

S.T. CLEMENT



1927 - 1977

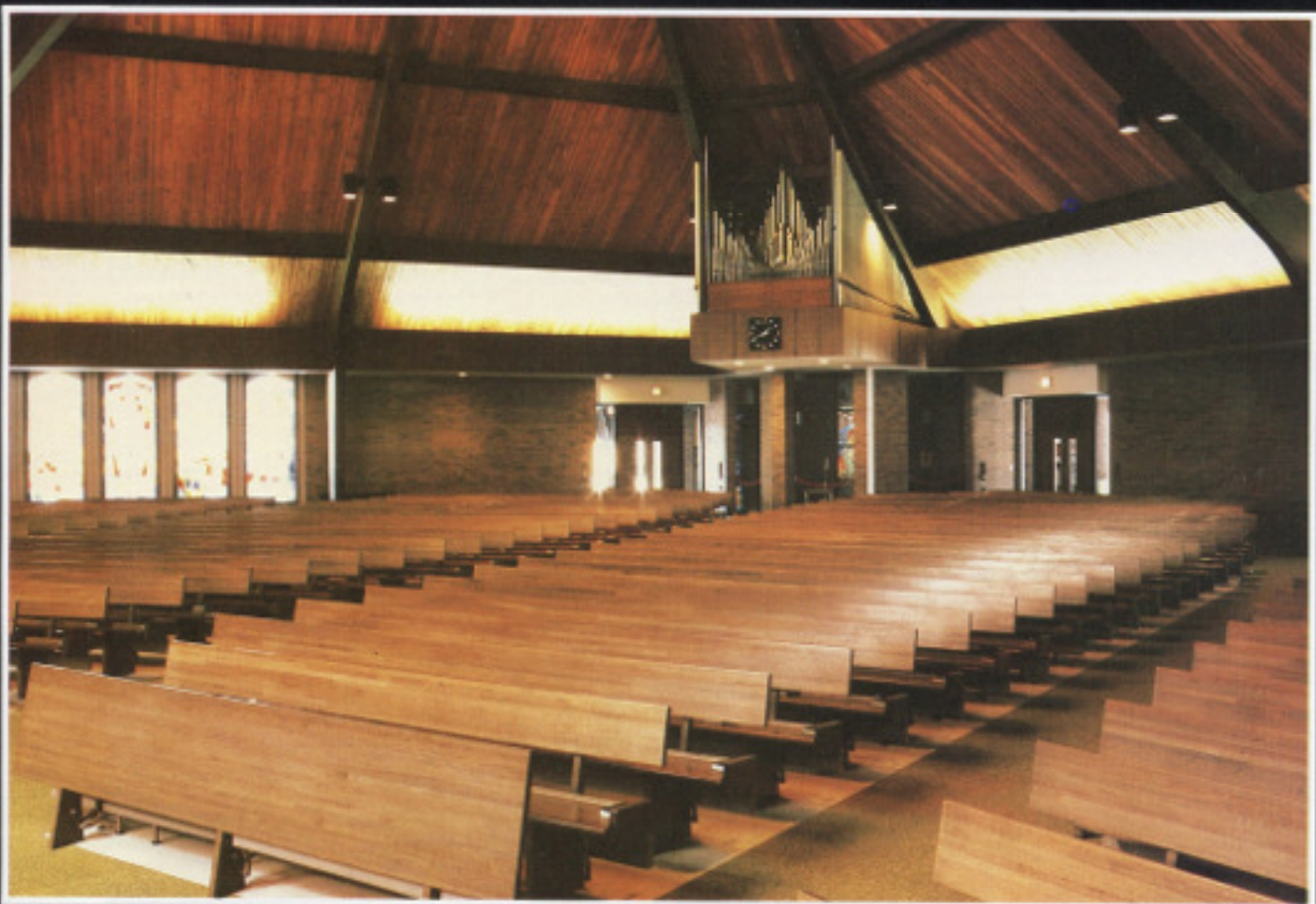
ST. CLEMENT PARISH GOLDEN JUBILEE

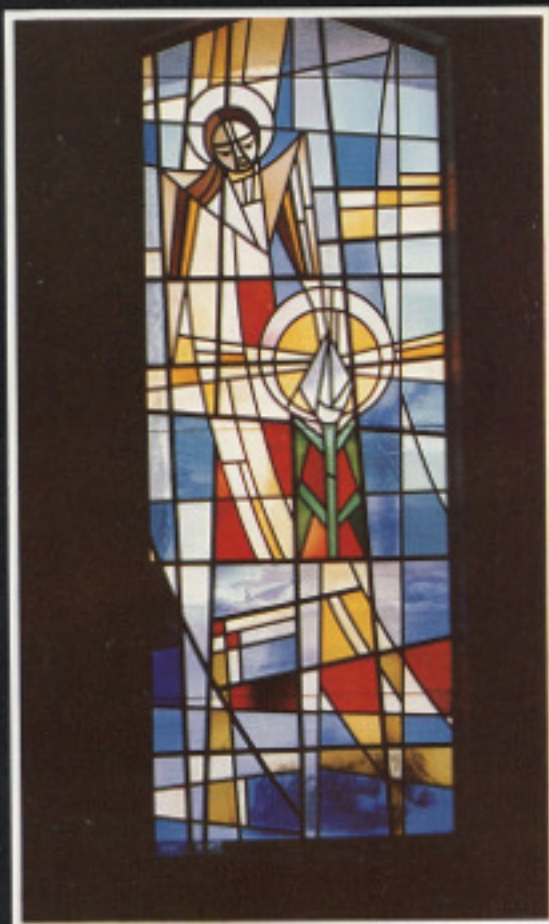


1927-1977
Dearborn, Michigan









St. Clement, Our Patron



Though a Roman by birth, St. Clement was of Jewish extraction, a convert of Sts. Peter and Paul. Legends tend to blur verifiable data of his life, but two facts are undisputed: he was the third pope after St. Peter; and he wrote a lengthy letter to the Corinthians. The Corinthian Church was torn by internal struggles; Clement urged reconciliation so convincingly that peace and order were restored. St. Clement is believed to have died a martyr's death in the year 100. Since he is our patron, we have a claim on his protection and intercession.

Excerpt from St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians

He who has love in Christ must observe the commandments of Christ. Love unites us with God; love covers a multitude of sins; love endures everything, is long-suffering to the last; there is nothing vulgar, nothing conceited, in love; love creates no schism; love does not quarrel; love preserves perfect harmony. In love all the elect of God reached perfection, apart from love nothing is pleasing to God. In love the Master took us to Himself. Because of the love which He felt for us, Jesus Christ Our Lord gave His Blood for us by the will of God, His body for our bodies, and His soul for our souls.

His Holiness
Pope Paul VI





His Eminence John F. Dearden, D.D.

Archbishop of Detroit



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT

1234 WASHINGTON BLVD.
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

November 5, 1976

Dear Father Porcari:

I am pleased that you brought to my attention the forthcoming celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of St. Clement's parish in Dearborn.

What you are planning for St. Clement's parish as it prepares to celebrate fifty years of existence is very much worthwhile. I know that it will be primarily an action of thanksgiving for abundant blessings received.

I welcome the opportunity of this writing to express to you and to the parish community my cordial good wishes and my personal congratulations on this memorable occasion.

Certainly, St. Clement's parish has under God much to be proud of. It has had over the years a tradition of strong faith, a vibrant parish spirit, and evident joy in the things that lead us to God. And I know that, as the parish and its friends unite in a special action of prayer, they will ask God in His goodness to continue to make St. Clement's parish abidingly faithful to its mission in the Church.

Cordially yours in Christ,

John Card. Marden
Archbishop of Detroit

Reverend Ernest M. Porcari
Pastor, St. Clement's Church
5275 Kenilworth Avenue
Dearborn, Michigan 48126



