

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church and School

310 Spring Avenue
Troy, NY 12180

A Brief Parish History
1913 – 2013



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The year was 1913. Woodrow Wilson was President, Pope Pius X was in the final years of his papacy, and World War I was still a year away. The Catholic Church in Troy was growing! With its growth came a new parish, as 45 families broke away from St. Francis de Sales Church and began a new mission parish on the East Side of Troy.

Father Daniel Mahoney was the first pastor and when the parish began, there was no rectory in which to live. Undaunted, he rented a small flat and began the journey to build what we now know as Sacred Heart Church; but the building you see today did not exist in 1913 and would not come into existence for another 14 years.

The early years were difficult as the first church building was actually the basement of what is now Carol's Restaurant at the corner of Pawling and Ford Avenues, four blocks south of the current church location.



Figure 1: View looking northwest from corner of Pawling Avenue and Ford Avenue at site of the original church.

Those early years were riddled with debt as the slow process began to build a church. Father Mahoney would serve as pastor for only a little more than a year, as he died unexpectedly on November 19, 1914.

Newly ordained associate Father William Heffern became interim pastor until Reverend William White was appointed to succeed Father Mahoney. His job was no easier, but slowly the parish began to take shape, as the debt was whittled away, the rectory was completed, and a building fund was established.

An old building at "The Corners" (the intersection of Spring and Pawling Avenues) was purchased and the mission church was opened for Sunday services. However, more than just a building was taking shape. Church festivals, bazaars, and benefit parties were organized and the building fund "nest egg" had reached \$43,000. Sadly for many, Father White was transferred. Father Thomas Judge became the new pastor in 1921. Then, once again, tragedy struck as Father Judge was called home to God less than a year later.

In 1922 Father Leo O’Haire was named pastor. Through his dedication and hard work, along with the able assistance of many committed parishioners, the campus we now enjoy came to fruition. He celebrated the first Mass in the school auditorium in April of 1926 but sadly he would not live to see his dream of a Catholic school come to pass, as he died suddenly that spring.



Figure 2: View of present day church and school complex looking south along Pawling Avenue.

Father Edward Walsh, who presided over the opening of Sacred Heart School on September 8, 1927, succeeded Father O’Haire. On that first day, 119 students were welcomed in grades one through four. One teacher and one grade were added each year until 1932 when the first class of 8th graders, numbering 35, graduated.

With the opening of the school and the new church, rapid growth occurred as the hunger for a Catholic school education grew. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet staffed the school, led by the first principal Mother James Marie, who served through 1932. The Sisters would prove to be a vital component of the Sacred Heart “family” for nearly 70 years.

Over the next 25 years Sacred Heart became an anchor for the East Side, as the parish expanded to include the establishment of numerous societies and clubs including the Women’s Club, the Altar-Rosary Society, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Catholic War Veterans, to name just a few. Father Walsh served as pastor for a decade until the Spring of 1936. A large mortgage assumed by the parish to build the church and school buildings was slowly being chipped away. Father Edward Reilly became the new pastor in the Spring of 1936. This was at the height of the Great Depression but in spite of that fact, Sacred Heart continued to flourish.

By 1941 the United States had entered World War II and all Americans were contending with the sacrifices that entailed, both here at home and around the world. Still, Sacred Heart continued to grow. During these years the school saw a series of principals including Mother Francis Paul, Mother Loretta Joseph, and Mother Regina. By 1950 the school population had reached 690. Then in 1952 a long-awaited and joyous event took place—the burning of the \$315,000 mortgage, upon the satisfaction of the loan. Sadly, in late 1952 Father Reilly took ill and could not continue as pastor.

Early in 1953, Father William Martin became pastor. It was not uncommon at this time to have three or four priests serving at Sacred Heart. During these years many expansion and improvement programs were begun.

With the post-war era came the baby boom and a population explosion at Sacred Heart. The original school building that sits above the current church was filled to overflowing.



