

Landmark 25 Years

# Our Lady of Lourdes Celebrates Anniversaries

The twenty-fifth anniversaries of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic church at Fifth Ward and the ordination of its pastor, Rev. Irenee Charles Dekeukelaere, C.I.C.M., will be celebrated jointly tomorrow by the congregation.

A mass of thanksgiving will be offered at 5 p.m. to commemorate both events with Rt. Rev. Msgr. A. M. Chenevert, dean and pastor of Marksville, presiding.

Rev. Dekeukelaere, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes since 1955, was born in Belgium

and attended St. Vincent's Junior College at Eeklo. After graduating at the beginning of World War II, he joined the order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Fathers to become a missionary priest. At the mission society in Scheut-Brussels, he studied theology and philosophy and finished his theological work in Lauvain in 1948.

He was ordained a priest in that year by Most Rev. Leon DeSmedt, bishop of Si-wan-Tse, China, who became a martyr in 1953. In the same year as his ordination, he came to America and began studies at the Catholic Uni-

versity in Washington.

For a time he served at Don Bosco's home in Cottonport before becoming assistant pastor in Hessmer where he worked until 1953. He was then transferred to DeSoto Parish to be co-pastor of St. Joseph's church in Mansfield. Included in his duties was the care of the mission churches of Rambin, Carmel, Frierson and another small church set in the woods.

Under his guidance, the present church in Rambin was constructed after the old one was destroyed by fire and the mission churches were repaired and supplied with vestments and other materials they lacked.

In March of 1955, he became pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes which also included the missions of Moncla and Effie.

Our Lady of Lourdes parish had been started in 1948 with Rev. John L. Jansen, C.I.C.M., as pastor and Rev. Henry Beckers as his assistant. Prior to this the small church built in 1925 had been a mission attached to St. Francis de Sales church in Echo.

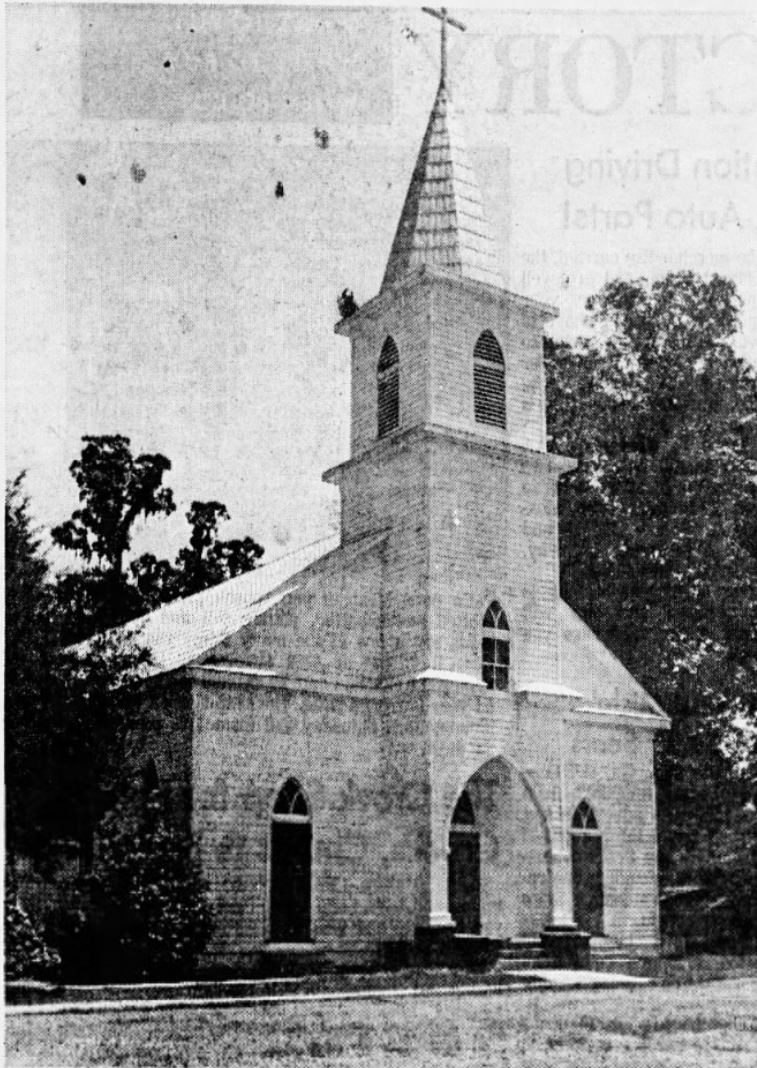
Rev. Jansen served until 1955 and was followed by Rev. Wilfred Passchijn, C.I.C.M. for a short time, until Rev. Dekeukelaere succeeded him.

In 1959, a new rectory was completed to replace the old one which was a renovated army barrack. The new church, designed by archi-

tecs, Barron-Heinberg & Brocato and contracted by James E. Eiland, was finished in 1969 and dedicated by Bishop Charles P. Greco in July. It is a modern structure with the updated use of clear glass which allows a view of the surrounding oak trees laden with Spanish moss.

St. John the Baptist church at Moncla, since being a part of Our Lady of Lourdes parish, has been remodeled, refurbished and air conditioned as has St. Winnifred church at Effie.

In its celebration, the parish also will recognize Mrs. S. L. Boucher, who has served the parish for the past 24 years.



Our Lady of Lourdes church at Fifth Ward celebrates its 25th anniversary as a parish and the similar anniversary of its pastor,

Rev. Charles Dekeukelaere. The new church shown above was completed in 1969. (Town Talk Staff Photo).