

St. Michael School – Monroe, Mich.



St. Michael School in Monroe, Mich., began in 1853. The IHM Sisters started teaching there in 1855.

Unfortunately, walking from the IHM Motherhouse to the school – more than a half mile away – was “injuring the Sisters’ health...on the cold winter mornings,” according to the convent chronicler. The sisters withdrew after several years, but “returned in 1874 when arrangements were made for the sisters to live nearer the school.”

St. Michael’s enrollment increased slowly but steadily. By the outbreak of World War I, three IHM Sisters taught the 116 children in grades one through eight. The students did their part for the war effort, selling thrift stamps and liberty bonds. They even created a war garden and grew vegetables for the school and parish.



The parish built a new school, which opened in September 1919. Just a few years later, it was set on fire as part of an anti-Catholic movement. “Two rooms were completely destroyed...and almost \$2,000 damage was done,” the chronicler notes.

During World War II, the 200+ students participated “with zest” in Victory Book, stamp, bond, scrap metal and paper drives, raising more than \$3,500 for the war effort.



By the 1950s, St. Michael School had nearly 300 students enrolled, and the parish added two additional classrooms to accommodate them. The seventh- and eighth-graders participated in ballroom dancing lessons, and students in grades one, two and three field-tested the new polio vaccine. Students in all grades raised money for books for the school library and the missions. The school instituted a new girls’ uniform in 1955 – navy blue skirt and short-sleeved jacket.

During the 1960s, the school formed a band; began a “rag drive;” and held book fairs “to provide wholesome and clean literature for our children.”

The defeat of Proposal C (which would have provided state funding for parochial schools) in 1970 resulted in fewer children able to attend St. Michael.



In 1973, our **Featured Class Year**, 360 children were enrolled. Seventh- and eighth-graders participated in a shared program with the public schools for their math, science and physical education classes. Remedial reading, social services and speech therapy were also available through the shared program. The boys’ basketball team won the championship; Sister Mary Margaret (Harriet) Durack, IHM, left the school after seven years as principal; and “Father Ted [St. Michael Pastor Rev. Ted Fujawa] dressed as

the Easter Bunny and visited the school and presented each child with an Easter egg.”



On June 12, 49 eighth-graders graduated. The class “planned the liturgy around the theme, ‘It’s Only Just Begun...’” After Mass, the graduates and their families had a reception in the gym.

When Sister Patricia (Helen Mary) Aseltyne, IHM, left as St. Michael principal at the end of the 1979-80 school year, no IHM Sister was directly involved with the school or parish. The school remains open and serves children in kindergarten through grade eight.

In 1973



The United States bombing of Cambodia ended, marking the official halt to 12 years of combat activity in Southeast Asia. A ceasefire was signed, ending U.S. involvement of ground troops in the Vietnam War.

On national television, President Richard Nixon accepted responsibility, but not blame, for Watergate.

Pearl S. Buck, Betty Grable, Pablo Picasso and Lyndon Johnson died.



In Super Bowl VII, the Miami Dolphins defeated the Washington Redskins 14-7. The Oakland A's beat the New York Mets in seven games for the World Series Championship. Secretariat won the Triple Crown in horse racing.



Roberta Flack’s “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” won a Record of the Year Grammy Award. Album of the Year went to *The Concert for Bangladesh*. *The Waltons* did well at the Emmys, winning awards for Outstanding Drama Series, Outstanding Continued Performance By an Actor in a Leading Role in a Drama (Richard Thomas), Outstanding Continued Performance By an Actress in a Leading Role in a Drama (Michael Learned), and Outstanding Performance By an Actress in a Supporting Role in Drama (Ellen Corby).