

St. Matthew School – Detroit



St. Matthew School in Detroit opened in 1930 with seven IHM Sisters, one lay teacher and 351 students in grades one through eight.

Enrollment began to climb almost immediately. By 1933, more than 500 children attended St. Matthew. The convent chronicler reports that, "Owing to the crowded conditions of the classrooms all extra activities were eliminated in order to keep the work of the grades up to standard." Each year, the school added additional classrooms to alleviate some of the overcrowding.

By 1936, the chronicler noted, "It is planned to build a Parish High School. When?"

Eventually, "extra activities" were resumed. A school orchestra made its first appearance in March 1939, and music recitals were much anticipated throughout the year. A football team was



organized in the fall of 1939. Ten years later, the team won an all-city championship, and the 877 students and their 17 IHM teachers were thrilled.

And through the years, enrollment continued to climb. Throughout the 1950s, more than 900 children attended St. Matthew School. The boys were Eastside Baseball Champions in 1952. The girls won two championships as well, but the chronicler did not record in which sports! A new school library opened in 1956, and at long last, ground was broken for a high school.

It was not the parish school originally envisioned, but the parishes of St. Matthew, St. Philomena and Our Lady Queen of Peace collaborated to open Bishop Gallagher High School in nearby Harper Woods. The parish bulletins noted that "With three parishes cooperating, we can have a better school, with more extensive facilities than any one parish alone."



Enrollment reached its zenith in 1966, our **Featured Class Year**, with 1,214 students. Each grade had at least three classrooms to accommodate everyone, and teachers taught anywhere from 33 to 52 students at one time. The children were active in the lives of both the school and the community. They sold Christmas seals, and they filled baskets with food and gifts for people in need at St. Rose Parish. Graduation day for the 171 eighth-graders was June 12.

St. Matthew School continued to thrive throughout the rest of the 1960s. But enrollment began to fall, following the defeat of Proposal C (which would have provided funding to parochial schools in Michigan). At the same time, fewer IHM Sisters were available to teach. Sister Geraldine (Rose Philip) Demech was the last IHM to teach at St. Matthew. Although she left at the end of the 1979-80 school year, the school continued its mission of education for more than 20 years before the low enrollment forced its closure.

In 1966



The average cost of new house in the United States was \$14,200; average annual income was \$6,900. Gas cost 32 cents a gallon, and the Dow closed the year at 785.

Miranda Rights came into being.

All cigarette packs in the U.S. carried the warning "Caution! Cigarette smoking may be hazardous to your health."

Pope Paul VI and Arthur Michael Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, met in Rome - the first official meeting for 400 years between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches.



The first *Star Trek* episode, "The Man Trap," was broadcast. CBS backed out of plans to broadcast *Psycho* deeming the movie too violent for at-home viewing.

Tom Jones received a Best New Artist Grammy Award. Roger Miller and his "King of the Road" won Grammys in the categories of Best Contemporary (Rock and Roll) Single; Best Contemporary (Rock and Roll) Vocal Performance, Male; Best Country and Western Single; Best Country and Western Song; and Best Country and Western Vocal Performance, Male.

Walt Disney, Elizabeth Arden, Buster Keaton and Sophie Tucker died. Keifer Sutherland, Sinead O'Conner, Troy Aikman and Halle Berry were born.



MIT biochemist Har Khorana finished deciphering the DNA code.