

HOLY REDEEMER



GRACE NOTES

July 2024

This is a very special month for Holy Redeemer Parish. On Sunday, July 7th at 2 pm Bishop Edgar da Cunha will celebrate the rededication mass for Holy Redeemer's renovation and new altar. All are encouraged to attend. To commemorate the event we are devoting most of this month's Grace Notes newsletter to a history of Holy Redeemer Parish and including a number of recent and not-so-recent pictures. We hope you enjoy what we've put together.

History of Holy Redeemer Parish

The exact date when the first Catholic mass was celebrated within the boundaries of Holy Redeemer Parish is not known for certain. Speculation has variously focused on Basque fisherman, Norse adventurers and even St. Brendan, the Irish saint. The best "first mass" candidate likely goes to the voyage of the French explorer Samuel de Champlain, who sailed into Chatham harbor in October of 1606 with a crew of 79 men. Champlain was educated as a priest, and typically sailed with a member of the clergy on board. Therefore it's not unreasonable to believe that the crew attended a mass during their exploration of Chatham.



Excluding Champlain's voyage, the first recorded Catholics on Cape Cod were employees of the Sandwich Manufacturing Company, which in 1827 petitioned Bishop Benedict Fenwick of Boston to send a priest to that community to serve the sizable number of Irish Catholics employed in the glass works.

As early as 1850 Chatham is noted as being a mission station of the Catholic parish in Sandwich. The first recorded celebration of the Holy Eucharist in Chatham was not until February 2, 1855, when Father William Moran celebrated Mass at the home of Patrick and Ann (Clark) Drum. He returned a month later to baptize their son John Henry Drum on March 8, 1855. However, there is a dispute as to whether the Drum family were actually residents of Chatham or Harwich.

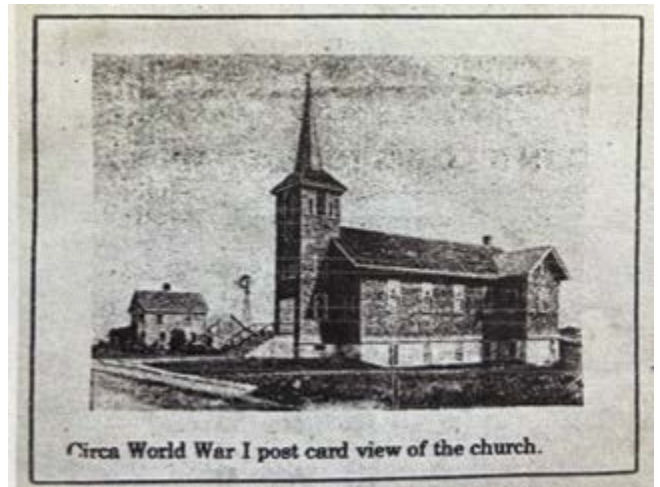
Father Moran also visited Chatham every three months or so to say mass in the home of Peter Starkey. In the late 1800's local Catholics typically attended mass in the Danforth cottage on Shore Road, in the Slavin home at the corner of Highland Avenue and Seaview Streets, and in the home of Benjamin O. Eldredge. Marriages and baptisms were also performed in these homes.

Growth in Chatham's Catholic community began to increase around the turn of the century with the building of large summer hotels like the Chatham Bars Inn, which employed many young Irish girls as maids. Even so, for most of the year mass was still celebrated on an intermittent basis in private homes. During the summer season masses were celebrated on a more regular basis with the assistance of a Redemptorist priest from the mission church in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Finally, in 1915 several Chatham residents – Matthias and Thomas Slavin, the Lewis Clarkes, Charles Hudson, the Earl Nickersons, and Richard and Jack McKay, among others – made plans to build a church in Chatham. Land on Highland Avenue for the church was donated by Matthias Slavin. The church was built with money raised chiefly from the local Catholic maids, the servants of Chatham’s summer residents, and many of the summer residents.

The design plan for the church with its attenuated gothic spire was modeled after English chapels from the 13th and 14th centuries. The adaptation of these early English gothic forms to a New England environment was accomplished by using abundant native wood materials to replicate what traditionally would be built using stone.

Ground was broken for Holy Redeemer Church on November 30, 1915, and construction was completed in 1916. The altar was donated by Mrs. T.J. Geraghty of Chicago, a chalice was donated by Father Francis X. Kelly, three sets of vestments were donated by the Tabernacle Society of New York, and the chapel’s ten stained glass windows and pews were donated by generous friends and parishioners. Holy Redeemer’s first mass was celebrated on June 25, 1916. The church – which boasted a seating capacity of 150 -- was dedicated by Bishop Daniel Feehan on Sunday, August 27, 1916.

