

***THE HISTORY OF ST. MATTHEW'S CATHEDRAL WITHIN
THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND***



By Bob Garrow
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The History of St. Matthew's Cathedral

The city of South Bend is part of the current Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend. At the founding of the diocese it was originally titled the Diocese of Fort Wayne. The city of South Bend is located in St. Joseph County in the north central part of Indiana. “The county was organized on January 29, 1830 becoming legally independent on April 1, 1830.”¹ The county is named after the St. Joseph River which runs through the county. The St. Joseph River is named after Joseph the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus. By September 7, 1831, South Bend was chosen as the seat for the county's government; it is comprised of 13 townships. During this time period Rev. Stephen Badin, the first priest ordained in the United States, built a log chapel on property now belonging to the University of Notre Dame. “But as far back as 1824, the Pottawattamie Indians were visited by the Rev. Claude Allouez, S.J. Even at that time a small chapel was erected on the border of St. Mary's Lake. Father Badin continued to visit here (there) until 1832,”² then another missionary priest were assigned. Then in November of 1842, the Congregation of Holy Cross (C.S.C.) helped the Catholics of the area meet their spiritual needs.

The original log chapel built by Father Badin was the first (semi-public oratory) in the diocese. The log chapel was built for the Indians and the Catholics in northern Indiana and southern Michigan. In 1856 the chapel was destroyed by fire, but it was recreated and can still be visited to this day on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

¹ Northern Indiana Center for History, “Facts about St. Joseph County” Center for History Online. [home page on-line]; available from <http://centerforhistory.org/learn-history/local-history/facts-about-st-joseph-county>; Internet; accessed 28 August 2013.

² Herman Joseph Alerding and John Francis Noll, *The Diocese of Fort Wayne* (publication place: Nabu Press, 2010), 290.

In 1853, St. Joseph church was built by Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C., becoming the first Catholic Church in South Bend. In 1859, St. Patrick's was erected and soon all the German and Polish Catholics would worship here. As well, the Catholics west of the St. Joseph River at the time would also find God in this holy place. As more immigrants began to arrive in South Bend, especially the Polish, they founded St. Hedwig's Church in 1877. Then the German Catholics of the city wanted their own church and so St. Mary's Church in 1883 was erected only two blocks from St. Patrick's. "Factories in Mishawaka and South Bend brought a number of Belgians to these two cities."³ Thus Sacred Heart Church was erected in 1896. The Polish people living in the city also desired a new church, the northwest erected St. Stanislaus in 1898, St. Casimir's was erected in 1899 for the southwest, in addition to St. Adalbert's being founded in 1910. Hungarian Catholics erected St. Stephen's in 1900 in the south and in 1916 Our Lady of Hungary was completed. As evidence from this consistent ecclesial growth "South Bend felt the wave of eastern European immigrants who were attracted to employment in the great factories of Studebaker Wagon Works and Oliver Chilled Plow in the city's west side. The city's population grew from 35,999 in 1910 to 70,983 in 1920. Catholics in St. Joseph County increased from 9,626 in 1906 to 30,198 in 1926."⁴

In order to understand the relationship of South Bend to the diocese it is essential to understand the long and storied history of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend in its entirety. Originally the state of Indiana was under the Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky. By 1834, a new Episcopal See was created in Vincennes, Indiana. "The territory not constituting the diocese of

³ Alerding and Noll, *The Diocese of Fort Wayne*, 296.

⁴ Joseph M. White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ: a History of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend: Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Diocese and Catholic Life in Northern Indiana* (Fort Wayne, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007), 206.

Fort Wayne, as might be conjectured, became part of the Diocese of Vincennes, which embraced the whole state of Indiana, and the eastern part of Illinois. The Right Reverend Simon Gabriel Brute was selected as the first bishop of this new diocese.”⁵ In 1855, the first Provincial Council of Cincinnati was held with six bishops, one of whom was the fourth bishop of Vincennes, Right Reverend M.M. de St. Palais. Bishop de St. Palais requested a division of his diocese and Fort Wayne be named as a See City by the Vatican. The Cincinnati provinces bishops made the proposal to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in Rome. “It was not until January 9, 1857, that (the) Propaganda issued the decree *Ex debito pastoralis officii* establishing the See of Fort Wayne.”⁶ John Henery Luers was selected as the first bishop of Fort Wayne on August 31, 1857, and Pope Pius IX confirmed the appointment on September 13, 1857. He died June 29, 1871 and he was laid to rest in the crypt of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

Reverend Joseph Dwenger was chosen by Pope Pius IX as the second bishop of the diocese upon the death of Bishop Luers. Bishop Dwenger “was consecrated in the Cathedral at Cincinnati by Archbishop Purcell on April 14, 1872. He came to Fort Wayne immediately and took full charge of the diocese.”⁷ He passed away on January 23, 1893, and was also laid to rest in the crypt of the Cathedral. “The Right Reverend Joseph Rademacher was appointed as the third Bishop of Fort Wayne on July 14, 1893, having been transferred from the See of Nashville.”⁸ Bishop Rademacher died on January 12, 1900 and like his predecessors he too was interned in the Crypt of the Cathedral. Appointed next to the See of Fort Wayne was Reverend

⁵ Alerding and Noll, *The Diocese of Fort Wayne*, 20.

