

St. Michael Parish A Brief History

1909 On July 4th, Bishop Muldoon, D.D. of Rockford, blessed the now completed church. Fr. Lucaciu's work here was completed and he went on to other missionary work. Rev. Fr. Ioan Pop, newly arrived from Romania, was named as the new pastor. ■

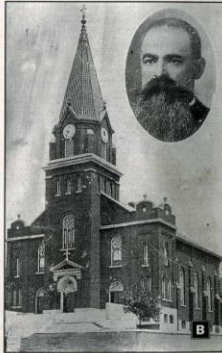
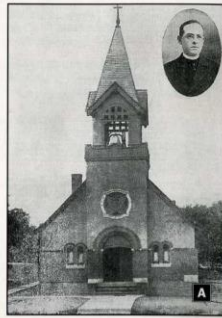
1915 Aurora's Romanian population grew quite rapidly and it became apparent that the first church was too small. A new and larger church was built on the site of the old church. The old church was then moved to the north end of the parish grounds and converted into a school. ■

1916 Plans and contracts were worked out and construction started on the new St. Michael Church. ■

1917 The contract payment was completed (\$2,475) as previously agreed upon. Land for our cemetery was purchased for the sum of \$2,500. Eight years after dedicating the first church, Bishop Muldoon, D.D. of Rockford once again blessed and dedicated a new beautiful St. Michael Church. ■

1919 Rev. Fr. Ioan Pop, pastor of St. Michael Church, died on October 23. He was succeeded by Rev. Fr. Aurel Bungarlean from May 1919 through the spring of 1920. Rev. Fr. Aurel Hategan succeeded Fr. Bungarlean. ■

1920 On September 12, Rev. Fr. Leon Manu, who arrived from Romania, succeeded Fr. Hategan. ■



1921 A fire in the church to basement caused much smoke damage which required the entire church to be repainted. The Romanian Athletic Club (R.A.C.) was founded. Baseball and football teams used Romanian to call their plays. ■



1924 A home for the school sisters was purchased next to the church, facing Pierce Street, at the cost of \$8,000. ■

1925 The Romanian Red Rose band was organized. Basketball caught on with the teams of Junior to and Senior High School age including a girl's team! School population reached almost 300 pupils taught by seven nuns. Organizations such as the St. Mary's Sodality and the Young People's Club were founded. ■

1927 Rev. Leon Manu went to Romania and returned with Rev. Fr. Liviu Fogas. Fr. Fogas stayed briefly and moved then the Detroit. ■



1928 The first St. Michael eighth grade class of eighteen students graduated on June 12, 1928. Rev. Fr. Basil Marchis was ordained in Romania. Rev. Fr. John Vuc arrived as the new associate to Fr. Manu. ■

1929 Louis Puscas, a member of this year's graduation class, was ordained a priest in 1942, and was named in 1983 as the first Bishop of the Romanian Catholic parishes in the United States. In the same class was soon-to-be Sister Stella Kuk, OSF. ■



1930 During these difficult depression years, St. Michael Parish endured many hardships. Rev. Fr. Manu returned to Romania. Rev. Fr. John Vuc was then named as Administrator in 1930 and served until 1932, when the parish community suffered a tragic division. Bishop Hoban of Rockford then appointed Rev. Fr. Joseph Rzeszotko, a Latin Rite priest, as Administrator in 1933. He served until Rev. Fr. Basil Marchis assumed his duties as Pastor on June 18, 1935. ■

1936 Many necessary improvements and repairs to the church and school took place. 3-1/4 acres were added to the cemetery where a large, ornate metal cross, donated by St. Nicholas Parish, Aurora, was installed. Damaged in later years and unrepaired, it was replaced by a simple redwood cross. Parishioners, as was so often the case, provided their energies and funds for the cemetery fencing. ■

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1941 Rev. Fr. Basil Marchis, an Honorary Dean of Maramures, was designated a Papal Chamberlain by Pope Pius XII and granted the title of Monsignor. ■

1942 Rev. Fr. Louis Puscas was ordained a priest by Bishop Basil Takach in Pittsburgh on May 14, and returned to St. Michael Parish to serve the Divine Liturgy for his first time on May 17. ■

1944 Rev. Fr. John Filip was ordained in Rome. ■

1946 In preparation for the Thirtieth Anniversary of the new church, the interior was cleaned and repainted, the convent underwent major repairs, the parish home was refurnished, and the school repaired. ■



