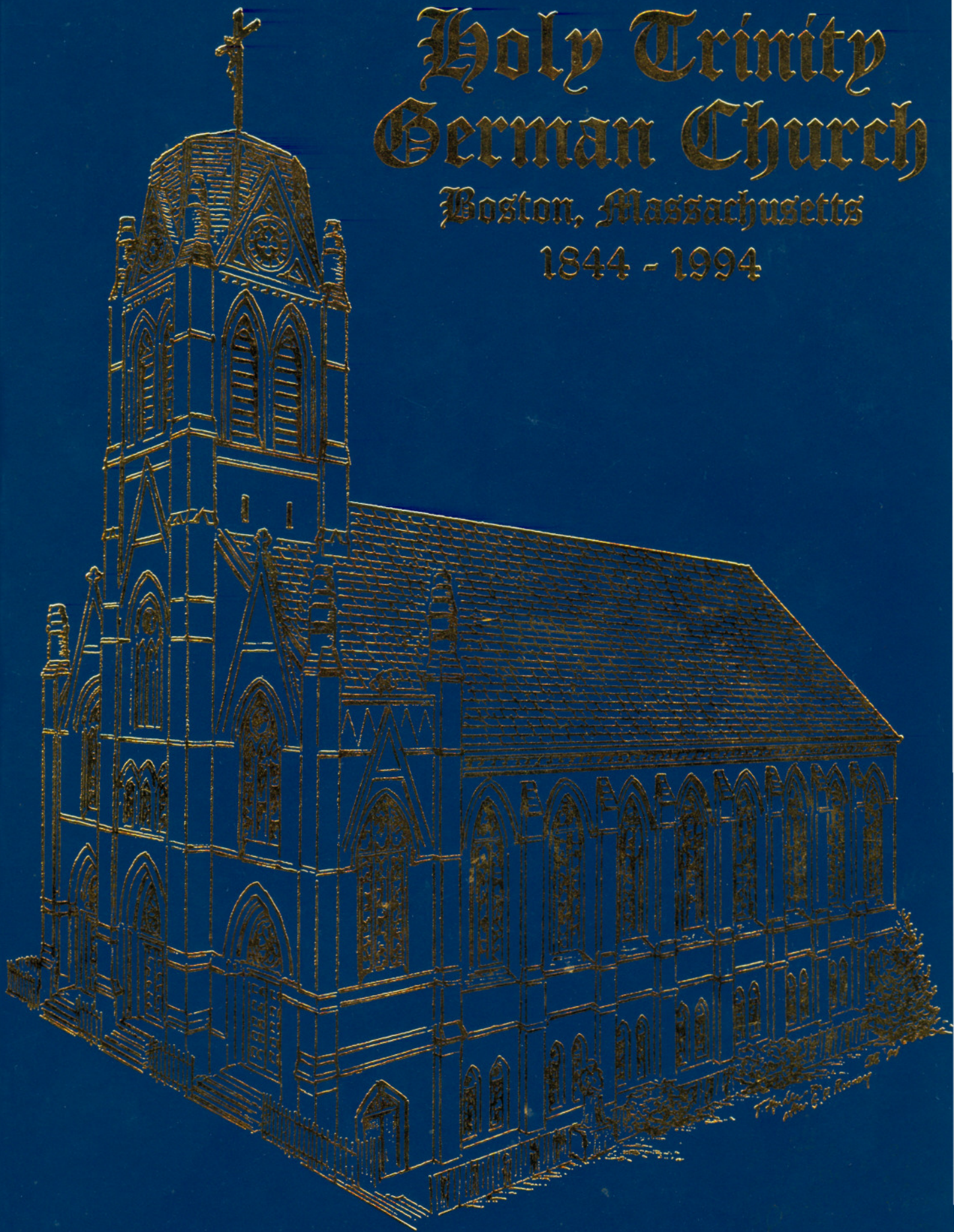


# Holy Trinity German Church

Boston, Massachusetts  
1844 - 1994





**HOLY TRINITY**  
**GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**OF BOSTON:**  
*A Way of Life*



By  
Robert J. Sauer

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**1993 - 1994**

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# DEDICATION

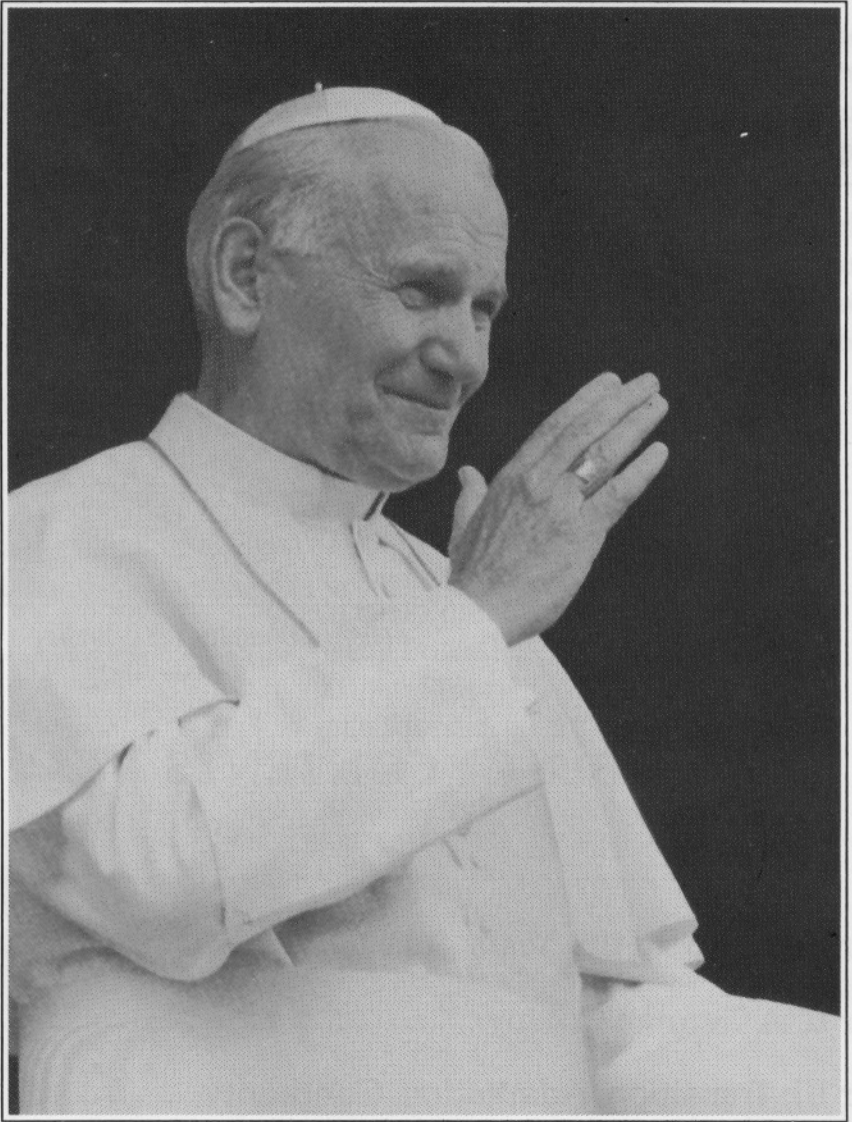
This book  
is dedicated  
to the parishioners  
and clergy  
of Holy Trinity  
German Church,  
past and present,  
a most remarkable  
group of people.



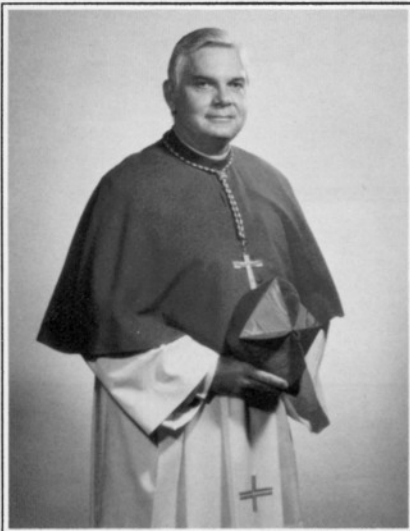
*Heilige Dreifaltigkeits Kirche*

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*His Holiness Pope John Paul II*



CARDINAL'S RESIDENCE  
2101 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE  
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

April 23, 1994

The Reverend Frederick J. Murphy  
Holy Trinity Church  
140 Shawmut Avenue  
Boston, MA 02118

Dear Father Murphy:

It is my great pleasure to extend to the priests and parishioners of Holy Trinity my prayerful best wishes on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the parish.

From 1844, when there was a great need for a German-speaking parish, to the present, Holy Trinity Church has served well the people of the Archdiocese of Boston. From its first Pastor, The Reverend Francis Rolof, to its present Administrator, The Reverend Frederick J. Murphy, the faith has taken deep root and has matured among generations of German-speaking Catholics at Holy Trinity. In more recent times, Holy Trinity Church is the place where the Tridentine Latin Mass is celebrated in the Archdiocese of Boston. Indeed, today the pastoral needs have changed and the vitality of this parish is experienced in many parishes throughout the whole Archdiocese.

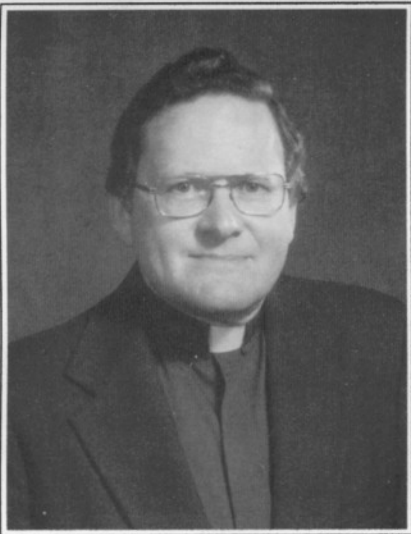
As you gather to celebrate the 150th anniversary of your parish, it is my prayer that all the members of Holy Trinity may rededicate themselves to the Lord so that your vitality of spirit and spiritual growth might continue to be strengthened within you through the Lord's favor.

With prayerful best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Edward Cardinal Garry*  
Archbishop of Boston

BCL:kr



(617) 542-5682

## Holy Trinity Church

140 SHAWMUT AVENUE • BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02118

April 23, 1994

Dear Friends,

I am honored to be able to extend my congratulations to you on the proud occasion of the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of Holy Trinity Parish.

It has been almost three years since I assumed my responsibilities as Administrator. In that time I have learned so much about the history of this parish, of the valiant Jesuit priests who staffed it for a century and a quarter, and of its extraordinary growth over the decades, to include schools, an orphanage, and a home for elderly widows, buildings located not just in the South End but in South Boston and Roxbury. All this was done by devoted parishioners who gave generously of their time and money to support the parish they were so dedicated to, and who joined the many organizations the parish sponsored.

Above all, the parish built, in 1877, the beautiful church that continues to provide the essential ministry of a parish, worship. Holy Trinity's heritage of great music is still the strong attraction it has always been, and continues to enrich our weekly liturgies.

For some years now it has been the custom for the Rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross to be the Administrator of its neighbor down the street. It is a good arrangement, and I have found my life as a priest enormously enriched by the dual assignment.

I look forward to working together with all who love Holy Trinity to guide her into the future.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Frederick J. Murphy*

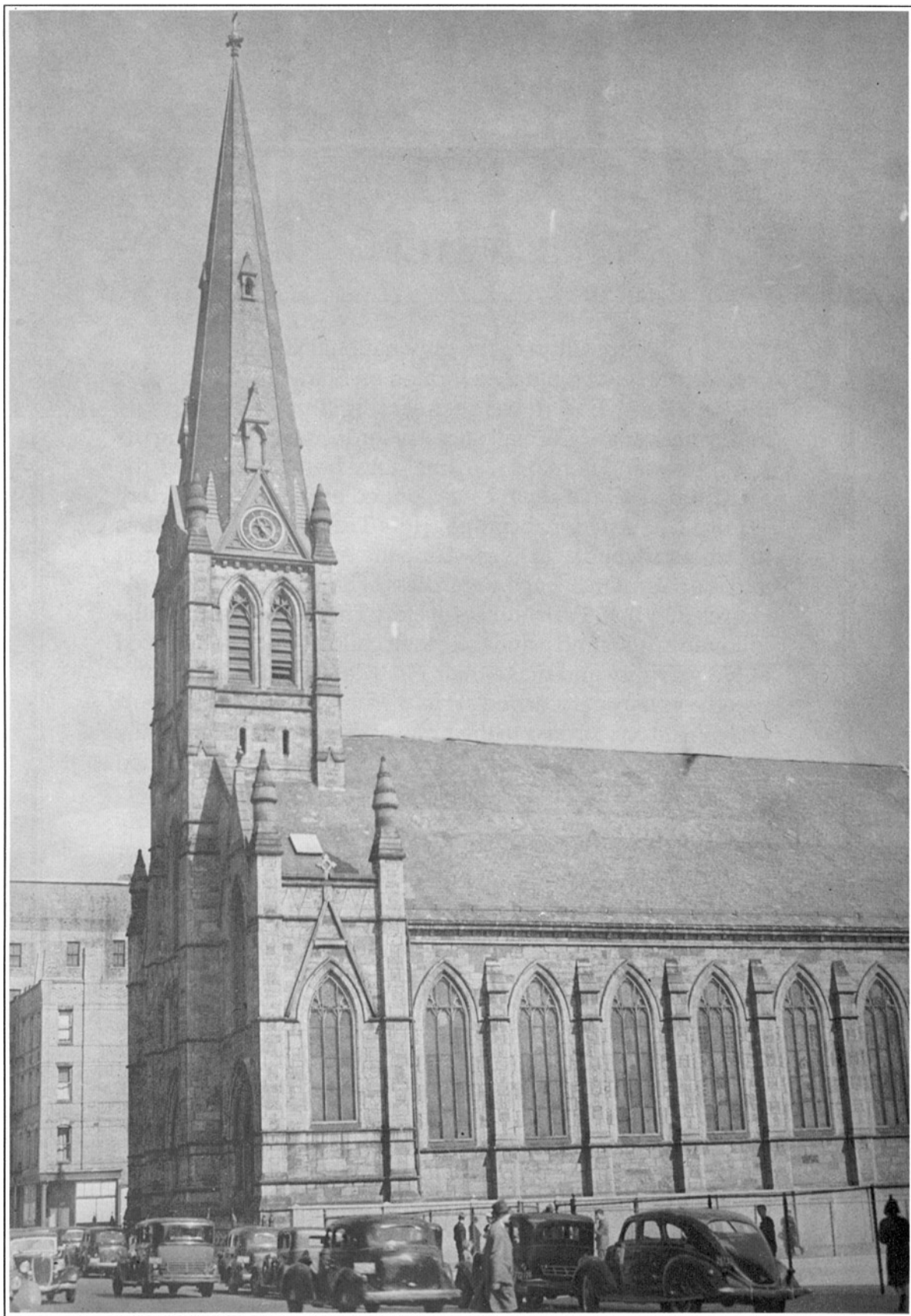
(Rev.) Frederick J. Murphy  
Administrator



## PREFACE

Holy Trinity Church, the only national German Catholic Church in New England, is located on Shawmut Avenue, in Boston's South End. It has been serving German immigrants and Americans of German ancestry for 150 years. (During the last four years, Bernard Cardinal Law has also allowed the Tridentine Latin Mass to be celebrated each Sunday at Holy Trinity.) As a national church, Holy Trinity may consider as members anyone who lives within the Archdiocese of Boston and is of German lineage, regardless of how far away from the church they live. Parishioners of Holy Trinity Church have the following rights and privileges: their children may be baptized at Holy Trinity and make their First Communion here; their daughters may get married at Holy Trinity; they must support Holy Trinity according to their means; in case of sickness they can call a priest from Holy Trinity; and they may be buried from Holy Trinity.

Originally founded as a diocesan parish in 1844, Holy Trinity was taken over by the Society of Jesus in 1848, and for the next 113 years the Jesuit fathers directed the parish until it returned to the control of the Archdiocese in 1961. Holy Trinity was and is much more than just an ordinary Catholic church or parish. From the earliest days it became a way of life for clergy and parishioners alike, complete with parochial schools (in fact, the oldest permanent parochial school in New England belonged to Holy Trinity), sodalities and other organizations with many weekly and monthly social functions.



*Circa 1935*

# THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

Among the more than five thousand Germans who immigrated to the United States in the 1820s were the first German Catholics in Boston, namely the three Kraemer brothers, Melchior, Sebastian and Mathias, who were clock makers from Baden. The Kraemers had initially settled in Philadelphia. They moved to Boston in 1827, and before long they were operating a very profitable import business specializing in "Nuernberg Wares," i.e., toys and clocks. Their business soon became famous throughout the northeast region of the United States. By 1830, other German Catholic immigrants had arrived in Boston in the hope of establishing a new life for themselves and their families. Most of these people had their roots in the western and northwestern German states of Wuerttemberg, Baden, the Palatinate and the Rhineland. Germany at the time was not a united nation-state, but a patchwork of independent states dominated in the north by Prussia and in the south by Austria.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Catholics of Puritan Boston, primarily of Irish and French origin, worshipped first at a former Huguenot chapel on School Street, and then at the Church of the Holy Cross, which had been erected on Franklin Street, near Devonshire Street, by the first Bishop of Boston, Jean Lefebvre de Cheverus (later the Archbishop of Bordeaux, France). Members of the Puritan establishment, including John Adams, actually assisted in the building of this Catholic church. But the German immigrants did not have a church of their own. The next Bishop of Boston, Benedict Joseph Fenwick, S.J. (he had been consecrated second Bishop in 1825), authorized the German immigrants to worship in his Cathedral on Franklin Street. Bishop Fenwick would remain a steadfast friend of the German immigrant Catholic community in Boston throughout his life.

Although there were no German speaking clergy in Boston, Bishop Fenwick, who knew a smattering of German, did the best he could for the German immigrant congregation. Before long the German immigrants made it clear to Bishop Fenwick that they wanted a priest who could preach to them and hear their confessions in their own language, and who knew the customs of the old country. Some of those customs revolved around important religious feast days. For instance, Germans traditionally put a high priority on the celebration of Christmas. (In fact, the German immigrants in Boston introduced the use of Christmas trees and greeting cards to New England, customs which soon became mainstays of American cultural



*Melchior Kramer, 1791-1849,  
Co-Founder of Holy Trinity Parish*

life.) Easter, too, was a time for unique German traditions. German Catholics participated in a wake from Good Friday until Easter Sunday at the Holy Grave with a figure of the dead Christ lying in a grave. To his credit, Bishop Fenwick was sensitive to the needs of the German immigrants. Between 1836 and 1846, he summoned five secular clergy from the Germanies to serve the congregation, namely Fathers Francis de Sales Hoffmann (the first German-speaking priest to arrive in Boston), Edward Freygang and Bernhard Smolnikar. Father Smolnikar, a native of Austria, was mentally unbalanced: he actually preached heresy to the congregation, advocating a form of Christianity not far from Lutheranism. Father Smolnikar even published a three volume diatribe against the Pope and bishops, which resulted in his being relieved of his position by Bishop Fenwick. In any event, none of these priests stayed very long in Boston, a city with a relatively small German Catholic population. They were more interested in moving westward, where the large German immigrant communities of the farmlands of America's Middle West were being established.

For more than four years the German immigrants of Boston were unable to secure the services of any permanent priest, and this led to a number of problems. The Germans were not keen on the idea of having to submit to the jurisdiction of an Irish bishop and pastors

who did not understand their language and customs. Many wanted to keep the German language in order to keep the faith. Many feared that a rapid assimilation into American society would result in a falling away from the Church, an attitude that would be expressed at times throughout the nineteenth century as American society continued to change and modernize. Boston, which up until the 1830s was really a "town," was, by the 1840s, in the process of becoming a "city," due in no small part to the economic growth resulting from the growing textile industries of the region. The "better people" of Boston, i.e., the Brahmin establishment, sought to make Boston the "Hub of the Universe," a center of civilization, and the Brahmins would provide the spirit and wherewithal to effect this greatness. In addition a new Boston aristocracy was emerging, consisting of wealthy merchants residing in Bulfinch homes, who sought to modernize the city. In the 1840s and 1850s, the South End of Boston, the future home of Holy Trinity, would emerge from what had been wetlands between Boston and Roxbury. Speculators set about constructing beautiful bow-front brick houses and parks in the hope that the upper classes would elect to reside in this new section of the city.

For the time being, in the absence of their own clergy, Rev. John Raffener of New York visited the German immigrant congregation in Boston several times a year in order to hear confessions and attend to the other sacraments. Father Raffener is considered to be the founder of Holy Trinity Church. Born in December 1785, in Mals, Austria, of a well-to-do Tyrolean family, he had entered the Benedictine monastery in Innsbruck as a youth. While studying in Rome in 1809, his life was disrupted when the French Emperor and conqueror Napoleon closed all religious institutions in the Eternal City. He therefore decided to study medicine, receiving his degree in May 1813. At this point he volunteered for service with the Austrian Army, and two years later he was at the top of his profession. With the peace of Europe restored in 1815, he undertook studies in Prussia, at the University of Berlin, and thereafter returned to Austria, where he became a wealthy physician, practicing in both the Tyrol and the neighboring state of Switzerland. But John Raffener's religious calling could not be suppressed, and he returned to religious life. On May 1, 1825, he was ordained at age forty. Father Raffener's first assignments included tours as a hospital chaplain in a Tyrolean hospital. In 1833, he volunteered to come to the United States, arriving in New York City, where he stayed for seven years at St. Nicholas' parish, the oldest German parish in the city. He then went on to found Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn. In 1843, he was made Vicar General of the New York Diocese for German Roman Catholics, a post he held until his death



*Rev. John Stephen Raffener, 1785 - 1861,  
Founder of Holy Trinity Parish*

in July 1861, the third month of the American Civil War. A true American Patriot, Father Raffener's last official act before his death was the raising of the Stars and Stripes, the flag of the Union.

It was Father Raffener who saw the need for a permanent German parish with German clergy in Boston. In 1840, he took up a collection to construct a church. The next year a plot of land was purchased for \$3,500, and in August 1841, a nine member committee, headed by a Mr. Peter Wein, assembled to oversee the construction of the new church. In June 1842, Father Raffener, along with the members of the congregation, laid the cornerstone of the new parish church on the corner of Lucas and Suffolk Streets (later, Shawmut Avenue) in Boston's South End, with Bishop Fenwick in attendance. The new church would be known hereafter as Holy Trinity Church. Before long the cost of the construction began to exceed the forecasted expenditure, and many members of the congregation began to lose heart in the project. Many refused to continue to contribute to the building fund, an unfortunate situation which caused a rift among the German immigrant Catholic community. On June 10, 1843, construction was almost completed when the north side of the church tower collapsed, discouraging the congregation. Those who had opposed the entire undertaking from the start suggested that the whole



project now be abandoned. In fact, many of these people actually stood by and cheered as the tower crumbled to the ground, shouting "If only the entire (building) committee were buried beneath the stones!" However, after generous assistance from Bishop Fenwick, the church was completed, and the first Mass was celebrated in the church basement in June 1844, by the new pastor, Rev. Francis Rolof of Maryland (Bishop Fenwick's home state). The church, constructed of Roxbury puddingstone and Maine granite, and boasting a formidable tower, became a familiar sight in Boston until 1872.

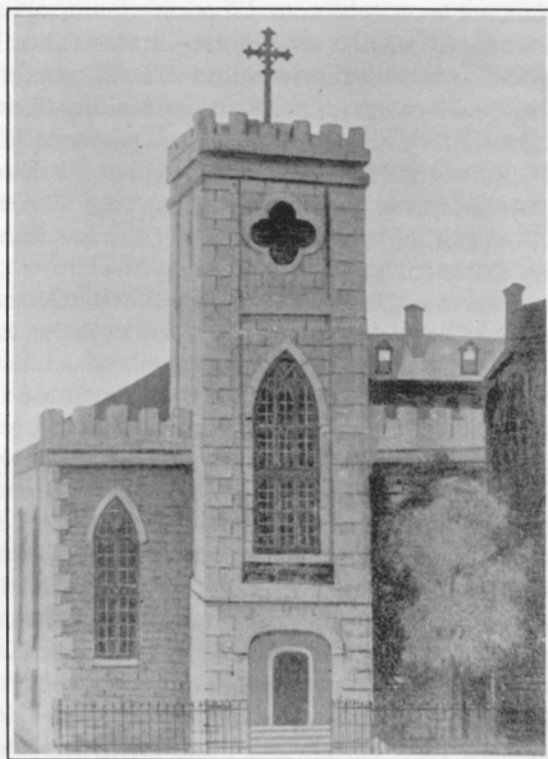
Father Rolof was an old man by the time he came to Holy Trinity and he was soon replaced by Rev. Gerard H. Plathe, who hoped to raise eight hundred dollars from the congregation in order to erect a proper rectory for the clergy on Lucas Street (the clergy were living in the homes of parishioners). In his attempt to carry out this project, Father Plathe encountered a growing animosity among the Germans themselves, with two camps emerging, the High Germans and the Low Germans (due to their places of origin in the Germanies). The congregation had roots in different German states, complete with different dialects and traditions. Now North Germans and South Germans opposed one another senselessly over the cost of the rectory. Such ill will played no small part in Father Plathe's departure in 1845—he was replaced by Rev. Alexander Martini, a former Franciscan, but he, too, could make no headway in reconciling the differences among the various factions in the congregation. He resigned as pastor in 1848.