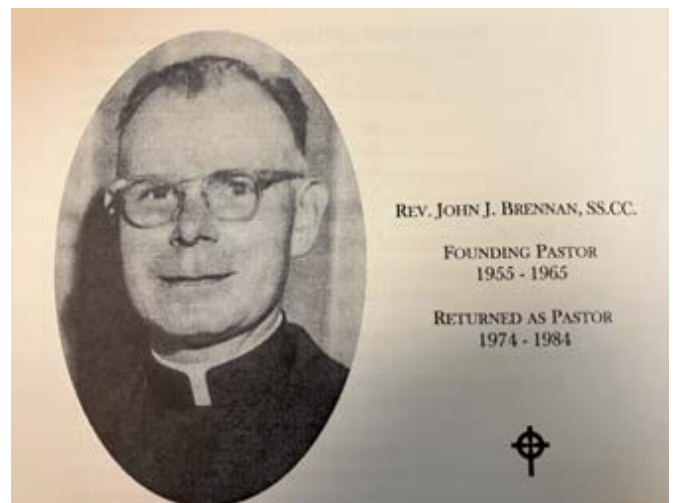


At that time Holy Redeemer was deemed a “mission church,” and was ministered by Sacred Heart priests from Holy Trinity Church in West Harwich. Father Hilarian Eikerling – who assisted Bishop Feehan at the dedication – was named the first pastor of Holy Redeemer.

The first catechism classes – which consisted of eight students -- were held on Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm in the home of Mrs. B.O. Eldridge; she taught the younger children and Father Eikerling taught the older students.

Growth of the Catholic community in Chatham continued to be slow for the next three decades. But by 1950, in anticipation of Holy Redeemer becoming its own parish, Father David Sullivan, a curate at Holy Trinity, was given the primary responsibility of pastoral care for Chatham’s catholic community.

In 1952 Father Sullivan’s responsibilities were subsequently assumed by Father Theodore Brennan, who is considered the founding pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish.



Born in Castle Blayney, County Monaghan, Ireland, Father Brennan came to the United States in 1927 when he was 16 and lived with an aunt and uncle in New York City. While completing his high school education at night he worked by day as a plumber's apprentice. He later went on to earn a New York City construction superintendent's license. Although a promising career in construction beckoned he saved his money to enter college and fulfill his dream of the priesthood. He originally studied at St. Mary's Seminary in Kentucky, but after hearing Father Mateo Crawley-Boevey preach -- often referred to as "the modern apostle of the Sacred Heart" -- he was inspired to join his community and was ordained a Sacred Heart priest on June 6, 1950.

When Father Brennan arrived in Chatham the town and the church came as a total shock to him. "I thought I had been shanghaied," he joked. "I was used to working in big city churches and here I was in a small chapel where they were rattling in the pews."

Despite his surprise Father Brennan quickly rolled up his sleeves and got to work.

In addition to his priestly responsibilities, Father Brennan drew on his previous experience in construction to make needed changes to Holy Redeemer, expanding the church to increase the seating capacity from 150 to 440. The work was completed by June 1954 and on July 21, 1954, Bishop James Connolly rededicated the expanded church.

On May 1, 1955, Holy Redeemer Parish was formally established. Father Brennan purchased the Eldridge home across the street from the church to serve as a rectory and obtained land from the estate of Frank Dill to increase the size of the parking lot. He also purchased the former Doan and Beale Funeral Home next door to the church for use by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory, who assisted with religious instruction for the children of the parish.



Holy Redeemer Church circa 1955 – The Year the Parish was Founded

Father Brennan continued expanding the parish's infrastructure. In the early sixties he purchased sixteen acres of land in South Chatham for building a satellite church to use during the summer months when visitors overwhelmed Holy Redeemer. In 1962 ground was broken for construction of Our Lady of Grace Chapel, which opened in time for the summer tourist season in 1963.



Opening of Our Lady of Grace Chapel in 1963

In October 1964, Father Brennan was transferred to St. Joseph's Church in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. He was succeeded as pastor by Father Paul Price (who served from 1965-1969), Father Daniel J. McCarthy (who served from 1969-1972), and Father William McClenahan (who served from 1972-1974). Father Brennan returned for a second stint as pastor in April 1974, just in time for Holy Redeemer's twentieth anniversary.

Upon his return Father Brennan undertook a second renovation of Holy Redeemer, seeking to expand the church's ability to serve the Catholic community of Chatham. Seating capacity was increased to 560, the church hall and kitchen were renovated, six classrooms were created in the church hall and a new organ was purchased. The renovations commenced in 1980, and following their completion the church was rededicated by Bishop Daniel A. Cronin. One of the highlights of the rededication service was the entire congregation singing "Kumbaya."



