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Building an Urban Faith Community: Centennial History of St. Augustine Church

Part Two

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By the 1950s, the campus of St. Augustine occupied the block of Chili Avenue between Hobart and Lozier Streets. In addition to its magnificent church (far right), the campus housed a rectory (center), school building (foreground), and three-story brick convent. (From the St. Augustine Archives.)

Cover: St. Augustine, (left) the central figure of the majestic stained glass featured at the church's altar, was designed by Rochester artisans for Pike Stained Glass Company. St. Peter, (right) inscribed with "Gift of the Portuguese," was the church's very first stained-glass window and was contributed to the church as a show of appreciation by the approximately 200 Portuguese members of the congregation. (Photos by Brian D. Fox.)

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St. Augustine's beloved Monsignor John M. Duffy, church pastor from 1945 to 1968, was known to have personally paid the tuition for many children to attend Catholic schools. Here, he and school Principal Sister Mary Grace Buckley pose with students of the 1960s. (From the St. Augustine Archives.)

One of Rochester's Leading Parishes

It was the fifties, and St. Augustine, one of Rochester's leading Roman Catholic parishes,¹ thrived. Monsignor John M. Duffy, a well-known and highly respected priest in the Rochester diocese, led the parish. Members of St. Augustine's loved and revered him. Five thousand people belonged to the parish, more than half the population of the solidly middle class neighborhood in which it stood.² Attendance in the school approached 700.³ Each of the campus buildings boasted significant improvements. The Sisters of St. Joseph, 14 of whom taught in the school with three lay teachers, lived on campus in a beautiful new brick convent. A full range of societies furthered spiritual life and added socialization for members.

Bishop Kearney sent Father Duffy to St. Augustine's in 1945 following the death of the parish's first pastor, Father John H. O'Brien. A native of rural Red Creek, N.Y., Duffy became a priest on his 30th birthday. After teaching at Aquinas Institute and serving as assistant pastor at St. Anthony's and Holy Family churches in Rochester, he

accepted an exciting new position. In 1929, Father John F. O'Hern, third Bishop of Rochester, appointed Father Duffy the first full-time Director of Catholic Education for the Diocese. ⁴

From his new office in the Lincoln-Alliance Building, Father Duffy worked out the first real diocesan educational program and exerted his influence in legislative matters regarding bus transportation and release time for Roman Catholic public school students to study religion. His outstanding service in this work was eventually recognized by his appointment to this flourishing urban parish. ⁵

Upon arrival at St. Augustine, Father Duffy assessed the needs of the parish and set out to meet them. He found that many of the buildings on the campus needed repairs. The traumatic events of the second World War, and Father O'Brien's poor health during the last years of his pastorate, had diverted attention from the physical plant.

After attending to the school's curriculum, methodology, and teachers, Father Duffy turned to building projects. He ordered new plumbing and heating systems for the school and replaced windows on the building's west side. He eventually oversaw the construction of two additions designed by Rochester architect Frank Quinlan in 1953 and 1958. ⁶

The rectory required attention to provide living quarters for three assistant priests and adequate office space. Housing for the Sisters of Saint Joseph presented an even bigger challenge. The Sisters who taught in the school lived in an overcrowded and poorly heated convent. Msgr. Duffy moved them into two properties, one on Lozier Street and the other on Hobart Street. The old convent and the house next to it were torn down to provide adequate space for a new three-story dwelling that accommodated 18 Sisters. Parishioners launched a drive for \$40,000 during construction. The response was overwhelming, and in 1950 the brick convent that matched the church ⁷ was completed at the cost of \$140,000.

An intensive series of renovations and installations in the church led up to an important date, 1948, the Golden Jubilee year of St. Augustine's founding. Lighter glass replaced dark glass in the clerestory. ⁸ A new lighting system enhanced the beauty of the sanctuary. Artists decorated the wall behind the main altar with angels and gilt Byzantine-inspired patterns. Artisans renovated the altar canopy, and selected a complementary tapestry for the dossal. A Stromberg-Carlson loud speaker system facilitated the transmission of the Scripture readings and sermons.

The golden anniversary year was a busy one, replete with many celebrations. In May, the Holy Father bestowed the distinctive rank of Domestic Prelate ⁹ upon Father Duffy, which entitled him to be

addressed as Right Reverend Monsignor. A month later the new Msgr. Duffy celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood.

In preparation for the parish commemoration of 50 years, a new oak-cased organ was installed in the choir loft. One hundred gilded pipes hid 2,092 organ pipes arranged in 30 sets behind the ornamental casework. The organ evoked a tonal quality and resounding harmony common in huge cathedrals. A celebrity guest, the Canadian-born organist Dr. Eugene Lapierre, dedicated the organ with a recital on October 24, 1948.¹⁰

The fund raising of parish societies made the building and renovation projects possible during Msgr. Duffy's tenure. The bazaars and festivals begun in 1907 continued annually. The entire neighborhood turned out for these events, which each netted about \$10,000 dollars. They continued for many years until dwindling attendance and lower profits made this major effort no longer worthwhile.¹¹

The Mothers' Club was an active force in providing resources for the school. In 1967, they provided funds for a beautifully furnished library. Parishioners built all the shelving and cataloged the books. A Resource Center, opposite the library, opened the following year.¹²

From the start and throughout his time at St. Augustine, parishioners cherished Msgr. Duffy for his love of people, kindness and generosity.¹³ His popularity earned him the title, "Pied Piper." He was very private about his many good works. Literally, he carried out the adage: "Let not the right hand know what the left hand is doing." For instance, he paid the tuition for many boys and girls to attend Catholic high schools.¹⁴

In 1968, Msgr. Duffy celebrated his 75th birthday. After 23 years of service to St. Augustine's parish, he retired and moved to Mother of Sorrows Rectory where he could continue ministering to people without the burden of administration.¹⁵ Msgr. Duffy died on February 19, 1980 at the age of 86.

Transformations

By the time of Msgr. Duffy's retirement in 1968, the parish neighborhood was entering a period of profound changes. Attendance in church and school were beginning a decline that increased in the years following Duffy's departure. The era of stable, long term pastorates was over. Two resident pastors served St. Augustine parish during the first 70 years of its existence. During the next 30 years, eight pastors came and went for a variety of reasons, often in quick succession. As in earlier years, women religious brought stability to the parish. The people of the parish, although shrinking in number, accepted increasing responsibility for the leadership, spiritual life, and

financial viability of the church. They also proved willing to embrace and lead change. The days of campus building ended and a time of bridge building began. The once self-contained community began to reach out to other religious and neighborhood groups in an effort to improve the lives of residents of Southwest Rochester.

At mid-century, the neighborhood surrounding St. Augustine's urban campus consisted almost entirely of people of European descent whose origins were Germany, England, Ireland, Italy, and Portugal.

The majority of the people in the 19th and 20th Wards were middle class. Typical residents lived in family units, owned their own homes, had high school educations, worked as craftsmen, foremen, clerical workers and operatives, and earned wages which averaged \$3,000 to \$4,000 annually.¹⁶

In the 1960s, a new ethnic group, African Americans, began to move into the 19th and 20th Wards.¹⁷ Many initially moved to the greater Rochester area during the years following World War II, to obtain seasonal agricultural work.¹⁸ Following the Rochester riot of 1964, local corporations and schools actively recruited African-American professionals to work in Rochester. By 1970, 50,000 African Americans made Rochester their home.¹⁹

Intense discrimination confined these emigrants to housing in central Rochester, primarily in the northeast (Ward 7) and southwest (Ward 3) sections.²⁰ Formidable barriers of racism and prejudice prevented them from purchasing homes outside of these areas, either in the city or the suburbs.