Needless to say, Bishop Fenwick encountered difficulties in enticing German secular clergy to come and serve Boston's German immigrant Catholic community. He died in 1846, being replaced by Bishop John Bernard Fitzpatrick, who was impatient with the discord in the German community. In fact, Bishop Fitzpatrick was so angry with the Germans that he threatened to close Holy Trinity church altogether. At this point the Germans were rescued from themselves. The Bishop reached an agreement with the Society of Jesus which would enable the Jesuits to assume control of the parish, an arrangement which would continue until 1961, when the church again reverted to control of the secular clergy. Thus, the parish was now handed over to Rev. Gustave Eck, S.J., in a last ditch effort to maintain the parish. Father Eck would serve at Holy Trinity from 1848 until 1854, the first in a long line of Jesuit pastors and assistants. Included in the agreement between the Bishop and the Jesuits was the stipulation that the Jesuit Fathers at Holy Trinity would receive a salary from the diocese for their work at the church in addition to the regular contributions that pastors normally received. Father Eck was under no illusion with

regard to the difficult task which he had undertaken. Prior to his arrival at the parish Bishop Fitzpatrick had written him a letter, stating that the Germans were a difficult lot at best, and that rough seas no doubt lay ahead for any new pastor.

Father Eck was a kind and affable man. Ably aided by a number of assistants from Europe, Father Eck soon reversed the downward spiral of the parish, reconciling the various hostile factions. His particular fondness for children led to his winning the hearts of their parents, whom he convinced to act in common cause. Father Eck's approach included the founding of a number of Holy Trinity organizations (see Chapter VII). He instituted the Rosary Society, founded the St. Vincent de Paul Society, as well as two sodalities of the Blessed Virgin in 1851 (one for men, the other for young women), and initiated the Stations of the Cross. During that same year, 1851, a rectory was finally erected on Middlesex Street. Father Eck also managed to make a number of improvements and embellishments to the church itself, including a high altar, an organ and the renovation of the basement.

Although the number of immigrants from Ireland overwhelmed Boston in the 1840s and 1850s (of a total city population of 160,000 in 1855, 50,000 were Irish), by the second year of Father Eck's tenure, Boston also saw a marked increase in the number of immigrants from Germany, which meant that a larger church was a necessity. In fact, the late 1840s saw upwards of 100,000 immigrants coming to America from Germany per



*The old church, 1844 - 1877*

year. Boston had a population of about 1,500 Germans at this point, evenly split between Catholics and Protestants.

There were several reasons for this large influx of Germans to the shores of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. First of all, there occurred two natural disasters in Europe, the potato blight and the failure of grain crops (due to bad weather), which ravaged much of the continent and the British Isles. These developments led to a fifty percent rise in the cost of staple food. Starvation was a real possibility for many. Secondly, in 1848, ill-fated liberal revolutions swept through most of continental Europe and the Germanies were no exception. The Prussian army, having reformed itself since the ignominious defeats of the Napoleonic era, was deployed as the fire brigade of the reactionary Hohenzollern monarchy in Prussia, and also assisted other authoritarian German governments in suppressing revolutionary activity throughout southwestern Germany. The Prussians managed to occupy the Palatinate without much difficulty, but the situation in Baden was of an entirely different sort. The army of Baden had sided with the forces of revolution, and the Prussians engaged them in bloody battles. The superiority of the Prussian forces prevailed, and severe retribution was meted out to an embittered population, many of whom embraced liberal political philosophies. Many of these liberals decided to leave their homeland and make a new start in the United States, where they and their descendants would make a significant contribution to American democracy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thirdly, the 1850s saw a rapid increase in Prussia's economic situation, with the rural population declining from a little over fifty-one percent to forty percent. The population of the cities was on the rise, but the development of industry was not yet keeping pace with this growth, resulting in another million Germans immigrating to America.

In order to accommodate the growth of the German immigrant Catholic community in Boston, Father Eck planned to construct the greatest Gothic structure in the United States, complete with a pair of steeples. He started a collection, the Three Cent Society, to this end. Bishop Fitzpatrick told Father Eck that he could begin construction on this project as long as he had the money to do it. Subsequently, Bishop Fitzpatrick departed for a two month stay in Europe. With the permission of Jesuit Provincial, Rev. Ignatius Brocard, S.J., Father Eck commenced building on the corner of Tremont and East Canton Streets in 1853, although the original church still had a debt of eight thousand dollars, and the rectory, too, was not yet paid for. A certain John Keely of Brooklyn, New York, was to build this grand structure, which was to be dedicated to the Immaculate

Conception. But, the whole undertaking was a bit much for the parish to support financially. In addition, it seems that the builders' priority was to gouge the parish. Before long the Jesuit Provincial, Father Brocard, died. No longer enjoying the Father Provincial's moral support and quickly running out of funds, Father Eck was forced to secure loans from banks and private sources in order to pay the builders. When Bishop Fitzpatrick returned from his trip to Europe and heard about the project, he was furious. He was angry that the whole undertaking had gone forward without his express authorization. In yet another turn of bad luck, Father Eck's health, which had been deteriorating due to the terrific strain under which he worked, required that he take a rest on physicians' order. He departed for Bangor, Maine, in 1854, in order to stay with his good friend Rev. John Bapst, S.J. However, this respite was not sufficient to restore his health, and his doctor urged him to journey to Europe for a cure. With any luck he would be able to return not only with restored health, but also with money from his wealthy friends on the Continent. To these ends he boarded a steamer on August 30, 1854 (with the passage paid for by a Holy Trinity parishioner, a Mrs. Kraemer). Father Eck would never return. Some parishioners would accuse him of absconding with parish funds earmarked for the construction of the new church. At this point, construction of the church was halted and the builder received as compensation the land and construction materials.

With the parish in a state of disillusionment, depression and debt, a number of Jesuit pastors quickly passed through Holy Trinity between 1854 and 1859, namely Fathers Ernest Reiter, John Cattani, and Norbert Steinbacher. In 1859, Father Ernest Reiter, S.J., returned to the parish, staying until July of 1870, when he was ordered to assist in the Jesuit Buffalo Mission of New York. Father Reiter had been born in February 1821, at Arensburg in Westphalia. He studied at the diocesan seminary of Paderborn, the University of Munich and the Roman College. Ordained in 1846, he began his ministry in his native state of Westphalia. Soon he encountered a number of Jesuits who had been expelled from Switzerland, and their influence upon him was so great that he decided to enter the Society of Jesus, transferring to Alsace to begin his noviceship at Issenheim. He came to the United States in 1854.

During Father Reiter's tenure at Holy Trinity we see the first attempt by the Jesuits to return the parish to the diocese. (There would be others, too: in 1919, 1946, and 1961, when control was finally given back to the Archdiocese of Boston). In 1860, Father Reiter asked that the diocese take control of the parish due to the bad debt situation and also because there was a lack of German-speaking priests to properly administer to the congregation. It appears that for financial reasons

the diocese was unwilling to accept this burden. The Jesuits now attempted to convince the Redemptorist fathers (who would form the nucleus of the Mission Church in Roxbury) to take charge of Holy Trinity, but they also refused, claiming that it would be too much of a burden for them to shoulder. Thus, Father Reiter was forced to use his own salary from the diocese and any donations he could scrape up in order to pay off the church's debt, which he managed to do at great effort. In order to assist Father Reiter in this task, the Father General of the Society of Jesus in Rome sent a Rev. F. Soprani as Visitor to the United States to ease the administration of the financial burden at Holy Trinity. Father Reiter told the parishioners that "one of my brothers incurred these debts in good faith; it is our duty to reconcile them." Father Reiter brought heart to the parishioners, which they so desperately needed at this juncture. Through skillful administration, in a period of five years the loans and debts had been repaid, including those owed to the parishioners. In fact, the parishioners were now willing to contribute to the physical improvement of their church. Father Reiter was now actually able to buy more land on Shawmut Avenue and collected enough money to build a new and larger church! In addition, he acquired a set of bells for \$1,500 from a parish church in New Orleans, Louisiana, which had made their way to Boston via the hands of Union General Benjamin Butler. Butler was a former Massachusetts governor, political general par excellence (he was not a professional soldier), inept military commander and despised military governor of New Orleans, who had impounded the bells from one of the southern city's parishes. In 1863, these bells rang in the tower of Holy Trinity. (And speaking of the Civil War, forty-two Holy Trinity men served in the Union Army, fifteen of whom were killed in action.)

As Holy Trinity emerged as a viable parish during Father Reiter's tenure, the City of Boston decided to overhaul the South End, which amounted to raising the Suffolk Street area. The project to raise the South End was a massive undertaking for the mid-nineteenth century, with men, animals and trains working around the clock to lift this section of the city by ten feet. In an amazingly short space of time the South End was transformed, with whole streets disappearing and new construction of every type being erected. Holy Trinity Church itself was too solid to be moved. Therefore, the basement was abandoned and filled up to street level, and the rectory was raised ten feet, an endeavor which took some three months to complete.

Father Reiter would not supervise the completion of the building of the new church. He was called away to New York as the Buffalo Mission had been turned over from the New York Province to the German

Province, and he was needed to give the German priests his experience in dealing with American life. Amidst a great outpouring of tears from the parishioners of Holy Trinity, he was given a lavish send-off as he embarked upon a new chapter of his life in mission work in New York, which would include establishing St. Joseph's Church in Erie at the specific request of the local bishop. His success among the parishioners of St. Joseph's was so great that they asked that he become their pastor, a hope that was dashed with his untimely death from erysipelas in May 1873.

As the German Catholics in Boston were well on their way to becoming an established community in their new homeland, they were also aware of the ordeal of their relatives remaining in Germany. The 1870s were a difficult time for German Catholics in the newly united Germany, and for the Jesuits in particular. A powerful German Reich had come into existence after the victorious Prusso-German armies decisively defeated France in the War of 1870. Several years earlier, in 1864, Pope Pius IX had attached the prevailing ideology of the rising middle class, liberalism, and in 1870, declared that the Pope was infallible in matters of dogma. The Pope also insisted that the Vatican would exercise primary control over bishops. Many liberals, as well as conservatives, thought that the Papacy was attempting to stem the tide of centralized state control of society, and a general trend towards secularization at the expense of religious forces. In the new Germany especially, the liberals believed that the only acceptable allegiance a German citizen could swear was that to the national state, and Catholics, regarded as "ultramontanes," were viewed by liberals as being less than patriotic citizens. At this time, too, a new Catholic political party, the Center Party (Zentrum Partei), had come into existence, drawing most of its support from the Catholic strongholds of Silesia, Westphalia and the Rhineland. The Center Party sought to safeguard the rights of German Catholics against the irreligious powers of the state. The Center Party quickly became a major player in the German Parliament, the Reichstag, much to the dismay of the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, a practitioner of Realpolitik (the "politics of reality," i.e., power politics), who courted the liberals in order to advance his own domestic and foreign agendas. Thus, he sponsored successful legislation in the Reichstag which removed all religious control of schools in Germany, a measure which ushered in a dark chapter in the history of modern Germany known as the Kulturkampf (i.e., culture war). In July 1872, the Reichstag passed a law against the Jesuits in particular. Many (including Kaiser Wilhelm I) believed that the Jesuits were in cahoots with the Jews in an international conspiracy against the Fatherland. This law effectively suppressed Jesuit activity in the Reich

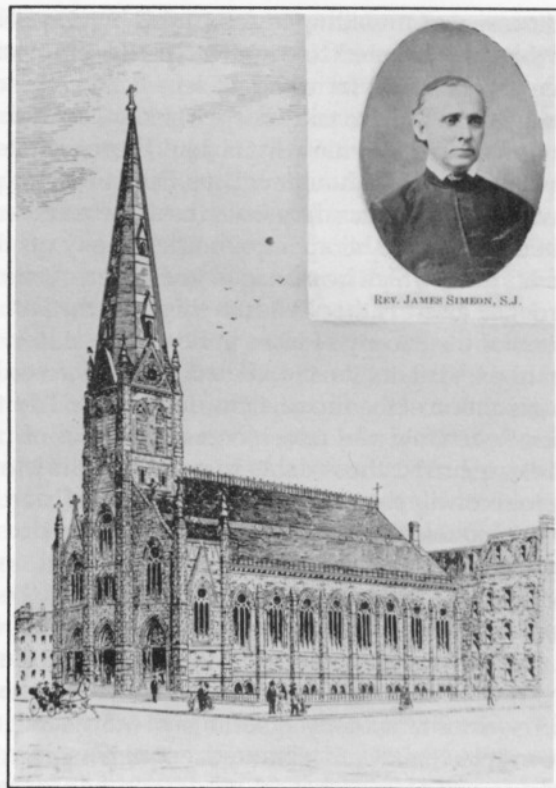
closing down the Jesuit center, limiting the stays of Jesuits in Germany and prohibiting all foreign Jesuits from entering the country. The Kulturkampf would ultimately fail, and Bismarck would back away from it, but it left a deep wound in many German Catholics, especially the Jesuits and their friends, for many years to come. It is not surprising that over two million Germans came to America during the 1870s, two thousand of them settling in Boston.

The new Holy Trinity Church was completed under Father Reiter's successor, Rev. James Simeon, S.J. of Washington, DC. It was built on the corner of Cobb Street and Shawmut Avenue according to specifications of architect P.C. Keely. Bishop John J. Williams, laid the cornerstone on November 10, 1872, the day after the infamous Boston Fire which destroyed nearly the entire downtown section of the city, between Summer and Milk Streets, State Street, and then to Washington Street at a cost of upwards of ninety million dollars. Father Reiter had returned from the Buffalo Mission to give the sermon but the attendance was rather limited, as most of the parishioners had rushed off to see the devastation wrought by the fire. The first Mass was celebrated in the basement on May 1, 1874, by Father Simeon. Final payment for the last leg of construction was made possible by a loan secured by the Bishop, parishioner contributions and fairs, music concerts, and similar activities.

On May 27, 1877, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, Archbishop Williams (he became the first Archbishop of Boston in 1875) dedicated the new church, which had cost roughly a quarter of a million dollars (land, church and rectory). Like the first church, it was also built of Roxbury puddingstone and trimmed in Maine granite. Instead of towers, it had a tall steeple which graced Boston's South End skyline until 1938, when a hurricane damaged it to such an extent that it had to be removed. The new church had a seating capacity of 1,200, with the lower church accommodating seven hundred.

As historian Thomas H. O'Connor indicates in his history of Boston, Bibles, Brahmins, and Bosses, the South End, initially intended as the residence of the "better people," had by 1870, become not a haven of the upper classes, but a neighborhood for middle class people, including German immigrants, many of whom were people of means. The Brahmins had elected to move into the brownstones of the Back Bay, south of Boston Street. Simultaneously, by the eighth decade of the nineteenth century Boston had grown to thirty times its original size, incorporating the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, Charlestown, Brighton and West Roxbury. The population of the city in 1865 was 140,000. Ten years later it stood at 341,000.

Father Simeon returned to Europe in 1877. He was



*Die neue hl. Dreifaltigkeits ~ Kirche*

replaced as pastor of Holy Trinity by Rev. Franz X. Nopper, S.J., who would lead the parish for the next fifteen years until he was transferred to the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, where he died in 1895. When Father Nopper assumed direction of the parish, it had a debt of \$110,000. He made great strides to reduce it. In fact, he was able to purchase some important additions to the church, including statues, a baptismal font, an iron fence to surround the church, and also made necessary repairs and renovations to the parish buildings. Father Nopper was one of the most popular pastors of the parish. For his Silver Jubilee at Holy Trinity, Father Nopper was honored by one thousand admirers and well-wishers, all meeting in the Casino Hall, which was built to accommodate six hundred people. Upon his death in 1895, the congregation established a scholarship in his name at Boston College. Perhaps his greatest legacy was the founding of the St. Francis "Home" on Ellis and Highland Streets in Roxbury (grade school, orphanage and old peoples' home—see Chapter V). Father Nopper also wrote two first-rate histories of Holy Trinity.

Father Nopper's tenure was not marked by smooth sailing on all fronts however. As the official historians of the Archdiocese of Boston State in History of the Archdiocese of Boston In the Various States of Development, 1604-1943, Germans throughout American filed complaints with the Vatican to the effect that



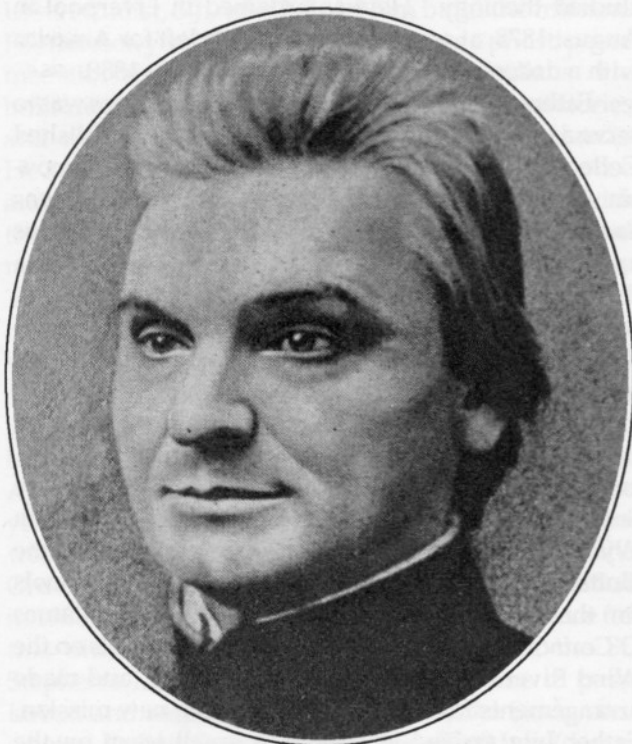
American bishops looked upon the national churches, i.e., foreign language churches, as temporary make-shift arrangements, that the church hierarchy in the United States was denying them equal rights with English-speaking parishes, and that they practiced a general policy of discrimination. In the midst of this discord Archbishop Heiss of Milwaukee dispatched Rev. P.M. Abbelen to Rome in the autumn of 1886, in order to deliver the Germans' grievances to the Propaganda (the committee responsible for the Propagation of the Faith and foreign missions). The message was in fact moderate in tone, yet many believed that the Germans were accusing the Irish bishops of denying the Germans their rights, as being oblivious to their spiritual welfare, and generally, persecuting them. Counter-arguments were also put forth in Rome. In December several bishops from the eastern United States drafted a letter to the Vatican which assailed the actions of German bishops who had never mentioned their grievances to their American counterparts but had appealed directly to Rome. In short, the American bishops condemned the whole idea of nationalism in the Catholic Church. The upshot of the controversy saw the Propaganda reject the bulk of the Germans' demands, although some minor concessions were granted. But four years later, the German-American problem again came to the fore. This was a result not so much of the actions of Americans but of Germans in Germany, where the secretary of the St. Raphael soci-



*Waifenhaus und Altenheim*

ety for the Protection of German Catholic Emigrants, Peter Paul Cahensly, who had devoted his life to railing against persecution of Germans in America, held a meeting in Switzerland in December 1890, under the auspices of an International Congress on Emigration. Those in attendance were for the most part Germans and Austrians, giving the appearance of a German attack on the American Church hierarchy. Shortly after this conference, Cahensly took a petition to the Vatican in which he advocated creating a federation of national churches in the United States, demanding that each radical group receive a quota of appointments to the episcopate in proportion to its numerical strength. He made the wild assertion that over sixteen million Catholics had fallen away from the faith due to a lack of clergy of the various immigrant groups. Meanwhile, he had attracted the attention of the United States government, which was not keen on the idea of a Germanic plan to change the American Church and influence the American people. The bishops now sent the Vatican numerous protests with regard to Cahensly's scheme. The Vatican ultimately rejected Cahensly's plan, but his actions had far-reaching effect. Cahensly had influenced many Americans of German origin into believing that they were being treated unfairly by their American bishops and throughout the 1890s, they steadfastly opposed the more liberal bishops whom they considered their opponents.

Father Nopper was succeeded by Rev. Nicholas Greisch, S.J. (1892-1893), who completed payment on the mortgage on the Cobb Street property and reduced the remaining parish debt to \$65,000. It was Father Greisch who introduced an inner circle of six church council members (Kirchenrat) to assist the priests in administering to the worldly affairs of the parish during this period of growth. Father Greisch was succeeded by Rev. Charles de Gudenus, S.J., who had a brief tenure as pastor of Holy Trinity (1893-1896).



*Rev. Franz X. Nopper, S.J.*

## CHAPTER II:

# A GERMAN COLONY

By the turn of the century, German immigration to Boston had slowed down to next to nothing. As historian Thomas H. O'Connor indicates, most of the newly arriving immigrants came from Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Poland and the Balkans. A considerable number of Jews and Orientals also began settling in Boston. This influx of foreign people led to bigotry, most notably in the form of the Immigration Restriction League of Boston, an organization founded by three Harvard graduates in 1894, and championed by Republican Congressman Henry Cabot Lodge. Attempts by the Brahmins to assimilate foreign races into mainstream society through the sponsoring of cultural institutions to improve society, for example the new Boston Public Library in Copley Square (erected in 1895), had seemingly failed. The "better people" were concerned that if "inferior races" were not kept out of Boston, the "Hub of the Universe" would degenerate into something less than civilized. (The bigotry would continue into the 1920s, when most of the objectives of the Immigration Restriction League would become absorbed into federal legislation.) Boston was segregated into ethnic enclaves, which was reflected in the political sphere as local and state government provided socio-economic advancements for the various ethnic groups. The "better people" perceived the Irish as the most threatening of the ethnic groups, especially as a political force. For the Irish, it was an age of colorful ethnic politics. Political bosses such as John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, who would become Mayor of Boston, became the new power brokers in Boston. The uproarious South End native James Michael Curley appeared upon the political scene at this time, too. He would remain a force in local and state politics through the 1950s. Curley brought to politics a new type of leadership. Unlike Fitzgerald, he was not a political boss with a limited ethnic constituency. Curley appealed to all ethnic groups in Boston, frustrating bosses and Brahmins alike as he forged a broad base of support city-wide.

As the character of the city changed, that of Holy Trinity parish itself changed. It had gradually gone from a clear-cut national parish into one that was neither local nor strictly national. About seventy percent of the parishioners were of German ancestry, but they did not speak German. They attended Holy Trinity because of family tradition, their attachment to the Jesuits and their membership in the sodalities and other parish organizations.

The wiry Rev. John J. Jutz, S.J., assumed the mantle

of pastor of Holy Trinity in 1896. Born in Frastanz, Vorarlberg, Austria (near Feldkirch), in October 1838, he was the oldest of eight children of a good Catholic family. As a youth he expressed a desire to become a priest, but he would not join the Society of Jesus until he was thirty-one years of age, when he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Gorheim, near Signmaringen. The reason for his relatively late start was due to the fact that he had to go to work at an early age as an apprentice and journeyman molder to help support his family. He worked as a molder for fifteen years, becoming the sole support of his family in the wake of his father's death. As his siblings grew older and could assist the family financially, John decided to marry. All the preparations were made for his marriage: a date set, furniture purchased for the new home, etc. when his fiancée died quite unexpectedly after a short illness. John viewed this event as providential, and during a retreat decided to embark on a program of education under the encouragement of a local Jesuit. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1869.

