

**SAINT MONICA'S CHURCH**

303 CAMPANILE DRIVE, EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS

DEDICATION AND BLESSING SUNDAY, JUNE 12th, 1966



St. Monica

PRINTED IN ITALY



# Saint Monica

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St. Monica our Patron Saint was born at Tagaste North Africa in the fourth century. There in the year 354 Saint Monica's son, Saint Augustine, was born. Saint Monica instilled into the heart of her son the truths of Christian belief.

Saint Monica converted her pagan husband by the power of her prayers and her Holy life.

After her husband's death she suffered intense grief when her brilliant son, Augustine, went astray in morals and faith. A saintly bishop consoled her with the words, "It is not possible that the son of so many tears should perish."

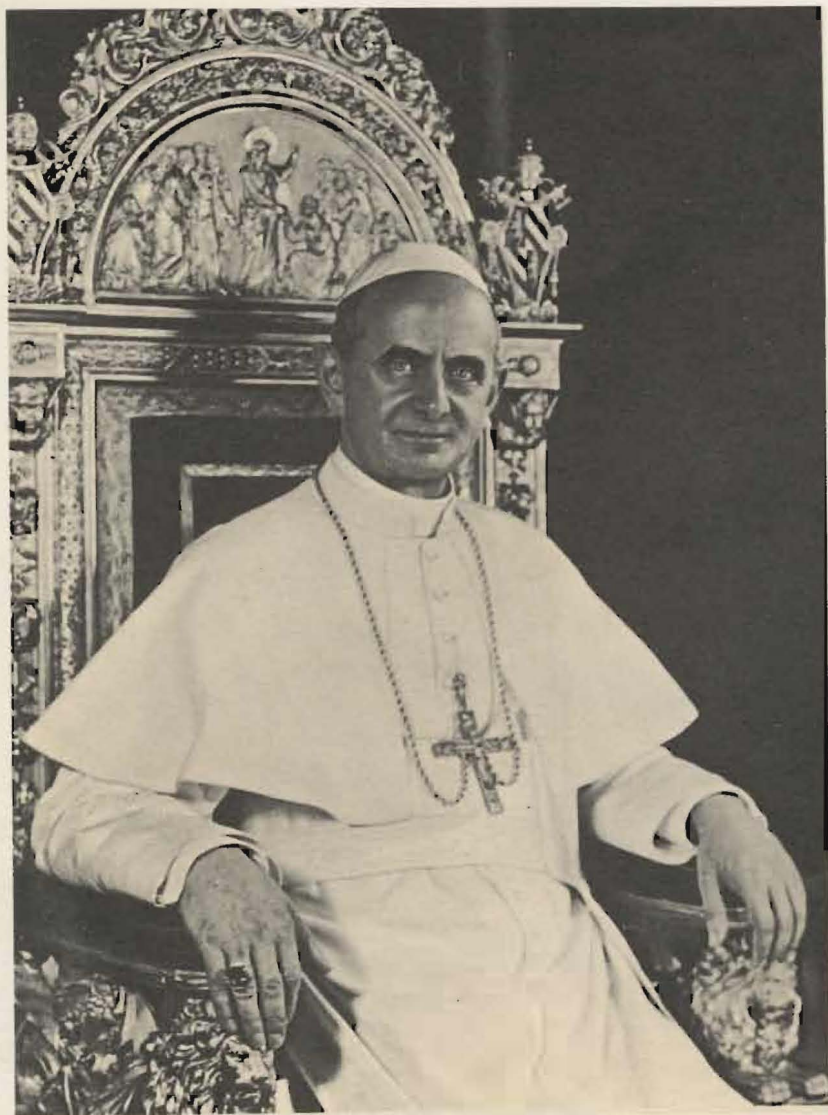
Saint Augustine went to Carthage then into Italy, but his mother followed him praying constantly. Then at Milan, Italy he was guided by his

saintly Mother's prayers to the great Bishop Ambrose and then he returned to the true faith. St. Augustine's marvelous conversion turned Saint Monica's sorrow into joy.

Saint Monica and Saint Augustine started to return to Tagaste but she died enroute at Ostia, Italy while waiting to board the ship. She died happy knowing that her prayers were answered in her son's return to christianity and her husband's conversion.

What better prayer for us?

"O God you are the comfort of those who mourn and the savior of all who trust in you. Blessed Monica's loving tears moved you to convert her son, Augustine. May we also grieve for our sins and win the grace of your pardon through the intercession of these two saints. Through our Lord."



