

# BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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## The Rev. John Castaldi 1834-1895

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**M**onsignor John Castaldi faithfully served as priest of St. Joseph's Church in Albion for 33 years. It was during his pastorate that the congregation grew in size and physical properties were greatly expanded.

Father Castaldi was born at Piacanza, Italy, Nov. 28, 1834, and was the son of a merchant.

At the age of 15 he was sent to college and finished his education at the Propaganda in Genoa.

He entered the priesthood and came to Buffalo in 1859, becoming assistant priest at the cathedral.

Then he went to Corning and Batavia, and was appointed to the Albion church in January, 1862, succeeding Father Stevens, and during his pastorate the church enjoyed great prosperity, gaining nearly 1,000 members and about 800 communicants.

He also attended the parish at Holley for about 13 years.

During the first year of his ministry the pastoral residence, just north of the church on North Main Street was built and occupied by him until 1870, when the Sisters of Mercy came here and took the house as a convent.

In 1876 the English property was bought at a cost of \$10,000 and this large stucco house on the west side of North Main Street was occupied as a convent. Later the Adler house was purchased as a pastoral residence.

In 1870 the parochial school



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building was erected on North Main Street at a cost of \$3,000 and two years later it was enlarged at a cost of \$1,500. The church was several times enlarged and repaired.

In 1887 Father Castaldi celebrated his silver jubilee — the 25th anniversary of his settlement as a priest here — and he then became irrefragable except with his own consent.

In 1868 he made a visit to Rome, and again in 1881 and 1887 he joined Bishop Ryan in a trip to the Holy Land. While in Jerusalem, on March 26, of that year, he and the bishop were made Knights of the Holy Sepulcher. Father Castaldi also received the title of monsignor from the Pope at Rome.

In 1874 Father Castaldi bought and laid out the Catholic cemetery on Brown Road, known as Holy Cross, containing 26 acres.

When the present St. Joseph's Church was built during the mid 1890's, a large stained glass window showing St. John the Baptist was dedicated in Father Castaldi's memory.