

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE ANTECEDENTS OF ST. IGNATIUS COLLEGE, CHICAGO

§ I. EARLY JESUIT VISITORS

Nowhere among the great cities of the United States does the Society of Jesus strike deeper historical roots than in Chicago. It made entry into the city or what was to become such with the Jolliet-Marquette expedition of 1673. In December of the following year Father Marquette returned to the locality, where he resided until the spring of 1675.¹ Some twenty years later than Marquette's historic wintering on the banks of the Chicago River the site of the future metropolis was marked by a Jesuit Indian mission, named for the Guardian Angel, the first attempt to make of the locality a centre of cultural and religious influence.² This missionary venture passed into history about 1702 and with its passing all contact of the Society of Jesus with the Chicago terrain ceased for well-nigh a hundred and fifty years except for the passage at intervals of one of its devoted missionaries along the

¹ Garraghan, *The Catholic Church in Chicago*, pp. 3-10, *idem*, *Chapters in Frontier History* (Milwaukee, 1934), pp. 30-32. Marquette's wintering-place in Chicago, December 14, 1674, to March 30, 1675, was located, 1907, by the Chicago Historical Society on the north bank of the west fork of the south branch of the Chicago River at the point where Robey Street (since 1928 Damen Avenue) meets the river. This point, marked, October 1930, by a splendid stone memorial erected by the city of Chicago, was within the original limits of the Holy Family parish. Robert W. Knight, M. W. S. E., joint author with Lucius H. Zeuch, M. D., of *The Location of the Chicago Portage Route of the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago, 1928), has located (1930) the wintering-place further down the river at Lincoln Street, which would still be in the original territory of the Holy Family parish.

² Garraghan, *Catholic Church in Chicago*, pp. 13-21, M. M. Quaipe, *Chicago and the Old Northwest, 1673-1835* (Chicago, 1913). Quaipe places the mission in or near the "loop-district." "From every point of view the study of St. Cosme's letter leads to the conclusion that the Mission of the Guardian Angel was on the Chicago River at some point between the forks and the mouth" (p. 42). Cf. also Garraghan, *Chapters in Frontier History*, pp. 38-41. For the subsequent history of Father Pinet, Chicago's first resident pastor, and the particulars attending the circumstances of his death in 1702 at the Jesuit mission on the site of St. Louis, Mo., cf. Garraghan, "New Light on Old Cahokia," *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, 11: 99 *et seq.*

portage trail that linked the valley of the Mississippi with the region of the Great Lakes.

The evolution within a century of modern Chicago from a Potawatomi Indian village into a vast seething centre of human life belongs to the amazing things of history. In 1823, the year in which the first middlewestern Jesuits reached St. Louis, then a fast-growing town with a population of five thousand, Chicago was described in a contemporary gazetteer as "a village in Pike County containing 12 or 15 houses and about 60 or 70 inhabitants." Today, with its population overtopping the three-million mark, it ranks the second largest city on the American continent and the fourth, probably third among the cities of the globe. Quite as phenomenal as the material growth of Chicago has been its religious growth as indicated by the development of the Catholic Church within its limits. The first resident Catholic priest in modern Chicago, the Reverend Irenaeus St. Cyr, came as late as 1833, having been sent by Bishop Rosati of St. Louis in answer to a petition from the Catholics of the northern town, who described themselves as a group of one hundred and twenty-two souls without church or pastor. That same year, 1833, saw the first incorporation of Chicago as a town. Ten years later, 1843, the state of Illinois was erected by the Holy See into a diocese with the episcopal see at Chicago. When the first bishop, the Right Reverend William Quarter, arrived on the scene, May 5, 1844, he found that the chief city of his diocese contained but a single church with two attendant priests. Today, after the lapse of nine decades, it counts over two hundred and thirty Catholic churches while the clergymen serving them number at least five hundred. Bishop Quarter's administration of the diocese of Chicago lasted only four years. The stream of his health and apostolic energy was flowing at full tide when death suddenly claimed him, April 9, 1848, at the early age of forty-two. The first year of his residence in Chicago had seen him engaged in correspondence with the Jesuits of St. Louis with a view to securing their services for the state capital, Springfield. He wrote September 18, 1844, to Father George Carrell, president of St. Louis University.

I feel much uneasy about the condition of a large portion of the Southern part of this diocese, being so naked of priests. Before I arrived here and whilst in New York the Rev. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Owings wrote to me stating that the Jesuits would take charge of Springfield, if I gave my consent. Now there is no religious order I'd rather see established in this diocese, for there is no other, I believe, capable thro' their members of doing more good for religion. Now I take leave to request of you to signify to your Superior that I am not only willing but would desire to give your Order that place, and the missions attached in charge. My dear friend, you know already

the deep regard I have for you and the unbounded confidence I always placed in your excellent judgement I leave you then to arrange the affair as you may think best

The mission of Springfield could not be undertaken by the Jesuits for lack of men, that perennial check on apostolic good will and zeal. On October 18 Bishop Quarter wrote again to Carrell "I regret you could not extend your very useful Society. Maybe before long you will be able to do so. And be assured that no one will rejoice more to see the Society of Jesus extending its branches over the West than your humble servant."³

The first Jesuit to visit modern Chicago appears to have been Father James Oliver Van de Velde, who spent a few days there in June, 1846, while on his way to St. Louis from the Second Council of Baltimore. Three years later he returned to Chicago as Bishop Quarter's successor. The earliest recorded exercise of the sacred ministry in the same city by a Jesuit priest took place in April, 1847, when Father Francis Di Maria, professor of theology in St. Louis University, conducted a spiritual retreat for the clergy of the Chicago diocese. The exercises of the retreat were held in the "Chapel of the Holy Name of Jesus" attached to the University of St. Mary of the Lake. Di Maria, who was an excellent classical scholar, composed a Latin inscription commemorating the event and recording the praise of Bishop Quarter for having successfully convened his first diocesan synod.⁴

Under Bishop Van de Velde the Jesuits of St. Louis were sometimes heard in the pulpits of the city, especially during Holy and Easter weeks. Father Di Maria officiated at the Holy Week services of 1850 in St. Mary's Cathedral, Father Verhaegen at those of 1851 and Father Gleizal at those of 1853. On Palm Sunday night, 1851, Verhaegen opened a three days' mission at St. Mary's Cathedral with an introductory discourse on "the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius," preaching, besides, at the Vesper services on Easter Sunday. On May 2 of the same year he opened at the University of St. Mary of the Lake a retreat for the clergy of the diocese, at which Bishop Van de Velde with forty-one of his priests were present. While Verhaegen was thus engaged with the clergy, his fellow-Jesuit, Francis Xavier Weninger, then entering on a missionary career that was to make his name a household word among the German Catholics of the United States, was

³ Quarter to Carrell, September 18, October 18, 1844. (A)

⁴ Quarter's diary in [McGovern], *Catholic Church in Chicago*, pp. 78, 82. This work, published anonymously on the occasion of Archbishop Feehan's jubilee as bishop in 1890, also reproduces *in integro* Van de Velde's diary kept by him during his tenure of the Chicago see

preaching a mission to the congregation of St. Joseph on the North Side.⁵ During Holy Week, 1853, Father John Gleizal, master of novices at Florissant, conducted a mission at the cathedral Under date of March 23 of that year Bishop Van de Velde notes in his diary "Easter Sunday, General Communion of men Solemn Pontifical Mass Sermon by Reverend Father Gleizal In the evening grand illumination of the Sanctuary in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary Consecration of the Catholics of the city to the Blessed Virgin after the sermon by Father Gleizal Immense concourse of people Several Protestants admitted into the church by conditional baptism before Vespers." Another entry "[March] 28 Permission obtained to keep Father Gleizal and continue the exercises for one week longer Instructions continued "

The unexpected turn given to the fortunes of the European Jesuits by the revolution of 1848 brought Bishop Van de Velde into communication with Father Minoux, provincial of the Jesuits of upper Germany and Switzerland⁶ When Minoux saw his communities dispersed in the track of the revolutionary storm, he dispatched the seminarians with their professors to America with a view to opening a house of studies in Milwaukee or Chicago The plan could not be realized, but the exiled seminarians found a home, some at Georgetown, and some at St. Louis University Bishop Van de Velde, seeing the German Catholics of Chicago destitute of pastors of their own nationality and language, petitioned Minoux to send ten or twelve of his priests to Chicago They were to come at their own expense, but the Bishop felt confident that once in his diocese they would be amply cared for by the congregations under their charge As to a college in Chicago, they were not to think of such a project for the Bishop was utterly without means to help them In April, 1849, Minoux expressed to Van de Velde the hope that perhaps one or two of the fathers of his jurisdiction might be assigned to Chicago, but the hope was never realized and at no time did the members of the dispersed province of upper Germany and Switzerland take up the exercise of the sacred ministry in the chief city of Illinois. Nor were the St. Louis Jesuits yet in a position to estab-

⁵ In 1853 Weninger preached missions to the two German-speaking congregations of St. Peter's and St. Michael's In 1856 he conducted a mission in St. Michael's church on North Avenue, on which occasion he gave the decisive impulse to the erection of a new and spacious church of brick, built only to be destroyed in the great fire of 1871 During his 1853 mission at St. Peter's on Washington Street he led the congregation in procession through the streets of the city to the cemetery on the North Side, the while they recited the rosary, a thing which the good Father long years after declared to be "now quite impossible on account of the crowds that throng the down-town district "

⁶ Cf. *supra*, Chap. XVI, § 4

Chicago, Illinois.

October 2, 1856.

To Rev^d Father Damen

The University

St. Louis.

Dear Father Damen

I received your very kind letter, and feel as ever most grateful to you for your kind interest for the advancement of Religion in this diocese.

I feel, most fully, & fervently, the truth of all you say, and I sad to say, I know, I feel not do a better work for Religion, for the diocese, or for my own soul, than by establishing, here, a House of your Society, and this is the very reason, I have been so very anxious to effect this, & was, on the subject is also from my personal regard and affection for your

Institute, and for many of your letters, undoubtedly, that I feel strongly, and so fervently, believe to be the good work we ought to do.

