

History of Blessed Sacrament Church

Hughestown, Pa.

On August 16, 1941 ground was broken for the construction of the Blessed Sacrament Church which was to serve as a Mission Church of St. John the Evangelist. It was commonly referred to as “The Chapel.” Msgr. Patrick J. Boland, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston, officiated at the ceremonies. Following the ground breaking members of Blessed Sacrament worked feverishly, preparing the former reservoir site and digging the basement and foundation for the construction of the new church.

The first Mass held in the church was Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve 1941. Msgr. Boland celebrated the Mass in the auditorium because the construction of the church was not completed.

The original altar was a copy of an altar Msgr. Boland had seen in 1932 at the Maryknoll House in Hong Kong. The wooden altar, altar rail and tabernacle were carved in China and shipped to Blessed Sacrament.

On June 7, 1942, Bishop William J. Hafey, Bishop of Scranton, laid the cornerstone and officially dedicated Blessed Sacrament as a Mission Church of St. John’s.

In 1945 Bishop Hafey established Blessed Sacrament as a parish, and appointed Father Serenus R. O’Connell as the first pastor. Father O’Connell celebrated the first Mass in the new parish on September 16, 1945.

That same year, the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes was built by parishioners who gathered large stones from back yards, fields and quarries. The grotto served as a sacred space for quiet reflection and prayer. Over the years, vines and other plants growing on the grotto walls made the structure unsafe. As a result, a restoration was undertaken, and the grotto was rededicated on August 13, 1995, as part of the 50th Anniversary celebration of the parish.

Father O'Connell served as pastor for 15 years during which time the parish rectory was built. He was succeeded as pastor by Father John J. Jackson. Father Jackson was pastor of Blessed Sacrament from 1961 to 1981.

In 1981 Father Karl Monahan succeeded Father Jackson and became the third pastor of Blessed Sacrament. Father Monahan died on January 1, 1984.

Father Charles Rokosz was named as the fourth pastor, and served as pastor for eight years. During his tenure extensive major renovations were done to all parish buildings.

In 1991 Father Joseph Verespy was appointed the fifth pastor of Blessed Sacrament. He served the parish until 1999, when he was succeeded as pastor by Father Joseph Adonizio.

In July, 2000, Father Thomas J. Maloney was named as the seventh pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, serving until the closing of the parish on November 14, 2010, thus being the final pastor.

Of course, the history of any parish is truly the story of the men, women and children who have been gathered together by the Holy Spirit. Theirs is a story of sacrifice and determination, of both joy and sorrow. Their story is one of enthusiasm and hope. Above all, theirs is a story of faith - one people, gathered around the table of the Lord, strengthened and nourished and sent forth by Jesus, our Blessed Sacrament.

In June of 2007 Blessed Sacrament in Hughestown, St. Mary's Assumption and St. Mary, Help of Christians in Pittston, were linked. Father Maloney was appointed pastor of all three parishes which began to come together in the Parish Community of Blessed Sacrament † St. Mary's.

In December, 2007, a diocesan parish reconfiguration process, “Called to Holiness and Mission: Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Scranton”, was announced. Since that time Core Teams from each parish, in conjunction with the Pittston Area Cluster Team, spent much time in prayer, study and dialogue regarding the presence of the Church in the area. A recommendation was sent to the Diocesan Planning Commission in May, 2008.

The final decision for parishes in the diocese was announced by Bishop Martino on January 31, 2008. The decision regarding our parishes stated that *Blessed Sacrament Parish, Hughestown, St. Mary’s Assumption Parish, Pittston, and St. Mary, Help of Christian Parish, Pittston would all consolidate into a new parish at the St. Mary, Help of Christians’ site. The church buildings of Blessed Sacrament and St. Mary’s Assumption will close.* **Called to Holiness and Mission**

On Sunday, November 14, 2010, at 2:00 p.m., a closing liturgy is being celebrated at Blessed Sacrament Church. Following the liturgy and the closing of the church, the Blessed Sacrament will be taken to the site of our new parish, ***Our Lady of the Eucharist***, at the church of St. Mary, Help of Christians. Benediction will be celebrated there, followed by a reception in the church hall.

The new parish, ***Our Lady of the Eucharist*** will open on the First Sunday of Advent, November 28, 2010.

Our Lady of the Eucharist maintains the roots and traditions of all three parishes as we come together. The Eucharist is the center of our life as a Catholic Church. It has been the center of the life of our parishes. The name “Blessed Sacrament” holds a special meaning for all of us as we consolidate. Our Blessed Mother has also been a very important figure in the community life of the parishes, especially under the names “St. Mary’s Assumption” and “St. Mary, Help of Christians.”

Because the Eucharist and Our Blessed Mother are central elements of our faith life, we celebrate the newly consolidated parish of ***Our Lady of the Eucharist***.