**The Founding of St. Remy Parish in the**

**Central Northwest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

A Thesis

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This thesis *The Founding of St. Remy Parish in the Central Northwest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*, is written primarily to acquaint our readers with the interesting history of the founding and development of this fascinating, yet apparently little known, French parish, and secondly, to give those who are privileged to be members of this parish a greater esteem, appreciation and love for their Catholic heritage. In order to do justice to the subject, it will be necessary to go back a number of decades previous to the establishment of the parish to acquaint ourselves with existing conditions.

Shelby County was established in 1819, being named by the settlers in honor of Governor Shelby who had shown marked consideration to them during their short stay in Kentucky. They had settled there temporarily while trying to decide upon a location for the establishment of a permanent settlement. Hardin, the oldest town in the county, and a site of historic interest, was at first designated as county seat, but after reconsideration Sidney was pointed out to be a better and more advantageous site.

*History in Shelby county began long before its establishment as a pioneer commonwealth in 1819, a chain of events beginning about seventy-five years previous to that date having stamped the map of this part of the northwest indelibly, although these events were separated from the settlers’ era by a period of time in which history is perplexingly uncommunicative.[[1]](#endnote-1)[[2]](#footnote-1)*

As early as 1749 there were bands of Indians who had migrated from the Canadian territories of the French toward whom they had been well disposed, and settled in the valley of the Miami River at a place then known as *La Riviere a la Roche* (or River of the Rocks). Here they established trading posts and became very friendly with the British traders who, in turn, succeeded in alienating these Indians from their former Canadian friends. Then it was that the French governor ordered an expedition under Celeron de Bienville to repossess the Ohio River for the King of France.

Peter Loramie, a French Canadian, established a trading post about one mile north of the present village of Fort Loramie. Both the village and Loramie Creek were named in his honor. During the revolution, the historic figure, George Rogers Clark, with the assistance of Father Gibault, won the Middle West for the struggling Republic. The Indians, instigated by the English, remained more or less hostile to the Americans. The tragic death of Colonel Hardin, a lieutenant, chosen by George Washington on a mission of peace to the Shawnees is worthy of mention as the present town of Hardin, oldest in the county, was so named to commemorate this incident. Anthony Wayne, better known as “Mad Anthony” is credited with the building and naming of forts Greenville, Recovery, Loramie, and Piqua, which names today are perpetuated by small villages which have sprung up to commemorate these historic spots.

The honor of being recorded as the “first settler” in the county has long been acknowledged as belonging to James Thatcher and his family, who came in 1805 and settled on Loramie Creek about three and one-half miles north of Russia.[[3]](#footnote-2) As early as 1788, when Marietta was founded, settlers looked with envious eyes to this section of the country, yet they preferred the disadvantages of the Muskingum Hills to the dangers of the upper Miami.

The richness of the country, however, was a lure in spite of the dangers. The first French Catholic to settle in the vicinity was Francis Foy, who settled in Wayne Township in 1823. It is of interest to note that Basil Debrosse, one of Russia’s venerable parishioners today, is the grandchild of Francis Foy. Among other settlers arriving in the early thirties were the Marchals, Debrosses, Monniers, Richards, Delaets, Pequignots, Goffenas, Reboulets, Smiths, Adams, Lacheys, Pilliods, Maueres, Vieltes, Theibeaus, Couchots, Ligiers, Frantzs, Eshmans, Henrys Maillots, Waynes, Framms, and Parmenters.[[4]](#footnote-3) These settled in the vicinity of the present town of Russia, Frenchtown, and Versailles. Here they felt certain of material reward and, so far as hardships were concerned, they consoled themselves by the thought that hardships were inevitably connected with pioneer life and material prosperity anywhere in the great Northwest.

It is difficult for us, who were born, reared, and educated in our so-called modern civilization, to estimate correctly the privations, trials, and adversities endured by these pioneers. A land of wilderness, forest abounding with wild animals, inimical to the safety of man and domestic fowl were the perils they encountered. With courage and steadfastness that evoke admiration, those worthy men set to work to clear the forest, to build places of habitation, and to cultivate the land. Their untiring zeal was rewarded, and by degrees the land was conquered by their industry.

