

# History of the St. Felix Parish

## The Missionary Period

Although the parish has been in existence more than 150 years, history notes that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass probably was offered within the confines of the future parish as early as 1686 when Nicholas Perrot established a trading post at or near what is the present sight of Wabasha. With Perrot on his expedition was a Jesuit priest, Fr. Joseph Jean Marest, who labored among the Sioux Indians.

Six years before that, Belgian Recollect Father Louis Hennepin, captured by a band of Sioux while ascending the Mississippi in April 1680, became the first white man to come to this area.

The history of Saint Felix is closely allied to the development of Wabasha as an integral and influential force in its life. In 1830, Augustine Rocque built the first trading post and the first house in Rocque's Landing, or Wabasha as it eventually became known in 1843. General Sibley visited the house on his trip to Mendota in 1834 and he said that it was the only home existing between Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin and Mendota at the time.

Father Lucian Galtier had been sent by Bishop Mathias Loras of Dubuque to administer to Catholics on the upper Mississippi in 1840. To him went the honor of saying the first Mass in the Diocese of Winona when he stopped at Rocque's home. A frequent visitor here during trips from Mendota to Dubuque, he availed himself of the Rocque home to offer Mass for the first settlers, Catholics of French extraction.

In 1843, Father Galtier was transferred to Keokuk, Iowa. Father A. Ravoux, who had been assisting the zealous pioneer priest in the care of the few Catholics scattered over Minnesota and the Dakotas east of the Missouri river, was left in exclusive charge of this 150,000 square-mile territory from 1844 to 1851.

In his memoirs, Father Ravoux wrote, *"My little flock was scattered- Mendota, St. Paul, St. Anthony and Wabasha were the principal localities where lived several Catholic families."* Records of baptism proved that Father Ravoux visited Wabasha officially at least twice a year, holding services at various private homes.

According to these early records, he baptized Genevive Larose on September 29, 1845; Joseph Buisson on March 13, 1846; Augustine Perron on January 19, 1848, and Cyprian Buisson on January 5, 1849.

The establishment of the new diocese of Milwaukee, in 1843, placed Minnesota under the jurisdiction of Milwaukee's first bishop, Bishop Henni, thereby removing this territory from the jurisdiction of Bishop Loras of Dubuque.

Father Ravoux repeatedly besought his new superior to send additional workers into the mission of the Northwest. The Bishop consoled him with the assurance that Saint Paul, ere long, would be made a diocese. The prediction was fulfilled in July 1850 when Saint Paul was made an Episcopal see with the Reverend James Cretin, Vicar General of Dubuque, and a personal friend of Father Ravoux, being appointed the first bishop in the fall of 1850.

Bishop Cretin urged Father Ravoux to erect a chapel in Wabasha instead of in Chaska, as he had planned, even though the necessary logs already had been prepared. Father Ravoux (later Monsignor) with Wabasha pioneers Thomas Robinson, Joseph Rocque, Frank Lapoint, and Peter Lariviere went to Chaska.

From there, the pioneers rafted the logs prepared for the new chapel in the Minnesota River down the Mississippi and safely to Wabasha where the faithful and willing workers soon framed the first chapel on upper Main Street near the present Wabasha bathing beach.

Because the chapel had not been built upon church property, it passed into other hands and served for a time as Wabasha's first public school, then a printing office, and later as a private dwelling.

### **Saint Felix Parish Established**

The years 1850 to 1861 witnessed a considerable influx of settlers of Irish and German descent into Wabasha and Goodhue counties. The need of a resident pastor became imperative. As administrator of the young diocese, following the death of Bishop Cretin, Monsignor Ravoux realized this need and appointed Father Felix Tissot in charge of the Catholics of Wabasha and Goodhue counties in October 1858.

Saint Felix Parish, now over 150 years old commemorates on October 16<sup>th</sup> the arrival of its first pastor who found then neither a church, a residence, nor even an organized parish. Neither was there much money, as was evidence by the collection of \$7 at his first Mass, \$3 at the second Mass a few weeks later, and then nothing for six months.

