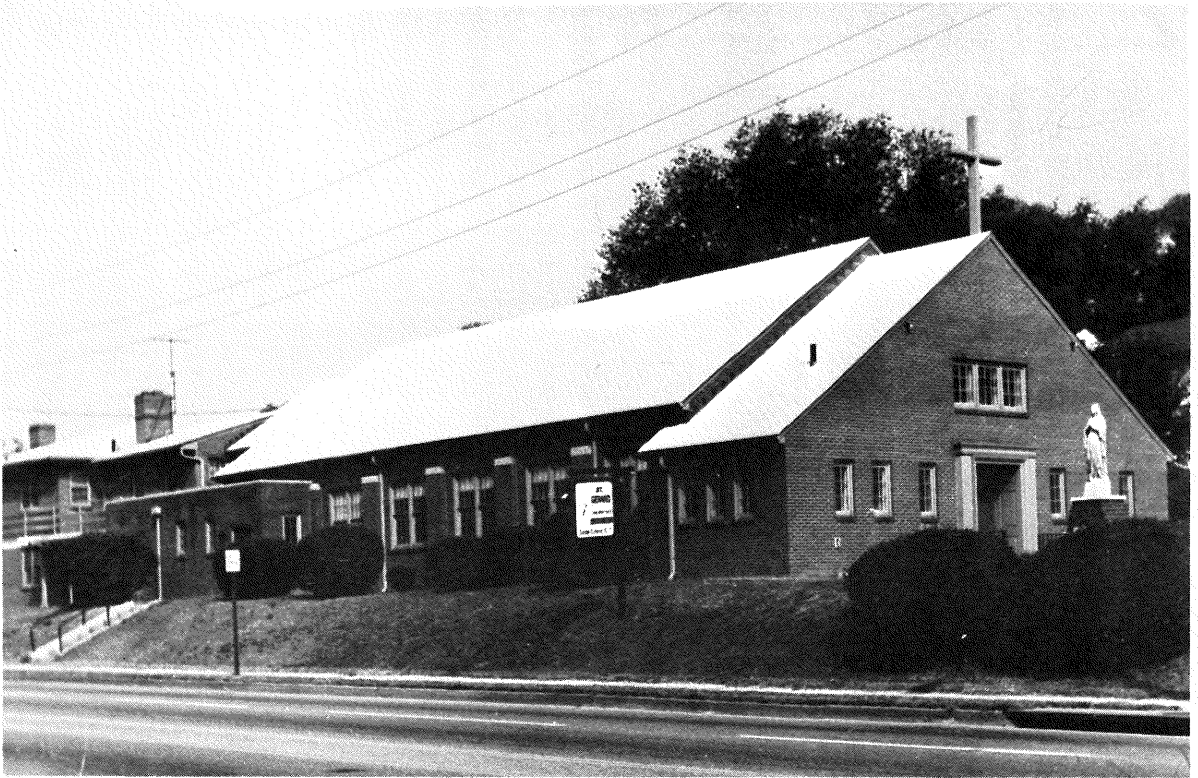


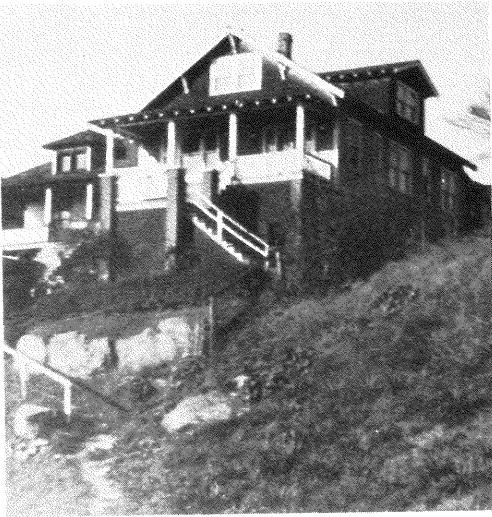
THE  
SAINT  
GERARD  
STORY



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\* THE ST. GERARD STORY \*  
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Anna Louise Haley  
Roanoke, Virginia  
1981



St. Gerard Chapel  
835 Moorman Road



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## Introduction

In the early years, Catholics in the United States found keeping the faith was difficult, and for black Catholics it was even more difficult. Racism was widespread, even in the Church. Black Catholics were few, and even fewer were the number of white Church men who were concerned with, or even knew about, the injustice that black Catholics daily faced both in the Church and in civil society.

The black Catholic congregation of St. Francis Xavier Church in Baltimore has been called the "womb of black Catholicism" in the United States. The French Revolution was one factor in the formation of the congregation. Because of persecution in France, Sulpician Fathers migrated to Baltimore. They opened St. Mary's Seminary in 1791. In 1793, one thousand white and five hundred black refugees from Santo Domingo settled in Baltimore. The French language linked the refugees with the Sulpicians. Under the care of Father John Bessier and Father Nicholas Joubert, the blacks gathered for worship in the basement of St. Mary's Seminary. Later, Father Joubert established a school taught by ladies of the community. From this developed, in 1829, the first black Catholic Sisterhood, the Oblate Sisters of Providence.

In 1843, Redemptorist Fathers took up the care of the black community. Father John N. Neumann, C.S.S.R. (now St. John Neumann, C.S.S.R.) who later became a bishop and was canonized in 1977, encouraged them.

When Father Nicholas Joubert died in 1843, no one offered the Sisters spiritual guidance nor advised them in their problems. Father Neumann learned the Sisters were in trouble and visited them. When he became vice-regent of the Redemptorists, he sent Father Thaddeus Anwander, C.S.S.R. to be their counselor. The new archbishop, having heard of the plight of the Sisters, wanted to disband the order, but Father Anwander pleaded for another chance. Today, thanks to Father Neumann, the Oblate Sisters are active in many dioceses throughout the United States.

Following the Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866, Archbishop Martin J. Spalding endeavored to have the Church in America pay special attention to the needs of black Americans. As a result, Mill Hill Josephites from England came to Baltimore in 1871. From there, they spread to other sections on the United States. A mission was established in Richmond, Virginia, in 1884. It was not until 1946 that a mission solely for black Catholics opened in Roanoke. Five years later, a church building was dedicated - St. Gerard's.

St. Gerard's Catholic Church on U.S. 460, at 809 Orange Avenue, N.W., is geographically at the hub of the black community. It is within walking distance of housing projects, redevelopment areas, very poor slums, and black middle-class homes.

It had its origin in June, 1946, when Bishop Peter Leo Ireton of the Diocese of Richmond offered the Redemptorist Fathers, through Very Reverend Cornelius Hoffman, C.S.S.R., Vice Provincial of Richmond, the opportunity to assume the spiritual care of black Catholics in Roanoke. The provincial of the Baltimore Province, Very Reverend Michael Gearin, C.S.S.R., approved. A few weeks later, acceptance of the foundation came from Most Reverend Patrick Murray, Superior General in Rome.

Early in August, 1946, a group of Redemptorists visited Roanoke. They included the Provincial; the Vice Provincial; two provincial consultors, Rev. Bernard Licking and Rev. William Greene; and the Rev. John Keegan, Rector of the Brooklyn Community, the site of Provincial Headquarters at that time. The Dean of Richmond's Southwest Deanery, Right Reverend James A. Gilsenan, received the group and gave them a tour through the black community. At that time, the black population was centered in a contiguous area in the northwest and northeast sections of the city.

The laws of the Commonwealth required segregation and custom supported the laws. Housing was segregated, as were the churches and public facilities. The announcement that the Redemptorists would establish a church for black Catholics brought mixed emotions. Black churches feared they might lose members. White churches felt an implied rebuke that they had not met the needs of their black parishioners.

The few black Catholics in the city were happy to have a church of their own. They did not feel welcome at St. Andrew's. One black Catholic, Arthur Serrell, had been appointed to a board at St. Andrew's but did not attend any meetings. Father McDonald came about that time to open St. Gerard's.



## The St. Gerard Story

### The Redemptorist Period

September 15, 1946 to October 27, 1974.

Roanoke, in 1946, was a growing agricultural and manufacturing center with a metropolitan district population of 110,593. The 1940 census showed a black population in the central city of 12,812 and a total population of 69,827. The Chamber of Commerce estimated the 1946 population at 74,000.

There were 102 churches in the city representing 19 denominations. Of these, 43 were churches for black congregations representing five denominations: Baptist, Holiness, Methodist, Christian and Presbyterian.

There were three Catholic churches, predominantly white but with a few black members: St. Andrew's, Our Lady of Nazareth, and St. Elias - a Maronite Catholic Church. Catholics made up about four percent of the total population.

The Redemptorists were not new to Virginia. The Vice Province of Richmond was established in 1942. One hundred years earlier, Father (now Saint) John Neumann, C.S.S.R., had preached at Richmond. Harpers Ferry, Martinsburg, Kingwood, and Wheeling were attended by St. John Neumann that same year. Redemptorists had preached in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Lexington, and Roanoke in the following years. They were at St. Andrew's in 1911.

Beginning in 1941, Redemptorist foundations were established in the Diocese: St. Augustine Church in Richmond and St. Alphonsus Church in Newport News. Richmond was also the site of Vice Provincial headquarters.

The Redemptorists devote themselves primarily to bringing the Gospel of Christ to those most in need. In the South, this has been chiefly among the black.

Rev. Maurice J. McDonald, C.S.S.R.,

September 15, 1946 to July 31, 1953

Rev. Maurice J. McDonald, C.S.S.R., the first superior of the Roanoke foundation, was told of his appointment on August 18, 1946 and it was announced to the Brooklyn Community, where he was then assigned, on August 19. Bishop Ireton announced the plan in a diocesan letter read in all the churches of the Diocese of Richmond on September 8 and September 15, 1946.

On September 15, 1946, Father McDonald arrived in Roanoke to establish a Roman Catholic mission for the blacks in the city. He began his work the day he arrived. He had established temporary residence at the Nazareth rectory where the pastor and two assistants were able and willing to give help. The senior assistant, Father John McMahon, took Father McDonald to visit the Charles A. Rowe family. There he met John Henry Jefferson, a black Catholic converted through the example of the Rowes.

The next day, Msgr. Gilsenan took Father McDonald to see a prospective convert, Mrs. Juan Nabors. She and her husband wished to become Catholics and their two sons were in need of baptism.

That same day, Father McDonald met the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth at their convent on Campbell Avenue. They expressed great interest since they and their pupils had been praying, for some time, for a mission for the blacks in Roanoke.

The next day, the Rev. Harris Findlay, assistant at Nazareth, took Father McDonald about the city to conduct necessary business. Father McDonald began looking for a site for his mission and for the furnishings that would be needed. He visited the War Assets Administration on Church Avenue to see about purchase of war surplus materials. The war was over but consumer goods and housing were still in short supply. It took persistence, ingenuity, and the assistance of many people to locate the housing and the furnishings necessary to establish quarters for a new congregation. Building a new congregation took even more effort and was often discouraging.

Rev. T. B. Martin, pastor of St. Andrew's Church, picking the names of black Catholics from his files, found there were eleven. Father Joseph Hodges, a former assistant at St. Andrew's, later head of the Diocesan Motor Chapel, and now Bishop of Wheeling, West Virginia, had left a file listing nine black persons interested in

becoming Catholics.

Ernest Preston, a young black Catholic home from college, invited the known Catholics to meet at his home on September 19. Father McDonald arranged to have his first Mass at the Preston home, 430 McDowell Avenue, N.W., and requested the September 29 Mass at the home of Mrs. Robert Burrell. Mrs. Burrell suggested Harrison School, a black elementary school at 511-521 Harrison Avenue, N.W. The principal, Mr. Lewis A. Sydnor, referred Father McDonald to Superintendent of Schools, D. E. McQuilken. Through the urging of Msgr. Gilsenan, Mr. McQuilken was persuaded to telephone the members of the School Board. They granted the use of the school auditorium for a nominal sum.

Seventeen persons, nine adults and eight youngsters, attended that first Mass at Harrison School on September 22, 1946. Mrs. Thomas Butler played the piano. Father McDonald preached his first sermon in Roanoke; his topic - Our Lady. Sisters Mary Adele Feeley and Martha Joseph Lenihan, from Our Lady of Nazareth, attended Mass and afterwards took the names of the children for Sunday School.

Fifteen were present at the Mass on October 6, six children and nine adults, one a white man. The collection amounted to \$8.57. There was singing practice after Mass in the front of the room, while Sister Eunice Anthony and Mary Veronica McAuliffe taught Sunday School in the back.

Fourteen attended Mass on October 13, ten adults and four children. Sister Angelica Lohman, Superior of Our Lady of Nazareth Convent, came for the Sunday School. Baby boy Andrew Anderson, Jr., was baptized after the Mass. The congregation was growing. On November 3, 1946, when Msgr. Gilsenan offered to send THE CATHOLIC VIRGINIAN to all black Catholics, Father McDonald gave him 23 names.

Meanwhile, the search for a site continued. Clergy and lay people, black and white, Catholic and non-Catholic, offered assistance. Sites were shown by real estate dealers, by prospective parishioners, by fellow priests, and by prominent members of the black community.

A suitable building was found at 835 Moorman Road, N.W. On October 14, 1946, Father McDonald signed a contract to buy, provided permission could be obtained from the Provincial. This was granted on October 16, the Feast of St. Gerard. This date determined the name of the new parish.

On that date, too, Bishop Ireton set the "parish" limits. The territory for the parish of St. Gerard Majella, C.S.S.R., "pro solis negritis", included the counties of Roanoke, Craig, (the Diocese

of Richmond section), Franklin, and Botetourt.

The first Mass in the chapel at St. Gerard's was celebrated on December 1, 1946. Nineteen blacks were present. The organ was brought from the Nazareth Convent for the occasion. The collection totaled \$10.13.

On December 7, 1946, Father McDonald slept in the house for the first time. On Christmas Eve, the first Redemptorist visitor was housed: Rev. John Huston, who helped at St. Andrew's for the Christmas Masses.

During December, gifts continued to arrive for the chapel and the house. Rev. John Keegan, Rector of the Brooklyn Community, sent candlesticks, a crucifix, and a ciborium. Sister Angelica gave altar linens and altar breads, and sent five dining room chairs from Our Lady of Nazareth Convent. A beautiful crucifix for the hall and a radio were also received.

The year 1947 opened auspiciously. Rev. Joseph Otterbein, C.S.S.R., the first of 12 assistants in establishing St. Gerard's Parish, arrived on January 7. A little later, Father Alfred DeFazio drove Father McDonald home from Richmond in a LaSalle. The Redemptorists now had a car, but it was June before Father McDonald found time to get his driver's license. Meanwhile, his transportation was provided by his parishioners, chiefly Arthur Serrell.

From the first, Father McDonald introduced the congregation to the rich variety of Catholic rituals and symbols: the Mass, the Sacraments, novenas, Benediction, Forty Hours, and others. Lenten and Holy Week services in 1947, though poorly attended, included the usual age-old Catholic devotions. About 60 people attended Palm Sunday services. Juan and Mrs. Nabors were baptized. Only ten were present for Tenebrae on Wednesday evening, but the services included Matins and Lauds and a sermon. The choir chanted the Benedictus and the Miserere. Twenty-three were present at the seven o'clock Mass on Easter Sunday. Fifteen were strangers. More than 50 attended the High Mass at eleven.

A picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was erected on May 27, 1947. It was the gift of a Nazareth parishioner who had obtained it from her sister, a nun of the Visitation Convent in Wytheville when it was dissolved.

On August 10, 1947, Mrs. Marion Birkes came to work at St. Gerard's on a part-time basis. At this writing she is still there, full-time, as a housekeeper.

At the end of 1947, St. Gerard's had a total Catholic group of 49: 17 families with 23 children. About 12 were under instruction and eight others came quite regularly to Sunday Mass. The average Sunday attendance was between 35 and 40. There were 16 baptisms during the year, 13 of them children. Eight made their first communion.

### Fund Raising

St. Gerard's mission was financed largely by the Redemptorists and the Diocese of Richmond. Some assistance came from interested members of the community, white and black. The Sunday collections were augmented by fund-raising activities of the congregation.

One early event was an exercise in ecumenism, a musical program, and three one-act plays presented at Lucy Addison High School in April, 1947. The production drew an audience of 625, 125 of them white. Success was due to Mrs. Juan Nabors, playwright, who directed two plays for children. Miss Sadie Lawson, vice-principal of Addison High School, directed the third play - THE SLAVE WITH TWO FACES. That cast was made up of teachers from Addison High School.

The following year, SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE was presented at the Academy of Music. About 600 attended. Francis Ballard, director of the Patchwork Players, a local theatre group, assisted Father Otterbein and Mrs. Nabors with the production. Father Otterbein collected ads for the play program. Five of the boys on the Carver High School (Salem) basketball team were in the cast. Father Otterbein attended most of their games.

During the month of January, 1948, Father Otterbein began preparations for a bazaar for February 4 at the colored American Legion Hall at Fifth Street and Center Avenue, N.W. The weather was rough. Few came.

The Bazaar became an annual affair during Father McDonald's pastorate. Redemptorists from Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Dalton sent contributions for the 1949 bazaar. The Sisters of Our Lady of Nazareth Convent sent religious articles to sell and the ladies of the Nazareth parish sold tickets, collected gifts, and raffled a spread. The bazaar was held on June 1 and 2. Twenty-five white children came with the Nazareth nuns. Some white people played Bingo with the blacks.

In November, 1949, a fund-raising effort expanded into the City Market, an Opportunity Sale held November 14 through November 18, in the Arcade, a spot on the City Market where no black had ever held a

sale. It involved a great deal of labor and cleared \$100. There was no trouble with the whites. The bazaar on May 24 and 25, 1950, made about \$350. Bingo went well. Some of the Nazareth ladies who had helped in 1949 avoided the 1950 affair. It would seem that the Redemptorists' stand on public housing alienated many former supporters.

On May 1, 1952, Miss Alta Mai Thompson, St. Gerard's first organist, presented her music pupils in a successful recital. About 250 were present. The swing band from Gainsboro School participated. Miss Thompson's musicale became an annual event.

St. Gerard's also assisted in civic fund-raising activities, notably the Hospital Development Fund.

### The Salem Mission

On April 5, 1948, Bishop Ireton assigned to the Redemptorists the town of Salem, to care for white and black. Salem was in St. Andrew's parish. The pastor, Father T. B. Martin, and Father John O'Hara, his assistant, were cooperative. Father Martin called Mrs. William (Marie E.) Kellner, president of the Catholic Women's Club of Salem, who arranged to gather all Catholics at the home of the secretary, Mrs. R. D. (Charlotte Fishburn) Martin. Father Martin gave Father McDonald a list of the Salem Catholics.

During the week, Father McDonald arranged with Dr. Charles Smith, President of Roanoke College, for the use of the old Lutheran chapel at the college currently used as a classroom. The chapel, and later the Laboratory Theatre, were used until the Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was erected in 1948-49. Fifty-five attended the Mass in Salem on April 18, 1948. Even at the risk of repercussions from ecclesiastical authority and/or the congregation, non-segregated seating was decided. The few blacks drifted together in two or three benches. The students, many from the North, sat near them. There was no comment and all seemed pleasant.

A priest from the St. Gerard community was in charge of the Salem mission until October, 1963, when the Salem parish became independent. The first priest in charge was Rev. C. Walter Campbell, C.S.S.R., who arrived on July 17, 1948. He said his first Mass in Salem the next day. Father Campbell remained as administrator at Salem (a quasi-pastor the Bishop called him) until he was transferred to Orangeburg, S.C., on July 31, 1951.



Bishop Ireton, Father McDonald, Father Otterbein and Father Donlan  
with the first Confirmation Class, April 3, 1949.



Father Donlan and his football team.



As administrator, he supervised the removal of the Army Chapel from Camp Butner and its rebuilding at Main and Green Streets in 1948-49. He spearheaded the drive to finance it, organized the Catholic Men's Club, and the Legion of Mary. He also laid the groundwork for the acquisition of additional territory.

#### Father Donlan's Youth Ministry

Father Otterbein was transferred on July 16, 1948, and Father Francis Donlan, C.S.S.R. arrived on July 17. He expanded St. Gerard's work with young people. On September 18, 1948, he rented a store at 29 Center Avenue, N.W., adjoining Dr. L. C. Downing's office, as a youth center.

