

## HISTORY OF SAINT PIUS CHURCH



Saint Pius Church was founded in October 1910. The church, located at Borden and Dreman Avenues, was completed in April 1927.

### ***Catholic Telegraph* article March 25, 1977**

Parishioners and other friends of St. Pius Parish, South Cumminsville, Cincinnati, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the parish church Sunday, March 27, with Mass at 11:30 a.m.

Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin will preside at the jubilee celebration, which also will include a reception and lunch at St. Pius School. Father Caesar Mazzolari of the Verona Fathers is pastor of the 66-year-old parish, whose first church was built in 1911. Ground for the present church was broken in 1925 under the supervision of Father John H. Berning, who served as pastor of St. Pius for more than 50 years.

The church, which cost a little more than

\$250,000, was dedicated April 24, 1927, by Archbishop John T. McNicholas. The homily was preached by Father Urban Vehr, rector of St. Mary Seminary, who later became the Archbishop of Denver. Church furnishings cost an additional \$63,000.

Priests of the Verona Fathers, whose U.S. headquarters is at the Sacred Heart Seminary, Forestville, have administered St. Pius for the past four years. The church is at Dreman and Borden Avenue near the northern end of Beekman Street.



## HISTORY OF SAINT PIUS CHURCH GOOD NEWS TRAVELS IN SONG AND DANCE

Catholic Telegraph Article July 24, 1981

Good News is making the rounds in Cincinnati in a van carrying 20 teenage girls and a sound system. The good news, not surprisingly, is the Gospel and it is conveyed in song and dance by St. Pius Parish Choir, the Children of Joy. Each Thursday evening through the summer the group takes the Gospel into parish neighborhoods as the "Good News on Wheels." Last summer Verne Kemper and Michelle Luttenegger, directors of the Children of Joy, launched the weekly forays into the South Cumminsville area of Cincinnati.

The idea, according to Ms. Kemper, was to spread young, musical street ministry throughout the parish. But doing that well and with the right "spirit" involves more than getting together at the last minute to sing and dance. "We are family, we're not just going out to work," she declared in a recent interview with the *Telegraph*.



To achieve that sense of family the group gathers at St. Pius' rectory beginning at two o'clock each Thursday afternoon for five hours of rehearsal, prayer, dinner and fun before setting out. The hours together bring the girls close to each other and give depth to what they present to the public, Ms. Kemper explained. Last week the destination was the Fay Apartments complex. The arrival of the Good News was announced throughout the neighborhood over the van's public address system shortly after 7:00 p.m. As the crew from St. Pius set up the outdoor sound system, the singers and dancers blocked out their positions on the empty lot-stage as near-

by residents warily approached. Some who remembered last year's performance brought along lawn chairs.

The Good News members wore bright red tunics with the group's name stenciled in black letters. They faced the growing crowd of curious onlookers and began to sing gospel melodies *a cappella*. Ms. Luttenegger read from the New Testament as the girls dramatized the story of the woman who was to be stoned to death for committing adultery. At the conclusion of the reading the audience applauded. The scene was disrupted briefly so the van could be moved at the request of police who explained somewhat apologetically to Comboni Father Caesar Mazzolari that they were responding to a complaint. "If somebody doesn't like us being here we won't stay long. Just one more song," the St. Pius pastor assured them.

By this time the crowd was responding warmly to the Good News presentation. Most of them had joined into the singing and clapping under Ms. Kemper's direction. "It is always like this," Father Mazzolari remarked as he observed the attentive expressions of the audience. To the obvious disappointment of the listeners, the Good News ended and collected its microphones and speakers preparing to leave when one of the neighbors invited everyone into her home for popcorn and Kool-Aid.

This, too, is part of the Good News, Ms. Kemper noted. "It's when we hang around afterwards to share and laugh with the community that we know the Lord has touched them." And that she added, is the goal of choir "to fill them with the joy of the Lord."

## HISTORY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC CHURCH – DAYTON

[Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* archives- unknown author]

The parish of St. John the Baptist was begun in 1843 under Rev. Father George J. Franz, then assistant at the Emmanuel Church. Most of the parishioners were of German extraction and it was for this reason considered at German parish. During the administration the present nine room brick building used as the Rectory was built. The original church which was of frame construction was replaced by the Rev. Boniface Luebbermann by a combination Church and School.

In 1913, the present brick church was constructed by Father George Franz, and in 1924 under Rev. Father George A. Steinkamp there was added the modern brick school building providing room for classes, entertainment, recreation and all other parish needs.

During the World War when so many manufacturing concerns imported laborers from the South the West Side more than doubled its colored population. As a result the white folks moved out of the neighborhood and the membership of St. John's dwindled so fast that the burden of support became too heavy to carry.

Realizing in this situation a golden opportunity to establish a Catholic Negro Mission, His Grace Most Rev. Archbishop McNicholas contacted the Holy Ghost Fathers whose chief work is among the Colored population and invited them to take charge of the new project.

Rev. Edward A. Malloy, C.S.S.p. was appointed pastor on September 5, 1928, and in October of the same year, Father Henry J. Thessing C.S.S.p. took up his position as assistant to Father Malloy. Unlike so many missions which must be founded with practically a handful of members and no buildings, St. John's Mission as a Negro Parish was comprised with a complete plant and a goodly number of parishioners. Not only did the Colored members prove themselves staunch supporters of their newly acquired Mission, but many of their white brethren continued faithful thus contributing greatly to the success of the work.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who had been in charge of the school since the beginning continued teaching. When in September 1929 the white children were excluded from the school, the enrollment was so small that it was thought advisable to begin with only the four lower grades. Only two Sisters were required that year, but each year a new grade was added and additional Sisters put on the teaching staff. At present, January 1940, there are 186 pupils with four Sisters of Notre Dame doing the teaching.



## PARISHES THAT SERVE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

The parish has grown slowly but consistently and although the white membership has steadily declined, we still retain some very staunch and faithful old timers and have added a goodly number of splendid converts.

The deep interest of our Archbishop in the souls of our Colored people and his sympathetic cooperation has helped in the exigencies of the work have set an example for all his subjects.

The excellent good will of true and spiritual Christian charity shown by the priest and people of the other parishes of Dayton, who have not only contributed much to the success of the Mission spirituality but made it possible the payment of operating expenses. The Federation of Catholic P.T.A. has pledged their loyal support and are providing themselves as an outstanding benefactor.

Although 10 years old, as a distinct Colored Parish, St. John's has all the societies, devotions, liturgical and social functions usually found in any organized parish. The standard of education and training is as high as that of any other Catholic parochial or public school in the city and credit goes to the Sisters who have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to make their pupils good Christians and citizens.

Judging from the first 10 years, we feel sure that with the continued good will, cooperation, and support of our own members and all Catholics of Dayton, we shall be blessed with ever greater success both spiritually and materially.

## **HISTORY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH — DAYTON DAYTON'S ST. JOHN CHURCH CLOSED IN '63, STILL SERVES**

Taken from Catholic Telegraph - November 28, 1968

Two "inner-city" parishes and a community center in Dayton received funds this week from the annual distribution of interest earned on the proceeds of the sale of Dayton's old St. John property and buildings, which took place in 1963.

St. James Parish, which was consolidated with St. John's several months before the sale, and Resurrection Parish were granted \$3,000 each and the Dakota Street Mission Center received \$2,800.

Recommendations for the distribution of interest were made by a committee that includes Father James H. Garland, Dayton Director of Catholic Charities; Father Walter C. Ahr, pastor of Resurrection Parish; and Father Joseph A. Brennan, C.S.Sp., administrator of St. James.

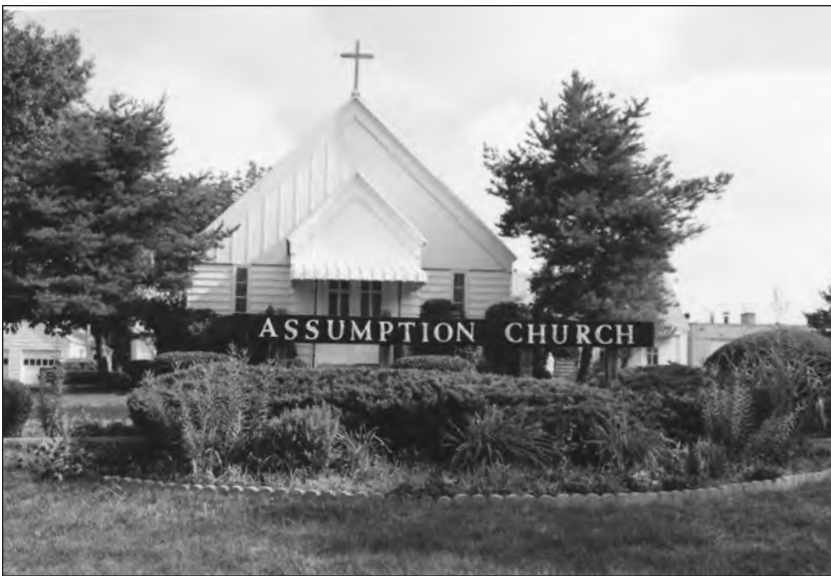
The two parishes, it was reported, will use the funds for their share of high school tuition for students in their parishes and "to the extent needed and possible" for high school scholarships.

The St. John property and buildings were purchased by the City of Dayton because they stood in the way of construction of Interstate 75. At the same time the city bought the nearby St. Joseph Community Center to expand the city's public school and social service facilities in the Edgemont Area.

## **HISTORY OF ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH – DAYTON SILVER JUBILEE TO BE CELEBRATED BY DAYTON PARISH**

[Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* – Nov. 1, 1974]

Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin will officiate at Mass in Assumption Church 3805 King's Highway, Dayton, Sunday, November 10, at 12:15 p.m. to mark the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the northwest Dayton parish. Among the concelebrants of the Jubilee Mass will be Father Edward F. Lawler, pastor of Assumption. A luncheon in the parish school will follow the Mass, and Archbishop Bernardin will meet parishioners after the celebration.



Archbishop John T. McNicholas first announced the plans for a parish in the Dayton View section in 1948. Father Urban R. Koenig was appointed first pastor of the new parish, and the first Masses were celebrated in a place called Mickey's barn adjacent to the church grounds.

A church was built under the direction of the late Dominican Brother Bertrand Bailey and parishioners worshipped there for the first time November 20, 1949. Bishop George J. Rehring officiated at the dedication of the church July 9,

1950.

Sisters of the Precious Blood have been in charge of the school since the first classes were held – September 17, 1951, and the present convent was built in 1961. Assumption is a part of the Assumption- St. Agnes Consolidated Elementary School and of the Dayton Catholic middle School.

The anniversary committee of Assumption Parish expressed its hope that former parishioners would return for the jubilee Mass and luncheon. Information about the Nov. 10 celebration is available at 277-1503.

The committee also noted the contribution of Father Koenig, now pastor of St. Louis Church, North Star, to the growth and development of Assumption Parish where he served until 1972.



### **ASSUMPTION COUNCIL PLEDGES PROMOTION OF RACIAL EQUALITY**

[Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* – May 9, 1968]

A pledge to “seek opportunities to further full and equal human rights for all men” was made by Assumption Parish Council, Dayton, in a statement made public last week. The council headed by John Cotter, opposed discrimination in any form. The text of the statement is as follows:

“The Assumption Parish Council publicly and firmly attests to its belief in the principle of equal opportunity for all men without regard to race, color, religious beliefs or condition of life. The council declares itself against poverty in any form; against bigotry toward any people or race; against discrimination in employment, housing, education, church membership, or school attendance; and pledges itself to actively seek opportunities to further full equal human rights for all men. The council reaffirms the fact that Assumption Church, School and all associated programs shall not be closed to any person because of race or color, and urges the entire parish as the People of God to support the principles of equality, charity and brotherhood to all people, for surely, the man says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness still.”



## THE HISTORY OF SAINT JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAYTON

Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* – November 27, 1969



St. James Parish, Dayton, will celebrate its 50th Anniversary Mass Sunday, December 7, with a Mass at 11 a.m. offered by Archbishop Paul F. Leibold, according to an announcement by Father Joseph A. Brennan C.S.Sq., who is in charge of the parish. The sermon will be given by Father Thomas Fortkamp, C.P.P.s., chaplain at St. Elizabeth Medical Center. Singing at the Mass will be the St. James Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Elizabeth Lawson.

Fr. Brennan has been administrator at St. James' since October 1968. A priest from Biafra doing graduate work at the University of Dayton, Father Marcellinus Ibe, is in residence in the parish.

St. James Parish was established in 1919, with Father Joseph N. Kock as pastor. Formation of the parish came as the result of the work of Edgemont Catholic Church and School Society, organized in 1918 for the explicit purpose of promoting the proposal for parish and school facilities, in an area known as South Edgemont. John C. Weaver became chairman of the committee backing the proposal for a new parish. Father Henry Stich, chaplain at St. Elizabeth Hospital was enlisted to aid the group.

At Father Stich's suggestion, the committee paid \$100 for the Knights of Columbus hut at Wilbur Wright Field. The building had been a part of the K. of C. War Activities Program. Property was purchased at the corner of Cincinnati Street and Heck Avenue, for \$8,650. Parishioners themselves dismantled, moved, and rebuilt the hut as the first parish church. Father Stich celebrated the first Mass in the church on August 24, 1919. Ten days later, the first pastor was appointed.

