

## ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

The history of the Catholic Church in Ellsworth dates back more than three-quarters of a century to the middle ages of the decade 1840-50, when a few of the faithful who had settled here purchased a small building on what is now High Street, between Elm and Dean, and had it remodeled into a little chapel in which services might be held.

Ellsworth was then a mission station, one of several in eastern Maine, and Mass was said here only four times a year. The first priest who came here to hold services was probably the Rev. Thomas O'Sullivan, who succeeded Rev. Michael Lynch as pastor of the old St. Michael's Church in Bangor in 1839. The little building which had been used as a chapel in Ellsworth was, early in the fifties, changed into a school, and a new church was erected nearby, about the year 1852. This was destroyed by fire two years later.

In September, 1852, the Rev. John Bapst, S. J., who was engaged in missionary work along the circuit in eastern Maine, asked permission to form two missionary centers in this section with two fathers at each. In January, when this request was granted, Father Bapst and Father Vigilante made Ellsworth their central station and took charge of Cherryfield, Benedicta, Old Town, Frankfort, Bucksport, Belfast, Rockland, Thomaston, Waterville and Skowhegan.

The Rev. Father Bapst was born in La Roche, Fribourg, Switzerland, Dec. 17, 1815. When only 12 years of age he was sent to the College of Fribourg, where he was a diligent and brilliant student. He entered the Jesuit novitiate September 30, 1835, and after taking his perpetual vows in 1837, studied and taught until his ordination to the priesthood, December 31, 1846.

In 1848, he came to the United States, and was sent as a missionary to eastern Maine. In 1853 and 1854 religious feeling ran high in Ellsworth, reaching such a pitch that Father Bapst's life was constantly in danger. In October of the latter year, Fr. Bapst, who had, in 1853, succeeded the Rev. Thomas O'Sullivan as pastor of the church in Bangor, passed through Ellsworth on his way to attend a sick call at Cherryfield. He arrived Saturday evening and spent the night in the