Despite what appeared to be almost unsurmountable obstacles, Father Tissot planned the building of a church on land donated by Joseph Rocque which today forms the old part of Saint Felix Cemetery.

While the new church was being erected, a second bishop of Saint Paul, the Reverend Thomas L. Grace, was ordained. He came to Wabasha in October 1859 to dedicate the church and to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. On this occasion, jubilation turned into gloom when the bishop decided not to dedicate the church since it was too far removed from the center of the city, and he advised it to be moved to a more central and favorable location. However, Confirmation was administered to the class of 19 which became the only class to receive the sacrament while the church was located in the cemetery grounds.

Among the names included in the class were those of Barrett, Buisson, Brass, Benjamin, Drury, Ganie, Hickey, McCaffrey, Nolan, Romandino, and Ryan. Some of these names still grace the parish roster, while others have disappeared from the Wabasha scene.

Despite the bitter disappointed regarding the church, Father Tissot obeyed the wishes of his superior and made plans to rebuild the church on the site of the former Notre Dame convent at Pembroke and Third Street.

The passing years proved the wisdom of the bishop's judgment, but the decision would have been a crushing one for a lesser man than Father Tissot.

Saint Felix had just reason to be proud of its first pastor who possessed such great courage and determination. The new building erected under his supervision was two

story, the upper story served as a church and the lower one as a school. Lack of funds made the task a difficult one, with Father Tissot himself contributing much of the manual as well as artisan labor. Despite many difficulties, the new building was completed in the summer of 1862, and the bishop was invited a second time to consecrate and to dedicate a church in Wabasha.

The dedication took place on July 27, 1862, with the church being given the name of the pastor's patron, Saint Felix.

The record of the dedication, as it appears in the parish books in Father Tissot's own handwriting, reads as follows: "At Wabasha on Sunday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1862, the church erected by the faithful (on lot 6, block 22) under the invocation of Saint Felix was solemnly dedicated to Almighty God by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Langdon Grace, Bishop of Saint Paul, assisted by the Reverends Louis Caillet and Felix Tissot, the Pastor. The feast of Saint Felix, patron of the church occurs regularly on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November." – Felix Tissot, p.p.

Confirmation was administered for a second time to a class of 71 members, 44 of whom were of Irish, 19 of French, and 8 of German descent.

Everlasting gratitude also was due Father Tissot for establishing a parish school with Mary Cavanaugh, later Mrs. John McDonald, as the first teacher. Frequently, father Tissot served as both principal and teacher.

His pastoral cares were not confined to Wabasha alone. Catholics of both Wabasha and Goodhue counties were assigned to his administration, and his circuit included about 25 locations.

During his pastorate, he built churches in Lake City, Highland, Oakwood, Red Wing, Goodhue, and Belvedere.

After his arduous missionary labors in this territory, father Tissot became pastor at Saint Anthony, now East of Minneapolis. He died at his home in Minneapolis in 1894. His memory stays enshrined in the hearts of the grateful Saint Felix Parish where his courage in hardship serves as an inspiration to all.

In October 1866, Father James Trobec arrived in Wabasha to succeed Father Tissot. During the first year of his pastorate, he built the church at Minnieska and later enlarged that at Highland.

With the opening of railroad traffic between Winona and Saint Paul in 1871 giving new business impetus, membership at Saint Felix was fast increasing. Because of this increase, Father Trobec planned a permanent parochial school to replace the private school previously maintained by the priest with Mrs. Smoot and Henry Funk as teachers.

As a first step, Father Trobec built a parsonage on a lot adjoining the church in 1872, and vacated his former quarters on the ground floor of the church building. These quarters were arranged into school rooms and a residence for the nuns who were to conduct classes.

