

ASSUMPTION PARISH  
**150**<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
**1870 - 2020**  
"THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US,  
AND WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY." --PSALM 126:3

"DIARY OF A PARISH"  
CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, PROVIDENCE, R.I.  
**1870-2021**

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 recently ordained 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 original church and rectory would be built. 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. 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 18, 1871

Papers are filed with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's office by **Francis P. McFarland**, Bishop of Hartford and **Father James Hughes**, Vicar General of the Diocese, requesting the incorporation of a new parish, **Church of the Assumption**, on Potters Avenue in Providence. The request was signed by the pastor **Reverend Michael M. Clune** and by two lay individuals selected by members of the new parish **John McWeeney** and **John Connors**. *If you look carefully, you will discover that Mr. Connors signed this document with "his mark" as opposed to his signature.* This was not uncommon in those days. The papers had been drawn up in Hartford on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. We can surmise that **Bishop McFarland** filed the papers upon his arrival for the dedication of the new Assumption Church just two days later on August 20, 1871.

August 20, 1871

The **Church of the Assumption** is dedicated by the **Right Reverend Francis P. McFarland**, Bishop of Hartford, assisted by a number of the clergy. Representatives of many Catholic societies from around the city attended the ceremonies at the invitation of the pastor **Reverend Michael M. Clune**. 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.

October 1871

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**.

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 was forged by the **McShane Bell Foundry** of Baltimore and weighed some 3000 lb.! It bore 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 it still hangs in the tower the bell is no longer in use. The high cost of maintenance made it a luxury the parish could no longer afford.

May 14, 1876

The reception of nearly 50 young ladies into the **Children of Mary Sodality** was the occasion for a visit to the Church of the Assumption by **Right Rev. Thomas F. Hendricken**, Bishop of Providence. The ceremony, conducted during the 10:30 A.M. High Mass, was a very beautiful one indeed. An unusually large congregation packed the Church to witness the proceedings.

November 12, 1876

At this time Father Clune was offering two Masses each Sunday at the **Church of the Assumption**. There was a **Low Mass** at 7:30 A.M. followed by a **High Mass** at 10:30 A.M. *High Mass was celebrated with a choir and almost all of the priest's parts were sung or chanted as were all the Ordinaries i.e. Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei and dismissal. Six candles were lit on the altar for High Mass as opposed to only two for a Low Mass.* **Miss Mary A. Baxter** was the organist and she also directed the choir. There were a number of organizations active in the parish including **The Children of Mary** and the **Christian Doctrine Society**.

June 10, 1877

Following the 10:30 A.M. Mass, the **Children of Mary** presented the pastor **Father Michael Clune** with a set of vestments. The presentation address was made by **Miss M. Sherry** in a faultless manner. Father Clune was completely taken by surprise, not having the slightest inkling of what was about to take place. He thanked them heartily for their present. Meanwhile, the members of the **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** were busy making preparations for a grand **Parish Picnic** to be held at **Mashapaug Grove** on the Fourth of July. *There will be dancing, music, singing, foot-racing, sack-racing, baseball, boating, a shooting gallery and many other attractions.*

March 30, 1879

This was a very exciting day for the people of the Assumption Church. **Right Reverend Bishop Thomas F. Hendricken** came to Potters Avenue to preach a sermon on behalf of the poor in the parish. The church had only recently been painted, frescoed and otherwise ornamented and presented a very cheery, comfortable and beautiful appearance. There was a good-sized

congregation present at High Mass, which was celebrated in the presence of the bishop at 10:30 A.M. with the pastor, **Reverend Michael M. Clune** as celebrant. After the reading of the gospel, Bishop Hendricken complemented the people on the improvements made to the church and spoke encouragingly of the future. In choosing the subject of *charity* for his sermon, the bishop said he was reminded of a very sad case he had heard about just the day before. *A poor woman called upon him and begged for a little coal to warm her cold and cheerless home. She said she had taken her children from house to house begging for a bit of fuel that might keep them from getting sick.* And this said the bishop is just one of hundreds of such cases in the area. **Bishop Hendricken** went on encourage the assembled multitude to generously assist fellow parishioners in need and reminded them that *“Were it not for charity, I’m sure many would have died this past winter from sheer want.”* It was a very sobering presentation.

- August 5, 1882      The pastor of Assumption parish, the **Reverend Michael M. Clune** and **Mr. Joseph F. Murray**, Superintendent of the Sunday School, intend taking steps to increase the attendance of the children of the parish and to impart more energy to the work of the school. Difficulty has been experienced in finding qualified young men willing to become teachers, but it is believed that efforts in this direction also will be successful.
- August 23, 1883      This day was generally observed as a day of pleasure, the majority of the parishioners and Sunday School scholars accompanying **Father Clune** to **Rocky Point** on the annual excursion. The pleasure seekers took the 9:15 o’clock boat for the Point, arriving there shortly after 10 o’clock. Previous to dinner the time was spent strolling leisurely about the shady grounds, the young men diverting their attention to baseball and other sports. The number on the ground was increased by the arrival of the afternoon boat, which brought down all parishioners who could not join them in the morning. After a pleasant day at the seaside, all embarked for the city on the 5:40 o’clock boat, arriving home an hour or so later.
- October 2, 1887      **Willie Gavigan**, whose death resulted from injuries received from a runaway team, was buried today. Willie was a youth of bright promise and had been an altar boy for some time. His remains reposed in the church where friends, relatives and companions paid their final respects.
- January 20, 1888      **Father Michael M. Clune** succumbs to an attack of bronchitis after 18 years as the first pastor of Assumption Church. He was just 48 years old at the time of his passing. 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. **Father Clune** left behind a thriving parish of some **3000** souls.
- January 23, 1888      A Solemn High funeral Mass for **Father Clune** is celebrated 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. The church, which was draped in mourning, was filled to its utmost capacity. All the seats were occupied, and many persons stood in the aisles during the ceremonies. The body of the deceased pastor, robed in priestly vestments, rested in front of the altar railing, while a guard of honor, composed of members of the **St. Vincent de Paul Society**, stood on either side. The eulogy was delivered by the **Reverend C. Hughes** of Fall River. The musical portion of the services were appropriately rendered by **Miss Mary A. Baxter**, organist. The Assumption Choir was reinforced by volunteers from other city choirs. Burial was in Saint Francis Cemetery, Pawtucket.

- February 1, 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 in the rectory during the concluding portion of the Month's Mind Mass that was being offered for the late Father Clune in the church on February 21<sup>st</sup>. 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 24, 1888 **Reverend John C. 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.
- April 1888 **Mrs. J.J. Moriarty**, an organist of unquestionable ability and extensive experience, arrives at Assumption parish. She replaces **Miss Mary A. Baxter** who held the position for more than a decade.
- May 28, 1888 The **Sisters of Mercy** are now assisting the pastor **Father John C. Tennian** in conducting the Sunday School sessions.
- December 31, 1888 The old bell-tower has been pronounced "*unsafe*" and workmen are in the process of taking it down. The bell is also being removed from the tower and will be housed until such time as the parish is ready to erect a new tower and beautify the front of the church.
- March 10, 1889 **Father Tennian** announces that work would commence immediately on an extensive renovation of the interior of the church. It is unclear where the congregation worshipped while this work was underway but the best guess is that the parish utilized one or more of the many halls that existed in the neighborhood in those days. The church reopened to an overflow crowd on August 18, 1889. All reports indicate that parishioners were extremely pleased with the nature and quality of the work that had been done.
- January 5, 1890 The Sunday School now numbers 460 pupils with an average class of 8 to each of the 60 teachers.
- January 27, 1890 The **Annual Financial Report** reveals that the indebtedness of the parish has decreased by approximately \$4000.00. Meanwhile, owing to the many improvements that have been made in recent months, the value of the church property has increased by about \$2000.00.
- April 7, 1890 The choir, conducted by the organist **Mrs. J.J. Moriarty**, and assisted by the full choir of **Saint Vincent's Church** of Boston, are making preparations for a grand church concert to be held on May 4. The proceeds of the concert, the first of a series, will be used as a nucleus fund for the purchase of a new and larger pipe organ, the cost of which will be about \$1500.00. The present organ, the smallest ever made by **W.K. Adams & Sons**, has been in use for 16 years and was purchased for \$400.00. About sixteen months ago **Father Tennian** expended nearly \$200.00 to repair the instrument but it has become quite evident that this organ is entirely inadequate to the merits of the choir.
- March 16, 1891 Nearly twenty years has elapsed since the **Church of the Assumption** was erected. and now through the energy and financial prudence of the pastor a project is afoot whereby the sacred

edifice will be so finely remodeled that parishioners can worship therein until the celebration of its golden jubilee. Plans have been drawn up and the contract has been awarded to **Mr. Joseph Stapleton** who will commence the work in early April. During the past three weeks **Father Tennian** has been collecting funds for this purpose and has already received in cash and promised money about \$2000—two-thirds of the sum required. The people of the Assumption who have ever heartily cooperated with the pastor in efforts to reduce the church debt from \$14000 to the outstanding sum of \$4500, will appreciate a project which gives them a handsome and imposing edifice and saves them the expense of erecting a new structure for the next quarter of a century.

- August 16, 1891 The patronal feast of the **Church of the Assumption** has always been fittingly celebrated by the parishioners, but it will be of more than ordinary interest this year—the completion of the new tower and other improvements effected under the administration of the pastor **Rev. J.C. Tennian**. The church now presents a striking appearance, with its beautiful tower and belfry, surmounted by a magnificent golden cross. The fine old bell has been placed in position, and today rang out for the first time in three years sending forth its call to the people to assist at the divine sacrifice. The church now has space for 100 additional seats if the occasion requires it, but at present the seating capacity, which is 800, is ample enough. A solemn high Mass was offered at 10:30 A.M. with **Father Tennian** as the celebrant. Music for the occasion was under the direction of **Mrs. J.J. Moriarty**. Two Sisters of Mercy, **Sister Ursula** and **Sister Jerome** did a magnificent job of decorating the altar and the sanctuary for the celebration.
- June 13, 1892 Painters have been engaged for the past two weeks beautifying the **church, rectory, stable, fences** etc. so that the parochial buildings present a very handsome appearance. The predominant colors are steel gray with white trimmings. The base of the church tower and turrets are tastefully adorned in dark carmine (a crimson or purplish-red color), a very admirable effect being thus attained. On the first Sunday of July a special collection was taken up to help defray the cost of these improvements.
- August 24, 1892 On this gorgeous late summer morning the members of the senior and junior choirs, the teachers of the Sunday School, the pew collectors and the ushers assembled at the rectory, and hence embarked in party wagons for Rocky Point, where they enjoyed a very pleasant outing. Boating, bathing and all the popular field games were indulged in. A shore dinner was served with all the accompaniments and during the afternoon the choir rendered choice vocal music. The event was the most successful yet. The pastor, **Father John C. Tennian**, accompanied the group which numbered about 100 people.
- August 7, 1893 **Typhoid fever** is prevalent in the Elmwood area of the city and has almost assumed epidemic proportions. There are some 12 to 14 cases in Assumption parish alone.
- December 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. The additional Mass will be offered at 9:00 A.M. followed by **Sunday School**. 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.”*

- February 24, 1894 The property on the north side of the church is currently on the market but it is held at so high a price that Father Tennian does not deem it advisable to enter into negotiations with the view of purchasing it.
- June 9, 1894 The contract for the construction of a new organ in the **Church of the Assumption** is awarded to **W.K. Adams & Sons** of Providence. Earlier in the year the parish had determined that it desperately needed to replace the organ that had been installed in 1874. Over the next few months several fundraisers were held and donations were solicited from parishioners. The new organ will be a high-class instrument of great volume and capacity and will be placed in the church at a cost of **\$1800.00**. **W.K. Adams & Sons** had a national reputation, having erected instruments in some of the leading churches in the United States. The great organ in the **Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul** was built by this firm and is one of the finest instruments of its kind in this part of the country. The old organ was quickly removed and construction of the new organ commenced almost immediately. Dedication of the new organ took place on Sunday, August 19, 1894.
- September 24, 1894 The **annual house to house visitation** by the clergy begins today. **Father Tennian** will visit the west side of the parish, beginning at Auburn, while the new assistant pastor **Father Denis Murphy** will start at Bridgham Street. *The annual collection will be raised in conjunction with the taking of the census.*
- June 22, 1895 A statue of the **Sacred Heart**, a gift of a pious parishioner, was erected in the church during the past week. It is one of celebrated “Munich” statues created by **Franz Mayer of Munich, Inc.** The statue is a life-size representation of “**The Sacred Heart of Jesus Pleading**”. The statue was solemnly blessed during a special service on Sunday afternoon, July 14<sup>th</sup>. Cost of the statue and pedestal was about \$135.00. This statue was moved to the new Assumption church when it opened in June 1912. The statue is still on display in the church and was completely restored around 2010.
- March 14, 1896 Judging from the pledges already received, the **Silver Jubilee and Debt Cancelling Collection**, to be taken up on next Sunday, promises to be the banner collection of Assumption parish. All are eager to clear off the last remnant of the debt with which this church is burdened.
- August 16, 1896 The **Church of the Assumption** celebrates the **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the dedication of the church with a **Solemn High Mass** at 10:30 A.M. The church was handsomely adorned for the occasion, and all who entered could not fail to notice the conspicuous floral figures “**1871-1896**”, which met their gaze as they looked toward the sanctuary. Principal Celebrant of the Mass was assistant pastor **Father Denis E. Murphy**. **Mrs. J.J. Moriarty** presided at the organ and under her direction a special musical program was rendered.
- October 9, 1896 The **Reverend Denis E. Murphy**, assistant pastor of Assumption parish for the past two years passes away at Saint Joseph’s Hospital. He had been in delicate health for fifteen years, and when he was ordained in April 1884, no one thought he could live much longer. He fought his illness, however, and his spirit was such that he said Mass last Sunday, and on Monday went about his parish work. The end came quickly, and though his grit upheld him some, his strength was gone. The body of Father Murphy was transferred from Saint Joseph’s Hospital on Sunday afternoon, and it lay in state at the **Church of the Assumption** until after the Solemn Requiem funeral Mass on Monday.