1947 Our parish had the honor of being visited by His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Prefect of the Sacred Oriental Congregation and Dean of the College of Cardinals. It was the first time a European cardinal had visited the Diocese of Rockford. The parish continued to improve their campus. ■

1948 The succeeding years did not find Msgr. Marchis and the parishioners of St. Michael inactive. On the contrary, continuing their zeal and sacrifices, extensive repairs to the church were made. A new tile roof was installed and the bells and steeple clock were electrified. ■

1952 The church's debt of \$72,000 was paid off. ■

1955 Msgr. Marchis was conferred by Pope Pius XII to Domestic Prelate with the title of Rt. Rev. Monsignor. ■

1956 Rev. Fr. John Popa arrived as Rt. Rev. Msgr. Marchis' new associate. ■

1957 Major interior remodeling was undertaken: painting, flooring, pews refurbished, electrical work, and marble trim was installed. ■

1958 Msgr. Marchis celebrated 30 years as a priest. St. Michael Parish celebrated its Golden Anniversary. ■

1961 Construction of the present rectory got underway and was completed in 1963. ■

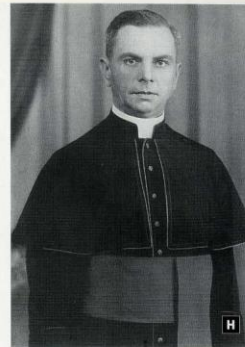
1963 St. Michael School had its last graduation class and the school closed. ■

1966 A small group of family and parishioners, joined by Msgr. Marchis and Bishop Cristea went to Rome where Deacon William G. Popp was ordained as a priest in October. Rev. Fr. William Popp was appointed as associate to Msgr. Marchis in January 1967 and served until August 1967. ■

1973 Msgr. Marchis represented the Romanian Byzantine Catholics at the International Eucharistic Congress held in Melbourne, Australia. Fr. Vuc, pastor of St. George, Aurora, died in November. ■

1975 Rev. Deacon John Buga was ordained to the diaconate in May. ■

1977 Msgr. Marchis retired after 42 years as St. Michael's pastor. Rev. Fr. John Filip was appointed as his successor in September 1977. ■



1980 Msgr. Marchis died March 5 at age 87 and laid to rest in St. Michael Cemetery.

1982 Sister Stella Kuk celebrated 50 years as a nun and had a special reception in her honor.

1983 Pope John Paul II elevated Rev. Fr. Puscas to the title of Apostolic Ecarch. He became the first Bishop for the Romanian Catholics of Byzantine Rite in the United States. Bishop Louis was consecrated June 26 at St. John the Baptist Church in Detroit and installed as Bishop of Canton, Ohio. St. Michael Parish held its 75th anniversary celebration during this year. ■

1984 Rev. Fr. John Filip entered retirement. Rev. Fr. Mircea Boac was assigned to replace him.

1986 The interior and exterior of the church were repainted, the exterior tuck pointed, and the school building was demolished. Rev. Fr. John Michael Botean was ordained May 18, and on August 3 was installed as parish administrator by Bishop Louis Puscas. Fr. Botean served the parish until 1990, when Bishop Louis requested him to come to Canton where he served as Pastor.

1987 The current Men's Club was founded.

1988 In November, St. Michael Parish celebrated its 80th Anniversary.

1990 In September, Rev. Fr. Michael Moisin was appointed Administrator. Rev. Fr. Teodor Cornea arrived from Romania and was appointed Assistant Administrator on October 19.

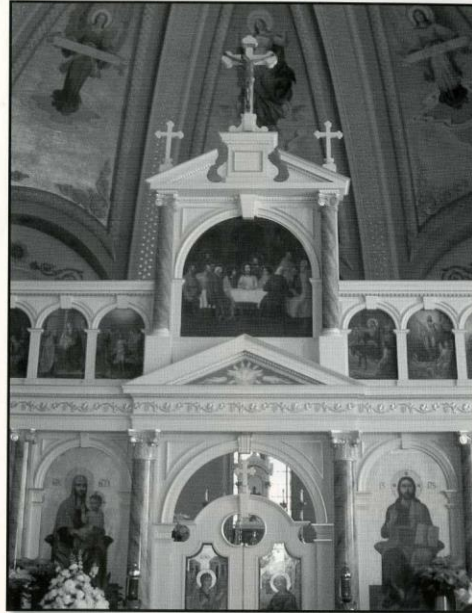
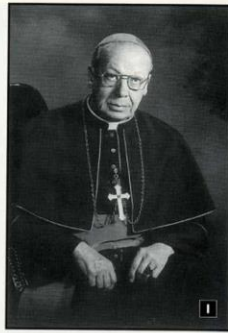
1992 Rev. Fr. Teodor Cornea was appointed Administrator and served the parish until he died February 20, 1995. He had been ordained June 26, 1947.