Plans for a building program were immediately developed. The school was dedicated September 26, 1921. On April 21, 1923, an addition to the school, to be used for church purposes was dedicated. The church-school project cost \$90,000. A rectory was built in 1926. The original plan was to eventually convert the church addition into a school auditorium, but this never was carried out.

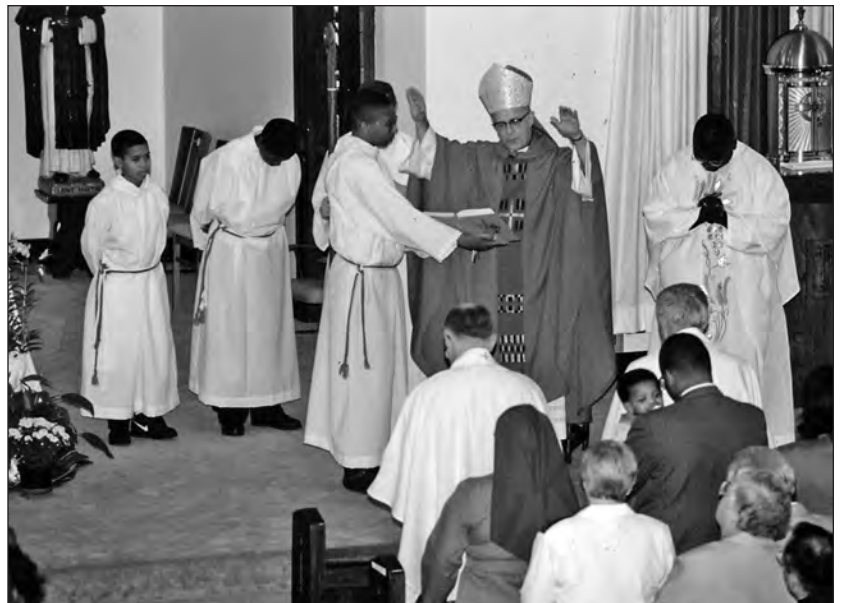


Father Lawrence G. Wessel was pastor from 1937 until his death in 1964. At that time, the parish was placed under the care of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Father Paul Lippert, C.S.S.p., was named administrator. Father Brennan succeeded Father Lippert. Father Lippert had been in charge of St. John Parish, which in 1964 consolidated with St. James'. The facilities of St. John's in the path of new freeway construction, were razed.



Property comprised of two lots and a house adjacent to St. James' were purchased by the parish in 1967 from the estate of an early member of the parish. The parish has an outdoor shrine to Our Lady of Fatima. The statue of Our Lady was created by the Dayton sculptor, Robert Koepnic at the Dayton Art Institute.

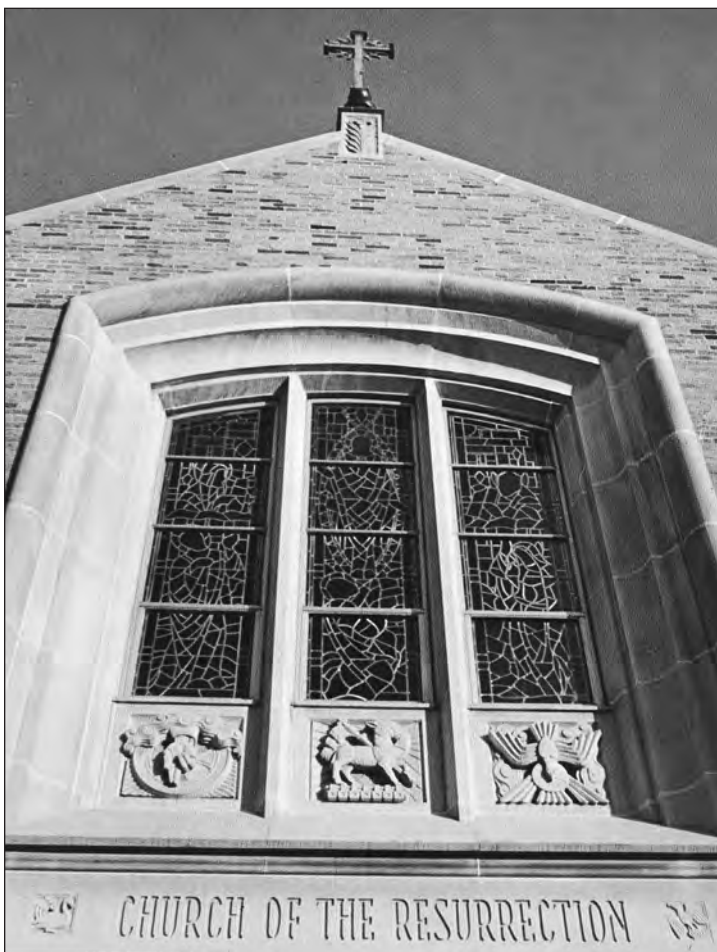
Father Brennan sees St. James School as an important source of black leadership both in the Church and in the Dayton community in the years ahead. There are 167 children in St. James School, including 38 from other parishes in the open enrollment program, a plan to help break down the defacto segregation in Dayton Parochial Schools. There are also 30 children who are attending Catholic schools in a voluntary exchange program, a plan permitting Negro youngsters to attend the parochial school of their choice.



## HISTORY OF RESURRECTION CHURCH

Resurrection Church was founded in April 1920 with the present church at 138 Gramont Avenue completed in September 1943.

Resurrection Parish, Dayton, celebrated its Golden Jubilee Sunday, October 25, 1970, with a Mass in the church followed by an open house in the school and church. The celebrant of the mass was Archbishop Paul F. Leibold. In attendance, in addition to the pastor, Father Edward F. Conlon, and the assistant pastor, Father Harry J. Gerdes, were members of the clergy who formerly served the parish, religious, parishioners and former parishioners.



An \$8,000 program of renovations was completed in time for the 50th anniversary observance. Renovations included the placing of the symbols of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism in the front of the church, refurbishing of the sanctuary, an addition of a “crying room,” a two-Room addition to the rectory, painting of the interior of the convent and the school, acquisition of articles for the school and playground and a complete remodeling of the school cafeteria.

At that time Resurrection had about 600 families. There were 257 children in the parish school and 100 enrolled in CCD classes. School principal was Sister Ermelinda Burgei, C.P.P.S.

Before the establishment of the parish, many Catholics in West Dayton were attending Mass at the National Military Home, known now as the Veterans Administration Center. The chaplain at the home, Father Bernard Kuhlman, helped Catholics of the community realize their dream of a new parish. He said the first mass on Easter Sunday, 1920, in the Frank Reisinger funeral

parlor. Parishioners and both the date and the place for the mass suggested the name of the new parish.

The first pastor of Resurrection was Father Henry Stich. He purchased a property on Third and Kilmer streets for use as both a church and parish house. At this location, Resurrection school was also established. Two rooms in the rear of the building were converted into classrooms. Two Sisters instructed 85 pupils in seven grades. Pews from an old church were sawed in half to provide seating for the children, four at a desk. One of the two nuns, Sister Mary Benedicta, is expected to be on hand for the anniversary celebration Sunday.



Father Stich served until 1922, when he was replaced by Father Schnuck. During Father Schnuck's pastorate, a property was acquired on Gramont Street, then called Church Street, and on this site was started the present parish plant. Among other pastors were Father George Steinkamp, Father John Schawe, Father John P. Stedman, Father James Haley, Father Cornelius Berning, Father Vincent Robers and Father Walter Ahr.

The financial depression of the 1930s imposed many hardships on parishioners, but they managed to keep their parish alive. Father Stedman, who led the parish during the period of great financial stress, was able in the early 1940s to add to the school and to build a new parish church. Resurrection parishioners always have had a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Block rosary began in the parish in 1950, and two years later a replica of the Grotto of Lourdes was erected at the parish.



## HISTORY OF RESURRECTION CHURCH



**Parishioners participated in a 1988 Lenten revival at Resurrection Church above. At left, the combined choir of St. James and Resurrection parishes raised a joyful noise — frequently and with great spirit — during the celebration of the final Mass at St. James.**

## **THE HISTORY OF SAINT BENEDICT THE MOOR CATHOLIC CHURCH THE VISION AND THE VICTORY – A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The construction of St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church is analogous to the American dream, the rite of passage of a people. The story of how this new church became a reality is the bedrock background of most American drama with the hopes, the struggles, and the perseverance endured by this faith community.

St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church is the congregational repository of three Catholic churches in the Dayton Community: St. John the Baptist, St. James and Resurrection of Our Lord. St. John the Baptist was founded in 1894, St. James in 1919 and Resurrection of Our Lord in 1920. St. John was the first to embrace African-Americans as they migrated from the South to the Dayton area. In the meantime, Resurrection Parish was working diligently to find a home in response to the growing number of parish families in the western part of Dayton. St. James Catholic Church was striving to meet the needs of people in the Edgemont area of Dayton.



In the early 1920's, Resurrection of Our Lord obtained property in the area of West Third and Kilmer Streets where a church and rectory were constructed. Two rooms in the rear served as the school. The first Mass celebrated at Resurrection took place on Easter Sunday, hence the name of the church. Two years later the property on Gramont was acquired and the current church and school were built.

Meanwhile, in response to the growing Catholic African-American Community of St. John's, the Holy Ghost Fathers, known for their work in such communities, were assigned to the parish in the late 1920's to service what was then called "mission community." The Holy Ghost Fathers made great strides and took pride in itself, in creating by its evangelistic efforts, a parish community in the surrounding neighborhood.

In the Edgemont area of Dayton, St. James Catholic Church was erected on land donated by the grandfather of our current Montgomery County Prosecutor, Matt Heck. Mr. Heck's distant cousin, a Glaser, was the first to wed in the new church with another relative, Leo B. Glaser, as one of the founding fathers.

With the onset of the 1950's and an effort to connect the hinterlands of America with an interstate network of highway systems, change challenged old established neighborhoods. St. John Catholic Church was lost to "progress" and was demolished in 1963 to make way for the new interstate highway construction program (Interstate 75 and U.S. State Route 35). Parishioners of St. John transferred their memberships either to St. James Catholic Church or to Resurrection

of Our Lord. Throughout all the changes, the Holy Ghost Fathers remained steadfast and committed to the St. James Parish community.

The 1960's whisked in more changes with integration and Vatican II. With integration, neighborhoods changed from predominantly Caucasian to predominantly African-American.

With Vatican II, the newly required changes caused a split among the parish faithful impacting many families. It was then that the prayer of one day reuniting as a people of God was born.

Through the years both parishes, St. James and Resurrection, persevered, nurturing their surrounding communities with schools for the children and on-going outreach ministries that brought many to the faith and provided spiritual support during challenging times. Many of those programs and activities exist today through such organizations as the Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver, the Altar Rosary Societies, Cursillo Retreats, Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantries, and the Health Care Ministries among others. Also a source of pride was the production of two priests from the St. James parish: Fr. Martin Curtis and Fr. Joseph Davis.

Two priests who rest in the hearts and minds of Resurrection's parishioners are Fr. William Schiesl and Fr. Edward Conlon. Fr. Bill left the parish and went to Over the Rhine Neighborhood in Cincinnati to serve the poor and dispossessed. Fr. Conlon realized his lifetime dream of serving as a missionary priest in Grenada, West Indies.

At St. James, during the tenure of its first black priest, Father Egbert Figaro, the opportunity to construct a new parish in the area of what is now the Job Corp Center on Germantown Street became available and a building campaign was launched. Concern for the dwindling number of priests and the growing costs of maintaining parish campuses in Archdioceses across the nation collided with the optimism of rebuilding. As a result, faith communities began to develop strategies that would ultimately require consolidation and closure of parishes. The impact of these activities began with the sharing of priests. For the St. James and Resurrection Parish Communities, it was in the person of Father Freddy Washington in 1994. In 1999, the two communities reunited at one location at Resurrection Church, 130 Gramont Avenue and combined the parishes' names to St. James/Resurrection. During Fr. Freddy's tenure, the idea of building a new home resurfaced. This idea of building a new parish was transformed to a Vision to Victory Campaign. The Vision to Victory Campaign galvanized and energized this combined parish community toward realizing that vision.

On February 2, 2003, the parish community of St. James/Resurrection broke ground on eleven acres of property at the corner of Liscum Drive and McLin Parkway (State Route 35). Under the tenacious leadership of Father Francis Tandoh, C.S.Sp., a Holy Ghost priest from Ghana, St. Benedict the Moor will celebrate the "homecoming" of a faith journey that started many years ago on May 14, 2005.

Just as the Israelites struggled, stumbled, and endured the test of faith and time to arrive at the promise land, the faithful of St. John's, St. James, and Resurrection will take its place in history as a community of believers continuing the work of bringing people closer to Christ. Through continued prayers, work and faith, St. Benedict the Moor intends to establish itself as a parish community that embraces the challenge of God's work in its journey toward the vision and victory of salvation.

## **MS. EDNA DIGGS**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR**

God and I are buddies. We talk on a regular basis, and it's never a one-way conversation.

I came to the Midwest for college and was surprised at the attitudes and lack of knowledge about black Catholics. Black and white people that I have met in this part of the country would say, "You're Catholic? I didn't know black people could be Catholic!"

I am proud to be Catholic. I am a cradle Catholic, and I was baptized at the Basilica of St. Mary of The Immaculate Conception in Norfolk, Va. I also attended school there through the fourth grade, when my parents sent me to public school. Even though I attended public school, I went to catechism every Saturday.

