the greater part of 1993 working on a parish mission statement which would reflect our attempt to renew and rediscover who we are and in what direction we should travel as a parish family into the next century. The statement came to fruition in October, 1993. A framed copy of the statement was hung in St. Jude Chapel:

We, the community of St. Aloysius-St. Jude, a Roman Catholic parish of the Diocese of Worcester in central Massachusetts, exist to honor and glorify God. By imitating the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, and empowered by His Holy Spirit, we work together for the fulfillment of His kingdom on earth. We dedicate the gifts and the talents unique to each member of the community to building, in love, the Body of Christ, which is the Church. As Christ's disciples, we are called to be living examples of His teachings and, by our lives, we testify to the love He has for all of us. We invite more active involvement from all our young and adult members in order to reach our full potential as a Christian community characterized by love, service, and generosity. Sustained by the gifts of the sacraments, motivated by the Word of God, inspired by prayer, encouraged by one another, and committed to our mission, we, the members of this parish family, pledge to

1. *Make prayer the foundation of our thinking and action.*
 2. *Be honest and understanding with one another.*
 3. *Live our lives in simplicity, as Christ did.*
 4. *Reach out to others.*
 5. *Share willingly our faith, time, energy, and resources.*
 6. *Be sensitive to the needs of the parish families as well as the universal church and the world around us.*
- “Act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God.” (Micah 6:8) In the year of our Lord. 1993*

After twenty years of service, and with a large gift from the ladies’ Guild, the kitchen in St. Jude’s Hall was renovated. In the summer of 1993, the hall was sound proofed and retractable dividers were installed for new and better CCD classrooms. New flooring was installed, and the walls were repainted for a completely new look. In September, 1993, the 10:00 am Mass was moved to 10:15 am as the first and second grade CCD classes began on Sunday mornings from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. With the completion of these renovations, the parish no longer needed St. Aloysius Hall and it was sold in February. As we entered 1994, the year of our 90th anniversary, God called another of our young people and Patricia Faron, daughter of Edward and Patricia Faron, responded. Pat left for a teaching assignment in January as a Jesuit Volunteer in Nepal. Nineteen eighty-four to 1994 brought many changes, especially in our physical structures. We started the decade with five buildings. St. Aloysius Church had been the center of our spiritual lives. We ended the decade with three buildings and with St. Jude’s as our primary building of worship. We came together in the 90’s as a parish family in the true spirit of giving. Our response to the Giving Tree, the Empty Stable, and Partners in Poverty appeals indicated that we are, as a parish family, attempting to live by the tenets of our mission statement. St. Aloysius-St. Jude Parish continued to serve the Catholic population of the Rochdale area with a solid foundation built over ninety years. Amor vincit omnia – True love conquers all! Statistics for the decade as of June, 1994: baptisms: 283, marriages 79. Some things never change.

Reaching Our Centennial 1994 – 1994

This had been a decade of stability and continuity as Father Peter marked his fourteenth year with us as of June 29, 2004. As the parish celebrated our 90th anniversary, Eva Bouchard celebrated her 95th birthday. She was the only person still living here since our parish was formed in 1904. In addition, there were several events held to celebrate our 90 years as a parish. Fathers Chet Janczukowicz (1967- 1971), Martin Manahan (1970-1973), John Kelley (1967 – 1969), Cyril LeBeau (1980 -1983), Stephen Johnson (1976 – 1983), and George Dunkley (1985 – 1990) all came back throughout the year to celebrate Mass with us, and to help commemorate our 90 years and their role in the life of the parish. Other events that year included our marching in the Founders’ Day parade carrying a large banner proclaiming our 90 years. We held a birthday party at the rectory. A Mass for the Anointing of the Sick, and one for our “seniors,” 75 and older, was celebrated. We received a new hand-carved statue of St Aloysius, donated by Margaret Kennedy in memory of her husband Francis, the son of Aloysius, the first baby baptized in the mission church in 1869. Father Peter said “thank you” to all the people who worked so hard to make our

