

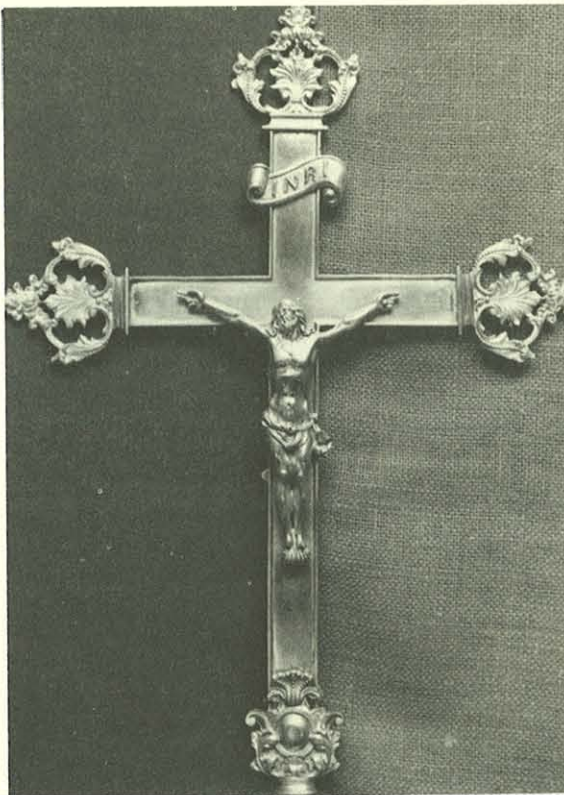


*Mass at Watab Lake Marian Shrine*

*Assumption Chapel Marian Shrine*



*Parish processional cross*







Top to bottom, left to right: Bertha Bohmer, Annie Rass, Frances Gretsck, Mary Rau, Frank Himsl, Sophie Dombrovski, Elizabeth Janker, Julie Achmann, Rosalie Roske, Rose Hackner, Sophie Brinkman, Fr. Gregory Steil, OSB, Joseph Eder, Matthew Knoblach, Henry Eder, Susan Gillitzer, Cecelia Reisinger, Hazel Bernick, Stephen Salzer, Peter Thielman, Henry Dombrovski, Bernard Meyer, Harman Kremers, 1905.

Top to bottom, left to right: Annie Klein, Rose Weyland, Anna Dillenberg, Mary Meyer, Mary Kalla, Veronica Dombrovski, John W. Reisinger, Andrew Salzer, Joseph Goedert, Joseph Achmann, Mary Brinkman, Annie Janker, Dora Meyer, Lizzie Weyland, Lizzie Meyer, Mary Maile, Joseph Roske, Frank Bohmer, Mike Gillitzer, Rudie Himsl, Peter Jennis, Margaret Reisinger, Mary Eder, Gertrude Reisinger, Ida Gillitzer, Fr. Gregory Steil, OSB, Adrian Sauer, Frank Hartig, John Maile, Joseph Kalla, Rose Reisinger, Rose Sauer, Justina Reisinger, Alma Atzendorfer, Herman Meyer, John Zwilling, John Gillitzer, Simon Dellenberg, 1909.



