



Title (Free Text Part) **Holy Rosary Parish and School**
Classification **History Records - Finding Aid**
Owner Location **Holy Rosary Parish (113th St.)**
Begin Date **1/1/1903**
End Date **12/31/2007**
Bulk Dates (yyyy-yyyy) **1992-2007**
Processor(s) **Altepeter, Andrew**
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Copyright Notice **No restrictions**
Collection Language(s) **English**

Biographical/Administrative History

On May 12, 1882, Archbishop Patrick Feehan commissioned Father John Waldron to form a parish in the area to the south of the then city limits of Chicago, centering on the new town of Pullman. George M. Pullman's palace car works and the "model town" he built for his employees provided a population in need of pastoral care. Father Waldron said Mass in the Market Hall in Pullman a few Sundays as had visiting priests from St. Viator's College, Bourbonnais, before him. A church building in Pullman, however, would need the consent of George Pullman, who owned the village. Pullman refused. He disliked selling any of his land and had a plan for just one church in Pullman, the Greenstone Church, to be used by the various faiths with rents all being paid to George Pullman.

Father Waldron found a site in Roseland at 110th Street and Indiana, and built a wood frame church 100 feet by 50, dedicated on January 21, 1883. In the first year there were 102 families, which rose to 320 in 1884. Most early parishioners were poor renters who worked for Pullman, and were primarily Irish. As other ethnic groups entered the area, new ethnic parishes were formed. Holy Rosary remained the English-speaking territorial parish and mother parish of Pullman. It was sometimes referred to as "Holy Rosary (Irish)." During the parish's first fifty years, there were also a small number of Polish families.

In 1887 Fr. Waldron was succeeded by Fr. Patrick Tinan. The parish soon outgrew its original church building and was able to negotiate land from the Pullman company. On December 4, 1887, the new church basement was opened for services. The cornerstone was laid in June 1890 and the church dedicated October 5 of the same year. In 1889, Pullman and the rest of Hyde Park Township was annexed into the city of Chicago, in anticipation of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. The Pullman strike of 1894, one of the notable episodes in labor history, nearly paralyzed the community. Still, the parish grew and mothered new parishes St. Louis of France, St. Nicholas, Ascension, and St. Catherine of Genoa.

In 1900, Fr. Tinan purchased a lot for the school, which opened in September 1902 and was run by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. They would serve the school for over eighty years. During the first year there were seven grades with a total enrollment of 128 boys and 126 girls, taught by six sisters. A new rectory was constructed in 1906 to house the priests, while the sisters moved from the school building to the old rectory. Later that year, Holy Rosary's third pastor, Fr. Edward Keough, was appointed. His pastorate would last almost 41 years. In 1926, the parish buildings were refurbished with new wiring and lighting fixtures, and in 1932 a new convent was constructed with 22 rooms, including a chapel and community room. The old convent, the former rectory, was demolished.

On March 4, 1937, a fire was detected by the janitor in the altar boys' sacristy. The fire soon engulfed the church, and although the structure was saved, the interior had to be gutted. Subsequent investigation revealed that three distinct blazes had been kindled in various parts of the church. Plans for rebuilding were immediately underway. Side walls and the steeple were reinforced and a new roof put in place. While construction went on, Mass was said in Palmer Park Fieldhouse. The first mass offered in the restored church was Easter Sunday, April 17, 1938. New marble altars were installed in 1940. An outdoor shrine to the parish's patroness, the Queen of the Holy Rosary, was dedicated in 1941.

Fr. Keough died in 1947, and the parish hall was renamed in his honor. Fr. James Sheridan succeeded him. The parish marked its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1957. The 1960s were an era of change for the parish and its neighborhood. Most of the area's whites moved to the suburbs, and although the school was almost entirely African-American, the parish was genuinely interracial. At the end of

the decade, the liturgical changes of Vatican II took place, including changing the position of the altar. Fr. Sheridan was succeeded as pastor by Fr. William Gentleman (1963-1966), Monsignor Francis Brackin (1966-1972), Fr. Lawrence Hanley (1973- 1981), Fr. John M. Sweeney (1982-1983), Fr. William Stenzel (1984-1990), Fr. Richard Creagh (1990-2005), and Fr. Mark Krylowicz (2005-2008).

Holy Rosary School closed in 1984 due to declining enrollment and a declining number of sisters available to teach. The poor parish survived for several decades on the generosity of a few anonymous donors and a sharing program with other parishes of the archdiocese. However, by its closure 2008 the parish had fewer than 200 active members and was unable to financially survive. At the time of its closing, the parish boundaries were 107th St. to the north, 130th St. and the Little Calumet River to the south, the Bishop Ford Freeway to the East, and Wentworth Avenue to the west.

For more information on Holy Rosary prior to 1980 consult Vol. 1, pp. 389-393 of:
Koenig, Harry C., ed. A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Chicago: New World Publishing, 1980.

Provenance

Accruals

Separations

Scope & Content

The collection comprises 20 archival boxes (8 full legal size, 1 half legal size, 1 oversize legal, 6 shoe boxes, 1 flat file box, and three 1.2 cubic ft. boxes). The largest portions of the collection are photographs, including snapshots of parish events and class photographs from the school. The oldest record is a log book of parish activities beginning in 1887.

The remainder of the collection includes financial reports (upcoming fiscal year budgets and end-of-year annual reports), legal records (primarily documentation from wills or estates, as well as property deeds), minutes from parish staff and organization meetings, audio and video recordings, printed materials (memorabilia and booklets), correspondence, architectural drawings and parish bulletins.

Series Description

Parish Bulletins: 1949 – 2003

Weekly bound copies of parish announcements. After 1982, bulletins were not bound.

Printed Materials: 1957 – 2006

Booklets or pamphlets commemorating parish special events and anniversaries.

Historical Records: 1887 – 2007

Early parish log books, records from parish organizations, parish profiles, and pastor correspondence.

Parish Council Minutes: 1996 – 2007

Minutes from the meetings of the parish council, otherwise known as “L.I.F.T.”

Financial Records: 1989 – 2007

Audits, budgets and annual reports on parish finances.

Legal Records: 1904-1994

Early property deeds and wills left to the parish.

Architectural Records: 1914 - 1983

Plat Surveys and architectural drawings for renovations.

Parish Photographs: ca. 1880s – 2005

Photographs of parish buildings, people and events. The bulk are snapshots, stored in archival shoeboxes, from parish events from 1989-2005, during the time Fr. Richard Creagh was pastor.

Audio and Video Records: n.d.

Reel to reel, video cassettes, and audio cassettes of parish events.

School Class Photographs: 1903 – 1984

Composite class photographs of Holy Rosary School, including oversized photographs. Delicate photographs are stored horizontally with architectural records.

School Photographs: n.d.

Contacts

Holy Rosary Parish (113th St.) (Client)
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Box List

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