

A Brief History Of Corpus Christi Parish

There were few Roman Catholics in Corona, as Hasbrouck Heights was called in its early days, and even by 1896 or 1897 there were only some half a dozen families who were Catholic. To assist at Mass on Sunday, they were obliged to go to St. Francis de Sales in Lodi, or, so the old sources say, to Carlstadt, where there must have been a mission. Without private automobiles, that was something of a trek, and the local people were eager to have a church of their own.

In 1896, a zealous Catholic laywoman, Mrs. Mary A. Murtha, raised \$2,700 for a church, and early the next year the faithful petitioned the diocese of Newark for a church of their own. The petition was granted, a tract of land on the south side of Kipp, west of the Boulevard, was donated by Edward Anson, and work on the church began that spring.

But having a church building was not the same as being a parish. At first, the church in Hasbrouck Heights was a mission station of St. Francis de Sales in Lodi, under the care of Fr. Joseph Ascheri of that parish. Fr. Ascheri ministered to his flock in the Heights, sometimes walking, sometimes riding his bicycle, until his death in 1910. He was succeeded by Fr. Henry J. Watterson, and he, after three years, by Fr. William J. Carlin.

Through all this time, the Catholics of Hasbrouck Heights remained a mission of St. Francis de Sales in Lodi, with the mission priest coming to say Mass only on Sundays and feast days, or for special occasions. Parish records were kept at St. Francis. The original church was of wooden clapboard, but in 1914 part of the Dunstan Estate, on the Boulevard between Kipp and Washington Place, was purchased. The old church building was lifted up and moved to the new site; the first part of the move was made on a Saturday night. The trolley wires on the Boulevard had to be raised to permit passage of the old steeple, which stood over the front door, and steps were hurriedly placed at the corner of Kipp and the Boulevard so that the congregation could enter for Mass the next morning. The church was then gradually moved to its present site, and a stucco finish and slate roof were added.

In 1914, the church purchased the rest of the Dunstan estate, including the house, which was converted into a hall and meeting rooms for social activities. A census showed that the Catholic community had grown to 140 women, 106 men, and 91 children. In view of this growth, the diocese eventually decided to erect an independent parish in Hasbrouck Heights, and in February 1919, Fr. Andrew L. Clark was appointed the first Resident Pastor of Corpus Christi Parish. The old Dunstan home—by then in rather dilapidated condition after its use as an all-purpose building—became his rectory.

There was much work to be done, and not much in the way of material resources, but Fr. Clark proved equal to the challenge. He acquired more property, including the land on the west side of the Boulevard on which a building containing an auditorium and meeting rooms was constructed.

As the parish continued to grow, Fr. Clark realized that a parochial school was badly needed, and the building was renovated to serve that purpose, opening in September 1928. The Sisters of Charity from Convent Station, New Jersey, one of several religious communities descending from the Sisters of Charity founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, came to teach at the new school. About this time, too, Mme. Raphaeline Di Janni, who was to become another institution in the parish and the town, came to Corpus Christi as organist and choir director.

A year after he had presided over the first graduation from Corpus Christi School, Fr. Clark died, and on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1932, Fr. (later Msgr.) Robert G. Fitzpatrick was appointed pastor. In an early display of ecumenism, the ministers from the various Protestant churches and Mayor Oldfield welcomed the new Roman Catholic pastor at a formal reception.

In 1933 the pastor was given an assistant in the person of newly ordained Fr. (later Msgr.) Francis M. Mulquinn, who had been an altar boy in Msgr. Fitzpatrick's old parish, St. Mary's in Jersey City. In the years that he served in Corpus Christi, Fr. Mulquinn was to become a well-known figure in the parish and the Borough, organizing sports events for all the youth of the town, forming a men's choir in the parish that performed at church and civic functions and even made some recordings, instituting a catechetical program that became a model for the archdiocese, and ministering to the faithful, day in and day out, with a mixture of firmness and compassion.