His Holiness Pope Paul VI



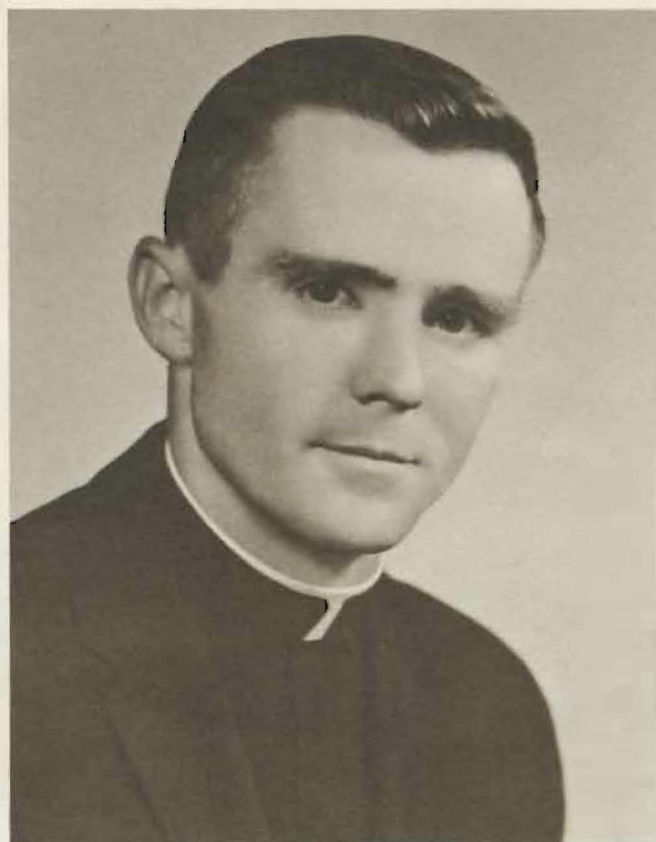
The Most Reverend John B. Franz D.D.  
Bishop of Peoria





**Father Richard C. O'Brien**

Father Richard C. O'Brien, ordained 1946.  
Pastor of St. Monica's September 1964.



**Father Dale J. Finnell**

Father Dale J. Finnell, ordained 1960.  
Assistant Pastor of St. Monica's June 1965.



Artist's conception of Church, Parish Hall and Rectory.



## GROUND BREAKING

Building Committee: L-R: T. L. Salzer;  
J. Murphy; J. G. Kerr; A. Schmitt; G.  
Hoffer; Fr. O'Brien; (Not in picture:  
J. L. Carroll; J. Rupert).

(Tazewell Courier Photo)





Ground Breaking, November 8, 1964. Ray Giacoletti, Jr., great grandson of Joseph Geier, a member of the original St. Monica's Parish. (Tazewell Courier Photo)



Members of the Original Parish, l. to r. Wm. Dray; John Dray; John Hoffman; Mrs. Drusilla Murphy; Joseph Geier; Edward Tucker Sr. (Tazewell Courier Photo)



Journal-Star Air Photo of Construction

## CONSTRUCTION



### SAINT MONICA PARISH

MOST REVEREND JOHN B. FRANZ O.D.  
REVEREND RICHARD O'BRIEN PASTOR

C. IBER & SONS  
GENERAL CONTRACTORS

COMFORT CONTROL CORP.  
HEATING & VENTILATING CONTRACTOR

C. O'BRIEN & CO.  
PLUMBING CONTRACTOR

DANIEL ELECTRIC CO.  
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

BARTOLOMEO  
ASSOCIATES  
ARCHITECTS  
ENGINEERS

WILLIAM A. BIBO  
SUPERVISING ARCHITECT

(Tazewell Courier Photo)





Church Construction — June 1965 — (Tazewell Courier Photo)

Church Rectory Construction — March 1965



Church Hall Construction — May, 1965





Solemn Blessing of Church Bells by Father O'Brien and Father Finnell, August 8, 1965.

Bell Tower completed — The Bell Tower is dedicated to the memory of Father J. H. Fennen. The bells are inscribed — Large Bell — St. Joseph; Center Bell — Blessed Virgin; Top Bell — St. Monica.

(Tazewell Courier Photo)







The Solemn Blessing of the Cornerstone by Rt. Rev. Msgr. J. B. Reidy of Peoria, assisted by the clergy and the people of the parish. June 20, 1965.