*These early settlers were men of deep and abiding faith, loyal, law abiding citizens, God-fearing and free from many present vices. Thy were particularly submissive to the will of God. When a great loss or calamity befell them they humbly accepted it from the hand of God. ‘Thy will be done.’ They were free from profanity. They had their little pet words to blow off steam when provided, but no cursing. As to vulgar talk, it was absolutely taboo. They were honest, hard-working, friendly souls, just the sort to carve homes out of the wilderness.[[5]](#footnote-4)*

In 1833, the year of Bishop Purcell’s consecration, the Diocese of Cincinnati embraced the whole states of Ohio and Michigan. The population was about thirty thousand Catholics who worshipped in nine brick and eight wooden churches.[[6]](#footnote-5) This, indeed, was a vast territory for the Bishop to direct and guide with only seventeen missionary priests to assist him. Realizing the urgent need for more laborers in the vineyard, Bishop Purcell visited Europe in 1839 with the hope of obtaining recruits. His efforts were not in vain, for he secured from the diocese of Clermont, France the services of several young energetic French priests who arrived in Cincinnati the same year. Reverend Louis Navarron, one of the band, was sent at once to take care of the French Catholics in Darke and Shelby Counties in the territory now marked by the towns of Russia, Versailles, and Frenchtown.[[7]](#footnote-6) Father Navarron was born in France, July 15, 1807, ordained December 7, 1831, and died February 15, 1882.

Russia was so named because many of the first settlers saw a marked similarity in the physical features of the region they were about to settle and those of Russia in Europe. They had become very well acquainted with the latter, being soldiers under Napoleon in his campaign through that country. Hence this little village has ever since been called Russia.

Father Navarron must have arrived in the territory about September of 1839, as his records show that his first baptism was that of Margaret Reboulet, child of Nicholas Reboulet and Margaret Goubeaux, on October 17, 1839. Full of zeal in his new missionary field, he worked to provide for the spiritual welfare of the flock entrusted to him. Since none of the places were financially capable of supporting a church alone, it was agreed to erect a church at some central points, thus eliminating expenses and at the same time giving opportunity to all. In accordance with this plan a certain Mr. Marchal donated a piece of ground situated between Russia and Frenchtown and about three miles northeast of Versailles. Here a log church was built and dedicated by Bishop Purcell on December 4, 1840, under the patronage of St. Valbert, a name chosen to gratify the donor of the ground.[[8]](#footnote-7)

It seems that Father Navarron, for some time at least, remained at St. Valbert, most probably taking lodging with some family residing near the church. The condition of the road and the length of the journey made it very difficult for many of the people from Russia and Frenchtown to attend services at St. Valbert. Father Navarron, ever alert to the needs of his good people, became cognizant of the inconveniences they were undergoing and at once sought means and ways to remedy their difficulty. To build a church in each town seemed to him the best plan. With courage and trust in God he worked to make this effective.

At Russia, Father Navarron took up residence with Jean Jacques Debrosse and his family who lived about one-half mile southwest of the present St. Remy Church. Here he divided one room, using one part for living quarters, the other for a chapel where he said Mass, at least on weekdays, administered the sacraments, and buried the dead. A small plot of land on Mr. Debrosse’s farm was used for a cemetery. The owner hoped that a small chapel would soon be built. In 1849 a certain Mr. Delaet donated three acres of land for a cemetery and church.[[9]](#footnote-8)

While plans for the church were being considered, Father Navarron was made pastor of the church at Fayetteville, Brown County, Ohio, April 5, 1850. This change must have caused no little sacrifice on the part of Father Navarron and his parishioners who saw in their pastor a kind and loving father. Although Father Navarron did not build the first church, he is called the “Founder of St. Remy Parish.” One of his successors says:

*Father Navarrone was a man of much zeal and activity for the glory of God. He was particularly devoted to the people of this community, and he laid the foundation of that solid faith that characterizes the people of this community. We are convinced that his spirit watches over this community and that he ever offers up fervent prayers to God for the good people of St. Remy Parish.[[10]](#footnote-9)*