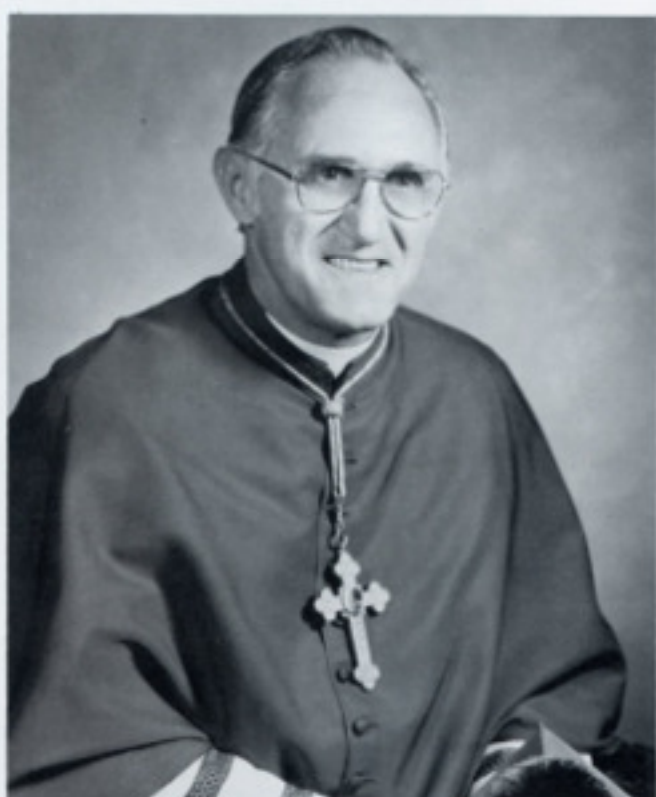
Most Reverend Thomas J.
Gumbleton, D.D.



Most Reverend Walter J.
Schoenherr, D.D.



Most Reverend Joseph L.
Imesh, D.D.



Most Reverend Arthur H.
Krawczak, D.D.

st. clement church

5275 KENILWORTH • DEARBORN, MI 48126

Feast of St. Clement, 1976

Dear Parishioners,

The 50th Anniversary of St. Clement Parish is indeed a time to rejoice and celebrate and give thanks to Almighty God for the countless blessings He has bestowed upon our parish.

It is a time, too, to express our gratitude to the many priests and religious who have dedicated their time and talents in service to our people. Special thanks are due to the pioneers of our church; without their steadfast faith, determined efforts and untiring labors, there would be no St. Clement Parish.

On this happy occasion, I congratulate you for all you have accomplished in the last fifty years. Your generosity is a source of pride; your charity toward the poor is a glorious chapter in our history; your concern for the missions of the Church is a sign of growth and Christian maturity. I congratulate you for your growth in prayer life, the frequent reception of the Sacraments, and above all, your great love for Holy Mass.

For these reasons and many more, this book is dedicated to you as a permanent record of your material and spiritual growth and achievements.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Ernest M. Porcari

Rev. Ernest M. Porcari,
Pastor



FIFTY YEARS OF LOVE AND DEVOTION

In the space of a few years, the area bounded by Michigan Avenue, Ford Road, Greenfield, and Schaefer was transformed from farmland into a residential neighborhood. The wartime industrial boom and the rapidly expanding auto industry drew people from various parts of the country and resulted in the city of Fordson being described in the 1920's as "... the fastest growing community in the nation."

As a result of this rapid population growth, a need arose for a Catholic parish for English-speaking residents. St. Barbara Church, founded in 1924 for Polish-speaking Catholics, could not satisfy the needs of the English-speaking parishioners. In answer to numerous requests from area residents, Archbishop Michael J. Gallagher, on June 24, 1927, canonically established St. Clement Parish.

The first organizational meeting of the parish was held on August 23, 1927 in the Schaefer Building on the northeast corner of Michigan and Schaefer. John Schaefer offered the use of his building to serve as a temporary church until a new church could be erected. Reminiscing parishioners recalled that Mass was celebrated on the second floor and that confessions were heard in a clothes closet! In eager anticipation of their new church, the small but enthusiastic group of charter members literally passed a hat at their first Mass and collected the total of \$75.00, a truly large sum at that time. (From the very beginning, St. Clement parishioners have been noted for their generosity.)



The Schaefer Building

The Schaefer Building served as a center of worship for the parish until June 24, 1928, when Mass was celebrated for the first time in the new church on Kenilworth near Ruby. This site had been selected in preference to suggested sites at Michigan and Maple, and at Ternes and Hubbard Drive (formerly Gildow).

