

# The Windows of St. Michael's

*A brief history about those who donated the stained glass windows of St. Michael's, or in whose memory they were given.*

## Given by: The Ladies Catholic Benevolent Association (LCBA)



The Ladies Catholic Benevolent Association (LCBA) was established in St. Michael parish around the turn of the century. It was founded in 1890 in Titusville, Pennsylvania, and probably appeared in our area about 1900. The LCBA was established by a group of Catholic ladies as a mutual benefit or aid society to provide for the support and financial security of "practical Roman Catholic women." It was, in fact, only the second such ladies society in the United States. Like the Knights of Columbus which was founded in 1882 in New Haven by Rev. Michael McGivney, it was to prove highly successful in giving support and insurance to multitudes of Catholics, particularly immigrants.

It's likely that sometime in the early 1900s organizers presented the concept from the pulpit at St. Michael's, as they did in parishes throughout the country. Evidence of the great need for this type of society and testament to their success can be seen in the fact that within 15 to 20 years of being established, nearly 120,000 Catholic women had become members. And they already had earned a reputation as a first-class insurance organization.

In St. Michael parish the LCBA served as a social group for ladies, in particular the Irish immigrant women. It was a place where they could share experiences, trials and tribulations, stories of the "home country," and provide mutual support for each other. Although it's questionable how much financial insurance the St. Michael group gave to our ladies, it appears they may have provided some degree of burial insurance. Whenever I asked my immigrant Irish grandmother why she belonged to the LCBA she said, "Because they're the folks who will bury me when the good Lord takes me home!"

In the 1970s membership was opened to both women and men as well as non-Catholic Christians, and it was renamed Loyal Christian Benefit Association to reflect that change. However, it's not likely it was still active in the parish at that time.

—Larry O'Keefe