In January, 1949, Father Donlan opened St. Gerard's Information Center. At that time it was the only Catholic information center for non-Catholics catering exclusively to blacks. In June, Father Donlan organized a lay Information Council to help the center. He was edified and encouraged by the Council's zeal and apostolic spirit. At first, the center averaged 50 visitors a week, but the numbers dwindled. The center was discontinued on June 30, 1951. It did some good but the intellectual approach was not a success.

Father Donlan prepared St. Gerard's first confirmation class. Twenty-three were confirmed by Bishop Peter Leo Ireton on April 3, 1949. Mrs. A. V. Mundy and Mrs. Helen Johnson were sponsors for the girls. Ernest Preston and Ralph Thomas were sponsors for the boys.

In September, 1949, Father Donlan organized a football team, St. Gerard's Dodgers, with Ralph Thomas as coach. Because it was part of the city league, equipment was available from the city. They enjoyed hampionship season. St. Gerard Juniors defeated three high school teams to win a trophy in April, 1959, at a Field Day at Booker T. Washington Memorial near Rocky Mount, Virginia.

During the 1950 season, Father Donlan had two baseball teams functioning. The Juniors were about high school age. The Seniors were young men up to about 30. Junior uniforms were donated, but the Seniors bought their own.

St. Gerard's 1950 sandlot football team topped the Negro sandlot teams. They were scheduled to play at Victory Stadium but bitter weather canceled the game.

Father Donlan worked with Mr. Nathaniel A. Clark, Field Executive BSA, to establish scouting at St. Gerard's. The first meeting was held in december, 1950. Within a short time, organization was complete.

Mrs. Juan Nabors' group of Girl Scouts, Mrs. Shaw's Brownies, and Miss Alta Mai Thompson's Cubs were meeting regularly.

Basketball teams were organized in the 1950-51 season.

Father Donlan's athletic programs kept St. Gerards in the public eye as part of the community.

As soon as the new church was completed, Father Donlan stressed recreation in the hall. He bought ping pong table tops for afternoon games. Social evenings for boys and girls did not prove successful. Few attended. Some parishioners objected to the use of the hall for recreation, fearing riff-raff would damage the building. Father Donlan supervised all the activity. He became quite a public figure in negro recreation in the city. His appointment to the Negro Recreation Board was public acknowledgment of his work.

The athletic program was also a vehicle for inter-racial activity. On February 21, 1950, Father Albert Periera, assistant pastor at Our Lady of Nazareth, participated in a radio panel on inter-racial brotherhood. When asked what Catholics were doing to break down prejudice, he said the Nazareth basketball team was to play St. Gerard's at Addison High School the next Friday night. They played February 24 and St. Gerard's won.

The St. Andrew's team later played St. Gerard's and St. Gerard's won again. In that game, one boy from St. Andrew's could not play because his father refused to give him permission. The boys ribbed him so that his father let him play the next game. About 24 friends of the St. Gerard's team were present. There were no incidents.

Sometime in February, 1952, a plan to have a basketball game at St. Andrew's gym between the St. Gerard's team and Father Periera's black team from Portsmouth fell through. Someone thought it imprudent. The Redemptorists thought it another lost opportunity to put principle into action.

After Father Campbell was transferred to Orangeburg, S.C., Father Donlan was in charge at Salem until Father John Jerlinski, C.S.S.R. arrived on February 25, 1952.

#### Human Obstacles to God's Work

The work of Father McDonald and his fellow Redemptorists was not always easy. Apathy, personal resentment, religious prejudice, and racial prejudice presented problems.

Attendance at Mass, especially Holy Week and Holy Day services, was often discouragingly low. On Candlemas Day, 1948, Father McDonald

blessed the candles "with no one present but the angels".

Some of the people offended others by overdressing and by taking it upon themselves to settle matters not in their care. Older Catholics did not provide the help Father expected. He also feared the bad example of lax Catholics might sway the new converts. Gains through baptism seemed lost by removals, with eight lost in 1950, and ten moving out of Roanoke in 1951.

Parishioners were sometimes uncooperative. Activities were carried out against the pastor's expressed wishes. Some fund raising efforts failed because of personal feuds. A few, even among the leaders, did not cooperate in the Building Fund Drive, and this knowledge had a detrimental effect.

Some white Catholics, including members of the clergy, were critical or uncooperative because of the Redemptorist priests' support of public housing.

In November, 1949, Father Donlan wrote a series of letters to the editor trying to counteract the non-Catholic bias of the Roanoke papers. He felt the editor was not fair in refusing to print his replies, although his letter defending the Pope, who had been attacked in an editorial quoted from a Washington paper, was printed.

Radio time was not always available. When Father McDonald first saw the WROV manager about Radio time, he could not get it. The stations had agreed not to sell time to "Religion" but to donate certain periods to the Ministers' Conference. The Ministers' Conference refused to give St. Gerard's time because the Redemptorists were doing Negro work and some Negro preachers were not ready for radio.

The Ministers' Conference at that time was only open to white Evangelical Protestants. Until late 1954, it was all white, all male, and all Protestant. The first black was voted in shortly after the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation. It was opened to Catholic priests about 1972, and to Jewish Rabbis in 1976.

By 1950, the radio situation had changed. The station was obliged to sell time. Father McDonald, for \$12, bought a 3:45 P.M. spot for six Tuesdays in Lent, 1950.

### Early Parish Organizations

The first of several organizations formed for adults at St. Gerard's was the Ladies of Charity. Father McDonald and two of his parishioners attended the regular monthly meeting of the St. Andrew's/ Nazareth Ladies if Charity in October, 1948, at the home of Mrs. John

St. Clair, in South Roanoke. They were interested in forming an organization of their own at St. Gerard's. They did so, a month later. The first organizational meeting was held on November 21, 1948. Present were Miss Alta Mai Thompson, Mrs. E. Preston, Mrs. Marion Birkes, Mrs. A. V. Mundy, Mrs. Juan Nabors, Mrs. A. Lewis, Mrs. Alberta Montgomery, Mrs. F. N. Hale, Mrs. D. Harvey, and Mrs. D. Holland.

A fish fry in December and donations brought the treasury to \$120. Christmas baskets were bought for poor families and Father Donlan and Father McDonald delivered them, assisted by Arthur Serrell and William Steptoe.

St. Gerard's Ladies of Charity, in addition to helping the poor, sponsored a program in 1950 to consecrate the homes of the parish to the Sacred Heart. Very slow progress was made. Most homes were only half Catholic. When plans were initiated for a nursery, in 1952, the Ladies of Charity served as the Catholic representatives on the Board of Trustees. St. Gerard's Ladies of Charity affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women and, for a time, their activities merged.

#### A Man for All Seasons and Every Need

Father McDonald's social and civic activity was varied. He worked with individuals and groups. He made arrangements for admission of a girl to the Good Shepherd Convent in Baltimore, secured a doctor for a man who was then sent to Burrell Memorial Hospital, helped get a man's jail sentence reduced from one year to two months, and helped a poor family get steady assistance from the Department of Public Welfare.

In December, 1949, he worked to get the old Gregory School for a recreation center. He spoke about it at the meeting of the Executive Committee of American Legion Post #3 which unanimously passed a resolution to City Council to retain the appropriation in the budget. E. Brown, head of the Civic League, was not in favor. He said it was condemned as a school, so it was not fit for a recreation center.

During the month of April, 1950, Father McDonald cooperated with the American Legion, during Religious Emphasis Month, in a campaign urging people to teach religion to their children. His sixty-second "spot" announcement was broadcast daily by each of the three radio stations for four weeks in April.

At the request of Dr. H. T. Penn, Father McDonald appeared at a City Council meeting on June 15, 1950, in favor of employing black

fireman for the city. (Black firemen were not hired in Roanoke until December 1, 1963.)

### Public Housing

The big event in 1950 was the housing project. Father McDonald's leadership was a major factor in bringing low-rent housing to the city.

On October 26, 1949, the Public Housing Administration allocated 900 low-rent housing units for Roanoke. City Council authorized preliminary steps aimed at getting a negro residential subdivision underway in the Lincoln Court area. On February 18, the Redevelopment and Housing Authority appointed architects for its projected 900-unit housing development. On the same day, public housing was attacked in the closing session of the Virginia Building Material Association convention at Hotel Roanoke.

Father McDonald felt that public housing would be good for the city, so he supported it. He enlisted the aid of the American Legion and Father Donlan enlisted Arnold Schlossberg, a local attorney and real estate operator. Crowds filled council chambers to debate the issue. Civic leagues took stands, usually in opposition. An exception was the Public Affairs Committee of the Hunton Branch, YMCA. On May 22, 300 were on hand to hear defense of public housing. Fathers McDonald, Donlan, and Periera, and Msgr. Peter Rabil were there. The first three spoke in support of the project.

Father McDonald addressed numerous groups in defense of public housing. On October 29, 1950, he spoke at the Deanery meeting of the NCCW in St. Andrew's Auditorium. The group passed a resolution praising the Roanoke Housing Authority. Two virulent editorials against the resolution appeared in the papers, and letters followed.

City Council called for a referendum to determine the sentiment of voters on public housing. At the urging of Father McDonald, an educational campaign was launched by a group of Roanokers to acquaint citizens with the facts and to seek supporters for the referendum.

Many people were reluctant to support public housing for fear of reprisals by the real estate people. Some priests in town seemed to be against it. Some Catholics were surprised at the Redemptorist stand and statements, although the Bishop favored the Redemptorist position.

The proponents of public housing lost the January 9, 1951, referendum but won their objective. City Council finally agreed to

cooperate and construction began. On September 21, 1952, Father McDonald took part in the dedication ceremony of the public housing project at Lansdowne. It seemed a fitting recognition of the part he played in supporting low-rent public housing.

Father McDonald celebrated his Silver Jubilee at a Mass on June 11, 1950, in St. Gerard's Chapel. There were 50 at the Mass, half of them white. One hundred and fifty came to the reception after the Mass.

A week later, Father Campbell celebrated his Silver Jubilee at Salem. The High Mass was sung by men from St. Andrew's. There were two white and two black altar boys. The reception after the Mass was held on the terrace behind the church. About 12 blacks were present. There was no semblance of trouble at the Jubilee.

#### Diocesan Convention

An incident that created bad feeling in the Valley was precipitated when the NCCW voted to hold the diocesan convention in Roanoke in April, 1950. St. Gerard's Ladies of Charity was affiliated. Because of segregation laws, the site of the convention became a problem. At Hotel Roanoke, a limited number of blacks could be seated at a separate table. Father McDonald and Father Periera objected to the segregation and the limitation in numbers.

Father McDonald wrote the president of the state organization and suggested meeting in St. Andrew's auditorium. The problem of the site was referred to the Bishop, who preferred St. Andrew's. Despite the bad feeling resulting, Father McDonald felt that principle and the good of race relations demanded it. Father Periera provided valuable support.

The convention opened May 14, 1950. Miss Alta Mai Thompson and Miss Frances Hale were delegates from St. Gerard's. Miss Mildred Dix and Mrs. Charles Crutchfield also attended. Father George Wichland, C.S.S.R., of St. Augustine, Richmond, cooperated best of the outside black parishes. Some delegates came from Alexandria and Falls Church. None came from St. Joseph's in Richmond, or Newport News, Portsmouth, or Norfolk. A number of St. Gerard's ladies attended the reception at Nazareth on Saturday afternoon. The Redemptorists lost some white friends but gained respect among the blacks.



Mrs. Alma Sewell, Mrs. Marion Birkes, Father McDonald,  
Arnold Schlossberg, and Paul Wiggins in March, 1948.



Charles Anderson, Mrs. Juan Nabors, Miss Alta Mai Thompson,  
Dr. L.C. Downing, and Mrs. Alberta Montgomery, members of  
the Building Committee, 1951.



## Building the Church

Permission to start a building fund for a church was obtained in January, 1948. The first planning meeting was held in March, 1948, but it was not until the Spring of 1950 that serious work began. In March, several small lots on Grange Avenue, N.W., were purchased. They were not ideal but deemed the best possible site. The Vice Provincial suggested getting an architect to plan a building in the \$20,000 range.

On the advice of Leo Henebry, the firm of Eubank & Caldwell was consulted. Since Father Otterbein had obtained such a large layout for the St. Martin de Porres Center at Hampton Institute for \$20,000, St. Gerard's Redemptorists decided to try for a combination auditorium and gym for \$20,000. This firm guaranteed price, secured contractors, and supervised construction.

At the Vice Provincial's suggestion, Father McDonald consulted Bishop Ireton. The Bishop preferred a church-hall for Roanoke and recommended getting the plans of Our Lady of Peace in Arlington. The plans were received and contractors' estimates sought. The bid was \$50,000. Because of the imminence of steel rationing, approval for the plans was rushed. The parish had \$10,000. With the promise of financial support from the Bishop of Richmond and \$15,000 from the Vice Provincial, the work could start. The Provincial approved the plans, assured the St. Gerard Redemptorists of his cooperation, and agreed to the Eubank & Caldwell offer. The offer was to build on a cost plus rate with a \$3,000 commission. Mr. Caldwell said they would have to push the price beyond the means of the parish if a firm price were given.

Almost any amount would have been beyond the means of the parish. Only about 30 members of the 21 families at St. Gerard's, in 1950, worked for wages.

After long preparation, the Building Drive had a kick-off meeting on April 12, 1951. It was generally thought the parish could raise \$10,000 in three years with pledges and social affairs.

The co-chairmen of the Drive Committee were L.C. Downing, M.D., a prominent leader in the black community and a Presbyterian; Miss Alta Mai Thompson, a public school teacher and one of the early parishioners of St. Gerard's; and J. Butler Thompson.

The Executive Board was made up of Charles Anderson, Mrs. Juan Nabors, Mrs. Alberta Montgomery, Miss Alta Mai Thompson, and J. Thomas Butler.

Three committees were set up: Parish, Friends, and Memorial. Chairmen were Charles Anderson, Parish Committee; Mrs. Paul Montgomery, Friends Committee; and Mrs. Juan Nabors, Memorial Committee. Most of the parishioners were included on the committees.

Mr. Guy Bost, Jr., an artist for Houck & Co., made a line drawing of the new church to be used in the building drive.

The Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Nazareth mimeographed an explanatory brochure. (See Appendix IV)

The tool house was moved to the site of the church on May 21, 1951. The next day, Father McDonald moved the first shovel of earth. There was no ceremony. Workmen broke ground on May 28.

Meanwhile, the drive for funds continued. Father McDonald preached at all Masses at St. Andrew's, May 13, soliciting for the drive. He collected \$250. The appeal in Salem brought \$900.

The building of St. Gerard's was a joint effort of the Diocese of Richmond, the Redemptorists and their friends and colleagues in other places, and the people of Roanoke: black and white, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. It truly was an ecumenical project. By the end of July, the drive totaled \$9,237, mostly pledges and gifts from Redemptorist Friends in the North. The total among white Roanoke and Salem friends was \$3,350.

Father McDonald had spoken to Bishop Ireton about extra money for the building when the Bishop suggested changing from cinder block to red brick for the exterior of the church, and the Bishop had promised a loan of from \$6-\$7,000. This had to be canceled because of arrangements the Vice Provincial had made for Richmond projects. The Bishop did help with the unpaid bills of \$5,500, starting with a check for \$1,000.

The church was built with the main entrance facing east. To the right of this entrance was a sound-proof room, for mothers with infants, which doubled as a kitchen. On the left were rest rooms. At the far end of the nave were sliding doors which could cut off the sanctuary when the nave was used for secular purposes. There was a small entrance at each side of the nave in front of the sliding doors.

Behind the sliding doors were the sanctuary in the center, with a sacristy to the left, and an office to the right. The confessional adjoined the sacristy, and a shrine adjoined the office. The altar was a gift from Dr. L. C. Downing, in memory of his father.

As a permanent expression of gratitude to the benefactors, a special metal box was built into the stand that held the sanctuary lamp and the names of the benefactors are kept in the box. It was

still there during Father Schmied's pastorate. It is now kept in the safe.

On November 20, 1951, the dedication date was set with the Bishop and on November 27, 1951, Father Donlan picked up kneeling benches from Richmond. Rev. A. Lachovsky, Rock Castle Superior, had his men make them for the communion rails, for which he charged only a fraction of their value.

The first Mass was said in the new church on December 16, 1951, before a congregation of about 50. A week later, on December 23, the building was dedicated by Bishop Peter Leo Ireton, with 180 in attendance, 40 of them white.

Bishop Ireton blessed the church, erected the stations, presided, and preached. Vice Provincial Father Joseph Driscoll sang the Solemn High Mass. Father McDonald was the deacon, Father Joseph Otterbein the subdeacon. Sister Martha Joseph Lenihan had Nazareth boys assist at serving with the St. Gerard's boys. Father Francis Donlan directed the singing. Mrs. J. Thomas Butler was the organist. Father T. B. Martin and Father John McMahon assisted Father Robert O. Hickman as Master of Ceremonies.

Because of the inclement weather, the Bishop came by train and went to Our Lady of Nazareth. The dinner arranged for the clergy at Hotel Roanoke was canceled. The Bishop left on the 11:50 train. There was no reception following the dedication, an omission Father McDonald later regretted.

The Sunday after the dedication, the Sacrament of Baptism was administered for the first time in the new church to Elton Gerard Witcher.

The first confirmation in the new church was celebrated November 16, 1952, by Most Rev. Joseph Hodges, Auxiliary Bishop of Richmond. Twenty-seven were confirmed in a beautiful ceremony. About 100 were present. The Knights of Columbus provided a color guard. Father John Igoe and Father Joseph Hirsch from St. Andrew's, and Father John McMahon of Nazareth attended. Miss Alta Mai Thompson and Mr. Leo Henebry were sponsors.

The first funeral came several months later. Mrs. Colene H. Hardy died January 2, 1953, and was buried from St. Gerard's.

Margaret Mann, a Catholic from Salem, was married on July 30, 1953, to Russell Smith, a non-Catholic. This was the first marriage in the new church and the last sacrament Father McDonald administered at St. Gerard's.



Bishop Joseph Hodges, Father McDonald,  
and the 1952 Confirmation Class.



The Day-Care Center  
April, 1953

## The Kindergarten

The Redemptorists made two attempts to establish a kindergarten and nursery at St. Gerard's. The first effort was initiated by Father McDonald and Father Jerlinski, in 1952.

A Board of Trustees was chosen: Dr. L. C. Downing, Mrs. Callie Hayes and Mrs. Zelda Coles from the non-Catholic community, and the St. Gerard's Ladies of Charity from the Catholic community. Mrs. Elsie Scott, Mrs. D. Walker, and Miss Dorothy Byers were engaged as nursery workers. Methods were discussed, equipment was purchased, and news stories and pictures were published in THE ROANOKE WORLD NEWS and THE TRIBUNE. Ralph Thomas gave a concert for the benefit of the nursery on October 17, 1952.

The presence of 35 people at the open house on January 11, 1953, gave some promise of success, but the nursery opened with only six children. Twelve were registered, but attendance was poor. Flu was one cause. The fee of \$1.00 daily was another. Religious prejudice might have been the strongest reason against it. St. Gerard's provided no transportation, another drawback. The nursery closed on June 30, 1953.

Father McDonald was not completely discouraged. He was willing to try again if he could get volunteer help and charge little or nothing for care. A combination kindergarten and nursery could be tried if Sisters were available to operate it, but the opportunity did not come during his pastorate.

## Farewell

News of Father McDonald's impending transfer came in mid-July. A farewell party was given in Salem where he was presented a gift of money. The Knights of Columbus also gave a gift of money. St. Gerard's gave a farewell party on July 30th with about 100 attending. A purse was presented. The parishioners also presented a new Bible for Father McDonald's father.

Father McDonald's last entry in the ANNALS read: "I am leaving today to help out at Congers, New York, during the month of August ... New pastor expected here August 10 ... God bless this tiny parish."

Father McDonald left Roanoke on July 31, 1953. His tiny parish had grown from 11 black Catholics when he first came, to 17 families: 17 men, 27 women, and 45 children.

