



## DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

May 26, 2011

### **LUDINGTON AREA PARISHES MERGE TO FORM SINGLE PARISH COMMUNITY; ST. STANISLAUS, SACRED HEART CLOSE**

LUDINGTON, Mich. – On Thursday, May 18, and Friday, May 19, Bishop Walter A. Hurley joined Rev. Wayne Wheeler, pastor, and Ludington area parishioners for closing liturgies for St. Stanislaus and Sacred Heart parishes respectively. Rev. Thomas Schiller, Rev. Dennis O'Donnell and Rev. Norman Droski, former Ludington area parish pastors, concelebrated the closing liturgies with Bishop Hurley. Both closing Masses provided parishioners and clergy the opportunity to bid their church homes goodbye in a special way and paid tribute to the rich history that envelopes both faith communities.

“I recognize that there is a sadness about all of this,” Bishop Hurley told St. Stanislaus parishioners during the homily on Thursday. “I know many of you have deep roots here. Some of you went to school here. All of the men here with me in the sanctuary were pastors here at one point or another.”

The parish communities of St. Stanislaus and Sacred Heart will now fully merge with St. Simon Parish in Ludington completing a process begun eight years ago and continued as part of the *Our Faith, Our Future* pastoral plan initiated in fall 2009.

Bishop Hurley concluded his homily by encouraging parishioners to look to the future.

“As we gather here today for this closing Mass, recognizing our own sadness, it is also a time to be excited. New beginnings offer new hope and new promises.” (*cont'd.*)



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St. Stanislaus Parish was established on Third Street in Ludington in 1897 by families of polish heritage. In 1900, Bishop Henry Joseph Richter appointed Rev. Joseph Pietrasik to build a combined church-school building and the new church was blessed by the bishop on May 9, 1901. The rectory was built in 1907 and the school opened in 1909, operating until 1967. Construction of a new church was

completed on July 22, 1955. (Ancona, Gaspar F. *Where a Star Came to Rest*, Éditions du Signe, 2001)

The parish community of Sacred Heart originated with a dozen families who began gathering once a month in John Sladick's home for celebration of Mass by Rev. Laurence Hayden of St. Simon Church. Sacred Heart Church was built in 1900 and dedicated by Bishop Richter. The church became a mission of St. Stanislaus Parish in 1901 and was transferred to St. Simon in 1908. It was also a mission of St. Jerome, Scottville and St. Mary, Custer. Sacred Heart was established as a parish in 1964 and Rev. Thomas Neis was its first pastor; it returned to being a mission in 1980. (Ancona, Gaspar F. *Where a Star Came to Rest*, Éditions du Signe, 2001)



*The Diocese of Grand Rapids serves over 178,000 Catholics, 101 parishes and missions and 29 schools in an 11-county area of West Michigan.*

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