In 1933 too, the rectory and school were altered and improved, and when the Bishop of Newark came to administer Confirmation in April 1934, he agreed with the pastor that the existing church was too small for the growing congregation. Formal approval of the expansion plans was given by the diocese in June, work began in September, and the new church was ready for use at the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve of 1934. The church building was walled in brick; a vestibule, two side entrances, a new bell tower with three bells, and a new slate roof were added; and the interior was enriched with new altars, candlesticks, and other furnishings, including the carved oak crucifix over the main altar. The stained-glass windows from the original church, many of which were memorials, were incorporated into the new, and new ones in a fine medieval style with a blue background were added.

In the fall, while work went forward on the church renovations, a parish census was taken that revealed 427 men, 520 women, and 491 children in the parish. The following year, the parish produced a commemorative history, from which much of the information in this book has been taken.

During Msgr. Fitzpatrick's pastorate, various lay organizations were begun or reorganized: the St. Vincent de Paul Society cared for the needy of the parish and served as ushers; the Mt. Carmel Guild was another charitable group, supplying shoes, clothing, and First Communion and Confirmation outfits to deserving families; the Corpus Christi Players were an amateur drama club; and the Columbia Cadet Corps afforded boys from 12 to 16 an opportunity to learn military tactics, first aid, and other skills that would soon be needed as the threat of war began to loom. The Holy Name Society, a fraternal organization for the men of the parish, was also reorganized. All of these groups, and other civic as well as parish organizations and societies, met in the school, which was becoming inadequate to the demands placed on it.

The next milestone in the growth of the parish therefore occurred in 1938, when the Alexander property on Kipp Avenue was purchased and plans were begun for a new school there.

Money was raised by various activities, notably a Variety Show, put on by the mothers of the school children under the direction of Mme. Di Janni. Work on the new building began in January 1940 and was finished that September: besides eight classrooms, the facility contained offices, a library, and a gymnasium.

The following year, the church was expanded on both sides, as Corpus Christi, along with the Borough and the country, weathered World War II. By 1947, with 858 families in the parish, a second assistant priest was added to the staff, Fr. Donald Nobel. Two years later, one of the institutions for which Corpus Christi would become known began: the Holy Name Men's Choir. Trained and encouraged by John P. Quinn, the group had its start with five men learning a few hymns to sing at the society's annual Communion Breakfast and grew to 39 members who sang High Mass (in Latin, remember) at 9 a.m. on Sundays. Taking as their motto St. Augustine's dictum "Qui cantat, bis orat" ("He who sings prays twice"), they sang "a capella" (without instrumental accompaniment), vested in cassocks and surplices. Nor were their efforts confined to their own parish: they sang in churches and at civic events throughout a wide area of New Jersey. When one of them moved to Wilbraham, Massachusetts, and started a similar choir in his new parish there, they offered the Massachusetts group support and encouragement, and traveled up to join them in their first High Mass.

Meanwhile, the parish continued to grow, numbering 1,559 families in 1952, and 1,881 by 1955. Once again, the church could not hold the Sunday congregations, and overflow Masses were being said in the old school on the Boulevard, which had by then been converted into a Parish Center. The school too was in need of expansion, and a building fund was started early in 1957. A goal of \$250,000 was set, \$315,00 was pledged, and over 90 percent of that paid by 1959. In 1957 the cornerstone for the school extension was laid. The building would contain additional classrooms and a large chapel that could hold the Sunday congregations, with weekday Masses continuing to be held in the old church. Parish tradition has it that the bishop had refused permission to expand the church again or to build a new one. But when the pastor proposed a "chapel" in the school addition, no objections were raised. New parishioners are sometimes surprised to find that the chapel is the larger of the two structures, since the word "chapel" normally denotes a smaller ecclesiastical edifice.

