

*Like living stones, let yourselves be built  
into a spiritual house.*  
— 1 PETER 2:5A



## CHAPTER ONE

# THE ROOTS

## THE HISTORY OF SAINT CLEMENT PARISH

The beautiful Tree of Life painted in the apse above the altar of our church has been important in the life of Saint Clement Parish since its beginning. When the founding pastor suggested in 1905 that the new parish be placed under the patronage of Saint Clement of Rome, he had this image in mind, for the Basilica San Clemente in Rome, built on the foundation of Clement's ancient church, displays a twelfth-century Tree of Life over its own altar.

This Tree not only symbolizes the vibrant life that believers hope for when they follow Jesus Christ, it symbolizes the vibrant life of the community that worships beneath it. Every weekday, every Sunday for generations, the faithful have gathered under the branches of this Tree, worshipping together and then going out into the world to live the faith that has been nourished here in this special place.

The life of Saint Clement Church symbolized by this Tree needs a strong foundation, strong roots that support and nourish. Our founders put down such roots for us. They had a vision of what could spring up at the corner of Deming Place and Orchard Street, and that vision has come to life. Establishing this sacred place was hard work, but it was also a labor of love. The founders' determination, dedication, and generosity still live in the thriving community of faith that is Saint Clement Church.



● Monsignor Francis A. Rempe, served Saint Clement from its founding in 1905 until his death in 1946.

## THE SEED IS PLANTED: 1905–1925

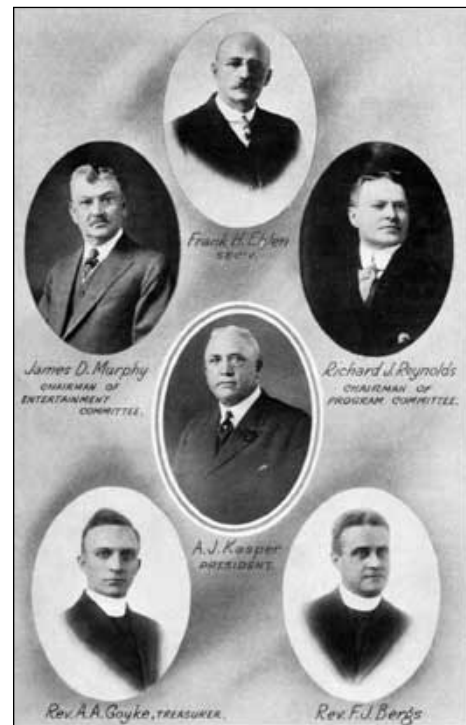
Adam J. Kasper wanted a church near home. He was tired of having to hitch up the carriage and drive to a church where he could hear a sermon in German and chat with his neighbors after Mass in German. Saint Alphonsus at Lincoln and Wellington was a lovely church, but it was a little more than a mile away. Saint Michael near Clark and North was almost two miles. Saint Josaphat on Southport was close, but its people were Polish. Our Lady of Mount Carmel was a little closer, but its parishioners were Irish. Adam Kasper wanted a German church close enough to walk to, and he wanted that church to have a school. He began talking with his neighbors around the intersection of Orchard Street and Deming Place about it.

Around the same time, in 1903, James E. Quigley began his ministry as archbishop of Chicago. His main concern for the growing archdiocese was the founding of new parishes in neighborhoods where the nearest church was too far away.

In early 1905, Kasper and his Catholic neighbors wrote to Archbishop Quigley asking for a parish. Quigley, who in his twelve years as archbishop authorized the formation of 97 parishes, quickly agreed. He sent a telegram to Rev. Francis A. Rempe on May 10, 1905, requesting an immediate visit. At this meeting the plans for the new parish on the north side were explained, and Rempe was asked to estab-



● The Board of Trustees in 1915. Adam J. Kasper, Frank H. Ehlen and Louis P. Hugel were among the founder present at the first meeting of the new church.



● Caption still needed.



lish it. The young priest had served as pastor of Saint Benedict Church in Blue Island for only one year, but in that short time he had already assisted with the founding of Saint Francis Hospital there.

The first meeting of the new pastor and the parish committee was held at the Kasper home, 628 Deming Place, that same month. Present at this meeting were Monsignor A. J. Theile, representing Archbishop Quigley; Adam J. Kasper, Herman J. Berghoff, William F. Juergens, Frank H. Ehlen, and Louis P. Hugel.

On June 30, 1905, Archbishop Quigley formally appointed Rempe pastor of the new parish:

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*My dear Father Rempe:*

*I hereby appoint you to the German parish recently formed on the North Side, and bounded as follows:*

*North—Belmont and Diversey;*

*West—Halsted Street and Seminary Avenue;*

*South—Webster Avenue and Fullerton Avenue;*

*East—Lake and Lincoln Park.*

*I wish you the blessing of God and success, and commend you most cordially to the good will, respect and obedience of our Catholic people residing in the above described territory.*

*Yours truly in Christ,*

*J. E. Quigley,*

*Archbishop of Chicago*

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During the summer of 1905, as the land for the parish was being purchased, Father Rempe visited the Catholics of the territory specified by the archbishop. As the archbishop's letter reveals, the plan was for the parish to be German-speaking. As Rempe canvassed the neighborhood, however, he recognized a greater demand for English. After consultation with the archbishop, the parish began as bilingual, with a close eye on the continued use of German.

Walking about the neighborhood trying to gather resident Catholics wasn't always an easy task for Father Rempe. Some residents saw him as an intruder into their own established parishes, while others offered little help in pointing out where more Catholic residents could be found. However, Rempe had great assistance from the lay founders of the parish, F. H. Ehlen, Louis P. Hugel, Frank

## PASTOR FRANCIS REMPE—A LIFE'S WORK

Saint Clement Church was Monsignor Francis A. Rempe's life's work. His accomplishments are the result of his strong character, and talents, his capacity for hard work, and his devotion to the work of the Lord. Bilingual in German and English, he was able to form connections everywhere in the diocese. He inspired parishioners to united action during the years of financial sacrifice for the building of the church.

1874—Born in Aurora, Illinois, May 8; baptized at Saint Nicholas Church two days later.

1888—Entered Saint Joseph's College, Teutopolis, Illinois, conducted by the Franciscan Fathers.

1892—Entered Saint Francis Seminary, Saint Francis, Wisconsin.

1896—Ordained deacon by Archbishop Katzer of Milwaukee on June 21.

1897—Ordained priest by Archbishop Feehan of Chicago at the episcopal residence on March 18. Celebrated his first Mass the next day in Saint Nicholas Church, Aurora, Illinois.

1897—Assigned to Saint Boniface Church, Chicago.

1903—Appointed by Archbishop Quigley administrator of Saint Paul Church, Chicago, in November, and served until February 1924. He was the first diocesan priest assigned to that parish.

1904—Appointed by Archbishop Quigley pastor of Saint Benedict Church, Blue Island, in February. Founded Saint Francis Hospital, which opened March 25, 1905.

1905—Appointed by Archbishop Quigley pastor of Saint Clement Church, Chicago.

1914—Appointed by Archbishop Mundelein Vicar General for Women Religious. Appointed by Archbishop Mundelein Diocesan Consultor.

1917—Named domestic prelate by Pope Benedict XV; invested Monsignor by Archbishop Mundelein.

1921—Sent by the American hierarchy to distribute alms of the American people to the poor of Germany and Austria.

1924—Named prothonotary apostolic by Pope Pius XI.

1929—Received the degree of Doctor of Theology from the University of Wuerzburg on March 7.

1946—Died at the age of 72, Mercy Hospital, Chicago, on February 14.