The church, a brick Romanesque structure, had a seating capacity of over 100 people. It was designed by Arthur DesRosier and built by Burnett and Henige, Dearborn firms. This building served in a dual role. While the main part of the building was the church proper, the rear functioned as a community hall. Construction of the rectory had been completed before the Church was even started.



Rectory



Original Church Building

Reverend Vincent J. Toole

Rev. Vincent J. Toole was appointed founding pastor of St. Clement parish and met his parishioners for the first time at a fund-raising party on September 1, 1927. Father Toole had served the Church previously as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Paw Paw, Michigan and at St. Henry Parish in Lincoln Park. During World War I, he had served as chaplain with the army in France, where, wounded in action, he was cited for "gallantry." Father Toole had gained recognition in the Dearborn area as a result of his letter to Detroit newspapers defending the peace plans of Henry Ford. As pastor, Father Toole, an affable and capable man, soon became popular with his people. After two years of zealous service, Father left St. Clement for St. Gertrude Church in St. Clair Shores. Father Toole died in 1951.



Father Toole



First Holy Communion Class St.

First Holy Communion Class



Front Row, left to right: Emma O'Brien, Anna Ehrman, Corinne Hase, Stella Donnelly, Jean McCallion, Rose Swindell. Back Row: George McCallion, Columb' McGill, Joseph McCallion and Maurice Dore — First Parishioners.



June 24, 1928

Reverend Francis J. Oakley



Father Oakley

In late 1929, Rev. Francis J. Oakley replaced Father Toole as pastor. Father Oakley was born in Cork, Ireland on May 13, 1890. Ordained in Dublin in 1914, Father came to Grosse Pointe as chaplain of the Sacred Heart Academy in 1917. Before coming to St. Clement, Father served at St. Charles Borromeo and Holy Rosary Churches, St. Francis Home for Boys, St. Joseph's Sanitarium, Sacred Heart Church, and Guardian Angels Church in Clawson.

An authoritative and determined man, Father Oakley dedicated himself to the amelioration of the Church and community. He was politically active and out-spoken about his views. *The Clementine Courier*, the parish paper, served as a forum for exposing political ideas.

One of Father's first acts as pastor was to remodel the church to increase its seating capacity. Father Oakley's plans to create "... a very beautiful edifice which will be in keeping with the dignity of this growing parish of St. Clement" called for the relocation of the sanctuary in what had been the community hall, the installation of new pews and a new paneled ceiling.



Father Oakley officiates at wedding.



Interior of Original Church Building.

At the same time, construction of the parish hall (our present school hall and basement) was begun. This hall served as a focal point for social and community activities: ice cream socials, bazaars, dinners, weekly dances, and card parties. Many of these activities served a dual purpose: enjoyment and fund-raising. Involvement in these developed and strengthened a strong bond of Christian community in the parish.

Parish organizations flourished. The Dramatic Club provided entertainment. The Tabernacle Guild involved the women in sewing altar linens and in caring for the needs of the altar. The Holy Name Society and the Male Choir strengthened Christian worship. Through these and other groups, the parish grew both spiritually and materially.

After a long term as pastor, Father Oakley died on September 9, 1959 at the age of 69. Father Oakley is still gratefully remembered by many who had, through his efforts, gained employment during the difficult Depression years. Father is further remembered by those who knew him well as a loyal friend and a man of unobtrusive charity.



Father Oakley Baptizing.



Father Wagener

Reverend John Wagener

Rev. John Wagener was appointed in October, 1959 to succeed Father Oakley. Father Wagener was born on December 29, 1903 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Fourth in a family of nine children, Father was one of four in his family to dedicate his life in service to God. Sister Anna Therese and Sister Regina Marie entered the Sisters of St. Joseph; a brother, Joseph, became a Christian Brother.

Father Wagener was educated at St. Michael's in Pennsylvania, Holy Name Institute (now Catholic Central High School), the University of Detroit, Sacred Heart Seminary, and Mt. St. Mary's of the West in Norwood, Ohio. He was ordained June 11, 1933 in Detroit and served at St. Alphonsus Church, Dearborn, and at Holy Cross Church, Marine City. In 1940, Father was ordered to active duty as chaplain in the U.S. Navy. His tour of duty called him to far-away shores: Africa, Sicily, Italy, Eniwetak, Ulithi, and Japan. Upon his release from duty in 1946, Father Wagener was assigned as an assistant at St. Gertrude Church, St. Clair Shores. In 1950, he became founding pastor of St. Dennis Parish, Royal Oak, where he remained until his appointment to St. Clement.