⁶ White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ*, 80.

⁷ Alerding and Noll, *The Diocese of Fort Wayne*, 111.

⁸ Alerding and Noll, *The Diocese of Fort Wayne*, 134.

Herman Alerding, of German birth but moved to the United States early in his childhood. He was a priest for the Diocese of Vincennes and was consecrated as bishop on November 30, 1900, in the Cathedral in Fort Wayne. After being involved in a car accident on Thanksgiving Day of 1924 he became quite infirmed and subsequently died on December 6, 1924. It was said that “Bishop Alerding’s episcopate extended over a period of twenty four years, during which the diocese made great progress. He will long be remembered by the priests who knew him as a competent administrator, as a tender hearted, affable, appreciative Prelate.”⁹ During this episcopate, one of the great moments of progress occurred with the creation of St. Matthew’s Church which would impact the Diocese in many fruitful ways.

With expansion of churches and the population growing, seventy-five Catholic families living on the Southeast side of South Bend in 1914, began to lobby for a new parish. World War I had begun and the plans were put aside. When the war had ended those desiring this new parish had grown to 175 families. Bishop Herman J. Alerding, of the Diocese of Fort Wayne, gave permission to the Reverend John F. DeGroote, C.S.C., then pastor of St. Patrick’s, to purchase fourteen lots in the second addition of Oak Park which was bounded on the North by Dubail Street, on the East by Miami Street, on the South by Dayton Street, and on the West by an alley reaching from Dayton to Dubail Streets. The purchase of the land cost \$31,000.00.

The first organizational meeting of the proposed new parish took place at Studebaker School on August 14, 1921. Father De Groote, C.S.C., held a meeting to decide how to raise money in order to pay for the recent land purchase. The members of the new parish elected John G. O’Brien as president; Jesse A. Kingsbury vice president, and Bryon F. Grager secretary. A

⁹ Alerding and Noll, *The Diocese of Fort Wayne*, 146.

number of proposals were given: the first was to build a double decker building: the first floor for the Church and the second floor for the school. Bishop Alerding decided to build only a temporary church structure. The building committee of O.W. Pierce, W.M. Foley, and Edward Pfeffer was formed to supervise the construction. On Tuesday 30 May 1922, Fr. John De Groote, C.S.C., laid the cornerstone and Fr. Frank Wenninger, C.S.C., of the University of Notre Dame preached the sermon. Fr. Theodore J. Hammes was named as the first pastor of the new church. Since there was no rectory yet built Fr. Hammes stayed at St. Monica's rectory in Mishawaka.

Fr. Hammes soon realized that the families and parishioners did not have a lot of wealth, so he called for volunteers to help build the Church. Twenty two able bodied volunteers answered the call of the new pastor. In May 1922 construction began with \$10,000 in cost and free labor. A basement was built underneath the church for social gatherings. By August 13, 1922 the church was dedicated and the first mass was celebrated. The choir was directed by O.W. Pierce and Eleanor Weiss was the organist.

The early years of the church was one of poverty. Fr. Hammes had to ask the neighboring pastors for assistance to furnish the church. Pastors from St. Monica's, St. Stanislaus, St. Casimir's, and St. Patrick's gave such essential items as candlesticks and vestments.

When the church opened the capacity was only 240 people. In a year there was a need for an addition. The addition brought the capacity of the church to 600. The addition cost \$32,000 and was dedicated on October 21, 1923. By the end of the year 1923, the parish was growing rapidly, with many groups such as the Guardian Angel Society, The Children of Mary, and the Rosary Society, increasing membership of the parish to 950 with 241 families. On November 26, 1923, First Holy Communion was administered to 16 boys and 24 girls. In 1924,

the parish expanded its boundaries to include six lots to the West of the property, giving the parish the entire block from Miami to Dale Streets. The purchase cost of the land was \$52,500.

After Bishop Alerding had passed away in December of 1924 the diocese was in need of a new bishop. On May 13, 1925, Reverend John Francis Noll was selected and notified that he had been the selection of Pope Pius XI to fill the vacant see at Fort Wayne. Later in 1953, Pope Pius XII would name John Noll an Archbishop for his numerous contributions to the Catholic press in the form of *Our Sunday Visitor* and for his work for the Church in America. This was a great honor for Archbishop Noll and for the whole diocese due to his see not being in archdiocese.