1995 Rev. Fr. Michael Moisin was once again assigned to St. Michael Parish as Administrator, and served until he was then granted a leave of absence to further his studies.

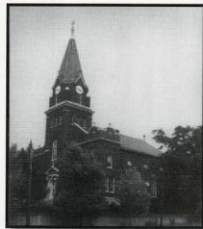
1996 Most Rev. Louis Puscas, Bishop Emeritus, who had retired, was called upon in September to be interim pastor.

1998 Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Opris was appointed by Bishop John Michael Botean as Parochial Vicar from January through September.

1998 December 1st, Rev. Fr. Aurel Pater was assigned as pastor and as proto-presbyter.



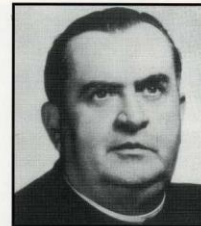
After completing their religious training as priests, two members of this church were later ordained as Bishops: Most Rev. Bishop Louis Puscas, Emeritus and Most Rev. Bishop Dr. Nathaniel Popp. After serving as a former pastor, Rev. Fr. John M. Botean, was later ordained as Most Rev. Bishop John Michael Botean.



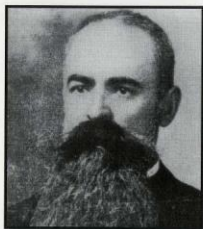
Rev. Fr. Epaminonda Lucaciu



Rev. Fr. Liviu Fogas



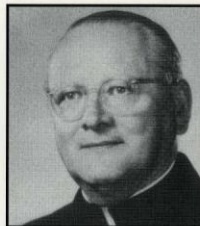
Rev. Fr. John Vuc



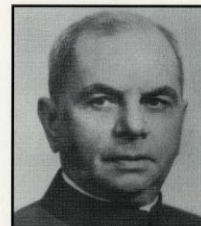
Rev. Fr. Ioan Pop



Rev. Fr. Aurel Bungardean



Rev. Fr. Joseph Rzesotko



Msgr. Basil Marchis



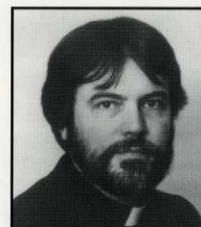
Rev. Fr. Aurel Hategan



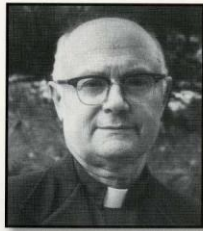
Rev. Fr. Leon Manu



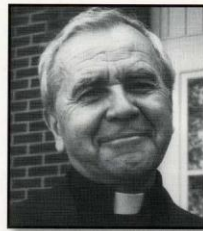
Rev. Fr. John Popa



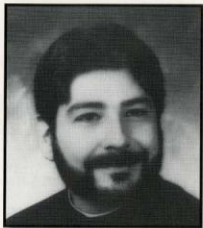
Rev. Fr. William Popp



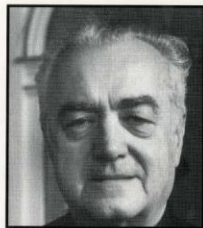
Rev. Fr. John Filip



Rev. Fr. Mircea Boac



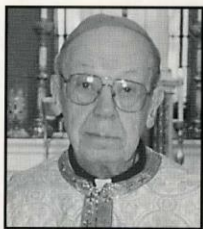
Rev. Fr. John Michael Botean



Rev. Fr. Teodor Cornea



Rev. Fr. Michael Moisin



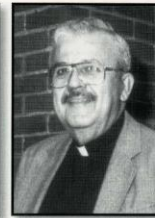
Most Rev. Louis Puscas



Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Opris



Rev. Fr. Aurel Pater



Rev. Deacon John Buga



Sr. M. Floru, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Gela, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Eudemia, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Imolita, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Leon, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Medelpha, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Rudolph, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Zelata, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Doris, O.S.F.



Sr. M. Libina, O.S.F.



Margaret Marie, O.P.



Sr. M. Ruell, S.Sp.S.