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### MERCHANT, FATHER, AND FOUNDER: ADAM J. KASPER



Adam J. Kasper can be called the founding father of Saint Clement Church. He was the head of the A. J. Kasper Company, a coffee and tea importer and wholesaler, in Chicago. Father of five sons and four daughters (and eventually grandfather of seventeen), he gave many gifts to the parish; one of the most notable is the rose window over

the main entrance. Kasper died October 23, 1924, at Edgewater Golf Club, now Warren Park. He was 72 years old and he and his wife, Katherine, had just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. The shrine of the Blessed Virgin at the front of the church was given by Mrs. Kasper in memory of her husband on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the parish in 1930.

Ehlen, and Adam J. Kasper, who opened his home to the young priest.

Later that summer, Rempe sent a letter to all the households he had visited, inviting them to the first Masses of the new parish on August 6, 1905. These first Masses were at 8 o'clock (sermon in English) and 10 o'clock (sermon in German) that day. Since the parish had no building of its own, the parishioners rented the assembly hall of nearby Alcott School from the city school board. It was in that hall that the new Saint Clement parish celebrated its first Sunday services as a faith community. About 35 parishioners attended each Mass.

There was some controversy about Catholics worshipping in a public school building. Parish documents mention "bigots" writing to the daily papers in indignation. However, the school board ignored their complaints and the parish continued to worship in the assembly hall at Alcott School until it had a building of its own.

There was no collection that first Sunday, but on the Sundays that followed, an offering of ten cents was collected at the door. On August 25, 1905, the archbishop designated Saint Clement, pope and martyr, as patron of the parish. Rempe had suggested this saint in the hope "that the patron would always remind the people of the parish of the struggles and sacrifices of the early church, and would link them in inviolable fidelity to Rome."

On September 5, 1905, a month after the first Mass, the deeds of the parish property were signed. Two lots were purchased for \$34,800 (in 2005 dollars, \$714,220). The first lot, on the west side of Orchard Street just south of the alley, was to be the site of the combination school and church building to be erected immediately. The other lot, at the northwest corner of Orchard and Deming, would eventually be the site of the permanent church building.

Noted architect William Brinkmann was asked to draw up a plan for the combination school and church. He designed a Gothic style building with an assembly hall in the basement, a church seating about 450 on the first floor, and four classrooms, an office, and a library on the second. Ground was broken for this building on October 18, 1905, a date ever after known to the parish as Founder's Day. It was damp that day; a cold drizzle fell on the small procession of parishioners led by Father Rempe to the vacant lot where the new parish's home would rise. After blessing the ground, Rempe turned over the first spadeful of earth. He was followed by William Brinkmann, architect; Adam J. Kasper, Frank H. Ehlen, Jacob Thurnes, trustees; Frank Ehlen Jr. and Ray Hartney, altar boys; and Mrs. Judith Kosche, Mrs. Adam J. Kasper, Mrs. Frank H. Ehlen, Mrs. Smith, Miss Mattes, Mrs. Henshaw, Miss Agnes Kasper, Alexander Kasper, Mrs. Elizabeth Hack, Edward Ehlen, and William Henshaw.

The weather in the weeks to follow was fair, allowing the construction to proceed rapidly. Rempe laid the cornerstone of the building on November 18, 1905, by permission of Archbishop Quigley. Because of the mild weather and the simplicity of the structure, the first floor was ready for use on Sunday, December 24, 1905. The parish was able to celebrate its first Christmas in its own place of worship.



At the last Sunday Mass in the Alcott School assembly hall on December 17, 1905, Father Rempe laid out some important points as the parish prepared to move into the its building. He cleared up the notion that the parish was to be only a German parish. "Anyone, irrespective of their nationality, can be a member of this church," said Rempe. Up to this point, the pastor had spoken little of financial matters. "Now that the time of probation is passed there must be an entire change. Those who wish to belong to this parish must be willing to make great financial sacrifices. I never speak about money matters unless it is necessary, but then I will be sincere and outspoken."

With that statement, the repayment of the debt for the new parish, which between the construction and the land purchase was approximately \$70,000 (\$1.4 million in 2005 dollars), began.

The Christmas Day Mass was a proud moment for the parish. The Altar Boys Choir sang, and parishioners contributed generously to the collection. One week later, the church started its Sunday school program. The life of the parish was growing. On January 21, 1906, the Young Ladies' Sodality was formed, and the Young Men's Sodality followed a little more than a month later.

These sodalities were not only social clubs for the young people of the parish, they were also consistent fundraisers. The Young Ladies' Sodality's most popular fundraisers were the card parties they hosted in the assembly hall. The Young Men's Sodality often presented dramatic entertainment, with tickets usually ten cents. Community theater was such a popular parish pastime that in 1928 fifty parishioners organized the Fireside Players, offering a different play every six weeks.

Other parish societies contributed in other ways. The Altar Society was formed September 20, 1905. Its purpose was to provide the church with the necessary vestments and linens. The society's sewing circles made the robes for the altar boys. The society also maintained the costly vestments and paraments imported from Europe.

In the early months of 1906, pew rent was established. Pew rent for one's chosen seat in the church for a given Mass was due quarterly. The policy was discontinued in March of 1929.

● *The women of the Altar Society in 1930.*

## THE WOMEN FOUNDERS: SUPPORTERS AND MODELS



The eight mosaics of women saints on the piers that support the dome are a tribute to the women of Saint Clement Church. These saints, Agnes, Elizabeth of Hungary, Barbara, Teresa of Avila, Rose of Lima, Catherine of Siena, Clare of Assisi, and Mary Magdalene, are founders of religious orders, single women, doctors of the church, mystics, mothers, and reformers. Why these saints? The history of the founding women of the parish offers some answers to that question.

Women have been actively involved from the beginning of the parish. At the groundbreaking of the first church building in 1905, as many women parishioners walked in the procession and turned over spadeful of earth as men. The first organist was Elizabeth Kasper, another daughter of Adam Kasper. The mosaic of Saint Agnes was donated by Agnes Kasper. The mosaic of Saint Mary Magdalene was given by Mrs. M. Nibling.

The placement of these mosaics of women saints reflects the importance of women in the founding and development of the parish. Women have contributed to the development of the parish from the founders to the Sisters of Saint Francis who taught in the school to the women who have served on the parish staff to the many women involved in parish life and service today. The women saints who hold up the dome and gaze down on the assembly are models of the many women of Saint Clement who have served the parish in so many ways over the years.





● The officers of the Young Ladies Sodality (pictured in 1915) organized fundraisers and social activities.



● The women of the Saint Clement Guild (pictured in 1915) were formidable fundraisers for the church.

The first parish-sponsored lecture in 1906 was by Miss Mary Vaughan, a well-known speaker. The topic of that lecture is not recorded, however. Lectures were scheduled periodically throughout the year. One memorable talk was presented by Bishop Peter J. Muldoon of Rockford on “Divorce” in December 1913. Parish documents report that all present proclaimed the lecture “a masterly presentation of this important subject,” and even the daily papers commented.

On Tuesday, September 4, 1906, the Saint Clement parochial school opened its doors to 85 pupils. The four teachers were Franciscan Sisters of Joliet, Illinois. Tuition was 50 cents a month per child. (By 1926, it had increased to \$3.00 a month.) Children of poor parents were admitted free. Archbishop Quigley dedicated the school on September 30, 1906. The sisters who ran the school were Sister Cleopha Kick, superior, Sister Lydia Behrendt, Sister Gerarda Jonik, and Sister Ermelinda Nelles. By 1909, there were nine sisters overseeing the school.