- October 28, 1896 **Reverend Peter J. Malone** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption parish. He comes to the Assumption from **Saint Patrick's Parish** in Valley Falls. Father Malone was ordained by Bishop Matthew Harkins at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on June 24, 1891. He will remain in this capacity until June 1900 when he was transferred to the **Cathedral**.
- January 30, 1897 **Father Tennian** announces that ground will be broken in early spring for an addition to the present rectory which is "*altogether too small for the requirements of the parish.*"
- March 6, 1897 The contract to build an addition to and remodel the old rectory has been awarded to **D.T. Dunham and Co.** The mason work, under the supervision of Mr. Healy of Cranston Street will be commenced at once.
- January 25, 1899 **Father John C. Tennian** announces that he has been named pastor of **St. Mary's Church, Pawtucket**. The congregation was deeply moved at the announcement of his transfer, for during his eleven years at the Assumption he had, by his excellent administrative ability and kind and charitable disposition, completely won the hearts and minds of both young and old alike. It was due to the tireless efforts of Father Tennian that Assumption parish was now almost completely debt free. At the same time, **Reverend Thomas L. Kelly** is appointed the fourth pastor. Father Kelly was certainly no stranger to Assumption parish. Back in the late spring and summer of 1890 Father Kelly had taken charge of the parish for a period of three months while Father Tennian embarked on a European trip. Over the next several years Father Kelly would make frequent visits to the parish as a guest of Father Tennian.
- May 28, 1899 The children who had been under preparation made their **First Holy Communion** at the 7:30 A.M. Mass. There were 70 of them, girls dressed in white and boys in their Sunday best and it was an impressive sight to see them, so full of devotion. In the afternoon, the annual **May Procession** and reception took place. The procession passed through the grounds and around the church headed by the altar boys. **Miss Louise Atchison** crowned the statue of Our Lady.
- July 8, 1900 **Reverend John T. Fahey** is appointed an assistant pastor of Assumption Parish, Meanwhile, the parish continues to grow at an impressive rate. *As of this date, a fourth Sunday morning Mass would be added to the schedule.* Masses will now be offered at 7, 8, 9 and 10:30 A.M.
- January 12, 1901 Father Kelly is desirous of having those who can sing join the choir, which is being reorganized under the direction of the new organist **Professor Ernst Fischer**. Professor Fischer replaces **Mrs. J.J. Moriarty** who served Assumption parish for nearly thirteen years. Mr. Fischer operates his own studio in the **Conrad Building** on Westminster Street in downtown Providence where he teaches piano, singing, harmony and music composition.
- February 2, 1901 Members of the Assumption Adult Choir call on **Mrs. J.J. Moriarty** who had recently vacated the position of organist after thirteen years of service. As a token of appreciation of their friendship and esteem the group presented her with a handsome picture of Raphael's **Sistine Madonna**. The picture is framed in oil waxed oak with powdered gold trimming and is a work of art. **Mr. George Cheese**, on behalf of the choir, made the presentation speech and Mrs. Moriarty responded, expressing herself as sincerely grateful for the kindness of friends she had so long been associated with.
- May 11, 1901 **Father Thomas Kelly** announces the formation of a **Holy Name Society** in Assumption Parish. *Holy Name Society members are called to grow in holiness through devotion to the Most Holy*

*Name of Jesus. Members of this fraternity are called to be leaders, to cleanse themselves in the sacrament of Penance, strengthen themselves with the Most Holy Eucharist, nourish their souls on Sacred Scripture, increase their desire for divine love through prayer, and lead their families, friends and co-workers to Christ Jesus by their acts of charity and piety.* Nearly 300 men submitted their applications for membership. In the decades that followed, monthly communion breakfasts would be held for the members and there was also an annual retreat. Meanwhile, the group would also hold occasional events designed to raise money for the parish. The **Assumption Holy Name Society** would remain a vital part of the life of the parish for the next 70 years.

- 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.
- Easter Sunday 1902      Palms, Easter lilies and azaleas were the features of the decoration of the altar of the Church of the Assumption at the Easter services. *The main altar was set off by the pure white of the lilies, placed among the candles and behind them, making a screen against which the vases of bright-colored cut flowers showed well.* Daffodils, hyacinths and small bouquets were placed on the side altars of St. Joseph and the Virgin. The services of the day were Low Masses at 7 and 8 o'clock celebrated by the pastor **Father Thomas Kelly** and the Children's Mass at 9 o'clock celebrated by **Father Fahey**, with carols by the children's choir directed by **Miss Sarah Gough**. Father Fahey also celebrated High Mass at 10:30 A.M., the sermon being delivered by Father Kelly. The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament followed High Mass. The music for the High Mass was provided by a chorus of 35 voices directed by the organist **Ernst Fischer**.
- August 17, 1902      The patronal feast of **The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** was observed with a Solemn High Mass at 10:30 A.M. **Father Fahey** was the celebrant. Music was provided by the senior choir under the direction of the organist **Professor Ernst Fischer**. It should be noted that at this time the **Feast of the Assumption** had not yet been designated as a **Holy Day of Obligation** by the Roman Catholic Church. When **Pope Pius XII**, on November 1, 1950 solemnly announced the **Assumption of Mary** to be a dogma of the faith, he did not establish a new doctrine, but merely confirmed the universal belief of early Christianity. *Henceforth, August 15<sup>th</sup> would be observed as the Feast of the Assumption and a Holy Day of Obligation.*
- December 21, 1902      **Father Kelly** is hospitalized after suffering a debilitating stroke. By April, Father had recovered sufficiently to travel to South Carolina at the recommendation of his physician for additional rest and treatment. In his absence assistant pastor **Father John T. Fahey** and **Father John F. Sullivan**, assistant pastor at **Saint Mary's** on Broadway would minister to the needs of the parish.
- February 12, 1903      According to a report in today's edition of *The Providence Journal*, **Father Thomas L. Kelly**, currently a patient at **Saint Joseph Hospital** is much improved. Father Kelly has suffered severely from *partial paralysis* of the limbs, but yesterday was able to walk in the yard of the institution with the assistance of two attendants. This is the first time the priest has been out of the building since he became a patient there several weeks ago and his friends and parishioners are gratified by his advancement toward recovery.

- March 17, 1903 **Professor Ernst Fischer**, Organist and Choir Director of the Church of the Assumption, passes away at Rhode Island Hospital after a three-week battle with pleuropneumonia. He was just 45 years old at the time of his passing,
- July 11, 1903 A tiny notice in the “*Church News*” section of today’s edition of *The Providence Visitor* reveals that Assumption parish 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.
- December 9, 1903 **Sarah M. Gough**, formerly the Director of the Assumption Children’s Choir, is named the new Organist and Choir Director of the Church of the Assumption.
- January 10, 1904 It was announced that beginning in February a **monthly collection** would be taken up at all of the Masses on the first Sunday of each month in order to secure funds for the erection of a new Assumption Church.
- April 10, 1904 **Bishop Matthew Harkins** administered the **Sacrament of Confirmation** to 250 children and a number of adults in a Sunday afternoon ceremony in Assumption Church. He was assisted by assistant pastor **Father John T. Fahey** and **Father John F. Sullivan**. The sponsors were **Mr. James Gallivan** and **Miss Annie Crofton**. The church was crowded to the doors and many were unable to gain admission. The pastor, **Father Thomas L. Kelly**, was present in the sanctuary.
- April 28, 1905 An architectural sketch of the proposed new **Church of the Assumption** appears in *The Providence Journal*. The caption reads as follows: *The parish of the Church of the Assumption is to have a magnificent new edifice for public worship near the corner of Cranston Street and Linwood Avenue. The old church on Potters Avenue, near Cranston Street, has become during the many years since it was built, entirely unsuited to the needs of the growing parish. The plans for the new structure were drawn by McGinnis, Walsh & Sullivan, Boston architects, for Reverend Thomas L. Kelly, the pastor. When the building is completed it will be one of the handsomest churches in the city.*”
- For reasons that at this point remain largely unknown this structure would never be built. Perhaps the cost proved to be too great for the parish or maybe the chronic illness that plagued Father Kelly and caused him to be away from the parish for long periods of time sidetracked the project. It would be another five years before ground was broken for the new church adjacent to the original church building on Potters Avenue.
- September 1905 **Reverend Joseph E. Hughes** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption parish. In an article in the August 17, 1907 edition of *The Providence Visitor*, Father Hughes is referred to as the **acting pastor**. It would appear that Father Hughes was in charge of the parish for a period of time while the pastor **Father Thomas L. Kelly** was required to be away for health reasons. On the very same day assistant pastor **Father John T. Fahey** is transferred to **Holy Name Parish** in Providence.
- October 17, 1905 A committee delegated by the congregation of the Church of the Assumption went to the **Holy Name** rectory on Camp Street and on behalf of his former parishioners, presented a purse of

gold amounting to \$800 to **Father John T. Fahey**. The gift was in recognition of Father Fahey's six years of service at Assumption parish. **George B. Clegg**, who was chosen as spokesperson of the committee, handed Father Fahey the purse and then observed: "*We are gathered here this evening for the purpose of expressing our regret at the termination of your services in our midst and offering you our best wishes for your future welfare, and at the same time to present to you some slight token of our appreciation of your valuable services and of the love we have toward you.*" The surprise was so great that for a few minutes Father Fahey was overcome but he quickly recovered. He assured the committee that the loyal support given **Father Kelly** and himself made his six years stay at the Assumption parish the happiest years of his priestly life.

May 6, 1906

At the request of Archbishop Patrick Riordan of San Francisco, a special collection was taken up at all of the masses for those in dire need in the city. Less than three weeks earlier, on the morning of April 18, the City of San Francisco and the surrounding area felt the impact of an earthquake estimated to be 8.4 on the Richter Scale. Fires burned in the city for three days after the earthquake. Hundreds lost their lives and a quarter million San Franciscans were left homeless. Meanwhile, scores of Catholic churches and schools were heavily damaged. *The good people of the Church of the Assumption raised a total of \$242.50 for this very worthy cause.* The funds were forwarded to the Archbishop the very next day.

July 10, 1907

The newly-ordained **Reverend John F. Reardon** is appointed assistant pastor of the Church of the Assumption. Father Reardon had been ordained just a week earlier at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul by **Bishop Matthew Harkins**. He said his first Mass just a few days later at his home church of **Saint Mary's** in Pawtucket.

December 11, 1908

The funeral of Walter Gaughan, late of Linwood Avenue was held today. *A wide circle of friends mourned his death, which was made doubly sad by the fact that very recently his father was also a victim of the typhoid epidemic.*

April 16, 1909

Assistant pastor **Father Joseph E. Hughes** is appointed pastor of Saint Brendan's Parish in Riverside. He remained at Saint Brendan's until his death on December 14, 1929. Father Hughes was 60 years old at the time of his passing.

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. The preponderance of available evidence would seem to indicate that Father Kelly was absent from the parish for long periods of time after suffering a stroke in December 1902. This was too bad because as a pastor he was beloved by his parishioners and as a preacher displayed "*a marked finish of expression and fruitful vocabulary*". Father Kelly was also considered to be 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 Emmitsburg, Maryland, of which he was an alumnus. Father Kelly was also editor of *The Providence Visitor* for two years. He is replaced by **Reverend John F. Haney** who comes to Assumption from **Sacred Heart Church** in East Providence. Assistant pastors at this time are **Father Thomas A. McGrath** and **Father John F. Reardon**.

