

Saturday, November 5, 1988

80th Anniversary Dinner Dance

The Lincoln Inn Batavia, Illinois

6:00 р.т.

Cocktails (cash bar)

7:00 p.m.

Program

Welcome:

Mr. Joseph S. Popp

Parish Council President

Introduction:

Fr. J. Michael Botean

Invocation:

Bishop Louis Puscas, D.D.

7:30 р.т.

Dinner

9:00 р.т.

Dancing

Sunday, November 6, 1988 Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

10:00 a.m.

St. Michael Romanian-Byzantine Catholic Church

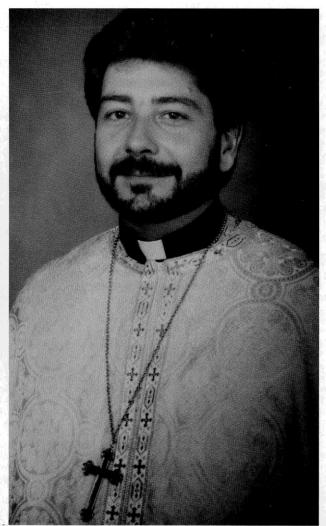
12:00 noon

Buffet luncheon in the church hall



THE MOST REVEREND LOUIS PUSCAS, D.D.

BISHOP OF THE ROMANIAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of CANTON, OHIO



Rev. Fr. J. Michael Botean Administrator

Welcome

"BINE AȚI VENIT!" These words, which Romanians use to express their joy at receiving an honored guest, have the same meaning as our English word, "welcome": well have you come to celebrate this evening of remembrance, thanksgiving and joy; moreover, it is well that we have come to this eightieth year in the life of our community.

Why pause at eighty years to celebrate an anniversary, when we have just celebrated our Diamond Jubilee a scant five years ago? We are, perhaps, reminded of the psalmist's words: "We have spent our years like a sigh . Seventy is the sum of our years, or eightu, if we are strong, and most of them are fruitless toil, for they pass quickly, and we drift away," (Ps. 90: 9b-10). We are aware that this is likely to be the last time we gather to honor the foundation of our community while any of those who were here at that time are still with us. And we reflect: who among us expects to be here to celebrate our 160th anniversary in 2068? Eighty years is the span of a generation, and St. Michael Church, about to enter its second lifetime. might ponder this and ask. "What really have we built here?'

Our foremothers in Romania used to spend hours spinning fibers of flax, wool or cotton into a single thread upon a fus or spindle which they kept twirling in their right hands. Inch after inch, yard by yard, these fibers were spun into the thread which was woven into the cloth which was sewn into the garments with which they, with their husbands and their families, clothed themselves with beauty. If one were to stop one of them and ask, "What good are you doing, twirling that spindle around and around?" she might have answered, with stiff fingers and a proud smile, "I am making a dress for my beautiful daughter's wedding."

God's right hand is upon the spindle of

our destiny at this moment. The twin threads of our life yesterday and the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Now are being spun together into the strong yarn we call Holy Tradition. Were we to ask God what good God can possibly be doing, founding, feeding and caring for tiny little communities like ours, little more than a dot in a footnote in the Book of Human History, God would likely answer, "I'm making a garment for my beautiful daughter to wear when she enters into the bridal feast of my Kingdom."

Until that feast is fully upon us, though we may pass and drift away, the Church, God's beautiful daughter, abides. She abides in St. Michael's, she abides in 1988. Though our toil may seem fruitless to us at times, though we may wonder what we have built and at what our future is to be, we who are the sheep of God's pasture have given and will continue to give the wool off our backs until that day when the wedding garment is complete. Well, indeed, have we come to this day on which we bless our ancestors, hallow our tradition, and prepare to hand our community over to a new generation.

My thanks to you, our honored guests, for enjoying this evening with us, and to the Parish Council and people of St. Michael who have helped out and who have participated in our various anniversary events. In particular, I would like to thank Mrs. Vera L. Greaves, chairperson, and the menbers of the Anniversary Steering Committee, listed elsewhere in this booklet, who worked hard through much struggle in order to bring about a successful anniversary year, Most especially, we of St. Michael's thank the Holy Trinity who, after all, was the first to utter: "Trăia scă biserica: Long live the Church, today and beyond!"

