

St. Aloysius Catholic Church

The first Catholic Mass was held in Olivia in 1880. Father Krauber was the first priest assigned to celebrate the sacraments in the newly established mission church in Olivia. This young congregation was yoked with the parish of St. Mary in Bird Island where Father Krauber resided.

Fr. Andrew Kober would be the first full-time pastor assigned to St. Aloysius in 1888 (1888-1896).

On May 17, 1888, a group of Catholic men who called themselves the "Catholic Society of Olivia" held a meeting to scout out a suitable location for a new parish church. Through the generosity of John Morgan, he presented an entire city block for the construction of the future parish church and additional buildings. On June 20, 1888, on the vigil of the feast of St. Aloysius, the papers of incorporation were signed and the building of a church in Olivia began. St. Aloysius was chosen as the patron of the new parish as the parish was founded on the eve of the saint's feast day.

The first church of St. Aloysius was a white, wood frame structure along with a single spire. In 1896, a new wood frame rectory was also constructed. In August of 1907, Rev. Henry D. Pomije was assigned to St. Aloysius and it was under his 42 year pastorate that the present Italian, Romanesque revival style church was built. Within its walls a treasure of murals, paintings and mosaics from Italy capture the worshiper. Fr. Pomije also was responsible for beginning the Catholic grade school in 1914, as well as maintaining beautiful Roman style formal gardens that were

the pride of Olivia and a tourist stop for the greater Minnesota area.

From a few pioneer souls in southern Minnesota, the parish has grown to be some 500 families strong. In the Jubilee Year of 2000, a new social hall that was named the "Jubilee Center", was completed under the present pastorate of Fr. Paul van de Crommert. In recent years, there have been many numerous improvements including converting the former convent building into offices, updating the rectory, etc. Recently, the exterior of this historic church has been repaired and restored and a capital campaign is underway to complete the restoration of the interior. While faces and facilities may have changed over the years, the most constant attribute of Saint Aloysius has and will continue to remain the same, namely, our commitment to Christ, to one another, and to the betterment of our Church and local communities.



Father
Henry D. Pomije

