Our Lady of Mercy Church

Centenary Jubilee

1919-2019

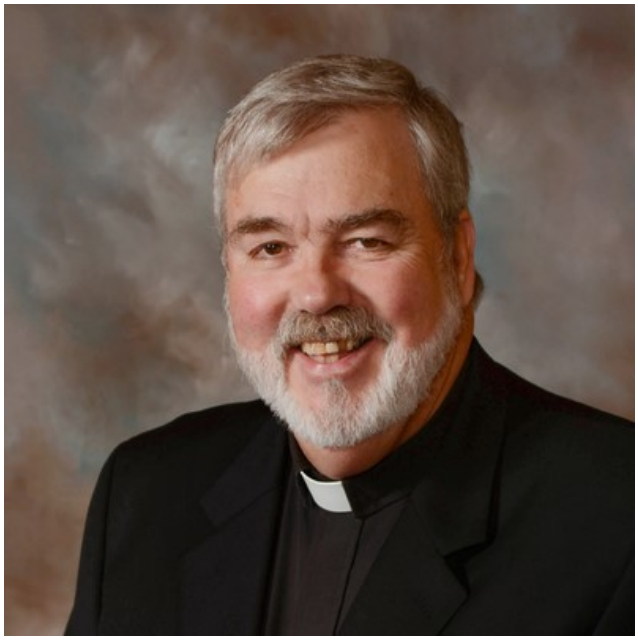


Lowell, Ohio



Most Reverend Jeffrey M. Monforton

Fifth Bishop of Steubenville



Very Rev. Timothy J. Shannon, Pastor 2012-2019



Rev. David L. Gaydosik, Pastor 2019-

BISHOP OF STEUBENVILLE
P.O. Box 969
Steubenville, OH 43952
Phone: 740-282-3631 Fax: 740-282-3327
Website: www.diosteub.org

August 25, 2019

Father David Gaydosik
Our Lady of Mercy Parish
5001 Lowell Hill Road
Lowell, OH 45744

Dear Father Gaydosik and Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Lowell:

Congratulations and God's blessing on the Centennial Anniversary of Our Lady of Mercy Parish! As each parish in our Diocese has its own history, Our Lady of Mercy is no different.

We find the beginnings of this parish not far from the Muskingam River, one mile east of the Village of Lowell, which in fact was the third settlement in the Northwest Territory. Our Lady of Mercy was formed out of the former Ave Maria Parish in 1919 and its missionary discipleship continues to this day 100 years later. No, the Holy Spirit never falls asleep, but definitely is constantly on the move in us!

I am most grateful to have opportunity to celebrate this solemn day with you at the Sacrifice of the Mass and we are honored to also be joined by the previous priests who served here at the parish, especially the recently retired Father Timothy Shannon.

As I mentioned to our brothers and sisters in Harriettsville two years ago, your role and mine is to evangelize the world that is to be contagious with the truth through the Holy Spirit. As this day is fittingly a most joyful occasion, may you and I continue that joy throughout the weeks, months and years to come with family, friends and all with whom you and I encounter.

God bless Our Lady of Mercy Parish. Again, congratulations on this esteemed anniversary and entrusting you through the care of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, patroness of our beloved Diocese, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Jeffrey M. Monforton

Most Reverend Jeffrey M. Monforton
Bishop of Steubenville

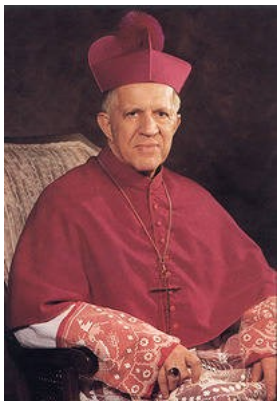
Past Bishops of Our Lady of Mercy Church



Most Reverend James Joseph Hartley
(1919-1944)
Fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus
(founding bishop of Our Lady of Mercy Church)



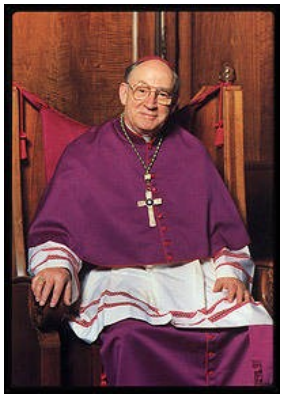
Most Reverend Michael Joseph Ready
(1944-1945)
(Temporary Administrator)
Fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus



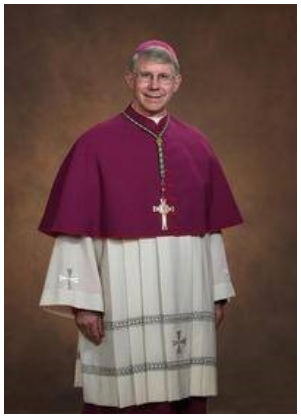
Most Reverend John King Mussio
(1945-1977)
First Bishop of Steubenville



Most Reverend Albert Ottenweller
(1977-1992)
Second Bishop of Steubenville



Most Reverend Gilbert Sheldon
(1992-2002)
Third Bishop of Steubenville



Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
(2002-2011)
Fourth Bishop of Steubenville



Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church
5001 Lowell Hill Rd
Lowell, OH 45744

August 25, 2019

Congratulations on your parish's 100th anniversary. It is truly an honor to celebrate with you and join with your parish as we journey forward.

The parish of Our Lady of Mercy is a living testimony to a deep-rooted faith; a burning zeal for God; an undaunted courage with a hope in a brighter tomorrow. This hope inspired the hard work and sacrifices required to survive these 100 years.

As we continue on this journey, may God bless and strengthen our resolve to carry forth the tradition, on our journey to the House of the Father.

Sincerely,



Fr. David Gaydosik
Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy, Lowell



Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church
5001 Lowell Hill Rd
Lowell, OH 45744

August 25, 2019

One Hundred Years

One hundred years is a long time. Today we celebrate our One Hundredth Anniversary as a parish. There is much for which we can be thankful. In a hundred years, we have weathered many storms. We have lived through two world wars, we have survived the years of the Great Depression, many of our church members have served in the world wars as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Some of our members have lost their lives in preserving the American Way of life and the freedoms we enjoy. We have much for which we can be proud and thankful!

Over the years, we have established ourselves as the parish on the hill - Lowell Hill. We accepted the challenges that were part of being a new parish 100 years ago. We built the rectory, church and social hall. We established our beautiful cemetery to honor those who have gone before us. We have raised our families and have supported each other over the years.

Most importantly, we have been a people of faith and taught the great Catholic values to all who were willing to listen and learn. It is our faith in God that helped get us through any difficulty. Without the faith we have none of what we have accomplished - enduring the storms of the Depression and wars and erecting a beautiful church and social hall and rectory and starting our cemetery and raising our families, and establishing the support we have for each other -would not mean much if it were not because of the faith in God that we have. Today, after 100 years, we are grateful indeed!

As we pray and celebrate today, may the light of faith in God on the hill here in Lowell be a beacon for all to see, know and love.

May God bless us always.