The mission church in Salem had grown to 39 families: 40 men, 45 women, and 86 children. Fifteen men were active in the Holy Name

Society, 29 women in the NCCW, and nine in the Legion of Mary. The Newman Club at Roanoke College had six members.

Father McDonald left a community better prepared than most for the trauma following the Supreme Court decisions of 1954 and 1955. Co operation of blacks and whites in establishing St. Gerard's Mission, and in building the church on Orange Avenue, fostered a core of rapport that was needed in the trying times of the fifties and sixties.

The disagreements and alienation that accompanied the drive for public housing and the peaceful solution of the problem paved the way for handling other problems. Establishing Our Lady of Perpetual Help as a joint venture of black and white, and non-segregated seating there, helped break down racial barriers.

The integration of the races was not always smooth. Friends were alienated when they felt the Redemptorists were going too far or moving too fast. Expected leadership from the clergy, Catholic and Protestant, was sometimes wanting. Public opinion and economic interests often overrode moral principles. Despite these obstacles, the work continued and progress was made.

Rev. Thomas Norton, C.S.S.R.

August 17, 1953 to May 7, 1959 and 1971 to November 28, 1972

Rev. Thomas Norton, C.S.S.R., the second pastor at St. Gerard's, came to Roanoke from Newport News on August 17, 1953. A new missionary, Rev. Larry Murphy, C.S.S.R., arrived at the same time. On the following day, Father Norton took his oath as Superior of the small Redemptorist community that served St. Gerard's and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem: Rev. John Jerlinski, administrator at Salem, Father Murphy, and himself. A month later, he attended the Divine Office and funeral of Msgr. James Gilsenan, pastor of Our Lady of Nazareth Church. As Deam of the area, Msgr. Gilsenan had been Father McDonald's chief advisor when he established St. Gerard's in 1946.

Father Norton used various means to become acquainted with the parish and the community. Early in October, he visited some of the local institutions: the Northwest Recreational Center, the YWCA, the Burrell Memorial Hospital. He celebrated Mass for St. Gerard's Girl Scout Troop #86, which attended in a body. He spoke to the Holy Name Society of Our Lady of Nazareth at their communion breakfast in November. He attended a performance of WHY THE CHIMES RANG at Booker T. Washington Junior High School in December. Right after Christmas, he gave a poorly attended party for St. Gerard adults. A day later, he gave a very successful party for the children. Sister Benedict Hohman, from St. Andrew's, provided toys for the occasion.

Father Norton continued the work begun by Father McDonald, making changes that might enrich the spiritual development of the congregation: adjusting the Mass and novena schedules to the needs of both parishes, introducing additional devotions, and enhancing the physical surroundings. Novena attendance improved, from six in June to 19 in August. In January, 1954, Father Norton changed the novena to the evening. White people attended in varying numbers.

Radio programs continued to emphasize the Redemptorist presence in the community. Father Jerlinski had a 15-minute program Monday through Friday on "Religion", beginning January 4, 1954. Beginning August 30, 1954, Father Norton was on WSLR-Radio each morning, Monday through Saturday, for 15 minutes of morning devotions. During 1955, five radio talks were given on Catholic doctrine and one on St. Gerard.

St. Gerard's received several gifts for the church during the year. An organ was brought from Marion in January by Father Jerlinski



and Father Murphy. On February 28, Father Norton blessed the three-foot statue of Blessed Martin, a gift of Father Georges OP, head of the Blessed Martin Guild in New York City. In March, he blessed a statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a gift from Mrs. Faddoul Santon, in memory of her husband.

Contact was maintained with black Catholic congregations elsewhere. On Low Sunday, April 25, 1954, five members of St. Alphonsus Church choir from Newport News sang High Mass at 9:30. A turkey dinner was served after the Mass.

### Parochial School Integration

The integration of the Catholic schools in Roanoke, in 1954, was welcomed by Father Norton and his parishioners. The idea of a small parochial school for black pupils was broached during Father McDonald's first years in Roanoke. Several families were interested but nothing materialized.

The Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, made parochial school attendance possible. On May 31, 1954, Father Norton talked with Sister Celine Carrigan, the principal of Nazareth School, about admitting black pupils. A few days later, he talked with the principal of St. Andrew's School, Sister Miriam O'Connor. Father John Igoe and Father Robert Beattie, administrators of Roanoke Catholic High School, were consulted. All agreed to admit black pupils. When school opened on September 7, 1954, black children were in the Roanoke Catholic schools for the first time, with seven at Nazareth elementary, 12 at St. Andrew's elementary, and two at Roanoke Catholic High School. There were no incidents.

On July 14, 1954, the first nuptial Mass was celebrated at St. Gerard's when Miss Willa Elliott married McCloud Tilman. The Butler family made up the choir.

In celebration of the Marian Year, Father Jerlinski conducted a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington on August 16 and 17, 1954. All the parishes were invited to participate. On October 10, members of St. Gerard's were among the 2,500 parishioners of the Southwest Deanery who celebrated the Marian Year on St. Andrew's grounds with Rosary, Mass, and Benediction.

In September, Father Jerlinski was transferred to Southern Pines, N.C., and Father Murphy to Tampa, Florida. St. Gerard's gave

a farewell party for them on September 16. Our Lady of Perpetual Help had a farewell party for them and a welcome for Father John Craven, C.S.S.R., new administrator of the Salem Church, on September 19, 1954.

### New Parish Organizations

Several new parish programs developed during Father Norton's pastorate. The oldest organization, the Ladies of Charity, was reactivated in April, 1957, and remained active, alone or as part of the NCCW, until 1959. In May, 1954, the Deanery president of the NCCW, Mrs. O. P. King of Our Lady of Nazareth, officiated at the reorganization of the NCCW at St. Gerard's. During the following five years, the St. Gerard members participated in parish, deanery, and diocesan activities. Seven members attended the Diocesan Convention at Hotel Roanoke in May, 1955. Two hundred twenty-five delegates were present, but only two blacks from outside Roanoke attended. In March, 1957, St. Gerard's was host for the Deanery meeting.

St. Gerard's Holy Name Society was organized in July, 1954. Bob Theimer of Salem, a state officer of the Society, gave a brief talk. Twelve men were present and William Steptoe was elected president. Seven of St. Gerard's members attended the Deanery meeting at St. Andrew's in September. At the January, 1955, meeting Father Norton discussed some of the activities and responsibilities of the Society. In connection with the obligation to support the church, he distributed envelopes which would be used, beginning February 1, for offertory collections. He also encouraged men to look up would-be converts and bring them to church.

On April 8, 1956, Father Norton blessed the Holy Name manuals and lapel buttons and presented them at the altar to the Holy Name men present. A communion breakfast followed. On Ascension Thursday, the Society prepared a chicken dinner for the benefit of St. Gerard's Boy Scout Troop #102.

A Nocturnal Adoration Society was formed on Thursday, February 6, 1958, for the Roanoke Valley. Father William Connolly of St. Andrew's was in charge. Eight men from St. Gerard's came for an hour of adoration from 9:00 P.M. until 5:00 A.M., ending with Mass and communion at 6:00 A.M. Men and high school students attended the communion breakfast of the Holy Name Society on December 14, 1958.

On the Feast of the Presentation, November 21, 1955, the Legion of Mary was organized at St. Gerard's. Mrs. Charlotte Martin, Mrs. Mary Theimer, Mrs. Marguerite Miller, and Mrs. Florence Carter, officers of the Legion Presidium from Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem, came to explain the Legion to St. Gerard's. Six parishioners were present: Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Dungee, Mrs. Elaine Davis, Mr. and Mrs. William Steptoe, and Mrs. Daisy Straw.

### Youth Work

The Redemptorists were interested in all aspects of youth activities. Summer school opened for St. Gerard's children on June 14, 1954, with a 9 o'clock Mass and continued with study until 11:00. An average of 20 children attended daily. Catechetical instruction was given during the school year by the Sisters of Charity.

In July and August, 1954, nine boys and eight girls had two weeks of camp at Gloucester Point. In the summer of 1956, nine boys and 25 girls had three weeks at Gloucester.

Twelve young people formed a teen-age club in 1954. In 1957, it had become the Catholic Youth Club (CYC). By 1959, membership was 18.

Parishioners helped the Redemptorists plan and prepare Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts, and parties for special groups.

Father Norton and his associates appeared frequently as participants in various youth meetings, or those involving youth problems: a K. of C. meeting for Catholic youth, a Brotherhood Week assembly at Booker T. Junior High, the Nazareth Women's Club discussion on vacation care of children, the student body assembly at Lucy Addison High School, the Newman Club meetings at Roanoke College, the letter awards assembly at RCHS, and the Catholic Youth Council Workshop at St. Paul's in Richmond.

In January, 1957, Father Norton gave the prayer and the benediction at the State PTA meeting at Addison High School. He was the principal speaker at the awards assembly for the B'nai Brith winners in April, 1957. In May, 1958, he gave the address at the Industrial Arts Assembly at Booker T. Washington Junior High School.

### The Rectory

Among the memorable events of 1955 were the completion of the rectory and the erection of a shrine to St. Gerard.



Girl Scouts and Brownies

December, 1956



Sisters of Nazareth  
and Mrs. Kate Fagan  
at  
St. Gerard's on Orange Avenue

When St. Gerard's Church was completed on Orange Avenue, in 1951, the Redemptorists continued to reside in the Moorman Avenue house. In November, 1952, the Vice Provincial, Rev. Joseph Driscoll, suggested building a rectory. Mr. Eubank, of Eubank & Caldwell, was asked to draw up a preliminary sketch of a house with four bedrooms, to cost about \$25,000. Father Driscoll wanted the rectory started in January, but it was not until February 6, 1953, that plans for the rectory were picked up from Eubank & Caldwell, and it was several years after Father Norton's arrival before the building of the rectory was completed.

On June 2, 1955, a contract was signed with R. J. Campbell & Sons for building the new house. The next day, Charles Overstreet, the subcontractor, began excavating.

The Salem parish also acquired a rectory during this period. In August, 1955, the Fitzgerald property on Greene Street, adjacent to the Salem church, came on the market. It was purchased in October for \$30,000 to be used for a rectory and meeting place. Prior to this, the apartment over the Salem church was occupied by the priest when he was not at St. Gerard's. Father Jerlinski, who served as administrator at Salem for 2½ years, arrived in Salem in February, 1952. Because of the severe weather, he was allowed to remain in residence in Salem all but two nights a week. This became a habit during the rest of his tenure and did much to make the Salem Catholics feel more like a real parish.

St. Gerard's Rectory was completed in December, 1955. The move from the house on Moorman Road, begun December 20, took two days. The total cost was more than double the limit originally set - \$52,393.36. The Vice Provincial, Rev. Joseph Driscoll, joined the St. Gerard priests and other Redemptorists for the housewarming on April 26, 1956. When the Redemptorists left St. Gerard's, in 1974, the appraised value of the land and house was \$91,600.

Several attempts were made to sell the Moorman Road property but a sale was not effected until 1965.

#### Anniversary

The erection of the shrine to St. Gerard was part of the anniversary celebration. Father Norton had brought from Richmond, in February, a statue of St. Gerard donated by the house in Annapolis,

Maryland. On the 200th anniversary of the death of St. Gerard, October 16, 1955, a High Mass was celebrated at 9:00 A.M., followed by the blessing of the shrine in the rear of the church. At 3:00 P.M., two Gerardine babies, born during the octave of the feast, were baptized: Gerarda Willis and Ralph Gerard Cronon. Radio station WRIS broadcast a description of St. Gerard's life, sponsored by the Redemptorists and St. Gerard's guild.

In September, 1955, Father Craven was transferred to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and Father Walter Campbell returned to Salem as administrator. Father Joseph Kilian was assigned as missionary, residing at St. Gerard's. On December 3, Father Robert McCrief arrived and replaced Father Campbell in Salem, as administrator, when Father Campbell was transferred to Spartansburg, South Carolina.

### The Hall

St. Gerard's Hall was a busy place, especially during fund-raising activities. Fund-raising not only supplemented the parish income, but served as a showcase for the talent of the parishioners, provided social activity, and strengthened parish ties. STAR OVER ROANOKE, a modern drama about the magi, was presented by Mrs. Steptoe, Mrs. Dorothy Walker, and Joseph Crutchfield on January 6, 1954, after the novena.

An attentive audience filled the church at 8:00 P.M., December 18, 1954, to see a beautifully presented playlet based on an idea of Miss Alta Mai Thompson and directed by Mrs. Juan Nabors. About half of the parishioners appeared in the play. Since it was strictly to boost parish spirit, no admission was charged.

The choir presented AFTER WIMPOLE STREET in the church hall on April 30, 1955. It was well acted, well received, and well supported. The annual music recitals presented by the pupils of Miss Alta Mai Thompson provided cultural enrichment and ecumenical activity. St. Gerard's young organist, 13-year old William Nabors, was a talented musician who gave piano recitals not only at St. Gerard's but in neighboring states. St. Gerard's was a closely knit parish family, generous with its time, its talent, and its resources.

As a civic contribution, St. Gerard's Hall was available for community activities ranging from a tea for Mothers' Day to an AA group for blacks. An 18-week instruction course for Girl Scout leaders began in the hall on October 19, 1954. Twenty ladies, all

school teachers, enrolled. The use of the hall for such varied activities made St. Gerard's a highly visible presence in the community.

### Growth

St. Gerard's congregation grew from 99 in 1953 to 212 in 1958. Religious activity also increased. Religious instruction classes, or convert or inquiry classes, met almost weekly between 1956 and 1959. During Father Norton's pastorate, 25 converts were baptized.

In March, 1956, a triduum and a spiritual bouquet of Masses, visits, communions, rosaries, and stations honored Pope Pius XII on his birthday. On March 11, 1956, Most Reverend Joseph Hodges, Auxiliary Bishop of Richmond, confirmed 39 of St. Gerard's parishioners: 19 adults and 20 children. They had individual sponsors. He returned in March, 1958, and confirmed another large class: 32 adults and 21 children.

First communion was celebrated in May, usually on Mother's' Day. In 1956, the Sisters of Nazareth prepared 15 children for their first communion on May 20. The following Sunday, Sister Rita Agnes McBride was presented a book marking the close of the catechetical instruction by the Sisters for the year.

Because of an increase in communions, Father Norton asked the sisters to double the number of altar breads they sent. They sent 100 small hosts every two weeks instead of 50.

Father Norton was installed as Superior for a second term at St. Gerard's in May, 1956. A little later, he celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Father Kilian celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1958. On May 3, 1958, Father McCrief attended the funeral in Richmond of Bishop Leo Ireton, who had invited the Redemptorists to establish a mission for the blacks in Roanoke. Father Norton, Father Kilian, and Father McCrief were all in Richmond on September 30, 1958, for the installation of his successor, Bishop John Russell, as head of the Diocese of Richmond.

### School Integration Crisis

In June, 1958, a parishioner of St. Gerard's became the first black student graduated from a formerly all-white high school, in Roanoke. Integration caused complications. The graduation banquet



and prom were scheduled for Hotel Roanoke. Hotel policy barred blacks at the graduation dinner except for the graduate himself, Vernon Dudley, and even he could not remain after dinner for the prom. Vernon's mother called the president of the Norfolk & Western who referred her to the manager of Hotel Roanoke. The Board of Managers met and decided to deny Roanoke Catholic High School the use of their facilities. No other high school had enjoyed this privilege in recent years. Father Igoe and Father Beattie decided to have the dinner and prom at St. Andrew's auditorium. The students voted against it.

Before the problem was settled, the news media came for interviews and pictures. The Associated Press tried unsuccessfully to get pictures and fuller details from Mrs. Dudley. The papers carried the story that the five Dudley children were withdrawn from school because of unjust treatment to Vernon. Msgr. J. Louis Flaherty, Superintendent of Diocesan Schools, came from Richmond to help ease the situation. On May 19, 1958, the school policy was set forth:

... to provide those experiences which, with the help of God's grace, are best calculated to develop in the students the attitudes, ideals, and virtues necessary for Christian living in American democratic society. If ... a senior betrays by his conduct that he has not absorbed the fundamentals of Christian living, he shall be given the opportunity of spending another year in high school before ... being eligible for graduation.

No further incidents occurred. A picnic projected for Bedford Lake, closed to blacks, was held on school grounds and a brunch in the convent replaced the banquet. The graduation exercises were completed without further incident.

### Closing Days

In December, the choir - with Sister Rose William Hartlege, Sister Matilda Masterson, and a few adult parishioners - visited Burrell Memorial Hospital right after Mass to sing Christmas carols in the lobby. They were broadcast throughout the hospital on the intercom. Afterwards, they visited Mrs. Birkes in her hospital room and gave her a special concert.

An attempt was made to start a "family night" with the women and children enjoying themselves in the hall while the men attended

a Holy Name meeting. On January 2, 1959, about 25 women and children were present. Two weeks later, only three were present for the NCCW "family night". The temperature was 12 degrees. In March, the NCCW oratorical contests were held in the hall after Stations of the Cross. About 50 were present.

Late in April, the parish was told Father Norton was to leave Roanoke for Elkton, Virginia, and Spartanburg, South Carolina. After Mass on April 26, the men of the parish honored him at a breakfast, served by the ladies. Mr. Venson Oliphant was Master of Ceremonies. Twenty-two men were present, including one white man, Mr. Andrew Kramer, who delivered a farewell address.

Father Norton served as pastor of St. Gerard's for nearly six years. He officiated at the first nuptial Mass in the church, saw the rectory built and occupied, and assisted the black children admitted to the parochial schools for the first time. Both the Salem and Roanoke congregations more than doubled during this period. He and his associates continued to emphasize the Catholic presence in the community and to involve St. Gerard's parishioners in parish, deanery, diocesan, and community activities. A variety of parish activities involved both blacks and whites: novenas, the study club, the Inquiry Class, and the Devout Life conference. Father Norton hoped the study club would be the basis of an interracial council, some day. The hope was not realized during his tenure.

Father Norton left for his new assignment on May 7, 1959, and Father Bernard Krimm arrived the same day.

Rev. Bernard Krimm, C.S.S.R.

May 7, 1959 to October 22, 1963

Rev. Bernard Krimm, C.S.S.R., was the third pastor of St. Gerard's Catholic Church and its mission, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem. He came to Roanoke from Dalton, Georgia, on May 6, 1959. Previously, he had been a missionary to Puerto Rico for ten years. His knowledge of Spanish was a boon to some Cubans residing in Roanoke at the time. They usually attended St. Gerard's throughout Father Krimm's pastorate. Many transferred to Salem when he became pastor there. In 1959-60, Father Krimm shared responsibilities for the Salem parish with Father Kilian and Father McCrief until Father John Murphy arrived, in the fall of 1960, and took over the administration of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Father Krimm had a busy first summer, a portent of his tireless ministry during his stay in the Roanoke Valley. On June 1, he attended the meeting of the Parish Council of Catholic Women at Nazareth and extended them an invitation to join a study class with St. Gerard ladies, to begin September 7th.

On June 4, he attended the graduation exercises at Roanoke Catholic High School to see two of St. Gerard's children receive diplomas: Jacqueline Birkes, the daughter of St. Gerard's housekeeper; and James Goode, who was later ordained a Franciscan priest, the first of St. Gerard's congregation so honored.

Change and Additions

The church was painted, repairs were made, and shelves were built in the choir loft for the church library. Information classes were scheduled every Thursday.

In July, daily Mass was moved to the little chapel room called the Father's Chapel. It was better adapted to the dialogue Mass than the church. Ten to twenty attended each morning. At Mass on Sunday, the church was always full.

Eighty children from the north spent the summer at Camp North in Salem. Father Krimm conducted catechism classes for the 30 Catholic children there. Catechism classes were held each Saturday morning throughout the year for St. Gerard's children. Weekly attendance averaged 30. In late August, the teaching staff was

augmented by two Sisters of St. Joseph who stayed at St. Andrew's Convent for three days: Sister Elizabeth Mary, Father Krimm's sister; and Sister Walburga.

In August, priests from Roanoke, Lynchburg, Bedford, Martinsville, and Elkton joined Father Krimm and Father McCrief to celebrate their Silver Jubilees of Profession.

In September, 54 children from St. Gerard's and 60 from Our Lady of Perpetual Help enrolled in the Catholic schools. Father Krimm taught religion daily and was guidance counselor at Roanoke Catholic High School from 1960 until 1963, when Father Doheney took over the teaching assignment.