On September 16, 1928, the parishioners voted to build a school. A year later in 1929, construction began on May 15 at a cost \$167,000. With the bishop's permission the school building was constructed with the second floor unfurnished. The building was dedicated by Bishop John F. Noll on October 13, 1929. On August 22, 1929, six sisters of St. Joseph from Tipton arrived to begin teaching the first five grades. The sisters were: Sister Rosaria the Superior who also taught the fifth grade, Sister Marcella who taught the first grade, Sister Henrieta who taught second grade, Sister Benigna who taught the third grade, Sister Anthony who taught the fourth grade, and Sister Cyril who was the housekeeper. Enrollment for the first year was 150 students. Every year thereafter a grade was added until June 1, 1933, when the first class graduated. There were forty students that day who achieved this feat. As part of the 1st graduating class, officers were selected for the St. Matthew's School Alumni Society. The officers were: Robert Heiter as president, Harriet Gottron as vice-president, Eugene Scott as secretary, and Corrine Walsh as treasurer. Soon the depression hit and St. Matthew's was

effected as was the rest of the country. The parish was overburdened with a large debt. This burden became too much for Fr. Hammes. In 1933, after 11 years as pastor, Fr. Hammes, became ill and was replaced by Reverend Arnold J. Wibbert. He did this by asking Bishop Noll to replace him with some other priest. Fr. Hammes at the age of 75 was named a Monsignor by Pope John XXIII, and would later pass away at the age of 100 on September 5, 1985. Fr. Wibbert, who was ordained on June 10, 1922 by Bishop Alerding, came to the parish from The Holy Rosary Church in Gary which he had founded in 1931.

Fr. Arnold Wibbert arrived in 1933, and would serve as pastor for the next 36 years. During his tenure as pastor, tremendous growth of the parish would occur, from a wooden frame church to a Cathedral. When Fr. Wibbert arrived at St. Matthews he inherited a tremendous amount of debt, with his leadership the parish became debt free. It is said “the people realizing the sole reason for Father Hammes’ resignation promised to back Father Wibbert at considerable sacrifice.”¹⁰

The second floor of the school opened in September 1934, as Central Catholic High School. This high school was ran by two Brothers of Holy Cross with 18 students. Within four years the school was accredited by the state of Indiana. The school would remain open until May 1951. The school was being furnished financially by the parishioners of St. Matthew while many of their own grade school students were being forced, due to lack of space, to attend the public grade schools. 190 students were attending the high school when it closed, while 300 plus students were being forced to attend the public grade schools.

¹⁰ Alerding and Noll, The Diocese of Fort Wayne, 305.

On November 14, 1945, St. Matthew Parish was out of its parish debt. With this great news the parish began a period of tremendous growth. In 1953, the school's upper floor was renovated for the grade schools. In 1954, a new rectory was constructed and in 1955, a new auditorium was added to the school. In 1957, the parish celebrated the first fish fry, which has been a staple of the parish ever since. On May 26, 1959, Fr. Wibbert was invested by Bishop Noll as *Domestic Prelate*. From that time forward he was referred to as the Right Reverend Monsignor.

During this time, Archbishop Noll in August of 1954, had a stroke that left him unable to walk without assistance, upon which he retired on March 8, 1955. By November of 1955, he had another stroke which confined him to his home. He passed away on July 31, 1956. "Many considered Archbishop Noll a 'national' bishop, representative of all Catholics of America. For those of his diocese, however, he was their own: a simple man of strong faith, 'home grown' and well beloved."¹¹ He was laid to rest at Victory Noll in Huntington, Indiana.

In March of 1955, when Archbishop Noll could no longer conduct the business of the diocese he requested the Apostolic See that an administrator be named. On March 9, 1955 Auxiliary Bishop Leo Pursley, a priest of the diocese, who's episcopal consecration took place on September 19, 1950, was designated as the apostolic administrator with full responsibilities for diocesan leadership. Five months after Archbishop Noll's death on January 2, 1957, it was announced the new bishop for the diocese would be Bishop Leo Pursley, who was installed on February 26, 1957. It was also released that diocese would change with the creation of the

¹¹ Ann Ball with Leon Hutton, *Champion of the Church: the Extraordinary Life and Legacy of Archbishop Noll* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2006), 129.

Diocese of Gary, that the four western counties of the state of Indiana would no longer be under the Diocese of Fort Wayne.

