



ASSUMPTION BVM CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, R.I.
OUR PARISH HISTORY 1870-2018

January 1870

Catholics in the Elmwood neighborhood petition **Bishop Francis McFarland** of Hartford for a church in this area. Congregations at **St. Michael's** on Oxford Street and **St. Mary's** on Broadway were increasing dramatically and the district between the two was becoming thickly settled. There had long been talk of the formation of a new parish to reduce the overflow in the **South Providence** and **Olneyville** churches and to afford greater convenience to those who resided in the Elmwood area of the city. **The impressive growth of Elmwood and the West End was a reflection of the development of Providence as an industrial and commercial center.** A number of manufacturing establishments moved into the area west of Elmwood Avenue. The most prominent were **cotton mills, jewelry manufacturers**, and companies such as the **Gorham Manufacturing Company** on Adelaide Avenue, which made silverware and other goods from precious metals. *At this time, Elmwood was an expanding middle and upper-middle class residential area that stretched along Elmwood and Potters Avenues, and Public, Stanwood, Bucklin, Greenwich and Madison Streets.* A young assistant pastor from **St. Michael's** by the name of **Father Michael Clune** saw the need and collected the necessary funds from people in the neighborhood to buy a site and erect a temporary structure. The site purchased by Father Clune was on **Linwood Avenue** but *was ultimately rejected as the site of the Church by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Hartford, Father Hughes.* It was Father Hughes himself who in April 1870 negotiated the purchase of the lot of land on which the present church and rectory now stand. The price paid for this lot was said to be \$3200.00.

June 1870

Once the site had finally been determined area residents undertook the task of taking up a monthly collection to raise funds for building the church. As summer approached, work begins at the site of the new Assumption Church on a tract of land between Potters Avenue and Jessamine Street (now known as Benedict Street). **Parishioners actually dig the foundation of the church themselves!** After a long day at their regular jobs these hard-working individuals would arrive in horses and wagons armed with picks and shovels and would often toil well into

the evening and on Saturdays. By September the site was ready for the masons and carpenters hired to do the actual construction. Incredibly, it was the nickels, dimes and quarters of these newly-arrived immigrants that would ultimately fund the building of this magnificent Church.

June 1871

Meanwhile, **Father Michael M. Clune** had been transferred to **St. Patrick's** but was now appointed the *first pastor* of **Assumption Parish** when the large clapboard church building was nearing completion. Initially there were approximately **1400** parishioners mostly of **Irish** descent. The presence of this new church and the availability of affordable housing would encourage the growth of this heavily **Irish** neighborhood. One of Father Clune's earliest undertakings as the pastor was the organization of a choir of some **150** voices under the direction of a **Professor Keagan**. Many of the parishioners found work at the **Elmwood Cotton Mills** on Daboll Street. The mill had begun operations just a few years earlier in 1866. The company made cotton cloths, prints, sheeting and fancy goods. The company's best-known product called "*Elmwood shirting*" was a fancy grade cotton cloth which gave the company a reputation for producing high-quality goods. **Cable Electric Products** would purchase the complex in 1948. In the 1990's the buildings were purchased by the City of Providence and totally renovated. It is now the site of the **Charles Fortes Elementary School**.

August 20, 1871

The **Church of the Assumption** is dedicated by the Bishop of Hartford **Bishop Francis McFarland**. The church was often referred to by the locals as the "**Elmwood Church**". For the first few years of his pastorate **Father Clune** would be assisted on a part-time basis by **Reverend D.A Quinn** and **Reverend John H. Hurley**. It is worth noting that the new Assumption Church was the *only Catholic church in Providence* that had a bell to announce its regular services.

January 31, 1872

Pope Pius IX establishes the *Diocese of Providence*. Previously, the entire State of Rhode Island had come under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Hartford. At the recommendation of the Bishops of the Province of New York, **Father Thomas F. Hendricken**, pastor of Immaculate Conception parish in Waterbury, CT was appointed the first Bishop of Providence. Father Hendricken grew up in Ireland and after ordination was recruited for the Diocese of Hartford by the Second Bishop of Hartford **Bernard O' Reilly** who actually resided on **Fenner Street** in Providence. **Bishop O'Reilly** was also responsible for bringing the *Religious Sisters of Mercy* to the Diocese Providence in the 1850's. In a strange twist of fate, the Bishop's namesake and great grandnephew, **Father Bernard O' Reilly** would be ordained in Ireland and recruited by the **Diocese of Providence** more than a century later. As it turned out, Father O'Reilly's very first assignment was here at the Assumption.

September 1873

Construction of the new Assumption rectory at **791 Potters Avenue** begins.

July 1874

Work on the new rectory is finally completed and **Father Clune** moves from a little house on the corner of Cranston Street and Potters Avenue into his new residence. Unfortunately, due to the economic crisis known as the "**Panic of 1873**" poverty and hard times had befallen the nation. Though the wooden church building had cost only \$12,000, little reduction of debt was made during the remaining years of Father Clune's pastorate. However, the completion of the rectory did raise the valuation of the Church property to \$30,000.

1875

One of the outstanding events in the early history of Assumption Parish was the blessing of a bell valued at some \$1300 (lots of money in those days) donated by two non-Catholics, **Mr. J.W. Smith** and **Mr. Daboll**, owners of a mill on Daboll Street. The bell bears the inscription

“From morning till night I will sound thy praise, O Lord”. When the new church was built the bell was removed and installed there. This bell remained in use until about 2010. Although the bell still hangs in the tower it is no longer in use. The high cost of maintenance made it a luxury the parish could no longer afford.

- January 20, 1888 **Father Michael M. Clune** succumbs to an attack of bronchitis after 18 years as the first pastor of Assumption Church. With missionary zeal he set himself to the task of building up the parish. In all his labors he had the active cooperation of his parishioners to whom he was the zealous pastor, prudent counselor and true friend. A Solemn High funeral Mass was celebrated on Monday, January 23, 1888 by **Bishop Matthew Harkins**. A large contingent of the clergy came from all parts of the diocese to pay the last tribute of respect to the departed priest. **Father Clune** left behind a parish of some **3000** souls.
- January 1888 **Reverend William Hines** is appointed the second pastor of Assumption Parish. **Father Hines** was afflicted with a number of serious medical conditions. He would pass away a mere three weeks after beginning his pastorate. Ironically, Father Hines collapsed during the concluding portion of the Month's Mind Mass he was offering for the late Father Clune on February 21st. He was just 39 years old. For a month thereafter, the parish was without the services of a priest, the parishioners attending whatever church was convenient.
- March 1888 **Reverend John G. Tennian** is appointed the third pastor. He was young and vigorous and an extremely hard worker. He quickly set himself to the task of renovating the seventeen-year-old church and paying off the \$14,000 mortgage. Shortly after Father Tennian arrived the church is embellished with new Stations of the Cross and stained-glass windows. Only two Sunday Masses are celebrated at this time.
- August 1893 A new organ is installed in the Church. Cost of this instrument was \$2000.00.
- Dec. 10, 1893 **Assumption Church** receives its first full-time curate when **Reverend J.W. Conlin** is assigned to the parish. Beginning on the first Sunday of 1894 the schedule of Sunday Masses is increased from two to three. Meanwhile, in a report to parishioners Father Tennian advised that *“owing to the meagerness of the monthly and annual collections last year and to the large amounts paid to the city for curbing, sewers etc., our church debt is considerably over \$1500.00.”*
- August 16, 1896 The **Church of the Assumption** celebrates the **25th Anniversary** of the dedication of the church with a **Solemn High Mass** at 10:30 A.M.
- January 25, 1899 After eleven years as pastor **Father Tennian** is named pastor of **St. Mary's Church, Pawtucket**. Payment of the parish debt was nearly completed when Father Tennian was transferred. **Reverend Thomas L. Kelly** is appointed the fourth pastor. Unfortunately, Father Kelly was in poor health during most of his tenure at the Assumption. He suffered a debilitating stroke on December 21, 1902. Although he recovered to some degree health problems continued to plague Father Kelly for the remainder of his time at Assumption. At this time, Father Kelly was assisted by **Rev. John T. Fahey**.
- January 19, 1902 Assumption Parish distributes the **Annual Financial Report** to parishioners. The total receipts for the year 1901 were \$17125.88 and the expenditures, including *\$2500 paid off on the debt* were \$16869.15, leaving a balance of \$256.73.

- July 11, 1903 A tiny notice in the “*Church News*” section of today’s edition of *The Providence Visitor* reveals that Father Kelly has completed the purchase of the adjoining lot on the north side of the church. The lot on Potters Avenue measures 52 feet long by approximately 100 feet deep. The price paid was said to be **\$1900.00**. It would appear that Father Kelly was anticipating the need for the parish to construct a new and much larger Church of the Assumption in the not too distant future.
- April 1909 **Father Thomas L. Kelly** resigns as pastor due to chronic health issues. He had been pastor of the **Church of the Assumption** for ten years. By all accounts, Father Kelly was perhaps the best Greek scholar in the diocese and ranked among the shining lights of the country. For many years he was professor of Greek and moral theology at **Mount Saint Mary’s College** in Maryland, of which he was an alumnus. Father Kelly was also editor of *The Providence Visitor* for two years. As a pastor he was beloved by his parishioners and as a preacher displayed “a marked finish of expression and fruitful vocabulary”. He is replaced by **Reverend John F. Haney** who comes to Assumption from **Sacred Heart Church** in East Providence. The assistant pastor at this time is **Reverend Thomas A. McGrath**.
- August 14, 1910 Ground is broken for the new church. **Father Haney** had the honor of turning the first shovelful of earth followed by many older members of the parish who had performed a similar ceremony when the first church was built some 40 years earlier. At this time, there are a number of active organizations within the parish including the **Holy Name Society** (men), the **Children of Mary** (teenage girls), the **Tabernacle Society** (ladies) and the **Assumption Catholic Club** (men and boys)
- Nov. 12, 1910 Led by **Fay’s Military Band (a/k/a The American Brass Band)** thousands of people parade through the streets of the **Elmwood** and **West End** neighborhoods to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone for the new **Assumption Church**. Formed in November 1837, The **American Brass Band** is the *oldest continuously running civilian concert band in the United States and continues to perform concerts to this day*. An outdoor Mass is held at the site of the new Church. Some **40** priests and more than **5000** people are in attendance. In his homily **Bishop Matthew Harkins** made the following observations: “*As I look over this congregation today I find that many once loved faces are absent. They have gone to their reward and let us hope, are face to face with their God. They planned for this Church but were not given the privilege of seeing it erected. That privilege is yours. And your children, the grandchildren of those pioneer Catholics of the Assumption parish will enjoy it in the years to come.*” Before **Bishop Harkens** laid the cornerstone, a box containing the names of the Trustees, copies of the local newspapers and of *The Providence Visitor*, a catalogue of LaSalle Academy, a badge of the Holy Name Society and some coins was lowered into place.
- May 4, 1912 **Reverend James B. O’Brien** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption parish by **Bishop Matthew Harkins**. Father O’Brien was ordained in Baltimore on June 21, 1911. Following a summer internship at **Our Lady of Mercy** in East Greenwich, Father resumed his studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington in the fall. Assumption would be his first full-time assignment and he would remain at the parish for more than 13 years before being re-assigned in July 1925. **Father O’Brien** was responsible for the formation of the **Assumption Boys’ Sanctuary Choir** in 1924 and for a time was Moderator of the **Assumption Catholic Club**

- June 2, 1912 The new Assumption Church (the church we currently worship in), designed in the *Perpendicular Gothic* style by the architectural firm of **Murphy, Hindle & Wright**, is dedicated by Bishop Harkins. **Murphy, Hindle & Wright** specialized in ecclesiastical architecture and provided designs for many of the early 20th century church complexes in the Diocese of Providence. The firm was also responsible for the design of the **George J. West School** in the Mount Pleasant section of the city as well as the **Edgewood Yacht Club** in Cranston. As its name suggests, the chief characteristic of *Perpendicular* architecture is the emphasis on strong vertical lines. Windows were the "*artist's palette*" of the *Perpendicular* builders. Because of advances in the use of the pointed arch and supporting elements such as the flying buttress, window openings could be extremely large, and builders took advantage of their opportunity to create huge expanses of glass separated by thin, curving stone tracery in ever more elaborate patterns. Window area was maximized, while wall area was minimized. As one can readily see from the extraordinary windows in this church, which were made in Bavaria, the result is a lofty, open interior of extraordinary lightness and delicacy. Notable examples of churches built in the **Perpendicular Gothic** style are **Canterbury Cathedral** and **Winchester Cathedral** in England. Meanwhile, the original church building was repaired to be used as a Sunday School.
- May 23, 1919 At a parish meeting, a proposal is made to begin a fund-raising drive to erase the parish debt. Originally, this meeting had been called to make arrangements for the annual **Assumption Parish Lawn Party**. *However, when the pastor, Father John Haney, spoke of the need for a school in the parish and of the debt that stood in the way the first plan was abandoned.* There was enthusiastic support for the bigger thing, the drive that would sweep away entirely the obstacle to the proper development of the parish. An executive committee was appointed and immediately began working on the details. Chairman of the committee was **James V. Crofton**.
- February 1, 1922 According to an article in this day's edition of the *Providence Evening Tribune*: "Two daring burglars armed with revolvers forced their way into the rectory of the **Church of the Assumption** on Potters Avenue at 5 o'clock this morning and pointing revolvers at the pastor, **Reverend John F. Haney**, *they ordered him to hold up his hands and open the combination safe.* The armed bandits then secured his keys and unlocked the door of the safe and took the contents, which amounted to about **\$58.00**. It is understood that one of the bandits called at the rectory and rang the bell. The call was answered by the housekeeper and the man at the door called for Father Haney. The housekeeper, believing that it was a sick call, summoned Father Haney. When the pastor arrived at the door the man pointed a revolver at him as he forced the priest into the hallway, being closely followed by the second bandit. The other priests, **Father John E. Reardon** and **Father James B. O'Brien**, were asleep on the upper floor of the rectory at the time. After pocketing the contents of the safe, both burglars it is said, left the premises the way they entered. The robbery was then reported to the police."
- August 10, 1923 **Bishop William A. Hickey** announces that the **Diocese of Providence** has purchased the former **Smith Estate** residence and 37000 square feet of land bounded by **Elmwood Avenue, Daboll Street and Mawney Street**. Following renovations, the residence will be occupied by the **Sisters of the Holy Cross and Passion** who intend to conduct a hostel for young women at this location.
- September 4, 1923 **Reverend John F. Haney**, pastor of **Church of the Assumption** for the past 14 years, passes away in the parish rectory following an illness of several months. His death brings to a close nearly 38 years of active service in the Roman Catholic priesthood. The construction of the present Assumption Church, begun in June 1910, is largely the result of his enterprise. Ever

maintaining a keen interest in the welfare of Assumption Parish, Father Haney was engaged in making plans for a fund with which to build a parochial school at the time he was taken ill in May of this year. During his tenure, Father Haney managed to completely pay off the debt on the new church while leaving a substantial sum of money in the parish treasury. He was just 64 years old at the time of his passing.

October 9, 1923

Reverend Patrick J. Sullivan, founder and pastor for the past 14 years of **Saint Mark's Parish** in Jamestown is appointed the sixth pastor. One of Father Sullivan's first actions as pastor was to acquire the **Sherry Estate** at the corner of **Potters Avenue** and **Dexter Street**. This would be the site of the **Assumption School** that he founded. Ground would be broken for the school in early 1925.

