

“The times, they are a-changin’”

St. Anne in the Sixties

If the 50s were a time of stability and relative tranquility, the 60s erupted as a volcano of change and challenge—to the status quo, to the established order, to the whole notion of what it meant to be an American Catholic. The repercussions of the decade are still being felt, not only in the United States, but also in the larger Catholic Church.

For American Catholics, the decade began auspiciously with the election of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the first Catholic U.S. President. The euphoria surrounding his election didn't last long, however. In 1963, an assassin's bullet killed the ebullient young president, causing the nation to mourn in a way it has done at few times in its history.

“I was on the way out of the courthouse in Snohomish County when I heard about it,” said parishioner Bob Lamb. “It was deeply disappointing; I always begrudged the fact that he really didn't get to serve his term as President.”

Parishioner Colleen Zamberlin was watching the parade in Dallas on television. “It was tragic,” she said. “Then watching Jack Ruby shoot Lee Harvey Oswald was very troubling.”

“I was stunned,” said parishioner Betty Ferguson. “But with five little kids to take care of, that's as far as it went.”

Despite JFK's death, the country remained prosperous and largely at peace. This encouraged people to have children, fueling the 60s baby boom, the largest generation in American history and one that has continued to dominate the life of the nation. Suddenly Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry

were out and The Beatles and the Rolling Stones were in. White shirts and skinny black ties gave way to love beads and bell bottom jeans.

Catholics could be forgiven for being confused. Rapid changes to American culture coincided with one of the most significant reorganizations of the Catholic Church: the Second Vatican Council.

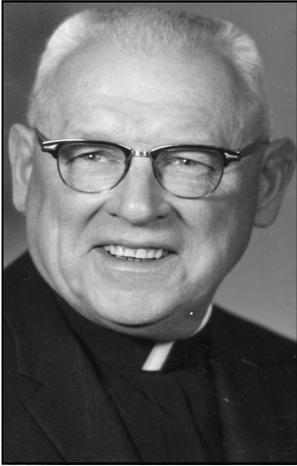


St. Peter's Basilica, where over 2500 bishops and theologians gathered for the opening session of Vatican Council II in 1962.

Vatican Council II: Opening the windows of the Church

If Americans felt that their world had been overturned in the 1960s, Catholics felt this even more so. In addition to changes in the social and economic standing of Catholics from the late 1950s onward, the Second Vatican Council profoundly transformed Catholicism.

Vatican II remains one of the most significant moments of change in the history of the Catholic Church. In explaining his reasons for calling the Council, Pope John XXIII described it as “opening the windows of the church to allow the fresh air in.” For some, it represented a moment of decline—when the Catholic Church lost its direction and became too interested in



*Fr. Bernard Cremer,
Pastor 1960 - 1972.*

conforming to the modern world. For others, the council represented a long overdue renewal of Catholic Christianity, opening the church up to the larger world.

The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, or Vatican II, was the twenty-first Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church. It opened under Pope John XXIII in 1962 and closed under Pope

Paul VI in 1965. At least four future pontiffs took part in the council's opening session: Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, who on succeeding Pope John XXIII took the name of Paul VI; Bishop Albino Luciani, the future Pope John Paul I; Bishop Karol Wojtyła, who became Pope John Paul II; and Father Joseph Ratzinger, who later became the current Pope Benedict XVI. (Raymond Hunthausen, who would serve as Archbishop of Seattle two decades later, was the youngest American bishop to attend the opening session.)

Adapting to change

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 was the communion rail: Catholics no longer knelt to receive the Eucharist; they received it standing. Gone were most cassocks and habits: Many priests and nuns eschewed them in favor of contemporary clothes.

“Danny was old enough to learn to be an altar boy,” said Betty Ferguson. “He was lucky since his older brothers (Tom and Peter) were required to learn the responses in Latin.”

Bob Lamb converted to Catholicism in 1954. “I was upset because this Church that never changed was changing,” he said. “In retrospect, it was probably for the best.”

In the midst of these changes, St. Anne parish continued to grow. With Fr. Cremer as pastor, St. Anne's settled into the 1960s following a period of expansion to keep pace with intense growth. Fr. Cremer planted the beautiful rose bushes that still grow in front of the rectory, and built a greenhouse in its backyard. He tended the parish as carefully as his garden.

“He won national prizes for his lilies,” said Colleen Zamberlin. “He used to give us plants. I still have a Christmas Cactus and a plant called Drunkard's Delight that I received from him.”

“He married us in 1960,” said Bob Lamb. “He had been a military chaplain in World War II so when we asked if my non-Catholic brother could be my best man, he said, ‘No problem.’ In the war they had to allow lots of exceptions.”

The abundance of vocations meant Father Cremer had an assistant. Father Sean Heneghan, who served under both Father Quain and Father Cremer, touched the lives of many parishioners.

Betty Ferguson remembers when she and Murray came to register in St. Anne's after moving from Magnolia. Father Heneghan asked them where they had moved from. They answered Magnolia. “But you're going the wrong way,” he said, with a



Catholic men gather at the communion rail during a Holy Name Society Mass, a monthly tradition in most Catholic parishes throughout the 1960s.

twinkle in his eye and his Irish accent. "When people start earning more money, they move from Queen Anne to Magnolia!"

The care and feeding of pastors

It was a fulltime job taking care of the priests and the rectory. Housekeeper Margaret McAlerney approached her work with energy and enthusiasm. For more than 44 years, Margaret served a long succession of priests.

Born in County Down, Margaret arrived from Ireland when she was 21. She worked six years in the Bon Marché's tea room and as a housekeeper in private homes before coming to St. Anne's rectory on November 5, 1926.