Monsignor Wibbert in 1959 decided to build a new church. After 37 years the tiny wood frame church had runs its course. The Church was taken apart and a new brick church was constructed. Msgr. Wibbert would not allow the construction of the church until most of the money had been raised. While the church was being built Masses took place in the new gym. Ground was broken for the new church on August 16, 1959, and on May 29, 1960, St. Matthew's Cathedral was completed. The only part of the old church that was saved were the bells, which are still in place today. During the construction, The Diocese of Fort Wayne was re-designated as the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. "Bishop Pursley obtained from the Holy See a change of its formal title to that of 'Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend.' In a decree from the Congregation of the Consistory dated July 22, 1960."¹² At the request of Bishop Leo Pursley, St. Matthew's Church was elevated to the dignity of a Co-Cathedral. Bishop Pursley sought the change "to procure the good souls more effectively, to honor South Bend for the religion and charity conducted there, and to more effectively unify the clergy, religious and laity in common support of diocesan causes, as well as general interest and objectives of the church."¹³ The new church cost \$650,000. It was said at the time that the parishioners who remembered the tiny wood frame church felt much pride watching the church grow into a place that became the seat of the Bishops. Many credit the hard work and perseverance of Msgr. Wibbert for this incredible

¹² White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ*, 372.

¹³ White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ*, 372.

transformation. Msgr. Wibbert retired on March 30, 1969. He went home to the Lord on December 18, 1969.

On April 1, 1969, the Cathedral had a new rector, Msgr. Joseph R. Crowley. During the first few months the first parish council was formed and officers were elected. When Msgr. Crowley came to the parish improvements were needed along with the school, in both attendance and its structure. Attendance at the school had dropped to 300 students. He added to or refurbished the lighting, desk, restrooms, windows, and the gym, all when they could be afforded. He also hired two principals during his tenure for the school: Ann Henthorn (---) and Mary Ann Retseck (-- 2010). Msgr. Crowley was the rector of St. Matthews for two years when on August 24, 1971 he was elevated and ordained as the Auxiliary Bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend inside St. Matthew’s Cathedral. After his ordination, Bishop Crowley was appointed director of religious education for the diocese. The new rector and pastor was Msgr. Stanley L. Manoski who arrived on February 1, 1972. During his tenure St. Matthews’s celebrated 50 years as a parish. In 1974 Auxiliary Bishop Crowley returned as rector of the cathedral.

Pope Paul VI accepted Bishop Pursley’s resignation on August 31, 1976. “Bishop Crowley, a local favorite, had been passed over to succeed him. Instead the pope appointed Auxiliary Bishop William E. McManus of Chicago as the seventh bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend.”¹⁴ Bishop Pursley’s formal retirement took place on October 18, 1976. He would pass away in Fort Wayne on November 15, 1998 and be interred in the Fort Wayne Catholic Cemetery with the majority of the priest from the diocese.

¹⁴ White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ*, 439.

After Bishop McManus was installed as the new bishop on October 18, 1976, in Fort Wayne he came to St. Matthew Cathedral on October 19, 1976, to celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit. In January 1984, Bishop McManus submitted his letter of resignation to Pope John Paul II upon turning the age of seventy. On February 26, 1985, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio Archbishop Pio Laghai announced that the resignation had been accepted by Pope John Paul II and a new bishop was announced. Bishop McManus would administer the diocese until April 30, 1985, which was the date of the instillation of Auxiliary Bishop John Michael D’Arcy, of the Archdiocese of Boston, who became the eighth bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend. Bishop McManus returned back to Chicago and would pass away on March 3, 1997. Before his retirement, Bishop McManus offered Mass at St. Matthew Cathedral, he said, “After 46 years of priesthood, I am more convinced than ever that most sins are the result more of ignorance than malice ... In that spirit at this last Mass as your Bishop, please forgive me.”¹⁵

During his second stint as rector, Bishop Crowley left an indelible mark on the parish. The parish grew from a neighborhood parish where parishioners walked to the church for the need to drive there. This was necessary due to the growth of the Southeast side of South Bend. This required the tearing down of houses to accommodate for parking lots. The Cathedral also saw Ervin Kapsa, of St. Adalberts, become the first married laymen ordained as a permanent deacon for the diocese. The first group of extraordinary Eucharistic ministers took place in 1974. The creation of the first parish directory occurred in 1977 along with the ordination of Emillio “Guy” Gizzi as a permanent deacon in 1983, who has served the parish faithfully ever since. A highlight for Bishop Crowley and the parish happened in 1989 when the choir was invited to the

¹⁵ White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ*, 465.