Everybody in my neighborhood in Norfolk was Catholic. St Mary's is a parish that was combined with St. Joseph the Black, a Catholic parish that was founded in 1889 by the Josephite priests. We were a part of the first parish in the Diocese of Richmond that was established in 1791. That was two years before the establishment of the United States hierarchy! Today that parish is 99 percent African American.

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the church [December 8, 1991], Pope John Paul II proclaimed the Church of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception a minor basilica, the only one in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In his proclamation, the pope said:

*"Your black cultural heritage enriches the church and makes her witness of universality more complete. In a real way the church needs you, just as you need the church, for you are a part of the church and the church is part of you."*

While growing up, I took my faith for granted. As an adult Christian, I realize that my entire being *knows* that I am a child of the Creator of heaven and earth. Faith has taught me that "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

Life happens. There is sickness and death, pain and suffering, joy and sorrow. I have suffered discrimination, and I've gone through a divorce where I had to raise my two sons alone.

Instead of feeling desperate during those trying times, I prayed. Instead of crying, I prayed. In order to not give up, I prayed. My father assisted me in raising my children, and my parish family has supported me and lifted me up in prayer.

I am grateful for God's guidance. It was during these most difficult times in my life that I got involved in the RCIA program and became a Eucharistic minister. The opportunity to minister to others helped me to grow in faith and to do the Lord's work.



## **MRS. ETHEL DILLINGHAM**

### **PARISHIONER OF SAINT BENEDICT THE MOOR**

I was born in Lakewood, New Jersey in the “sub sticks” - the boondocks. We had an outhouse and we warmed ourselves and cooked our food on a coal stove. It was during the Great Depression and it was rough back then. Black people didn’t have much of a chance to better themselves considering the added burden of outrageous racism as an everyday part of our lives.

Extreme situations call for extreme measures and my parents wanted a better life for my sister and me, so they sent us away from home to school in the late 1930’s. My sister was old enough to go to Cardinal Gibbons Institute, a Catholic boarding high school in St. Mary County, Maryland. I was too young for the boarding school, so I attended St. Peter Claver Elementary School on the same grounds. My parents made arrangements for me to live there until I reached the ninth grade.

The school was operated by a group of Black women who would become known as the Oblate Sisters of Providence. They were the first order of sisters of African descent. The school was founded the school in 1828, approximately thirty-eight years after the end of slavery. \*Elizabeth Lange (Sr. Mary Lange) was one of the founders of the school that provided education for Black children in Baltimore. Unlike some southern states, Maryland did not have a law prohibiting the education of Blacks, but neither was education encouraged by local officials. There were a few small schools for Black children operated by Protestant groups, but there was little being done to educate the children of Black Catholics.



The sisters really gave me an education for life and everything that I needed to get along in this world. They were role models who looked like me. Consequently, armed with my strong Catholic faith and a good education, I knew that I could make something of myself. By this time, my parents were dead and I was out on my own in the world. I relied on my faith and I worked hard.

I went to nursing school and earned a registered nurses license in Baltimore, but I wanted to live in New York. Unfortunately, New York State would not accept reciprocity of license from Baltimore. I was determined to continue my nursing career in New York and began waiting tables in a New York restaurant while studying for the Board exams. I passed the exam with flying colors and went to work at the Harlem Hospital.

When the military opened its ranks to include Black people, I saw it as an opportunity and joined the Army during World War II serving as an Army nurse for approximately 3 years, achieving the rank of Captain. Up until this point in my life, I had not been around White people. My

environment had been one of cultural enrichment, prayer, devotion, and higher learning. I had no idea of the cruelty ahead of me. I thank God for my background. Without such wonderful examples, encouragement, discipline and the Good News that Jesus is King, I would not have made it. The outside world was horrific!

There were very few Black nurses accepted into the Army because we only served the segregated Black troops in segregated hospitals or wards. While stationed in Arizona, I went to the base store like everybody else to get my uniform. The clerks would not serve me. I felt absolutely terrible! It was humiliating and I was angry. That was my first personal taste of ugly Jim Crowe.

I was determined to rise above the ignorance and bigotry, so when I discharged from the Army I returned to New York to attend Columbia University where I earned a Bachelor Degree in Nursing Education.

In 1949, I landed a job at the Veteran Administration Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Now, let's talk about racism! My superiors at that hospital treated me like dirt. They tried to beat me down to the point where I would leave. My working environment was bitter but I prayed, held my head high, and I took no time off from work. I found comfort caring for the patients. I had to work twice as hard as everybody else. Not only did I work, I went back to school and earned a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

I worked at the Dayton VA for approximately 27 years. I was passed over numerous times for promotion. I was certainly qualified for most of those years I was the only nurse in the hospital with a Master's Degree. I was discriminated against for being Black *and* for being Catholic. I would not complain because I knew that the Lord bore my suffering with me. A change had to come! The status quo was just plain wrong. Justice finally prevailed and I climbed from staff nurse to Clinical Specialist. The Lord fought my battles for me.



Ethel Johnson-Dillingham  
WWII Army Nurse

The Catholic Church has shaped my life. I believe its teachings and I am grateful for God's hand upon me. Since I came to Dayton, Ohio, I have been a member of St. John, St. James, Resurrection and St. Benedict the Moor. I love my parish family and will work to glorify the Lord as long as he gives me strength.

\*The following is a summary and update on the status of documents sent to Rome regarding Sainthood for Sister Mary Lange:

"The documentation representing the Diocesan investigation was submitted and the Cause for Mother Lange was officially opened. The Copia Publica was prepared by the clerk of the Congregation of the Saints based on the submitted documentation. The documentation was accepted and the decree of validity of the Diocesan investigation was given. The request to appoint the relatore (the Congregation for the Causes of Saints clerk serving as a director while the Positio on the life and heroic virtues is being written) has been approved. Father Spiewak met with him and they decided the Positio will be prepared and presented in English. Our Postulator, Father Spiewak, requested that the miracle or miracles we have be sent to him."

## CATHOLIC COUNCIL TO EXPAND ITS RACIAL EFFORT

*Dayton Journal Herald* – Saturday, June 1963

The Catholic Interracial Council [CIC] is planning to expand its programs to improve racial relations and to involve more Dayton Catholics in social issues. Mrs. Ethel Dillingham of 4125 Oakridge drive, newly elected president of the council is encouraging new programs because she believes the Church has a natural role to play in racial and moral issues.

“The Church has always advocated social justice and the dignity of man,” she says quietly. “Race, creed or color does not change a man. We are merely following the teachings of Christ. Color is an incidental factor. I don’t believe many Catholics have aligned themselves to other civil rights groups. There has been a definite need for a Catholic organization to bring other Catholics in the Dayton area into social problems to see what they can do.”



The council was founded in 1960. Its active membership is now between 65 and 70. The executive committee meets monthly. The entire council meets nine times a year. “We need to be made aware there is discrimination in Dayton and on a racial basis,” Mrs. Dillingham continued.

In her two-year term as president, she plans to coordinate a program with Dayton’s two Catholic Hospitals, St. Elizabeth and Good Samaritan to alleviate what she said is discrimination in semi-private rooms. “There has been a great deal of improvement in this situation in the last two or three years,” Mrs. Dillingham said. “There was discrimination in accommodations and there are still some isolated incidents.”

The council will also begin a “Project Equality” merit employee program to assure Negroes equal opportunity in obtaining jobs with businesses dealing with the Church. She used construction companies building new church facilities as an example.

Membership drives will be held, adult and student education programs will be planned, a Junior Catholic Interracial Council is in the making and a public relations program will bring problems to the attention of Catholics and stimulate activity. Mrs. Dillingham said the group will keep a close watch on the local and state fair housing situations and will urge passage of housing laws. The council is a signee of the one-year fair housing moratorium here.

## **MR. ROBERT ODON**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR PARISH**

The Lord has blessed me. I was born in a one-room house on a sharecropper's farm. I was raised in the projects by a single mother and educated in segregated and sub-standard public schools. When I look back, I know that it has only been the Lord on my side that molded me into the man that I am today.

You know, hindsight is always perfect. When I consider from where I came from, I know that I didn't recognize the hand of God upon me when I was younger. There had been circumstances in my life where I stood in the crossroad. Given my background, I could have taken an entirely different course in life.

My parents divorced when I was young, and there were no male role models in our house for me to emulate. My mother moved us to Dayton in order to have the support of her family. We attended several different churches in our neighborhood, but none of them felt like home.

As a young man I searched for a church. I attended every church I could find, except Jehovah Witness. While I was stationed at Rickenbacher Air Force Base in Columbus, I was invited to a Catholic church. At first, I just sat and watched. I was fascinated with the ceremony and structure by which the Mass was conducted. It occurred to me that there ought to be a book titled *Why Do Catholics Do That?* Well, at the time there wasn't a book with that title. But, I discovered that there were ways with which to have my questions answered.

The church provides the means for lay people to learn about our faith. I was blessed that my RCIA instructor, Ms. Anna Burns, mentored me. She took me under her wing and guided me through the sacraments. She appreciated my curiosity and answered the questions that stirred within me. Consequently, I took as many classes in religious education as I could find. I am proud to have inherited the position she held as the Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) at my parish.

I appreciate the symbols utilized in the Catholic Church that leads us into a relationship with God. A lit candle that eliminates the darkness that serves as encouragement for us to let our light shine. Water that symbolizes life, a life dedicated to the Lord. Oil a symbol of restoration that gives us the strength to spread the Good News of God's grace.

I have learned that our mission mirrors the mission given to the apostles. Christ told His followers to spread the good news of the Kingdom of God. So it is with all Christians. I find fulfillment in immersing myself in the Word of God and then reaching out to as many people as I can.

I praise God for sending Father Augustine Tolton, the first recognized African-American priest in the United States; Daniel Rudd, a child of slaves, who founded the National Black Catholic Congress and began the only newspaper [*American Catholic Tribune*] owned by a colored man.

They were great witnesses who inspire us to be great — to be open to God's call for men and women to be keeper's of the promise.

## ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH

**“THE CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE CITY – WITH THE CITY IN ITS HEART”**



St. Mark Roman Catholic Church [3500 Montgomery Road] is the most visible landmark in Evanston. In the first half of the 20th century, St. Mark was Evanston. In the years following its 1902 annexation to Cincinnati, Evanston developed rapidly. In 1905 Archbishop Henry Moeller established a new parish, as the area around Evanston was separated from St. Elizabeth Parish in Norwood.

At first, services were held in the home of Mary Klinckhamer, heir of Park Brewery owned by Henry Klinckhamer. A temporary frame church was later erected on the land she donated. A combination church-school was constructed in 1906. The cornerstone of the St. Mark's combination church and school was laid on April 29, 1906. A convent was built in 1909 for the Sisters of the Precious Blood who operated the school. By 1911, the Sisters were holding classes in the old frame church and the newer school.

Evanston Catholics went to great expense and effort to create an edifice that expressed the social and spiritual importance of their parish. The present Romanesque Revival style church, dedicated in 1916, is dominated by a campanile and large rose window. The church has mosaic floors, marble columns and altars oak wainscoting, and imported stained glass windows. The mural on the proscenium was painted in 1939 by Leo Mirabile.

The school burned down in 1922, but parishioners replaced it within a year. In the 1940s the parish built a recreation center with a bowling alley and youth club. The new rectory was completed in 1950.

The parish changed in the 1950s as black families moved into Evanston and white residents moved away. Primarily due to the construction of I-71, the size of the congregation and the school enrollment decreased.

The parish changed in the 1950s as black families moved into Evanston and white residents moved away. Primarily due to the construction of I-71, the size of the congregation and the school enrollment decreased.



## PARISHES THAT SERVE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

St. Mark School with 95 students closed in May 2002. Students were urged to attend neighboring Catholic schools, especially Corryville Catholic School, which planned to relocate to 1712 Duck Creek Road. With Corryville changing its plan to relocate in Evanston, the St. Mark School building remained vacant until June 2004. At that time, the building was leased to National Heritage Academies of Ann Arbor, Mich. In August 2003, the Alliance Academy opened its doors to 350 students, kindergarten through fifth grade. To accommodate the large student body, the bowling alley was renovated into seven additional classrooms. In August 2007 the student enrollment was 480 students, pre-kindergarten through 8th grade.

St. Mark Catholic Church, located at the corner of Montgomery and Duck Creek Roads near the campus of Xavier University, continues to serve the residence of Evanston and beyond with quality pastoral ministry and education that is deeply rooted in tradition and Catholic spirituality.