Father Krimm instituted the family rosary in the homes beginning October 1. He made a schedule for the month and visited the homes to recite the rosary with each family.

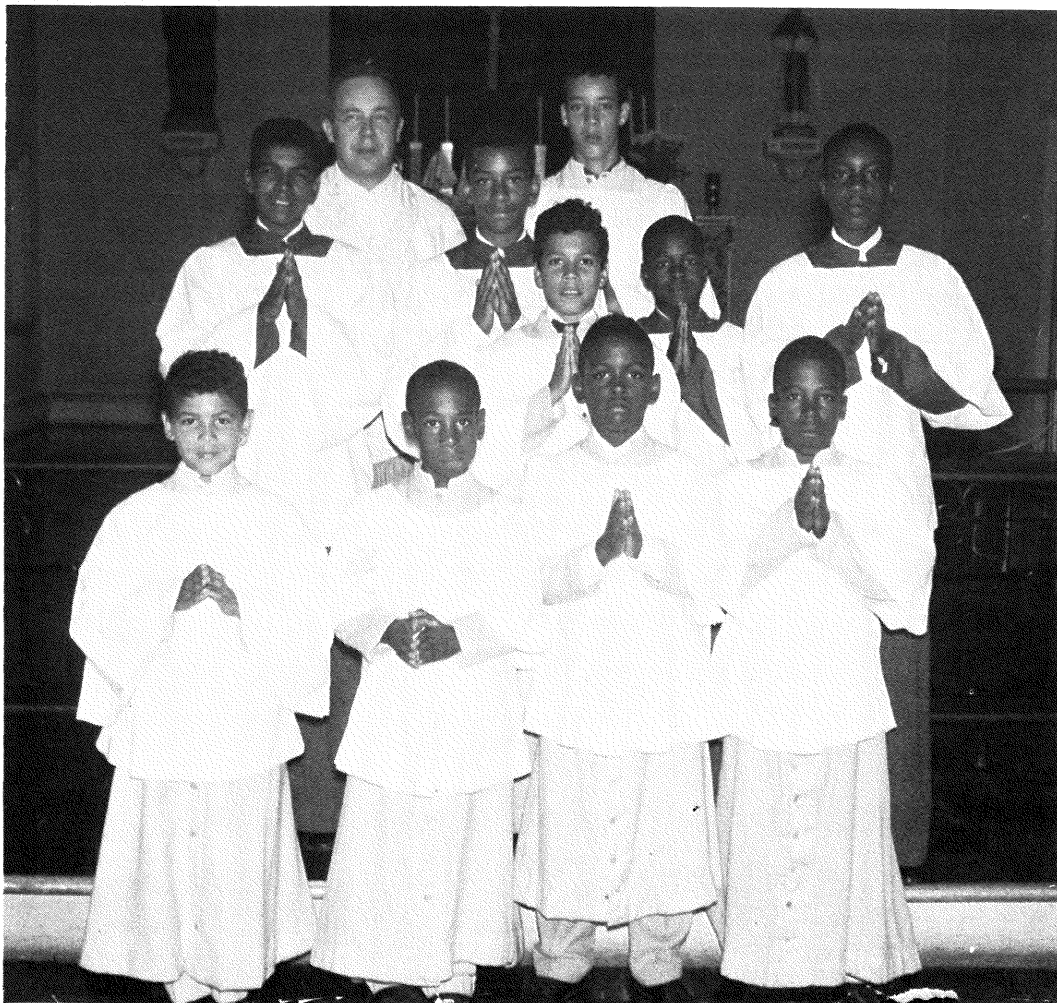
A good parish spirit prevailed during the parish bazaar in October. The highlight was the raffle of a 1959 Buick.

#### Family and Youth Activities

On January 10, 1960, Father Krimm scheduled a special Holy Family Day program beginning with family communion at 9:00 A.M. Rosary and consecration at 5:30 were followed by a parish family supper. A community sing, dancing, and movies followed. Venson Oliphant and Charles Anderson showed movies of past parish activities. About 80 were present, 12 of them from Salem.

The Sodality of Mary for young girls was organized in 1960 with an enrolment of 31. The next year, a junior Holy Name Society was formed with 21 members. The Holy Family or Sacred Heart Society for women and the Holy Name Society for men continued to function. Father Krimm trained the altar boys. Mrs. Birkes looked after their vestments. Father Krimm considered the Society of Altar Boys one of the most faithful and loyal he had ever seen in all the places he had been assigned.

On February 10, 1960, the second in a weekly series of training classes in CCD was conducted at St. Andrew's by the Sisters of Our Lady of Victory from Clifton Forge, for parishes in the entire Roanoke area. Four of St. Gerard's and six of Salem's congregations attended. The CCD program was initiated at St. Gerard's in 1961, with 58 enrolled.



Father Krimm and his Altar Boy Society  
Early 1960's



Blanche Dungee, Camille Willis, Marion Birkes,  
Otis Ogden, Geneva Johnson and Martha Ogden  
meet with Father Krimm, June, 1962.

On February 26, Father Krimm gave the invocation when Burrell Memorial Hospital celebrated the first graduation of its Practical Nurses School at Lucy Addison High School. In March, he judged the NCCW Oratorical Contest.

In 1960, the Diocesan Council of Catholic Men conducted the church census in their communities. A meeting was held on March 6th at St. Andrew's for assistant chairmen and team captains of all the parishes of the Roanoke area to receive Diocesan Census Instructions. Thirteen of St. Gerard's men met again March 15th to prepare for the census the following Sunday.

Father Krimm's first winter in the Valley was memorable. The heaviest snowfall in Roanoke in 20 years closed schools for a week, beginning February 13th. Fifteen inches fell during the day and night. Most churches cancelled their services for Sunday. Another storm began March 2nd and lasted almost two weeks. Seventeen inches fell over the week-end. Between January and mid-March, 59 inches fell, a record for Roanoke and Southwest Virginia. Snow did not deter Father Krimm.

#### School Bus Service

In early February, Salem's school bus committee met in St. Gerard's Rectory to discuss a school bus plan and how to finance it. Since 1951, St. Andrew's had sent its bus to Salem to pick up the school children. When that service was discontinued, a bus was chartered from the Safety Motor Transit Company. The bus served the three Catholic schools. In the Fall of 1960, the bus service was opened to all the Catholic parishes in the Valley.

#### Kindergarten Reopens

In the fall of 1960, Father Krimm reopened the kindergarten and day care nursery, with 40 children enrolled. Mrs. Mattie Bell Morris, "a wonderful retired school teacher, a Baptist," was the teacher and Mrs. Blanche Dungee the assistant.

On Palm Sunday, St. Gerard's kindergarten pupils presented a program in the hall. Six boys and five girls received diplomas at the first annual commencement on June 11, 1961. Mrs. Madge Burrell Wheaton was the speaker. A month later, July 9, 1961, a Baby Day program was presented in the hall. The following year, the blessing

of infants and pre-school children came on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28th.

### Other Items of Note

The meeting of the Southwestern Deanery of the National Council of Catholic Women was held at St. Gerard's on October 16, 1960. Membership in St. Gerard's NCCW was growing and reached its peak in 1961.

October 30, Msgr. Peter Rabil, pastor of St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church, blessed the wayside shrine of Our Blessed Lady in front of St. Gerard's Church.

1960 was just another busy year for St. Gerard's and Father Krimm. The annual May procession, the dinner sponsored by the Holy Name Society, and the annual Parish Festival involved all segments of the congregation. The Redemptorists from St. Gerard's helped out the other parishes at daily and Sunday Masses, and at special celebrations. As the year ended, a contract was signed for the new building at Roanoke Catholic High School and further involvement of St. Gerard's in Valley activities followed.

St. Gerard's congregation continued to grow. Nineteen children and 12 converts were baptized during the year. In May, 53 of St. Gerard's parishioners were confirmed by Most Reverend Joseph Hodges, Auxiliary Bishop of Richmond.

### Challenge and Change

Late in January, 1962, Father Krimm spoke at the Catholic Information Center at Roanoke Catholic High School on the coming Ecumenical Council.

Father Joseph Coughlin arrived on February 17 to assist Father Krimm and to serve as chaplain at the Veterans' Hospital. When Father John Murphy was transferred to Opa Locka, Florida, in October, 1962, Father Coughlin took over administration of the Salem church. Father Coughlin, the "big, bald priest," was quite Irish. He attended the St. Patrick's Day show presented by the Young Adult Club at St. Andrew's auditorium and the St. Patrick's program by the Nazareth seventh grade. His personal observation was, "They don't go in much for the wearin' of the green around here."

Early in February, Father Krimm sent announcements to the other Catholic churches in the Valley that a Carmelite Third Order was being



formed, and by Fall the organization was complete. A public clothing ceremony was held in October.

In March, Father Krimm sighted up Mr. A. White as St. Gerard's chairman of the campaign for the Roanoke Valley Catholic High Development Fund. Mr. John Murphy was campaign chairman at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

St. Gerard's congregation fluctuated in size but grew from 233 to 287 in 1963. Sixty converts and 78 infants were baptized between 1959 and 1963. Parish income increased annually, more than doubling between 1959 and 1963. The parish debt also increased. The Development Fund demands increased the debt to five times the parish income.

Parish activities were not confined to the Roanoke area. In May, St. Gerard's had a card party to help defray expenses of a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the dedication of the chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The regular devotions were augmented in October with a week-long mission and a pilgrimage for peace to St. Andrew's. In November, St. Gerard's entered their float, THE ANNUNCIATION, in both the Salem and the Roanoke Christmas parades.

1963 was a year of challenge and change. Financial problems continued. In March, the Catholics of Roanoke Valley were directed by Bishop Russell to contribute their share to the Diocesan Development Fund. The assessments were: St. Andrew's \$10,000; Nazareth \$8,500; Perpetual Help \$1,500; St. Gerard's \$450. Since the Valley was currently subscribing to a drive for the Roanoke Catholic High School, Bishop Russell directed that the parish assessments be paid by August 1 from this source.

Pope John XXIII died June 3, 1963. On June 6, Bishop Ernest Unterkoefler celebrated the Roanoke-Salem Requiem Mass at St. Andrew's. Later that month, news came of Father John Murphy's death.

The Richmond Committee of the Legion of Mary Curia held its annual meeting at St. Gerard's on June 23.

Local Cubans attended the Mass at St. Gerard's on September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the patroness of Cuba, to pray for peace for their country.

That day was also Father Igoe Day. The mayor and other community leaders joined St. Gerard's congregation to honor Father John

Igoe, pastor of St. Andrew's, in appreciation for his religious and civic work in Roanoke.

Rev. Luke Doheny, C.S.S.R., arrived in mid-September from the Immaculate Conception Parish, Bronx, New York. A little later, Rev. John Ferris, C.S.S.R., arrived from Wilson, North Carolina.

In celebration of the beatification of Bishop John Neumann, C.S.S.R., the Redemptorists had a special Mass at St. Peter's in Richmond on October 13. Father Krimm was in Philadelphia for a similar celebration when St. Gerard's community received confirmation that Our Lady of Perpetual Help had become a separate parish.

### Separation of the Parishes

On October 17, Father Krimm was appointed Salem's first pastor, with Father John Ferris as assistant. Father Luke Doheny became the new pastor at St. Gerard's. Father Joseph Coughlin remained at St. Gerard's as assistant and as chaplain at the VA. The changes became effective October 22, 1963. The Salem congregation was delighted, but St. Gerard's congregation was saddened at losing their beloved pastor who had been with them for five years.

The neighboring priests joined the Redemptorists at dinner on October 21, honoring St. Gerard's feast day, Father Krimm's departure, and Father Doheny's welcome. That same day, Father Krimm and Father Doheny took their oaths of office as superiors. Father Ferris officiated. On October 23, at the request of the Richmond Chancery, Father Doheny took the oath against modernism in the presence of Father John Igoe, VF, of St. Andrew's, who was delegated by the Bishop's office.

In preparation for the separation of the parishes, Father Doheny and Father Ferris had modernized the kitchen at the Salem rectory. Salem Catholic women took up a private collection to purchase kitchen utensils and other needed articles. The condition of the Salem rectory delayed Father Krimm's moving from St. Gerard's, but Father Ferris moved in on October 25.

A LAYMAN'S VIEW records some of Father Krimm's work as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the kind of activity that had made his ministry at St. Gerard's memorable:

... all the Salem parishioners (at last) rejoiced, both for their more stable pastorage and for the enthusiastic plans of the new pastor.

Although it was a complete "starting anew", in more ways than one, the people willingly dug in again on money-raising projects, parish census, recruiting teachers and pupils for CCD classes, and revitalizing parish organizations. To Father Krimm fell the task of the change-over in the new ecumenical liturgy and rubrics, to which the parishioners tried to accustom themselves with better grace than they perhaps would have done with a less patient and understanding pastor.

Father Krimm remained in the Roanoke Valley for six more years. In February, 1964, he was appointed administrator at St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church after Father Rabil's death, and served until a new pastor was appointed.

Father Krimm's transfer from the Roanoke Valley, towards the end of 1969, was announced in the Roanoke papers:

The Rev. Bernard Krimm, pastor to Catholic churches in this area for 11 years, is being transferred from the Roanoke Valley. He has served Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem for six years.

Before being assigned to the Salem church, Father Krimm served St. Gerard's in Roanoke for five years. He is affiliated with the Redemptorist Order which carries on extensive mission work among Negroes, and went to Our Lady of Perpetual Help integrated congregation when it attained the status of a self-supporting parish in 1963.

Father Krimm has been active in the ecumenical movement in the Roanoke Valley. He has participated in theological dialogue groups with Protestant clergymen under sponsorship of the Roanoke Ministers Conference. He is program chairman for the conference. He has also worked with Catholic lay persons in planning for increased church involvement in social welfare programs in urban areas.

The Salem priest said he is being moved to a northern province in the church's administrative area and probably will go to Philadelphia.

Father Krimm made an indelible print on the Roanoke Valley. His ministry edified clergy and lay people alike.

Rev. Luke J. Doheny, C.S.S.R.

September 15, 1963 to June 1, 1964

Father Luke J. Doheny, C.S.S.R., was pastor at St. Gerard's for less than a year. Few changes were made. In early November, Father Doheny replaced Father Krimm as Senior Religion Instructor at Roanoke Catholic High School for the 1963-64 session. For the remainder of the school year, he and Father Coughlin supported school activities. They attended athletic, musical, and dramatic events and were patrons of the 1964 annual, THE SENIOR KEY.

The death of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, stunned the community. Requiem Masses were said the day after the assassination at St. Gerard's and at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. On November 25, Presidential Requiem Masses were said at the request of Bishop Russell. The three Catholic schools were closed that day. The 30-day mourning period ended at sundown, December 23. A Month's Mind Mass was celebrated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 6:00 P.M. that evening.

St. Gerard's congregation honored their former and current pastors at a reception on December 29.

The meetings of the Third Order of Discalced Carmelites continued at St. Gerard's in October, November, and December, but in January and thereafter they were scheduled at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The Vocations Director of the Province interviewed a St. Gerard's youth in January regarding admission to the Redemptorist Order and forwarded his papers to North East, Pennsylvania, but the vocation did not materialize.

Father Doheny and Father Coughlin continued the Redemptorist policy of participation in inter-parish activities. They celebrated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception with a dinner for the diocesan clergy of Roanoke. They attended the funeral of Monsignor Peter Rabil, pastor of St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church and attended the lunch at St. Andrew's for the clergy. They attended confirmations and participated in May processions.

On May 17, 1964, Father Krimm celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his ordination. All Catholics in the Valley and their guests were invited to the reception at Our Lady of Perpetual Help following the

11:30 A.M. Solemn Jubilee Mass. The Redemptorists and other special guests were invited to the banquet at Hotel Roanoke that evening.

Fifty-eight pupils were enrolled for the 1963-64 session of St. Gerard's kindergarten and day nursery. The spring program and graduation exercises on May 31, 1964, featured an operetta supplemented with Bible verses, poems, and songs. Mrs. Gertrude West, a member of the State Department of Education, was the speaker. Father Doheney and Father John Barry awarded the certificates to 10 boys and 12 girls. Father Doheney left shortly after this for his new parish in Charlotte, North Carolina.

St. Gerard's had only one senior in the Catholic High School class of 1964. The graduation exercises, on June 5, included the dedication of the new gym, towards which St. Gerard's had pledged \$7,180.

Rev. John Barry, C.S.S.R.

June 1, 1964 to October 15, 1969

In May, 1964, the Redemptorists announced new appointments, effective June 1. Father Doheney was transferred to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Charlotte, N.C.; Father Coughlin to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Tampa, Florida; and Father Ferris from Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem to St. Gerard's in Roanoke. Rev. John Barry, C.S.S.R., came from Newport News to be pastor at St. Gerard's. Within the month, Father Ferris was approved by the Military Ordinariate as VA Chaplain, and a little later Father Barry qualified as his substitute.

Financial Problems

In late June, Father Barry was confronted with a financial crisis. With an annual income under \$14,000, St. Gerard's was responsible for a note of \$23,730.32 held by the First National Exchange Bank.

When the new gymnasium was built at Roanoke Catholic, the cost was proportioned among the parishes in the Valley. The original amount for which St. Gerard's was responsible was \$25,000. Father Barry found it impossible to pay the interest and the amount demanded by First National Exchange Bank to amortize the loan. Father Barry felt it was entirely too much for the parish. He believed it a problem for the Diocese, not a responsibility of the congregation. This condition, plus the fact that some of the black children could not pay the full tuition at St. Andrew's Catholic School, impelled Father Barry to write Bishop Russell to acquaint him with the problems. The Bishop called for a meeting of the pastors. Fathers Robert Beattie, George Gormley, Bernard Krimm, and John Barry attended. At the meeting, Bishop Russell said the children of St. Gerard's should pay the same tuition as the children of St. Andrew's, not a higher tuition as the children outside the parish had to pay. He also urged that every consideration be given to St. Gerard's. At a later date, he had the Diocese take over the note to the bank. St. Gerard's obligation was to repay the Diocese at a low rate of interest. An enormous burden was thus lifted from the parish.

It was at this meeting that there was also talk of giving St. Gerard's parish lines, but this made little sense to the pastors since

St. Gerard's was so close to St. Andrew's.

The cost of operating the Catholic schools came up again in 1967 and 1968. This also raised questions about the continuance of St. Gerard's. In 1967, Father Barry took the position that there was no urgency to decide the matter and that St. Gerard's was of great service to the blacks in the area, so no action was taken.

Roanoke Catholic High School finances were again discussed at a conference in Richmond in May, 1968, and again the question of closing St. Gerard's came up: "... there is no need of this segregated church," was the sentiment of some pastors and their people. At that time there was a group of white Catholics who were interested in interracial relations who felt that keeping St. Gerard's was merely perpetuating segregation.

Bishop Russell directed Father Barry to have a "town hall" type of meeting after Mass one Sunday to find out the desires of the black people. This meeting, held early in June, was attended by about 150 people. Except for one person in the congregation, everyone - by a show of hands - echoed the sentiments of Mr. Silas Jones who stood up and said: "Don't tell me that I cannot go to that church on the hill, but don't close St. Gerard's. We want to have our own community, our own societies, and our own priest." With this strong endorsement, the question of closing St. Gerard's never came up again. The Bishop wrote that St. Gerard's would continue indefinitely but that integration should begin immediately.

During Father Barry's time no formal steps were taken to integrate the parish. One white Catholic attended Mass at St. Gerard's each Sunday, but retained her membership at St. Andrew's. It did not bother St. Gerard's that there were no white members. The parish had a strong identity. It had been established for blacks (pro solis negritis) but white Catholics had attended Mass, novenas, study groups, and fund raising activities since the parish was founded.

Finances and property management were important aspects of parish activity. The Moorman Road property was again put up for sale in October, 1964. It was in poor condition and acceptance of a \$3,500 offer was authorized. The property was sold in May, 1965.

In 1965, a lay consultant was provided by Bishop Russell, at no cost to any of the parishes, to increase the Sunday Offertory Collection. In March, the Increased Offertory Program was conducted at St. Gerard's. Men went to the homes of parishioners asking them to estimate how much they would give the church the coming year. The

response was very good. The 1966 income increased about 17%. St. Gerard's congregation supported the church very well.