## **Saint Felix School Opens**

On September 2, two lately-arrived School Sisters of Notre Dame – Sister Mary Venantia and Sister Mary Saturnina with the former in charge – opened Saint Felix School. Enrollment was 71 pupils, half of whom were Indians. (On July 2, 1895, two

students Nora McKeffrey and Louis Schmidt, were honored by being members of the first two-year high school graduating class..)

Two years after the opening, Father Trobec realized that because of increased enrollments, there was also a need for greater church accommodations. The foundation for a new church was begun in the spring of 1874 following a generous response on the part of the parishioners, gradually becoming more affluent. The cornerstone was laid on July 14, 1874.

Thousands gathered in Wabasha the following year on July 18 for the dedication of the new church by Bishop Grace. It was a memorable day for both the parish and the city as bands, delegations from neighboring parishes, and members of societies in proper regalia and with banners, all added to the color of the occasion.

The new church cost \$20,000 which was raised through contributions with the greatest contributor being Father Trobec who gave \$3,500. During the next year, approximately \$6,000 was expended for necessary furnishings.

In the meantime, school accommodations once more became inadequate. So a 20' x 30' addition was planned and built in 1884. At this time the church was also raised on a new foundation and improved with a coat of brick veneer. The final material improvement undertaken by Father Trobec during his pastorate occurred in 1887 with the frescoing of the church at a cost of \$1,400. The improvement made Saint Felix one of the most beautiful churches in southern Minnesota at the time.

The priest's efforts as a pastor were limited by no means to material progress. He had missions given in his parish at various times and, as early as 1872, brought to Wabasha the famous Jesuit missionary, the Rev. F.H. Weninger. Later there followed Paulist missionaries Wyman and Elliot and also a band of Jesuits.

Saint Felix had increased to 300 families by 1884. By the time Father Trobec completed his work and had delivered his farewell sermon to the parishioners on October 2, 1887, he had left a church, a school a convent, and a parsonage as monuments to his labors after 21 years of devoted service to Saint Felix.

His next call took him to Saint Paul where he was asked by Archbishop John Ireland to form a new parish. He remained there until September 1897 when he was appointed Bishop in the Diocese of Saint Cloud.

The successor of Father Trobec was Father Maxmilian Wurst. He had read an appeal, in his native Germany, by Father J.F. Buh, later Vicar General of the Diocese of Duluth, asking for volunteers to go to the western missions of the United States, especially those of Minnesota.

He offered his services and at the age of 15 arrived in Saint Paul with eight other men who had accompanied Father Buh to America. Bishop Grace sent the youngest of the group, Max Wurst, first to Saint John's at Collegeville and, then, to Saint Francis College, Wisconsin, where he studied philosophy. He was sent to the "Grand Seminary" in Montreal for his studies in theology.

Those studies were completed by Christmas of 1876, but the young man was not old enough to be ordained. Therefore, he continued his studies privately until he was recalled by Bishop Grace to Saint Paul where he received the Diaconate on October 30, 1877.

After that, as a deacon, he assisted Monsignor Plut at Shakopee, Minnesota until his ordination to the priesthood in April 20, 1878 by Bishop Grace in the Cathedral of Saint

Paul. His first mass was offered up on Saint Mark's Day, April 25, 1878, at Saint Mark's Church in Shakopee.

After his ordination, he served as assistant pastor in Rochester, as the first resident of LeSueur, Minnesota, and dean of LeSueur and Sibley counties. He was appointed pastor of Saint Felix by Archbishop Ireland and came to Wabasha on October 4, 1887.

During that year, father Wurst was faced with the problems of a parish decreasing in size. Sixty families had moved when the Luger Furniture Company moved from Wabasha to north Saint Paul. The stationing of a resident pastor at Minneiska in 1896, along with the subsequent establishment of Saint Agnes Church in Kellogg and a new parish in Theilman some years later, resulted in the Wabasha parish's membership dropping from 325 families to 200.

Improvements involving financial expenditures became difficult. Father Wurst succeeded, nevertheless, in reducing the church debt and, in addition, raising \$1,100 for three church bells which were solemnly blessed on January 15, 1889.