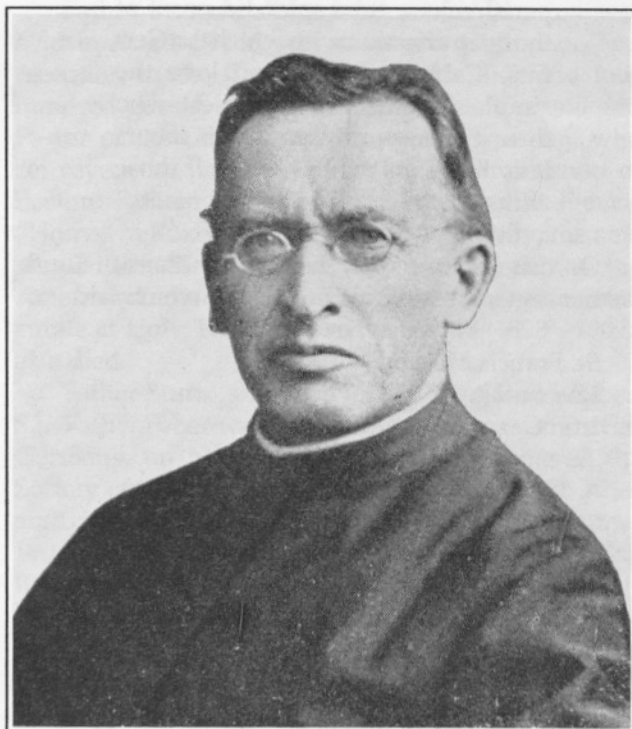
During the Franco-Prussian war the young Jesuit served with exceptional bravery on the battlefield as he cared for the wounded. Through overwork in his care of wounded soldiers, he contracted typhoid and smallpox from which he made a heroic recovery in little time. After the war the new German government's anti-Jesuit laws drove him into exile, first in Holland, where he studied philosophy, and then in Britain, where he studied theology. He was ordained in Liverpool in August 1878, at age forty. Father Jutz left for America with a dozen other priests and brothers in 1880.

Father Jutz' first mission in the United States was to serve as minister and curator of the newly established College of the Sacred Heart at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. He took his last vows here in 1881. After a year as an assistant rector at St. Gabriel's, Prairie, he started his apostolic work for the Indians, embarking upon a decade long odyssey as a missionary among the Arapahoe, Shoshoni and Sioux Indians of South Dakota and Wyoming. He founded St. Stephen's Mission in 1884, and then, after eighteen months of pioneer work, went to South Dakota to establish the St. Francis Mission on the Rosebud Reservation. The Jesuits were not strangers to this part of North America: Father Peter Jan De Smet ("Blackrobe") had founded a Jesuit mission in Wyoming around 1840. Now in the early 1880s, the United States government wanted to establish schools for the Indians on the reservations. Bishop James O'Connor of Omaha offered to establish schools on the Wind River Reservation at Fort Washakie, and made arrangements for Father Jutz to found a new mission. Father Jutz arrived at Lander, a small town on the southwest edge of the reservation on April 20, 1884, discovering much to his dismay that an Episcopal

minister, Rev. John Roberts, had already set up a school for the Shoshoni. With a pony, a tent and a couple of boards, Father Jutz made his way to the eastern part of the reservation and established a mission for the Northern Arapahoes. In his book about his experiences, Recollections of an Old Indian Missionary, he wrote:

I began at once to pitch my tent and to put up an altar for Mass on the following morning. Chief Black Coal was my next door neighbor, so I invited him to watch me during the Mass. He and his two wives sat down upon the ground before my tent and witnessed with awe the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. The Mass was my only spiritual occupation as I did not understand the Indian language. I next enlarged my habitation by making another tent out of the extra canvas which is usually spread out over the tent itself. My sleeping apartment was in a corner of the tent and my bed a mattress made of huge branches covered with a buffalo hide. My kitchen was a hole in the ground into which I laid a few stones.

Father Jutz was soon joined by a Jesuit brother, Ursis Nunlist, S.J., who helped him build the mission. For thirteen years Father Jutz worked as a priest, peace mediator and active laborer among the Indians. He built churches, mission buildings, schools, dormitories and workshops, and planted gardens and orchards. He and Brother Nunlist single-handedly built a house and school, digging a well two hundred feet deep with their own hands, hauling timber thirty-five miles and making bricks from the earth. (While a pastor at Holy Trinity, Father Jutz was also the resident mechanical handyman: "Father Jutz can repair anything" was a common saying among the parishioners who were less skilled with tools.) Father Jutz hoped to combine worship with education. In 1887, he was ordered to build the Mission of the Holy Rosary at the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota, where he stayed for nine years. Mother Katherine M. Drexel of Philadelphia, the wealthy heiress to the Drexel fortune (she founded the Order of the Blessed Sacrament in 1891 and was beatified in 1988), provided much of the financial assistance for this undertaking. Without her assistance the St. Stephen's Mission would never have come to pass. Loved and respected by the Indians, the Sioux considered Father "Iron Gaze" or "Iron Eye" Jutz (due to his metal framed spectacles) "a brave man, braver than any Indian."



*Rev. John Jutz, S.J.*

A pious and fatherly priest, Father Jutz founded Holy Trinity Church's monthly parish newspaper, the Monatsbote (Monthly Messenger), in 1899, which is published to this day. Originally printed in German and English, it provided parish news concerning the various religious and community organizations as well as articles of literary interest. Its first editor was John J. Kormann, a native parishioner who was educated in Europe and at Canisius College in Buffalo.

The parishioners of Holy Trinity sponsored a gala celebration for Father Jutz on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee as a priest in 1903, keeping Father Jutz in the dark as to the planned festivities. In his honor the parishioners donated a marble altar in the sanctuary in the basement of Holy Trinity. On August 30, 1903, Father Jutz sang the solemn High Mass in the beautifully decorated church, with Bishop William Stang of Providence, Rhode Island (later first Bishop of Fall River), preaching a splendid sermon which went straight to the hearts of the congregation. During the evening a reception and banquet attended by some four hundred people, including twenty-five priests, was given in the Casino Hall. The Jesuit organ, the Woodstock Letters, stated that:

The demonstrations in honor of Father Jutz's Silver Jubilee, which were absolutely spontaneous on the part of the

parishioners, gave splendid proof of the deep affection with which the German Catholics of Boston love the simple, saintly, zealous priest who during the seven years of his labors here has won the hearts of all those with whom he has come in contact.

On this occasion, too, the Sioux Indians of South Dakota sent a message to Father Jutz, which said:

St. Francis Mission  
Rosebud Agency, Dakota  
Iron Gaze (Father Jutz),

We have heard that you are a holyman (priest) for 25 summers. We ask the Great Spirit to help you and strengthen you. We wish to thank you. Father, remember your Indians of St. Francis Mission when you pray to the Great Spirit. I shake your hands with joy.

John Francis Reclining Bull, Chief.

Father Jutz lived with the following aim: "My daily resolution shall be, 'I shall become a saint today'; for if I can lead a holy life for the day, I shall be able to become a saint."

While serving at Holy Trinity, Father Jutz and his assistant, Rev. Alexander von Ascheberg, were singled out for praise by the German government, which had changed its tune with regard to Catholics and Jesuits in particular. Both men, having served the German armies in the field and in the hospitals with distinction during the Franco-Prussian War (often demonstrating exceptional bravery), were now honored by a grateful Kaiser Wilhelm II, who bestowed upon these two priests medals bearing a likeness of his grandfather, Kaiser Wilhelm I, on the centennial anniversary of the late Kaiser's birth. The decorations were made from melted bronze French cannons.

Under Father Jutz' leadership Holy Trinity became a model parish in the city of Boston, as indicated in the following quotation from W.M. Byrne's 1899 History of the Catholic Church in the New England States, Volume I:

The organization of the parish is so complete and far-reaching that it resembles a colony rather than a congregation. To the Germans belongs the distinction of having established . . . the first Catholic parish schools in New England, and at the present time as

many as six hundred pupils . . . are enrolled in the three schools which they support. One of these, for older pupils, situated opposite the church, is conducted by German Sisters of Notre Dame, who were brought here from Cincinnati by Father Reiter in 1859. Another for younger children is maintained in connection with St. Elizabeth's chapel and the German House on Ellis Street, Roxbury, by the Sisters of St. Francis, and there is a primary school in South Boston. The instruction is given in high German, although the parishioners, coming from all parts of Germany and Austria, still speak in their homes many dialects. Minor differences, it would appear, are now completely sunk in the spirit of loyalty to common faith and the mother tongue.

The number of societies connected with this church is unusual. They embrace social, intellectual and commercial objects, as well as benevolent and religious ones.

The congregation had grown to some six thousand by 1900. An ever increasing proportion of the German Catholic families chose to make Roxbury their neighborhood. Yet strong national feelings drove them to worship at the church on Shawmut Avenue, for which they had intense feelings of loyalty.

Here, in an edifice of solid design and serious interior, they love to hear the precious accents of the mother tongue and listen to the music which, in its avoidance of florid repetition and its humility of subordination to the altar service, is probably the most profoundly religious in the city.

One of the more remarkable parishioners of this era was Mary A. Dierkes (1870-1950), a native of South Boston and lifelong member of the Holy Trinity Young Ladies' Sodality. After studying voice in both Boston and Leipzig, Germany, she was elected as the first female member of the Boston School Committee, serving from 1903 to 1905. Her contribution to the Boston Public Schools included improving the way in which music was taught, upgrading textbook standards and raising teacher salaries. She was also quite active in the Horace Mann School for the Deaf. In 1903, she was selected to represent the Boston School Committee at



the National Education Association convention. In addition to all of this, she was involved with the Logan Island Hospital and Almshouse, and from 1914-1920, served as trustee and secretary of the Boston Infirmary Department Board.

Rev. Edmund J. Sturm, S.J., succeeded Father Jutz in 1906 (Father Jutz would die of kidney failure in 1924 at age eighty-six), and served as Holy Trinity's pastor until his death in 1910. A Jesuit priest for eleven years prior to his assignment at Holy Trinity, Father Sturm was born on November 16, 1859, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He studied at St. Francis College in his hometown, and later in Belgium. Ordained in August 1884, he worked for seven years in Chippewa Falls and West Superior, establishing churches and schools. The assignments included service as Pastor at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Plains, Sank County, Wisconsin. After several years he entered the Society of Jesus. Before long he was serving as a professor and prefect general of Canisius College prior to being sent to Holy Trinity, where he served four years, taking a particular interest in the young people of the parish. As moderator of the Young Men's Sodality, he stressed the philosophy of life as "not what is the least I can do—but what remains for us to be done." Among Father Sturm's accomplishments was the erection of the marble altar on the right side of the basement in the church.

Two of Father Sturm's assistants, Rev. J.P.M. Schleuter, S.J., and Rev. Robert Swickerath, S.J., made significant contributions to the parish during the early twentieth century. Father Schleuter, who celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his entrance into the Society of Jesus on March 30, 1911, was the spiritual moderator of the Young Ladies' Sodality. He had played a instrumental role in establishing the group's library in 1900, one of the first Catholic libraries in Boston. The Woodstock Letters cited a passage from the Sacred Heart Review, stating that "One of the striking characteristics of Father Schleuter's life-long labors has been his interest in Catholic literature. A firm believer in the power of the press, he has been unceasing in his use of it." Among his publications were "An Hour with a Sincere Protestant," and the translations of the Rev. W. Cramer's "The Christian Father" and "The Christian Mother," which were widely read. Father Swickerath (later professor of philosophy and librarian at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts) founded the Holy Trinity Debating Society, the first officers being Robert Kirchgaessner, Edward Mueller, Victor Mueller and Karl Walter.

It was during Father Sturm's tenure that the Monatsbote was reduced in size from that of a standard newspaper to a smaller pamphlet, the number of pages was increased from eight to thirty-two, and the price was raised from fifty cents to one dollar.

Father Sturm's silver Jubilee of ordination was held in August 1906, with a solemn High mass and reception in the Casino Hall, which included four hundred guests, among them the Vicar General and Pastor of the Cathedral, Monsignor Patterson, who conveyed the congratulations of the Archbishop of Boston. Father Sturm died unexpectedly at St. Francis "Home" in Roxbury in June 1910. Tragically, the next month Rev. Henry Geron, S.J., a missionary to the American Indians and to Britain before serving as a curate at Holy Trinity for sixteen years (1893—1909), also died.

Father Sturm's successor was Rev. Joseph Faber, S.J. Father Faber was born in Moselkern, near Treves, Germany, on November 17, 1855. He entered the Society of Jesus in September 1876, in Holland. After studying philosophy and theology in Holland and Britain, he sailed for the United States in 1890, taking final vows in 1891, while serving as coadjutor at Canisius High School. In August 1894, he was selected to serve as rector of St. Michael's in Buffalo, New York, where he stayed until 1908. His next assignment was as assistant at Holy Trinity from 1908 to 1910, and as rector from 1910 to 1918, which included the difficult years of the Great War. Father Faber's accomplishments while at Holy Trinity included the building of a new school in the basement of the St. Francis "Home" in Roxbury, the installation of stained glass windows in the lower church, and the installation of a marble communion railing as well as new Stations of the Cross in the upper church.

By the time Father Faber's tenure was over, Holy Trinity parish had in fact become a mission in the true sense of the word, with three schools and a large number of parish organizations, which meant that the priests were run ragged, as the parishioners were spread far and wide throughout the city.

The First World War brought discrimination and ill-feelings towards the Germans of Boston. During the first three years of the war, 1914—1917, the tone of the parish was one of pity for both sides in the European conflict. But there was a natural tendency to root for Germany. On January 27, 1915, a concert was held in the Casino Hall in honor of Kaiser Wilhelm II's birthday, featuring the music of the orchestra of the Hamburg-America steamer "Cincinnati," assisted by the Casino Dramatic Club and Holy Trinity Men's Choir (the famous Maennerchor), with the proceeds going to parish charities. In May of the same year, the Holy Trinity Athletic Association held its annual exhibition and donated the proceeds to the widows and orphans of German soldiers killed in battle.

There was also an attempt to counter the anti-German propaganda which had been put forth by the British and French, which portrayed the Germans as

the "murderous Huns" who committed all sorts of atrocities against the Belgians and French. The May 1915 issue of the Monatsbote portrayed German Admiral Graf von Spee as both a hero and practicing Roman Catholic. The average German soldier was also portrayed as a decent and religious person. In a Monatsbote from August 1915, there is a report from a French captain who found religious pictures and prayer books among dead German soldiers. The Captain is reported to have said: "I firmly believe that the dead soldiers I encountered were not responsible for murdering women, children, old people and the wounded." In fact the Kaiser himself was portrayed as a Christian gentleman (although not a Catholic): the same Monatsbote records his awarding the Red Cross Medal, First Class, to the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg and her mother for aiding wounded soldiers of both the German and French armies. The Austrian Kaiser, Franz Josef, too, received favorable mention in the parish press on the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday in 1915. And the feats of the German armies themselves did not go unnoticed. In November 1915, the Monatsbote spoke of the Kaiser personally awarding the Iron Cross, First Class, to Crown Prince Georg of Saxony for exceptional service at the front. The Monatsbote also contained reports of a chaplain from Baden depicting heroic Rhinelanders as "selfless Roman Catholics," as well as heroic exploits of Catholics from the Tyrol. The mood of the country had not yet turned against the Germans. During the evening of May 12, 1915, at a meeting of the Holy Trinity Schoolboy Association, Boston Mayor James Michael Curley gave a speech praising the German contribution to America, stating that to a great degree, America's German immigrants had allowed the United States to make unprecedented progress in the fields of science, art and industry.

Holy Trinity parishioners saw themselves as good, hard-working Americans, and the anti-German feeling which swept the nation in the spring of 1917, after Congress declared war on Germany, did much to hurt them. Historian Thomas H. O'Connor points out that Boston was one of the most patriotic cities in America, hosting numerous recruiting drives and bond drives. The city was in fact the military and naval headquarters of the New England region, and was a principal shipping port. The harbor was mined and an anti-submarine screen was placed in the surrounding waters to keep German U-boats from entering. The people of Boston followed closely the heroic exploits of their locally raised 26th Infantry Division, the "Yankee Division," which fought with distinction at Belleau Wood, Chateau Thierry and the Argonne. While protesting the portrayal of the German soldier as the "Hun," the people of the parish proved themselves to be loyal

American patriots in the best sense of the word, and rallied to the cause. The hurt of discrimination was made even worse with the sacrifice and worry resulting from the fact that ninety men of the parish served in the United States armed forces during the First World War, three being killed in action. One parishioner, Mrs. John Berlo of Dorchester, collected woollens for the men in service, who she noticed, were "leaving in increasing batches." A parish knitting circle was established to make clothes for American troops in France. The Monatsbote itself sacrificed for the war effort: the traditional green cover was forsaken for plain white, due to the scarcity of dyes. Father Faber wrote to the Jesuit Provincial in April 1917 (the month the United States declared war on Germany), that

troublesome times have begun for us Germans and us all. We need the Christian courage, confidence in God and true prudence and patience. We need your prayers. Of course the eyes of all are turned towards our German parish but we hope to be left in peace. All the Fathers are American citizens.

Mention must be made of yet another important development at Holy Trinity during the years of the Great War. This was the arrival of a new assistant, Rev. Joseph Keller, S.J., in July 1916. Father Keller had been working as a missionary in Jamaica. He established his living quarters at the old people's home in Roxbury. For the next quarter century Father Keller acted as the parish director of the Little Flower Missionary Club. The Little Flower Missionary Club collected literally tens of thousands of dollars, from annual sales, penny sales and other activities. The money was sent to overseas missions.

Father Faber was recalled to Buffalo to take over St. Ann's Church in the spring of 1918. (Father Faber would die of diabetes in 1926, in Buffalo.) He handed the parish over to Rev. John B. Schmandt, S.J. The next few months would be a difficult time for the parish. In April tragedy shocked the parish as Father Schleuter died suddenly while standing on the corner of Tremont and Pleasant Streets in Boston. He had been on his way to the print shop with that month's Monatsbote manuscript in his hands, bringing to an end a quarter-century of faithful service to the parish. Father Schmandt unfortunately died in October 1918, a victim of the Spanish Influenza ravaging Boston (Holy Trinity schools were forced to close for the last week in September 1918, due to the epidemic) and other major American cities during the last few weeks of World War I. The epidemic lasted through the end of November 1918.

Father Schmandt was replaced by the genial Rev. Bernard C. Cohausz, S.J., who immediately began to reorganize the parish, improving parish life and finances. He revitalized the religious life of the community, introducing Lenten devotions at noon along with other spiritual activities.

Father Cohausz was born October 30, 1868, in Norwalde, a suburb of Muenster in the German state of Westphalia. The son of a well-to-do linen merchant, Father Cohausz came from a devout Catholic family. His grandfather had been one of the founders of the German Catholic Center Party; his ancestors were the parents of the great German Jesuit Peter Canisius. (At the canonization of Canisius in 1926, Father Cohausz received a special invitation to attend the ceremony in Rome.) His mother, the former Pauline Vreda, was pious woman, as were her two sisters, both of whom became nuns, one a Franciscan, the other entered the Society of the Sacred Heart. His father August became the father of two Jesuit priests, Bernard and Otto. Bernard was the oldest of eight children. He went to primary school at a local institution and graduated from the Gymnasium Paulinum in East Muenster in 1889, having displayed a wide range of academic talents. Intelligent, jovial and well-respected by his classmates, he apparently had a bright future as a businessman, but he had a religious calling which could not be ignored. Thus, in April 1889, less than two months after leaving the Gymnasium, he entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Blyenbeck, Holland. The Novitiate was housed in a castle given to the exiled Jesuits by Countess Von Hoensbrook. His classmates included his successor as pastor at Holy Trinity, Charles P. Gisler. In the autumn of 1890, both men went to Wyandsrade to continue their classical education, occupying yet another old castle in Limburg, Holland. At the end of the year they moved onto Exaeten to study philosophy and natural sciences, occupying yet another castle in the Roermond area for about three years. It was here that they also learned English. At the end of the three year period, Cohausz and Gisler were among five Jesuits selected by the Father Provincial to go to America, which was a welcomed opportunity for them both. They arrived in New York in 1894, and taught at Canisius College for four years before they returned to Holland to study theology at St. Ignatius College at Valkenburg in preparation for ordination. They were both ordained on the same day, August 27, 1901. Father Cohausz stayed at Valkenburg for the next four years, while Father Gisler went back to Canisius College during the third year. They were soon reunited, however, when Father Cohausz arrived in Buffalo, serving as minister of the house, pastor of the church and vice-president of the college, exhibiting unlimited zeal and energy. In fact, he worked constantly, appar-

ently oblivious of his own well-being. In the words of his friend, Father Gisler, Father Cohausz "... worked like a giant. He was on his feet from early morning until late at night." Father Gisler later recalled:

No work was too hard for him, no sacrifice was too great for him, when there was question of helping souls. Whether people were rich or poor, gentle or simple, learned or ignorant, made no difference to him. He possessed a natural aptitude for dealing with refined people; he was kind and polite by nature and by training; yet he never neglected the poor or the uneducated.

In the autumn of 1918 Father Cohausz was sent to Holy Trinity Church to serve as pastor. He heard as many as 28,000 confessions per year. The People of Holy Trinity had suffered much during the First World War, and they needed a pastor of the caliber of Father Cohausz.

One area of controversy that Father Cohausz encountered occurred in the spring of 1919. A dispute with the Archdiocese would see the Jesuits attempt to hand the parish over to the secular clergy for a second time. In early April 1919, the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Boston, James P.E. O'Connell (Cardinal O'Connell's nephew), wrote a letter to Father Cohausz in which the Chancellor said that in accordance with a recent decree of the sixth Boston Synod, no English at all was to be used at national churches (which were to maintain their national languages), and this included Holy Trinity. Alarmed by this, Father Cohausz wrote a letter to the Jesuit Provincial in New York, Rev. Joseph H. Rockwell, S.J., in which he stated

that in National Churches it is forbidden to preach and conduct devotions in the English language. His Eminence (William Cardinal O'Connell) explained that the National Churches are only to effect the transition to the English-speaking parish. How we can make this transition without using the English language, I do not see.

Father Cohausz went on to say in his letter that he had received a response to his request of the Cardinal that English be used in short five minute sermons at devotions, but that he had received "a very snappy answer" from the Chancellor's office, which stated that "the legislation was made to be obeyed, not to suffer exceptions." Father Cohausz concluded his letter by

saying: "Kindly advise me what to do in this state of affairs, shall I see the Cardinal or shall I wait for future developments? One trouble comes after the other. My whole life here in Boston has been but a chain of troubles."

Several days later, on April 17, 1919, the Father Provincial wrote a letter to Cardinal O'Connell in which he stated that the legislation of the Sixth Boston Synod would adversely affect the young people of Holy Trinity parish who had little or no interest in the German language as they had become assimilated into the American mainstream. The only people in the parish who could still be properly reached by the German language were the every decreasing numbers of older people. If German alone were used at the church the young would go elsewhere, which would mean that only the old people would be left to support the church, which would be an impossibility. In closing, the Provincial said that if the Cardinal insisted on enforcing the provision of the Synod's legislation in the case of Holy Trinity, then the Jesuits were prepared to ask the Archdiocese to "kindly take over the parish and place it in other hands. . . We shall accept your Eminence's decision with cheerfulness."

Upon returning from a Knights of Columbus meeting on Monday evening, April 21, 1919, Father Cohausz discovered a Special Delivery Letter awaiting him in the church rectory. The letter was from the Cardinal, requesting his presence the next morning at 10:30 at the Chancellor's office on Bay State Road. The next morning Father Cohausz appeared at the Chancery but the Cardinal had been "called away on unforeseen business," according to the Cardinal's Private Secretary, Dr. Richard J. Haberlin. Haberlin said that the Synod's law on language had not been intended for Holy Trinity. He suggested to Father Cohausz that he "should go on with your work quietly, but . . . make a report . . . about your parish stating . . . the reasons why you wanted a dispensation . . . and His Eminence will grant it." Haberlin concluded the meeting by saying: "In future if you have a matter like that don't write to the Chancellor—of course I don't want to say anything against the Chancellor—but if a whole heap of letters are lying there—write to me and I will speak to His Eminence."

On April 28, 1919, Father Cohausz submitted his report to the Cardinal, in which he described Holy Trinity as a parish of about one thousand families, both German and of German extraction. He stated:

The work among the Germans is of the greatest importance as no nationality is so endangered by socialistic and liberal societies as the Germans especially as there are so many non-Catholic socialistic and infidel German soci-

eties here in the city of Boston. If the Catholic Germans are not kept strong in exercising their faith and religious duties they may easily become the prey of those societies.