Figure 3: Newspaper clipping announcing plan for school addition.

Double classes were set up in the gymnasium and closets, storage rooms, and spare rooms became teaching areas. It was apparent that a building expansion was required. As these new plans were being made, a fire gutted the gymnasium. Despite this setback, the parish and school communities remained undaunted. The gym was refurbished.

In 1958, a fund drive was conducted and construction began on the new wing of the school. On September 9, 1959 the new addition was opened, including eight new classrooms and a thoroughly equipped kitchen and cafeteria. Enrollment peaked at 975 students.



Figure 4: Cornerstone on school addition being set by Fr. Martin.

In these years of exponential growth, dedicated principals Sister Aloysius Joseph, Sister William Edmond, Sister Helen Francis, and Sister Dolorata led Sacred Heart School.

In 1961, Pope John XXIII elevated Father Martin to the rank of Monsignor in recognition of his pastoral work. It was also in 1961 that Father James Vaughan served as an associate in his first assignment to Sacred Heart. Monsignor Martin passed away on September 8, 1963 and with his passing came a heightened awareness of his many contributions to the parish. Previous biographical histories describe him as a humble, kind, gentle, and loving priest—a true servant of God.

Monsignor John Bourke succeeded Monsignor Martin. He was one of the first pastors in the area to carry out the changes that stemmed from Vatican II, particularly changes in the liturgy. Sacred Heart was one of the first parishes to have an altar facing the people, lay ministers of the word, and commentators. It was also during Monsignor Bourke's pastorate that ground was broken on the mission Church of St. William.



Figure 5: Present day St. William's church building.

In 1964, Sister Marie Consolata Robinson became the new principal of Sacred Heart School. Monsignor Bourke passed away in 1970 and was succeeded by Father William McManus who served as pastor until 1973. During Sister Consolata's tenure, which lasted until 1972, Sacred Heart's first lay teachers—Miss Virginia Morrow and Mrs. Genevieve Murphy—retired after more than thirty years of service. It was also at this time that lay teachers became the majority and an integral part of the faculty

Following the retirement of Sister Consolata, Sacred Heart School was blessed with one of those rare individuals who left an indelible mark simply by being who she was. Sister Anne Queen followed Sister Consolata as principal, and Sacred Heart School would never be the same. Sister Anne was a skilled administrator, and a dedicated educator. Inspired by her love for the students, she carved out a legacy that is remembered still by those who knew her.

She was never afraid to speak her mind, and you always knew where she stood.



Figure 6: Sister Anne as she appeared in a Times Record newspaper article.

Incredibly, Sacred Heart was blessed once again just a year later in the Summer of 1973, when Father James J. Vaughan became pastor. Together, Father Vaughan and Sister Anne would shepherd the parish and school through many years of prosperity with steady hands, devotion, and a guiding love.



Figure 7: Sister Anne & Fr. Vaughan meet with Mr. John Manning to discuss enrolling his son Robert while Miss Loretta Langton (Class of '27) looks on.

Many can recall such memorable events as The Women’s Club Card Party and Fashion Show, the Annual Minstrel Show, and the Parish Clam Steam. Later, there were the long-running Sacred Heart Parish Bazaar and Annual Faculty-Student Basketball Game—pitting 8th graders against faculty and staff—both parish favorites in which Father Vaughan and Sister Anne regularly participated.

Sadly, in February of 1994 Sister Anne Queen was called home to God after a courageous battle against cancer. Although she left us prematurely her memory lives on, and the legacy she imparted is with us still.



Figure 8: Womens Club Annual Card Party and Fashion Show provides an evening on-the-town and raises funds for many worthy causes.

In her stead Sacred Heart School would again be blessed as Mrs. Susan Merrill stepped in as interim principal, the first lay principal in the history of the school.

After a methodical selection process, the search committee realized the best candidate had been there all along. Mrs. Merrill has guided Sacred Heart School since 1994 and continues today.