Vatican to sing for Pope John Paul II, under the direction of Dr. Ed Cline. On the July 15, 1990, Bishop Crowley retired as the rector of the Cathedral. Even during his retirement he remained very active in the parish and in the diocese. Upon his retirement the Sisters of St. Joseph left St. Matthew to return to Tipton. They left a lasting legacy of over 61 years of faithful service to the parish. Bishop Crowley went to the Lord on February 4, 2003, and a Mass of Christian burial would take place at St. Matthew Cathedral. He was interred in Catholic Cemetery in Fort Wayne.

“On April 30, 1985 Bishop D’Arcy took canonical possession of the diocese at a prayer service (vespers) at St. Matthew Cathedral.”¹⁶ Then on May 1, 1985, his instillation took place in the Cathedral in Fort Wayne. Bishop D’Arcy retired on January 12, 2010. He would serve the diocese as Bishop Emeritus until his death on February 3, 2013. The first seminarian he accepted and would later ordain as priest, Monsignor Mike Heintz states: "He was a totally devoted pastor," he said. "He was a strong leader. He genuinely loves the people here, and he poured his life into them. He was thoroughly devoted to Catholic education. He worked very hard to strengthen the Catholic schools and education. He was devoted to getting the students educated in the faith."¹⁷ On February 6, 2013 a Mass of Transferal was celebrated at St. Matthew Cathedral. Like many of the previous bishops, he was interred in the crypt of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Fort Wayne.

¹⁶ White, *Worthy of the Gospel of Christ*, 465.

¹⁷ Amanda Gray and Tom Moor, “Legacy of Faith” South Bend Tribune Online [home page on-line]; available from http://articles.southbendtribune.com/2013-02-04/news/36750187_1_emeritus-john-m-d-arcy-choices-and-controversial-stances-bishop-rhoades; Internet; accessed 1 October 2013.

Upon the retirement of the beloved Auxiliary Bishop Crowley an administrator was needed. Monsignor William Lester stepped into the role until a new rector was appointed. Reverend John R. Sheets, S.J., was named the new rector and ordained Auxiliary Bishop by Bishop John M. D'Arcy on June 25, 1991, at St. Matthew's Cathedral. Bishop Sheets, S.J., had been the head of the theology department at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, and taught at Marquette University before coming to South Bend. Fr. Tom Shoemaker, parochial vicar to Bishop Sheets, said "the experiences among parishioners at St. Matthew Cathedral caused him to constantly say his time in the parish was the best time of his life. He read and wrote about God, but in the parish he was with the people living the faith, with the people experiencing the sorrows and joys of life, and it was among and through them that he saw faith and the love of God in action."¹⁸ Bishop Sheets was a humble and deeply spiritual man. He retired on September 21, 1997. He would go to our Lord on April 16, 2003, from complications of Alzheimer's disease. At the time of his death he was living in Wisconsin.

During the leadership of Bishop Sheets the religious sister's former convent was opened as the Cathedral Center. This took place in 1992. From 1992 to 1994 the purchase of land and homes on Dayton and Miami Streets allowed for more access to a daycare center called Kindercove. From 1993 to 1997 much needed repairs were completed in the school and in the cathedral buildings.

With the retirement of Bishop Sheets, S.J., a new rector was needed. A new Auxiliary Bishop and rector was named to lead St. Matthew's Cathedral. Reverend Daniel J. Jenky, C.S.C.,

¹⁸ Sharon Little, "Longtime Friend Recalls Humility of Bishop Sheets," *Today's Catholic* 77, no. 17 (2003), 12.

was installed and ordained on December 16, 1997 at St. Matthew's Cathedral. In attendance was the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the United States, the then Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, (later Cardinal). During the tenure of Bishop Jenky many improvements to the parish took place. During his time he converted one of the many children's cry rooms into a place for prayer. The baptismal font was moved from the sanctuary of the Church to the vestibule in the new prayer room. He also involved parishioners to become more engaged in this second parish of the diocese. As one parishioner said of Bishop Jenky: "he had a vision – he called it a vision of a new millennium of faith. He improved our church, and our lives, by making it and making us more prayerful."¹⁹ Part of his vision included the Bishop Crowley Boulevard, increase of safety for children, the enrichment and strengthening of diocesan liturgical life, social programs for visiting the infirmed and elderly, programs for young adults, as well as creating a \$2 million dollar capital fund drive for diocesan needs. Bishop Jenky states that "Monsignor John Seltzer and Monsignor Bill Schooler gave me an intense course in Parish Stewardship. At Notre Dame, my financial challenges only had to do with fighting budget commitments. In the spirit of stewardship, I got many committees going so people could use their time and talent. Another challenge was basically cleaning the Cathedral. We sand-blasted the bricks inside, and through someone who worked in the Indiana prison system, we had the pews stripped and refinished. With the help of a Notre Dame designer, I was able to replace the Cathedral sanctuary furniture, including the Bishop's Cathedra (chair). Terrazzo will last forever, but our terrazzo had to be stripped and refinished. I was also able to secretly buy up property around the Cathedral and