### **Mission Statement:**

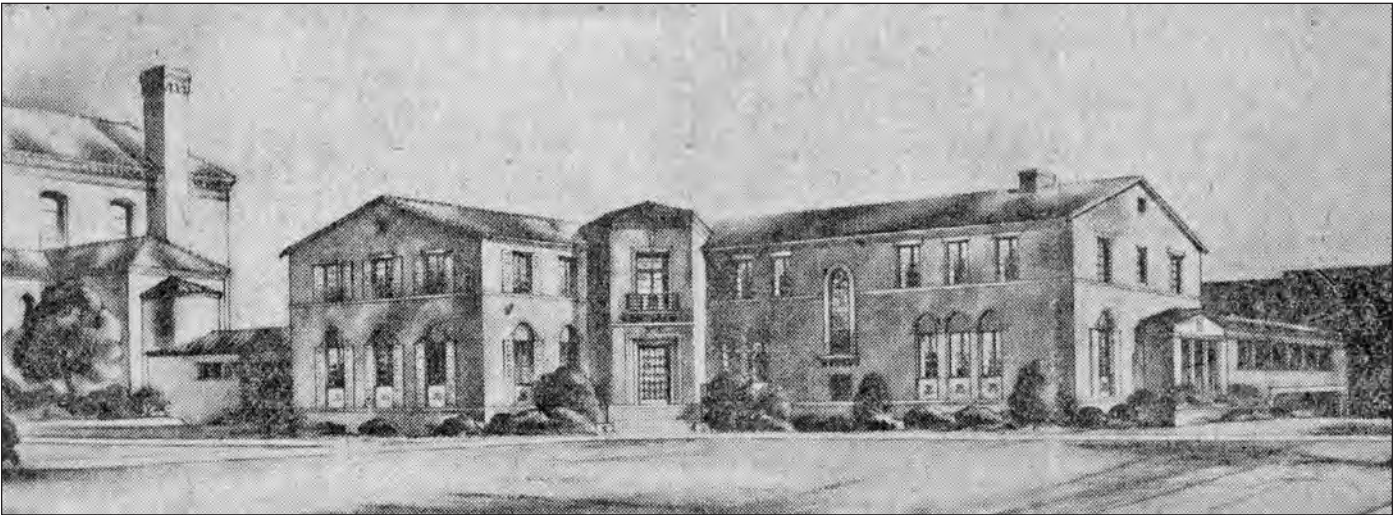
*St. Mark Catholic Church, being primarily an African-American community, is empowered by the Holy Spirit and therefore committed to attending to the unmet needs of all God's people, by witnessing to the Gospel mandate of Jesus Christ toward the fulfillment of God's kingdom here on earth.*



## **ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH**

### **PRECIOUS BLOOD FATHERS BUILDING MISSION HOUSE**

Catholic Telegraph Article – March 25, 1949



A mission house for the Fathers of the Precious Blood is being erected on St. Mark's parish property, corner of Montgomery and Duck Creek Roads, Cincinnati, Father Cornelius E. Smith, C.P.P.S., pastor announced this week. The two-story, L-shaped building will serve as a residence for the pastor and assistant pastors, and as headquarters for four members of a Precious Blood mission band. Four rooms will be used for religious instructions by St. Mark's Cathedral information center. There will be a large meeting room for parish societies in the basement. The exterior will be dark yellow brick, to match the church and school.

The building will be erected about 150 feet from Montgomery Road and will occupy a site to the rear of the present rectory, between the church and school. A passageway from the school to the church will lead through the mission house, and will be used by the school children during inclement weather. A large vestry will connect the building with the church.

The main entrance will be at the juncture of the two arms of the L-shaped building, and will directly face the intersection of Montgomery and Duck Creek Roads. The present rectory, a frame building more than 10 years old, will be razed this fall when the mission house is completed. It is expected that the new building will be ready for occupancy by late November.

The property now occupied by the parish plant was given to the Precious Blood community by the Mary Klinkhammer estate in 1905; when the parish was established. With the erection of the new building, the parish plant will be one of the most complete in the archdiocese. It includes, besides the church, which was built in 1916, the school, a recreation center, and a sister's house. Architect of the new building is A.M. Strauss of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

## ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH

### 'SEPARATE' PARISHES UNITE AT ST. MARK'S FOR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* December 12, 1980

Well over 1,000 people attended a spirited and colorful celebration of the 75th Anniversary of St. Mark's Parish in Evanston, Sunday, Dec. 7. Present parishioners and former parishioners filled the church for the liturgy and for the banquet commemorating the founding of the parish by the Precious Blood Society in 1905.

Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin was the principal celebrant at the festive Mass of Thanksgiving prepared by the parish worship commission with the aid of Father Clarence Rivers. Sunday's observance culminated a year of work for the chairwoman, Lucille Yarborough, who first began attending Sunday Mass at Saint Mark's in the 1950s. Although her family moved from the Evanston area many years ago she has remained an active member of the parish. In this, she believes her family is like many who are members of St. Mark.

"The people who are here today want to be here. And we'll be here if we have to come 20 miles. St. Mark's is home base. There is something that draws us back — friendship, love, maybe. It's the love that helps us overcome our differences, and believe me, we have those here."

In the 1960s many black families, displaced by urban renewal in Cincinnati's West End, moved to the predominately white suburb of Evanston. White families then left the neighborhood and St. Mark's parish. Since that time the parish has grown to be one of the largest, predominately Black Catholic congregations in the city.





The celebration Sunday reflected the spirit and enthusiasm of St. Mark's "new" parishioners, said Franklin Shands, president of the parish council. "There is tremendous spirit here, greater than I've seen in any other church, anywhere. Black people are more expressive of their emotions, so when we worship it's more sound and fury than you find in a white parish."

Mr. Shands is a long-time Black Catholic activist whose association with St. Mark's began when he taught at Purcell High School in the 1960's. "I believe the Black man does view the Catholic Church as the white man's church. We need the understanding that Black and white Catholics worship the same God, with the same ceremony. WE have different cultures but we, as Christians, should take the lead so there can be an outpouring of the spirit together," he stated.

Mr. Shands expressed the opinion that black and white Catholics are more polarized than they were 15 years ago during the height of the civil rights movement. He hoped that inviting many white Catholics to the 75th anniversary festivities might expose them to the vitality within the black Catholic community.

"Some of the ex-parishioners came up to me and expressed wonder at what we had done," noted Mrs. Yarborough. Precious Blood Father Dennis Kinderman, pastor of St. Mark's called the day a celebration of reconciliation for new and old parishioners. We have two separate St. Mark's. People did in fact leave because of racism. There was prejudice and ignorance like we've seen throughout salvation history. Reconciliation can't happen in a day. But any liturgy celebrates what is hoped for rather than what is — what we know will come. Reconciliation is hoped for here," he said.

In his homily, Archbishop Bernardin addressed the importance of diverse cultures within the church. "This Catholic Church, when it is truly catholic, will be a harbor for all kinds of ships, a shelter for all kinds of seemingly contradictory cultures," he said. People who may be drawn to the church need not "...cast off their own customs and time-hallowed traditions which are truly good and reflect Gospel values," he said.

Father Kinderman summarized his feelings for the *Telegraph* the day after the celebration, "We are all one church, we have to be one in Christ."

## **BERNARD YOUNG**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I was born in New Jersey. My dad was Episcopalian, and my mom was a Baptist Sunday school teacher, but they were both open to different religions.

We moved to Virginia when I was 10... the Bible belt. As a child, I was exposed to different religions and different forms of expression... praise and worship was a part of our lives.

After high school, I came to Cincinnati to attend Xavier University, a Catholic university.



Like most young people, I was looking; seeking, trying to find my way in this world and discover where I belonged. It was during this time that I came upon St. Mark in Evanston. I had never been a part of a church community that invited individuals to examine one's self in the light of Christ. The invitation was: Come, reassess and examine. The message was: You have no need to hide who you are. There is forgiveness and redemption. The good news was: This community is here for you as you reestablish yourself in Christ.

I was so excited! Excited because I found the Catholic Church open to the broadest range of expressions of praise to God through Christ. It utilizes all of the natural elements in life for worship: water, air, fire, earth. It presents the Gospel purely... the real Gospel. It doesn't profess that everyone through the ages did everything right, however, the pure Gospel surpasses humanness. It has and does evolve in spite of duress.

Catholicism is received in different ways around the United States, but if we examine areas of the globe where people of color live, we find that Catholicism has an undeniable influence on the culture and the underlying spiritual experience. This church recognizes that the basic expression of Christ is in community. That is the uniqueness of Catholicism, therefore, my attraction to it. It teaches that our relationship with God is in community and that is what is expressed through the Gospel.

The Catholic Church offers the help of the community to bring one to its best position... in community with Christ. That is the good news of the Catholic Church.

## **MRS. HARRIETT HAZELY** **PARISHIONER OF ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I am a cradle Catholic...my entire family was baptized at the same time at Old St. Edward's Church.



I lived on Hopkins and Lynn streets in the West End, right across from St. Joseph school and church, but couldn't go there because it was an all-white parish, and colored people, as they called us in those days, were not allowed there. I had to walk right past St. Joseph to go to St. Ann on John Street. By the time I reached the 6th grade, things had changed a little bit, so I attended school there in the 7th and 8th grades. I graduated high school from Our Lady of Mercy in 1951.

I am proud to be a product of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament! They taught us at St. Ann that we could go anywhere we wanted to and do anything that we wanted to do in life! My classmates and I embody and wear that as a badge of honor ... we boast confidence and holiness through the Body of Christ, because we are His and He is ours. Though society treated us as second-class citizens, we knew that we were as good as the white folks, if not better, because we suffered more than they did. We suffered at their

hands. I never understood how they had the nerve to believe that they were better than us, jump on us in the Lincoln Courts and call us names. I just kept on going ... never had time for racism. Racism is a waste of time.

I loved the Beatitudes, still do. The Sisters taught them to us as children, and I do my best to live by them to this day. The beatitudes strengthened my faith as a child when everything was so bad for black people ... they gave me hope and helped me to hold on, don't give up, go through the tribulation, stay and fight because the Lord understands.

### **The Beatitudes**

*Matthew 5: 3-12*

*3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. 5 Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. 10 Blessed are they who suffer persecution for*



*justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you, when men reproach you, and persecute you, and, speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. 12 Rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in heaven; for so did they persecute the prophets who were before you.*

There have been times in my life when I just got fed up with being treated badly and feeling powerless in the Catholic Church, I struggled with the hypocrisy, so I would leave...not go for a while, because I'm human, see. The Lord would turn me around and draw me back, like a magnet. Honey, I have a bruise on my arm from when Jesus snatched me and brought me back to the church! He knows where I'm supposed to be.

## **A MARRIAGE ‘SUCCESS STORY’**

By Elizabeth Bookser Barkey – Friday April 18, 1980 Catholic Telegraph

Staying married for 25 years doesn't seem like such a feat to Joseph and Inez Railey who celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in February in the company of family and friends. They disagree with people who say it's impossible for a couple to commit themselves to one another for life. "Looking back over 25 years, I don't see where it was so hard," said Mr. Railey in a recent interview. "It isn't a matter of counting the years," added his wife. "When you look back, the problems weren't near so bad as you thought at the time. Some of them solved themselves."

Couples beginning marriage today may have more problems than couples starting out 25 years ago, Mrs. Railey reflected. "We didn't have as many forces pulling at us as young people today," she said. But her husband thinks that circumstances aren't so different – "all the little things that can cause problems in a marriage are always there." No matter what, when two people marry, they will confront some problems, according to the couple. And that's one of the reasons the Raileys believe a strong religious faith is an aid in marriage.

As members of St. Mark Parish in Cincinnati, the Railey's and their five children have been active in a variety of church and parish-related activities: the Black Catholic Caucus, school boards, parish councils, and the Knights of Columbus.

"Religion has played an exceptionally strong role in our marriage," said Mrs. Railey, a convert to Catholicism. "It gives you something to turn to when all else fails."

If any newlyweds were to ask the Raileys for advice on how to make a marriage succeed, the Raileys know how they would answer. "Don't smother each other" advised Mrs. Railey. "You each need a little freedom." And her husband echoed her advice. "Realize that the other person is an individual. You don't own her just because you have a marriage license," he said. "Let her be herself. After all that's the reason you married her in the first place."

## ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH

### EVENT WELCOMES BISHOP

Catholic Telegraph Article – August 1, 1986



A ceremony and reception honoring the visiting bishop of Kumafi, Ghana, from West Africa will be held Friday August 8, at St. Mark Church, Evanston. The events planned to greet Bishop P. Kwasi Sarpong begin at 7:30 p.m. The bishop is one of the leading church scholars in the English-speaking countries of West Africa. He is known for his research in black heritage and involvement in the work of injecting African culture to the Catholic Church in his diocese.

The occasion will also honor people who done outstanding work to establish the presence of the Catholic Church in the local Black community. Awards, which will be given periodically in the future, will be presented to both clergy and other people. The clergy award this year will go to and always be presented in honor of Father Charles F. Murphy and Father Arnold Witzman and the last Msgr. Clement B. Busemeyer for their unique contributions to the Black Catholic community. According to Father Clarence Rivers, the first Black Catholic priest ordained in the Cincinnati Archdiocese, Fathers Murphy and Witzman were instrumental in encouragement and support of his vocation.

Father Witzman was also involved in the establishment of De Porres High School, a now-closed Catholic High School for Blacks in the West End. Father Busemeyer played a major role in keeping a Black Catholic Church in the West End – St. Joseph Parish. He also fought a losing battle to keep St. Mary's Hospital in the neighborhood.

## PARISHES THAT SERVE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

The awards will honor lay people for their work in the Church and in the Black community. The award for the lay persons will be called the Steward's Award in honor of three women who were outstanding and dedicated "household" stewards for parishes and priests working in the Black community. The three women are the late Mrs. Ruth Smith, who worked for Holy Trinity, downtown Cincinnati, and mother of Benedictine Father Allen Tarlton; the late Mrs. Helen Chisholm, who served both at St. Ann and St. Joseph Church; and Mrs. Zemrhue Stratton, who served also at St. Joseph Church, St. Edward and St. Ann Church.