* * * * *

With kindest regards, for Father Drah and all friends. I am, by dear Father

Very sincerely yours
Anthony
Bp of Chicago.

A letter by Bishop O'Regan of Chicago to Father Damen, S J, inviting him to establish a Jesuit house in that city Archives of the Missouri Province, S J, St Louis

lish a house in Chicago though Bishop Van de Velde would gladly have seen them permanently settled in his diocese. In 1850 he made overtures to Father Elet, vice-provincial of Missouri, for the opening of a Jesuit college in Chicago, and also corresponded on the subject with Father Roothaan, but Elet and his advisers deemed the project utterly impracticable in the existing straitened circumstances of the vice-province.⁷

§ 2 BISHOP O'REGAN'S INVITATION

Bishop O'Regan, Chicago's third bishop, had made acquaintance with the St. Louis Jesuits during the years that he presided over the St. Louis diocesan seminary at Carondelet. From Chicago he endeavored to secure their services in some permanent form for his diocese. In February, 1856, Father Gleizal, to whose enlightened zeal was due in considerable measure the opening of the Milwaukee residence, was urging upon Father Beckx that a similar venture be made in Chicago. "The Bishop of Chicago, most devoted to our Society, and a lover, almost a worshipper of all our people, has over and over again begged Rev. Father Provincial for some of our Fathers in order to open a Residence in his city, the inhabitants of which multiply so rapidly that they now number more than 100,000." Two fathers, so Gleizal thought, could be spared for the undertaking.⁸ Almost at the same time Father De Smet was informing a correspondent in California "Bishop O'Regan offers us his college with two churches. But where are the men?"⁹ Lack of men was indeed the barrier that stood between the St. Louis Jesuits and the numerous enterprises of charity and zeal for which their services were now being sought in many quarters. With a staff of only seventy priests, they were conducting colleges in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Bardstown, and Indian schools among the Osage and Potawatomi Indians, besides serving parishes in Louisville, Milwaukee, and other points in the Middle West. However inviting a field for them both in education and the sacred ministry Chicago might appear to be, it had perforce to lie for the moment outside the range of their activities. But the moment when they were to establish themselves in residence there was not long delayed.

In the summer of 1856 Father Arnold Damen, pastor of the Jesuit Church of St. Francis Xavier in St. Louis, assisted by three associates of his order, Fathers Isidore Boudreaux, Benedict Masselis, and Michael Corbett conducted a series of missions or spiritual revivals in Chicago at the invitation of Bishop O'Regan. A communication which appeared

⁷ Elet à Roothaan, 1850 (AA)

⁸ Gleizal ad Beckx, February 4, 1856 (AA)

⁹ De Smet to Congiato, April 20, 1856 (A)

in the *St. Louis Leader* and has been cited on a previous page of this history, dwelt on the gratifying results that attended the efforts of the missionaries.¹⁰ The exercises were held at first in the cathedral church of the diocese, St. Mary's, which stood at the southwest corner of Wabash Avenue and Madison Street, but the capacity of the edifice being overtaxed by the attending throngs, the mission was transferred to the newly erected Church of the Holy Name at State and Superior Streets. Both the cathedral and the Church of the Holy Name were swept away in the great fire of 1871.

The three priests who shared the labors of Father Damen on this occasion were to pursue the duties of their Jesuit calling for long years to come. Father Isidore Boudreaux attained to high repute in domestic circles of the order as an admirably competent master of novices, in which employment he was retained for a period of twenty-three years. Father Masselis, Belgian by birth and at this juncture thirty-six years of age, was to see protracted service in the preaching of popular missions and die in Detroit at the very ripe age of ninety-three. Father Corbett was now only in the second year of his Jesuit career, having prior to his entrance into the Society been a secular priest of the diocese of Pittsburgh. He, too, was to see length of days, passing away in 1912 at eighty-seven in the novitiate at Florissant.

In the mid-fifties, when this large-scale Jesuit mission was preached in Chicago, European immigration to the United States was in full tide. Thousands of Irish and German families were pouring into the great urban centers of the East and the Middle West and to supply the spiritual needs of the strong Catholic element among them was a problem that taxed to the limit the resourcefulness of bishops and priests. Parishes were indeed being organized on every side, but often they were inadequately served, often also they were not numerous enough to meet the needs of the Catholic population. It was precisely as a supplement to the ordinary parochial service that the popular mission became an instrument of the utmost utility in the period of immigration. In Chicago of the mid-fifties the field was particularly ripe for the harvest which the Jesuit missionaries succeeded in gathering in. The bulk of the Catholic hearers to whom they appealed were of Irish immigrant

¹⁰ *St. Louis Leader*, August 15, 1856. The correspondent was apparently Father Matthew Dillon, pastor of the Holy Name parish and president during the period January, 1855-August, 1856, of the University of St. Mary of the Lake. In a letter to Damen, dated September 8, 1856, Dillon wrote: "Our good people of this city regret very much your absence from among them. Time only can bring to light how much of good your mission here has effected. If God bless us with perseverance, we are in a fair way of doing well, priests as well as the laity. It is not necessary for me to mention to you that our people here, as I had been always of opinion, are very good." (A)

stock They were beginning to render to this element a service which Father Weninger had been rendering for some years to the German-speaking Catholics of the country

The career of Father Arnold Damen as a zealous and enterprising pastor in St. Louis and later as a successful preacher of popular missions has been recorded with some detail in preceding chapters of this work ¹¹ Here will be told the story of his noteworthy activities in Chicago after the midsummer of 1856 when he was the central figure in the series of missionary revivals to which the Catholics of Chicago were summoned at that time. Declaring himself to be gratified with the results achieved on this occasion by Father Damen and his colleagues, Bishop O'Regan took advantage of the father's presence in the city to renew again his invitation to the Jesuits to establish themselves in the metropolis. Damen, having previously obtained the sanction of his superior in St. Louis for the course he now pursued, showed himself disposed to accept the invitation and began at once on his own account to look over the ground to determine a suitable location for a new parish ¹² His preferences were for the West Side, where large numbers of Irish Catholic immigrants were settling down. A few weeks after his return to St. Louis he received a communication from Bishop O'Regan

I have just now written to Father Provincial and I want you to assist me with him that he may grant the request of establishing a House in Chicago. You know its necessity and the prospects before it and hence I have referred to you as one who can give to the Provincial and others all the requisite information on the subject. May I beg of you to do so? You could not co-operate in a holier work. You would be a most efficient instrument to build up religion in this city and diocese. Land can be had quite near to the locality you wished for, but in a still better place, at a fair price and in large quantities. In one place as much as six acres can be had. By buying all this, you would, in one year, have two entirely free. The increased value caused by your establishment would effect this. This is a positive fact.

I would also request of you not to correspond on this matter with anyone whatever in Chicago, except myself, not even with those, who, in other respects, would be found most trustworthy. Already Catholics whom you

¹¹ *Supra*, Chaps. XX, § 5, XXXIV, § 2

¹² Father John B. Druyts was superior of the Jesuit vice-province of Missouri during the period 1856-1861. Father Matthew Dillon of the Holy Name parish, Chicago, wrote to Damen, September 8, 1856: "You do not mention what were the prospects of your coming here. I hope the Father Provincial will not—as his Predecessor—be hereafter sorry. But there is one thing he will not have to be sorry for, he never will get the offer to refuse it that Father Murphy did. Oh my, if he knew as much of the place as I do, how greedily he then would have taken the College and Church. This very day, Sir, he would have both places in a flourishing condition. I hope, however, you will come to some other part of the city. If the Father Provincial sent you here, he would not regret it." (A)

regard much are actually speculating on the subject and if they knew you or I had a preference for a particular place, they would soon have it bought up. You will write to me soon again

I am sorry that I did not merit your thanks better whilst you were in Chicago I can never sufficiently express my esteem for you and your worthy Fathers

I would have written sooner to you and to Father Provincial, but I wished to know more about the land

With kindest regards for Father De Smet and the earnest wish of seeing you soon permanently at work in Chicago where you are most ardently expected, I am, etc

In a second letter which Bishop O'Regan wrote to Father Damen a few weeks later he declared his inability to lend him on the part of the diocese the financial help he had solicited

I know I cannot do a better work for religion, for the diocese or for my own soul than by establishing here a house of your Society, and this is the reason I have been so very anxious to effect this It was on this account as also from my personal regard and affection for your Institute as for many of your Fathers individually, that I so urgently and perseveringly tried to see this good work accomplished

But, as to resources which it would appear you suppose me to have—I have no such, as I think you must know You are aware how much we are in debt, and how much must be expended before any revenue can be derived from our churches We have also to erect a hospital, two Asylums, a House of Refuge and a House of Mercy, we must build School Houses, Priests' Houses, buy lots for churches and build churches I must also at once provide a cemetery, which will cost at least \$32,000, without any prospect of much revenue in my lifetime All these wants are known to you and my inability to supply them, or even a small portion of them How then, very dear Father, can you talk of my leaving property to my successor? If your Society comes here, I will leave them wealth, a spiritual wealth practiced by you and I hope by myself

What I say to you is this Let you yourself come here and keeping your mind to yourself buy six acres of land, and this is now to be had in a most convenient place In about twelve months two or at most three of these acres will pay fully for all—and thus you will have a fine property free

I beg of you not to think lightly of this By adopting it you will be able to effect much for religion and for your Order My thousand dollars will go to make a part of the first payment ¹³

§ 3 THE PARISH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Bishop O'Regan's invitation to the St. Louis Jesuits to extend the field of their labors to his own episcopal city, then fast becoming an

¹³ (A) Damen's letters to Bishop O'Regan have not been traced

influential center of Catholicity in the West, came at an opportune moment. In the course of 1856 the vacating by the Jesuits of their Louisville field of work was taken under consideration by Father Druyts, the vice-provincial, and his consultors. Chicago appeared to them a more inviting center for the educational and ministerial activities of the Society than Louisville, which had, in fact, been something of a disappointment. At a meeting of the board held in St. Louis October 1, 1856, two weeks later than the date of Bishop O'Regan's first letter to Damen, it was determined that the consultors should communicate with the Father General, Peter Beckx, explaining the situation in Louisville on the one hand and pointing out on the other the promise of a plentiful spiritual harvest held out by the large and rapidly growing city of Chicago.