The experience of the James and Alice H. Young family, prominent Rochesterians, provides a case in point. When the Youngs, both college educated, attempted to purchase a home in the 19th Ward in 1957, their realtor's company received numerous calls and complaints.²¹ Ultimately, "a white woman" purchased a home on Millbank Street for them, a house which they never saw nor selected, and held it a month before turning it over to the Youngs. When neighbors learned that African Americans would live in the house, they sent a letter threatening to burn the home and signed it the "KKK of Millbank Street."²²

Several factors opened the neighborhoods of Southwest Rochester to African Americans in the 1960s. Urban renewal destroyed significant blocks of inner city housing and supplied relocation funds. At the same time, "large numbers [of 19th Ward residents] who had purchased homes at the same time were ready to move."²³ Finally, realtors inaugurated a controversial practice called "block busting" to force integration in the outer city neighborhoods.

Common block busting techniques included:

- “• the use of race issues to encourage panic selling
- the encouragement of Negro prospective buyers and the discouragement of white buyers
- the encouragement of buyers to use property for speculative purposes rather than for residence.” ²⁴

A massive exchange of property ownership followed. On the streets surrounding St. Monica's, more than half the residents moved between 1965 and 1970. ²⁵ “White flight” occurred, even though African-American newcomers came from the same socioeconomic background as their European-American neighbors. ²⁶

A neighborhood resident looked back on the factors that motivated many European-Americans to relocate:

I remember well the 1960s mind set of ‘impending doom’ in the parish as the racial make up began to change. The flight to the suburbs...and truly, it was a flight, a fleeing, motivated chiefly by fear. I wonder what was gained and what was lost, by all those flights. And what was there to be afraid of? ²⁷

St. Augustine parishioners observed as membership in St. Monica parish declined, and the pastor, Father Edward A. Zimmer, witnessed a great deal of tension between old and new residents. Father Zimmer's efforts to provide a youth center in the church, and basketball courts in the church parking lot, evoked outright hostility from parishioners. ²⁸

Changes in property ownership took place at a slower rate on the streets near St. Augustine than they had near St. Monica. ²⁹ The neighborhood population did not evolve as rapidly ³⁰ and attendance in the church and school, though declining, remained status quo. This gave parishioners the opportunity to prepare for integration and avert problems. ³¹

Many large families moved to the western suburbs of Gates and Chili during this time, causing school figures to decline. Most families moved because they feared a loss in property values. African-American children enrolled in the school during these years, although their numbers remained small. ³²

Several hundred 19th Ward residents met in 1965 to form the Nineteenth Ward Community Association. Its goal was:

to create a model for the possibility of a racially integrated community within a stable residential area...one in which property owners are largely resident on premises, in which homes are largely one or two family residences, and in which the buying and selling of property takes place for reasons other than panic and speculation.³³

During the transitional years of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Father Edward Tolster served as pastor of St. Augustine. Father had previously served the parish as an assistant in charge of youth activities and as administrator at the end of Father O'Brien's tenure. Parishioners who recalled his presence in the parish 25 years earlier affectionately received him. However, many circumstances had changed. Tolster had developed a heart condition and the parish was adapting to integration.

Father Tolster assumed his duties in 1968, just three years after the end of the Second Vatican Council.³⁴ He wished to inculcate the recommendations of the Council among his parishioners and exerted every effort to support them.³⁵ One of the most significant was the establishment of a parish council.

In the spirit of Vatican II, lay people were invited to engage in the total apostolic mission of the parish through a parish council. This involvement called for parishioners to promote and implement programs which fostered the spiritual, educational, social, financial and physical needs of the parish and to serve as representatives of the members of the parish in matters pertaining to administration, fiscal affairs, and facilities of the parish. The council acted in an advisory capacity to the pastor who possessed the final administrative say.³⁶

Father Tolster's brief pastorate marked a turning point for the parish, as he sought to network with and serve the larger community. His greatest contribution to the parish was the effort to further ecumenism with area churches. Father Tolster was the first Catholic pastor to establish a "Reach-out" to all Christians in the area.³⁷

On January 27, 1970 a remarkable spiritual alliance occurred in the 19th Ward. All the ministers and priests in the southwest region of the city of Rochester signed a covenant, designated SWEM (Southwest Ecumenical Mission). Founded on the common commitment of the churches, they pledged to "the Lord Jesus Christ and to one another...to aid public and private agencies and community organizations in assuming their appropriate responsibilities for meeting human needs in the southwest sector."³⁸

In 1982, SWEM opened an Emergency Food Cupboard.³⁹ To the present day, the people of the neighborhood donate food, money and their time to maintain the food cupboard.

An avid sportsman to the last, while hunting deer on Thanksgiving Day, 1972, Father Tolster suffered a fatal heart attack.

Co-Pastors

The 1970s brought new forms of leadership to St. Augustine's, exciting youth programs, ministries to serve the elderly and the poor, and a 75th anniversary celebration. Women religious expanded their traditional roles as educators and moved into parish administration and pastoral care. Ministries changed in every way possible to meet the changing needs of Southwest Rochester people—both parishioners and non-parishioners. For the first time, the parish secured some government funding to support its efforts.

Following the sudden death of Father Tolster, the Diocesan Office offered St. Augustine parishioners an exciting option of pastoral administration: the traditional form with a pastor and assistant priest, or a recent concept of team ministry—two priests with equal responsibility in pastoral areas. Bishop Dennis Hickey, who lived in the parish on Woodbine Avenue, scheduled several meetings with parishioners to discuss the matter of leadership.

An openness to a new leadership style and a willingness to assume responsibility characterized the people of St. Augustine who stayed in the parish during these transitional years.⁴⁰ Members of the church and the parish council voted to try the co-pastorate model, the third of its kind in the Rochester diocese.

After several weeks, Bishop Hogan announced his selection of Fathers Paul McCabe and Neil Miller. These two priests were good friends, both approaching 40 years of age and possessed of complementary skills and capabilities. Each had served energetically in different ministries and parishes for over 10 years.⁴¹

Father McCabe assumed responsibility for the school, while Father Miller focused on liturgy. They shared all other areas equitably. Both believed in their compatibility to work with one another and chose St. Augustine because it was an urban parish with significant levels of low income, elderly citizens and changing population bases. On February 18, 1973, the people welcomed their two new priests with great enthusiasm.⁴²

As the co-pastors studied the complexities of St. Augustine parish, the number of poor and elderly people who required service indicated to them the need for a pastoral assistant. In September they chose Sister Marietta Hanss, of the Sisters of Mercy, to fill this post.

The year 1973 marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of St. Augustine. Mrs. Mary McMahon, a lifelong parishioner and a teacher in the school, updated the history of the church during the years 1948 to 1973. Festivities culminated in a celebratory Mass with Bishop Joseph Hogan as celebrant. Dinner at The Party House in Gates followed a reception in the school hall.⁴³

Throughout the 1970s, African Americans continued to move into the 19th and 20th Wards. By 1980, in the eastern section of the 19th Ward, African Americans outnumbered European Americans. In the more westerly neighborhoods north and south of Chili Avenue, they comprised about one-third of the population.⁴⁴

Parish figures from 1973 to 1974 show that 1,004 families continued to be registered members of St. Augustine. Fifteen hundred people regularly attended Sunday services; 503 students attended St. Augustine school in grades kindergarten through eight. The church carried no debt and derived about \$2,000 in income each Sunday.