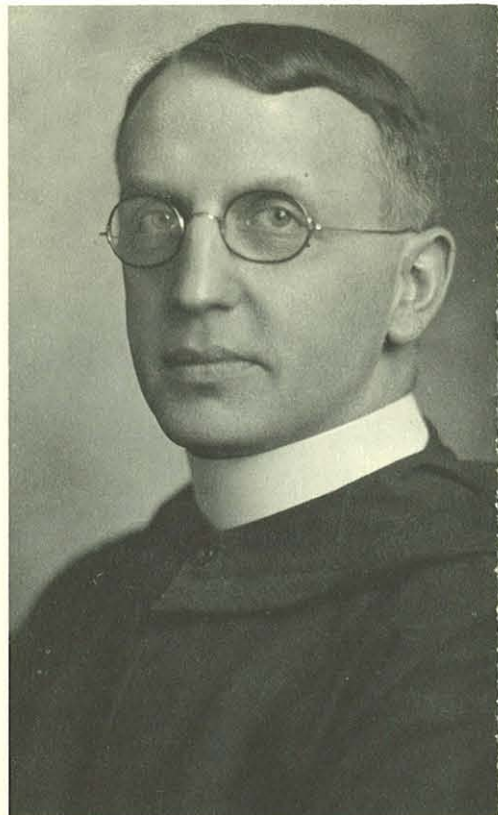




*Front to back, left to right, First row: David Douvier, Esther Gillitzer, Jane Pflueger, Jerry Eiyneck, Eugene Eisenschenk. Second row: Alex Nuessendorfer, Virginia Kremer, Carole Dullinger, Judy Merdan, Dennis Hynes, Ralph Meyer, Jr. Third row: Melvin Hiltner, Matthew Zwilling, Jr., George Westerhoff, Jr., Dave Merdan. Fourth row: Charles Merdan, Fr. Rembert Bularzik, OSB, Robert Reischl, 1950.*

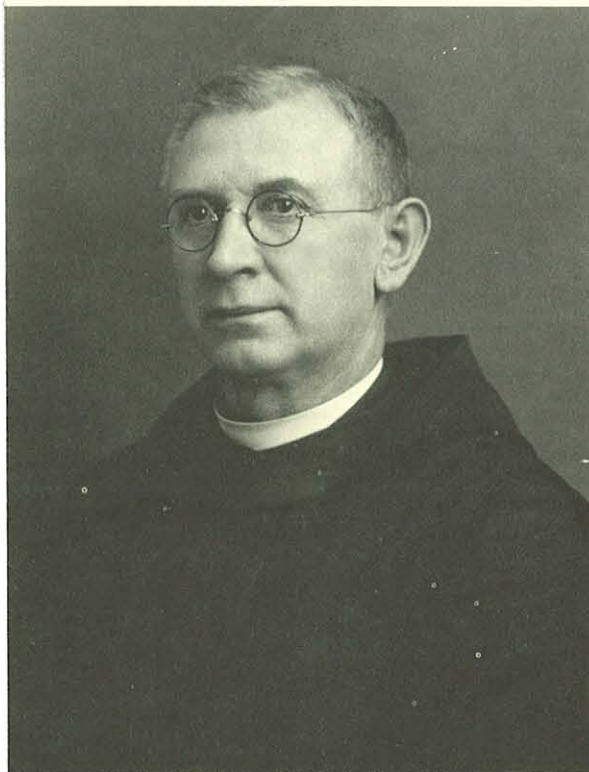


*Mass servers Bernard and John Meyer*



*Fr. Boniface Hain, OSB*

*Fr. Athanasius Meyer, OSB*



*Herman Meyer, 1912*





was a prairie, hence walking and driving was not so difficult, but the sun may have drawn perspiration from them. Later on processions of the same kind were held on St. Boniface Day (June 5). Some parishes built a small wooden chapel outside of the villages — as the chapel outside of Cold Spring and Richmond, and to this they repaired in procession.

A pilgrimage to the Grasshopper Chapel near Cold Spring also was a parish tradition — renewed in 1974 — to ask God that the countryside be forever spared from the plagues that destroyed the crops in 1856 and 1857.

First Communion Sunday had its traditions:

*First  
Communion*

It was still generally customary to confirm children nine years of age and above and to admit them to Holy Communion when they were 12 or over. The boys, if possible, wore suits of black; the girls were dressed in white. No special clothes or ornaments were required of adults. In the church they occupied the front seats or rather benches, for in churches that had seats or pews, a few more benches were reserved for the children, boys on one side, girls on the other . . . (What is still the case in some parishes, though the venerable custom is dying out.) Each communicant carried a candle in a candlestick of glass or of metal. The candles were lighted during the Mass, but were not taken to the altar by them when they received Holy Communion, another opportunity for a celebration. One cannot blame them, for they had so little occasion to divert themselves. Presents were also given the communicants. It was customary to offer the candles to the church; the candlestick was carried home.

Lenten devotions at least once caused a rift between the pastor and the monastic choir's master of ceremonies:

*Lenten  
observances*

During Lent, Vespers were sidetracked for the Way of the Cross or Stations (*Kreuzweg*). That may have been in good taste in the parishes — the peculiarity is that it was also done in the abbey from the beginning till 1904 or thereabout. Subprior Alphonse Kuisle (a military *Wuerttenburger* or northern *Schwabian*) was the pastor of the Collegeville congregation and insisted that in Lent the Way of the Cross must be said on Sunday and Vespers, too, of course. So we had both in succession.

