

St. Michael the Archangel - Miami



St. Michael the Archangel School opened in 1951. The five IHM Sisters assigned had a two-day train ride from Monroe, Mich., to Miami. The school, kindergarten through grade five, had 363 children enrolled.

"We initiated the first day on mission by sleeping in until 5:25," the convent chronicler noted. "Double sessions were necessary this first year because of the large number of children and the shortage of teachers."

That first year, St. Michael School began the tradition of hosting an All Saints party, where children dressed as their patron saint, rather than a Halloween party. *Life*

magazine published a story and photos about the event.



The music and athletic programs at St. Michael were very popular. The school formed a band before Christmas the first year the school was open. The athletic program, with basketball and softball teams, began in 1954. Both achieved frequent recognition and success in state and local competition.

A grade was added each year, and by 1955, 717 children, K-nine, were enrolled. The parish built a new wing, utilizing four portable classrooms during construction. Additionally, "the Spanish class often met...in the glorious Florida fresh air," says the chronicler.

Kindergarten was discontinued in September 1958. The diocese closed all ninth grades connected to parish schools in June 1960. In spite of these changes, and a tuition increase "to \$8 for one child and \$12 a family," the student body was 854-strong for the 1960-61 school year.

Miami was home for many Cuban exiles, and the parish hosted "Civil Defense meetings because of world tensions, especially those in our neighboring territory of Cuba." Because of those tensions, the school held evacuation drills for the students.

St. Michael thrived during the 1960s, with enrollment consistently over 650. During 1969, our **Featured Class Year**, the Home School Association raised \$4,000 to purchase an overhead projector, electric typewriters, books, and other items for the school. The basketball team came in fourth in league play; the baseball team was in second place; the track team won several trophies; "And the cheerleaders were voted 'outstanding.'"



At the annual science fair that year, **Ramiro Ramirez** won first place; **Jack Griffin** received an honorable mention and "**Charles Ortegon** got the 'excellent' award." The 40 boys and 78 girls in the eighth grade graduated June 6 at 7:30 p.m.

St. Michael continued to make improvements for its students, installing an air conditioner in the science room, adding a health clinic and making sure all bulletins to parents were in both English and Spanish.

In 1972, "enrollment purposefully declined because the Archdiocese [of Miami] asked schools to reduce class size to 35." Even so, enrollment hovered around 600. The parish re-instated kindergarten classes in 1979, and in 1986, the first pre-K class started.

The IHM Sisters left at the end of the 1985-86 school year. St. Michael remains open and active for students in grades

pre-K through eight.

In 1969

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed the year at 800. The average cost of new house was \$15,550. The average income per year was \$8,550. Gas cost 35 cents per gallon.

Apollo 11 astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., walked on the moon.

The United States, USSR and about 100 other countries signed the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

The first in vitro fertilization of a human egg was performed in Cambridge, England.

In Super Bowl III, the New York Jets defeated the Baltimore Colts, 16-7. In the World Series, the New York Mets – an expansion team in existence for just eight years – defeated the Baltimore Orioles, four games to one, in what was considered one of the biggest upsets in baseball history.

Golda Meir, of Milwaukee, became prime minister of Israel.

Boris Karloff, Dwight Eisenhower, Judy Garland and Rocky Marciano died. Catherine Zeta-Jones, Brett Favre, Renee Zellweger and Jennifer Aniston were born.