



Parish History

On July 10, 1966 the Most Reverend Vincent S. Waters, third Bishop of Raleigh, dedicated St. Raphael Church and thus formally established this parish to serve the rapidly expanding Catholic population of Wake County. Prior to that date, however, the foundation of the parish was made possible through the efforts of the late Monsignor Michael A. Carey.

Msgr. Carey, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes parish, saw the rapid growth taking place in north Raleigh and knew that a new parish would be needed. In 1964, he purchased 35 acres on which the future church was to be built. The Catholic Church Extension Society awarded a twenty thousand dollar grant to what was then a mission endeavor and asked that the parish be named in honor of St. Raphael the Archangel. As the new parish prepared to serve the north Raleigh area, Our Lady of Lourdes parish continued to give financial help, both by paying for the purchase of the property and in renovating the farmhouse for use as the priest's home and parish office. (See article on the history of the Carey-Beddingfield House).

One hundred and fifty families in north Raleigh celebrated the dedication of their church with Bishop Waters and their new pastor, Father John L. Richardson. It was a modern building, shining white amid the Carolina clay which was alternately dust or mud. Changes for the better came slowly—A parking lot, landscaping, trailers, the shrine. Sacraments were celebrated—Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. Fathers Alan Dash and James Waters were ordained to the

priesthood here in 1967. During this time of work and celebration, families joined together and, slowly, the community of St. Raphael grew stronger and larger. Father Richardson was transferred to Jacksonville, N.C. in 1973.

Monsignor Francis J. Murphy, JCD, was named second pastor. During his five year tenure the St. Raphael family continued to grow. Seton Hall was erected as a place for social and educational gatherings. In 1974 the Diocese celebrated its Golden Jubilee and our parish was honored by having its choir director invited to conduct the 350 voice diocesan choir of which the St. Raphael Choir was the nucleus. In 1975, St. Raphael joined with the other parishes of the diocese in welcoming the new Bishop of Raleigh, the Most Rev. F. Joseph Gossman. Like many of this parish, Bishop Gossman moved here from the north. And, like so many others, he learned to make this his home and came to know us and we him, as members of one large family.

When the parish celebrated its Tenth Anniversary in the Bicentennial Year, the 150 founding families had become 600 and the growth continued. Sister Shirley Simpson, CSC, came to St. Raphael this year as both the first non-ordained member of the ministry staff and as the first full-time Director of Religious Education, an office she would hold for the next eleven years.

In August, 1978, Father Gerald Lewis, Chancellor of the Diocese, was named third pastor of St. Raphael. He was joined in March, 1979 by Father Jerry Sherba, as Associate Pastor; in May by J.