Father Rivers, who organized the award presentations, said these women were chosen as symbols of outstanding achievement from a pool of many candidates. The priest consulted with members of the Black Catholic community in making these selections. The names of the lay people to win these awards were not available at press time, pending notification of the winners. For more information about the event, call Father Rivers at 221-3889 or 221-5538.

## HISTORY OF SAINT AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

The roots of St. Agnes Parish took hold in 1890, when the German-Catholic community in Bond Hill began worshipping in the chapel of St. Aloysius Orphanage. That small community was then referred to as Holy Family. In 1891, the archbishop granted permission to establish a Bond Hill parish, and a vacant feed store became the temporary chapel (sometimes referred to as St. Alphons) on Christmas Day. Plans to erect a brick church on the present grounds were made in 1892 when the parish was officially named St. Agnes. In 1893, Father George Vonderahe began celebrating Mass in the new red brick building for the 35 families of St. Agnes parish.

By 1913, the number of parish families had more than doubled. Until then, the school children of St. Agnes attended classes at St. Aloysius. While a new stucco school building was being erected, classes were held in the basement of the church. The school opened on October 1, 1913, taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame. In March 1914, the construction of the rectory was completed. Both building developments occurred under the pastorate of Father Aloysius Monter, the first resident pastor.

In 1920, Father Augustine C. Adelman was appointed pastor, who provided the Sisters of Notre Dame a residence adjacent to the school in 1923. In 1924, Father Joseph Pohlschneider succeeded Father Adelman as pastor. School enrollment continued to increase as Bond Hill continued to develop. In response to that increase, plans for a new school building began under the new pastor, Father Albert Burke, in 1928. Plans required the razing of the stucco school building and Sisters' residence. During the construction of the new 10 classroom building, the Sisters again had to reside at the Orphanage, and the 255 school-age children of St. Agnes again were taught there. On February 18, 1930, the new school was opened for classes for the first





time. In addition to classroom space, the new building housed an auditorium that was used as a chapel until a new church building could be constructed.

By 1934, the parish numbered over 500 families. That year the red brick church was razed to make room for the current structure. In 1939, Msgr. Burke purchased a 10-room apartment house located at 1660 California Avenue for the 11 Sisters who were teaching at the school.

After the death of Msgr. Burke in 1946, Father Aloysius A. Huber was appointed pastor. By then, the parish had grown to 1,068 families, requiring seven scheduled Sunday Masses. Under Father Huber's pastorate, three-fourths of the school yard was black-topped, the driveway was widened, landscaping was improved, and a credit union was established. In addition, he brought the Sisters closer to the school and improved their facilities when he purchased a four-apartment residence for them at 1626 Anita Place.



With the continued growth of the parish, another Mass was added to the Sunday schedule in 1954 for a total of eight Masses. Approval for the building of a new church capable of seating 650 was given that year, and a ground-breaking ceremony took place on June 13, 1954. The current church was unveiled in 1956:

- First Mass was held on Palm Sunday, March 25;
- High Altar of the church was consecrated by Bishop Clarence Isseemann on May 11;
- Solemn blessing and dedication presided by Archbishop Karl J. Alter on July 15.

By 1962, the parish numbered 3,196 persons and there were 388 pupils registered in the school. Parishioners were active in many ministries, including: the Holy Name Society, St. Mary's Ladies' Sodality, Lay Committee of Consultants (eventually becoming the Finance Commission), St. Agnes Post of the Catholic War Veterans, St. Theresa Auxiliary Knights of St. John, PTA, St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Agnes Credit Union, St. Paul Guild for Converts, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Cub

Scouts. All these groups flourished and contributed to the spiritual, social and financial well-being of the parish.

In 1963-64 black children began attending St. Agnes School for the first time, and a few black adults began attending Mass at St. Agnes. By 1967, St. Agnes became a victim of "white flight" as the parish numbers decreased from 1,200 to 600 families. Parishioners who remained at St. Agnes were determined to hold the parish together and many embraced the spiritual and leadership gifts of their new black fellow parishioners. A 24-member Parish Council and 9-member School Board were formed in 1967. Building improvements continued to be supported.



Msgr. Huber became pastor emeritus after retiring as pastor in 1970. In 1971 Father James W. Peaker was appointed pastor and encouraged more use of lay lectors and eucharistic ministers. Meetings were initiated to discuss changes in the liturgy.

In the fall of 1972 210 pupils were registered at St. Agnes School. Sister Ann Rene McConn, SND, became active in the Bond Hill Community Activities program, designed to teach neighborhood residents how to get things done in and for their community.

In 1976 Father Paul L. Rehling was appointed pastor. He advocated lay leadership, and especially supported and enabled the development of black lay leadership. Father Rehling formed a three-member leadership team, authorized by parish council and approved by the Archdiocesan Personnel Board, to give a sense of new direction and leadership to parishioners. Four Commissions were established: finance, education, social action and worship.

By 1980, the schedule of weekend Masses was reduced to one Saturday Mass and two Sunday Masses, and school enrollment had reduced to 163 students. The Sisters terminated their staffing of the school in 1981, and Flo Edelmann became the new principal. By 1982, St. Agnes was 50 percent black and 50 percent white.

In 1983, Father Giles H. Pater was appointed pastor, where he expanded Father Rehling's commitment to lay leadership. Shortly after Father Pater became pastor, parishioner James Smith [an African American] was ordained to the diaconate. To bond with parishioners, Father Pater learned about African-American history and culture and the experience of integration. He utilized his education in liturgy and music to help enhance the great music tradition of St. Agnes. (Dr. James Moore became Choir Director in 1976.) During Father Pater's pastorate, the parish supported a Centennial Capital Improvement Campaign, and made the tough decision to close St. Agnes School. Eventually the building was leased to the Cincinnati Community Action Agency to house a Head Start program. Parish council also began to proactively plan for the possibility of having a less than full time pastor.

## PARISHES THAT SERVE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

Those plans became a reality in 1993 when Sister Mary Jerome Buchert, O.S.U., became our first pastoral administrator, and Father George Jacquemin became our first canonical pastor. Strong lay leadership, both adult and youth, continued to be developed. Various catechesis programs were initiated, and major improvements to buildings & grounds were completed. In 1998, St. Agnes was blessed to have another African-American parishioner, Royce Winters, ordained as a lay deacon. Sister Mary Jerome; current pastor, Father Tom DiFolco; Deacon Winters; and parish council worked together to develop visionary plans for the future of St. Agnes given the priest shortage.

St. Agnes underwent another transition period in 2001, when Sister Christa McGill, S.B.S., assumed the pastoral administrator position. The parish again began to lose members as the number of registered families dropped to 250. When Patrick Lesher became pastoral administrator in 2004, he encountered a parish faced with uncertainty, yet eager to meet the challenges and maintain the legacy and ministry of St. Agnes.

That legacy, initially formed by a small number of German Catholics, and exemplified by their generosity and commitment to community, continues to be upheld by current parishioners, lay leaders and pastoral staff. Current members of St. Agnes no longer are confined to the Bond Hill neighborhood. Instead many travel from suburbs in northern Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky to worship at our two Sunday Masses. Yet outreach efforts to Bond Hill continue via justice and social action and community life activities.

Although St. Agnes School no longer exists, the building remains an educational site, currently leased by P.A.C.E. High School. Thus, the spirit of Sister Ann Rene McConn and the other Sisters of Notre Dame lives on.

With pastoral and lay leadership working together with dedicated parishioners, St. Agnes has demonstrated great resiliency and ability to adapt to change. With this continued collaboration, St. Agnes will refine and implement the creative steps necessary to live our mission:

### **Mission Statement:**

*The Mission of the people of St. Agnes Catholic Church is to celebrate our faith through Word and Sacrament and to be obedient to God's command to love one another. This love shall be inclusive of all people; we share our spiritual and temporal gifts as we worship in an African-American style.*



**Deacon Jim Smith, left, and Father Paul Rehling**

## **MRS. ELOUISE WALKER**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The Lord has been so good to me. I don't worry about anything; I am grateful for the day.

I was baptized Catholic when I was about 10 years old. My mother was Methodist and my father was baptized Catholic on his deathbed. I am so grateful that my parents sent me to the Catholic Elementary Mission School. The sisters there taught us many things about life while we studied the Catechism. To learn about the Bible is to learn about life. It has helped me along the way.

I was born in Key West, Florida back when racism was occurring. There were separate schools, bathrooms and water fountains. We had to go to the back door of the store to shop, sit in the balcony at the theatre.

I've always believed in praying. Going to Mass and praying made me feel calm enough to look pass the ignorance. Through prayer, I learned that everything was going to be all right.

When it came time for me to go to high school, I wanted to stay in Catholic schools, but there were no black Catholic high schools in Key West, Florida. One option for black children was to attend Catholic high school in Rock Castle Virginia. My family couldn't afford that, so I went to Douglas High School, a public school in Key West. After I graduated high school, I worked in a department store in Florida. A particular white lady came into the store one day and I asked her, "May I help you?" Well, she didn't want service from me and raised a stink. The owner, who was white, told me, "You are a good worker. I would rather keep you and let her go." So, you see, just like there were bad white folks, there were some that were good.

I married my high school sweetheart Alvin O. Walker [from Key West] in Maysville Kentucky. We moved to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1946 after he returned from Japan after serving in the military. He was Presbyterian. We moved to Cincinnati because he wanted to attend an embalming school. The embalming school in Cincinnati was the only one in the United States that would allow blacks to attend. I joined Mother of God Catholic Mission when we first got here. I changed my membership to St. Agnes once we moved to Bond Hill in 1966. I've been a member of this parish for 41 years!

I have been close to death many times, but the Lord preserves my life. It was in 1954 when I was sicker than I have ever been and needed to make up my mind if I was going to have surgery or not. I was scared, but decided to go through with it. All I could do was pray that the Lord would spare me in order to raise my kids. Well, He did. That was the turning point in my life.

Since then, if I can do ANYTHING to help somebody, I'll do it. I pray for others, talk to folks about Catholicism and encourage children to get an education... education is important! So many people suffered and sacrificed for the opportunity for our people to go to school. Children ought to get as much education as they can.



## **MR. JOHN BURNS**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I am proud to be Catholic. I've been a member of St. Agnes for 28 years and wouldn't leave for anything... I'll die here.

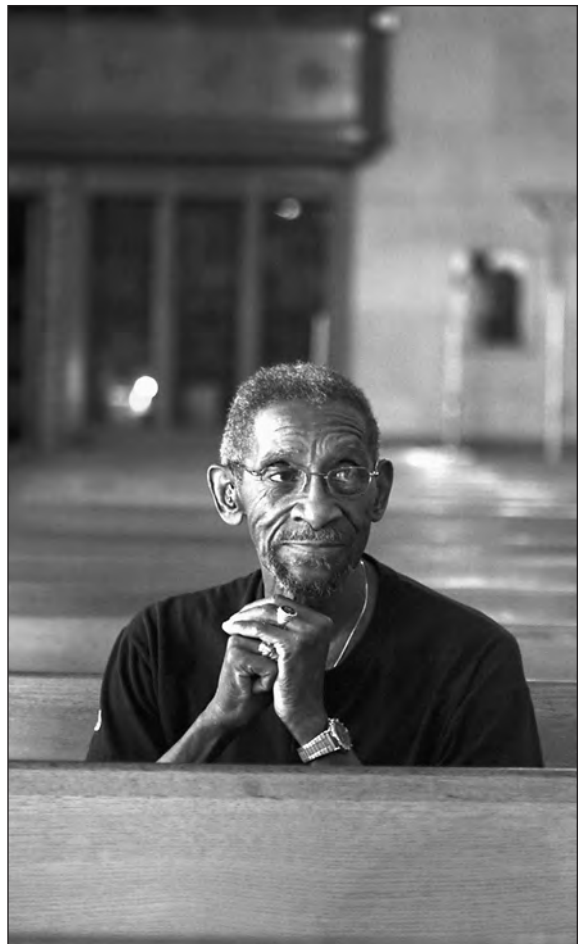
Catholicism was planted in me as a child. I grew up in the West End. There was no kindergarten in Catholic schools, so I started school in 1932 at Sherman School. I went to St. Ann's in the first grade when I was six years old. My classmates and I were taking instruction in preparation for first Holy Communion, when my mother and one of the Sisters had a disagreement that resulted in my mother being asked to withdraw from the church. She did — and took me with her. My mother did not shuffle, if you know what I mean. To this day I do not know what the disagreement was about, but I do know that my mother was offended ... that's enough for me.

As a result of leaving St. Ann, my family joined a Protestant church. I was active in the church as a member of the youth group, attending camps and meetings. I attended Stowe School and graduated from Old Woodward High School. However, my entire life, I continued to say the prayers that I had been taught at St. Ann. They touched me, sustained me, and kept me when things were difficult. Society treated black people like second-class citizens, but when I prayed, I knew that God heard me. I believed that the saints interceded on my behalf.

I spoke with my mother before her death about my desire to reunite with the Catholic Church, and she encouraged me to follow my heart. I didn't reunite with the Catholic Church until after my mother died, as a form of respect for her. She taught me! She was the kind of woman that set an example for me. She instilled a sense of self-value and a set of principles in me that sustains me until this day. Actually, she gave me the fortitude to return to what I believed in.