Father Barry consulted the City Planner in January, 1969, regarding the effect of possible future civic improvements on St. Gerard's church property. He was told that widening Orange Avenue to six lanes was the only possibility and that it was not being considered at the time.

Father Barry asked City Manager Hirst in March, 1969, to upgrade the lighting on Orange Avenue after a parishioner was killed as she crossed Orange Avenue to evening Mass. Nothing could be done until the budget was reviewed in June. Eventually, lighting was improved as far west as Tenth Street.

### Kindergarten Problems

St. Gerard's Kindergarten and Nursery opened in September, 1964, with 40 children. The following June, St. Gerard's was notified by the State that they could no longer operate the kindergarten without a license. A number of improvements were required, including paving the parking lot and fencing in the play area. A provisional license was granted in August and attendance limited to 30 children. The facility reopened in September, 1965, with Mrs. Naomi Shaw and Mrs. Blanche Dungee in charge. State approval was given for a year with an annual application required each July. The kindergarten and nursery continued as a community service under the direction of the Redemptorists until 1971, except for the 1968-69 session. Only 23 registered at St. Gerard's in September, 1967. The government Poverty Program had three day-care centers in the area which were taking care of the children. Only ten children applied in September, 1968, not enough to make expenses, so the center did not open. In October, TAP asked to use the facilities, paying heat, light, and other expenses. The Bishop gave his approval.

On September 2, 1969, the center opened for the last time under Father Barry's direction. Twenty children were enrolled. Tuition was \$30 per month. Mrs. Dungee and Mrs. Grace Hockaway were in charge.

### Change and Vatican II

Father Barry came to St. Gerard's during the period when the changes proposed by Vatican II were being introduced. Mass, facing the people, was celebrated at St. Gerard's for the first time on



November 29, 1964. Most were pleased but some preferred the other way of saying Mass.

Workshops were held to help priests and laity with the changes. A Liturgical Conference for the Southwest Deanery was held at Roanoke Catholic High School on November 5 and 6, 1965.

On December 6 and 7, 1965, Masses were celebrated at 7:30 P.M. in accord with the wish of Pope Paul VI in thanksgiving for the Lights and Graces of Vatican II.

There were changes in the Rite of Confirmation. In 1965, Confirmation was a parish celebration. Bishop John Russell came on May 23 and conferred the Sacrament on 65 of St. Gerard's parishioners. Clifford Willis was sponsor for the men and boys, and Miss Alta Mai Thompson for the women and girls. The children wore robes. In 1968, Confirmation was a deanery celebration. Auxiliary Bishop J. Louis Flaherty came to St. Andrew's on April 21, 1968, to confirm adults of the entire Southwest Deanery. St. Gerard's had 25 confirmed. The confirmands received communion under both species. In May, the next year, Bishop Russell returned to confirm at St. Andrew's the adults in the Valley who had not previously been confirmed. There were six from St. Gerard's.

Only eight or ten people attended evening Mass during Lent, 1966. About 40 attended Wednesday evening novena services. Permission was received from the chancellor, in mid-April, to have the evening Mass at 7:30 P.M. in connection with the novena.

#### Ecumenism

Redemptorist activity in ecumenism began in 1946 when St. Gerard's Mission was established, and continued over the years. Interest grew after the Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism in 1964. St. Gerard's priests were among the 400 participants, including 25 ministers and five priests, who attended an ecumenical service at Hollins College in November, 1965.

Father Barry regularly attended the monthly dialogue meetings of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In 1968, ten ministers and rabbis held their December meeting at St. Gerard's.

In February, 1966, Father Barry attended a luncheon meeting with area Protestant ministers to explain the Catholic viewpoint on the Lord's Supper. During the discussion, and the question and answer period, no unity of doctrine was evident. In March, 1966,

he spoke at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Salem to about 50 people and was treated with the greatest courtesy. In January, 1968, he was on a panel with four ministers discussing ecumenism at the Huntington Court Methodist Church. A lively two-hour discussion followed but some people walked out when the Catholic viewpoint was presented. He was invited to Trinity Methodist Church in March, 1968, to talk on ecumenism and the Vatican Council.

Ecumenism crossed racial lines. Father Barry took part in the memorial service for Martin Luther King, Jr., at Ebenezer Baptist Church on April 7, 1968.

In July, 1968, the white congregation of the Central Church of the Brethren invited St. Gerard's congregation to a joint picnic at Wasena Park. About ten white and ten black families attended. All were pleased with the fine afternoon outing.

### School Activities

Father Barry kept in close touch with the Catholic schools. In September, 1964, he began teaching religion to the seniors at Roanoke Catholic High School. In September, 1966, he began work as a guidance counselor. He attended graduation exercises each year. Five students from St. Gerard's graduated in 1966. Two of them had attended Catholic school from the first grade. They were the first two blacks in the history of Roanoke to complete grade and high school in formerly all-white schools since integration started. Five students from St. Gerard's graduated in 1967 and four in 1968.

Father Barry and Father Ferris also participated in some activities of the public schools: a Christmas program at Lincoln Terrace School in 1965; a talk on Brotherhood at Lee Junior in February, 1966; the invocation at the Veterans' Day celebration at Lucy Addison High School in 1966. In October, 1967, Father Barry gave a class to seniors at Cave Spring High School on dating, courtship, and marriage.

### Religion, Race, and Change

The Redemptorists continued to encourage their congregation to participate in inter-parish, diocesan, and civic activity. Father Barry and Father Ferris attended a meeting of the clergy and laymen at Nazareth in September, 1965, to reactivate the First Friday Nocturnal Adoration Society. St. Gerard's men became the envy of the

other parishes. In those days the men would adore the Blessed Sacrament for an hour on the Thursday before the First Friday, throughout the night. The church of adoration would be rotated among the churches in the Valley. St. Gerard's, in the dead of winter, at two or three o'clock in the morning, would have its ten faithful men at St. Andrew's or Salem or wherever else the adoration was to take place.

At the K. of C. clergy night dinner on February 7, 1966, the local council approved the first black member of Roanoke Council, William Robertson of St. Gerard's. On May 15, 1966, he and Father Barry took the Third Degree of the K. of C. On February 20, 1967, Bishop Russell appointed Father Barry chaplain of the K. of C. Council in Roanoke.

Twenty-five parishioners from St. Gerard's attended the communion breakfast for Diocesan Vocations at Hotel Roanoke on February 20, 1966, for all city parishes. Over 200 heard Father Eusebe Menard from Washington, D.C., speak on Vocations. At 2:30 P.M., Father Menard and Mrs. Ricardo Stubbs, wife of the First Secretary at the Peruvian Embassy, visited St. Gerard's for a reception.

In May, 1966, black women, for the first time, were invited to join the Catholic Daughters of America. Five accepted the invitation.

At the DCCW State Convention at Hotel Roanoke in April, 1967, St. Gerard's members took care of the vestments and altar equipment, each day, for the concelebrated Mass. Two of St. Gerard's CCD teachers attended the annual convention in Richmond in November, 1967.

During the sixties, poverty and race demanded and received much attention nationwide. The problems were familiar to the Redemptorists and they continued their involvement locally.

Father Barry met with the Human Relations Council at the YMCA in February, 1966, to try to persuade the Times-World newspapers to put the pictures of black brides on the Society pages. The editor said it was against the policy of the papers and they had no intention of changing. (A change did come, about 1967.)

In April, Father Barry attended a meeting at Roanoke Catholic High School about the War on Poverty (Economic Opportunity Act).

About 400 whites and 200 blacks registered for a conference on "Religion, Race, and Change" in November, 1967. Rev. John F. Cronin,

SS, from D.C., gave the main lecture on Housing. Father Barry gave the invocation at the final banquet.

In August, Father Barry was invited to be on the Citizens' Committee to evaluate the local Office of Economic Opportunity anti-poverty program, TAP. It was a six-month project. Later, this Greenleigh Evaluation was considered in establishing a Catholic Social Development Office, in Roanoke, in 1969.

### Office for Social Development

In 1968, a group of Roanoke Catholics began a study of the need of a Roanoke office for Social Development similar to those set up by the Diocese in Tidewater, Northern Virginia, and Richmond. In response to their request to the Diocesan Commission, the Priests' Council Social Development Committee sent a Task Force to visit Roanoke in April, 1969, to evaluate the need for a regional office in the Roanoke area. They recommended that an office be established in the Roanoke Valley with a full-time executive director. Father George Gormley, Dean of the Southwestern Deanery, requested the assistance of the Trinitarians, who assigned Sister Kathleen Daley, MSST. She initiated consultations with various clergymen, city officials, poverty workers, the TAP organization, and others. She came to Roanoke for the month of August as resource person and temporary director. An in-service training for the board was set up at Roanoke Catholic High School for the week-end of August 15-16, 1969, using the staff of Metropolitan Urban Service Training.

The board comprised Rev. George Gormley, pastor of St. Andrew's, temporary director; Rev. John O'Connell, pastor of Our Lady of Nazareth; Rev. John Barry, pastor of St. Gerard's; Rev. Bernard Krimm, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help; Mrs. Fred Eckert; Sister Sara Cecilia, Superior of St. Andrew's Convent; and Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Duetsch. A room in Ryan Hall, at the old St. Andrew's School, became the office on a temporary basis. The Roanoke office became active in providing meals for the bedridden elderly, providing transportation for medical treatment for the elderly, and operating a clothing distribution center for the needy.

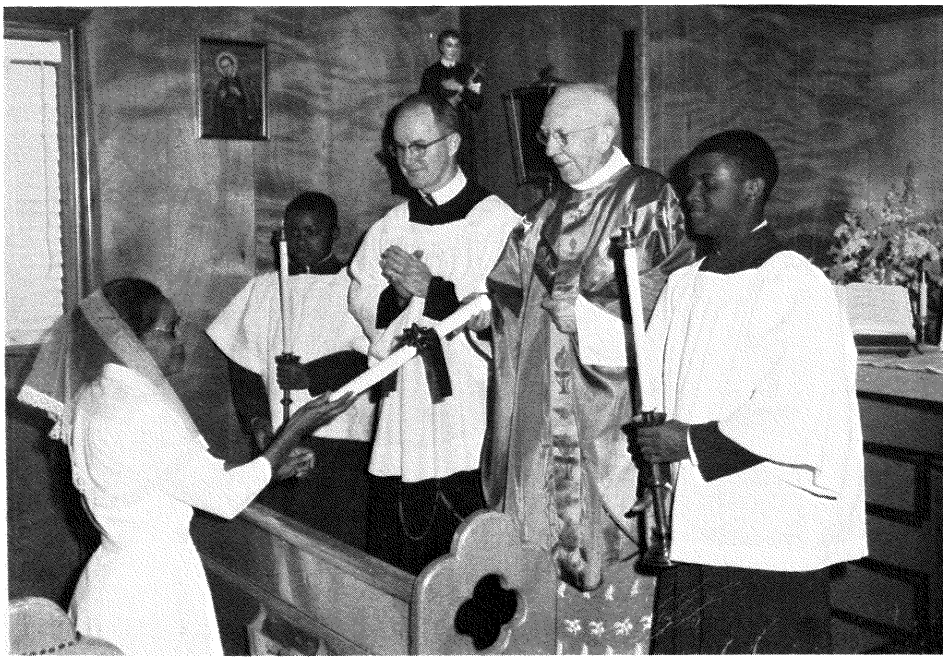
### A Redemptorist Oblate

An unusual ceremony was celebrated in January, 1968. Mrs. Marion Birkes was made a Redemptorist Oblate. This is an honor given



Two views of the Sanctuary





Mrs. Marion Birkes, a Redemptorist Oblate  
January, 1980

to lay persons who have been benefactors of the Redemptorists in a special way. They share in all the prayers and good works of the Redemptorists throughout the world. Mrs. Birkes began working for the Redemptorists in July, 1947, as part-time housekeeper. In addition, she did the cooking for the kindergarten and nursery children from the time it opened in 1960. At this writing, she is full-time housekeeper.

Parish celebrations were popular: communion breakfast for the Boy Scouts and the troop committee; a covered dish supper for all the parish; a breakfast for the children and their parents following a First Communion Mass; picnics for the CCD and the altar boys. 1969 was a busy year for the women of the parish who planned the social activities.

It was also a busy year for Father Barry. In January, he was among the 35 clergymen who attended a three-day study course in counseling and related problems presented by Virginia Commonwealth University at the Second Presbyterian Church. He attended the monthly dialogues with the local National Council of Christians and Jews. He gave the invocation at the VA Hospital observance of Memorial Day. On June 4, he celebrated the Mass and gave the Baccalaureate address for the Roanoke Catholic High School graduates. During July and August, he served 20 hours a week at the VA Hospital while Father Ferris was in Ireland celebrating with his parents their Golden Wedding anniversary.

In October, Father Barry was assigned to Hampton Retreat House. The parish honored him at a farewell reception given by the women of the Sacred Heart Society.

A news item in THE TRIBUNE of October 23, 1969, summarized Father Barry's achievements:

The transfer of the Rev. John Barry from the City of Roanoke to Hampton, Virginia, is indeed a great loss to the local citizens, especially the Negro community in which he labored so faithfully.

During the past six years of his pastoral ministry at St. Gerard's, he has been a man totally devoted to Almighty God and the people he served.

Whether he was celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, writing a recommendation for a worthy high school graduate, attending a board meeting for better housing, or simply

appearing in the city courts for one of his parishioners, he presented himself as a Man of God. A man who not only loved the people under his care, but knew them and understood their every need.

Father Barry, while in Roanoke, could always be found genuinely and personally involved in any project which he felt would improve the condition of man or of the community in which he worked. He did not simply narrow himself to Catholic concerns and specifically spiritual enterprises, but he held firmly to the theory that sees and discovers God in everything that He created.

On behalf of the parishioners of St. Gerard's Church and in their name, we wish to thank him for being a priest who recognized the intrinsic worth of every person and a man who lived what he preached -- that all men are created in the image and likeness of God. Our thanks to you for making us aware of that simple, yet transcendent doctrine of the God-given dignity of each individual human being.

Finally, we thank Father Barry for bringing Christ into our community and for being completely dedicated. In our eyes, Father Barry is a priestly man and a manly priest. May God bless him in his new endeavor.



Rev. Edward McDonough, C.S.S.R.

October 24, 1969 to October 29, 1974

Father Edward McDonough, C.S.S.R. came from Holy Rosary Church, in Richmond, to be the new pastor and superior at St. Gerard's. Rev. John Ferris remained as the second member of the community.

Father McDonough continued the customary devotions at St. Gerard's. In addition, he established a Tuesday night inter-racial group at St. Gerard's that met for fellowship and worship, employing the power of the Holy Spirit. Both Catholics and Protestants attended the group, some coming a distance of 80 miles. It was the only Catholic charismatic group in the general area.

An article in THE ROANOKE TIMES of January 9, 1972, on "Reverse Integration" quoted Father McDonough regarding the white parishioners who attended St. Gerard's for "apostolic reasons" and were therefore helping integrate the parish. They were attracted by the prayer meetings each Tuesday which offered Roanokers a chance to participate in the charismatic movement of the Catholic Church. Some white people joined the parish. Some white members were elected to the Parish Council.

A Parish Advisory Board was set up about 1966. While Father McDonough was pastor, St. Gerard's had an elected Parish Council selected by a discernment process. It was later replaced but was not very active. As the Parish Council expanded, it absorbed the organizations that had preceded it: the Sacred Heart Women's Society that had replaced the Ladies of Charity, the Nocturnal Adoration Society, the Catholic Men's Group, and others. Adult education classes were held Monday nights, after the 6:45 Mass. Classes for elementary and high school students were on Saturday at 6:00 P.M., before the 7:30 Mass.

The church bulletins carried announcements about registration at the Catholic schools and about the Carousel to support them. Enrollment, however, was poor. In 1960, 91% of St. Gerard's children attended Catholic schools. That Fall, three white schools, for the first time, enrolled black students. Roanoke City's separate-but-equal junior and senior high schools fell in 1970 and the elementary schools were desegregated to the satisfaction of the court in 1971. As integration in the public schools increased, fewer of St. Gerard's children enrolled in Roanoke Catholic schools. The percentage fell

from 46% enrolled in 1969 to 17% enrolled in 1974.

### Day Care Changes

Father McDonough was the last Redemptorist director of St. Gerard's kindergarten and day care center. The center had reopened with 20 children on September 2, 1969, while Father Barry was still pastor. The ninth and last annual commencement under Redemptorist direction was held on Sunday, May 23, 1971, at 6:00 P.M. Mr. Charles Day, principal of Addison High School, was the speaker. Father McDonough presented diplomas to the four graduates. He thanked all who had made the year a success, especially Mrs. Bernard Dungee, Mrs. John Harris, and Mrs. Richard Deane.

Mrs. Dungee had been the mainstay of the whole operation. She worked in the kindergarten from its beginning in 1960 until TAP took over in November, 1975. Her day began with Mass at 7:30 A.M. She then opened the kindergarten at 8:00 and was there until 5:00 P.M. She watched over the children, trained them, fed them, nursed them when they were sick. She did all this for "St. Gerard's" for small wages. Her husband, Bernard, at no cost to the church, did maintenance for St. Gerard's: plumbing, electrical repairs, carpentry, etc. Mr. and Mrs. Dungee were totally dedicated to St. Gerard's. The parish was a "family affair". The Redemptorist Fathers, the men and women of the parish, the youth, the children, all "belonged". If honor came to one, all rejoiced; if sorrow came to one, all wept.

In September, 1971, St. Gerard Child Care Center was placed under the Federal Headstart direction, but still was housed five days a week in the church and sanctuary. Sister Mary Fay, MSBT, with the assistance of parish and community members, introduced a Montessori-type day care program. The program continued under her direction until May, 1977.

In March, 1970, former pastor Father Luke Doheney, Consultor to the Vice Provincial, visited St. Gerard's. Father Thomas Norton, another former pastor and superior at St. Gerard's, returned about the same time to assist in parish and missionary work. He continued assisting at St. Gerard's and giving missions and retreats to other parishes until he suffered a heart attack on November 11, 1972. He died on November 28. Mass was offered at St. Gerard's but the funeral and burial were in Boston.

## Interdenominational Racial Ministry

Father McDonough was active in interdenominational racial ministry in the Valley. He was among the early supporters of Roanoke Area Ministries (RAM) and of the Catholic Office of Social Development, groups to involve the church in the needs of the poor.

THE ROANOKE TIMES, on March 31, 1970, headlined the news that City Council had ordered a cut in the Welfare Budget. Both THE ROANOKE TIMES and the ROANOKE WORLD NEWS, on April 2, reported Father McDonough's reaction:

The Rev. Edward McDonough of St. Gerard's Parish told about 20 persons at the meeting, "Welfare workers and recipients are getting the brunt of the whole thing. It is a slap in the face of the welfare department and the recipients."

In May, 1970, Father McDonough became the first director of the Roanoke Office of Social Development. He had previously worked with community organizations in Boston and Richmond, had served in various Redemptorist assignments in Boston, New York, North and South Carolina, and Virginia, and held a master's degree in counseling from Boston College. He had also had a number of opportunities to speak on the social teachings of the Church on TV and radio.

Father McDonough faced the challenge of helping the Catholic people in the Valley understand their vocation, as outlined by Vatican II, in matters relating to peace, race, and poverty. Opportunities were opened to his own parish, to individuals, and to the Valley at large.

During 1970, St. Gerard's operated a day-care center all summer for working mothers. It supervised some neighborhood Youth corps students who worked in the program but were paid by Office of Economic Opportunity funds. St. Gerard's also sponsored a young people's dialogue group on the problems of integration. Some of the group participated in other similar groups on an inter-faith, inter-racial basis. This culminated in a television program in which some of the group from St. Gerard's took part. A series of weekly meetings on "The Church and the Poor" was sponsored by the Office from January 26 to February 19, 1971, to inform Catholics on the basic needs in the field.

Father McDonough's concern for the working people involved him, personally. In February, 1971, THE ROANOKE TIMES carried a picture of Father McDonough and the Rev. Charles T. Green counting votes

from a union representation election held during the week for Roanoke municipal blue collar workers.