August 14, 1910

Ground is broken for the new Church of the Assumption on the adjoining lot acquired by Father Kelly in 1903. The groundbreaking ceremony was strictly a parish affair. The pastor **Reverend John F. Haney** turned the first shovelful of earth after having blessed the ground. He was

followed by assistant pastor **Father Thomas A. McGrath** and then by many older members of the parish who had performed a similar ceremony when the first church was built some 40 years earlier. The new church will have a seating capacity of more than 1000 people. **Gilbane Building Company** was the principal contractor for the project and the firm of **Murphy, Hindle & Wright** the architects. There are a number of active organizations within the parish at this time including the **Saint Aloysius Society** (young men), the **Children of Mary** (teenage girls), the **Rosary and Scapular Society** (ladies) and the **Holy Name Society** (men).

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*. The cornerstone was donated by a parishioner, **Peter Barden**, of Cranston Street. 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.

April 14, 1911

**Mary A.T. O'Connor** is now the Organist and Choir Director at the Church of the Assumption. Miss O'Connor would remain in this position for the next three decades.

February 25, 1912

Assistant pastor **Father Thomas A. McGrath** is transferred to **St. Peter and Paul Church** in West Warwick where he will spend the next 24 years.

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

In the presence of a large congregation **Bishop Matthew Harkins** blessed the new **Church of the Assumption** and dedicated it to the service of Almighty God. The dedication ceremonies commenced at 10:30 A.M. and was followed by a Solemn High Mass with the Bishop as principal celebrant.

The new Assumption Church was designed in the *Perpendicular Gothic* style by the architectural firm of **Murphy, Hindle & Wright** who specialized in ecclesiastical architecture and provided designs for many of the early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 the result is a lofty, open interior of extraordinary lightness and delicacy.

The impressive stained-glass windows in the new church were crafted by **F.X. Zettler Studios** of Munich. The existing church organ, built and installed by **W.K. Adams and Sons** of Providence in 1894 was completely refurbished and was placed in the new church. Meanwhile, a beautiful antique brass sanctuary lamp by the **Gorham Company**, and an antique brass and oak Communion rail by **W.J. Feeley Co.** have also been installed. *All of these, together with the three marble and oak altars, the Stations of the Cross, and each of the stained-glass windows were gifts by members or friends of the parish.* The beautifully-carved statuary on the altar was done by the one of the leading wood carvers of his day, the Boston-based **Johannes Kirchmayer**. With the dedication of the new church, the original church building was scheduled to undergo repairs and would be used as a Sunday School.

June 22-24, 1915

The annual "**Assumption Parish Lawn Party**" is held on the church grounds at the corner of Linwood Avenue and Cranston Street.

August 20, 1916

The Assumption **Holy Name Society** holds a special meeting in the parish hall to prepare for the big Holy Name parade to be held in September in the streets of downtown Providence. The parade is a major event that takes place once every three years and brings together thousands of Catholic men from all across the State of Rhode Island. *It was said that the Church of the Assumption was expected to have more than 1000 men participating in this event.* **Joseph Gormley** was chosen as drill master for the parish society. **Father James B. O'Brien**, spiritual director of the society, spoke briefly just before the close of the meeting.

October 14, 1917

The **Union of Catholic Parish Clubs** of the Diocese of Providence held its annual election of officers in the rooms of the Cathedral Catholic Club, Providence. This was the first meeting under the revised constitution of the Union and because of that fact the activities for the coming year were to be discussed. *There were nearly 100 delegates present from Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls.* The clubs holding membership in the Union are, Cathedral Catholic Club, St. Michael's Catholic Club, St. Thomas Catholic Club, St. Raymond's Catholic Club, **Assumption Catholic Club**, St. Edward's Catholic Club, Immaculate Conception Institute, Providence, St. Mary's Y.M.C.A., St. Joseph's Catholic Club, Sacred Heart Catholic Club, Pawtucket, and Holy Trinity Catholic Club Central Falls. The St. Edward's Catholic Club and St. Raymond's Catholic Club were admitted to membership at this meeting. *These 12 clubs represent nearly 4000 Catholics who have banded themselves together for the purpose of keeping alive Catholic activities in the many parishes of the diocese by means of indoor tournaments, sports leagues, debates and other features, thereby bringing about a spirit of cooperation amongst the Catholic men and boys in the furtherance of Catholic ideals and duties to these ideals.*

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**.*

September 2, 1921

The **Assumption Catholic Club** will hold its annual **Lawn Party** on the church grounds, corner of Linwood Avenue and Cranston Street, on Labor Day and the two nights following September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. The committee in general consists of the officers and members of the club with the assistance of the officers and members of the **Ladies' Club**. The club has under construction a building that adjoins the present clubhouse. For the present, this building will house **four bowling alleys** and an added number of **pool tables** and when there are funds available in the near future this building will add a **gymnasium**. This being completed, Assumption parish will have one of the best parish clubs in this section of the country. Since its beginning in 1917, the club has had a wonderful history, due in great measure to the assistance from the pastor of the Assumption Church **Father John F. Haney** and his assistants **Father John F. Reardon** and **Father James B. O'Brien**, who is the moderator of the club. Father O'Brien has been instrumental in the development of the club's improvements. In all of its undertakings, the club has received the hearty cooperation of the parishioners who understand the need for such a club, the purpose of which is to *promote the spiritual, moral, intellectual and social improvements of its members, especially catering to the young men of the parish*. Proceeds from the Lawn Party will be used to defray the expense of the installation of the bowling alleys.

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 F. 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."

October 27, 1922

It was announced that long-time parishioner **Miss Mary Ann Sherry** (in all likelihood the very same person referred to in the entry of June 10, 1877) has bequeathed the sum of \$5000 to the **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** of Assumption parish to establish a fund for the poor of the parish. Miss Sherry passed away ten days earlier at the age of 63. For decades, the Sherry family operated a grocery store at 636 Potters Avenue (at the corner of Dexter Street). Meanwhile, she has chosen to leave her residence at **626 Potters Avenue** to the Sisters of Mercy.

Nov. 27-28, 1922

The Combined Choirs of Assumption Parish present the musical comedy "**In the Garden of the Shah**" in the parish hall. All proceeds will benefit the school fund.

April 3-4, 1923

"**The Bells of Shandon**", a three-act modern Irish play by Charles Bradley is presented to a capacity audience at the **Assumption Parish Hall**. The drama was presented for the benefit of the **Holy Name Society** and marked the 10<sup>th</sup> annual entertainment of that organization.

July 26, 1923

At the invitation of **Rt. Reverend Bishop William A. Hickey**, the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** announce that they have chosen Providence as the site of their first settlement in the United States. *The Bishop, in confirming the announcement, stated that the invitation was extended to the Sisters of the Cross and Passion some months ago. Their work in teaching the poor of London, their zealous care for young women, as well as their success in conducting homes for working girls, had given to them a wonderful reputation and induced him to invite them to come to the Diocese of Providence.*

August 9, 1923

**Bishop William A. Hickey** announces that the **Diocese of Providence** has purchased the estate of former Providence mayor **Charles Sidney Smith (1891-1892)** which includes a 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 working women at this location. As with other religious orders when they came to the diocese, **Bishop Hickey** helped organize a group of Catholic women to prepare the sisters' new home prior to their arrival. In the case of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**, it was the newly formed **St. Camillus Guild** of Catholic nurses that undertook to raise money to furnish the new hostel.

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. The news of the death of the beloved pastor was relayed throughout the city by the tolling of the bells. Father Haney had been in failing health for the previous two years. His assistant pastors, **Rev. John F. Reardon** and **Rev. James B. O'Brien** and his sister Miss Ann Haney were present at the bedside. 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. Father Sullivan comes to Providence with a reputation as a splendid preacher, an erudite scholar and an able administrator. One of his first actions as pastor was the acquisition of the **Sherry Estate** at the corner of **Potters Avenue** and **Dexter Street**. This would be the site of the **Assumption School** that he founded.

October 15, 1923

**Reverend John C. Tennian**, third pastor of Assumption parish, passes away at the age of 70. Father Tennian served as pastor of Assumption from March 1888 through January 1899. For the past 24 years, he has served as pastor of **Saint Mary's Church** in Pawtucket.

February 11-12, 1924

The sixth annual **Minstrel and Social** given under the auspices of the **Assumption Catholic Club** is held. Most agree that his year's edition is bigger and better than ever. A new and novel stage setting and lighting effect was constructed for the stage. The chorus consists of more than one hundred mixed voices, the principals being some of the best talent in the city. The end men were **Vincent Kelly, Edward Manning, J. Riley, Hugh Donlin, John Miley** and **Edward Malone**. President of the Assumption Catholic Club is **Philip E. Cunningham**.

- February 20, 1924 As part of the continuing effort to raise funds to properly furnish the new **Saint Gabriel's Hostel**, the **Saint Camillus Guild** holds a whist and entertainment in the sisters' new residence.
- 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.** 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.
- May 11, 1924 At the request of the Pastor **Father Patrick J. Sullivan** these four Sisters took charge of the weekday after school religious instructions in **Assumption Parish**. Just two weeks later on May 27th **Bishop Hickey** administered **Confirmation** to about three hundred children of the parish. *"He was delighted with the manner in which things were carried out, and especially the behavior of the children. The sisters had undoubtedly wrought a wonderful change in the discipline, and when the day was over, the congratulations that poured in from the Bishop and the clergy were overwhelming."*
- June 14, 1924 **Saint Gabriel's Hostel** receives their first boarders. On the very same day, two additional Cross and Passion sisters arrive in Boston to increase the size of the Providence community and to enable them to meet their new commitment at **Assumption parish**.
- November 13, 1924 The cornerstone for the new **Assumption School** is laid. Construction will begin in earnest in the spring. To make way for the new school the **Sherry** family residence has been razed
- March 5, 1925 Construction begins on the new Assumption School and Convent. The chief architect of the school building and convent is **Mr. John F. O'Malley** of the **O'Malley Fitzsimmons Company** of Pawtucket.
- July 10, 1925 Big changes afoot at the Assumption rectory as two long-time assistant pastors are transferred on the same day. After spending 18 years as an assistant at Assumption **Reverend James F. Reardon** is appointed the new pastor of **Saint Brigid's Church** in Johnston. At the same time, **Reverend James B. O'Brien** is transferred to Saint Patrick's Church in Valley Falls where he will be an assistant pastor. Meanwhile, **Reverend Francis P. Brady**, an assistant pastor at **Saint Edward's** in Providence and **Reverend Edward V. Hughes**, formerly the chaplain at the **Saint Vincent de Paul Infant Asylum**, 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 9<sup>th</sup>. As always, a good time was had by all. The committee in charge of this event are as follows: **Hugh B. Donley**, chairman, **Francis McKenna**, secretary and **Rev. P.J. Sullivan**, treasurer.

November 2, 1925

Sixteen months after the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** welcome their first boarders to **Saint Gabriel's**, Mother Gonzaga meets with Bishop Hickey to discuss the future of the hostel. *Things were not going particularly well.* In England, the hostels run by the Sisters served girls who left their homes to find work in the industrial cities. The hostels offered them decent and safe places to live at a cost on the level with the small wages that they earned. As the rent paid by the girls did not cover the cost of running the hostels, the difference between what the girls could pay and what the actual cost of running the hostels was made up by the monies other Sisters of the Cross and Passion earned by teaching in Catholic schools where the English government paid their salaries. *Part of the sisters' apostolate in running the hostel was to provide guidance to the residents.* The Sisters quickly discovered that things were quite different here in America. The Sisters teaching in Providence were not paid by the state as they were in England, but by Assumption parish. Their income was simply not sufficient to offset the cost of running Saint Gabriel's.

As a result, in order to cover the cost of running the hostel, the Sisters had to take in business and professional women who were able to pay the full cost of their stay. These women had little need to look to the Sisters for guidance, Rather, they tended to regard the Sisters as "little more than housekeepers or maids and treated them as such." At the meeting Bishop Hickey makes it clear that he is unwilling to subsidize the home with scarce diocesan funds. In reporting the contents of her meeting with Bishop Hickey to **Mother Gerard**, Mother Gonzaga wrote "*I wouldn't be one bit sorry if the Bishop's advisors said close it up as it will be a drag for many years.*" After the Assumption School opened in February 1926 all of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion took up residence in the convent there and Mother Gonzaga became the superior of the house. Saint Gabriel's home was quietly closed.