Fr. Nobel was replaced by Fr. Donald A. Cooper as associate in 1953, and in 1959 a fourth priest was added to the staff, Fr. Frederick C. Koerner. Two years later, Fr. Mulquinn was made pastor of St. Raphael's in Livingston, being replaced at Corpus Christi by Fr. Robert Patterson.

A landmark event in the history of the parish and of the Borough took place in January 1967. During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is observed annually by many Christian churches during that month, an ecumenical prayer service was held in Corpus Christi Chapel, at which Frs. Cooper, Koerner, and Patterson were joined by the rector of the Episcopal Church, the Rev. Norman Egerton, and the pastors of the Methodist, Reformed, Lutheran, and United Community churches. Mme. Di Janni played the organ, the combined Protestant church choirs and the Corpus Christi Boys' Choir sang, and the Rev. Mr. Egerton preached the sermon to a congregation of 1,700 people, who filled the chapel to overflowing. Following the service, the Protestant clerics and their wives were invited to the Rectory by Msgr. Fitzpatrick.

That same year, after almost 35 years of dedicated service, Msgr. Fitzpatrick died, to be greatly mourned by all. His successor was Msgr. Edgar A. Verhoest, who was then pastor of All

Saints in Jersey City, having previously served for ten years as chaplain in the Alexian Brothers' Hospital in Elizabeth. The same year saw the replacement of Fr. Cooper, who went to Immaculate Conception in Montclair, by Fr. Joseph W. Kukura, a newly ordained priest who would go on to teach moral theology at the archdiocesan seminary was the new associate. During his years at Corpus Christi, he instituted the annual Carnival as a fund raiser for the Catholic Youth Organization, for many years a sign of spring in the Heights.

Msgr. Verhoest's pastorate encompassed many of the changes in liturgy and parish life brought about by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. One of these was the practice of having seminarians get some hands-on experience working in parishes. Several deacons from the seminary did their internship at Corpus Christi. When Fr. Patterson left to take up work in Our Lady of Good Counsel in Newark in 1968, the staff was briefly reduced to three priests, but in 1970 newly ordained Fr. Robert T. Ulak came to Corpus Christi. In the years since then, Fr. Bob, as he was affectionately called, worked with the youth of the parish, continued his studies, and became Mr. Fixit for the sometimes temperamental electrical and PA systems in the church and chapel. He also oversaw the computerization of much of the parish's administrative records. Fr. Ulak being of Polish extraction, and Fr. Bob introduced the Middle European custom of blessing Easter food on Holy Saturday morning to Corpus Christi. Holy Saturday noon still sees an assortment of baskets, from children's filled with chocolate eggs and bunnies to large hampers with the traditional Polish kielbasy, horseradish, eggs, and babka, brought to church for the blessing.

In 1973, Mme. Di Janni retired as music director, amid an outpouring of appreciation from the parish and the town. The farewell reception in her honor was attended by hundreds, messages of appreciation were received from throughout the county, and the Mayor and Council adopted an official resolution honoring her for her contributions to the community. Even in retirement, Madame continued to play when needed, and her pupils carried on her tradition.

In 1976, Msgr. Verhoest officially retired as pastor, though he continued to reside in the Corpus Christi Rectory for many years, hearing confessions and saying the early morning Mass. His successor was Fr. Gerard W. Walsh, who came from St. Cassian's in Montclair, accompanied by his faithful companion, the dog Blackie. Fr. Walsh started a parish newsletter and a parish council, and took great pains to improve and maintain the physical structures of the parish buildings. He also instituted "brown bag Sunday": on the last Sunday of every month, parishioners are asked to bring nonperishable food to church, which is donated to food pantries in Englewood and Newark. The needy of these and other parishes are also the recipients of the piles of gaily wrapped Christmas presents that the parish collects each year. His hard-hitting but compassionate sermons, stressing God's love for mankind and the practical requirements of the Christian life, attracted even those of other communities who came to hear him preach.