25th Anniversary Mass at Holy Redeemer in 1980

Father Brennan continued as pastor of Holy Redeemer until his retirement in 1984. He was succeeded by Father McClenahan, who returned to Holy Redeemer for a second round. He would be the last Sacred Heart pastor at Holy Redeemer; in 1988, the Sacred Heart priests withdrew from the Lower Cape parishes, which they had served faithfully for seventy-eight years.

In June 1988 Father James F. Buckley, pastor of St. Margaret's Parish in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts became the first diocesan priest appointed as pastor of Holy Redeemer. A decade later Joseph Mador was ordained as a permanent Deacon, becoming the first religious vocation from the parish. Father Buckley continued as pastor of Holy Redeemer until his retirement in February 2001. He was well known for his ministry to the sick and under his direction the church was made handicapped accessible through the installation of the church's first elevator.

Following Father's Buckley's retirement Father George Scales served as parish administrator until June 2001 when Father Jon-Paul Gallant was appointed pastor. During Father Gallant's tenure Holy Redeemer celebrated its the 50th Anniversary in 2005.



**Bishop Coleman, Father Gallant and Other Clergy
Celebrating 50th Anniversary Mass at Holy
Redeemer in 2005**

Father Gallant was responsible for the installation of two stained glass windows at the back of the sanctuary, one depicting the Annunciation of Mary and the other depicting the Appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene following his Resurrection. The windows were salvaged from the former St. Elizabeth Church in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Father Gallant remained as pastor of Holy Redeemer until June of 2008, at which time Father Scales returned to Holy Redeemer as pastor. He was succeeded by Father John M. Sullivan in June 2017. Father Sullivan continues to serve as pastor of Holy Redeemer. Like his predecessor pastors, Father Sullivan is ensuring that Holy Redeemer's infrastructure – particularly a much-needed elevator improvement – evolves to meet the dynamic needs of the parish.



Holy Redeemer's Pastors, Vicars and Deacons

Pastors of Holy Redeemer Parish

1955-1965	Rev. John J. Brennan
1965-1969	Rev. Paul J. Price
1969-1972	Rev. Daniel J. McCarty
1972-1974	Rev. William McClenahan
1974-1978	Rev. John J. Brennan
1984-1988	Rev. William McClenahan
1988-2001	Rev. James J. Buckley
2001	Rev. George Scales (Parish Admin.)
2001-2008	Rev. Jon-Paul Gallant
2008-2017	Rev. George Scales
2017-present	Rev. John M. Sullivan

Parochial Vicars of Holy Redeemer Parish

1955-1957	Rev. Jeremiah Casey
1957-1958	Rev. Augustine Whelan
1958-1959	Rev. Roger Doherty
1959-1964	Rev. Christopher Christensen
1964-1967	Rev. Frank Powaza
1967-1969	Rev. Leo King
1969-1971	Rev. Kieran Rush
1971-1973	Rev. James Hipp
1973-1975	Rev. Stanley Kolasa
1975-1984	Rev. Leo King
1984-1988	Rev. Frederick J. Myers
1988-1991	Rev. Daniel LaCroix
2000-2001	Rev. George Scales

Deacons of Holy Redeemer Parish

1997-present	Rev. Deacon Joseph Mador
2001-2009	Rev. Deacon Gabriel Liegey
2001-2104	Rev. Deacon Richard Stenberg
2024-present	Rev. Deacon Art LaChance

Holy Redeemer Parish and Parishioners Through the Years

Prior to 1960



Earliest Picture of Holy Redeemer Church



Holy Redeemer Church - 1916



First Communion Card for Virginia Griffin - June, 1943



Wedding of Rita Forgeron and Walter Terrio - 1949



Interior of Holy Redeemer Church - circa 1950



Wedding of Ed and Ginny Forgeron - 1954



Early Renovation - 1950s

1961 to 1990



Holy Redeemer Float in Memorial Day Parade - early 1960s



First Communion celebrated by Father Price - late 1960s



Mrs. Elizabeth Griffin

**Church Organist
Retires In Chatham**

Holy Redeemer Organist Retires - 1972



Summer Outing



Baptism of Amy Griffin by Father Kolasa - circa 1974



Choir Loft During Midnight Mass- 1986 (Ginny Forgeron, Joyce Gallup and Barbara Wells)