General parish expenses required only 25 percent of the parish revenue. The largest single expenditure, (72 percent), went to maintain St. Augustine School.⁴⁵ The swift decline in religious vocations after mid-century caused school expenses to escalate dramatically. The low cost of the Sisters' labor kept in check the expenses of running parishes and maintaining schools during the earlier years of rapid growth.⁴⁶ As lay teachers joined the declining number of women religious in St. Augustine School, costs went up. By the mid-1960s, the number of lay teachers equaled the number of teaching Sisters. By the early 1970s, twice as many lay people as Sisters taught at St. Augustine School.⁴⁷

In February, 1974, the co-pastoral administration introduced the concept of "Team Ministry." This included the co-pastors, Father Paul McCabe and Neil Miller; Sister Marietta Hanss, RSM, Religious Education Coordinator Sister Mary Joan Gleason, SSJ, and School Principal Sister Mary Daniel Bovenzi, SSJ. This group allowed parishioners to become more involved in running the parish.⁴⁹

The co-pastorate of Fathers McCabe and Miller proved short-lived. Father Neil Miller resigned his position in June, 1975 because of persistent illness. His departure saddened parishioners and placed greater stress on Father McCabe.

The Era of Teens and Seniors

A new co-pastorate served St. Augustine parish for the next three years. On August 28, 1975, Bishop Hogan appointed Father David Simon as the replacement for Father Miller. Father Simon had very limited pastoral experience but he was eager to try his wings. In the four years previous to this appointment, he served as chaplain of DeSales High School in Geneva, N.Y.⁵⁰ Father Simon's interest in young people bore fruit in a variety of exciting programs in the mid-to-late 1970s.

Teens from the “baby boom” generation were among the most visible and active members of St. Augustine during the 1970s. Music drew many young people to both St. Augustine and St. Monica, kept young people in church, and directed their energies toward community service.⁵¹

Father Simon and Sister Sheila Walsh, SSJ, Religious Education Coordinator at St. Monica, focused on teens when they created the first successful merger of parish ministries of the 19th Ward. In 1975, the two conceived the idea of having the youth of both parishes co-produce a musical. The students performed the resultant show, “Memories,” at St. Agnes High School in May 1976.⁵²

In 1978, Anthony Falzano, a gifted musician who dreamed of working with youth in musical theater, wrote all the music for the production, “Prophets,” which raised \$1,100. Falzano came on board full-time to organize a solid foundation for youth ministry. The youth group “Upstairs”⁵³ offered cultural programs in art, crafts, dance, theater, and folklore, in association with the Arnett Library.

Young people continued to offer peak performances of original shows with Falzano as music director and Sister Sheila Walsh as producer. One of the most popular shows was “City Streets,” performed in Monroe High School Auditorium in 1979. Involvement eventually spread to the adults, who presented several musicals, thus further cementing partnership between the two parishes.

This creative project ended after seven years. In 1982, Sister Sheila Walsh was called to a new position in the diocese and Falzano left to seek more permanent job security.⁵⁴ Walsh, now a real estate broker, retains special memories of this ministry:

My “Camelot” years were the ones I spent working with the youth at St. Monica’s and St. Augustine’s parishes. Some of the teenagers were street kids who realized for the first time that they could achieve. There were no try-outs; everyone was accepted. Our expectations were high and they met them—not without a struggle but with hope and determination.

My fondest memory was watching the faces of these youngsters as they understood the fact that someone was clapping for them.

Today when I meet these adults, they remind me of those nostalgic days and wish they could repeat the joys of their performances. ⁵⁵

Teenagers also actively participated in, and enriched the music of Sunday Mass at St. Augustine during the 1970s. In 1971, teens founded a folk group, "Sun," which they also managed. It included non-parishioners. For five years, Michael Ciminelli led the group and selected the songs, while Dennis Caiazza acted as the musical director. The enthusiastic rendition of meaningful music and the dedication of the group increased the attendance at the 9:30 Mass each week. ⁵⁶

"Sun" disbanded in 1979. Two decades later, many members of the parish continue to look fondly back on their memory of the folk group:

During a period of turmoil, "Sun" encouraged many kids to stay involved in their church and spend their time helping others. Through our music, joy, and enthusiasm, and by the legacy of our record, we helped make sure the "Sun" would always shine at St. Augustine. ⁵⁷



Teens posing at Manhattan Square Park in downtown Rochester promote "City Streets" presented in the spring of 1979 at Xerox Auditorium. Left to right, performers include: Marty Lynch and Kathy Bunce; Tim Lynch and Anne Marie Klein; and Mike Sinopoli and Kathy McCombs. (From the St. Augustine Archives.)

In 1977, Monroe County awarded a CETA ⁵⁸ grant to St. Augustine's to fund special youth programs. Children in grades five through eight benefited from after school activities in chorus, dance, swimming and gym at the YMCA on Arnett Boulevard. ⁵⁹

Government funding also enabled the parish to serve senior citizens during the 1970s. By 1980, one in six people living in the neighborhood was a senior adult. ⁶⁰ In addition to the work undertaken by the Coordinator of Services to the Elderly and Homebound, St. Monica Business Manager Richard Ensman obtained a CETA grant which provided funding for advocacy and referral for senior adults in the 19th Ward.

A large staff visited senior citizens with two specific goals in mind:

- to refer senior adults to agencies that would advocate for their needs
- to make it possible for them to retain their independence by remaining in their own homes.

Because of the one year limit of the grant, its benefits were of short duration.

Serving An Inner-City Neighborhood

By the end of the 1970s, the church that had always been known as an outer city, middle class parish was increasingly described as an inner city parish in transition. ⁶² A decade after Msgr. Duffy's departure, only one fifth of the parishioners remained. Projected deficits necessitated more efficient use of resources. St. Augustine began to share services with St. Monica and St. Stephen Episcopal churches. Despite these challenges, services to the people of Southwest Rochester continued to be a priority. Surveys identified the needs of the neighborhood. A new pastor, Father William Trott, and Pastoral Associate Sister Rita Sullivan, RSM, led by example. They opened the rectory to homeless people and personally ministered to neighborhood drug addicts.

In 1975, St. Augustine's parish council outlined an ambitious nine point priority list designed to reach out to the neighborhood as well as to serve the needs of parishioners. Within the parish, the plan called for inner renewal and increased giving. Parishioners were encouraged to become more involved in the social and educational missions of the church. ⁶³

All other efforts pointed outside the campus to neighborhood service. Plans included outreach—to Black and Spanish-speaking people,

elderly and youth, unchurched and alienated Catholics—and fostering of Human Development programs to address social injustice and human needs.⁶⁴

A parish profile compiled just three years later in November 1977 shows an erosion of active parishioners and revenue. The number of registered families remained high at 976. Sunday attendance dropped to 1,050 and Sunday offering lowered to \$1,700. The 1977 parish budget projected a \$19,000 deficit.⁶⁵ At the same time, parishioners established enormous goals of neighborhood service.

Two co-pastors, a pastoral assistant, school principal, religious education coordinator and coordinator of services to the elderly and homebound comprised the staff.

The parishioners include a large number of elderly people, a significant population of Portuguese and Italian immigrants, a growing but still very small number of black families, a stable number of young families with young children, and a declining number of middle aged families. It is primarily a middle class parish with a significant number of truly economically poor people.

Activities available to parishioners include: Bingo..., Basketball/Sports Program, Divorced and Separated Catholics (shared with Saint Monica's), Legion of Mary (2 adult and 1 junior), Marriage Encounter Prayer Groups, Singles Club, Teen Seminar, annual musical play of teenage youth, Cursillo.⁶⁶

The number of vocations declined, and fewer priests and women religious were available to serve on St. Augustine's staff. At the same time, the involvement of lay people in church ministries grew. By 1977, more than 200 parishioners served as lectors, eucharistic ministers, ushers, altar servers, and music ministers.⁶⁷

Many people at St. Augustine's reacted with sadness when the option of co-pastoral administration came to an end in December, 1977. Father David Simon accepted an assignment at Holy Name of Jesus in Rochester while Father Paul McCabe was transferred to Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Elmira. To replace these dedicated priests, the Diocese asked Father Elmer McDonald, former St. Augustine assistant priest, to return to the parish as pastor.⁶⁸

Father McDonald felt at home with the old families who were still part of the parish. However, it was a far different situation from the one he had left. Added to that, it troubled parishioners that no consultation

with the diocese had prepared them for the return from a co-pastorate to a single pastorate form of administration. ⁶⁹

Father McDonald concluded his responsibilities at St. Augustine's in August, 1979. He assumed ministerial duties as a Navy chaplain in the Veteran's Psychiatric Hospital in Waco, TX. ⁷⁰ In September, 1979, Father William Trott assumed the duties of pastor. His 10-year stay at St. Augustine would be the longest of any priest since Msgr. Duffy.

