

11 Graduate in Last Class At Sts. Peter, Paul School

By FRANK J. KITCH
Palmer Bureau Chief

PALMER — Eleven boys and girls make up the final graduation class of Sts. Peter and Paul Grammar School, Three Rivers, built 62 years ago and the last parochial school still operating in the area.

Will Give Diplomas

Diplomas will be awarded and a congratulatory-farewell message given this morning by the Rev. Robert Czekowski, pastor, during the first commencement Mass celebrated in the parish church in nearly 25 years.

Graduation exercises customarily are conducted in the school's tiny auditorium. The change to a graduation Mass was requested by the three remaining teaching nuns of the Order of Franciscan Sisters and by parents.

Some graduates' parents today will be able to recall their own "good old school days" spent in the eight-room schoolhouse beside the church.

"After the school closes," Fr. Czekowski said, "a program of renovating the building will be taken over by the parish's growing confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes."

Three Teachers

Three nuns taught 69 pupils in five grades this year.

Sr. Cecilia, in secular life, Cecilia Nadolski of Westfield, has been at the school eight years and a teaching nun for 25 years. She has been reassigned to Mater Dolorosa School in Holyoke, as has Sr. Mary Jane, in secular life Mary Jane Vidnansky of Bridgeport, Conn.

Sr. Edna Marie, in secular life Edna Marie Pelczar of Lawrence, has been transferred to St. Michael's.

For many years, Sts. Peter and Paul had as many as 10 teaching nuns living in the local convent. Three years ago the parish was warned that a shortage of teaching sisters might jeopardize the school's existence.

Grades Dropped


The school was forced first to discontinue Grade One. This past year, Grades Two and Three were dropped, leaving five grades for the three nuns to teach.

St. Ann's School in Three Rivers was forced to close two years ago. It had been in existence for 84 years.

Next September, the 19 seniors graduating from Sts. Peter and Paul will be in Palmer High School's freshman class. Sixteen other pupils will enter eighth grade, six enter seventh grade, 13 enter sixth, 10 enter fifth and five enter fourth grades at the public school system.

Sts. Peter and Paul School was built in 1921 at a cost of \$75,000. It opened to classes in September that year.

Its first eighth grade class of 11 boys and 10 girls graduated in 1923, 50 years ago.

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Springfield, Mass., June 17, 1973



Fifty years later, the school's final graduates of 1973 are: back row, from left, Edward Wojtowicz, Thaddeus Kszepka, Stanley Sekula, John Gladkowski, Michael Gancarz, Mark Schultz, Kenneth Kozlik and James Brozek. Middle row: Sr. Mary Jane, Christine Smola, David Burns, Philip Maslon, Principal Sr. Cecilia, Scott Gralinski, Louise Kszepka and Sr. Edna Marie; and front row, Denise Dusseault, Janet Zajac, Carolyn Ziemienski, the Rev. Robert Czekowski, pastor, Kathy Swiatlowski, Arlene Guzik, and Maryann Wostena.