Fr. Kukura's transfer in 1973 had reduced the number of assistants to two, and 1979 Fr. Koerner was also transferred. He was replaced by Fr. Joseph Mirandi, who served until 1981, and occasionally visited for a day or two until his death. His successor was Fr. Thomas McLaughlin, who served here from 1981 to 1986, when he was transferred to Holy Name in East Orange. Fr. Thomas Hart briefly replaced him, and later that year was in turn replaced by Fr. Stephen Sheridan. On Fr. Sheridan's departure to take up work in communications for the archdiocese, Fr. Robert Iaquinto, a native of Jersey City with a varied background became parochial vicar. In 1989, Fr. Iaquinto was

transferred, and Fr. Brendan H. Quinn replaced him.

The Newark Archdiocese took advantage of the restoration of the permanent diaconate. Among them was a Heights resident, Joseph Romano, who was ordained by Archbishop Gerrity in December 1977. Deacon Romano requested and was granted permission to exercise his ministry here in Corpus Christi parish, where he assisted at Mass and took Communion to the sick. Further afield, he worked with the Archdiocese Vocational Office, encouraging vocations among blacks, Hispanics, and other minority groups. When Deacon Romano died in 1977, he was greatly mourned by the parish, and his funeral was attended by many priests and deacons from throughout the archdiocese.

In March 1991, as his parish prepared to celebrate the 45th anniversary of Fr. Walsh's ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Walsh received a telephone call. At first, he did not recognize the voice on the other end. Then he realized it was the Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, telling him that he was now "Monsignor Walsh", the Pope had paid tribute to his years of service to the People of God in New Jersey by making him an honorary member of the papal household. Msgr. Walsh was formally invested with his title by Archbishop McCarrick at a noon Mass on October 6, 1991.

On April 17, 1994, as the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights celebrated the centennial of its founding, and ecumenical thanksgiving service was held in Corpus Christi Chapel, sponsored by the Heights Ministerial Association; Msgr. Walsh gave the homily, and refreshments were served afterwards in the school cafeteria.

The summer and fall of 1994 saw a number of changes in parish personnel: Fr. Ulak was appointed pastor at Sacred Heart in Irvington, the parish in which he was born and raised, leaving Corpus Christi on July 1. Meanwhile, in June, the principal of Corpus Christi parochial school, Sr. Eileen Richard of the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, who had served in the school since 1979 and been principal since 1980, announced that she would leave that year to enter the Carmelite convent in Roxbury, Mass., on September 8. She was succeeded as principal by Miss Patricia Jean Szczypien, who had taught here since 1977. Also in May 1994, Msgr. Gerard Walsh, after 48 years of active ministry; announced that he was retiring. A farewell dinner in his honor was given by the parish on June 3.

At the end of August the new pastor arrived. He was Msgr. Francis A. DeDomenico, a native of St. James Parish in the Ironbound section of Newark and St. Peter's in Belleville, who had completed graduated theological studies in Rome and had previously served as Parochial Vicar at Holy Trinity in Hackensack, as director of campus ministry at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, and academic dean at Immaculate Conception Seminary, and as pastor of St. Aloysius in Jersey City. As Pastor of St. Aloysius he had been honored by Rome by being made a Prelate of Honor of Pope John Paul II.

In June 1994 Fr. Ulak was replaced by Fr. Andrew Zmarlicki, a young priest from Krakow, Poland. He came to Corpus Christi after a one year assignment at St. Mary's in Dumont.

Before Msgr. Walsh retired, he had started work on an all-day kindergarten program for the parish school.

Though he had been in residence and performing the functions of pastor since September, it was not until Sunday, November 13, that Msgr. DeDomenico was formally installed. The installation was undertaken by the Rev. Peter J. Riley, dean of Bergen County South, pastor of St. Mary's, Rutherford. The official letter from Newark Archbishop Theodore McCarrick appointing Msgr.

