

History of St. Joseph Parish continued.

1925 – 2003

Father John J. Nevin 1942 - 1950

Father Joseph Barry 1950 - 1952



When Father Nevin served St. Joseph Church, the parish was undoubtedly still in debt. The country was still coming out of the Depression and had only the year before been plunged into World War II. At this time, strict rules governed church dress and behavior. The women and girls wore hats; no slacks or shorts were allowed. Lipstick was not to be worn if one was receiving Holy Communion. In addition, of course, absolute silence was to be observed in church.

From 1942 to 1945 the Florida Orange Festival Building was home to some 250 German prisoners of war who were brought here to work in the citrus industry. They were used to pick, pack, process and can citrus. Obviously, the Festival was not held during these years, and the dining room operated by the parish was inactive. It is remembered that the prisoners were well fed, moved about the town with relative freedom and often stayed in the homes of families who were using their help.



Toward the end of his pastorate, Father Nevin established the first Parish Council. The parish said a formal good bye to him with a reception

in November 1950. He was presented with gifts of a radio and luggage. At the reception, Frank Goodman, Jr. and Mrs. Russell N. Haas sang Irish numbers as a special tribute. The organist, Mrs. Margery Peake, arranged the music. After almost eight years in service, he had been transferred to St. Mary's Hospital in West Palm Beach as Chaplain. In 1955, Father Nevin returned to Ireland.

The next pastor of St. Joseph was Father Joseph Barry. He served



the parish for less than two years. It may have been during his time here that the church was raided by the police for having a bingo game in Lyceum Hall. At this time, Polk County prohibited alcohol as well as gambling. No one was arrested, however.

(Obviously not only church rules were strict.)

Maybe the raid was responsible for one parishioner remembering the good-looking Father Barry as being prematurely grey.