A communication from Father Beckx, made under date of October 30 through Father John Etheridge, assistant to the General for the English-speaking provinces, was encouraging

Father General has received a letter from Father Damen through me on the expediency of our establishing ourselves in Chicago. In reply his Paternity has directed me to confer with you and he has desired me moreover to apprise you of the answer and to beg of you to advise with your Consultors on the subject without delay and to let his Paternity know your judgement upon it and your ability to find men and means for undertaking the work. If you can undertake it without incurring debt and without trenching on the full formation of Ours in Noviceship, Studies and Tertianship, his Paternity thinks that it may be an enterprise worthy of our zeal and perfectly conformable to our Institute, but before deciding he would wish to know your opinion and the grounds of it.¹⁴

The contents of Etheridge's letter were laid by Father Druyts before his consultors on December 1. To the General's inquiry whether men and means were available for the contemplated residence in Chicago, it was agreed to return an answer to the effect that two fathers could be spared for the work in July, 1857, and that the necessary money could be raised by popular subscription. If money could not be found by this means, then the residence was not to be attempted. Father Druyts, having acquainted Father Beckx with the view of his consultors, was answered by the General in January, 1857. "I am pleased with your Reverence's proposition and I grant you the permission which you ask of me in your letter of December 2, namely that of sending some one to the city of Chicago to find out whether the citizens will furnish the needed alms and other means for establishing there a church and residence. I feel with your Reverence that we can be of great service in

¹⁴ Etheridge to Druyts, October 30, 1856 (A)

promoting the Catholic faith in that central city which seems to be ever on the increase.”¹⁵ The Father General subsequently authorized Druyts to close the Jesuit residence in Louisville, if he saw fit, and at the same time open a house in Chicago. “I grant your Reverence permission to buy ground in Chicago on which to build, provided that such step be opportune and in keeping with the ministry of our Society. The conditions laid down in your Reverence’s letter are to be attended to, namely first, that no debt be contracted with outsiders, and secondly, that the Vice-Province is to advance all the money for the purchase of the property at an annual interest of 10 per cent, and thirdly, that the church is to be built with the alms of the faithful and in size and interior finish is to be in keeping with the amount of said alms.”

Even before this letter from Father Beckx had reached St. Louis, Damen, in accordance with the General’s previous concession, had been sent to Chicago to determine how far, if at all, his order could rely upon financial aid from the Catholics of the city. It did not take him long to arrive at the conclusion that he would not have to stand alone in the enterprise he had taken in hand, he could count on ready and adequate assistance from the people to whose spiritual welfare he was to lend his services. While in Chicago he was joined for eight days by Father Druyts, the two together making diligent search for a satisfactory location for the proposed church. Damen wrote March 10, 1857, to Druyts

The answer from Philadelphia has come about the Bull’s head property. They will sell at \$600 a lot, which would make a total of \$24,600 [*sic*] for the 44 lots. The acre which is in litigation cannot be settled yet. With this acre included, there would be 52 lots, and this would make a total of \$31,400 [*sic*]. Of this \$2,500 would be paid by two Protestant gentlemen towards the improvement. I went out this afternoon and made inquiries about the number of Catholic families in the neighborhood and I could not find a dozen around the place. I therefore concluded that the place should be rejected as one that would not pay us for the sacrifices we have to make. Should your Reverence think differently, telegraph (*buy the Bull’s head*). Bishop still continues recommending this place and says that we will regret it, but I cannot believe that, informed as I am at present about the few Catholics in that vicinity. Moreover, here we would have to put up \$10,000 improvements the first year, that is a part of the bargain.¹⁶

Now I have accepted the Southwest Side, three acres at \$5,500 an acre,

¹⁵ The population of Chicago increased during the decade 1850-1860 from 29,963 to 112,172.

¹⁶ The Bull’s Head was a tavern at the southeast corner of Madison Street and Ogden Avenue, where the Washingtonian Home stood in later years. It was built in 1848 by Matthew Laffin and owed its name to the neighboring cattleyards, the first to be opened in Chicago.

that is thirty-two lots. Here we will have a large Catholic population at once, sufficient to fill a large church. We can put up a frame church, which will answer the purpose till all the land is paid off. Then it will answer for a school, and the rest of the land, which we can sell, will help us to build the college and the new church. In my opinion, it is decidedly the only place we can take here.

I will leave here on Thursday, the 12th inst. Should you not approve of this, telegraph to Mr. B. J. Caulfield (*do not buy*). However, should you not be willing to take this, I am willing to take it on the responsibility of the Sodality investing Jane Graham's donation in this.¹⁷

Having thus determined on a site for his new church, Father Damen returned to St. Louis whence he soon advised Bishop O'Regan that the business just concluded by him in Chicago had received the indorsement of his superior. Further plans for the expansion of the Church in Chicago were now communicated by the Bishop to Father Damen.

I have received your note with the agreeable news that Father Druyts has confirmed your acts in Chicago. I have given thanks to God for this great blessing and I pray that He may always aid with His abundant graces the holy work. I would strongly impress on you to come as soon as possible after Easter to collect and commence the work. This can now be more effectually done, because the Sisters of Mercy have given up the project of building a Hospital. Moreover, some one else might be walking over your ground unless you come in good time. I would at once define your Parish, announce it, and you would attend the sick calls from my house and have the emoluments and a better claim in collecting.

I have now another trouble to give you. It is this. I want to bring the Ladies of the Sacred Heart or some of them to Chicago and I want this to be done this summer. I will give all the patronage in my power, and this is the only aid I can give. But at present this patronage is money or worth. It stands thus.

The Sisters of Mercy are to give up their Boarding School this summer and to convert that house into a hospital. They now have 46 boarders—it may be more. All these would at once pass into the school of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, with many others, I am sure. In order to receive them

¹⁷ Jane Brent Graham was a daughter of Major Richard Graham and Catherine Mullanphy, the latter a daughter of John Mullanphy, millionaire and distinguished philanthropist of St. Louis in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The donation referred to was a piece of St. Louis real-estate placed by Miss Graham at Father Damen's disposal. "Another one-time Democratic leader was B[ernard] J. Caulfield. He aspired to no office until near the end of his life, when he was tempted to run for Congress. He did so, was elected and acquitted himself creditably—unhappily he became involved financially and was obliged to leave Chicago—and sad to say, died, I may say in poverty, in Dakota." W. J. Onahan in Illinois Historical Society, *Transactions*, 1906, p. 80. Caulfield was Damen's confidential adviser in money matters.

it would be necessary to have a house built and completed at farthest on the middle of next September This can be easily done by a community able to raise money, as I am sure The Sacred Heart can I consider all this as a happy coincidence and as the voice of God calling to us at one time the Jesuits and the Ladies of the Sacred Heart

Do, Dear Father and Friend, complete the good work you have begun Use all your influence to have this effected Now is the fitting time. Property can be conveniently had not far from your church In three months, a house can be finished, and when opened, it will be filled It will be a transfer from one house here into another

I write this day to Madame Galway and, through God and his Virgin Mother, I implore success for this good and holy project I depend very much on you Write soon and work hard for the Sacred Heart's sake ¹⁸

On April 9, 1857, Father Druyts acquainted the Father General with the proposed purchase in Chicago, which at this time had not been definitely closed. The revenues of Chicago churches ranged from three to six thousand dollars a year. The eighteen thousand dollars offered for the property could be paid off in four years "Property-owners, seeing the way the city is growing, are every day becoming more exacting" Hence it was impossible to await the General's explicit approval of the purchase. "We promise again not to contract debts." The money was to be advanced by the vice-province with interest at 10%, which was a common interest-rate at the period.¹⁹

The property which Father Damen had finally selected as a location for his church lay a block west of the intersection of Twelfth Street with Hoosier, or, as it was subsequently called, Blue Island Avenue. It consisted of thirty-two lots, making up the entire block between Twelfth, May, Eleventh and Austin (Aberdeen) Streets. N. P. Iglehart and Co., a local real estate firm, were the agents for the property,

¹⁸ O'Regan to Damen, March 21, 1857 (A) Mother Galway with ten other Religious of the Sacred Heart arrived in Chicago in August, 1858, at the invitation of Bishop O'Regan and subsequently of Bishop Duggan The community resided first on Wabash Avenue and later at the corner of Rush and Illinois Streets, where they conducted a school for girls Mother Galway, having acquired twelve acres on Taylor Street on the West Side, within the limits of the new Jesuit parish of the Holy Family, built there a convent, which was first occupied by the nuns on August 20, 1860 In the fall of the same year the frame building on the North Side formerly occupied by the nuns was moved to the northwest corner of Taylor and Lytle Streets and in it was opened a "free school" for the girls of the Holy Family parish In 1864 Mother Galway enlarged the convent-building, establishing in it an academy and boarding-school for girls In 1866 a brick building with capacity for 1,000 children was erected for the "free" or parochial school at the corner of Taylor and Lytle Streets Andreas, *History of Chicago*, 3 774

¹⁹ Druyts à Beckx, April 9, 1857 (AA)

which was owned by Mrs Mary Ann Shays, a widow residing in Hamilton County, Ohio. A preliminary agreement to buy the ground, subject to Caulfield's opinion of the title and to Father Druyts's approval, was signed by Father Damen on March 11, 1857. Twenty-five of the lots were to be paid for at the rate of six hundred dollars each. A warranty deed for the property was executed April 20, 1857, by Mary Ann Shays through N P Iglehart, her attorney, in favor of John P. Druyts of St Louis, for a consideration of seventeen thousand, nine hundred dollars. The money was to be paid in installments for which Druyts gave a series of notes payable in one, two and three years' time, the notes being secured by a mortgage on the property. As a matter of fact, all the notes were taken up and paid by Druyts by September 24, 1857. The circumstances which led to this premature payment of the debt throw an interesting light on the panic of 1857.²⁰

Father De Smet touched on the current financial situation in a letter from St. Louis to John Lesperance, a Jesuit scholastic then pursuing theological studies at Namur in Belgium.