Over the years the school has evolved in many ways. In the mid-1980’s, the diocese moved all Troy 7th and 8th grades to the new CCHS middle school as part of Catholic Central High School. Although our school lost two grades, its mission has remained the same—to provide a faith-based, Christ-centered education, integrated



Figure 9: Sacred Heart Annual Clam Steam

throughout the curriculum, and designed to develop students' talents and skills. Today, while cognizant of the need to prepare students to compete and thrive in a high-tech, global economy and work place, we still emphasize that Christ-centered philosophy that imparts both skills and Christian values.

This was the mission 85 years ago when Sacred Heart School opened and the typical student-teacher ratio ranged from 45:1 to 60:1. Eager young students sat in rows of desks in classrooms filled to overflowing. The Sisters of St. Joseph strove to educate this growing number of youngsters who sought a Catholic education.



Figure 10: Sacred Heart Class of '83 - 8th Grade graduating class.

That desire still remains today for students, parents, and the staff of Sacred Heart as they celebrate 85 years of academic excellence and look forward to continuing that educational excellence for years to come.

As for the parish, on Father Vaughan's arrival in 1973, the Sacred Heart community gained an able shepherd who has dedicated his life to the people of Sacred Heart. In the early years Father Vaughan was often seen with his ever-present companion, "Mickey." Many can remember Father Vaughan and the long list of four-legged friends at Sacred Heart.



Figure 11: Fr. Vaughan and Mickey, Easter 1977.

Father Vaughan is also thought of in so many other ways—cheering on his beloved Yankees or Notre Dame, or his ever-present love of country as he always remembers in prayer our troops in harm's way—both those from our parish and *all* of those brave Americans who have answered the call. He is well known for his patriotism. As a Navy Chaplain himself in the late 1950s, Father also served his beloved country.

In 2013, Father Vaughan celebrates a total of forty years as Pastor and Pastor Emeritus at Sacred Heart. Among the many gifts he has given us and which he still enjoys bestowing today, is the heartfelt and genuine greeting he gives to all those who come back to Sacred Heart. Perhaps they left the area to build a life, or start

a family or career. They may come back to Sacred Heart Church for a wedding, or a Baptism. Whenever they come home for Christmas, although the calendar may have changed, the experience of hearing Bing Crosby's "I'll Be Home for

Christmas" at the Vigil Mass is just one example of remembering all the good that has come from having been a part of Sacred Heart and fortunate enough to call Father Vaughan a friend.

In 2000, Father Vaughan retired as pastor and fortunately for the parish he decided to remain on the second floor at 310 Spring Ave rather than head south to Florida full time! Father Gary Mercure took over as pastor, and Sister Rita Duggan assumed the responsibilities as Pastoral Associate for Administration.

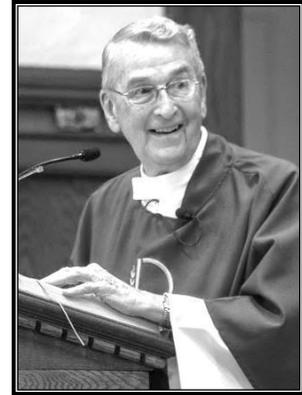


Figure 12: Fr. Vaughan Speaking on the occasion of his 60th Anniversary of Ordination.

These were challenging years for the Catholic Church in America as dwindling populations and priest shortages necessitated difficult decisions. Among them was the sad reality that Saint William's Church, our satellite parish begun in 1967 with Father Peter Keyrouze as pastor (which became part of the Sacred Heart/St. William's merger in the 1990s), must close. Fortunately, lasting relationships had been forged over the years and many St. William's communicants came to call Sacred Heart home.



Figure 13: St. William's Church Closing Mass.

In 2008, our current Pastor Father John Yanas returned to Sacred Heart. He had served previously at Sacred Heart in the early years of his priesthood alongside Father Vaughan, from 1985 until 1992.

