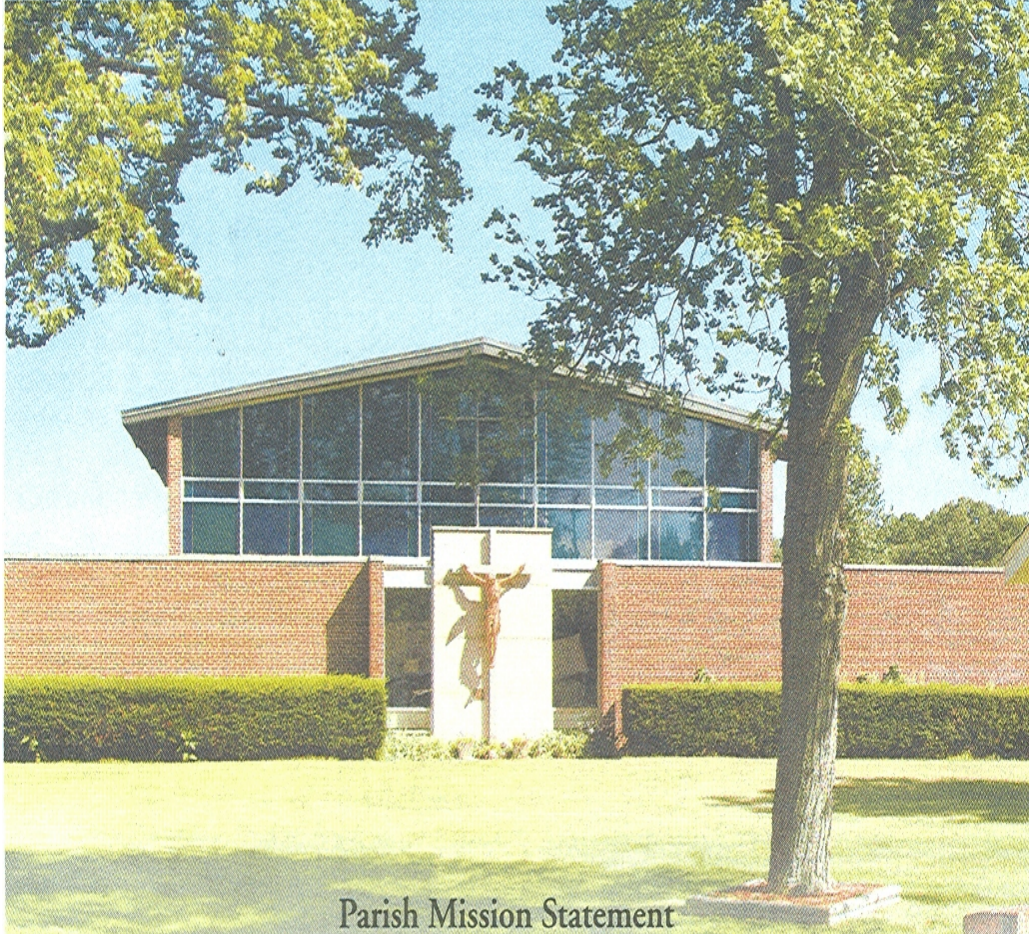


St. Thomas The Apostle Parish

est.1948



Parish Mission Statement

As children of God we are St. Thomas Catholic Parish.

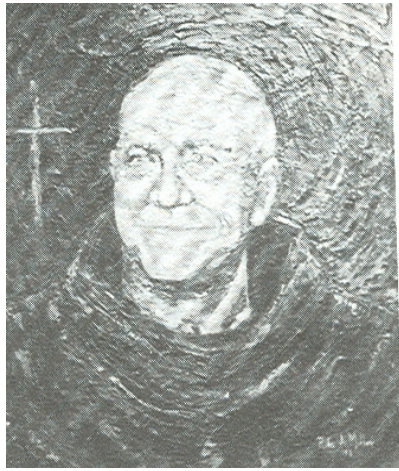
Faith brings our family together. The celebration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the gospel unite us.