Fr. Tim Shannon



Our Lady of Mercy

Patroness of Our Parish

In the Catholic Church, a building is named for one of the following: Jesus Christ or a title used for Christ, Mary or one of her titles, one of the officially canonized saints of the church, or a person in the process of becoming a canonized saint. Obviously, the church in Lowell is named under the second option. Bishop Hartley requested the church be named "Our Lady of Mercy" when he founded the parish in 1919.

The devotion to Mary under the title *Our Lady of Mercy* can be traced back to the year 1218 when Peter Nolasco established a religious order, known as the Mercedarians, in Barcelona, Spain. Tradition holds that it was because of a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary that he established the order. The order was founded at the time for the purpose of the rescue of Christian captives. The order still exists to this day in 17 countries. The title of Our Lady of Mercy was also referred to as Our Lady of Ransom at different times in history. The feast of Our Lady of Mercy is celebrated on September 24th. The Virgin of Mercy is the patron saint of Barcelona, where a week long festival celebrates her each year.

Mary is invoked under the title of Our Lady of Mercy often in the church today. Mary is the greatest recipient of the Infinite Mercy of God through the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. She is, of course, the mother of Jesus Christ. By her consent, God came into our world in order to save us from sin and death. She was at the cross, with her heart joined with her son. Today, she is present in heaven and shares her love with us and acts as an intercessor on our behalf.

Prayer to Our Lady of Mercy

Blessed Virgin Mary, who can worthily repay you with praise and thanks for having rescued a fallen world by your generous consent! Receive our gratitude, and by your prayers obtain the pardon of our sins. Take our prayers into the sanctuary of heaven and enable them to make our peace with God.

Holy Mary, help the miserable, strengthen the discouraged, comfort the sorrowful, pray for your people, plead for the clergy, intercede for all women consecrated to God. May all who venerate you feel now your help and protection. Be ready to help us when we pray, and bring back to us the answers to our prayers. Make it your continual concern to pray for the people of God, for you were blessed by God and were made worthy to bear the Redeemer of the World, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.

- Saint Augustine of Hippo

Ave Maria- The Precursor to Our Lady of Mercy Church

While the parish of Our Lady of Mercy formally began on the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1919, the Catholic presence in the area can be traced back much further. In fact, Mass was celebrated since at least 1850 by priests from Marietta at the Phillip Schilling home on Bear Creek. Later on, the parish of Ave Maria, also referred to as Rainbow or Waterford, was established at roughly the same time as St. John the Baptist of Churchtown. Mass had been celebrated in Churchtown for some time prior to 1866 in a temporary structure. When the parish there was formally established, a parish was also established to serve Catholics living more to its north. Archbishop J.B. Purcell of Cincinnati (prior to the creation of the Diocese of Columbus) purchased four acres from Andrew Schwendeman on June 23, 1866, for one-hundred dollars. The deed was later recorded in the Washington County Recorders office on August 17th. Fr. Magnus Eppnik was charged with establishing the parish. On July 1, 1866, Auxiliary Bishop Sylvester Rosecrans laid the cornerstone for Ave Maria Church. The new parish had twenty-three families and was almost entirely German (most coming to the area via a settlement near Pittsburgh), while the Churchtown parish was more of a mixed congregation of German and Irish ancestry. Early documents on the Ave Maria parish referred to it as "St. Mary's of the Evening Star." For whatever reason, this name did not appear on later documentation.

Construction on the Ave Maria church began at once, and Fr. Eppnik came nearly everyday from Churchtown to oversee the work. According to records, a brick yard was started on the site. Although the first kilns were destroyed by rain storms, the "earnest pioneer Catholics were not dismayed, nor did they falter." The 35 by 60 ft structure was completed by the next year, thanks to the hard work and generosity of the people. Mr. Picket, a well-known architect from Cincinnati, designed the structure. In October of 1867, Bishop Rosecrans was in Marietta for confirmation. On Monday, October 7, 1867, Ave Maria Church was dedicated by the bishop. Priests from Miltonsburg, Marietta, and Cincinnati were also in attendance. Ave Maria was attended to as a mission of St. John the Baptist for sometime and was later granted status of a parish and assigned a resident pastor. Churchtown, for a time, was also responsible for serving mission churches in Hackney, McConnesville, and Stockport. In 1874, a two-story rectory was complete for a pastor to take up residence. However, records show that a priest did not take up residence until a few years later.

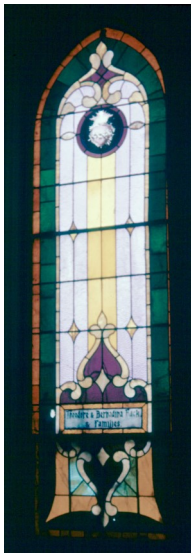


Artistic rendition of Ave Maria Church by Our Lady of Mercy parishioner Helen Fliehman (†2011)

The location of Ave Maria church was ultimately not viewed as ideal for service of Catholics in the Lowell area by the bishops of Columbus. In fact, during Fr. Woesman's time (1884-1892), there had been some discussion, by Bishop Watterson, of moving the parish to a location "closer to the river or railroad" in order to better serve the "souls of the parish." Ultimately, though, the parish remained at the Rainbow location for some considerable more time. It was not until 1918 and the arrival of Fr. Clement Crock, that formal direction was given to scout the area for land to provide a more suitable location for a parish. The Ave Maria church was officially closed on October 12, 1919. It would be historically accurate to say that not all agreed with the move. Several parishioners engaged in an intense dispute with Fr. Crock and Bishop Hartley to keep the church open. In the end, the directions of the Bishop were faithfully executed by the priest and the people of the area. The church was available for use of a limited chapel after its closure, but there are no records to indicate it was again used officially. The building remained for over half a century, only being maintained by efforts of the older generation. In June of 1974, in the presence of Lowell's pastor at the time, Msgr. O'Carroll, the walls were pulled down and the engraved cornerstone was removed for storage. It has since been placed at the Marian Shrine on the Lowell parish grounds. The cemetery is still faithfully maintained by the people of Our Lady of Mercy to this day, and a new grave is opened from time to time.



Confirmation Class at Ave Maria, 1890's



One of the original windows of Ave Maria Church, which were ordered from Germany. This particular window was donated by the Theodore and Bernadina Huck family (photo taken in 1950s by Gus Letto). Other windows were donated by the Joseph Huck , Joseph Kern, Louis & Mary Lang, Schilling, Andrew Schwendeman, and Vondreau families.