¹⁹ Susan Baxter, "St. Matt's Parishioners Bid Solemn Farewell" *Today's Catholic*, 76, no. 14 (2002), 15.

school, and so eventually we had fenced in grass like areas for the kids and the Bishop Crowley Boulevard, in this way the parents could collect and drop off the children at will.”²⁰

He led changes in creating the St. Matthew Cathedral campus with a new parking lot, closing streets and demolishing old abandoned homes. Also under his leadership the two side altars were embellished and were beautified. Outside the Cathedral, two side flag poles displaying the Papal and American Flags were installed. After serving since 1997, Bishop Jenky, was transferred to the Diocese of Peoria by Pope John Paul II. He was named as the new ordinary of the diocese on April 10, 2002. Bishop Jenky, C.S.C., looking back on his time at St. Matthew’s Cathedral, said that “I had spent virtually my entire priesthood, serving the University of Notre Dame. While I had all sorts of pastoral experience, this did not include parochial experience. I will be eternally grateful to the folks at St. Matthew Cathedral parish for “breaking me in” as a parish priest. My five years at ‘St. Matt’s’ helped me in so many ways to now serve as a Diocesan Bishop in Central Illinois. I enjoyed and loved the folks in South Bend and I have the highest regard for the Fort Wayne – South Bend priests.”²¹

With this appointment, Bishop D’Arcy appointed Very Reverend Michael Heintz rector of the cathedral, after having served as parochial vicar under Bishop Jenky. A great honor was bestowed upon Fr. Heintz as he was named and installed as a Chaplain of His Holiness with the title of Monsignor on December 10, 2009 in the cathedral in Fort Wayne. Msgr. Heintz remarked when looking back at his time at St. Matthew Cathedral that “I think that over the past fifteen years, my greatest joy has been to see the parish grow, not simply numerically, but in its Catholic

²⁰ Bishop Daniel Jenky, C.S.C, to Robert Garrow, “History of St. Matthew Cathedral,” personal e-mail (18 September 2013).

²¹ Jenky to Garrow

faith. When I arrived here, there was a lot in place that was solid, and I have tried to build on it. I think the key is to focus on the sacred liturgy. After all, it's where 90 percent of the parish encounters the church each week. Our training program for altar servers, and then helping them transition to become lectors and extraordinary ministers as well once they are in high school, serves to communicate the nature and importance of the liturgy in their lives."²²

On November 14, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Bishop Kevin Carl Rhoades, Ordinary of the Diocese of Harrisburg, the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend. On January 12, 2010, vespers was celebrated at St. Matthew's Cathedral with the newly appointed bishop who would be installed the next day in the cathedral in Fort Wayne.

During Msgr. Heintz's leadership growth has occurred both spiritually and physically. On Thanksgiving Day of 2010, St. Matthew Cathedral began providing dinner for those who lived around the parish. Many of the parishioners donate their time and effort to help those around the parish celebrate this holiday. Those who have helped this dinner become so successful have made it special and it is a tremendous success that has continued to be more appreciated each year. On December 22, 2012, new vigil candle lights were installed inside the sanctuary and placed under the icons that are behind the altar. At the Chrism Mass on March 25, 2013, new altar candles and crucifix were used for the first time. These items are now used only for special solemn occasions, such as Easter and Christmas. Then during May of 2013, there began a new parish garden, so whatever food is grown any parishioner may take from the garden. Many vegetables and herbs were grown this year and the parishioners look forward to its

²² Monsignor Michael Heintz to Robert Garrow, "History of St. Matthew Cathedral," personal e-mail (19 September 2013).

continued success. Then on August 10, 2013 Bishop Rhoades celebrated a Jubilee Mass for all the permanent deacons of the diocese, including its very own Deacon Guy, who celebrated 30 years of faithful service.

A great honor has occurred in the past few years at St. Matthew Cathedral as it has had the pleasure of hosting two important individuals from the Vatican. Cardinal Francis Arinze and Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganó. On May 15, 2005, Cardinal Arinze, Prefect of the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments offered the 5:30 Sunday Mass. Then on November 4, 2012, Archbishop Viganó, the Apostolic Nuncio, who is responsible for diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the United States Government, offered the homily to the 11:00 congregation. Bishop Rhoades said at the time: "I thought the Mass today was beautiful. The archbishop's homily was great. You could just feel the joy of the people in welcoming archbishop here because he represents our Holy Father."²³