The money crisis in the United States is awful. The banks of New York started the ball and it rolled with lightning speed all over the Union—from every quarter it is now rolled back again to the great metropolis of the East, and daily we hear of nothing but failures and suspensions of banks and of commercial houses. In St Louis six banks have suspended—Waterman & Co, failed, the Iron Mountain Company, Chouteau, Harrison & Valle suspended and placed 900 workmen out of employ. Lucas & Co have acted

²⁰ N P Iglehart, like many others, felt the pinch of the money stringency and was in consequence ready to deal liberally with such of his creditors as could offer him cash. "I explained to Mr Damen," he wrote to Father Druyts September 15, 1857, "that I would deduct a very liberal sum, if you would place me in funds at once. My object was two-fold—I desired the money and I was also anxious that you or your institution should reap the benefit." On September 16 Damen wrote to Druyts: "The very lowest that Iglehart will take on the two remaining notes is a deduction of \$3,000. The notes are, I believe, \$9,700, he is willing to take for them six thousand, seven hundred and some odd dollars, he makes a net deduction of \$3,000. I consulted Mr Caulfield and he told me to accept of it at once, if you delay, he may be over his difficulties in money matters and he will no longer offer it. Send the money to me for Iglehart, for it is necessary that I should get the notes and the mortgage, which Iglehart holds on the property, before I pay him the money. I am so extremely busy that I hardly know what to do first." Iglehart wrote again to Father Druyts September 22, instructing him to pay the net sum due on the notes, \$6,122 to J H Lucas & Company, bankers of St Louis. "You have a good bargain, and as it is in a good cause, I trust it will be of general benefit." Father Druyts paid the outstanding notes on September 24. On October 6 following, the banking house of J H Lucas & Company suspended payment in consequence of the financial crisis. William T Sherman, the future General, was a partner in the Lucas bank, the fate of which in the panic of 1857 is related by him in his *Memoirs*, I 134 *et seq.*

most nobly—arrangements are being taken for the immediate issue of certified checks for all the deposits of this community in the banking house. And these checks will bear interest at the rate of ten per cent per annum, from date until paid. And not only so, but these checks will be secured by a mortgage on millions of dollars of real estate in the city of St. Louis. This is a bold move on the part of Mr. Lucas. It entitles him to the admiration of the country and he will receive it. His certified checks, bearing ten per cent and secured, as he with his princely fortune of four millions can, will be hailed as better than gold and even by the suffering, and they will be as current in paying debts as the bills of the Bank of the State of Missouri. What other banker will imitate this noble example? ²¹

It was in the midst of this general financial stress that Father Damen took up his work in Chicago. The lack of money, business and commercial depression, the growing number of the unemployed and a general air of restlessness and discontent on all hands were so many circumstances to render the task of collecting funds for a new church an appalling one for even the stoutest heart. Yet Damen attempted the task and succeeded. By the end of May, 1857, the subscriptions amounted to thirty thousand dollars. "I get along pretty well," he wrote in September to Druyts, "and people are astonished that I can get money at all." In October he wrote again to the vice-provincial

Swift, you are aware, has suspended business, most people say that he is broken. Almost all the Catholics deposited with him and lose considerably by him. This works against us. Two days before he closed I drew out \$1,000 and left with him \$207. However, I will get it all. The man who delivers stone to our building has to pay him \$2,800, and he has taken my check on Swift, to which Swift has agreed, so that I lose only the interest. We find it next to impossible to collect money at present. The people are all afraid in consequence of the many failures all over the country. Still, up to this time Chicago has kept up better than St. Louis, Philadelphia, Boston and New York. There have been less failures here than elsewhere. ²²

²¹ De Smet to Lesperance, October 13, 1857 (A)

²² "The year 1857 was one of widespread business disaster. One of those periodical business convulsions had swept over the land. Following the unexpected failure of the Ohio Life and Trust Company, a panic occurred in the great Eastern money centers, so general as to completely destroy for the time all business confidence. The sudden and forced liquidation of all debts which followed so lessened values that insolvency became the rule rather than the exception among business men. Trade at the close of the year was completely paralyzed and the new year showed more business wrecks than any five years before. Chicago could not and did not come out of the storm unscathed. The sudden withdrawal of all orders for the purchase of her grain and other products of export on which the stability of her trade was built and the great depreciation of all state securities on which rested the solvency of the Illinois banks, brought many of her citizens

Meanwhile much had been accomplished towards organizing what was to be the third Catholic parish on the West Side, St. Patrick's having existed since 1846 and St. Francis's for the Germans since 1852. The March of 1857 had seen Father Damen make definite choice of a site for the imposing church edifice which he planned to build. On May 4 following, he arrived in Chicago from St. Louis in company with Father Charles Truyens to take the work definitely in hand. He carried with him a memorandum of instructions from Father Druyts, which bespeak the high religious purpose that actuated the promoters of this apostolic venture "Remember why we go to Chicago, viz. A.M.D.G.—the good of religion, the good of souls. Let us then have the best of intentions and often renew them."²³ Father Damen lost no time on his arrival in giving out contracts for the erection of a temporary frame church, a two-story structure, twenty by forty-eight, with "a neat balcony erected in front of first-story," to be delivered on or before July 15, 1857. On July 12 the church was solemnly blessed under the title of the Holy Family by Bishop Duggan, Coadjutor-bishop of St. Louis. Circumstances had brought it about that Bishop O'Regan, to whose efforts were primarily due the establishment of the Jesuits in Chicago, was not to preside at the dedication of their temporary church. At the dedicatory services the sermon, an eloquent one, was preached by Bishop Duggan. Meantime Bishop O'Regan had gone or was about to go to Rome to lay his resignation before the Holy See.

The throng of worshippers soon taxed the little house of worship beyond capacity so that an addition was made to it in August, followed by a second addition in the course of 1858. The first Church of the Holy Family stood at the southeast corner of Eleventh and May Streets. On Sunday, August 23, 1857, feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, took place, with the Bishop, his clergy and a great concourse of the laity in attendance, the laying of the corner-stone of the spacious and permanent edifice of brick. The *Daily Times* in announcing the event said. "The Reverend gentlemen who have undertaken this enterprise propose to spend \$100,000 on the erection of a temple of worship which will surpass in size any other in Chicago, which sum must be raised principally among themselves and also, it is understood, to found a collegiate institution with funds of their own, which it is anticipated will eventually rival that of Georgetown, District of Columbia."²⁴

to sudden ruin and forced several of her banks into liquidation" Andreas, *History of Chicago*, I 572

²³ Druyts's instruction to Damen directed the latter "to conclude no contract without consulting Mr. B. J. Caulfield" (A)

²⁴ Both college and church entered into Damen's original plan as disclosed by him on his arrival in Chicago "We learn that the Order of Jesuits have resolved

Damen's first letter from Chicago to the Father General, written in the vernacular about August, 1858, tells the story of his initial experiences in that city

It is now about a year since we have opened a church in Chicago. As it is altogether a new establishment commenced principally at my suggestion, I think it my duty to give your Paternity an account of our doings here.

We have built at first a small wooden church destined to be used afterwards as a school for the poor, but the crowds of people that came to it was so great that we were obliged to enlarge it two different times and even now it is crowded to excess. We suppose that it contains at present about two thousand persons, but we have four Masses every Sunday. One of the Fathers says two Masses every Sunday for the accommodation of the people, which is quite an ordinary thing in this country where there is such a want of priests. The people of our congregation are almost all very poor, yet are willing to assist us as far as they are able to build the new church. They have given us the greatest consolation by the fruit which they have derived from our instructions and exertions for their spiritual welfare, in truth we never anticipated to reap so rich a harvest in so short a time. Before we came here many of these people did not go to Mass on Sundays, few of them attended the sacraments, most of them had not been to their Easter duties for years! Intemperance, cursing and other vices were exceedingly common among them, chiefly on Sundays. Now these vices have been almost entirely done away with and there reigns among them a fervor and devotion that are truly consoling and edifying. Quite a number of them assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass every day and the confessionals are crowded every Saturday, Sunday and feast-day. Since we have been here we have had about 30,000 confessions and communions. Almost 300 or 400 have been prepared for their first holy communion and two hundred and fifty-eight have received confirmation. Our Sunday-school is frequented by 400 to 500 children. We have also commenced two day-schools for the poor. About 300 to 400 frequent these schools taught by secular lay-teachers, to whom we have to pay a small salary. On the whole our anticipations have been more than realized. We have built a wooden house which contains twelve rooms sufficient to accommodate five or six fathers and two or three brothers. The house is very convenient and neat. The wooden church, house and school-houses with furniture cost about eight thousand dollars or forty thousand francs. We have also commenced the new church, which is now about twenty-five feet above ground and in two months will be ready to be roofed in. The church when finished will be one of the largest and most beautiful of the United States. Our Society has certainly nothing like it in the United States. It will be two hundred and twenty feet long, seventy feet wide, and in the transepts (for it is cruciform) one hundred and twenty-seven feet to establish a Church, College and Free School in this city on a scale of magnitude equal to any of the same character in the United States. The college building will probably cost about \$100,000." *Chicago Daily Journal*, May 19, 1857.

wide. Its style will be pure Gothic. The basement will give school rooms, large enough to accommodate 1500 children. The basement is stone, the superstructure brick with cut-stone trimmings. Thus far I have made no debts and have paid out since we are in Chicago over \$25,000. We have still a little trifle of money in the bank, perhaps one or two hundred dollars. Several persons have given me as a donation to the building of the church real-estate or lands in St. Louis and Chicago amounting in value to \$20,000, but at present there is no money in the country, so that it is impossible to sell land except at a great sacrifice. These lands of which I have the deeds or rather of which the Provincial has the deeds will be worth \$30,000 in two or three years of this time. Moreover, there is due to me on the church some \$30,000 [in] subscriptions, for which I have negotiable notes and which I could collect by law, but of course, I have no idea of doing anything of the kind, as these people are very willing to pay, but they cannot at present, for America has never seen as difficult and severe a time as the present. When I signed the contracts for the completion of the church, I had no idea that times would turn out as they have done. I was confident that I would be able to meet all the payments demanded, but times have turned out in such a manner that we foresee nothing but misery and poverty. Last winter we have been enabled with proper exertions to relieve about 3000 persons or families. This winter the poverty will be greater and we must be prepared to relieve a greater number of poor people.²⁵

Meantime Damen was reporting at intervals to his superior in St. Louis, Father Druyts, the experiences he underwent as he was engaged in the task of bringing to completion the great church he had begun. Extracts from his correspondence follow.

