

THE ROAD TO 125

Legacy Ministries and Outreach

Did you know: One of the Legacy Societies offered life insurance and a former Pastor was a coal miner before he was called to the priesthood?

St. Benedict Parish has a long history of vibrant organizations and ministries. From its earliest days, these groups served both our faith community and the wider neighborhood. As the decades passed, changing lifestyles led to shifting membership, causing some historical societies to fold.

Part of this evolution stems from broader social shifts: during the early-to-mid 1900s, parish groups were the central social hub for Catholic families. Today, competing commitments—such as youth sports and digital civic communities—have redistributed how parishioners spend their time.

Let's take a look at Legacy Societies...

Jednota Society

Many of the original families of St. Benedict were of Slovak heritage. **Founded in January 1912**, the local Jednota Society was a Catholic fraternal organization that provided members with low-cost life insurance and social activities to preserve their culture. Meaning "union" in Slovak, "Jednota" was part of the First Catholic Slovak Union (FCSU), a national fraternal benefit society founded in Cleveland, Ohio. From time-to-time donating sums of money to the parish.



Holy Name Society

In **January 1917**, the Holy Name Society was established. The Society promotes deep respect for the names of God and Jesus Christ, avoid offensive speech, and support their local parishes through prayer, and service. The society would meet after Mass on their respective Communion Sunday. The first charter members included John Forish, Albert Yench, Joseph Stofko, Frank Chervak and George Gumbita.



2001

Ron Knaus, Jr., Jerry Davis, Ron Knaus, Sr., Jerry Gumbita, Frank Novotny

Sodality 1951



Blessed Virgin Sodality

Established on March 15, 1921, the Blessed Virgin Sodality is a religious organization dedicated to fostering devotion to Our Lady through the praying the Rosary and supporting the needs of the local church. The Sodality collected regular dues and hosted various social events. The Sodality pays tribute to the Blessed Mother through the annual May Crowning Celebration, which was first held in 1925. Among its many contributions, records from 1951 highlight a major donation by the Sodality to purchase the church altar.

Rosary Altar Society

Established in 1949, the Rosary Altar Society is dedicated to honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary and promoting devotion through the recitation of the Rosary and recently the 101st annual May Crowning. Through fundraising and financial contributions, the Society supports the care and maintenance of the sacred altar, vestments, and sanctuary. Monthly meetings feature communal recitation of the Rosary, prayers for special intentions, planning for upcoming activities and fundraisers, and viewing videos for spiritual growth.



2001

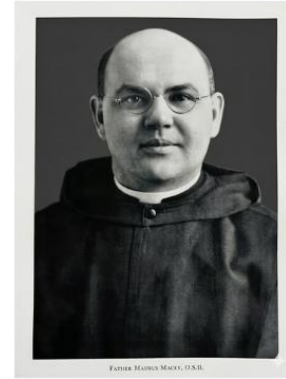
Top Row: Dorothy Stofko, Mary Eliz. Kmetz
Lower: Dolly Burns, Mary Graham,

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A Journey Through St Benedict's History

Father Maurus Macey, O.S.B. Pastor September 24, 1924- March 16, 1948

Father Maurus Macey was a compassionate, resourceful Benedictine priest and former coal miner who served for nearly twenty-five years as the eighth pastor of St. Benedict's Church in Marguerite, Pennsylvania. Known for his deep dedication to his community during severe economic hardship, he famously secured permission to re-open an abandoned mine to personally lead unemployed parishioners in digging coal for heat, organized land and seeds for stranded families to grow their own food, built up the local parish school, and tirelessly worked until he freed the parish from debt.



Read this interesting excerpt and learn about Fr. Maurus's Outreach Legacy

*The "Black Days" of 1930 brought even greater difficulties. How he braved them, was described by the "St. Francisco Monitor" and copied by other papers. Under the title "**A Real Remedy In Western Pennsylvania With Bishop Boyle**" this writer stated in part:*

"We drove to one of those villages you may read about—a mining town—where the mine was shut down, and a group of two hundred families were stranded in Company houses. We drove over the unpaved roads through the village of Marguerite to the parish church at St. Benedict's. Bishop Boyle went to the sacristy entrance, where the pastor lives in two upper rooms. "Father Maurus," he called, "come down, you have visitors." Father Maurus is a tall, stout, broad shouldered Benedictine. He began to show and tell us things. The parish was established from St. Vincent Monastery which is six miles away. Then the depression came, and the two hundred families were without money and without hope. He borrowed land, laid it out in lots, one for each family, taught the people to prepare the land, and procured seeds for them. They have been feeding their families from these lands. He borrowed a coal mine that had been abandoned some time ago, and the men know how to take out the coal skillfully and safely. They keep warm. He has a small coupe and drives to the Benedictine Monastery to get plenty of milk and anything else he can snatch. The men put the tile on the roof, paint the interior, keep it clean. "Father Maurus engineers the landscaping around the church. Back of the church is a brick school, steam heated. Women from the village teach it. The Bishop conducted an oral quiz in arithmetic. The children know their numbers. Graduates of the school have gone to the seminary, the sisterhoods and high schools. "Father Maurus had been well into this work when the Quakers came along to found a colony in the neighborhood. They do much quiet work, and seeing these difficulties they asked him: "How much do you need?" And he answered: "One hundred dollars a month will see me through, but I have no time to make reports." They said: "Do justice, you'll get a hundred dollars a month" and he informed them, "One hundred and fifty families are Catholics, but we make no distinction." They send, what he needs of that value wholesale in medicine and meats."

"Then we visited the Quaker Settlement, the Westmoreland Homesteads, sponsored by the Department of the Interior—Mr. Ickes. In an old farm house is the office, in charge of Mr. David Day, of the Society of the Friends, the finest type of a government servant. David Day and the Bishop sat for a long time talking about home stading. "It was the most cheering afternoon we have spent since the depression started. Give these humble, realistic, considerate men, like Father Maurus and David Day, a chance, and they will rebuild America."