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.
- February 18, 1926 With the opening of the Assumption School the decision is made to close **Saint Gabriel's Hostel**. Eventually, all the Sisters of the Cross and Passion then in the diocese would take up residence at the Assumption Convent.
- 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.
- March 17, 1927 The **Assumption Catholic Club** presents an **Irish Night** entertainment in the Parish Hall on Potters Avenue. Under the direction of **Reverend Francis Brady**, moderator of the club, a varied program of musical and dramatic numbers will furnish the St. Patrick's night entertainment in the Assumption Hall. A two-act play called "**Patsey**" will open the program. With a cast of seven people, "**Patsey**" depicts the doings of some neat Irish lassies and the problems of everyday life. The comedy roles of this piece are well done and are bound to furnish more than ordinary amateur comedy. **Catherine Barry, Mary Lyman, Elizabeth Barry, Eleanor Maher, Anna Maher, Kathryn Hehir and Madelyn Brogan Lyman** make up the cast of "**Patsey**". **Tom Giblen**, well known to the minstrel and theater-goers will be seen in songs and stories assisted by Mrs. Giblin. **The Shaw Sisters** in a novelty ukulele and song

skit; **Francis Nolan**, monologue and songs, **Braney Girard**, whistler and singer, and **The Taylor Family** will also appear on the bill.

August 1927

**Sister Albeus Condon** arrives in Providence and takes up residence at the Assumption convent, Sister joined the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in 1916 and took her vows on January 6, 1919. She would teach at the Assumption School for the next 17 years. As both an educator and administrator, **Sister Albeus** would go on to become one of the most influential figures in the history of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in America.

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.

October 9, 1928

The **Church of the Assumption** was the scene of an impressive ceremony when **Right Reverend Bishop William L. Hickey** administered the **Sacrament of Confirmation** to a class of 212. The class was composed of 197 children and 15 adults. The Bishop was escorted from the rectory by a procession headed by a cross bearer and two acolytes, and composed of the Sanctuary Choir boys and visiting clergy. As the Bishop entered the church, the organist, **Miss Mary O'Connor**, played "Ecce Sacerdos" which was sung by the choir boys. The sermon was delivered by assistant pastor **Father Edward V. Hughes**, who told the children about the beauty and grace of the sacrament they were to receive, and urged them to "*always be faithful to the gifts the Holy Ghost was about to bestow upon them.*"

March 18, 1929

In observance of Saint Patrick's Day, the **Assumption Tabernacle Society** hosts a "*Green Tea*" in the parish hall. Thomas F. Cooney was the speaker and a musical program followed. **Helen T. Callahan** was chairman of the event.

June 1929

The first Commencement exercises for **Assumption School** are held in the Assumption Parish Hall. Scholarships were given for **St. Xavier's** and **Lasalle Academy**, and gold medals were awarded for efficiency. On the advice of **Msgr. Thomas Cassidy**, Superintendent of Schools, who was pleased with the work achieved, a ninth grade would be added in September 1930.

August 23, 1929

Plans for the annual **Assumption Parish Lawn Festival** to be held on the school grounds September 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 7<sup>th</sup> are rapidly being formed. Every effort is being made to make this year's event bigger and better than ever. *The grand prize of the event is the latest model of a 1929 Chrysler sedan valued at around \$1100. A walnut hope chest, filled and overflowing, a 100 pc. dinner set, a suit of clothes, a ton of coal, smoking sets and other valuable items have been secured as attractions for the various booths.* Those in charge include **Charles Morse**, chairman, **Rev. F.P. Brady**, treasurer, **Rev. E.V. Hughes**, automobile, **Mrs. Blake** (Tabernacle Society booth), **Mr. McBurnie** (Holy Name Society booth), **Miss Gottins** (Young Ladies Sodality booth) **Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Hoey** (Assumption Catholic Club booth). Among the workers are Mary and Margaret Quinn, Helen McDonald, Mary McKenna, Mr. Dempsey and Mr. Giblin.

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**, pastor of St. James Church of Arctic Center for the past 11 years is appointed the seventh pastor of Assumption Parish by **Bishop Hickey**. Prior to his appointment as pastor in February 1918 Father Keefe had been an assistant pastor at Saint James for 12 years. He was well known by the people of the Pawtuxet Valley as a zealous and faithful priest. Assistant pastors at this time were **Father Edward V. Hughes** and **Father Francis P. Brady**.
- May 25, 1930 The first Assumption School **May Procession** took place today. Owing to the inclemency of the weather the children could not march on the street. They marched around the church instead. The clergy and the parishioners were loud in their praise of the crowning of the statue. In subsequent years the students would march up Potters Avenue led by the **LaSalle Academy Band**. This tradition continued for more than two decades.
- September 9, 1931 As another school year commences **Assumption School** continues its remarkable growth. *Enrollment now stands at 600 pupils.* One of the reasons for the increased numbers was the admission of children from **Saint Mary's** on Broadway and **Saint Matthew's** in Cranston. These parishes had not yet opened their own schools.
- September 27, 1931 The eighth triennial parade of the **Union of Holy Name Societies** went down in diocesan history as *the largest and most successful demonstration of Faith ever held in Providence.* More than 30,000 men from every parish in the diocese joined in this impressive **Holy Name** demonstration. The seemingly endless line of men and youths, the crowded streets through which they marched, the address of Right Reverend **Bishop Hickey**, the impressive massing of colors at the foot of the altar at the **Dexter Training Grounds**, and the hushed multitude as the Eucharist was raised in Benediction was truly an unforgettable experience. Many of these proceedings were broadcast "live" on radio station **WJAR**.
- March 8, 1932 **Sister Louis Myers**, one of the original faculty members at **Assumption School**, passes away at the age of 71. She had been stricken with *lobar pneumonia* just four days earlier.
- July 23, 1932 The former Potter estate in Bristol known as "**Rockridge**", recently purchased by the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** for their first novitiate in this country, will be known henceforth as **Mount Saint Joseph** it was announced today by **Mother Mary Gonzaga**, Superior. The spacious 24 room house was blessed today by **Bishop Hickey** in the presence of a representative number of the 16 nuns from the **Convent of the Assumption** in Providence. These Sisters are still the only band of their Order in America at present but with the opening of the novitiate they hope to significantly increase their numbers and establish other communities in this country.
- 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 priests 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.
- November 25, 1932 **Mother Mary Gonzaga, C.P.**, Superior of the **Mount Saint Joseph Novitiate** in Bristol, celebrates the golden anniversary of her entrance into the sisterhood. *Nine years earlier she had done the pioneer work of establishing her order in America.* A Mass was celebrated in the novitiate chapel by the **Most Rev. William A. Hickey, Bishop of Providence.**
- September 22, 1933 **Reverend Joseph Allan Hughes** is appointed an assistant pastor of the Church of the Assumption by **Bishop William A. Hickey.** This will be Father Hughes' first assignment. He was ordained in Louvain, Belgium on Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> and celebrated his first Solemn Mass just one week later at his home parish of **Saint Anthony's** in Providence. Father Hughes has the distinction of being the second longest-serving priest in the history of Assumption parish.
- June 17, 1934 Sixteen boys and a like number of girls receive their diplomas as graduates of **Assumption Junior High School** at exercises following the 11:00 A.M. Sunday Mass.
- November 2, 1934 The Diocese of Providence publishes its annual "**School Census Report**". Assumption School is growing by leaps and bounds. The eight year old school now boasts an enrollment of 660 students being taught by 15 teachers.
- January 7, 1935 Election of officers for the **Assumption Catholic Club** took place at the club's headquarters on Potters Avenue. They are: **William Hamlyn**, President, **William Manning**, Vice President, **Reverend Francis Brady**, Treasurer, **John Kelly**, recording secretary, **Vincent Gormley**, financial secretary, **Ambrose Tishe**, **Clement Gormley**, **Peter Hicks** and **Edward Ryan**, directors. The club, with a membership at present of about 175, has extended an invitation to every man in Assumption parish to join.
- January 18, 1935 The **Assumption Catholic Club** will hold a **Father and Son Night** on this coming Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 P.M. in the parish hall. *The program put together by the committee in charge of the affair consists of seven boxing bouts, two wrestling bouts, tap dancing, monologues, singing, and other offerings by well-known entertainers.* The affair will be for the benefit of both the parish and the club.
- February 18-19, 1935 The **Assumption Catholic Club** presents the **17<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Fleming, 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**. **Sister Mary Patricia Davis** was professed on May 26, 1938. She would one day become the principal of **Assumption School**.

October 7, 1935

The 1935-1936 school year was scheduled to commence on Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. However, *an outbreak of infantile paralysis delayed the start of school a full four weeks*. The outbreak began during the summer and by September 11, 1935 had claimed fourteen lives in the state of Rhode Island with 133 cases reported in Providence alone. In early October the number of cases began to drop and the Providence School Committee voted on Friday October 4<sup>th</sup> to allow schools to reopen the following Monday. *The faculty of Assumption School for the 1935-1936 school year was as follows:* **Sister Arcadius** (Principal), the recently arrived **Sister Vincent Mary Ryan** (Grade 9), **Sister Albeus** and **Sister Mary Concepta** (Grade 8), **Sister John Mary** (Grade 7), **Sister Bernice** and **Sister de Chantal** (Grade 6), **Sister Paschal** and **Sister Dominic**

**Mary** (Grade 5), **Sister Clotilde** and **Sister Bertrand** (Grade 4), **Sister Collette** and **Sister Mary Oliver** (Grade 3), **Miss Madeline Doherty** (Grade 2), and **Sister Marie Louise** and **Sister Francesca** (Grade 1).

- Christmas 1935 **Mozart's "Twelfth Mass"** will be sung by a solo quartet, under the direction of **George Potier**, with **Miss Mary A.T. O'Connor**, organist at the Midnight Mass. A carol and anthem program with full choir will begin at 11:20 P.M., including numbers by Dudley Glass, Praetorius, Berthold Tours and Franz Gruber. The Mass processional will be "**Calm on the Listening Ear of Night**" and the Offertory hymn will be "**Adeste Fidelis**". The Quartet is comprised of Mrs. Eva Carroll, soprano; Catherine Barry, alto; Alfred Pimble, basso; and Parker Burke, tenor. Meanwhile, a vested choir of 50 voices will sing the Processional "**Jesu Bambino**" and Recessional "**When the Sun Has Sunk to Rest**" an Old English Noel, Christmas morning at the 9:45 A.M. Mass.
- February 5, 1936 The annual **Communion Breakfast** under the auspices of the Assumption **Holy Name Society** is held in the parish hall. *Reverend Father Lorenzo C. McCarthy, president of Providence College was the featured speaker.* Moderator of the Holy Name Society is **Reverend J. Allan Hughes**.
- 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 assigned here she became practically indispensable.
- January 16, 1938 The annual **Communion Breakfast** of the Assumption **Holy Name Society** is held in the parish hall following the 8:30 A.M. Mass. Over 125 men were present. Featured speakers were **Thomas Meehan** and **John J. Wrenn**.
- April 26-27, 1938 The Children of the Assumption School present "**Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**", an operetta in four scenes, in the Assumption Parish Hall. Stars of the show included **Josephine McBurnie** (Snow White), **Olive Eagleson** (Queen), **Ernest L'Heureux** (Prince), **Joseph Carey** (Carl, the Huntsman), **Alma Proulx** (Voice from the Mirror) and **Roberta Hoey** (Witch). An additional performance took place on Monday evening, May 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- August 25, 1938 At this time a total of five Masses are being offered each Sunday morning at Assumption Church. Masses are at 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 10:15 and 11:00 A.M.

- October 27, 1938 A comprehensive “**School Census Report**” covering all of the parochial schools in the Diocese of Providence is published in *The Providence Visitor*. There are now 86 Catholic schools in the diocese including 15 high schools. **At this time Assumption School boasted a total of 724 students being taught by 18 teachers.**
- September 19, 1940 **Miss Josephine Lynn McBurnie**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph McBurnie of 57 Plymouth Street has entered the novitiate of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in Bristol it was announced today. She is a recent graduate of **Assumption Junior High School**. Josephine would take her final vows in May 1943 and take the name Teresa. **Sister Teresa** taught at Assumption School for many years. She opted to leave the Order in the late 1960’s.
- April 6, 1941 Americans feel that “*the great rights of free men*” are in jeopardy and that these principles are worth fighting for if necessary to preserve them, First Assistant Attorney General **John E. Mullen** told more than 200 members of the Assumption parish **Holy Name Society** at their seventh annual communion breakfast held this morning in the parish hall. Speakers at the breakfast, which followed the 8:30 A.M. Mass in Assumption Church, included **Rev. Nicholas Serror, O.P.**, of the Providence College biology department, **Rev. J. Allan Hughes**, moderator of the parish society, and **Joseph Manning**, financial secretary who served as toastmaster. **Father Serror** criticized the “*perfidy of rulers who have forgotten morality and are trying to forge chains of slavery*”. Father Hughes, under whom the society first sponsored Communion breakfasts, criticized birth control as “*intrinsicly evil*” and added that Catholics must use “*self-control and not contraceptives.*” Seated at the head table in addition to the speakers were **Philip Quinn**, president of the **St. Vincent de Paul Society** in the parish, **John Hogan**, president of the **Assumption Catholic Club**, Councilman **Ernest Munroe** of the Eight Ward, **Joseph Veasey**, recording secretary of the society and **Dr. Joseph Streker**, president.
- April 2, 1942 **Mr. Joseph B. Fay** is the new organist and choirmaster at Assumption Church. He would hold the position longer than anyone in the history of the parish.
- September 22, 1942 **Reverend Edward V. Hughes** is transferred to **Saint Joseph’s Church** in Newport where he will be an assistant pastor. Father Hughes spent more than 17 years at the Assumption. On the same day **Father John V. Doyle** is appointed an assistant pastor of Assumption parish by **Bishop Francis P. Keough**. Coincidentally, Father Doyle would also remain at Assumption for more than 17 years.
- March 17, 1943 **The Tabernacle Society** of Assumption parish presents a **Saint Patrick’s Day** entertainment in the parish hall. The feature of the show will be a revue given by the pupils of the school. Solos will be rendered by **Claire Lambert** and **Charles Payne**. Eccentric dances will be performed by **Frances Hasney**. Among others on the program are Rosalie Casey, Eleanor Doyle, Philip and Barbara Daniels and the Colvin sisters.
- 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. During the 1943-1944 school year the building housed some 340 students in grades one to four taught by a staff of eight Sisters. *Total enrollment of Assumption School had now reached 800 students.* Eventually, this facility would be used for grades 7-9 and would come to be known as “*The Annex*”.