With great joy there have been nine men who have been sons of the parish who were ordained as priest: Joseph Voorde, 1933; Harold Reily, 1935; Alan Berndt, O.S.B., 1945; John VandenBossche, C.S.C., 1951; Charles Doyle, 1953; Robert Mahoney, 1961; Terry Fisher, 1985; James Stoye, 1991; and Kevin Bauman, 2008. There have been a number of priest and deacons whose ordinations have also occurred at St. Matthew Cathedral. Ordained as priest for the diocese were Fr. Tom Shoemaker on November 11, 1990; Fr. Jim Stoye on November 16, 1991, and Msgr. Mike Heintz and Fr. Bob Van Kempen on November 27, 1993. The following were ordained as transitional deacons for the diocese, Fr. Jacob Meyer and Fr. Ben Muhlenkamp on

²³ News Center 16, "Pope's Ambassador to U.S. visits South Bend" WNDU Online. [home page on-line]; available from <http://www.wndu.com/home/headlines/Popes-ambassador-to-US-visits-South-Bend-177177031.html>; Internet; accessed 27 September 2013.

May 14, 2011 along with the permanent deaconate of Ervin Kapsa which occurred on May 15, 1971.

When one looks back upon the history St. Matthew Cathedral one is drawn to the parishioners who attend this place of worship. Bishop Sheets, S.J., writing to his Jesuit provincial on August 31, 1995, states: “I have grown to know and love the people. This is especially true in relationship to the people who are members of the parish of which I am pastor, St. Matthew’s co-Cathedral... In short, my ministry here has given me an extended family whom I love dearly.”²⁴ As Bishop Jenky, C.S.C., states: “It was not unusual at St. Matthew to have three generations of a single family active in the parish. There were all kinds of “lifers” who had gone to St. Matthew’s as children, and sent their children, and watched their grandchildren go through St. Matt’s. It was my impression people loved their parish and maintained their commitments.”²⁵ The reaction of Msgr. Heintz echoes his predecessor. Msgr. Hentz states that “I think that it (St. Matthew Cathedral) is a remarkable parish in that there are no factions or battles ideologically. The vast majority of the people of the parish are happily Catholic, committed to Jesus and his Church. It is a demographically diverse parish, including both millionaires and the poor, with a lot of middle class, working folks in between. We are definitely not a suburban parish.”²⁶

As the parishioners of St. Matthew come to worship God every day, they do so in a church which is considered to be of the modern period and built of brick. It is quite spacious and

²⁴ Bishop John M. D’Arcy, “Bishop Sheets Taught Many About Catholic Spirituality, Theology,” *Today’s Catholic* 77, no. 17 (2003), 2.

²⁵ Jenky to Garrow

²⁶ Heintz to Garrow

has a great simplicity. The nave of the Cathedral is approximately 7,000 sq. feet with seating for 850 people. Along the North side walls are two confessionals where one may receive the sacrament of reconciliation face to face or receive the sacrament behind the screen. On the South wall are two additional confessionals allowing for the sacrament to be used by two people at a time, behind a screen only, allowing for a grand total of four spaces for the penitent.

Great devotional shrines are also found in the Cathedral with a Shrine of the Sacred Heart, having a statue of Christ, which is located along the South wall. On the North wall is a statue of the patron saint of the parish, St. Matthew. Inside the sanctuary at the left side altar is a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary along with a framed picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe. On the right side altar is St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus. Next to this altar is also found an icon of St. Matthew. In the prayer room where the Baptismal font is located, is found many relics. The parish has over eight reliquaries. The relics include those of the True Cross and the 12 Apostles, just to name a few. Included in this room is an icon of the Black Madonna, or Our Lady of Czestochowa. Finally along both the North and South walls are located the Stations of the Cross.

The Cathedral also has many stained glass windows. There are 137 slit windows of varying shades of blue, green, red, and gold. The cooler colors in the rear, the warmer colors toward the front, which allows for the attention to be focused on the altar. What people notice the most is the large stained glass window above the entrance to the Cathedral. This stain glass window depicts an event in the life of St. Matthew. Depicted in the window is a lion, representing the Gospel writer Mark, which is a symbol of courage and Christ's kingship. The next symbol is an ox, which represents the Gospel writer Luke and his emphasis on Christ's

works. The next symbol is that of an eagle, which represents the Gospel writer John, depicting the soaring quality of the Gospel account. Then there is a man who is the central figure in the stained glass, this man depicts St. Matthew. Under his right hand is a bag of gold coins, representing Matthew being a former tax collector, but also displayed is his hand to show him as a writer of the first Gospel. Matthew is depicted as a man to be a symbol of Christ humility. Then at the top of the window is an angel bending over Matthew giving him inspiration to accomplish his work. The various colors are seen to be reflected against the reredos and altar during the early morning and mid-morning hours.