March 1924

At the request of the **Right Reverend William L. Hickey**, Bishop of Providence, and through the intervention of **Reverend Felix Ward C.P.**, **Mother Gerard Dunn, Superior General of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion** sends a small band of pioneer Sisters from the Mother House in England to Providence in early 1924. **Mother Gonzaga McCunnin, C.P.** and the Sisters began life in their new home in **Saint Gabriel's Hostel** for young professional women at the site of the former Smith Estate at **315 Elmwood Avenue** on March 14, 1924. In that first group of sisters was **Sister Dionysious Fitzpatrick C.P.**, **Sister Louis Myers C.P.** and **Sister Pious Ruddins C.P.** A few months later these four Sisters would take charge of the weekday religious instructions in **Assumption Parish** at the request of the Pastor, **Reverend Patrick J. Sullivan**. From the very beginning, the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in North America forged an identity that was uniquely theirs. Leaders, like **Mother Gonzaga** and those that followed her, contributed to the shaping of this distinctive character. These women were products of their times and of their cultures. They and all the Sisters brought their beliefs and their values to bear in their encounters with their society and their church. The beginnings of the **North American Province** of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion were their creation.

July 1, 1925

Father Francis P. Brady and **Reverend Edward V. Hughes** are appointed Assistant Pastors of Assumption Parish.

Sept. 7--10, 1925

As the brand-new **Assumption School** nears completion, the annual **Lawn Party and Parish Reunion** is held on the parish grounds at the corner of **Linwood Avenue** and **Cranston Street**. Recall that this particular parcel of land had originally been purchased in the spring of 1870 by the founding pastor **Reverend Michael Clune**. It was where he intended to build the new **Church of the Assumption**. However, the site would ultimately be rejected by a diocesan official who would eventually negotiate the purchase of a plot of land a few blocks away on Potters Avenue where the church and rectory now stand.

At this time the **Lawn Party and Parish Reunion** is a major fundraiser for the parish. Special features and attractions are on the program for each day and evening. *The proceeds will benefit the school fund.* On Labor Day afternoon, the ladies of the parish have arranged a **doll carriage parade** for the kiddies, boys and girls, with prizes for the most attractive doll carriage in line. There will be field sports and running races for the older boys on Monday afternoon. Tuesday evening there will be an **automobile parade** through the parish starting from the Church on Potters Avenue at 7:15 P.M. And of course, no lawn party would be complete without a **pie-eating contest** which will take place this year on Wednesday evening September 9th. As always, a good time was had by all.

January 7, 1926

An “open house” is held for the parishioners at the brand new **Assumption Convent**. **Mother Gonzaga, Sister Louis, Sister Dionysius and Sister Jean Marie** attended. The sisters received a “*shower of gifts*” and a warm welcome from the people of the Assumption. **The Sisters of the Cross and Passion** were largely a teaching order who were renowned in England and Ireland for the many schools they conducted there. The journey of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion began long before their ocean voyage across the Atlantic from England. Their foundress **Mother Mary Joseph Prout** instilled in her first postulants that their mission would not merely be confined to England. Rather, we can imagine she envisioned that one day the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** would be teaching in America and in other nations as well. Two days later Bishop Hickey blessed the new convent and the next night Mother Gonzaga and Sister Jean Marie slept there for the first time. **The Sisters of the Cross and Passion had officially come to Assumption Parish**. The community’s relationship with the parish continues to this day, their histories inextricably intertwined.

February 11, 1926

A very important day in the history of Assumption Parish. The new **Assumption School** opens its doors. Initial enrollment is 200 pupils in Grades 1 thru 4. **Sister Arcadius Hickey** was appointed the first principal of the school. The balance of the faculty included Sisters **Louis Myers, Pascal Grogan, Jean Marie Murphy, Dominic Mary Finnegan and Mary Oliver Mullally**. Among those enrolled in the very first 4th grade class was nine-year-old **Joseph White**. After graduation from the Assumption school **Joe White** would go on to attend **LaSalle Academy**. In those days the parish paid the tuition for its young men to attend LaSalle Academy and its young women to attend St. Xavier. **Joe White** appreciated that very much and never forgot it. For more than eight decades **Joe White** would serve Assumption Parish in just about every volunteer capacity imaginable until his passing on April 18, 2008 at the age of 92.

May 16, 1926

The newly constructed **Assumption School** located on the corner of Potters Avenue and Dexter Street is dedicated by the **Most. Rev. William A. Hickey**, Bishop of Providence. In his remarks Bishop Hickey complimented the pastor, the **Rev. Patrick J. Sullivan**, his assistant pastors and the parishioners for their work building the school and the attendant convent. He declared that the erection of the school placed the educational facilities of **Assumption Parish** among the finest in all the Diocese of Providence. Following the dedication ceremony, the doors to the school were thrown open for all to inspect. The school was designed by **John F. O’Malley** of the **O’Malley-Fitzsimmons Company** of Pawtucket. The building measures 100 feet long by 70 feet wide and is two stories in height. The school is of brick construction with stone trimmings and steps. It contains 13 classrooms and a principal’s office. The 200 students of the school, which opened on February 11, are taught by six teaching Sisters under **Sister Arcadius, C.P.** as principal. The faculty is composed of **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**, *the only group of that order in the United States*. At this time the **Assumption Convent**, located right behind the school grounds, houses six teaching Sisters and three others. The building has a capacity for 18 members of the religious order. While only five grades are taught at the school at this time, the plan is for one grade is to be added each year until the full complement of eight grades is reached. The **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** have committed to adding additional teaching Sisters as needed.

September 7, 1927

Reverend Thomas L. Kelly, fourth pastor of Assumption Parish, passes away at the age of 70. He had been forced to retire from active ministry some 18 years earlier due to ill health. Meanwhile, the **Assumption School** is flourishing. As the new school year approached enrollment at the school had reached **470** students.

- September 8, 1929 **Father Patrick J. Sullivan** passes away unexpectedly. Father Sullivan was stricken on an ocean liner while returning from a European trip. News of the death of the much beloved priest was announced with the tolling of bells at the church on Potters Avenue. Father Sullivan was 60 years old at the time of his passing and had been pastor for six years. As pastor, Father was responsible for building both the Assumption School and convent. The funeral Mass was sung by Right Reverend William Hickey, Bishop of Providence. Parishioners, former parishioners and nearly 200 priests of the diocese jammed the church to its very doors. Meanwhile, traffic was at a standstill in the Potters Avenue area and following the Mass a special detail of police of the motorcycle squad acted as a convoy for the hearse on the first part of its journey to the cemetery.
- November 20, 1929 **Reverend William J. Keefe**, currently the Pastor of St. James Church of Arctic Center is appointed the seventh pastor of Assumption Parish by **Bishop Hickey**. Assistant pastors at this time were **Father Edward V. Hughes** and **Father Francis P. Brady**.
- June 1930 A very important part of the parish history that has largely been forgotten is the **Assumption Catholic Club**. The club appears to have been formed around the turn of the century and remained active until the late 1950's. The club would sponsor fundraisers for the parish and organize activities for the youth. In the early 1930's, assistant pastor **Father Francis P. Brady** was bequeathed two buildings by an Assumption parishioner. There was a rather large house located at the corner of Potters and Homestead Avenues and a one-story brick building directly behind it on Homestead Avenue (this structure still stands today). Father Brady graciously offered the use of these buildings to the **Assumption Catholic Club**. Four **bowling alleys** and a **pool hall** were installed in the brick building. Meanwhile, the basement of the house was converted into a **boxing club**. In fact, a future featherweight champion of the world, **Joey Archibald**, actually trained in that gym as did former parishioner and future U.S. Congressman **Edward P. Beard** who fought several amateur bouts and even had one professional fight. The men of the parish took advantage of the card room at the club and there was a meeting room in the building as well. The Assumption Catholic Club routinely fielded football, baseball and basketball teams and competed with other such clubs from around the city including squads from **Blessed Sacrament, Cathedral** and **Saint Michael's**. With the demise of the Assumption Catholic Club in the late 1950's, the property would be taken over by **Hope Council Knights of Columbus**.
- September 1931 **Assumption School** continues its remarkable growth and enrollment now stands at 600 pupils.
- July 1933 **Extensive repairs** are made to the rectory, including the **painting** of the interior and exterior of the building and the **installation of rubber tile floors** to the lower hall and bathroom.
- September 9, 1933 The very first Profession Ceremony of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in North America took place on this date when **Sister Marie Louise** and **Sister Collette** pronounced their temporary vows. **Bishop William A. Hickey** celebrated the Mass which proceeded the ceremony and received the vows of the two sisters. A Passionist priest preached and several clergy from the local area were in attendance. At their profession, the two sisters exchanged the white veils that marked them as novices for the black veils of the professed. They received the Passionist Sign to wear on their habits and a silver ring was placed on the third finger of their right hands. At the conclusion of the ceremony a lighted candle was placed in the hands of the newly professed sisters. The next day Sister Marie Louise and Sister Collette moved to the

Assumption Convent in Providence. They began teaching on September 11, 1933, the first day of the new school year.

February 1935

On Monday and Tuesday evenings, February 18 and 19, The **Assumption Catholic Club** presented the **17th Annual Minstrel Show** under the personal direction of Tom Giblin. The minstrel show was an American entertainment consisting of **comedy skits, variety acts, dancing** and **music** performed by white people in blackface. Minstrel shows actually began in the 1830's and over the next several decades helped give birth to many forms of American popular music including Ragtime, Blues, Dixieland, Barbershop Quartet, Country and Bluegrass. In the early part of the 20th century minstrels were largely supplanted by vaudeville as the most popular form of live entertainment. However, minstrel shows remained extremely popular as fundraisers for local civic and religious organizations and were very well attended. The program for this particular show lists a total of 20 acts. **Joe Houlihan's Orchestra** was on hand as well as a chorus. The best guess is that most of the performers were parishioners although guest acts did appear from time to time. Among the acts presented in this show was a song and dance by Lillian McCaffrey, a comedy act featuring Rosalind Flemming, Joseph Kenney and Joseph McNulty and dancing by the Daniels Trio. Ted Richards sang "Singing A Vagabond Song" while Charles Fay offered "Okay Toots" to the delight of all assembled. Chairman of the Minstrel Committee was James E. Curry. Other members of the committee included Ernest C. Munroe, Arthur Hoey, John Carmody and Francis Kelly. President of the **Assumption Catholic Club** at this time was William H. Hamlyn, Jr. Among the neighborhood businesses who took ads in the program were Lucy's Ice Cream Parlor, located at 576 Cranston St., Robert F. Carroll and Sons Funeral Home at 677 Cranston St., Huntington Café at 603 Huntington Avenue, Lombardi's Bakery at 814 Potters Avenue and Otto Henn Inc. located at 866 Cranston St. With the advent of the civil rights movement, minstrel shows would disappear from the American scene in the 1950's.

May 16, 1935

According to a story that appeared in *The Providence Visitor* on this date: "*One of the best trained sanctuary choirs in the diocese sings each Sunday at the Children's Mass at Assumption Church.*" The choir was instituted more than 10 years ago by **Rev. James B. O'Brien**, now pastor of Saint Agnes Church on Branch Avenue. **Sister Jean Marie Murphy C.P.** has been in charge of the group since May 1926. At present there are 45 boys in the choir, all pupils at the parish school. Rehearsals are held three afternoons each week at the school and on Friday nights in the church. They have learned several Masses and, in addition to the hymns they render at Sunday Mass, the boys sing at the monthly Holy Hour and answer all the responses at Requiem Masses, at which they assist on days when there is no school."

August 1935

The Parish Hall undergoes extensive renovations. Remember that the Parish Hall was actually the original church building and was located on the site of the present-day parking lot. Over the next few decades the parish hall would continue to host a wide variety of parish meetings and functions including the **Harvest Supper** and **Easter Card Party**, **CYO basketball**, the annual **St. Patrick's Play**, Saturday afternoon children's movies, communion breakfasts as well as meetings of the **Tabernacle Society**, **Holy Name Society**, **Mother's Club** and **Home and School Association**.

September 1935

Mary Davis from the Assumption Parish becomes just the second American to enter the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**. She was a graduate of the Assumption School and had been prepared for her first communion by **Sister Dionysius**. Mary chose **Patricia** as her religious name and would one day become the principal of **Assumption School**.

- June 1936 The remarkable growth of Assumption Parish continues. The decision is made to convert the basement of the church into a chapel. According to the recent parish census there are now **1543 families** in the parish with a total population of **5764**. There were four priests assigned to Assumption at this time. **Father William Keefe** was pastor. He was assisted by **Father Francis P. Brady, Father J. Allan Hughes** and **Father Edward V. Hughes**.
- September 1936 Recently-professed **Sister Mary Andrew Greaves** arrives from England. She is assigned to teach second grade at the Assumption School. The total number of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in North America now stands at twenty-two. *Nineteen of these sisters lived in the Assumption Convent.* Why so many? The Assumption School was very successful. **Enrollment had swollen to over 700 students.** There are now 15 classes being taught by 14 Sisters and 1 lay teacher. Ironically, this success became one of the factors that limited the growth of the Cross & Passion community in the United States. The Assumption was such a big school that it seemed there were never enough sisters to teach in it. Once a teacher was there she became indispensable.
- October 1942 **Father John V. Doyle** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption parish by **Bishop Francis P. Keough**. Father Doyle would remain at Assumption for more than 17 years.
- August 1943 Due to steadily increasing enrollment in the **Assumption School** the parish decides to purchase the old **Potters Avenue School** located at **775 Potters Avenue** from the City of Providence for the sum of \$7500.00. The sale is finally completed on September 12, 1944. *There are now nearly 800 pupils attending the school.* At first, grades one through four were moved there. Eventually, this facility would be used for grades 7-9 and would come to be known as "*The Annex*".
- November 30, 1944 **Father Francis P. Brady**, new pastor of **Saint Andrew's Church**, Block Island, is the guest of honor at a reception given by parishioners of the **Church of the Assumption** *where he had served as an Assistant Pastor for more than 19 years.* In his brief remarks, **Reverend William J. Keefe**, Pastor of the Assumption Church extolled the priestly traits which endeared him to the hearts of the people, and begged God's grace on his work in the years to come. The pastor then presented Father Brady with a purse as a token of the people's esteem and devotion. The varied program, directed by the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**, was staged by the children of the parish school. **Charles Payne** and **Thomas Haxton** were soloists. The **Reverend J. Allan Hughes** was Master of Ceremonies.
- October 1945 **Tabernacle Societies** were lay Eucharistic Adorative associations within Roman Catholic parishes, principally in America and Australia. Typically, members would commit to spend at least an hour or two each week in personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. The origins of the **Assumption Tabernacle Society** are largely unknown but evidence recently uncovered would indicate that the organization was formed by a group of female parishioners at or even a bit before the turn of the last century. A portion of the stained-glass window depicting "The Scourging at the Pillar" was donated by The Tabernacle Society in 1911. The organization would evolve into a service organization as time went on. At this time the group was led by **Miss Mayetta Callahan** who served as President. **Mrs. Bernard Fay** was Vice President while **Miss Mae Dailey** served as Secretary-Treasurer. Beginning the following March, the Tabernacle Society would sponsor an annual **Saint Patrick's Play** featuring the children of the

Assumption School. The tradition would continue for more than a decade and become one of the most important fundraisers of the year for the parish.

