

Saint Augustine Parish History

Halbur, Iowa

2002

The history of St. Augustine's Parish began in the year 1901. Up to that time the people living in what is now the Halbur Parish had been members of Holy Angels Parish of Roselle. Because of the distance many people, especially those living west of Halbur, had to go by horse and buggy to attend Church and to send their children to a Catholic School and also because Halbur had become a railroad town, these people at that time decided to form a new parish in the town of Halbur. A delegation therefore was sent to see Archbishop James J. Keane of Dubuque, then the Bishop of the territory, to request a pastor and to have Halbur proclaimed a Parish. The Archbishop granted their request and appointed the Rev. John B. Baeumler as pastor.

Father Baeumler arrived in the newly formed parish in June 1901. The people having been notified of his coming, formed in procession on foot, on horseback, and in carriages to welcome their first pastor of Halbur and escorted him to the Public school building in the north part of town, which had been prepared for Holy Mass. The first Sunday after Father Baeumler's arrival, on June 16, 1901, Mass was celebrated for the public school building. The parish at its beginning numbered 52 families and after that first Mass they made their contributions for the first payment on the pastor's salary and toward parish expenses. The contribution that Sunday amounted to \$281.40.

Church services continued to be held in the public school building until 1902. Shortly after the formation of the parish a tract of land in the west part of Halbur, eight acres in size, was donated by August Prenger to the new parish. On this property there was erected in 1902, a parochial school building and a rectory. The school building, a two story frame structure, cost \$4,400. And the rectory \$3,350. The upper story of the school building was used as a church for three years until the new church was completed. The first altar for this building and for the new church was built by Henry Petersohn and Peter Schulte. These two men also later built the confessional for the new church. The original school building was also used from the very beginning as the Sister's convent.

In 1904 a new brick church was completed at the cost \$13,900. The contractor for the building was J.P. Arp of Sac City, Iowa. By 1911 the parish was debt free for the first time. In the meantime sidewalks were put down where needed, city water mains were extended by the parish to the Church property, the church was frescoed, a crucifixion group was erected in the cemetery, three fine altars were bought for the church and a pipe organ installed in the church.

Catholic School education began in Halbur in 1902. On March 24, 1958, construction was started on the present St. Augustine School. By February 1959, this building was ready for use and classes were moved into it. It was staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of LaCrosse. In 1969 St. Augustine of Halbur and Sacred Heart of Templeton consolidated with the attendance center for grades one through four at Halbur and grades five through eight at Templeton. At

that time there were approximately 320 students. In the fall of 1993, kindergarten classes were begun for the first time. The system is called Holy Trinity School. Current enrollment is 116 students. In 1954, ten parishes, including St. Augustine, organized Kuemper Catholic High School in Carroll.

Father Baeumler, the first pastor, was succeeded on August 31, 1914 by the Rev. M.A. Schemmel. The following served as pastors: Father Bernard Schilmoeller, Rev. H.B. Kramer, Rev. Lawrence J. Greteman, Msgr. Bernard V. Greteman, Rev. Victor E. Kollasch, Rev. Cleo Seuntjens, Rev. Leo Riesberg, Rev. Eugene Ceperley, Rev. Paul Kelly, Rev. Gary Snyder, and Rev. Dale Reiff.

The following young men from the parish have been ordained to the priesthood: Father Lambert Schenkelberg, Rev. John P. Hausman, Rev. Bernard Eischeid, Rev. Leander Friedman, Rev. Jerome Koenig, and Rev. Lynn Bruch.

The following ladies from the parish entered the convent: Sister Evangeline (Louise Bornback), Sister Leonitia (Audrey Grey), Sister Winifred (Cecelia Hinnens), Sister Barbara Ann (Zelma Hausman), Sister Mathilda (Mary Schenkelberg), Sister Zelma (Katherine Schenkelberg), Sister Raphaela (Lena Underberg), Sister Syra (Mary Underberg), Sister Vernard (Ludvina Neppi), Sister Ricarda (Alvera Eich), Sr. Raphaela (Lois Friedman), Sister Iva (Marie Halbur), Sister Juliet (Ida Vogl), Sister Juliana (Eleanore Vogl), and Sister Lois (Lois Loeffelholz).