We are spirit guided.

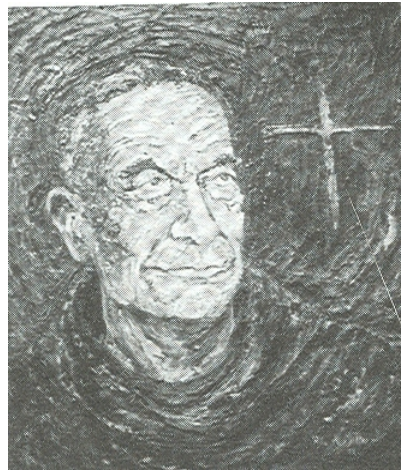
We commit ourselves to prayer, social outreach, education, healing, evangelization and the acceptance of all God's people.

Amen

Our Founding Father's



Fr. Rudolf Hornberger



Fr. Clementin Grosskopf

Father Rudy, a native of Indianapolis and Father Clem of Petoskey were verteran of many years of missionary work in China, stationed within 100 miles of each other in the Shantung province of the East Coast. Fr. Rudy was first sent to China in 1933 after serving in Rome. Fr. Clem was sent in 1928, following his ordination.

When Japan occupied China, The two priests were detained, then assigned to a prison camp. The Fathers spoke sparingly of these years. They did mention that one of the big problems in the prison camp was the lack of food.

Fr. Clem found an old bicycle beyond the prison fence, some nights he would slip out and bike around China to minister to the people, somehow he would get back before being missed. Released in 1943, they were comforted by the thought that their work in China would not go to waste. They trained a number of Chinese priests to carry on in disguises impossible for a Westerner.

Fr. Rudy served at St. John Hospital in Springfield, IL as an instructor for U.S. Cadet nurses from 1944-1947, receiving a citation for "meritorious service in recognition of wartime contributions". Fr. Clem was sent to Red Cliff, WI where he worked with the Native Americans. The two Fathers were sent to Muskegon in 1948, where they founded our Parish, St. Thomas the Apostle.

Fr. Rudy returned to Illinois once to preach to 25 Chinese Sisters on retreat there.

In 1972, Fr. Rudy was transferred to the Franciscan Friary of St. Roch in Oak Forest, IL where he served as Chaplain in the Oak Forest Hospital.

On Feb. 2, 1975, Fr. Rudy passed away at St. Francis Hospital in Blue Island, IL and is buried in Oak Brook, IL where all the Franciscans of the area are buried.

Fr. Rudy was a Franciscan for 50 years and a priest for 43 years.

Fr. Clem left St. Thomas in 1967 to serve parishes in Joliet, IL and Dubuque, IA.

He returned to St. Thomas in 1971 were he served in residence.

Fr. Clem suffered much with back and hip troubles.

When he became disabled, he lived at Brookhaven.

On July 11, 1979, Fr. Clem passed away at Mercy Hospital and is buried at St. Mary's Cemetery in the circle of graves in front of the cemetery office.

Fr. Clem was a Franciscan for 59 years and a priest for 52 years.

St. Thomas History



Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Smith

When Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Smith were approached by Msgr. Hyland in the name of Bishop Haas, to donate some land for a Church in this part of Muskegon County, they asked that the Church be named St. Thomas. Their son Thomas had been killed as he got off the bus in front of their house coming home from St. Mary's School. Thus St. Thomas the Apostle became the titular name of the new Church. 2 ½ acres on the corner of Apple & Dangle were donated in memory of their son.

1948:

Father Rudolf Hornberger OFM and Father Clementin Grosskopf OFM were appointed to start a new Parish in East Muskegon

Nov. 7: First Mass was held at the Egelston Town Hall at 8:20 a.m. with about 100 people in attendance The 11:00 Mass at the rectory was attended by about 75.