- January 26, 1946 **Father William J. Keefe**, pastor of Assumption Parish for nearly 17 years, passes away at **St. Joseph's Hospital** after a brief illness. He had been about his church duties as usual the previous day and his death came as a shock to his parishioners and friends in the community. He was 72 years old. Highlights of Father Keefe's pastorate include the **renovation of the church basement into a lower church, renovation of the parish hall, and the acquisition of the Assumption School Annex.**
- March 14, 1946 **Rev. John F. O'Rourke** is appointed the eighth pastor by the **Most Rev. Francis P. Keough**, Bishop of Providence. Previously, **Father O'Rourke** had served as the Pastor of **St. Leo's Parish** in Pawtucket and also at **St Mary's Parish** in Newport. An accomplished administrator, Father O'Rourke is credited with rebuilding the churches in both of these parishes.
- August 1946 The Assumption rectory is redecorated and refurnished. There were four priests assigned to the parish at this time. The assistant pastors were **Father J. Allan Hughes, Father John V. Doyle, and Father Timothy J. Sullivan.**
- November 11, 1946 The **Assumption Catholic Club**, like many other groups, lost many of its members in **World War II**. And like many other groups, its members come together on this day—**Armistice Day**—to pay tribute to their deceased comrades at a **Solemn High Mass** at Assumption Church at 10:00 A.M. Fellow parishioners will accompany them, all meeting at the club headquarters at the corner of Potters and Homestead Avenue at 9:30 from where they will march in unison to the church. *Assumption Parish is mourning some 30 War Dead.* A few of these war heroes were once wearers of the Green and White of the C.Y.O., one of them being **John (Happy) Owens**. They and all the boys and girls who lost their lives in the wars are worthy of our prayers on Armistice Day and every day.
- December 1946 **Father O'Rourke** announces that parish debt of \$26,000 has been fully paid off.
- March 17-19, 1947 **Assumption Tabernacle Society** is pleased to present the 2nd Annual "**St. Patrick's Play**" for three consecutive evenings at the parish hall. This year's production is "**Bit's O' Blarney**" featuring the students of the Assumption School under the direction of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. **Gail Coleman, Gloria DeCosta, Marie Hildebrand, Joan LaChance, Patsy Leahy, and Ann Reddington** do an Irish Jig to the tune "*Just A Little Bit of Green*". Meanwhile, **Jackie Boyle, Patsy Aylesworth and Betty Velino** collaborate on the song "*At the End of an Irish Lane*" while the chorus performs "*My Irish Molly O*". The accompanist for this event is **Mrs. Anna Colvin**. Among the "**Diamond Boosters**" for this year's show are **Haxton's Package Store, Otto Henn Inc., Smith's Drug Store, Dutch Dainty Bakery, Potters Avenue Hardware and the James V. Crofton Funeral Home.**
- September 1948 Extensive repairs are made to the exterior of the Church. Bricks are re-pointed and all wooden surfaces including windows and doors are repainted. At this time, there is a 12-year-old boy who is both a student at the **Assumption School** and also a member of the **Boys Choir**. His name is **Dan Trainor** and he would one day become **Father Trainor** and Pastor of Assumption Parish.

- January 1949 Restoration work on the interior of the Church is begun under the guidance of **His Excellency, The Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney, D.D., Bishop of Providence.**
- January 28, 1950 A year-long redecoration of the Church and Baptistry is finally completed. The **Church of the Assumption** issues a descriptive booklet to parishioners and benefactors explaining all of the newly added paintings and symbolism incorporated into the work. The paintings in the church and baptistry are replicas of great masterpieces of art found in the ancient basilicas of Rome. Memorial paintings in the sanctuary are to the left and right of the window and depict **The Blessed Mother Giving the Rosary to Saint Domenic and Her Coronation as Queen of Heaven.** Also depicted on the sanctuary wall are the **Sacrifices of Abraham and Melchisedech,** while the sidewall paintings depict **The Last Supper, The Sermon on the Mount** and four angels bearing phrases of praise from the **Gloria** of the Mass. The booklet goes on to explain that the plan of the **Baptistry** was modeled after that of the **Cathedral of Florence, Italy.** The pastor, **Reverend John O'Rourke,** cites Assumption Church as "*one of the finest Gothic churches in the East.*" There were three assistants assigned to Assumption at this time. They were **Father J. Allan Hughes, Father Timothy J. Sullivan** and **Father John V. Doyle.** At this time there were an estimated 8400 parishioners in Assumption Parish.
- March 15-17, 1950 The **Tabernacle Society of Assumption Parish** is once again pleased to present the annual "**Saint Patrick's Play**" for three consecutive evenings in the parish hall. This year's production is "**Echoes from Erin**" featuring the students of the Assumption School under the direction of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. The show kicks off with an opening medley of "*The Wearing of the Green*" and "*The Girl I Left Behind Me*" featuring **Regina Burns, Maureen Leahy, Jean Studley, Joan Studley, Anna Esposito and Carol Aylesworth.** A bit later on in Act II of the show **Frankie D'Ambra** does a solo rendition of "*Harrigan*". Then just before the closing chorus **Maureen Dineen, Gail Lynch, Vincent Brown and Joseph Janetta** dance an Irish Jig to the tune "*Kitty of Coleraine*". As always, the accompanist for this event is **Mrs. Anna Colvin.** Among the "**Diamond Boosters**" for this year's show are **U.S. Senator Theodore Francis Green, Johnson's Hummocks Grill, Carpenter-Jencks Funeral Home, S.S. Payne Post, A&P, and Hanrahan's Bar.**
- April 14, 1951 Pastor **Father John F. O'Rourke** passes away at Saint Joseph's Hospital after a brief illness. He was 73 years old. **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** offered a solemn pontifical requiem Mass for Father O'Rourke on April 28th in Assumption Church. Among the honorary bearers were Rhode Island Governor **Dennis J. Roberts** and Providence Mayor **Walter Reynolds.**
- Sept. 11, 1951 **Reverend John L. Ryding** is appointed the ninth pastor of Assumption Parish. After graduating from LaSalle Academy in 1908, Father Ryding attended **Mount Saint Mary's Seminary** in Emmitsburg, Md. He was ordained at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul by **Bishop Matthew Harkins** on December 19, 1915. For the previous seven years, Father Ryding had been pastor of **Saint Margaret's Parish** in Rumford.
- November 25, 1953 **Mother Arcadius** leaves Assumption School, her home for the past twenty-eight years, to take up her new responsibilities as Superior of **Mount Saint Joseph** novitiate in Bristol and faculty member of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion's newly-chartered **Mount Saint Joseph College** in Wakefield. **Sister Mary Patricia Davis** replaces Mother Arcadius as Principal of Assumption School.
- January 11, 1954 **Father Ryding** resigns due to chronic health issues and retires from active ministry

- June 21, 1954 **Reverend George E. Archambeault** succeeds **Father John Ryding** as pastor. **Father Archambeault** comes to the Assumption after serving as Pastor of **St. Mary's Parish** in Warren. When Father first arrived, he discovered that the rectory was in extremely poor condition. The roof leaked, the building needed painting, and there were also serious structural problems. When one of his assistants fell through the staircase and landed in the basement **Father Archambeault** decided that the time had come to build a new rectory. There were three assistant pastors at this time including **Father J. Allan Hughes**, **Father John V. Doyle** and **Father Anthony I. Robinson**.
- Mar. 14-16, 1956 The **Assumption Tabernacle Society** proudly presents the annual "**St. Patrick's Play**" in the Parish Hall. This year's production is entitled "*Shamrock Hours*" and features the children of the **Assumption School** under the direction of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**. The annual "**St. Patrick's Play**" had been a tradition in the parish for more than a decade but it appears that this was the final show. This production featured tunes like "*Let Us All Be Irish Tonight*", "*Tis A Great Day Tonight for the Irish*" and "*With My Shillelagh Under My Arm*". Former U.S. Congressman **Edward P. Beard** fondly recalls that his solo rendition of "*Danny Boy*" in this show was really his first public appearance. As always, the pianist for this show was **Mrs. Anna Colvin**. Among the "*Diamond Boosters*" for this event were **Robert F. Carroll and Sons Funeral Home**, **Lillian's Luncheonette**, **Lombardi's Bakery**, **Federal Dairy**, and **Segal's Pharmacy**.
- May 1956 The priests of the parish move to a temporary rectory at 521 Elmwood Avenue. The old rectory is demolished and construction begins on the new rectory that is still in use today. There were four priests assigned to the parish at this time. **Father Archambeault** was the Pastor and his assistants included **Rev. J. Allan Hughes**, **Rev. John V. Doyle** and **Rev. Anthony I. Robinson**. In the Fall of 1956 a booklet is published listing the donors to the **Rectory Fund**. The donors are listed on a street-by-street basis. What is most striking about this is the huge number of parishioners who participated in the campaign. For example, there were 65 individual donations from people living on **Althea Street** and 60 donations from parishioners on **Potters Avenue**. Most of the donations appear to be in the \$10.00 to \$50.00 range with the average donation being around \$20.00.
- October 1956 **Assumption Parish** stands to lose a substantial number of parishioners when plans are unveiled by the **Department of Transportation** to extend the **Huntington Expressway** from the area of Westminster Street and Broadway south to Reservoir Avenue. While the new road (now known as Route 10) was badly needed and would greatly improve traffic flow in the area, hundreds of families would be forced to vacate their homes and leave the area.
- May 18, 1958 **Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney, D.D., Bishop of Providence**, solemnly dedicates the new Assumption Rectory. The new rectory virtually replaces the three-story Victorian style house at 791 Potters Avenue which had served as the residence for the parish priests. Very little, if anything, is left of the former rectory which has been replaced by a modern, up-to-date building that is fireproof throughout and so designed that it is regarded as one of the finest in the diocese. The new rectory would prove to be a source of much controversy within the parish. Many parishioners were extremely upset at the final cost of the new structure and considered it to be very extravagant. Some went so far as to dub it "the million-dollar rectory". The reality is that the costs associated with the construction of the new rectory would plunge the parish into debt for many years to come.

- July 1, 1958 **Father Charles F. Dolan** is appointed an Assistant Pastor of Assumption Parish.
- October 7, 1958 New parish boundaries for the **Church of the Assumption**, taking some families from both **Saint Ann's** and **Saint Matthew's** parishes in Cranston are announced by Assumption Pastor **Reverend George Archambeault**. Assumption Parish lost more than 200 families who had to be relocated to make way for the new **Huntington Expressway**. It was believed that the new parish lines would return about 125 families to the parish. However, less than two years later another shoe would drop.....
- May 1959 **Assumption Parish Mother's Club** compiles and offers for sale a cook book of favorite recipes in an effort to raise funds for the parish. This is a tradition that continues in many parishes even to this day. **Jeanne Guiot** offered her **Cream Meatball** recipe while **Claudia Waddicor** explained how to put together a real pork pie. If fried food was what you were craving you may have been tempted to try **Rose Fay's clam cake recipe** (her secret ingredient was Aunt Jemima pancake mix). Those looking for dessert ideas might attempt **Evelyn Carr's "Whacky Cake"** or maybe **Rita Trenn's "Cowboy Cookies"**. In the 1950's and 1960's there were also frequent cake sales to help to supplement parish income.
- September 9, 1959 **Sister Kathleen Mary Burke C.P. (then known as Sister Bertrand)** becomes the third principal of Assumption School.
- September 19, 1959 **Father John V. Doyle** is transferred to **Blessed Sacrament Parish** after 17 years as an Assistant Pastor at Assumption. Five years later Father Doyle would be appointed **Pastor of SS John and Paul Parish** in Coventry where he would spend the next 25 years before retiring in 1989. Father Doyle passed away on July 29, 2002 at the age of 88.
- June 22, 1960 **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** appoints **Father J. Allan Hughes** the first Pastor of **St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish** in Narragansett where he will serve until his retirement in 1978. Father Hughes spent a total of **27 years** as an Assistant Pastor at Assumption having arrived in October 1933. At this point in time he was the longest serving priest in the history of Assumption Parish. Eventually his record would be eclipsed by **Father Daniel Trainor** who would spend a total of 35 years serving the parish.
- May 6, 1960 Assumption Parish suffers another major blow when the **Providence Redevelopment Agency** announces plans to substantially **redevelop** a **117-acre** parcel of land in the **West Elmwood** section of the city. The proposed **Huntington Industrial Park** would be a source of badly needed jobs for the community. But as a consequence, nearly 500 more families in the **West Elmwood** neighborhood would be forced to move. A close-knit neighborhood, old **West Elmwood** referred to a community bounded to the east by **Mashapaug Pond**, to the north by the railroad tracks at **Huntington Avenue** and to the west by **Niantic Avenue**. Providence was just one of many American cities drastically altered by so-called "*urban renewal*" projects during this period. Supposedly "blighted" and deteriorated neighborhoods were demolished to make way for highways, industrial parks and other modern urban structures. These changes were supposed to improve cities but in all too many cases they destroyed vibrant communities and negatively altered people's lives. Many would argue that this is precisely what happened in West Elmwood. Assumption Parish would never be the same. As a result of the highway extension (Route 10) and the construction of the Huntington Industrial Park *Assumption would lose nearly 25% of its parishioners.*

- May 28, 1961 Recall that young man who was singing in the choir back in 1948. Upon graduation from LaSalle Academy in June 1953 **Dan Trainor** decided to enter **Our Lady of Providence Seminary**. He continued his studies at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and returned to Our Lady of Providence Seminary before being ordained by **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** on May 27, 1961. Having received all of his sacraments at the Assumption he said his first Mass here the very next day. Over the next decade Father Trainor would serve at St. Francis Parish in Wakefield, St. Rita's Parish in Warwick, St. Leo's Parish in Pawtucket and for seven years at St. Theresa's Parish in the Manton section of Providence.
- September 5, 1962 **Sister Marie Louise Murphy, C.P.** settles in as the fourth principal of Assumption School. She would remain in this position until the school was forced to close in June 1973.
- October 1962 At this time there were a number of active membership organizations within Assumption Parish. Among the most important was the **Tabernacle Society** led by President **Mary Quinn**. The Society sponsored many fundraisers and social events throughout the year. There were monthly cake sales after all the Masses as well as the annual **Harvest Supper** in October and the **Easter Card Party** in April. There was also an active **Holy Name Society** and a vibrant **Home and School Association** in the parish at this time.
- October 11, 1962 **Pope John XXIII** convenes the **Second Vatican Council** in Rome. Its purpose was said to be a spiritual renewal of the Church and reconsideration of the position of the Church in the modern world. The far-reaching reforms enacted by the Council would impact virtually every element of Catholic life, as they included *a new vision of the role of the Church in modern life*, a new emphasis on *ecumenism* (stressing, to an extent, the shared religious vision of all Christians), and a *reinterpretation of the liturgy* (with a focus on encouraging *lay participation*). What is quite remarkable in retrospect is that four future pontiffs took part in the Council's opening session: **Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini**, who on succeeding **Pope John XXIII** took the name of **Paul VI**; **Bishop Albino Luciani**, the future **Pope John Paul I**; **Bishop Karol Wojtyła**, who became **Pope John Paul II**; and 35-year-old **Father Joseph Ratzinger**, present as a theological consultant, who more than 40 years later became **Pope Benedict XVI**. Over **2500** delegates took part in the opening session, making it the largest gathering in any council in church history. There would be four sessions of the council over the next three years before the **Second Vatican Council** finally adjourned on December 8, 1965.
- June 1964 Due to declining enrollment the **Assumption School Annex** is closed. In the 1970's the parish would sell the building to a local businessman who would convert the structure into a warehouse. Then in 2005 this same building, located just a couple of doors down from the rectory at 775 Potters Avenue would be sold once again, completely renovated and re-named "*City Place Condominiums*".
- Nov. 29, 1964 One year after the **Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** was enacted—the "**New Mass**", as it was then called, was introduced into parishes throughout the United States. Author **James. M. O'Toole** describes what Catholics experienced at Mass on that day, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, in this passage from his 2008 book "**The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America.**" He writes:
Parishioners sitting in their places that morning knew something was different from the moment the Mass began. The week before, the priest and the altar boys had entered in silence; now everyone was expected to sing at least two verses of a processional hymn. The scriptural passages were read aloud in the vernacular. The priest, standing behind a new altar set up in the middle of

the sanctuary (a temporary wooden altar was used at Assumption), still said some prayers in Latin, but the people were encouraged to recite others along with him, again in their own language. The distribution of Communion was now different. In the past, the priest had repeated a prayer in Latin as he worked his way along the line of parishioners kneeling at the altar. He now paused in front of each parishioner, in many places standing rather than kneeling, held up the Communion host so they could see it, and said "Corpus Christi" ('the Body of Christ'), to which the communicant responded, "Amen". In a few months this, too, would be said in English, and the altar rail itself would be gone. The Church discontinued all Latin by 1969.

