

St. Joseph School – Trenton, Mich.



St. Joseph School in Trenton, Mich., opened in February 1948 with five IHM Sisters, two lay teachers and 252 students in grades one through six.

Because of the shortages resulting from WWII, teachers worked with no blackboards, bulletin boards or book shelves. The floor was cement and doors were actually flaps of canvas. These limitations "...did not contribute to the development of an intellectual atmosphere," the convent chronicler notes. "But the good spirit of the teachers and the remarkable attitude of the pupils reduced difficulties to a minimum."

The school added a seventh grade in September 1948 and an eighth grade the following year. With the additional grades, enrollment grew to 400. As it grew, St. Joseph School helped reduce the overcrowding in the Trenton public schools and, to show its appreciation, the Trenton Board of Education made school busses available to the St.

Joseph students who needed a ride.



The chronicler mentions a variety of important events in the school. The annual May Procession began in 1948, as did hot lunches in the cafeteria. Girls began wearing uniforms in 1951. The parish built a new convent in 1955. The 1956 football team won the CYO championship game.

She also records some of the unpleasant events at St. Joseph, such as when someone broke into

the school, stole typewriters and ransacked several of the rooms and when one of the seventh-graders set fire to the church and school.



Students at St. Joseph School held book fairs to raise money for the school library and worked to help support the global missions and for people in need more locally. They planted trees for Arbor Day and celebrated Earth Day from its inception.

In 1979, our **Featured Class Year**, Sister Helen Vivian, IHM, was principal of St. Joseph. Mrs. Carol Callan taught the 35 eighth-graders. The school held a "cheese and sausage sale," and the children raised more than \$3,000 – with the first-graders raising more than half of it! The money went to support school programs. **Tonie Franzese** won the school spelling bee, and **Kevin Pavlov** wrote an award-winning poem for the Farm Bureau

Insurance Group's "America and Me" contest. The eighth-graders took a class trip to Toronto and

they took over all administrative duties in the school on "Take Over Day," May 24. On June 4, the eighth-graders graduated; Bishop Walter Schoenherr celebrated Mass.

Enrollment remained at about 300 through the 1980s when Sister Margaret Mary Dowling, IHM, served as principal. Under her leadership, the school instituted a Student Council; a Red Cross Student Health program and a computer program. June 1988 "brought an end of the IHMs at St. Joseph School." The sisters continued to minister in the parish until 1994.

St. Joseph School is still active and open for grades kindergarten through eight.

In 1979

The median household income in the United States was \$16,461.



Iranian militants seized the United States embassy in Teheran and held hostages, 52 of whom remained in captivity until January 1981.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan stirred world protests. The accidental release of anthrax spores at a Soviet bioweapons facility in Sverdlovsk killed several hundred people.

The people of Pittsburgh celebrated both a Super Bowl crown and a World Series Championship. The Steelers beat the Dallas Cowboys 35-31, and the Pirates defeated the Baltimore Orioles in seven games.



The Sugar Hill Gang released the first commercial rap hit, "Rapper's Delight," bringing rap off the New York streets and into the popular music scene.

Billy Joel received a Record of the Year Grammy Award for "Just the Way You Are," and Album of the Year went to *Saturday Night Fever*, by the Bee Gees.

Lou Grant won an Emmy for Outstanding Drama. *Taxi* won for Outstanding Comedy.