Interior of Ave Maria prior to closing in early 1900s



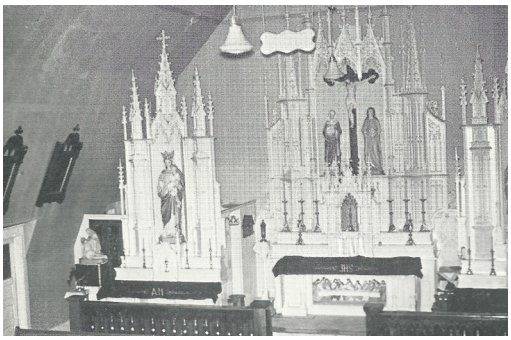
Ave Maria Cemetery in 2019

Our Lady of Mercy is Established

On May 1, 1919, Bishop Hartley directed Fr. Clement Crock (at the time serving both Churchtown and Rainbow) to purchase four acres on Lowell Hill from Mr. Louis Fritchie for the sum of $1,200. The Diocese of Columbus had been interested in moving the Rainbow parish closer to the railroad and river for decades. Finding land to build a Catholic Church in the village of Lowell had proven to be a challenge. Bishop Hartley visited the area on September 14th of that year to inspect the property (as well as the property of the old Beverly College for the site of St. Bernard's). Bishop Hartley was "very pleased with the location" and left directions to build a new church the following spring. The first burial was held on the property in October of 1919, (Mary Davis) two months before the first Mass. Later, some bodies were transferred to Lowell for burial from other cemeteries.

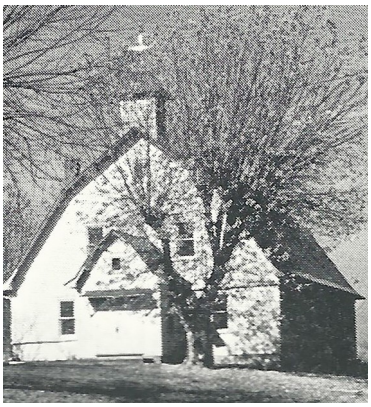


Fr. Crock



Original Church Interior

Fr. Crock moved far ahead of schedule and a temporary wood structure was built in the fall of 1919. A building committee of Frank Henke, John Schwendeman, Joe Huck, Charles Brown, and John Lang was appointed by the Bishop. Some of the furnishings were transferred from Ave Maria to Our Lady of Mercy, leaving behind some (including the main altar) for use as needed and for funerals. The new structure's materials costs about $2,100 and the parishioners built the 35 by 60 foot structure themselves. Some statues and altars were purchased from St. Patrick's Church in South Bend, Indiana for around $500. The first Mass was said on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th of that year. The church was fully paid for in ten short days. That temporary structure continued to serve the parish until the new brick church of today was built in 1954-1955. Although the pastor had recommended that the new parish be named in honor of St. Louis, Bishop Hartley decided that the parish would be named Our Lady of Mercy, out of respect for the heritage of Ave Maria church. Also, there was no church in the Diocese of Columbus at that time dedicated under that particular title of Our Lady.



Original Church



May Crowning

First Christmas at Our Lady of Mercy

From the writings of Fr. Clement Crock, the first Christmas at Our Lady of Mercy proved to be both a cherished success and a heavy burden for the priest. He writes, "On December 24, I rode horseback to Lowell, said Mass and heard 96 confessions. On the way back, I had a sick call at Peter Schaad's. When I got home (to Churchtown) people were waiting for confessions." Fr. Crock heard confessions, helped fix the crib, and prayed the Divine Office. On Christmas morning, he arose at four-o-clock, hearing confessions until five. He then had High Mass, sermon, and benediction. By 7:40 AM, he was on his horse and headed to Lowell through cold and snow. He arrived on Lowell Hill by 8:30 AM, gave his horse to a neighbor (Mr. Pierce) to take to his stable, and celebrated High Mass and preached. There was no time for benediction as he "ran from Lowell Hill to Lowell and caught the ten-o-clock Interurban for Beverly." He had High Mass there, preached, and led benediction. After a meal and returning to Lowell, he walked up Lowell Hill. Fr. Crock's saddle had been damaged by a dog. After repairing the saddle, Fr. Crock was able to return to Churchtown by dark. It was obvious to the pastor and bishop that carrying for the congregations in Churchtown, Lowell, and Beverly, would be burdensome for one pastor and his horse. Thus, arrangements were made to send a pastor to Lowell as soon as possible.

1920, A Year of Transition



Fr. Zuber

The following year the current rectory was built, using the timbers from the old Ave Maria rectory. Fr. Arthur Zuber was appointed to be the first resident pastor of Our Lady of Mercy. He also served as administrator of St. Bernard's (at that time a mission) in Beverly. The arrangement of the pastor of Our Lady of Mercy serving St. Bernard's continued until 1946, when St. Bernard's was established as a parish.

The summer of 1920 was a busy one for the parish. Finish work was taking place on the rectory. A picnic was held in July for the benefit of the parish and it raised about $2,200. A Delco Light System, furnace, and water system were installed in the house. The priest was also busy preparing children for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The cemetery was laid out in lots and a beautiful Orebronze cemetery cross was erected in honor of Louis Bauerbach, who died in World War I. Bauerbach was killed in France's Argonne Forest on November 1, 1918 (ten days before the Armistice). The cross was donated and erected by Mr. Nicholas Bauerbach. The costs of the rectory, not including the labor and materials donated by parishioners, was about $6,500. By the fall, more than half of the debt on the rectory had been paid.



First Confirmation Class -October 17, 1920

The first formal visit from Bishop Hartley was on October 17, 1920. He came for Confirmation and inspected the rectory. Fr. Zuber had begun his tenure, and he reflected kindly on his appointment to Lowell and Beverly and the good people of the parishes.

First Confirmation Class—Boys

(Items are listed as they were entered in the Church Registry)

Name	Parents
John Bauerbach	Nick & Philomena Bauerbach
Howard Brown	Charles & Blanche Brown
Clyde Bertram	Daniel & Clara Bertram
John Dyar	William Dyar & Wife
Harry Dyar	William Dyar & Wife
Sylvan Engle	Mr. & Mrs. William Engle
Glen Engle	Mr. & Mrs. William Engle
Marcus Heckman	Paul & Clara Heckman
Edward Huck	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Huck
Anthony Huck	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Huck
Clarence Huck	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Huck
Carl Lang	Mr. & Mrs. John Lang
Frank Lang	Louis III Lang & Wife
Oscar Morris	Walter & Anna Morris
Eugene Offenberger	Mr. & Mrs. John Offenberger
Wilbert Offenberger	Mr. & Mrs. John Offenberger
Harold Offenberger	Mr. & Mrs. F. Offenberger
James Offenberger	Mr. & Mrs. F. Offenberger
William Schaad	Peter Schaad & Wife
Ralph Schaad	Peter Schaad & Wife
Lawrence Schaad	Mr. & Mrs. Frank Schaad
George Morris	Walter & Anna Morris
James Reginald Meiser	John and Rose Meiser

First Confirmation Class—Girls

(Items are listed as they were entered in the Church Registry)

Name	Parents
Freda Alich	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Alich
Anna Bauerbach	Nick & Philomena Bauerbach
Clara Bauerbach	Nick & Philomena Bauerbach
Ida Bauerbach	Nick & Philomena Bauerbach
Enid Bertram	Dan & Clara Bertram
Esther Gardner	Mr. & Mrs. William Gardner
Irene Brown	Charles & Blanche Brown
Louise Heiss	Mr. & Mrs. John Heiss
Clara Huck	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Huck
Mildred Huck	Mr. & Mrs. John Huck
Louise Huck	Mr. & Mrs. John Huck
Mildred Lang	Mr. & Mrs. John Lang
Elizabeth Lang	Mr. & Mrs. Louis III Lang
Marie Lang	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lang
Louise Lang	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Lang
Caroline Lang	Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Lang
Agnes Morris	Walter & Anna Morris
Marie Offenberger	Mr. & Mrs. F. Offenberger
Louella Offenberger	Mr. & Mrs. John Offenberger
Josephine Peters	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Peters
Anna Tullius	Mr. & Mrs. Mike Tullius

All of the boys used Joseph and all of the girls used Maria as their Confirmation Name. The boys were sponsored by Mr. Henry Rupple and the girls by Mrs. Henry Rupple. The sacrament was administered by the Bishop of Columbus Rt. Rev. James J. Hartley, D.D.