- 1966 The new permanent marble **Altar of Sacrifice** is finally installed in the main church. Prior to Vatican II, the priest had celebrated the Mass in Latin with his back to the congregation, making the Mass seem remote and relegating the people to the role of spectators. At this time a total of 6 Masses were celebrated in Assumption Church each Sunday (Saturday evening Masses had not yet been introduced). Masses were offered at 7:00, 8:30, 9:45 and 11:30 A.M. in the main church. Masses were also offered in the basement chapel at 8:30 (Children's Mass) and also at 10:00 A.M. There were still four priests assigned to the Assumption Parish in 1966. Assisting Pastor **Father George Archambeault** at this time were **Rev. Charles F. Dolan**, **Rev. James M. Thompson** and **Rev. William N. Girolamo**.
- January 13, 1967 After eight and a half years at Assumption, Assistant Pastor **Father Charles F. Dolan** is appointed Pastor of **St. Patrick's Parish** in Providence by **Bishop Russell J. McVinney**. While Father was honored and thrilled at being appointed a pastor, he was visibly shaken about the prospect of having to say goodbye to all of his friends at Assumption. Less than a year after his appointment Father Dolan would collapse in the rectory at Saint Patrick's. Ultimately, he would be forced to give up his pastorate due to chronic health issues. He was designated **Pastor Emeritus** of Saint Patrick's in June 1971. Father Dolan passed away on November 5, 1977 at the age of 73. He chose to have his funeral Mass celebrated at the Church of the Assumption on November 9, 1977.
- Feb. 20, 1967 Parishioners are stunned to learn of the sudden death of Assistant Pastor **Rev. William Girolamo**. He had suffered a massive heart attack. A Stigmatine Father who came to the Providence Diocese in 1953, Father Girolamo had been assigned to Assumption Parish in September 1960. He had previously served as an assistant pastor at Saint Anthony's in Woonsocket, Saint Patrick's in Valley Falls, Sacred Heart in East Providence and Saint Charles in Woonsocket. He was just 50 years old at the time of his death.
- April 1967 **Father Joseph P. Henry** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption Parish. His tenure would prove to be short-lived as in September 1968 he was appointed assistant pastor of **Saint Timothy Parish** in Warwick where he would serve for the next nine years.
- May 19, 1968 **Father George Archambeault**, pastor of Assumption Parish since 1954, is honored at a testimonial dinner at the **Hearthstone Motor Inn** in Seekonk on the occasion of the **50th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood**. The **Right Rev John T. Shea** was the principal speaker and **John F. Smollins, Jr.**, a Providence lawyer was toastmaster. **Mr. Joseph White** was general chairman of this event.
- June 15, 1968 **Rev. George Archambeault** retires shortly after celebrating his 50th Anniversary as a priest. Over the previous few years the parish population had decreased significantly as many families fled to the suburbs. Unfortunately, the new pastor would inherit a huge parish debt with fewer

contributors to pay it off. Assistant Pastor **Father Francis J. Giudice**, who arrived at Assumption in October 1967, would serve as interim pastor for a period of four months. Upon his retirement **Father Archambeault** took up residence in Jamestown. He passed away on October 10, 1976 at the age of 86.

Sept. 9, 1968

Bishop Russell J. McVinney assigns 50 priests to new posts in the Diocese of Providence. **Reverend Joseph A. Besse** is appointed the eleventh pastor of Assumption Parish. **Father Besse** comes to the Assumption after teaching Latin and Greek for nearly a decade at **Our Lady of Providence Seminary** in Warwick. At the same time, his colleague at the seminary, the **Reverend James F. Ford** is appointed part-time assistant pastor of Assumption Parish. Father Ford will continue teaching at Our Lady of Providence Seminary High School in Providence.

Meanwhile, at the invitation of the new pastor **Sister Angela Daniels C.P.** arrives at Assumption from St. Bernard's in Wickford for what was supposed to be a *three-month temporary assignment*. No longer able to teach due to health concerns, **Sister Angela** was coming to help out in the parish office. A half century later **Sister Angela** is still at ministering at the Assumption. What Sister has achieved during her years in this parish is truly remarkable. She has played a major role in establishing such innovative programs as the **Indochinese Advocacy Project**, **The Genesis Center**, **Matthew XXV** program for AIDS victims as well as a host of other endeavors. Indeed, the history of the **West End** and our parish might have been quite different had **Sister Angela** chosen to leave the Assumption at the end of her "*temporary*" assignment in 1968.

1969-1970

A period of tremendous upheaval in the **West End**, the **City of Providence** and in urban areas all across America. Racial tensions were very high and the nation had drifted into a severe recession. Many frightened city residents decided to flee to the suburbs. Demographic changes in the neighborhood around Assumption Parish meant fewer parishioners with less means. Throughout this difficult period two courageous priests from Assumption Parish, **Father Francis J. Giudice** and **Father James F. Ford** would be at the forefront of efforts to promote *social justice* and positive change in the area.

June 14, 1969

The **Holy Name Society** sponsors "*Assumption Sports Night*" in the parish hall. The featured speaker on that evening was Providence College head basketball coach **Joe Mullaney**. Mullaney would go on to coach the **Los Angeles Lakers** of the NBA. The program also featured PC guard **Johnny Egan** and legendary local sportscaster **Chris Clark**.

September 1969

Newly-ordained **Father Bernard O' Reilly** arrives at Assumption Parish. Father O' Reilly was born in County Cavern, Ireland and attended St. John's School of Philosophy. After graduation, he continued his studies at the Graduate School of Theology and was ordained to the priesthood on June 8, 1969. When asked how he happened to come to the Diocese of Providence Father O' Reilly revealed that he was recruited by then **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** who was visiting relatives in Ireland during a break in the **Second Vatican Council**. Father O'Reilly recalls that upon his arrival at Assumption, one of his first obligations was to register for the draft as the Vietnam War was in full swing. Fortunately, members of the clergy were automatically assigned "conscientious objector" status if their number was drawn in the lottery. Father O' Reilly has been a priest of the Diocese of Providence for nearly 50 years now. After leaving Assumption in 1974 Father served as an assistant pastor at St. Edward's Parish in Providence, St. William's Parish in Warwick, St. Bernard's Parish in North Kingstown and St. Lawrence Parish in North Providence. In 1988 he was appointed Pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Harrisville where he served for a quarter century until his retirement in July 2013. When someone asks Father where he grew up he

invariably replies “*at the Assumption in Providence*” for indeed it was here that “*the seed of my priestly development began to take shape.*”

Meanwhile, enrollment at the **Assumption School** has plummeted to just **275** students. Due to a growing shortage of religious sisters the parish is forced to hire more lay teachers. **Father Besse** is committed to keep the school open as long as possible. However, most parishioners consider it just a matter of time before the school will be forced to close.

April 4, 1970

Effective on this date Rhode Island’s 587,000 Roman Catholics may fulfill their Sunday obligation by attending a Saturday evening Mass. Announcement of this privilege, which is also extended to the eve of holy days of obligation was made by the **Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney, Bishop of Providence**. The privilege is limited to Masses beginning at 5:00 P.M. and later and to not more than two such Masses in each parish. In a letter to the priests and laity of the diocese, Bishop McVinney said in part: “*The Holy Father has authorized each Bishop in his own jurisdiction to permit Saturday evening Masses in fulfillment of the Sunday obligation. This has been implemented in many places with considerable satisfaction to many.*” He added the hope that “*this effort to facilitate attendance at Mass will have a beneficial effect.*” It would be more than a year before Assumption Parish would make the decision to add a 5:00 P.M. Saturday evening Mass to its schedule.

June 1970

Bishop Russell J. McVinney appoints **Father Raymond Tetreault** Director of the **Latin-American Apostolate** in the Diocese of Providence. The Hispanic immigrants that this apostolate served came from many nations, among them **Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia and Costa Rica**.

February 12, 1971

After just two and a half years at Assumption, **Father Joseph Besse** is appointed Pastor of **St. Phillip’s Parish**, Greenville. Meanwhile, it was announced that **Reverend Daniel M. Trainor** has been assigned to Assumption, the parish he grew up in. Father Trainor graduated from **Assumption School, LaSalle Academy** and **Our Lady of Providence Seminary**. He continued his studies at **Saint Mary’s Seminary** in Baltimore and returned to Our Lady of Providence Seminary before being ordained by the **Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney** at the **Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul** on May 27, 1961. **Father Trainor** is to be part of a **Team Ministry** along with **Father Francis J. Giudice, Father James Ford** and **Father Bernard O’Reilly**. Team ministries were a relatively new concept at this time and were being tried out at a few inner-city parishes in the **Diocese of Providence**. Although **Father Trainor** was designated as the **Administrator** the majority of the decisions were arrived at by the team. It was an attempt at shared responsibility. By this time, the number of Masses being offered on Sundays had been reduced from six to five. Masses were offered at 7:00 A.M., 8:30 A.M., 10:00 A.M., 11:30 A.M. and 5:30 P.M. A Saturday evening Mass had yet to be introduced in the parish.

March 21, 1971

Reverend James Ford, a member of the Team Ministry at Assumption Parish, is elected president of the newly-formed **People Acting through Community Effort (P.A.C.E)**. The group is essentially an amalgam of more than 170 grass-roots organizations from south and southwest Providence. Since his arrival in the West End in September 1968, Father Ford has taken a keen interest in the everyday struggles of the people in his neighborhood. According to an article in the **Providence Evening Bulletin** “*more than 700 people attended the day-long convention. The crowd was equally divided between blacks and whites and was of mixed religious persuasion. Father Ford said he did not actively seek the presidency but willingly accepted the nomination by the block clubs with which he has worked over the past year.*” In the weeks and months ahead, the

group intended to tackle a number of ongoing issues including *the removal of junk cars, cutting down on arson, pressuring owners to clean up vacant lots on Potters Avenue and Cranston Street, better dog control, the failure of banking institutions to deal with the problems of the inner-city, enforcement of minimum housing codes and locating a supermarket on Cranston Street to replace one that had burned down two years earlier.* In addition, **P.A.C.E.** called for *increased police protection in the neighborhoods and more youth activities, especially for girls.* The ongoing problems in the neighborhood only accelerated the exodus of Assumption parishioners to the fast-growing suburbs. As a result, poverty in neighborhoods like **Elmwood, South Providence** and the **West End** would continue to worsen.

- June 1971 Assumption Parish celebrates its **100th Anniversary** with a special Mass on Sunday, June 20th at the Church followed by a reunion and dinner-dance at the **Rocky Point Palladium** on Saturday evening, June 26th. **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** was the principal celebrant of the Reunion Mass. This memorable event was co-chaired by **Mr. Joseph White** and **Mr. Thomas Meagher**. In all, *more than 40 parishioners served on the 100th Anniversary committee* including Mr. & Mrs. Edward Kehoe, Hope Griffin, Kay Dillon, Louise Tiner, Mary Quinn, William McKenna, Thomas Blessington, Adrian Tognetti, Anna Kelley, Tom Wallace, Rita Trenn, Mr. & Mrs. Angelo Caliri, Sr. Angela Daniels C.P., Sr. Jean Audette C.P., Virginia Lawton, Mrs. Ernest Monroe, Eleanor Downing, Mrs. William Kilduff and Father Daniel Trainor, Parish Administrator.
- August 10, 1971 The **Most Rev. Russell J. McVinney**, Bishop of Providence passes away at his summer residence in Watch Hill of an apparent heart attack. He was 72. *The first Rhode Island native to become the chief shepherd of the state's more than 595,000 Catholics, he was appointed bishop of the Diocese by Pope Pius XII on June 2, 1948.* He was consecrated fifth Bishop of Providence on July 14, 1948 at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul.
- October 8, 1971 **Father Francis P. Brady**, who served as an Assistant Pastor in Assumption Parish from July 1925 to November 1944 passes away at the age of 77. In September 1944 Father Brady was appointed Pastor of **Saint Andrew's Parish**, Block Island where he served for two and one-half years. Then in June 1947, Father Brady was appointed Pastor of **Our Lady of Mercy Parish** in East Greenwich where he would serve with distinction for some 23 years before retiring in June 1970.
- Dec. 6, 1971 **Msgr. Louis E. Gelineau**, vicar general of the Diocese of Burlington, Vt. is appointed the sixth Bishop of Providence by Pope Paul VI. He was consecrated during a Mass at the **Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul** on January 26, 1972 before 1500 witnesses.
- June 30, 1972 A brand new vicarate in the **Diocese of Providence** was filled with the appointment of **Reverend Francis J. Giudice** as **Vicar for Community Affairs**. Former Director of Providence Health Centers, Inc. and a member of the Team Ministry at Assumption Parish for more than four years, Father Giudice was appointed to the new post by the **Most Rev. Louis E. Gelineau**, Bishop of Providence. In announcing the appointment Bishop Gelineau said that Father Giudice will *"provide greater effectiveness for the Church in the social area by providing coordination for all our efforts."* For the time being, Father Giudice will continue to reside at the Assumption rectory and assist with weekend Masses.
- February 1973 A decision is made to raze the parish hall. This 102-year-old wooden structure had served as the original Assumption Church. Unfortunately, the building was in need of major repairs and rising insurance rates made the hall a luxury the parish could no longer afford. When the building was

demolished it was replaced by the current parking lot. Shortly thereafter the downstairs chapel would be dismantled and the church basement would become the new parish hall.

June 1973

The **Assumption School** is forced to close its doors after 47 years. Declining enrollment and dramatically increased operating costs left the parish with no alternative. Many of the remaining students transfer to the new **Bishop McVinney Regional School**. For nearly five decades the Assumption School was staffed by the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**. If you were among the thousands of students who attended the Assumption School over the years you are sure to remember teachers like **Sister Arcadius, Sister Collette, Sister Marie Louise** and the unforgettable **Sister Vincent Mary**, to name but a few. Although the school was gone the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** would continue their work at Assumption Parish in a variety of capacities for decades to come. We cannot express in adequate terms our sincere appreciation for the undying devotion, the self-sacrifice and the all-encompassing care by the Sisters, who made Assumption School a place where the spiritual well-being and mental development of all those who passed through its portals first and foremost.

Assumption School Song

Hail to the school we love so well,
The school our own we call.
Pure and true for the white and blue
We'll be what e'er befall.
Knowledge and virtue with earnest toil,
We garner day by day.
Our places to take, in the ranks of life
And guard our heavenward way.

Hail to the School of the Assumption!!
Hail to the Assumption School!!

Loyal we'll be to our Holy Faith,
For which the martyrs died.
Loyal to country, true to our flag,
We'll be whate'er betide.
When cross and flag upon us call,
True heroes we will stand
Ever united, bravely we'll fight
For Christ and Fatherland.

Hail to the School of the Assumption!!
Hail to the Assumption School!!

March 26, 1974

The parish decides to divest itself of the unused school building formerly known as "*The Annex*" at **775 Potters Avenue**. The building is to be reconfigured into a warehouse for a building supplies company. Proceeds of this sale will be used to reduce the considerable parish debt.

