

gregation's activities. Only a week after the dedication ceremony, Father Reilly performed the first baptism in the church sanctuary on August 28, 1960. Those first children: Darren John Betz, the son of Paul and Marion Betz; Peggy Ann Dugan, the daughter of Robert and Barbara Dugan; and Patrick Ignatius Reilly, the son of Edward and Florence Reilly; are a symbol of the joy and early growth of Holy Innocents.

The first wedding of the parish was that of Joseph Hack and Helen Wright on October 2, 1960. There were other "firsts" as well during these months: On October 10, the congregation mourned the passing of Elinor Stamp at the new church's first funeral. Nine days later, forty-four children who had been instructed by parish volunteers received their First Holy Communion. Before the close of the year, on December 6, Auxiliary Bishop Hogan returned to give the sacrament of Confirmation to eighty-nine children and twelve adults. Father Reilly, about the same time, noted that attendance at Mass was at "very satisfactory" levels. It is easy to understand, then, that even in this brief span of time Holy Innocents had become a truly busy church.

The first full year of operation, 1961, saw a dramatic expansion of parish activities. The spiritual vigor and vitality of the congregation were numerically captured by Father Reilly in his records.

There were 121 baptisms, 117 infants and 4 converts. There were five funerals to mark the only sorrowful events of the year. There was a Communion Class in the spring and the fall, and fifty-nine children received their First Communion. In addition, a Novena was initiated in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. It began with a Solemn Triduum, and as many as 300 people attended ceremonies on Monday nights.

At the same time the parish took steps to provide Christian education for its children. Father Reilly placed particular emphasis on making "spiritual training" available to youngsters not able to attend a Catholic school. During 1961 Holy Innocents held three CCD classes each week, except during the summer months. Some 275 children attended, while another 75 took part in a special summer vacation school. Even with these undeniable successes, however, Father Reilly still wanted to do more in this area. He strongly encouraged parents to send their children to religious classes, noting that the efforts of 20 parishioners, all of whom were "very capable teachers" allowed ample opportunity for Holy Innocents to provide this vital service.

During this first full year, Father Reilly was



*Almost ready! View of church one week before official blessing ceremony, August 1960*

also able to assess the accuracy of the Catholic population estimates that had led to the founding of the parish. As it turned out, the events of 1961 more than supported the initial hopes of those who had urged the need for the new church. Fully 805 families joined the rolls of the congregation. As a result, Holy Innocents distributed some 25,000 Communion, a very impressive number indeed.

From the beginning, Holy Innocents was blessed with a strong foundation of support. But this did not mean that Father Reilly had an easy time of things. In fact, nurturing the congregation called on all his skills as an administrator in addition to his abilities as a spiritual leader. Fortunately for all in the parish, the pastor was more than capable in both areas.

Church finance offers a good illustration of these capabilities, and it is worth looking at the topic in some detail. By December of 1961, the pastor explained to the congregation that the indebtedness of Holy Innocents amounted to slightly more than \$317,000. This debt was divided between the Diocese of Trenton, to which the parish owed \$26,000 at 3 percent interest, and the Emigrant Savings Bank, which held a note for just over \$191,000 at a rate of 5½ percent. At the same time, the church already had paid back more than \$15,500 of its loans while accumulating almost \$62,000 in savings. "That money," Father Reilly noted,

to all intents and purposes, is our start towards a school, a convent and a rectory. I think it represents a remarkable record, and it is due to the Help of our God, and to so many parishioners, who gave active cooperation to this church's program during the past.

How then did the church raise these considerable funds and meet its obligations? For the most part, the parishioners dug deeply into their own pockets, either as individuals or in groups. A short list of examples will clearly

involved. The combined efforts of the Holy Name Society and the Rosary Altar Society raised \$15,000, while the church Building Fund amassed the striking sum of \$45,000. Seat money amounted to almost \$11,000, and the special Easter and Christmas collections brought in another \$10,000. The regular Sunday collections accounted for the rest.