DeDomenico pastor of Corpus Christi was read by Fr. Brendan Quinn.

The spring of 1995 saw the arrival of Fr. Donald Ransom for a brief period.

In June of 1995, Father Raymond Holmes was assigned to Corpus Christi. Working with a group of parishioners, the "Parish Life Committee" was formed to enhance the quality of life in our parish. Activities have included ice skating, trips to the Cloisters Art Museum, and the Advent wreath making. The committee is currently coordinating the Parish Photo Directory. An outgrowth of the committee is the Corpus Christi Community Theater Group, founded in 1997 under the capable leadership of Vic and Robin Pianese. The initial offering, "Annie Warbucks" was a sold out success. The current presentation, "Irene," under the direction of Bob Shindle, continues the groups philosophy of providing quality family entertainment, at a low cost.

In January of 1997 after 68 years of service to the parish, the Sisters of Charity announced that they were withdrawing their corporate commitment to the parish school. The convent on Washington Place was then in July of 1997 renovated to provide a Parish Pastoral Center for offices, and meeting rooms for parish activities.

In the years since his arrival, Msgr. DeDomenico has done much to beautify the worship spaces of the parish. One of his first contributions was to install statues in two empty niches in the front of the chapel: St. Patrick, patron of Ireland, and St. Boniface, English-born but the apostle of Germany. The tabernacle in the church received a much needed refinishing. Later came extensive renovation of both the church and the chapel. When the carpeting was taken up, elegant terrazzo flooring in varying shades of green and beige was revealed in both, and was polished. The wooden pews and wainscoting in both church and chapel, and the pitched roof of the church, were refinished, and the wall of the sanctuary in the chapel was adorned with richly colored murals of the Baptism of Jesus and the Supper at Emmaus. Reproductions of the cross of San Damiano (the one before which St. Francis of Assisi heard Christ tell him to "rebuild the church"), Raphael's *Transfiguration*, Gerard David's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, Murillo's *Holy Family*, and a Botticelli *Madonna and Child* were hung on the back wall of the chapel, and a parishioner's gift supplied polychromed reliefs of Christ, the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and the Holy Family, which were hung on the railing of the choir loft. A tapestry of a German painting of Our Lady and the Christ Child, the *Madonna of the Pears*, was added to the chapel vestibule, a gift originally given to Msgr. DeDomenico from Bishop Jerome Pechillo, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark.

After Vatican II, the baptismal fonts in both church and chapel, like many throughout the world, had been moved to positions adjacent to the altar. After a while, however, liturgical practice favored the positioning of the font toward the back of the church, so as to indicate that baptism is the doorway to membership in the Body of Christ. Accordingly, pews were removed partway up the nave of the chapel and in the back of the church, and the fonts placed there. In the chapel, an ambrey case was installed near the font to display the Holy Oils used in baptism, confirmation, and the sacrament of the sick.

In the church, the area where the font had been before Vatican II had become a shrine area, containing a number of plaster statues of the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and various saints. These statues were moved to the back north side of the church, and the old font area was converted into a restroom with marble floor and original wainscoting. The stained-glass windows, depicting various sacred scenes and given by long-ago parishioners, were hung in the vestibule of the chapel, and plain

colored glass ones took their place in the restroom.

In the chapel, the confessionals were redesigned and enlarged to safeguard the penitent's anonymity or to allow the option of an informal face to face exchange between penitent and priest. The two options are immediately recognizable to the penitent upon entering the room.

After Vatican II, many liturgical roles were opened to the laity. Among them was the privilege of proclaiming the readings at Mass. Those who carry out this role are known as lectors, and a lector group was formed in Corpus Christi parish in the late 1960s, as the liturgical directives of Vatican II began to be implemented. Fr. Cooper trained and instructed these first men, who included Ed Cosgriff, Harry Dietrich, George Faherty, Tom King, John Murphy. Presently there are 26 lectors, men and women of high school age and up, whose schedules are drawn up by head lector Gae Licameli.

