

## Featuring St. Columban - Birmingham, Mich.



In 1958, four IHM Sisters left Monroe via a food and laundry truck to teach at St. Columban School in Birmingham, Mich. With five stops along the way, it took more than four hours to get to Gesu Convent, their temporary home while the St. Columban Convent was under construction.

A generous parishioner lent the sisters her car to travel back and forth. The car had muffler trouble, and the chronicler reports that, "The noise was terrific! We sounded like hot-rod racers as we drove through the city."

School opened Sept. 17, 1958, with 162 children in grades one through four. By 1960, the school had grown to 333 students in grades one through five. Six IHM Sisters and three lay teachers taught them. Sixth, seventh and eighth grades were added gradually.



With 505 students by the 1963-64 school year, the school building was bulging at the seams. Jan. 13-16, 1964, "Nightly meetings were held for parishioners to explain the need for additional rooms in our school," the chronicler notes. The students collected money and donated \$115 for the building fund.

Construction on a new wing for the school began in 1964, but it wasn't completed until February 1965. In the meantime, the first-graders were on half-day sessions because of the crowded conditions. In spite of the construction upheaval, students remained active. The eighth grade organized games and planned treats for the primary grades for Halloween. They were rewarded with a "Halloween Hootenanny." Students throughout the school saved money during Lent that year to contribute to the newly established IHM mission in Recife, Brazil.



1970, our **Featured Class Year**, was the year a sports program for girls started at St. Columban. (Football and baseball teams had been organized for the boys in 1968.) It was also the year the Student Council sponsored an "elephant sale," with proceeds going to the school library. The eighth-graders went to Manresa for their retreat in February. In March, their teacher, **Mr. Smetek**, returned following back surgery. ("Absence and substitutes make the heart of the student grow fonder for the old teachers," the chronicler wryly noted.)

Members of the Class of 1970 planned the liturgy and designed the booklets and banner for graduation day, June 9. Their school days at St. Columban ended that evening with a sock hop.

The following year, 1971, the school board and parish council voted to close the school in June because of finances. The school building was converted for parish use. IHM Sisters continued to minister at St. Columban for more than 10 years in a variety of parish-centered capacities.

### In 1970



The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty went into effect, after ratification by 43 nations.

United States ground troops withdrew from Cambodia.

An earthquake killed more than 50,000 in Peru.



Elvis Presley began his first concert tour since 1958.

Paul McCartney announced that the Beatles had disbanded. At the same press conference, he announced the release of his first solo album.

Garry Trudeau's comic strip *Doonesbury* debuted in approximately two dozen newspapers in the United States.



The heavily favored Minnesota Vikings lost the Super Bowl to the Kansas City Chiefs by a score of 23-7. The Baltimore Orioles defeated the Cincinnati Reds in five games in the World Series. The New York Knicks won the best of seven games against the Los Angeles Lakers for the NBA Championship. The Boston Bruins swept the series against the St. Louis Blues to win the Stanley Cup.

*M\*A\*S\*H*, *Patton*, *Love Story* and *Airport* were all big at the box office.



*Midnight Cowboy* won the Best Picture Oscar, the first and only time an X-rated movie received the honor. An Outstanding New Series Emmy went to *Room 222*. The 5th Dimension received a Record of the Year Grammy for "Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In."