I reunited with the Catholic Church when I was 30 years old at St. Edward on Clark Street in 1959. I then attended Holy Name and Assumption. After that, I lived in Evanston between Assumption and St Mark, but finally received my first Holy Communion at St. Francis de Sales from Archbishop Bernardin. When I moved to Lincoln Heights in the early 70s, I attended St. Martin de Porres.

I've always felt at home in the Catholic Church. I love the liturgy, the people, and the sense of community that I find here. The people at St. Agnes are a part of my family, and so it is through-





out this universal church. As a result, when something needs to be done, I will always say, “I’ll do it.” Just like family members do.

Prayer has always opened doors for me. I’ve been able to go from glory to glory... to climbing Jacob’s ladder. As my life goes on, my faith grows stronger. I’ve been able to accomplish meaningful things because of my relationship with the Lord.

I grew up during the “Big Band Era.” Right now, I disc jockey at special events and retirement homes. It makes me so happy to play the music of my era for people from my era... it brings back wonderful memories for my audience and me. I also host a radio show on WMKV for one hour on at 3:00 p.m. on WMKV. I thank God for my family and friends, my health, but most of all for His grace and mercy.

## **MRS. JOYCE COLEMAN**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH**

My parents had me baptized Catholic as an infant in Selma, Ala. My father was tragically killed in 1944, leaving my mother with my infant brother and myself.

From the time that I was a small child, I was taught that I am loved with an everlasting love. As a matter of fact, I was brainwashed with love in Catholic schools. The Sisters of St. Joseph (Josephite Community) taught me that nobody is better than I am. God sees all of us and loves all of us. There is no need to ever be ashamed of who you are, because God does not make mistakes.

Jim Crowe had no conscious effect on me in Selma, although he lived all over the place. He would spread his wings and he was mean. There were Colored water fountains, bathrooms, entrances, and schools. Consequently, my mother taught me to take care of everything I needed before leaving home. I was conditioned to avoid humiliating circumstances and to this day, I seldom use public facilities. I built defenses to protect myself.

There were no Catholic high schools in Alabama for black children. The priests at my parish school had knowledge of a high school in Ft. Wayne, Ind., that didn't abide by Jim Crowe rules. My mother's brother and his family lived in Ft. Wayne, so my mother sent me there to live with them and to attend high school.

In the South, I knew my place, so to speak. The facilities and "whatnot" were separate, but it wasn't until I got to Indiana that I realized that I lived in a separate society. I was in for the shock of my life.

There were only 4 or 5 black children in my freshman class and Father Muldane, the parish priest treated us like we were dumb... ignorant. I was crushed!

Coming up, my family didn't have the finances for extra activities, so I read. Reading was my escape. I loved Shakespeare and Edgar Allen Poe so much that I could quote the verses and soliloquies.

I can still hear Father Muldane telling me, "Negroes don't understand Shakespeare." I couldn't believe him! Well, I did understand Shakespeare, Poe, Dickinson and anybody else. I thought, "Do I have to put up with this?"



Father Muldane was “Jim Crowe” to me. He told me that I was ignorant and called me a nigger. It didn’t mean anything to him that I had graduated first in my class in Selma. Consequently, I put in 150 percent effort to excel in school ... I got on his last nerve. He wouldn’t call on me, and when I earned good grades he accused me of cheating. He gave me a “D” in English. I stayed after class to speak with him. When I told him, “God don’t like ugly and He’s gonna get you,” he gave me a detention.

See, the education that I received in elementary school was more than book learning. I knew that I was a child of God and it was difficult for Father Muldane or anybody else to break my spirit. I thought that he was a nigger. My mother taught me at an early age, “Anybody can be a nigger. They come in all shapes and colors. The word means ignorant and you are not ignorant.” Soon after, momma moved to Cincinnati.

I sincerely appreciate how momma sacrificed — left her family and friends in order for me to have a Catholic education. She sent for me, and I entered Our Lady of Angels High School as a junior.

My experience at OLA was far better with the Franciscan Sisters. They were kind and encouraging like the Josephite Sisters. Upon graduation, I entered Mercy Nursing School with four other black young ladies. Once again, I was faced with bigotry in the person of Sister Sylvia.

I had scored extremely high on a final semester exam after 1-1/2 years. I can also still hear Sister Sylvia’s voice, “How did you get such a good grade on such a hard test?” I had studied, of course and told her so.

She replied, “It is impossible for someone like you to score so high. You must have stolen the test. It is a typical trait of your race to lie, cheat and steal.” She denied me the grade that I had worked so hard for. I was crushed this time. I cried all of the way home. It hurt that not only did she question my intelligence, she assaulted my integrity.

I know that God leads and guides His children through obstacles. Yes, there have been times in my life when I wanted to give up, just quit. Acts of God allow situations to occur, but through it all, I have learned to trust in Jesus. I trust that negativity cannot have continuation. We all go through ups and downs; that’s life. I don’t blame others, nor do I live out “Woe is me.”

My life has purpose, and I know that the Lord will get me through.



## **MRS. HELEN BENNETT**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I grew up in a family of nine! Our family consisted of my loving parents, Andrew and Millie King, and the seven children – two boys and five girls. Our parents were Baptist, but raised four girls and one son Catholic. I we went to church at Blessed Martin de Porres Catholic Church and attended elementary school at Blessed Martin. One of my sisters went to St. Gabriel for three years. Three of my sisters and I graduated from Our Lady of Angels [O.L.A.] in St. Bernard.

My parents were very dedicated to their faith and to ours. By the grace of God, we all had love, faith and understanding – this was an extraordinary model of the King family, and I cherish every moment, and give thanks and blessings to God, my dear parents, the Sisters of Charity, and the Franciscan nuns. My parents are both deceased now, as are two of my brothers and three of my sisters.

We grew up in the Lincoln Heights area. I never really liked the community. We were a poor people and I didn't like atmosphere. All my white high school friends seemed to live so good. I used to complain all the time. My dad would constantly tell me, "When you get grown, you can live anywhere you want to!" I didn't hate it, it just wasn't right. But during those years, I had my church and my parents loved us and cared for us the best they could.

Religion played a 'big role' in our household! Since our parents were Baptist but desired to raise five of the seven of their children as Catholic, religion was important. We all got along just fine, no complications whatsoever. I was baptized at St. Martin de Porres when I was in the 2nd Grade - I was 8 years old. I can't remember exactly how I felt about my Baptism, or about my First Communion and Confirmation, but now I am excited and joyful about receiving the Sacraments of the Church.

I remember that Dorothy Moxley, who lived in our same neighborhood, attended our Church. She was very attentive to me, and was very important to me in my spiritual journey. Fr. Edward Deiner, now deceased, and Sr. Theresa Cecile helped us along the way as well. My Catholic education helped me to become self reliant, encouraged me to keep the faith, and taught me to trust in my Savior.



I've been a member of several parishes- St. Martin de Porres, St. Agnes, St. Anthony, St. Mark, and St. Andrew. At my current parish, St. Agnes, I enjoy the Mass, the choir and most of the activities. I was much more active when my children - Sheila, Vincent, and Sean attended elementary school there. My husband [Lucius Bennett] and I were married for thirty-three years. He died in 1990 on Christmas Day, I miss him dearly.

My worst moments of being Catholic were when I was in high school There were some prejudiced times! All the things that I could remember, the one that comes mind is how I treated by the nun who taught me art.

It seemed that I was always the last thing on her mind. There were so few Blacks at the school at the time and somehow she managed to 'keep me in my place.' I don't hold any grudge, that's all behind me now.

My best moments of being Catholic are just being Catholic. This faith has helped me to be a better person. It was through prayer that I learned to trust in the Lord at all times. My favorite hymn is 'What a friend we have in Jesus':

*What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!*

*Oh what peace we often forfeit  
Oh what needless pain we bear  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!*

My favorite Scripture Readings are Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd', and a reading from Matthew 6: 1, "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

I'm blessed to possess wealth. I'm blessed to have faith. For the rest of my days, no matter the trials and tribulations; despite sickness and failing health; I'll just 'keep on, keeping on!' I know that I am blessed!

## **MRS. BETTY J. CONNORS**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. My mother Gladys Gover – Carter raised her four children: Dolores, Betty, Shirley and Thomas in the Methodist Church. My father Fernando Albert Carter died of cancer in 1965. He had attended a Lutheran Church but later became a minister in the Unitarian Church. My father also served as merchant seaman on the S.S. Valley Forge and was lost at sea but was later rescued. My mother played piano and organ, and had a beautiful soprano voice. Mom insisted that everyone in the family had to play an instrument and sing. One of her brothers, Charles Gover Carter was a Baptist minister in Somerset, Kentucky.

I attended Stowe Elementary, Hughes High School, Good Samaritan School of Nursing and the University of Kentucky. My parents raised me as a Methodist Episcopal. I attended a Catholic Church in Boston, Massachusetts from 1960 – 1965. While a nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital, I converted to Catholicism and was baptized and received my First Communion on September 13, 1970. We had a Mass in the Chapel and afterwards the nuns hosted a party for my family and friends.

My mother was the most instrumental person in the development of my spirituality. She taught us not to just read the Bible but to live our religion in how we ran our lives. It manifested itself in how we treated other people. But not only that, it even impacted the vacations we chose. For example, my career as a nurse revolved around other peoples problems.

I married Charles Raymond Connors [born in Maysville, Kentucky] on August 23, 1950. He played six different instruments, but what he loved most was playing the trombone. He graduated from the Boston Conservatory of Music and played in numerous European Symphonies and Orchestras. He also played with Clark Terry, Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington. We have two daughters, Charlene Connors-Willis and Jacqueline Connors-Burton; three grandchildren: Christa, Noah and Kealyn. We get together every Sunday for dinner and fun. We love music. We share a lot through singing, playing and going to concerts. My grandson is taking piano lessons and my granddaughter is taking violin lessons.

What I enjoy most about Saint Agnes are the friends I've made; and sometimes the music. I did not like it when the church left tradition, especially the music. My favorite sacred hymns are Panis Angelicus, Ave Maria, Spirit Song, The Savior Is Waiting, On Eagles Wings, and Teach Us To Pray. The Scripture Readings that I lean on for strength and comfort are: Psalm 23, Psalm 27, John 14 and Ecclesiastes 3.

The Savior is waiting to enter your heart  
Why don't you let Him come in?  
There's nothing in this world to keep you apart  
What is your answer to Him?

He has waited before  
And now He is waiting again  
To see if you are willing  
To open the door  
Oh, how He wants to come in.

My faith was something I learned from my parents and my family. The only exception was Father Minick my instructor for Catholic formation. My faith has helped to put the needs of others before my own. I wanted to make sure my children and grandchildren knew: Why Christ died. Where is he now? And, Will they see Him?

## CHUCK CONNORS PLAYED WITH ELLINGTON

**TROMBONIST TOURED THE GLOBE DURING HIS 33 YEARS WITH LEGENDARY JAZZ BAND**

**Cincinnati Enquirer – by Cliff Radel**

Charles “Chuck” Connors belonged to an exclusive fraternity, the Duke’s Men. For 33 years, the Bond Hill resident played bass trombone in Duke Ellington’s big band and reunion orchestras. The Maysville, Kentucky native died Sunday at University Hospital from complications of pneumonia. He was 64.

Norris Turney, the alto saxophonist who replaced Johnny Hodges in Ellington’s band, remembers Mr. Connors as “a very, very fine trombonist and a very humble man.”

In the 33 years of playing in a band that gave free reign to improvisers, Mr. Connors never took an ad-lib solo. “My dad was very disciplined and a perfectionist,” said his daughter J. Diane Connors of Roselawn. “He would take a solo if it was written. But he would not do any ad-libs. He didn’t like leaving things to chance.”

A 1956 graduate of the Boston Conservatory of Music, the classically trained Mr Connors preferred section work to solos. “He was the anchor of the Ellington trombone section,” Turney said. Before joining Ellington on July 7, 1961, Mr. Connors worked in the bands of Dizzy Gillespie and Clark Terry. From 1981 – 1983, he played on Broadway in the Ellington revue *Sophisticated Ladies*. Since 1988, he worked in Cincinnati as a member of Eddie Love’s Jazzmen. He also played in the house band of the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park’s 1993 production of *‘Ain’t Misbehaving’*.

Mr. Connors’ talent took him around the world, first as a member of Navy bands [1948 – 1952], playing for troops during the Korean War. With Ellington, he played for four presidents and performed at the White House three times. When the legendary band toured Africa and played its sacred concerts in London’s Westminster Abbey, Mr Connors was there, playing his bass trombone. And not, letting it go to his head.

“Music was his life,” his daughter said. “But it was also his profession.

Our friends could not get over that he worked in Duke Ellington’s band and we got to meet all these wonderful people. But he always told us that it was just his job and that all those wonderful people walked just like us.”

Also surviving are his wife, Betty; a daughter, Charlene Willis of Pleasant Ridge; three brothers, Alonzo of Mary Esther, Florida, Dr. William, and George both of Dayton, Ohio; and two grandchildren.

Visitation is 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. today at Saint Agnes Catholic Church, 1619 California Avenue, Bond Hill. The funeral service will follow at the church. Burial will be in Spring Grove Cemetery.