The pastor often expressed his gratitude for all who gave. He wrote that

Our parishioners are very faithful in the use of their weekly envelopes. . . . Those who use their envelopes are truly the back-bone and the major support of this parish. As said before, they contribute eighty percent of the money received each Sunday.

All of this financial data — and the story of how it was raised — belongs in a parish history *not* for its own sake. Indeed, there is nothing like a mass of dollar signs and mortgage information to bog down a narrative. It is, however, important to understand the magnitude of the challenge that Father Reilly and the congregation confronted in this early period. The attention the pastor paid to detail, how much the parish owed, where and what its savings were, how the money was raised — all these are, in effect, testimonials to the admirable responses of all concerned to the necessary tasks of the period.

Father Reilly's ability to face all these issues squarely accounted for a good deal of his success in getting Holy Innocents well launched. It is in facing these everyday tasks, such as finance, that the character of any enterprise is often revealed. It was a task that Holy Innocents faced with realism and dedication, for on September 26, 1963, the loan from Emigrant Bank was paid off in full.

In facing the labor of building Holy Innocents, Father Reilly fortunately did not have to work alone. There was plenty of help and the early days of the parish brought forth the best efforts of other clergy, the laity and a number of hard-working and capable organizations. For example, Father Paul Kane, the first assistant at Holy Innocents, lent invaluable support in all aspects of the church's work. In the early 1960s, priests from the Redemptorist Fathers in New York also helped on weekends, when Masses were especially heavily attended.

For years, Father Reilly was also able to count on the efforts and advice of the parish's first lay trustees, Augusto Silva and John Carluccio, and later on trustees William Philburn and C. Kenneth Johnson. Still others helped in additional ways. The Loffredos, for instance, volunteered to count the weekly collection money when the parish was founded, a task they have faithfully performed to this day. At times, Mrs. Reilly, the pastor's mother, worked with them. Nick D'Onofrio was the first custodian. He was assisted by Tom Boltz after the opening of the school. They were succeeded by the present caretaker, Sam Santaniello. From the start, lay leaders and parishioners proved willing and able to cooperate in vital church activities.

Indeed, lay efforts proved crucial to the success of Holy Innocents from the start. This fact was nowhere more apparent than in the activities of the two largest parish societies, the Rosary Altar Society and the Holy Name Society. Over the years both groups have contributed a great deal to the social and spiritual welfare of Holy Innocents, and Father Reilly always spoke in the highest terms of their work.



Card party at Monte Carlo Pool, July 1962



Father Reilly with original trustees, Gus Silva and John Carluccio



*School and Convent  
campaign committee, 1963*

The Rosary Altar Society was founded in October of 1960 with 160 original members. Sue Matthews served as temporary chairman, while Helen Peluso took up duties as acting secretary. Both became permanent officers when regular elections were held in March 1961. The first slate of officers listed Mrs. Matthews as president, Peggy Sullivan as vice president, Bettylu Johnson as treasurer, Mrs. Peluso as recording secretary, and Nancy Gillespie as corresponding secretary. On November 10, 1960, the Society held its initial event, a "Hat-O-Rama," which was attended by over 150 people. More than \$100 was raised for the Building Fund. The Society then established a frequent series of activities. On July 20, 1961, the women held the first annual card party and fashion show, which attracted many to the huge Monte Carlo pool in Asbury Park. Soon after this they organized the first Annual Spaghetti Dinner, which has become an election night tradition. A short one year from the date of their first event, the Altar Society sponsored the Solemn Triduum at the beginning of the Novena mentioned earlier.

The Society's second year was just as active. They held yet another card party. More than 1400 people crowded to the Monte Carlo pool, where this time they were treated to a special Aquacade. The hard-working women also sponsored an Annual Communion Breakfast for their daughters. (The records of all these gatherings have been carefully preserved by the members, right down to the bills [from 1961] for 50 dozen eggs, 65 pounds of ham, 61 pounds of butter and 6 jars of coffee!) The Rosary Altar Society, in short, was one of the vital centers of parish activity, providing almost from the beginning a major focus of fund-raising, social excitement, and spiritual growth.