## CORNERSTONE CEREMONIES, JUNE 20, 1965

Contents: Pictures of Fr. Francis J. O'Reilly, Fr. Joseph H. Fennen, Father R. C. O'Brien, Father Dale Finnell, Original Church & Rectory, Interior of original Church, Church & Rectory — Sept. 1966, Ground breaking Ceremony, Artist's rendering of new complex.

Documents: Letter signed by Pastor, Peoria Evening Times — Oct. 10, 1898, History of Parish, List of signed Parishioners, Servers for Blessing of Cornerstone, Sunday Bulletin — June 13, 1965, Parish financial report for 1964, Map — locating new site.

Things: Daily Missal, Set of Church support envelopes, 1964-5 Guild yearbook, God's Plan for Church Support — Brochure, pledge card, advertising, Medal of St. Monica, Medallion of Pope Paul VI, 3 Kennedy half-dollars, 1964 quarter, dime, nickel, penny.

Pamphlets: What is Liturgical renewal; Leaflet Sunday Missal (6-20-65); How to serve Mass; Mass on Day of marriage.

Newspapers: Peoria Journal Star; Tazewell Courier; Peoria Register; Our Sunday Visitor.

### DOCUMENT INCLUDED IN CORNERSTONE:

In the year of our Lord, 1965, on Sunday, the 20th day of June, the Feast of St. Silverios, Pope & Martyr, while Paul VI was gloriously reigning as Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, Lyndon B. Johnson being President of the United States of America, the governor of the State

of Illinois being Otto F. Kerner, the Most Reverend John B. Franz, by the grace of God and favor of the Apostolic See, being Bishop of Peoria, Illinois, this corner-stone of the Church of St. Monica was set by the Right Reverend Monsignor James B. Reidy, P.A., Vicar-general of the Diocese of Peoria, acting in the name of and under the authority of the Most Reverend Ordinary.

The pastor of the parish at this time was the Reverend Richard C. O'Brien who had been appointed by Bishop Franz on September 11, 1963. The assistant pastor of the parish on this date was the Reverend Dale Finnell who was appointed by Bishop Franz on June 9, 1965.

This document is signed and sealed by the pastor.

(Seal)  
June 20, 1965





Completed Church, May 15, 1966





Baptistry

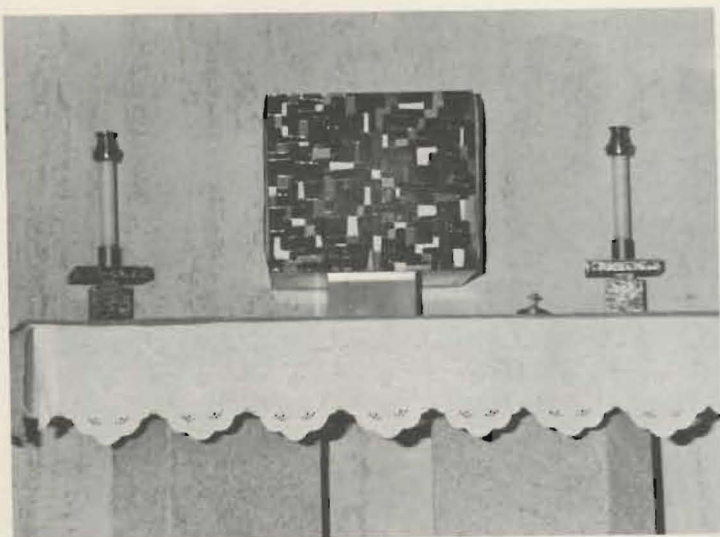
First Baptism in new Church, November 7, 1965. Daniel Patrick Franz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Franz.



Vestments



Sacristy



Blessed Sacrament Altar with Tabernacle



Interior view of Church, Stained Glass Windows.



Interior view of Church





Perspectives of Sanctuary.



## CATECHETICAL TEACHING STAFF

Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis,  
l. to r.: Sister M. Noel, Freshmen; Sister  
M. Joseph, Sophomores; Sister M. Cyrus,  
Fifth Grade; Sister M. Francis Rene, seat-  
ed, Fourth Grade.



Sister M. Veronica, Eighth Grade; Sister  
M. Dolora, Seventh Grade; Sister M. Domi-  
nic, Sixth Grade.



Sisters of St. Joseph from the Acade-  
my of our Lady, l. to r.: Sister Karen  
Patrice, Second Grade, Sister John  
Bernard, First Grade, Sister Anne  
Christine, Third Grade.