Along with the stained glass window in the balcony one can find the choir loft. In this area the choir is found next to a pipe organ and a piano. Included is room for the choir to sing or chant the beautiful liturgical music of the church in which they give praise and glory to God and continue to sanctify the people of God by lifting up their voices in song to God.

As one approaches the sanctuary one will notice the marble communion rail still in place; the gates to the railings have been removed, but the separation is still visible. Along the wall behind the altar are six icons, three on the left and three on the right. They depict Mary, an angel, and St. Peter on the left, and on the right, St. John the Baptist, an Angel, and St. Paul. The altar is a beautiful soft brown and white marble with a mosaic of a resurrected lamb holding a victory white banner, located in the front of the altar. Behind the altar is the tabernacle. As is customary when an altar is consecrated relics of saints are enclosed in the altar. In the main altar are entombed Sts. Masaueta and Felicity. In the Blessed Virgin altar are Sts. Modestine and Clement. In the St. Joseph altar are Sts. Theodore and Theophilia. The parishioners can call upon these saints' intercession and have them give their prayers to the Lord.

As tradition, with St. Matthew being the Co-Cathedral, it has the distinction of being the second church of the diocese. Located in the sanctuary is the bishop's cathedra, or throne. Located above the cathedra is the current ordinaries official crest. The current ordinary of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend is Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. In the current coat of arms for Bishop Rhoades he combined both diocesan and personal elements. The diocesan coat of arms combines the history of the diocese. “The crescent moon at the top of the shield symbolizes the Blessed Virgin, the patroness of the diocese and the cathedral under the title of her Immaculate Conception; the battlement, or rampart, recalling the historic foundation of the See City of Fort Wayne; and the three crosses of equal size representing the Most Blessed Trinity, the basic mystery of our faith. The lower portion of the left side includes heraldic reference to the city and area of South Bend. The lily is a traditional symbol of Saint Joseph whose name identifies the county of which South Bend is the seat and also the river which flows through it. The use of the “fleur de lis,” the French form of the lily, recalls the pioneer settlement of the territory by the French and the early missionary labors of French priests, particularly Holy Cross Father Edward Sorin and his companions who founded the University of Notre Dame. The figure of the six-winged angel is one of the four familiar symbols of the four Evangelists, in this instance of Saint Matthew, patron of the co-cathedral in South Bend. The curving line between the lower two sections of the shield represents the Saint Joseph River, the South Bend of which gave the city its name. It is interesting to note that such curved lines are known in heraldry as “bends.”²⁷

²⁷ “Diocesan Coat of Arms,” Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend (2013), <http://www.diocesefwsb.org/>.

St. Matthew Cathedral is a special place due to the people who have steeped through the doors of the parish to worship and give glory to God. The Co-Cathedral parish has been blessed to be led in prayer by wonderful bishops, rectors, and curates. One curate in particular, Father Earl Harber, who arrived in 1953, would serve the parish faithfully for the next fourteen years. In 1967, Fr. Harber succumbed to an untimely death. He left a legacy of a well beloved priest, who cared about the parishioners as well as non-parishioners. It could be said that Fr. Harber because of his work with the poor, was a priest based in the heart of Jesus Christ, such was his love for the children and the disadvantaged.

As St. Matthew Cathedral enters into her 91st year as a parish, one can see the tremendous impact that this, at one time small wooden frame church, which grew into a Co-Cathedral, has had on the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The parish has grown from 75 original families to its current number of 1,432 families giving the parish 4,016 parishioners. The school continues to educate 250 young people in grades pre-K through eighth grade. As the current rector Msgr. Heintz states so eloquently: “The parish, which is jokingly described as a parish trying to be a cathedral (while the Fort Wayne Cathedral is described as a cathedral trying to be a parish!), has provided a kind of anchor in the community of a strong Catholic presence. Whenever some news story relative to the Church breaks, they come here to film and interview folks. It is a strong and public presence, and helps to unite both halves of the diocese.”²⁸ St. Matthew Co-Cathedral parishioner’s take great pride in their love of Christ and their impact on the diocese and the community of South Bend. Due to the great vision of Bishop Pursley in 1960 to designate the parish as a cathedral he helped unify the diocese. Msgr. Heintz echoes this

²⁸ Heintz to Garrow

sentiment by stating: “In years past, there may have been some tensions between Fort Wayne and South Bend, but I do not experience this at all today.”²⁹ As St. Matthew Cathedral continues to enter into 100 years of existence the parish is as active as ever and will continue to lead by example and be an impact within the Universal, Diocesan, and local communities of the Catholic Church.

Behold the Lord at work for, as Scripture states: “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. (Psalm 127:1);” The story of St. Matthew Co-Cathedral, South Bend, under the watchful Eyes of an All Good God who never looked away!

²⁹ Heintz to Garrow

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