First Communion Class of 1920: Howard Brown, John Dyar, Sylvan Engle, Glen Engle, Harold Offenberger, James Offenberger, Ida Bauerbach, Esther Gardner, Louise Huck, Elizabeth Huck, Marie Offenberger, Josephine Peters

First Marriage at Our Lady of Mercy: Clarence Huck (son of Mr. and Mrs. John Huck) and Emma Bauerbach (daughter of Nicholas and Philomena Bauerbach) on October 12, 1920. Witnesses were Raymond Huck and Josephine Bauerbach.

First Baptism Recorded at Our Lady of Mercy: Robert Long on November 9, 1919, son of Herbert and Catharine (Quinn) Long

Incredible Growth, Hall is Built, Consideration for New Church

In May of 1929, Fr. Joseph Pickard was appointed pastor. A remarkable note of his tenure is that in his 18 years in the parish, only four burials were recorded. But, during this same period of time, 190 baptisms had been recorded. The parish consisted of roughly 60 families at this time. The church was becoming too small for a growing congregation. Plans were drawn up and approved by the Diocese of Columbus for a new church. But, due to the Great Depression and World War II, plans were shelved until several years later.

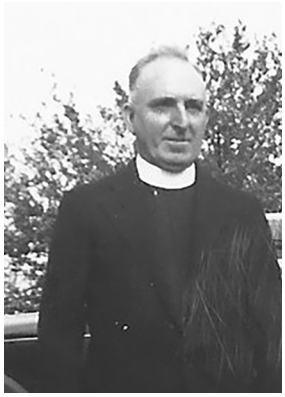
Fr. Pickard did recognize the need for supplemental revenue and storage space. He knew that dances were common throughout the countryside, and in many area barns, and thought a hall would serve Our Lady of Mercy Parish well. With permission from Bishop Hartley, he proceeded to plan for the building of the hall. At the opening dance, Fr. Pickard noted that the weather was too bad to drive cars. As a result, a great crowd walked the hill from Lowell. Dances were held regularly (bi-weekly at first, and later weekly) and "everyone enjoyed them." The estimated cost of the old hall was $12,000, and the debt was paid in a timely fashion.



Old Social Hall, shortly before demolition in the Spring of 1987



First Communion, 1940's

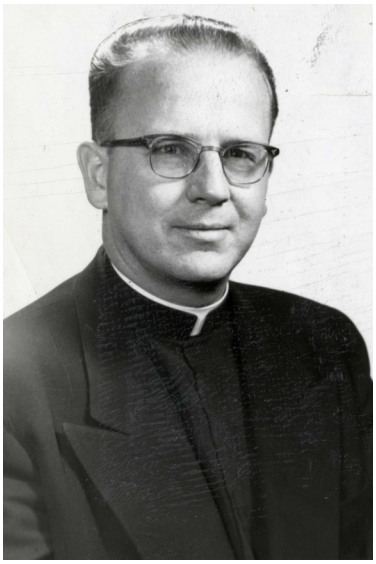


Fr. Pickard

Fr. Pickard was lovingly remembered by many older parishioners, and still holds the longest tenure to this day (18 years) of any pastor who has served Our Lady of Mercy. On October 21, 1944, the Diocese of Steubenville was established. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of both Fr. Pickard and the parish and property of Our Lady of Mercy Church would be transferred into the Diocese of Steubenville. Bishop Mussio was appointed to the new diocese in March of 1945. During Fr. Pickard's pastorate, two sons of the parish, the Long brothers, gave their lives for our country in World War II. Atop the base of the cemetery monument are plaques honoring the brothers, both bomber navigators killed in action during World War II – Ralph on November 11, 1944, in the Mediterranean area and Harold on March 14, 1945, in Lintz, Austria.



Assumption Deanery Marian Day, Hosted by Our Lady of Mercy



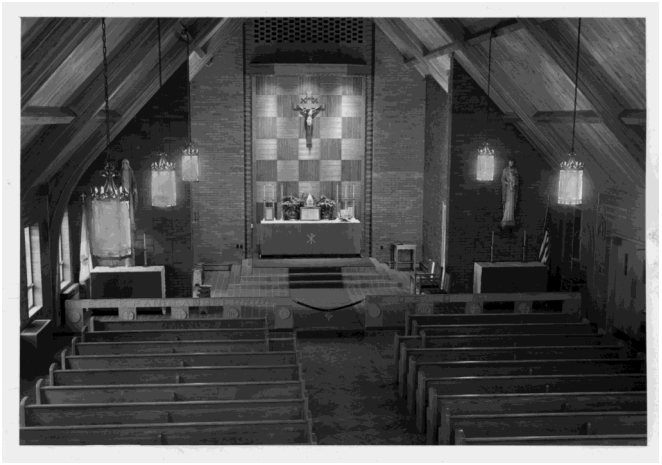
Msgr. Molloy

New Church Constructed

Following the brief pastorates of Fr. Robert Brown and Fr. Cronan Molloy, Fr. James McMahan served the parish from 1951 until his death from an extended illness on Christmas Day, 1967. The need for a new church was by no means diminishing. Construction began on September 20, 1954, and work was completed the following year. The first Mass in the new church was celebrated on Christmas, 1955.



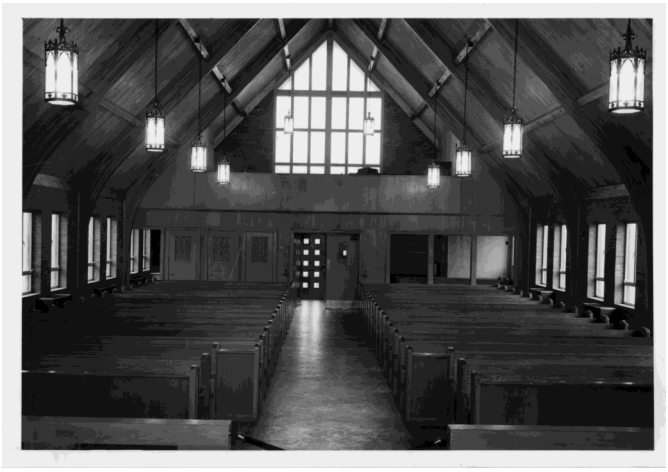
New church, near the end of construction



Original Interior

The new red brick veneer church was described as twice the size of the previous structure, measuring 102 feet in length and 40 feet in width. A bell tower, 41 feet in height, was built on the side of the church. The pews were finished in silver oak with a light green stain. The altars were oak with olive finish. The open beam interior was of light oak. Joe and Minnie Yester donated the stations of the cross that were painted on copper, with wooden portions matching the pews. The aisles were originally of red and gray asphalt tile, while red quarry tile was placed in the sanctuary. Furnishings were funded by parishioners. A custom communion rail was crafted by the Schwendemans, with the inscriptions *Ecce Panis Angelorum (Behold the Bread of Angels)* and *O Salutaris Hostia (O Saving Victim).*

One noted feature of the new church was the new “mothers’ room.” In the rear of the church with a glass window, the room was considered an innovative feature at the time. Construction was completed by J.A. Schwendeman and Sons as general contractors. Scott-Easley, of Marietta, served as the architects. Cost of the project was $78,000. The entire debt was paid off in about one year.