Building A City Of God

For 11 years prior to coming to St. Augustine, Father Trott was spiritual director at St. Bernard's Seminary. He offered guidance to the men who were discerning their call to the priesthood. To become the pastor of an integrating parish was a real challenge—one to which he really looked forward. He began at once to meet with neighborhood groups in the homes of parishioners to discover what areas most needed attention.

Father Trott imprinted upon the minds and hearts of the people that "the reign of God is here." He encouraged parishioners to make a Holy Hour each week for the people of the parish; to begin tithing for the support of the Church; to deliver groceries to the needy; and to lovingly serve their neighbors in any possible way. ⁷¹

Trott oversaw the opening of a chapel on Hobart Street that offered a desirable place for daily Mass and prayer gatherings. ⁷² To honor the memory of Msgr. Duffy, Father Trott suggested that the new chapel be named the Duffy Memorial Chapel. Parishioners overwhelmingly supported this idea, for all remembered Duffy for his 23 years of service to the parish. ⁷³

In September 1980, the diocese reassigned St. Augustine's associate pastor, ⁷⁴ leaving Father Trott alone to minister to the parish. The priest shortage was being felt in many areas, while the exodus of families to the suburbs continued to reduce the numbers of active parishioners. ⁷⁵

Father Trott continued the effort toward sharing services with St. Monica's, initiated in the 1970s. By 1980, the two churches shared an inter-parish business and management office. ⁷⁶ In 1981, St. Augustine and St. Monica inaugurated joint Parish Council meetings. A director of religious education served both churches. ⁷⁷ With great accord, St. Augustine also shared facilities and prayers services with St. Stephen Episcopal Church, located one block away on Chili Avenue. ⁷⁸

St. Augustine and St. Monica parishes also worked together on a community outreach effort known as Project Reach. The project began with a census conducted by SWEM, in the southwest area of Rochester. They learned that, at a time when each parish had between 600 and 700

members, 3,800 people in the area who were identified as Roman Catholics were not affiliated with any church. Project Reach proposed an evangelization plan to meet the spiritual needs of senior adults, divorced and separated Catholics, couples of mixed religious backgrounds, youth, singles, African Americans, and Portuguese and Spanish speaking persons, many of whom felt somehow alienated from the Roman Catholic Church.⁷⁹

Project organizers expressed a positive view of the southwest neighborhood with its 42,000 people. They described it as:

“one of the most versatile yet changing communities in Upstate New York,” and they reported that more than half the residents are non-white, more than one in three residents is under the age of 20...the eastern section of the community contains ‘poverty pockets,’ and there continued to be a large number of senior adults over the age of 65.⁸⁰

Under Father Trott’s guidance, parishioners engaged in many missionary activities outside the neighborhood, through Human Development, Jail Ministry, visiting at St. Ann’s Home and The Heritage, as well as by Prayer Hours and Holy Hours.⁸¹

With his usual compassion for the poor, Father Trott outfitted the rectory basement as a sleep center for the homeless, in 1984. Not all of the parishioners agreed with this plan, since it opened the rectory to any and all. Charity overcame opposition, but not without repercussions.⁸²

A parish convention in April, 1986 revealed that parishioners worried that Father Trott and Pastoral Associate Sister Rita Sullivan were “running themselves into the ground physically and emotionally” by “spending much time and energy on those living at the rectory,” many of whom were chemical abusers. While parishioners rejoiced in the “care and love” shown by all staff members they also felt that the staff was sometimes too busy to care for parishioners.⁸³ One response encapsulated the feelings of many:

If I am not in school, not a senior citizen, not in the hospital, not in jail, and not actively participating in a group, the assumption seems to be that I have no problems, no desire to participate.⁸⁴

With extraordinary openness, Father Trott invited parish members to continue to discuss their concerns.⁸⁵ After 12 years of exceptional service to St. Augustine’s people, Sister Rita resigned her position as pastoral assistant due to health problems.

Loss and Resurrection

At the time of Sister Rita's departure, two watershed events occurred at St. Augustine. Both the school and the convent closed. A period of adaptive re-use of the campus buildings followed. Parish-backed outreach ministries served the poor, drug addicts, and the terminally ill. The church hosted a mission for "Black Catholics" and signed an historic covenant with the Episcopal Church. Alterations to the church interior reflected new liturgical practices while still maintaining the integrity of the original design. The diversity of people in the 19th and 20th Wards, and the superior craftsmanship of the area's older structures, began to be widely recognized as assets.

The closing of St. Augustine School resulted from decreasing enrollment and insufficient funding. The school population had grown too small to be viable.⁸⁶ In 1985, only 118 students attended St. Augustine in grades kindergarten through eight. The eighth grade included only nine young people. Half of the students in St. Augustine School were African Americans who lived in the neighborhood and many were not members of the Roman Catholic Church.

By the end of 1985, the parish faced an extremely painful prospect—the ultimate decision to close the school. If the school were kept open another year, the parish would go bankrupt.⁸⁷

In 1982, Sister St. Luke Hardy, SSJ, a St. Augustine teacher in the 1960s, returned to the school as principal. It fell to her to perform the sad duty of closing a school that had offered quality education for 88 years.

Sister St. Luke recalls the experience of closing the school as both "excruciating" and "a peak grace experience" in her life.⁸⁸ Father Trott provided exceptional spiritual leadership as he and Sister St. Luke guided staff, parents and students through the process. They gathered the "school community" together numerous times. They encouraged everyone to share his or her concerns, grief, anger and suggestions. They prayed together to learn where God was leading them as a community.⁸⁹

At the end of the school year, Sister St. Luke and the faculty planned a series of fun activities. The spring concert included humorous surprises; faculty members sang and two teachers appeared as "Mr. Ed, the Talking Horse." St. Augustine School's acclaimed gospel choir secretly made a professional tape and presented it to Sister St. Luke. A closing picnic at Egypt Park ended with everyone releasing helium balloons into the sky.

People from St. Augustine School's past also participated in the school closing. Former students, faculty, parishioners, and friends

received an invitation to attend a farewell tour of the school. It was a grand reunion since it provided an opportunity for a nostalgic return to school days.⁹⁰

Despite the deep sense of loss felt by all involved, the faculty managed to create a positive and memorable experience for all the students.⁹¹ They instilled a desire in the children to project St. Augustine's charisma into whatever school or situation they would find themselves. Every student "graduated." Every child received a button marked "filled with the Spirit—Sent to Serve—St. Augustine School 1986." A touching, lasting moment in the graduation ceremony came when all sang "Reach Out and Touch," and everyone in the congregation held hands. Relocations happened with a hopeful spirit.⁹² As a result of the school's closing, the Sisters moved to new assignments and the convent also closed. This was as hard a loss as losing the school; the Sisters of St. Joseph had been on the campus since 1911.