### Early Growth

In 1912, after Saint Clement had been a bilingual parish for seven years, the archdiocese decided that there was little need for a German parish within the boundaries of other parishes. Accordingly new parish boundaries were drawn up. The chancellor sent the new boundaries to Father Rempe that fall.



October 3, 1912

Reverend and dear Father:

The present boundaries of your parish after the recent adjustment are as follows:

North—Diversey Boulevard, from Lake Michigan to Racine Avenue.

South—Webster Avenue, from Lake Michigan to Lincoln Avenue.

East—Lake Michigan, from Diversey Boulevard to Webster Avenue.

West—Racine Avenue, from Diversey Boulevard to Wrightwood Avenue; East on Wrightwood Avenue to Lincoln Avenue; Southeast on Lincoln.

Kindly announce this adjustment to your congregation on Sunday next.

All the Catholics residing within this territory are from henceforth parishioners of Saint Clement's Parish.

Yours truly in Xto.,

E. F. Hoban

Chancellor

By order of the Most Reverend Archbishop

In these early years, the financial report was read to parishioners every January so that all could be mindful of its financial goals.

The annual parish bazaar was a popular and effective fundraiser. The week-long event was typically held in the fall. Events were planned for each evening of the week, and all the proceeds went to the parish. Musical performances, plays, and card and coffee parties were among the most popular entertainments. In the years when there was no bazaar, the parish held a fall collection.

On January 13, 1914, the Saint Clement's Guild was formed with the purpose of raising money to eliminate the church's debt. Mrs. Harold R. Dwyer conceived the idea and Mrs. Adam J. Kasper hosted the first meeting. In 1916 that goal was met: The debt was paid. The Guild then turned to the building fund, raising money to build the permanent church. The Guild's monthly dues were \$1.00; most of its members, however, were able to make larger contributions.

## PARISH FIRSTS

**First baptism:** September 10, 1905. Margaret Louise Barthel

**First marriage:** September 3, 1905. Charles Smith and Ida Veldkamp

**First funeral:** February 6, 1906. Mrs. Agnes Louise Werner

**First Mass by a priest from the parish:** June 30, 1907. Rev. Henry W. B. Prost (son of parishioners)



- These nine women were Saint Clement School graduates who joined the sisters who had been their teachers. Top row, left to right: Sister Margaret Mary (Marie Brandt), M. Clement Maria (Teresa Bach), M. Verdiana (Elsie Braband). Middle: M. Candida (Ethel Heinz), M. Ethelburga (Helen Berner), M. Laetitia (Helen McCarthy). Bottom: M. Nora (Bessie Grealis), M. Edward Marie (Catherine Jordan), and M. Trinette (Dorothy Schmitz).



## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SAINT: MOTHER CABRINI

Maria Francesca Cabrini was born in a small town south of Milan, Italy, in 1850. From an early age she desired to serve God as a missionary. In 1880, she and seven other young women founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They planned to go to China. But in the 1880s, millions of Italians emigrated to the United States and Pope Leo XIII asked her to serve them in America.

For 28 years, she traveled throughout the United States founding schools, orphanages, and hospitals. In 1903 she founded Columbus Hospital, so named to ward off the anti-Catholic prejudice of the times, in the 2500 block of North Lakeview Avenue in Chicago. She lived there in the last years of her life and often visited Saint Clement. And it was there, in the hospital she founded, that she died of malaria in December of 1917.

The hospital has closed and the building is in the hands of developers. But the room where she died just blocks from Saint Clement is a shrine. The wicker chair in which she died bears a plaque: "From this chair the soul of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini took flight to heaven." She was canonized in 1946, the first American citizen to be named a saint.

## The Church Is Built

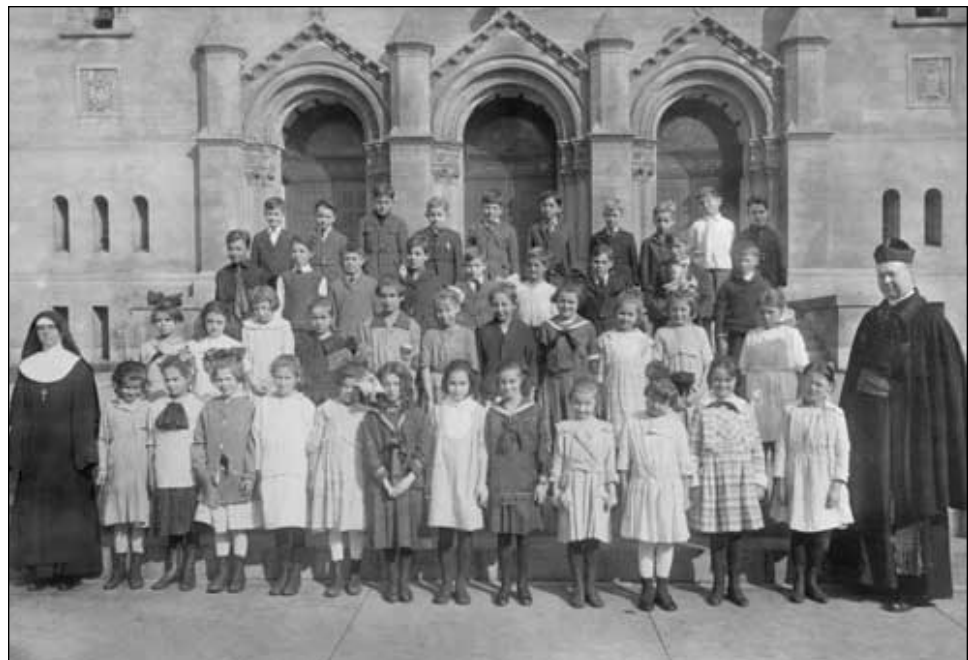
By 1916 the parish was ready to make its dream of a permanent church come true. Father Rempe had visited the new Byzantine style cathedral in St. Louis and admired it greatly. He hired its architect, George D. Barnett, who had studied the Byzantine style, to design the new church building for Saint Clement parish.

Groundbreaking for the new church was March 19, 1917, and construction proceeded smoothly. The laying of the cornerstone was a great event in the life of the parish. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* of September 10, 1917, reported, "The corner stone of the new Catholic Church of Saint Clement, Deming Place and Orchard Street, was laid yesterday afternoon at 3:30 o'clock by Archbishop Mundelein, after impressive services and a parade in which marched 2,000 men and boys, before an assemblage mainly composed of communicants of Saint Clement parish, that numbered over 8,000."

A year later, on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, September 8, 1918, Archbishop Mundelein dedicated the new church. Bishop Edmund M. Dunne of Peoria preached.

The Bedford limestone exterior was finished, but the interior of the church was not completed for another ten years, in time for the parish's 25th jubilee in 1930. It was more urgent to expand the parish school than to finish the interior decoration of the church.

- *Monsignor Rempe with the 42 students of Room 4 and their teacher in 1919.*



## The School Expands

In 1917, the school building was overflowing. The parish had opened a two-year high school for young women, and classes were being held in the old convent. In 1924 plans were drawn up by the architectural firm Worthmann and Steinbach and approved by the pastor and trustees. The cornerstone was laid in October of that year, and on October 4, 1925, Cardinal George Mundelein, in the presence of a large gathering of parishioners, blessed the building.

The expansion added a third story, a basement, and a three-story wing to house a cafeteria, an auditorium seating 750, and a gymnasium. There was space in the rear for an addition intended to house bowling alleys and meeting rooms. The old basement was remodeled and renamed Fireside Hall. The improved and expanded school building was also able to house many of the busy parish's activities, such as bazaars, dinners, and meetings.