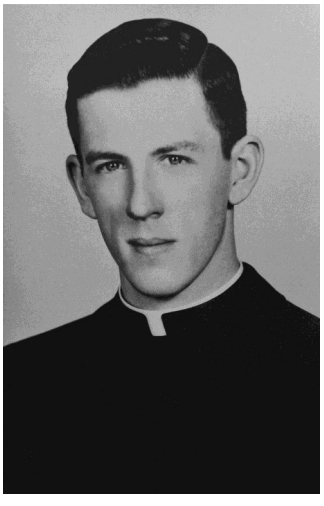
View from Sanctuary, 1956

The Solemn Blessing of the church took place on May 8, 1956, by Bishop Mussio. Fr. James McMahon was celebrant for the Mass with Bishop Mussio presiding in the sanctuary. Vicar General Msgr. Edward Murphy, of Marietta, served as assistant priest. The sermon for the festive occasion was delivered by Fr. Cronan Molloy, former pastor, who was serving as rector of St. John Vianney Seminary in Bloomingdale at the time. Many priests and guests attended the blessing, followed by a dinner in the hall.

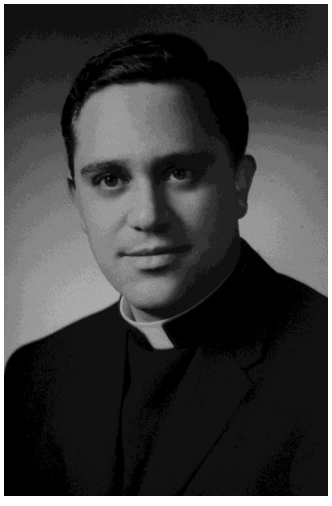
Fr. McMahon continued to oversee a period of growth in the parish. The new church was well utilized, and continues to be a blessing to the community to this day. After an extended illness, Fr. McMahon passed away on Christmas Day, 1967. Following his funeral in the church, he was buried in the church cemetery under the cross-monument. He became the first priest buried on parish grounds.



Fr. McMahon



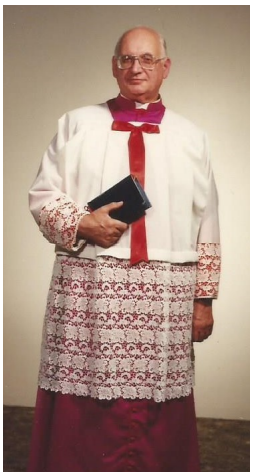
Msgr. Coyne



Fr. Battocletti

Modern Era

Following the death of Fr. McMahan, Fr. George Coyne served as a temporary administrator. He was also serving as principal of St. Mary's High School in Marietta at that time. After his brief tenure, Fr. Battocletti arrived. He was known as a strong administrator and helped provide the implementation of the Second Vatican Council reforms. During this time, several adults from the parish participated in the Cursillo prayer movement. This included training to serve in roles such as lectors. Also, around this time the parish established the first religious education program with lay teachers. Since the days of Fr. Pickard, some Dominican Sisters from Marietta had been chauffeured to Lowell on Sundays (with various families taking turns driving the sisters from St. Mary's). In 1971, Fr. Donal O'Carroll, a native of Ireland, came to Lowell from Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Lore City (Guernsey County). While in Lowell, he established a more formal partnership with most of the Protestant Churches in Adams Township. He had been appointed the first Director of Ecumenism for the Diocese of Steubenville, a novel concept at the time. Fr. O'Carroll helped further facilitate the training of lay teachers from the parish. During the 1970's many teachers served the parish school of religion, which enrolled as many as 170 students at one time (including 65 in the high school class). In addition to the former hall and the church, some classes were held in the rectory basement and dining room.



Msgr. O'Carroll

In 1986, Fr. O'Carroll volunteered to assume care for our neighbors at St. Henry's church in Harrietsville, rather than see the parish close due to lack of clergy. The parishes' close partnership continued until June 30, 2019 (when St. Henry was clustered with St. Mary of the Assumption in Marietta). To help facilitate the transition of a pastor caring for two churches, Fr. O'Carroll provided additional training for the laity of each parish. This helped transition some of the lay members to take over more leadership roles in the parishes. In the summer of 1987, Fr. O'Carroll was transferred when he was assigned as chaplain of the St. John Hospital in Steubenville. He was soon named a monsignor, as shown at left.



First Communion 1984



Pie Making, 1987 (last work function in old hall)

New Hall

One major highlight of the history of the parish is the new social hall that was built in 1987. The previous one-floor wooden structure had served the parish well for over 50 years. In 1986, after a formal vote was taken, Fr. O'Carroll began the planning and fundraising for a new hall. The previous hall was suffering from decay and the roof was in poor condition. From June 1986 to January 1987, over $62,000 was raised to begin planning a new hall. Contractors Bob Huck, Virgil Huck, and Cecil Schwendeman formed a building committee. Sandy Spindler, Terry Schwendeman, Dan Fliehman, and Phyllis Anderson formed a fundraising committee. Lawrence Schaad was in charge of organizing pledges. Final approval was given by Bishop Ottenweller in early 1987 to borrow an additional $60,000 to cover the estimated costs of $120,000. Total costs proved to be around $116,000. Funds continued to be raised, and the hall debt was paid within about two years. A mortgage burning party was celebrated early in Fr. Cinson's tenure. Estimated costs for the hall were around $350,000, had it not been built by volunteer labor.

On the morning of May 9, 1987, the old hall was burned with assistance from the Lowell-Adams Fire Department. Progress moved quickly on the replacement. Many parishioners, non-parishioners, and non-Catholics assisted the process. In addition to the talented contractors within the parish, other contractors from the area—including Charles Schilling, Clarence Bauerbach, Charles Zwick, and Robert Heiss assisted. The block was laid in three days, the hardwood floor put down in four days, and the exterior of the 100' by 40' structure was completely bricked in two days.









Clockwise from top left: New Hall Construction, Dan Fleihman and Ken Long doing interior work, a lunch break for the workers, and bricklaying.