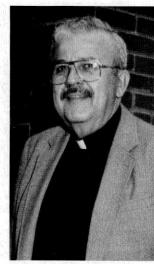




Cantors: Mr. John E. Kish Mr. George Matyas



Fr. Vincent Bataille, OSB Marmion Abbey



Fr. Deacon John Buga



Rev. Fr. Kenneth F. Yossa Seminarian-in-residence October, 1987 - April, 1988



Lector Victor P. Dunn is flanked by acolytes Peter Buga (l) and Tom Mickle.



St. Michael lectors (from l): Victor P. Dunn, Vera Hunger, Dlane Moreau and Joseph S. Popp. Not pictured: Jenny Buga, Mollie Hamling, Russell Onak (coordinator), Michael Piscoran, Candace Popp and Dona Popp.



Fr. Michael with acolytes (from I): Dan Ardelean, John Nagy, Michael Piscoran, Adam THill, Frank Ardelean, Ed Massee and Tom Mickle. Not pictured: Mark Buga, Tom Carney.

The bells of St. Michael's tell a story:

"Unto the glory of the great and powerful God! A.D. 1917, the whole world being at war for three years. The head of the Catholic Church: His Holiness, the Roman Pontiff, Pope Benedict XV; the Bishop of Rockford: the Rt. Rev. P.J. Muldoon; the priest of the church: Father Ioan Pop. The President of the United States: Woodrow R. Wilson; Governor in the State of Illinois: Frank Lowden; the Mayor of Aurora: J.E. Harley; King in Hungary: Carol I."

Ten years before, on July 21, 1907, the people who caused these words to be inscribed on the Great Bell of their new church gathered with the Rev. Dr. Epaminonda Lucaciu in the auditorium of St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in their native tongue: Romanian. Leaving behind them family, friends, and a centuries-old way of life, they had come from the regions of Satu Mare and Sălaj in Transylvania, at that time a part of Hungary, to Aurora, Illinois, in order to escape the foreign oppression they had known in their homeland and to find decent work, the opportunity to speak their own language, and the chance to be themselves. What they did not leave behind, however, were their pride, their industry, their tradition, their dreams and their invincible faith in God.

With these gifts, measured out to them generously by the Giver of all good gifts, they began to organize their small colony on North Lincoln Avenue. At the meeting which followed the Divine Liturgy on that day, it was determined to take up a collection toward the establishment of a church which was to be dedicated to the Prince of the Heavenly Host, the Holy Archangel Michael.

Six months later, on January 17. 1908, another meeting was held, this time in the community's own parish home at 445 N. Lincoln. The people decided to erect a temporary chapel and to elect Vasile Butuza, Ioan Silvăṣan, Ioan Pintea and Vasile Bala to represent them as Curators. George Puṣcaṣ, Ioan Pop, George Chiṣ, Ilie Precup and Vasile Bumbar were chosen to make up a committee of Senators, and Ioan Onciu was named Chief Cantor. By April of that year, the community could boast net assets of \$25.85 after expenses. The priest's salary had been set at \$100 per month (provided, that is, that the church had been able to collect at least \$121 for the month, considering the economy and the struggles of immigrant families, until such time as the church's debt could be repaid). Nevertheless, on September 13, the Forefeast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the community put all its trust in the Crucified One and approved the plan for a church building which would cost \$5,000.

Independence Day, July 4, 1909, saw Bishop P.J. Muldoon presiding over the dedication of St. Michael Church, assisted by Fr. Lucaciu and the parish's new Pastor, Rev. Fr. Ioan Pop. Buried in the cornerstone, which had been blessed on January 17 of that year, was a list of all those who had contributed toward the founding of the parish, as well as a statement of "Fundamentals": "This church is Greek-Catholic, and the official language is Romanian."

"Acest clopot chema-va pe vii la ruga, plânge-va morții cu jale, si va depărta vremi grele": This bell will call the living to prayer, mourn the dead with grief, and will keep harsh weather away," (Middle Bell).

The people of St. Michael's grew in number and in organization. By 1915, the old

continued on page 10

church building had been outgrown. It was decided to build a new church on the same, hallowed site and to convert the seven-year-old church into a school. Plans were completed, the contract finalized and construction begun in 1916, and Bishop Muldoon returned to Aurora to consecrate the new church building on July 18, 1917. Meanwhile, Fr. Pop arranged the purchase of land for St. Michael Cemetery where, tragically, he was laid to rest little more than two years later, the first Romanian Catholic priest to die in the United States. He was succeeded by Rev. Fr. Aurel Bungårdean and then by Rev. Fr. Aurel Haṭegan until the arrival of Rev. Fr. Leon Manu in September, 1920.

