

St. John Parish.

Cincinnati Ohio  
Cot Green & Bremen.

In the early forties the inhabitants of Cincinnati began to move in large numbers to the northern sections of the city. This movement was almost entirely of German families. Bishop Purcell immediately realized the necessity of caring for the spiritual needs of these families. He therefore charged Rev. P. Fernandez with the task of establishing a new parish among them. Accordingly a general meeting of the members of Holy Trinity and St. Mary Parish was called to order in the latter's schoolhall on Oct. 27, 1844 to draw up plans for the founding of a third German parish. On March 25, 1845 the cornerstone of the new St. John parish was laid. This ecclesiastical ceremony was the grandest that Cincinnati ever witnessed. A procession formed of various societies, the priests of the city, and the bishop full vested in his episcopal vestments robes, was held from St. Mary Church to Green and Bremen streets. Here Revs. Fernandez and Hammer preached a german sermon, and Rev. Wood and the most Rev. bishop an english sermon. Upon returning, the procession stooped at Vine and Liberty streets, the site of the first church and cemetery of the city, and prayers were offered up for the dead.

On the feast of All Saints 1845 bishop Purcell consecrated the new church, at which solemnity bishop Henni of Milwaukee preached. Shortly after Rev Fernandez returned to St. Mary church and Rev Hammer took over the charge of the new parish, who remained in office only three months and then returned to his former position as assistant at St. Mary church. In 1846 the new parish was entrusted to the franciscan fathers. Rev. William Unterschiner ofm was

made pastor, he being the first franciscan who was sent to the American missions from Tyrol at the request of bishop Purcell. Under his direction the parish made notable advancement both materially and spiritually. Above all Rev Unterschiner (ofm) furthered the spiritual progress of the parish. He founded societies and confraternities that have remained to the present time. The awful plague of cholera that visited Cincinnati in 1849 claimed many victims in the parish.

Soon after the appointment of Rev Edmund Etchmann ofm as first assistant, a suitable rectory was built in the year 1846, directly behind the Church on Bremen street. In 1909 it had to give way to the erection of the new parochial school. Rev. Unterschiner (ofm) labored zealously as pastor until the autumn of 1856 when a severe illness confined him to his bed, and which finally brought about his death on Jan. 17, 1857. Rev. Hammes preached the sermon at the solemn deposition.

Rev. Otto Jais, who has established a reputation for himself in this diocese, was appointed successor and labored in this capacity with several interruptions until the year 1885.

The work on the first church was not yet completed when in 1845 plans were already made for a parochial school. In the winter of the same year, classes were taught in an improvised building. A new school was built opposite the sacristy in 1851, which also proved to be too small, so that several classes had to be taught in the rectory. In 1860 a large, roomy, three-story school house was erected, to which an additional story was added in 1865. From 1861 to 1891, all the boys of St. Francis (founded by Rev. Otto Jais ofm in 1868) and St. John parish attended the

St. Francis parochial school; and all the girls that of St. John. Lay brothers of the Holy Cross and of the Order of St. Francis in turn taught the classes for boys, while sisters of Notre Dame took the education of the girls into their charge. The addition to the parochial school building caused it to stand higher than the church. To remedy the matter this first church was renovated. Work was begun in April 1867. The church thus renovated was solemnly blessed by bishop Purcell on Dec. 1, 1867. Rev. Meninger S. J. gave the festive sermon. The present church measures 165 feet in length, 64 ft in width, and 53 in height. The tower rises to a height of 202 feet and contains four bells, the largest of which weighs 700 lbs. The organ is a masterpiece. The parish celebrated its silver jubilee in 1870.

Rev. Otto Jfm was called to his eternal reward on May 18, 1885. His successor was Rev Pius Niebauer Jm., who remained in office until 1886 when Rev. Gregory Fungmann Jfm became pastor. The latter labored in this position until 1897. He built present new parochial school. The cornerstone was laid on June 30, 1895 and on Nov. 3rd, on which day the parish celebrated its golden jubilee, it was blessed by bishop Matz of Denver. The sermon on this occasion was delivered by Rev. William Tappert of Covington, Ky. The main building and north wing were completed in 1895; the south wing was built in 1904 under the direction of Rev. Philibert Alletta Jfm, who succeeded Rev. Fungmann Jfm as pastor in 1897. The school was entirely completed in Feb. 1910.

In the year 1905, a new rectory was built on Green St, and completed in the following year. A building association formed of parish members made it possible