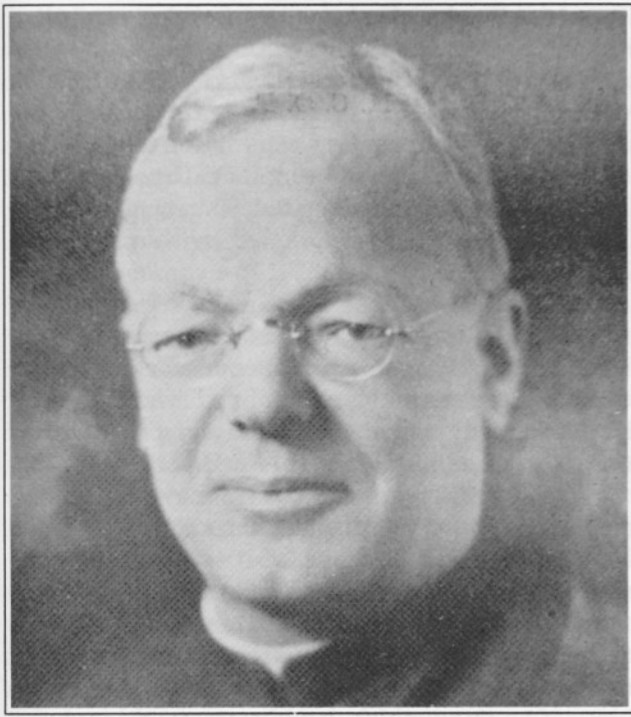
Father Cohausz also said in his letter that for spiritual reasons, it was imperative to reach the younger people with English. "As on account of the relations between our country and Germany during the past years the teaching of the German language in our schools had to be neglected altogether or at least had to be reduced to a minimum." Father Cohausz pointed out that the young people knew their prayers in German, but that was the extent of their knowledge of the language, and "under these circumstances the enforcing of the law would mean a disaster to our Holy Trinity parish and a detriment to the souls of our German-American population." The official permission to continue to use English arrived in the form of a letter from Dr. Haberlin, dated May 1, 1919. The crisis had passed. Holy Trinity would continue to flourish as a Jesuit parish.

As a businessman Father Cohausz managed to improve the financial conditions of Holy Trinity parish, which had deteriorated to some degree in the recent past. He would leave \$17,000 in the bank to his successor, despite the fact that he was always available to help those in need of financial assistance. Father Cohausz also established the Holy Trinity Relief Committee in January 1920, serving as its treasurer, to assist the suffering people in post World War I Germany and Austria. The committee consisted of a number of prominent parishioners, including John Rupp, Joseph Vaas, Miss Rosa Spoth, Joseph Hunzelman, Leo Gueter, Miss Marie Mueller and Miss Catherine McLeod. By Easter of that year, over one thousand dollars had been collected and twenty boxes of clothing had been sent to Germany and Austria.

In short, Father Cohausz' three years in Boston were a great success, despite his troubles. He now departed for New York where he would fill a number of positions in the coming years, serving as rector of St. Ann's Church, rector of Danisius High School and rector of St. Michael's Church in Buffalo. He died from a combination of overwork and diabetes in 1938. Father Cohausz was succeeded in July 1921, at Holy Trinity by his old friend, Rev. Charles Paul Gisler, S.J.

Standing five feet six inches, with brown eyes and grey hair, Father Gisler had been a well-respected professor at both Canisius College in New York and Boston College. He was born on January 10, 1868, at Aldorf, the capital of the Canton of Uri in Switzerland. Aldorf is a picturesque village near Lake Lucerne and the Alpine railway tunnel of St. Gotthard, which runs





*Rev. Charles P. Gisler, S.J.*

between Switzerland and Italy. The Canton was one of the original three which comprised the foundation of Switzerland in the year 1290, the oldest democratic state on earth. For hundreds of years the people of Uri maintained their independence despite the best efforts of a number of would-be rulers, from the Hapsburgs to Napoleon. Altdorf itself was the setting of Schiller's famous drama, "Wilhelm Tell," which saw the legendary apple shot from the head of a youngster in the village marketplace.

Father Gisler came from a devout Catholic family. A brother became a Benedictine monk in Jerusalem, another joined the Trappists in southern Africa and two sisters became nuns. In fact, Father Gisler was the direct descendant of the Blessed Nicholas of Flue, who died in 1487, and who was beatified in 1669.

Father Gisler graduated from the Kantonschule in 1880. After preparatory school in 1886, the young Gisler went to the Jesuit College, "Stella Matutina," in Feldkirch, Austria, which was run by German Jesuits who had been expelled from Germany. (With the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938, the Hitler government would suppress the college, which by that time had become one of the foremost Jesuit institutions in the world.) Father Gisler entered the Society of Jesus on September 30, 1888, in Bylenbeck, Holland, and made his juniorate in Wynandsrade. He studied philosophy in Exaeten and later in Valkenburg. Upon completion of his studies in philosophy, he was sent to the Buffalo Mission of the German Province. He was prefect and teacher at Canisius College in Buffalo from

1894 to 1896, and later held the same posts at St. Ignatius College in Cleveland. He returned to Holland in 1898, to study theology at Valkenburg, where he was ordained in August 1901. He then returned to America, making his tertianship at Brooklyn, Ohio. From here he went to Canisius College to teach, and held the position of prefect from 1903 until 1914. He became a United States citizen on March 30, 1905, and took his final vows in February 1906. He served as minister of St. Ann's Church in Buffalo from 1914 to 1917, taught philosophy at Canisius College from 1917 to 1919, and spent a couple of years teaching French and Greek at Boston College from 1919 to 1921, the year he was appointed pastor and superior at Holy Trinity Church, a post he would hold until his death in December 1940.

Father Gisler was a man of outstanding character who led by example: a man truly religious, devoted to prayer, who showed remarkable zeal for souls, and demanded the highest of academic standards among his students, hoping to instill in them solid Catholic traits. As pastor of Holy Trinity, he heard no fewer than sixteen thousand confessions annually. On confession days he was one of the first priests in the box at three o'clock in the afternoon and one of the last to leave, often after ten o'clock in the evening. He introduced a number of novenas and devotions, and it was he who was responsible for changing the novenas and other religious exercises from German into English, for adding other devotions customary in other Jesuit parishes and for doubling the attendance at services. He encouraged his assistants in the performance of their duties, which, given the fact that many of the German families of Boston were spread throughout the area, required them to make extraordinary efforts to care for their flock. He was only too glad if his subordinates could do as much as possible for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Father Gisler was instrumental in reclaiming strayed Catholics of German descent. He was always present at parish activities, and was very accessible to his parishioners. To this day many of them can recall seeing Father Gisler standing outside the front door of the church, talking with the people, making sure that all felt welcome.

The early 1920s saw the parish continue its relief work for the people of Germany and Austria. At a time of increasing economic prosperity in the United States, Europe was in the throes of economic dislocation. Germany not only had to contend with economic hardships, but she was also forced to accept the dictates of the Treaty of Versailles, which included accepting guilt for starting the Great War, territorial losses, stiff reparations and a strict curtailment of her armed forces. Germany was also attempting to adapt to life without a Kaiser. (President Wilson had made the Kaiser's abdication a precondition to armistice in November

1918.) Thus, Germany's precarious fledgling democracy was plagued by a number of problems, including the fact that the majority of Germans blamed the democratic forces in Germany's defeat. Throughout the decade, political life would become radicalized, with both the extreme right and the extreme left paralyzing the country, a situation that would ultimately lead to the Nazi dictatorship. Father Gisler himself handed a large donation over to cardinal Faulhaber of Munich who visited Boston in June 1923, a year of terrible inflation in Germany, with the intention of aiding starving children in the Bavarian capital.

The 1920s were a time of change and adjustment for the people of Boston, as well. The self-proclaimed "People's Mayor," James Michael Curley, was in the midst of serving his second term (1922-1926). As historian Thomas H. O'Connor states, Curley embarked upon citywide neighborhood construction projects, providing jobs and economic opportunities to the people of the neighborhoods, the patronage system upon which his political clout was based. Curley's programs targeted improvement in the neighborhoods at the expense of "old Boston," which began to show signs of deterioration in such places as Scollay Square, Beacon Hill and other area of downtown.

During the Golden Jubilee of Holy Trinity Church on June 13, 1927, William Cardinal O'Connell paid tribute to the parishioners, stating that "There are no better citizens or better Catholics than those of German blood" and that "the German people are a noble race."

The celebration included some thirty priests and altar boys and twenty-five flower girls. Special mention was made of the over thirty male members of the parish who had entered secular and religious orders and ninety females had become sisters of a dozen different orders. The celebration was dominated by a festival of German classical music featuring sixty singers of the Concordia and church choirs, led by soloist Joseph Ecker.

In 1929, Father Gisler, ever an active pastor, led a pilgrimage to Rome which included many of the parishioners of Holy Trinity, an experience which would remain with them as long as they lived. The journey to the Eternal City was made by way of France. The return trip went through Switzerland and Germany.

The Depression years of the 1930s took a decisive toll on Boston. According to historian Thomas H. O'Connor, local politicians who had traditionally provided employment based on patronage were now less powerful as the federal government become ever more involved in the economy during the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt, a trend which would continue through the 1970s. Federal social agencies, bureaucrats with allegiances in Washington, and congressmen and senators overshadowed and absorbed most of the power of the local politicians. One of the more noticeable trends during this time was the start of a steady decline in the ethnic neighborhoods of Boston.

The parishioners of Holy Trinity fought their way



*Members of the Committee of Arrangements, 1927*

through economic hard times, and no doubt the survivors were strengthened by the experience. Economic difficulties were tragically exacerbated when, around two o'clock in the morning on March 14, 1935, a fire ravaged the houses adjoining the rectory owned by the parish at 15 and 19 Lucas Street, rendering twenty-one people homeless. The parish would rally to assist the unfortunate victims.

In the summer of 1938, Father Gisler traveled to Europe, visiting Basel, Switzerland, and Austria, which had been recently annexed by Germany. His passport bears the German customs stamp, which includes the Nazi eagle. One can only image the sadness he felt in his heart during his trip to German-speaking countries as Europe was on the verge of preparing for yet another world war, which would break out almost one year after his trip abroad.

Perhaps Father Gisler's greatest attribute was his spirit of Christian charity. A most gracious host, he would invite his Jesuit friends to special celebrations at Holy Trinity on the various Feast Days. His charity was not worn on his sleeve, however. He made a conscious effort to hide his acts of kindness as best he could. He went to great pains to assist the starving religious communities of the world after the First World War, as he appealed for both private and public assistance. In return he received letters of appreciation from Europe and Asia. As far as the poor people of Boston were concerned, Father Gisler assisted those poor parishioners down on their luck, who were ashamed to ask for assistance of any kind.

On October 1, 1938, Father Gisler celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Jesuit with a celebration at Holy Trinity, which included a High Mass followed by a breakfast and entertainment in the Casino Hall. On Monday, October 3, a concert was given in his honor by the Holy Trinity Maennerchor under the direction of Ferdinand Lehnert.

Father Gisler died at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton on Sunday, December 15, 1940. A Requiem mass was attended by hundreds of priests, including Bishop Richard Cushing, representing Cardinal O'Connell. In addition, a number of monsignori and the Fathers Provincial of the New England and Maryland-New York Provinces were on hand. Father Gisler lies in the Jesuit cemetery in Weston.

The year 1940 also saw the passing of the parish secretary, Caroline Hasenfuss. She was replaced by Miss Mary Geiger, daughter of parishioner Max Geiger. Mary Geiger has been a mainstay in the parish to the present day. Max Geiger had immigrated to the United States at age two from the Black Forest area of Germany. Living on Gold Street in South Boston, he operated his own painting business for many years before moving to Quincy in 1926. Mary went to the



*Mary Rose Geiger*

Holy Trinity School in South Boston (grades one through four), Holy Trinity School in the South End (grades five through eight), and then to the Holy Trinity High School in Roxbury. Like the other parishioners who lived in South Boston (most of whom lived in the neighborhoods of St. Vincent's and St. Augustine's parishes), the Geigers walked daily from South Boston to the church on Shawmut Avenue for services and church activities, which meant a half hour trek each way. A member of the Young Ladies Sodality, Mary would soon become instrumental in a rosary project, which sent literally thousands of cord rosaries to American servicemen during the Second World War.

Father Gisler was succeeded as pastor of Holy Trinity by the noted physicist and graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Rev. Henry M. Brock, S.J. Father Brock had been ordained in Hastings, England, in 1912. An extremely thrifty pastor, his tenure would be cut short due to health reasons.

By early 1941, the parish consisted of 490 families and 1,900 souls. The schools totaled more than four hundred students being taught by fifteen teachers. Holy Trinity was a thriving parish and community. But there were clouds on the horizon signifying changes that would shape the future of the church and its parishioners for decades to come.



## CHAPTER III:

# TRANSITION, ADAPTATION, CONTINUITY

On December 7, 1941, Japanese forces attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The world would never be the same again. The next day President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress for a declaration of war against Japan. Several days later Germany, honoring a previous security agreement with Japan, declared war on the United States. The United States, in turn, declared war against Germany on December 11. The world was at war for a second time in a quarter century. The traditional Christmas lights would not be lighted at Holy Trinity this year. In fact they would not come on again until the war was over.

Many of the men and boys from Holy Trinity parish now entered the United States armed forces. By the time the war was over, 285 parishioners would serve in uniform. The war would not only change forever the lives of the survivors, but also the future of the parish.

Among those parishioners who went to war when their country called was Lt. Col. William H. Fandel, a pilot of the Flying Fortress Command in England, who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. 1st Lt. John V. Wessling, stationed with the US Eighth Air Force in England, piloted B-17 "Flying Fortresses" on daylight bombing raids over Nazi Germany, France and Italy. His major complaint was not being shot at, but that it was next to impossible to get a cold glass of milk in England! John H. Lanigan served as an ordnance officer with a United States Army Air Force bombardment squadron of B-24s. In March 1944, he wrote home: "The work is very interesting and consists of the supplying of the bombs, fuses, ammunition and weapons. Please say 'hello' to those of my friends who are still in the Sodality. I have and will continue to remember in my prayers Holy Trinity." Max Geiger's son, Al Geiger of the Army Air Force, served in the Pacific as a tailgunner on a B-29 stationed on the island of Saipan, which had been secured by United States Marines in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. Parishioner Bernard Grueter found himself on exotic pieces of real estate in the Pacific as the United States executed a bloody island hopping campaign. One of these islands was called Tinian, in the Marianas, but it was anything but a tropical paradise. "Everything on this island is about wrecked," he wrote home in October 1944. "The Navy did one swell job of shelling this place." Lt. Andrew Wessling served with Lt. Gen.

George S. Patton's Third Army, winning a Silver Star for "highest gallantry and heroism in action," as well as a Purple Heart. Nuno Costa found himself in the paratroopers, serving with the 82nd Airborne Division, "All-American," and participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Costa subsequently fought his way across France and Belgium, including participation in the legendary Battle of the Bulge during Christmas 1944, which saw the Germans attempt a last ditch offensive in the West. George Krim, future church organist and choir director, served as a combat infantryman with the US Army's 75th Infantry Division in France and Germany, as did Joseph Reiss. PFC Herbert J. Hohmann won a Bronze Star for heroism along with a Purple Heart in Italy during the battle for Rome as a wireman with the 157th Infantry Regiment. Lt. Walter R. Boehner, US Navy Reserve, a member of the Usher's Club, served as the staff aerologist and weather advisor on an Admiral's flagship conducting amphibious operations in the South Pacific. Boehner participated in no fewer than ten amphibious invasions, including General Douglas MacArthur's celebrated 1944 return to the Philippines. At the time Boehner was serving as a meteorologist with the 7th Amphibious Force. Admiral T.C. Kincaid, Commanding officer of the US 7th Fleet, awarded Boehner a commendation ribbon for meteorological expertise in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

Of the clergy at Holy Trinity two priests served as chaplains, Rev. Harry C. McLeod, S.J., and Passionist Father Christopher Berlo, both of the US Naval Reserve. In appreciation of the moral support from the parish, Father McLeod and his men sent home two large vigil light holders constructed from a six inch shell. Father



*Rev. Harry C. MacLeod, S.J., Lieutenant, U.S.N.*



McLeod's service was recognized by none other than the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, whose letter of thanks to the parishioners of Holy Trinity in late 1944 stated: "In recognition of this patriotic service on your part the Navy Department presents a Certificate of Service as permanent evidence of your contribution in behalf of the religious life of the men and women of our armed forces." Father Berlo served with United States Marines on New Britain, and went in with the assault wave of the Army's 24th "Victory" Division during the liberation of the Philippines, an operation which provided some tense moments for him—"one bullet creased my helmet. I also had the chin strap shot off my helmet at the left ear, without even drawing blood."

The parishioners made a special effort to support the men in service. A special abbreviated Monatsbote was sent to the servicemen overseas, and the church held a special Mass for servicemen each Wednesday morning at eight o'clock. Local Boy Scout Troop 31 held scrap paper collections to aid the war effort. One Holy Trinity assistant, Rev. Joseph J. Sweeney, S.J., agreed to serve as chaplain for the First Post of Catholic War Veterans, to be called Holy Trinity Post No. 233. Holy Trinity schoolchildren did their bit for the war effort too, assisting the federal government in alphabetizing War Ration Books during regular school hours, a policy that was also adopted throughout the schools of the Boston Archdiocese.

As the war raged on in Europe and the Pacific, Father Brock's health had deteriorated to such an extent that he had to be replaced in May 1943, by his associate pastor, Rev. Francis X. Weiser, S.J., who now became the twenty-third pastor of Holy Trinity Church. Father Weiser, an intellectual of the first rank, would serve as pastor until 1950. Born on March 21, 1901, in Vienna, Austria, he entered the Society of Jesus in September 1916, in his native city. He studied theology, philosophy and psychology at the University of Munich prior to his ordination on July 26, 1930, at Holy Trinity Church in Innsbruck, Austria. (Father Raffener, the founder of Holy Trinity Church in Boston had also been ordained at Holy Trinity Church in Innsbruck.) Father Weiser held earned doctorates in theology, philosophy and psychology from the University of Innsbruck, and earned another doctorate in theology in 1950, from the Gregorian University in Rome. After ordination, Father Weiser spent a year studying at Poughkeepsie, New York. Returning to Austria, Father Weiser served as the national moderator of the Austrian Sodalities of Our Lady from 1932 to 1938, became active in the Catholic Youth Movement, edited a youth magazine and was active in directing retreats and writing. Father Weiser fled to the United States in the wake of the German annexation of his homeland in 1938, and became an American citizen. He served as



*Rev. Francis X. Weiser, S.J.*

pastor of St. Ann's Church in Buffalo, New York, where he became active with the National Catholic Women's Union and the Catholic Central Union of America before coming to Holy Trinity Church in Boston in 1939. He served at Holy Trinity as associate pastor for four years before replacing Father Brock as pastor.

Father Weiser was an extremely active pastor. During the Second World War he served as an auxiliary chaplain for the German prisoners of war at Fort Devens between 1943 and 1945. He was also instrumental in forming the Massachusetts branch of the National Catholic Women's Union, and shortly thereafter was appointed as Youth Director and later National Spiritual Director, a position which he held for twenty years. In his later years, he served as professor of philosophy and German at Emmanuel College (where he taught for eleven years), and as professor of ethics and theology at Boston College from 1961 to 1970. Also a cultural historian, Father Weiser was concerned with the relationship of liturgy and the Christian life. He authored no fewer than twenty-two books, several of which dealt with traditional German customs, The Christmas Book, The Easter Book, The Holiday Book and The Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs. His first book, Das Licht der Berge (The Light on the Mountain), was translated into thirty languages. He published a short history of Holy Trinity Church on the anniversary of the parish centennial in 1944, entitled Holy Trinity Parish, Boston, Mass. 1844-1944. His Zum Vater der Stroeme is a history of Father Marquette and the discovery of the Mississippi. His last book, before his death at age eighty-five in 1986, is a life of Kateri Tekakwitha, a recently beatified American Indian. His books were not only instrumental in influencing people



*Executive Committee,  
1944*

the morning and afternoon was taken up with a party for the children in the Casino Hall. On Trinity Sunday, June 4, the Centennial of the parish was celebrated in the morning with a ten o'clock Pontifical High Mass and Benediction. On Monday a special celebration was held in Remembrance for the Dead of the parish, as well as for the recently deceased William Cardinal O'Connell. A 7:00 a.m. High Mass of Requiem was followed two hours later by a Solemn High Mass, which was attended by numerous clergy, sisters, parishioners and friends of Holy Trinity.

in the United States, but also in Germany. In 1957 the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Theodor Heuss, awarded Father Weiser the Order of Merit, First Class, for his outstanding contribution to the young people of Germany, and for his work in war relief. In his later years the University of Innsbruck awarded him the Citation of Honor and the Jubilee Medal for outstanding scholarly and literary achievement.

That evening a parish reunion was held in the Casino Hall. On this day, June 5, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt reported to the American people that Rome had fallen to the Allies; he would report even bigger news the next day as the largest invasion in history was underway, the invasion of Normandy, June 6, 1944.

Perhaps the most memorable celebration during the bittersweet years of Father Weiser's tenure was the 1944 celebration of the centennial of Holy Trinity parish, which was held between May 28 and June 5, 1944. The celebration was formulated and directed by a committee chaired by Joseph A. Pink. At 8:30 a.m. on May 28, Pentecost Sunday, a community Mass was held for the sodalities. Later that evening, at eight o'clock, Boston Mayor Maurice J. Tobin arrived at Boston College High School on Harrison Avenue along with the Administrator of the Archdiocese, Richard J. Cushing (who became Archbishop later that year), for an address to the Holy Trinity Centennial Committee, followed by a concert at Holy Trinity Church by some personal friends of Father Weiser, the world-renowned Trapp Family Singers, refugees from Nazi annexed Austria, who made their new home in Vermont. On Friday, June 2, the centennial of the parish schools was celebrated, with a High Mass at 8:30 a.m. for the students. Two hours later Archdiocesan Administrator Cushing presided over Confirmation at the church. The rest of

At the end of the Second World War, Holy Trinity parish played a major role in providing relief to war-torn Europe. Reports of starvation and sickness poured in from Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary. One letter spoke of eighteen nuns dying of starvation in Vorarlberg, Austria, during the winter of 1945-1946. Before long such reports became commonplace. Horror stories also took the form of reports of occupying Soviet troops in Austria and Germany robbing, looting, raping and murdering. A United Press International report spoke of Vienna being the hungriest capital in Europe, with a basic ration of 1,200 calories per day. Recovery was hampered all the more by the

*The Trapp  
Family*





*Holy Trinity Rectory Relief*

fact that there were four major zones of occupation, one for each of the victorious powers (United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union). Shortly after the end of the war, President Harry Truman set up the Council of Relief Agencies (CRALOG), the authorized official United States government channel for operating in Germany and through which private relief was handled. CRALOG consisted of some eleven agencies, including War Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference of New York. These people shipped goods to the American, British and French occupation zones through the Caritasverband, the official Catholic charity agency in Germany. Thus, Holy Trinity would have to ship its donations via New York. The Young Ladies' Sodality began sending dozens of crates of food and clothes to Europe shortly after the conclusion of hostilities in November 1945, setting the stage for the formal founding of the Holy Trinity Relief Association in January 1946, which consisted of about sixty members under the direction of Joseph Pink, who was ably assisted by his wife, as well as Mrs. Anthony Hohmann and Mrs. Rose Creutz, who brought SAFE packages. The parish secretary, Mary Geiger, handled the relief correspondence along with Caroline Timmerman and Irmgard Waesch (later Mrs. J. William Linse). Clothing was gathered at Tondorf's funeral home on Shawmut Avenue. In a note accompanying a missal published in 1945, under the United States Military Government Information Control, a gift from the parishioners of Holy Trinity, was the inscription of the fly leaf from a certain Aloys Graf of Heidelberg, German: "In the year of our need 1947-48, we received help through Christian love and goodness. As an outward sign this missal shall praise and thank the goodness of God." The parish was in the forefront of the relief effort to such a degree that in May 1946, the Archbishop of Boston named Father Weiser the official representative of the Archdiocese for relief work for the national Catholic

Welfare Conference in Germany and Austria. Returning from the National Catholic Women's Union in Newark in 1946 (where the Parish was represented by members of the Holy Trinity Catholic Women's Guild, including the President, Miss Clementine R. Smith, Mrs. Rose Langerfeld and Mrs. Barbara King), Father Weiser was able to tell the parishioners of Holy Trinity that "it is clear that there is no other parish in the United States which has done so much for the relief of Europe as we have done so far." In the first few months of its operation, Holy Trinity relief had collected \$5,500.

A number of Holy Trinity organizations participated in this war relief effort, which lasted into the 1950s. The Holy Trinity Rectory Relief stacked the back rooms of the rectory with donations and goods of all kinds to ship to Europe. Father Weiser sent between six and ten packages of food, medicines and clothing each week to an individual person or institution in Europe asking for assistance. Between 1946 and 1949, the Holy Trinity Rectory Relief collected \$13,500 for these purposes.

The St. Joseph's Relief consisted of non-parishioners in Winchester, Massachusetts, who packed and shipped boxes, sending each week three or four parcels to addresses supplied by Father Weiser. During the year 1948-1949, this group collected \$1,700 and shipped 4,800 pounds of clothes and shoes to Europe.

St. Rose's Relief consisted of non-parishioners from Arlington, Massachusetts, who packed and shipped packages to families in Germany with many children. Father Weiser supplied them with the names and addresses of such families with between eight and fourteen children. Between 1947 and 1949, this group collected almost \$14,000 and shipped close to 11,000 pounds of shoes and clothing overseas.

