

St. John Vianney School – Highland Park, Mich.



St. John Vianney Parish had been established for more than 20 years when the four IHM Sisters arrived in 1954 to staff the school for the 99 children in grades one through six.

It was clear upon their arrival that the sisters' classrooms needed a bit of attention.

"During the previous year, the Detroit Board of Education had used the school building as a clinic," the convent chronicler notes. "There were many preparations necessary for the opening of school. The sisters from Gesu and several from Marygrove came to help rearrange and decorate the rooms for school."

The parish added a seventh grade the following year, and the chronicler records that "Dec. 8 marked the first time in the church's 28 years that a group of children sang the complete Mass...All were very pleased."



1956 saw another "first" for St. John Vianney when the first Offertory procession in the parish took place. That was also the year the school added an eighth grade formed the Home School Council.

St. John Vianney was never a big school; peak enrollment (1959) was 208. But its students took an active role in the life of their school. Through paper drives, rag drives, candy sales, school fairs and other fundraising efforts, they purchased books for the school library; "drapes for the windows in the auditorium;" and they helped the Mothers' Guild finance the blacktop for an empty parking lot to create a playground.

The children also raised money to support the missions, both at home and abroad, and helped their IHM teachers outside of the classroom, such as when the boys planted grass around the convent and school and cared for it "under the direction of Sister Gerontia."



It wasn't all work for St. John Vianney's children. They enjoyed sports, the school newspaper, Christmas parties, May crowning festivities, an annual mother-daughter banquet, school picnics, class field trips and Halloween parties.

During the 1965 basketball season, the chronicler boasts that the "...team won more games than ever before in the sports history of the school...The cheerleading squad also did an excellent job this year."

In 1968, our **Featured Class Year, Michael Lauchlan** and **Betty Bourke** attended the Optimist International's 10th "Observance of Youth Appreciation Week." Later that same year, Michael accepted a scholarship to U of D High School. With fewer parishioners sending their children to St. John Vianney, the Class of 1968 was the last to graduate. The school closed in June 1968.

In 1968



The U.S. population stood at 200,706,052, and Americans had a life expectancy of 70.2 years. Unemployment was 3.8 percent, and a first-class stamp cost six cents. The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended the year at 943. The average cost of a new house was \$14,950. The average annual income was \$7,850. Gasoline sold for 34 cents per gallon. The first Big Mac went on sale in McDonalds. It cost 49 cents.



60 Minutes aired on CBS, beginning its reign as the longest-running prime-time newsmagazine.

The motion picture rating system debuted with G, PG, R and X.

The Detroit Tigers won their first World Series championship since 1945, defeating the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games.



London Bridge was sold for more than \$2 million. It was dismantled and reconstructed in Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

The "Truth in Lending Act" was passed to protect consumers during credit transactions.