*Kreuzweg*

It was hard for the small community of fathers and clerics who said the high Mass in the forenoon. Vespers in the afternoon and some verses from the *Stabat Mater* during the Stations — say after every four. The fathers and clerics made complaint and Abbot Peter effected a compromise with Father Alphonse to the effect that at 3:30 p.m. the monks obliged to attend choir, repaired to their choir chapel, recited Vespers and Compline and then marched down to church into the organ loft to assist at the *Kreuzweg*. It was due to long fighting between the pastor and the Master of Ceremonies, Rev. Francis Merschman (+1916) that chanted Vespers were introduced in Lent (about 1906) and this arrangement without the Way of the Cross, continues to the present day. The pastor then had the Way of the Cross for the congregation after the parish Mass, on Fridays, I think.

Why should that devotion be held on a Sunday? The Church does not require fasts and abstinences on Sundays, why then such a penitential service? Again, the reason alleged was that otherwise the people would have nothing to do on Sunday afternoons, since they simply sat in the pews and looked on — in complete silence — and read out of their prayer books, any kind of prayer.



After I had become acquainted with the Divine Office, I used to wonder why the priests insisted so strongly upon Vespers, which forms only a small part of the office and are not obligatory for the people. The reason alleged was to get people to go to church, since the afternoons, unless broken up by some "service" would have probably been spent in visiting or in drinking at saloons, if there were any. So these Vespers were simply devotions so far as the people were concerned. The priest recited his office in his choir and sang only the parts above mentioned. I used to think he had a hard time doing that, since his small Breviary was all browned at the margins of the leaves by snuff and grease from the fingers.

Other than Sunday Mass and Vespers, the Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament were part of the weekend's liturgy as late as the 1960's:

In parishes, benediction service was held every Saturday evening — for the same reason. Usually the rosary and litany of the B.V.M. were recited with the people, the priest, in surplice and white stole, leading. He knelt on the altar step *Coram Sanctissimo* in the open tabernacle and afterwards gave benediction not with the ciborium but with his hand (*mit der Hand*). This was a matter upon which the bishop of St. Paul was very strict. He did not authorize Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance on Saturday evenings. After the creation of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Minnesota, things changed. And now you may find churches, many of them, where priests do not scruple to have only low Masses on Sundays, but have chanted (musical) services, devotions in the afternoon or evening on the pleas that it is too hard to get singers.

*Forty  
Hours*

The parish also prayed to God at the forty hours devotion, a devotion dating to 1534 in which the Blessed Sacrament was put upon the altar for adoration and prayer in remembrance of the forty hours Jesus lay in the sepulcher. The parishioners would take turns through the day and night keeping vigil with the Lord. Every year the priest reminded his people about their devotion:

The Blessed Sacrament should not be left alone on this holy day, but we should all, children also, spend at least one hour in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. (*March 25, 1924*)\*

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During the day of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, double genuflection. (*March 29, 1931*)\*

*Baptisms*

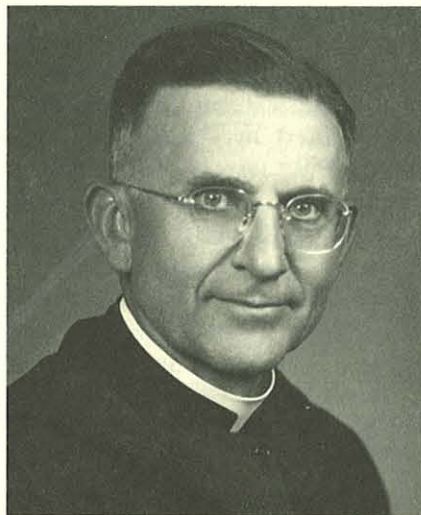
Father Alexius commented on the christening of babies in the early years of the parish and diocese:

Baptisms were administered at first in the homes, while the churches were still in the making. The usual time for baptizing was on Sundays and many had "fonts." Unnecessary to say that the parents secured sponsors — godfathers and godmothers. The names given the babies were those of the well-known saints, such as may be found in the *Kalendar*. Children generally received two names — or more. The honorarium was different in different places, until the "tariff" was regulated by the bishops. The babies were clad in a long muslin gown and were not always very quiet during the ministration. The baptism was duly entered in the register, the fee paid, and the rest of the day was given over to a cheerful little party at the home of the parents. Others gave the new Christian some little presents and the women admired the baby trying to find its resemblance to father or mother.