The Rosary Group was made up of members of the Young Ladies' Sodality of Holy Trinity who had made thousands of cord rosaries for American servicemen during World War II. Now they turned their efforts to making some 26,000 rosaries to send to Germany and Austria.

The Holy Trinity Family Relief sent private packages to family members and friends in Germany and Austria. Some families sent as many as five hundred packages each year, beginning in 1945.

The Massachusetts Stipend Relief was established by Father Weiser to collect and send Mass intentions to priests in Germany and Austria. Between 1946 and 1949, \$10,700 was collected for this purpose.

The Papal, National and Diocesan Relief Drives included Holy Trinity's contributions to the general Catholic drives for overseas work. The parish contributed \$3,600 to the National Catholic Welfare Conference Drives during 1946-1947, \$2,400 for the Children's Collections for the Holy Father between



1946 and 1949, and \$1,100 for the Bishops' Emergency Relief Collection during 1947-1949.

Special Purpose Donations were established for a number of projects in which Holy Trinity participated. Caroline Timmerman directed a group called "The Children's Christmas Project," which shipped toys, clothes and candy to the children of Germany and Austria. The Young Ladies' Sodality sent food, clothes and shoes to the poor people of France. During 1946-1947 alone, they sent 2,000 pounds of such goods, and also sent \$550 to the poor in Italy. The St. Francis Mission Society donated \$1,200 during 1946-1949 to German-speaking missions in Japan, China and India. The Jesuit Reconstruction Fund was set up to help rebuild destroyed churches and colleges. In 1946, this group provided almost \$3,000 for these purposes. One generous soul contributed \$1,000 to rebuild a destroyed church. In addition there were a number of smaller Special Purpose Donations, which gave over \$800 during the years 1946-1949.

The Correspondence Relief Work consisted of Father Weiser and Mary Geiger answering letters from Germany and Austria asking for assistance and information on family members, employment, immigration, etc. By 1949, Father Weiser had answered no fewer than 25,200 letters.

Thus, the parish was quite busy in assisting a shattered world. The Young Ladies Sodality sponsored annual Grand Penny Sales, while other parishioners offered their services translating letters from Germany, packing boxes, collecting money, etc. The volunteers worked diligently at their tasks. Each of the women involved would spend an entire day of the week packing boxes (which weighed an average of fifty pounds), from nine o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon. The men would then wrap the boxes during the evening; between the hours of seven and eleven. Between sixty and eighty packages of clothing, food, shoes, linens, medicine, etc., weighing some four thousand pounds, were shipped to Europe each week. The larger packages were sent to American chaplains in Germany and Austria, who in turn distributed them among the churches, hospitals and refugee camps. Smaller boxes were sent to individual addresses and to the Soviet Zone. The figures for the year 1948 give an indication of the momentous service provided by Holy Trinity parishioners to the unfortunate people of Europe:

- 100,000 pieces of clothing
- 6,000 pairs of shoes
- 17,000 pounds of food
- 6,200 blankets, curtains, sheets, towels, etc.
- 30,000 hats, ties, toys, sewing equipment, etc.
- 10,000 pounds of medicines and bandages, etc.
- 750 bars of soap

Between 1946 and 1949, \$85,000 was collected for the purchase of food, medicines and postage. Almost 500,000 pounds of clothes and shoes, and almost 18,000 cans of food were shipped during the same period. Assistance continued through the 1950s. In a letter to the Holy Trinity Relief Association in May 1953, Rev. Alfred A. Schneider, Director of Missions for Germany, War Relief Services, of the National Catholic Conference said:

I take delight in acknowledging the receipt of your fourteen boxes containing good used clothing...Please accept our organization's heartfelt gratitude for this excellent and most valuable shipment...Many of these unfortunate people are still living in camps and barracks and new refugees continue to escape from behind the Iron Curtain into Western Germany at the rate of 600 per day.

In fact, by the early 1950s, the Holy Trinity Relief Association was making a special effort to help these refugees from eastern Germany as well as others fleeing the satellite countries of the East Bloc.

In addition to the war relief, during the mid-to-late 1940s and early 1950s, the parish continued to assist poor people at home, playing a major part in the diocesan drives. Boston itself was in a period of decline, and most agreed that the city had a bleak future. Historian Thomas H. O'Connor, in his book Bibles, Brahmins and Bosses, quoted an issue of the Boston Globe from 1945, in which the city was described as a "hopeless backwater, a tumbled-down has-been among cities." Boston was losing both people and businesses at an alarming rate, as both the downtown section and ethnic neighborhoods underwent population and economic changes.

Outwardly Holy Trinity appeared to be a model parish. But the parish was in trouble financially. By the mid-1940s, the parish had reached such a financial state that the Jesuits made a third attempt to hand the parish over to the Archdiocese of Boston. There was simply no way that the Jesuits could continue the upkeep of the church and the fourteen buildings and other properties comprising Holy Trinity parish because of a decline in active attendance, which had been the case since the early 1930s. The parishioners who lived in the neighborhoods of Boston and surrounding communities were often under pressure to support their local parishes (especially if they were sending their children to the local parochial school). At this time the parish property consisted of the following: two churches, four chapels, two parish halls, two priests' houses, two



convents, two grade schools, one high school, five apartment buildings, one garage, two playgrounds and one building with rooms for parish organizations. The parish's financial problems dated from Father Gisler's tenure as pastor. Between 1928 and 1942, no major repairs had been made on the parish properties. During the mid-1940s, a number of major repairs had to be undertaken in order to comply with state public safety laws, i.e., electrical and roof repairs, which had used up a \$25,000 reserve fund. Father Weiser thought that the year 1948, the centenary of the Jesuit take over of the parish from the diocese, would be an ideal and opportune time to effect this switch. The 1848 agreement between the Society of Jesus and the diocese had stated that the Jesuit Fathers at Holy Trinity should receive a salary for their work at the church as well as the regular contributions that pastors received from other parish churches (see Chapter I). Since the end of the nineteenth century, and through the mid-1940s, the annual salary for each of the four priests at Holy Trinity had been six hundred dollars. Ordinary Sunday collections by the mid-1940s amounted to around one hundred dollars. The largest collections at Easter and Christmas, more than two thousand dollars per year, went directly to the church instead of the house during the years 1869 to 1929, a practice which was opposed by the Provincials, but the Father Visitors insisted on this, which meant that \$138,000 had been so designated during that sixty-nine year period. By 1945, there were no fewer than ten Jesuit priests assigned to Holy Trinity, six working directly with the parish, and the others studying. Of the six, only four received the six hundred dollar salary from the Archdiocese and the others received no compensation from this organization. The only regular collections for the Jesuits was that conducted by Father Joseph Keller's Little Flower Missionary Club, founded in 1924, whose money, beginning in 1943, went to the missions of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus. In its first eighteen years of existence the club sent money to various other missions, eighty percent of the which were non-Jesuit missions.

By 1945, there were over seven hundred families in the parish, and not all of them attended Sunday Mass at Holy Trinity. They mainly came to the church for sodality services, but they continued to donate their money to Holy Trinity. The large feast days continued to be overcrowded. In the words of Father Weiser, the parish had become something of a "spiritual luxury," and did not serve the needs of the parish in the traditional sense. In fact, as early as 1941, the Father Visitor to the parish urged "an organized effort to bring the young men and women back to Holy Trinity." But through the continued financial support of the parishioners, the priests at Holy Trinity were able to maintain

their "missionary" activities, the beneficiaries being non-parishioners. The fact that any Catholic of German descent could belong to the parish meant that the Jesuits assigned to Holy Trinity had to make sick calls as far away as twenty-five miles. Only a handful of parishioners remained within three miles of the church, and most resided between five and ten miles away. Roughly speaking, there were about 250 families who could be considered active parishioners, by and large partaking in sodality activities.

The Holy Trinity schools also had seen a decline in parish enrollment. In 1945, only six children of the parish attended the in-town school, only thirty percent of the children enrolled in the Roxbury grammar school were parishioners, and only ten percent of those attending the High School in Roxbury were parishioners. Father Weiser made continued pleas to parishioners to send their children to Holy Trinity schools, pointing out that many Holy Trinity graduates went on to Boston College High School, Boston College, Regis College, the College of the Holy Cross and Emmanuel College. He stressed the idea that if the parish children did not attend the parish schools, they would fall away from the sodalities and from the church itself. The South End neighborhood had become the home of some of the worst slums in the city of Boston, home to a wide variety of people with various racial and ethnic backgrounds including Syrians, Italians, Poles and poor Irish. The people in the neighborhood officially belonged to the Cathedral parish. The pastors of the Cathedral expressed their dissatisfaction on more than one occasion that the Jesuits at Holy Trinity were interfering with their parishioners as many of the local neighborhood people attend Holy Trinity and sought out the Jesuits rather than their own parish priests.

In 1948, Father Weiser proposed to Archbishop Richard Cushing that the Archdiocese provide the Jesuits at Holy Trinity \$25,000 per year if he wanted the Jesuits to continue operating the German parish, plus additional funds for the non-German parish as well as footing the bill for repairs and construction. If the Archbishop desired, he could separate the parish, leaving the Jesuits the church, rectory and Casino building. If the Archbishop so desired, he could establish a South End mission center, which would mean that the Archdiocese would take over all of the parish buildings in town with the exception of the church, and the Jesuits would transfer and maintain the German national parish at the St. Francis "Home" in Roxbury (the Jesuits would reside in the "Home") in the hope that the Archbishop would permit one Mass and a German sermon to be celebrated in Holy Trinity's upper church on Shawmut Avenue, with the lower church to be used as the neighborhood mission church, which would be operated by priests of the Archdio-

cese. The Archdiocese would also pay for the education of non-parishioners at Holy Trinity's Roxbury school, as well as for the major repairs needed on the school buildings (about eight thousand dollars). Father Weiser believed such an arrangement would satisfy the older Americans of German ancestry, and would also allow the Casino Club to continue as a lay organization, paying rent to the church.

Father Weiser made it known to both the father Provincial and the Archdiocese that there was still a real need for a German parish in Boston at this time, as evidenced by the events of the decade. He did not necessarily wish to have the Jesuits walk away from Holy Trinity for a number of reasons. During World War II, Father Weiser had been called by the First Service Command and asked to arrange for missions to German prisoners of war in twenty-two POW camps. Also, both the Archdiocese and the city of Boston referred European relief requests to Holy Trinity, given its activity in this sphere. In addition, a number of American servicemen had brought home German brides, and the parish took the lead in assisting them as they became accustomed to American society. No other Catholic institution in Boston could take care of all these German needs. Therefore, the best solution seemed to be one which would see the Archdiocese take over all of the parish buildings in intown Boston and establish a missionary center to serve the South End. Father Weiser was of the opinion that most parishioners would accept such an arrangement.

In any event, the parish did not revert to the control of the Archdiocese at this juncture, which was a source of consternation for Father Weiser who had to forgo his scheduled trip to Europe in 1948, and plans went ahead for the centennial anniversary of the Jesuit arrival at Holy Trinity. For the occasion, a High Mass was celebrated on Saturday, June 5, 1948.

The parish dilemma would outlast Father Weiser's tenure. It would not be solved until the end of his successor's tenure. For the time being the fate of Holy Trinity remained up in the air with no decision forthcoming from the Archdiocese to liquidate the debts of city churches. In a letter to the Jesuit Provincial, Rev. John J. McEleney, S.J., on December 22, 1949, the Archbishop said that in a last resort solution to Holy Trinity's problem of not being able to support itself, the Archdiocese would appoint an administrator, who would be directly subordinate to the Archdiocese. The Archbishop stated in his letter that the Father Provincial

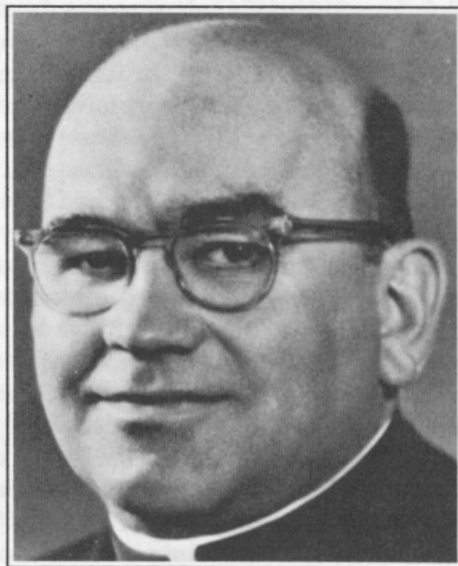
... might try Holy Trinity... under a new pastor after the beginning of 1950, but always on the understanding that the Diocese cannot be responsible for any deficit.

At one time I thought that if you gave up the parish I would attempt to interest the Redemptorists in assuming responsibility for this project. The judgment of priests closely identified with the area convinces me that the parish cannot support itself within the district that it serves and so I would have told them that it would have to serve as a center for other works or devotions.

In any event, Archbishop Cushing wanted the matter settled by July 1, 1950. A week later, on December 28, 1949, the Father Provincial decided that the Archdiocese would simply have to take over Holy Trinity Church.

As Holy Trinity was apparently on the verge of change, the city of Boston, too, was poised for transformation. A mayor, John B. Hynes, was elected in 1949, defeating Curley. Hynes was a career bureaucrat who would remain in office until 1959, providing the basis for changing the city. Hynes was concerned with revitalizing both the downtown area as well as the neighborhoods, and to this end he would establish the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in 1957, a decision which would have far reaching effects on many of the older parts of the city, including the South End.

Father Weiser's successor was the forty year old Rev. Robert J. Carr, who would be the last Jesuit pastor of Holy Trinity. He took control of the parish on January 29, 1950. His reign would also be focused on the most pressing issue of the fate of the parish: having served as an assistant at Holy Trinity for some years,



*Rev. Robert J. Carr, S.J.*

Father Carr knew that it would be his responsibility to close the church as a Jesuit parish. He did not know when this would take place, as the Archdiocese had not set a specific date for this. The Archdiocese was leery of taking on not only the spiritual, but also the financial responsibilities of Holy Trinity.

Throughout the 1950s, Father Carr not only devoted himself to the German parish, but increasingly applied his energies to the physically deteriorating multi-racial South End neighborhood, providing activities for the local children. Father Carr was instrumental in bringing a number of black youth from Roxbury into the various parish organizations. The black population of Boston had soared from 23,000 in 1940 to some 40,000 by 1950, with most families residing in increasing numbers in the South End and Roxbury. (In fact, Roxbury had not seen any new construction since 1920.)

As the municipal authorities began making preparations to improve the city, the Catholics of Boston continued to assist those less fortunate, and Holy Trinity parishioners, to no surprise, were in the forefront of these efforts. The Archdiocese recognized the sacrifice of the Holy Trinity clergy and parishioners on more than one occasion, including a letter which stated: "Holy Trinity Parish had been outstanding among the other parishes in its generous cooperation, considering the number of parishioners." It must be noted that most of the Holy Trinity parishioners also contributed to the same drives in their local parishes as well. In 1952, the Father Visitor, Rev. William E. Fitzgerald, S.J., noting the activity of Holy Trinity's parishioners, said that "the social ministry carried on among the poor of the district and especially among the children is very commendable." Father Carr was an active and zealous priest. He was not only instrumental in bringing the liturgy up to date, but he was, above all, concerned with the youth, for whom he had a particular bent. He took a keen interest in the running of the Holy Trinity CYO. He was assisted in this area by Rev. Ignatius F. Pennisi, S.J., who had come to Holy Trinity in September 1945, at age thirty-five. Father Pennisi would stay until the Jesuits departed in the summer of 1961. In addition to his teaching religion at the Holy Trinity grammar school, Father Pennisi was busy with the CYO activities, which included three boys' basketball teams, three girls' basketball teams, a boys' boxing team, a boys' CYO club, public school catechism classes, and the Holy Trinity Bugle and Drum Corps.

The Bugle and Drum Corps, founded in the early 1950s, was directed by Father Pennisi. It consisted of three units: Troubadours, Cadets and Queens Maids. The Holy Trinity Cadets regularly won top honors in competitions throughout the northeast region of the United States. In 1953, the Cadets won the Archdiocesan

Class 2 Championships at Boston College's Alumni Stadium amidst a heavy rainfall. In June of that year, they also won first prize in their first out-of-state competition, appearing in Nashua, New Hampshire, at the New Hampshire State American Legion Convention Parade in celebration of Nashua's centennial. In October they went on to become Class C Champions at a competition in Medford, Massachusetts. The story would be repeated throughout the decade.

Father Pennisi's contribution to the parish also included taking the local neighborhood children and adults on various outings and picnics at holiday time and during summers. They visited such resort areas at the seashore at Gloucester and the lakes of Sharon. Father Carr supplied the money for these trips, but the original source was, to a large extent, the generous German parish.

While Fathers Carr and Pennisi were busy with the neighborhood, two assistants, Rev. August Silbernagel, S.J., and Rev. Anthony I.D. Ecker, S.J. (who brought Holy Communion to the sick, etc.), ministered to the German parishioners. Father Silbernagel was a native of the Tyrol, having left his homeland in August 1939, on the eve of the Second World War. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1945, celebrating his first Mass in China, where he was stationed as a missionary. His brother Paul served with the Wehrmacht in World War II, being killed in action in Russia in 1944.

Tragedy again struck the parish in October 1956, when a terrible fire broke out at Holy Trinity Church, causing over a quarter million dollars in damage. The blaze ripped through the main roof of the church whose peak reached to 125 feet above the ground. The fire was contained to the front of the church and the belfry was saved. An assistant, fifty-eight year old Rev. Francis M. Horn, S.J., was awakened by the fire and fought his way through the rectory to the church, which was filled with toxic fumes, to save a ciborium containing consecrated Hosts. The Boston Fire Department determined that the conflagration had been caused by faulty electrical wiring. In fact, about one-third of the upper church organ had been consumed in flames. On the orders of the Archdiocesan Chancery, Masses were now moved to the upper church and St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel in the Casino Hall. The West German government made a donation of almost four thousand dollars in a ceremony marked by a speech by the West German Consul General Werner von Holleben. Before long Father Carr was directing many volunteers of the German parish who now threw themselves into the restoration of the upper church. Brother Timothy Cummins, S.J., the parish handyman, could not do the restoration himself. In a short space of time the upper church was restored to its former splendor.

The decline of Boston in the late 1940s and 1950s

was quite apparent to all. By this point, all of the ethnic neighborhoods were showing a marked decline, a trend which had begun in the 1930s. The population of the city in 1950 was over 800,000; in 1960, there would be less than 700,000. The urban renewal of the South End of the late 1950s and early 1960s presented problems and obstacles to the parish. In 1959, Mayor John F. Collins accelerated the urban rejuvenation initiated by Mayor Hynes. Under Hynes the BRA had ruthlessly uprooted families from the West End and transformed this traditional neighborhood into something completely different. Collins hoped that his attempts at urban renewal would have a kinder face. The 1960s would see Federal money pour into Boston in the name of progress during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, as government advanced that attempt at social engineering known as the "Great Society" at great expense, both in financial as well as human terms.

Historian Thomas H. O'Connor asserts that by 1970, federal money no longer poured into the urban renewal projects of the cities, and Boston was no exception. The war in Vietnam caused a cutback in federal domestic spending. But urban renewal continued in Boston as independent organizations, businesses and churches continued the process either on their own or in conjunction with public projects. The Prudential Center, the Hynes Auditorium, the John Hancock Tower and the modern addition to the Boston Public Library are all examples of this. The 1970s would see Boston completely transformed, both physically and intangibly. The South End would be no exception.

Boston's Catholic community was also affected by the deterioration of the city and the subsequent attempt at revitalization. The fact of the matter was that many of the Catholic churches in the South End and Roxbury were no longer capable of supporting themselves. Archbishop Cushing was committed to keeping Holy Trinity a viable institution. He is reported to have stated that "... if I have to go to court to save Holy Trinity Church, I will." The Holy Trinity School in the South End was set to close in June of 1961, due to the urban renewal project scheduled for the Castle Square area of Boston, but delays in the city sponsored project contributed to a very low morale among the residents of the neighborhood. No real plan was actually in place, and demolition of buildings would be put off for at least another year. In his letter of March 13, 1961, Charles W. Liddell, Executive Director of the United South End Settlement, wrote to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Boston, Rev. Robert Sennott, saying:

The neighbors dont [sic] really know where to turn. A number have moved out leaving vacant and vandalized apartments. Landlords understand-

ably refuse to make minimum repairs and city housekeeping services are poor.

Not only has the great courage and strong leadership of Father Carr meant much to this neighborhood, both the church and school together with our settlement house have been the anchor points of support and hope during this uncertain period.

In short, the closing of Holy Trinity school would affect some three hundred families. Liddell hoped that Father Sennott would allow the school to continue to function "on a limited basis for one more year [and] this would do a great deal to keep this neighborhood from collapsing . . . . The great human needs of this area cry out for all the help we can give." Liddell stated that "... Father Carr's presence and helping hand will be needed until the last of the families are gone." Father Sennott's reply two days later indicated that the Archdiocese could do nothing about the scheduled closing of the school because

The fact of the matter is that these Sisters [the teachers in the school] have been promised to another Pastor, the school built, the convent under construction, the children registered and it would be impossible to cancel that program. We know that you will understand that His Eminence will do everything possible to help people everywhere. It is unfortunate that these difficulties are permitted to come to existence.

The urban renewal project would ultimately displace over seven hundred families. In fact, the very existence of Holy Trinity Church itself was in doubt in the spring of 1961, as urban renewal targeted the area. Father Carr's request of several thousand dollars to erect a shrine to St. Joseph was refused by the Father Provincial, Rev. James E. Coleran, S.J., because he anticipated demolition of the church.

The Jesuits departed Holy Trinity in August of 1961. Father Carr left for Tampa, Florida. Of the other Jesuits, Father Pennisi went to St. Mary's parish in the North End of Boston, Father Horn went to the Immaculate Conception on Harrison Avenue in Boston, Rev. Joseph Doherty went to teach at Boston College High School on Morrissey Boulevard in Dorchester, Brother Timothy Cummins transferred to the Jesuit center in Weston, Massachusetts, and Father Silbernagel



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION RECTORY

761 Harrison Avenue  
Boston 18, Massachusetts

September 8, 1961  
Our Lady's Birthday

To all who participated in the final send-off of the Jesuit Fathers from  
Holy Trinity on August 27, 1961.

Dear Friends:

To say that the Jesuit Fathers who participated in the final Solemn Mass at Holy Trinity were moved by the outpouring of parishioners and friends and by your expression of affection both in sad farewells and in tangible gifts would be a gross understatement. I don't think we ever realized that you cared so much for us and that our departure meant so much to you. We do know that our relationship and that of our predecessors over the past 113 years was something that benefited us as well as you. For that we thank you and Almighty God, the Author of all benefits.

What more can we do now than to say that we shall show our appreciation where you would want us most to show it - in our prayers and Holy Sacrifices. God love you all and keep you in His grace.

Sincerely in Christ,

Robert J. Carr, S. J., former Pastor  
August Silbernagl, S. J.  
Joseph G. Doherty, S. J.  
Francis M. Horn, S. J.  
Ignatius F. Pennisi, S. J.

went to Austria, where he currently resides in the town of Linz. A couple of weeks before the departure of the Jesuits, the Sisters of St. Francis, who ran the grammar school for fifty of the last 118 years, closed the school in preparation for demolition and left for Assumption parish in South Lynnfield, Massachusetts. In his last sermon to the congregation, Father Carr said: "This has not been just another church; it has been a way of life." Many parishioners now gave up on Holy Trinity with the departure of their beloved Jesuits who had been at the center of their lives and the lives of their ancestors for the last 120 years. In short, it came as a shock when this chapter of the history of the parish came to a close.

The Jesuit influence had left an indelible stamp on the lives of parishioners. The vocations alone speak for this. More than forty Holy Trinity parishioners became priests, mostly Jesuits, as well as nine brothers, again mostly Jesuits. And 111 girls became nuns, mostly Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the Order of St. Francis, Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, the order respon-

sible for the education of the parish children.

With the departure of the Jesuits in September 1961, Rev. Robert L. Ryer, a native of south Boston (although he was reared in Everett, Massachusetts), became the first secular administrator (1961-1966) and pastor (1966-1967) of Holy Trinity Church in over one hundred years. Father Ryer had worked at St. Edward's parish in Medfield, Massachusetts, and St. Matthew's parish in Dorchester, but a missionary calling found him soon moving south. He worked as a mission priest among the poor black farmers of the southern United States, including those in Ferriday, Louisiana, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Returning to Boston in 1951, he became an assistant at Blessed Sacrament in Jamaica Plain before coming to Holy Trinity.