## **SHUNNED MINISTER HONORED**

Cincinnati Enquirer – by Kristina Goetz  
January 21, 2001

It's never too late to apologize and make enemies – even after more than 80 years. That is the message members of two local Unitarian churches hope to send this weekend on the eve of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

They will host a series of events acknowledging discrimination against a black Unitarian minister and his West End congregation in the early 1900's. Members of the First Unitarian Church in Avondale and Northern Hills Unitarian Universals Fellowship in Wyoming will apologize to descendants of the Rev. W.H.G. Carter. He was a minister who founded the Church of the Unitarian Brotherhood in Cincinnati in 1918.

They hope the service will help them face the truth of their past and focus on social justice issues. "This service is not a punishment, nor retribution, not a guilt trip," said the Rev. Sharon Dittmar minister at First Unitarian Church. "This service is recognition of collective truth and responsibility. It is an apology. It is an education."

The Rev. Mr. Carter founded his church at a time when blacks and whites did not worship together. He sought assistance from the city's two Unitarian churches at the time and from the national denomination, the American Unitarian Association.

### **Reconciliation Weekend Schedule – January 14th**

- 10:30 a.m. Joint service of reconciliation – Presentation of Rev. W.H.G. Carter Living Memorial
- 11:45 Catered luncheon for Carter Family, Northern Hills guests and First Church members
- 1:30 Gravestone dedication by Northern Hills and Carter Family members at Beech Grove Cemetery adjacent to the church  
Memorial room dedication

## **MRS. ELAINE ANTOINETTE FOSTER** **PARISHIONER OF ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I was raised by my grandmother Georgia Grayson Felts and my grandfather George Felts. We lived in a house with my mother Corinne Shannon Choice and her brother Charles Shannon. It was a “big old” wooden-framed house and everyone had their own room. My mother and her brother were just knock-outs. My mother was beautiful and had long black hair and my uncle was good-looking. As I grew up, the relationship I had with my mother was like she was my big sister. I spent a lot of time with my grandmother and grandfather. My grandparents handed down to me a loving faith, “if God is as loving as my grandparents, he’s a great God!”

My grandmother had an unshakable love and she loved unconditionally. Everyone in the neighborhood would come to our house to talk to my grandmother. She would send me out in the backyard to pull up what I thought were weeds and she would make up a concoction. Whatever she made, the people who used it would all of sudden get better. She was like the “good witch” of the neighborhood. She also worked as a nurse maid and took care of little Jewish kids. Her care for those kids helped me to understand that we’re all family and responsible for taking care of each other.

My grandfather was brilliant! If he hadn’t been a black man, he would have been an engineer. Everyone in the neighborhood would bring all these things that they needed him to fix. One day, I told him, “It’s not fair for them to bring all their stuff to you, for you to fix because you’re smarter than this.” He would just say, “No, no, this is a gift from God and I’m grateful to help them.” The delight of my childhood is directly related to the relationship I had with my grandparents. We would go for walks down by the lake and watch the people go by on their boats. As we walked and talked along the lake, the three of us would share one hot dog. I never doubted that I was cherished and loved by my grandparents.

Buffalo was a friendly town. The people who lived next door to us were Germans and they were very clean and friendly. The weather in Buffalo was so harsh; and living there is harsh on the people because it’s so expensive. During the winter you simply couldn’t drive by people who were stopped on the side of road because the next day you would read about it in the newspaper that they had froze to death. It crystallized in my mind what my grandparents taught me, “We need each other.” It is epitomized in the song, “I Need You to Survive”:

**I need you, you need me.  
We’re all a part of God’s body.  
Stand with me, agree with me.  
We’re all a part of God’s body.  
It is his will, that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me, I need you to survive.  
You are important to me, I need you to survive.  
I pray for you, You pray for me.  
I love you, I need you to survive.  
I won’t harm you with words from my mouth.  
I love you, I need you to survive.  
It is his will, that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me, I need you to survive.**

My grandparents were Lutheran. I was the only Catholic in the family. When my mother married my father - who was Catholic and a Native American - she made a promise to raise her children Catholic. Because of that promise, I attended Catholic schools. The nuns at the schools that I attended were just the “pits.” They were mean, rude, unkind, and abrasive. My grandmother would always say, “They were just frustrated old white women who needed to have a good glass of wine; listen to some good blues; and be with a good man.”

When I started reading the Bible and began to compare that with: the love I felt in my home; the death and carnage in the Old Testament; and then the contrast of love in the New Testament; it is then that I set out on my own spiritual journey. I began my search in the Lutheran Church. My family was raised Lutheran. I was confirmed in the Our Savior Lutheran Church in Buffalo, New York at the age of sixteen. I felt at home there because my grandmother and uncle sang in the choir and I was worshipping with people that I loved. My grandmother would say, “If you talk about faith but don’t live it – it’s just a bunch of crap!”

This journey led me to read the writings of Thomas Moore, Thomas Aquinas, and all those female saints who talked about Jesus as their lover. I read books on Buddhism, Thich Nhat Hanh – No death, No Fear – Comforting Wisdom for Life and the writings of Depack Shopar. I didn’t understand it all but in the same way that I prayed for clarity and wisdom in the Scriptures, I did the same thing with these wisdom books. Through these writing I came to believe that Catholics are not the only ones who will go to heaven. In my search, I attended Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian and the holy-roller churches.

In the first Baptist church [or it could have been the first Black church I attended] I found out what it meant to have joy. When I was born, black people in Buffalo were poor. I mean real poor! I never knew white people could be poor because of my upbringing. I would bring friends home and give them my clothes and my mother would spank me because she had to work three jobs to help support the family. What I heard and what I saw in that Baptist church, changed me forever. These black folk were thanking God for all these blessings. I was asking myself, “what blessing?” As I looked at them, they didn’t have anything. “Even Native Americans were given reservations and casinos to operate.” But, what they had was a sincere gratitude that allowed them to express joy despite their trials and tribulations. They sang with great faith these words: “I cried because I had no shoes and then I saw someone with no feet to use. I just want to thank you Lord.”

Their faith taught me that my joy and hope, that my gratitude does not come from others but from whose I am and where I have come from. Out of all the books I’ve read, I found this wisdom amongst a people who were poor but knew the essence of joy. Once you understand this essence of joy, then and only then, do you find God. When people in my family are depressed and down, I tell them, “you have to work with me – I can’t be the only sister here who has faith – come on and work with the sister.”

**“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vine,  
Though the olive crop fails and the field produce no food,  
Though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,  
Yet I rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.” - Habakkuk 3: 17-19**

The other thing I learned on my search is that we are spirits on a flesh journey. Not flesh on a spirit journey. We are mind, body and spirit. That spirit is the essence of God. Our purpose is to grow that spirit and reconnect with the God who is already in us. We must listen to that voice within us, and as we live it, the voice becomes louder.



There could be no greater hell than to be disconnected from God.

I came back to the Catholic Church because I love the ritual and I love the way the Church prays. The prayer of the Church has allowed me to express myself to God more freely than any other avenue that I've explored. I believe that we are called to know joy. The joy comes and it is not defined by what's happening around us. It may take a lifetime for us to really get it – but we can know a joy that helps us to laugh even if it's through our tears. And never, and I mean never let anyone abuse us [physically, mentally, or emotionally]. Life brings us seasons and we must recognize the season. It may mean that you get together with your friends and just have a good time – and when you are tired – you cry and laugh together. We need to take be responsible for putting each other back together - and there is joy in that!

My son Calvin who was manic depressive prayed one day, “God if I can't get any better just take me.” After his death, no one in my parish called me; nobody cared, and no one came to comfort me. We called a Lutheran Church and they ministered to us.

Shortly after I joined Saint Agnes, the mother of a friend died, and I asked him who was going to take care of you because his mother was not Catholic. I thought to myself, “They are not going to do anything for his family because my family was Catholic and they didn't do anything for us.” O Glory, Hallelujah! The church came through. The deacon preached at the funeral and a number of parishioners showed up and gave their support. I was shocked! And, I was glad that my new Church family - knew how to be family.

The love and wisdom my grandparents handed down to me, I have shared with my children. My daughter, Gina was able to overcome the difficulties of acquiring her Ph.D. in Public Policy and Planning from Rutgers University.

During one of her classes, she told a professor, “If you don't believe that there is a God, there is absolutely nothing I can learn from you.” The professor did everything he could to deter her from completing her degree. And one day she called and said, “Mom come and get me.” I immediately flew to New Jersey to get my child and the first thing she said was “Mom, what happens when a dream is denied?”

After returning home she fell on her knees and prayed, “Lord, not like this, not like this!” The guy across the street told her, “You know Miss Gina, don't let the white man deny your dreams.” Later that year, she was hired as an assistant to the city manager in Colorado Springs, Colorado and went on to get her Ph.D.

My grandmother taught me that at the end of my life, not only will I meet my Creator, but I will meet my ancestors and they will say, “you stood in the heat of the day and you stood with grace.” My daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer and she told me, “Mom, this may end my life, but nothing will take away my faith in the God whom I love!”

My grandmother would always say, “Child you just stand! No, child, you just stand!” If I was slumped down, she would strike me across the back and say, “Stand up as if nothing can knock you down.” I now believe that everything is a learning experience. Whatever the circumstance, we must learn something because if we fail to learn it, we might just have to go through it again.

The words have been arranged in song written by Donnie McClurkin:

**What do you do when you've done all you can  
And it seems like it's never enough?  
And what do you say when your friends turn away,  
and you're all alone?  
Tell me, what do you give When you've given your all,  
and it seems like you can't make it through?**

**Well you just stand when there's nothing left to do you just stand  
Watch the Lord see you through  
Yes after you done all you can, You just stand**



**Deacon Royce Winters, rear, and Father Steve Angi**

## HISTORY OF ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* September 2, 1959

St. Anthony's Parish, Madisonville will celebrate its 100th Anniversary Sunday, October 4, with a Solemn Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving. Bishop Paul F. Leibold will officiate at the Mass, which will take place at 4 p.m. in the "new church" – dedicated in 1891 by Archbishop William Elder.



Father Henry Wasserman, pastor of St. Anthony's for the past 20 years, announced that priests who formerly resided in the parish and former assistant pastors will assist at the Mass. Monsignor Robert J. Sherry, rector of St. Gregory's Seminary, will preach the centenary sermon. Assisting Bishop Leibold at the centennial Mass Oct 4 will be Father August Kneipp, deacon; Father Frank Wuest, sub-deacon; and Father Donald Kneipp and Father William Goldschmidt, acolytes. Master of ceremonies will be Fathers Francis G. Lammeier and Ferdinand Kylius. Other officers will be Father Francis Buddelmeier, book-bearer; Father Sylvester Huser, miter-bearer; Father Phillip A Kesting, candle-bearer; Father Vincent Roberts, gremial-bearer; Father Lawrence Mick, cross-bearer; and the Very Rev. Pal L. O'Connor, S.J., president of Xavier University, assistant priest.

Professor John A. Fehring will direct the choir, the Archbishop's Boys' Choir and the schola of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary. Miss Mary K. Carlton will provide the accompaniment.

Sons of the parish in the priesthood include a seminary rector, the Very Rev. Cronan T. Molloy of St. John Vianney's Seminary, Bloomindale, O.; two brothers, Father August Kneipp, administrator of Presentation Church, English Woods; Father Donald Kneipp, assistant pastor of St. Anthony's, Dayton; and Father Francis Wuest, Glenmary Missionary

Home Missioner stationed at Sacred Heart Church, Appalachia, Va.

The centenary observance, which is expected to draw a large crowd of former parishioners as well as many civic and church leaders, will recall the steady growth and occasional excitement of the "mother parish" of the area.

Its history includes an extremely modest beginning, with a lot purchased for \$80; a change of locations and of names – originally was named for St. Michael; a disastrous fire, in 1891; and through the years a close relationship with the history of Madisonville itself. Until the original

## PARISHES THAT SERVE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

Church of St. Michael was established in October 1859, the spiritual needs of the few Catholics in the Madisonville area had been provided by Father Michael Sullivan, past of Holy Angels' and of the old All Saints' Parish. He offered Mass for them monthly in private residences.

In 1858 a tract of land on the north side of Main Street [now Madison Road] was purchased for \$80, and plans were drawn up for a church measuring 40 by 50 feet and a parish house. Father Sullivan was pastor in the first year of the new parish. He saw the first church dedicated in October 1859, by Archbishop John B. Purcell.

The first resident pastor of the Madisonville congregation was Father Anthony Walburg, who became pastor August 24, 1864, and held the post for 10 years. Seeing the need for development of the parish, he disposed of the old church property and on the new site built a brick church named St. Anthony. The church was 90 feet long and 48 feet wide, surmounted by a large tower. With its furnishings it cost \$12,000. A one-story school building also was built at a cost of \$900. Dedication services were held in October 1874. In December of that same year, when he was succeeded by Father Francis Kessing, Father Walburg announced that the parish was free of debt.



## **MRS. BESSIE DRANE**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The only way for me to live my life is to believe and trust in God. I take my burdens to the altar and leave them there.

My family was a part of the Great Migration from the south; we came from Camden, Ala. Once we settled, my uncle took me to a Baptist church, and it scared me. My cousin and I were happy to be recruited by the Sisters at Holy Trinity Church and School in The West End.



Jim Crowe was a way of life back then and it was hurtful. I got through it with prayer. I've always felt that if I went to God, all things were possible. Consequently, when I came up against racism and unfairness I would let them know who I am and whose I am... it worked.