Similar plans had been put into operation in Frenchtown, the log church of Holy Family being built and dedicated on October 15, 1846. Not until 1864, however, did Versailles have a church of its own. With the founding of St. Denis Church, Versailles, St. Valbert Church was abandoned. Today the cemetery alone remains to mark that historic spot. It’s located about one and one-half miles northeast of the present St. Denis Church on a beautiful hill overlooking a valley. Although the tombstone which marked the first burial in the cemetery is no longer to be seen it is known from parish records to have been that of Henry Grilliot, who died November 2, 1839. St. Valbert’s was long cherished by its devoted children who had undergone many sacrifices to witness within its walls the renewal of Calvary’s Victim. Even to this day St. Valbert’s is spoken of with love and reverence, the present generation having imbibed this spirit from their forefathers. St. Valbert’s is rightly credited as being the mother church of Frenchtown, 1846; Russia, 1852; Newport, 1862; Versailles, 1864; North Star, 1892; and Osgood, 1908.[[11]](#footnote-10)

Although Father Navarron, as stated before, was removed before the Church at Russia was completed, the work continued under the supervision of his successor, Reverend Arnold Pinker. The church was dedicated August 18, 1852, by Archbishop Purcell under the invocation of St. Remy.

Little is known about the pastorate of Father Pinker. Parish records show the first marriage to be that of Sebastian Simon and Mary Lenora Matthien, July 15, 1852. The first burial in St. Remy Cemetery was that of Pierre Stanislaus Roi, September 18, 1852; the first baptism was that of Remigius Debrosse, December 18, 1852.

In January, 1853, Father Pinker was succeeded by Reverend August Rollinet, a zealous missionary who was born in France in 1786, and ordained in 1820. Father Rollinet remained in the parish until 1857. He died January 1, 1859 at Calmoutier, near Canton, Ohio.

Reverend Patrick Hennebery, his successor, was born January 30, 1830 in Clouconny, Ireland. The next known date of his life is 1844 when Father Henneberry entered the Society of the Fathers of the Precious Blood at Thompson, Ohio. He completed his studies, and received Holy Orders in 1853.

*Like his confreres, during those pioneer days he attended the neighboring mission places administering to those in need of spiritual solace. Very soon thereafter he was designated as a missionary and he devoted himself exclusively to that work serving most of the time in central Ohio.[[12]](#footnote-11)*

Probably it was during that time that he did missionary work in Russia, for a period of four months, from March 1857 until July of the same year. He must have had some influence even during so short a stay as his zeal for the cause of Christ and his oratorical ability are well known. The community of the Precious Blood covets as one of its valuable possessions a volume of sermons, all handwritten. Although some contain passages of rare elegance, the composition is very simple. Reverend L. Linenberger, C.PP.S., in an account of the life of Father Henneberry states that “…it was his personality and dynamic oratory rather than his beautiful sermons that captivated his audience…” Father Henneberry died September 19, 1897, and lies buried at Virginia City, Nevada.

Little is known concerning the history of the parish during the next two and one-half years. Parish records verify that Reverend A. B. Langlois succeeded Father Henneberry in July and remained to the end of that year. During the next two years, the parish work was conducted by several visiting missionaries. One may very well presume that the morale of the parish must have declined somewhat during this period when the people had no permanent pastor who had their interests at heart.

In December, 1859, Reverend Cyril Brisard came from Canada to be pastor of St. Remy Parish. He remained until October of 1867. Up to this time the pastors had led a real missionary life, residing with the Jean Jacques Debrosse family mentioned before. During the pastorate of Father Brisard the first log rectory was built and now the people could speak of a resident pastor. This log rectory, having been formed from the rough timber of the forest nearby could boast of nothing but its poverty. It served the purpose, nevertheless, until future financial conditions would provide a better one.