A new era thus began for the Romanian youth of Aurora: the Romanian Athletic Club, founded in 1921, organized what was probably the first American football team to give its signals in Romanian. An all-Romanian baseball team started up in 1922, and the Romanian Red Rose Band was organized in 1925. 1926 saw the formation of St. Michael's Youth Club, basketball teams (including girls' basketball), and Saturday night dances at the Romanian Hall. Other organizations founded at this time included St. Mary's Sodality (403 members), Club Säläjean, the Young People's Club (98 members), St. Michael's Society and the Rosary Society.

In 1924 a home for the School Sisters of St. Francis was purchased on Pierce St. for \$8,000, and by 1926, seven sisters were educating some 286 children at St. Michael School. On June 12, 1928, 18 students, St. Michael's first eighth-grade class, graduated in the presence of Gheorghe Grățianu, Romanian Minister of Affairs in the United States. The next year, the famous "Class of '29" graduated, including in its number the boy who was to become our bishop, Louis Puscas, and soon-to-be Sister Stella Kuk, SSSF.

The Great Depression brought with it grief and hardship in many forms worldwide, no less in Aurora. Previously, Fr. Manu had gone to Europe and returned with Rev. Fr. Liviu Fogas, who served St. Michael for a short while until his departure for Detroit. Now Fr. Manu returned to Romania permanently and was succeeded at St. Michael by his new assistant, Rev. Fr. John Vuc. Fr. Vuc cared for God's people at this difficult time until 1932 when, on account of human weakness and for reasons ultimately known only to the unfathomable mind of Providence, the community suffered a tragic division. This same Divine Providence, however, proved even stronger than human weakness in its healing and redeeming love, such that the city of Aurora was eventually able to boast of having two Romanian Catholic parishes, St. Michael and its neighbor, St. George. There being no Romanian-Byzantine priest available to take Fr. Vuc's place at St. Michael, Bishop Hoban of Rockford assigned Rev. Fr. Joseph Rzeszotko to administer St. Michael. Fr. Rzeszotko served until Rev. Fr. Basil Marchis, who had been sent by the bishops of Romania with the approval of the Pope, assumed his duties as Pastor on June 18, 1935.

Fr. Marchis' long and memorable tenure saw the beginning and the ending of three wars for the United States which were as costly to this community in terms of devotion and blood as they were to every American community. Nevertheless, the work of building the parish continued untiringly throughout these times. The Society of the Heart of Jesus, the Choir and the Holy Name Society were established, and many needed building and refurbishing projects for the church, school and cemetery were

undertaken. The parishioners showed their spirit of zealous generosity by accomplishing much of the work with their own hands and by providing the money for these projects from their own pockets.

On May 14, 1942, the first of St. Michael's two sons to become a priest, Rev. Fr. Louis Puscas, was ordained by Bishop Basil Takach in Pittsburgh, PA, and, on May 17, then-Father Puscas returned to his home parish to serve the Divine Liturgy for the first time. St. Michael's received the unique honor of hosting, for the first time in Aurora's history, a Cardinal of the Roman Church when Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Secretary of the Sacred Oriental Congregation and Dean of the College of Cardinals, paid the parish a visit in 1947. For his unflagging efforts, Fr. Marchis was named Honorary Dean of Maramures by Bishop Alexandru Rusu of Baia Mare in 1941 and Papal Chamberlain by Pope Pius XII in 1946. He was capably assisted and supported during nearly all of this time by Mary Dohan, who, as rectory housekeeper, performed many of the often unnoticed services that sustain the ministry of the parish priest from day to day.

The people of Israel wandered for forty years in the desert after leaving Egypt before crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land and freedom. The forty years of growth which the people of St. Michael's knew, however, reached quite a different climax at the half-way point of this story. In 1948 the church building received a new, red roof and the clock and bells were electrified. On September 4, the Association of Romanian Catholics of America (ARCA) was established in Youngstown, Ohio, and on December 1, the infamous "Decree #358" was promulgated by the three-year-old Communist regime in Romania, declaring that the Romanian Catholic Church united with Rome shall "cease to exist" in her mother country. Forty years after its birth in this free land, St. Michael's saw the yoke of oppression fall upon its mother Church, whose own roof in Europe was now crimsoned with the red of martyr's blood.