With characteristic ability to "roll with new things,"⁹³ St. Augustine's parishioners adapted to these changes. Father Trott quickly sought to preserve the outreach to youth and to the African-American neighbors who had become linked to St. Augustine's faith community through the school. He hired a youth minister, and he engaged Sister Campion Bush, SSJ, as Evangelizer to begin the conscious work of reaching out and building relationships.⁹⁴

What would happen to the newly vacated buildings on the campus? The parish leased the school to the Rochester City School District. The main building, the Westside Adult Learning Center, housed the Refugee Assistance Program which assisted would-be citizens to become literate Americans. The Annex, the Josh Lofton Resource Center, offered smaller classes for children needing special attention. A day care program served parents who participated in the many classes conducted by the school. Thus St. Augustine's School continued to serve the educational needs of the community.⁹⁵

At first, the convent provided a home for a storefront ministry, the St. Theresa Center, inaugurated in June, 1987. Bible study, prayer, counseling, advocacy for the poor, reading materials, crafts, and refreshments aided those dropping in to the center.⁹⁶ The Matt Talbot Group, founded by Deacon Gregory Doyle to aid people fighting addictions, also began on the campus.⁹⁷

In 1988, the Catholic Family Center purchased the convent as a refuge for homeless women and their children. It bears the name "Women's Place." Most of the residents find temporary transitional housing there, following a prison term, drug rehabilitation or family crisis. Sister Eileen Conheady, SSJ, a former resident of St. Augustine



St. Augustine School's last eighth grade class on graduation day in 1986. Left to right: Peter Palmer, Matthew Catalano, Philip Tucker, Barry Castrechino, Andrea Dias, Chinetta Hart, Rebecca Barnhart, and Michael Grubaugh with school Principal Sister St. Luke Hardy, teacher Robert Graham, and St. Augustine Pastor Father William Trott. Missing from the photo is Christine DeCaires. (From St. Augustine Archives.)

convent, worked night and day to secure funding for this project of charity.⁹⁸

After the school closed, Father Trott asked Sister St. Luke Hardy to stay on staff in Sister Rita Sullivan's position. Sister St. Luke's services as liaison between the church and its parishioners mitigated for many of the losses of the preceding year. In the years following the closing of the school, Sister cared for many of the aging parents of her former students.⁹⁹

In March of the Lenten season of 1987, the parishes of St. Monica and St. Augustine coordinated a special mission experience. Father Tom Usher, an African-American Catholic priest and evangelist from the Diocese of Mobile, Alabama conducted a retreat. For many, it was a first time experience for reflection on the Pastoral written by the Black Catholic Bishops of the U.S., "What We Have Seen and Heard."

The Roman Catholic Diocese and the Episcopal Diocese made history in 1988 when they pledged a covenant at St. Augustine Church. Bishop William Burrill and Bishop Matthew Clark signed the covenant in the presence of parishioners of both St. Augustine and St. Stephen as well as people from both Dioceses. The agreement called for: joint discussion groups for Bible study, worship practice and theological

issues; shared religious retreats; collaborative work on social justice issues; shared day care and youth programs; and study of issues involved in reunification. Masses in both faiths included prayer for both bishops as a sign of commitment to each other.¹⁰⁰ Husband and wife deacons Brian McNulty of St. Augustine, and Lynne McNulty of St. Stephen provided the living embodiment of this ground breaking liaison between the two faith communities.

St. Augustine's parish turned 90 in 1988. Bishop Dennis Hickey celebrated with a special Mass on Sunday, August 28, 1988, the feast of St. Augustine. The following evening, Bishop Matthew Clark blessed a bronze statue of St. Augustine, newly mounted on the exterior tower wall.¹⁰¹ The statue formerly adorned the Hall of Theology at St. Bernard's Seminary, which the diocese sold in 1982.¹⁰² Father Trott recorded his feelings about the anniversary and the sculpture in a letter to parishioners:

It is with great pleasure that we at St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church prepare to celebrate our 90th year as a witness to Christ on the west side of the City of Rochester. It is a pleasure to be part of such a city... St. Augustine, as a leader in an urban community, faced many similar concerns with the people of the city and streets. We feel proud to carry him as a patron and try to carry on his example of care for all of God's people.¹⁰³

In January, 1989, Father Trott left for a six-month sabbatical. In April, he resigned from the parish. He wrote to parishioners that, after much prayer and thought, he would be leaving St. Augustine to become pastor of St. Joseph Church in Livonia, N.Y.¹⁰⁴

Soon the parish learned that Father Robert Ring would replace Father Trott as pastor. A young priest with talents in music and liturgy, Father Ring had much to offer the parish's diversified cultures. Born and reared by Southern Baptist parents, he sang in choirs and actively participated in Bible study groups as a child. He attended Cornell University and began exploring other religions. He found a home in the Catholic Church and decided to enter the priesthood. St. Augustine was Father Ring's first assignment to a City of Rochester parish, having previously ministered to parishes in Fairport and in the Southern tier of the diocese.¹⁰⁵

A parish convention held in early January, 1990, indicated a need for study and renewal in the area of community worship. Discussions centered around the official document, "Art and Environment in Catholic Worship." Father Ring addressed three areas which required

better compliance with liturgical practice: a Gathering Area, Reconciliation Chapel and Baptismal Font. These required alterations to the church interior.

The Gathering Area found room at the rear of the Church by removing unneeded pews and carpeting the space. The Reconciliation Chapel took over the former baptistery and an accessible entrance provided for the handicapped. The Baptismal font moved to the center of the Church since it is the initiation into membership within the fold.¹⁰⁶

St. Augustine opened its doors to the public to display both its traditional beauty and its renovations in 1991, as a participant in the 21st Annual 19th Ward House Tour. Sponsored by the 19th Ward Community Association, the house tours began in the early 1970s, "when adverse publicity made city living seem undesirable." As a counter measure, the annual House Tour showcased "the Ward's fine housing and demonstrate[d] its friendly neighborhood spirit."¹⁰⁷

As the 1990s unfolded, St. Augustine's neighborhood remained diverse. In addition to European and African descended people, a growing number of Hispanic persons, mainly from Puerto Rico, inhabited the neighborhood, primarily north of Chili Avenue. About 150 people of Asian origin also lived north of Chili Avenue.¹⁰⁸

Many professionals of varied ethnic backgrounds continued to move into southwest Rochester, drawn by the character of the dwellings, the convenience of city living and the diversity of inhabitants. The homes, built primarily before 1940, featured outstanding craftsmanship, architectural variety, leaded glass windows and fine wood trim.¹⁰⁹

Property values south of Chili Avenue, where owners occupied the majority of homes, averaged about \$60,000. Homes north of Chili Avenue, where fewer than half the residents owned their dwellings, were worth about \$10,000 less. Poverty pockets continued to exist in the neighborhood, and a growing number of women raised families alone.¹¹⁰

During Father Ring's tenure, parish membership numbered about 500. Parishioners continued to be actively involved in the community.¹¹¹ Elisha House, a comfort care center for two terminally ill people, including AIDS patients, opened in a parish-owned house at 390 Chili Avenue, January 6, 1991. St. Augustine and St. Stephen churches cooperatively sponsored the facility. Deacon Lynne McNulty applied for a grant to finance the new ministry and became its director. Staff also included a physician, nurses, and trained volunteers from the two parishes.

St. Augustine Joins A Cluster

St. Augustine parish arrived at its 100th anniversary as part of a cluster of churches known as the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward. Each church retains its individuality within the cluster. More effective use of resources is continually developed to support parish and cluster ministries. Staff and parishioners work together to make decisions and take action in the community and within the parish. Many parishioners direct their efforts toward bringing peace and personal safety into the neighborhood.