- April 19, 1974 The **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** celebrate **50 years** of service to the **Diocese of Providence** with a **Golden Jubilee** banquet at the **Rocky Point Palladium** in Warwick. At this time, the order operated **Prout Memorial High School** and **Mount Saint Joseph's College**, both in Wakefield as well as **St. Luke's School** in Barrington.
- February 2, 1975 Assumption parishioner **Loring Johnson** is selected to be a member of the second class of the Diocese of Providence's **Permanent Diaconate Program**. Classes are slated to begin in April.
- May 1, 1975 **Reverend Robert L. Blais** is assigned to Assumption Parish by **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau**. He will be **Co-Pastor** and a member of the Team Ministry along with **Father Daniel M. Trainor** whose title changes from Administrator to Co-Pastor. Meanwhile, **Reverend Bernard O'Reilly** is reassigned to **Saint Edward's Parish** in Providence where he will be an Assistant Pastor.
- June 17, 1977 **Mr. Loring Johnson**, a parishioner at Assumption since the mid-sixties, is ordained a **Permanent Deacon** by **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau** at St. John the Baptist Church in Pawtucket. Bishop Gelineau had established the **Permanent Diaconate Program** in the **Diocese of Providence** in 1973 and Mr. Johnson was selected to be a member of the second class. *Deacons are ordained ministers within the Roman Catholic Church who perform various ministries in support of the Church, usually at a parish-level.* Lay deacons appear to have played a very prominent role in the early history of the Church. Following the **Second Vatican Council**, the **Permanent Diaconate** was restored by **Pope Paul VI** on June 18, 1967 as an ordained ministry in the Church. In the United States, the Diaconate was restored in 1968. The 2 ½ year training program includes courses in **theology**, **spiritual development** and **ministerial skills**. Aside from assisting the priests at Mass on weekends and on Holy Days, Deacon Johnson spent the next dozen years ministering to patients at the **Elmwood Health Center**, conducting **Marriage Preparation Classes** and helping to prepare the young men and women of Assumption Parish for the **Sacrament of Confirmation**.
- Nov. 21, 1977 This was the date set by the United States Conference of Bishops for introducing the option of receiving Holy Communion in the hand. *This was a rather controversial change at the time.* To illustrate, in an article in the **Assumption Parish Newsletter** edited by Parish Council President **William Piacentini**, **Father Dan Trainor** and **Father Robert Blais** addressed the issue in the following way: *"When Communion-in-the-hand is officially offered as an option we hope that priests and people keep an awareness of the fact that it is only an option. We hope that the overkill in argumentation on both sides of the dispute will be ended and no one will suggest that it is more "mature" to receive Communion-in-the-hand or more "reverent" to receive communion on the tongue. So let us have unity in this diversity of practice. Let those who wish to receive Communion in the manner of the last 12 centuries continue to do so. Let those who wish to receive Communion in the manner of the first 8 centuries do so. Let no one be forced to receive Communion in a way not wished. And, most of all let none think themselves superior because of the way they choose to receive Communion."* More than four decades later the idea of Communion-in-the-hand remains highly controversial in some circles. It is worth noting that both **Saint Pope John Paul II** and **Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta** were personally opposed to this practice!
- January 1978 Since construction of the new rectory was completed in 1958 Assumption Parish has been mired in debt. **At this time the debt stands at around \$70,000.** Long-time parishioner **Joseph Guiot** has devised a **Mortgage Reduction Plan** designed to accelerate paying off the parish indebtedness to a local bank. Joe is an Assistant Vice-President for Rhode Island Hospital Trust

National Bank and as such is uniquely qualified to advise the Parish Council's **Finance Committee** on such matters. If the plan is successful, parish funds now being spent on interest may be used to pay on the principal. As a result, the parish will be able to pay off its bank debt in 7 years rather than 15 years. According to Joe: *"We will be asking parishioners to loan Assumption Parish sums of money in \$1000 increments interest free. This loan will be perfectly secure as they will be backed by the full resources of the Diocese of Providence."* He went on to say that: *"Now is the time to dig deep and rid ourselves of debt."* Despite difficult economic times the plan proved to be a remarkable success and in just a few short years Assumption Parish would be very nearly debt-free.

May 1980

Father Robert Blais, a member of the team ministry at the Assumption, is deeply disturbed by the number of homeless people he encounters in the West End. **Father Blais** decides to take action and establishes **Advent House**. The mission of **Advent House** is to provide homeless people, primarily those with substance abuse issues and/or mental health problems the structure and support they need to put their lives in order and become self-sufficient. *Advent House was the very first "homeless" shelter in Rhode Island.* Over the next three decades **Advent House** would add a number of new facilities including **Linwood Court** and **Advent Apartments** and expand its mission to include a program designed to reunite homeless mothers and their children. However, by 2010 **Advent House Inc.** had run into severe financial difficulties. **Rhode Island Housing**, which had originally financed the ambitious 57-unit **Advent Apartments** in 1997, had no alternative but to take possession of the development from the financially troubled agency.

June 1981

Responding to the continuing influx of refugees from Southeast Asia Father Dan Trainor and Sister Angela Daniels C.P. co-found the **Indo-Chinese Advocacy Project** and in early 1982 open the **Genesis Preparatory School for Indochinese**. Located in the old Assumption School building at 620 Potters Avenue **Genesis Center** is a community-based school and support center. The initial mission of the school was to help newly arrived **Laotian, Hmong, Cambodian** and **Vietnamese** families overcome language barriers and cultural isolation. The refugees were taught how to shop for groceries and how to go about finding housing and employment. Although **Genesis Center** was a separate entity funded by a private foundation and not officially part of Assumption Parish many of our parishioners gave generously of their time and talent to this most worthwhile project. In 1987, Genesis changed its name to **The Genesis Center for Self-Sufficiency** as it prepared to expand its services to include a growing **Hispanic** population, as well as to address the increasing pressures for refugees and immigrants to obtain stable employment. Today the **Genesis Center** continues to offer day and evening adult education classes at its facility and offsite at local businesses. The organization's work attracted national recognition when, in 2014, it was honored by **Vice President Joseph Biden** as a "model program" in the **National Skills Coalition**, a designation awarded to only 30 nonprofit organizations around the country. *Over the past 36 years the Genesis Center has served more than 7500 students from 50 countries.* It is a remarkable success story.

1982

Mr. Joseph Fay, organist at the Assumption for more than 50 years, decides to retire. Joe is replaced by his protégé, twelve-year-old **Michael Comella**. Father Trainor certainly knew what he was doing. Michael would eventually become Assumption's Music Director and serve the parish for some 28 years before departing in May 2010. Michael has gone on to have a long and highly successful career in education, both as a teacher and an administrator, in the Providence school system.

April 8, 1983

The **Most Reverend Louis E. Gelineau**, Roman Catholic Bishop of Providence, leads an extraordinary **ecumenical memorial service and prayer vigil** for the Cambodian people, many of whom had witnessed their loved ones being systematically slaughtered by the **Khmer Rouge** beginning in 1975. This service, the bishop said, is meant to demonstrate “*in a tangible way our support and caring of the plight of the Cambodian people*” who have suffered from “*unspeakable horror*” as a result of the genocide perpetrated by **Pol Pot** and the **Khmer Rouge**. It has been estimated that **between 1.5 and 3 million** Cambodians died from starvation, torture, disease or execution at the hands of the **Khmer Rouge** between 1975 and 1979. Tragically, most of the Cambodian refugees who settled in the West End and other neighborhoods in Providence never had the opportunity to properly mourn their loved ones. More than 800 people, mostly refugees from Cambodia, came to this interfaith service at **Assumption Church**, which was chosen for the ceremony because of its extensive outreach to the Cambodian community. At this time, the city Providence had the *second largest concentration of Cambodians in the United States*, second only to Los Angeles. Midway through the ceremony there was scarcely a dry eye in the church.

The April 9th edition of the *Providence Journal* described the scene this way: “They came down the aisle in double file, sobbing as the Cambodian “*sound of suffering*” played on an ancient string instrument, reverberated through the church. Then quietly, with a red-robed bishop, a saffron-robed Buddhist monk and a dozen other clergymen looking on, they knelt one-on-one before the empty coffin in a symbolic tribute to the loved ones who died and who they never had a chance to bury.” The article continued: “Black-and-white photos of mutilated bodies, all taken in Communist Khmer Rouge “execution camps”, hung from the church’s tall marble pillars. Behind them were the more familiar scenes, familiar to Christians at least, of the Stations of the Cross.” Among the participants in this heart-wrenching service was the Venerable **Maha Ghosananda**, a **Khmer Buddhist monk** and spiritual leader of thousands of Cambodian Buddhists throughout New England. He recited prayers for the dead, speaking of how, “when life comes, death comes also, in an endless reproduction of life.” As he spoke, a choir sang in the background a song from Holy Week “**Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?**”

Nov. 12, 1983

More than 1100 current and former parishioners attend the parish reunion at the **Rocky Point Palladium** in Warwick. Music for the evening was provided by the **Paul Borelli Orchestra**. Nearly thirty members of the **Sisters of Cross and Passion** were in attendance. **Sister Vincent Mary**, then living in Farmington, Long Island, NY taught at the Assumption School for decades. In a note she sent to accept her invitation she remarked “*my years at the Assumption were the happiest years of my life.*” In attendance on that evening were several priests who had been assigned to Assumption Parish in years gone by. Among them were **Father Joseph Besse**, **Father Bernard O’Reilly** and **Father John V. Doyle**. The event netted a total of \$25,000. The proceeds were used to purchase new exterior doors for the Church.

In conjunction with the 1983 **Assumption Parish Reunion** the Parish Council publishes a “**Parish Newsletter**” designed to bring both present and former parishioners up to speed on what was going on in the parish at that time. Edited by Council President **Marion Avarista**, the booklet discussed the various ministries going on in the parish. Of particular interest was a program unique to Assumption Parish called the “**Indochinese Advocacy Project**”. As Marion Avarista explained “Located within the boundaries of Assumption Parish are 3000+ Indochinese. As a caring Christian community, our parish initially reached out to these refugees through a family to family visitation program. More than 125 people have been involved in this program. As time went by, the increasing needs of the refugees necessitated the placement of a social service worker to handle emergency needs. The **Diocese of Providence**, through the **Community Affairs** office,

provided funds to hire two community organizers to address some of the problems being identified through the direct services activities. In 1982, the **Indochinese Advocacy Project** received a grant award from the national Catholic **Campaign for Human Development** to continue this important organizing work. Another area of need that was unmet involved widows and widowers with small children who needed to learn English and other life survival skills. This brought about the reopening of the Assumption School under the name of **Genesis Preparatory School**. The school services this particular client group by providing day care for the children while their parents are attending class. Funding for the first and second year of this program has been provided by **The Genesis Foundation**, an international foundation whose aim is to assist third and fourth world peoples in the area of education and development.” Over the next decade **Sister Angela Daniels** and **Father Daniel Trainor** would play a significant role in helping to grow what would ultimately become **The Genesis Center**. Finally, in the 1990’s the **Indochinese** community began to disperse to other more rural areas of the United States that more closely resembled the climate and economies of their native lands.

- 1985 At the behest of **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau** a number of suburban parishes begin to explore the idea of “twinning” with an inner-city parish. **Father Joseph Creedon** was the Pastor at **Christ The King** in Kingston at that time. Father Joe recalls that the Parish Council at Christ The King decided to reach out to four inner city parishes in the hopes of finding a suitable match. It was an ambitious concept. **Christ The King** would offer financial support, there would be occasional pulpit exchanges and the hope was that parishioners from the two parishes might work jointly on some projects. As it turned out the Pastor most enthusiastic about the idea was **Father Dan Trainor** at **Assumption Parish**. The relationship that started more than three decades ago continues to this day. More than three decades later, the good people of **Christ the King** continue to support the **Assumption Food Pantry** in innumerable ways throughout the year.
- September 1, 1986 After being designated the **Administrator** of Assumption Parish for the past 15 years, **Father Daniel M. Trainor** is appointed **Pastor** of Assumption Parish by **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau**.
- February 1986 **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau** has taken note of the influx of **Hispanics** from countries such as **Nicaragua, Columbia, Haiti** and the **Dominican Republic**. He issues a pastoral letter welcoming Hispanics to the Diocese of Providence: *“I call upon all pastors and parish staffs to welcome the Spanish-speaking into their parish communities. We are presented with a unique moment of history, when the prophetic, evangelistic, communitarian and missionary aspects of the church can take on new radiance in the Diocese of Providence. To this effort I commit myself. To it, I call you all.”* Later on in the year the Bishop establishes the **Hispanic Ministry** program. Funded by a grant from the **Catholic Charity Fund**, the program has its roots in a ministry begun some two decades earlier by **Father Raymond Tetreault** at our neighboring parish of Saint Michael’s. In 1985, a study committee recommended to **Bishop Gelineau** that, rather than create new Hispanic parishes, the Church of Providence should reach out to them through **Spanish-speaking clergy and pastoral assistants** and welcome them into existing parishes. From very modest beginnings, this ministry would flourish in the years to come and play an extremely important role in the future of Assumption Parish.
- Sept. 13, 1986 **Reverend J. Allan Hughes** passes away at the age of 78. Following his ordination in July 1933, Father Hughes was assigned to Assumption Parish where he would remain for the next **27 years**. While at the Assumption he was one of five priests in Rhode Island that helped to organize the **Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)**. In July 1960, **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** appointed

Father Hughes pastor of the brand-new **Mary, Star of the Sea** Parish in **Narragansett** where he would remain until his retirement in 1978.

Sept.19, 1986

Reverend Frederick Sneesby is appointed Assistant Pastor of Assumption Parish. Father Sneesby comes to Assumption from **Our Lady of Mercy Parish** in East Greenwich.

October 1986

Sister Cecilia Castrillon, a Franciscan Missionary of Mary nun, arrives at Assumption Parish. She has been sent here by the **Hispanic Ministry Program** of the Diocese of Providence to establish a Hispanic community. It was a pretty small group to begin with...perhaps about 20 people. Among them was a young couple, **Luis and Teresa Garcia** who would serve Assumption Parish in myriad ways over the next two decades. Along with **Sister Cecilia** and the newly-arrived assistant pastor **Fr. Fred Sneesby**, Luis and Teresa would play a major role in the establishment of the Hispanic community at Assumption. Teresa would one day become a full-time pastoral assistant while Luis would enter the Diocese of Providence's Permanent Diaconate program.

May 5, 1987

Word is received of the death of **Father Anthony I. Robinson**. Father Robinson arrived as an assistant at Assumption Parish in October 1950. Previously he had been assigned to the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence. During his many years at Assumption, Father Robinson devoted much of his ministry to the needs of the growing **African-American** community in the West End. In 1954, Father Robinson and a group of local leaders founded the **St. Martin de Porres Center** on Cranston Street. He would serve as its Director for many years. The St. Martin de Porres Center has a long history of serving some of the state's most vulnerable elderly citizens. It has the distinction of being one of the oldest senior centers in Rhode Island, as well as the first in the Northeast to serve a primarily minority population. Poor health would force Fr. Robinson to resign from parish work in 1976. By this time, he was pastor at St. Agnes Church in Providence. But Father Anthony Robinson would continue his special ministry to African-Americans and other minorities at the **St. Martin de Porres Center** for the rest of his life. **Father Dan Trainor** would often cite Father Robinson as an extremely influential figure in his own life.

June 19, 1987

Genesis Preparatory School for Indochinese, which has completed five years of providing English and cultural survival training to Southeast Asian refugees, mainly women and their children, announces that there will be a program for **Hispanics** in the coming year. Some 20 to 25 Spanish-speaking single parents, and their pre-school children, will be enrolled in a pilot program under a \$10,000 grant from the **Diocese of Providence**. The program for Hispanics will differ considerably from what is being offered to the Indochinese because the needs are much different. According to **Sister Angela Daniels**: "*We believe that Hispanics already have the survival skills. What they need is English and vocational training.*"

August 31, 1988

Sister Pascal Grogan, C.P. passes away at the age of 98. Sister Pascal joined the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in 1910 and took her vows in 1913. She came to this country in 1926 and was part of the **Assumption School** faculty when it opened its doors in February of that year. Sister Pascal would continue to teach at Assumption School for the next 34 years, finally retiring in June 1960.