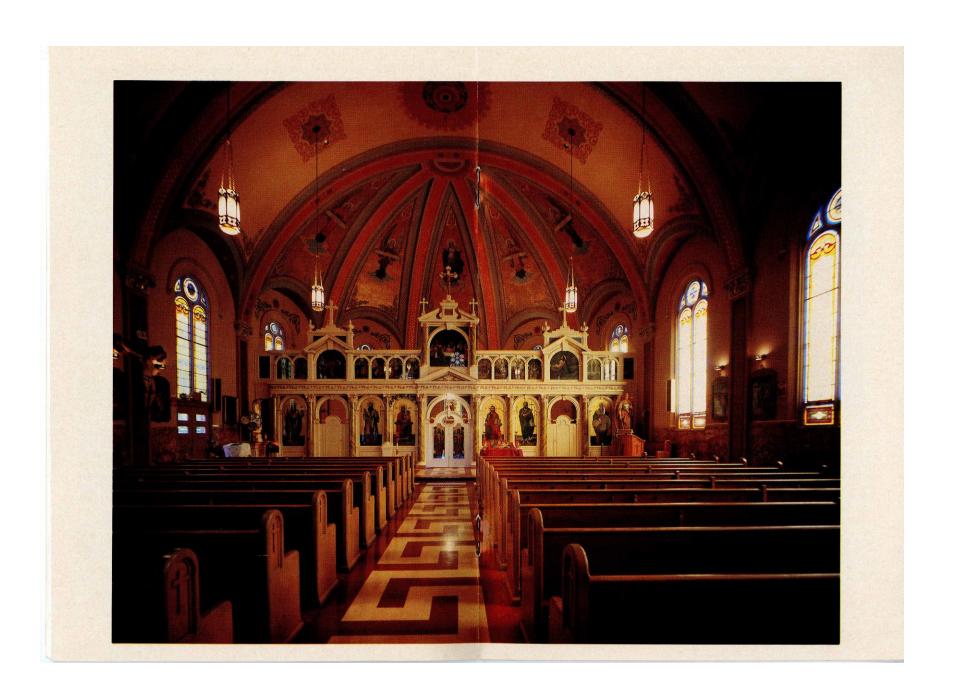
"Acest clopot e menit să plânqă pruncii plăpânzi la mutarea lor la ceriu, să ne cheme la nchinare, să nfrângă furtune mare, ": "This bell is meant to bewail tender infants at their departure to Heaven, to call us to worship, to defeat great tempests," (Small bell).

In Aurora, children became the focus of attention when the school building was surfaced with brick and cement walkways poured around it in 1949. The church's old debt was paid off in 1952 and, as a sign of gratitude, a statue of Our Lady of Fatima was erected. 1956 brought with it not only the beginning of major renovation for the church and basement, but also Rev. Fr. John Popa, who arrived from Rome in order to assist now-Msgr. Marchis in the pastoral care of the people until October, 1957. A year of celebration in honor of St. Michael's Golden Jubilee lasted from August 31, 1958, until July 4, 1959, coincidentally the year of Msgr. Marchis' Thirtieth Jubilee.

In 1961, plans for a new rectory were approved and, on June 11, the school received a visit from Bishop Vasile Cristea of Rome. The rectory became habitable in 1962 and was completed in 1963. In the same year, the last graduating class of St. Michael School received its diplomas, while, at the Vatican, the Second Vatican Council began its work of worldwide renewal of the Catholic Church.

St. Michael was not exempt from the far-reaching changes brought about by the

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Council, as well as those undergone by all sectors of American society during the Cold War. Along with many others throughout the country, St. Michael School, faced with declining enrollment and the changes in religious life brought about by the incipient vocation crisis, was forced to close its doors forever in August, 1966. In 1967, Rev. Fr. William G. Popp, a son of St. Michael who had been ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Cristea in Rome the previous October, returned to his home parish as assistant to Msgr. Marchis. Now Bishop Nathaniel of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, Orthodox Church in America, Fr. William served St. Michael until August, 1967. On May 17, 1975, another son of the parish, Rev. Deacon John Buga, was ordained to the Diaconate and has served his parish well in this capacity ever since.

On September 4, 1977, after forty-two years of service to the parish, Msgr. Marchis announced his retirement. He was succeeded by Rev. Fr. John T. Filip, who was installed on September 30. Monsignor's retirement proved to be all too brief; he was called to be with the Eternal High Priest on March 5, 1980, at the venerable age of eighty-eight, and was laid to rest at St. Michael Cemetery.