anniversary year a success by hosting a buffet dinner for the volunteers. Nineteen ninety-five was a significant year in the life of the parish. We received an official decree from the Bishop's office suppressing the mission status of St. Jude's and changing the name of our parish to St. Aloysius-St. Jude Parish as of June 21, 1995, the feast of St. Aloysius. Pauline Thibeault stepped down as CCD administrator after ten years of faithful service and was replaced by Terri Smith. The Meadows Nursing Home opened on Rte. 56 and Father Peter began serving the needs of the Catholic residents by bringing communion and saying Mass at their facility, The year also saw the beginning of the Empty Cupboard Program, our way of helping the food pantry at Jeremiah's Inn. We signed our first covenant with St. Joseph's Parish in Haiti. An ad-hoc property committee addressed the property at Church Place, the original church and rectory. It was decided to leave the property as was for now, but to connect the rectory to the Oxford-Rochdale Sewer District. We also inaugurated a bereavement committee in December, 1996. Nineteen-ninety-seven was a year of losses and gains: Paul and Diana Ghize, long-time members of our parish, moved to Worcester, and Rich Davis, our music director for 16 years, stepped down. He was replaced by the very capable Marge Jalbert and her assistant David Berthiame. The original wooden doors at St. Aloysius-St. Jude Church were replaced by new insulated aluminum and stained glass doors, adding light and beauty to each entrance. Jeremiah's Inn saw fit to honor our parish with their annual "Golden Friends Award." This award is given to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the services or programs at Jeremiah's. Our commitment to the Inn remains strong today. The bereavement committee was fully operational and ready to serve the needs of the parish as of June, 1997. They hosted the first Memorial Mass in November for the families who lost loved ones during the year. In April of 1998, Eva Bouchard, the oldest member of our parish, was called home to God. She had been a member of the parish since the beginning. Florine Girard became the reigning senior of the parish. In that same year, Peter Ryan answered God's call and was ordained a Deacon in May. Father Joseph Ernst from St. Joseph's Parish in Haiti paid us a visit in September, 1998. His visit helped us to know and better appreciate our sister parish and its people. The people of St. Joseph's gifted us with a beautiful, handmade altar cloth. A new oil burner and two new oil tanks were installed in the back room of the church hall, and work began on refurbishing the exterior of the church. Repainting, repairs to the chimney, shingling of the roof, and a new cover over the stained-glass window in the sanctuary were all completed in this project. This was also the year of the first appreciation dinner honoring those members of the parish who give of themselves to help make our faith community what it is. Nineteen-ninety-nine was the year of the parish's 95th birthday. To prepare for the distribution of communion under both species at Masses beginning mid-April, training sessions for extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist were held in March, with ministers being commissioned on Holy Thursday. In May, Terri Smith resigned as CCD coordinator with Ann Lisenik assuming the position. Pauline Thibeault, who had given so much of herself to the parish and its school of religion, lost her battle with cancer and went home to God in October. This year's monies from the Empty Stable went to the families of Jeremiah Lucey and Joseph McGuirk, two of the firefighters who lost their lives in the Worcester Cold Storage Warehouse fire in December. We began the year 2000 with a recital on our beautiful and versatile new organ. The Diocese of Worcester celebrated its ten years of covenant with the Diocese of Les Cayes in Haiti and we celebrated five years with our sister parish, St. Joseph's. Father Ernst wrote that he had been transferred from St. Joseph's in Damassin to Sacred Heart Parish in Cap-Haitian. The new pastor of St. Joseph would be Father Charles. Margaret Shivick was honored at the awards banquet at the ministry convention for her work as parish leader in the Haitian Apostolate, the Empty Cupboard Program, and her Assistance in "fleshing out" our parish mission statement. The next three years were quiet years within the confines of our immediate parish family, but we continued to be very active in the outreach program

with our sister parish in Haiti. We began the special Lenten Haitian Project. In 2001, we donated enough money to St. Joseph's to construct 70 benches for their mission. In 2002, we sent funds for them to buy new windows, doors, and a roof for the church. In Lent of 2003, we raised enough money for the parish to buy a new mill for the parishioners of St. Joseph's to grind corn and millet into edible flour. In 2004, the project's goal was to raise at least \$6,000 for the pastor to use in whatever way he felt best to fill the needs of his flock. In March of 2001, on his 91st birthday, Joseph Bergin died. He had been baptized in St. Aloysius Church on March 30, 1910, and was certainly one of the patriarchs of the parish. In August, we welcomed Bob Ryan and his wife who came to share their missionary experiences working in Haiti among the poorest of the poor in our hemisphere. As we mourned the devastating loss of life from the attacks on September 11, we joined Catholics around the country on December 31 and January 1, 2002 in a National Day of Prayer for world peace. In June of that same year, Father Peter celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. After an open parish meeting in the fall, it was decided that, when the time was right, we would sell the property on Church Place. Also in the fall, Marge Jalbert left as music director and David Berthiaume became chief organist. Two thousand and three began with the 60th wedding anniversary of Waino and Dorothy Jyringi, and the election of their son Wayne to represent Deanery One on a newly formed Diocesan Pastoral Council. A "Passover Meal" was held before Mass on Holy Thursday. It was a very meaningful event for all those taking part. In August of 2003, the Diocese held a Pastoral Planning Committee meeting where representatives of the different parishes met in preparation for the formation of parish clusters – a cluster being a unit of cooperation. There are 44 clusters in the Diocese. Wayne Jyringi, Ron Lareau, Teena Cherry, and Ann Listenik formed our parish cluster committee along with Fr. Peter. We had our first meeting with fellow cluster committees from St. Joseph's and St. Pius X in October. Our cluster is Cluster 31. Several joint services were planned for the coming year. In preparation for a commemorative 100th anniversary photo booklet, in October, 2003 members/families from the parish had their pictures taken. As our parish celebrated its Centennial, our oldest parishioner, Florine Girard, also celebrated her centennial on May 26. God called her home to him on September 14, 2004. As we reflect on our 100 years at the time of the Centennial,, we see the losses and gains. God has blessed us as a parish family in many ways. Our commitment to our Christian outreach programs –the Empty Cupboard Project, Partners in Poverty, the Giving Tree, the Empty Stable, and our covenant with St. Joseph continued. We have a strong CCD program with dedicated teachers. We have a very active and strong youth group, and we have many active and dedicated parishioners who give of themselves in countless ways to make a strong and committed parish life. In December, 1994, our Diocese received Bishop Daniel Reilly as its new shepherd. He remained with us until May, 2004 when he retired and was followed by Bishop Robert J. McManus.