Between the construction of the permanent church and the addition to the school, the parish now carried its largest debt. To help with paying that debt, the Dollar-A-Sunday Club began in February 1924. The names of those who donated at least a dollar to the Sunday collection were published in the bulletin.

By 1929, the debt was reduced to the point that the parish was able to continue work on the interior of the church. Rev. Gleb Werchovsky, a Ruthenian Catholic priest, began the work in June 1930. It was completed on October 18, 1930, in time for the 25th anniversary celebration. (See more about Father Werchovsky's art in Chapter Three of this book, beginning on page XX.)

## THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES: 1925–1945

In 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution went into effect, and the nation was thereafter dry. Outlawing the sale of liquor meant that only outlaws would sell liquor, and there was no shortage of people willing to buy what they sold. In Chicago, bootleggers bribed police and politicians lavishly and crime ran rampant.

One bootlegger, George "Bugs" Moran, ran his enterprise out of a garage just outside the parish boundaries, at 2122 North Clark Street. Fearing for their safety, many families in the neighborhood packed up and left for the suburbs in the early 1920s.

Life was not all crime and corruption, however. In 1921, Monsignor Rempe was sent to Europe to distribute the generous donations of the American people to the poor of Germany and Austria. He visited every diocese in the two countries. On Pentecost of that year, Rempe was received in private audience by Pope Benedict XV. And in 1924 he was granted another papal honor by Pope Pius XI, being named prothonotary apostolic. In the spring of 1929, Monsignor Rempe was granted the degree of Doctor of Theology by the University of Wuerzburg in Bavaria. Saint Clement parishioners were proud of their pastor.

## The Great Depression

In late 1929, the stock market crashed and the financial world was thrown into a panic. Banks failed across the country, and before long the nation was mired in the Great Depression. Millions of people lost their jobs. Chicago, a great manufacturing city, was especially hard hit. Unemployment in Chicago rose to 42% in 1932.



● Saint Clement School eighth-grade students pose with their awards and trophies, 1932.



## TO CATCH A THIEF

One Wednesday afternoon in April of 1925, Rev. Peter Engeln, associate pastor of Saint Clement, was in his study in the rectory. The pastor, Monsignor Rempe, was at a meeting with Cardinal Mundelein. The midday service was over and all was peaceful. Suddenly the housekeeper burst into the study and breathlessly told Father Engeln that there was a burglar in Monsignor Rempe's room on the second floor.

Engeln, a former athlete according to the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, walked quietly toward the room. The burglar had nearly finished piling Rempe's valuables on the floor when he heard the priest approaching and dashed out of the room and down the stairs. Engeln took off in hot pursuit. The two ran out of the rectory, through the passageway, and into the church, where a few parishioners were still at prayer. Startled, they watched the burglar and the priest race up the main aisle. They were nearly to the altar when Engeln tackled the man. According to the *Tribune*, "the robber fought viciously to escape, but finally Father Engeln was able to overpower him." When the police arrived, "they found the robber subdued." He was arrested and held on a charge of attempted burglary.

The story made the *Tribune's* front page on April 9, 1925, with a photograph—not of Father Engeln, but of the pastor, Monsignor Rempe, who wasn't even there.

Longtime Saint Clement parishioner Margaret Considine was a small girl during those years; she recalls that the neighborhood around the church was working class and that many of the old mansions on Deming Place had been converted to rooming houses. Her memory is that people had less money, but no one she knew was destitute. The shops in the neighborhood and the parish managed because the wealthier people who lived in Lakeview helped to support them.

Enrollment in Saint Clement School did not decline during the Depression, according to Mrs. Considine's memory, staying steady at about 600 students. Tuition was \$1 per student, with the third (and later) children in a family admitted for free. Weekly elocution lessons with Alice Melvin were 25 cents. Monsignor Rempe was greatly attached to the school and its students, and personally handed out every report card each month.

Mrs. Considine recalls that Monsignor Rempe spoke forcefully before Christmas and Easter about the necessity for generous donations during these times, as the church needed everyone's contributions, and afterward always thanked everyone with great sincerity. "He was always good to those in need," she said. "He visited all the families and helped whoever needed it."

## The World at War

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, the American Pacific Fleet in port at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy. 2400 Americans were killed and another 1200 were injured. All eight battleships of the fleet, among many other ships, planes, airfields, and barracks, were destroyed or severely damaged within two hours.

The nation was shocked and enraged by the surprise attack. Even before President Roosevelt asked Congress for a declaration of war the next day, millions of people were flooding recruiting offices to join the armed services.

The war touched Saint Clement Parish in many ways. Meat, butter, sugar, rubber, and gasoline were rationed. People planted victory gardens and learned to can their harvests. Bond drives, scrap metal drives, paper drives, even drives asking people to donate their typewriters to the war effort called on citizens to make sacrifices.

Those who could made greater sacrifices. Thousands of Chicagoans joined up, and their families hung service banners in their windows: small flags with a red border, white field, and a blue star for each service member. If a service member was killed, the blue star was changed to gold.

Despite the war, there was a certain energy in the air. People who had struggled through the Depression years were working again. With millions of men in the service, women went to work and found they liked it. Mrs. Considine recalls that life at



Saint Clement Parish went on; she says that people got along and had fun together.

She recalls that there were “oodles” of war weddings, her own among them in 1943.

### The Death of the Founder

In the late winter of 1946, Monsignor Rempe fell ill. He was no longer young, and his illness grew worse quickly. On February 14, he died at Mercy Hospital in Chicago. His funeral was held at Saint Clement, the church he had founded, built, and nurtured into a thriving parish. Ecclesial and civil dignitaries attended the funeral, and the people of the parish gathered by the hundreds to pay their respects and mourn their pastor.

Although the people of the parish grieved sincerely over the loss of Monsignor Rempe, church life went on. The two associates and two priests in residence helped the community carry on without its founding pastor and turn to welcome the new pastor when he arrived a few weeks later.

### SAINT CLEMENT: A GOLD STAR PARISH

In April of 1942, less than a year after war was declared, Saint Clement blessed a large service banner honoring parishioners in the service. The flag had 42 stars representing 42 parishioners. Two were gold: two sons of Saint Clement Church had already made the supreme sacrifice.

### SERGEANTS ENLIST FOR A LIFETIME

On Thursday morning, October 12, 1944, WAC Sergeant Mary Lou Peters of Grand Rapids, Michigan, wed Staff Sergeant Theodore B. Lascari of Lodi, New Jersey, at Saint Clement Church. Both worked at the Chicago WAC (Women’s Army Corps) recruiting headquarters. Civilian and military friends attended an informal reception at the bride’s apartment on St. James Place that evening. According to the Friday *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “the Sergeants Lascari are honeymooning in the city and will return to duty at 166 W. Van Buren St. Monday morning.”

## THE FIFTY-YEAR MARK: 1946–1970

Saint Clement Church began its fifth decade with a new pastor. In March 1946, Rev. Edward O. Leiser arrived at Saint Clement from suburban Naperville, where he had been serving as pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Church. The Saint Clement community welcomed him with open arms.

The new pastor ushered in many changes at Saint Clement, one being the introduction of a weekly bulletin. On March 15, 1953, the inaugural issue of the *Saint Clement Anchor* was published. In his weekly column, Father Leiser offered paternal advice to his flock to help them stay on the right path: reminding parishioners to go to confession and daily Mass and not to miss Sunday Mass during the summer; asking people to pray for fallen-away Catholics, for increased vocations to the priesthood, for the conversion of Russia; offering advice to teenagers about how to relate to their parents and to parents about how to supervise and discipline their children; dating advice; marriage advice; warnings to drive safely; and cautions about the dangers of over-imbibing at the office Christmas party. The bulletin usually addressed a social or political topic as well, such as tolerance between Catholics and non-Catholics, a comparison of Christian values and Communist values, achieving peace with the Russians, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the 1960 presidential election (without referring to the Democratic candidate, Senator John F. Kennedy, by name, instead calling him “the Catholic candidate”).