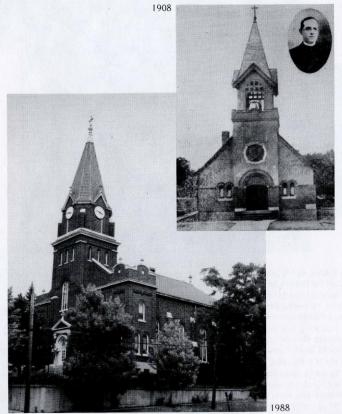
While Fr. Filip was pastor, the church exterior and the rectory were painted, and the Romanian Catholic community around the world saw the fulfillment of an age-old dream when Pope John Paul II elevated Fr. Puscas to the dignity of the episcopate. Bishop Louis, consecrated June 26, 1983, became the first bishop of the Romanian Catholic Church in the United States.

Fr. Filip entered retirement and was replaced by Rev. Fr. John Mircea Boac on November 9, 1984. During Fr. Boac's tenure, serious renovation of the church grounds was begun by the people, who saw to the demolition of the now unused school building in early 1986, and to the roofing, tuck-pointing and painting of the church interior and exterior. The entire amount needed for that phase of an ambitious refurbishment project, which is still in progress, was raised by the generous contributions of the people of the parish.

On August 3, 1986, Rev. Fr. J. Michael Botean was installed as administrator of St. Michael by His Grace, Bishop Louis. The current Men's Club received its founding on August 23, 1987, and, striving to know and to fulfill the will of God in the service of God's people in Aurora, the history of this church continues.

A convention of history has it that the story of a church be told in a roster of the clergy who served it or by the buildings that have gone up or come down, just as conventional historiography tells the progress of a nation by listing its kings or presidents, along with the wars it has fought. Indeed, the priests who come and go, like the buildings that come and go, stand as a kind of milestone in the progress of a parish, the most visible markers along the way of an eighty-year journey. But the bells of St. Michael tell a story that is far deeper and broader than that. They tell of the religious devotion of a people who emigrated across a wide ocean and navigated a cultural abyss to find a better life for themselves and their posterity. They tell of the children these immigrants bore and raised in the shadow of a red tile steeple, and of their children's children. They tell of the vibrant and generous faith of a people who have given two bishops, a deacon, and no fewer than twelve nuns to the Mystical Body of Christ.

The bells of St. Michael tell of the lives, the loves, the hopes and the memories of, literally, thousands who are in some way touched by their tolling, affected and moved by their venerable, gentle, yet strong and lively singing of the praises of the Lord of History. Hour after hour, Sunday after Sunday, lifetime after lifetime, through war, poverty, war, prosperity, more war and, indeed, the uncertainty about what is to come, they sing: "Intru mărirea Marelui Dumnezeu!" "Unto the glory of the great God!" As it is written upon the Great Bell, "This church was built and this bell placed through the goodwill offerings of the Romanian people of Greek-Catholic faith of Aurora, emigrating from the regions of Satu Mare and Sălaj of Hungary. All of this was done for the propitiation of the most righteous anger of God, and for the peace of the whole world."



Oldest Surviving Founder of St. Michael Church



Mr. Ioan Luca Kish, born January 16, 1890

Sitting in his favorite room, a twinkle in his eye, and a smile on his lips, Mr. Kish recalled the formation of St. Michael Parish.

When asked if he knew how many families belonged and what he remembered most, he replied that as an eighteen year old young man he did not pay attention to such things but that everyone who came to church would sing.

His advice is that people should go to church and think about things, and that parents should tell their children to attend and tell them why. He also said they should learn Romanian.

He is a life-long member of St. Michael.

In addition to Mr. Kish, members of St. Michael Church who were living in Aurora at the church's founding in 1908 are Mr. Alex Chivari, born November 5, 1908 and Mrs. Emma Olah, born June 18, 1906.

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They still live in Aurora and are members of the church.



Members of St. Michael Men's Club: Fr. Michael, Peter Buga, Gus Silagi (Vice-President), Lloyd Popp (President), Deacon John, Joseph Tolian (Treasurer).



Our men looking at plans for new parking and landscaping.



A Men's Club meeting.



St. Michael Church Parish Council, 1988-89 (please see page 23)



Parish general assembly, 1988





St. Michael Ladies' Auxiliary Officers: Emma Ideran (Vice-president), Fr. Michael, Florence Bates (Secretary), Lena Matyas (President), Viola Moldovan (Treasurer).



