

RESURRECTION PARISH – A Brief History

In 1943 the influx of new families living in Cheektowaga and working in the nearby factories created a need for additional Catholic Churches to serve the community. Recognizing the need Bishop John A. Duffy established Resurrection Parish on January 1, 1944 at the southern boundary of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish. Rev. James A. Wroblewski was named as the first Pastor. Sixty-nine people attended the first Service which was held in the Connor's home on Bellevue Boulevard.

On January 9th, a few days after the parish was officially established, Fr. Wroblewski baptized the first baby of the Parish. It was Kerin Martha Browning. Later Kerin married Fred McGlinchey On May 25th, the first funeral Mass was said. It was that of Constantine Wroblewski. The next month, Father administered the Sacrament of the Eucharist to twenty-nine children. This was the first Communion class of the Parish.

After consultation with parishioners it was unanimously decided to locate the new Church at Como Park Boulevard and Union Road. Ground was broken and blessed by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Francis Kasprzak, Pastor of Transfiguration Church in Buffalo, New York on September 14, 1944.

While the Church was being constructed, the former Mary Kozlowski married Walter C. Cobel on October 7, 1944. The spiritual growth of the Parish was begun.

Fund raising began in earnest with a Lawn Fete and a Card Party and Dance. Bricks to build the new Church were sold for ten cents each. 75,000 bricks were required for construction. The Church building was completed and blessed by the Most Rev. John F. O'Hara on July 22 1945.

The new Church was completely outfitted through the generosity of many people. St. Luke's Parish in Buffalo, New York provided the alter linens, missals and other necessary items with the generous donations from the parishioners.

Continued growth created a need for expansion of the Parish. On April 18, 1947 Bishop John F. O'Hara granted permission for the construction of an addition to the existing Church building, adding four new classrooms costing \$30,000.00. A Rectory was soon built at a cost of \$24,000.00.

Reurrection Shool opened on September 7, 1947 with an enrollment of 54 children. Religious instruction for public school children began on Sunday, September 28, 1947. The second story addition was opened in September of 1948. The first students graduated on June 25, 1950. There were eight graduates.

Father James E. Wroblewsk guided the spiritual and temporal affairs at Resurrection until his untimely death on June 14, 1959. Rev. Stanislaus J. Brzana, who later became an Auxiliary Bishop of Buffalo and Ordinary Bishop of Ogdensburg, New York, now retired, became the Administrator of the Parish. He served in this capacity until the appointment of Re. Anthony J. Krawczyk as the new Pastor beginning on August 16, 1959.

In 1966, Rev. Krawczyk was assigned as Pastor of St. Valentine's Church in Buffalo. Rev. Chester W. Malikowski was appointed Pastor. His first endeavor was to conduct a Parish census. He walked and drove throughout the community, meeting most of the parishioners in a personal manner.

He could see the Church building becoming crowded at ever Mass. In a short while enthusiasm prevailed among the people to build a new Church. With this in mind sources for raising revenue through bingo and other activities developed. The Leonard Post Building (now part of the Galleria Mall) held the first bingo games in January 1967. Richard Kaczmarek, the first Chairman of the bingo games, directed the games at the Post till January 1978. He still continued to head the bingo games, a source of revenue for the Church School.

Father Malikowski sought permission to build a new Church. Permission was granted by Bishop McNulty in February of 1968. The cost of the new building was approximately \$385,000.00. Everything was on the move, William Preto revived the Lawn Fete in August 1968, serving as Chairman. This yearly event has been a major fund raiser for the Parish ever since that time.

A young man, Thomas Swiatek finishing his studies for the Priesthood, was ordained as a Fransiscan Priest on December 31, 1968, taking the name of Fr. Nicholas Swiatek, OFM Conv.

The new Church was dedicated on December 1969, Bishop McNulty celebrated the Mass of Benediction. On May 5, 1971 the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra performed in the sanctuary of the new Church.

On May 28, 1973 Bishop James McNulty ordained another young man of the Parish – the second ordination – Fr. Lawrence Cobel, the son of Walter and Mary Cobel, the first marriage.

In June 1977 a ground-breaking ceremony was held for the construction of a much needed Parish Social Center. The cost was not to exceed \$300,000.00. It was completed and an “Open House” for parishioners and friends was held after all Masses on December 17th and 18th. Resurrection Parish now had its own facility for all Parish events.

Father Malikowski was elevated to “Honorary Prelate” with the title of Reverend Monsignor. A Mass of Celebration was held in June of 1981, followed by a reception in the Center.

The present Bishop, Edward D. Head ordained yet another young man from the Parish. He was Fr. Richard Siepka. The date of ordination was July 10, 1982.

Msgr. Malikowski subsequently developed a serious health problem which necessitated the appointment of Rev. Harry Szczesniak as Administrator of the Parish on January 6, 1985.

Sunday, September 25, 1985, saw a memorable happy and sad day. The entire Parish celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Msgr. Chester W. Malikowski. A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by him and other priests. A reception followed in the new Center. Due to his failing health, this event was the final public appearance of Msgr. Malikowski. On November 2, 1985 death took Msgr. Malikowski, Bishop Edward D. Head celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial on November 6, 1985. Several hundred faithful and religious attended the Mass. Shortly after this the Center was renamed “The Msgr. Malikowski Center”. Rev. Harry Szczesniak continued as Administrator until February 2, 1986. Fr. Edward J. Sobierajski became the new Pastor of Resurrection Parish.

Rev. Sobierajski made many improvements to the Parish facilities. These improvements included the painting of the church, resurfacing the parking lot, installing new windows in the school building, repairing the rectory and installing a new roof on the Msgr. Malikowski Center. He served the Parish spiritually and continually urged parishioners to pray for vocations to the Priesthood..

His dream was fulfilled when Donald Levan took the vows of the priesthood on April 8, 1989. He was the fourth Priest of the Parish ordained to the Priesthood.

The Felician Sisters taught at the Resurrection Parish School. The first Principal was Sister Maxentia Czop, who served in this capacity from September 1947 till June of 1953. The present Principal is Sister Christinette Lojewski. One of the girls of the Parish, Rosalie Marie Marszalek, entered the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart. Another young lady, Jean Murawski, became one of the Poor Clare Nuns.

On January 15, 1992, Rev. Sobierajski was appointed Pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Cheektowaga. On March 15, 1992 Rev. Walter Matuszak became the new Pastor of Resurrection Parish. Under his guidance plans were made to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Resurrection throughout the 1994 calendar year. Plans included many spiritual and social events as well as the publication of the parish's first pictorial directory. Fr. Matuszak retired on February 1, 2009.

Rev. Conrad P. Stachowiak became the next Pastor of the Parish, he oversaw repairs to the roofs of the Church, Rectory, and the Msgr Malikowski Center. In addition the parking lot was resurfaced and new heating and air-condition was installed in the Church. Rev. Stachowiak brought the deaf ministry with him that he had at St. Augustine Parish where he was Pastor until 2009. He retired from the Priesthood in January 2019.

The present Pastor of Resurrection Parish is Rev. Michael K. Brown. This part of Resurrection's history is being written today and will be for the future to read.