

# Plans, Preparations and Contracts

In Onawa in 1944, after the parish debt had been paid, the parishioners made plans for a larger St. John's Church. The parish had grown considerably and the small church, built in 1914, lacked the necessary room to accommodate the parishioners conveniently. The fund for the new church grew steadily after that time, as the following figures disclose.

1944 .....	\$ 2,608.50
1945 .....	2,978.50
1946 .....	2,960.00
1947 .....	16,488.50
1948 .....	8,289.50
1949 .....	8,774.00
1950 .....	8,039.26
	(Rosary Society) 1,282.04
1951 .....	7,110.20
	(Rosary Society) 1,220.23

In 1951, part of the savings of \$7,110.20 was used to purchase the old Pike property, consisting of a lot and a half and adjoining the church property on the east. The purchase price was \$3,865.00 and the Parish site was increased to a total of five and one-half lots.

During 1952 another \$8,791.29 was added to the building fund savings and the total on hand for that purpose on January 1, 1953 was over \$62,000. Serious consideration was then given to the plans for the new church. Various architects were contacted for their proposals and a number of them offered sketches as well.

On June 24, 1953, a resolution was adopted to engage the services of William Beuttler, A. I. A., of Sioux City and ask him to work with the parishioners in preparing plans and specifications. The parish had on hand on that day approximately \$71,000 for the project.

Early in February of 1954 it was decided to take bids on the proposed church and the plans and specifications were submitted to a selected group of contractors. The bids were opened on April 27 in the office of the architect and the directors voted to the acceptance of the low bids, subject to the approval of the Most Reverend Bishop. His oral approval was given on April 29 and a resolution to this effect was adopted by vote of all the directors on May 4, 1954. Contracts were signed on May 8 with Weir Whitmore of Onawa, son of T. F. Whitmore who constructed the former church in 1913 and who had worked on that church, for the general construction in the amount of \$99,819.30; with Budden and Sons of Sioux City for the Heating and Plumbing for \$13,700.00; and with Maurice Bakke of Onawa for the electrical work for \$4,224.66. The building fund

savings on that day amounted to approximately \$90,000.00.

Plans called for the removal of the old church to another site on the parish property where it could be used temporarily while the new one was under construction. The last Mass in the old church on its permanent foundations was offered on May 19 and its removal was begun on that day. By May 23 the old church was in its temporary place and several of the parishioners then aided the pastor in restoring things to their proper places. On June 3 Mass was again offered in the old church. During this interval the parishioners had journeyed to Blencoe where they attended services in St. Bernard's Church.

Meanwhile excavation for the new church was begun on May 26, 1954. Pouring for the footings was begun on June 15 and the first part of the basement wall was poured on June 22. The first face brick did not arrive from the Vale, Missouri plant until August 4 and after that the work progressed satisfactorily. Delay was also encountered in the delivery of the stone and for this reason a cornerstone laying ceremony had to be postponed.

## Church Completed -- Description

The winter of 1954-55 was an ideal one for the building purposes and work continued throughout most of the winter. During the spring and summer of 1955 the finishing work on the interior and exterior was completed and the new church was ready for occupancy and for the first Mass on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 8, 1955.

Plans were then made for the dedication and blessing of the church, and for the blessing of the cornerstone. November 8, 1955, was the date chosen with the approval of the Most Reverend Bishop.

With the completion of the new church, the old frame building was dismantled by volunteers from both Onawa and Blencoe parishes, and the lumber sold at an auction sale on October 3. It netted approximately \$2,000.

Regarding the dedication we quote from the columns of the "Globe," our Diocesan paper: "Formal dedication and blessing of the new St. John's Catholic Church here will be held Tuesday morning, November 8, beginning at 9:30 a.m. His Excellency, the Most Reverend Joseph M. Mueller, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City, will officiate and also offer the Solemn Pontifical Mass after the blessing of the church.