*Members of St. John's University Skiing Club, 1922, include Leo Lauer (first row, second from left) and Conrad Diekmann (second row, third from right).*



*Fr. Benjamin Stein, OSB*

*Men's retreat with Fr. Alfred Meyer and Fr. Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, OSB*





St. Benedict's  
Day

The Collegeville parishioners expressed much devotion to the saints, especially SS. Benedict, John the Baptist, and Scholastica. For many, God was too powerful or too far off to care for all of man's worries. A saint would understand. Perhaps he would stand before God and present the the faithful's needs to him. Every parishioner could identify with some saint as that saint had lived the trials of this earth.

The saint who was closest to this parish was St. Benedict. "On this day the relic of St. Benedict will be exposed for veneration." (*March 15, 1931*)\* Prior to his feast day on March 21, the parishioners offered a nine-day novena to St. Benedict in return for special blessings. Parishioners who worked for the abbey had the day off so they also could take part in the spiritual celebration. That day the novices made their first simple vows and older monks pledged their solemn vows. Before Vatican II the abbot celebrated a pontifical Mass, assisted by deacons, sub-deacons, acolytes, the crossbearer, and a packed church. Everyone celebrated for Benedict had blessed the community well.

Societies

Societies offered parishioners the opportunity to express a particular devotion. Organizations such as the St. Benedict Men's Society, St. Scholastica Christian Mothers, Young Ladies Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, Holy Name Society, the St. Rose Mission Circle, Young Men's Club, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and Confraternity of the Holy Ghost gave the parishioners, as in most parishes in the United States, a knowledge they personally could help their fellow parishioners and others spiritually as well as materially. The St. Rose Mission Circle, for example, since 1950 has provided financial and material assistance to the Indian and foreign missions.

Father Alexius recalled:

When the societies, or a society turned out in Mass, the members wore *regalia* over their Sunday cloths. The men wore a blue and red sash laid over the shoulder

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like a deacon's stole. The sashes had gold or silver fringe and other decorating. Married women and young ladies wore a broad ribbon about the neck with a large medal attached to the ribbon. The young men wore a light narrow sash like the men. The children wore a medal. Each society had a banner, (falime) costly according to its means. The large banners hung from a pole and were carried by a muscular man. Two other men each held a tassled cord by means of which they steadied the banner on windy days.

Parish announcements reminded the sodality members of their duties:

St. Benedict Men's Society members should wear their badges, occupy front seats. (*July 24, 1938*)\*

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Communion Sunday for the Young Ladies Sodality. (*August 9, 1936*)\*

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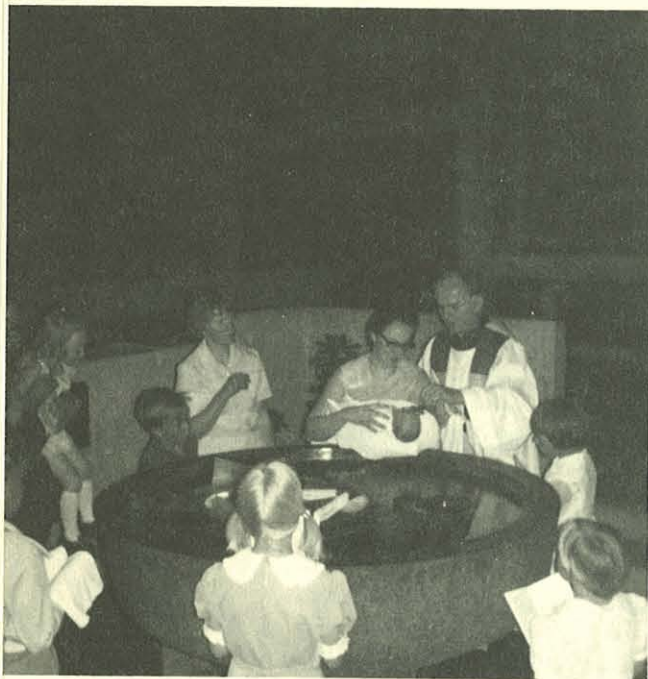
Next Sunday the Christian Mothers go to Holy Communion in a body, wearing their badges. (*August 6, 1939*)\*