In 1991, a letter from the staffs of St. Augustine, St. Monica, and Our Lady of Good Counsel ¹¹² parishes addressed the need for effective planning for these three neighbors in the 19th Ward. Desiring to be proactive to ensure their long term viability, the parishes asked the diocese for permission to plan together. Parishioners and staffs dialogued for a year. Since St. Augustine and St. Monica had been for many years allied in ministries and programs, they recognized the unique opportunities for growth and service that grouping offers to the entire community. ¹¹³

In the midst of these negotiations, Father Ring concluded his active duties at St. Augustine. The Bishop required his services as priest personnel director for the Diocese of Rochester. Bishop Clark appointed Sister St. Luke administrator of St. Augustine parish from January to June, 1992. Sister's proven management skills and long association with the parish made her an excellent choice for the responsibility; she personally knew nearly every parishioner. On June 28, 1992, a farewell reception for Father Ring expressed the parish appreciation of the love and care he had showered on the people of St. Augustine parish. ¹¹⁴

At this time, the three southwest city parishes of St. Augustine, St. Monica and Our Lady of Good Counsel formally clustered together to form the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward. The cluster also included Emmanuel Church of the Deaf, which held services at Good Counsel. True to form, the grassroots people of St. Augustine parish gave full support to the staff by attendance, prayer, a spirit of cooperation and willingness to change. ¹¹⁵

Bishop Clark announced his selection of Father Robert Werth as pastor of the new cluster, the first in the city of Rochester. For the preceding nine years Father Werth had lovingly and diligently served St. Bridget's Church in urban Rochester. He counted as a great blessing his ministry among the African-American people who initiated him into their deep-rooted spirituality. Because of his training as a social worker he excelled in his perception and understanding of the struggles of the needy and those battling racist attitudes.

Father Werth greeted his appointment as pastor of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward with anticipation, for he realized that this arrangement could lead to a new concept of inter-parish unity. He lost no time in promoting his belief in "people power." He recognized that parishioners were intelligent people, rich in faith and devoted to the Church. He worked to empower them to share the responsibility for decisions regarding the life and governance of the Church and its people.¹¹⁶

No longer hierarchical with a priest at the head, the cluster team consisted of co-equal members. They included a business manager,¹¹⁷ full-time evangelizer, part-time youth minister, three pastoral associates/visitors, and two priests, a pastor and parochial vicar.

Father Peter Enyan-Boadu from Ghana, Africa, who completed his Master's Degree at Fordham University, received the appointment of vicar. After obtaining permission from his Bishop in Africa, Father Peter arrived on October 2, 1992 to take up his duties.¹¹⁸ A third priest, Father Ray Fleming, also served the cluster, both as pastor of Emmanuel Church of the Deaf, and by presiding at Masses in all three churches.

In 1994, a retired Rochester priest, Father Richard O'Connell, came to reside and serve in the cluster. Father Enyan-Boadu left the cluster in 1996, when Bishop Clark transferred him to Holy Cross Church to fill a vacancy there.

In 1995, the retirement of the two parish rectory secretaries, Anna O'Connell and Rosemary Link marked an era of loyal commitment to the parish. They worked in the rectory for 30 years and 27 years respectively, and represented the caliber and spirit of St. Augustine's people.

To build bonds between the cluster congregations, Father Werth encouraged parishioners to attend services in all three churches. Sacraments such as First Eucharist and Confirmation became cluster-wide and rotated from one church to another. On Easter Sunday, 1995, the three parishes inaugurated a cluster bulletin, a further bonding agent.¹¹⁹

As the priests rotated among the different parishes in the cluster, Sister St. Luke Hardy's continued presence at St. Augustine as coordinator provided continuity for parishioners. In 1995, Sister St. Luke's role changed to encompass the pastoral care of the entire cluster. Sister Campion and longtime parishioner Mary Ellen Fischer remained at St. Augustine as a steady presence, especially on weekends. Sister Campion's role continued to focus on evangelization, RCIA, social ministry, Social Action Network (SAN), and Bible study.¹²⁰

On two separate occasions Sister Campion was honored for her work in the community. In December 1995, *City* newspaper awarded her the title "Peacemaker" for her efforts to bring harmony to a harsh and chaotic world. In June, 1996, she was commended at the annual Faith in Action Banquet for her involvement in social action and educational issues in the 19th Ward. ¹²¹

In the 1990s increasing crime became a major worry of St. Augustine parishioners and all cluster members. A mugger attacked Father Fleming while the priest jogged on Genesee Park Boulevard. Father Werth and Sister Campion participated in candlelight vigils when, in broad daylight, neighborhood youths shot a teenaged member of Good Counsel who was returning home from classes at Monroe Community College, and again when robbers shot the owner of a Chinese restaurant on Thurston Road. The two also marched with St. Augustine parishioners in protest against the establishment of a gun shop on Thurston Road. ¹²²

In 1996, the Duffy Memorial Chapel closed when the City School District required two more classrooms to establish a Nursing Education component. The people decided to celebrate daily Mass in the rectory. Parishioners remodeled the former living room of the rectory for this purpose. ¹²³

Former pastor, Father William Trott died in October, 1996. Trott lay in state in St. Joseph's Church in Livonia, N.Y., where he currently served as pastor. Bishop Matthew Clark celebrated his funeral on Saturday, October 5, at St. Augustine Church. ¹²⁴

In the summer of 1996, St. Augustine parish again responded to a neighbor in Southwest Rochester. Reverend James Cherry of Aenon Baptist Church on Genesee Street needed building space for his congregation while renovating his church. He turned to Father Werth for a solution to the problem. Beginning August 30, St. Augustine Church served as Aenon Baptist's place of worship. Aenon's offices found housing in the rectory and the chapel accommodated the congregation's daily Bible classes. They used the former St. Augustine School for Sunday school. Aenon Baptist's maintenance man served St. Augustine's needs and volunteers installed a new water system and moved their organ to the church for the use of both congregations. Ecumenism and new friendships emerged from this shared arrangement with one of Rochester's oldest African-American congregations. ¹²⁵

Late 1996 marked the beginning of an effort to create a strategic plan for the future of the cluster. The purpose of this collaboration was to plan the best use of each parish's resources to provide the most effective ministries to meet the needs of the times. A Strategic Planning Committee with representatives from each cluster church advanced a plan to produce solvency and increase volunteerism by parishioners. ¹²⁶

As a kick-off for the Centennial year of celebration of St. Augustine's 100th year of parish history, Father Werth celebrated an outdoor Mass in a Genesee Valley Park Pavilion. Since both St. Augustine's and St. Monica's parishes formed in 1898, members of both churches participated in the Mass and in the family picnics that followed. Father Werth energized those present with his characteristically insightful and inclusive words, humor, enthusiasm and warmth.

Other Centennial activities drew from St. Augustine's past, including: an old-fashioned covered dish supper and family fun night, spaghetti dinner fund raisers, a lawn social at Genesee Valley Park and a 100th anniversary dinner at the Mapledale Party House. The festivities culminated with a Centennial Mass presided over by Bishop Matthew Clark on December 6, 1998, almost exactly 100 years to the date when the first Mass was celebrated in the mission church.

In the Spring of 1998, there were additional reasons to celebrate. Improvements to Chili Avenue resulted from membership of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward with 11 other city and suburban churches in Interfaith Action. The group succeeded in upgrading the lighting on Chili Avenue and arranging for the demolition of a vacant, decrepit building on the corner of Chili Avenue and Thurston Road.¹²⁷ On March 26, the city conducted "Chili Avenue Project Uplift," aimed at addressing chronic problems on the avenue.¹²⁸

April 1, 1998, Interfaith Action drew 500 people to St. Augustine Church to meet with Rochester Mayor William Johnson. They expressed their opposition to the placement of a garbage transfer station on West Avenue, and voiced their hopeful and positive visions for the future of the neighborhood.