## NEW PARISH HALL and CATECHETICAL CENTER



Main Entrance



Interior of Hall

Exterior View



## RELIGIOUS OF THE PARISH:



Father Ralph Gates, deceased, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Gates of East Peoria.



Father Gerald Moeshel, grandson of original trustee of Parish. Now at St. Catherine's Laguna Beach, California.



Father Placid Hatfield, ordained June 1, 1958, Monk of St. Bede's Abbey. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Abe Hatfield.





Father James J. Sheridan, ordained June 7, 1961, order of St. Augustine, son of Mrs. Carolyn Sheridan, and the late John E. Sheridan.



Sister Margaret Eugene, St. Joseph's Order, Dean at Font Bonne College in St. Louis. Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tucker, Sr.



Sister Mary Carolyn Sheridan, Order of Marist, now in Jamaica. Daughter of Mrs. Carolyn Sheridan and the late John E. Sheridan.





Original Church and Parish House —  
built in 1898, dedicated October 9,  
1898.

## HISTORY OF ST. MONICA'S PARISH

In the years before St. Monica's Parish of East Peoria was organized, the Catholic families of East Peoria and the surrounding area traveled to Peoria to attend Mass, for their weddings, funerals, and baptisms. They traveled by horse and buggy through rain and mud and cold. Needless to say, they could not attend Mass regularly, nor could the children receive religious instructions.

Four Catholic men from the East Peoria Area, (John Murphy, Charles Schmitt, John Ely, and M. J. Maloney) met with Bishop John L. Spalding to request the establishment of a Parish in this area. These men were joined by Father Francis J. O'Reilly, an assistant priest from St. Mary's Cathedral and together they succeeded in organizing forty Catholic families from the surrounding area into St. Monica's Parish.

In the Spring of 1898, they purchased an acre of ground near the top of Spring Street in East Peoria and began the construction of the original Church. The men of the Parish did most of the actual construction work. The Church was dedicated by Bishop Spalding on October 9, 1898. The entire cost of the site and the Church was \$2,000.00 and was practically debt free at the time of dedication. Father O'Reilly continued as acting Pastor from 1898 until 1901.

The following is an exact copy of the account of the Dedication as it appeared in the Peoria Evening Times of October 10, 1898:

"NEW ST. MONICA: The Roman Catholics dedicate a very pretty Church in East Peoria. A Military Mass was held. Bishop Spalding Delivers the sermon,

Father Francis J. O'Reilly, acting pastor from October 9, 1898, until Father Fennen was appointed in September 1901.



and the exercises are participated in by organizations of Peoria.

The new Roman Catholic Church in East Peoria was dedicated yesterday morning. It is named St. Monica and is located on or near the spot where Marquette first addressed the Indians of this vicinity. The morning was a delightful one, the atmosphere and the natural scenery combining to render the services peculiarly attractive and impressive.

It was a great day for the little parish; a great day for the Catholics of Central Illinois, who attached much importance to the ceremonies on account of their historical feature. Fully 1,500 people were in the congregation, a special train having been run over to the village over the T.P.&W. Railroad at 9:30 carrying 600 people, and as many more went over from the city and gathered in from the country round about. The weather was perfect and everything was favorable to the successful carrying out of the programme.

The Church is located in the farther end of the village from the city, and to the right of the main thoroughfare leading through the corporation. It is an unpretentious, yet neat and ornamental little structure at the foot of a high bluff, with a seating capacity of perhaps three hundred, the interior finished in cypress or hard pine with a little altar in front and the exterior is painted plainly white. A little turret rises from one corner, the base of which affords the main entrance.

The tent in which the dedicatory exercises, which were all in the open, was a few yards from the church, on the hillside. Here an altar had been erected and green oak leaves and branches, with the silken American flags of the Catholic societies formed the decorations, while the candles burned brightly.

In front and below the tent were several hundred camp chairs for the congregation, while off to the left was a large tent in which a barbecue dinner was served by the ladies of the parish after the services.

There were two services during the day, the dedica-



tory ceremonies with solemn high mass and the address by Bishop Spalding in the morning followed at 4 o'clock by solemn vespers. The people present thoroughly enjoyed the services and none present will ever forget the occasion. The ceremonies were preceded by a parade in which all the uniformed and other Catholic societies of Peoria participated. They went over on the train, then formed in line and marched down the road toward the lower free bridge, meeting Bishop Spalding in his carriage and escorted him to the church grounds.

The choir of St. Mark's church, augmented by an organ and a full orchestra, was in attendance and sang for the military mass.