Later that year, around Christmas time, Bishop Ottenweller was in Lowell to dedicate the new structure officially. Fr. Victor Cinson had arrived as new pastor of the parish that year. He was joined by Fr. O'Carroll and over 350 parishioners and guests to celebrate. All workers from outside the parish were invited as well. Afterwards, a round and square dance was held with music from Steve and Tony Pottmeyer. Newspaper accounts at the time described the hall with a large upper floor for banquets and dances, equipped with a modern kitchen, patio off of the kitchen for picnics in the summer, and a spacious lower level with classrooms and a kitchenette.









Dedication festivities for the new hall included (clockwise from top left) Msgr. O'Carroll, Bishop Ottenweller, and Fr. Cinson; the Bishop socializing with parishioners in the basement (before classrooms were partitioned), many enjoying the upstairs, and a cake for the occasion (decorated by Jeanne Brooker).

Social Hall Activities



Dedication Dinner, 1987



Table of life-long parishioners, 75th anniversary, 1994



John Paul and Tony Pottmeyer, Parish Pie Auction



Children's Halloween Party

Our Lady of Mercy Fish Fries

One of the staples of the Lowell area for over the past 30 years has been the well-regarded fish fries, sponsored by the Holy Name Society. Beginning shortly after the hall was built, and continuing annually, the fish fries have drawn crowds from near and far to Lowell Hill during Fridays of the Lenten Season. The first fish fries served around 75 pounds of fish, while today they serve a typical 500 pounds. Proceeds from the events have been instrumental in many parish improvements.







Our Lady of Mercy CWC

Like in many parishes, the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Woman's Club has been a vital organization to the ministry of the parish. The many fundraisers, craft shows, dinners, and socials have had and continue to have a positive impact on the life of the parish and the outreach in the greater community.



CWC Officers in the 1970's



Officers in 2019



1989 CWC Christmas Party



2018 CWC Christmas Party



Mildred Schwendeman and the famous chicken pies



A recent "noodle-making"

The 1980's through today



Fr. Victor Cinson

In addition to the new hall, Fr. Cinson's tenure was noted with several accomplishments, both physical and spiritual. The rectory underwent a significant renovation and upgrade. The rectory has continued to be a point of pride for the parish, as the timbers from the Ave Maria rectory served as the frame for the Lowell home. In 1994, the parish celebrated its 75th anniversary. Part of the celebration featured a new stations of the cross prayer garden, donated by the Catholic Woman's Club. It was constructed between the church and cemetery and serves as a focal point to this day.



Bishop Sheldon at 75th Anniversary Mass



Fr. Cinson at Wedding Anniversary Mass

During Fr. Cinson's tenure, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) was formally established. Still, thriving today, it has been a successful program and welcomed numerous adults into the parish. Fr. Cinson also continued the work of ecumenical outreach in the Lowell and Adams Township area. The Lowell Area Ecumenical Cooperative was formed, with Fr. Cinson providing stable leadership. The group scheduled several joint services throughout the year. The churches of Highland Ridge, St. John' Evangelical, and Lowell United Methodist continue many of these services with Our Lady of Mercy to this day. Another highlight of the Cinson tenure was the ordination of Wayne Morris, a native son of the parish. Fr. Morris was a descendant of the Bauerbach family, one of the original families of the parish.



Easter Vigil Service of Light



First Communion, early 1990's



Fr. Huffman

In the summer of 2004, Fr. Cinson's committed service to the parish came to a close. His 17 years were the second-longest in parish history. Fr. Cinson was transferred to St. Gabriel Church and St. Francis Xavier Church in Minerva and Malvern, respectively. The tenure of Fr. Tim Huffman began that same summer. Fr. Huffman was a native of New Matamoras, Ohio, and was happy to return to the area after serving extra-diocesan assignments in Virginia and South Carolina. During his tenure, several repairs and renovations were made to the church and grounds. The bell tower, which had begun to lean, was repaired. The pews and interior doors were refinished and several cosmetic upgrades made to the sanctuary. A new Allen Organ was purchased during Fr. Huffman's time. Fr. Huffman was noted for his love of dogs and his great language skills. He would celebrate Mass in Spanish and Latin from time to time. Fr. Huffman was also a talented organist, and would lead ecumenical hymn sings with the local Protestant Churches.

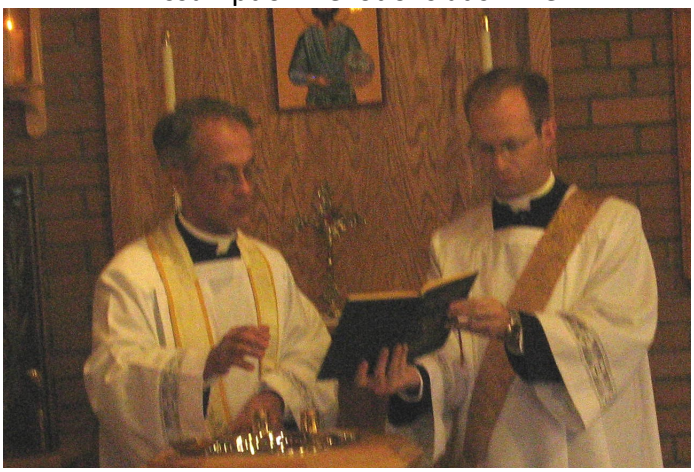
During Fr. Huffman's time the monstrance, original to our mother parish, Ave Maria, was re-gilded. It is believed to be the only physical article from the old parish still in use today. Fr. Bradley Greer, a native of North Carolina, resided in Lowell as a seminarian for the Diocese of Steubenville from 2004-2009. He assisted Fr. Huffman in several endeavors and currently serves as Chancellor for the Diocese. Fr. Huffman's loyal eight years of service to the people of Lowell came to a close in 2012.



Assumption Devotions at shrine



Fr. Huffman with Diego, Maria, and Peter Daniel



Fr. Huffman and (then) Deacon Greer at baptism



First Communion, 2006



Fr. Shannon

In the summer of 2012, Fr. Huffman was transferred to St. Peter's Church in Steubenville. Fr. Tim Shannon would replace him. Fr. Shannon came to Lowell while still serving as director of vocations for the diocese. During his tenure, progress continued with the RCIA and ecumenical outreach. Fr. Shannon oversaw some lighting upgrades to the church, new carpeting, and a new sign. Fr. Shannon also served as the Dean for the Visitation Deanery (made-up of parishes in Washington, Morgan, Noble, Monroe, and Guernsey Counties). Fr. Shannon also hosted seminarian Nick Ward for a brief time as a pastoral intern.

Among other accomplishments, the hall restrooms were renovated, a new sign and gates were added at the entrance to the cemetery, and exterior upgrades to the rectory were completed. Many sidewalks were repaired or replaced on the grounds. During his tenure, an "Upper Room" program was implemented for the teens of the parish.