Mrs. Anna Meggesin, one of the surviving founders of St. Michael Ladies' Auxiliary.



Members of the Ladies' Auxiliary (front row, from I): Madeline Onak, Goldie Onete, Mary Saros, Jennie Onete, Florence Kish. (2nd row): Vera Hunger, Lillian Zizich, Emma Ideran, Lena Matyas, Emma Moldovan. (3rd row): Mary Popp, Rita Kish, Marion Tatar, Mary Paskiewicz. (top row): Vi Buga, Vera Banks, Florence Bates, Viola Moldovan, Fr. Michael, Mary Miklosik, Vera Greaves, Leona Banks.

Eastern Christian Formation program First Communion class: Deidre Popp, Lauren Hamling, Angela Brooks, Greg Clementz. Not pictured: Mrs. Candace Popp, instructor.





Members of St. Michael Church Choir (front row, from l.): Diane Moreau, Lena Matyas, Lillian Zizich, Madeline Onak. (2nd row): John E. Kish, Emma Ideran, Marcia Onak. (top row): Deacon John Buga, Viola Moldovan, Dan Silagi, Joseph S. Popp.





Sister Gerda Moehler, SSSF and Sister Anne Beitzinger, SSSF who have helped our choir for many years.

On July 19, 1987, the family members of St. Michael held a kick-off brunch to begin our celebration of our 80th year as a parish. A multitude of red, yellow and blue balloons, each holding a message for whoever found it to contact us, were sent air-borne from the front lawn by the parishioners. A note was received from the Bodtke family of Grand Junction, Michigan, who found a balloon in a blueberry field on July 24th. We thank them for taking the time

to let us know, for they must have realized that this was an important occasion for us.

We thank you for sharing this day with us also.

CATHOLIC CHURCH SENDS

YOU GREETINGS and GOD'S BLESSINGS
AS WE CELEBRATE OUR BOTH
ANNIER SARY PLEASE SHARE
WITH US YOUR NAME - WHERE and
WHEN YOU FOUND OUR BALLOON
REV. F. John Mirtual Botean
60905
40505

July 19, 1981



Deacon John, Vera Greaves, Gus Silagi and Diane Moreau of the Anniversary Steering Committee

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John and Lillian Zizich

St. Michael Parish Council (top row, from I): Fr. Michael Botean, Jim Bates, Cantor John E. Kish, Deacon John Buga, Victor Dunn (auditor), Peter Buga, Michael Piscoran (Vice-president), Joseph S. Popp (President), (front row): Diane Moreau (Secretary),

Marcia Onak (Treasurer), Lena Matyas (President, Ladies' Auxiliary), Vera L. Greaves. Not pictured: Frank Ardelean, Robert Banks (auditor), Stephen Korody (past President), Lloyd Popp (Men's Club President).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

80th Anniversary Steering Committee

Vera L. Greaves, General Chairman Frank R. Ardelean Rev. Fr. J. Michael Botean Fr. Deacon John Buga Rose Johanns Diane Moreau (Cookbook chairperson) Russell Onak (Windsock chairperson) Gus Silagi Susan Zizich (Publicity chairperson)

Members of the Parish Council shown on page 18.

In charge of special events held during our celebration year:

Kick-off Brunch:

Men's Smoker:

Christmas Caroling:
Pizza Party:

ARCA-YD Basketball Tournament:
Romanian Day Golf Outing:

Vera L. Greaves
Fr. Michael and Deacon John
Rev. Fr. Kenneth F. Yossa
Peter Buga and Victor Dunn
Peter Buga and Frank Ardelean
Michael Piscoran

We wish to extend a special note of appreciation to:

Merchants Bancorp, Inc., St. Michael Ladies' Auxiliary, and Reuland Food Service, sponsors of Sunday's luncheon buffet;

St. Michael Men's Club, for their financial support;

Alex's Destinations Unlimited, for travel arrangements.

The Image Shop (Joseph S. Popp), for anniversary logo and windsock designs; photography, cover design and consultation for this booklet.

Credits and permissions: R.W. Gerwing, for use of icon drawing of St. Michael the Archangel; Ron Stewart, for use of portrait of Bishop Louis Puscas; T.W. Greaves, photography assistance

Commemorative Booklet Committee: Rev. Fr. J. Michael Botean, chairperson, Vera L. Greaves, Joseph S. Popp

We have made every effort to be as accurate and complete as possible. We apologize for any error, omission or other fault which may be discovered despite this effort.