

H I S T O R Y

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

Sacred Heart School opened its doors to receive three hundred and twenty-four pupils on the 14th day of September (The feast of the Exaltation of the True Cross) in the year of our Lord, one thousand, nine hundred and fifty-three.

Reverend Alfred T. Sico, pastor, said the Mass of the Holy Ghost at 8 o'clock which was attended by the teachers, new pupils and their parents. Following the Mass the children proceeded to the new building, part of which was still under construction, since unavoidable labor disputes necessitated a delay in the finished structure.

Sister Mary Alfreda was assigned to teach Grade 1A and greeted sixty-five eager youngsters, while Sister Mariella who was assigned to Grade 1B greeted sixty-seven pupils.

The second graders, seventy-six in number, and the largest class in the school, was under the direction of Sister Mary Joanna, an experienced primary teacher.

(Miss) Patricia Angiolilli, formerly a teacher in St. Mary's School, Plainfield, New Jersey, joined the faculty of Sacred Heart and was assigned fifty-eight pupils in third grade.

The fourth graders, 29 girls and 30 boys, and the oldest group to be included in the 1953-54 registration, were introduced to Sister Mary Lucy, formerly on the faculty of St. Joseph's School, Trenton, New Jersey. Sister's task was to orient the pupils in the philosophy of Catholic education, since, they had come from three public schools in the area.

- RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION -

Religious instructions were entered into wholeheartedly in an effort to determine the immediate needs of the new pupils. Baptismal

Records, First Communion, Confirmation data were reviewed, parents interviewed, in order to obtain accurate information for record cards to be permanently filed in the office of the principal.

SOCIETIES

The first in a series of newly formed spiritual societies was the St. Aloysius' Society which was organized October 11, 1953. Sister Mary Alfreda was appointed moderator. The Society held meetings every second Sunday of the month and received Holy Communion in a body at the 9 o'clock Mass. Membership restricted to boys in the elementary school numbered seventy-one members.

ANGELS' SODALITY

The Angels' Sodality, composed of girls of the elementary school level and who had made their First Holy Communion received in a body for the first time on Sunday, October 18, 1953, at the 9 o'clock Mass which was celebrated by the Rev. William Campbell, assistant pastor. Sister Mariella was appointed moderator. Present membership is 67. The Sodality meets on the third Sunday of every month.

ALTAR BOYS

A group of boys (grades 3 & 4) interested in serving the priests at God's altar was placed under the guidance of Sister Mary Lucy. Sister's task was to train these boys for the privileged task that was to be theirs as members of the Saint John Berchman's Altar Society. Forty boys successfully completed their training and served Mass before June, 1954.

CHOIR GIRLS

Girls interested in choral work and possessing trainable voices volunteered for choir work. There are forty girls in the choir at the present time (1953-54) Sister Mariella, music instructress, was in charge of the group. Girls sang at the 9 o'clock Mass on Sundays and at Benediction throughout the year.

LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART

Application for membership in the Apostleship of Prayer was made to the National Director, 515 E. Fordham Road, New York 58, New York, October 16, 1953. This marked the initial step in the establishment of a local center in Sacred Heart parish. Certificates of Membership were received October 28, 1953. The establishment of this local center enables the members to participate in the apostolic work of the Sacred Heart and to enjoy the spiritual graces and indulgences of the Apostleship.

The First Friday of November marked the first time the League of the Sacred Heart received Holy Communion in a body at the 8 o'clock Mass which was celebrated by the Rev. Alfred T. Sico. A breakfast was served in the new school cafeteria by mothers of the pupils.

A Holy Hour was conducted in the afternoon by the assistant pastor, Rev. William Campbell, at which time, the Act of Consecration was recited by all the pupils and a formal dedication was made to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament followed. Choral program was sung by the Junior Choir composed of third and fourth grade girls, under the direction of Sister Mariella.

EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

As part of the Educational Guidance program SURVEY TESTS were made in the "Skill Subjects" to determine where to begin work in the respective subjects. This was done, too, in preparation for the administration of standard achievement tests (primary and elementary batteries) to be given in school to all pupils, the latter part of October, for the purpose of determining grade levels of achievement in

Paragraph meaning
Word meaning AVERAGE READING

Spelling

Language

Arithmetic reasoning
Arithmetic computations AVERAGE ARITHMETIC

Kuhlman-Anderson Intelligence Tests were also administered throughout the school. The findings were studied individually and collectively on a comparative basis with the achievement test results to determine which children fell into the following groups:

Above average
AVERAGE
Below average

Where it was found that a pupil had an IQ of average intelligence, or better, and a subject achievement below grade level, principal-teacher conferences were held and teacher-parent-principal conferences in an effort to determine causes and to apply remedies.