It appears that Father Brisard also drew up the plans and began the construction of the second St. Remy Church, a brick structure. The first log church, built in 1852, had for a number of years proved to be too small to accommodate the number of worshippers who by this time had greatly increased. Father Brisard did not remain to see the new church completed, his duties having been delegated to his successor, Reverend Breard, another French priest, who had been incardinated into the diocese. Father Breard was born in France, October 19, 1821, and ordained October 31, 1847. He arrived in Russia in January, 1868. Under his able supervision and guidance, the church was completed and dedicated that same year.[[13]](#footnote-12)

After the departure of Father Breard in June 1871, the parish was again without a resident pastor. For about two years, between June 1871 and January 1873, visiting or neighboring priests conducted the parish services.

In the Providence of God, the parish was not to decline but was to increase spiritually and materially under the able guidance of the Fathers of the Holy Ghost. Just how it happened that this congregation was stationed in the parish is most interesting and is an undeniable proof of Divine Providence. In 1850 Archbishop Purcell visited the motherhouse of this congregation in France and offered them the direction of his seminary in the diocese in Cincinnati. In spite of the numbers needed on their mission and in the colonies, the Venerable Superior could not refuse to accept a work that would redown to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Late in July, 1851, Bishop Purcell very unexpectedly returned to America. With his departure, the affair was dropped.[[14]](#footnote-13)

Demands for missionaries, however, from other American Bishops did not cease. Finally, on July 19, 1872, the Superior General accepted an offer made by the Bishop of Covington, Kentucky, to take charge of an educational institution in his diocese. Four priests were designated to begin this new field of labor in America, Fathers Ott, Schwab, Richert, and Steurer. They landed on American shores sometime in November and were filled with surprise on arriving in Covington to find their post occupied.

Future events prove that this unfortunate situation was apparently permitted by Divine Providence. Two of the priests, Fathers Steurer and Richert remained in the diocese doing missionary work while Fathers Ott and Schwab went into the neighboring diocese of Cincinnati. Here they discovered the French parish of Russia which had been without a priest for three months, and in the same vicinity three or four English and German missions equally deprived of spiritual help. Reverend John Nepomucene Reinbolt, the provincial of the Brothers of Mary, who was well acquainted with Father Ott offered him the most cordial hospitality in one of their houses. Because of the recommendation of Brother Reinbolt to Archbishop Purcell, Father Ott was missioned to St. Remy Parish and the surrounding territory. As the duty of caring for these missions proved to be beyond the ability of one person Reverend Francis W. Schwab was sent in February 1872, to assist Father Ott.[[15]](#footnote-14)

More promising designs were yet in store for this infant community when Archbishop Purcell offered them St. Boniface Parish, Piqua, Ohio. Father Ott in one of his letters says:

“…on March 28, his Grace offered us one of the most beautiful parishes of his diocese. I attribute this favor to St. Joseph, whom we have particularly invoked during this privileged month… At Piqua one finds two parishes, the one Irish, the other German. It is the latter one that is confided to us, and it is the most important and the best organized…”[[16]](#footnote-15)

To the great delight of the Fathers, this parish offered them a very convenient rectory: rooms, refectory, parlor, and even a small oratory.

On April 22, 1873, Fathers Ott and Richert left Russia with bags and baggage to live at St. Boniface. Father Ott was appointed religious superior. This change in residence did not mean that their obligations toward the other parishes had ceased. It was quite the contrary, for they continued to serve St. Remy, Versailles, and Frenchtown where they found a poor and abandoned French population. Father Schwab, because of his familiarity with the German language administered to the people of St. Boniface, Piqua, while Father Ott continued to labor for the poor parishes at Russia, Frenchtown and Versailles. The people at St. Remy were only too happy to have a priest in their midst. They willingly made sacrifices in order to receive the fruits of his ministrations.

On January 31, 1874, Fathers Ott and Richert set out with the same bags and baggage to retrace their steps of the previous year. The reason for this action is not explicitly stated but one can very well presume that the difficulties they encountered in traveling from Piqua to Russia, a distance of about twelve miles, were such that they preferred to reside at Russia. Streamline transportation was at that time only a potentiality.