Need for a new rectory became evident with the arrival of an assistant pastor in 1890. Serving at Saint Felix parish as assistants between the years 1890 and 1919 were the following priests: Fathers J.J. Culliton, O'Connell, Dominic Mangan, M.J. Holper, and Louis Wurst (brother to Father Wurst). The new rectory became a reality in a comparatively short time.

Improvements were also made in the school. New floors were laid and new desks installed. The church received comfortable new pews and a new steam heating plant was installed so that the parishioners, who had to face the icy blast of Minnesota winters as they travelled to church, might worship in comfort upon arriving at the house of God.

All went smoothly throughout these years as sacrifices were made in response to the appeal of the pastor. Then came the greatest blow of all to add to the legion of difficulties that had beset the young Father Wurst in Wabasha.

## Tragedy Strikes

A cry, "the church is on fire!" resounded throughout Wabasha that fateful day, February 7, 1893. Indeed, the cry was true. The people could only watch and pray while the church became a smoldering ruin, thus wiping out in a few hours the work of 20 years. Not a single article of the furnishings of the church had been saved. Even the bells crashed to the ground, "a mass of broken metal."

Despite the tragic loss, the parish began at once to plan with Father Wurst for a new church. It is interesting to note that Father Louis Wurst, the pastor's brother, was ordained to the priesthood a few months after the fire and said the first Mass amidst the ruins of the burned church — "*beneath the canopy of heaven.*" By November 1893, at the cost of \$17,000 and decorated by Wabasha's own George Satory, the new edifice was completed.

The structure was dedicated in Thanksgiving Day, November 30, 1893 by Bishop Cotter of Winona with the former pastor, by then Bishop Trobec, preaching the sermon of dedication. Saint Felix Church had "*risen from its ashes.*" The three bells, which had been recast after the fire, received their second baptism preceding the dedication ceremony and still serve today to summon the faithful.

To Father Wurst also goes the credit for the founding of Saint Elizabeth's Hospital in 1898 and which today is a fine, fully equipped modern hospital and nursing home with a **licensed capacity of 45 acute and 52 long-term care beds**, operated by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother of the "West Side" of Wabasha, serving the community from Alma, Wisconsin, across the river, to Elgin and to Rollingstone in the south.

Father Wurst had originally owned the property on which he planned to erect an orphanage or children's home. However, he turned the property over to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and named the newly established hospital, Saint Elizabeth, in memory of his mother.

After founding the hospital, Father Wurst again began plans for an orphanage. He had received a bequest from Henry Frazen for this purpose. In 1930, under the direction of Bishop Cotter, Saint Joseph's Orphanage was established with the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother in charge. A \$40,000 building erected in 1905, which originally housed six children, at times provided shelter and care for as many as 100 children in the early part of the century and for up to 40 children in later years before the home was moved to Winona in September 1950.

Back at Saint Felix, the need for a new parochial school was becoming more and more apparent. The old church building, transformed into a school, was at best makeshift. Therefore, on October 1, 1901, work was begun on a new school building.

The structure was completed in January 1903. Formal dedication was postponed to April 29, 1904, the Silver Jubilee of Father Wurst's ordination to the priesthood. Bishop Cotter again conducted the ceremony of blessing the new school and also preached the jubilee sermon.

The new building, having been dedicated, now provided adequate space. In 1904, a full four-year high school course was added to the curriculum. The first high school graduation took place in June 1908 with four graduates. The construction of the new school now made possible the providing of more adequate and comfortable living quarters for the Sisters of Notre Dame, who conducted the school. Through the financial and manual construction by the parishioners, the former old school building was transformed into a convent.

In recognition of Father Wurst's masterful, scholarly, devout and unselfish life, Pope Pius X on January 28, 1911, raised him to the dignity of a domestic prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor with all the attendant privileges.

