

History of St. Joseph Parish continued.

1925 – 2003

Father Charles Anderson 1957 - 1964



When Father Charles Christian Anderson arrived, the first phase of the school building, with four classrooms, was just being completed. Students moved into the new building on January 3, 1957. Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley was invited to dedicate the new



Father Anderson and three St. Joseph Sisters.

school. At the dedication on March 15, 1957, he remarked, “this Catholic school marks a turning point in the history of the Catholic Church in Central Florida. Take it to your hearts, cherish it, support it. It is yours.” A temporary altar was set up outside the school and after the Archbishop dedicated the building and blessed each classroom, Benediction was given.

But this was not the end. Plans had already been made for the building of the next four classrooms. When this second unit was completed, the school had eight classrooms, lavatories, a lounge and office.

This second phase was completed in the summer of 1958 and welcomed an enlarged student body in September 1958. Tuition fees were \$10.00 a month or \$15.00 a month for families with more than one child enrolled. Most students were from Winter Haven but some children came from Bartow, Lake Wales and Haines City.

A bus picked up the students in outlying areas. Once when the bus broke down, Willie Winston, who had driven the bus for many years, went to each home to ensure that all the students had been able to get to school. Willie was the father-in-law of Dorothy Winston, who was the housekeeper in the rectory for many years.

Because there was no cafeteria, the students brought lunches from home in Mickey Mouse, Barbie, and other decorated lunch boxes, complete with thermos bottles. Wooden picnic tables were set up under the trees at the far end of the property, near where the gym is now located. Eating picnic style presented a few problems such as splinters, ants, flies, and gulls from Lake Silver who seemed to know when it was lunchtime. The gulls would swoop down unexpectedly and make off with a tasty morsel from someone's lunch. In inclement weather, children remained in their classrooms for lunch.

In time, a screened-in building was built near where the kindergarten and science lab now stand. With electrical facilities now available, on certain days room mothers and aides prepared hot dogs. Hamburgers were provided by MacDonald's which was just being introduced to the Winter Haven area. Children were presold tickets for hot dogs and had to specify whether they wanted their hotdogs with catsup, with mustard, or plain. At lunch, if a child had ordered catsup, the child was given a dog wrapped in a pink napkin, if mustard, a yellow napkin, and white if an undecorated dog was the child's request.