Nov. 21: First Baptism: Thomas Calkins by Fr. Rudy

Nov. 22: The Altar Society was established and the first meeting was held

November: First Choir established under the direction of Mrs. Ray Jasicki Sr. and Fr. Clem



Fr. Rudy and Fr. Clem

1949:

Jan 7: First Wedding: Wm. R. Fitzsimmons & Ruth Lindefield

Jan 16: First Sick Call

Jan 19: First Youth Group about 25 attended

Feb 6: Plans were made for building the Church/Hall

Feb 12: Three High School Students received their First Holy Communion: Patricia Belgardt, Frank Wal, & Josephine Halleah

April 17: Easter Masses: 9:00 a.m at Grange Hall & 11:00 a.m at Egeleston Hall.

May 8: 28 Children received their First Holy Communion.

August 19: First Funerals: Dr. C. Derezinski & Wm. Dutcher

November 27: Ground broke and cornerstone laid for new Church/Hall combination designed by Harry L. Meade and Chas. M. Norton of Grand Rapids and built by Acme Builders of Muskegon Heights.



Interior of First Church

1950:

May 13: First Mass celebrated in our New Church

1951:

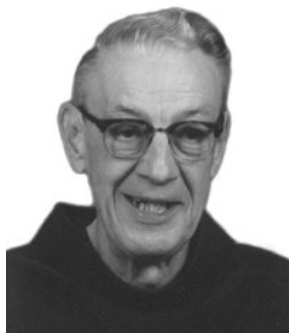
Jan 7: First Christmas Party

1953:

The rest of Joseph Smith's property was purchased. Entire Church property consists of 25 acres.

1955:

Fr. Robert Dentzman OFM Teacher at Muskegon Catholic makes residence at St. Thomas.



1957:

Fr. Robert Dentzman OFM was assigned to Chicago Parish after teaching Math at Catholic Central for two years and making his home at St. Thomas.

Fr. Robert Dentzman, OFM

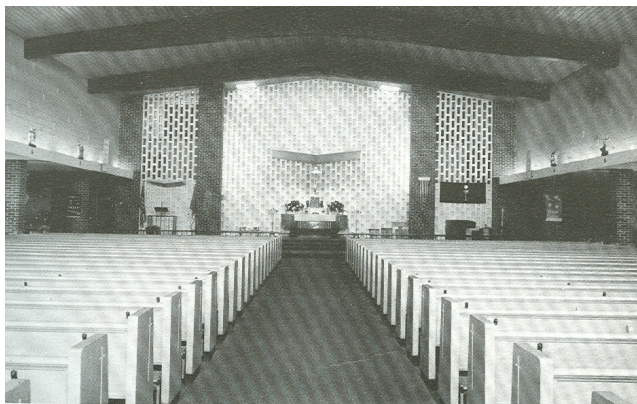
1961:

July 9: Cornerstone laid for Current Church

1962:

April 15: Palm Sunday, First Mass celebrated in our New Church.

November 11: Dedication of Church



Interior of Current Church



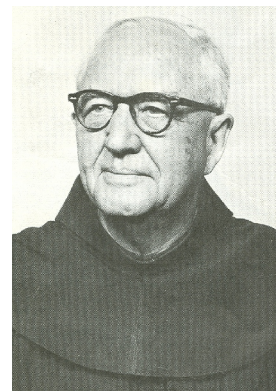
1956: Fr. Rudy's 25th Jubilee

1965:

First visit of Bishop Babcock to our new Church and Rectory on the occasion of Confirmation.

1954:

February 2: First Evening Mass is held - First Friday



**Fr. Vincent Fochtman
OFM, PHD, LLD**

1966:

Fr. Vincent Fochtman OFM, PHD, LLD comes to live in residence at St. Thomas.

1967:

Sanctuary renovated, putting Altar facing congregation.

August: Because of ill health,

Fr. Clem was transferred to Joliet, IL

Fr. Donatus Grunloh OFM

arrives to take his place.