May 27, 1858. From the above you see Mr. Miller's charges, which I think very high, the Chicago architects charge only one half of that for a large building as ours is to be. You will know, dear Father, how to exercise your own judgement in the affair. I have seen nothing yet of Mr. Miller. If you think that Brother Dohan or Brother Heilers could see the things well executed, you would do well to send either one or the other by the first of July. The house is getting ready for plastering and no money yet. It is too bad.

June 6, 1858. You are no doubt astonished that I have not written to you before this; but I have been so busy getting up the May Festival, etc., etc. The fathers here had hardly done anything towards it, and yet with all my exertions it will hardly bring \$600. There is no money in Chicago. I regret I signed any contracts, but it is too late now. We have to go on, and I think it providential that we signed the contract so thoughtlessly for never could we build the church so low as we get it for, we must only exert ourselves and rely on Providence. It will be necessary to sell the lot of Mrs. Hunt and borrow some money or sell Jane Graham's property, I

²⁵ Damen to Beckx, August, 1858 (AA).

will have money enough till the end of July, but then I must necessarily get some I have borrowed a thousand dollars here at ten per cent per annum payable in five years from date on the property which has been given to me here. Last Monday week we had confirmation in our church Two hundred and fifty persons were confirmed We had about one thousand communions in the morning or perhaps more. Our congregation is really doing wonders, it fills us with consolation

June 16, 1858 Please send me the remainder of the money of the festival as soon as possible, for I have to make a great many payments. If you cannot get any more than \$1,200 for Mrs Hunt's lot, it is better to sell it for that, because I will be awfully pushed for money, but we must trust in divine Providence.²⁶ We have prayed so much and as it is for God's greater glory, I feel confident that God will help us We have just opened our free schools We have already 200 children and they are pouring in fast The boys' free school costs us nothing except the board of Mr Seaman (the converted Episcopalian minister) He does remarkably well, keeps excellent order, is sacristan, etc , etc. He is willing and humble What he gets from the school is to go towards the payment of his debts If you could effect a loan of seven thousand dollars, I could roof the church this year Then we could do all the rest ourselves by degrees and pay off that debt slowly Now, my dear Father, what is a debt of seven thousand dollars on such a church, chiefly, when there is twice the amount of property to pay that debt, it seems to me you ought to see that I feel confident that the Archbishop would let you have that amount if you were to ask him ²⁷

July 19, 1858 Now, dear Father, try to act cleverly for Chicago Give me \$6,000 for Jane Graham's property and I will never ask you again for a cent for Chicago Had I \$6,000 I could make all payments and put the roof on the church, and after all what would be a debt of \$6,000 on a church like this, chiefly when there is no prospect of times getting better till we have a good crop.

²⁶ Ann Lucas Hunt (born Sept 23, 1796, died April 13, 1879) was the only daughter of Judge Jean Baptiste Lucas, a St Louisan from the province of Normandy in France Her brother, James H Lucas, reputed St Louis's wealthiest citizen in his day, was the leading banker of the city in the fifties She married Captain Theodore Hunt, U S N , and after his decease, a cousin of his, Wilson Hunt, associated with John Jacob Astor in the northwestern fur-trade and a leading figure in Washington Irving's *Astoria* The Lucas family held at one time a tract of St. Louis real estate (Lucas Addition) which included almost the entire "down-town" district of St Louis Mrs Hunt's gifts to St Louis charities were considerable. She wrote her *Memours*, a contribution to the pioneer history of St Louis

²⁷ A fair for "the completion of the Church of the Holy Family" had been held before this in Metropolitan Hall, December 28-31, 1857, the "managers" being P. Conley, B J Caulfield, Capt. Gleeson, M A Rorke, R T Blackburn, Henry J. Green, Robert Bremner, Michael Kehoe, Henry McCauley, A B Taylor, Philip Carlin, Charles O'Connor, Medard Ward, Charles McDonell, Thomas Lonergan Chicago *Daily Times*, December 30, 1857

I have been anxiously looking for Brother Hutten Brother Heiler[s] cannot do by himself the work which is now to be done at the church, raising of joists, beams, etc Moreover, we have money enough to make a great many things for the church and to keep both brothers busy. If the people see that nothing is done at the church, it will be impossible for me to make collections ²⁸

May 20, 1859 We had a visit yesterday from Bishop Duggan accompanied by Archbishop Purcell Bishop Duggan told me that he had begged you to make a loan of \$10,000 to finish the church, but in vain You remember that when I was in St Louis, I wanted to sell Jane Graham's donation for \$7,000 ²⁹ You said it would be too great a sacrifice Now, Reverend dear Father, I beg you to take this property for the Vice-Province Give me the \$7,000 and I will finish the interior of the church this year What we lose on the sale of the property, we gain on the cheapness of the material and the labor by doing it this year Things are rising in Chicago, and probably next year it will cost us one-third more to do the same work The increased revenues of the church should also urge you on to this as well as the greater good we would do by giving accommodation to more people, for I am truly astonished that so many Protestants come on Sunday nights to the lecture in spite of the crushing of the crowds I am sure you will be glad to hear that I have paid the July payment of \$1,690 72 to the stone-company, by paying it now, I got \$23.74 discount, that is, one per cent a month The floor of the church has been raised In a week hence they will take out of the wall the cracks under the transept windows. When will Brother Hutten be here? We want him badly.

Please let me know whether you will accept the property for \$7,000, because then I can give out the contract for the plastering Do say yes for the love of God and the B.V.M. [Blessed Virgin Mary]

May 24, 1859. I am working day and night in order to pay off the \$5,000 which is to be paid here this summer, and you know well enough that this is no trifle in these hard times We think it better to make a sacrifice and have the church finished and do more good and secure a larger revenue than to leave the church unfinished I have already bought 22,000 feet of lumber and paid for it, because lumber is rising in price The architect is preparing things, and in a few days I will give out the contract for plastering, for we have no time to lose if we wish to have it done before the cold weather sets in

Our congregation is doing wonders We have the exercises of the month of May at eight o'clock in the morning and the church is full, we have them again at 7 30 o'clock at night for those who cannot come in the morning, and the church and school-rooms are overflowing On Sundays hundreds of people are obliged to go away, not being able to get into the church or schools Fainting takes place often in the church, although all the windows

²⁸ The services of the Jesuit lay brothers, which were contributed gratis, represented a considerable saving of expense in the construction of the church

²⁹ *Supra*, note 17

are open Our collection last Sunday was \$35 00, the largest we have had on an ordinary Sunday since we are here

We concluded [the] month of May last night Perhaps a thousand people had to go away, could not get into the church It seems as if the whole city was pouring to us, crowds from all sides procession-like

Yesterday I gave a dinner to the Bishop [Duggan] as Bishop of the Diocese All the clergy were invited with his Lordship It was a grand affair After dinner I and Father Halpin walked with him in the new church, which he admired very much, and he pressed me very much to borrow the money to finish the interior ³⁰

June 15, 1859 Every week we look for Brother Hutten Brother Heiler[s] says he will believe that he is coming when he sees him, for I have been speaking about it so long that they, our folks here, have turned unbelievers Brother Heiler requested me to say that he should bring his tools along, for it would be a terrible item to buy him a chest of tools, two men already are working with Brother Heiler's tools

We have a strange summer, cold, raining and thunder Our lightning-rod has been struck two or three times

Father Damen's correspondence with his St Louis superior was always in English, but writing to the Father General he generally made use of French with an occasional letter in the vernacular. In a French communication to Father Beckx dated May 11, 1859, he reviews the outcome of his two years of activities in Chicago

Convinced as I am that it is always agreeable to your Paternity to receive news from your sons, I have decided to write to you Our large church is now covered with a slate roof, but we have a debt of 75,000 francs [\$15,000] Still, we have enough property and more than enough to pay off all that. This property was given to me for the church and I will sell it when times are more favorable I had intended to sell the half of it for 35,000 francs, but Father Provincial thought that this would be selling at too great a sacrifice, for sometime from now this property will sell at 100,000 francs [\$20,000]. Since we have been in Chicago, which is not yet two years, I have paid out 265,000 francs [\$53,000], of which I begged 190,000 [\$38,000] among the Catholics of this town, the other 75,000 [\$15,000] francs I borrowed from the Vice-Province and this constitutes the debt of which I spoke above and of which I expect to pay one-third in the course of this year. Times continue to be bad here, there being no money in circulation, still I thank God that we have commenced a house in Chicago, for it is truly here that the Society ought to be This town will become one of the greatest in the United States and the good which it has pleased God to work by our ministry surpasses everything which we dared to promise our-

³⁰ Bishop Duggan, who had been administrator of the diocese of Chicago after the resignation of Bishop O'Regan, received his appointment to the see on January 21, 1859

selves Our wooden church is always crowded with people and we are obliged to send them away in great numbers because it cannot contain all During the sermons there is such a multitude assembled that they are actually on top of one another Many remain outside not being able to enter, and hear Mass and listen to the sermons through the windows which we leave open I have seen these poor people standing for hours in the rain and snow Every Sunday evening we have the exercises of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the Conversion of Sinners, when I give a sermon on the dogmas of our holy religion Ordinarily a number of Protestants and non-believers come to assist at the services, but unfortunately many of them now begin to stay away, as they belong to the upper classes they do not like to be crushed in the crowd if they find it possible at all to get into the church. O, my dear Father, you realize how much I regret not having the means of furnishing the large church, which will hold five or six thousand persons Oh! how many souls we should be able to bring to the true faith and how many others to the practice of virtue and religion Even now we are engaged in the confessional for a very considerable time, sometimes being kept there until midnight Easter Saturday we heard confessions until half past one in the morning During May we had exercises in honor of the Blessed Virgin twice a day, the church being too small to admit all who came to the exercises In the morning about eight hundred persons, for the most part women, came to mass and the exercises and in the evening as many men to the sermon We hear confessions every day, not only during this month, but throughout the whole year, besides, we have received several Protestants into the church, among whom were two ministers And as regards the Catholics of Chicago and particularly those of our congregation or parish, it is truly consoling and admirable [to see] how much they have advanced in virtue and piety since we are here The Fathers who are with me are in amazement at it and we often speak of it among ourselves ³¹