Parish Mardi Gras



2019 RCIA Breakfast



Fr. Shannon, 2015 Baptism



First Communion, 2019



Fr. Gaydosik

After seven years of dedicated service to the parish, and 44 years of priestly labor for the Diocese of Steubenville, Fr. Shannon retired on June 30, 2019. The work of Fr. Shannon's successor, Fr. David Gaydosik will be starting as this booklet goes to press. The next chapter in the history of the parish will begin in August, 2019. In an interesting irony, Our Lady of Mercy Church will again share a pastor with St. John the Baptist in Churchtown. This arrangement will mirror the original design when Our Lady of Mercy was founded in 1919.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish has no doubt been a blessing to many souls of the Lowell area for 100 years. The many baptisms, confirmations, and weddings have impacted generations of the faithful. The countless communions, confessions, and anointing rites have provided infinite mercy. Ecumenical services, social hall functions, craft shows, fish fries, and other gatherings have impacted the entire river valley in ways that can never be quantified. The entire community of Lowell will be eternally grateful for the incredible gift of Our Lady of Mercy Parish. No matter what the future may hold, the fact cannot be denied that the fruits of the past 100 years have positively impacted the course of history forever.



2019 Confirmation



Youth Group-Zip Line Outing, Spring 2019

Our Lady of Mercy Parish Groups - 2019



Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion



Altar Servers



Lectors



Ushers



Rosary Leaders



Parish Council



PSR Catechists



Charity & Compassion Committee

Our Lady of Mercy Shrine





A focal point of the lovely parish grounds is the Our Lady of Mercy Shrine. In the 1970's, after the demolition of the Ave Maria Church, some of the bricks were collected and brought to Lowell. The bricks formed a grotto, altar, and seating. Many parishioners contributed to the construction of the shrine. Recently the Ave Maria cornerstone from 1866 and a commemorative plaque have been added.

Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery







The Church Cemetery's main feature is the cross and memorial in the center of the plot. The cross was originally donated in memory of Louis Bauerbach who was killed in World War I. Two other sons of the parish who were killed in the Second World War, Ralph and Harold Long, are also memorialized with plaques. The cross was restored in the early 2000's. Near the cross, former pastors Fr. James McMahon and Msgr. Donal O'Carroll are buried. A new gate with an arched entrance was added in 2012. The cemetery is very much an extension of the parish community today, well maintained by members. It continues to serve as a cherished ground where many who have worshiped together are now resting together. Many former parishioners continue to return to Lowell from other parts of the country for their final resting place.

Our Lady of Mercy Interior



The sanctuary area (shown here prepared for Palm Sunday) includes the main altar, the central focus of the Catholic Mass. It is here the most principal and ancient act of the Catholic worship takes place. The bread and wine here become the Body and Blood of Christ during Mass. Behind the altar are three steps (as is a common custom) rising to the tabernacle. It is here that the Eucharist is reserved for later distribution, to provide communion to the sick, and for prayer and meditation.





On the sides of the sanctuary are statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. The statues used today are original to the 1954 new church. The placement of Mary on the left (right when standing in the sanctuary) and Joseph on the right are common in Catholic churches traditionally throughout the world. In some cases, patron saints are used in their place.





In the center is the crucifix, also original to the 1954 church. It was refinished by J.A. Schwendeman & Sons in the mid 2000's. The sanctuary area also contains the ambo (pulpit). The present one in use is a gift from a Baptist Church in Northern Ohio.

Other statues include the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Infant of Prague, and St. Boniface (patron of Germany). The St. Boniface statue was created specifically for the parish in Oberammergau , Germany (along with the larger crucifix found in the social hall). On the right side is a shrine to St. isidore, the patron of farmers.






The sanctuary also contains the baptismal font, crafted in the 2000's. The manger scene, one of the traditional fourteen stations of the cross, and the church at Christmas are shown below.







Holy Week 2019– The 100th Celebration of Easter at Our Lady of Mercy

The highlight of the liturgical year at Our Lady of Mercy has always been Holy Week. The Sacred Triduum of the Catholic Church is a chance to celebrate the most sacred mysteries of our Christian faith. Holy Thursday often includes the mandatum (foot washing), followed by a procession to the altar of repose. The altar is generally stripped in preparation for Good Friday services. On Friday, the faithful venerate the cross. Good Friday is the only day that mass is not celebrated. The Great Easter Vigil generally includes the reception of new members into the church, blessing of the water in the Baptismal Font and Paschal Candle, and a recalling of the history of salvation through the scriptures.













RCIA Team 2019

Music at Our Lady of Mercy

The music ministry of Our Lady of Mercy has played a vital role in the community. The primary organist for over 65 years at Our Lady of Mercy was Joanna (McCreery) Pitt. Before her, Rosemary Luton and Esther (Gardner) McDermott were among those who served the parish. The parish has also been blessed with other accompanists through the years, committed choir members, liturgical guitarists, and cantors. In 2019, the parish is served by organist Evan Schaad, who along with his wife, cantor Heather, lead the Sunday morning music. Guitarist and cantor Jerry Smith, and his wife Anna, lead the music for Saturday night Masses.



Long-time Organist, Joanna (McCreery) Pitt (†2006)



Evan and Heather Schaad



Choir in 2019



Choir in 1970's



Jerry and Anna Smith



Choir in 2006



Allen Organ in use today

St. John Central School

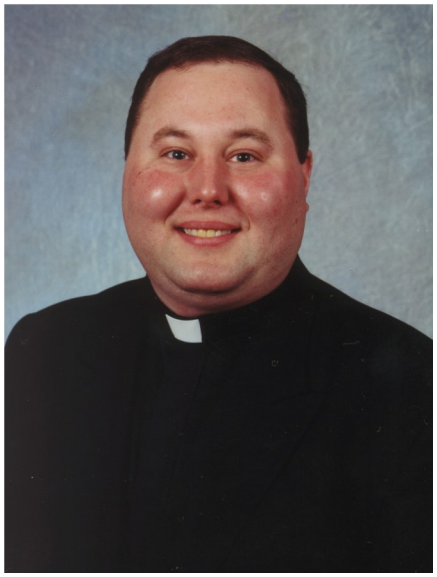
Early in 1950, pastors from Churchtown, Beverly, and Lowell met at the request of Bishop John King Mussio to discuss the possibility of establishing a Catholic school for the children in this area. Their insight into the needs of the community resulted in a plan to have the parishes build a school to be staffed by Catholic sisters hired by the local school board, and to serve the district elementary school of the predominantly Catholic area. Upon approval of their proposal by the Bishop, Washington County school officials, and the State Department of Education of Ohio, seventeen and one-half acres of property adjoining the church in Churchtown were purchased from Howard Jurden. In 1956, St. John Grade School was opened as a public school. Due to the unavailability of teaching sisters, the school was staffed by two lay teachers. However, beginning in the spring of 1957, an agreement to work with the Sisters of the Assumption of Grahamsville, South Africa was reached. The good sisters began teaching with temporary provisional certificates. However, their college degrees were from non-American institutions. Therefore, the county superintendent ultimately recommended to non-renew their teaching credentials and their contracts. The county superintendent did not like the idea of these Catholic sisters teaching in a public grade school. The resulting clash between the superintendent and local board members was spirited and lively, and the controversy ended up being discussed in the national press. This led to the separation of this public school from local board control and its being designated a parochial school on August 30, 1959. It was designated a central school to serve Churchtown, Beverly, Lowell, and Vincent (now Little Hocking).