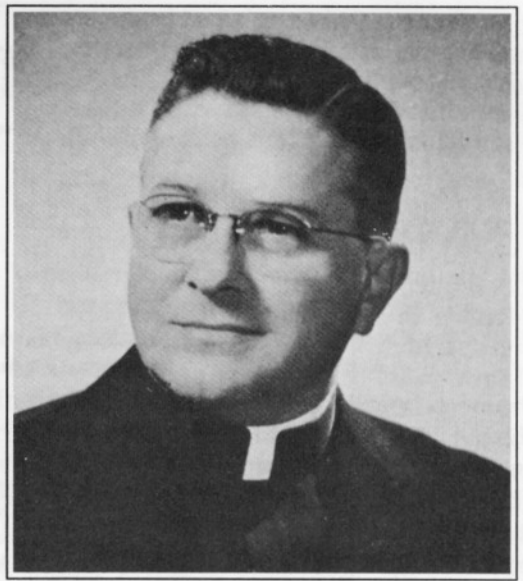
Assigned to the parish at the last minute, Father Ryer had little time to prepare for this new position, which he assumed on September 1, 1961. He would, however, make it a point to carry on the German traditions of the church despite the great changes of the

past decade. A hard worker, he made every effort to maintain the same level of commitment to the German parishioners as had his Jesuit predecessors, with special emphasis during Holy Week, on feast days and other celebrations. One parishioner states that within Father Ryers' first week as administrator of Holy Trinity, he had won the hearts of the parishioners. One parishioner had described him as a strong leader in the best German tradition, and the parishioners responded to him. Father Ryer sponsored among other things, the refurbishing of the lower church, and convinced the parishioners to contribute funds for his project. In short, he lifted up the parish. If a project required extra effort, he made that extra effort, regardless of its effect upon him personally, and expected others to follow his example. This was exactly what the parish needed during this time of transition, which thanks to Father Ryer, was a smooth one. He overcame infighting and made the parishioners work together so that the parish would survive. In this he was assisted by Rev. Terence D. McGlone, a graduate of St. John's Seminary, class of 1943. Father McGlone was ordained in October of that year at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston. Due to his exceptional priestly work, in September of 1965, Pope Paul VI made Father Ryer Papal Chamberlain, with the rank of Monsignor.

During Father Ryer's tenure, the parish schools, orphanage and home for the elderly were all finally phased out, and by 1966, only the church and rectory still stood. With urban renewal of the South End in full swing in 1967, the area was demolished, with Holy Trinity spared the wrecking ball.

Monsignor Ryer died of a heart attack at Holy Trinity rectory in 1967, having served at Holy Trinity for six years. Ironically, he died several weeks after celebrating a memorial Mass for the last former Mayor of Cologne and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Monsignor Ryer's funeral at Holy Trinity was attended by no fewer than three bishops. It was presided over by the Most Reverend Jeremiah F. Minihan, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston. In his eulogy, the Right Reverend Lawrence J. Riley said that Monsignor Ryer was "resourceful and enterprising. Gifted with a golden voice, he knew music, and he knew how to teach it to others. Dynamic and energetic, he bubbled over with enthusiasm and exuberance. His was an optimism that was innate and contagious."

On May 9, 1967, Cardinal Cushing appointed Rev. John J. Cogavin, the fifty-four year old assistant at St. Francis of Assisi in Braintree, Massachusetts, as Monsignor Ryer's successor at Holy Trinity. Father Cogavin was a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who had been ordained on May 3, 1940, by then auxiliary Bishop Cushing. He had served as the Director of Vocations in



*Rev. Robert L. Ryer*

the Lowell, Massachusetts, area in 1955. Between 1959 and 1965, he was involved in the "lend-lease" program in San Antonio, Texas, and then returned to his home state, serving at St. Patrick's in Watertown before going to St. Francis in June 1966. Father Cogavin retired in August 1983, while serving as pastor of St. Catherine's parish in Westford, Massachusetts.

Rev. William H. Morgan served as administrator from September 1973 until March 1975, when he was replaced by Rev. William C. Burckhart, whose family had roots in Holy Trinity parish. On Sunday, June 5, 1977, the parish celebrated the centenary of Holy Trinity Church with a 10:00 am Mass, the principal celebrant of the concelebrated Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving being the retired Archbishop of Kingston, Jamaica, John J. McEleney, S.J. The Archbishop was joined by Father Burckhart. The increasing evolution of the neighborhood was represented in the associate clergy assisting Father Burckhart: Rev. Thomas Szeliga, S.B.D., was on the altar representing the Chinese community and Rev. Nguyen Van Chung represented the Vietnamese community. Concelebrants included former Jesuit pastor Father Carr and former Jesuit assistants, Fathers Anthony Ecker and Pennisi. The guests of honor were the Vice Consul and Frau Meinhard Krueger of the Federal Republic of Germany. Music was provided by the combined choirs of Holy Trinity and Sacred Heart Church of Weymouth, Massachusetts, under the expert direction of Holy Trinity's organist and choir director, George Krim. A bronze plaque was dedicated to the parishioners of German descent who had originally financed the construction of the church. An informal reception was held in the lower church, followed by a more elaborate dinner at

Lantana's in Randolph, Massachusetts.

In July 1979, Father Burckhart was replaced as administrator of Holy Trinity by Rev. James. F. Lanergan, who would serve until February 1985. In May 1980, the parish got a newly ordained deacon, Mr. Gerard Rooney, a native of Hyde Park, Massachusetts, and graduate of the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston. For over a quarter of a century he had been employed as an artist by Rust Craft Publishers of Dedham, Massachusetts, the successors to Louis Prang, a German native and Holy Trinity parishioner who printed the first Christmas greeting card in the United States in 1856. (Mr. Rooney was also the staff artist for The Pilot.) Prior to ordination as a deacon, Mr. Rooney studied for three years at the Pastoral Institute at St. John's Seminary. Having been active in prison work for a dozen years, he would have a joint ministry: Holy Trinity Church and the State Prison in Norfolk, Massachusetts.

In March of 1985, the parishioners of Holy Trinity asked Archbishop Bernard Law to appoint a permanent administrator to the church. Father Lanergan transferred to St. Stephen's Church in Framingham, Massachusetts, and the Archbishop had appointed a temporary administrator to Holy Trinity who did not reside in the parish. Over one hundred letters from Holy Trinity parishioners, members of the Goethe Society, and the various member organizations of the Associated German Societies of Massachusetts, including the Boylston Schul-Verein, flooded the office of the Archbishop. In fact, some parishioners even sought to make Holy Trinity church a national landmark at this time: Dick Schneiderhan and Carl Ludwig (also members of the Boylston Schul-Verein) were in the forefront of this movement.

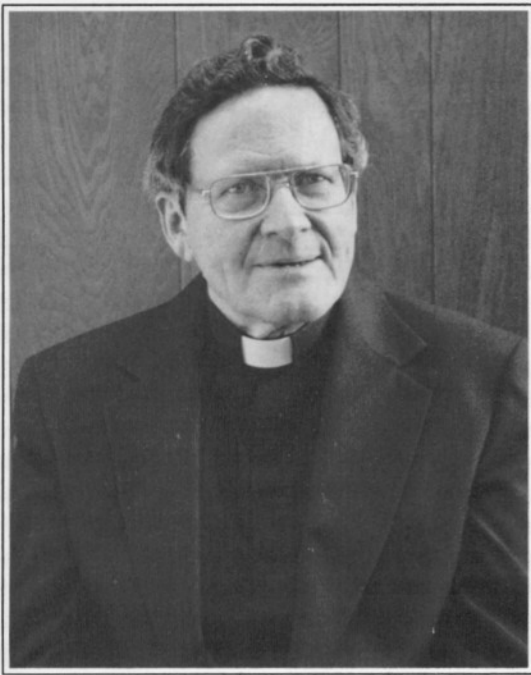
Monsignor Francis J. Lally assumed control of the parish in 1985. He was the first man to hold the dual positions of Rector of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Administrator of Holy Trinity Church. Born in Swampscott, Massachusetts, in June 1918, Monsignor Lally had a long and varied career which spanned some seven decades. A graduate of Boston College and St. John's Seminary, he was ordained in August 1944, by the Most Reverend Richard J. Cushing. He joined The Pilot as associate editor in 1948, serving in this capacity until 1951 when he became editor, a post he held until March 1971. A respected clergyman, Monsignor Lally also served as chairman of the Boston Redevelopment Authority from 1961 to 1970 at the request of the City of Boston. The city hoped that he would bring a more human face to the renovation of the city, especially in light of the experience of the people of the West End during the 1950s. After stints as a parish priest at Sacred Heart Parish in Roslindale (1971-1975) and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops in

Washington, DC (1975-1984), Monsignor Lally retired. He returned to Boston only to assume the dual role of rector of the Cathedral and administrator of Holy Trinity (1985-1987). His death on September 3, 1987 was unexpected.

Two priests who served the Holy Trinity communities during this time were Rev. John Ford, S.T., and Rev. William Joy. Father Ford, a native of Winchester, Virginia, arrived at the parish in January 1986. He lived at the rectory until late 1988, but continued his duties at Holy Trinity until 1991. In addition to performing liturgical duties on Sunday, as well as weddings, baptisms, and funerals, Father Ford brought a new community to Holy Trinity in late 1990, namely the Ethiopian Orthodox Catholics. Father Ford is currently pursuing doctoral studies at Boston University. Father Joy, a native of Hingham, Massachusetts, arrived at Holy Trinity on February 5, 1984, in the midst of a snowstorm. While stationed at Holy Trinity, he carried out liturgical duties and assisted in parish meetings. He remained at Holy Trinity until August 1985, when he transferred to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in order to study labor and management issues at the request of Cardinal Law. Currently in residence at the Cathedral, Father Joy celebrates Mass occasionally at Holy Trinity.

Monsignor Lally was replaced as both rector of the Cathedral and administrator of Holy Trinity by Rev. Peter V. Conley, a native of Readville, Massachusetts, who attended Boston Latin School, St. John's Seminary and the North American College in Rome, being ordained in December 1963. Before replacing Monsignor Lally at Holy Trinity, Father Conley had served in a number of important posts, including St. Mary's Parish in Melrose. He was also quite active in education, serving on the faculty of both Emmanuel College in Boston and Pope John XXIII College in Weston, before Bernard Cardinal Law selected him to chair the Ecumenical Commission and the post of Secretary for Community Relations. Father Conley revived the Holy Trinity Parish Council (an important group in the parish today), increasing its numbers to include sufficient members to cover all aspects of parish life. A most caring priest, Father Conley was concerned with the physical maintenance and restoration of Holy Trinity Church. Major projects accomplished during his tenure included the drive for and purchase of a new organ for the basement chapel; repair and re-painting of the outdoor Christmas creche and its statues and the statues in the garden; protective Plexiglas coverings for the stained glass windows of the chapel, and started repair of the stained glass window over the high altar in the main church. Father Conley is currently Editor-in-Chief of The Pilot.

Holy Trinity's congregations have been brought



*Rev. Frederick J. Murphy*

together by the tireless efforts of Father Conley's successor and current administrator, Rev. Frederick J. Murphy, a native of Jamaica Plain. Father Murphy attended Boston College High School, St. John's Seminary and the North American College in Rome, being ordained in 1957. For thirty-one years he served on the faculty of the seminary college, first at Cardinal O'Connell Seminary in Jamaica Plain (1960-1970), and then, upon the formation of the four year college system, at St. Clement's Hall on the campus of St. John's Seminary in Brighton. After eight years as dean of the college, he was appointed as rector of the Cathedral and administrator of Holy Trinity, assuming both responsibilities on July 1, 1991, committed to serving the parishioners of Holy Trinity in the best tradition of his predecessors.

Two important developments\* occurred at Holy Trinity during the 1980s, which are maintained to this day as the church continues to reach out to the local neighborhood, namely the founding of the Cardinal Medeiros Center of the Kit Clark Senior Services (KCSS) in the basement of the church, a day shelter for older homeless people, and the opening of Bridge Over Troubled Waters, a shelter for homeless and abused teenagers located in Holy Trinity's rectory, to which Bernard Cardinal Law has been seriously committed.

The Cardinal Medeiros Center, which services upwards of 175 people on any given day, is dedicated to providing food and finding shelter for frail and elderly homeless people, from age forty-five and up. It came into existence on Columbus Day, 1984. It is di-

rected by the able Joe McPherson, a native Bostonian and trained social worker who has been with Kit Clark Senior Services (the executive director is Sandra Albright) for some fifteen years and has been a member of the staff at the Cardinal Medeiros Center since its inception. In addition to the program at Holy Trinity, KCSS also operates a congregate housing program at St. Helena's apartment building on Union Park Street, behind the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, assisting former homeless people in the transition to housing.

Bridge Over Trouble Waters was founded in 1970, by Sister Barbara Whelan and two other Sisters of St. Joseph. In 1987, with the support of the parishioners, Cardinal Law gave the rectory to the Bridge, which initially operated between the hours of nine o'clock in the morning and six in the evening. This arrangement did not, however, address fully the needs of the young people, and in January 1989, a twenty-four hour operation was put into effect to better serve them. This is known as the "Transitional Living Program," a voluntary program designed to permit the residents to live at the rectory for about a year, where they are taught how to live, with the intention of keeping them out of the shelter system. The residents work, go to school, and some go on to college. There are sixteen beds and on average twenty-five residents, boys and girls, go through the program annually.

In 1990, Bernard Cardinal Law designed Holy Trinity as host church to the Tridentine Latin Mass, which is celebrated once a week on Sundays. The central location, availability of parking and traditional church decor make Holy Trinity a natural choice for this. Over the past couple of years the congregation at this Latin Mass has continued to grow, bringing new life to Holy Trinity.

The members of this German national parish, while decreasing in number, remain steadfastly loyal to Holy Trinity and its organizations. Many of them live in suburban communities such as Dedham, Quincy, Malden, Holbrook, West Roxbury, etc., yet they still come back to the church for the services, German prayers, customs and traditions of their ancestors. After all, Holy Trinity has never been just an ordinary Catholic church or parish: it is a way of life.



## CHAPTER IV:

# HOLY TRINITY SCHOOLS, ORPHANAGE AND HOME

## Schools

Holy Trinity parish was the pioneer in parochial school education in Boston, and most likely was the first parish to establish a parochial school in New England. The German immigrants wanted to give their children a solid education in a religious environment. Their descendants continued this commitment to excellence in education.

The first school for both boys and girls was founded in 1844, by Father Plathe. The first schoolmaster was probably a Mr. Schluessle. Classes were initially held in the basement of the church. A Jesuit Brother, Caspar Menke, served as headmaster for a number of years. Brother Menke had been born in the town of Gesecke, Westphalia, on March 2, 1812. At age twenty-eight he went to Switzerland with the intention of joining the Society of Jesus, but because of the large number of applicants, he had to wait until there was an opening. In the interim he worked as a tailor. He was finally

admitted to the Society in October 1841, entering the novitiate at Brieg, Valesia, where he stayed until 1847, when the Jesuits were expelled from Switzerland. Brother Menke left for Oleggio, Italy, but when revolution broke out in the summer of 1848, he left for America with a group of Jesuits. He lived in Georgetown and Frederick, Maryland, for a short period of time before being sent to Holy Trinity in the autumn of 1850, where he would remain until his death forty-five years later in 1895, at age eighty-three, serving not only as headmaster of the school, but also as sexton, janitor and laborer. One of the priests with whom he served said of him at the time of his death that: "Brother Menke deserves to be put in a frame and proposed as a model Brother of the Society." His obituary stated that "his obedience, modesty and fidelity edified all who knew him, and gives us the assured confidence that they have secured for him an everlasting reward."

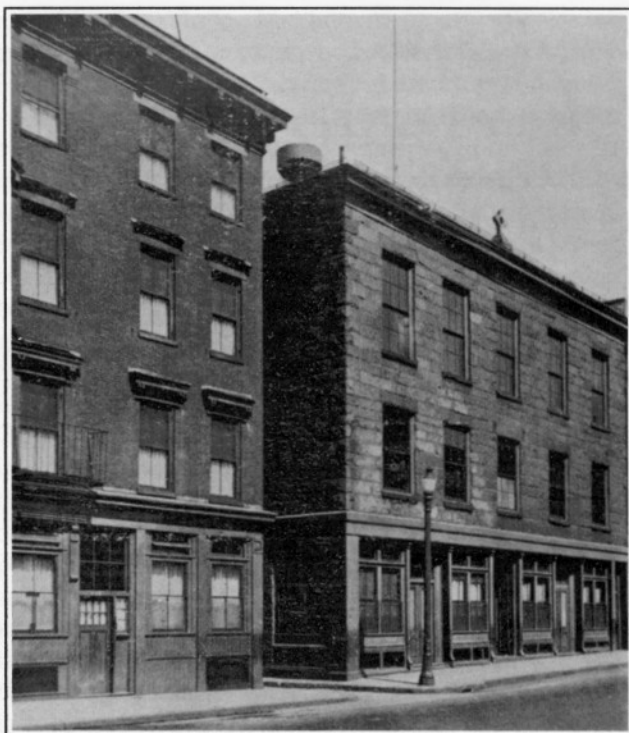
By the time Father Eck assumed control of the parish in 1848, the increasing number of schoolchildren required the purchase of new facilities. Thus, a wooden two story house was acquired on the corner of Lucas and Suffolk Streets, where the girls' school was now established (the boys were still in the church basement). Eventually the boys would transfer to this building, and the girls would again move this time to a larger structure, which enabled the basement of the church to be used for religious services.



*Interior of upper church, 1994*

In 1859, Father Reiter engaged the services of the School Sisters of Notre Dame from Cincinnati to serve as teachers at the girls' school. By 1878, the Sisters had taken over the direction of the little boys' and middle boys' school, and by the turn of the century only the big boys' school was run by laymen. During the last year of Father Reiter's tenure as Pastor (1870), Rev. Hugo Praesser, S.J., established a school in South Boston for children aged six to eight years. However, this school was soon closed due to operating costs, and the fact that few students were being served. There was talk at this time of re-establishing yet another school in this section of the city, but this would not happen until 1895.

In 1874, as the South End was being filled in, a new school was built on the property of the old church at the cost of thirty thousand dollars. The architect was named Weissbein, the builder Sullivan. The boys now took their classes in the Casino Hall, and others attended classes in a nearby building, formerly housing a piano factory. In 1879, Father Nopper decided to form a school corporation to alleviate the school debt, entitled "Holy Trinity Catholic School and Society." Father Nopper would serve as its president and treasurer. One of his first actions included buying adjacent land behind the church on Cobb Street for some ten thousand dollars, which would be used as a playground for the schoolchildren. The school was funded by the Confraternity of Men as well as the sodalities. The Catholic Casino also contributed to this effort, providing several thousands of dollars per year. Father Praesser asked those parishioners who could afford it to pay at least fifty cents per month to the school fund, for many families could not afford to send their children to the parochial school. This generosity enabled many poor children the benefit of a Catholic education. The results of parochial school education were evident by the fact that in 1894, ninety percent of Holy Trinity's grammar school graduates passed exams for high school, as



*Holy Trinity School and Convent*

opposed to sixty percent of those who attended public school. But the times also dictated that many children left school at age fourteen to go to work. In the event that this was the case, Holy Trinity provided these people with a solid foundation for life.

One of the unique characteristics about German parochial education at Holy Trinity was the fact that many German dialects were spoken at home because the families originated in various German states, primarily Bavaria, Baden, Swabia, the Rhineland, Westphalia and Austria. With the unification of Germany in 1871, High German language courses were taught in schools in Germany in order to create a standardized German language. The same approach was taken in Holy Trinity parish schools. The pupils learned not only English (to prepare them for full participation in American life), but they also become competent in German, no small accomplishment. Although a national German parish, Holy Trinity's parishioners realized the importance of assimilation into American society, the road to opportunity and success. By the turn

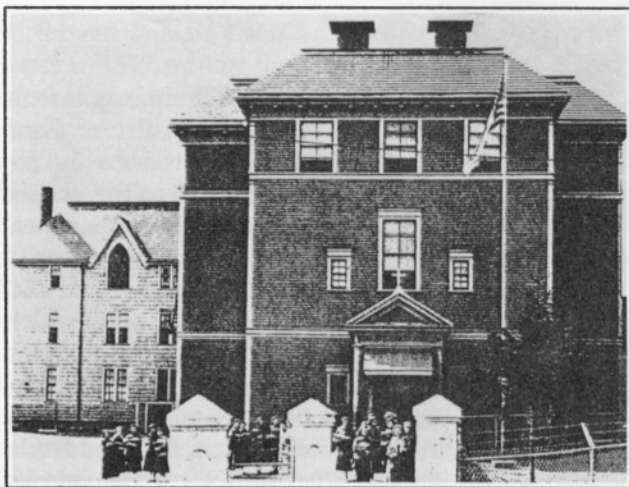


*School at  
South Boston*

of the century, a slow but steady trend stressed the use of English in preaching and teaching. After America's entry into World War I, the parish schools scaled back further the teaching of the language of their forefathers as proof of their loyalty to the United States. After the war, German language instruction was re-introduced, but relegated to a half-hour of instruction per day. Beginning at the turn of the century, religious education was given exclusively in English, and by the 1930s, the German language was a sole concern of only the oldest parishioners as the younger generations had become thoroughly Americanized.

By 1890, the German parishioners were scattered throughout the city, steadily drifting to the areas of Roxbury, West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, South Boston and Dorchester, a trend which would continue throughout the coming century. In keeping with this trend, Holy Trinity opened schools in Roxbury, in the "Home" in Roxbury in 1891, and in South Boston at West 6th and F Streets in 1895. The South Boston school would remain in operation until 1927. The School Sisters of Notre Dame, who lived on Berkeley Street, and who were teaching at the parish school next to the church, also taught at the South Boston school until 1913, when they were replaced by the Sisters of St. Francis. In 1933, Holy Trinity High School for girls would open in Roxbury, too.

The Roxbury operation had been made possible by Joseph Tondorf of the Germania Co-operative Bank, who acted as medium in the purchase of the Ellis Estate on Highland, Hawthorne, Ellis, Thornton and Fulda Streets under the direction of Father Nopper. In less than two years a school, taught by the Sisters of St. Francis (in 1913, they would replace the School Sisters of Notre Dame at the school in the South End), and an orphanage had been built as well. In addition over



*Holy Trinity Grade School, Roxbury*

twenty houses were now erected on the land of the former estate.

By the mid-1940s, Holy Trinity operated three schools, with over 470 pupils, only seventy-five of whom were Holy Trinity parishioners. The remainder were from other parishes, mostly the Cathedral (which lacked classroom space) and All Saints in Roxbury (which did not operate a school). Eighty percent of the students were from poor families of non-parishioners; thus, the parishioners of Holy Trinity paid the tuition costs and other costs of educating not only their children, but also the children of non-parishioners. In short, the financial requirements of operating the schools had become an impossible burden for the Germans. By 1945, Holy Trinity's grade school in Roxbury had over two hundred students being taught by six Sisters of St. Francis. Holy Trinity High School in Roxbury had over one hundred girls taking both college and commercial courses, taught by six Sisters of St. Francis. The business course was regarded as one of the best in Boston. The girls' high school also had its own sodality.

Only in 1944 would the Archdiocese of Boston decide to assist the schools financially. In September of the following year, Archbishop Richard J. Cushing purchased a new parish school building, the Waite building, for Holy Trinity parishioners near the church (classes at the in-town school had been conducted in the Casino buildings). A grateful Father Weiser thanked the Archbishop publicly, saying: "Through his kindness [Archbishop Cushing] we now have this fine building for our children, in addition to the High and Grammar schools in Roxbury."



*Franciscan Sisters Lioba, Ephrem, Damiana*



## Orphanage and Home

The "Home" at Roxbury was a unique feature of Holy Trinity parish. People who had fallen on hard luck were kept in the parish and cared for by the parishioners, clergy and nuns attached to the parish. Thus, this "Home" lacked an institutional character, and its inhabitants enjoyed a family atmosphere.

In January 1860, Father Reiter had established a St. Joseph's Widows, Orphans and Poor Society, which would come to the assistance of those who fell into these categories in the order in which they appeared. In April 1888, a large wooden building and accompanying land were purchased on Highland, Ellis and Fulda Streets in Roxbury for \$29,000 to serve the people. Three years later, on the Feast Day of St. Joseph, the Archbishop of Boston dedicated this building. The orphanage consisted of two buildings, the original wooden structure as well as a newer one, the latter having three floors in order to accommodate ten elderly women and thirty-five orphans, on average. The "Home" also had four schoolrooms, a cafeteria, playrooms, a couple of bathrooms, and the St. Elizabeth of Hungary chapel, which, according to a stipulation of Archbishop Williams, was to be considered an annex to Holy Trinity Church. Complete with a garden, the grounds would be kept in spotless condition. The orphanage was tied in directly to the school. Some two hundred children of the neighborhood would go to this branch school until age fourteen, at which point the girls would learn how to cook over a two year period of time, and the boys would go to work under the tutelage of a member of the parish in a given business. A special "School Association" was established expressly for the purpose of operating the Roxbury branch school. Members of this association were asked to contribute twenty-five cents per month to this cause.

