

Bradley Catholic community as a Mission Church to serve the needs of the area's English speaking people. Since Bradley was then (and still is) largely made up of working class people, Fr. Hackett chose St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers, as the name of this new Church Community.

Over the next several years, Fr. Hackett and his assistant, Fr. Matthew Hanley, as well as their successors, Fr. T. J. Whalen and Fr. John P. Aylward would offer Mass with the people at several different locations. The first site was Norris Ulmstead Hall, the Woodman Hall on Broadway Street. A home on Grand Avenue was also used for a brief period.

In 1904, Archbishop James Edward Quigley, of Chicago, raised St. Joseph Mission to the status of "a parish with a

In the late 1800's, the Kankakee area was a place of several different ethnic groups. There were French, French-Canadian, German, Polish, and Irish, each with their own "National Parish". In the year 1900, Father William Hackett, the pastor of St. Patrick Church in Kankakee, organized the resident priest". Fr. Joseph Avila Milot was the first pastor of this newly created parish of 136 families. Fr. Milot immediately moved the celebration of Mass from the hall on Broadway to a rented Baptist Church on Center Avenue. Two and a half years later, on January 20, 1907. the Rt. Rev. P. J. Muldoon dedicated St. Joseph's first permanent church building. Erected on Center Avenue, and now used as the south wing of St. Joseph School, the building was 85 feet long and 50 feet wide. It cost \$20,000 and at the time housed both the church and the rectory.

The brick facade, a belfry, and a brass bell were added some months later. That bell, named "James Edward Joseph", now sets in the courtyard between the church and school buildings. It is inscribed with its name and the names of the parish, first pastor, and village, and A.D. 1907. Although now silent, "Joseph" proudly recalls the founding of Bradley's first and only Catholic parish.

During the pastorate of Fr. Harris Darche (1923-37), St. Joseph Parish saw an explosion of parish organizations. Some of these are: the Daughters of Isabella, Darche Circle, bearing his name; the Holy Name Society, still in existence today; the C.Y.O., which in 1931 won the Chicago Archdiocesan baseball championship at Cubs Park in Chicago and also won several basketball championships; and the Young People's Club. The parish's annual "Fall Festival" owes its origins to Fr. Darche also. He first organized it as an annual "Homecoming Festival" to raise funds during the great depression.

The years after World War II were years of tremendous growth for Bradley and for St. Joseph Parish. From 1940 to 1957, the number of families grew from 400 to over 750. The then-current pastor, Fr. Raymond Berneau, undertook a massive renovation of the parish facilities. The present convent was built, and in its basement was located a parish hall. The church was also moved from the second floor to the first floor of today's school's south wing in order to better accommodate the elderly and funeral processions.

The history of the school is also owed in great part to the Dominican Sisters from Springfield, Illinois. In 1924, Sister Mary Dionysius, Sister Mary Leonarda, and Sister Joseph Marie were the first faculty of the school. From then until 1955, the Sisters' numbers rose from three to ten. Today, the convent has five Sisters - four Springfield Dominicans and one Joliet Franciscan. Three of the Sisters work in St. Joseph School and one heads the Religious Education program for the parish's adults and public school students.