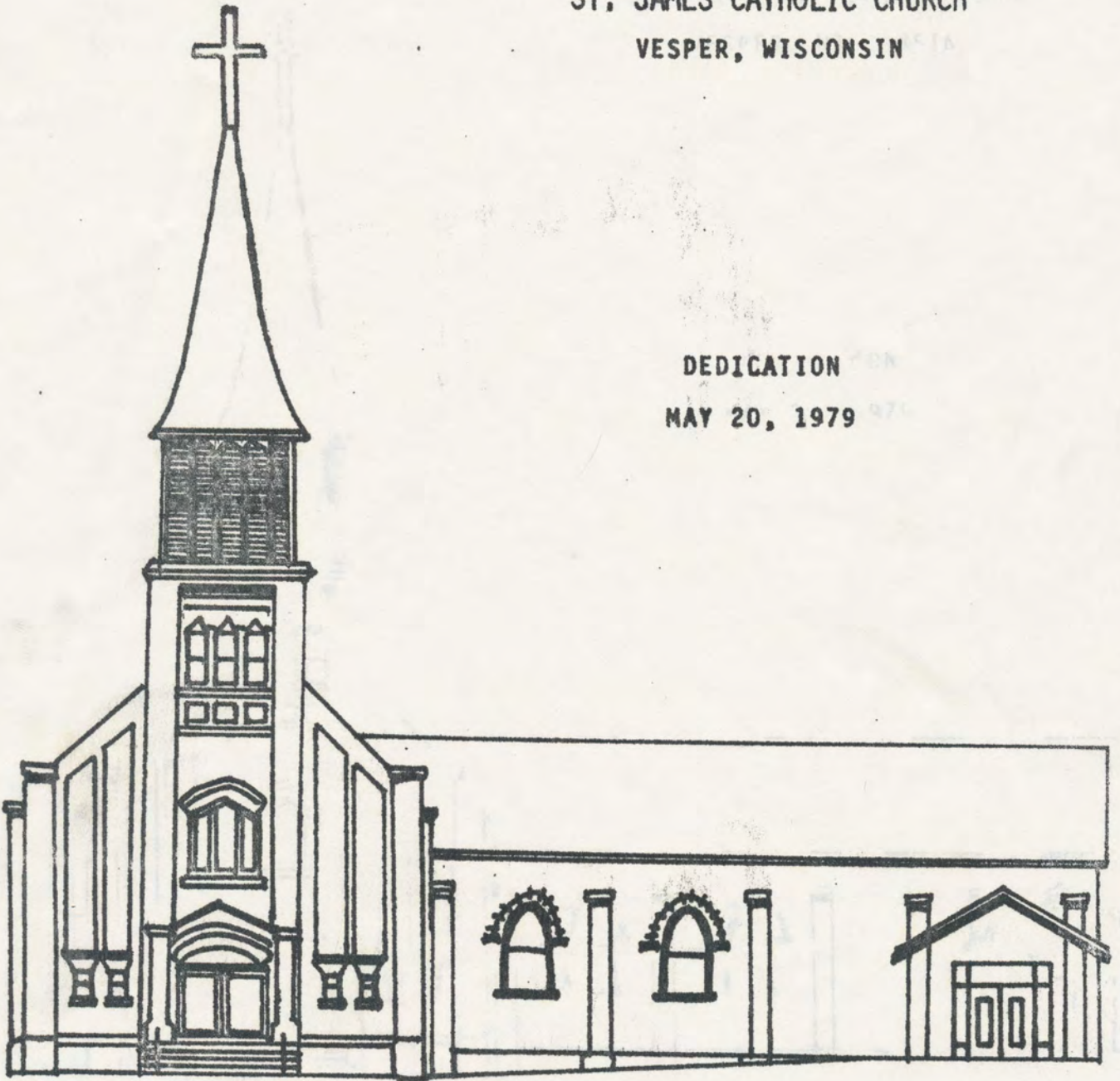


ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH  
VESPER, WISCONSIN

DEDICATION  
MAY 20, 1979





On Friday, October 6, 1961, a 50 year history of St. James Parish was written by Mrs. Ken Du Pree, with the pastor, Fr. Peter Rombalski, which read as follows:

VESPER -- St. James parish is 50 years old.

Though fire slowed their plans, plucky parishioners finally celebrated their golden anniversary, September 24, one year late.

Jubilee rites however took on an added glamour when enacted in their church now completely renovated after fire razed the interior last fall.

After the Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving, parishioners gathered for a parish dinner and later a poultry shoot. Topic of the day was the early struggle of the pioneers who planted Christianity so firmly in this rural area.

#### PARISH HISTORY

Father John Willitzer, then of St. Joachims of Pittsville, said the first Mass in Adams Hall, October 15, 1909. Mr. Joseph White and Mrs. Frank Ladick were the trustees during those first progressive years. Officers of the active Altar Society were Mrs. Henry Treutel, president; Mrs. John Flannagan, secretary; and Mrs. Celia Goldhammer, treasurer.

The parish remained a mission of Pittsville until 1919 when Father C. W. Gille, now Monsignor Gille of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Wisconsin Rapids, was appointed the first resident pastor.

Mr. John Carroll donated an acre of land for the parish buildings. Later, four acres more were purchased on the west side of the village of Vesper. The beautiful brick church was dedicated by Bishop James Schwebach on November 10, 1910. Mr. Frank Patrenets donated land for the cemetery.

During Msgr. Gille's stay, a rectory was purchased in November of 1919. Prior to that time our pastor resided with John Mollet. On April 19, 1926 the old rectory was destroyed by fire. Parishioners, working side by side with Msgr. Gille, completed the present rectory on the eve of Thanksgiving of 1926. It was also during Msgr. Gille's stay that plans were completed for the addition of the steeple of St. James.