All of this was equally true of the men's organization, the Holy Name Society. The Holy Name Society is one of the oldest Christian

Confraternities; its origins are traced back to the thirteenth century. At Holy Innocents, as one early membership invitation put it, the Society offered parish men an "opportunity to gain a better knowledge of Christ and Christianity; to become more practical and courageous Catholics;" and to "cultivate their social life in a religious and wholesome atmosphere." The first meeting was held on October 23, 1960 and was attended by 104 men. Andy Murphy served as temporary chairman, but was shortly followed by Edward J. Logel, the Society's first elected president. Later on, William E. Bogart succeeded Mr. Logel.

Meetings of the Holy Name Society were generally lively affairs. They often included guest speakers with diverse topics ranging from Catholic journalism to judo. The members also undertook a rigorous program of dedication to the faith. Even in their first year, thirty men of the Society offered their time in an hour's vigil to Christ each First Friday night at St. Catherine's Church in Spring Lake. "They have learned," wrote Father Reilly of their work for the faith, "and they plan even further such efforts." They did indeed. Over the years they brought their sons to an Annual Communion Breakfast, aided the parish with essential fund-raising activities, and never stopped reaching out to others.

The spirit of both societies was contagious. While Father Reilly worried at times that too much important work was falling on too few willing shoulders, the efforts of the women of the Altar Society and the men of Holy Name began to steadily augment the vital Building Fund. These efforts also served to help draw both new and existing members of the congregation into the mainstream of the life of Holy Innocents. Under the pastor's ever watchful eye and steady hand, this energy soon began to produce concrete results.



*Opening of Holy Innocents Convent, August 1965. Front: Father Reilly, Mother Carolina Jonata. Back: Sister Anne Nokrokus, Sister Adele Venezia, Sister Rosemary Teti*

One of the most important of these was the parish's first major construction project since the building of the new church. On January 7, 1964, Father Reilly broke ground for a parish rectory. This event could never have taken place without the fund-raising labors of the societies and the generosity of the rest of the congregation. Construction went smoothly, and on November 25, Msgr. Joseph Casey, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Bayhead, New Jersey (a friend of Father Reilly's), presided at the laying of the cornerstone and the blessing of the newly finished rectory. The building was a welcome addition to Holy Innocents. Spacious enough to accommodate no fewer than four priests, the opening of the rectory finally gave the pastor adequate quarters. All-in-all, it was a project of which the entire parish could be proud, although it was only a prelude to even greater things to come. For already Father Reilly was making plans for the establishment of Catholic education for the children of the parish — and that meant building a new school.

### ***The Holy Innocents School***

On Thursday, July 30, 1964, even before the rectory was completed, Father Reilly and Bishop Ahr signed the contracts for the construction of a new Holy Innocents School and convent. It was an event of the utmost significance in the history of the parish, and a step that came only after the most careful thought and meticulous planning. The intent of Father Reilly and of the diocese was always for a school in the parish, but the need became pressing much sooner than many observers had guessed. As of December 1962, Holy Innocents had 984 boys and girls of elementary school age. In addition, the 115 babies baptized

during 1962 would be ready for school in five short years. After discussing the matter in detail with Bishop Ahr, Father Reilly announced the full dimensions of the effort on May 15, 1963. He outlined plans for a school of two stories, with twenty rooms. It would extend north from the church, forming an "L" at the end of the property away from West Bangs Avenue. The structure would have sixteen of its rooms as teaching areas, one for a principal's office, another for a library, and two for faculty rooms (one each for nuns and lay teachers). The architect was Thomas Moran of Princeton, New Jersey. If possible, he was to have the school ready for occupancy by the academic year starting in September of 1965.

It was a fine building under discussion, but who would staff it? Father Reilly had a ready answer for this key question. The Religious Teachers Filippini, already involved in the life of the parish, would assume teaching responsibilities. Since Holy Innocents was founded in 1959, Sisters Adele Venezia, Catherine Girgenti, and Elaine Tromba had worked in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program, and as early as 1962 the Filippini Sisters had indicated their willingness to serve in a parish parochial school. Father Reilly already knew how well they would do in this critical role, for after his ordination he had taught high-school religion at Villa Victoria Academy in West Trenton and the Filippini Sisters had directed the academy.