Sister Regina Marie, Margaret Creighton, Father Wagener, Mary Kiffner and Nick Wagener.



Ed Wagener and Sister Anna Therese.



Father Wagener Baptizing.

Father Wagener's kindness and generosity coupled with his warm congeniality made him a welcome leader at St. Clement. His administrative abilities were well utilized as he began the revitalization of old parish groups and the organization of new ones.



Father Wagener enjoys Clean-Up Parade.



Father Wagener and Mrs. Porcari.



Father Wagener receives check from Lionel Harbord on behalf of the Ushers' Club.



Father Wagener speaks at civic function.

His experience as founding pastor of St. Denis prepared Father for the building needs that confronted him here. On November 21, 1961, the interior of the church was completely destroyed by fire. Damage was estimated at \$80,000. Father immediately prepared the school hall for use as a temporary center of worship, minimizing the inconvenience to the parishioners. This hall was used for five months, until on Palm Sunday, 1962, Mass was first celebrated in the renovated church.



Church after Fire.



Renovated Church.



The Altar Before and After the Fire.

Due to a growing parish enrollment, a necessity arose for more adequate office space. And so, in 1963, Father Wagener continued his building program by expanding the rectory. Father's final and most prodigious building project involved the planning and construction of the new church and the conversion of the old church into a gymnasium. Building plans were drawn up by architect Robert Svoboda; construction was done by Chase and Company.



Breaking Ground for New Church.



Construction of New Church.



Bishop Schoenherr at Dedication Mass.

On January 21, 1968, approximately 500 parishioners witnessed the ceremonial breaking of ground by Father Wagener. After a relatively short period of time, the cornerstone was blessed on May 18, 1969. Five months later, on October 23, 1969, Bishop Walter J. Schoenherr presided at the dedication of the new church. On this occasion, Father Wagener congratulated the people of St. Clement for their achievement:

To the people of St. Clement's Parish, who have made this possibility a reality through your prayers and sacrifices, congratulations and God's blessings upon you. May your zeal for the house of God continue until He calls you to share for all eternity His mansion in heaven.

The new church, a modern structure, is a source of pride both to the parish and to the community. The altar rightfully occupies the focal position. Its solid marble richness is balanced by its simplicity of design. A skylight allows for natural lighting of both the altar and the matching marble tabernacle. Complementing the beauty of the altar and its setting is the impressive array of pipes arranged in the loft above the baptistry. The sunken baptistry with its surrounding stained glass windows also adds to the beauty of the church. Much consideration was given to choosing an organ that would complement the church's beauty as well as being a worthy instrument to enhance the liturgy. The organ, a two-manual pipe with 15 stops and 20 ranks, was purchased from the Tellers Organ Company of Erie, Pennsylvania for \$26,700.00.



After almost eleven years of strong and manly leadership and religious guidance at St. Clement, Father Wagener retired from the pastorate and from active parochial service on June 30, 1970.



Mayor Hubbard Honors Father Wagener at Farewell Reception.

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Reverend Leo Broderick



Father Broderick

On July 15, 1970, Rev. Leo Broderick officially replaced Father Wagener as pastor of St. Clement. Father Broderick was born March 1, 1930 in Detroit, to James and Jennie Borderick. He received his schooling at St. Brigid and St. Luke Grade Schools, Catholic Central High School, Sacred Heart Seminary College and St. John's Provincial Seminary, Plymouth. Father later earned a Master's degree in history from Eastern Michigan University.

Father Broderick was ordained in June, 1965. His first assignment was to St. Frances Cabrini, Allen Park. He was then appointed chaplain at Eastern Michigan University, where he built the John XXIII Chapel and Student Center.

While pastor of St. Clement, Father Broderick, always a studious man, taught part-time at St. John's Provincial Seminary in Plymouth, Michigan. Because of his love for and experience with young people, Father formed the Young Adult Club. It was this club, which with Father's guidance and encouragement, presented the parish with the Paschal Meal, now a traditional celebration at St. Clement.