The Council also gave permission for members of the laity to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. The original parish team of lay ministers of the Eucharist, which included Connie Cevasco, Helen Rymer, Thomas Moriarty, and Mary McGuire, was trained at Immaculate Conception Seminary, then at Darlington, and solemnly commissioned. At present, the 30 active Eucharistic ministers have been trained in the parish, but their names are still submitted to the Archbishop and they are formally commissioned in a church ceremony. They assist in distributing the Eucharist at Mass. Both the parish priests and the Special ministers of the Eucharist bring communion to the sick and homebound of the parish. In 1998 Sr. Jean Rider was added to the parish staff to enhance and coordinate the ministry to the homebound.

Over the years numerous formal and informal groups of laymen and women have carried out tasks of service in the parish and its school. One of the oldest is the Rosary Society, founded in the late 1930s with Msgr. Fitzpatrick as its moderator and Marge Krenn its first president. The women of this spiritual and social association devoted to the Blessed Mother meet once a month, after a Mass and recitation of the Rosary. They make every effort to attend the wake of deceased Rosarians and recite the Rosary there. The group has also made many gifts to the church, and is affiliated with the Newark Archdiocesan Council and the Bergen-Hackensack District Council of the National Council of Catholic Women.

The Knights of Columbus is another long-established group that is part of a larger whole. The Corpus Christi chapter, officially Msgr. R. G. Fitzpatrick Council, No. 7041, was organized on February 17, 1978, with 33 members. Today it numbers 139, and sponsors, among other projects, roses for the unborn, scholarships, an annual clothing drive, a retarded citizens' drive, an annual memorial Mass and Communion Breakfast, and the annual pasta dinner.

In October 1986, a group of young mothers, inspired by the "good news" their children were bringing home from religion class, wanted "something more" in their own interior life. They met under the spiritual direction of Sr. Anne Martina of Corpus Christi school. At first they were thinking of something like a class on their Catholic heritage, but they found themselves instead forming a prayer group that they are sure has blessed them and changed them profoundly. At present the leader is Sarah Chiha, and the groups meets on the first and third Tuesday of every month from October to May.

Several parish associations have the youth of the parish as their focus.

Corpus Christi Parish School has a proud history of striving and achieving excellence in

academics while integrating a strong atmosphere of Christian values and principles.

In 1994, Corpus Christi acquired a new pastor, Msgr. DeDomenico and a new principal, Patricia J. Szczypien. And with the addition of Vice Principal Michelle Murillo in 1998, the new team had the huge task of maintaining the strong reputation of the past and at the same time promoting renewed growth and change to facilitate the needs of the present and the future.

The school continues to enjoy a large enrollment of students. A full staff of certified teachers are dedicated in educating the total student spiritually, academically, and physically. The school provides three distinct curriculums to serve the needs of its diverse population: Early Childhood for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten; Elementary Education for Grades 1 through 6; and Junior High School for Grades 7 and 8. An extensive program of after school care, clubs, and activities are also available throughout the year. Office administrators Estelle Arsenault and Julie Carpino play a vital role in communication and coordination of school activities.

The nineties were prosperous years for the school. A new Kindergarten classroom was constructed to accommodate many students and full day sessions. A state of the art computer lab was built to provide access to global information. A new art and science lab was created to promote growth of knowledge in those areas. For continued success, Corpus Christi School will pursue and explore ways to improve and grow to meet the demands of the 21st Century.

The Home School Association is an organization of parents. The eight elected board members offer their service as a link between the school and family. They provide assistance in organizing volunteers, fund raising, social and educational activities, and encouraging close parental involvement.

It is with continued and renewed dedication and prayer to our Lord that Corpus Christi Parish School will move into the next Century and meet all its challenges with much success.