Years 2005 – 2023

Father Peter White guided us through the years after the closing of St. Aloysius Church and brought us together as a cohesive St. Aloysius-St. Jude Parish. Whenever we see a butterfly, we will recall Fr. White's description of the butterfly as a symbol of resurrection and new life. The same might be said of our parish as we entered a new century. During his last years with us, Father Peter saw to the sale of the Church Place property to the Church of Christ. Before the sale, he had purchased the home next to St. Aloysius-St. Jude as the new parish rectory. We will also remember Father Peter's "Twelve Days of Christmas," and his devotion to the people of Haiti. Only Father Michael Kelley served our parish longer than Fr. Peter. In the

spring of 2012, after 22 years as our pastor, Father Peter announced his retirement. Our new pastor, Father John M. Lizewski, Father Jack, came to us on June 30, 2012. Father Jack had taught for 20 years at St. Mary's High School in Worcester and Anna Maria College in Paxton. He joined Cynthia Garabedian, our CCD coordinator, and Kevin Mathieu, Director of Liturgical Music and church organist. Arriving at the beginning of a long, hot summer, Father's first major project was installing air-conditioning in the church. (We soon became the envy of surrounding churches for this creature comfort!) He also had the space between pews widened to make worshippers more comfortable. Statuary was added to the sanctuary with our patron saints, Aloysius and Jude, next to the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph and the Infant Jesus. Angels guard the tabernacle and the Infant of Prague, a gift from Aloysius Kennedy's daughter Mary in the 1940s, which had been returned to the Kennedy family after St. Aloysius Church closed, returned to its fitting place in the new church. A new beautifully carved altar was commissioned to house the tabernacle, originally the tabernacle at St. Aloysius. The old altar was donated to Notre Dame Academy's new chapel. New lighting and candelabra completed the new look of the sanctuary. New lighted signage was placed in front of the church and rectory and the statues of St. Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes, which had been part of the grotto at St. Aloysius, were given a prominent place near the new church sign. The Parish Hall was completely refurbished. Under Father Jack's guidance, many parish ministries continue: the Intercessory Prayer Group, the Empty Cupboard Program, Our Lady of Hope, collecting clothing for Urban Ministries in Worcester, a monthly Haitian collection, the Divine Mercy Devotion each Friday afternoon, an expanded Parish Music Ministry with a Parish Festival Choir, and, of course, the Ladies Guild, still going strong. A parish Pot Luck Supper was instituted each September. The Covid epidemic was one of the biggest challenges in the life of the parish. Closed circuit television was installed in the Hall providing the ability for people to gather in smaller groups to celebrate Mass in person or watch a video version from home. We met this health challenge as we had all challenges throughout our church's 154 years in Rochdale/Leicester. Most importantly, the parish continues to grow with new parishioners joining us and contributing to the life of the parish.

Pastors of Our Parish 1904 – 2023

Rev. Cornelius Sullivan 1905 – 1910 Rev. Michael Ahearn 1910 – 1911 Rev. Thomas McDonnell 1911 – 1912 Rev. James Murphy 1912 – 1930 Rev. Michael A.K. Kelly 1930 – 1945 Rev. Jeremiah McCarthy 1945 – 1952 Rev. Francis Carroll 1952 – 1968 Rev. Francis Rupprecht 1968 – 1970 Rev. Chester Janczukowicz 1970 – 1973 Rev. Martin Manahan 1973 – 1979 Rev. Edmund Gannon 1979 – 1980 Rev. John Reynolds 1980 – 1984 Rev. Cyril LeBeau 1980 -1984 - Rev. Thomas Teczar (1984) Fr. George Dunkley 1985-1990 Fr. Thomas White 1990-2012 Fr. Jack Lizewski 2012-Present

Associate Pastors

Rev. James Clifford. Rev. Walter Leahy, Rev. Charles Lamb, Rev. William Gallagher, Rev. Francis Alex, Rev. Albin Webber, Rev. Edward Mahan, Rev. Myles Quail, Rev. John Kelley, Rev. Charles Dunphy, Rev. George Hill, Rev. Anthony Marteka, Deacon Richard Trainor, Re. Aiden Wood, Rev. Stephen Johnson