Father Leiser described the members of the parish societies as “the heart of the parish and the soul of Catholic action.” During the 1950s, the parish’s social and service activities were primarily carried out by three groups: the Altar Society, the Mothers’ Club, and the Holy Name Society.



## SAINT JUDE AND THE COMEDIAN

It was late in the 1930s, the depths of the Depression. Comedian Danny Thomas had recently moved to Chicago with his young family and his career was not going well. Now out of work, he was praying before the statue of Saint Jude at Saint Clement. Show me my way in life, he prayed to the patron saint of hopeless causes, and I will build you a shrine.

Not much later, he got a permanent job at a Chicago nightclub and his career began to turn around. Soon he was working regularly in radio and then on television. He starred in a popular TV show, *Make Room for Daddy*, which was broadcast from 1953 to 1965, and established a successful production company that produced the *Dick Van Dyke Show* and the *Andy Griffith Show*, among many others.

He remembered his pledge to Saint Jude and began discussing with friends what form that shrine might take. With the help of fellow members of the Arab American community and Memphis businessmen, he founded Saint Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, which opened in 1962. It is the world's foremost center for the study and treatment of catastrophic diseases in children, focusing on leukemia, cancer, and infectious diseases.

Danny Thomas was honored for his philanthropy many times over. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980 and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1984. He died in 1991.

## Social, Service, and Devotional Life

Women of any age could join the Altar Society. The women of the Altar Society held regular meetings and social events, such as fashion shows, card parties, and parties for senior citizens. The Altar Society also engaged in spiritual reflection and renewal, such as an annual day of recollection and a Holy Hour on Holy Thursday. The society also carried out service projects, such as rummage sales, collecting items for Saint Vincent's Orphanage on LaSalle Street, visiting the sick and poor, and collecting medical supplies to send overseas.

In 1951, as the first children of the post-war baby boom began to attend Saint Clement School, the Mothers' Club was formed to assist with fundraising and school activities. This group was a driving force at the parish for more than twenty-five years. The Mothers' Club hosted an annual parish picnic and pantry showers for the Sisters of Saint Francis. The group also held fundraisers throughout the year (such as holly bazaars, pot luck buffets, bake sales, and breakfasts) to buy books for the school library, fund graduation parties for the eighth-graders and seniors, and install fire alarms in the school, among other worthy goals.

The men of Saint Clement were encouraged to join the Holy Name Society to pray and socialize together. The Holy Name Society met in the Clubhouse, now known as the Fahey Center. The

men of the society attended Mass together, sponsored annual pancake breakfasts, and held "smoker nights." According to Joe Fassl, a parishioner during the 1950s, the Holy Name Society was "a bunch of older guys getting together for beer and sauerkraut."

First established in 1910, the Saint Vincent De Paul Society was revived at Saint Clement in 1962. Every Tuesday night, the five or six men of this group met at the rectory. The Saint Vincent De Paul Society visited needy parishioners at home, collected and distributed used books and magazines, helped poor children in the parish, served the aged and infirm, and studied public welfare programs.

In the 1950s, the big annual parish party was the May Party. Each spring from 1953 to 1957, the May Party was held at the Belden-Stratford Hotel. For a \$1.50 ticket, parishioners enjoyed an evening of food, drink, cards, bunco, and the chance to win cash prizes and household appliances.

In the mid-1960s, other groups began to form, such as the Hi Club for high school students, the Singletons and the Young Adults' Club for parishioners in their twenties, and the Convert Club for new Catholics.

In October 1966, a group of men and women organized the Planning Committee, with the stated mission of accomplishing a feeling of unity among parishioners and of making Saint Clement the most active and interesting parish possible. In 1966 and 1967, they held a Halloween party, New Year's Eve party, a Saint Patrick's Day party, and a Las Vegas night.



During the 1950s and 1960s, the parishioners of Saint Clement were faithful to various traditional religious practices. Every Tuesday evening, parishioners gathered to offer devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and every January, the faithful gathered to pray a novena to the Infant of Prague. Father Leiser commended the parish on a large turnout for this novena in January 1962; although it was a cold and snowy night, the church was almost full. In addition, parishioners participated in the Forty Hours devotion, an intense time of prayer before the blessed sacrament, and in First Friday Masses in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In May of each year, the seventh- and eighth-grade students of Saint Clement School honored Mary at the May crowning. Each year, the men and women of Saint Clement attended separate week-long missions.

In the autumn of 1955, Saint Clement celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. In that year, the parish embarked on a jubilee fundraising campaign with a goal of \$200,000, to expand the school and add to the convent. In 1958, Father Leiser oversaw the construction of an addition to the convent that included a chapel, a common room, and recreation rooms for the sisters.

## Changes in the Neighborhood, Changes in the Church

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Lincoln Park neighborhood was changing; many parishioners were moving to the suburbs. The neighborhood around the church began to decline in the early 1960s. In the spring of 1966, Saint Clement was the victim of vandalism and theft. The parish reluctantly decided to keep the doors to the church locked during the day.

In the early 1960s, the Second Vatican Council brought the Roman Catholic church into a new era. The reformed liturgy was introduced at Saint Clement on November 19, 1964. Prayers formerly said in Latin would now be spoken in English; the priest would face the people; the people would participate in saying the Our Father. The Vatican II changes had a positive effect on Saint Clement parish. In the words of parishioner Vito Teresi: "As soon as they turned the altar around, people started getting more involved. When they did away with the traditional heavy vestments, medieval pageantry, and so on, a new breed of priest emerged and the approach to parishioners changed. They could get closer to the people of the parish."

On September 21, 1957, the fortieth anniversary of his ordination, Father Leiser was invested as a domestic prelate with the title Right Reverend Monsignor.

In 1965, Leiser wrote, "Our parish must become a community of truth, joined by our deeply held convictions, by our sense of sharing a precious secret. Our parish must become a community of love, admiring each other's gifts, rejoicing in our God-given talents, Christ-in-me loving Christ-in-you. And from this love must come forth a community of service, bearing one another's burdens, washing our brother's feet, caring for our neighbor's children, helping in the little incidents of every day and in the great emergencies of every life; help with the cup of cold water, the band-aid, the pint

## PARISH FACTS AND FIGURES

In 1955, 165 infants were baptized at Saint Clement, 38 adults were received into the church, 131 children made their first communion, 74 couples were married, and the funerals of 55 parishioners were held at Saint Clement.

In 1962, 190 infants were baptized, 61 couples were married, 54 parishioners died.

In 1966, 193 infants were baptized, 70 children made their first communion, 58 couples were married, and 65 parishioners died.

The people of Saint Clement joined the world in mourning the deaths of Cardinal Stritch in August 1958, Pope Pius XII in October 1958, and Pope John XXIII in June 1963.



• *These 1953 graduates (Nancy Pfeiffer, Pat Epperson, and Priscilla May) don't know that Father Sullivan is behind them.*

- *Young women of the parish bring flowers of the fairest to crown the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1960.*



of blood, the loan in time of need. Our parish must become a community of worship; we must pray together and for each other, we the One Body kneeling, confessing, adoring the One Spirit.”

In 1964, Monsignor Leiser’s health began to decline and in March 1966, he resigned as pastor of Saint Clement. Monsignor Leiser died on October 17, 1974, at the age of 84. During his twenty years at Saint Clement, he supervised ambitious remodeling and redecorating projects in the church, the convent, the rectory, and the school. Monsignor Leiser was a man of great faith and generosity. He was always conscious of the needs of the parishioners of Saint Clement.

