

Margaret Mary Healy was born in Ireland in 1833 and immigrated to the United States with her father to escape the ravages of the famine in Ireland. After her father's death, she joined some relatives in Matamoros, Mexico where she met John Bernard Murphy whom she married in 1849. Later, they couple moved to Corpus Christi, where John Bernard became Mayor. They purchased a ranch in San Patricia County, near Mathis, Texas. On July 4, 1884, John Bernard Murphy, judge, member of Texas' First Constitutional Convention, and the mayor of Corpus Christi, Texas, died. He left his widow, Margaret Mary, a woman of means, and she moved to San Antonio, Texas in 1887. On Pentecost Sunday, May 29 of that year, a letter from the United States bishops was read in St. Mary's Catholic Church. This letter changed her life. In 1887, on the advice of Bishop John C. Neraz, Margaret Mary began to construct, from her own resources, a church and the first Catholic free school for African-Americans in the State of Texas. The facilities were located at the corner of Live Oak and Nolan Streets in San Antonio and were dedicated in honor of St. Peter Claver in September 1888. Shortly thereafter, she built a residence for the priest who would serve the community. Throughout the construction phase and for the first several years of the existence of St. Peter Claver Mission, as it was called, Mrs. Murphy suffered great indignities and persecution from those opposed to her efforts on behalf of "those" people. She battled the daily storms of criticism and prejudice, and her opponents incessantly tried to arouse discord. On June 6, 1892, she and three other women became novices with the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, where her blood sister was a member. One year later, on Friday, June 9, 1893, Mother Margaret Mary Healy Murphy, Sister Mary Joseph McNally, Sister Mary Aloysius McMullen and Sister Mary Alphonsus Cronyn made their first vows in the convent of Our Lady of Light on Nolan Street, in the presence of Bishop Neraz. Thus, our congregation, Sisters of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate came into being. On June 6, 1892, she and three other women became novices with the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, where her blood sister was a member. One year later, on Friday, June 9, 1893, Mother Margaret Mary Healy Murphy, Sister Mary Joseph McNally, Sister Mary Aloysius McMullen and Sister Mary Alphonsus Cronyn made their first vows in the convent of Our Lady of Light on Nolan Street, in the presence of Bishop Neraz. Thus, our congregation, Sisters of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate came into being. On August 25, 1907, at the age of 74, Mother Margaret Mary died peacefully at the Nolan Street convent that she worked so hard to build. The eulogy at her funeral described her work as "destined to bring forth glorious fruits under the pains and self-sacrificing zeal of the Sisters of the Holy Ghost." Mother Margaret Mary Healy Murphy was buried with her beloved husband in Holy Cross Cemetery in Corpus Christi, Texas. (*Excerpts from www.shsp.org/mission-history.html*)

Construction of St. Philip the Apostle Catholic School began in 1954 and was completed on September 5, 1955 with the Sisters of the Holy Spirit staffing the school. His Excellency Bishop Thomas K. Gorman dedicated the building on September 18, 1955. In September of 1987, a large new wing connected to the east end of the school was completed which included a cafeteria, Gym, Library, Computer Lab, Science Lab, and additional classrooms. The school celebrated 50 years of service to the community in 2005.

St. Augustine Catholic School opened in 1957 with three primary classrooms with the Sisters of the Holy Spirit asked to staff it. The school building was dedicated in 1958. Addition of a cafeteria, gym, and Middle School building was around 1985. The school celebrated 50 years of service to the community in 2007.

On October 17, 2014, Bishop Keven J Farrell announced the combining of the two Catholic Schools into a new academy-model school serving lower and middle school students in Pleasant Grove. The new St. Philip & St. Augustine Catholic Academy will open for the 2105-16 school year in newly renovated and expanded facilities on the present day St. Philip campus at 8151 Military Parkway.