St. Lucy Filippini, the Holy Teacher, began her praiseworthy work in Italy toward the end of the seventeenth century. She was aided by companions who followed her example and leadership in a vast social apostolate. In 1692, the first schools of Lucy Filippini were opened in Italy.

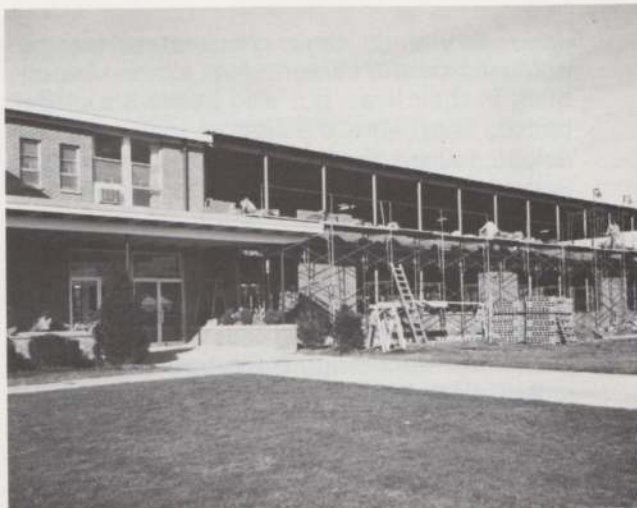
On August 17, 1910, five young Religious Teachers Filippini, with the blessing of Pope Pius X, left for America. They were answering the urgent request of St. Joachim's Parish in Trenton, which was concerned for the needs of the Italian immigrants. These dedicated teachers began the first Lucy Filippini school in the United States.

The planned convent was designed to house twelve sisters, with room for future expansion, and was to stand in the northwest corner of the parking lot. In addition to a room for each sister, the convent would have a chapel, a sacristy, a community room, two parlors, a kitchen and a laundry. In front of the building, and quite fittingly, was to stand a shrine statue of St. Lucy Filippini. "Thank God," wrote Father Reilly in a letter to the parish on the matter, "the day has disappeared, when the Sisters, who sacrifice so much for these children, are the last ones to be considered in the building of a new parish!"

Before these plans could become reality, however, there was much work to do. After full consideration of the finances involved, on May 15, 1963, Bishop Ahr wrote to Father Reilly approving a capital campaign to support the projects. "I send my blessing to you," he said, "and to all who participate in the campaign." The total cost of the school and convent, including road and parking lot improvements, came to \$750,000, much more than the parish could afford all at once. However, the Bishop allowed that construction could begin when Holy Innocents had raised a third of the necessary funds. As usual, the pastor faced the organizing tasks for the campaign with alacrity. He recruited a parish campaign committee of 130 men, as well as producing an impressive brochure explaining the nature of the effort. He also arranged for a series of special memorial opportunities for contributors to both the convent and the school. It was quite a challenge for the still young parish, but during 1963 the labor came fully alive. Slowly at first, but then faster and consistently, parishioners began fulfilling their pledges.

On August 2, 1964, Father Reilly broke ground for the new buildings. He was assisted by two close personal friends, Father John J. McGovern, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Whiting, and Father James A. Thompson of St. Rose of Lima Church in Freehold. Neptune mayor Joseph Wardell was also there for the occasion, as were trustee Augusto Silva and Sister Mary Grenna of the Filippini Sisters. Several hundred members of the congregation looked on as their pastor turned over the first shovel of earth. Five days later, on August 7, bulldozers began the initial excavations. Good progress was made from then until January 10, 1965, when twelve inches of snow fell. Another heavy snow five days later brought work to a halt. Even so, plans still called for a September 1965 opening. In the meantime, Father Reilly was busy urging parishioners to keep up to date on their Building Fund pledges and arranging to register and admit the first classes of students.