- May 10, 1944 Funeral services for **Mother Eugenia Smith C.P.**, Superior of the Cross and Passion convent on Dexter Street, were held this morning with a solemn high Mass of requiem being sung at the Church of the Assumption. **Reverend Francis P. Brady was celebrant, Reverend J. Allan Hughes was deacon and the Reverend John V. Doyle was subdeacon. Mother Eugenia** entered the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in Bolton, England in 1914. In the mid 1930's she was sent to join the community at **Mount St. Joseph Novitiate** in Bristol and was appointed Superior of Assumption Convent in 1941. She died at Saint Joseph's Hospital after an illness of several weeks.
- October 19, 1944 Long time Assumption assistant pastor **Reverend Francis P. Brady** is appointed pastor of **Saint Andrew's Parish**, Block Island.
- November 20, 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. Father Brady received a purse of money from his former parishioners, more than 900 of whom attended. 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 varied program, directed by **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.
- December 7, 1944 **Reverend Timothy J. Sullivan** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption Parish. Father Sullivan comes to Assumption from **Saint Edward's Parish** in Pawtucket.
- 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 unearthed would indicate that the organization was formed by a group of female parishioners around 1905. A portion of the stained-glass window depicting "The Mocking of Jesus" 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. *A throng of almost 2000 persons assembled outside the church when the casket was transferred to the church from the rectory.* A guard of honor comprising the **Holy Name Society**, the men of the parish and pupils of the **Assumption School** lined the route over which the casket was borne. 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.** A solemn pontifical Mass for the repose of the soul of

Father Keefe was celebrated by the **Most Rev. Francis P. Keough, Bishop of Providence** on January 29<sup>th</sup>

- March 14, 1946 **Reverend 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**.
- September 5, 1946 Members of the various Assumption Church sodalities and fraternal organizations are teaming with parishioners in a concerted effort to reduce the parish debt by participating in the first-ever "**Assumption Parish Bazaar**" which opened on Labor Day evening and will continue in the Parish Hall until Saturday night when a number of prizes will be awarded. **Philip Quinn**, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is the general chairman of the event assisted by **Miss Mayetta Callahan**, secretary and the Pastor **Reverend John F. O'Rourke** as treasurer. *Proceeds derived from the affair will go towards defraying the parish debt and hopefully towards the erection of a badly-needed new rectory.*
- October 17, 1946 Another comprehensive "**School Census Report**" covering all of the parochial schools in the Diocese of Providence is published this week's edition of *The Providence Visitor*. There are 90 Catholic schools in the diocese including 18 high schools. Total enrollment now stands at 32775 students, a modest increase over the previous year. In commenting on the numbers, Father Cassidy, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Providence observed: "*The increase in enrollment in Catholic Schools gives evidence of a desire for religious and moral training by parents who sense their responsibility in providing a well-rounded education for their children.*" **At this time Assumption School boasted a total of 802 students being taught by 17 teachers.**
- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. Meanwhile, work begins on an extensive redecorating of the interior of the church. 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.

May 8, 1949

The **Sacrament of Confirmation** is conferred by **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** on 186 children and 59 adults in the completely redecorated Church of the Assumption. **Reverend John F. O’Rourke**, Pastor, under whose direction the church was redecorated, delivered the address of welcome. In December 1949, Father O’Rourke 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 Melchizedek**, 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**. **Father 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. *It is the heyday of 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**.

June 14, 1950

After solemn benediction in the Church of the Assumption at 7:30, the pastor **Reverend John F. O’Rourke** presented diplomas to the 64 ninth grade graduates of **Assumption School**. Among this year’s graduates is the future pastor of Assumption Parish **Daniel M. Trainor**. “**Parent’s Night**”, at which the graduates and parents were entertained by the **Assumption Tabernacle Society**, was held the previous evening in the parish hall. *Prizes for the highest general class average were awarded to Mary Beecher and Lillian Mercier*. The boys and girls of the **Class of**

**1950** spent their Graduation Day enjoying an outing at **Mount Saint Joseph** in Bristol, where the Novitiate of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** is located.

- October 19, 1950 **Reverend Anthony I. Robinson** is appointed an assistant pastor at Assumption Parish. His previous assignment had been at the **Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul**. At the same time, **Reverend Timothy J. Sullivan**, who had been an assistant at the Assumption for the past six years, is transferred to **Saint Mary's Parish** on Broadway where he will also be an assistant pastor. On the very same day a future pastor of Assumption Parish, **Reverend Joseph A. Besse**, receives his first permanent assignment. **Father Besse** will join the faculty of **Our Lady of Providence Seminary** in Warwick Neck.
- November 21, 1950 The annual show, "**Musical Review**", sponsored by the **Immaculate Conception Sodality** of Assumption parish, will take place next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 8:15 in the parish hall at 795 Potters Avenue. The **Rev. J. Allan Hughes** is directing the show. The Masters of Ceremony will be **Charles Payne** and **Ray Grimes**. Several of the old time Assumption minstrel favorites will be on hand to entertain. Among those will be **Bernie Murphy, Roy Kenehan** and **Doug Harrop**. The female tradition will be upheld by two singers new to the show. They are **Claire Lambert Cotter** and **Ann Moran**. The show is a combination of singing and dancing with good sets throughout. Assisting Father Hughes in the direction of the show is **Mrs. Charles Payne**. The accompanist is **Bob Suitor**.
- April 14, 1951 Pastor **Father John F. O'Rourke** passes away at Saint Joseph's Hospital after a brief illness. Father O'Rourke, who would have been 73 years old on May 1, is credited with rebuilding two churches in the Diocese of Providence, and the church debt of two parishes, including Assumption, were paid off during his pastorates. **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** offered a solemn pontifical requiem Mass for Father O' Rourke on April 28<sup>th</sup> in Assumption Church. Among the honorary bearers were Rhode Island Governor **Dennis J. Roberts** and Providence Mayor **Walter Reynolds**. It would be nearly five months before a new pastor was appointed. In the interim, assistant pastor **Reverend J. Allan Hughes** would serve as Administrator.
- 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 Emmittsburg, 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 1, 1951 The annual "**School Census Report**" covering all of the parochial schools in the Diocese of Providence is published in *The Providence Visitor*. There are now 103 Catholic schools in the diocese including 18 high schools. Total enrollment has increased to approximately 36,700 students which is an increase of nearly 1000 over the previous year. **At this time, Assumption School boasted a total of 942 students being taught by 20 teachers.** According to **Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas V. Cassidy**, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Providence: "*Growth in the number of Catholic schools in Rhode Island and a general excellence in the quality of teaching have been made possible by the generosity of Catholics willing to assume the financial burden of these schools and by the devoted care of religious educators under the outstanding guidance of Bishop McVinney of Providence.*"

- May 18, 1952 About 175 children, including those attending public schools, received their **First Holy Communion**. In the afternoon the annual **May Procession** was held, the children marching from the Assumption Annex to the Church.
- June 12, 1952 Graduation exercises were held in the Assumption Church after benediction in evening. The pastor, **Father John Ryding**, gave a short talk and distributed the diplomas to 55 boys and girls.
- April 17, 1953 Two young professed sisters, **Sister M. Assumpta** and **Sister Michael Vincent**, come to live at the Assumption convent.
- September 28, 1953 School re-opens after an extended summer vacation. *The opening of school had been delayed for two weeks because of the prevalence of polio in the City of Providence.*
- November 25, 1953 **Mother Arcadius** leaves Assumption School after twenty-eight years of devoted service 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 for eight years as Pastor of **St. Mary's Parish** in Warren. Previously, he had been Pastor of **Saint Joseph's Parish** in North Scituate. 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**.
- September 1954 The Assumption **Home and School Association** is established. The purpose of this organization as stated in the by-laws is as follows: *"to work toward the advancement of Catholic education and the welfare of all school children in the parish. To offer the services and talents of the parishioners to the Pastor and the Principal, to aid and assist the educational process."* For the next 15 years this would become one of the most active organizations in the parish.
- March 15-17, 1955 This year's St. Patrick's entertainment entitled "**A Lilt of Irish Laughter**" is held on three consecutive nights in the Parish Hall which was filled to capacity on each occasion. The parish treasury was enhanced by a bit more than \$5000.00 from the production. **Father Archambeault** expressed his sincere gratitude to everyone involved.
- March 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 later in the year construction would begin 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.
- October 21, 1956 The **Mother’s Club** of Assumption Church held its annual “**Silver Tea**” this afternoon in the parish hall. Purpose of the affair is to provide the mothers an opportunity to become more acquainted with the Sisters who teach their children. The affair is in charge of **Mrs. Joseph B. Fay** assisted by **Mrs. Eugene McKenna**. Others on the committee are Mrs. Russell Graves, Mrs. John Linstrom, Mrs. Thomas Haire, Mrs. John Byron and Mrs. Daniel McCullough.
- February 16, 1958 The 87<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the **Church of the Assumption** was observed with a parish reunion at **Johnson’s Hummocks** restaurant on Allens Avenue in Providence. **Thomas C. Haxton** was general chairman of the event while **William J. McEnery** was co-chair. Other members of the reunion committee were **Paul E. Kelley, Sylvester Hesketh, Clement F. Gormley, Mrs. Rose A. Fay, Joseph McCarten, Joseph White, and Mrs. Martin Quinn**.
- 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 situation was further exacerbated when the pastor was reluctant to allow parishioners into the building. 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 (then known as Sister Bertrand)** becomes the third principal of Assumption School. *The faculty for the 1959-1960 school year is as follows:* **Sister Collette** (Grade 1), **Sister Teresita** (Grade 2), **Sister Maria 'A Cruce** and **Sister Mary Magdalene** (Grade 3), **Sister Assumpta** and **Sister Mary Francis** (Grade 4), **Sister Gerald** and **Sister Laeticia** (Grade 5) **Sister Mary Thomas** and **Sister Michael Vincent** (Grade 6), **Sister Mary Leo** (Grade 7), **Sister Melanie** and **Sister Mary Andrew** (Grade 8) and **Sister Kenneth** (Grade 9).
- September 11, 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. At the same time **Reverend John M. Thompson** is appointed an assistant pastor of Assumption Parish. Father Thompson comes to Assumption from **Saint Anthony's Parish** in Woonsocket.
- October 29, 1959 It was the best of times for the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in North America. The novitiate house in Bristol known as **Mount Saint Joseph** was bursting at the seams prompting the new Provincial **Mother Albeus** to seek a larger property to house the novitiate. Furthermore, the wooden buildings in Bristol were in need of extensive repairs. In the summer of 1959, Mother Albeus became acquainted with a property in South Kingstown known as **"Shepherd's Run"**. This was a 212-acre estate that extended from Tower Hill Road to Pettaquamscutt Cove and commanded a view of the ocean and approaches to Narragansett Bay. Included was a nineteen-room mansion of Norman French design built of stone. Negotiations for the property commenced on September 16, 1959 and were wrapped up very quickly. The closing took place on October 29, 1959. Purchase price was \$130,000. About six months later, **Mount Saint Joseph** would be sold to the **Sisters of Saint Dorothy**.
- March 7, 1960 **Miss Mayetta Callahan**, President of the **Assumption Tabernacle Society** for more than 15 years, passes away unexpectedly at the age of 64. She would be succeeded as President by **Mary Quinn**.
- April 8, 1960 At this time there are six Masses being offered each Sunday morning. Masses in the upper church are at 7:00, 8:30, 9:45 and 11:00 A.M. Masses in the basement chapel are at 8:30 (Children's

Mass) and 10:00 A.M. Assumption was still very much a thriving parish. Then about one month later....