On March 27, 1966, the people of Saint Clement welcomed Rev. George Knippen as the new pastor. Father Knippen was formerly pastor of Saint Joseph in north suburban Waukegan.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the Saint Clement community are the comments of visitors who have found comfort here. In August 1966, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Genty of Indiana sought the comfort of Saint Clement as their daughter was undergoing treatment at Children’s Memorial Hospital. In a letter to Father Knippen, the couple described Saint Clement Church as “a big family whose love of Christ and each other envelops everyone who comes in.”

In 1966, a parishioner who had attended Mass in many cities across the country wrote to welcome Fathers Knippen, Berghaus, Massion, and Monsignor Hagarty to Saint Clement: “I hope you’ll all like this area and parish. Since my three years of Chicago living I feel I’m in about the country’s most diversified and ‘sharp’ parish. I love the musical instrumental Mass, the procedure of Mass as guided by the brochure you supply each Sunday, your most practical and pertinent sermons. I hope you’re aware of your ‘alive’ Sunday Masses.” These words ring true to this day.

## STIRRINGS OF A NEW SPRING: 1970–1990

Dark space. That was the atmosphere of Saint Clement Parish as the 1960s dwindled down. The church, in general disrepair, was dark and dusty with plenty of empty seats at any service.

The Clubhouse building at 638 Deming Place, next to the church, looked more like a semi-abandoned tenement than the center of activity it would later become.

Saint Clement School had plenty of empty desks.

The convent at 622 Deming, inhabited by only a handful of Sisters of Saint Francis of Joliet, echoed with vacant rooms.

It wasn't just the parish complex that was gloomy.

Lincoln Park, like the rest of Chicago and the nation, continued to shudder after the violence of the late 1960s. Many families had fled to the suburbs. Larger apartment buildings along Halsted Street and Diversey Boulevard had become havens for street gangs and drug dealers. It was not safe to walk to the church after dark.

Turmoil wasn't limited to the city. The church itself was in a period of tremendous upheaval after the renewal called for by Vatican II after centuries of stability (some said rigidity). These changes came at a cost. Some Catholics mourned the passing of the church life they had always known.

Pope Paul VI reiterated the church's ban on the use of artificial contraception in his 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, but Saint Clement parish was not especially supportive of its few families with young children in any case. Items in the church bulletin regularly advised parents to leave their children at home so they would not disturb the solemnity of the liturgies.

There were a few attempts to reach out to young people. Rev. John Vlazny offered a youth Mass in the chapel beneath the upper church, but the archdiocese refused his request to use guitars in the liturgy. A group of young adults, disenchanted by the slow appearance of changes mandated years before, formed an "underground church" that met in a second-floor apartment on Burling Street. Rev. John C. Massion, associate pastor of Saint Clement in 1969, said, "Unfortunately, few of the 60,000 young people here have any association with the church. For these, the church today is a church impotent. Having outgrown their Baltimore Catechisms, they wonder if the church has any answers." Together, Massion and the underground parishioners sought those answers. But when Cardinal John Cody got wind of the success of Massion's underground church on the second floor, he transferred the young priest to another parish.

Filling his position was difficult. At the time, Saint Clement was high on priests' unofficial list of undesirable parishes. The rectory, even the pastor's office, seemed to have a revolving door. After Rev. George A. Knippen was named pastor emeritus in 1973, Rev. Robert Sauer replaced him for a brief period.

### The Transformation Begins

In 1975, Sauer's replacement, Rev. John Fahey, moved into the dark space that was Saint Clement. Within a few short years, he transformed it.

The school was his first priority. Having most recently served as rector of Quigley Preparatory Seminary South, Fahey was committed to quality education. "I knew I might have to close Saint Clement School," he said later. "But if I was going to close a school, I was going to close a good school." The palatial, mostly empty convent was another concern. With the energy crisis of the 1970s, heating the cavernous building

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*How lonely sits the city  
That once was full of people!  
How like a widow she has become,  
She that was great  
among the nations!*

—LAMENTATIONS 1:1

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● *Crucifer Vincent Czarnowski leads the procession for the 1970 first communion Mass.*



● *The former convent is now Ronald McDonald House, serving families of patients at Children's Memorial Hospital.*

was very expensive. Maintaining the huge building for a mere handful of inhabitants seemed fiscally irresponsible, and Fahey offered to relocate the sisters to a more affordable apartment in the neighborhood. They declined and soon withdrew from the parish whose school they had run for seventy years. Fahey hired Norah Lex, an experienced principal who had recently worked in the archdiocesan Office of Education, and new faculty to serve the school.

In 1976, a group planning to open the first Ronald McDonald House in the Chicago area expressed interest in buying the convent property. Fahey convened a group of parishioners to discuss the issue. The desire to serve those in need—the families of sick children—overrode some concerns about Children's Memorial Hospital "taking over the neighborhood." Since the renovated house opened in 1977, thousands of families have found a home away from home in the former convent on Deming Place. Funds from the sale went to improve the school, to make some repairs to the church, and to refurbish the Clubhouse, later named the Fahey Center.

New programs appealed to a variety of people not only from the immediate area, but also from communities beyond. Programs for singles were very popular, as were Fahey's Theology and Literature lecture series. Fahey hired Sinsinawa Dominican Sister Dolores Brooks, one of the first women pastoral associates in the archdiocese, who organized a variety of programs, including a women's book club and a women's group. Sister Jacqueline Rice, BVM, opened the Sunday School of Religion and offered a Phoenix program to minister to newly divorced and separated Catholics. Sunday morning child care brought more families to church, and Klement Kids kept grade-school children busy all summer long. Rev. Thomas Nangle, associate pastor of Saint Clement in the mid-1970s, was named chaplain to the Chicago Police Department in the early 1980s. For many years, he returned to Saint Clement on weekends to preside at Sunday Mass.

In 1976, Scott Arkenberg, a music student at DePaul University, was hired as music director. In October 1979, Arkenberg and Saint Clement choir members were among the vast throng for Pope John Paul II's Grant Park Mass. Among Arkenberg's

innovations were the successful *Messiah* concerts, first offered in December 1979, and “Caroling to the Animals,” now overseen by the Lincoln Park Zoo Society. Parish outreach served more than the inhabitants of the zoo. The long-standing Saint Vincent de Paul Society was joined by other service groups: Common Pantry, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the ecumenical Night Ministry.

These programs and the enhanced grace and beauty of the Sunday liturgies attracted many people from outside the boundaries of the parish, and the life-giving spirit of Saint Clement called people to stay with the community, even though they lived far from the Lincoln Park neighborhood, even outside the city limits.

## 75th Anniversary—A Celebration

In November 1979, “The Parish that Runs in the City that Works” kicked off its year-long 75th anniversary celebration with a 7.5-mile run from the zoo to Montrose Harbor. Within less than a decade, dark space had been transformed into a center of spirit and energy that enriches the neighborhood, the city, the world.

Father Fahey’s words sum up the spirit of the faith community that blossomed during his first years at Saint Clement:

*We come from different places, and we are also going in different directions. . . .  
Here at Saint Clement many of us have found a welcome, a level of trust,  
and a spirit of encouragement that surprised us. For us the parish has indeed  
become a sacrament of God’s presence in our lives, uniquely valuable and enduring.*

—JOHN FAHEY, Feast of Saint Clement, 1980  
75th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet



● Father Fahey and the parish staff in 1980.



● Longtime parishioners smile for the camera in 1980. Marie Thurnes, front, was among the founding parishioners in 1905.