#### PARISH GROWS

The Catholic population of Vesper and the surrounding community numbered 15 families at the time of the founding of St. James, and at the silver jubilee this number had tripled.

Now at the Golden Jubilee there are now 98 families who make St. James parish.



Nuns from SS. Peter and Paul are instructing 110 St. James children in religion classes. Many of high school age group receive instructions under the CCD program.

Among the known living charter members still attending St. James are Mrs. Mary Adams, Jacob Sternot, Mrs. Joseph Hladilek, Mrs. Celia Goldhammer, Charles Hladilek, and Joseph Rokus.

Monsignor Gille was succeeded by Father A. M. Kammer in 1929 and the work of the growing congregation continued. Father Kammer left in 1936, and was replaced by Father G. Kaiser. Father L. Paquette served Vesper and St. James from 1937 until 1941 when Father J. P. Hough was appointed pastor.

Thus continued a succession of changes:

Father Oberwinder from 1942 to 1944; Father C. P. Wolf, 1944 to 1947; Father F. W. Zoll, until 1950; Father E. J. Kaim, 1950 to 1952; Father P. T. Weller, 1952 (two months); Father F. Przybylski, 1952 to 1953 when our present pastor, Father P. F. Rombalski, was appointed pastor.

UNDER THE leadership of Father Zoll our present Christian Mothers Society was organized with Mrs. Ollie Bushman as its first president. Officers of the group today are Mrs. George Osenga, president; Mrs. Ken Du Pree, treasurer; and Mrs. Carl Cepress, secretary.

One of the more recent organizations flourishing in the parish is the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The CCD board of directors includes Mr. and Mrs. Ted Passer, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Leu, Robert Gruber, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Slattery, Mrs. Halverson, Mrs. Norbert Hamel, Mrs. Wellnitz, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rohmeyer.

Devotional simplicity enhances the redecorated church. The marble altars were blessed on June 4, 1961. The electric organ is another new feature. Organists are Mrs. Everett Bean and Mrs. Leonard Heller. Mrs. Billiet has been our sacristan for many years. Present trustees are Mr. Harold Brockman and Mr. John Heller.

#### VOCATIONS

Vocations from St. James include Marion Krommenacker, now Sister Mariette, OSF, who attended the jubilee rites. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. August Krommenacker. Miss Jeanne Filut recently entered the novitiate of the Franciscan Order. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Filut. Agnes Radecki has also entered the religious life.

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Father George A. Stashek was appointed pastor of St. James parish in June of 1965. After 50 years of parish and community growth, the people of St. James faced a great decision of taking on a church and CCD expansion program. Under the leadership of Father Stashek and prayers that Almighty God give us cooperation, charity and grace to provide HIM with a nice home for worship, a parish council meeting was called for Sunday afternoon, January 30, 1977. The needs of the parish were evaluated and it was voted to provide for more seating capacity and also expand our CCD facilities.

A volunteer building committee was set up with election of officers as follows:

Ralph Hamel, president; Theora Huser, secretary; and Richard Slattery, treasurer. Other members on the committee are James Jacunski, William Winch, Richard Olsen, Ray Brock, Paymond Grassel, Mrs. Raymond Grassel, Leo Schiferl, Carl Cypress and Andy Simonis.

ON MARCH 6, 1977 -- Father Stashek informed the parishners of his consultation about our plans with Bishop Freking, and he was pleased with the interest of the people of St. James and we could now proceed with our plans.

On March 16, 1977 - Billmeyer & Son , Architects, were hired for the new addition and whatever remodeling was needed. Two of the stained glass windows from the church would be utilized in the new addition.

On June 3, 1977, a letter was sent to all members of the parish with information on the plans and finances of the building project. The total construction came to \$650.00 per envelope holder.

On July 20, 1977 -- The Diocesan Building Committee fully approved the building plans as presented.

Bid opening was on November 9, 1977 and the following won the bids:

1. General Contractor - Gritz Builders, Inc. -\$129,600.00.
2. Plumbing Contractor - Kohls Plumbing & Heating, Inc. - \$6,725.00.
3. Heating & Ventilating Contractor - Peterson Sheet Metal - \$24,444.00.
4. Electrical Contractor - Linde Electric - \$12,090.00.

The contracts were signed by Bishop Freking on November 10, 1977. Construction started November 14, 1977.

The tower on the church was re-shingled and painted in the fall of 1977. A new roof was put on the church in May of 1978.

It was decided to renovate the old church with new ceiling, new lights, new sanctuary and carpeting. New pews were installed in the new addition.

Black topping around the building was completed November 1, 1978.

Final inspection date of the new building was February 7, 1979, although it was completed in November, 1978.



The new kitchen was planned and paid for by the St. James Altar Society. The present officers are: Pres. Mrs. Wm. Winch, V. Pres. Mrs. Marty Bliet Jr., Sec. Mrs. Bruce Zimmerman, Treas. Mrs. Ed. Heller. The completion of the new building and the old church was all paid for except for \$80,000.00.

The present parish council officers are Robert Gruber, president; Mrs. Norbert Hamel, secretary; with alternates Harold Brockman, president; and Mrs. George A. Osenga, secretary. Trustees are Richard Slattery and John Stevenoski.

Much was accomplished by the St. James people since October 15, 1909 to the present time of dedication of the new CCD Center and renovating of the church, which was designed by Parkinson and Dockendorff Architects of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

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On this day of Dedication, Sunday, May 20, 1979, we ask Bishop F. W. Freking, the priests and the community of God, His Blessings and Graces on all who served and helped to bring the Faith of Jesus Christ to St. James. May God bless all of us.