Father Damen had more than once appealed to the Father General for financial aid towards building the new church, suggesting on one occasion that his Paternity make application on behalf of it to the Association of the Propagation of the Faith Father De Smet, as pro-

³¹ Damen à Beckx, May 11, 1859 (AA) This seventy-five thousand francs or fifteen thousand dollars was borrowed from the vice-province "The church which Father Damen is building there is very large and without the tower will cost \$70,000 The Father is endowed with a very great zeal If God in His goodness spares him to us, he will perhaps find the means of seeing his enterprise through within three or four years The land on which the church is built cost the Vice-Province more than 15,000 dollars All the money which I obtained in Belgium has gone into that [purchase] together with the bulk of the available funds of the Vice-Province Father Damen has engaged to pay the Vice-Province out of the resources of this church 1500 dollars in interest annually for the support of the scholastics With another Provincial or another Superior in Chicago I am afraid this engagement would be difficult to keep" De Smet à Beckx, January 7, 1858 (AA)

curator of the vice-province, made a similar request to Father Beckx in favor of the new Chicago church. It does not appear that the General found himself in a position to extend the aid thus solicited, Damen had to look to other quarters for a solution of his financial problems. In the end he was to succeed admirably in providing means for the completion of the church.

Early in 1860 contracts were let to Patrick O'Connor for the towers and front wall of the church and to Robert Carse for the stained-glass windows, "work to be equal to that of the windows in St. James' church, North Side." Progress in bringing the great structure forward to completion was now so rapid as to permit of its solemn dedication in the midsummer of 1860. The ceremony took place on Sunday, August 26, feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a day in the Church's calendar dear to the heart of Father Damen, and was carried out with a degree of splendor probably unprecedented in the ecclesiastical history of the Middle West.³² Thirteen members of the hierarchy were in attendance, Bishop Duggan being the officiating prelate, Bishop Fitzpatrick of Boston, celebrant of the pontifical Mass, and Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis, the preacher of the dedication sermon. In the progress of the ceremony sermons were delivered in English by Bishop Carrell of Covington, in German by Bishop Henni of Milwaukee and in French by Bishop de St. Palais of Vincennes. Besides the prelates named there were present in the sanctuary Bishops Smyth of Dubuque, Juncker of Alton, Grace of St. Paul, Whelan of Nashville, Lefevere of Detroit, Luers of Fort Wayne and Timon of Buffalo. Mozart's Twelfth Mass, rendered under the personal direction of Father Maurice Oakley, one of the priests serving the parish, was the musical feature of the occasion. For Damen the day was a memorable one in the tokens of success with which it crowned his labors of the preceding three years. "The Reverend Arnold Damen," wrote in 1866 James W. Sheahan of the *Chicago Times*, "is the Hercules who has in a few years wrought all this work. To his energy, his ability, his sanctity, his perseverance and

³² Damen had all through his life a marked devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, his last spoken words on his death-bed were, "Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer my life and sufferings." It is significant that he selected the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for both the laying of the cornerstone and the dedication of the Holy Family Church. As to the title of the church, he wrote to Father Beckx January 3, 1860: "The good God and the Holy Family have assisted us admirably. To build such a church in times so hard in regard to money is no trifle. It is the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph who have done it. Please have the kindness to send us the Mass and office of the Holy Family indicating the day when the feast of the Holy Family is celebrated, for our church will be dedicated to the Holy Family." Damen à Beckx, January 3, 1860 (AA).

his great practical intelligence is due not only the erection of this magnificent edifice but the great spiritual success which has crowned the labors of the Society."³³

The new church of the Holy Family occupied ground on the north side of Twelfth Street (now Roosevelt Road), a short distance east of May Street. It measured originally one hundred and forty-six by eighty-five feet, with a nave sixty-one feet high. Later two transepts were added, increasing the width to one hundred and twenty-five feet, while in 1866 an extension of forty feet was made to the length, making the total length one hundred and eighty-six feet. The architects were Dillenburg and Zucher, while the interior was designed by John Van Osdel. The style was heavy Gothic and the material brick with trimmings of Illinois cut stone. The main altar, designed and constructed by Anthony Bucher, was dedicated in the presence of seven bishops on October 25, 1865. Though of wood, its massive proportions, richness of detail and general impressiveness make of it a notable work of ecclesiastical art. The organ, designed and manufactured by Louis Mitchell of Montreal, was introduced to the congregation in an elaborate musical recital, October 21, 1870.

Several years spent in the management of the parochial or as they were called "free" schools attached to the Church of St. Francis Xavier in St. Louis had made Father Damen very much alive to the supreme importance of this side of parochial service. In Chicago, accordingly, he set himself without delay to organize the "free" schools of the Holy Family parish. On August 11, 1857, only a few months after his arrival in the city, he opened a girls' school in a rented house. On September 7 the boys' school was started. In June of the following year three hundred children were in attendance at the two schools, the boys' classes being taught by Mr. Seaman, a converted Protestant minister. In May, 1859, Father Damen engaged at an annual salary of eight hundred dollars the three sisters, Mary, Sarah and Margaret Ghent "to conduct the choir, play the organ and teach school for females." In the fall of 1860 the Religious of the Sacred Heart, under the direction of Mother Galway, opened a parochial school for girls in a frame building at the northwest corner of Taylor and Lytle Streets.³⁴ In 1867 a second school for girls was opened in the Holy Family parish on Maxwell Street, immediately west of Jefferson, under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.³⁵

³³ From an album of Chicago views (1830-1866) with letterpress by James W. Sheahan.

³⁴ *Supra*, note 18.

³⁵ Sister Mary Agatha Hurley with eight other members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary arrived in Chicago August 6,

After the opening of the new church the boys' school was held in the old church until the destruction of that pioneer structure by fire in May, 1864. What looked like a special interposition of Providence marked the event. Both church and residence were in danger from the fire. "In the act of removing the Blessed Sacrament to a more secure place," Father Coosemans informed the General, June 17, 1864, "the minister, Father Niederkorn gave a blessing in the direction of the fire, saying, 'O Lord, save the house!'" The prayer of faith was heard on the spot. The wind, which had blown violently in the direction of the church, suddenly changed and the progress of the fire was stopped." The following Sunday Father Damen at a meeting of the parishioners laid before them the project of a school building adequate to the needs of the parish. A canvass of the parish having netted seven thousand dollars in subscriptions, property was purchased on the east side of Morgan Street, between Twelfth and Maxwell, and the corner-stone of a new school-house for the boys, to be of brick and three stories in height, was laid thereon in July, 1864. Opened in January, 1865, the institution became known as the "Brothers' School" from the circumstances that the management of it from its earliest days was in the hands of Father Andrew O'Neill and his brother, Thomas O'Neill, temporal coadjutor of the Society of Jesus. Their connection with the school lasted through a period of thirty-five years.

Not only were schools established for the children of the parish, but various organizations of a spiritual and philanthropic character were, one after another, set on foot. The Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was established in 1857, the Altar Society in the same year, the Married Men's Sodality in 1858, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (first council in the city) in 1859, the Rosary Society, Married Ladies' Sodality, Young Ladies' Sodality, and Holy Angels Sodality in 1861, the Acolythical Society in 1863, the Apostleship of Prayer in 1864, the Young Men's Sodality in 1866, the Sodality of the Annunciation and the Bona Mors Society in 1868, the Temperance and Benevolent Society in 1869.

On August 22, 1858, Father Damen announced at the High Mass of the day that a meeting of the men of the parish would take place

1867, at the invitation of Father Damen. On August 19 they opened a girls' school in a rented building on Maxwell Street between Jefferson and Clinton, residing meanwhile at 512 Halsted Street until the completion of the brick convent and school of St. Aloysius erected for them by Father Damen on the south side of Maxwell Street between Jefferson and Union. The story of the foundation, growth and educational activities of the sisterhood is told in *In the Early Days Pages from the Annals of the History of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1833-1837* (St. Louis, 1912).

after Vespers with a view to organizing a "Society of the Holy Family for men" That afternoon about sixty men of all seasons of life, no matrimonial line being drawn, gathered in answer to the call John Comiskey, at first appointed secretary *pro tem*, was permanently elected to that office while Patrick Brennan was elected first prefect The original name was retained until June 16, 1859, when a diploma was obtained aggregating the society to the *Prima Primaria* Sodality in Rome under the title, "Sodality of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Men," and with St. Joseph as secondary patron. The first directors were Fathers Damen, 1858, Tschieder, 1862, Dominic Niederkorn, 1863, De Blicck, 1864, Dominic Niederkorn, 1866. A division of the body into two sections, as its numbers grew, was found to be necessary and was made on a basis of age, but the arrangement did not prove a happy one, the outcome being that in 1866 the married and unmarried members were organized into separate units, the former constituting the Married Men's Sodality and the latter the Young Men's Sodality. Father John O'Neill became the first director of the Young Men's Sodality on its organization in 1866.

On Saturday, July 26, 1861, feast of St. Anne, a group of married women of the parish, some fifteen in number, were organized by an initial act of consecration into an association called St. Anne's Society or more popularly "the Society." Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Dargan held the offices of prefect and assistant prefect respectively in this Society, which was to develop into the Married Ladies' Sodality. St. Anne's Society held its meetings at the "Convent School" on Taylor Street. On September 1, 1875, at the petition of its director, Father Sautois, it was granted a diploma of affiliation to the Roman *Prima Primaria* St. Anne's Society was thereby transformed into the Married Ladies' Sodality, the place of meeting being at the same time transferred from the "Convent School" to the basement chapel of the church, which lay directly underneath the transepts. Of all the Holy Family parish organizations, the Married Ladies' Sodality developed the largest membership, its numbers running at one time over two thousand.