On September 7, 1965, one of the parish's fondest dreams became a reality. Holy Innocents School opened on schedule for children in the first three grades. (Each passing year saw the addition of a grade until a full eight grades were available. It was not until September, 1979, that another of Father Reilly's hopes became a reality. A kindergarten was finally opened under the direction of Mary Grez.) For the moment, however, the members of those first classes captured the hearts of the parish. At 8:30 that morning, a Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit began the school year with all



*Holy Innocents School under construction, January 1965*

the new students and many of their parents in attendance. The first principal, Sister Adele Venezia, then opened the term for the 150 young scholars. The official dedication ceremony took place on October 31, when the Right Reverend Msgr. Michael P. McCorristin, P.A., vicar general of the Diocese of Trenton, gave the blessing. A newspaper photograph captured the scene as Father Reilly's face shown with pride.

Holy Innocents School began its first varsity sports program in 1968. Father William Barna, with the help of Alice Hoecker, Marge Kenny and Peg Sullivan, started a track team which competed against other Catholic grammar schools in the area. Next a boys' basketball team was formed and cheerleaders were organized. Track was later dropped, but girls' and boys' soccer teams have been added. Lorraine Schannen is currently Director of Sports.

Skipping ahead slightly, it is worth remarking on the Holy Innocents School's next milestone, the first eighth-grade graduation. Thirty-eight students graduated during a Mass celebrated by Father Reilly. In attendance at the ceremony were Dr. V.J.W. Christie, superintendent of the Neptune Township Public Schools, Sister Angelina Pelliccia, M.P.F., principal in 1971, and Sister Josephine Longo, M.P.F., the eighth-grade home room teacher. Five of the students on that June day received awards to mark the occasion: *Richard Illes* won the Edward J. Fahey, K.S.C. Award for General Excellence and Daily Achievement; *Geraldine Crowell* received the Father James A. Reilly Award for Religion; *Terrance Trainor* won the honors for excellence in mathematics and science; while *Patricia Dugan* and *Joseph Gabriele* respectively took awards in English and history. They should be remembered, as in-

deed should all their classmates, for the graduation of 1971 was not just a proud benchmark in their lives, but also in the life of the parish. They were the first of many classes helped toward the future at Holy Innocents School.

### *Growth in the Faith*

Until this point a reader unfamiliar with Holy Innocents might consider the history of the parish as something of a case study in institutional development. The story of church growth since the first Mass in Woodrow Wilson School in 1959 was indeed a striking success, rich in social events and building projects. It was all of that, but it was impressive in other ways as well; for the congregation and its pastor were always more concerned with faith and people than with mortar and brick.

All this is clear in the collected pastoral letters of Father Reilly. Over the years he emphasized matters of faith and the gathering of the faithful into the church. By the year 1966, the records showed 1,049 families belonging to the parish, for a total of 4,294 parishioners. Understandably, at this time most Masses were so well attended that the services of three priests were needed.

Participation, however, rather than numbers was the key issue for Father Reilly. Accordingly, he devoted considerable time to urging the congregation to attend Mass. There was always room, he noted, "for improvement in much of our spiritual life," and one of the best ways to improve was to attend Mass faithfully. It was the "perfect way to adore God," he wrote, and would enable parishioners "to store up so much merit for yourselves in Heaven." The pastor particularly enjoyed organizing missions, which for two or three weeks (as in 1966) brought church members to special Masses with preaching on various aspects of the faith. As early as 1962, hundreds of parishioners flocked to these services.

But not all Masses were held in times of joy. On Friday, November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The whole country was shocked and dismayed. Holy Innocents held a memorial service that sad evening at 8:00 p.m. Notice of the special service was given over local radio and spread by word of mouth, and over 800 somber parishioners crowded the church. On the following Monday, President Kennedy was buried and Bishop Ahr gave permission for a Requiem Mass in all parishes of the diocese; in Neptune, Holy Innocents was again filled to capacity. It was a soul-searching time, and one never to be forgotten.

