

Our Beginning

Not long after Michigan gained its statehood, a humble, hard-working missionary from Slovenia began establishing some of the first mission schools in the Upper Peninsula. On a bluff overlooking Keweenaw Bay, native children were given instruction from books this Catholic priest wrote especially for them in their own language. From his L'Anse mission, Father Baraga also composed an Otchipwe (Ojibwa) dictionary to aid others in his spiritual and educational mission work. One hundred fifty years later, it continues to be the primary resource for Ojibwa linguistic research and reference. History records his deep commitment to the Catholic school of his mission in the area, now known as Baraga County.



In 1843, Father Baraga established his fourth major mission a few miles north of the village of L'Anse. A century later, one of Baraga's successors saw the need for a school in the rapidly growing parish. This summoned the arrival of the teaching Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The Sisters, in varying numbers, would be part of Sacred Heart School's teaching mission until the winter of 2001.

On June 13, 1954, ground was broken for a \$200,000 parochial school which opened its doors the following spring to 142 students, making Sacred Heart School the thirtieth elementary school in the Diocese of Marquette. Initially only three classrooms were opened for grades two through six with Sister Francis Jane, C.S.J. acting as both principal and fifth and sixth grade teacher. The teaching staff also included Sister Helen Louise, grade two, Sister St. Mark, grade three, and Sister Mary Augusta, grade four.

On Sunday, September 18, 1955, the Most Reverend Thomas L. Noa, Bishop of the Marquette Diocese, dedicated the school. Seventh grade was added that year and eighth grade would follow in the fall of 1956. By this time, six sisters of St. Joseph were living in the convent on Baraga Avenue.

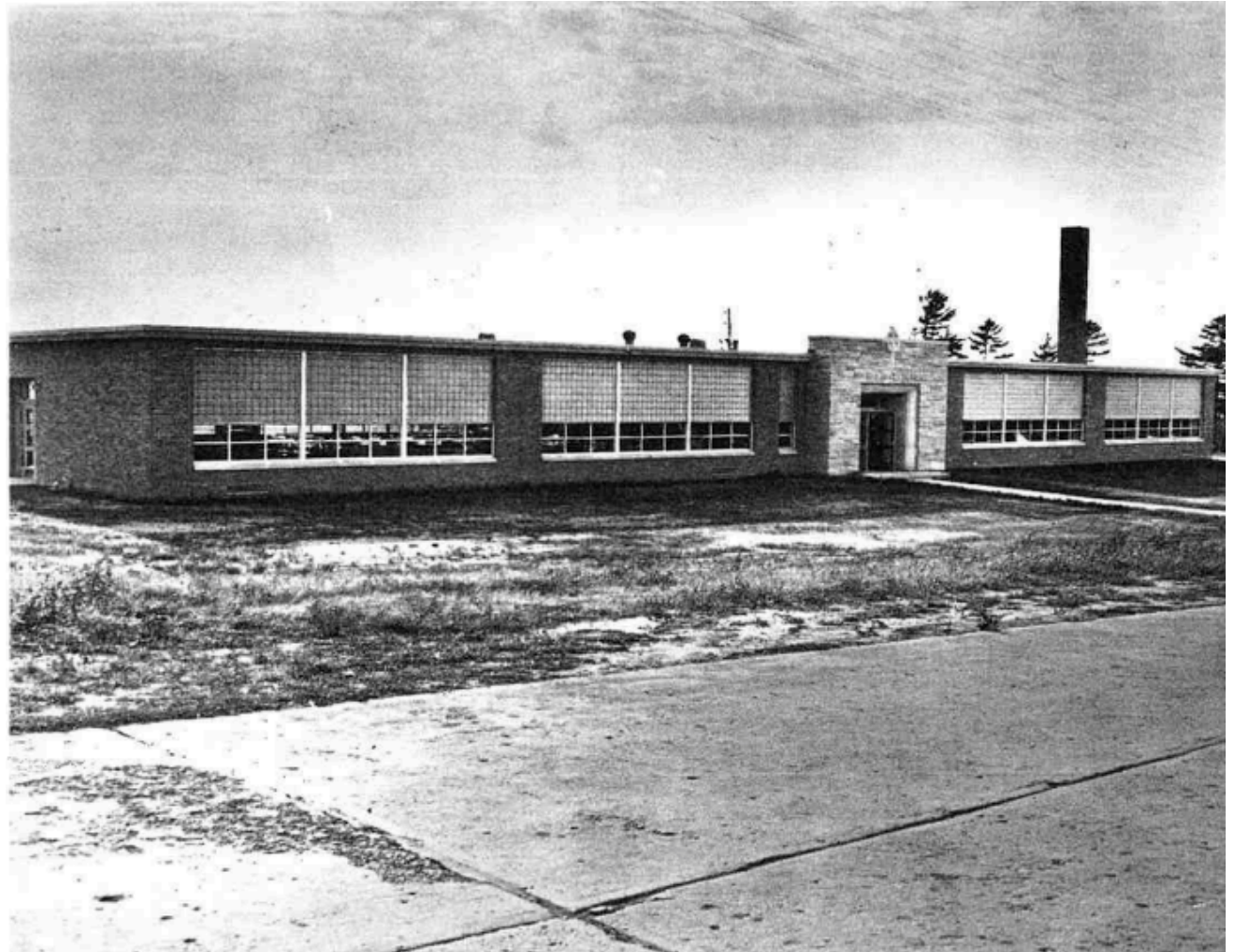


The first 8th grade graduation ceremony took place on Thursday, May 30, 1957. By the following fall, the school program had expanded to grades one through eight, with an enrollment soon reaching almost 300 students.

Sacred Heart School, now one of only ten Catholic schools in the Diocese of Marquette, continues to serve the L'Anse parish as well as parishes around the area. With the shortage of teaching Sisters, we are now totally staffed by lay teachers serving grades K-6, eager to carry on the teaching ministry maintained by the Sisters of St. Joseph for almost half a century... and inspired to continue the



educational mission established so long ago by Father Frederic Baraga, the Snowshoe Priest.





Bishop blessing exterior, September 26, 1955.



Laying the cornerstone for Sacred Heart School on September 26, 1954.



Sacred Heart School held its first graduation exercises Thursday, May 30. Twenty-six young people received their diplomas from the Pastor, Rev. Casimir Adasiewicz, after the 8 o'clock Mass. The graduates were served a breakfast by members of the seventh grade. Those in the graduating class: Top row, left to right, Joseph Chaudier, Darlene Barbo, Albert LaCosse, Mary Ann Dault, Anthony Supanich, Alice Schultz, Joseph Ross. Second row, Patricia LaJoye, Francis Krolik, Homer Elmblad, Dorothy LeRue, Adlore Chaudier, Patricia Boyer. Third row, Margaret Daust, Samuel Deschaine, Emily Seavoy, Thomas Poisson, Beverly Brunette, Martin Curtis. Bottom row, Joseph Hansen, James Tembreull, Dorothy Gauthier, Joseph Robillard, John Hugo, Judith Welsh, Lloyd Hugo.