

Blessed Sacrament (Cathedral) School – Detroit



Blessed Sacrament School in Detroit opened in 1906 with four. The parish had opened just a year earlier, but the first impression the IHM Sisters had of the church proved to be erroneous.

“The short time of parochial existence and the countrylike nature of the surroundings...naturally evidenced a small congregation...” the convent chronicler observes. As a result, the four sisters sent to Blessed Sacrament were delighted to have 80 students, in grades one through nine, that first year.

The parish added a grade each of the next three years, and by the time the first Blessed Sacrament high school students graduated in 1910, enrollment was at more than 300 and the number of classrooms had doubled from four to eight.



Rapid growth continued. In 1914, with more than 700 students, the chronicler notes that “School opened with such attendance that the seating capacity was severely tested. The parish added four additional classrooms in 1916. The Brothers of Mary taught boys in grades six through 12, while the IHM Sisters taught the rest of the student body.

In 1922, “The Brothers did not return, and this necessitated our taking the sixth, seventh and eighth grade boys. Three lay teachers were in charge of the Boys’ High School,” reports the chronicler.

At Blessed Sacrament, students enjoyed a variety of activities, such as the annual May procession, creating food baskets for those in need at the holidays, school concerts, retreats and the junior/senior prom. The combined enrollment of the grade school and the all-girls’ high school held fairly steady at around 500 through the next few decades.



In March 1958, Msgr. Flynn, Blessed Sacrament pastor, announced that the high school would close at the end of the school year. St. Agnes Parish planned to open an all-girls’ high school, and because so few members of the high school student body came from Blessed Sacrament, Msgr. Flynn wrote that “...it becomes evident that the need for our parish high school would have passed.”

Nonetheless, there were still 300 children – an enrollment that never varied by much over the next dozen years – in grades one through eight. A new regulation – “only” 40 students to a classroom – was readily adopted by both teachers and parents.



Students were actively engaged in the life of their school and community. They continued the tradition of creating food baskets for those less fortunate; participated in football and basketball, as well as the Boys Choir Festival, Knights of the Altar and Junior Legion of Mary. Mardi Gras had become a tradition – free supper to parishioners, followed by burning palms for Ash Wednesday. (“A little disturbing – fire in a public building,” the chronicler wryly observes.)

Michigan’s Proposal C, prohibiting public aid to private schools and their students, was passed in November 1970, and Blessed Sacrament suffered the same fate as many of the state’s parochial schools.

“June 18 [1971]: Blessed Sacrament officially is closed.”