

119 YEAR OLD CHURCH HOLDS REUNION TODAY

Fete Will Observe Road Opening

Old St. James church, built in 1833 where the Des Plaines and Sag river valleys meet near Lemont, will be the scene of a reunion today of former members and descendants of persons laid to rest in the cemetery surrounding it.

Mass will be said at noon by the Rev. Raymond Ploszynski, pastor, in the original stone church at the edge of Argonne forest preserve. Afterwards, the cutting of a ribbon will mark the opening of a road leading from Archer av. to the top of the promontory where the church stands. The road has been newly blacktopped with funds raised at the annual parish picnic and reunion.

Church to Serve Dinner

The church's Altar and Rosary society will serve a country style roast beef dinner after the ceremonies. Mrs. Victoria Borkvec is president.

Homecoming picnics have been held for nearly 50 years on the first Sunday in August, the pastor said. This year there will be booths set up around the parish hall at the foot of the hill for games and sale of needlework and other articles. A children's carnival ride also is planned by the arrangements committee, headed by Bob Crotzer and Mrs. Ann Dalman.

The committee has invited all old-timers to attend the event. Nonagenarians among them include John Claffy, Henry Koller, Peter Ruppert, Matt Jungles, and Michael Zimmer.

Fort on Site in 1650

Early explorers and missionaries first said mass upon the hill where St. James church stands, the pastor said. In 1650, he said, a fort was built on the site by Frenchmen who befriended Indians in the area.

The old church, which seats 250, remains unchanged except for the addition of flying buttresses. The parish's 125 families opened a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Forest nearby on Palm Sunday this year. Its walls are of black walnut and knotty pine.