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 23, 1960

Work begins on the new novitiate, college and chapel for the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** in Wakefield. The buildings were designed by **Charles A. McGuire Associates**. Principal contractor for the project was **E. Turgeon Company** of Providence.

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. In September 1935, he was one of five priests that helped to organize the **Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)** in the Diocese of Providence. Meanwhile, he was also the Moderator of the **Holy Name Society** at Assumption for many years. He was a much beloved priest. At this point in time Father had the distinction of being 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.

July 1, 1960

Just days after the transfer of long-time assistant pastor **Reverend J. Allan Hughes** was announced, Assumption parishioner **John F. Smollins, Jr.** composes a beautiful “Letter to the Editor” that appears in today’s edition of *The Providence Visitor*. It reads as follows:  
*“It is with mixed emotions that the parishioners of the Assumption Church received the news of the appointment of Rev. J. Allan Hughes as pastor of St. Mary’s Star of the Sea parish in Point Judith. We knew that Father Hughes was to be awarded for his years of service to the church by his elevation to such a position, and we knew that we were losing one of the outstanding priests of the diocese. His endeavors on behalf of the Assumption youth will never be forgotten. He organized the first C.Y.O. council in the parish, championed an outstanding athletic program and served as an inspiration for many of its future leaders. The Holy Name Society and Knights of the Altar have benefited immensely from Father Hughes sagacity and guidance. It is extremely difficult to put into words the respect and admiration which everyone has for him. I can only extend my hearty best wishes and hope that God will shower a multitude of blessings on Father Allan in his new parish. St. Mary’s Star of the Sea is indeed a very fortunate parish.”*

- September 9, 1960 **Reverend William Girolamo** is appointed an assistant pastor of Assumption parish.
- 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 then for seven years at St. Teresa of Avila Parish in the Manton section of Providence.
- September 10, 1961 The new novitiate of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** located on Tower Hill Road in Wakefield is dedicated by **Bishop McVinney**. The novitiate is situated on a beautiful hillside site overlooking Narragansett Bay. Comprising the new facilities are a chapel, library, 5 classrooms, recreation room, infirmary, 2 refectories, 69 cells and 3 cloisters. It was a very optimistic time. *Sadly, the turmoil that would decimate the Catholic Church during the decade of the 1960's was just around the corner. No one could have predicted that by the end of the decade vocations would almost completely dry up and many of the current Sisters would for various reasons choose to leave religious life.*
- 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.
- March 29, 1963 Assistant pastor **Father John M. Thompson** is transferred to **Saint Joseph Parish**, Pawtucket.
- June 1964 Due to declining enrollment the **Assumption School Annex** is closed. The parish would continue to own the largely vacant 28000 square foot structure for the next 14 years.

- 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.*
- October 25, 1965 The annual **Harvest Supper** sponsored by the **Tabernacle Society** is held in the parish hall. **Mrs. Mary Quinn** and **Mrs. Gertrude Flynn** were co-chairmen of this event.
- July 1966 The new permanent marble **Altar of Sacrifice** is finally installed in the main church. A temporary wooden altar had been in use for the previous 20 months. 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 now three priests assigned to the Assumption Parish. Assisting Pastor **Father George Archambeault** were **Rev. Charles F. Dolan** 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.
- January 13, 1967 **Reverend Francis J. Giudice** is appointed an assistant pastor of Assumption Parish. Father Giudice was ordained to the priesthood on July 1, 1956 in Louvain, Belgium by **Bishop Russell J. McVinney**. From 1959-1961 he pursued post-graduate studies in hospital administration at **Saint Louis University**. In 1961 he became chaplain at **Saint Joseph Hospital** and **Assistant Secretary for Catholic Hospitals** in the **Diocese of Providence**. Then from 1962 until he was transferred to the Assumption Father was an assistant pastor at **Holy Angels Parish** in Barrington

where he worked with the pastor and the parish community to fundraise and construct a new church building.

- February 20, 1967 Parishioners are stunned to learn of the sudden death of Assistant Pastor **Reverend 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. A Solemn Pontifical Funeral Mass was celebrated by **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Present were the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** as well delegations from the **Family Guild**, the **Tabernacle Society** and the **Home and School Association**. A Mass for the children of the parish was celebrated earlier that morning at 8:00 A.M. Father Girolamo was just 50 years old at the time of his death.
- April 1967 **Father Joseph P. Henry** is appointed assistant pastor of Assumption Parish. Father Henry comes to the Assumption from **Sacred Heart Parish** in East Providence. His tenure would prove to be short-lived as in September 1968 he was transferred to **Saint Timothy Parish** in Warwick where he would serve for the next nine years.
- October 20, 1967 An article appears in this week's edition of "*The Providence Visitor*" entitled "**Enrollment in Catholic Schools Dropping Steadily**". According to **Msgr. Arthur T. Geoghegan**, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Providence, this is a "*serious matter*". Over the past year enrollment in Catholic schools in Rhode Island decreased by a whopping **1746** students. "*To a minor degree*", Msgr. Geoghegan said, "*the decrease reflects the national birthrate which has been declining since 1957. It also, however, reflects the exodus of families with school age children from city parishes with established schools to the suburbs, where there are few parochial schools.*" He continued "*For the most part, the drop is to be explained in dollars and cents. The older urban parishes no longer have the income to support a large school and the new suburban parishes have not the income to build new schools and employ the needed number of lay teachers.*" Msgr. Geoghegan pointed out that Saint Teresa's School and the **Assumption School**, both in Providence, formerly were 16 room schools. Today they are eight room schools. He concluded by saying "*A large number of schools report classroom enrollments at various levels far too small to be justified financially.*" The Assumption School would remain open for several more years but it seems the handwriting was on the wall.....
- 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 **50<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 January 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**.

Sept. 13, 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 50 years now. After leaving Assumption in May 1975 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. He celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Ordination on June 22, 2019. When someone asks Father O'Reilly 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.*"

- September 3, 1969 It is the start of another school year and 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. *At this time there were just 6 teaching sisters, two lay teachers and a principal.* **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.
- December 14, 1969 A plan for parishioners of **Saint Paul's Church** in Edgewood to provide monthly financial support to the deeply indebted Assumption parish is announced at Masses at St. Paul's. The plan is the first in the **Diocese of Providence** and possibly the first in the country where an affluent suburban parish helps finance the operation of poorer churches in the inner city. Starting in January, parishioners at St. Paul's will receive an extra envelope in their monthly packet of budget envelopes. On the envelope will be written "*My contribution to the Assumption parish*". **Monsignor John Tully**, pastor of St. Paul's, who conceived and initiated the plan, estimated that Assumption parish could receive \$1500 to \$2000 a month under the program. **Father James F. Ford**, a curate at Assumption, said that such a sum monthly would be a "*significant aid*" to the finances of the parish. The combination of rapid changes in the demographics of the parish and the losses of large number of parishioners due to the construction of Route 10 and the Huntington Industrial Park has had a deleterious effect on the finances of the parish. *Of the 43 couples married in Assumption Church in 1968 only one remained in the parish.* A large percentage of churchgoers are older people. The institution of this plan would allow Assumption to keep its head above water for the next couple of years.
- 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.
- May 9, 1970 An **Assumption School Reunion**, the first such event since the school opened in February 1926, is held at **Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet** in Cranston. A reception took place at 6:30 P.M. followed by dinner and dancing. **Mr. Thomas F. Wallace** was general chairman. **Sister Marie Louise, C.P.**, school principal, served as advisory chairman. *Committee members for this event included Virginia Hanrahan, Evelyn Ide, James P. Hanley, William J. McEnery, State Senator Raymond E. Grimes and Thomas G. Healey.*
- May 17, 1970 **Pentecost Sunday** marked a joyous occasion for the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion**. Two of their members, **Sister Clotilde** and **Sister Eunice Ann (formerly Sister St. Pierre)** celebrated the golden jubilee of their profession at Mount Saint Joseph in Wakefield. Both sisters were well known in the diocese. For many years they taught at the **Assumption School** in Providence. A jubilee banquet, attended by a large group of 70 Passionist sisters and priest friends was served in the community dining room.

June 12, 1970

**Bishop Russell J. McVinney** announces the appointment of **Father Raymond L. Tetreault** as Director of the **Latin-American Apostolate** in the Diocese of Providence. Father Tetreault will be responsible for the **spiritual welfare** and **religious education** of recently arrived Spanish-speaking people. *His mission is to serve these people wherever they locate in the diocese and Father is to help them adjust to their new community's environment.* Immigration from Latin America began in 1964-65 and has been greatly increasing over the past few years. Indications are that this wave of immigrants will continue to increase over the next several years. At this time, communities of Latin American people have become established in **Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls**. In Providence, the Spanish-speaking people are mainly from **Puerto Rico, Cuba** and the **Dominican Republic**. In the Pawtucket-Central Falls area the community is made up of people from **Colombia, Puerto Rico** and from **Central American** countries.

**Father Tetreault** has been working with these people for the past year. At this juncture, Father conducted a Special Mass for these new residents of the Diocese on the first and third Sundays of the month at **Saint Michael's Church** in Providence and on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at **Saint Edward's Church** in Pawtucket. Father Tetreault is hoping to offer Sunday Mass in both communities every week in the not-to-distant future. He went on to say: *"We don't want to establish another national parish. Rather, we are hoping to establish a social center for these people. They need a place to meet and establish friendships, to learn of information regarding jobs, education, and other matters of social concern."* Thus, the groundwork is being laid by the Diocese of Providence to handle the influx of Hispanics in the 1980's, 1990's and beyond. It would be another 15 years before a Hispanic community would be established at **Assumption Parish**.

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 26-27, 1971 The Church of the Assumption concludes the celebration of its **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** with a dinner-dance at the **Rocky Point Palladium. Nearly 650 parishioners attended.** Among those in attendance were members of the Team Ministry including Fathers Daniel M. Trainor, James F. Ford, Francis J. Giudice and Bernard O'Reilly. Also attending was **Father Joseph A. Besse**, pastor of Saint Philip's Church, Greenville who came to Assumption Church in 1968 and served until last February when the team ministry was appointed. A 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass was celebrated the following morning at the Church. **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 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary committee* including Mr. & Mrs. Edward Kehoe, Hope Griffin, Kay Dillon, Luisa 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, Ann Canning, Edward P. Beard, Rose Fay, Bernard Casey, 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.
- Dec. 30, 1971 The decision by **St. Paul's Parish** in Cranston to end its annual subsidy of **Assumption parish** after just two years may endanger the future of the parish school whose enrollment has shrunk to just 254 students in eight grades. The end of the subsidy was announced in a letter from the **Rev. Msgr. John J. Tully**, pastor of St. Paul's earlier in the week. St. Paul's could no longer afford the subsidy because its own financial difficulties had made it necessary to either close some grades in St. Paul's School or take up an added monthly collection. Meanwhile, **Father Daniel M. Trainor**, administrator of Assumption said "we're going to do our best to keep it open." He

added that it might be possible to ask for additional help from parishioners, from another church or from the diocese.

- 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.
- January 12, 1973 **Reverend James F. Ford**, a member of the Team Ministry at Assumption Parish, was named today as coordinator of the diocesan **Special Awareness Team**. He will continue in residence at Assumption. The **Special Awareness Team**, consisting of three to eight persons, will work under the **Vicar for Community Affairs** and will work actively in the Church’s social action apostolate.
- January 25, 1973 The **Diocese of Providence** offers a subsidy of \$116,000 to a proposed Catholic school district in the city. *The subsidy would go to the parishes of St. Michael, St. Charles, Cathedral and Assumption if they agree to form a regional school district.* The subsidy is intended to spur the parishes to regionalize in an effort to maintain parochial education in the city. It is believed that without diocesan assistance the schools might be forced to close as early as next year.
- 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 1, 1973 The **Diocese of Providence** announced that it has taken steps that could lead to the establishment of a **Permanent Diaconate Program** in Rhode Island. **Rev. Francis J. Giudice, Vicar for Community Affairs**, and a spokesman for an ad hoc committee on the diaconate program, said the diocese has received approval for a permanent diaconate from the **National Council of Catholic Bishops**. According to Father Giudice the next step would be the creation of an administrative board that would include clergy, religious and lay people that would work to develop the program further in the diocese. He went on to say that if approved, the diaconate would be open to both married and single men.
- June 20, 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. Previously, Father Blais had served as an assistant pastor at **Saint Peter's Parish** in Warwick. Meanwhile, **Reverend Bernard O'Reilly** is reassigned to **Saint Edward's Parish** in Providence where he will be an assistant pastor.