In 1998, the bells of St. Augustine's massive church tower are usually silent. Last repaired at great expense in 1976,¹²⁹ the bells hang in too precarious a position to be safely rung. At a time when weekend Masses at St. Augustine's generate the same amount of revenue that they did 20 years before and the church operates with a deficit, funds do not exist for the costly repairs required to return them to working order. No longer strictly a community by locale, the parish has become a community of interest. Many of its parishioners reside in other parts of the city and county. They remain attached to the parish and to the neighborhood in which it stands.

Sr. Anna Louise Staub, SSJ, was born in 1913, grew up on West Avenue and attended St. Augustine Church and School. From 1966 to 1972, she returned to the parish as school principal. She conducted numerous oral histories for this publication.

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Endnotes

1. *Catholic Journal*, October 21, 1948.
2. *St. Augustine Church*, 1959, typed, unpublished, p. 10. Archives of the Diocese of Rochester.
3. *The Official Directory of the Diocese of Rochester*, Rochester, NY, 1938-1984.
4. *Catholic Journal*, July 23, 1980.
5. Letter, Fr. Robert McNamara to Prof. John J. Augenstein, Milwaukee, WI, May 4, 1996; McNamara, *The Diocese of Rochester 1868-1968*, pp. 346-7; *Catholic Courier and Journal*, June 21, 1929; *St. Augustine Church*, 1959, p. 9.
6. In 1953, builders completed an annex facing Chili Avenue. This addition added two classrooms and two offices. In 1958, a final building added a two classroom structure on Hobart Street. *The Official Catholic Directory of the Diocese of Rochester* shows that school attendance grew from 476 pupils in 1945 to 604 pupils in 1952 and to 758 students in 1957.
7. Diocese Archives, Sept. 1959, p. 11.
8. Windowed walls that rise above the roofs of adjacent aisles to provide light for the central part of the church.
9. Honorary Member of the Papal Household. Acknowledgement for excellence in church ministry, awarded to a priest.
10. *Church Musicians Guild of Buffalo, Jubilee*, 1946-1996, Buffalo, NY 1996; and *St. Augustine Diamond Jubilee 1898-1973*, Rochester, NY, 1973, p. 12.
11. Personal witness, Sr. Anna Louise Staub, SSJ; *St. Augustine Parish Bulletins*, 1979.
12. *Diamond Jubilee*; p. 14; personal witness, Sr. Anna Louise Staub, school principal 1966-72.
13. Interviews with Sr. Anna Louise Staub and other parishioners.
14. Personal witness, Sr. Anna Louise Staub, school principal 1966-72.
15. Msgr. Duffy was regarded as a saint by all who knew him because of his prayerfulness and his loving care for the sick. Personal witness, Sr. Anna Louise Staub.
16. *Rochester At Mid Century: A Graphic Description of the Population Characteristics of Rochester, NY*. Distributed jointly by the University of Rochester and the Rochester Council of Social Agencies, 1953, Census Tracts 62, 68, 75, and 87; and Doris Meadows, Ph.D., *Neighborhood As Community: The Nineteenth Ward in Rochester, New York*, Rochester, NY 1984, p. 14.
17. From 1860 to 1940, African Americans comprised less than

- one percent of the city's total population. Ruth Forsythe, comp., *The Rochester Area: Selected Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Rochester, NY: Monroe Community College, 1984), p. 50.
18. Seasonal agricultural work brought many African Americans from locations in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina to Wayne and Cayuga County farms, and eventually to Rochester. Victoria Sandwick Schmitt, "Goin' North," *Rochester History*, Winter, 1992, pp. 22-24.
 19. Forsythe, *The Rochester Area*, p. 50.
 20. Bryan Wittman map of Black Neighborhoods, City of Rochester, 1970 and 1980 in Forsythe, *The Rochester Area*, p. 49.
 21. Their realtor lost her job as a result of this incident, went out on her own, and promised the Youngs that she would get them a home.
 22. Dr. Alice Holloway Young lecture, "I Dream A World" lecture series, Gannett School of Science and Man, RMSC, Dec. 1, 1992, V. Schmitt notes. Alice H. Young, telephone interview with V. Schmitt, Rochester, NY, June 19, 1998.
 23. Meadows, *Neighborhood as Community*, p. 15. Jare Cardinal, RMSC Manager of Community Relations, July 13, 1998, points out that this was a time of prosperity in Rochester, there was a certain amount of status attached to suburban living and the new I-490 expressway made it easy for suburbanites to commute to jobs in Rochester.
 24. Meadows, *Neighborhood as Community*, pp. 15-16.
 25. 1970 Federal Census records show that about a third of the people who moved into the area came from Rochester's inner city. Two thirds of the African Americans new to the neighborhood lived in husband and wife households and more than half owned their own homes. Twenty-nine families reported incomes below the poverty level, and of these 31 percent received public assistance.
 26. 1970 Federal Census.
 27. Letter, Terry Reuschle to Fr. Robert Werth, May 18, 1998.
 28. Ron Robitaille, "Parishes in Trouble," *Upstate* magazine, Nov. 4, 1973, pp. 4-6.
 29. 1970 Federal Census.
 30. IBID.
 31. Sr. St. Luke Hardy, SSJ, telephone interview with Victoria Schmitt, Rochester, NY, June 19, 1998.
 32. Personal memory of Sister. Anna Louise Staub.
 33. Meadows, *Neighborhood as Community*, p. 16.
 34. From 1962 to 1965, the General Council of Bishops confirmed by the Pope to discuss the spiritual welfare of the Church.
 35. Telephone interview, Kathleen Murty, Dec. 30, 1996; personal witness, 1968 to 72, Sr. Anna Louise Staub, school principal.
 36. In late 1971, the parishioners elected 18 people, from a volunteer list of 51, to serve on St. Augustine's Parish Council for a period of three years.
 37. Personal witness, Sister Anna Louise Staub. Tolster attended meetings with the clergy from the 11 surrounding churches every month.

38. Covenant, Southwest Ecumenical Mission, typed, unpublished, n.p., 1970.
39. One of the prime movers of this project was Mrs. Maureen Havens, who in spite of terminal illness, dedicated herself to its advancement. Telephone interview with Rev. Richard Comegys, pastor of St. Stephen Episcopal Church, June 27, 1997.
40. Sr. St. Luke Hardy interview with Victoria Schmitt, May 27, 1995.
41. Rev. Robert McNamara, written account, July 7, 1997. Archives of Diocese of Rochester.
42. Fr. Neil Miller, telephone interview with Sr. Anna Louise, October 30, 1997.
43. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1973.
44. 1980 Census. A noticeable trend was that about one-third of the African Americans who moved into rental housing in the neighborhood between 1974 and 1980 reported incomes below the poverty level. This compares to about 10 percent of the neighborhood overall living below the poverty level.
45. Memoranda to Personnel Board, July 22, 1975, typed, unpublished, p. 3. Archives of the Diocese of Rochester.
46. Elizabeth Ann Milliken, *Beyond the Immigrant Church: The Catholic Sub-Culture and the Parishes of Rochester, New York 1870 - 1920*. Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1994, p. 325.
47. *The Official Catholic Directory for the Diocese of Rochester, 1960-1980*.
48. During the Easter season in the Spring of 1974, Sr. Marietta Hanss, parish assistant, died of cancer. Parishioners had grown attached to her in a very short time and her death elicited a great deal of sadness. The following September, Sr. Rita Sullivan, R.S.M., succeeded her in that position. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1974, 1975.
49. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1974. Kathy Murty, telephone interview with Victoria Schmitt, July 22, 1998.
50. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1975.
51. During the late 1960s, St. Monica's Coffeehouse provided a setting for a variety of young Rochester rhythm and blues musicians, several of whom went on to make music their profession. Daniel T. Schmitt, interview with Victoria Schmitt, June 14, 1997.
52. "Memories" realized a profit of \$3,000. "Good News," an original show, followed the next year with a profit of \$4,000. Each parish shared in part of the profit and turned the rest of the revenue back into youth programs.
53. As an outcome of this successful collaboration, the Urban Ministry Office of the Diocese granted \$7,500 for the two parishes to establish youth ministry. St. Monica received a \$39,000 CETA (Comprehensive Education and Training Act) grant to fix quarters for the youth group on the second floor of the school, hence the title, "Upstairs."
54. *Rochester Courier Journal*, April 11, 1979, pp. 10-11; Sr. Shelia Walsh, SSJ, interview with Sr. Anna Louise Staub, June 12, 1996.
55. Shelia Walsh, interview with Sr. Anna Louise Staub, April 28, 1998.