Sunday, November 29, 1964 marked a rather

different special Mass in the history of the parish. Holy Innocents joined Catholics across the nation in celebrating the first "new Mass" — the first Mass said in English. The change from the Latin Mass was part of the ecumenical trend set in motion by Pope John XXIII. Over the 1960s, these changes would include lay participation in parish affairs to a greater extent than ever before. The first lay leaders, whom Father Reilly noted "did very well," were chairman Alex Koharski, Frank Reznick, Dr. Arthur Weller, Robert Slawski, Joseph Roma, Frank Philipps, William Grady, George Boland, and Paul Maier.

It was a big day in the spiritual life of the parish when Nicholas Amatelli became the first Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. A few months later he was joined by Arthur Vandebos, and then by William Dafeldecker. The program has steadily grown and now includes women as well as men.

Nick was also the first parishioner to become a Deacon. He began his studies in 1977, at the same time he assumed the duty of Director of Religious Education. He was ordained on May 17, 1980. Following his lead, Michael Auleta was ordained May 14, 1983. They have since been joined by James Walsh, a member of Nick's Diaconate class. Jim served at Holy Spirit Church before coming to Holy Innocents in 1983.

The parish also increased its social work as the years passed. In 1965, for example, Father John J. Meehan, assistant at Holy Innocents, was given responsibility for Catholic work at nearby Fitkin Hospital. It was no easy task, and duties there strained Father Meehan's ability to keep up with normal visitations. But despite the work it was a labor of love and dedication, earning the gratitude of thousands of patients at the hospital. After Father Meehan's departure for other duties in 1967, the assistants who followed him maintained the hospital chaplaincy through the 1970s. In 1981, the hospital received its own chaplain, who lived at Holy Spirit Church in Asbury Park. But for over fifteen years Holy Innocents had done the job faithfully and well.

Other assistants contributed vitally to church efforts to bring comfort to the suffering. At various times over the late 1960s and early 1970s, for instance, three assistants had served as missionaries to Biafra. Fathers Francis McEvoy, Vincent O'Connell, and Michael Wallace all saw duty in that war-torn land during the Nigerian civil war. Back home, Fathers Guido Tiong and Matthew Sheary led a special healing service in February of 1975. It drew almost 200 people. "I think it was absolutely beautiful," declared one resident; "It just



Police Chief Anthony Paduano addresses the eighth grade on Career Day. Listening attentively are (l. to r.) Lieut. C. Scott, Ptl. J. Scully, Rev. J. Scully, Mr. S. Grasso, and Sister Elsa.

shows how much faith people have."

In early 1979, Father Reilly took additional steps to aid the disadvantaged. Following a call from Bishop Ahr to make the parishes more accessible to the handicapped, the pastor laid plans to install a chairlift in the church. The following year Father Reilly and head usher Anthony Loffredo were able to demonstrate the church's chairlift for the local press.

The church's efforts to extend a helping hand, and to voice its concern over issues it considered important, reflected a maturity evident in the parish by the 1960s and 1970s. Holy Innocents was an important part of the community. Its school rendered a valuable service, and its pastor was a well respected local figure. Father Reilly was, to cite just one example in this regard, a National Chaplain of the United States Navy League. Members of the congregation were active and aware. A review of the weekly parish bulletin, for instance, reveals a crowded schedule of Masses, notices of diocesan affairs, the activities of the school, and meetings of church groups. In fact, in the pages of the bulletin the reader finds a reflection of the scope and depth of the commitments of the parish to the wider church and to society in general.

### *The Twentieth Anniversary*

August of 1979 marked the twentieth year of Holy Innocents parish. It was a time for reflection as well as celebration, as Father Reilly recalled the early days of the congregation, the building of the church, the rectory, the school and convent. The work was worth the results, a sentiment the community shared as the local press extensively reported parish plans to observe the anniversary. The actual celebrations came in October, delayed in order to allow parishioners to complete their summer vacations. The wait also let the parish search

out former members of the church who had moved away, inviting them to return and share in the festivities.