The parish Basketball program was expanded in 1997 to include an intramural program. The response to this program has been very positive with over 400 children involved. The goal of the athletic program is for children to have fun, learn basic skills and elements of good sportsmanship.

Scouting for both boys and girls has been a part of our ministry to young people. Under the guidance of generous leaders the daisies, brownies, girl scouts, cubs and boy scouts are thriving. In 1998 two of our boy scouts achieved the rank of Eagle scout, James Duverney and James DiGuglielmo.

In March of 1995 the Junior High CYO opened the doors of its center in the building across the Boulevard to the junior high students of the parish and community. In this safe environment, open Fridays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 7 to 10 p.m., from September to June, they can enjoy games and socialize with their friends, while the director, Sarah Chiha, and 24 other volunteers encourage them to live their Christian faith in the details of every day. The group's motto is "With privileges come responsibilities."

For older youngsters, in April 1995, the parish designated a youth minister, Maureen Morosco, for high school youth ministry under the direction of the pastor, Msgr. DeDomenico. The ministry strives to offer functions and activities for youth in which they can identify their own gifts and interests, and be guided to use them as disciples of Christ to build up the Kingdom of God on earth. Young people of all races, ethnic backgrounds, and even different faith traditions, are welcomed, accepted for who they are, and encouraged to grow physically and spiritually. Activities

cover service, social, and spiritual fields, and include raising money and supplying food for St. Augustine's Soup Kitchen in Newark, where they also helped convert an old rectory into a shelter for women and gave a play and a Christmas party of 200 inner city children. The group has also performed a Holy Week Passion Play for the parish and is involved with the pastoral care department at Bergen Pines Nursing Home. Each year they take part in retreats, rallies, and social gatherings with other young people of the archdiocese at which they learn new ways of praying and growing in their knowledge and love of God through Scripture, music, and even video. Some of the members also serve the parish as lectors or eucharistic ministers.

In June of 1997, Donna Marie Clancy became the Pastoral Associate for Catechetics.

Corpus Christi's Office of Religious Education ministers to the parish in many forms of Religious Education; Sacramental preparation, Religious Education Classes (K-8), Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), School Liturgies, and Religious Resource Center for school and parish.

At the present time the ministry has grown to 35 Catechists teaching in the Religious Education program with 500 children in the program.

Involvement of parents in the program and sacramental preparation is a major goal of the Office of Religious Ed. Having parents walk the faith journey with their children is a vital aspect of bringing children up in the Church. Our preparation and celebrations of the sacraments, First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation are parish wide. All children; school and Religious Ed. are of one parish, "Corpus Christi."

Our RCIA process is headed by a Core Committee and the Coordinator of RCIA is Charles Licameli. The RCIA Team reaches out to those who have been away from the church of those wanting to become a Catholic. Last year there were five adults welcomed into full communion and one child baptized at the Easter Vigil. This year the team has welcomed five adults into the RCIA process.

The goal for the future is to have all of Corpus Christi Walking by Faith with our children and RCIA candidates.

In 1997, Mary M. Seaman arrived as the new director of Music Ministries.

Within the short time Mary has been here the parish has learned 15 new hymns and two new mass settings. The Cantor Ministry has grown from three (one a non-parishioner) to six all parishioners, with two in training. Our youngest cantor is a fifth grader in our school. Our parish choirs include The Intergenerational Choir, ages 14 and up; Junior Choir, grades 4-8; Festival Choir and a new Contemporary Music Ensemble under the direction of John Zisa, one of our cantors.

Our Choirs are not only singers but instrumentalists as well. They minister together at parish sacraments, special liturgies, and always have an open door for new comers.

Renew 2000, a process of parish spiritual in preparation for the millennium, has begun under the leadership of our pastor, Msgr. DeDomenico.

As this brief history of our parish indicates, we the parishioners and staff of Corpus Christi parish have given a great legacy by the generous service of the priests, religious and laity who have gone before us. As we celebrate our one hundred years, we pray to be worthy of this legacy as we journey together into the next millennium, and continue to form "The Body of Christ."