In the early years the Roxbury school was run by eight sisters of the Third Order of the Holy Franciscans. Foremost among these nuns was Sister Mary Damiana, O.S.F., who served as Superior during the years 1891-1916, and after a few years' absence, returned in 1919 to serve many more years before her death from heart trouble in 1929. The oldest of eleven children, she had been born in Weiler, Germany, in February 1850. She came to the United States at age twenty, a few years later entering religious life in Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, where she professed in August 1877. She arrived at Holy Trinity's Roxbury branch to open the "Home" for orphans and old people in March 1891, along with four other nuns. She worked tirelessly at Holy Trinity until her demise, living by the words "work and pray." She would rise at two o'clock in the morning on Mondays to begin the wash, and toiled endless hours for years at a stretch without any apparent detriment to her health.



*Orphanage and Home, Roxbury*

She took particular pride in maintaining a spotless community chapel, which she artistically decorated.

The total cost of establishing the Roxbury enclave in the early 1890s amounted to \$59,000. The orphanage itself was supported by five sources: a monthly collection of the men's sodality; tuition; monthly contributions of the Roxbury School Association, a support group especially founded to assist the "Home"; the Casino Club; and voluntary contributions.

By the mid-1940s, the orphanage had become a boarding house for non-parishioners adjacent to the convent, directed by two Sisters. Father Joseph Keller, the well-known Jamaican missionary and director of the Little Flower Missionary, lived at the "Home," serving as its chaplain. Father Keller sponsored many devotional services at the Roxbury sight, which served as a magnet for the neighborhood faithful.

Holy Trinity schools, orphanage and "Home" were all phased out during the early 1960s, when the parish was transferred from the Society of Jesus to the Archdiocese of Boston.



*Rev.  
Joseph A.  
Keller, S.J.*



## CHAPTER V:

# HOLY TRINITY MUSIC

The musical life of Holy Trinity is nothing short of spectacular. Early on the church set a standard for music, religious and otherwise, which has rarely been equaled or surpassed by other parishes.

One of the early organists and music directors at Holy Trinity was Adam Chelius, who occasionally had the assistance of the talented members of the Germania Orchestra. Chelius would be followed by a whole host of first-rate musicians.

The talented Professor Franz Funke served as organist and choir director in the 1880s. He is the great-grandfather of the current organist and choir director, George Krim. In the days before electricity, three or four boys would pump the lever of the bellows of the organ in order that the organist might play a tune, which was no doubt a challenge, given the fact that Funke was a gifted man who could play the great works of the German composers of the day. In addition to playing the organ, Funke was also the teacher of the boys in the seventh and eighth grades at Holy Trinity's grammar school in the South End. (Church law forbade the Sisters of Notre Dame from teaching boys at this grade level.) Teaching was part of the job description of the church organist, an arrangement which lasted until about 1913, when the Sisters of St. Francis arrived to teach the boys in the seventh and eighth grades. A Music Sister was appointed as well, whose job it was to teach piano and direct a children's choir.

Parishioner August Francis Schubert was one of the foremost clarinetists in Boston during the second half of the nineteenth century. As a young boy in Germany, he was taught to play the clarinet by his father, who had played with the great Ludwig van

Beethoven for eight years. Schubert came to the United States in 1849, amidst the upheaval of revolution that was sweeping the Germanies. After arriving in America, he played with several military bands and orchestras, and helped to organize the 99th New York Regimental Band in 1860-1861. After the Civil War he joined the old Boston Brigade Band, then Ryan's and Edmund's Orchestras, and for a dozen years was a player in Carter's Band. He died of heart disease at his home in Roxbury in July 1888. His funeral at Holy Trinity included the music of Carter's Band under the direction of Professor Funke.

At the turn of the century Professor Funke was succeeded as parish organist and choir director by Joseph Ecker, a very fine musician, who was the patriarch of one of the best-known musical families in Boston. One of the highlights of Joseph Ecker's career was conducting the church choir for an illustrated lecture on the Passion Play by Fraulein Marie Mayer of Oberammergau, Germany, who visited Holy Trinity in April 1915. She had most recently played the role of Mary Magdalene in the last production of the Passion Play at Oberammergau. Her trip to the parish was sponsored by Holy Trinity's St. Anthony Society and Teutonia Council No. 225 of the Knights of Columbus.

Joseph Ecker's oldest daughter Emma was considered by many to be the finest vocal teacher in Boston during the second decade of the present century. She went on to become a nationally recognized alto contralto. She could also play the organ and would at times fill in for her father as church organist, as would her brother James. James Ecker was a superior musician in his own right. He became the Director of Music for the Boston Public Schools, and Director of the Boston College Glee Club. According to a later church organist, Irvin Brogan, James Ecker was "one of the best musicians I ever met." A third child of Joseph Ecker, Joseph Jr. (an optometrist by profession), was a well-known baritone whose solo appearances were widely acclaimed.

In the 1920s and 30s, Joseph Ecker was followed by Miss Adelaide Breen, a very competent church organist. During this same time, Ferdinand Lehnert acted as choir director. He also taught diction and music at Weston College. And the most notable female vocalist of Holy Trinity during this time was the lively Celia Sartoris Kelter, who continued to sing at funerals well into her mid-eighties.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, a Jewish Professor wrote organ accompaniments for all of the German hymns found in The Holy Trinity Manual: Prayers and Hymns (originally printed in the 1920s), which proved to be of tremendous value to subsequent musicians at Holy Trinity. Some of these musicians, who played the organ for the Young Men's Sodality



*Chapel at the Home*

services, were relatives of the present director George Krim, notably his father, George F. Sr., and an uncle, William Krim.

Irvin C. Brogan assumed the role of church organist and choir director in December 1940 at the time of Father Gisler's death. With the coming of the Second World War, Brogan joined the United States Navy. Benny Aucoin now served as organist during the early 1940s in Brogan's absence.

Brogan returned to the parish in 1944, and resumed his position as Holy Trinity organist and choir director. He would serve in this capacity until 1953. During his tenure at Holy Trinity, other organists assisted him in providing music at Novena, First Friday, Lenten, and Sodality services. They were Elsa Bergdoll (married in 1956 to George Krim, present organist) and Mary Hohmann, who was also organist at the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Chapel in Roxbury. Indeed, Brogan would maintain his close affiliation as an active musician until 1987. A native of Reading, Massachusetts, Brogan graduated from Boston College, Class of 1935. He began his musical career as an organist in 1929, serving as church organist at St. Joseph's Church in Woburn. While a student at Boston College, he served as student organist. Over the next half century he would play at weddings, funerals, etc., in over one hundred parishes of the Boston Archdiocese: Blessed Sacrament, Wakefield (1936—1938); Blessed Sacrament, Hough's Neck (1938—1940); Holy Trinity (1940—1953); St. Catherine's, Norwood (1953—1965); The Paulist Chapel, Boston (1965—1968); St. John the Evangelist, Swampscott (1968); St. Theresa's, West Roxbury (1968—1979); and St. Andrew's, Forest Hills (1983—1987). He also played at Christ church Episcopal (1980—1983). Brogan was employed as manager of McLaughlin and Reilly Company, a Boston publisher of Catholic church music until 1968, when the company was sold to another publisher. Among his many memorable contributions were performances with the famous Trapp Family Singers, the Austrian exiles and close friends of Father Weiser, who participated in the 1944 centennial celebration of Holy Trinity Parish.

Brogan was also the first American of non-German ancestry to become a member of the Saengerchor Boston, to which Holy Trinity sent a number of its vocalists. Brogan was recruited into the Saengerchor Boston by its director, August Becker, a Holy Trinity parishioner from Jamaica Plain who had married an American of Irish extraction. Becker also sang in the Holy Trinity Maennerchor. In 1951, Brogan began a seven year tenure as temporary Dirigent of the Saengerchor Boston, initially intending to fill in until an American of German descent could be found as a permanent Director. A replacement was found, but the arrangement did not

work out, and Brogan would serve as Dirigent for the next twenty-five years. One of the highlights of Brogan's years with the Saengerchor Boston was a 1968 trip to Europe to participate in several choral festivals. In a large stadium in Stuttgart the group sang along with 185,000 other vocalists from all over the world. Brogan personally conducted the Connecticut Saengerchor at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, which he claimed was "the highlight of my life." Irvin Brogan died on December 8, 1992, and his funeral Mass at Holy Trinity was attended and sung by members of the Holy Trinity German and Latin Choirs. Many of his peer church musicians from other parishes in the Archdiocese, including the neighboring choir from the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, also participated and sang at the Mass. George Krim, current organist and director, was assisted by Leo Abbott, organist and director of music at the Cathedral, and Genevieve Schmidt, organist and choir director at St. John the Evangelist church, Wellesley. Miss Schmidt is also assistant organist at Holy Trinity.

Since 1953, George Krim has held the post of organist and music director at Holy Trinity. As noted he is a direct descendent of Professor Funke. Krim grew up in Roxbury, literally next door to the Holy Trinity branch grammar school, attending the chapel on Sundays. He attended this grammar school and went to Boston College High School, graduating in 1943. He served with the US 75th Infantry Division in Europe during the Second World War.

Krim joined the Holy Trinity Maennerchor in 1950, which at the time was directed by Irvin Brogan. With Brogan's departure in 1953, Krim was selected to be choir director of the thirty-five member all-male choir, preparing all of the music for the church liturgies. Krim was a natural musician, having played the piano since a boy, but he had no formal training. Brogan suggested that he take some formal musical training, and he did. He studied for over a year at the Boston Conservatory of Music, learning solfege and basic keyboard tech-



*Holy Trinity German Choir, 1994*



*Holy Trinity Latin Schola, 1993*

niques. He continued keyboard and musicality from Armando Arena, a Boston teacher. For composition, Krim sought out and secured the assistance of the superb musician Edward Cornelius Currie of Somerville (the man responsible for producing the Holy Trinity Maennerchor's Haydn Singmesse), with whom he would study some ten years, from 1955 to 1965. Before long, Krim had mastered harmony and counterpoint, choral conducting, organ technique and instrumentation.

Krim is a gifted composer in his own right. He has written original Masses, Motets and Hymns for the Holy Trinity parish choirs which, since the 1950s, have included both men and women. Krim has retained the centuries' old quality music in his tenure at Holy Trinity. He has made a great effort to expose the choir to all types of music, from chants to folk music, fitting them into appropriate liturgy. He made a smooth transition when the vernacular came into use following Vatican II, when the Mass became a participatory experience for the parishioners. He has made it a point to retain the German heritage of music in church services. To this day, once a year, on the third Sunday in November, there is an all German Mass celebrated at Holy Trinity. This Mass includes participants from the thirteen member organizations of the Associated of German Societies of Massachusetts (AGSM), which consists of the Boylston Schul-Verein, the Goethe Society, The Ladies' Aid society and the Deutsches Altenheim of West Roxbury, as well as Holy Trinity church. (Krim is a Holy Trinity delegate to the AGSM.)

In addition to his regular work as music director of the German congregation, Krim has also been active in providing music for the traditional Latin Tridentine Mass since 1990. Having first-hand experience with the traditional music of the Latin liturgy which preceded Vatican II, Krim became an invaluable source of traditional procedure and music when Holy Trinity was designated as the host for the weekly Latin Tridentine



*Christmas Tableau-Epiphany, 1994*

Mass by Bernard Cardinal Law. Krim continues to play the organ at the Latin Mass on Sundays at noon, and conducts the Holy Trinity Latin Schola, a choir of twenty to twenty-five men and women.

As Holy Trinity's composer in residence, Krim's best-loved work is his "A Christmas Tableau in Five Settings," a pageant in the best German tradition, and which does much to contribute to Holy Trinity's reputation throughout the region as the "Christmas Church." Krim's masterpiece was first performed at Holy Trinity on January 9, 1966. Krim saw the need for a pageant which would act out the Christmas story, something that had been absent from the parish for the first half of this century. Such a thing had been done during the 1800s, and Krim sought to revive this tradition. So, he decided that he would bring back the Christmas play and perform it at Epiphany, rather than at Christmas itself, a time during which many people are busy with holiday preparations. In 1972, he provided an entirely new musical score, with full-scale performances, designed for between sixty-five and seventy-five voices in the choir, plus the narrator, and between twelve and twenty actors, as well as trumpets, with soprano and baritone soloists. For the January 1994 Sesquicentennial performance, Krim re-scored and embellished all of the solo and choral parts of the Tableau while retaining the work's entire original instrumental arrangements. The pageant, which lasts about forty-five minutes, includes music and narrations of Scripture readings, from Christ's birth to the Epiphany. Silent actors perform pantomime. The five settings are as follows:

**First Setting—Prophecy.** This includes readings about the Apocalypse. St. John appears in the desert with the knowledge that God is coming. The Shepherds are also introduced;

**Second Setting—Word Became Flesh.**



The angel appears to St. Joseph, and he and Mary go from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born;

Third Setting—Announcement. After the birth of Jesus takes place, the angels and shepherds announce that they go to Bethlehem;

Fourth Setting—Adoration. This part portrays the three Magi and the end of the Christmas story;

Fifth Setting—Exultation. This setting invokes the congregation to participate in the Christmas story, with the acknowledgement of the birth of Christ with the singing of Krim's arrangement of "Now Thank We All, Our God."

Needless to say, large crowds attend these performances. This is an evolving work, and although costumes and actors may change, the music and narration format remain the same. In the past twenty years, Krim's very popular work has been performed at a number of other churches, including Sacred Heart in Weymouth and Trinity Episcopal Church in Copley Square. It was even carried on the internal television at Youville Hospital in Cambridge during the late 1970s, so that the bedridden could enjoy this masterpiece. Since 1981, the pageant has been performed under the auspices of the Holy Trinity Christian Arts Series (CAS), an organization committed to sponsoring serious cultural endeavors (see Chapter VI). In recent years students from the Boston Conservatory of Music have partaken in the choreography, which has included ballet. An anonymous donor has ensured that this work will continue to be performed through the end of the twentieth century. Performed on even-numbered years at Holy Trinity Church, this pageant remains a beautiful spiritual experience for those who are fortunate enough to witness it.

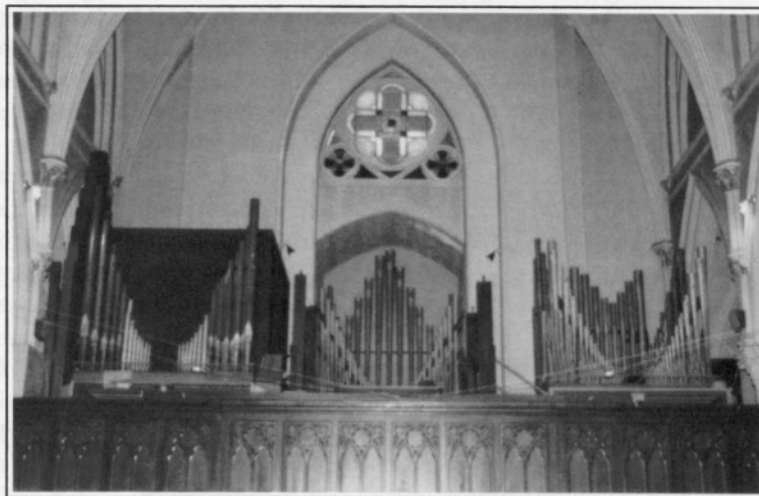
## Organs at Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity's 2,880 pipe organ with fifty-four stops was one of the first of its kind in New England. Built by Hook & Hastings (Opus Number 858) at an original cost of nine thousand dollars in 1877, it was twenty-four feet wide, twenty feet deep and thirty-five feet high. It was first used in a concert in early May 1877. The 1956 church fire damaged the organ, but it was subsequently restored by Conrad Olson, with only a few of the original pipes surviving in the rebuilt instrument.

During Father Ryer's tenure as administrator in the mid-1960s, Holy Trinity's lower chapel was rebuilt and a new electronic organ was provided for this part of the church.



*Die Grosse Orgel, 1877*



*The restored organ, 1957*



*Choir  
picnic,  
1897*



## Singing Groups

### *Church Choir*

The Holy Trinity Church Choir originally began as a group of men and women, but changed into an all-male choir in accordance with liturgical regulations on chant and music. It was directed by some of the finest musicians in Boston, and was widely acknowledged as one of the finest choirs in the city. In the post Vatican II era, it has reverted to a mixed group of men and women.

### *Cecilia Singing Society*

The Cecilia Singing Society, which included both men and women, was a choir established in 1858. It was comprised of some of the best musical talent in Boston, giving concerts, and receiving high marks from press and public alike. Among its members were Louis Steuer, Mathias Brock, Henry Wessling, Jean Paul Selinger (a noted portrait painter), members of the Werner family (Anthony, Cecilia and Dr. Julius), and Louis Pfau, who claimed that the society was the first in the United States to produce the Oratorio "Christus" by Handel, which was widely acclaimed.

### *Casino Male Choir*

The Casino Male Choir, founded in 1870, furnished entertainments and concerts of a high caliber, and strengthened the church choir at solemn occasions.

Prominent members included Joseph Ecker and the father-son team of Michael and George A. Mischler. In connection with this musical group was the Germania Orchestra, one of Boston's best, which began the Boston Philharmonic Concerts in 1859, under the leadership of Carl Zerrahn (conductor of the Handel and Haydn Society, 1854—1894), and this became the nucleus of the world renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1881, by Henry Lee Higginson, a New Yorker of German ancestry.

### *Concordia Singing Society*

The Concordia Singing Society originally began in 1859 as a male choir, with a hall at the corner of Washington and Union Park Streets, and was for a good many years directed by Professor Falkenstein, the famous composer and organist at the Cathedral. In 1878, this organization merged with the Casino Choir.

### *Concordia Choral and Symphony Society*

The Concordia Choral and Symphony Society was founded of Rev. Henry J. Nelles, S.J., who was born in 1865 of a deeply religious family. Father Nelles was a great lover of music from his days as a youth. His Sunday afternoon concerts at the Conservatory of Music in Boston were listened to and enjoyed by thousands, either in person or on the radio. This society gave a number of outstanding performances, particularly in Jordan Hall.

## CHAPTER VI:

# HOLY TRINITY ORGANIZATIONS

To a great degree, parish organizations made Holy Trinity a way of life, as parishioners' entire lives were focused upon the church. Parish organizations provided the spirit of Christian community which would forever shape their lives. During the Jesuit years, each organization had a Jesuit moderator and spiritual advisor.

## Religious and Spiritual Organizations

### *Confraternities of Mary and the Sodalities of Our Lady*

The confraternities of Mary were founded in 1848, by Father Eck, but at the time they met not publicly, but in private. Father Eck decided that it would be preferable to open up the Confraternities to all parishioners of Holy Trinity—men, women, boys and girls. By 1851, the organization boasted a membership of over four hundred as follows: 95 men, 151 women, 70 boys and 91 girls. This same year Father Eck divided the organization into separate groups according to age and gender. The Sodalities of Our Lady were dedicated in December 1851, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, with the Young Men's Sodality boasting 132 members and the Young Ladies' Sodality with 127. By the end of the century the memberships had more than doubled for the Young Men's Sodality and the Young Ladies' Sodality had more than quadrupled. At the Golden Jubilee of the founding of the young peoples' sodalities in May 1901 (which included a High Mass, the induction of sixty-two new members and banquet and concert in the Casino Hall), Archbishop Williams addressed the sodalities, saying "It is not so much the danger from without as that from within our heart, which we have to fear; be therefore, vigilant, unceasingly, and you will be rewarded." The sodality activities were an important influence on the young people throughout the twentieth century, with such activities as monthly Communion, devotions every two weeks, instruction and guidance, daily rosary, special devotion to Mary, organized Catholic Action, support of Catholic Missions, charities, lectures, library, debating and drama societies, Red Cross auxiliary, chaplains' aid, sports and outings, club house and rest home, socials and parties. The Confraternity of the Men and the Young Men's Sodality became the parish group of the Holy

Name Society. During the Second World War, the following members of the Holy Trinity Young Men's Sodality made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their very lives in the service of their country:

Capt. Richard Huerth  
Lt. Charles Arekelian  
Lt. Anthony Aveni  
Sgt. Francis J. Miethe  
William F. Bausch  
Albert Alexander  
Francis P. Weider  
George F. Millett  
Joseph J. Brennon  
John G. Babb  
John J. Herr

### *The Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart*

The Archconfraternity of the Sacred Heart was founded by Father Reiter in June 1863, as the Society of the Sacred Heart, and later, the League of the Sacred Heart. By the turn of the century it numbered over a thousand members. Meetings were held on each second Sunday of the month in the afternoons. It eventually became absorbed by the League of the Sacred Heart and the Apostleship of Prayer.

### *The Confraternity of Bona Mors (Happy Death)*

The Society of the Happy Death, a feature of most Jesuit churches, which met on the third Sunday of the month, was also founded by Father Reiter in December 1863, and at the turn of the century its membership was close to a thousand members.

### *Holy Childhood Association*

Founded in 1849, the Holy Childhood Association was among the earliest organizations of the parish. Its purpose was to hold monthly meetings and sponsor the conversion of heathen children. Each member was expected to give one cent per month for this purpose but in actuality each year the group contributed several thousand dollars to this cause. On the second Sunday in January, this organization sponsored a procession of the children of the parish, who would parade through the church complete with statues, banners and flags. Each child baptized at Holy Trinity was at the time of baptism entered into the Holy Childhood Association.

## Processions

The processions were among the most colorful activities of Holy Trinity parish. Perhaps the most impressive were the Shepherds' Processions on the night of Christmas Day, with the children dressed as shepherds, singing songs, with a baby in the manger. The chief procession of the year was the one held on Corpus Christi, the first one being staged in 1851. One witness commented:

The girls, clad in white, with lilies in their hands, groups of symbolic figures, with banners and flags, the boys with staffs and rods, all the associations of the parish with their signs and symbols and burning candles, finally the flower-strewing little children preceding the clergy—all these made a fantastic impression....

As time went by, the parishioners who live far away from the church would make a special effort to partake in these ceremonies.

### *St. John Berchmans Society*

The St. John Berchmans Society was established for the altar boys who were pupils at the Holy Trinity grade schools. There were two branches of this organization, one in Roxbury and the other in the church on Shawmut Avenue.



*Gruppe Von Vereinsfahnen*

## Ushers' Club

The Holy Trinity Ushers' Club was founded in 1903, by Peter C. Ulrich, the first moderator being Father Jutz and the first President being Victor Mueller. Prior to this time, ushers had been selected from the ranks of the old Maennerbruderschaft (Confraternity of Men). It was staffed by married and single men, serving at both the church in Shawmut Avenue as well as the chapel in Roxbury. The Ushers' Club was also a solid supporter of the various charitable activities sponsored by parish organizations. During the First World War, seventy-five percent of the members of this organization enlisted in the United States Armed Forces. A large number also served in the Second World War.

## Charitable Organizations

These organizations were established to provide for the welfare of Holy Trinity parishioners and others in need of such services.

### *St. Vincent's Society*

The St. Vincent's Society is the oldest Holy Trinity parish organization. Founded by Father Eck in June 1850, its first president was a Mr. Kilian Ochs. The St. Vincent's Society's mission was "not only to support the sick and those incapable of working, but also to stand by and help the widows and orphans of deceased members of the Society"; in others words, it was both a welfare agency and insurance policy. Throughout the years the St. Vincent's Society assisted not only parishioners, but also contributed to the assistance of those people outside the parish who desperately needed assistance. By 1889, it had become a member of the Deutsche Romanische Katholischen Central Verein-Nord Amerika (German Roman Catholic Central Society of North America), which enabled the members to communicate with other American Catholic of German ancestry. During the first fifty years of its existence this organization, which numbered 190 members in 1900, paid out over \$70,000 to those in need of financial assistance. During its first half century, the society had primarily concerned itself with the orphans, widows and poor families of the parish, but after the charitable institutions were established in Roxbury, it was converted into a sick benefit society.

## ***Holy Trinity Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society***

The Holy Trinity Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was another early organization of the parish. It also belonged to a larger global association. Founded by Father Schleuter in September 1890, its members hoped to set a good example of Christian life, and to seek out and assist the poor. They hope to lead by example, living by the words, "Man does not live by bread alone, but also by the Word of God." Members of the Holy Trinity Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society took an active interest in the education of children, providing hot lunches to the children of the parish schools. They also took an interest in the attempted reform of juvenile delinquents. Their funds came from members, collections, donations, etc.

