St. Cecilia School opened in 1909

The dream of Catholics in Broussard for a Catholic school of their own began to crystallize when Father Arthur Drossaerts was appointed pastor in 1904. He directed much of his energy to the securing of sisters.

In 1907 he received a promise from Father H. Constantinou, O.M.I., that the Sisters of Divine Providence would build a $15,000 building in Broussard, provided the people of Broussard would furnish one-half this amount.

Although Archbishop J.H. Blenk of New Orleans would not approve the agreement only if the buildings and property would belong to the church parish, the sisters agreed to this arrangement.

Father Drossaerts held meetings in Broussard to help the parish understand the need for financial support for the project, as well as the acquisition of property.

Property with a frontage of 145 feet by 270 feet was donated by A.L. Broussard and co-heirs, Helen Broussard, wife of Ulysses Bernard, Cecile Broussard, wife of Joseph P. Beaux, Carlos Broussard and Alzire Broussard.

A lot measuring 145 feet by 130 feet adjoining the donated land was purchased from Mrs. Clara Broussard, wife of D. Guillaume Bernard, in March, 1909.

With the approval of Archbishop Blenk, Father Drossaerts made formal application to the motherhouse for five Sisters of Divine Providence to staff the newly-built parochial school, the only one, in the strict sense of the word, in the archdiocese outside the city of New Orleans.

The foundation for the school building was laid in May, 1909 and the building was completed by August Guessel, contractor, by August 16, 1909.

The first faculty included Sister Mary Jane, superior; Sisters M. Eleanor, M. Angelina, M. Felix and M. Olympia. Because of increased enrollment, Sisters Louise and Arcadius arrived later.

There was an enrollment of 70 pupils at the first session on September 15, 1909, and it continued to increase until the enrollment totaled 198 at the end of the term.

Archbishop Blenk blessed the school, dedicated to the patronage of St. Cecilia on January 23, 1910.

During the pastorate of Father Louis Castel, who succeeded Father Drossaerts, the school debt was paid. The enrollment grew to 238 pupils with a staff of nine sisters, and two music teachers with 46 music pupils.

While Father M. Massebiau was pastor, the depression and bank closing made it necessary to change the school support from a tuition plan to the sponsorship of a community fair, which continues to this day.

A celebration of the 25th anniversary of the school was not held because of the

(Continued on page 9)

St. Cecilia School

(Continued from page 8) Depression and lack of funds, but parishioners rejoiced at the visit of Archbishop Drossaerts, now Ordinary of the San Antonio Archdiocese, who visited Broussard en route home from the funeral of Archbishop Shaw in New Orleans.

Father P.G. John Kemps, who succeeded Father Massebiau as pastor in 1933, continued to encourage parish support of the school. A community center and gym was constructed, and in 1950 a music building was built.

A sisters' home was purchased across the street from the school in 1957. Also in this year, a new kitchen and store rooms were attached to the gym. The school was reorganized as an elementary school in 1964-65, and a kindergarten added.

After the sisters withdrew in 1975, the first lay principal was Ellis Savoy. Brother Joseph Roy, F.S.C., was principal for the 1977-78 school year. Henry Landry has been principal since 1978.

Since Father Michael Jarrell succeeded Msgr. Kemps as pastor in 1976, a new cafeteria has been built and named for Msgr. Kemps, and the original school building totally renovated and a new gymnasium built.

A day at St. Cecilia

Waitin' for the bell
Messin' around

For quiet moments

Working out

Solo basketball