Father Ott assumed complete charge of St. Remy Parish. As evidence of his zeal we need to cite only a few of his activities. The church, which showed signs of neglect, was remodeled and fittingly decorated; the cemetery was enlarged, stone paths added and the entire lot refenced. These improvements alone amounted to 2,500 francs. Besides this Father Ott obtained from the motherhouse in France a beautiful monumental stone cross with a realistic metallic Christus. The erection and blessing of the cross took place on All Saints, 1874. From a letter written by Father Ott to the superior General we glean that this crucifix was something to be prized in America. “…Crucifixes are rarely seen in the cemeteries of America. Ordinarily one sees only a wooden cross. This is indeed a singular contrast with the white marble tombs that one sees in great number…” Then he adds this interesting passage which reveals a characteristic of the French people “…The Catholics partake a little too much of the vanity of the ‘Yankees’ who believe in exterior splendor…” He closes his letter by stating that the people were, with reason, very proud of their new cemetery for it was without doubt the most beautiful in that part of the country.[[17]](#footnote-16) Now that the Church was remodeled and adorned, the cemetery enlarged and improved, the next problem confronting Father Ott was the repairing of the rectory which he accomplished in 1875.

In March of that same year a mission was given in the parish. Father Richert gave the principal instruction. His words “sweet persuasive” bore fruit in the hearts of the most innocent soul as well as in that of the most hardened sinner. The large number of confessions testified to the success of the mission.

On the feast of Corpus Christi, owing to a very substantial gift form one of the parishioners, a grand outdoor procession was held. The repository was beautifully decorated, and the streets through which the blessed Sacrament was carried were fittingly adorned with flowers and banners. The procession aroused the faith of the people and stimulated them to renewed fervor.

On July 27, Archbishop Purcell visited the parish and the following day administered the sacrament of Confirmation. Fathers Schwab, Steurer, and Richert were also present for the occasion. After a short instruction, Archbishop Purcell announced to the congregation the nearing departure of their loving pastor, Father Ott. All the ceremonies finished, Archbishop Purcell was escorted to Versailles by twenty-five young chevaliers and four carriages.[[18]](#footnote-17) Father Kreutzer succeeded Father Ott and remained there until the Holy Ghost Fathers left Ohio in October, 1876

The work of these zealous priests and their untiring interest in the parish is worthy of the highest admiration. During their comparative short stay of three years they accomplished much for the welfare of the parish both spiritually and materially. Their zeal was not only recognized by the parishioners, but also by Archbishop Purcell, as is shown by the following letter, written by His Grace to Father Ott.

*Cincinnati, Ohio*

*December 1, 1873*

*Dear Reverend Father,*

*It is a great consolation to receive such a letter as yours of November 28. God be praised that interest in souls is so well safeguarded in the missions under your direction.*

*Congratulations to the zealous and pious congregation (it is thus that one designates the parishes in the United States) of St. Boniface at Piqua. Tell the good Catholics at St. Remy and Holy Family (Frenchtown) that I appreciate highly their willing spirit to compete in zeal and piety with their neighbors (the Germans of Piqua).*

*I am pleased that the Catholics of Troy and Tippecanoe give signs of truly Catholic life.*

*I accept the young subject that your worthy Superior offers me.*

*Thanks be to God! Missionaries and ecclesiastical vocations are no longer wanting in this diocese; but those that you promise will be most welcome.*

*My compliments to your Confreres and fellow laborers.*

*Sincerely yours,*

*T.B. Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati[[19]](#footnote-18)*

At the time of Father Ott’s departure from Russia, Archbishop Purcell wrote to the Father Superior as follows:

*I beg earnestly very Reverend Father Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and The Sacred Heart of Mary to send back Reverend Father Ott to the mission at St. Remy in this diocese. The worthy Father had done much good; he is highly esteemed by all his parishioners, and he too is very happy. Father Schwab and his confreres merit the same testimony.[[20]](#footnote-19)*

With the departure of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the parish was placed under the competent guidance of Reverend Francis Roth. His pastorate of nine years, March, 1877 to July, 1886, is of special interest to us for it was during this period that the first St. Remy School, a substantial frame structure, twenty-six by forty feet, was erected.