SERVICE GROUPS

The first in a series of service groups was the installing of officers and members of the Sacred Heart School Safety Patrol. Significantly enough the day chosen for the Ceremony was the Feast of the Most Holy Angels, October 2, 1953. Present on this occasion were: Rev. Alfred Sico, pastor, Sister Mary Alma, Principal, Chief Andrew A. Phillips of the South Plainfield Police Department and Detective Silvio Donatelli and Patrolman Spisso of the local department.

Officers of the Patrol were selected from among the Fourth grade pupils for the year 1953-54 and included:

Captain - Peter Monticchio
Lieutenants - Ernest Spisso & Nicholas Muzzillo
Members - David Spisso, Ernest Spisso, Edward Micali,
Frederick Eckert, Francis Stavish, James Stavish,
Joseph Stopinski, Jay Vondran, Leonard Schiavi,
James O'Neill, James Manning, Joseph Hughes,
Jon Famularo, Lawrence Pearly, Michael Hannigan,
Norman Hood, Peter Monticchio

Sister Mary Alma was the first moderator of the school safety patrol.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCHEON

PROGRAM

Application was made to the National School Luncheon Program headquarters in New York City for permission to participate in the National School Luncheon Program.

The approval was received October 11, 1953. Letters were immediately sent to parents of pupils asking for volunteers to serve on the First Friday Breakfast committees and daily luncheon committees. Results of this drive were most gratifying. The program started in operation, the Feast of All Souls, November 2, 1953.

Mrs. Mary Fill, a member of the parish, was engaged to take over the responsibility of the kitchen and the first of a list of salaried employees..... She was assisted by volunteers from among the mothers of pupils.

On November 2, 1953, two hundred and forty-one pupils were served a hot luncheon consisting of meat loaf and tomato gravy, whipped potatoes, green beans, bread and butter, ice cream and milk. This meal was to be typical of the subsequent ones to be served. The number of luncheons served daily averages 240 to 250. Twenty-five cents is charged per pupil. The government reimburses with cash and commodities to assist in the operation of the program.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The first step was taken in the direction of forming a Parent-Teacher unit in Sacred Heart parish, November 7, 1953, at which time a telephone call relative to our proposed plans, was made to Sister Helen Rose, Honorary President of the New Brunswick Region, and Mrs. Joseph Rulewich, Regent of the New Brunswick region. The efforts were to be blessed because

A MEMBERSHIP DRIVE was officially opened at all the Masses on Sunday, November 15 and concluded on Sunday, November 22, the feast

of Saint Cecelia. Total paid memberships totalled 554 members.

A preliminary meeting was held December 10, 1953, which was presided over by the pastor and school principal. The former read and explained the By-Laws of the Association and the latter read the Constitutions. Roll Call was taken and approximately three hundred and fifty persons were in attendance.

The following women were appointed to hold office from January 1954 to May 1954.....

President - Mrs. Samuel Hughes

Vice-Presidents

Mrs. Daniel Raveia
Mrs. Leonard Capraro
Mrs. Hugh Mc Closkey

Recording Secretary ...

Mrs. Albert Phillips

Corresponding Secretary ...

Mrs. Samuel Mascialino

Treasurer:

Mrs. Nicholas Muzzillo

January 25, 1954, was the date set and agreed upon as the date for the next meeting at which time the Officers were to be officially installed in a church ceremony, followed by Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

An Executive Meeting was held in the Office of the Principal with the pastor, school principal, and new officers in attendance. At this meeting the following members were named Committee Chairladies.

Program - Mrs. Charles Flaherty

Welfare and Social Hygiene - Mrs. John Stahley

Membership - Mrs. Eugene Poklitar

Hospitality - Mrs. Richard Devlin

Refreshments - Mrs. Amerigo Monticchio

Civic - Mrs. Frank Stavish

Literature - Mrs. Edward Orzel

Social - Mrs. Russel Walsh

Legislative - Mrs. Joseph Stopinski

Publicity - Mrs. Michael Santoro

INSTALLATION CEREMONY

Installation of Officers took place on Monday evening, January 25, 1954, at an impressive church ceremony presided over by the pastor, Father Sico. Father James Mc Grath, pastor of St. Mary's Church, Bordentown, New Jersey, was the guest speaker. Approximately four hundred and fifty persons were present among them, the SUPERVISING PRINCIPAL OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE RESIDENT PRINCIPALS OF GRANT, WILLIS AND THE ROOSEVELT PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Many teachers from the local public schools were also in attendance. Diocesan officers as well as Regional Officers were among the guests. Mrs. Mary Fill was Chairlady of the Refreshment Committee ably assisted by mothers of the school children.