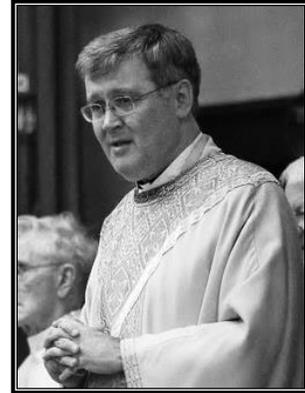
A 1972 graduate of Christian Brothers Academy in Albany, Father Yanas was ordained in 1984 and served as Pastor at Our Lady Queen of Apostles in Frankfort, New York before coming back to us in 2008. Since his arrival for a second "tour of duty," Father Yanas has brought a renewed sense of energy and purpose to the parish.

Father's wry sense of humor, thought-provoking homilies, steady leadership, and clear sense of mission have served the people of Sacred Heart well.

Along with Father Vaughan and Father Konaku, he continues to make Sacred Heart a beacon of light and spiritual refuge for those seeking to practice their Catholic faith.

Behind the scenes, Pastoral Associate for Administration Suzanne Kehn Turner and a host of dedicated volunteers, including lay ministers, parents, parishioners, friends, and alumni, help to make it all work.

While this chronology speaks of the priests, religious sisters, and lay teachers who have guided Sacred Heart these past 100 years, it is truly the people of Sacred Heart School and Church who have made our parish a shining example of faith-based education, worship, and fellowship; a place that continues to welcome back those who have been a part of Sacred Heart in the past, and to welcome those coming to Sacred Heart for the first time.



**Figure 14: Fr. John Yanas
12th Pastor of Sacred Heart
Church.**



**Figure 15: Sacred Heart
Roman Catholic Church. A
Century of worship,
fellowship and community.**

As we enter our second century of service, we look back at a parish that has seen ten popes, from Pius X to Francis I, and seventeen presidents come and go, two World Wars and many world conflicts, a Great Depression, and unprecedented societal changes. Yet the idea that was born a century ago, when 45 families set out to build a Roman Catholic Community on the East Side of Troy, endures.

Sacred Heart Church and Sacred Heart School still strive to provide a welcoming, nurturing, faith-based example of Catholic Faith, Hope, and Love. Now, as we set off on a second century dedicated to remembering the past and working hard in the present to allow all who come here to live and enjoy a better future, we do so with the ultimate goal of helping all those who seek it, to obtain the gift of Eternal Life in the presence of God the Almighty Father.



Sacred Heart Church Pastors:

Rev. Daniel P. Mahoney 1913 - 1914

Rev. William H. White 1914 - 1922

Rev. Thomas Judge 1922

Rev. Leo A. O'Haire 1922 - 1926

Rev. Edward A. Walsh 1926 - 1936

Rev. Edward T. Reilly 1936 - 1953

Msgr. William L. Martin 1953 - 1963

Msgr. John Bourke 1963 - 1970

Rev. Edward McManus 1970 - 1973

Rev. James J. Vaughan 1973 - 2000

Rev. Gary Mercure 2000 - 2008

Rev. John Yanas 2008 - present



Sacred Heart School Principals

Mother James Marie 1927-1932

Sister Andrea 1932-1934

Mother Francis Paul 1934-1939

Mother Loretta Joseph 1939-1947

Mother Regina 1947-1949

Mother Verena Joseph 1949-1950

Sister Ursula Marie 1950-1952

Sister Aloysius Joseph 1953-1958

Sister William Edmond 1959-1961

Sister Helen Francis 1961-1962

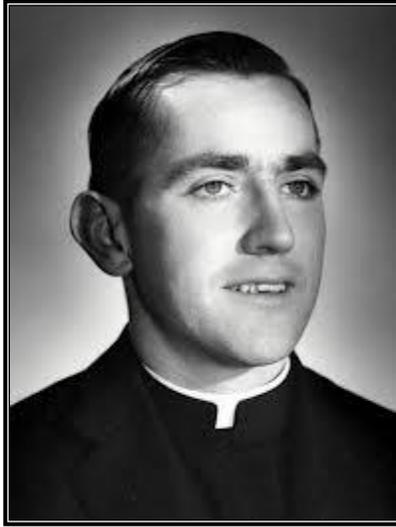
Sister Dolorata Mahar 1962-1964

Sister Marie Consolata 1964-1972

Sister Anne Queen 1972-1994

Mrs. Susan Merrill 1994-Present

FATHER WILLIAM KRUEGLER 1930-1962



Missionary Priest killed in Bolivia August 7,1962

“...if I am found worthy.”

