



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton

Joy in Christ
100 Jubilee
1912-2012

Jubilee 100 Biography Project

Biography of Boniface and Irene Markowski

Submitted by St. Michael-Resurrection Parish

Boniface (Barney) and Irene Markowski are longstanding members of St. Michael-Resurrection Parish. As individuals, partners in married life and as parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, faith-filled and faithful parishioners, they are people who have demonstrated a living faith that has extended over 56 years in this community. It is in the very fabric of their everyday lives. It is in their humility, steadiness and constancy that we celebrate these genuine cornerstones of faith within our faith community.

In September 1956 Boniface and Irene Markowski, with their three children, moved into the Terrace Heights area where a new church, St. Michael Archangel, had just recently been built. Space during liturgies was scarce and latecomers were obliged to sit in the choir loft.

As the population of Terrace Heights expanded, a new church was built in Gold Bar. Boniface and Irene remember fondly how fortunate they were to have so many priests within the community. During that time the family grew with the addition of two more sons. The boys served for many years as altar servers. Eventually the two parishes combined to form the present St. Michael-Resurrection Parish located on the corner of 50th Street and 106th Avenue. Some of their children were baptized in the parish and it is with great pride that all five of their children were married at St. Michael-Resurrection.

There are many wonderful memories over the course of 56 years. Barney and Irene can only laugh when they recall Fathers Baker, Bednar and Crough who, in good fun, referred to themselves as the BBC. All collections were counted after the last Sunday mass and the counter was also responsible for depositing the bag of money into a chute located in the bank wall. For those involved, the trip to the bank was always a cause for a little anxiety. For a period of time Barney and Irene enjoyed the company of a large number of parishioners who were from the Philippines. They were always struck by the strong sense of faith within this community and on many occasion the parish was hosted to a feast of their special food. For many years Barney and Irene enjoyed the good company of fellow parishioners while playing Military Whist. Laughter and camaraderie were an important part of their life within the parish.

Over the course of many years Boniface and Irene were involved in both parishes and in a variety of ministries and activities. As longstanding, active members of the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Woman's League they were part of a community that was a backbone to not only the parish but to the entire Archdiocese. Singing in the choir, working on parish council, being part of the counting crew and carrying out whatever was required in helping with funerals are only a few examples of their involvement.

Barney's skill with the violin enhanced liturgical music and his skills in woodworking and carpentry assured that the church building had quality cupboards and cabinets. Barney will tell you that he is serving his sixth Archbishop, and one of his fondest memories was helping to organize the building of the nativity scene that was erected at Hawrelak Park. This nativity scene is now housed at City Hall. In her own words Irene clearly articulates what ministry means to her and her husband: "It is not what an individual does. It is about working together. It is about companionship. It is about working side by side with other people. This is what parish life is all about."

As a relatively new member to the parish, I see Barney and Irene as steady, warm and inviting porch lights. They are a welcoming presence, who exude hospitality. They spread the loving light of Christ through every smile, through every double handed grasp of their handshake and through the steady eye contact with each greeting. To me Barney and Irene embody the importance of personal connection and building relationships within the parish community.

When asked to be representatives of the parish for this Jubilee initiative they humbly deferred to all the others who they felt, in their words "were more deserving" -- those more involved in Pastoral Care, Social Justice activities, Parish Council, Liturgical Planning. This humility and gentleness is what makes Barney and Irene so special.

Along with Barney and Irene Markowski, we celebrate all other longstanding members of St. Michael-Resurrection Parish. Each of these individuals, with their unique gifts, have left a legacy to our parish. These longstanding members built, with their dedication of time and talent, their own unique cornerstone on which this parish is built. We sincerely thank Boniface and Irene and all the other living and breathing cornerstones of St. Michael-Resurrection Parish.