



Rev. Charles Robert Dautremont
Sacred Heart's Eighth Pastor
1988—1996

Charles Robert Dautremont was born on April 17, 1934 in East Grand Rapids, MI to Joseph Loras Dautremont and Gail (Branch) Dautremont. He had one brother, Joseph, and three sisters, Margaret, Maureen and Nancy. As a child growing up with his siblings, his parents taught them archery skills. Charles and his brothers became expert archers and won many competitions. He delivered newspapers, worked in construction and was a seasonal mail carrier prior to his priesthood.

He attended St. Francis Xavier grade school as a child. His education for the priesthood included St. Joseph's Seminary in Grand Rapids, Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and North American College in Rome, Italy. He was ordained a priest at the North American College chapel in Rome on December 18, 1960 by Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor.

In September 1970 he went to Rome to pursue studies in Theology and to act as the official Procurator for the Diocese of Grand Rapids. After graduate study in Theology at Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, Fr. Charles received his Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) degree. The STL degree is a two-year Roman Catholic ecclesiastical degree in advanced theological study, beyond the Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB) and Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. The STL degree is for further theological expertise for service in religious communities and dioceses, and for teaching in higher education, diocesan schools and seminaries. In October 1971 he became a resident at St. Joseph Seminary in Grand Rapids.

He was appointed to additional assignments serving several parishes. From October 1971 to June 1981 he was appointed Director of the Department of Theological and Pastoral Services, and served as liaison with other areas and projects at the Michigan Catholic Conference and St. John's Seminary. He was the diocesan ecumenical officer and diocesan theologian. In October 1979 he was appointed to the newly established Presbyterial Council. In May 1982 he was appointed pro-synodal Judge of Tribunal. Finally, in August 1988 he was appointed Director of the Ecumenical Office.

During Father Charles' tenure at Sacred Heart:

- The church was remodeled.
- Through the help of the Catholic Human Development Office, Sacred Heart Parish sponsored their first Polish refugees in 1989. Irena Bieniecka and her daughter, Kamila, first escaped Poland in 1987 and lived in refugee camps in Italy for two years waiting for sponsorship to the United States. Then in August 1989, Father Charles gave his blessing to sponsor them. Sacred Heart Parish paid for the airfare, found the family an apartment in the city and offered them the support of the congregation. The parish furnished the apartment with furniture, kitchen utensils, linens, etc. Money was given to them to live on until Irena could find a job. She was able to get a job as a physical therapy aide at Muskegon General Hospital. Free tuition was given to her daughter who was nine years old and in the third grade at Sacred Heart School. Mrs. Bieniecka wanted her daughter to live in freedom, and when they had the opportunity to escape Poland, she had to leave her husband behind who was on constant watch by the Communists and arrested each time he tried to escape.
- In 1991 Fr. Dautremont succeeded in getting the parish out of debt.
- He was known for his theological homilies. He was a voracious reader and became an authority on the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and Theology. The theological readings became part of his homilies and evangelization to others.

Fr. Charles loved to travel with friends or alone. He visited every National Park in the U.S. He also traveled overseas to many foreign countries, such as Turkey, Israel, and China.

Priesthood Assignments:

August 1961	Assistant Pastor, Sacred Heart Church, Mount Pleasant, MI
September 1964	Assistant Pastor, Blessed Sacrament Church, Grand Rapids, MI
February 1972	Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Weare & St. Vincent Church, Pentwater
February 1974	Pastor, St. Edward Church, Lake Odessa
June 1978	Pastor, St. Francis Xavier Church, Chester
October 1980	Pastor, St. Joseph Church, Belding & St. Mary, Miriam
June 1988	Pastor, Sacred Heart Church, Muskegon Heights
July 1996	Pastor, St. Dominic Church, Wyoming
September 30, 2016	Retired to senior priest status

Rev. Dautremont passed away on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, at the age of 84 while recuperating from heart surgery at Meijer Heart Center in Grand Rapids. He is buried in Resurrection Cemetery, Wyoming, MI.