William Kruegler was born on October 1, 1930 in Troy, New York to Frank and Katherine Kruegler. He was one of eleven children. Originally a parishioner at Our Lady of Victory Church in Troy, Bill’s family moved to 336 Spring Avenue--two blocks from Sacred Heart Church—in 1941. Bill entered Sacred Heart in the 6th grade. He served as an altar boy, graduating from Sacred Heart in June of 1944, before going on to Catholic Central High School. After graduating from CCHS, Bill aspired to the priesthood and entered the seminary in 1948. During his time in the seminary Bill was drawn to the missionary life. Then on August 1, 1954 Bill would sign the formal petition to join the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, also known as Maryknoll. Bill would soon join his older sister Loretta who was a Maryknoll Sister in Panama, one of two older sisters who had become Religious Sisters. When he wrote home to tell his parents his decision, he said, “Yesterday, I signed the formal petition to take the Society Oath for one year, if I am found worthy.”

On June 7, 1957 Bill became Father William Kruegler, and would celebrate his first Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Troy, New York on June 16, 1957. By August, he was given his first missionary assignment to Bolivia.

Over the next five years Father Bill, as he became known, thrived in his work. He was given many assignments and seemed convinced that his decision to become a missionary priest had been the right one. However, Bolivia in the early 1960s was not the same type of country that Father Bill had grown up in. Bolivia was a third-world country and in many villages, privilege and rank allowed some to live above the law. It was just this type of situation that would bring Father Bill into conflict with one such privileged individual. This person had set up a clandestine saloon in the building connected to the parish house. There were often loud parties late into the night that disturbed the surrounding neighborhood. The bar also served young children. Father Bill continually brought the existence of the illegal bar to the mayor's attention, but to no avail. His primary concern was the exploitation of the children and the bad behavior that evolved from the frequent late night drinking at the bar, which often spilled into the surrounding neighborhood.

Undaunted, Father Bill would confront the bar owner and implore him to at least protect the children, while asking him to tone down the bad behavior. His pleas were ignored. Then in early August of 1962 the village in which Father Bill served was preparing to celebrate Bolivian Independence, which was observed on August 5th and 6th but regularly lasted an entire week. On the night of August 7th, Father Bill (or Padre Guillermo, as the locals called him) was returning from a field day celebration where many of his charges had won athletic awards. Father Bill was rushing to get ready to fill in for a sick priest at another mission. As he was hurrying to conduct rosary devotions before leaving for the mission, the bar owner Mario Saravia approached and called, "Padre Guillermo." A sacristan nearby heard Mario ask Father Bill what time rosary was, followed by a cracking sound that he mistook for fire crackers. He saw Mario running away and then saw Father Bill slumped on the patio covered with blood. Father Bill was mortally wounded and despite all efforts, he never regained consciousness and died there on the patio. He would later be laid to rest near the Church where he served at the time of his death. His sister Loretta visited his gravesite in Bolivia shortly after his death and again in 1996, 34 years later, when she was greeted as "Father Bill's sister" by many who still remembered him. They were proud to show her the life-sized statue and the plaque on the wall where the "Martyr for Youth" is *still* honored, and where people come to lay flowers and remember the young missionary priest from the United States who gave his life when he spoke out in defense of the innocence of children.

For more on the life of Father William Kruegler, read, ***If I am Found Worthy: The Life of William C. Kruegler, M.M.***, by Elizabeth V. Roach.