The society, as the Church, remembered their members in death, as well as in life, at the Mass for the dead. In the 1890's a brass band would lead the funeral procession only if the society could pay for it. Later Abbot Bernard Locnikar, OSB, abolished the custom.

In the early days of the parish, as well as today, the parishioners faithfully attended a funeral Mass. Father Alexius said that a funeral was a time when "neighbors and relatives came to view the remains and get a few serious thoughts concerning their own future." The requiem Mass provided time for serious thinking or private prayer. Until

*Funerals*



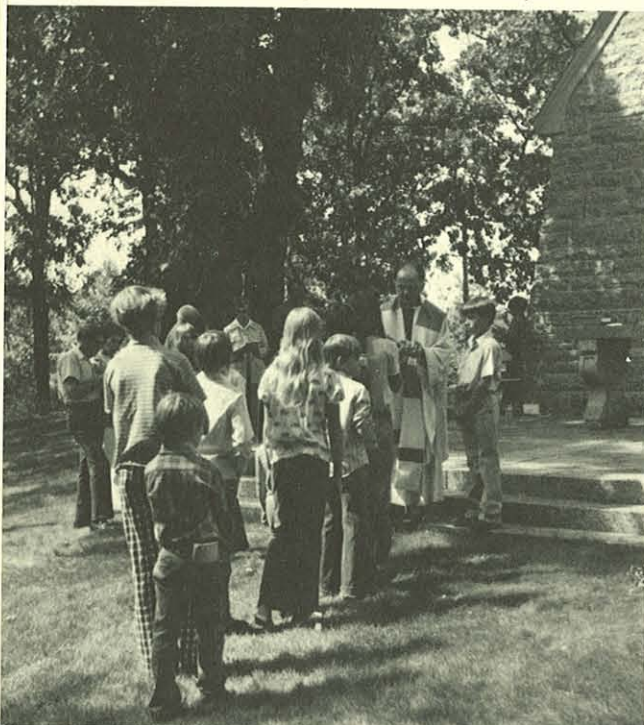


*Baptism of Todd Leo Bloch, 1975*



*Parish mission cross, 1910*

*Mass at Grasshopper Chapel, Cold Spring  
(Diocesan Holy Year Mass, 1974)*



*Confirmation, 1974*



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ssion cross, 1910

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Vatican II, after the Mass an altar boy led the way with a plain wooden cross. At the grave, the cross, which led the deceased from the church, was placed upon the grave. The priest was vested all in black. The sermon was one of death, sin, and what awaits the living. Today, as in past decades, the women of the parish prepare a meal which follows the burial.

A parish mission was a time of spiritual renewal. The missionary-preacher in 1950, Fr. Edward Malloy, CSSR, told the parishioners:

*Missions*

The aim of this mission is to bring you and your family innumerable blessings here on earth and eternal happiness and salvation in the kingdom of God. Remember, my dear friend, we are all here for only a short time, perhaps for only a week, a month, a year! Who knows? God alone knows. And then we must give an account of our stewardship. Should we fail to make good, all is lost, yes, lost forever.

First, the missionary preached to the women, usually in the morning, and then he preached to the men, usually in the evening. He also addressed the school children during the mission. Then the whole congregation would meet for the close of the mission at a high Mass. Missions were a time for forgiveness, once the fear of the Lord was sufficiently established. Almost everyone made a general confession which reflected their entire life and asked for God's forgiveness. A mission helped the parishioners feel right with the Lord.

At Sunday Mass, and even sometimes at funerals, the sermon was the center of the Liturgy of the Word. Father Alexius describes the preaching in the early days of the parish:

*Homilies*

The pulpit suggests preaching — before the high Mass on Sundays the priest would hold instructions in cate-