St. Gerard's own Social Development Committee was active. In 1969, Operation Santa Claus Bread Basket was initiated to provide help for the poor at Christmas. A poor people's supper was sponsored December 19, 1971, to raise funds for the project.

St. Gerard's kick-off for Respect Life Year, in 1972, was a pot-luck supper. Two African students were guest speakers. A little later, Father McDonough took a public stand on abortion laws. In a WORLD NEWS article in February, 1972, Frances Stebbins reported that two clergymen, a Catholic and a Lutheran, shared the view that taking the life of an unborn child is wrong:

Father McDonough enlarged on the traditional Catholic view that only God has the right to take life once it has been conceived. He debunks the idea that abortion is a painless way to solve the problems of over-population, promiscuity, exhausted mothers, or retarded infants. The guilt of the mother resulting from taking her child's life outweighs the advantages. "In my several inner-city parishes I've seen more women with serious emotional problems growing out of an abortion than any other single thing. Counseling towards adoption of the unwanted child is a far better way of dealing with the problem. Even in rape or incest, taking the child's life only adds another evil to the violation of the person already committed."

#### Bishop Howze's Visit

In December, 1972, Bishop Joseph Howze was named Auxiliary of the former Natchez-Jackson Diocese in Mississippi. He was the third black man in the history of the United States to become a Catholic bishop. While still pastor of St. Lawrence Church in Ashville, N.C., he was invited by Bishop Walter Sullivan and Father McDonough to come to St. Gerard's for a parish celebration in his honor. St. Gerard's and the Office of Social Development arranged his visit in December. St. Gerard's hosted a buffet for him and approximately 75 guests. The Bishop-elect concelebrated Mass at St. Andrew's with Father McDonough, Father Michael S. Schmied from Nazareth, and Father Thomas Henry from St. Andrew's. Father McDonough introduced the Bishop-elect to local civic officials, arranged a press conference, and gave him a tour of the Catholic schools. The Bishop-elect's

visit was a sign of encouragement to the church in Roanoke. He revisited St. Gerard's after his episcopal ordination and was honored with a reception in the summer of 1973.

### A Priest from St. Gerard's

One of the concerns Brother Joseph Davis, Executive Director of the National Office for Black Catholics, expressed at the Diocesan Social Ministry Institute in Roanoke was the lack of black leadership in positions in the church. Not long after Bishop Howze's appointment, one of St. Gerard's young parishioners completed an important step in that direction. On May 20, 1973, Father James Goode, OFM, the first member of St. Gerard's parish to enter the priesthood, celebrated his first Solemn Mass at St. Andrew's. St. Andrew's was the site for the Mass, rather than St. Gerard's, because Father Goode's family felt a larger church was necessary for the occasion. James had attended St. Andrew's Elementary School and graduated from Roanoke Catholic High School, so he was well known "on the hill".

In June, 1973, after postponing his local celebration, Father McDonough went north to celebrate his Silver Jubilee of ordination at the mission church in Boston. During the summer, an assistant was assigned to St. Gerard's.

### New Arrivals

For almost a year after Father Norton's death in November, 1972, Father McDonough was the only Redemptorist living in the rectory. In August, 1973, Vice Provincial Joseph Coughlin sent Father Joseph Daly, C.S.S.R., from Epiphany Church in Tampa, to assist at St. Gerard's. He arrived on August 31, 1973.

Several days later, Sister Priscilla, SSND, Father McDonough's sister, arrived to supervise the children's religious education for a year. St. Gerard's was therefore equipped for an expanded program in church music and religious education. Sister Priscilla also made home visits and worked with the charismatic group at St. Gerard's.

### Black Culture

On a day-to-day basis, black culture was not a part of the liturgy at St. Gerard's, but black cultural events were periodically sponsored. A special music program using singers from High Street

Baptist Church was produced on December 23, 1973. It was well received. A special liturgy, commemorating Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and Dr. Martin Luther King's struggle for freedom, opened Holy Week in 1974 with an ecumenical, inter-racial celebration. Plans for the liturgy grew out of an inter-parochial, inter-racial task force which was started at the Regional Social Ministry Institute in Roanoke on October 26 and 27, 1973. A committee of representatives from all Roanoke parishes made arrangements for the liturgy.

For several weeks, St. Gerard's planned with priests and parishioners of Our Lady of Nazareth the Valley-wide liturgy for Palm Sunday, April 7, 1974, in Lucy Addison Junior High School Auditorium. All were invited to the service. Every priest in the Valley concelebrated. Father George Gormley, Dean of the Southwest Deanery and pastor of St. Andrew's, was the principal celebrant. The scriptural readings were done by Miss Betty Reynolds, Miss Phyllis Williams, Mrs. Barbara Bethel, and the Rev. Mr. Craig Jakowsky, deacon at Our Lady of Nazareth.

Rev. Dr. Noel Taylor, pastor of High Street Baptist Church, preached. Rev. Alvin Jackson, pastor of Loudoun Avenue Christian Church, recited Dr. King's "I have a Dream" speech. The young people's choir from the Black Catholic Lay Caucus at Holy Rosary Church in Richmond, traveled by chartered bus to sing during the Mass.

Before the Mass, members of the clergy, acolytes, choir, and some parishioners marched in procession from St. Gerard's Church to the school. They had been joined at St. Gerard's by parishioners who had marched from Nazareth. About 800 attended the liturgy, including members of ten or more Protestant churches. Palm Sunday, 1974, was a memorable day. A reception in Lucy Addison Junior High School followed the liturgy.

### Diocesan Changes

The summer of 1974 brought diocesan changes. The boundaries of the Diocese of Richmond were moved. The Diocese of Arlington was erected from the 22 counties in Northern Virginia. The Diocese of Richmond expanded to the west, recovering the Virginia counties formerly in the Wheeling Diocese, and to the east, recovering the two Eastern Shore counties from the Diocese of Wilmington. Most Rev. Walter F. Sullivan, who had served as the administrator of the Diocese since Bishop Russell's resignation in April, 1973, was named Bishop of Richmond.

Ensuing events of 1974 gave no indication this would be the last year of Redemptorist ministry at St. Gerard's.

Sister Agnita Marie Hill, SCN, one of the religion teachers, celebrated her Silver Jubilee on May 25, 1974. Father L. Everett, of nearby Salem parish, held the Wednesday novena service, while both St. Gerard priests attended a diocesan clergy meeting on June 19, 1974. On July 7, Father Daly gave mission sermons at the church in Danville, Virginia, at the request of the Mission Procurator.

After a busy school year, Sister Mary Fay, the Trinitarian nun who conducted St. Gerard's Montessori-type day care center, decided to keep the center open for the summer of 1974 for children aged two to six. Despite the competition of nearby summer programs at St. Andrew's and at Nazareth parishes, plus YMCA programs and others, the venture was successful since it kept the staff together and helped the working parents of about 25 children. Sister Mary Priscilla returned after summer holidays to conduct the religious education program for a second year, with the continued assistance of two Sisters of Charity and two ladies of the parish.

In September, after many months of study, the parish decided to try Bingo as a fund raiser. A hall on Williamson Road, with all the necessary equipment, was engaged for Monday evenings, St. Gerard's paying a rental fee. With the help of volunteers, black and white, four Bingos were held in October with a profit of \$232.

On September 21, the Redemptorist priests attended the ordination to the priesthood of Rev. Mr. Dennis Murphy at Nazareth. Dennis had resided in St. Gerard's rectory while he worked as a counselor at the Community Youth Home during his diaconate. After the ceremony, Bishop Sullivan appointed the new priest to be associate pastor at Our Lady of Nazareth, effective October 2, 1974.

Acting on Bishop Walter F. Sullivan's request, in 1973, Father McDonough sent representatives, at parish expense, to a national meeting of black Catholics in New Orleans. Father McDonough chose Mr. and Mrs. Otis Ogden, parishioners of St. Gerard's. Mrs. Ogden had recently become an organizer for the Black Southwest Neighborhood Alliance. When the Ogden's returned from New Orleans and began organizing the Black Catholic Lay Caucus of Southwest Virginia, her office became headquarters. The caucus was formed to help black Catholics in the area develop a better relationship with the church, according to the chairman, Otis Ogden. Bishop Sullivan endorsed the caucus and supported it financially. The caucus was controversial. Its very existence tended to divide the parish.

The group grew in numbers, working primarily in St. Gerard's parish. St. Gerard's gave assistance by church announcements, distribution of literature, offers of meeting rooms, etc. A few members withdrew from St. Gerard's. Despite this, the caucus was the focal point in the efforts to remove the redemptorists, although many parishioners not in the black caucus were not satisfied with the pastoral ministry of Father McDonough. He had become very much interested in the Charismatic Prayer Groups and had become a leader of the movement in this area. Too often, he would be absent from the parish on prayer group ministry. However, the parish was not neglected since Father Joseph Daly was there to give pastoral care. The Catholic Black Caucus Group requested a meeting with Bishop Sullivan on September 20, in Roanoke.

On September 18 and 19, both Father McDonough and Father Daly attended the diocesan clergy meeting in Blacksburg, presided over by Bishop Sullivan. The Bishop indicated he wanted to meet members of the Black Caucus at St. Gerard's Rectory on September 20. This was arranged. When the meeting was held neither of the St. Gerard's priests was invited.

#### The End of a Mission

The president of the parish board presided at the meeting. The result of the meeting was that the Redemptorists were asked to leave St. Gerard's, the parish which they had founded for black Catholics in 1946. On Sunday, the Bishop informed Father McDonough that St. Gerard's was to be given a diocesan priest. No public announcement was made until October 22nd. The ROANOKE WORLD NEWS, October 24, 1974, reported the changes:

The Rev. Edward McDonough and the Rev. John Daly, pastors of St. Gerard's Catholic Church, will leave the Roanoke Valley after services Sunday for assignments in other dioceses. The Rev. Michael Schmied, associate pastor of Our Lady of Nazareth Church for the past three years, will replace Father McDonough as chief priest ...

Father McDonough, who came to Roanoke in 1969, expects to enter a form of ministry involving the Charismatic movement ... (\*)

(\*) (Father McDonough now devotes full time to the Charismatic movement, with emphasis on the healing ministry. He works primarily in the Boston, Massachusetts area, but he has become nationally known for his work in the healing ministry.)



Our Lady of Nazareth Bulletin, October 28, 1974, reported Father Schmied's appointment:

Bishop Sullivan has appointed Father Michael Schmied to be pastor of St. Gerard's effective October 29, 1974. The Redemptorist priests who have staffed St. Gerard's until now will be reassigned by their superiors ... look forward to close cooperation between Our Lady of Nazareth and St. Gerard's.

St. Gerard's Pictorial Directory, issued October, 1977, mentioned the change in the administration of the parish:

In 1974, the parish was transferred to diocesan administration with the specific desire of the Bishop of Richmond to make it possible for black Catholics to be as any other ethnic or cultural group, and that is "First Class" and within the mainstream of the life of the Church of Southern Virginia. The emphasis was on the sharing of the unique cultural, spiritual, and racial heritage which this particular congregation had with the entire diocesan community. The hopes were to develop a native, diocesan leadership, both religious and lay.

On October 27, Father McDonough gave his last Sunday morning radio program, a weekly event, at 7:45 A.M. Later, at Mass, a very full church greeted the Redemptorists on their last Sunday. After the Mass, a memorable send-off was given to them and to Sister Priscilla, SSND. Many tears were shed.

Despite the tears, priests and people could look back on 28 years of dedicated ministry. They could recall, with pride, their participation in the improvements and achievements of the community: a black parish with its own church and rectory; black parishioners active in parish, diocesan, and civic affairs; public low-cost housing; expanded educational opportunities; lessening of racial barriers in civic, social, and economic life; and more that cannot be written.

"St. Gerard's is a beautiful story of love and cooperation and dedication of the priests and people who made up the community. The annals give the names, facts, dates, but the real story is contained in the memories which are locked in the hearts of the priests and the people who knew one another and loved and cared for one another in a very special way."



Father Joseph Daly (foreground) and Father Edward McDonough saying farewell to St. Gerard's parishioners, October 27, 1974.

THE ST. GERARD STORY

DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATION

October 29, 1974 - -



## INTRODUCTION

Several factors contributed to the replacement of the Redemptorists by a diocesan priest, but the primary reason was the need of the diocese to become involved in the black apostolate. A year earlier, Father William Oliver, a district superior of the Society of the Divine Word, that has been responsible for training and ordaining over 40% of the black clergy in the United States, charged that:

... in the past, outside of the religious communities so dedicated, the Catholic Church's service to the black communities, particularly poor ones, has been little realized and least supported by the whole Church in this country.

This charge is not entirely true of the Diocese of Richmond, although its black congregations have been served primarily by religious communities: the Josephites, the Benedictines, the Redemptorists, and the Holy Ghost Fathers.

The fifth Bishop of Richmond, The Right Rev. John J. Keane (1878-1888), was much interested in bringing the grace of Christ to the black people. He had only a small number of Catholics in his congregation and there was strong anti-black as well as anti-Catholic feeling in his area. In January, 1879, however, he began a series of Sunday night sermons in St. Peter's Cathedral addressed exclusively to the black community in Richmond. Such large numbers of black people attended his services that he met much opposition from both black and white clergymen.

That same year, the Bishop established the Virginia Mission Union to help finance the missions in Virginia. His Vicar General, Father Francis Janssens, established a school in the basement of St. Peter's Cathedral. Father Augustine Van de Vyver, who later became Bishop, conducted catechism classes for blacks. In five years, about 25 converts were won.

Realizing the need for more concentrated effort, in 1883, Bishop Keane asked St. Joseph's Society for Foreign Missions for a priest to give full time to the work among blacks in Richmond. A priest was promised, provided a church and school were placed at his disposal.

Josephite Father John R. Slattery came to Richmond in 1884. He used the cathedral as a base for his work among the blacks until St. Joseph's Church was completed, in 1885. A grammar school was opened in connection with the mission church, conducted by a lay faculty until 1886, when Mill Hill Franciscans opened St. John the Baptist Industrial Institute. It was the only school available to blacks in Richmond at the time, and the only one giving advanced work of any type in the city. The Josephites extended their apostolate to Petersburg, Keswick, Columbia, Jarrett, Union Hills, Norfolk, and Lynchburg. The Redemptorists established foundations in Virginia, beginning in 1941. In 1946, they established St. Gerard's in Roanoke.

Bishop Walter F. Sullivan recognized this diocesan shifting of responsibility to religious orders and took steps to rectify it. He announced in March, 1975, that diocesan priests would staff Holy Rosary Parish in Richmond's East End, which for many years had been staffed by the Redemptorist Fathers. In October, 1974, the Bishop had assigned Rev. Thomas Quinlan as pastor of Norfolk's St. Mary's Church, previously staffed by the Josephites, and Rev. Michael S. Schmied as pastor of Roanoke's St. Gerard's, formerly staffed by Redemptorists.

"I have made the decision for this change because of my personal conviction that the diocese must become more directly involved in the black apostolate," Bishop Sullivan said. "We have five black seminarians now. Walter Barrett, a member of Holy Rosary Parish, will be ordained a priest in May. I want to offer black priests and seminarians the opportunity to serve in the predominantly black parishes."

Immediately after his ordination, Father Barrett was named associate at St. Mary's in Norfolk, where he ministered until he was made pastor at St. Gerard's in Roanoke, in May, 1977. Lloyd Stephenson, a seminary pastoral intern, was sent to St. Gerard's for the summer of 1975. Henry Byekwaso, a black seminarian from Uganda, was St. Gerard's deacon in 1976.

In addition, diocesan activities involving blacks increased: the Black Experience Week-end for young people, the Church Leadership Seminar for Adults, a celebration in the cathedral for black Catholics, and the Bicentennial. Prior to that, the Bishop had endorsed and given financial assistance to the Black Catholic Lay Caucus of Southwestern Virginia. Other opportunities for blacks were opened

up and the diocesan newspaper gave coverage to activities. Informative articles were printed to acquaint the diocese with some of the problems of black Catholics.

All black Catholics did not have the same problems. The change in parish administration at St. Gerard's in October, 1974, was traumatic for some parishioners. Some were reluctant to give up the traditional liturgies to which they had become accustomed, and moved to another parish. Some followed the Redemptorists to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem. Others were delighted with the opportunity to share liturgies reflecting black culture, and moved enthusiastically into planning the changes.

According to Brother Joseph Davis, the thrust of blacks for a voice in the church evolved from the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Changing St. Gerard's from the Redemptorists to a diocesan parish was part of the shifting focus of the civil rights movement. Some blacks felt St. Gerard's was a patronizing missionary church under the Redemptorists. There was little black culture. They began to realize, again, their culture, pride, and heritage. Instead of accepting the white culture, they asked acceptance of their black heritage. Some changes came that many did not like. The departures, when St. Gerard's became a diocesan parish, was an indication of the plurality of the black community.

A Diocesan Pastor - Rev. Michael S. Schmied

St. Gerard's first diocesan pastor, Rev. Michael S. Schmied, took over the parish October 29, 1974. Father Schmied, transferred from associate at Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke, was the youngest pastor in the diocese at that time. He threw himself wholeheartedly into carrying out the Bishop's wishes, as stated in A BRIEF FAMILY PROFILE of St. Gerard's, dated September, 1975:

Transferred to diocesan administration in October, 1974, with specific desire of the Bishop to bring black Catholics into mainstream of diocesan and ecclesial life, with emphasis on developing and celebrating and sharing the unique spiritual and cultural heritage of black Catholics: with hopes to develop a native, diocesan, black clergy, religious, and lay leadership.

The Redemptorists had introduced the Catholic culture to the blacks. Now, Father Schmied began to blend the black heritage with the Catholic culture. The change was not popular with some parishioners. His including "A Soulful People" on the church sign facing Orange Avenue was offensive to some. His stripping the church of some of its traditional Catholic symbols and disposing of them in the marketplace was an unforgiveable offense to others.

But Father Schmied persevered. He was formally installed as pastor on Sunday afternoon, December 15, 1974. The community accepted him as their pastor, and he made his commitment to them.

The Roanoke authorities recognized Father Schmied as a spokesman for the black community. Dr. Noel Taylor, Mayor of Roanoke City, asked Father Schmied to serve on City Council's Fair Housing Committee.

In April, 1975, Bishop Sullivan appointed Father Schmied part-time chaplain at the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Salem. Father Schmied contributed the salary from this to St. Gerard's ministry.

Father Schmied had been active in diocesan social ministry programs in racial attitudes, peace and justice, and poverty issues. He brought a reinvigorating leadership to St. Gerard's.

He instituted a new parish council elected by the parishioners. The council consisted of six committees: liturgy, fellowship, ecumenism, stewardship, Christian formation, and social ministry. The committee responsibilities and council procedures were spelled out



in council guidelines. The individual committees and the parish council met at least once a month to plan projects and programs.

Each committee proposed its own budget. The annual parish budget, recommended by the pastor and the stewardship committee, was approved by the council. Regular financial reports were given to the parishioners. The pastor consulted with the council on all major decisions affecting the parish.

St. Gerard's congregation was invited in January, 1975, to recommend men and women as lay ministers of Communion, a pastoral ministry that had been authorized two years earlier. Development of lay participation and lay leadership was one of Father Schmied's major efforts. For this reason, a week-end workshop was held each Fall for the training of council members.

He also put greater stress on black culture and tried to introduce more Afro-American elements into the liturgies. In August, 1975, Mrs. Camille Willis was sent by the parish to the Afro-American liturgy workshop conducted by Father Rivers in Rensselaer, Indiana. In 1976, Deacon Henry Byekwaso, Mrs. Willis, Christine Amos, Peg Hammerstom, and Thelma Moten attended the workshop. Out of this participation, many new responses and songs with an Afro-American flavor were introduced into the liturgy.

Father Schmied wanted to synthesize racial pride and Catholicism. Sunday bulletins listed achievements of black people. The Josephite Art Calendars, featuring the arts and other achievements of black people, were distributed to each household. Black History Week was observed each February with pictures of famous black people and events placed about the church.

During American History Month, 1975, racial tension arose in Roanoke over the exclusion of a Black History celebration. Violence erupted in the high schools. In July, 1975, Al Hammerstom wrote to Don Pack, Superintendent of Roanoke City Schools, urging advance planning for Black History Week for 1976, hoping this would avoid the violence and tension of the past.