The Rev. Francis J. O'Reilly, of St. Mary's Cathedral was the celebrant, the Rev. Father J. P. Durkin deacon, and the Rev. Father Gaudentius, of the Sacred Heart church, sub-deacon.

At the conclusion of the mass, Bishop Spalding, arose and addressed the assemblage. He first announced the committee or trustees of the new church, who are John Murphy, Charles Schmitt, John Ely, and M. J. Maloney. He then spoke in part as follows:

'Dear Brethren, the Gospel of this the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost is from the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew: Jesus spake to the chief priests and the Pharisees saying go ye into all parts of the earth and preach the Gospel . . .

This is indeed a happy festival. Everything has conspired to make this ceremony interesting and satisfactory. Nowhere in this whole world would we find a more perfect day. How beautifully nature seems to wait upon us, here on this hillside, with the green verdure about us, over there the great city and the winding river in view—all things about us and the bright sunshine from above causing an impression upon us which none who witnesses this service will ever forget. It is not usual to hold mass in the open though religion takes on a new charm and power when mass is held out in an open space like this, with all the natural objects which teach us the greatness and power of God about us.

It reminds us of the very beginning. The Savior loved to gather the people about Him in the field, on the hillside, by the lakeside, and preach to them. In the open air He delivered His discourses and His divinest words were spoken. He was always appeal-

ing to men to think of the birds, speaking of the lilies, of the harvest that was ripening, to the man who sows the seed of the planting of the mustard seed, which never perished. He was forever with nature as with His Father's works. What lessons do we not find in the earth. Here today we see the green grass about us, the leaves just beginning to turn and with the visitation of frost they will in a few days, clothe the earth in beautiful colors and shades and tints. When we see them fall, and then wither and die we know that nature is not dead; she will rise again in the spring and throw off her winding sheet. The harvest will come again. We know it never dies. So God will plant but the body. The soul dieth not. The trees that are green today and in all their beauty and glory will in a little while show a thousand tints, forming a spectacle to gladden all, yet they show the beauty that precedes death. So it is with generations of men; like the leaves they fall one by one, yet the whole race perishes once in every third of a century.

How evanescent our life! We have no abiding place here. Earth is not our home. Our life is a transitory nature, and when we contemplate these things we are convinced that God can't allow us to live but a day. We must ever be conscious of His presence. Religion springs from the soul, and as long a man feels that he is greater than what he is, so long will he look up to God and seek a light—a hope.

The Catholic Church has power equaled by no other faith to keep alive hope, the heavenly fire, for it comes down from the time Jesus' preaching on the hillside. There have been times when the Church went into the catacombs, into the bowels of the earth, in the desert, and built an altar to God around which they worshipped; and also into the primeval groves. Then it went into the world and through the ages erected the noblest monuments ever built by the hand of man. They are seen in St. Peter's in Rome, in Milan, Cologne, . . . in every large city beautiful monuments erected by the Catholic faith, which are the pride of the whole world. Here we have built a little church of wood but in it we can worship as well as in Rome, and Father O'Reilly's efforts need not be praised here. Two hundred years ago, Father Marquette saw and taught the Indians here. Here, possibly mass was celebrated in the open when no white men saw or heard. The tribes have ceased to be and yet here we gather and have mass again in the open. But here also is the permanent church. Here the faithful will gather, the lukewarm



grow fervent. This parish will grow. East Peoria is destined to become far more important. That great city over yonder, Peoria, cannot grow and multiply without having a child. This church will teach its members and the people round about to love their neighbors, to be better fathers, because every virtue is composed in the Christian idea. People must work in and out of season to become worthy of the kingdom of heaven. God's blessings are showered on this new church, and may those who founded it be rewarded as benefactors.'

The morning service was then over and the crowd swarmed into the dinner tent, where hundreds were fed."

On September 25, 1901, Father Joseph H. Fennen was appointed Pastor of St. Monica's, an office he was to exercise for almost 62 years until his death on August 24, 1963. At the beginning, he resided at St. Mary's Cathedral until the completion of the Rectory in December, 1901.

The following is a short history of significant events during the years of growth and change of Father Fennen's pastorate:

1926 — A fire in the Rectory occasioned a complete modernization.

