

## Featuring Our Lady of Lourdes School

When Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in River Rouge, Mich., asked the IHM Sisters to staff their new school, 11 IHM Sisters optimistically set out in August 1913 to teach there. They were in for a bit of a surprise.

"The school was in a very unfinished condition exteriorly," the convent chronicler reports. "...planks having been placed upon which to enter, as the steps were not yet built."



Nonetheless, the school opened Sept. 8, 1913 with 500 students in eight grades. Ninth grade school classes began the following fall. The school added one high school class each of the next three years. By 1922, so many children were enrolled that first-graders attended public school – there was no room at Our Lady of Lourdes.

When the new high school building opened in 1925, space constraints eased and more than 1,500 students enrolled by the 1929-30 school year, taught by 19 IHM Sisters and 10 lay teachers. The convent chronicler during this time was a staunch athletic booster, calling the 1932-33 football team "the best second place team in the world."



Enrollment in the 12 grades remained steady through the 1940s and '50s, with between 1,100-1,200 students.

Changing times brought changing mores. Concerned about how students spent their free time, the IHM Sisters opened the gym for organized recreation during the lunch hour. The chronicler notes, "...Games of various kinds and square dancing kept the boys and girls amused and did much to keep the boys from wasting time in the neighboring pool rooms."

Under the administrative supervision of Mother Miriam Therese, 11 IHM Sisters and two lay faculty members were responsible for nearly 400 high school students in 1963, our

**Featured Class Year.** The seniors chose the white rose as their class flower; the Infant of Prague as their patron; and the Grammy Award-winning "Moon River" as their class song. The football team won four of eight games that year; the girls' basketball team won five of seven games; and the boys' were Class C District Champions.



Enrollment began to decline in the late '60s. As a cost-saving measure, faculty was reduced to 10 IHM Sisters in 1969, and students spent three hours at Lourdes learning religion, social studies, biology and English, and three hours at Rouge High School for all other subjects.

Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School closed in 1970. The school maintained grades 7-12 for the next few years, but eventually bowed to financial pressures, and closed in June 1974.

## In 1963



Cardinal Montini, Paul VI, was elected pope following the death of Pope John XXIII.



The "March on Washington" civil rights rally was held with some 200,000 participants.

Poet Robert Frost, baseball great Rogers Hornsby, author Aldous Huxley and President John F. Kennedy died.



The first commercial nuclear reactor went online at the Jersey Central Power Company.



France and West Germany signed treaty of cooperation which ended four centuries of conflict.



Kenya achieved independence; 32 independent African nations established the Organization for African Unity.

*The French Chef* with Julia Child debuted on educational television.

*The Feminine Mystique* (Betty Friedan), *The Bell Jar* (Sylvia Plath), and *Happiness is a Warm Puppy* (Charles M. Schulz) were published.

William Faulkner's last novel, *The Reivers*, won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Samuel Barber's, *Piano Concerto No. 1*, won the Pulitzer in music.



The Los Angeles Dodgers swept the New York Yankees in the World Series; the Boston Celtics won the NBA Championship in six games over the Los Angeles Lakers; and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Detroit Red Wings four games to one for the Stanley Cup.