Monsignor Wurst was interested in the social and civic life, as well as the spiritual progress of Wabasha, evidenced by the fact he was instrumental in bringing Buena Vista Sanatorium, later called Buena Vista Nursing Home of Wabasha County, to the city.

Thirty-three busy and active years in Wabasha were taking a toll from the life of Monsignor Wurst. While hearing confessions during the Christmas season of 1918, he suddenly became ill. He never fully recovered from the illness and on April 15, 1919, after having spent an admirable priestly life in the service of his Master, Monsignor Wurst, a great man of God, passed to his eternal reward.

After the death of Monsignor Wurst, a short period of time elapsed before a new pastor was appointed. Father Hartman, during this time, served as a temporary pastor. In the fall of 1919, father John Bartholome, a native son of Wabasha County, became pastor of Saint Felix parish.

Father John Bartholome was born in Chester Township and availed himself of the education offered in Bellchester at the local parochial school. Later he attended Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee where he pursued the classical course. His studies in philosophy and theology were made at the Saint Paul Seminary in Minnesota's capital city, where on May 24, 1902, he was ordained a priest by the late Archbishop John Ireland. Father Bartholome, after his ordination, served as the first residential pastor of Worthington for 18 months, after which time he was appointed pastor of Saint Gabriel's parish in Fulda, Minnesota in 1904. There, he remained until 1919 when he was transferred to Wabasha after supervising the building of a new church and school.

Father Bartholome, upon his arrival in Wabasha, viewed the magnitude of work accomplished by his predecessor. To him was given a weighty responsibility, maintaining a parish already established. New requirements in education and educational facilities made many changes imperative.

In view of this situation, he began at once a program of transformation. The science rooms and library of the school were enlarged and equipped. An athletic program was inaugurated. In 1927, the high school became fully accredited to the University of Minnesota. In 1933, it was accredited to the North Central Association of Secondary Schools.

His true worth as a priest, a financier, and as an organizer can be appraised properly when it is remembered that he guided the parish through the difficult years of the great depression of the 1930's without having it adversely affected whatsoever.

The growth of the parish and the increased enrollment at the school necessitated the additional services of a second priest. In the fall of 1933, Father Urban Buchheit was appointed assistant pastor of Saint Felix. Also serving after Father Buchheit was transferred in 1936, were Fathers Lo Neudecker, 1936-1938; L.F. Kaiser, 1938-41; Waldemar Frisch, 1941-1943; Leonard Clausen, 1943-1945; Edward Klein, 1945-1948; William Anderson, 1948-1956; and James Dandeleit, 1954-1956.

In August 1944, Pope Pius XII recognized the accomplishments of Father John Bartholome by appointing him to the rank of Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. He was invested with the robes of his rank in October 1944 by Bishop Leo Binz. On May 14, 1952, Monsignor Bartholome celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood and was honored at a civic reception that evening.

With the end of World War II, there came a return to more normal living and along with it increased interest in education.

Once again the facilities of Saint Felix School were overcrowded. Under the administration of Monsignor Bartholome and with the supervision of Father William Anderson, the assistant pastor, plans were begun to provide additional educational facilities. On December 2, 1954, ground was broken and construction was begun on a new high school building which would house 250 pupils and an auditorium-gymnasium with a seating capacity of 6000 to 1000.

### **New High School Dedication**

The high school was moved into their new plant, constructed at a cost of over \$36,000 fully equipped, during the first week of December 1954. On Sunday afternoon,

May 15, 1955, the new school and auditorium were solemnly blessed by Bishop Edward A. Fitzgerald, who also delivered the sermon at the dedication.

The successful results of Monsignor Bartholome's careful planning were evident in the growth of spiritual life in the parish and in the education of children entrusted to his care.

On August 16, 1956, after having served God for 54 years as a parish priest, including 37 as pastor of Saint Felix, he resigned his pastorate to lie in retirement in Wabasha, viewing the fruits of his labors and enjoying the company of his many friends.