• Celebrating the 75th anniversary.

The photographs of parishioners in that 75th anniversary booklet reflect that spirit and energy. To highlight the diversity and activity of the parish, the editors bordered each page with portraits of parishioners. Besides representing the community of faith, these photographs symbolize “the sacrament of God’s presence in our lives.”

The official opening of the 1980 celebration was observed with a June 26 Mass with Cardinal Cody and descendants of founders present. Planners sought to include as many parishioners as possible in all the events of the jubilee year. A street fair and carnival in July attracted families with children. In August, an ecumenical service included clergy from neighboring Lincoln Park churches, with Rev. Fred Trost of Saint Pauls United Church of Christ giving the main address. More than 500 people celebrated Founder’s Day with Mass followed by an Oktoberfest in Fireside Hall on October 18, 1980, drawing former parishioners and graduates of the school from across the country even as far away as Arizona.

Celebrations continued with a festive Mass on the feast of Saint Clement, November 23, and a special performance of *Messiah* on December 6 and 7 with Henry Mazer of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as guest conductor. The choir, already growing before the anniversary year, enlisted additional members for anniversary liturgies. By the end of 1980, the crowd of choristers so filled the loft that risers had to be installed.

With the arrival of associate pastor Rev. Robert Oldershaw from Holy Name Cathedral in 1981, the beauty of the liturgy at Saint Clement was further developed. He organized a children’s choir of handbell ringers, similar to his cathedral group. Besides playing at Sunday liturgies, they participated in area-wide festivals at Holy Name Cathedral. Lay lectors and eucharistic ministers served at all Sunday liturgies. By the mid-1980s, altar boys were joined by altar girls, another innovation in which Saint Clement led the Chicago archdiocese.

When Cardinal Cody died in April 1982, the Saint Clement Choir performed the Fauré *Requiem* at his wake in Holy Name Cathedral. In August, choir members sang at Archbishop Joseph Bernardin’s Grant Park Mass. Many other parishioners joined in the daylong celebration, as the newly installed archbishop rode around the park on a golf cart, bringing warmth and hope to a welcoming city.

### Repairs, Restoration, and Renovation

With the parish’s spiritual, educational, and social ministries thriving, it was now time to turn to its physical needs. In 1981, Fahey convened a group to assess them. In 1982, the Campaign for Saint Clement raised \$587,000 from a thousand parishioners, solicited at eighty coffees held in various parishioners’ homes. The next year, the repairs began. The roof, the walls, the windows, the bells, the mechanical systems—all received needed attention. The organ in the choir loft was in such poor condition that it was unusable. The choir sang to piano accompaniment until a new tracker organ built by Casavant Frères was installed in 1983 at the cost of \$158,000.



● *The Casavant Frères organ in the loft.*



● *Preparing the apse for the new font.*

Because liturgical needs called for more than mere repairs, the parish asked liturgical consultant Robert Rambusch to lead more than one hundred parishioners through a process of education and development of guidelines for the renovation, restoration, and renewal of the church. In 1986, Walker C. Johnson of Holabird & Root was retained as restoration architect. This undertaking was financed in part by a campaign mounted in 1987, the Enduring Community Campaign, which raised \$1,376,000 for the project.

In 1987, the restoration began. Mueller Construction began with the basics: the demolition of the old boiler and the removal of asbestos. New restrooms were built on the lower level. Scaffolding was installed in the church and plaster molds were created. Robert Furhoff did paint discovery. The stations of the cross and most of the statues were removed. In early 1988, the church was closed for four months for cleaning of the walls and dome and restoration of the murals and stenciling.

The church reopened in April 1988, and restoration continued. The terrazzo altar platform and floor were installed under the dome, and the new altar table composed of elements from the former high altar was put in place. The reredos of the high altar was reconstituted as the blessed sacrament chapel. The altar rail was moved to behind the last pew. In November, new copper chandeliers designed by Walker Johnson were installed.

During the first days of 1989, finishing touches were added. Pews were cleaned. Lights were added to the mosaics, organ, bell towers, and rose window. A new sound system and light board were installed. Acoustic tile was affixed to walls in the apse and in the transepts and nave to reduce reverberation. Finally, on January 22, 1989, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin celebrated a liturgy of rededication and consecrated the new altar table. Saint Clement Church was once again the jewel of Lincoln Park. (See Chapters Two and Three of this book for more on the beauty of the building and the art of its interior.)

## Social and Service Programs

During that time of renovation, the parish's social and outreach programs continued. The Coordinating Commission and other innovations in parish governance emerged during those years.

In 1983, the Saint Clement team won the neighborhood category of the Chicago Marathon, with John Fahey as a leading age-category runner.

Lincoln Park was once again a fashionable and popular neighborhood, but the problem of homelessness began to emerge. The Lincoln Park churches joined forces to open a night shelter. For several years beginning in the 1980s, Saint Clement's chapel served as a nighttime home to hundreds of homeless men.

The crisis of HIV/AIDS emerged in the city, calling for new services. Beginning in 1986, Saint Clement hosted a Memorial Day remembrance service for people who had died of AIDS, sponsored by the AIDS Pastoral Care Network. For many years, that service concluded with a candlelight march up Halsted Street to a reception in the Wellington Avenue Church of Christ.

In the summer of 1989, Father Fahey retired. Rev. Joseph O'Brien, who had served as associate pastor earlier in the decade, returned to Saint Clement as his successor.

With its beautifully restored church and rich liturgical and social ministries, Saint Clement closed the decade truer than ever to Fahey's words from 1980: "For us the parish has indeed become a sacrament of God's presence in our lives, uniquely valuable and enduring."

## FLOURISHING: 1990–2005

Saint Clement entered the 1990s as a vibrant community of faith with a beautifully renovated church building, a strong foundation of lay leadership, and a new pastor. Father O'Brien encouraged the involvement of lay leaders in all aspects of parish life, starting with the Coordinating Commission, or parish council, and including all the other commissions that oversee the many ministries and organizations of the parish. The liturgical life of the parish was led by the lay members of the Liturgy Board, which initiated many practices that are still in use at Saint Clement today. Lay people took a prominent role in all aspects of the liturgical life of the parish, serving as eucharistic ministers, Mass coordinators, lectors, board members, servers, ushers, sacristans, and musicians. Sinsinawa Dominican Sister Diane Boutet, pastoral associate, developed Saint Clement's Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program into the largest and most active RCIA program in the archdiocese in the 1990s. Her work still bears fruit today. (See Chapter Four of this book for more, beginning on page XX.)

Saint Clement's music ministry grew in the 1990s under the direction of Dr. Randall Swanson, who had previously served at Holy Name Cathedral. A variety of choirs and other musical groups were formed for the Sunday Masses, seasonal concerts, and special occasions. The excellence of the Saint Clement Choir in the 1990s was recognized far beyond the parish boundaries, resulting in an invitation to sing at the Vatican in 1994. The Saint Clement Choir sang there and at other notable sites in Italy that year. In 1999, the choir toured France, singing at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Mont-Saint Michel, Chartres, and other sites, including the prestigious Toulouse International Organ Festival. The Saint Clement Choir was the first American choir invited to the Toulouse event.



The choir has been invited to sing for other convocations: in 2005 for the International Convention and Eucharistic Congress of the Knights of Columbus, and in 2006 for the national convention of the American Guild of Organists.