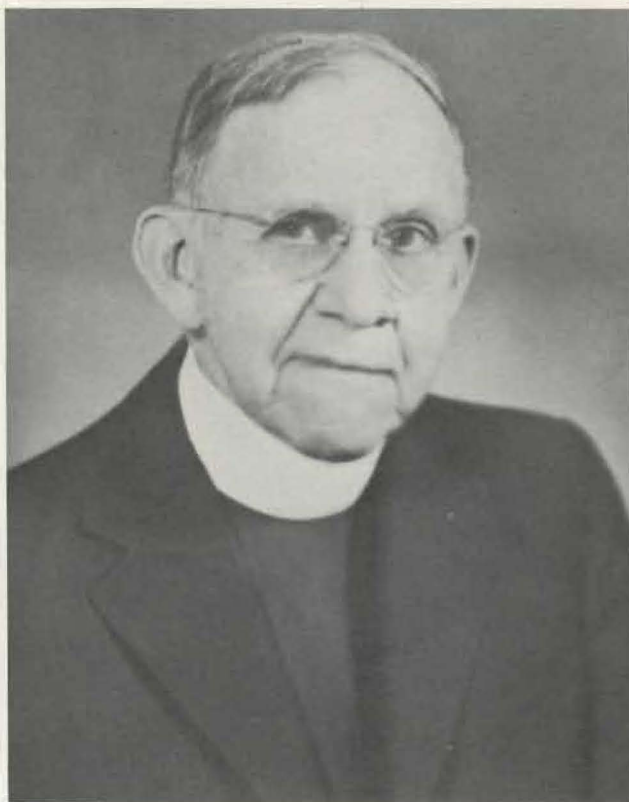
June, 1931 — Construction of new entrance to Church and Rectory along with new sidewalks and retaining wall.

Aug. 1934 — Addition of new sacristy and confessional in the Church.

Nov. 14, 1942 — Establishment of a Mission in Creve Coeur with a membership of fifty families. Father Fennen continued to care for this Mission until Sacre Coeur Parish was established in June 1952.

1952 — Installation of new Altar and complete redecoration of Church.

After almost 62 years of continuous service of God and people of St. Monica's, Father Fennen died on August 24, 1963. May he rest in peace.



Father Joseph H. Fennen, appointed Pastor September 25, 1901.



Father Joseph H. Fennen, 1902, shortly after he came to the Parish.

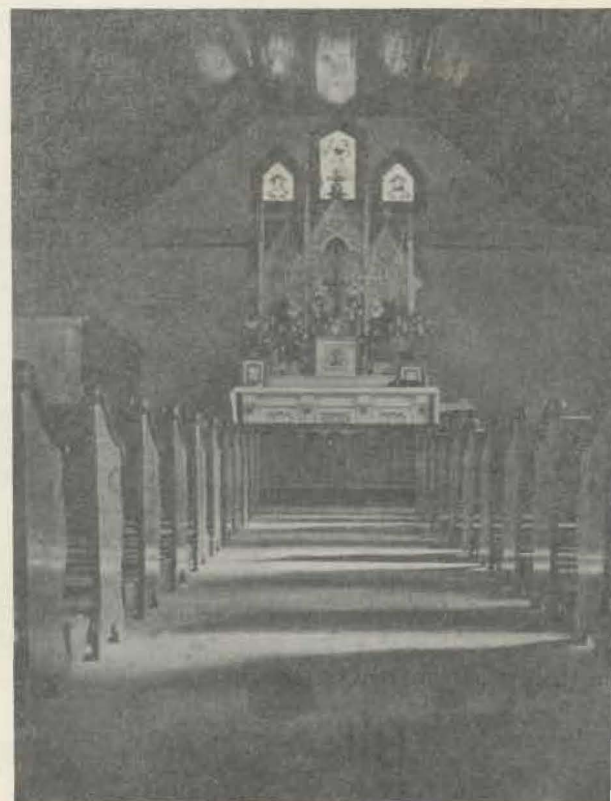


Bishop John Lancaster Spalding, D.D., first Bishop of Peoria.

The First Communion Class in the original church. They were left to right: first row, Joe Wurster, Joe Lindenfesler; second row, Mayme Frey, Lulu Gates, Annie Coogan, Martin Coogan, Lena McKenzie, Lela Gates, Kathryn Dainty; third row, Nellie Murphy, Rosa Rebholz, Father O'Reilly, Katie Murphy, Theresa Huber.



Interior view of original church during the Easter Season, 1965.



Interior view of original church during the Easter Season, 1899.





Palm Sunday Procession 1966

First Communion Saturday, May 14, 1966





SAINT MONICA'S CHURCH      303 CAMPANILE DRIVE      EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS