

The Centennial Celebration
Of
Annunciation Catholic Church
Bogalusa, Louisiana

“A History of Annunciation Catholic Church”
1906 – 2006



A Pastoral Council Project

Father Lawrence Phelps, O.S.B.
Pastor

Greg Genco
Centennial Chairman

Wanda Freeman
Michelle Goode
Ben Lott

Mary Dugan Brignac
Centennial Co-chairman

Karen Mizell
Frank Montalbano
Edward Ratliff

Tommy Jean Rayburn

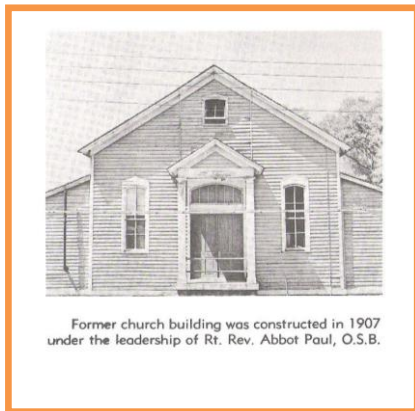
A History of Annunciation Catholic Church On the Occasion of the Hundredth Anniversary 1906 -- 2006

Written by Committee – headed by Greg Genco, Chairman; Mary Dugan-Brignac, Co-Chair; Karen Mizell, Co-Chair

One Hundred Years!!

A long time indeed! Called by God to bring His presence to eastern Washington Parish, the Abbot of St. Joseph's Abbey, near Covington, LA sent dedicated monks to begin ministering to the spiritual needs of the small Catholic community. Records show that as far back as 1906, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated in the fledgling log town on the banks of Bogue Lusa Creek (an Indian name for Smoky Waters). H.E. Cassidy recalled Mass being said in the home of his maternal grandmother at her residence on the site of the present rectory on Avenue B.

Part I 1907 - 1956

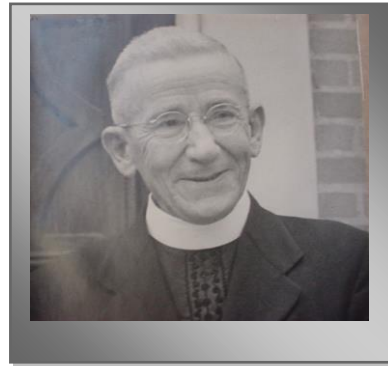


Early in 1907, we are told, the foundations for a permanent city were laid under the able and guiding hand of Col. W.H. Sullivan. His survey of the community included making provisions for the people to worship God. The Great Southern Lumber Company, of which Sullivan was Vice-president and Manager, donated land for a Catholic Church. On this tract the first Annunciation Catholic Church, a frame structure, was erected under the guidance of Abbot Paul Schaeuble, O.S.B. of St. Joseph's Abbey. This building, built in 1907, faced Avenue B.



Early accounts tell us that the dedication of the new church took place on Sunday, May 12, 1907 amid solemn and impressive ceremonies. The celebrant for the High Mass on this occasion was the young Father Placide Dobyms, O.S.B. The sermon was delivered by Abbot Schaeuble. The choir and band from St. Joseph's Seminary performed for the event, which drew large crowds from as far away as New Orleans. Later in the day Judge Frank McGloin addressed the

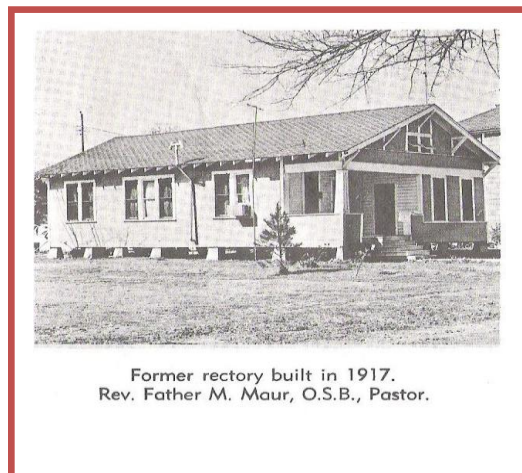
gathering in Goodyear Park just across Fifth Street from the church. It was an auspicious occasion long remembered, especially by the twenty-odd families that formed the charter group of what is now Annunciation Parish. However, because of the diminutive community, it would be some ten years before Annunciation Church would rise from the status of a Mission to that of a Parish.



Fr. Dobyms

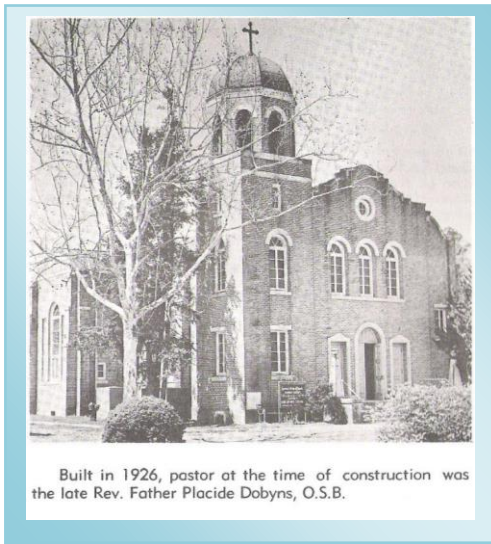
For those who are especially curious, we mention that the first Baptism administered was that of triplet sons of Mr. and Mrs. Ruffillo (Iginia Nanni) Parazza. The boys were John, Dominic, and Guido (Guy), who were born on November 26, 1905 and baptized on December 2, 1906. The first marriage recorded was that of O.H. Engerran and Ida Foret on March 2, 1908. The first funeral was that of infant Anna Michalko, 5 months, 9 days old on May 10, 1908.

It is interesting to note that between 1906 and 1909, the records show that there were no fewer than five different priests coming here to Annunciation Church from 1909 to 1913. However, Father Paul Unmuessing, O.S.B. was in charge of the Mission. From 1913 to 1917 we again find a number of priests, as many as seven, taking turns serving the people. Finally, in 1917 Annunciation was named a Parish with Father Maur Frieslich, O.S.B. as pastor. This necessitated the building of a rectory which was done as soon as possible, by the men of the parish, during Father Frieslich's five year tenure of office. Located at 519 Avenue B, it served as the rectory until the present one was erected in 1962, under the pastorate of Father Hubert Bordenave, O.S.B.



Former rectory built in 1917.
Rev. Father M. Maur, O.S.B., Pastor.

Father Placide Dobyms, the young priest who had celebrated the first High Mass in the church in 1907 on the occasion of the dedication, was appointed to succeed Father Frielsich in 1922. Prior to this Father Dobyms had served as a Catholic chaplain during World War I. During a time when Bogalusa was predominately Protestant, this saintly man won the admiration and respect of the entire community. Everyone who knew him saw the face of Jesus in his words and actions.

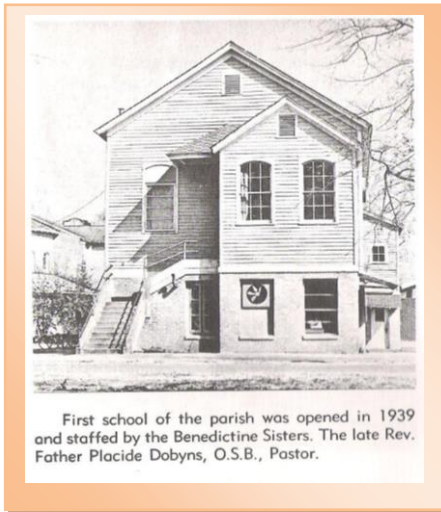


Under his capable leadership a new church, the present one, was erected in 1927. The copper-clad dome atop the bell tower gave the church an historic Gothic look. Beautiful stained glass windows, depicting the Joyful Mysteries, among others, surround the congregational seating area. The Seven Sacraments windows are arrayed around the dome of the sanctuary above the main altar. These priceless beauties are said to be as exquisite (or more so) than those in the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, LA.

Until recently a white alabaster carved Communion Rail was across the width of the church, below the last altar step. Oak handmade pews and kneelers were installed for the congregation. Small brackets can still be seen at the end of each pew, which held a card naming the donor and dedication.



Four side altars hold exquisite statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Blessed Mother Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Theresa. Smaller statues of St. Anthony, St. Jude and St. Benedict are arrayed around the church. The ornate old style main altar, which houses the Blessed Sacrament, was obtained from St. Joseph's Abbey in the early 1930's. The solid wood Altar was built by Father Stephen Muller during his tenure as Curator, after Vatican II requested the priest turn toward the people to say Mass.



First school of the parish was opened in 1939 and staffed by the Benedictine Sisters. The late Rev. Father Placide Dobyms, O.S.B., Pastor.

The old wooden frame church was moved to Avenue C and elevated to become a second floor with a ground floor of brick supporting it from below. This composite building served as a four-room school from 1939 to 1956 when, under Father Bordenave, the main building of the present school was built. The old school was then converted into a parish hall, dubbed Dobyms Hall, on the second floor and a school cafeteria on the ground floor.