- Sept. 16, 1976 **Father James F. Ford** is transferred to Saint Joseph's Parish in Pawtucket where he will be an assistant pastor. A short time later Jim Ford would leave the priesthood, marry, relocate to Virginia and become the father of two daughters. He spent the rest of his life advocating for the issues he cared about most. James F. Ford passed away on January 8, 2001 at the age of 63. A memorial service was held in the Church of the Assumption on January 15, 2001.
- 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!
- Dec. 15, 1977 **Sister Ellen Hickey, C.P. a/k/a Sister Arcadius** passes away at the age of 85. **Sister Arcadius** was the principal at **Assumption School** from its opening in February 1926 until June 1953. She was also the principal at **Saint Bernard's School** in Wickford from 1959 to 1967 when she retired from active ministry.
- 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.

March 1978

**M & J Supply Co.** acquires the former **Assumption School Annex** at 775 Potters Avenue for the sum of \$40,000. The building would serve as a building materials warehouse for more than 25 years. Proceeds from the sale would be used to further reduce the parish debt. In 2005 the building would be sold once again, completely renovated and renamed *“City Place Condominiums”*.

April 23, 1979

The **Tabernacle Society** of the Church of the Assumption holds its annual **Easter Card Party and Fashion Show** in the church hall. There is also a raffle featuring more than 100 prizes donated by area businesses, parishioners and friends of Assumption parish.

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.

March 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 four decades the Genesis Center has served more than 10000 students from 50 countries.* It is a remarkable success story.

November 22, 1981 A **Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service** for recently-arrived **Hmong** and **Cambodian** refugees is held at the Assumption Church. The greeting to the participants that appears in the program for this service reads as follows: *“Today, we here at the Assumption Church invite our new friends and neighbors to join with us to celebrate Thanksgiving. We welcome you to America. We ask God’s blessings upon you. We ask God to protect you in your new home. We invite you to join us in the meal, traditionally a sign of our thanksgiving to God.”* The service included an opening procession with a prayer led by **Father Dan Trainor**, a reading from scripture by **Sister Mary Frances, C.P.**, a Prayer of Thanksgiving led by **Sister Ann Patrice, C.P.** as well as presentations by Cambodian dancers and Hmong singers. For the English-speaking members of the assembled congregation commentary was offered by Assumption parishioner **Bill Piacentini**.

February 26, 1982 Assumption parish holds an **“Irish Night”** in the parish hall. Entertainment was provided by **Noel Henry and his Celtic Blues Band**. Members of the committee organizing this event include **Arthur and Carolyn Anderson, Nate Isles and Joann Beauchemin**.

July 1, 1982 After residing at Assumption rectory for more than 15 years **Father Francis J. Giudice** is appointed rector of **SS Peter and Paul Cathedral** in Providence where he would serve until retirement from active ministry in July 2004. He had a life-long affinity for the poor, and during his time at the Cathedral, Father championed the cause of poverty relief in **Haiti** after visiting the island in 1981. His advocacy led to the **Providence-Haiti Outreach** project and the construction of a school and athletic complex that continues to serve and feed hundreds of children.

October 1982 **Mr. Joseph B. Fay**, organist at the Assumption since 1942, 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 (1968-1971)**, **Father Bernard O’Reilly (1969-1975)** and **Father John V. Doyle (1942-1959)**. The dinner-dance netted a total of \$25,000 and is believed to be the largest social function in the history of the parish and netted a total of around \$25000. The proceeds were used to purchase new exterior doors for the Church. **Mr. Paul Tognetti** served as chairman of this event.

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.

September 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**. In July 1960, **Bishop Russell J. McVinney** appointed Father Hughes pastor of the brand-new **Saint Mary, Star of the Sea** Parish in **Narragansett** where he would remain until his retirement in 1978.

September 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. For the previous several months Father immersed himself in learning the Spanish language and looks forward to working with the fledgling Hispanic community at Assumption. In the summer of 1989 Fred Sneesby makes the decision to leave the priesthood. He had been a diocesan priest for ten years. He would ultimately marry and begin a new professional life. Fred and his family make their home in Rhode Island where he has worked in human services for many years. He also writes about faith and culture. Fred Sneesby is the author of two books including “A Believer’s Christmas” and “Avoiding Martyrdom: The Catholic Church in the United States”.

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."*

Aug 14-15, 1987

The fledgling Hispanic community at Assumption parish holds its very first **Assumption Parish Festival** beginning with a Mass in the church at 5:15 P.M. on Friday evening immediately followed by a procession through the streets of the neighborhood. The modest festival concluded the following day with a dinner in the Parish Hall. Entertainment included music and the children of the parish performing dances adorned in the attire of their native countries. The tradition begun on that weekend more than three decades ago continues until this day.

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!!!!*”

- June 17, 1989 **Sister Albeus Condon, C.P.** passes away at the age of 91. **Sister Albeus** taught at the Assumption School for 17 years between 1927 and 1944. She went on to found a new convent at **St. Francis of Assisi Church** in South Kingstown and when an elementary school was established, she taught there. **Mother Albeus** later became Provincial Superior of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion’s** Our Lady of Dolors Province from 1953 to 1957.
- May 28, 1990 **Sister Mary Mullally, C.P.**, formerly **Sister Mary Oliver, C.P.** passes away at Saint Luke’s Convent in Barrington at the age of 86. She joined the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** at the age of 17 in 1921 and took her vows in 1924. Sister moved to the United States in early 1926 and was one of the original faculty members at the **Assumption School** in Providence when it opened on February 11<sup>th</sup> of that year. Sister Mary Oliver would more than 25 years at Assumption School before moving on to other assignments which included **Saint Francis School** in Wakefield, **Saint Mary, Star-of-the-Sea School** in Indian Head, MD and **Saint Luke’s School** in Barrington.
- 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 Landmark Medical Center in Woonsocket. 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. Upon leaving Assumption, Sister Collette was named principal of **Saint Mary’s Star-of-the-Sea School** in Indian Head, Maryland where she would spend the next eight years. She returned to Rhode Island in the mid-1970’s and resided at **Saint Lukes’s Convent** in Barrington until shortly before her passing at the age of 84.
- 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!**
- June 17, 1991 **Mr. Joseph B. Fay**, organist at Assumption Church for 40 years, passes away in North Kingstown at the age of 82. He had retired from the position in 1982. *Joe has the distinction of being the longest-serving organist in the history of Assumption parish.* His wife **Rose A. Fay** was a prominent Assumption parishioner as well. As a member of the **Assumption Tabernacle Society**, it was Rose’s task to make the baked beans for the annual **Harvest Supper**. She did it for

decades. Rose was a born fighter and over the years was extremely involved in West End civic affairs. Sadly, just two months after her husband's death **Rose Fay** would pass away at the age of 74.

September 12, 1991 Today's edition of *The Providence Visitor* features an article about the challenges of dealing with four major Asian youth gangs who are terrorizing residents of the **West End**, particularly other Asians. These gangs have 20 or 30 members each. Members range in age from as young as 10 or 11 through the mid-20's. Many of those involved in these gangs are Cambodian. We learn that the **Indochinese Advocacy Project**, founded in 1981 by **Sister Angela Daniels** and **Father Daniel Trainor** and based at the Assumption rectory, is attempting to alleviate the situation. According to Father Trainor, the organization lines up jobs, training and General Equivalency Diploma opportunities for youth, seeking to find alternatives to life in a gang. The project has also set up a **Big Brother/Big Sister** program in which area college students from Asian backgrounds, including some from Providence College, spend time with children at high risk for school dropout. Meanwhile, the 18 members of the **Southeast Asian Business Association** meet weekly at the Assumption rectory and attempt to tackle such issues as crime, improving the images of their businesses as well as the benefits of group insurance coverage. Currently there are four paid staffers assisting in this work thanks to a recent \$15000 grant from the **Campaign for Human Development**. United Church of Christ Minister Reverend Peter Pond also spends the lion's share of his time working on these issues. Reverend Pond would eventually convert to Catholicism and become a parishioner of Assumption parish.

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.

November 20, 1991 Sister Mary Elizabeth Lyons, "**Sister Clotilde**", a former educator and Novitiate Superior, passes away at Mount Saint Rita Health Center in Cumberland. Sister Mary was born in Dublin, Ireland and came to this country from Bolton, England in 1929. She was a Sister of the Cross and Passion for more than 60 years. **Sister Clotilde** was a teacher at the **Assumption School** from 1929 to 1948. Other assignments included a stint as Superior of the **Sisters of the Cross and Passion Novitiate** in Bristol and for a number of years Sister was engaged in Retreat work at the former **Immaculate Heart of Mary Retreat House** in Peace Dale and at **Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center** in Farmington, CT. Sister spent the latter years of her life residing at **Saint Luke's Convent** in Barrington. She was 95 years old at the time of her passing.

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 Mocking of Jesus**" was manufactured in Bavaria in 1911. The heat generated by the fire caused large sections of this window to melt. **Father Dan Trainor** recalls that the fire was the work of an arsonist. Within days Father Trainor contacted Mr. James Donahue Jr. at **New England Stained Glass** in an effort to determine how to best deal with this unfortunate 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.”* Father Trainor completely agrees with that assessment. As he remembers it *“they put up a wall of water to prevent further damage to the church. Their hard work and expertise certainly paid off.”* Michael Dillon 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 magnificent buildings it is a very sobering thought indeed.

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 would be 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. 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.

September 8, 1992

**Father Daniel Trainor** is sworn in as a member of the state **Ethics Commission**. He was forced to resign from the panel the very next day, after being ordered to do so by Providence **Bishop Louis E. Gelineau**. Father Trainor had been recommended for the post by **House Speaker Joseph DeAngelis** and appointed by **Governor Bruce Sundlun** to fill a five-year term. “After reviewing the **Code of Canon Law** Bishop Gelineau determined it would not be appropriate for Father Trainor to be on the commission,” said William Halpin, director of the Office of Communications for the diocese. Father Trainor accepted the Bishop’s verdict gracefully saying *“When I became a priest, I made a vow to follow and respect the Bishop in all of his decisions and that is what I am going to do.”* The Bishop’s decision was based on a 1983 revision in the **Code of Canon Law** that forbids priests to take public offices that would entail “a participation in the exercise of civil power.” Father Trainor went on to explain *“That’s a provision that wasn’t there when I became a priest. I knew that as priests we were not supposed to run for political office, but I didn’t know that it covered something like this.”*

August 13, 1993

**Rev. William J. Brennan**, beloved assistant pastor, passes away unexpectedly at the age of 64. Prior to his arrival at the Assumption Father Brennan had been pastor of **Saint Joan of Arc Church** in Cumberland since 1984. Due to ill health, he resigned his pastorship in early 1990. A concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial was held at Assumption Church on August 17, 1993

- Sept. 11, 1993 **Sister Marie Louise Murphy** celebrates the 60<sup>th</sup> 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/School 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. This would prove to be the final parish function at the **Rocky Point Palladium**. On January 22, 1996 it was announced that Rocky Point Park was closing forever.
- 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. *More than 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 would grow by leaps and bounds. Other parishes saw the considerable value in the program and offered to help. Additional funding was received from the **Catholic Charity Fund**.

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.

October 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.

February 16, 1995

**Bishop Louis E. Gelineau** announces the assignment of **Father Hector Quintero Galvis** as a part-time assistant at Assumption parish. Father Hector will also work part-time at the diocesan **Hispanic Ministry**. Father Quintero Galvis was born and educated in Columbia.

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.

November 7, 1996

According to **Sister Mary Caffrey** “*Children don’t understand poverty. They still believe and they still wish for that special toy.*” But because poverty was still on the rise in the area Sister Mary, in charge of Assumption’s “Ministry to the Poor” program since September 1992, had to wonder where will all of the needed Christmas toys would come from this year. In an attempt to assist **Sister Mary** and her dedicated group of 15 volunteers at Assumption parish, **The**

*Providence Visitor* announces in a front-page article the establishment of **The St. Nicholas' Children** fund-raising campaign. The idea was the brainchild of **Father Stanley Nakowicz**, executive editor of the diocesan newspaper. Donations were solicited from *Providence Visitor* readers so that the crew at Assumption could provide toys for the less fortunate children of the West End neighborhood during the Christmas holiday season. The idea was an overwhelming success. A total of 369 donations were received and 585 people were helped. According to Sister Mary “*Each person received food, six toys, and a \$10.00 gift certificate. Thanks to all of the donors we helped make the children’s Christmas a much happier one.*” **The St. Nicholas' Children Fund** would continue for more than a decade but was discontinued following the 2007 holiday season.