## ***The St. Joseph Society for the Support of the Sick***

The St. Joseph Society for the Support of the Sick originally was called the Catholic Casino Society for the Support of the Sick. It was founded in September 1870, but Father Reiter and a number of members of the Catholic Casino who wanted to establish an aid society. By the end of the first year of existence, its president, Joseph May, could report that fifty-six people had become members, raising over \$150. In 1878, this group merged with the Casino and Concordia Association and Support Society, and was renamed the St. Michael's Society for the Support of the Sick. But there was a problem. One could only belong if he were already a member of the Casino. If one quit the Casino, he also had to resign from the Society for the Support of the Sick. In 1883, the organization was re-founded as the St. Joseph Society for the Support of the sick, which began to grow rapidly as one of the more active organizations of Holy Trinity parish.

## ***The St. Joseph Society***

Founded in 1860 by Father Reiter, for widows, orphans and the poor, the St. Joseph Society (not to be confused with the St. Joseph Society for the Support of the Sick) raised money for the maintenance of Holy Trinity's charitable institutions in Roxbury, and exercised legal authority over the orphans of the parish. In 1894, it was incorporated as "Holy Trinity Catholic School and Society."

## ***St. Elizabeth Society***

The St. Elizabeth Society for women was founded

in 1869 in order to help poor families who were more often than not too proud to make known publicly their needs. By the mid-1940s, this group was raising an annual average of two thousand dollars for charity.

## ***Catholic Women's Guild***

The Catholic Women's Guild, founded in 1924, concerned itself with various charitable and social activities, assisting the priests and nuns in these spheres. It became connected with the Diocesan League for Catholic Women, and assisted the poor and orphans with food and money, the church itself, missions, and organized social activities for women. One of its most important contributions was the annual Christmas Presentation of books, cards and gifts to each of the more than five hundred children attending Holy Trinity schools.

## ***American Relief Action***

The American Relief Action was established after the First World War. As part of a larger national effort it sent hundreds of boxes and packages to the people of Europe struggling to recover from the Great War.

## ***Holy Trinity Relief Association***

The Holy Trinity Relief Association provided assistance to the suffering people of Europe in the years following World War II. (See Chapter III).

## **Catholic Action: Care of Children and Mission Aid**

### ***Neighborhood Organizations***

Holy Trinity operated a number of activities for the neighborhood children, including Boy Scouts Troop 31 (founded by Father Carr), Cub Scouts, CYO, Children of Mary (a sodality for youngsters sponsored by the Young Ladies' Sodality), etc.

### ***Propagation of the Faith***

Holy Trinity had its chapter of the Propagation of the Faith, which was a global Papal organization. Regular donations and collections from the Sodalities and other groups, especially those connected with the schools, supported this endeavor.



## ***Mission Society***

The Holy Trinity Mission Society was founded by the women of the parish in 1917, in support of German Catholic missions in China, India and Japan (where monthly donations were sent to Rev. Bruno Bitter, S.J., at Sophia University), but large contributions were also sent to Germany and central Europe following World War I. This special group worked to promote the Propagation of the Faith, and received contributions on a monthly basis from the Married Ladies' Confraternity.

## ***Little Flower Mission Club***

The Little Flower Missionary Club was founded in 1925, by Father Joseph Keller, S.J. Jamaican missionary and curate at Holy Trinity Church from 1916 to 1942. Father Keller's ill health had forced him to retire from active missionary work. Returning to the United States from Jamaica, he continued his efforts to assist those working in his stead. This Club was a special organization of the Mission Aid, concerned with providing missionaries with the tools and equipment they needed to carry out their tasks. By the mid-1940s, the group was collecting at least ten thousand dollars annually, the largest society of its kind in the country. At the time of Father Keller's death (he literally wore himself out in service to others) the Most Reverend Richard J. Cushing said of him:

In Father Keller this missionary spirit reached perfection.

He began by training a few leaders or promoters. He filled them with the missionary spirit that overflowed his whole life and he sent them forth to enkindle that spirit in the hearts of others. The Little Flower, on earth a missionary at the foot of the Cross, in Heaven a patroness of the missionaries, was given charge over the organization. The results are unprecedented in the annals of the work of the mission aid. Over a period of twenty years the Club has collected almost \$200,000 for missionary work. Bursaries have been established for the education of native priests, chapels have been built, sacred vessels and vestments of all kinds have been placed in needy mission stations. Appeals from every corner of the world have been answered. Any missionary in need could claim the funds of the Little

Flower Mission Club. Only one thing counted with Father Keller. If the missionary was poor, he or she could have whatever Father Keller possessed. The purse strings of the Club he founded were always open to Lady Poverty.

Rev. Edward Callahan, S.J., continued the mission work at Holy Trinity for twenty years, through the 1950s, as his main responsibility until the parish returned to the Archdiocese of Boston.

## ***Mission Sewing Circle***

The Mission Sewing Circle of the Catholic Women's Guild was a group of committed ladies who made vestments, altar linens, clothes, etc., which were shipped to the missions.

## ***St. Francis Mission Society***

The St. Francis Mission Society consisted of women who regularly contributed to the mission of German-speaking priests in Japan, China, India, etc.

## **Branches of General Societies**

### ***Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters***

Holy Trinity Court No. 51 (instituted on March 13, 1883, with a charter membership of forty-nine) and the subsequent courts, Germania Court No. 93 (founded on February 26, 1893, for Roxbury residents), St. Cecilia Court No. 105 (the first German Women's court, founded in 1894), St. Ottilia Court No. 118 (founded on June 9, 1895, with fifteen charter members), St. Boniface Court No. 199 (founded on October 29, 1895, with the assistance of Leo Schroth of the Germania Court, Rudolf Farrenkopf of the Sherwood Court, and Louis B. Pfau of the Holy Trinity Court, as well as Edward Schroth, and Christian Letzing, with fifteen charter members) and St. Aloysius Court No. 125 (instituted on January 31, 1896, with twenty-one charter members), due to the effort of George Wirth and Max Melle.

Founded in July 1879, the Catholic Order of Foresters of Massachusetts provided one of the most effective insurance policies available in the state of Massachusetts for widows and dependents of members. The organization also provided brotherly support of the sick in the true spirit of Christian compassion. All

Catholic men between the ages of eighteen and fifty were eligible for membership. Holy Trinity Court No. 51 was founded in April 1883, because many parishioners needed inexpensive and solid life insurance. This court was followed by yet another, the Germania Court No. 93, which enabled such activity to expand the services offered. One of the leading men of this organization was Joseph Tondorf, erstwhile member of the Germania Co-operative Bank and the funeral director.

### ***Knights of Columbus***

The Teutonia Council, No. 225, founded in 1897, is the local Holy Trinity parish group associated with the Knights of Columbus.

The Foresters and Knights of Columbus played a key role in promoting parish activities. They sponsored and participated in various religious, charitable and social events.

## **Social and Cultural Organizations**

### ***Catholic Casino Club***

The Catholic Casino Club was established by Father Hugo Praesser in 1869. It was an American version of the German Gesellenverein (journeymen's union). Father Praesser hoped to form a society of young men, to give them an opportunity to socialize, hold parties, meetings, etc., in a legitimate and innocent environment free from vice. The activities of the Casino included a singing society of young men, which was set up in the basement of the old church, as well as a night school to teach English language classes. Before long the Casino turned into a meeting place for young men

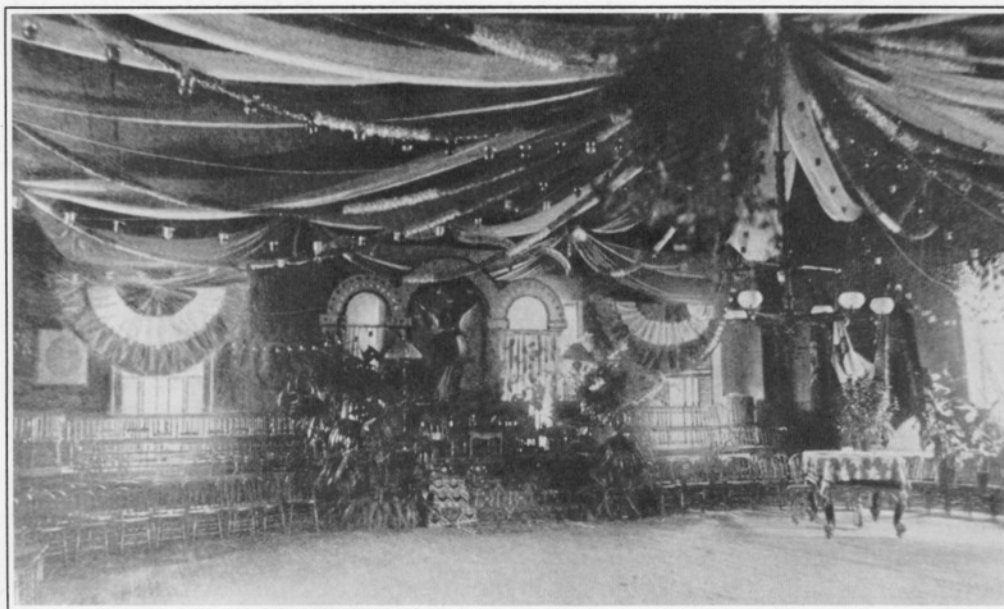
where they put on plays, shows, choir performances, etc. In 1869, the "Catholic Casino of the Germans in Boston" was founded on the corner of Waterford and Washington Streets. The Casino moved later to a room in the schoolhouse on Lucas and Suffolk Streets (later Shawmut Avenue). When the new church was built, it was situated in a magnificent hall in the renovated old church, which had been turned into the schoolhouse. The purpose of the Catholic Casino evolved into one which provided all parishioners the opportunity to meet and socialize in a Catholic environment. In addition, it also provided thousands of dollars on an annual basis for the Holy Trinity Schools.

### ***Dramatic Society***

The Holy Trinity Dramatic Society was sponsored by the Casino Club. It produced a wide variety of German and English language dramas and plays which were conducted in the Casino Hall.

### ***Dramatic Groups***

The Dramatic Groups of the Sodalities of Holy Trinity produced dramas of a religious nature. Some of the more well-known included the 1904 production of a beautiful cantata, "The Mystical Rose" (arranged by Father Robert Swickerath), accompanied by twelve tableaux, illustrating the life of the Virgin Mary. Father Henry Nelles' 1923 production of a Passion Play was repeated on more than one occasion, as was the "Sign of the Cross," a drama repeatedly staged before large audiences.



***Casino  
Halle***

## *Debating Society*

The Debating Society for Young Men was established in 1906, by Father Robert Swickerath, and lasted for about a decade, meeting on a monthly basis.

## *Gymnastics Society*

The Gymnastics Society was associated with the Casino Club and was dedicated to the physical development of the members of the parish through regular gymnastics training, something which was quite popular in Germany. Americans of German descent brought this tradition to America in the nineteenth century. Exhibitions were held to demonstrate to the parish the physical accomplishments of its members, the proceeds being donated to charity.

## *Bowling Club*

The Holy Trinity Bowling Club existed for many years. The group's facilities included a bowling alley in the Casino Hall, which was also made available to the other parish organizations.

## *Rest House*

Beginning in 1925, a large house was rented during the summer on Adams Shore in Quincy, where for a modest price parishioners could enjoy the seashore for a day, days or weeks at a time. Cared for by the Women's Guild, the house hosted the orphans in Roxbury during their two week vacations, as well as others who deserved a vacation but had not the means to fund one.

## *Germania Co-Operative Bank*

The Germania Co-Operative Bank was the result of previous attempts to provide a bank to serve specifically the people of Holy Trinity parish. During the early years of the parish bad business practices and competing personalities had resulted in financial losses for investors. At a meeting of the Catholic Order of Foresters in August 1885, parishioner Joseph Tondorf suggested that a co-operative bank be established. Father Nopper thought the idea was a good one, and before long an executive committee headed by Tondorf and a fifteen man directorship applied for and received a state charter in October of that year. Ten years later it had a quarter of a million dollars in capital and \$400,000 on deposit in savings. This bank enabled parishioners to buy their own homes. In fact, in the first decade of its existence, the bank had allowed more people to buy property than in the preceding forty years. Monthly meetings were held in the Casino Hall. In addition, a branch office of the bank was opened in Roxbury to provide a convenient location for the parishioners living in this section of Boston.

## *The St. Anthony Society of Holy Trinity Church*

The St. Anthony Society of Holy Trinity Church was established in 1900, by women of the parish to alleviate Holy Trinity Church's debts. One of the founders was the parish secretary, Caroline Hasenfuss. The St. Anthony Society met every fourth Thursday.

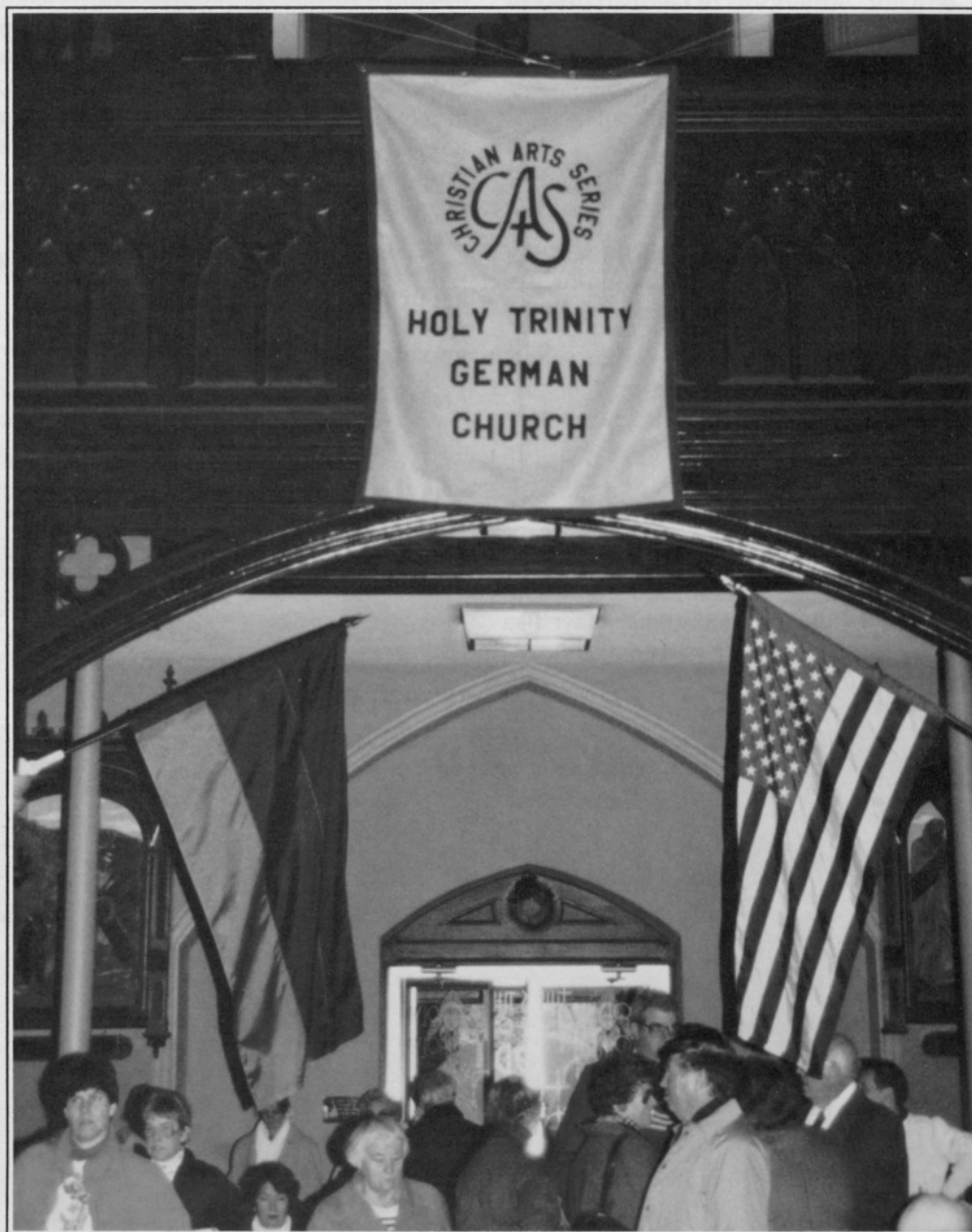
*Mary Queen of Virgins Tableau from "The Mystical Rose"*



## *Christian Arts Series*

The Christian Arts Series (CAS) was founded in 1981, with the intent of making Holy Trinity available for outside artistic and musical talent, since the church provides an ideal atmosphere for serious cultural performances. In fact, it actually becomes a concert hall for orchestral and choir music. The CAS committee, charged with the mechanics of putting on events, includes non-parishioners. It is currently chaired by Harry Kaufman, and the program coordinator is George

Krim. CAS concerts are held three or four times per year. The CAS is self-supporting, relying on donations, contributions and grants. Admission to events is free. The CAS sponsors two large events, the annual Oktoberfest and Krim's biannual pageant, "A Christmas Tableau in Five Settings" (See Chapter V). Some of the outside groups which have availed themselves of the opportunity to use the church include the Harvard Glee club, the Cecilia Society, Eastern Nazarene College, The Handel and Haydn Society, and the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra.



*CAS Banner*



# **APPENDIX**

## **Holy Trinity Pastors and Administrators**

### **Pastors:**

Rev. Francis Rolof 1842-1845  
Rev. Gerard Plathe 1845  
Rev. Alexander Martini 1845-1848  
Rev. Gustave Eck, S.J. 1848-1854  
Rev. Ernest Reiter, S.J. 1854-1856; 1859-1870  
Rev. John Cattani, S.J. 1856-1858  
Rev. Norbert Steinbacher, S.J. 1858-1859  
Rev. James Simeon, S.J. 1870-1877  
Rev. Franz X. Nopper, S.J. 1877-1892  
Rev. Nicholas Greisch, S.J. 1892-1893  
Rev. Charles de Gudenus, S.J. 1893-1896  
Rev. John B. Jutz, S.J. 1896-1906  
Rev. Edmund M. Sturm, S.J. 1906-1910  
Rev. Joseph Faber, S.J. 1910-1918  
Rev. John Schmandt, S.J. 1918  
Rev. Bernard C. Cohausz, S.J. 1918-1921  
Rev. Charles P. Gisler, S.J. 1921-1940  
Rev. Henry M. Brock, S.J. 1941-1943  
Rev. Franz X. Weiser, S.J. 1943-1950  
Rev. Robert J. Carr, S.J. 1950-1961  
Very Rev. Msgr. Robert L. Ryer 1966-1967  
Rev. John J. Cogavin 1967-1973

### **Administrators:**

Rev. Robert L. Ryer 1961-1966  
Rev. William H. Morgan 1973-1975  
Rev. William C. Burckhart 1975-1979  
Rev. James Lanergan 1979-1985  
Very Rev. Msgr. Francis J. Lally 1985-1987  
Rev. Peter V. Conley 1987-1991  
Rev. Frederick J. Murphy 1991-Present

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank a number of people who made this history of Holy Trinity Parish possible. Father Frank Murphy of Boston College introduced me to Father Fred Murphy, the current administrator of the parish who commissioned me to write the story. A number of people provided information and/or interviews, and their names appear in the Bibliography. I apologize for any omissions. I would like to single out four parishioners in particular for their contribution, namely Miss Mary Geiger, Miss Martha C. Engler, Mrs. Dolores Miller, and Mr. George Krim. Rev. John Walsh, S.J., archivist at the Campion Center in Weston, permitted me unlimited access to the Jesuit records regarding the parish. Mr. Ron Patkus, archivist of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston, accommodated me in researching Holy Trinity records deposited in that institution. Mr. John Atteberry of the University Archives at Boston College was of much assistance in providing access to The Woodstock Letters. Professors Thomas H. O'Connor and Andrew Buni of Boston College answered a number of my questions with regard to the history of Boston.

R.J.S.

# HOLY TRINITY GERMAN CHURCH

(Heilige Dreifaltigkeits Kirche)

~ 1994 ~



Main Altar



BVM Side Altar



St. Joseph Side Altar





St. Peter



Death of St. Joseph



The Creche



The Risen Christ



Lower Church - Main Altar

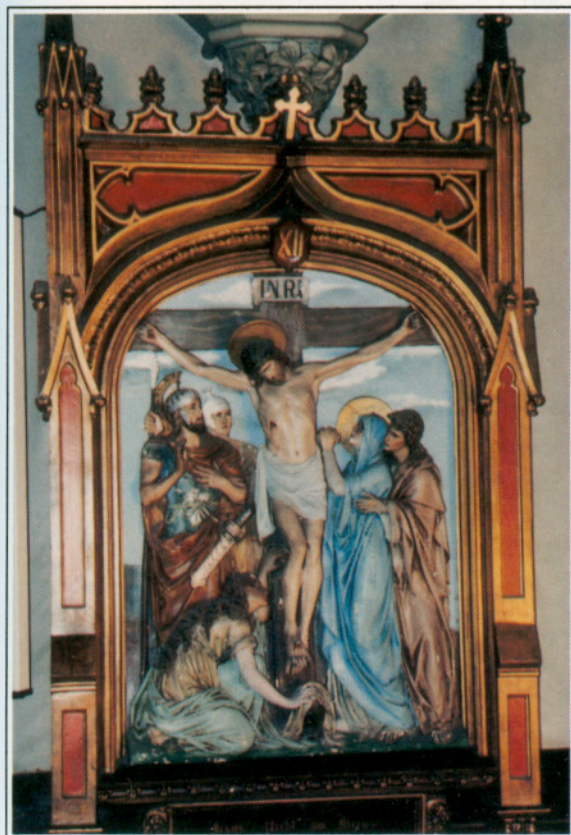




St. Concordia



St. Ignatius Loyola



The Twelfth Station



Killian Reiser





Baptism of Jesus



Coronation of Mary



The Nave

**HOLY TRINITY**  
**GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**OF BOSTON:**

*A Way of Life*

**STATISTICS**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**By**

**Robert J. Sauer**



# STATISTICS

## GERMAN IMMIGRATION \*

### German Immigration to America by Decade:

Decade	Total immigration	German immigration	German as % of total immigration
1820-29	129,000	5,800	4.5
1830-39	538,000	125,000	23.0
1840-49	1,400,000	385,000	27.0
1850-59	2,800,000	976,000	34.7
1860-69	2,100,000	724,000	34.8
1870-79	2,700,000	752,000	27.4
1880-89	5,200,000	1,400,000	27.5
1890-99	3,700,000	579,000	15.7
1900-09	8,200,000	329,000	4.0
1910-19	6,300,000	174,000	2.7
1920-29	4,300,000	387,000	9.0
1930-39	700,000	119,000	17.0
1940-49	900,000	118,000	14.0
1950-59	2,500,000	577,000	23.1
1960-69	3,200,000	210,000	6.5
1970	370,000	11,000	2.8
Totals	45,000,000	7,000,000	15.3

### Geographic Distribution of German-born Americans:

### Percentage of German-born

	1850	1880	1920	1960
N.E. States	1.2	1.8	3.0	3.9
Mid Atlantic States	36.0	30.0	30.1	38.5
N. Central States	48.0	56.4	52.5	32.4
S. Atlantic States	6.6	3.6	2.4	5.8
S. Central States	7.6	4.9	3.8	3.1
Mountain States	-	0.8	2.0	2.9
Pacific States	0.6	2.5	6.1	13.2

### Numbers of German-born in Boston:

1850	1,777
1860	3,202
1870	5,606
1880	7,396
1890	10,362
1900	10,739
1910	8,701
1920	5,915
1930	5,381
1940	3,851
1950	3,289

\* This data from the US Bureau of Census is cited in Thomas Piltz, ed., Three Hundred Years of German Immigrants in North America (Munich: "300 Jahre Deutsche in Amerika" Verlags-GmbH, 1983), p. 110.



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Herald American

Patriot Ledger

Record American

The following people provided information and/or interviews:

Sister M. Bernard, O.S.F.

Mr. Irvin C. Brogan

Sister Margaret Christine Sullivan, O.S.F.

Rev. Peter V. Conley, The Pilot

Rev. Charles F. Donovan, S.J., Boston College

Miss Martha C. Engler

Rev. John Ford, S.T.

Rev. John Garvey, S.J., Canisius College

Mr. Al Geiger

Miss Mary Geiger

Rev. William Joy

Mr. and Mrs. George Krim

Mr. Joseph McPherson, The Cardinal Medeiros Center

Rev. Ignatius Pennisi, S.J., Boston College High School

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Reiss

Mrs. Martha Rettman

Miss Rita Rettman

Miss Clementine Smith

Miss Rose Sullivan

Sister Barbara Whelan, Bridge Over Troubled Waters

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