56. "Sun" expanded its musical efforts to provide concerts at nursing homes and to the Newark Developmental Center where it broke barriers and became a means of communication and friendship. In 1973, the group recorded an album of its 13 most popular songs. St. Augustine's parish funded the production and received recompense through the phenomenal profits from the sale of the record.
57. Written record of Dave Caiazza, Feb. 10, 1996. St. Augustine Church Archives.
58. Comprehensive Education and Training Act.
59. Original Agreement, Oct. 25, 1977. St. Augustine Church Archives.
60. 1980-81 Annual Report, St. Augustine Church and St. Monica Church.
61. Original Agreement, Nov. 8, 1978; St. Augustine Church Archives; and written summary of the grant by Sr. Shelia Walsh, Dec. 15, 1996.
62. Memoranda to Personnel Board, July 22, 1975, typed, unpublished, p. 3. Archives of the Diocese of Rochester. When the diocese profiled St. Augustine parish in 1975, in preparation to replace Fr. Miller, it described the parish as a "typical central city parish in transition... St. Augustine is a traditional Roman Catholic parish located in a neighborhood which is characterized by an influx of minority groups from the inner city, and the exodus of many families as part of the migration pattern to the suburbs and smaller surrounding towns. Both situations introduce new sociological factors that must be addressed by the parish."
63. IBID, p. 3.
64. IBID, p. 3.
65. "St. Augustine Parish Profile," prepared by the Parish Council, Nov., 1977, typed, unpublished. Archives of the Diocese of Rochester.
66. IBID.
67. IBID; as a result of Vatican II, many lay people wanted a larger role and opportunities for education in ministry were offered.
68. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1978.
69. Letter, Most Rev. Dennis W. Hickey to Raymond Grandchamp, president of St. Augustine Parish Council, Jan. 2, 1978.
70. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1978.
71. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1979. The chapel was not a new building; it was housed in a former two classroom annex to the school.
72. IBID.
73. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1980.
74. Father Daniel Karl.
75. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1980.
76. 1980-81 Annual Report, St. Augustine Church and St. Monica Church.
77. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1981.
78. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1980.
79. *Project Reach: Community Outreach in Rochester's Southwest Area*. St. Augustine and St. Monica churches, Summer, 1981, typed, unpublished.

80. IBID.
81. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1982.
82. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1984. Sr. Campion Bush, July 11, 1998: Rectory housekeeper Rose Wagner did much of the work of running the center, and taught personal hygiene to the residents. Many returned to visit and thank her.
83. Agenda for parish meeting, April 20, 1986, typed, unpublished, p. 2.
84. IBID, p. 2.
85. IBID, p. 2.
86. *The Official Catholic Directory for the Diocese of Rochester*, 1970s, from 661 in 1971 to 473 in 1979. In 1980, only 264 pupils enrolled in the school. By 1981, the number dropped to 210.
87. Sr. St. Luke Hardy, interview with Victoria Schmitt, Sept. 13, 1996.
88. Sr. St. Luke Hardy, interview with Victoria Schmitt, May 27, 1995.
89. Hardy interview, Sept. 13, 1996.
90. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1986.
91. Sr. St. Luke Hardy, interview with Victoria Schmitt, June 22, 1998.
92. Hardy interview, May 27, 1995.
93. IBID.
94. Hardy interview, June 22, 1998. Evangelization was a newly developing ministry in the Roman Catholic Church.
95. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1989-90. Parishioners Mary McMahon (a retired St. Augustine School teacher) and Jennie Alessi worked as faithful volunteers in the program.
96. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1987. The St. Theresa Center closed in June of 1989.
97. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1988. Membership grew by leaps and bounds, and today the group is housed at Blessed Sacrament Church.
98. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1988.
99. Hardy interview, Sept. 13, 1996.
100. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1988. For a time, St. Augustine and St. Stephen churches had a joint religious education program, a radical step.
101. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1988.
102. Sculpture memorandum, Nov. 11, 1987. St. Augustine Archives.
103. Letter, Fr. Bill Trott to parishioners, Aug. 10, 1988.
104. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1989.
105. Fr. Ring's appointment and subsequent activities enriched the people's understanding of Liturgy in the life and history of the Church. Fr. Ring shared his considerable musical talents with parishioners. He frequently sang the Mass, accompanied by music director Teryle Thomas Watson, chairperson of vocal music at Rochester's School of the Arts.
106. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1990.
107. Doris Meadows, *The Twenty-First Annual 19th Ward House Tour*. Sponsored by the 19th Ward Community Association, Oct. 19, 1991, n.p.
108. 1990 Federal Census. About 550 Hispanics resided in the census tracts in St. Augustine's neighborhood.

109. Meadows, *The Twenty-First Annual 19th Ward House Tour*, 1991, n.p.
110. 1990 Federal Census.
111. Meadows, *The Twenty-First Annual 19th Ward House Tour*. 1991, n.p.
112. Our Lady of Good Counsel is also located in the 19th Ward, at the corner of Brooks Avenue and Genesee Park Boulevard.
113. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1991.
114. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1991, 1992.
115. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1991, 1992.
116. Biographical sketch provided by Fr. Bob Werth, June 2, 1997. Fr. Bob Werth to Sr. Anna Louise Staub and Victoria Schmitt, June 30, 1998. In 1998, cluster lay committees are in a decision-making mode and “no longer function as advisory to the pastor. The Strategic Planning Committee is setting the pace.” Other decision makers include Liturgy, Celebration, Finance and Public Relations committees, and parish council.
117. Business Manager Lourdes Perez Albuerne oversees four budgets, 12 buildings, three church rentals, two City School District leases, supervises secretarial and maintenance personnel, and works with the finance committee.
118. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1992.
119. St. Augustine Parish and Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward Bulletins, 1995.
120. Hardy interview, June 22, 1998. RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults); SAN (Social Action Network), which became Interfaith Action.
121. Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward Bulletins, 1995-96.
122. *Democrat & Chronicle*, March 6, 1997; *Democrat & Chronicle*, April 7, 1997; *Democrat & Chronicle*, Sept. 5, 1997.
123. Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward Bulletins, 1996-97.
124. Personal account of Sr. Anna Louise Staub, Jan. 15, 1997; Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward Bulletins, 1996.
125. Hardy interview, June 22, 1998.
126. Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward Strategic Plans—Fiscal ‘98, June 23, 1997.
127. Cluster parishioners now tend a flower bed on this site, which has become a small park.
128. Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward Bulletins, 1998; Conversation with Charlene Witkowitz, April 19, 1998.
129. St. Augustine Parish Bulletins, 1976. Some of the bells are rung at 8 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m.

Back cover: The impressive interior of St. Augustine Church is entirely the product of Rochester architects, contractors, and artisans. Yesterday and today, the church provides a tranquil, warm and welcoming atmosphere to all who make their way through its doors. (Photo by Brian D. Fox.)