Nov. 12, 1988

Time for another **Assumption Parish Reunion!** A very special reunion Mass was held at 5:00 P.M. in the Church. Concelebrants were **Fr. Dan Trainor** and **Fr. Fred Sneesby** assisted by **Deacon Loring Johnson**. The congregation was treated to a stunning rendition of "*Ave Maria*" from guest vocalist and former parishioner **Maureen Walsh**. Following the Mass, a dinner-dance

was held at the **Rocky Point Palladium** in Warwick. More than 800 current and former parishioners were in attendance. Music for the evening was provided by the **George Allen Orchestra**. Joining Father Trainor and Father Sneesby at the head table was our former pastor **Rev. Joseph Besse** and former assistant pastors **Rev. Robert Blais** and **Rev. Bernard O' Reilly** as well as **Mr. Charles Mansolillo** who served as toastmaster for the evening and **Mr. Paul Tognetti**, Reunion Committee chairman. A highlight of the evening was the playing of the "*Assumption School Song*" by **Sister Lillian Dempsey, C.P.** It was amazing how many of the attendees remembered the song. "*Hail to the School of the Assumption!!!! Hail to the Assumption School!!!!*"

July 1, 1990

Reverend William J. Brennan is appointed Assistant Pastor of Assumption Parish.

Sept. 14, 1990

Sister M. Collette Whelan, C.P. passes away at the age of 84. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Sister Collette joined the **Sisters of the Cross & Passion** in 1931 and came to this country in 1932. She taught at the **Assumption School** for more than 28 years. For most of her tenure here Sister Collette taught the first-grade students. She was a much beloved teacher.

June 1991

It had now been about three decades since major repairs were made to the exterior of the Assumption Church. Some repairs had been made to the roof, flashings and downspouts after the parish sold the convent on Dexter Street a few years earlier. The church building was now 80 years old and time and the elements had taken their toll. It was determined that repairs and renovation work must begin on the church as soon as possible. The **exterior bricks** were deteriorating and water was seeping into the church through the walls. Meanwhile, all of the **wood** on the church exterior needed repainting and the **church windows** also were in need of attention. The **front steps** needed to be replaced. To make matters worse it was clear that the **boiler** would not make it through the upcoming winter. After carefully considering all available options **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau** determined that the time had come for the parish to conduct a **Capital Campaign**. The campaign would be dubbed "**Assumption B.V.M. Church Restoration Campaign**" and the goal was set at **\$400,000**. In the brochure that was prepared to promote the campaign it was noted that the cost to *replace* the church by 1986 standards was some **\$5,000,000!**

October 1991

A breathtaking three-dimensional wall-hanging entitled "**Our Lady with the Children of the World**" is donated to Assumption Parish by the wife and sons of **Arthur W. Grandfield** in his memory. The family explained to Father Dan Trainor that they chose this item specifically because of Assumption's long and proud history of offering support to newly-arrived immigrants. They were certain that this unique representation of the Blessed Virgin Mary belonged in our beautiful church. The statue was designed and hand-crafted by the artisans and painters at the world- renowned **Demetz Art Studio** located in Ortisei, a small village nestled in the mountains of northern Italy. This family owned and operated company has been producing painstakingly detailed statues since 1872.

February 4, 1992

A fire in a vacant house on **Potters Avenue** right next door to Assumption Church causes extensive damage to one of the magnificent stained-glass windows. The window depicting "**The Scourging at the Pillar**" was manufactured in Bavaria in 1911. The heat generated by the fire caused large sections of this window to melt. Within days **Father Dan Trainor** contacted Mr. James Donahue Jr. at **New England Stained Glass** in an effort to determine how to best handle the situation. According to Mr. Donahue "*There were 24 sections of glass. There was very little*

original glass left, so we had to recreate roughly 85% of the window.” The fully-restored window looks every bit as good as the original. Amazing!

Michael Dillon grew up in Assumption parish and attended the Assumption School. Michael served in the Providence Fire Department for more than 39 years. He was a spectator at the fire on that frigid February evening. The way Michael sees it *“As compared to what could have happened the church dodged a huge bullet due to the efforts of the firefighters.”* Few would argue with that assessment. He went on to say that *“church buildings are extremely susceptible to fire because of the nature of their construction.”* For those charged with maintaining these buildings it is a very sobering thought.

April 16, 1992

“Assumption B.V.M. Church Restoration Campaign” had now been underway for several months. In an interview with *The Providence Visitor* Father Dan Trainor revealed that to date a total of **\$282,300** had been raised from present parishioners and a small group of parish alumni. When all was said and done this campaign would prove to be a moderate success. Approximately \$300,000 was raised. Over the next several months a new boiler was installed and the most of the necessary work on the exterior of the church building was completed. However, the hoped-for restoration of the interior of the church would have to wait for another 14 years until the next Capital Campaign was launched in 2006.

September 1992

Sister Mary Caffrey R.S.M. comes to Assumption to take charge of the parish’s *“Ministry to the Poor”* program. Central to this ministry was the **Food Program** which provided essential foodstuffs for hundreds of individuals each month. Beginning in 1996, Sister Mary also oversees *“The St. Nicholas Fund”*. This idea was the brainchild of Fr. Stanley Nakowicz of the *Providence Visitor*. This highly successful program, which solicited donations from *Providence Visitor* readers, provided toys for the less fortunate children of the West End neighborhood during the Christmas holiday season. As it turned out Sister Mary would be the first of a number of **Sisters of Mercy** who would serve at Assumption Parish over the next 15 years. When Sister Mary retired from active ministry in 1999, she was replaced by **Sr. Rita Bartley R.S.M** who oversaw *“Ministry to The Poor”* until her untimely death in March of 2006.

August 13, 1993

Rev. William J. Brennan, beloved assistant pastor, passes away unexpectedly at the age of 64.

Sept. 11, 1993

Sister Marie Louise Murphy celebrates the 60th anniversary of her vows as a member of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** at a Mass in her honor at the **Assumption Church**. Sister was the principal of **Assumption School** from September 1962 until the school was forced to close due to declining enrollment in June 1973. She was appointed the first principal of the newly-formed **Bishop McVinney Regional School** where she served during the 1974-1975 school year. From 1975 until 1987 she worked as a religion teacher and librarian at **Saint Luke School** in Barrington. **Sister Marie Louise** returned to her beloved Assumption as a pastoral assistant in June 1987. She passed away on May 12, 2003 at the age of 93.

October 9, 1993

“Reunion ‘93”, an Assumption Parish reunion organized by the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**, is held. As was the case with the most recent reunions in **1983** and **1988** a Reunion Mass was held in the **Assumption Church** at 5:00 P.M. Following the Mass, a crowd of more than 800 present and former parishioners and friends of Assumption Parish descended upon the **Rocky Point Palladium** in Warwick for an enjoyable evening of **dining, dancing** and **renewing old acquaintances**. Music for the event was provided by the popular Irish entertainer **Fintan Stanley**. **Father Dan Trainor** was joined at the head table by **Sister Mary Margaret Sheehey, C.P** (aka

Sister Kenneth), **General Superior of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion** who offered “*Grace Before Dinner*”. Also seated at the head table was **Sister Angela Daniels, C.P.**, **Sister Eileen Fucito, C.P.** and **Sister Mary Jane Holden, C.P.** who grew up in Assumption Parish and was the Chairperson for this event. Once again, **Mr. Charles Mansolillo** served as Master of Ceremonies.

October 15, 1993

Sister Vincent Mary Ryan, C.P. passes away just one week after attending the **1993 Assumption Parish Reunion** held at the *Rocky Point Palladium*. She was 92. As anyone who knew her will tell you Sister Vincent Mary lived life “*her way*”. She was one of a kind. Sister entered the **Cross and Passion** order in 1924 at Bolton, England and professed her first vows in 1927. She taught at the Assumption School from 1935 to 1959 and remained very highly regarded among her former students. Always the most popular figure at parish reunions **Sister Vincent Mary** was under “*strict orders*” from the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** “*not to die*” until after the 1993 reunion. Just one week before the reunion **Sister Vincent Mary** began making phone calls to her closest friends and informed them that the upcoming reunion would be “*her last public appearance*”. Less than a week after the event she passed away.

Nov. 18-19, 1993

The **Music Ministry of Christ The King Parish** led by Director **Tom Kendzia** presents its fifth annual **Feast of Christ the King Concert**. It was decided that all proceeds from these two performances would benefit the **Food Ministry** at sister parish **Assumption** in Providence. This year’s program has been dubbed “An Evening of Contemporary Liturgical Music”. Special guests included Gary Daigle and Pamela Warrick-Smith. *A quarter of a century later this annual concert continues to be a fundraiser to benefit the needy people serviced by the Assumption Food Pantry.* Over the years several of the most influential composers of liturgical music have performed at these concerts including **Jamie Cortez**, **Curtis Stephan** and **Marty Haugen** to name but a few. The people of Assumption Parish would like to thank everyone at Christ the King, most especially the Pastor **Reverend Jared Costanza**, for their continued generosity and support of our efforts to alleviate hunger in the West End of Providence.

December 1993

During the early 1990’s the ministries of **Father Trainor** and **Sister Angela** took another surprising turn. **Sister Angela** noticed that many of the people coming to the rectory in search of food or other help were ready to acknowledge that they or a member of their family was infected with **AIDS**. Around that same time, Father and Sister were hearing stories from a number of anguished mothers who told of sons who had gone off to live in places like New York City or Florida and had come home with the dreaded disease. This was a growing problem that demanded immediate attention. And so very quietly in December, 1993, the **Matthew XXV** ministry began at Assumption Parish. Working out of a small office in the rectory, the ministry served 12 clients with HIV/AIDS. It was supposed to be a “temporary” program. But a short time after the program began **Sister Claudine Picard**, a religious Sister of Mercy with 32 years of teaching experience came on board as Ministry Coordinator. As word spread of the services being offered here, the program grew by leaps and bounds. By 1998 there were over 300 active clients. Other parishes saw the considerable value in the program and offered to help. Funding was received from the Diocese’s Vision of Hope and Catholic Charity Funds.

In March, 1999 the **Matthew XXV** program purchased a home at **196 Congress Avenue** in Providence to house those with AIDS who might otherwise be homeless. There were 4 to 6 AIDS victims living at “*Serenity House*” at any given time, most without any support from family or friends. According to **Sister Angela**, what made the **Matthew XXV** program so unique is that it was able to help a significant number of clients reconcile with the Church and return to the

Sacraments. Sadly, in 2005, **Matthew XXV** was forced to close Serenity House. Adequate funds to maintain the property on a long-term basis simply could not be found.

July 1994

Sister Marge Mancini R.S.M. arrives to assume control of the parish's fledgling Religious Education program. Sister Marge recalls that when she arrived here "*there were about 40 names of students on a piece of paper*". Over her years at Assumption Sr. Marge worked tirelessly reaching out to the rapidly growing Hispanic population in the Parish. By the time Sr. Marge retired in June, 2003 the program had grown to more than 200 students with more than 24 catechists and teaching assistants helping out. Today, the Religious Education Program continues to flourish thanks in large measure to the efforts of Sister Marge Mancini.

Oct. 15, 1994

After completing four years of studies, **Mr. Luis Garcia** is ordained a **Permanent Deacon** by **Bishop Robert Mulvee** in a ceremony at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence. Deacons have a number of roles and responsibilities within the liturgy or Mass. They include announcing the Penitential rite, proclaiming the Gospel, preaching the Homily, voicing the general intercessions (or petitions), assisting with the Eucharistic gifts, serving as a minister of the Eucharist, purifying the vessels after communion, and dismissing the people at the conclusion of the Mass. Deacons are also permitted to assist the Pastor of a parish by conducting Baptisms and officiating at the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. They may also preside at Funeral services (although not at a Funeral Mass) and prayer services. **Luis Garcia** continued his ministry at Assumption Parish until 2007 when he relocated to Florida. Several years later Luis and his wife Teresa returned to Rhode Island. Luis has resumed his ministry at **Blessed Sacrament Church** in Providence. Luis is one of more than 18,000 Permanent Deacons currently serving in the United States.

June 26, 1996

The **Rev. Guillermo L. Corrales** is appointed part-time Assistant Pastor of Assumption Parish by **Bishop Robert Mulvee**. In addition, Father Corrales will work part-time at the **Hispanic Ministry** for the Diocese of Providence. Father Guillermo was born and educated in Colombia. He was ordained on June 17, 1989 in Antioquia, Colombia and had several appointments as assistant pastor and teacher in Colombia before coming to Providence.

Sept. 1, 2001

Rev. Gildardo Suarez joins Father Trainor as Assistant Pastor of Assumption Parish. Over the next few years, Father Suarez would play an important role in the growth of the Hispanic community in the parish. Meanwhile, **Father Guillermo Corrales** takes on new responsibilities as the full-time chaplain at Rhode Island Hospital while remaining in residence at the Assumption rectory.

Dec. 6, 2001

Two inner-city missionaries whose work with **refugees, immigrants, the poor and the suffering** helped transform thousands of lives in the **West End** became recipients of one of the highest honors the city can bestow at a joyful reception at the **Roger Williams Park Casino**. **The Very Rev. Daniel M. Trainor**, who began working at the **Assumption BVM Church** in 1971 and **Sister Angela Daniels**, a Cross and Passion nun who started two years before that, are only the third set of people to receive the **Vartan Gregorian Award**, which honors people who have made *significant and outstanding contributions to the city's cultural and educational life*. "It is nice to see saints recognized," said Roman Catholic **Bishop Robert E. Mulvee**, whose remarks were soon echoed by Mayor Vincent A. "Buddy" Cianci, Jr. The Mayor said the two are "*my personal heroes*". "*Thanks to them,*" Cianci said "*Assumption Church is a veritable beacon of light for those most vulnerable, for those seeking solace and spiritual sustenance, for those seeking hope and help.*"

January 14, 2002 Assumption Parish is stunned to learn of the apparent assassination of its beloved **Father Guillermo Corrales** while vacationing in his native Colombia. *El Mundo*, a Medellin newspaper, reported January 16 that the priest had suffered 25 knife wounds. Associates and relatives in Rhode Island suspect he was assassinated by Colombian guerrillas. They are believed to have targeted him since 2000 when he spent part of his vacation working with poor people in remote Columbian villages. When Father Corrales left for Colombia his brother **Fernando** asked him why he was wearing two coats. He replied: "I am going to give them to someone." Every winter, before Father Guillermo made his annual trip home to visit his family, he would stuff a large black bag full of clothing that he bought at various secondhand stores. Several weeks later, he would return with only the clothes on his back.

Educated in his homeland, **Father Corrales** served at parishes in the Colombian Diocese of Bogota before arriving in the Diocese of Providence in 1996. For four years Father Guillermo divided his time between two distinct and important ministries. Father was a part-time assistant pastor here at the Assumption while also serving as part-time diocesan assistant for Hispanic Ministry. In 2001 he became the full-time chaplain at Rhode Island Hospital while remaining in residence here at Assumption. Father Corrales was incardinated into the **Diocese of Providence** in July 2001. Upon learning of the death, **Bishop Robert E. Mulvee** said, *"This is a terrible tragedy for Father Corrales' family and for the people of the Diocese of Providence. It is but one more example of the violence that permeates our society. I pray that God will help us all deal with this tragic loss. I ask all to pray for the repose of Father Corrales' soul and for an end to such senseless violence."*

February 2, 2002 Three weeks after he was found murdered in his homeland of Colombia, more than 500 mourners gather in Assumption Church to honor the life of **Father Guillermo Corrales**. The principal celebrant was **Bishop Robert Mulvee**. Concelebrating were **Bishop Robert McManus**, **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau** and **Archbishop George Pearce**. Dozens of priests were in attendance as well as a number of Father Corrales' family members, many of whom live in the Pawtucket/Central Falls area. In his remarks, **Father Daniel Trainor** cited Father Guillermo as *"basically a simple man, a good man, with a sense of humor and an air of innocence about him. But most of all I remember Guillermo as someone who spent a week of his vacation up in the mountains of Columbia, baptizing and ministering to people in remote villages."* Perhaps the most poignant memory of this gentle priest is when he brought back a statue of the Baby Jesus from his native country. Father Corrales literally carried that statue in his arms all the way back to Providence. Father Guillermo was just 41 years old when he died. Those who knew him will never forget him.