The week of October 7-13, 1979, will always stand out in parish history. The celebrations went on every day with, as the parish bulletin put it, "something . . . for everyone, both spiritual and material, so that each parishioner" could take part. The first event was the dedication of the new Our Lady of Fatima Shrine on Sunday, October 7. (The statue arrived on time, but bad weather prevented the placement of footings, so the blessing took place with the shrine only temporarily erected.) At the same time, the congregation watched as lay trustees Charles K. Johnson and Daniel Moriarty burned the mortgage on the church and convent building. Following this came a few short prayers, hymns by the school choir, and a brief homily by Father John Meehan, Holy Innocents' first associate.

The next day, Father Reilly began a project dear to his heart — the preaching of a five-day "Old-Fashioned" Mission. The Mission provided a chance to hear preaching of the traditional kind, and the pastor invited all to attend. Each evening he delivered sermons on different aspects of church doctrine and Christian life, closing on Friday night with a Mass of Thanksgiving. As Father Reilly had hoped, the Mission was a great success and a fitting tribute to the spiritual progress of Holy Innocents.

The final occasion of the anniversary celebration was a gala "Birthday Ball" on Saturday, October 13. The affair was catered by Kelly's at the Avon Municipal Building. The party, with music by the "Cat-Nips," lasted until 1:00 a.m. The parish thus had come a long way in twenty years, and it had given much to its parishioners and to its community. Indeed, Holy Innocents was one of the major success stories of the diocese, and this fact was brought home to everyone during the anniversary week.

### *Into the Present . . . and Beyond*

The passage of Holy Innocents Church into the present has been a mixture of continued vigor and faith — and a bit of sadness as well. In the late '70s, Father Reilly's health declined and he was a patient several times at Deborrah Hospital. As the 1980s dawned, his health further deteriorated and he was forced to rely more heavily on his assistants, Fathers Ladisla Janovic and Eugene Roberts.

When Father Reilly entered Jersey Shore Medical Center in late February of 1982, he was anything but away from the thoughts of his many friends and parishioners. He had their prayers and their visits. Over the years, his work with other Neptune area clergy had been close,



(left) Father Donald Rackley. (above) Father Ockle E. Johnson, O.F.M.; Father Peter Loffredo

and in his hour of need they did not forget him. Pastor J. K. Moore of the Redeemer Lutheran Church called on him frequently and asked his congregation to remember "our good friend" Father Reilly in prayer. From neighboring Asbury Park, pastor Walter Forker of the Atonement Lutheran Church also came often to visit. And even from his hospital bed, Father Reilly was moved to respond. The next weekly bulletin of the Atonement Church carried the message that the ailing priest had sent altar flowers in thanks, along with an Easter greeting and a note expressing his "deepest gratitude to Pastor Walter Forker . . . and to all of my brothers and sisters in the Atonement Church for their thoughtfulness and efficacious prayers in my behalf."

Although he was able to leave the hospital in March, Father Reilly never fully recovered. Unable to keep up his former pace, he was in agreement when Father Roberts was named temporary parish administrator on July 2, 1982. Finally to the grief of the parish and community, the faithful pastor died on September 25th. Those who had known and worked with him for so many years felt the loss deeply. In a posthumous tribute, the Neptune Board of Education passed a special resolution honoring his contributions to regional education. It was a fitting award, for although he was a priest who labored long and well for his church, he had always placed a premium on service to the community as well. The contributions of Holy Innocents to the quality of life in Neptune will stand as one of Father Reilly's highest monuments.

Perhaps the parish itself, however, is his chief legacy. He laid its foundations and directed its physical and spiritual construction. When he died, Holy Innocents was home to more than twenty groups serving the needs of the congregation.

But Holy Innocents also gave of itself. Its vocations, for example, were distinguished.

The first was *Sister Katherine Walsh*,

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Walsh, who joined the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception in Clinton, Iowa, in 1960.

*Sister Andrea Jane Lee*, IHM, daughter of Claire Lee and the late William Lee, is now a Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Dean of Continuing Education at Marygrove College in Detroit. She received her Ph.D. in administrative education from Penn State in 1981.

