

## **History of Saint Adalbert Parish, Berea, Ohio**

Berea got its name in a flip of a coin in 1836. Reverend Henry O. Sheldon, a circuit rider and later, Berea's first postmaster, chose the name over another biblical name: Tabor.

A New Englander named John Baldwin, the founder of Baldwin Institute, which later became Baldwin Wallace University, prospered by transforming the sandstone that lined the banks of the Rocky River and small gullies in the area, into a thriving industry in the early 1840's. The need for labor to extract the sandstone attracted German, Irish and Polish stone cutters from Europe to work the area to make "Berea Sandstone" into foundations for buildings as well as the famous grindstones used across the nation. Sadly, by the 1940's, sandstone had been replaced by harder building materials and Carborundum grinding wheels.

The Polish immigrant stone cutters wanted their own worship site, after attending the Irish/ German Catholic Church of St. Mary's. On December 4, 1873, St. Adalbert Church was organized by the Pastor, Father Victor Zareczny with about 100 families from St. Mary's Church.

The founding Polish families included: Mucha, Tadych, Helwich, Piatek, Cichy, Marks, Gros, Krenc, Janke, Trafisz, Grausz, Tymke, Buszko and Zydor, among others. These families contributed to construction of the first church at a cost of \$6,000 on April 1, 1874, the cornerstone was laid on June 29, 1874.

Late 1874, the church was completed and a school began in the choir loft in December. The church was 45 feet by 80 feet, made of brick, with hand craved altars shipped from Poland. (still present today)

Before 1874 ended, four acres of land was purchased for a cemetery on (now) Bagley Road for \$520.

September 26, 1875 was the date of the church dedication, the oldest Polish Catholic Church in Ohio.

In 1876, the first school was built.

In 1878, the first rectory was built.

In 1886, the church spire and sacristies were added to the church.

1891 saw the building of a new school house, made from brick and costing \$11,000.

1892 was the year a convent was built, the Felician Sisters arrived from Detroit to teach in the school.

In 1898, the current rectory, made of stone was built for \$6,000.

1901, the current church organ was purchased for \$1,500.

A second convent was built in 1910

1920 was the year the school expanded to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

1924 had 300 pupils enrolled in the school, also the Golden Jubilee of the parish was celebrated and the parish was free of all debt.

1936 the final convent was built and razed in 2002.

1937 the current Church was started for \$55,000.

1938 Easter Sunday, the first Mass was celebrated in the new church on April 17. Stained glass windows were installed for \$7,124.

1948 Bishop Hoban celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

1953 Four new classrooms, cafeteria and kitchen were added to the school.

1957 Volunteer parishioners laid the sidewalks on all parish property.

1958 Property on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street was purchased to expand parking and exit area.

1962 Garages were built behind the school.

1963 Basement under the current church was dug out, reconstructed for \$60,000 by the Albertan Club.

1964 Old school was demolished and new school was built.

1965 Bishop Isenmann dedicates the current school.

1970 Brick house next to the rectory was purchased.

1971 The first Parish Council was formed.

1974 The first Christ Renews His Parish weekend presented in the parish.

1975 Seminarians appointed to the church for field education and the parish celebrated it's first parish picnic at the County Fairgrounds.

1976 Baptismal Catechesis program begins,

July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend marked a prayer marathon for the USA Bicentennial,  
August, Sister Melanie Bajorek (daughter of the parish) makes final vows.

1977 Polish classes were provided after school hours, Carillon bells installed in church tower.

1978 Spiritual Life Commission was formed,

July marked the beginning of coffee and donuts after Mass for fellowship,  
Parking lot was expanded and paved.

1979 The parish newspaper, the All About Adalbert was re-established.

1980 The connecting lobby between the school and church was built.

1997 Pre school was added to the current school.

2002 Convent was torn down for construction of new hall.

2003 Keller hall was built behind the church with 7,000 square feet of multi purpose use.

2004 Old Cafeteria was reconstructed into the state-of-the-art computer lab and library.

**Roster of pastors:**

Fr. Victor Zareczny	1873 – 1884
Fr. Nicholas Kolasinski	1884 – 1889
Fr. Emmanuel J. Sowikowski	1889 – 1890
Fr. Benedict Rosinski	1890 – 1892
Fr. Feliks Motulewski	1892 – 1893
Rev. Dr. Tomasz Misicki	1893 – 1894
Fr. Andrew Suplicki	1894 – 1901
Fr. L. Kuzins	1901 – 1901
Rev. Dr. Paul Cwiakala	1901 – 1907
Fr. Francis Doppke	1907 – 1908
Fr. Hipolita Ortowski	1908 – 1911
Fr. Ignatius L. Piotrowski	1911 – 1931
Fr. Stanislaus Rogosz	1931
Fr. J. Szpanowski	1932
Fr. Francis Duda	1932 – 1939
Fr. John Solinski	1939 - 1967
Fr. Casimir Cudnik	1967 – 1969
Fr. Thaddeus Michalski	1970 – 1974
Fr. Gerald Keller	1974 – 2008
Fr. Barry Gearing	2008 – 2018
Fr. Charles Butkowski	2018 - present

**Parochial Vicars (Associate Pastors and weekend associates)**

Fr. M. Krajdzieski	1933 – 1938
Fr. Casimir Grabowski	1938 – 1941
Fr. Casimir R. Pilatowski	1941 – 1942
Fr. Casimir J. Sitko	1942 – 1945
Fr. Casimir Cudnik	1945 – 1949
Fr. John P. Kusiak	1949 – 1952
Fr. Walter Dobosz	1952 – 1956
Fr. Joseph F. Ciotek	1956 – 1957
Fr. Joseph Skrocki	1957 – 1958
Fr. Stanley Cymanski	1958 – 1963
Fr. Ralph Bodziony	1963 -1969
Fr. James Cassidy	1969 – 1970
Fr. Leo Telez	1970
Fr. Thomas Backman	1971 – 1973
Fr. Victorian Haladus	1973 – 1981
Fr. Jerome Machar	1975 – 1978
Fr. Joseph Spolny	1978 – 1983
Fr. Thomas Winkel	1987 – 1988
Fr. Robert Burge	1988 – 1990
Fr. Dale Staysniak	1990 – 1993
Fr. Louis Hudak OSB	1993
Fr. Michael Brunovsky OSB	1993 – present

**Permanent Deacons**

Deacon Donald Butkovick	1994 – 2006
Deacon Edmund Gardias	2008 – present

**Priests ordained from the parish:**

Fr. Joseph Kuta	June 6, 1903
Fr. P. M. Tymek	June 25, 1907
Fr. John Solinski	June 2, 1917
Fr. Thomas Murawski	September 14, 1918
Fr. Dominik Mielcarek	September 14, 1918
Fr. Ignacy Dembrowski	February 24, 1923
Fr. John Kandrak	June 24, 1924
Fr. Alphonse Konarski	June 2, 1928
Fr. Ron Bryda	December 17, 1966

Fr. Franz Neuzil MSST	1967
Fr. Christopher Zerucha	May 21, 2011
Fr. Cameron Popik	May 15, 2021