1970:

Fr. Don is appointed Pastor,

Fr. Rudy stays on as Associate Pastor



Fr. Rudy, Fr. Clem, and Fr. Don

1971:

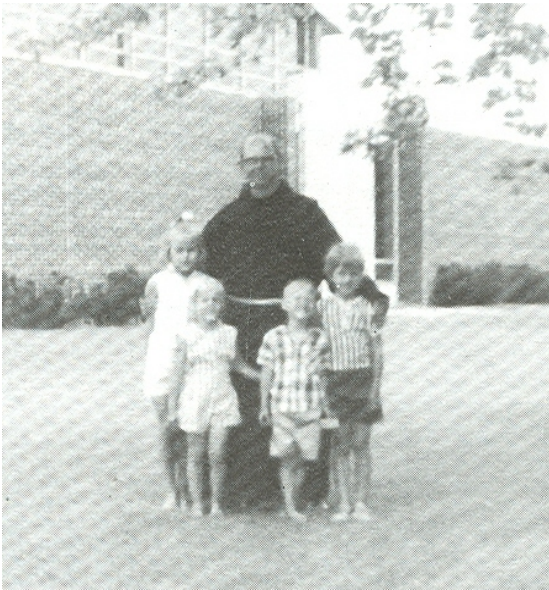
Dangl School purchased to be used as CCD center.
Joined the other Parishes in Muskegon to make a consolidated Catholic Elementary School system

1972:

CCD Building brought up to code and started classes in September.

Fr. Rudy left for assignment as Chaplain at County Home in Oak Forest, IL.

Fr. Conan Mitchell, OFM was sent as his replacement.



Fr. Donatus Grunloh, OFM

1974:

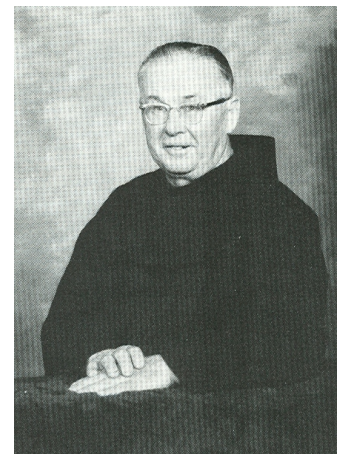
St. Thomas celebrates its Silver Anniversary,

Hall is named - **Founder's Hall** - In Honor of Fr. Rudy and Fr. Clem.

Formal celebration consists of Solemn Mass. Fr. Rudy is principal celebrant with Fr. Don, Fr. Clem, Fr. Conan and Fr. Vincent assisting.



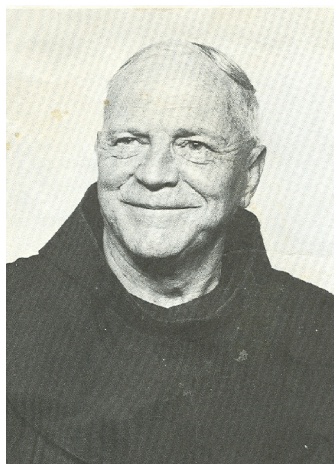
Fr. Don's Silver Jubilee



Fr. Conan Mitchell, OFM

June 23:

Fr. Don celebrates his Silver Jubilee



Fr. Rudy 1905 - 1975

1975:

Feb 2: Fr. Rudy age 69 dies at St. Francis Hospital in Blue Island, IL where he served as Chaplain.

He is buried in Portiuncula Cemetery, Oak Brooke, IL

New Lights were installed in the Church and the former Choir Room was renovated into a Mothers Room.

Fr. Vincent Fochtman moves to Petoskey to be near his physician.



Fr. Vincent 1894 - 1978

1976:

Dec. 5 - 11: Parish Mission conducted by Fr. Ambrose DeGroote OFM, Cap. and Fr. Caspar Stollenwerk OFM, Cap.

