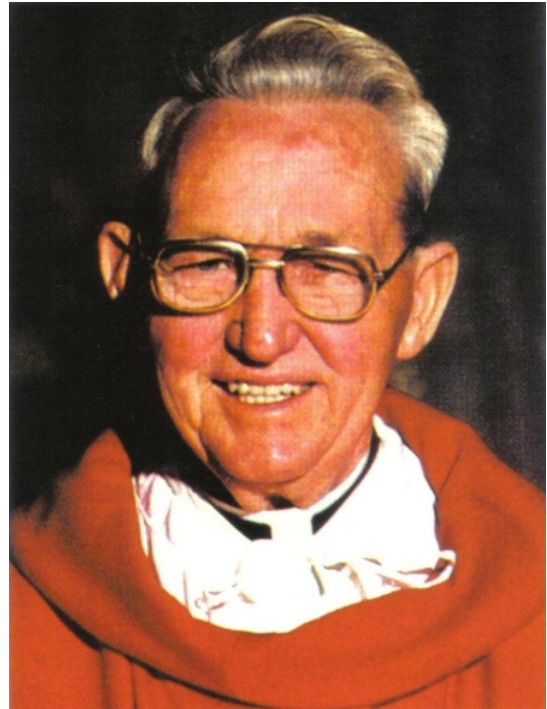


Father James F. McBride (1967-1985)

In 1967, Bishop Wright named Father James McBride to succeed Father Hinnebusch. In the years following the close of Vatican Council II, Father McBride was charged with implementing the considerable changes coming almost daily from the diocese and the Vatican.

What began as a straightforward organizational tool for calling together all the activity chairpersons to develop a calendar of meetings and events became one of the first Parish Councils in the diocese. After several years of preparation, and an election of 99 members from a slate of 198 candidates, the Assumption Parish Council was born. In the years to follow, the Assumption model served as a guide for other parishes as they moved to create their own Councils. Under Father McBride's direction, and with Council support and assistance, parish life bloomed.



Staff needs also grew and changed during this time. With enrollment in Catholic schools declining, more families required religious education and sacramental preparation outside of the daily school curriculum. Father McBride met this need by hiring the first director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) program. This gave the religious education of area public school students a primary, rather than secondary place in the life of the parish. (This position is now called Director of Religious Education [DRE]). Sister Maria Goretti DiZinno, CSJ, became the first parish social minister, laying the groundwork for Ladies of Charity. Father McBride helped with the education of ten deacons who served the parish in various capacities on their way to priestly ordination.

Post-Vatican II years were also post-Vietnam years, and found many refugee families seeking asylum in America. Answering that call, Father McBride opened the parish to a family from Cambodia and housed them in the house across the street from the rectory on North Jackson Avenue.

The youth of the parish participated in social activities through the Assumption Youth Organization (AYO), and families gathered for the first-ever North Park Parish Picnic, an outgrowth of the yearly post-festival gathering of festival volunteers. The festival and bingo, while providing social and community entertainment, also provided much needed funds for parish projects.

The underpinning of all of these spiritual and pastoral programs is a good working facility. Assisted by a very active Council Property Commission, Father McBride's years

saw many physical changes and renovations - the church interior was painted, new lighting added, an improved sound system installed, and a new tile roof installed. The church was made handicapped accessible, a new rectory was built on North Sprague Avenue, and the former rectory was demolished. The boilers were replaced in the "old school," and McGovern Hall received an update.

In 1985, Father McBride retired in ill health. His years as pastor allowed his successor to inherit a parish that was financially strong, physically maintained, and most importantly, spiritually growing and ready to accept the challenges of the future.