Paschal Meal.

1971 was a difficult year for parochial schools in the Archdiocese because of the passage of a bill which cut State-Aid to parochial schools (Proposal C). This, together with a diminishing enrollment and the inability to meet certain Archdiocesan budget guidelines, forced Father Broderick to close the school in June, 1971.

At this same time, Father was asked to teach full-time at St. John's Provincial Seminary. After much consideration, Father Broderick relinquished the parish in favor of the Seminary where he remains today.





Reverend Ernest M. Porcari

An assistant at St. Clement since 1964, Father Ernest Porcari on July 7, 1971, assumed the responsibilities of the pastorate of St. Clement Parish.

Father was born on October 2, 1932 in Norma, Italy, the second son of Giuseppe and Germana Porcari. He received his grade school education in Norma, and his high school education in Velletri, Italy. He came to the United States in 1950 and continued his studies at Sacred Heart and St. John's Provincial Seminaries. Father was ordained June 6, 1959 by Cardinal Dearden. After ordination, Father Porcari served as an assistant at St. Elizabeth Parish, Wyandotte, until May, 1964. From May to July, 1964, he served as administrator of St. Irene Church in Dundee, Michigan.



Father Porcari's First Mass.



Father Porcari visits his hometown.



Father Porcari's Installation as Pastor.



From his very first days here, Father Porcari established an excellent rapport with the people of St. Clement. A sincere and unpretentious man, Father has found acceptance with all age groups and diverse backgrounds within the parish and is likewise held in high esteem in the community as a whole.

As an assistant, Father had demonstrated his generosity and mission-mindedness by organizing S.C.A.M.P. in 1969. To meet the needs of the youth of the parish, he promoted the establishment of an Athletic Committee.

With the changes in structure and attitudes advocated by Vatican II, Father was influential in giving new direction to the parish. He was instrumental in setting up the Parish Council and its committees. The education of the people foremost in his mind, Father Porcari has always encouraged religious education programs for all ages.

In addition to his concern for the spiritual formation of his parishioners, Father, an astute businessman, has contributed much to the maintenance and up-keep of the parish plant. Since becoming pastor, Father Porcari has provided air-conditioning for the church, added two stained glass windows for the baptistry, built a much-needed garage and installed new heating and electrical equipment in the parish buildings. Seeking to provide St. Clement parishioners with a pleasant atmosphere for social and business activities, Father had the school hall remodeled in 1975. Shortly after its completion in October, a small fire broke out and left the hall unserviceable due to smoke and water damage. With his customary calm, Father undertook the second remodeling job, which was completed in time for Christmas activities.

In order to meet the requirements for the implementation of the New Rite of Penance, Father's building plans included the construction of Reconciliation Rooms in the church.



Building Reconciliation Rooms, 1977.



New Garage, 1973.



New Heating Equipment.



Father Porcari's crowning achievement, and that of the parish as well, was the liquidation of the Parish debt, \$163,000.00, within three short years, a truly remarkable feat for a time of economic difficulty.

Father's willingness to serve does not end with St. Clement Parish, but extends to the community as well. He works extensively with the Italian-American community in various activities. He helped organize the first Italian festival in Dearborn and coordinated efforts to aid the victims of the Italian earthquake in 1976. Another significant contribution to the community of Dearborn was his assistance in setting up the first United Nations Day celebration in the city.

While a capable and efficient man with respect to business matters, Father Porcari's paramount concern has always been with the people of his parish. He is dedicated to meeting individual needs and is never too busy to lend an understanding ear. Indeed, it is a common occurrence for people of all ages (parishioners and non-parishioners alike) to seek his spiritual and personal counsel. Father Porcari will always be warmly remembered and loved by the people of St. Clement.



December 22, 1975

Dear Father Porcari:

I would like to take this occasion to offer my congratulations to you and the parish community of St. Clement for the extraordinary feat of retiring the substantial indebtedness of \$141,000.00 in the short period of three and one-half years.

In this day of economic uncertainty, such an accomplishment should not go unnoticed and I would ask you to convey to your people my appreciation of their zeal and dedication as a parish family.

Wishing all an abundance of blessings during this holy season, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

John Card. Marden
Archbishop of Detroit