July 29, 2002 **Reverend John V. Doyle** passes away at the age of 88. Father Doyle was ordained on June 7, 1941 at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence. In **September 1942**, after brief assignments at Saint Philomena Church in Narragansett, the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence and Sacred Heart Church in Pawtucket Father Doyle was appointed an assistant Pastor at Assumption Parish by **Bishop Francis P. Keough**. He remained at Assumption until late 1959 when he transferred to **Blessed Sacrament Parish** in Providence. Then on June 16, 1964, **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** appointed him to serve as pastor of **Saints John & Paul** in Coventry, the largest parish in the state of Rhode Island. While at Saints John & Paul Father Doyle oversaw the construction of the parish school and rectory in 1966 and an addition to the church in 1979. He continued as pastor until his retirement from active ministry in July 1989.

Palm Sunday 2004 Responding to an invitation from Father Trainor **The Rays of Sunshine** begin a new ministry at Assumption Parish after more than 40 years at **St. Mary's Church** in Cranston. Led by the

group's founder **Joe DiBiase**, the Rays of Sunshine began as a children's choir in the mid 1960's. Starting with just 15 children, Joe built a group of 84 young people to sing what he calls "*Music with a Message*". During the 1960's, the group brought their unique blend of musical styles to churches all across New England. In the 1970's, **The Rays of Sunshine** visited churches throughout the United States and traveled to 9 countries in Europe including England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Austria. They performed for Pope Paul VI and over 20,000 people! The 1980's brought The Rays of Sunshine into a new era singing Contemporary Christian music written and produced by **Joe DiBiase**. This new kind of music was designed and created by Mr. DiBiase and became known as MIDI music. Once again, **The Rays of Sunshine** took to the road, teaching a new and different way to praise God in both small and large churches.

Since 2004, **The Rays of Sunshine** have been a shining light at Assumption Parish as they continue their ministry in music. Today the group consists of more than 20 people of all ages. You can experience the beautiful sounds of their voices in Praise to God each Sunday at the 9:00 A.M. Mass and on Holy Days and special feasts throughout the Liturgical year. Assumption Parish is certainly a richer community since **The Rays of Sunshine** have come among us and we deeply appreciate their enormous contributions to the spiritual life of our parish.

March 17, 2006

Sister Rita M. Bartley, RSM passes away unexpectedly. For the past seven years Sister Rita has been a pastoral associate and director of the **Food Pantry** at Assumption Parish. Feeding families is a year-round worry at Assumption Parish. As Sister Rita explained to a reporter from **The Providence Visitor** shortly after her arrival in 1999: "*People tend to forget that—no matter what the weather—circumstances, including the loss of a job or sickness, make it necessary for families to turn to food kitchens for help any time of the year.*" **Sister Rita Bartley** was always there for the people she served. She was 74 years old at the time of her passing.

Spring 2006

Assumption Parish embarks upon its first **Capital Campaign** since 1988. The idea was proposed to Father Trainor by two energetic and enthusiastic young ladies from the Hispanic community, **Cesarina Santana** and **Luanne Santelises**. The goal for the Campaign, dubbed "*Preserving A Proud Tradition*" is set at a modest \$200,000. Eventually, with the generosity and enthusiasm of all segments of the Assumption Parish community over \$420,000 in cash and pledges is raised. As a result, the interior of the main church undergoes its most extensive restoration since 1948. Shortly after the Campaign is announced **Father Dan Trainor** reveals that the Bishop has accepted his request to retire. His actual retirement date would be July 1, 2006.

July 1, 2006

Father Gildardo Suarez becomes the 13th Pastor of Assumption Church. *Father Gildardo has the distinction of being the first Hispanic pastor in the Diocese of Providence.* Father Suarez was born and educated in Colombia. Father entered the seminary in Marinilla Antioquia at the tender age of 13. He was ordained to the priesthood by **Bishop Alfonso Uribe Jaramillo** in Jordan, Antioquia, on Feb. 15, 1992. Father Gil received his degree in **Philosophy and Religious Sciences** at the **Catholic University** in Rio Negro, Colombia in 1998. He served as an Assistant Pastor at several parishes in Colombia before he came to the Diocese of Providence and was incardinated in July 2001. Father Suarez had been assistant pastor at Assumption since September 1, 2001.

Sept 24, 2006

Nearly 800 people attend the "**Fr. Dan Trainor Retirement Celebration**" at **Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet** in Cranston. Among those present were a large number of current and former parishioners of Assumption Parish, community and religious leaders, as well as relatives and

friends of Father Trainor. At Father Trainor's request the music for this event was provided by **Fintan Stanley** who has entertained at a number of Assumption Parish functions over the years.

December 2006

Restoration work on the interior of the Church is finally completed. Scope of the work included the painstaking restoration of the Sanctuary (Apse, Chancel and Proscenium Arch), the Nave and Choir Loft (Balcony) as well as the Side Aisles (including side walls, windows and side altars. Of special interest is the fact that the gold gilding, which was applied to both the main and the side altars in the late 1940's has been totally removed, thus returning our Church to its magnificent original natural wood state. In addition, the Baptistry and the Narthex were also completely restored. As with any project of this size some additional work was deemed necessary. Inspectors found that much of the wiring in the upper church did not conform to code. As a result, Henderson Electric was engaged to completely re-wire, clean and re-lamp the interior lighting. In addition, repairs were made to a small area on the exterior of the Church building where some leakage was discovered.

December 17, 2006

During a mid-day bilingual Mass marking the re-opening of the main church, **Father Gildardo Suarez** is officially installed as the 13th pastor of Assumption Parish by **Archbishop George Pearce**. The congregation greeted the Archbishop and Father Suarez waving white handkerchiefs which had been distributed prior to Mass. Concelebrating the Mass were our **Pastor Emeritus Father Dan Trainor** and **Father Joseph Creedon** from our sister parish **Christ The King Parish** in Kingston. Also assisting at the Mass was **Deacon Luis Garcia**. Lectors were **Gretchen Needham** and **Luis Frias**. Among those in attendance was **Mr. Robert A. Bove**, President of **Warwick Painting Company, Inc.**, the lead contractor for this project. *As the parish concluded its 135th anniversary celebration on this most special day it seemed like an especially good time to pause and thank the Lord for all of the blessings he has bestowed upon our parish and to remember all of the remarkable people who have served and worshipped here over the years.*

April 2007

With the extensive restoration of the interior of **Assumption Church** finally completed, some members of the **Rays of Sunshine** decided that our magnificent **Stations of the Cross** were in need of some attention. It had been at least several decades since they had been worked on. Three members of the group, namely **Wanda DeRouin**, **Anne Phillips**, and **Maria Giardello** took it upon themselves to make this happen. None of them had ever attempted a project of this magnitude before. Over the next three years, **Wanda**, **Anne** and **Maria** would devote a portion of their spare time to carefully **cleaning** and painstakingly **restoring** all 14 Stations to their original splendor. They chose to add a bit of color to these compelling three-dimensional figures. The results of their work just might bring a tear to your eye. An argument can be made that as a result of their efforts the **Stations of the Cross** in Assumption Church look better today than they ever have.

January 17, 2008

Assumption Church receives the **2007 Preservation Award for Institutional Restoration, Community Involvement and Stewardship** from the **Providence Preservation Society**. The citation read in part: *"It's hard not to be astounded when you walk into Assumption Church on Potters Avenue. Beautiful murals cover the walls, gleaming in the light that pours through the amazing stained-glass windows. When awed by this overwhelming beauty, it is hard to believe that only a few years ago the interior was in ruins."* **Father Gildardo Suarez**, current pastor of Assumption Parish was on hand to accept the award along with Pastor Emeritus **Very Rev. Daniel M. Trainor** as well as Capital Campaign Chairman **Paul Tognetti**. In accepting the award Father Trainor remarked: "I am very happy that we got this award. I see the renovations of the church linking the refugees of old who built the church, and the refugees who must now sustain it,

and all those in between.” Father noted that a capital campaign to pay for the extensive repairs was very successful and raised nearly \$450,000 for the renovations. ‘I’m very proud of the parishioners’ dedication and their willingness to be wonderful Christians and conscious of the need to support the buildings that are part of their lives,” Father Trainor added, noting that many of Assumption’s parishioners are recent immigrants who struggle to pay their bills and buy food yet they support the parish. He noted that several former parishioners who have moved away also generously supported the capital campaign.

April 12, 2008

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission’s annual **State Historic Preservation Awards** honor individuals, organizations and projects for their contributions to the preservation of Rhode Island’s historic resources. *Assumption Church was chosen from more than 100 nominees to receive one of 8 such statewide awards for 2008.* Our current pastor **Father Gildardo Suarez, Pastor Emeritus Very Rev. Daniel M. Trainor, Paul Tognetti** from the Assumption Capital Campaign and **Carol Nelson** from the Diocese of Providence proudly accepted this award on behalf of all current and former parishioners and friends of Assumption parish. The inscription on the award reads as follows: *“An ambitious restoration resurrected this 1910 building’s glory by restoring its fine murals, decorative painting, and stained glass. Inspired by Fr. Daniel M. Trainor, overseen by Fr. Gildardo Suarez, and funded entirely by parish members, the completed project links those who built the church, those who now must sustain it, and all those in between.”* All in all, a very proud moment for everyone connected with Assumption Parish.

May 22, 2008

In a development that would seem to have no bearing whatsoever on Assumption Parish **Reverend Daniel J. Sweet** is appointed Administrator of **Saint Anthony's Parish** on Plainfield Street by **Bishop Thomas Tobin** effective July 1, 2008. Father Sweet would replace **Father Robert M. Beirne** who had been pastor at Saint Anthony's since July 2004 and was retiring from active ministry. The fact that Father Sweet had been appointed **Administrator** rather than Pastor seemed to confirm the suspicions and fears of many parishioners that the days of Saint Anthony's remaining a viable autonomous parish were probably coming to an end. Declining attendance and revenue made it virtually impossible for the parish to afford a full-time priest going forward. The stock market crash of September 2008 further exacerbated the situation when the parish lost a substantial amount of the money it had invested. For more than a year, discussions were held with various area parishes and Father Sweet explored all available options. The goal was to keep the church open if at all possible. *Finally, in the late spring of 2010 it was decided that Saint Anthony's would become a Mission Church of Assumption of the B.V.M. Parish.* It seems that the parish had come full circle as **Saint Brigid's** in Johnston had been a Mission Church of Saint Anthony's Parish a century earlier. The change would take place on July 1, 2010. Meanwhile, Father Sweet would be transferred to Saint Michael's Parish in Providence.

August 24, 2008

More than 200 family members, friends and current and former parishioners attend the Dedication of the **“Joe White Parish Center”**. Throughout the summer months a dedicated crew of parishioners from the Hispanic community was hard at work making extensive renovations to the basement of the church. A new tile floor was installed, the walls were repaired and the hall was completely repainted. New carpeting was installed on the stage and a large quantity of new tables and chairs were purchased. At the May meeting of the **Assumption Parish Council** it was decided to dedicate the newly refurbished facility in memory of long-time parishioner **Joe White** who had passed away in April. On this day, the 9:45 A.M. Mass was celebrated in the basement and dedicated to the memory of our dear friend **Joe White**. Our Pastor Emeritus, **Rev Daniel Trainor** joined **Fr. Gildardo** in celebrating the Mass. A brief dedication ceremony followed. A

magnificent memorial stone was commissioned and unveiled. It reads in part: “*Joe White Parish Center. Eight Decades of Devoted Service to Assumption Parish. Dedicated August 24, 2008*”. A wonderful picture of Joe, taken only months before his passing also appears on the stone. Many thanks to **Mr. James Forte of the J. Forte Co.** in Cranston for creating this beautiful stone that will permanently hang in the new Parish Center. Over the next few months the renovation work continued. New double hung windows were installed, curtains were hung and the kitchen and hallways were repaired and repainted.

March 1, 2009

Assumption Parish is presented with a magnificent new solid walnut lectern designed and lovingly crafted by **Steven Moro** of Richmond, R.I. (brother of parishioner Marilyn Kelley). This lectern was presented as a gift to the parish by members of the Moro family in memory of their parents **Florence and Lincoln Moro**. Our pastor **Father Gildardo Suarez** thanked the family for their generous donation and **Father John Rainone** blessed the new lectern which will be a fixture in our church for generations to come.

June 30, 2010

Juan Perez arrives at Assumption Parish and assumes the position of **Hispanic Music Director**. Mr. Perez spent the previous 14 years in a similar role at Saint Charles Borromeo Parish in Providence. Juan is an accomplished keyboard player and guitarist. He describes his music as “*joyful*” and “*uplifting*”. Every Sunday at the 12:00 P.M. Mass he leads a talented group of musicians and vocalists in singing praise to the Lord.

July 1, 2010

St. Anthony Church on Plainfield Street in Providence officially becomes a mission church of Assumption Parish. **Reverend Andrew McNair** is appointed part-time assistant pastor of Assumption Parish and will spend the vast majority of his time tending to the spiritual needs of the people of St. Anthony’s. The decree from Bishop Thomas Tobin reads in part: **After consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Providence, and in accord with canon 515 2 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, I hereby:**

- 1. Suppress St. Anthony Parish in Providence, Rhode Island and unite it with Assumption Parish in Providence, Rhode Island to form one territorial parish. The suppression and unification shall take place at midnight on July 1, 2010. This unified parish shall include the membership of the present Assumption Parish and the former St. Anthony Parish. St. Anthony Church edifice will remain open for liturgical use and serve as a mission for Assumption Parish.*
- 2. Establish that the title of the current Assumption Church and St. Anthony Church buildings shall remain unchanged.*

As a result of the merger all parish registers containing the records of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage and deaths from St. Anthony’s have been transferred to Assumption Parish. Meanwhile, Assumption Parish assumes all administrative responsibilities for the combined parishes.

September 2010

Deacon Rony Lopez arrives at Assumption Parish after serving for 11 years at neighboring St. Charles Borromeo Church. **Deacon Lopez** was among 6 candidates ordained to the **Permanent Diaconate** by **Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. McManus** at the Cathedral of Saints. Peter & Paul on **October 2, 1999**. He continues to serve the Assumption and St. Anthony communities in innumerable ways.

September 17, 2010

Assumption Parish mourns the passing of **Brother Joseph R. Desrochers, O.L.P.** Brother Joe resided in Assumption Parish for some 35 years living in the rectory for most of that time. During

the 1980's and 1990's his primary ministry was assisting **Cambodian refugees** in transitioning to their new and unfamiliar surroundings. A Brother of Our Lady of Providence for 50 years, he retired from active ministry in 2008. Ever the lover of puzzles and games of all kinds, he frequently hosted "*game nights*" at the rectory for any parishioners and friends who might be interested. He was 67 years old.