A BUSINESS MEETING followed the Installation Ceremony which was presided over by the new president and her co-officers. The pastor and principal spoke briefly as did the Regent, Mrs. Joseph Rulewich.

OFFICIAL ELECTION

At the April Meeting a Nominating Committee was selected to present a slate of officers to serve during the year 1954-55. Mrs. William Keyes was appointed Chairlady and Mrs. Harold Matthews, Secretary. Other members of the Committee comprised - Mrs. Edmund Morrison, Mrs. Charles Pirrozzoli, Mrs. William Roesch.

The Appointees were confirmed in election at the May Meeting with the exception of Mrs. Nicholas Muzzillo, treasurer, who was replaced by Mrs. Ernest Gregg.

Installation Ceremonies were postponed to the September meeting.

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SACRED HEART SCHOOL OF MUSIC

A Music Class was organized in December of 1953 to accommodate the pupils desiring to avail themselves of an opportunity to study piano.

Sister Mary Mercy traveled to South Plainfield from Mount Saint Mary's Academy, every Thursday and Friday and Sister Mary Robert, every Monday, to give half hour lessons to the forty-two pupils. Sister Mariella, a member of the school faculty, taught after school hours and on Saturdays. Considerable satisfaction was realized both on the part of the teachers and their pupils. Parents were grateful for the opportunity to have their children study under such competent teachers.

SCHOOL PROCESSIONS

The first procession of school children was held during Holy Week in the new church. The response was overwhelming - 95% of the girls registered in school participated. All wore white dresses, white stockings, shoes (color optional) and wreaths of white flowers adorned their heads.

OUTDOOR CROWNING

An impressive outdoor crowning of the statue of the Blessed Virgin was held on the front lawn of the church, May . Patricia Walsh of Grade Four was the crowner and was assisted by four of her classmates who were dressed appropriately for the occasion. Hymns were rendered by the pupils of the school. The rosary was recited. In attendance were: Father Sico, Father Campbell, Faculty Members and Parents of the children. Benediction followed

CHILDREN OF MARY CROWNING CHURCH CEREMONY

The Annual May Crowning of Mary, Mother of God, was held on Sunday afternoon, May 31, at 3 P.M. Members of the Blessed Virgin

Mary Sodality comprised of senior members of the Sodality made up the Court of Honor. Twelve girls were received into the Sodality by the Moderator, Rev. William Campbell. One hundred and seventy-five school girls participated in the ceremony. Forty-six glower girls attended the girls in the Court. The sermon was preached by Rev. Joseph Connolly of St. Matthews Church, Stelton. Benediction was given by Father Sico.

First Communion

Mother's Day, May 1954, shall long be remembered as the happiest day of the year. One hundred and eighty one little children received their First Holy Communion at the 8 o'clock Mass. Rev. Alfred Sico was the celebrant.

Sister Mary Joanna was in charge of instructing these little ones for the reception of this most important sacrament.

Sister MaryElla was in charge of music.

FIRST ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER ALTAR & TRAFFIC BOYS TESTIMONIAL

The first annual Spaghetti Dinner honoring the Altar and Traffic Boys was held on Saturday evening, June 7, 1954, at 5:30 o'clock. Fathers of the boys were the invited guests of the evening. Honored guests included: Father Sico, Father Campbell, Visiting Clergy, Chief Andrew Phillips and Detective Donatelli of the South Plainfield Police Department.

Speakers included - Chief Phillips, Detective Donatelli and Councilman Leonard Capraro.

Mrs. A. Monticchio was chairlady assisted by a large committee of mothers.

Each Safety Patrol Officer received a certificate of Achievement for his work during the year 1953-54.

INITIAL SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

PROGRAM

The first general assembly was held in the school hall on June 15, 1954, at which time Mr. Mobus, President of the South Plainfield Safety Council, presented four cash awards to pupils of the school who had submitted slogans in the local safety contest in which all private and public schools participated.

Awards were given to:

Carol Grego, Grade 4, \$3.00 (2nd prize)
Janet Berthiaume, Grade 4, \$3.00 (2nd prize)

Gregory Riccardi, Grade 1, \$2.00 (third prize)
Gene Michaux, Grade 2 \$2.00 (third prize)

Richard Tarnowski, president of the fourth grade, led the Assembly in prayer and salute to the flag. Father Sico addressed the Assembly and imparted the (his) blessing to the children.

CLOSING DAY OF SCHOOL

School closed for the current year, June 18, 1954. The first year was one crowded with "newness" and activity and certainly blessed by God in many ways. The success of the work can well be attributed to the prayers and cooperation of the priests and sisters of the parish and to the whole-hearted cooperation of the parents and their children.

DEO GRATIAS!