

War, Growth and a New Church

War! It shocked and outraged the U.S. After President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor “a day of infamy” the nation declared war on the Empire of Japan. Thousands of men enlisted and women joined the workforce to assemble tanks, ships and airplanes in local factories. Life changed overnight, from the relative calm of the 1930s to the feverish war effort of the 40s.

St. Anne Parish got swept up in these changes, but Father Quain provided strong leadership, throughout the 40s, guiding the parish with a firm hand and a lively Irish wit. Meanwhile, the parish desperately needed a new church to house the growing number of families attending Mass. The 1950s were challenging times for St. Anne’s. It needed – and built – a school hall/gymnasium and the largest building project in its history: a new church. Sunday Masses were held upstairs and downstairs in the old church – it was literally bursting at the seams.

December 22, 1959 was a sad day for St. Anne’s – the day Msgr. Quain died. While the parish mourned the loss of its legendary pastor, the Archbishop – and the Holy Spirit – kept the “Light on the Hill” burning brightly with the arrival of a new pastor. Fr. Bernard Cremer was appointed to be the fourth pastor of St. Anne’s. He had big shoes to fill, but he wasted little time, cranking up a financial campaign to raise funds for a new church – which cost \$611,520.

With the help of 260 campaigners who called on every St. Anne household – and Fr. Cremer’s favorite saint, St. Polycarp – the funds were gathered. The pastor asked parishioners to remain at home until they were called on that afternoon. The campaign was a big success and work on the church began in April, 1962. Thirteen months later, the church was dedicated by Archbishop Connolly. Fr. Cremer would serve as St. Anne’s pastor for 13 years. Many parishioners have fond memories of him, often recalling his love of flowers. Roses planted on the east side of the rectory still bloom.

The 1960s erupted as a volcano of change, protest and challenge. It was the era of the Second Vatican Council, which profoundly transformed Catholicism. Pope John XXIII said it was called “to allow fresh air in.” By the end of The

Council, the church as many had known it had irrevocably changed. Gone was the Latin Mass, the priest faced the congregation and spoke in English. Gone were the Communion rail, and most cassocks and habits: Many priests and nuns began wearing contemporary clothes.

In 1973, after 12 years with Fr. Cremer, St. Anne Parish was assigned a new pastor, Fr. Richard Stohr. He was a “doer,” founding CYO in the Archdiocese, the Lazarus Day Center for the homeless and, after leaving St. Anne, the prison ministry at the reformatory in Monroe. He might best be remembered for introducing that most Catholic of institutions – Bingo. (Bingo was eventually abandoned after a parishioner with the evening’s receipts was shot on the school steps.)

Seattle was in the doldrums in the 70s, but this didn’t last long with homegrown companies such as Microsoft eventually transforming not only the city, but the way we communicated and conducted business. And St. Anne got caught up in the heady growth of the 80s that turned a sleepy port town into a bustling, thriving international metropolis.