In 2005, the parish commissioned four new choral works for the Saint Clement Choir from the renowned American Catholic composer Leo Nestor. Music Director Randall Swanson asked that the new pieces be based on Gregorian chant themes familiar to the Saint Clement community, and the result is four beautiful new works for choir, one unaccompanied and three with organ accompaniment. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” was first sung during Advent 2005. “Tantum ergo” (unaccompanied) and “Godhead Here in Hiding (Adoro te devote)” were first heard during the Holy Thursday evening liturgy in 2006. and “Jubilate Deo” at Pentecost. Each piece embellishes the original chant with the rich harmonic palette and soaring melodies that are hallmarks of Nestor’s brilliant musical language.

Leo Nestor (b. 1948) serves on the faculty of The Catholic University of America in Washington. He is the Justine Bayard Ward Professor of Music, director of choral activities, director of graduate studies in sacred music, and member of the conducting, composition, and Center for Latin American Music faculties of the university’s Benjamin T. Rome School of Music. From 1984 to 2001, Dr. Nestor was music director at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

## A Young Crowd

The Lincoln Park neighborhood, with its many apartments and active night life, was popular among recent college graduates in the later part of the twentieth century, and many of these young single adults found a parish home at Saint Clement. The programs of the Singles Group drew young adults from further afield as well. Many attended the chapel Mass, which had an average Sunday attendance of 400 in those years, and groups of singles would go out together for brunch after Mass each week. In 1991, the annual Singles Retreat drew 110 young adults for a weekend away in Woodstock, Illinois. The Singles Group leadership team offered three or four events each month focusing on the spiritual, social, and educational needs of single parishioners, as well as volunteer opportunities for the group’s active and energetic membership.

In 1994, the Archdiocese of Chicago celebrated its 150th anniversary. Eucharistic ministers from Saint Clement participated in the outdoor Mass in Grant Park with Cardinal Bernardin presiding. The Saint Clement chapel liturgy group created a banner to mark the spot in Grant Park where parishioners could gather, and the afternoon

## THE PORTATIVE ORGAN



In spring 2005, the church welcomed a new addition: a five-stop Taylor & Boody portative organ. This small pipe organ was completely hand made from the finest woods and metals, with a keyboard of ebony and boxwood and a case of beautifully carved white oak. The case was designed to reflect many of the symbols and architectural elements of the Saint Clement church building, and features beautiful hand carvings on three sides.

The organ is versatile. Its keyboard is transposable to two pitch levels, modern and baroque. The most essential part of any organ is its sound, and this one is no exception—the sounds in the Taylor & Boody organ range from sweet and gentle to brilliant and sparkling. It is ideal for accompanying a cantor or supporting the song of a smaller assembly.

The Taylor & Boody portative organ is yet another treasure of Saint Clement.



## A CENTURY OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

These seven priests have served the people of God at Saint Clement Church in its first century.



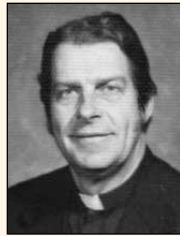
**Monsignor Francis A. Rempe**  
1905–1946



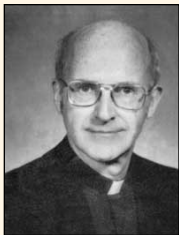
**Monsignor Edward O. Leiser**  
1946–1966



**Rev. George A. Knippen**  
1966–1973



**Rev. Robert Sauer**  
1973–1975



**Rev. John Fahey**  
1975–1989



**Rev. Joseph O'Brien**  
1989–1995



**Rev. Thomas E. Hickey**  
1995–present

picnic in the park drew parishioners into the celebration with other parishes from throughout the archdiocese.

The activities of the Saint Clement Human Concerns Commission took root and blossomed in the 1990s. The relationships Saint Clement developed with its sister parish, Iglesia 22 de Abril in El Salvador, and its sharing parish, Our Lady of Mercy in Chicago, are still important in the life of the parish today. (See more about the work of the Human Concerns Commission in Chapter Four of this book, beginning on page XX.) In 1992, two groups of parishioners visited our sister parish in El Salvador; another three groups went in 1994. The tradition of parishioner visits to El Salvador has lasted for more than a decade. Saint Clement has assisted the El Salvador parish community's liturgy committee, religious education program, social welfare group, library, health clinic, and organic farm. Saint Clement has also provided funding for a pastoral care worker who visits the elderly, for day care for children, assistance for students up to the junior high level, a self-supporting artisan shop, and a natural medicine store.

Seeking to reach out closer to home, Saint Clement established its sharing parish relationship with Our Lady of Mercy in 1996. This relationship has resulted in social, liturgical, and cultural exchanges as well as service by way of food and clothing collections, Jesse Tree donations, and most importantly the legal clinic begun by Saint Clement parishioner Sarah Flosi.

The early 1990s saw vibrancy and growth in all aspects of parish life at Saint Clement, but the parish continued to be held back by the debt remaining from the renovation of the church. In 1993 a program of the archdiocesan long-term planning department revealed that Saint Clement was a healthy parish with a bright future, but the debt was a looming problem. Fundraising was only maintaining the debt, not eliminating it. This, along with the continuing need for capital improvements to the aging parish buildings, had to be resolved in the second half of the decade.

The parish staff and lay leaders began to explore ways to raise funds. The parish's largest annual fundraising event, the Anchor Ball, was born of this effort. The first Anchor Ball was held at Plumbers Hall, with home-made table decorations and folding chairs. Soon after, a group of energetic parishioners transformed the party into a stylish formal affair that now attracts six or seven hun-

dred people each year. The Anchor Ball features silent and live auctions, as well as elegant dining and dancing at the most prestigious landmarks in Chicago. The funds raised each year are used for the school and for parish ministries.

### A Smooth Transition

The parish experienced a smooth transition with the departure of Father O'Brien as pastor in 1995 and the installation of the new pastor, Rev. Thomas E. Hickey, in early 1996. Father Hickey brought the same collaborative leadership style to Saint Clement as the pastors before him. He facilitated the growth of pastoral programs and adult formation opportunities. He expanded the parish sacramental preparation programs and facilitated outreach to the poor. Father Hickey took on the problems facing the parish as well.

Together with the staff and lay leaders, Hickey formulated a plan to eliminate the debt from the 1980s church renovation through the Anchors Away program. Through a series of coffees and cocktail hours, and a parish wide fundraising drive, \$2.4 million was raised. Eliminating this debt positioned the parish to grow and become ever stronger in the future.

### An Even Younger Crowd

Father Hickey also addressed the demographic shift of the neighborhood and the parish. In a few short years, the parish population, which had been primarily single young adults, naturally expanded to include a large proportion of families with small children. Children's programs had been minimal at Saint Clement for many years, since there had not been many families with children in the parish for some time. Father Hickey adjusted the focus of the parish leadership to include planning and preparing for the needs of families with children in the faith life of the parish. As in the past, lay leaders responded to the needs of new parishioners, notably through the Clement Moms program. Clement Moms offer a welcoming community for new mothers and a support network for women sharing in the ministry of family life.

Father Hickey's collaboration with the parish staff and parish council led to a larger and more vibrant parish school, a renewed religious education program, and the introduction of the Liturgy of the Word for Children in the first few years of the new millennium. He also worked with lay leaders and staff in further fundraising efforts, to which parishioners responded with generosity. The Anchored in Faith program overseen by Director of Operations Nancy Schwider, for example, raised \$5.4 million for the parish and outreach programs. These efforts led to a complete renovation of the chapel worship space, the construction of an addition to the school to accommodate the increased number of children in the parish, renovation of parts of the Fahey Center, and the complete renovation of Fireside Hall and the school cafeteria, creating the new Centennial Hall, dedicated in 2005. Under Father Hickey's leadership, Saint Clement Church is ready for the challenges of the next century.



● *Father Hickey greets parishioners as an usher hands out orders of service.*