*Father Peter Loffredo*, son of Anthony Loffredo and the late Margaret Loffredo, a graduate of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Md., was ordained May 23, 1970 in Holy Innocents Church and celebrated his First Mass there the following day. He is now a Doctoral Candidate at Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, Cal.

*Father Ockle Johnson*, OFM, son of Ockle and Bettylu Johnson, is a graduate of Washington Theological Union, Silver Springs, Md. He was ordained on May 9, 1981, at St. Camillus Church there, and he returned home to Holy Innocents the next day to celebrate his First Mass. After receiving his Masters Degree in mathematics from the University of Georgia, Father Ockle teaches that subject at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y.

The parish has been the starting point, then, for a gratifying number of men and women choosing to dedicate their lives and work to the church, and no doubt more will follow.

And what of the future at Holy Innocents? What direction does a parish with a distinguished past take? The record of the congregation has been one of steady growth, faith and service for a quarter of a century. Indeed, Father Reilly and those who labored with him — laity and clergy — built a firm and lasting edifice. In 1980, for instance, four volunteer school aides received Papal Blessings in recognition of their efforts. Two were secretarial assistants, Flavia Marisca and Addie Rogers. Gail Bertolini, a registered nurse, spent many days helping school nurse Betty Reid; while John O. Scott gave twelve years to accounting

chores. These were splendid records, and we can cite others: Betty Bergen, the first school nurse; Helen Breitbach, the first parish secretary; and subsequent parish secretaries Marilyn Petrocino, Ronnie McKiernan, Betty Nicolosi, and presently Grace Logel. So if we can use the past as a guide to what lies ahead, it is safe to predict that Holy Innocents will remain a vital center of Catholic affairs.

Certainly parish leadership remains strong and capable. The new Pastor, Father John Scully, was installed as pastor by Msgr. Robert T. Bulman, Episcopal Vicar of Monmouth County at a special Mass on November 14, 1982. Son of Mrs. Rose C. Scully and the late John Scully, Father studied at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, Md. Bishop Ahr ordained him at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton on May 20, 1972. Before coming to Holy Innocents he served as associate in a number of New Jersey churches, the last being St. Barnabas in Bayville. Thus, he was thoroughly familiar with regional issues and brought a background of solid experience when he came to Neptune.

Father Scully relies on the help of associate Father Roberts, while Father Donald Rackley assists on weekends when demands on the church are quite heavy. The school continues its mission of service to Catholic students under the guidance of Sister Elsa Donati, M.P.F., an experienced and dedicated administrator, who succeeded Sister Catherine Paone, M.P.F., in 1983. Lay leadership also remains active in the efforts of trustees John Traynor and Daniel Moriarty. As the parish evolves in the years ahead, there will be able leaders in all key posts to provide continuity with the past.

It is fortunate that 1984, the twenty-fifth anniversary year of Holy Innocents, follows a Holy



Grace Logel  
Parish Secretary



Annette DeSantis  
School Secretary

Year marking the 150th anniversary of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection. Archbishop May, head of the American Ad Hoc Committee for the Year of the Jubilee of the Redemption, has noted that the Holy Year "must be cultivated by a believing and open hearted church whose faith in God assures it of abundant blessings in return." So it has been at Holy Innocents: As of this writing, a full generation of priests, sisters, and laity have cultivated their parish, sustaining it through years of growth and change. All the while, they kept in view their faith and love of God, and they have indeed had "abundant blessings in return." Holy Innocents has come a long way, but with its many blessings it will travel farther still.



### ASSOCIATE PASTORS

John Meehan	1965-67	Robert Decker	1976-77
William Barna	1967-72	Joseph Ferrante	1977-79
Francis McEvoy	1968-69, 1970	Casimir (Casey) Ladzinski	1977-78
Vincent O'Connell	1969	Patrick Rhatigan	1978-81
Michael Wallace	1969-70	Andrew Cervenak	1978-79
Robert Wozniak	1972-74	Heart Irudayam	1979-81
Guido Tiong	1972-75	Eugene Roberts	1981-
Matthew Sheary	1975-77	Ladislav Janovic	1981-83