



ST. EUGENE PARISH HISTORY

In March 1942, Reverend Patrick Joseph Casey arrived in Los Angeles to establish a new parish in Southwest Los Angeles and

East of Inglewood. The boundaries of this new parish were Western Avenue on the East to 108th Street, Imperial Highway West to Van Ness Avenue, South on Van Ness to Imperial Highway, West to Prairie Avenue, North on Prairie to Manchester Boulevard, East on Manchester to Western Avenue. This new parish was to be named Saint Eugene Parish, the first in Los Angeles to be established after Eugenio Pacelli, who became Pope Pius XII.

The Reverend Casey first began the work of starting the new parish by calling on Mr. and Mrs. Edward Campbell, and the two 200 families. He said his first Mass in July 1942 in an old plumbing shop in the 9300 block on Western Avenue. The old plumbing shop had a dirt floor, and during that time Rev. Casey was in residence at Saint Michael's Parish. He would come from Western Avenue and walk out through the open fields to call on the Parishioners.

The first Rectory was established at 9322 Third Avenue in 1943. Mr. Edward Campbell was the first president of the Holy Name Society. Mrs. Marie Nealy was the first president of the Women's Guild. The Women's Guild eventually became the Altar Society.

The temporary church was built at 96th Street and Van Ness Avenue in 1945. And a permanent Rectory and School were built on parish property in 1948.

Saint Eugene opened its parochial school on September 21, 1948. The enrollment was 300 children in grades One through Six. On December 19th, the doors of the school were opened to welcome the Parishioners for an "Open House Day."

The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet were given charge of Saint Eugene School. Approximately two years later, the Convent for the Sisters was built at 9617 South Van Ness Avenue. On January 23, 1949 a Sunday afternoon, the Most Reverend Timothy Manning, Auxiliary Bishop blessed the school in the presence of 700 proud Parishioners. The "Mother's Club" was formed when school opened. On October 2, 1952 the name

was changed to “Saint Eugene Parish Council of Catholic Women.” Hence forth, it included all the ladies in their various activities. The new addition of four classrooms were completed February 13, 1953. The double session was terminated for the first and second grades for that school year. During the school term of 1955-1956, an additional four classrooms were completed and eliminated double sessions for the last time. Saint Eugene had an enrollment of 753 students in a Sixteen classroom plant.

On April 4, 1954 at 4 p.m. ground was broken for a permanent church. The church was completed March 1956. The first Mass was celebrated in the new church on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1956. The temporary church was renovated and remodeled into the parish hall with hardwood floors, a stage and kitchen.

The Archbishop of Los Angeles, His Eminence James Francis Cardinal McIntyre dedicated Saint Eugene Church May 1956. Fifty-One Priests attended the dedication and dinner celebration.

Since its inception, St. Eugene Parish Community has been a home for all to share with them the Sacraments that strengthen and spiritually nourish the ministries that magnify God’s name. The parish has gone through many changes. On January 1, 2009 the Igbo/Nigerian community was welcomed into the fold to become a part of this community and have a permanent place to worship.

The continuance of the beautification of the facilities have entailed many projects and renovations for the parish. They were: Renovation of the Parish Hall; the floor, painting, new chairs and tables, and installing new heating and air condition. The church- chairs, electric panels for the church and rectory, new bathrooms for the male and female. The rectory- installed new air condition and heating and to help reduce the noise from the Airplanes (LAX) new windows were installed.

These projects were possible due to the support and generosity of our Parishioners. All the groups/communities in the parish work together for the continued growth and progress of the Parish. St. Eugene has persevered under the leadership of the following Pastors and/or Administrators: Rev. Patrick Joseph Casey, Rev. John McNulty, Rev. John Young, Rev. Anthony Duval, Rev. Patrick Walsh, Five Pastors from 1942-2002. Rev. Sabas N. Mallya ALCP/OSS 2002-2004, Bishop David O’ Connell 2004-2006, Deacon Willard Hall, Sr. 2006-2007, Rev. Lawrence Shelton, 2007-December 2008, and Rev. Jude Umeobi currently serving the parish.