There was plenty of blarney spoken in the rectory in those years, as both the Irish-born pastor and his assistant had the strongest brogues that ever came out of Ireland. Margaret also spoke with a brogue, as did her brother, Barney McAlerney, who worked for a time as the church's sexton-janitor. Visiting the parish house was like watching a Hibernian parade.

There was often a spirited discussion taking place between Father Quain, assistants like the Rev. Maurice Galvin, a former hammer throw champion of Ireland, and Margaret and her brother, Barney. The rectory kitchen sounded like a County Cork wedding reception.

Margaret served cookies, a glass of milk or some other treat. Father Quain was equally hospitable, but chose a different beverage. After a baptism or wedding, Father Quain would pour parishioners a wee drop of the Irish—always "straight" with seldom a chaser, according to John J. Reddin, who profiled Margaret for the *Seattle Times*.

In those days, the rectory was at Second Avenue West and West Lee Street. In 1963, when the pre-

sent St. Anne Church was built, a new rectory was built at 1411 First Ave. W. It included a big modern kitchen which was Margaret's pride and joy. She loved conducting tours of the kitchen and its amply stocked pantry.

In 1970, she finally retired and moved to the Josephinum Residence at 1902 Second Avenue. After 44 years as housekeeper, she welcomed the change. "The food is good and I'm very happy,"

she said. "It's nice to be waited on for a change."

A shrinking city

Seattle continued to grow through the 60s but then began to lose population to the suburbs in the 70s. The city's population topped out at 565,000 in 1965, then declined as the Baby Boom faded and cheaper housing and open spaces attracted new residents to the outskirts of the city. The population of the rest of King County surpassed that of the City of Seattle by 1970.

The region's voters responded to the challenges and opportunities of growth by approving several

"Forward Thrust" bond programs in 1968 for new parks, fire stations, and a domed stadium (the Kingdome opened in 1976 and was imploded in 2001), but again rejected plans for rail transit. Voters later approved an all-bus system in 1972.

The city's growth suffered greatly when Congress canceled funding for a supersonic transport in 1969. This triggered the "Boeing Bust," and the company's payroll plummeted from 100,000 to 40,000 over the next two years. Seattle slipped into another deep recession which lasted until construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline began in 1974.

The rebellious spirit of the 60s bled into the 70s. Students staged demonstrations at the University of Washington and at other campuses in the area. The "rebellions" at St. Anne School were much milder.



Margaret McAlerney served as the rectory housekeeper for 44 years.

Sister Georgia was a St. Anne student in the 40s and taught there in the 60s and 70s, when her name was Sister Clare Christine. In the early 70s, she taught 8th grade in a basement classroom. She knew vaguely that there was a covering over the floor, but didn't think anything of it as there were desks covering the spot.

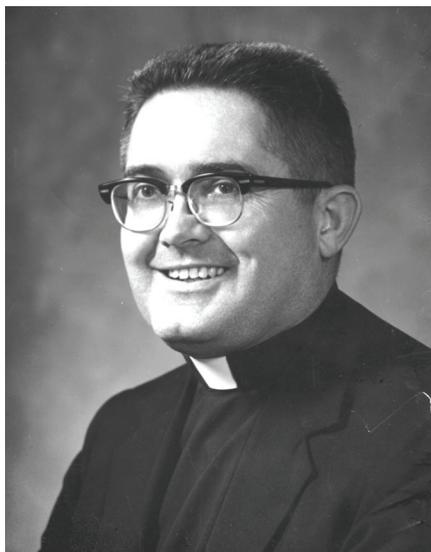
One morning, she arrived in the classroom to find the desks askew. After some questioning, several of the boys confessed that they had reentered the auditorium after a Boy Scout meeting the night before through an open window. They had heard from their big brothers that there was a tunnel from the back of the stage to the 8th grade classroom and they wanted to explore it. So, they crawled back into the auditorium, navigated the tunnel, and emerged into their classroom. They were so busy congratulating themselves they forgot to move the desks over the cover. Busted.

The school was an active and productive place. Some 7th grade girls designed and painted the front lower window of the school which won a trophy in the *Seattle Times* Christmas Trail Contest. The artists were Anne Pugel, Maura Pleas, Martha Camarda, Julie Passteylak and Mary Siderius.

In April 1973, the Parents' Club produced "The Skin of Our Teeth" by Thornton Wilder. Many present day parishioners were in the production: Dick Malloy, Joan Moeller, Paul Whaley (now deceased), Hugh McIntosh, Ed Moriarity, Pat Raney and Mary Forgette.

In 1973, after twelve years with Fr. Cremer, St. Anne Parish was assigned a new pastor, Fr. Richard Stohr. "Danny loved Fr. Stohr and always sat at the end of the pew on the main aisle," said Betty Ferguson. "Father would bop him on the head with whatever book he was carrying."

Bob Lamb headed the CYO sports program during Father



*Fr. Richard Stohr
Pastor, 1973 - 1975*

Stohr's time. "He was always very supportive of the program," Bob said.

"Whenever he saw Connie and me he'd always say, 'Mary had a little lamb.'"

Fr. Stohr was a "doer." He founded CYO in the Archdiocese, the Lazarus Day Center to provide food and shelter for the homeless and, after leaving St. Anne, the prison ministry at the reformatory in Monroe. In keeping with the spirit of the 70s, his work helped improve the outreach of the parish and archdiocese; but parishioners probably remember him best for introducing the most Catholic of institutions—Bingo. (Bingo was eventually abandoned at St. Anne after a parishioner with the evening's receipts was shot on the school steps.)

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St. Anne Parish and the rest of the city had to scramble to keep up with a whole new set of challenges as they got swept up in the heady growth of the 80s that turned a sleepy port town into a bustling, thriving international metropolis.