October 23, 1997 For the past four years **Sister Angela Daniels** has directed the **Matthew XXV HIV/AIDS Ministry** out of her pastoral assistant’s office in the Assumption rectory. She is assisted by three other individuals. The annual budget for this program is about \$35000. *At this time there are 245 clients taking advantage of the program.* Today it was announced that officials from the Diocese of Providence’s **Vision of Hope** campaign had decided to increase Sister Angela’s request for \$10500 to help fund the fledgling program to \$15500. According to Sister Angela: “*Although there was no explanation for the increase given, I think we received the extra money because we are the only HIV/AIDS ministry working directly out of a parish in the diocese and I think the diocese knows how important this work is and how many we are assisting.*” The **Vision of Hope** grant will go specifically to assist low income people and families dealing with HIV/aids in times of emergency and in crisis situations.

March 1999 The **Matthew XXV HIV/AIDS Ministry** purchases 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.

June 20, 2000 The **Rev. Peter L. Pond**, an advocate for the Providence Cambodian community passes away at the age of 67. Mr. Pond was the founder and executive director of Cambodian Mission for Peace and worked in ministry at the **Indo-Chinese Advocacy Project** at Assumption Church. As a minister, Mr. Pond worked directly with gang members, and made strides toward controlling the Southeast Asian gang members in Providence. Mr. Pond ministered in Providence for the past 9 years. While working at Assumption he converted to Catholicism. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on June 24, 2000.

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.

February 20, 2003

A deadly fire at **The Station** nightclub in West Warwick would claim 100 lives. It was the fourth deadliest nightclub fire in U.S. history. The public demanded sweeping changes to the fire codes governing safety in bars and restaurants, retail establishments, schools, churches and facilities operated by fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Columbus and the VFW.

July 7, 2003

**Governor Donald Carcieri** signs into law the “**Comprehensive Fire Safety Act of 2003**”, the 37- page revamp of fire safety laws inspired by **The Station** nightclub fire. The far-reaching new law eliminates the “grandfather” exemption and among other things mandates that churches install expensive new fire alarm systems. Furthermore, the new code requires that these systems be inspected on a regular basis. In late 2003 **Father Dan Trainor** gets an estimate for installing such a system in Assumption Church. *The cost was found to be in excess of \$100,000.* For many churches, particularly those in the inner city, the cost would be prohibitive. It appeared to many that there was absolutely no way that the parish could afford to undertake such a costly project in the foreseeable future.

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.

- April 1, 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. “*I remember Father Trainor laughing,*” Santelises recalls. “*He said that our hearts were in the right place but he didn’t think it could be done.*” 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. Other members of the committee included **Marion Avarista**, a parishioner for more than 40 years, **Teodoro Santana** and **Paul Tognetti**.
- April 15, 2006 During his homily at the Easter Vigil Mass, **Father Dan Trainor** reveals that **Bishop Thomas Tobin** has accepted his request to retire. He had ministered at Assumption parish for more than 35 years. His actual retirement date would be July 1, 2006. Father then announced that assistant pastor **Father Gildardo Suarez** had been named the new pastor by Bishop Tobin.
- July 1, 2006 **Father Gildardo Suarez** becomes the 13<sup>th</sup> 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** at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Jardin, Antioquia, on February 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 135<sup>th</sup> 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.

May 5, 2007

More than 200 current and former parishioners and friends of Assumption parish gather at **Lombardi's 1025 Club** in Johnston for the annual **Assumption 20 Week Club** dinner-dance. For the past 40 years the 20 Week Club has served as both a major fundraiser and social event for the parish. For more than three decades the club was led capably by Mr. **Joe White**. In 1999, Joe would step down as chairperson of the event and turn the reins over to **Mr. Paul Tognetti**. Sadly, this would prove to be the last 20 Week Club dinner-dance. Changing tastes and rising costs made it increasingly difficult to turn a profit for the parish. Furthermore, a stricter fire code implemented in the wake of the 2003 Station nightclub fire would make it virtually impossible for the 1025 Club to remain in business. The cost to make the necessary changes was prohibitive and they would close their doors forever in 2009.

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.
- February 13, 2010 **Reverend Joseph A. Besse**, eleventh pastor of Assumption parish, passes away at the age of 88. Following his relatively brief tenure at Assumption from September 1968 to February 1971, Father spent seven years as pastor of **Saint Philip Church** in Greenville followed by five years as chaplain at **Saint Joseph's Hospital** in Providence. In June 1983, he was appointed pastor of **Saint Pius X Church** in Westerly where he remained until his retirement in January 1992.
- 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 **50<sup>th</sup> 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 **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dedication of the current Assumption Church** building with an *all-day celebration*. A **100<sup>th</sup> 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.

- June 21, 2014 Father Gildardo engages **Accu Electric LLC** of Cranston to draw up and submit a blueprint for a long overdue **fire alarm system** for Assumption church. While the plan was accepted the two parties could not reach an agreement on the cost of the actual installation further delaying the project.
- 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**.
- December 3, 2015 Assumption Parish reaches an agreement with **J & J Electrical Contractors, LLC** of Warwick for the installation of a state-of-the-art fire alarm system for Assumption Church. For the owner of this company, Mr, Angel Jorge, the project was a labor of love. He would work on the project as time permitted but would do the work for about 50% of the cost of other estimates. The project would take a full four years to complete.
- 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 **25<sup>th</sup> 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 150<sup>th</sup> 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 **50<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

December 28, 2018 **Most Reverend Robert E. Mulvee** passes away at Saint Antoine Residence in North Smithfield after a brief illness. He was appointed the seventh Bishop of Providence by **Pope John Paul II** on June 11, 1997 and served with zeal and distinction until March 31, 2005 when he retired as Bishop Emeritus. Bishop Mulvee was 88 years old at the time of his death. A Concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial was offered on January 10, 2019 at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul.

April 18, 2019 Assumption Church reopens in time for the **Mass of the Lord's Supper** on Holy Thursday after extensive repairs are made to the massive window above the altar in the sanctuary and to the north facing wall of the church. Repairs that had been expected to take about six weeks took nearly six months to complete. The damage was far more extensive than anyone realized. During this time, Masses were offered in the church basement.

July 1, 2019 The **Diocese of Providence** publishes a list of priests credibly accused of the sexual abuse of minors. The name of **Father Charles F. Dolan**, assistant pastor at Assumption from 1959 to 1967 appears on the list. Father Dolan passed away more than 40 years ago. It is not known at what point in his ministry the alleged incident(s) took place. In releasing this report Bishop Thomas Tobin remarked: "*It should be strongly emphasized and clearly understood that the fact that a name appears on this list does not mean that the individual is guilty of having committed sexual abuse unless the allegation is otherwise proven or admitted. It means only that the allegation has been received by the Diocese and after a preliminary investigation, has been deemed to be credible.*"

August 5, 2019 **Father Daniel M. Trainor**, Pastor Emeritus of Assumption Parish, passes away at Saint Elizabeth Home in East Greenwich. Father had been in declining health in recent months. He was 83 years old at the time of his passing.

August 10, 2019 Nearly 60 priests from the Diocese of Providence joined with family, friends, and current and former parishioners at Assumption Church for the funeral of **Father Daniel M. Trainor**. **Bishop Thomas Tobin** was the principal celebrant assisted by **Father Nick Smith**, former Assumption assistant pastor **Father Bernard O' Reilly** and current Assumption Pastor **Father Gildardo Suarez**. **Father Nick Smith** offered a eulogy for his friend of many decades. Everyone in attendance agreed that Father Smith's heartfelt tribute captured perfectly the essence of the man they had all come to know, love and respect over the decades. Father Smith reminded the congregation that "*Dan was all over the world. He rubbed shoulders with popes and presidents. But his world began and ended, as you know, in his beloved Assumption Parish. With flight to*

*the suburbs and the new wave of immigration, the man who wanted to be a missionary, in one of life's ironic twists, found that the missions came to him, right here on the aptly named Potters Avenue.”* He concluded his remarks in this way; *“So for any exemplary priesthood, a life well-lived, a message received with humility, and the word proclaimed with joy, let's today give a clear and definite ‘Amen’ for the gift and privilege of Father Dan Trainor having crossed our paths!”* Inspiring music for the funeral Mass was provided by **Joe DiBiase** and **The Rays of Sunshine**. At the end of Mass all priests in attendance joined in chanting the “*Salve Regina*”. It was a fitting send-off for the much beloved priest. Burial was in Saint Ann’s Cemetery in Cranston.

- December 2019 Nearly 17 years after the deadly **Station Nightclub** fire a new state-of-the-art fire alarm system is activated in Assumption Church. The installation took nearly four years to complete and was basically done at cost by **J & J Electrical Contractors LLC** of Warwick.
- January 1, 2020 Assumption Parish marks the beginning of its **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** year. There was a great deal of enthusiasm. A committee had been formed in November 2019 and a number of events were being planned for the coming year including a **Kick-Off Mass** in April, a **parish picnic** in July, a **dinner-dance** at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet in September and the **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass** at the Church with Bishop Tobin on October 4. But unbeknownst to all storm clouds were gathering that would alter our plans dramatically.
- March 15, 2020 With the onset of the worldwide **Coronavirus** epidemic, **Father Gildardo** makes the difficult decision to cancel all Sunday Masses at Assumption and Saint Anthony’s. The following day **Bishop Thomas Tobin**, at the request of public officials and upon the recommendation of health experts, issues a directive suspending all Masses and other liturgical services until further notice in the Diocese of Providence.
- March 29, 2020 For the very first time the 9:00 A.M. Sunday Mass in English and the 12:00 P.M. Mass in Spanish are streamed on the **Assumption/Saint Anthony’s Facebook page**. This page had been started in November 2017 by long-time Assumption parishioner **Paul Tognetti**. Assumption/Saint Anthony’s is one of about a dozen parishes around the Diocese of Providence prepared to offer this service at this time. The Masses emanated from the Assumption Rectory chapel. Over the next several weeks the idea would be embraced by more and more parishes. By the end of May approximately 40 parishes were offering online Masses.
- May 30, 2020 As part of Phase 2 of Reopening Rhode Island, **Governor Gina Raimondo** allows churches around the state to reopen. **Bishop Thomas Tobin** issues a set of 10 rules designed to ensure the safety of all parishioners. *At this time only 25% of capacity will be allowed in a church at any one time. Face masks must be worn by all who attend the Mass. Social distancing must be maintained, there are no hymnals and Holy Communion will be distributed in a safe manner. There will be no “sign of peace” and those who are sick are advised to stay home.* As of this date, a total of **711** people had died of **Coronavirus** in Rhode Island while nearly 15000 people had tested positive for the virus. The Latino community was particularly hard hit by the pandemic. According to Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health: *“Our preliminary numbers indicate that roughly 45% of our COVID-19 cases in Rhode Island are among Latino Rhode Islanders. That means they are significantly overrepresented in our group of people who have tested positive.”*

At the 4:00 P.M. Mass at Saint Anthony's approximately 25 people were in attendance. Later that evening, a Mass was held at Assumption Church on the final night of a Novena to the Holy Spirit. Close to 90 people attended. While the Masses streamed on Facebook "Live" certainly filled a void everyone agreed that it was wonderful to be back in church.

- September 20, 2020 This was to be the day the Assumption parish celebrated its **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** with a dinner-dance at **Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet** in Cranston. Sadly, this event had to be cancelled late in early June due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was really a shame because an enthusiastic committee of about 15 people had been hard at work planning a series of events since October 2019. Plans included a Kick-off Mass in February, a parish picnic in July and a **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass** to be celebrated by **Bishop Thomas Tobin** on October 4<sup>th</sup>. All had to be cancelled. The parish was very grateful that as of this date only one parishioner had succumbed to COVID-19 and that individual contracted the virus in Florida in the early stages of the pandemic. Despite our disappointment at this turn of events the parish continued to acknowledge that *"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."* (*Psalms 126:3*) which was to have been the theme for the year-long celebration.
- February 5, 2021 **Father Francis J. Giudice**, assistant pastor and member of the Team Ministry at Assumption parish from January 1967 to June 1972 passes away at the age of 92. After being appointed **Vicar for Community Affairs** in June 1972 Father Giudice continued to reside at the Assumption rectory for the next ten years. A Concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial was held at his home parish of **Immaculate Conception** in Westerly on February 11, 2021.
- July 23, 2021 Father Gildardo receives a letter informing him that **Saint Anthony's Church** is the recipient of a bequest in the amount of **\$155,700** from the estate of lifelong parishioner **William L. Spillane** who passed away in May 2017 at the age of 89. Meanwhile, the sale of **Saint Anthony's Rectory**, which has been on the market for several years, appears to be imminent.

**"DIARY OF A PARISH"**

**CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, PROVIDENCE, RI 1870-2019**

**compiled and edited by Paul Tognetti**

**Revised August 2021**

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 100<sup>th</sup> 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. I have also uncovered new information in his latest book "*Catholicism in Rhode Island and the Diocese of Providence 1921-1948*". 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 [mptog@protonmail.com](mailto:mptog@protonmail.com)

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