For slightly more than a year, Father John, as he was affectionately known, enjoyed his retirement. But, as with all mortals, infirmities exacted their toll. He was hospitalized in mid-October, and on the Feast of All Saints in 1957, almost as though he, himself, had chosen the day, his great soul returned to his creator.

Bishop Fitzgerald next appointed as the pastor of Saint Felix parish a priest who was not entirely a stranger to the faith community and to others in the city. Recently raised to the mark of domestic prelate, Right Reverend Monsignor John A. Mich came to Wabasha on August 16, 1956.

The fifth pastor of Saint Felix parish was born in Olmsted County, Minnesota. His high school studies were at the former Heffrom High School in Rochester and the Academy at Saint Mary's College, Winona. His preparatory studies and course in philosophy were taken at Saint Mary's from which he received his Bachelor of Arts degree. He then went to Saint Paul Seminary where he studied theology.

On June 3, 1933, he was ordained into the priesthood at the Cathedral of Saint Paul by late Archbishop Gregory Murray. Following his ordination, he served as assistant pastor at Luverne, and as administrator of Saint Nicholas parish in Dundee from 1934 until 1936 when he became an assistant at Saints Peter and Paul parish in Blue Earth. He remained there until June 1943 when he came to Wabasha to serve as director of Saint Joseph's Orphanage. He also was the first Director of Charities for the Dioceses of Winona, a position to which he was appointed in 1945. These positions, along with that at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital, helped him become acquainted with people in Wabasha and the surrounding area.

In July 1950, he left Wabasha to become Pastor of Saint Mary's parish, Geneva, Minnesota. After serving there for 13 months, he was appointed pastor of Saint Ann's Parish, Slayton, where he supervised the construction of a new \$155,000 church.

Father Walter Fogarty also came to Wabasha on August 16 to serve as both an assistant pastor and assistant principal of Saint Felix high School. He remained in that position until June 1958. Two months later, Father Eugene Egan succeeded him.

Monsignor Mich was entrusted with the administration of a parish with a historical background of more than a hundred years. His task was to continue the work begun by the pioneer pastors as well as to tend that seed which had been watered by the grace of God, nurtured by subsequent clerics, and now had flowered into a viable faith community with upwards of 450 families.

## **First Century's Records**

The records of Saint Felix, during the first century of its existence, indicated 6,122 people had been ushered into the spiritual Christian life through the reception of the

Sacrament of Baptism by the priests of Saint Felix since October 31, 1858 when Michael James O'Brien became the first child baptized in the newly-formed parish.

In order to provide continuity in both the community and the state during that same period, 1546 couples pledged to "love, honor, and obey" in the presence of Saint Felix' priests, thus establishing another basic unit of society, the family. Throughout those first hundred years, a total of 2351 persons were administered last rites by the parish priest.

These and other records of Saint Felix told the story of joy, hope, sorrow, compassion, and love; of success and of failures, but mainly a story of accomplishments through sacrifice.

## **The Last 50 Years**

Monsignor Mich remained at Saint Felix until April 9, 1964, when he was succeeded by Monsignor John P. Gengler. By July, the following year, the new pastor had given his approval to construction of a single story convent to replace the old two-story building which housed Notre Dame nuns teaching at Saint Felix schools.

Improvements were also made to the kitchen facilities of the school's auditorium during the summer when a cooler and a walk-in freezer were added.

On January 11, 1967, Father John P. Daly was given control of the parish by Bishop Loras J. Watters. In the face of a rising tide of sentiment to close the high school because of mounting costs, the decision was made to do that effective June 1, 1968. The following month, Public School District 811 signed a contract to rent the former Catholic high school in order to take care of the over-crowding resulting when former Saint Felix student transferred into the public system. A retrenchment policy in education resulted as Saint Felix, for the first time in 75 years, reduced its level of education to the elementary sixth grade level during the 1968-1969 school year. Acting principal was Father Richard Engels at the time of closing while the assistant principal was Sister M. Alix, S.S.N.D.