From 1887 to 1898 the parish was under the direction of the Society of the Precious Blood. This congregation was founded in Rome in 1815 by Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, and was transplanted to American in 1843 by Reverend Francis de Sales Brunner.[[21]](#footnote-20) The present Provincial Motherhouse is located at Carthagena, Ohio.

The following are Fathers of the Congregation who are known to have been resident pastors: Reverend Raymond Vernimont, Reverend Nicholas Poiry, Reverend Louis Hefele, and Reverend Leopold Linder.[[22]](#footnote-21) These priests worked untiringly to liquidate the debts contracted by the French priests from Canada, and at the same time, to provide for the needs of the parish. During the pastorate of Father Vernimont, the old log rectory was given to the Sisters of the Precious Blood who had come to teach in the school, and a new brick parsonage was erected. In 1890 they began the construction of the present St. Remy Church, a brick structure, forty-five by one hundred feet, which was to replace the old log church of 1868. On the seventeenth of August, the cornerstone was blessed by the Very Reverend Henry Drees, C.PP.S., Provincial of the Congregation of the Precious Blood. [[23]](#footnote-22) It is of interest to note that Reverend Louis Hefele who was pastor from July 1891 to May 1892 will celebrate his golden jubilee this year. Father Hefele is now living in retirement at St. Mary Novitiate, Burkettsville, Ohio.

In July, 1899, the parish was placed, by the Very Reverend William Henry Elders, then Archbishop of Cincinnati, under the administration of diocesan clergy, with Reverend August Adelman as pastor. This youthful priest labored vigorously for the spiritual welfare of the parish, his outstanding activity being the inauguration of two Masses on Sunday.

In 1903 Reverend Henry J. Winner became pastor for one year, at the expiration of which time, Reverend Anthony Moeller, the assistant pastor of Emmanuel Church, Dayton, was placed in charge. The parishioners found Father Moeller to be an active, hardworking and thorough young priest. To his credit are placed the erection of a new Sisters’ home, the installment of a fine pipe organ and beautiful Stations. In 1910, much to the disappointment of his faithful flock, Father Moeller was transferred to nearby St. Michael Parish, Fort Loramie, Ohio, which position he retains to the present day.

The parish, however, was blessed with the appointment of Reverend Francis J. Kreuzkamp. Under his vigilant eye and industrious hand, the parish made rapid strides, both spiritually and materially. Religious instructions were of vital importance, frequent communions were encouraged, and all were urged not only to belong to some society, but to be faithful to the obligations contracted. “The societies,” said Father Kreuzkamp, “are the backbone of the parish.”

A casual glance through the financial statements of the parish from 1911 to 1921 during the pastorate of Father Kreuzkamp reveals facts which convince one of his zeal for souls. Several pages of each year’s statements are devoted to some phase of Christian education. Some of the topics discussed are: “Has the Catholic Religion Any Value,” “Should A Man Join Some Church,” “On Christian Training,” “On Divorce,” “Catholicity in America,” and other topics all as laudable as those cited.

Father Kreuzkamp also provided for the material needs of the parish as far as financial condition would permit. The church was repaired and frescoed, and beautiful new stained glass windows installed; the rectory was remodeled and enlarged. He also made his parishioners conscious of the need of a new school, but before his plans were realized, obedience called him to be pastor of St. Peter Church, Chillicothe, Ohio.

In July 1921, Reverend Frank Ratterman, the present pastor of St. Remy Parish, took charge. The first problem confronting him was the erection of a new school. Plans were made and by October 1922, building operations had begun. After many difficulties, the school, a plain structure sixty-four by sixty-five feet, was completed and dedicated on Sunday, October 7, 1923, by Right Reverend Monsignor William Hickey, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

In preparation for the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee in 1927 of the dedication of the first St. Remy Church, many needed improvements were made. The church was frescoed and a new heating system and lighting fixtures installed. The celebration, centered in the Solemn Jubilee Mass at eleven o’clock, with Reverend Remy Monnin, a son of the parish, acting as celebrant. Historical significance was given to the observance by a parade depicting conditions at the time of the dedication. A replica of the first St. Remy Church was skillfully constructed of logs and fittingly placed on a large wagon, surrounded by boys and girls in the dress of their ancestors of 1852. This float was followed by a boy representing the old French pastor of those days.