In every parochial enterprise he put his hand to, from the building of the frame church to the erection of the new church of brick and the interior furnishing of it in becoming dignity and splendor, Father Damen met with generous and open-handed aid from the parishioners Under the main altar of the church reposes today a parchment record of over a thousand names, being those of "subscribers to the main altar in the church of the Holy Family, Chicago, Illinois, 1865" A day comes when even a bare list of names in a parochial register may take on the dignity of a not inconsequential historical document. So with the early pew-register of the Holy Family parish. Therein are pre-

served the names of most of the laity identified with the pioneer days of the parish. In the list of pew-holders for 1864 appear among others the names of T. Minnard, William Kinsella, William J. Onahan, Michael Kehoe, Stephen McEvoy, Thomas Waldron, Mrs. Starr, Richard C. Dunne, A. D. Taylor, Jeremiah Crowley, Dr. Valanta, Mr. Doran, Joseph Sherwin, John Comiskey, Mrs. Sheridan, Patrick Brennan, Daniel Lordan, Mrs. Beshor, John Brannick, Thomas Scully, John Considine, Mr. Snowhook, Matthew Donohue, James Sullivan and Peter Yore.

To handle the ever-growing numbers that assisted at the services, a corps of ushers was gradually organized. No form of service rendered by the laity to the church was more valuable than this. Among those who lent aid to the pastors in this capacity for greater or less periods of time up to 1871 were Messrs. Walsh, Eustis, Squires, John Garvy, Peter Sullivan, Martin Kennedy, Daniel Lordan, Edwin Rush and Patrick Ponsonby. Of Peter Kennedy who served as special policeman in the church during the period 1867-1903 it is recorded that "he was most conscientious and exact in every detail with regard to anything that would promote the welfare of the church or the finances, was untiring in his care and watchfulness in keeping order among the children and young people in the gallery."³⁶

Though the laity had all along responded freely to Damen's repeated appeals for aid towards financing the church, schools and other parochial projects, he was at no time to find himself entirely free from debt, a situation viewed with much more anxiety two generations ago than it is today. To Father Beckx, who had expressed his concern over the extent of the parish debts, some forty thousand dollars in all, Damen explained in June, 1865, that this was after all not a matter to cause alarm. To offset the debt there was parish property and buildings valued at two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Besides, the gross annual income of the church amounted to eighteen thousand dollars, of which almost seven or eight thousand could be saved every year over and above expenses. In fact, so Damen believed, the financial condition of the Chicago residence was better than that of any other house in the vice-province. At the same time, should he be required to liquidate the church debts he declared himself able to do so within four years. In the same communication in which he sought after this manner to relieve the Father General of the anxiety the latter seemed to entertain over the indebtedness of the Chicago residence, Father Damen touches on conditions both in the parish and in the little Jesuit community over which he presided.

³⁶ Holy Family parish records. St. Ignatius High School, Chicago.

Our congregation is very edifying. Our parishioners practice their religion well. There is considerable piety and they give us a great deal of consolation. Then, too, every week we have some converts from Protestantism. Our congregation is very numerous while our church is too small although good Father Visitor said at the time of his visitation that it was too large. During the last two years almost two thousand houses have been built in our parish.

In general, very Reverend and dear Father, we owe much gratitude to divine Providence for all that it has done for the Chicago Residence. We have been blessed in an extraordinary manner in all our enterprises for the glory of the good God and the salvation of souls. I am amazed at it all and my heart is full of gratitude towards God who has been pleased to employ the services of so miserable a sinner as myself to do all these things in so short a time for the salvation of poor souls redeemed by the blood of His Son. If I had been more faithful to God's grace, more would have been done. This thought fills me with regret and apprehension. As to the community of our Chicago Residence it gets along very nicely. There is a good spirit in it, thanks to the mercy of the good God, all the members are obedient, respectful, full of zeal and exact in their spiritual exercises. Charity is carefully cultivated among them and we are all closely united. All are not as recollected in spirit as they should be, but we are all weak and shall try to do better in the future.³⁷

More than once were the Jesuits appealed to by Bishop Duggan for services outside their routine duties in the Holy Family parish. Towards the close of 1859 he petitioned the vice-provincial to send a father in the rôle of peace-maker to a German parish of Chicago in which disorders had broken out to such an extent that the church was laid under interdict. Not a few of the parishioners were beginning to attend the services of a neighboring Lutheran church. Finding no one else at his disposal, Father Druyts commissioned a novice-priest, probably Father Dominic Niederkorn, to take in hand the unpleasant task. At the same time Bishop Duggan was pleading with Father Druyts to take permanently in charge the German parish of St. Francis of Assisi on the West Side. "He offers us the German church of this quarter with everything that belongs to it and begs us for the glory of God, the good of religion and the salvation of souls not to refuse the offer."³⁸

³⁷ *Damen à Beckx*, June 27, 1865. "We have had grand doings here—an extraordinary concourse of people such as was never seen before. It seems that the persecution which the Church suffers elsewhere enlivens the faith in our people. On Easter Monday there were over 3,000 Communion distributed in our own church." Coosemans to De Smet, April 16, 1873. Archives of the Belgian Province, S J.

³⁸ *Druyts à Beckx*, January 1, 1860 (AA). The first non-resident pastor of St. John the Baptist's parish, Somonauk, De Kalb County, Illinois, was Father Dominic Niederkorn, S J, of the staff of the Holy Family, Chicago. He visited

Father Druyts agreed to take over this parish of St. Francis of Assisi before May, 1860, provided the Father General interposed no objection. Damen was eager that the arrangement be made and in characteristically ardent manner solicited Father Beckx's approval.

Our good Bishop who entertains towards each of us and towards the whole Society the sentiments of a true friend has offered us a German congregation which he wishes to make a model parish for the whole city. A single German Father or at the most two will be enough for the purpose and these Fathers can live in the same house with ourselves for the German congregation is very close to our own or rather we are right in its midst. So I pray and beseech your Paternity for the love of God, for the salvation of souls and for the honor of the Society to be so good as to write at once to Father Provincial so that he may send a German Father to our house in Chicago for the German portion of our flock³⁹

Father Beckx declined to sanction this further extension of Jesuit activity into the field of the parochial ministry, nor did it matter, as he wrote, that the Bishop showed himself so eager in his appeal. The Society in the American Middle West was in no position to accede to the repeated demands made upon its zeal, such gratuitous parochial obligations as the one in question were not to be assumed.

§ 4. ST. IGNATIUS COLLEGE

Though the energies of Father Damen during the first decade of his residence in Chicago went almost entirely into the rearing of the great shrine of Catholic worship on West Twelfth Street and the development of the parochial interests that centered about it, the project of a college, announced by him to the Catholic public at his first arrival in the city, was at no time lost sight of. Along the east side of the church property ran Aberdeen Street, which was subsequently closed by city ordinance between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, thus making the church property continuous with the block of ground lying to the east. This block, consisting of some thirty lots, was acquired by Father Damen from various parties, the first lots being purchased as early as 1865. Along the Twelfth Street frontage of this property where at one time had stood a Lutheran church, Father Damen planned to build

Somonauk from Chicago once a month during the period 1865-1869, the first St. John's Church being built under his direction. The church records begin with his ministrations, the first baptism, marriage and burial being entered under his name, all in 1865. The names of the Jesuit fathers A. O'Neil, Damen, Oakley and Van Goch also occur in the Somonauk records. *History of the Parish of St. John the Baptist* (Somonauk, Illinois, 1930)

³⁹ Damen à Beckx, January 3, 1860 (AA)

the college. Circumstances made the time an opportune one for the venture, for in 1866, the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Chicago's pioneer Catholic institution of higher learning, having become financially embarrassed, closed its doors.