1991 to 2010



Valentine's Dinner Preparation with Assistance from Father LaCroix - early 1990s



Christmas - 1992



Children Aboard Ark - 1997



Flagpole Memorial for Alice Zalesky - 2002



Christmas Pageant



Confirmation Class - 2005

2011 to Present



Choir - 2022



Blessing the Dogs - 2023



May Crowning - 2023



Groundbreaking for New Construction at Holy Redeemer - 2023



Holy Redeemer Closed for Renovations - 2023



New Construction at Holy Redeemer - 2023

As we like to do every month in Grace Notes, we're including a profile of one of Holy Redeemer's parishioners. This month our focus is on Carolyn Connolly-Gilmore. We chose Carolyn because for the past few months she's provided tremendous support to Holy Redeemer's rededication efforts, including the mass to be celebrated by Bishop da Cunha. Thank you Carolyn.

Getting to Know the Members of the Parish – Carolyn Connolly-Gilmore

If given the choice most of us would prefer to forget the pandemic: the lockdown, the zoom calls, the frantic on-line searching for a place to get vaccinated, the loneliness. We were all challenged by that period of time. But as is always the case, where there are challenges there are also opportunities. And occasionally pleasant surprises.

That certainly was the case for Carolyn Connolly. Carolyn is the third child of Dianne Connolly, whom we profiled in an earlier edition of Grace Notes. (Given the exemplary qualities of both mother and daughter it was tempting to write a piece about how "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree," but Carolyn's response to the challenges of the pandemic seemed more revealing.)



Carolyn could be called a Chatham "lifer," given that other than a brief period spent in the maternity ward in Hyannis when she was born, and time spent as an exchange student in Portugal, she grew up in Chatham. She was even the valedictorian of her senior class at Chatham High School. But the time spent in Portugal was a harbinger of things to come, because Carolyn was born with a sense of wanderlust. She came by it naturally: her grandparents were world travelers, having spent time in China and all throughout Europe. And although Carolyn's initial major at Brown University in Providence was International Relations (no great surprise), she managed to mostly keep her passport under wraps throughout her undergraduate career. She eventually decided to major in psychology and neurosciences, but she still managed to find time to add an international flair to her C.V., including courses in Islam, Judaism and Zen Buddhism. "I've always been very curious about other people's religious beliefs."

Carolyn leveraged the fact that Brown placed a heavy emphasis on research to land a position with a clinical research site in New York City, which was then involved in evaluating new drugs for the treatment of patients with kidney disease.

Shortly thereafter fate took a hand in the form of two important developments. Her father's health began to decline, and Carolyn moved back to Massachusetts to help care for him. She also accepted a clinical research position with an Israeli-based biotechnology company, which had an office in Boston. The new position afforded Carolyn the opportunity to be close to her father, but there was another advantage: spending lots of time in Israel. "I made well over a dozen trips to Israel. It had a massive impact on my religious beliefs, and really reconnected me with my Catholic faith from childhood. Aside from visiting places where Jesus lived and preached, walking the Via Dolorosa (actual stations of the cross) in the Old City of Jerusalem had a profound impact on my faith renewal."

Around this time Carolyn met her husband Tim, who was a lawyer with a practice in the Boston area. Unbeknownst to either Carolyn or Tim it was not the first or even second time that they had been in close proximity. When Carolyn was on her way to earning valedictorian honors at Chatham High School, Tim was working in Chatham as a part-time landscaper, and used to mow the grounds on which Carolyn would several hours later play her field hockey matches. And several years later they lived a short distance from each other in Providence when Carolyn was a student at Brown. And still their paths never crossed.

Armed with such amazing coincidences, Carolyn and Tim were definitely fated to marry, which they did shortly after the pandemic brought a temporary halt to all normal activities, like weddings and wedding receptions. So instead of the traditional wedding with 200 guests, half a dozen bridesmaids in jewel-toned attire, and all the other trappings, Carolyn and Tim were quietly married by Father Sullivan in a wedding ceremony that -- because of health concerns -- was limited to 10 people. Their wedding reception at the Chatham Bars Inn was likewise limited to 10 fellow celebrants.



But as the saying goes, “that which doesn’t kill us makes us strong.” And as anyone who has ever met Carolyn and Tim will attest, the love they have for each other is inspiring, and with enough left over to share with their two English bulldogs, Dixie (who unfortunately passed away last month) and Sophie.

There are many heartbreaking stories associated with the pandemic; cancelled proms and graduation ceremonies, silver and golden wedding anniversaries uncelebrated, spouses who were married for years only to be separated at the time of their death. But there were also stories of resilience, and challenges that were overcome, and two people finding joy in sharing each other’s lives come what may. Thank you Carolyn for sharing your story.