Noteworthy was the fact that on May 27, 1973, the parish held a belated celebration of the School Sisters of Notre Dame's 100 years of unselfish devotion towards furthering the religious education of Saint Felix students. Literally, more than a thousand persons took part in welcoming back those religious who had taught here, at a reception held during a Saturday night in the old school section of the Saint Felix complex. A Mass of Thanksgiving was offered on the following Sunday, followed by a banquet in the school auditorium attended by the nuns and their many friends.

Starting with the reign of Pope John XXIII, and during the decades following, there was a period of ecumenism resulting in greater dialogue between existing religious congregations. Following Vatican II, the laity also was granted greater responsibility in liturgical functions, while the Mass was recited in the native tongue, rather than in Latin, with the priest facing the faithful from behind a free standing altar rather than from the high altar previously used for the Holy Sacrifice. The laity also assisted with distributing Communion.

## **Saint Felix**

Named after Father Felix Tissot who was the first priest to serve the parish 1858-1866.

## **ITEMS IN THE CHURCH**

**Pipe Organ:** It was installed in 1904 at the cost of \$4000.00. In 2000 the organ was refurbished at the cost of \$50,000. Today the replacement would exceed \$250,000.

**Altars:** were imported from Bavaria, Germany in 1901. They were hand carved of Butternut Wood.

Front Altar:

**St. Felix of Valois** (1127-1212) His feast day is November 20 and is imaged at the top center of the altar. St. Felix was born to a royal family, he gave up his good life to become a hermit and a priest. At seventy, he was called by God to found and run the order of the Trinitarians. This religious group gave ransom to free Christian slaves. St. Felix, with John of Matha, built monasteries and hospitals to care for the poor Christians. St. Felix had a vision of a white deer with a cross on the antlers. The Trinitarian Order therefore wore a white habit with the red and blue cross on their chests.

**St. Boniface** (680-755): Located on the left is the patron Saint of Germany. He was born in England. His dream was to convert Germany. Boniface is holding his bishop's staff in his right hand and a book pierced by a dagger in his left hand. Because books were rare and precious at this time, it is said that as a dagger came toward him, he lifted the book to protect it. This statue was chosen to represent the original German Parishioners of Saint Felix Parish.

**St. Patrick** (385-461) Located on the right is the patron Saint of Ireland. He was born in Great Britain, and became a bishop and later went to Ireland to preach the Gospel. He used the three leaves of the shamrock to explain the unity of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). This statue was chosen to represent the original Irish Parishioners of St. Felix Church.

Marian Altar:

**Mary:** Patroness of the Americas. Mary and her child Jesus are in the center. ....

**St. Agnes** (277-300) is on the left side and is the Patron Saint of young girls. At age 13 she was arrested in Rome and ordered to deny God. She was beheaded after refusing to do so. She is usually portrayed with a lamb and the sword of martyrdom.

**St. Cecilia** (2<sup>nd</sup> Century) on the right is the Patron Saint of musicians. She was persecuted in Rome for becoming a Christian. Note the musical instrument in her hand.

**St. Joseph Altar** - St. Joseph is the Patron Saint of Carpenters and Foster Parents. He is also respected for being the husband of Mary and the stepfather of Jesus.

**St. Aloysius** (1568-1591) on the right side is the Patron Saint of young and abused children. At a young age he began devoting his life to God. Even though his Father did not want him to follow a religious vocation he entered the Society of Jesus at age 17. He won a reputation for innocence and sanctity. He died at the age of 23.

**St. John Berchmans** (1599-1621) on the left hand side is the Patron Saint of altar servers. Early in life he wanted to become a priest. At age 17 he became a Jesuit novice and was known for his diligence and piety. He died at age 19. Many miracles were attributed to him after his death. He was canonized in 1888.

### **ST. FELIX SCHOOL**

Opened in 1872 by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Currently the school has Pre-Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The high school closed and the last St. Felix High School graduation was 1968.