May 1, 2011

Sr. Angela Daniels, CP celebrates 50 years of Religious Life at the 9:45 A.M. Mass. The Mass was concelebrated by the current pastor **Father Gildardo Suarez**, **Pastor Emeritus Very Reverend Daniel M. Trainor** and **Father John Rainone**. **Sister Angela** was joined on this very special day by members of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**. A special program was created for the occasion which included the following **Words of Appreciation** from the **Assumption Community**: "*We would like to join Sister Angela's gratefulness of her 50th anniversary of Religious Life and we thank God for all He has done through her ministry at the Assumption since 1968. We have seen a clear manifestation of God's providence through the loving care she has shown us.*" **Father Trainor** gave the homily which focused on the many hats that **Sister Angela** has worn over the years as well as the thousands of troubled souls Sister has assisted during her long ministry at Assumption Parish. At the end of Mass **Father Gildardo** joined the **Rays of Sunshine** in singing "*You Raise Me Up*" in thanksgiving for all that **Sister Angela** has accomplished during her half century of Religious Life.

June 5, 2011

Our Pastor Emeritus **Very Rev. Daniel M. Trainor** celebrates the **50th Anniversary** of his ordination to the priesthood with a 2:00 P.M. Mass in the church followed by a party and reception in the **Joe White Parish Center**. Approximately 400 current and former parishioners, members of the extended Trainor family and friends of Father Dan were on hand. Meanwhile, a total of 19 priests were on the altar with Father concelebrating the Mass. Providence **Mayor Angel Taveras**, a proud Assumption parishioner himself, read a proclamation declaring June 5, 2011 "**Father Daniel M. Trainor Day**" in the city of Providence. Music at the reception was provided by the popular Irish performer **Fintan Stanley**.

June 24, 2012

Assumption Parish marks the **100th Anniversary of the Dedication of the current Assumption Church** building with an *all-day celebration*. A **100th Anniversary Mass** was offered at the special time of 11:00 A.M. The main celebrant of the Mass was **The Most Reverend Thomas J. Tobin, D.D., Bishop of Providence**. **Rev. Timothy Reilly**, Chancellor of the Diocese of Providence accompanied the Bishop and served as the **Master of Ceremonies**. The Mass was concelebrated by Pastor Emeritus **Very Reverend Daniel M. Trainor** and our current pastor **Reverend Gildardo Suarez**. On the altar for this very special liturgy were **Reverend Robert Beirne**, a retired priest of the Diocese of Providence who at this time was in residence at Assumption Parish, **Father John Rainone**, another retired priest who offered Mass several times each month at Assumption and **Deacon Rony Lopez**. In addition, former Assumption assistant pastors **Rev. Francis Giudice**, **Rev. Bernard O' Reilly**, **Rev. Robert Blais** and **Rev. Joseph Henry** were also present in the sanctuary. The parish was also pleased to welcome around 10 **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** who were also in attendance. Following communion **Fr. Gildardo** joined our **Music Director Joe DiBiase** and the **Rays of Sunshine** for a moving rendition of "*Ave Maria*". After Mass more than **500** present and former parishioners and friends of **Assumption Parish** attended a dinner-dance at **Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet** in Cranston. Once again, the Boston-based Irish entertainer **Fintan Stanley** was on hand to provide the music.

February 4, 2014

Sister Kathleen Mary Burke, C.P., formerly **Sister Bertrand**, passes away at the Scalabrini Villa in North Kingstown. Born in Dublin, Ireland, **Sister Kathleen** came to the United States in

1931 and taught at the **Assumption School** for several years. *She was the principal of Assumption School from 1959 thru 1962.* Sister also taught at **Corpus Christi School** in Connecticut and was the Religious Education Director at **Mary, Star of the Sea Parish** in Narragansett. At the age of 70, her ministry took a dramatic turn when she accepted an assignment in **Mandeville, Jamaica**, before finally returning to the United States in 2006 for health reasons. **Sister Kathleen** was 99 years old.

December 5, 2014 The Park Theater in Cranston was packed for a concert presented by world-renowned Irish musicians **Phil Coulter** and **Andy Cooney** with special guest **Geraldine Branagan**. “**Celtic Twilight Christmas**” was sponsored by the **Home Loan Foundation** in support of the **Assumption Parish Food Pantry**. One hundred percent of the proceeds were donated to the cause. **John Murphy**, Chairman of **Home Loan Investment Bank** presented **Sr. Angela Daniels C.P.** with a check for **\$50000.00** that would go a long way towards alleviating hunger in the West End. *During the six-year period from 2012 to 2017, various fundraisers sponsored by the Home Loan Foundation raised close to \$300,000 for the Assumption Food Ministry.*

May 20, 2015 At the third annual awards dinner held at the Twin River Event Center in Lincoln, Pastor Emeritus **Very Rev. Daniel M. Trainor** and **Sister Angela Daniels C.P.** of Assumption Parish are recipients of the Diocese of Providence’s **2015 Lumen Gentian Award for Community Service and Charitable Outreach**. The Lumen Gentium Awards formally recognize those who “toil in the vineyard” in service to the Lord by ministering to those in greatest need in their church or community. Sister Angela and Father Trainor received the award “*for their tireless efforts on behalf of the parish’s food pantry ministry.*” More than 100 nominations were received in support of candidates for the award. A committee of clergy and laity reviewed each nominee and submitted recommendations to Bishop Thomas J. Tobin for his approval.

Bishop Tobin offered his congratulations, prayers and gratitude to the award winners for their “sustained efforts of visible witness to the beauty of our Catholic faith.” He continued “*In your life and service to the Church, you have already demonstrated what it means to live the Gospel with convincing joy and hope. You have made a positive difference!*” The **Lumen Gentium Awards**, are presented in 10 categories: **Parish Service, Community Service and Charitable Outreach, Catholic Education, Evangelization, Communications, Administration and Stewardship, Respect Life, Public Service, Distinguished Catholic Youth** and **Friend of the Diocese**.

January 29, 2017 The **Most Reverend Victor Masalles**, Bishop of the **Diocese of Bari**, in the Dominican Republic, is the principal celebrant at the 12:00 P.M. Mass at the **Church of the Assumption**. **Bishop Masalles** was visiting the Diocese of Providence for the celebrations of **Our Lady of Altagracia**, a devotion from the **Dominican Republic**. Concelebrating this Mass was our pastor **Father Gildardo Suarez**. At this point in time, **Latinos** account for more than 80% of Assumption parishioners and people from the **Dominican** are by far the largest group. During his four-day visit, Bishop Masalles met with **Bishop Thomas J. Tobin**, and also celebrated the **Virgin of Altagracia** feast at the Cathedral, Saint Michael’s and Saint Patrick’s, all in Providence.

February 19, 2017 **Father Gildardo Suarez** celebrates the **25th Anniversary** of his Ordination to the Priesthood at the 11:45 A.M. Mass. A reception followed at the **Joe White Parish Center**.

November 15, 2017 **Assumption/St. Anthony’s** unveils its brand new state-of-the-art **parish website** and **Facebook page**. The web address is **assumptionparishpro.faith** and the Facebook page may be accessed by clicking the icon at the bottom of the website.

January 11, 2018

Bishop Thomas J. Tobin announces the start of the “**Grateful for God’s Providence**” capital campaign that will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Providence, to be celebrated in 2022. *The campaign is scheduled to run for two years with a minimum goal of \$50 million to support the church’s mission in Rhode Island and maintain the viability of diocesan and parish funds.* Of the campaign’s \$50 million goal, \$20 million will remain in local parishes to meet needs determined by parish leadership.

In addition to the funds reserved for parishes, the fund will dedicate \$8 million for **seminarian education**, \$8 million to **support retired priests**, \$5 million to **Catholic school tuition assistance**, \$5 million to **Catholic Charities and Social Services** and \$4 million to the **preservation and maintenance of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul**. In particular, *funds reserved for the cathedral will support the replacement of the deteriorating slate roof, an original component of the 128-year-old structure that serves as the home of the Catholic faith in Rhode Island.* Each parish was assigned a goal based on their weekly collection income. The goal for **Assumption/Saint Anthony’s** was as follows: **Assumption of the B.V.M. Church (\$140,668)** and **Saint Anthony’s Mission Church (\$80,459)**. **Assumption/Saint Anthony’s** is scheduled to conduct their drive in the fall of 2018.

March 10, 2018

With their eyes firmly fixed on the future, 16 members of the **Hispanic community** from **Assumption/Saint Anthony’s** joined nearly 200 other enthusiastic delegates from seven dioceses across **New England** for the regional **V Encuentro** at the **National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette** in Attleboro. The theme for this **Fifth National Encuentro** is “**Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God’s Love.**” **Pope Francis** has challenged Latinos to “*go out, encounter, engage and accompany*” as they renew their faith and become witnesses to Christ’s love in their everyday lives. Among the participants in this conference were **Dilania Inoa-Baez, Ylonka Jimenez, Cristina Mendez, Dulce Germosen, Luis Frias, Carmen Frias, Ysidro Chalas, Lesbia Pabon, Jose Rodriguez, Nurys Inoa, Mario Garcia, Esperanza Hernandez, Miladys Ramos, Brenda Flores, Adrian Flores and Adrian Flores, Jr.** The **Encuentro** (Spanish for “Encounter”) is a four-year process that aims to promote **evangelization, leadership development, and consultation** in Hispanic communities across the country. The **V Encuentro** *is a grassroots movement where the faithful in parishes have asked questions, listened carefully and identified pressing needs.* Prior to this meeting the group attended an **Assumption/Saint Anthony’s Parish Encuentro** last fall followed by the **Diocese of Providence Encuentro** at the **Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul** on October 28.

The first **National Encuentro**, which was held back in 1972, served as a way to take into account the needs and contributions of Hispanic Catholics throughout the United States. Since that time, the event has taken place sporadically, with the last one, the **IV Encuentro**, occurring in the year 2000. During the course of this meeting at **LaSalette** the delegates were divided into 12 groups to discuss various **areas of ministry** that were deemed important to Hispanic Catholics. Among the subjects discussed were **vocations, youth ministry and priestly ministry**. Discussions, music, and fellowship took place throughout the day. As the meeting drew to a close, there was a Mass presided by **Bishop Edgar Moreira de Cunha** of the **Diocese of Fall River**. The Mass was concelebrated by **Bishop Robert McManus** from the **Diocese of Worcester** and **Bishop Thomas Tobin** from the **Diocese of Providence**. Everyone is looking forward to the **V National Encuentro** to be held **September 20-23, 2018** in Grapevine, Texas.

September 2018

Sister Angela Daniels, C.P. marks the **50th anniversary** of her arrival at Assumption Parish. Over these many years Sister Angela has demonstrated a willingness to tackle a myriad of ticklish

social issues affecting *recently-arrived immigrants, persons afflicted with AIDS, and those who struggle to put clothes on their backs and food on the table.* Together with her dear friend **Father Daniel Trainor** they co-founded the **Indochinese Advocacy Project, The Genesis Center, Matthew XXV AIDS Ministry** as well as the **Assumption Food Pantry** which has become one of the largest in the city. Her good deeds have certainly not gone unnoticed. In 2001, Sister Angela and Father Trainor were honored by the City of Providence with the **Vartan Gregorian Award.** In May 2015, Sister Angela and Father Trainor were co-recipients of the Diocese of Providence's 2015 **Lumen Gentian Award for Community Service and Charitable Outreach.** Then just a few months later, Rhode Island Governor **Gina Raimondo** honored Sister Angela with the **2015 Jefferson Award for Public Service.** In her own quiet and unassuming way, Sister Angela has had a huge impact on all those she has served in our parish and in our community. Clearly, Assumption Parish and the West End is a much richer place for having had Sister Angela Daniels in our midst for these past five decades. May God bless her and keep her!

November 11, 2018 At the conclusion of the regularly scheduled Sunday Masses, Assumption Church closes for a period of at least six weeks so that the parish can address a *serious maintenance issue* concerning the stunning stained-glass window "**The Assumption of Mary**" above the main altar in the sanctuary. Several months earlier, a severe wind storm caused this window to shift dramatically. The parish has been advised that if the issue is not addressed immediately the window could incur further damage and may not be repairable. Over the previous couple of months, **Father Gildardo** worked diligently with both the insurance company and a number of contractors to try to figure out how to best address this problem.

It was decided that all of the stained-glass would be removed and placed in storage. The window frame will undergo extensive repairs and new clear plastic exterior windows installed where needed. For a variety of very good reasons, insurance company policy requires that the stained-glass not be reinstalled for a period of two years. As a result, for at least the ensuing 24 months the window will remain clear. As the approximately 60 stained glass panels were being painstakingly removed by technicians from **New England Stained Glass** it was discovered that these windows were fabricated by **F.X. Zettler** at his **Royal Bavarian Art Institute for Pictorial Painting on Glass** in Munich, Germany. The Bavarian stained glass made in Munich by Zettler during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was notable for its outstanding design, brilliance, richly detailed settings and exquisitely painted figures. **Mr. Kevin Donahue** of **New England Stained Glass** explained that Zettler windows were used in dozens if not hundreds of churches built in New England around the turn of the last century. Everyone looks forward to the day when the stained glass is reinstalled and the window is finally returned to its magnificent original state.

November 22, 2018 This week's edition of *Rhode Island Catholic* reports the results of the second phase of the diocese's "**Grateful for God's Providence**" capital campaign. Both Assumption and Saint Anthony's did exceptionally well, easily surpassing the goals set for them. The goal for Assumption Church was set at **\$140,668.** As of this date the parish reports an impressive **\$239,709** in cash donations and pledges. *That is approximately 170% of the goal!* What is even more impressive is that Assumption parish has the highest participation rate in the diocese with 61% of parishioners making a donation. At Saint Anthony Mission Church the goal was **\$80,459.** To date the good people of Saint Anthony's have pledged at total of **\$95,335** or 118% of goal. In commenting on these results pastor Father Gildardo Suarez remarked: "*I want to say thank you to all my people from Assumption and Saint Anthony for the love and generosity they showed for Christ and his church at this campaign.*" Plans are underway to repair portions of the exterior

walls, roof and parking lot at Assumption while at Saint Anthony's the parish's portion of the proceeds will be used to make badly needed repairs to the walls of the church.

ASSUMPTION BVM CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, RI: OUR PARISH HISTORY 1870-2018"

compiled and written by Paul Tognetti

Revised December 2018

When I began working on this project back in the summer of 2006 my expectations were quite modest. What I had to work with initially was the program from the **Assumption Parish 100th Anniversary Celebration** which took place in June 1971. Inside was a very rudimentary capsule history of the parish. It was not very exciting but it was a start. Over the ensuing years we have been able to add context and personality to the narrative. We did this by doing extensive research and by conducting numerous interviews with current and former parishioners, clergy and religious who were all too happy to contribute their recollections of the rich history of Assumption Parish. Source material includes articles from *The Providence Visitor*, *Rhode Island Catholic*, *The Providence Journal-Bulletin* and any number of documents from the Assumption Parish archives. A special word of thanks to **Mr. Pat Dineen** of Huntington Beach, CA., a former parishioner who had been researching the early history of Assumption Parish and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion for many years. When this project was in its infancy he graciously consented to share his considerable information with me. It was a huge shot in the arm. Meanwhile, a large number of interesting documents were unearthed by parishioner **Luisa White** in 2010. In the ensuing years some new entries were made but work on the history resumed in earnest in January 2018. Lots of new and interesting information has been uncovered. I would like to acknowledge in a very special way **Father Robert Hayman**, archivist for the Diocese of Providence, for graciously sharing his extensive files on the parish with me. And I would be remiss not to acknowledge the entertaining and informative *"The Women We Come From: The Sisters of the Cross and Passion in North America 1924-1968"* by Sister Mary Ann Strain, C.P. from which I have recently gleaned a fair amount of information that I had not seen anywhere else. **Please keep in mind that the parish history is a work in progress. We are always looking for new material.** If you have any **information, memorabilia or photos** that might be helpful, please contact Paul Tognetti at 401-461-7718 or by e-mail at pmtognetti@protonmail.com

**HELP US TO COMPLETE THE RESTORATION OF ASSUMPTION CHURCH
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Providence, RI 02907**

