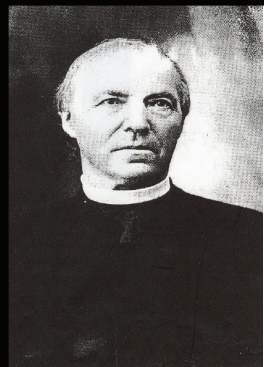


Noteworthy Highlights on Assumption Grotto's Pastors



Our First Pastor, 1852– January 2, 1892 Reverend Amandus Vandendriessche Mission Priest

In the 1860s Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere requested that Fr. Van begin the mission at the Junction later know as Roseville (Sacred Heart Parish). Daniel Corby and his wife Margaret contributed 3 acres of land for Sacred Heart Church and Cemetery. Many families in that mission were parishioners of Assumption Parish. On June 16, 1865 Bishop Lefevere dedicated the church of the Sacred Heart. Fr. Van was a builder and was instrumental in bringing their early wooden church into being. Fr. Van had charge of this mission until its first resident pastor was appointed in 1873.

He also visited periodically the village of Utica where forty Catholic families, mostly Irish, were living. A church site was purchased in June of 1866 and the church was dedicated to St. Lawrence on August 16, 1874. Ten days later, on the evening of August 26, Fr. Van would arrive at the French Settlement of Pinnebog to open a mission the same night. Three days later he opened another mission at St. Michael's Chapel in Port Austin. This mission was the first ever given in this wooded region and was met with great enthusiasm. Among the faithful attending the mission was a venerable patriarch, Mr. Belhumer, over 100 years of age, tall and straight, who came every day 2 ½ miles on foot to the church. In August of 1867 Bishop Lefevere gave Fr. Van an assistant, Fr. William Hendrix, who had just arrived from the Netherlands. In September of 1868 Fr. Hendrix became pastor of St. Clement in Centerline and later would become the first pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows in Detroit where Fr. Van came to perform one marriage in April of 1887. **Silas Farmer History of Detroit and Wayne County 1890 V volume II**

Author

Detroit News Tribune article dated Sunday July 1, 1900 Interview of Fr. Vandendriessche on his new book titled " Fr. Van's Progressive Dictionary of Versification " The book was the fruit of his work during his retirement years and was published a year before his death. The last burden in the life of the Detroit Priest now 75 years old. He does not expect to live much longer and the doctors have declared that soon he must write the word "Finis" taking leave of proof sheets and correcting forever... "Father Van's sick days predominates. Now he lives all huddled in a chair, he sits where through the rear room, he may see on the wall a lithograph in colors of the Grotto at Connor's Creek, where he was stationed for many years" **Note:** A copy of the same Lithograph can be seen in the Archive display. Fr. Van told the reporter: "I think I do not err in stating that English is now spoken by at least half the world. In time I foresee it will become the universal language. Already it is crowding itself in to the courts of Europe. **Grotto Archives Ch155e-1900**

Note: A copy of Fr. Van's published book was recently located and donated to the Grotto Archives by Vincent Rengers.

Death of a well known priest occurred Saturday

This Michigan Catholic article stated that Fr. Vandendriessche was a kind and loveable old man, generous to the last degree; in fact almost all of his fortune was given away or loaned to people without security. His death on November 23, 1901, was preceded two days by that of his old housekeeper, Teresa Neumann, who died of apoplexy. She had been a member of his household for more than seventeen years. There is a short paragraph inserted at the end of this article announcing the funeral of Teresa Neumann, which was held from Sacred Heart Church Monday morning and was attended by many friends of the deceased. Both were both buried in the Grotto Cemetery. **Grotto Archives: Ch157c-1901 Michigan Catholic Article, November 1901**



Our Second Pastor, Reverend Rudolph Marker January 2, 1892 – January 3, 1894

Bishop John S. Foley appointed Fr. Marker to replace Fr. Van at the Church of the Assumption. Before coming to Assumption Grotto he served at Ruth and at Paw Paw. Upon his arrival, Fr. Marker caused some ill feelings between himself and Fr. Van by burning all the refuse in the buildings and on the grounds. The older priest was upset to see the things which he had saved go up in smoke. Because of clashes from personality differences and problems straightening out financial matters, Fr. Van elected to move to his own residence rather than to remain at Assumption Grotto as Pastor Emeritus. Fr. Marker's assignment at Grotto was only from January 2, 1892 to January 3, 1894. During his pastorate he kept up the devotion to the shrine of the Virgin inaugurated by Father Van and made improvements and repairs on the church buildings and the grounds. He left to become pastor at the church of the Sacred Heart in Dearborn, where he served for the next twenty two years.

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Rev. Father Marker, for many years pastor of the church of the Sacred Heart, Dearborn, Michigan was the third priest to be called by death within a week. The deceased clergyman was returning from the funeral of Fr. Wermers and was seized with his last illness at the corner of Congress Street and Woodward Ave., Tuesday, as he was about to take an interurban car for his home. He was at once taken to the city hospital where he died a few minutes later. Rev. Walter Mooron, Chancellor of the Detroit diocese and Rev. Father Herbert of St. Mary's were summoned and arrived at the hospital before he died. Father Marker was born in Detroit on December 25, 1848, and would have been 67 years old next Christmas. He was the son of Mr. & Mrs. John Marker, who came to Detroit among the pioneers of the great German immigration. In 1854 the family moved to Wayne, where they lived for nearly twenty years. Father Marker entered rather later than usual upon his studies for the priesthood. He entered first at St. Mary's of the west, Cincinnati, and later studied from 1876 to 1880 at Assumption College. He was ordained a priest by Bishop Borgess, and with him were ordained Dean McManus of Port Huron; Father Matthew Meathe of St. Leo's and Father Luke Renaud, C.S.B. of St. Anne of Detroit. His life in the ministry was the quiet life of the rural pastor. He served at Ruth, Paw Paw, and at the Grotto Church of the Assumption, at Connor's Creek, whose latest pastor, Father James Ronayne, was buried the day before the funeral of Fr. Wermers. Rev. Marker was always remarkable for his cheerfulness and neighborliness and his love of children.

(Taken from Fr. Reilly's Notes, a transcription of a memorial for Fr. Marker. It is not known at this time the paper this was printed in. From the contents we assume the Michigan Catholic.) ---**Grotto Archives #161j-1915**