Pastors and Assistants
Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church

Fr. Joseph Ascheri, of St. Francis de Sales, Lodi, *1897-1910*

Fr. Henry J. Watterson, of St. Francis de Sales, Lodi, *1910-1913*

Fr. William J. Carlin, of St. Francis de Sales, Lodi, *1913-1919*

Msgr. Andrew L. Clark, pastor *1919-1932*

Msgr. Robert G. Fitzpatrick, pastor *1933-1967*

Fr. Francis M. Mulquinn, associate *1933-1961*

Fr. Donald Nobel, associate *1947-1953*

Fr. Donald A. Cooper, associate *1953-1967*

Fr. Frederick C. Koerner, associate *1959-1979*

Fr. Robert Patterson, associate *1961-1968*

Msgr. Edgar A. Verhoest, pastor *1967-1976*

Fr. Joseph W. Kukura, associate *1967-1973*

Fr. Robert T. Ulak, associate *1970-1994*

Msgr. Gerard W. Walsh, pastor *1976-1994*

Fr. Joseph Mirandi, associate *1979-1981*

Fr. Thomas McLaughlin, associate *1981-1986*

Fr. Thomas Hart, associate *1986*

Fr. Stephen Sheridan, associate *1986-1987*

Fr. Robert laquinto, associate *1987-1989*

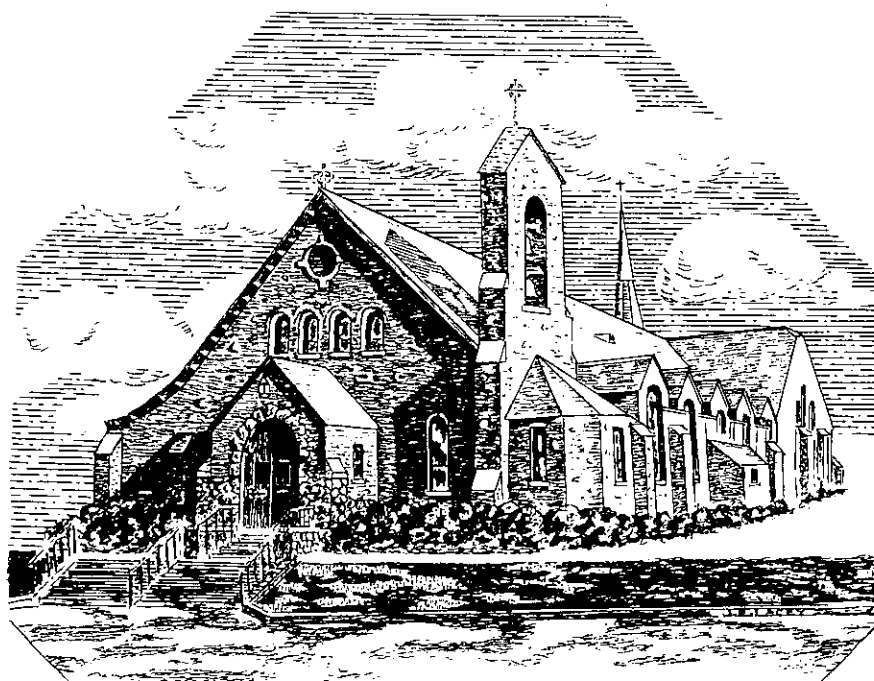
Fr. Brendan H. Quinn, associate *1989-1995*

Msgr. Francis A. De Domenico, pastor *1994-present*

Fr. Andrew Zmarlicki, associate *1994-present*

Fr. Raymond M. Holmes, associate *1995-present*

Corpus Christi Church Centennial Celebration Dinner and Dance



CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH

1897—1997

*The Landmark
East Rutherford, NJ
October 23, 1998*