In March, 1930, as a result of a fire which partly destroyed the Sisters’ residence, the pastor was advised by diocesan authorities to convert the rectory into a home for the Sisters and to build a new parsonage. In compliance with this suggestion, ground was purchased and plans put into effect. Late that same year the beautiful rectory, built in old colonial style, was completed and ready for habitation.

In 1939 the school problem was again brought to the attention of Father Ratterman. We will recall that the one-room school of 1883 had been replaced by the four-room school in 1922. The average attendance in the first school was fifty pupils; by 1922 it had increased to 125 pupils, and by 1927 to 180. The reason for this latter increase was the fact that the three one-room public schools within the limits of the parish were consolidated and St. Remy School became the Russia Rural Consolidated School. Further consolidation took place in 1936 which necessitated the building of a new high school with eight classrooms and gym-auditorium. The 6-3-3-Plan was adopted.

Certainly, much of the present progressive status of the parish is due to the untiring zeal of Father Ratterman, who for the past twenty years has sacrificed his time and labors for the benefit of the spiritual, and the material, progress of the parish. No less surprising is it to observe how the parish has flowered spiritually under his kind and fatherly guidance.

In conclusion, we say that the steady and vigorous growth of St. Remy Parish is due to God’s blessing, to the splendid leadership of good pastors, and to the high moral tone of the people. Although the little village of Russia has not produced a single person that the world would call great, it is nevertheless great, for its greatness lies in heaping upon its people treasures for eternity. Within the history and development of this parish we witness a practical application of Christ’s words in the parable of the mustard seed “which is the least, indeed, of all seeds, but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.” (Matthew XIII, 32)

**Historical Record of Pastors of St. Remy Parish**

1839-1850 Rev. Louis Navarron

1850-1853 Rev. Arnold Pinker

1853-57 Rev. August Rollinet

1857 (4 months) Rev. Patrick Henneberry, C.PP.S.

1857-58 Rev. A. B. Langlois

1858-1859 No resident pastor

1858 (April to July) Rev. G. Frese

1859-67 Rev. Cyril Brisard

1867-71 Rev. Charles Berard

1871-72 No resident pastor

1872-73 Rev. George Ott, assisted by Rev. Francis Schwab

1873-74 Rev. George Ott served while residing in Piqua

1874-75 Rev. George Ott and Rev. James Richert return to Russia

1875-76 Revs. Thomas Kreutzer, Charles Sterires, James Richert

1876-77 Rev. Alphonse deGoitere

1877-86 Rev. Francis J. Roth

1886-97 Revs. Raymond Vernimont, Nicholas Boiry, Leo Boehmer, Louis Hifele

1897-99 Rev. Leopold Lindes, C.PP.S.

1899-1903 Rev. August Adelman

1903-04 Rev. Henry Winner

1904-10 Rev. Anthony Moeller

1910-21 Rev. Frank Kreuzkamp

1921-61 Rev. Francis A. Ratterman

1961-69 Rev. Joseph Wolfer

1969-74 Rev. Joseph Schneider

1974-76 Rev. Francis J. Flanagan

1976-89 Rev. David A. Heinl

1989-95 Rev. Leo A. Hoying

1995-2003 Rev. Eugene F. Vonderhaar

2003-2014 Rev. Frank G. Amberger

2014-present Rev. Martin E. Fox

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Joseph D. Barnes, “The Story of Shelby County,” *Memoirs of the Miami Valley 1* (1919). 334 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Joseph D. Barnes, “The Story of Shelby County,” *Memoirs of the Miami Valley 1* (1919). 341 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. B.L. Grillot, “St. Valbert’s,” *The Versailles Policy* (1939). 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. B.L. Grillot, “Short History of St. Remy Parish,” (Address given at the Testimonial banquet in honor of Rev. Clement Goubeaux and Rev. Raymond Guillozet, May 10, 1936). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. John G. Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, Akron, E.H. McBride and Co., (1890), 3. P. 620 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
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