

REVEREND CHARLES ROLFES

The first Pastor assigned to St. Philip Parish was a young priest by the name of Fr. Charles Rolfes. He was a very sincere person, and well liked by the parish people. The early trustees were in charge of managing the money in those days, and had set a date for a fund-raising picnic. Before the date of the picnic arrived, Father Rolfes asked them to have a special meeting of the trustees, but did not give them a reason until the day of the meeting. His salary at this time was a mere \$600.00 per year. From this \$600.00 he had to pay his rent. (There was no parish house at that time.) He also had to rent a stable for his horse, buy hay and grain for the horse, as well as his own food, etc. At this meeting he asked the trustees to advance some of his pay so that he would have money to spend at the coming picnic. His spirit exemplified the generosity so important in those formative years.

REVEREND RAYMOND WECKEL

Before coming to Melbourne, Father Weckel was connected with the Marquette diocese. The severe northern climate forced him on farther south. At that time he was about forty years old. He was equal to the task that confronted him. He at once planned the building of a rectory at the cost of \$3,500. In August, 1912 it was ready for his occupancy. Then followed long and hard years, as he writes himself, until January 1, 1918 when the heavy debt that rested on the infant church was wiped out. In the meantime the membership of the parish had grown to sixty families with sixty-four children attending school regularly. This required more room in the church and necessitated doing away with the school in the rear part of the church. Father Weckel was evidently an energetic character and a man of action. A new school and a home for the teaching Sisters was a necessity. Building prices had now gone up considerably. A temporary structure would not do; it must be an up to date building, large enough for the fast growing parish. Although he met with some opposition, he induced his people to put up a massive brick building with a concrete basement, two stories high and having four large class rooms. One of these was fitted up as living quarters for the Sisters and two rooms were for the present used for school purposes. The cost was the princely sum of \$18,000.00. On April 7, 1922 the contract was let to Joseph Wilbers and Son of Covington, Ky., and work was begun after Easter.

In June the partition in the church between church and school was removed and on Sunday June 25, the whole building was used the first time for church purposes. Sunday, September 3, the new school was solemnly dedicated by the Very Reverend Dean Mathias Leick, who also gave an eloquent discourse on Christian education on this occasion.

September 6 the school opened with an enrollment of sixty-eight children and the Sisters moved into their new home. For thirteen years they had been going to and fro from their Motherhouse. After this Father Weckel became afflicted with a serious and painful illness but he faithfully kept up his arduous duties. In the summer of 1924 he went to his home in Alsace Lorraine but received no benefit from his trip as regards to his health. Father G. H. Geisen had charge of the parish during his enforced absence.

On Palm Sunday of 1925 Father Weckel officiated the last time. Then he had to spend the few remaining days of his life in his room, passing away on Wednesday after Easter, April 15. Thus ended a most fruitful life. He had put St. Philip's Parish in good condition, both spiritually and financially. He lived long enough to finish his work. With the Divine Master he could say: "It is finished," and then go to his eternal reward for his faithful service. He has earned for himself the gratitude of his people for all time to come. May he rest in peace. At his death Father Weckel was only fifty-four years old. His remains rest in the cemetery of the Sisters of Divine Providence near by.

The principle dates of his life:

Ordained, June 29, 1896;

Pastor of Melbourne, November 1, 1911

Died, April 15, at 5:30 A.M., 1925.

Father F. B. Donnelly attended the parish until the appointment of a new pastor, Father Charles P. Diemer, who took charge of the parish, July 1, 1925. The parish then numbered 90 families with 75 children in the school.