1977:

Fr. Clem celebrates his Golden Jubilee



**Fr. Don, Bishop Britenbeck,
Fr. Clem and Fr. Conan**

1978:

Fr. Vincent Fochtman age 83 dies. He is buried in St. Francis Cemetery in Petoskey, MI

Addition to Founder's Hall - Restrooms and Storage

Instituted Lay Ministers for distribution of Holy Communion.

Installed Large Crucifix on outside of Church in Gratitude to Fr. Clem

1979:

July 11: Beloved Fr. Clem age 80, dies at Mercy Hospital. He is buried at St. Mary's Cemetery.

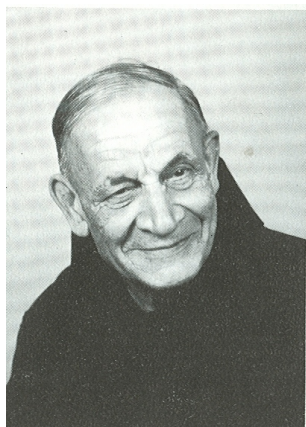
1981:

Fr. Don OFM is transferred to St. Louis, MO
Fr. Miro Wiese OFM is our new Pastor
Fr. Conan Mitchell OFM remains as Associate

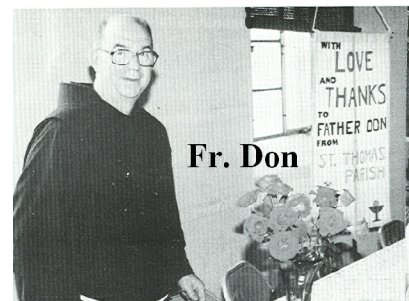
Original benefactor, Joseph Smith dies.

August 30: First Parish Chicken Dinner

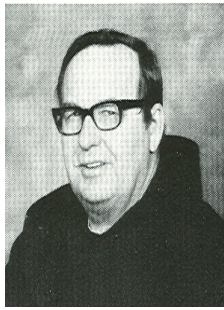
Prior to this, a Jitney Dinner was held in the month of October



Fr. Clem 1899 - 1979



Fr. Don

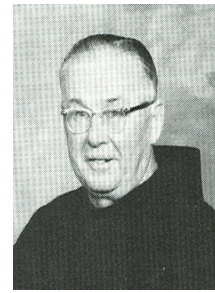


Fr. Miro Wiese OFM

1986:



Fr. Ron Schneider



Fr. Conan Mitchell OFM

Fr. Miro and Fr. Conan transferred Diocese of Grand Rapids to staff St. Thomas

Fr. Ron Schneider becomes first Diocesan Pastor at St. Thomas

1988: March 19:

Larry Jensen Ordained

1989: Food pantry is started to help feed area hungry

1991: Dave Kasprzyk ordained in 1981 becomes our Permanent Deacon

1992: September: Parish "Light Weekends"

1993: Founder's Hall renovated

Adopt Sister Parish in Haiti - St. Michael

1994: Fr. Ron Transferred to Hart,

Fr. Phil Witkowski becomes Pastor.

1995: July: First Parish Camp out weekend

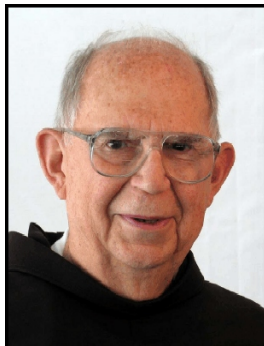
1996: June 1: First Seminarian Troy Nevins ordained

1997: Oct. 5: Van to provide rides to attend Mass at 11:00 on Sunday makes it's debut. Coordinated by Barb & John LaPres, The Van makes stops at Christian Care Center, Hickory Village, and Pine Grove Manor.

1998: Nov. 7: St. Thomas celebrates 50TH Anniversary Year, celebration includes Mass and reception at M.C.C.

