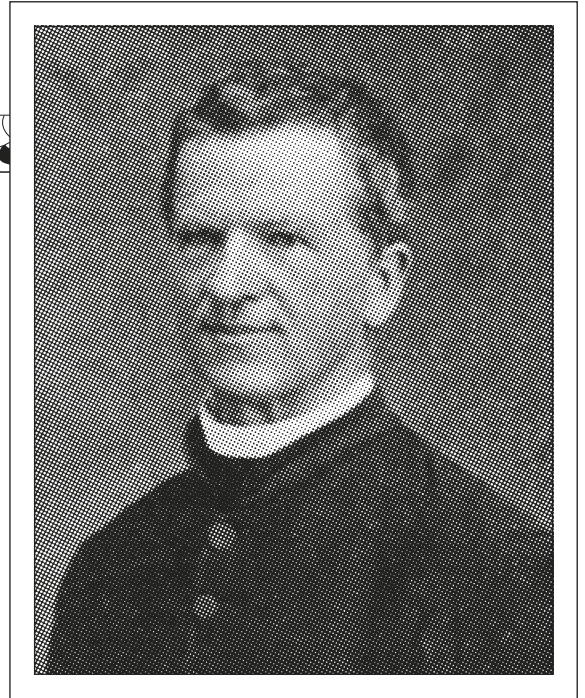




# 2007

## Father George Ziegler

1830-1897



Upon arrival in the fall of 1877, the first resident pastor of St. Francis parish, Father George Ziegler, left nothing undone to establish a Catholic school.

Demand for sisters far exceeded the supply. With trust in God, he wrote a desperate appeal to a priest friend in New Jersey, asking for sisters to instruct the youth in the frontier town of Traverse City. The letter was carried to the Dominican Sisters' Convent of the Holy Rosary in New York City.

In May of 1877, Mother Augustine Neuhierl had a deathbed vision in which she saw "a peninsula in the West dotted white with Dominican foundations." When her successor, Mother Hyacinth Scheininger, received Fr. Ziegler's letter she responded to what she recognized as the substance of the vision.

With \$1,000 from his own savings, Father Ziegler purchased a two story wood house on Union Street for the original school and convent. Mother Aquinata Fiegler arrived with Sisters Boniface, Angela, Camilla, Borromeo, and Martha on Thursday, October 25, 1877 and opened the school four days later.

The Lord had answered Father Ziegler's prayer by sending Mother Aquinata, a humble, prayerful woman who had unselfish charity for her Sisters,

unbounded confidence in God, and an intense love for the youth of the land.

Father encouraged the sisters and was a generous benefactor, along with former Bishop Ignatius Mrak, when they built their Holy Angels convent and boarding school on Tenth Street in 1883.

With an increase of families to his parish, Father built an addition to the original little frame church. With his own money, he erected a pastor's residence.

In addition to his arduous work in Traverse City, he attended to the spiritual needs of Catholics in Cadillac, Provemont, Leland, Suttons Bay, Northport, Empire, Frankfort, Arcadia, Hannah, Fife Lake, Mapleton, and Barker Creek. He built churches at five of these missions.

After working faithfully for eight years, his health failed and was obliged to retire. He entered the Franciscan order at St. Louis, Missouri. Father died at the age of 67 in 1897.

This self-sacrificing priest had set in motion the events that would have a profound influence on generations to come.