The 1976 Black History Week at Roanoke Catholic High School was a very successful event. The black students at RCHS, guided by Diane Steptoe, presented a week-long program for the high school and the intermediate school. Assemblies, bulletin boards, films, student reports, and guest speakers presented an understanding of blacks and their role in America. As Mike Steptoe wrote, in a letter to THE CATHOLIC VIRGINIAN, "... when everyone left for home there was a sense of inner pride and peace. We became aware of each other's needs and wants."

Father Schmied integrated black culture gradually with the traditional liturgy. Traditional devotions continued with the Eucharist Saturday evening at 7:30 and Sunday morning at 10:00. Weekday Mass was at 7 A.M. except Wednesday, when novena and Holy Year Mass were at 7:30 P.M. Later, he discontinued the Saturday night Mass and the novena.

On Sunday, January 12, 1975, the Parish Family Eucharist celebrated the Baptism of the Lord and remembrance of the birth of Martin Luther King. That afternoon, Father Schmied was invited to address, and the congregation to attend, a special unity service at Price Memorial AME Zion Church.

St. Gerard's congregation participated in the Children's Liturgy Workshop sponsored by the Department of Religious Education and Liturgy, January 25, 1975, at Williamsburg. Father Schmied wanted to make worship a more exciting experience for the little ones. A Children's Liturgy and Planning Team was organized to effect this.

Father Schmied's ministry at St. Gerard's was a ministry to the entire person. Aware of the economic problems facing his congregation, he periodically included in the Sunday bulletins, lists of job opportunities and the necessary qualifications.

Family problems were not overlooked. The teaching of natural family planning methods were announced in the Sunday bulletins. Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) was publicized. TAP-sponsored parent meetings were held in the hall. The Christian Formation Committee of the Parish Council planned parent meetings geared to the needs of the various parent groups.

Social activity as a means of building community was stressed. A Mothers' Day celebration, in 1975, was planned by the husbands and teenage and adult children. A Fathers' Day social was hosted by the Fellowship Committee. The parish Thanksgiving Dinner was continued. In December, there was a Christmas Dance at Holiday Inn for those over 18. A few days later, a children's party was held in the rectory. A costumed Mardi Gras was introduced before Lent. There was a parish family picnic at Hungry Mother Park, in August, and the annual parish week-end trip to Virginia Beach.

Father Mike was popular with the young people of the parish. At that time, St. Gerard's had a relatively large number of teen-age children. Father Mike organized a youth group out of which was formed a young people's choir. The youth brought contemporary music to the liturgy. It mingled with the traditional to yield a beautiful diversity.

Several of St. Gerard's young people participated in the Black Experience Week-end sponsored by the Richmond Black Lay Caucus and the Diocese Office of Vocations, at St. John Vianney Seminary, Richmond, January 17-19, 1975. It gave about 30 high school seniors and college students a chance to explore the place of black culture in the church and, for some although not for St. Gerard's youths, it was their first experience with a black priest. Black clergy had participated in parish celebrations at St. Gerard's as early as 1952.

Among the speakers was Rev. Mr. Walter Barrett, Deacon at St. Mary's, Norfolk. Michael Steptoe and Otis Ogden of St. Gerard's were discussion leaders. Lloyd Stephenson, a black seminarian of St. Vincent de Paul, Newport News, opened the Saturday session with a prayer.

During the summer of 1975, Lloyd Stephenson was assigned to St. Gerard's. The young people met regularly with him for planning a variety of programs. They voted to assist the adults in running parish bingo during the summer. They later elected a representative to the parish board. Soft ball was played in Salem after Sunday Mass. Through participation in the CROP walks, they became more aware of the problems of hunger, disarmament, and justice, and other national and international problems.

In December, Lloyd Stephenson brought some teenagers from his parish to join St. Gerard's youth in a retreat at Smith Mountain Lake.

Henry Byekwaso, a highly intelligent and articulate seminarian from Uganda, studying at Catholic University, left his mark on the youth rap. He was deacon at St. Gerard's at Christmas, Spring break, and the summer of 1976. In June, 1976, the Youth Rap changed its name to Umoja, which means Unity in Swahili. It is taken from the Seven Virtues of Africa. The youth group later declined in activity when most of the original group left high school and went on to college.

Deacon Byekwaso spent much of his time at St. Gerard's in home visits, counseling, and other pastoral activities. He also deepened the congregation's knowledge of the universal church. At the Fathers' Day Liturgy, June 20, 1976, he outlined the history, mission, and status of the Catholic Church in Uganda.

The link with the universal church was further emphasized when a group of parishioners accompanied Father Schmied to the International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in August, 1976. While there, they saw hand-carved religious objects shown by a missionary priest from Africa. Through him, they received the crucifix carved in

Tanzania that now hangs in the sanctuary at St. Gerard's.

As a follow-up of the Black Experience for Students, the Black Lay Catholic Caucus sponsored a church leadership seminar at Genesis House, July 18-20, 1975. Father Walter Barrett, who had been ordained in May, celebrated the outdoor candlelight Mass. The goal of the conference was to stimulate leadership among the laity through newly acquired knowledge and confidence, and to develop spiritual growth.

Leadership roles were already enjoyed by members of St. Gerard's congregation. Members served on Diocesan commissions: Pastoral Council, Social Ministry, Christian Education, and the pastor, Father Schmied, was chairman of the Social Ministry Committee of the Priests' Council. In August, 1976, Otis Ogden was appointed by the Bishop one of the eight diocesan delegates to the Call for Action Convention in Detroit.

t. Gerard's congregation was involved in diocesan planning for the Holy Year of Renewal and Reconciliation. Father Schmied's suggestion that St. Gerard's participate in the Holy Year Convocation in Richmond in May, 1975, by singing spirituals, resulted in the formation of an adult choir. Mrs. Barbara Bethel related its formation in an article "On Second Thought" published in THE CATHOLIC VIRGINIAN, December 9, 1977:

As in all churches, there were a few foolhardy souls willing to try anything, and before long we were 19 strong. The song selected was "Can't Hear Nobody Pray". For a while it was more like "Couldn't Hear Nobody Sing". Our determined pastor kept saying, "You can make it. You can make it." So we kept trying.

God must have begun to feel sorry for us, or our singing was so bad He couldn't take it any longer. He dropped down one of His angels to help us.

Sharon came to our church riding on a bicycle and playing a guitar. No one ever found out where she came from, what her full name was, or where she was going. She was plainly dressed, very quiet, full of smiles, and ready to teach us to carry a tune. She would work with us on Sunday mornings after Mass, and before long we began to sound like something. ... the choir director of a

Protestant church (agreed to) play the piano for us and make the trip to Richmond.

We were sounding so good, God smiled on us again. This time He sent Sam, a real live dancer. Sam, an African exchange student, was so gifted and beautiful, and he agreed to dance to our song. At long last, everything was together. A very nervous group journeyed to Richmond ... later, we were told we had done a very good job.

I guess our heads started to swell, and once again our determined pastor ... asked us to sing the same song the following Sunday at Mass ... we were awful! Our piano-playing angel was not present, our dancing angel was not present, and our directing angel, Sharon, could not get us together. We fell flat on our faces. We never saw Sharon again.

The result of this musical effort was the formation of the St. Gerard's adult gospel choir. Although the choir has undergone several changes in its direction (non-catholic or St. Gerard parishioners), it has continued to enhance the liturgies and to gain a good reputation in the community.

In August, 1975, two busloads of parishioners spent the week-end in Richmond. On Saturday, they enjoyed the fun of King's Dominion and that night socialized at the hotel. On Sunday, the choir sang at the 12:00 o'clock Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

This effort of St. Gerard's planted the seed for an annual Black Catholic celebration. For the next three years, parishioners from most of the predominantly black Catholic parishes in the diocese took part in such a celebration which was followed by a social period. St. Gerard's parishioners and its choir were prominent in the planning for and attendance at these celebrations. They were discontinued when the cost of travel became prohibitive, but they served to bring diocesan recognition to the black Catholics in the area.

On January 11, 1976, St. Gerard's parish sponsored a bi-centennial commemoration of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and a celebration of the Afro-American spiritual heritage. It was held at St. Andrew's Church, since St. Gerard's was not large enough to accommodate the crowd. This was the second public celebration of King's birthday for St. Gerard's. The first, in 1973, had been celebrated at Lucy Addison High School.

Father Walter Barrett was the principal celebrant. The sermon was preached by Marianist Brother Joseph Davis, executive director of the National Office of Black Catholics. During the liturgy, Michael Steptoe presented a Black American Literary Collection, from St. Gerard's and the Black Catholic Lay Caucus of Southwestern Virginia, to the principals of the Catholic schools.

Much of the liturgy was taken from the American Mass Program written by black priest/composer Clarence Rivers. Father Rivers had earlier stated his philosophy about black culture in the church:

I've been working personally to try to incorporate various elements of black culture into the Catholic worship ... as my understanding of black culture has enlarged, I myself have become more proficient in the arts of the black church ... if there is to be an introduction of black culture into the church, it is black people themselves or a black authority in the church which must determine how this gift is to be integrated into the church. No one else can make this decision. It has to be the decision of someone who is both black and Catholic.

Members of St. Gerard's choir sang at a special celebration of the liturgy with the theme "Black Catholics and the Bicentennial" on Sunday, April 4, 1976, in the cathedral at Richmond. Bishop Sullivan concelebrated with principal celebrant Father Walter Barrett, then associate pastor of St. Mary's in Norfolk, and the only black priest in the Richmond diocese, and with pastors of other diocesan churches with significant black populations.

Homilist was Franciscan Father James Goode, pastor of Our Lady of Charity parish in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York. Father Goode was a Roanoker, a graduate of Roanoke Catholic High School, and a former parishioner of St. Gerard's.

The liturgy noted the achievements of black Americans in this country's society, commemorated the anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, and honored St. Benedict the Moor, patron of blacks in North America.

The celebration was open to all races, with Protestant leaders and civic officials invited. This was the first diocesan-wide celebration of black Catholics ever held in the Diocese of Richmond.

Holy Week, 1977, at St. Gerard's, opened with the Palm Procession and the Parish Family Liturgy at 10:00 A.M. and Stations of the Cross and Benediction at 7:30 P.M. The Mass of the Lord's Supper on

Thursday included the installation of the Lay Ministers of the Eucharist. A parish family Passover Supper was followed by the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Foot Washing. Ceremonies closed with a vigil before the Blessed Sacrament.

On Friday, St. Gerard's people joined parishioners at Nazareth for the movable Stations of the Cross -- a bus tour of the Roanoke Valley to places where people felt pain, oppression, suffering, and deprivation.

On Saturday, catechumens and their sponsors were served dinner in the Parish House and an Easter vigil service followed. Mass of the Resurrection on Sunday included baptism, confirmation, and first communion for the catechumens, and renewal of the baptism commitment for all. Fellowship and an Easter Egg Roll followed Mass.

After Sister Mary Fay resigned as director in May, 1977, the day care center continued with the assistance of parish and community leaders. Mrs. Birkes was on hand each day. The Montessorri method was dropped when qualified directors were not available. In June, 1981, the contract with TAP was terminated and the day care center closed, by vote of the parish council. For some time, parishioners had resented the inconvenience in use of the hall as a day care center, and felt a need for more space for parish activities.

When Our Lady of Nazareth made the decision, in 1976, to move to a new site on Route 419, the future use of the Campbell Avenue property came up for discussion. One suggestion was that St. Gerard's be given the property for use in an expanded ministry. The proposal was amended to allow St. Gerard's to sell the property and use the money for expanded ministry within the black Northwest community.

On August 30, 1976, St. Gerard's Parish Council presented a proposal to Our Lady of Nazareth study committee about their plans for the future use of the property. No acceptable compromise could be reached. The plan fell through because of lack of financial resources. The property is currently used by diocesan and local agencies in the social ministry field.

A Diocesan Office of Religious Education for Southwestern Virginia was established in August, 1971, with Sister Mary Christine Zindel in charge. Days of renewal, planning sessions, and workshops were sponsored by the office for all involved in religious education. Members of St. Gerard's Christian Formation Committee attended to voice the concern of black Catholics in the renewed religious

formation program. Fourteen of St. Gerard's congregation and Father Schmied attended the Christian Formation Workshop in Richmond in September, 1975.

Many parish council members attended the annual diocesan Religious Education Convention each September as a means of developing better lay leadership.

Support of the Catholic schools continued to be a problem in the seventies. On April 14, 1975, Bishop Sullivan set parish subsidies for the Roanoke Catholic Schools for the ensuing three years. St. Gerard's diocesan subsidy was \$2,500 in 1975, but was later increased to \$5,000.

In the Fall of 1976, Sister Carol Conner, a teacher at Roanoke Catholic High School, was employed part-time as the pastoral sister. In 1977, she gave full time to pastoral duties. Her services were discontinued in 1978. Sister Veronica Sheehan, SCN, has been Religious Education Coordinator since 1979. Members of the parish serve as teachers and teacher aides.

### Finances

St. Gerard's financial position has improved in recent years. In September, 1975, the parish was debt free, having had its previous \$18,000 debt to the Diocese cancelled by the Bishop as an accounting in justice for black Catholics during the Holy Year. The fiscal 1974/75 income was \$27,000.

Parish collections were the major source of income between 1974 and 1978, varying from one third to one half of the total. Diocesan sources contributed about one fourth of the budget needs. Income from TAP averaged about 4%. Bingo provided about a fifth of the income between 1975 and 1978. It was adopted as a fund raiser by St. Gerard's in September, 1974, and was played each Monday evening at the Bingo Box on Williamson Road until that closed. Since then, it has been played at St. Elias Hall. In 1978/79, it brought in \$7,500, about 15% of the parish budget.

The Diocesan Budget for 1976/77 listed \$15,000 for the Black Apostolate Fund, a grant from the National Board which administers funds from the appeal formerly known as the Indian and Negro Collection. It is used in missionary dioceses such as Richmond. From this source, St. Gerard's received funds to meet its subsidy for the Roanoke Catholic Schools.



On May 15, 1977, Father Schmied celebrated the sixth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. It was a time of rejoicing and of sorrow, for Father Schmied was transferred from St. Gerard's.

In an earlier interview in THE ROANOKE TIMES, Father Schmied said he hoped to phase himself out of a job, as diocesan black clergy, religious, and lay leadership were developed. He said the people deserved a black priest. As a white man, he knew he could not fully understand the black experience.

A similar sentiment was expressed by one of the early Redemptorists at St. Gerard's. In connection with the Catholic Information Center which Father Donlan, C.S.S.R. opened with a staff of lay assistants in February, 1948, near St. Gerard's Chapel, he wrote:

The assistance of the laity is very important in work for the Colored, for the white priest in the South, to my mind, will never be wholly acceptable until conditions and discrimination resulting from segregation are removed. Moreover, a white priest, or any white person for that matter, can never fully realize the burden under which these people live. It is a matter of emotion and feeling which cannot be sensed merely by intellectual understanding of the problem.

Father Schmied helped develop black leadership, clerical and lay. He trained black seminarians and encouraged lay participation in parish, regional, and diocesan affairs. When Father Barrett, the only black priest in the Diocese celebrated his first Mass, Father Schmied concelebrated with him. But when the time came to relinquish his place to Father Barrett, he was reluctant to leave the parish where he had ministered two and a half years.

On Sunday, May 15, St. Gerard's hosted a farewell reception for Father Schmied and for Sister Mary Fay who also was leaving St. Gerard's. On Monday, May 23, Father Walter Barrett arrived. He was the first black diocesan priest to serve as a pastor in the Diocese of Richmond. He was installed as pastor by Bishop Sullivan on Sunday, June 12, 1977.

Rev. Walter C. Barrett

May 23, 1977 - - - - -

The decision to come to St. Gerard's was a tough one for Father Barrett. "I had told myself that I would be an associate for five years before accepting a position as pastor of a church," he said in an interview published in THE ROANOKE TIMES, May 13, 1979. "An associate gets to be with people -- to serve on an interpersonal basis. The pastor has to be an administrator, a janitor, an all-around type. I wasn't sure I was ready for that."

Mrs. Barbara Bethel, St. Gerard's Parish Council president, commented: "Many of us knew Father Barrett through his visits to Roanoke and through the black celebrations in Richmond, so we welcomed him warmly. We were proud that St. Gerard's was selected for the first assignment of a black pastor in the diocese."

The immediate response that greeted Father Barrett was the departure of a handful of people, black and white.

"I think some were really attached to Father Schmied," Father Barrett said. "With others, it was a reaction to my being black. You have to understand that many of our people are converts to Catholicism. They joined the church because of reverence, the form of the service. When I came they felt they were sliding back into the same old thing they had left."

Their fears were unfounded, Father Barrett kept in close touch with his parishioners to determine their needs and wishes. Visits to each home were scheduled. Where this was not possible, individual conferences in the rectory were encouraged. Questionnaires regarding parish interests were circulated frequently. Suggestions and criticisms were acknowledged and, where possible, changes were effected.

A 1980 questionnaire suggested more reverence before and during the communion rite. This problem was addressed from the pulpit. The same questionnaire made two opposing requests: a more traditional Mass, and more hand clappings and frequent 'Amen's'. Father Barrett replied, "Our Mass is traditional and on festive occasions becomes more solemn. We will get no more traditional than we are." Regarding the hand-clapping, Father Barrett said, "Spontaneity is welcome and will not be discouraged unless it distracts from prayerfulness."

In 1979, the Sunday Eucharist was given top priority in budget planning. More money was allotted to the Liturgy Committee. Missals

and hymnals were purchased. Competent choir directors and musicians were sought. The traditional liturgy was enhanced when music reflecting African traditions and rhythms blended with the old Catholic melodies. Dance groups performed as part of the liturgy. Black priests and brothers were invited to serve as celebrants and homilists. Black leaders were engaged to conduct workshops and training sessions.

Father Barrett combined the Catholic experience with the Protestant in sponsoring Catholic revivals in 1978, 1979, and 1980. Black priests from other dioceses participated along with local pastors of black Protestant churches. St. Gerard's choir alternated with the choirs from other local black churches in providing the music. Father James Goode returned to St. Gerard's as principal speaker for the 1980 revival.

McKinley Williams, a black student for the priesthood at St. Mary's Seminary and University, was assigned to St. Gerard's for the summer of 1979. "Big Mac" helped the youth advisors in formulating more youth activities. He instructed the altar servers, the confirmation class, and the converts in Catholicism. He served as Eucharistic minister, visited the sick, and made home visitations. With this wide variety of experience, he received first hand information on parish administration and thus was parish staff for the summer.

Lay involvement was varied. Lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, ushers, and musicians contributed to the liturgy. Volunteers helped with the religious education programs and the catechumens, drove the bus, and worked the bingo games. The Ministries Formation Program was opened to interested and qualified parishioners. St. Gerard's was represented in the 1980/81 program. A Men's Club, open to all men 18 and over, was organized in 1980. It was intended to assume responsibility for various maintenance and administrative chores.

In an interview printed in THE ROANOKE TIMES, May 13, 1979, Al Hammerstrom, a member of the Stewardship Committee, reported that St. Gerard's was solvent but not rich. Forty percent of its income came from weekly collections. The rest came from Monday night bingo games at St. Elias Social Hall, from the diocese, and from Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) for use of the church for a day care center.

One of Father Barrett's goals was to make St. Gerard's financially independent, to break the missionary mentality, the dependence on others. Parish contributions increased. The debt on the van was

paid up by July, 1979. A year-long renovation project, funded by the parish, was initiated in the Spring of 1979. The exterior was painted, the hall was carpeted, and the floors in the rectory were sanded. The parking lots were paved. New altar furnishings were purchased. A new altar was acquired and a new lectern. An improved sound system was installed and the Stations of the Cross were refurbished.

In the Spring of 1980, two lots on the corner of Orange Avenue and Hanover Street were purchased. At present, they are used as parking lots but the parish is looking towards expansion.

Father Barrett is aware of problems facing his congregation. The Catholic Church is perceived as foreign in the black community. Father Barrett's goal is to show you can be black and Catholic without contradiction. Some of the problems of being black and Catholic have been faced at the Unite for Justice hearings.