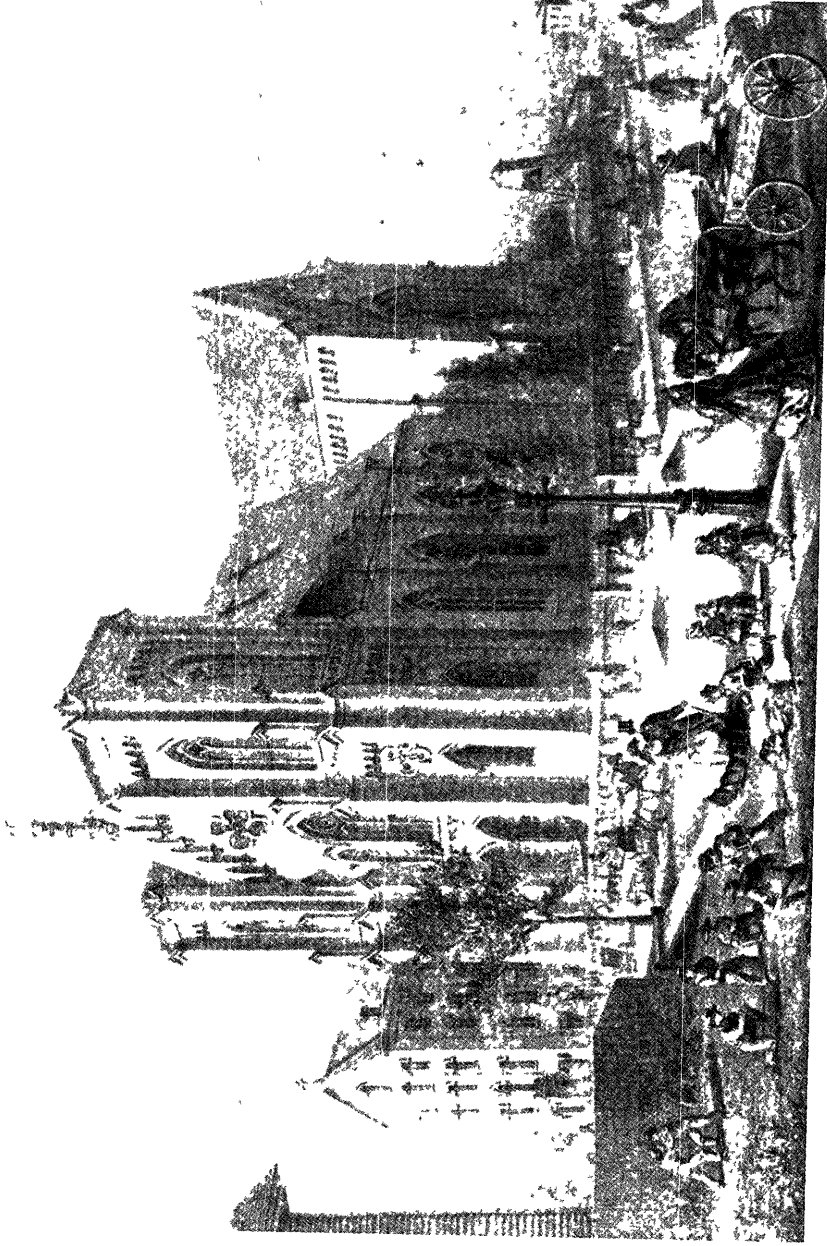
At provincial headquarters in St. Louis Father Damen's project of a Jesuit college in Chicago met with sympathy. "There ought to be a college of the Society in that great city," was the sentiment of the board of consultors at their meeting of November 18, 1862, "for although we cannot just now supply the teachers, still the time seems highly opportune for buying property on which a school-building may some day be erected." The purchase of a piece of property for such purpose was accordingly authorized, provided the Chicago residence was ready to meet the cost. Then followed the purchase of a plot of ground immediately adjoining the church on the east. This first step taken, Father Damen appealed to St. Louis in December, 1866, for permission to build, declaring himself in a position to do so. St. Louis was willing for him to go ahead but the General's mind on the question had first to be ascertained and Father Damen was to beware of any excessive zeal in the collection of funds. Though the approval of the General was readily secured, Damen's own consultors in Chicago were not in favor of starting the college as they judged that conditions in the city were not ripe for the undertaking. Moreover, they did not see their way to finance it except with borrowed money. Though Father Coosemans's advisers were in agreement that the necessary loans should be incurred and work on the college begun, he himself, in view of the attitude of the Chicago consultors, was not in favor of taking the step. The matter stood thus when Father Coosemans was summoned to Rome in the summer of 1867 to give information in the controversy regarding the Bardstown college, leaving his assistant, Father Joseph Keller, in temporary charge of the province. Father Damen, still persisting in his desire to build the college, now appealed to Father Keller to visit Chicago and see for himself the conditions that seemed to make it imperative to take this important work in hand. The acting-provincial, after taking advice of his consultors, did not hesitate to comply with the wishes of Damen, who had found fertile soil on which to let fall his own enthusiastic ideas. Enterprise and vision were not wanting in Father Keller, now in his fortieth year. He had in particular a bold, aggressive way of making provision for the future. He would have built at Bardstown a boarding school on a grand scale, a model institution thoroughly equipped in every respect and capable of housing half a thousand students. At St. Louis he cut the Gordian knot of certain problems that beset the University by suggesting the purchase in the West End of the Grand Avenue property, to which the institution was

subsequently removed. And now in Chicago he fell in with Damen's plans for a college and authorized him to see them through. He wrote to Father Beckx

Work has at last been started on the college in Chicago. It was, so I thought, to be done now or never. I shall send your Paternity a photographic plan of the edifice. It is going to be a most noble structure indeed and the cost of it will come high enough. But not to terrify your Paternity by our rashness, I hasten to add that just now we shall put up only a part of the college, nor shall we finish this part on the inside all at once, but by degrees according to the number of students and the funds available. Then after a few years we shall add the remaining parts, the wings, namely, on either side of the central section, until the entire facade as you see it in the photograph is completed, giving a frontage of 160 feet. The interior arrangement of living rooms, class rooms, library, museum, etc. has been carefully sketched out and has met with the approval of all who saw the plans. I went to Chicago myself to urge on the undertaking and marvelled at the achievements of Ours in that great city, a noteworthy and splendid house of worship, such as one would scarcely expect in America, a parochial school for boys with 1600 in attendance, schools for girls, one registering 400, another, nearly the same number, a third, 300, this last group taught gratuitously by nuns. The college is the only thing lacking and this will shortly be supplied. Then will the Society truly flourish in Chicago and there bring forth such fruits as our holy Father, in whose name the new college is to be dedicated, desires and such as he will bless from on high. I truly superabound in joy to see all these things, seeing also greater and better things to come to God's glory and the honor and increase of the Society.⁴⁰

On his return from Rome Father Coosemans was to find the foundations of St. Ignatius College laid and its walls above ground. But further work on the building had become impossible for lack of funds. Money was not to be obtained in Chicago except at ten per cent, but fifty thousand florins (some twenty thousand dollars) could be obtained at four per cent in Holland from a brother of Father James Van Goch, a native of that country. To negotiate the loan, however, would require the presence in Holland of Father Van Goch himself as also of Father Damen, the latter to lend authority to the transaction as superior of the Jesuit residence in Chicago. Both Coosemans and Keller now petitioned the General with earnestness that the two fathers be permitted to make the journey overseas. "I see nothing of greater utility and therefore I urge it," wrote Keller. "The hope of our Province almost depends on it for this college will be a nursery of vocations. From it the novitiate, the other colleges, the missions will derive means wherewith

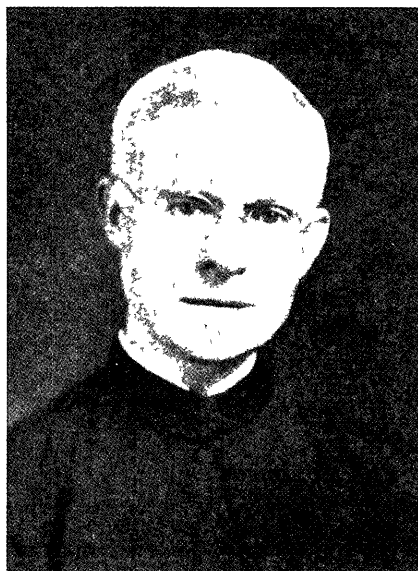
⁴⁰ Keller ad Beckx, September 24, 1867 (AA)



Church of the Holy Family, West Twelfth Street, now Roosevelt Road, as it appeared in 1866. Building at left of church is the pastoral residence and headquarters of Father Damen's missionary staff. From an album of Chicago views with letter-press by James W. Sheahan of the *Chicago Times*.



St Ignatius College Building erected, 1869, by Father Damen on West Twelfth Street, Chicago



Thomas M. Mulkerins, S.J. (1858-1934), coadjutor-brother, sacristan of the Holy Family Church, Chicago, for fifty-one years and its historian

to promote the glory of God ”⁴¹ And Coosemans was not less insistent. “Your Paternity is not unaware of what importance this college in Chicago will be, not only for the people who have there no institution of this sort ever since the Bishop was obliged to close his own, but also for the Province, for no doubt is entertained that it will furnish many vocations and will be in some way a nursery for the Novitiate. The building has been begun on a large scale to make it possible to compete with the Protestant colleges and the public schools, which are like palaces. It was necessary to do this so as to induce parents to give us the preference, external appearances do much to impress Americans.”⁴² Permission for Fathers Damen and Van Goch to visit Holland in the interest of the new college having been obtained, they sailed from New York, June 11, 1868, returning in the fall of the same year with the expected loan. Reviewing in September, 1869, the circumstances under which the College had been begun, Father Coosemans wrote to Father Beckx

Conditions for beginning a college at Chicago were very favorable in 1866. The Bishop had then given his permission, which might have been refused afterwards. The affair was referred to your Paternity, who agreed to it and authorized me to give Father Damen approval and permission. I thought with the Chicago consultors that the opportune moment had not arrived. During my absence in Rome the work was taken in hand with the approval of and, from what they tell me, at the instance of Father Keller, who was acting as Vice-Provincial. Father Damen had proposed at first to begin by building only one wing, but Father Keller wished them to build on a larger plan and one more worthy of the Society and to begin with the main section. This entailed a much heavier outlay than Father Damen had anticipated and made it necessary for him to borrow considerable sums. If I had listened to the advice of Father Thomas O’Neil on my return, I would have changed the plans or had work on the building stopped, but after receiving assurances from Father Damen that he saw his way out of the affair with the money they were expecting to obtain from Europe, I gave him permission to go on, the more so as the first story was already built. I have no doubt that with the help of heaven both interest and capital will be paid off in due season provided Father Damen be not taken away.⁴³

That Damen be not taken away was indeed altogether necessary if the projected college was to become a reality. When it became known to Father Coosemans in the course of 1869 that the energetic pastor of Holy Family Church would probably be chosen by the Holy See to succeed Bishop Duggan in the administration of the diocese of Chicago,

⁴¹ Keller ad Beckx, February 16, 1868 (AA)

⁴² Coosemans à Beckx, February 20, 1868 (AA)

⁴³ Coosemans à Beckx, September 5, 1869 (AA)

he hastened to direct the General's attention to the gravity of the situation. No one else with Damen's energy and peculiar fitness for putting the college on its feet was available, his withdrawal from the undertaking would mean nothing less than its collapse. In the event, the Reverend Thomas Foley of Baltimore was named Coadjutor-bishop of Chicago and Damen was allowed to go ahead with the building of the college.

The structural work of the middle section and east wing was completed before the end of 1869 and by the summer of 1870 the building was ready for occupancy. Father Coosemans described it to the General as "grandiose, like all the conceptions of Father Keller."⁴⁴ The building, of brick with stone trimmings, and five stories in height, including basement and spacious exhibition hall, was T shaped, being designed as one main section flanked by two wings. The cost of construction was approximately two hundred and thirty thousand dollars. With two classes of students and a staff of four professors, the college was formally opened in September, 1870. Father Damen's long-cherished dream of an institution of collegiate grade for the Catholic youth of Chicago had become a reality.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Coosemans à Beckx, January 8, 1867 (AA)

⁴⁵ The college was in the second year of its career when the great Chicago fire of October 9, 1871, swept through the city, rendering the Bishop homeless and leaving in its wake of destruction churches and charitable institutions, among them the Catholic orphan asylum at State and Superior Streets. Both Bishop and orphans found hospitality within the walls of the newly erected St. Ignatius College. The story of the Holy Family parish from its origin to recent date has been told with great wealth of detail by Brother Thomas Mulkerins, S. J., in his *The Holy Family Parish, Chicago Priests and People* (Chicago, 1923).