2002: Knights of Columbus formed. Council 13035 is named after "Fr Rudy & Fr. Clem". Jeff Johnson is Charter Grand Knight

2003: Fr. Phil Witkowski transferred,
Fr. Mark Bauer is our new Pastor



Fr. Don 1923 - 2005

2004:

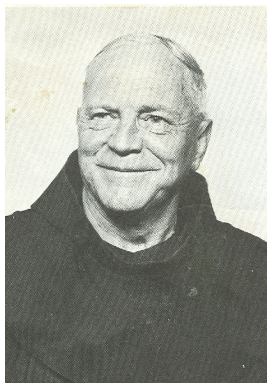
Fr. Michael Olson, Pastor of Our Lady of Grace is also assigned to be Pastor of St. Thomas. Fr. Phil Sliwinski, and Sr. Ann Porter, assist Fr. Mike

"Sandals in the Sun", Memories of Fr. Rudy and Fr. Clem are gathered by Gen Reinhold, Marge Jawor and Rita Miller. Book is available at the Parish Office.

2005: Sept. 29: Fr. Don age 82, dies at St. Anthony Hospital in Effingham, IL. He is buried in Aloysius Cemetery in rural Dietrich, IL



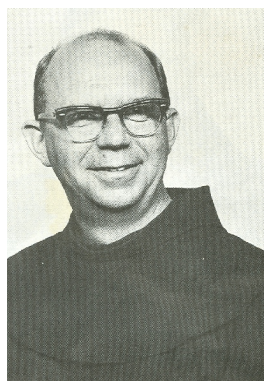
St. Thomas' 50th Anniversary



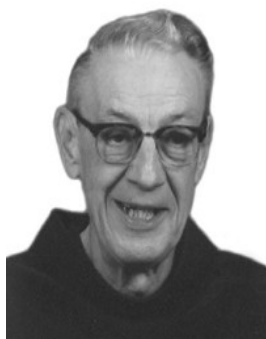
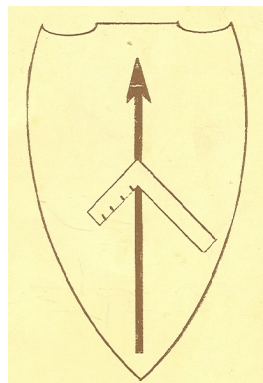
Fr. Rudolf Hornberger
1948 - 1972



Fr. Clementin Grosskopf
1948 - 1979



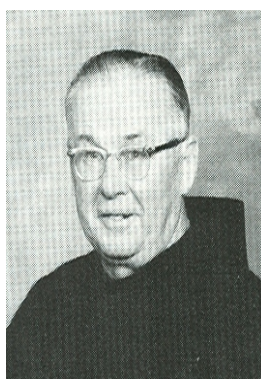
Fr. Donatus Grunloh
1967 - 1981



Fr. Robert Dentzman
1955-1957



Fr. Vincent Fochtman
1966 - 1975



Fr. Conan Mitchell
1972 - 1986



Fr. Miro Wiese
1984 - 1986



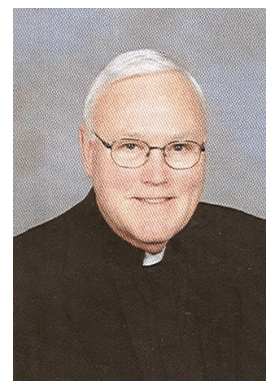
Fr. Ron Schneider
1986 - 1994



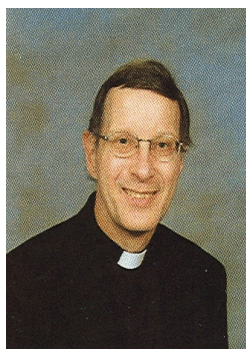
Fr. Phil Witkowski
1994 - 2002



Fr. Mark Bauer
2002 - 2003



Fr. Michael Olson
2003 - Current



Fr. Phil Sliwinski
2003 - Current



Sister Ann Porter
2003 - Current



Deacon Dave Kasprzyk
1991 - Current