At Call to Action hearings in Newark, New Jersey, in December, 1975, Marianist Brother Joseph Davis, executive director of the National Office of Black Catholics (NOBC) detailed a long history of "silence, accommodation, and acquiescence" by the Church in this country, first in the face of slavery and then in capitulation to other forms of white racism.

... the Catholic Church periodically engaged in limited, specialized programs in the black community. But never once ... has it been able to shake itself completely free of the cautions implanted by fears rooted in racism and fully open itself to welcome black people into its ranks ...

This opinion concerning St. Gerard's was voiced by Father Walter Barrett in an interview printed in THE ROANOKE TIMES, May 13, 1979. "We were conceived in iniquity," Barrett said. "Blacks went to the other parishes but they were never made welcome. The idea (of St. Gerard's) I think, was to set up a parish for the blacks so they would stay there."

Father Maurice J. McDonald, C.S.S.R., founder of St. Gerard's parish, disagreed:

This is distorted hindsight. The then Bishop, with the consent of the Roman authorities, thought that setting up another racial parish was what God wanted under the circumstances. Even at that time, some minds considered

that blacks might best discover their own identity and their own relationship with God by setting up their own house, though small and poor. Other Christians, black and white (and some Jews) helped St. Gerard's do that. No doubt some did it for less than perfect motives of love. Who of us has no "chipped edges"? God can draw straight lines even with a chipped foot ruler. St. Gerard's would not exist today if the authorities had waited for perfect motives among all the participants.

Father McDonald was not alone in his thinking.

The Rev. F. E. Alexander, founder and editor of THE ROANOKE TRIBUNE, was an outspoken critic of forced integration during the 50's and 60's. Through his editorials and public comments, he took a position against the rapid integration of black and white society. This stand put him at odds with several of his black colleagues.

Beginning in March, 1979, the Diocese of Richmond held three meetings as part of the Call to Action program to deal with injustice in the church and the community. At the first of these hearings, testimony was given that discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities remained a fact of life in Southern Virginia, both in society at large and within the Catholic church.

St. Gerard's was represented at the conference by Otis Ogden, Mrs. Edith Thornhill, and by youth representative George Shaw. Mrs. Thornhill reported shock at finding bigotry among Catholics, including priests and Sisters, when she attended Catholic schools years ago. Her race excluded her from social events. Shaw, a former student of Roanoke Catholic High School, reported greatly different experiences. He was welcomed at proms, and had a very good experience at the Diocesan Catholic Youth Convention.

Shaw's experience resulted partly from changes in the social structure, the acceptance of blacks and Catholics in areas only partly open before.

St. Gerard's has been involved in some of those changes and continues to work for improvement and change in the human condition.

St. Gerard's is involved in local, regional, diocesan, and national activities promoting racial and religious pride and progress. Father James Goode organized a prayer vigil at the White House in April, 1979, to protest increased defense spending at the expense of social programs. Six of St. Gerard's members went to Washington to

participate.

Local ecumenical activities varied. Some parishioners joined the Walk for Religious Unity in May, 1979, and the Forum on Different Faiths, two months later. Father Barrett exchanged pulpits with a Protestant minister in January, 1980, and attended the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue at Nazareth, in June. In October, he and St. Gerard's choir participated in the annual revival of the Maple Street Baptist Church. A month later, the church was represented at the Interfaith Day assembly at Eureka Park.

A strong religious education program has been developed. Films supplement the Christian Formation program. Special sessions are set up for parents to assist them in preparing the children for the Sacraments. A series of talks on "The Constitution of the church" and on Pope John Paul's first encyclical was arranged for the adults.

The children of St. Gerard's early years have grown to maturity and are assuming responsibilities as the parents relinquish them. They have watched the parish grow and change from a mission under the Redemptorists to a full-fledged parish with a black diocesan pastor. They have helped St. Gerard's gain recognition across the diocese, even across the nation.

In October, 1981, St. Gerard's celebrates thirty years of ministry in its present building. Its parishioners, as they look back in pride at the achievements of the past, look to the future with hope and confidence.

The Redemptorists at St. Gerard's - 1946/1974

- |     |                          |   |
|-----|--------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Rev. Maurice McDonald    | 9/15/46 - 7/31/53 *                     |
| 2.  | Rev. Joseph Otterbein    | 1/ 7/47 - 7/16/48                       |
| 3.  | Rev. Warren E. Kuhlberg  | 7/16/48 - 9/13/48                       |
| 4.  | Rev. C. Walter Campbell  | 7/17/48 - 7/31/51<br>9/23/55 - 1/ /56   |
| 5.  | Rev. Francis Donlan      | 9/18/48 - 2/22/52                       |
| 6.  | Rev. John Jerlinski      | 2/26/52 - 9/20/54                       |
| 7.  | Rev. Thomas Norton       | 8/17/53 - 5/ 7/59<br>/ /71 - 11/28/72 * |
| 8.  | Rev. Larry Murphy        | 8/17/53 - 9/20/54                       |
| 9.  | Rev. John Creaven        | 9/18/54 - 9/26/55                       |
| 10. | Rev. Joseph Kilian       | 9/30/55 - / /60                         |
| 11. | Rev. Robert McCrief      | 12/ 3/55 - / /60                        |
| 12. | Rev. Bernard Krimm       | 5/ 7/59 - 10/22/63 *                    |
| 13. | Rev. John Patrick Murphy | / /60 - 10/ 7/62                        |
| 14. | Rev. Joseph Coughlin     | 2/17/62 - 6/ 1/64                       |
| 15. | Rev. Luke J. Doheny      | 9/15/63 - 6/ 1/64 *                     |
| 16. | Rev. John Barry          | 6/ 1/64 - 10/ /69 *                     |
| 17. | Rev. John Ferris         | 9/15/63 - 10/24/69                      |
| 18. | Rev. Edward McDonough    | 10/24/69 - 10/29/74 *                   |
| 19. | Rev. Joseph Daly         | 8/31/73 - 10/29/74                      |

\* Pastor/Superior

Diocesan Priests at St. Gerard's

- |    |                         |                   |
|----|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | Rev. Michael S. Schmied | 10/29/74 - 5/ /77 |
| 2. | Rev. Walter C. Barrett  | 5/ /77 -          |

Charter Members of St. Gerard's

Angela Archer and her parents

James Booker

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Butler and Rebecca

Elizabeth Ann Harris and her parents

Mrs. Helen Johnson

Arthur Serrell

(Mrs. Camille Willis attended St.  
Andrew's but was not registered.)



Rev. Maurice J. McDonald, C.S.S.R.Founder of St. Gerard's

Rev. Maurice J. McDonald was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on June 9, 1899. After completing elementary school at St. Peter's in Cambridge, he attended Redemptorist schools at North East, Pennsylvania; Ilchester, Maryland; and Esopus, New York. After he was ordained, June 14, 1925, he worked as a parish priest in Manhattan, New York, for five years and in Brooklyn, New York, for eleven years.

While in Brooklyn, during the Depression, the Diocese there formed a Priests' Social Action Committee that ran workshops on social problems such as racial prejudice, labor unrest, and housing. Father McDonald helped to start a Parish Labor Union School in Brooklyn, and taught in it. He studied social action, according to the Papal Instructions, in the Catholic University in Washington during one summer.

Father McDonald served three years as chaplain in the United States Army during World War II, two of them overseas in Europe, in the Army General Hospital, which helped thousands of Americans wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. He was attached to the Twenty-eighth General Hospital in Liege when it was bombed. He was a captain at the time of his discharge.

While pastor of St. Gerard's, in Roanoke, Father McDonald was involved in various religious and civic activities. In December, 1949, he became involved in the Roanoke Hospital Development Fund Campaign, to secure funds for a new 75-bed Burrell Memorial Hospital and a 100-bed addition to the Memorial and Crippled Children's Hospital. In June, 1950, he was appointed chaplain of Roanoke Council 582, Knights of Columbus. In September, he was elected one of the five vice commanders of the American Legion, Post #3. With the permission of the Bishop, he presided at the memorial service at the State American Legion Convention, August 12, 1951. He was appointed to the Speakers' Bureau of the Community Fund in 1952. In 1953, he was appointed to the board of the Family Service Association and was a delegate from the Board to the Social Workers' Convention at Hotel Roanoke, later.

After Father McDonald left Roanoke he was stationed at St. Augustine's in Richmond and was chaplain at McGuire Hospital. From 1954 until 1959, he was pastor at St. Mary's, Ilchester, Maryland; and from 1959 until 1961 pastor at St. Joseph's, Dalton, Georgia. He was pastor at Holy Trinity, Orangeburg, South Carolina from 1961 until 1967. From there, he went to St. Alphonsus in New York as associate pastor.

Since June, 1980, he has been at St. Mary's in Annapolis, Maryland.

Excerpt from the Building Fund Brochure

An explanatory brochure concerning the Building Fund, signed by Father McDonough and mimeographed by the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Nazareth, contained the following statements:

"The total cost of the new church will be over \$50,000. How much more is hard to judge because of the uncertainty of the price of the materials. There are many features of the building which are almost necessary, and which we may be obliged to leave out: e.g., the folding doors which separate the sanctuary from the hall. We assure you that the more generous you are now, and the harder you work on the drive now, the better the church will be.

You have the facts, the need, the plan. Now let us start digging. The contract is let. The steel for the roof is being molded. The dirt will soon be flying at the building site. If you dig according to plan, chiefly into your own pocket, you will one day kneel in the new St. Gerard's and feel that a part of you is in the structure -- that God is in every part of it -- and that in a spiritual sense you are therefore in God through your work and sacrifice for His house.

You understand what this drive means. It means retrenching, sacrificing, saving. It means fewer taxis, more rides on the bus, fewer movies, more evenings at home. It means better care of your clothes, perhaps working part of your vacation, perhaps postponing some improvement on your home, perhaps less expensive Christmas gifts for the children. They, too, belong to this Drive. Their dimes as well as their prayers are valuable.

We all sacrifice for that which we love. You should love to have a new church. Then sacrifice for it. And pray for it. Ask Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Gerard, and Blessed Martin to pray for it.

'Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.'

Committees for St. Gerard's Building Drive, 1951Drive Committee

Co-Chairmen: L. C. Downing, M.D., Miss Alta Mai Thompson, J. Butler Thompson.

Executive Board: Charles Anderson, J. Thomas Butler, Mrs. Alberta Montgomery, Mrs. Juan Nabors, Miss Alta Mai Thompson.

Parish Committee

Chairman: Charles Anderson

Members: James Booker, Mr. & Mrs. J. Thomas Butler, Mrs. Helen Crutchfield, Mr. & Mrs. David Holland, Juan Nabors, Sr., Ernest Preston, Mrs. Esther Rose, Ralph Thomas, Mrs. Clarence Tyree, Clifford Willis.

Memorial Committee

Chairman: Mrs. Juan Nabors

Members: Mrs. Norvel Coles, Mrs. William DeBerry, Miss Mildred Dix, Mrs. Alvah Johnson, Mrs. Callie Mayse, Mr. & Mrs. A. Mundy, Mrs. John Scales, Mrs. Malcolm Shaw, Miss Beatrice Watkins, Mrs. J. L. Williams.

Friends' Committee

Chairman: Mrs. Paul Montgomery

Members: William Bethel, Mrs. Marion Birkes, Robert Burrell, Leon Chubb, Mrs. Hannen Dandridge, Mrs. Frankie M. Hale, Mrs. Sylvester Hill, Philip Ragsdale, Mrs. Essie St. Clair, James St. Clair, Mrs. Ernest Scott, Arthur Serrell, Mrs. Alma Sewell, Miss Viola Vanoy.

Pledges to be paid within three years - by May 1, 1954.

About thirty of the parishioners work for wages.

Most of the parishioners are included in the above committees.

Rev. Walter C. BarrettFirst Black Pastor of St. Gerard's

Rev. Walter C. Barrett was born in Richmond, Virginia, September 30, 1947.

He attended the former Van de Vyver Catholic School in the former St. Joseph's Parish, and then Cathedral Central High School for two years. He completed his high school studies at St. John Vianney Seminary. He spent two years at St. Charles College, Baltimore, before graduating from St. Mary's Seminary College, Catonsville, Maryland, with a bachelor's degree in philosophy.

For two summers while in college, he worked at Benton Harbor, Michigan, as director of a summer resort for the Archdiocese of Chicago. He then went to St. Mary's School of Theology in Baltimore, where he received a master's of divinity degree in May, 1974. He served as deacon at Sacred Heart, Norfolk, in the year preceding his ordination to the priesthood.

He was ordained May 3, 1975, at Sacred Heart Cathedral by Most Reverend Walter S. Sullivan, Bishop of Richmond. He celebrated his first Mass at Holy Rosary Church, Richmond, his home parish. Immediately after ordination he was appointed associate at St. Mary's, Norfolk, where he remained until he became pastor at St. Gerard's, Roanoke, in May, 1977.

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Directory of the Diocese of Richmond, 1938

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Material on the Roanoke Social Development Office

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St. Andrew's Sunday Bulletins

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The Roanoke World-News, Roanoke, Virginia

The Roanoke Tribune, Roanoke, Virginia

The Catholic Virginian, Richmond, Virginia

The Josephite Harvest, Baltimore, Maryland

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Salem, Va. (nd, unsigned, attributed to Charlotte Fishburn Martin

(Mrs. R. D.)

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## Acknowledgments

Many, many people helped in writing this story of St. Gerard's. Hearing of the writer's interest in the history of the Catholic Church in the Roanoke Valley, Rev. John Barry, C.S.S.R., Vice Provincial, offered the use of the Annals kept by the Redemptorists at St. Gerard's. Their use proved of inestimable value in getting a picture of the religious, racial, social, economic, and pastoral situation in Roanoke during a time of change and confusion.

The Redemptorist period at St. Gerard's bridged a time of rising expectations throughout the country, and of chaotic changes in the Church following Vatican II. It spanned the change in the attitudes of black Americans regarding integration and segregation. It witnessed the shift of black Catholics from accepting the Roman liturgy to insisting on acculturation of the black mode.

Members of St. Gerard's congregation, especially Mrs. Marion Birkes, Mrs. Blanche Dungee, Mr. Arthur Serrell, Mr. William Steptoe and Mrs. Camille Willis shared their memories of this period. Mr. Al Hammerstrom was generous with information, advice, and editorial skill.

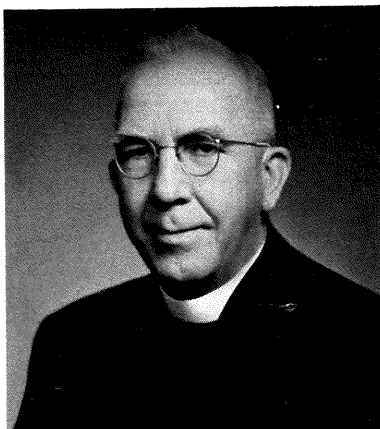
Former pastors and associates of St. Gerard's, through letters and conversations, supplemented and clarified information. Father Maurice McDonald's letters were particularly rewarding. Ann, Elizabeth, and Margaret Coughlin and Margaret Haley assisted with the research. Rev. Michael Hopkins, C.S.S.R., pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Salem provided work space in the church office, and the names and addresses of former pastors and their current addresses. Ann Anderson typed the manuscript and Linda Owen designed the cover.

Rosalie Waters Driscoll (Mrs. T. Frank) brought to my attention the Winter '78-79 copy of THE JOSEPHITE HARVEST, featuring the establishment of black congregations in Virginia. The editor, Rev. Earle A. Newman, SSJ, sent additional copies and provided items from the Josephite files.

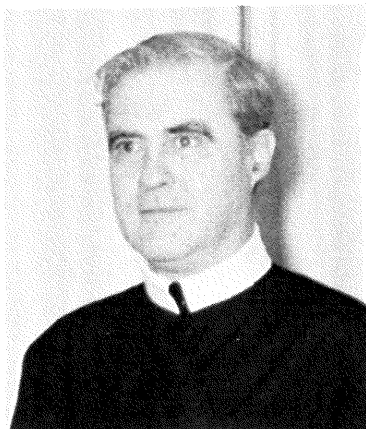
Grateful acknowledgment is made to all those who assisted in the gathering of this material and formulating this story, especially the following: Rev. Walter C. Barrett; J. Walker Caldwell; Rev. Luke Doheny, C.S.S.R.; Mrs. Joseph Duetsch; Brother Barnabas Hipkins, C.S.S.R., archivist; Rev. Bernard Krimm, C.S.S.R.; Mrs. H. P. Kyle; Sister Angelica Lohman, SCN; Leo Maier; Rev. Edward McDonough, C.S.S.R.; Rev. John Ryan, C.S.S.R.; Arnold Schlossberg; Rev. Michael S. Schmied; Rt. Rev. Walter F. Sullivan; Mrs. J. L. Thomas; and Rabbi Gerry Walter.

Errors and omissions are mine. This is an outsider's view of a unique congregation. Those who lived with and shared the trials and triumphs of this small parish can tell you a richer story.

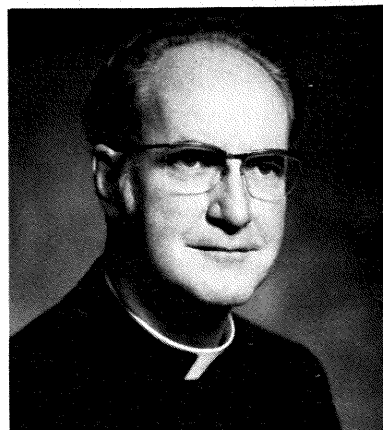
A.L.H.



**Rev. Maurice McDonald, CSSR**  
1946-1953



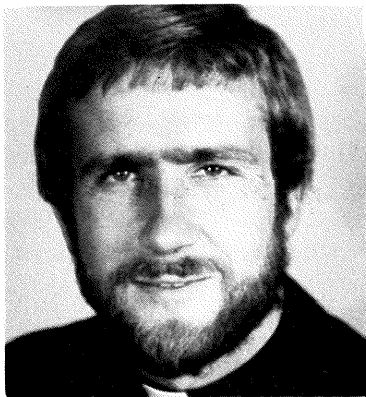
**Rev. Thomas Norton, CSSR (deceased)**  
1953-1959



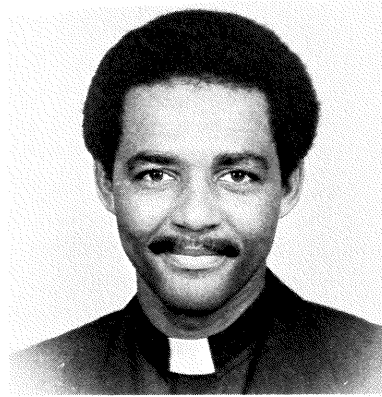
**Rev. John Barry, CSSR**  
1964-1969



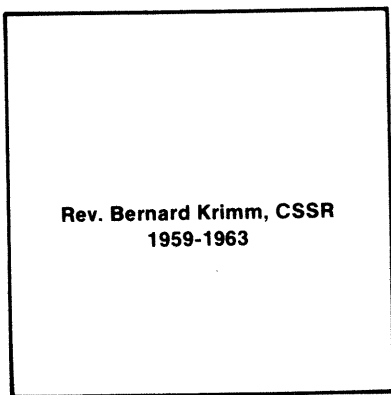
**Rev. Edward McDonough, CSSR**  
1969-1974



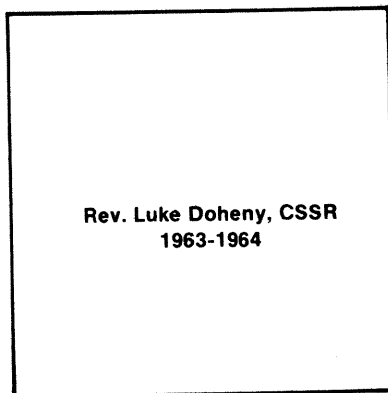
**Rev. Michael Schmied**  
1974-1976



**Rev. Walter Barrett**  
1976 -



**Rev. Bernard Krimm, CSSR**  
1959-1963



**Rev. Luke Doheny, CSSR**  
1963-1964

**PICTURES NOT AVAILABLE**





A Parish Council Workshop  
March 26, 1977