I was hired as an elevator operator and wore a uniform at Cincinnati Bell back when they first started hiring blacks. One day, the company president was on the elevator and the passengers were intimidated into silence. In front of everybody on the elevator, he asked me,

“Why is your hair like that?” I didn’t react, but silently prayed. After everyone was off of that elevator, I marched to the president’s office and politely told him, “I know what to wear and how to wear it! If you have a problem with how somebody looks, it ought to be with some of your inappropriately dressed office workers!” Oh, he was a big deal, but I was just as big as he was. I won his respect and he eventually hired my son, a Boston College graduate, as a manager at my request.

I have scuffled in my life, but I say, “Get out of my way devil! Get out of my way!”

The hardest thing that has happened in my life was that the Lord took my son in 1991. He was a big part of my husband’s and my life. He was loyal and wanted to take care of me... I still miss him dearly. I am blessed to have his two sons and his wife in my life.

I had been a member of St. Mark in Evanston, but when I visited St. Anthony the choir sang, “Somebody’s Knocking on my Door.” I knew then that I was home.

I have built my life around my church and my family. I enjoy working in the church and established with my church family an annual “Taste of African-American Food.” It has grown. People attend from all over Cincinnati, and we raise a nice piece of money for the church.

I pray that I have done some good in this world.

## **MRS. SALLIE P. COASTON**

### **PARISHIONER OF ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I was baptized at Friendship Baptist Church in Crawfordsville, Ga. I never will forget how my childhood friend, Jesse Jack and I decided that if I would say that I was saved and wanted to be baptized, he would too. Well, that is exactly what happened. We planned it. We sat on the mourner's bench\* and after the preacher's sermon he opened the doors of the church\*\*. It was then that I proclaimed that I had the Holy Spirit and was ready to be baptized. So did Jesse Jack. We were around 9 or 10 years old when the preacher took us outside in long white robes to baptize us in a pool. I was scared to death. I thought I was going to drown.

My father had his own farm before the 1920s. The KKK torched it. It burned our house down to the ground and destroyed the farm. Nobody was arrested, but it didn't catch fire on its own. It was awful! We were homeless. I remember my mother telling us all "Hate grows like a tree. It will take root and grow branches if you keep it in your heart."

That's all I have to say about that.

I attended a one-room schoolhouse, and there were no whites to be found. The standards in the Colored Schools were terribly low. *If* you finished the 11th grade you were qualified to teach. The school board (I guess) was not interested in Colored folks learning. They'd give us some old raggedy books and head on back to their side of the tracks.

When I finished the 11th grade in Crawfordsville, I went to live with my aunt in Atlanta so that I could attend Washington High School and earn a real diploma.

My aunt had a rule: "Everybody in my house goes to church," she would say. Even in my hometown, I didn't like the Baptist church. I didn't like all that hollering and shouting. I had to go even if I didn't want to — to somebody's church. So, I visited different churches before settling on a Methodist Church.

After high school I went to Reed's Business School in Atlanta. It was a two-year Secretarial School. I left there after 1-1/2 years. I had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C., to work in the Pentagon. All I had to do was pass the test, which I did.

Back then; everything was segregated, including the train that I was to take to Washington. The porters were black. When the porter spotted me, he instructed me to go to the back of train



to the “Colored Section.” Well, I showed him my government issued orders. I never will forget how he smiled at me proudly and said, “Come on then, get on in here!”

I worked part-time at the Pentagon in Munitions Building #2. The Pentagon was huge, I got lost often.

I got my first taste of the Catholic faith when I went to church with one of my co-workers. I was interested but only observed.

I met an Army man that fought in WWII. We married at the Justice of the Peace in Baltimore, Maryland.

While on the train on our way back to Washington from getting married, some white folks threw a brick through the window. Luckily the porters knew that something like that might happen and didn't seat any black folks by the windows.

After my husband was discharged from the Army, he brought me to Cincinnati. We have three children.

Since I love the Lord and have always had a need to worship, I thought that I would give the Baptist church one more try. Well, the preacher said that he would not preach until the congregation had put enough money in the collection. I thought, “That's the end of that!”

I had noticed a sign at St. Joseph in the West End that said they had information classes in regard to Catholicism. I knocked on the door and told the priest, Father Marinella, that I was interested in the classes. He welcomed me, scheduled me for Catechism classes, and I have been Catholic since. I was finally home.

Once I finished Catechism classes and was baptized, we moved to Madisonville. Segregation was STILL in effect, and there were no black families at St. Anthony. The parish would provide black folks with bus fare to a black church, Mother of God in Walnut Hills.

The priest at St. Joseph gave me a letter of introduction to give to the priest at St. Anthony stating that he did not want me to be sent to Mother of God. After the priest read the letter, he told me that I could enroll my son in the school. We were one of two black families at St. Anthony. Nobody wanted to socialize with us, but it didn't bother me. I was raised in segregation. I would go to church and go home. I have always known that God would fix the wrongs that black folks went through, so I put it in his hands and went about my business.

Since I converted, I have grown closer to where I want to go — to be in communion with my Lord and Savior. Faith is something you grow into. When I was baptized in the Baptist church, I did it so the preacher would stop glaring at me on the “mourning bench.” My friend did it because I did it: I often think about that. I chose the Catholic Church and I like going to Mass. The main thing is the Eucharistic offering. What sustains me through good times and bad times is the knowledge that God will never abandon me. He never has.

I'm not leaving my church until they wheel me out.

## HISTORY OF HOLY NAME CHURCH

Holy Name parish originated in 1904, when parishioners of St. Francis Xavier and St. George parishes were instructed by archdiocesan officials to found a new parish to better accommodate those Catholics who resided in Cincinnati's oldest suburb, Mt. Auburn. The site chosen was the old Zimmerman residence, built in 1859.

The new parish grew so rapidly that within two years after it had been established, plans were drawn for a church-school combination building. The school opened in 1907, but by the 1960s it was necessary to close the school and move the students to St. George School, today known as Corryville Catholic School.

The present Holy Name Church was built and consecrated in 1951. It was staffed by priests of the archdiocese until 1968, when priests of the Society of the Precious Blood came and ministered in the parish. 1990 was a critical year. The Precious Blood Fathers could no longer serve the parish and the archdiocese would not be able to provide a full-time pastor.



Parishioners requested to continue as a canonical parish with a full-time lay pastoral administrator and a part-time priest/pastor to serve as parish leaders. The plan became a reality when in 1990 when Sister Elizabeth Bowyer, SNDdeN, became the pastoral administrator and Father Terence Meehan the pastor, along with his assignment as pastor of St. Andrew and full-time chaplain of Hamilton County Justice Center.

In 2000, Sister Elizabeth was elected to leadership in her congregation and Sister Mary Gallagher, SC, took her place. Holy Name learned that once Father Meehan was reassigned there would be no priest available to serve the parish. The Franciscan Community was approached in 2002 and asked about the possibility of the pastor of St. Monica/St. George also serving as Holy Name's pastor, with the continued service of a pastoral administrator. The archdiocese and the Franciscan Friars agreed to the "partnering" plan, and it went into effect in 2002 when Father Meehan was transferred to another parish.

Today, Holy Name Parish continues to witness to the goodness of God, giving hospitality and support to those in need of compassion and healing.



## **HISTORY OF HOLY NAME CATHOLIC CHURCH DEDICATION IS SCHEDULED BEFORE PONTIFICAL MASS**

Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* June 29, 1951

Members of Holy Name Parish, Cincinnati will attend a new house of worship beginning this Sunday July 1, when Archbishop Karl Alter will dedicate their new church on Auburn Avenue.

The dedication will take place at 10 o'clock preceding a Pontifical Mass. His Grace will celebrate the Mass and also preach the dedicatory sermon. Monsignor R. Marcellus Wagner, V.G., will be the assisting priest, and Monsignor Clarence Isсенman, V.G., and Monsignor Charles W. Kuenle of St. Monica Cathedral will be deacons of honor.

Members of the Saxan club, former seminarians, will act as minor ministers, and other members will augment the parish choir. A procession headed by school children and uniformed Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus will precede the dedication ceremony.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament will take place at 4 p.m.

The altar of the new church was consecrated Friday, June 29, by Monsignor Wagner, who afterward celebrated the first Mass in the building.

The new church replaces an auditorium-church which occupies the first floor of the parish school building on McMillan Street. The church-school building was erected in 1907, three years after the parish was established.



Father Albin H. Ratermann is pastor of Holy Name Parish.

## **MRS. IRENE GAINES**

### **PARISHIONER OF HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PARISH**

I am 85 years old, and I have been a parishioner at Holy Name since 1964. I transferred from St. Anthony Parish [Madisonville] after we moved to the Clifton area. St. Anthony was a predominantly white parish at the time. Holy Name is a really nice parish. The parish is 50/50 [race], and it is more like a family. It's not too large, and everybody takes an interest in each other. I've been to other parishes where they have trouble reaching out to each other.

I attended Holy Trinity School for my 3rd – 6th grade. When my mother died I was 10-years-old. I left Holy Trinity because I wanted to attend public school with my five siblings – and because my father attended a Baptist church.

My father raised us the best he could and taught us that education was important, even though he didn't have the same opportunities we had. I began attending a Baptist church with my father. He was really strict, as would not let us go to the dances. My friends would come back to school and talk about the dances, the boat rides or the matinee. And I thought at the time, "When I turn



18, I'm going to do all of the things." Yet, as I grew older, I was still my daddy's daughter. I realized then that I really didn't want to do those things. I learned real early that your peers are always going to try to get you to do something else. You have to make up your own mind. If you do it, do it because you choose to do it and don't make any excuses.

The Catholic Church is more like a family. I know the church has not done and still has not done all it is supposed to do. But, it is still my family. It's not the church, but the people who choose to good or to bad. Faith leads you to focus on the good things. The Catholic teachings have helped me to make the right choices in life. I always tell my nieces and nephews, "If you are not in the Catholic Church, find a church to go because church will help you make good decisions." I like to treat people the way, I like to be treated. In life, you'll find some good people and you'll find some bad people, no matter their color. I try to understand the person from my point of view and not by what someone else has told me.

Even in a big family you don't get along with everyone. It's like that in the church. It takes a whole village to raise a child. Some people say today, don't say anything to my child. Back in my day, if I did something wrong and they told my daddy, I had to be accountable. One day, my sister and I snuck off to the matinee. Someone in the neighborhood told my daddy. It wasn't even important who told because we couldn't lie to daddy. We got a real good spanking. It's not like

that today. You can't do that today. People go about their own business and are afraid to get involve — times have changed.

I enjoy going to church. Every day the church is getting better in the way they deal with the other races. You shouldn't condemn a church for what it had done 100 years ago. All you can say is, thank you Lord — allow me to do the best I can. I pray every day. When I wake up in the morning, I thank the Lord for a beautiful day — no matter what it is doing outside. I pray that they stopped killing all these young men and women all over the world in the wars and on our streets. They say the devil is always on the prowl. We must be more considerate and try to help each other. It took me 85 years to get here. We can make a better church and a better world. That's prayer — that's all I hope for.

## **MRS. ROBERTA TOLLIVER**

### **PARISHIONER OF HOLY NAME CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1913. I am proud to say I am 94 years old and have been Catholic all of my life. I've been a member of Holy Name Parish for approximately 10 years. The people at Holy Name have been loving and very supportive. I just feel good every time I'm there.

My mother was raised in a Catholic group home. My grandfather didn't think he could raise his three daughters on his own in Lexington, Ky., so he sent them [including my mother] to the Good Shepherd Catholic Group Home in Cincinnati. My mother married a man from Bethel and they lived in Dayton.

My mother died when I was eight-years-old. My three siblings and I were separated and sent to live with relatives in Cincinnati, Dayton, Lexington and Santa Monica, Calif. I was raised by an aunt in Cincinnati.

I attended St. Ann's grade school from the 3rd – 8th grade. St. Ann's School was run by the Sisters of Blessed Sacrament. I am not sure how it happened but for the 9th – 11th grade I attended St. Francis de Sales High School in Rock Castle, Virginia. I then returned to Cincinnati and attended the 12th grade at Madonna High School which was located at Court and Mound streets.

As a young adult, I attended St. Ann's or Holy Trinity Church. Father Walsh was the pastor at Holy Trinity and was also in charge at Madonna High School. He was always so nice, and he took the time to know everybody.



I also remember attending Assumption Church in Walnut Hills and sometimes I would be the only black person in there. I never had a problem. Nobody ever bothered me. Some of them spoke and some of them didn't, but I never had a problem.

After I married, I attended St. Andrew in Avondale. My son had an incident at St. Andrew School. While on a third-grade school trip to Coney Island, they sent him home because they didn't allow blacks in the park. We didn't know he was going that day until he returned home and told us what happen. That's just the way things were back then.

What I have always liked about the Catholic Church is the peace and quiet. I don't like too

much of that jumping around. There's a place for it, but I don't care for it too much. A lot of people came into the church and tried to change the church rather than the church changing them. Some black people wanted to bring the black Protestant church into the church. The church should change the person and not the other way around.

I've remained in the church because I like it – its home. As the years have gone-by things have changed. But for me, the church is holy and sacred. It has helped me to pray. Prayer helps a lot and makes me feel better.

I always say, thanks be to God. For in 94 years, I learned to be thankful. Anytime something happens, I just say, thank you.