For a brief time in the 1990's and early 2000's, Our Lady of Mercy housed a preschool in the basement of the hall. The preschool in the village of Lowell had closed and options were limited for the community. For several years, many families were well served by the satellite preschool. Founding Board Members included Karen Schramm, Susan Hupp, Elanda Fliehman, Lisa Huck, Sarah Vandenberg, and Lisa Schwendeman. After some construction and renovations in Churchtown, the preschool transferred to St. John's campus. It continues to thrive to this day.



Julie Renner and Judy Best, Teachers at the Our Lady of Mercy Preschool

Father Wayne Morris, Son of the Parish



Father Wayne Morris, son of RB and Betty (Bauerbach) Morris, was born in October of 1973 and was baptized at Our Lady of Mercy later that month by Monsignor Donal O'Carroll. He received all of his sacraments except the call to Holy Orders at Our Lady of Mercy. Fr. Wayne was an Altar Boy from the 3rd grade until he graduated from Fort Frye High School. It was during his time as cantor in High School that the seeds of priestly vocation began, spirited on by Fr. Victor Cinson.

"I attribute my vocation from the fact that service, and especially behind the scenes service, were instilled in me from my childhood of being volunteered at church. From watering flowers, to server, lector, and extra-ordinary minister training, to decorating, to being the parish secretary and IT guy these were a few of the events that I enjoyed and helped to train me to be a servant of God. Thank you to the parishioners and friends of Our Lady of Mercy Parish. May God grant you many happy years." -Fr. Wayne



Wayne Morris, late 1990's



Deacon Wayne and Fr. Cinson, Christmas 2000



In honor of RB and Betty Morris



In memory of John and Marie Bauerbach

Pastors of Our Lady of Mercy

Fr. Clement Crock†	**1919-1920**
Fr. Arthur Zuber†	**1920-1929**
Fr. Joseph Pickard†	**1929-1947**
Msgr. Robert Brown†	**1947-1950**
Msgr. Cronan Molloy†	**1950-1951**
Fr. James McMahon†	**1951-1967**
Msgr. George Coyne	**1967-1968**
Fr. Richard Battocletti†	**1968-1971**
Msgr. Donal O'Carroll†	**1971-1987**
Fr. Victor Cinson	**1987-2004**
Fr. Timothy Huffman	**2004-2012**
Fr. Timothy Shannon	**2012-2019**
Fr. David Gaydosik	**2019-**

In Memory of

Father James M. McMahon

by

Father Walter E. Heinz

In Memory and Honor of All

Living and Deceased Members

of

Our Lady of Mercy Parish

Fr. Victor Cinson, Pastor 1987-2004

In Memory/Honor of	Donation By
The Joseph J. and John A. Schilling Families	Marie Schilling Scyphers
Deceased Choir Members	Our Lady of Mercy Choir
David Nicholas Bauerbach	David and Beth Bauerbach
John and Marie Bauerbach	Grace Bauerbach
Anna Marie Strahler Spindler	Kenny, Sandy, Bryan, Missy & Matt Spindler
Bob Peters	Marilyn and Heather Peters
Marlene A. Huck	Clair A. Huck
Clair and Edna Schwendeman	Tom and Becky Britton
Parishioners	Msgr. George Coyne
Our Family	RB & Betty Morris

In Memory of Dale and Marjorie Arnold And David Arnold by Donna Arnold and Patrick Arnold-McKinney	In Memory of John and Marie Schilling by Pat Camden McKinney
In Memory of Nicholas and Philomena Bauerbach Family Frank and Virginia Offenberger Family John and Marie Bauerbach Family Albert and Hilda Meiser Family James, David, Donald Bauerbach by Cecil Bauerbach	In Memory of of our Deceased Family Members by Bernard and Sue Klinger

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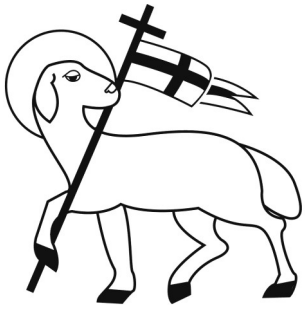

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In Honor of

Harold and Irene Huck Family

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Mike and Susan Huck

Austin and Tori Huck

In Memory of

Raleigh Willson

by

Helene Willson

In Memory of

Raymond and Mary Brooker

by

Bernard and Julia Brooker

In Memory of David N. Bauerbach



Grace and Family

In Memory of

Joseph and Margaret Schilling
Clemence and Eulalia Huck
Charles and Sandy Schilling
Elizabeth Detembel
Irene Barton
Mary E. Schilling
David and Mary A. Schilling
Francis and Louise Schilling
Charles and Frances Lang
Walter Lang
Edward Meiser
Leo and Stella Schilling
Howard Schilling
Leander Stehle
Edgar Lang
Joseph and Minnie Yester

by

Edward Schilling

In Memory of

Joe and Janice Pottmeyer

by

Tina Weckbacher

and

Tami Snider

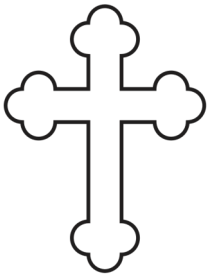
In Memory of

John Karol Morris

by

Jason and Jennifer Morris Family

In Memory of



Louise and Francis Offenberger

Cecil Offenberger

by

Kay Offenberger Family

In Memory of

Joseph and Ida Huck Family

by

James and Peggy Huck

In Memory of

Carol S. Fulton

by

Leroy and Ruth Skinner

In Memory of

Frank and Anna (Full) Schaad

Lawerence and Margaret (Arnold) Schaad

by

Jim and Phyllis Anderson and Bruce and Jane Schaad

In Memory of

Walter Huck Family

And

Paul Bauerbach Family

by

Charlie and Dorothy Huck

Congratulations on the *100th* Anniversary

In Memory of

Joseph (1891-1978) & Ida (1894-1986) (Schaad) Huck

John W.(1917-2007) & Mary Lou (1922-2016)Huck

Ross (1920-2002) & Meriem (1923-1999) Greene

by

Gregory G. & Marlene I. Greene

Matthew, Gregory, Katrina & Families

In Memory/Honor of

Jerry & Mildred Schwendeman

&

Bill & Pat Omspach

by

Kevin & Cynthia Schwendman

In Memory of

John and Alice Schwendeman

Cecil and Eleanor Schwendeman

Nancy Schwendeman Cain

by

Jim and Cindy Schwendeman

In Memory of Our Parents

Clarence H. Huck (8/30/1906 –4/26/1989)

and

Gertrude E. Huck (5/21/1915-7/21/1989)

and Our Grandparents

Joseph Huck (1861-1922) & Anna Huck (1864-1939)

by

Clair A. Huck, Roger J. Huck, and Marilyn Huck Peters

In memory of

Mr & Mrs Robert L. Long

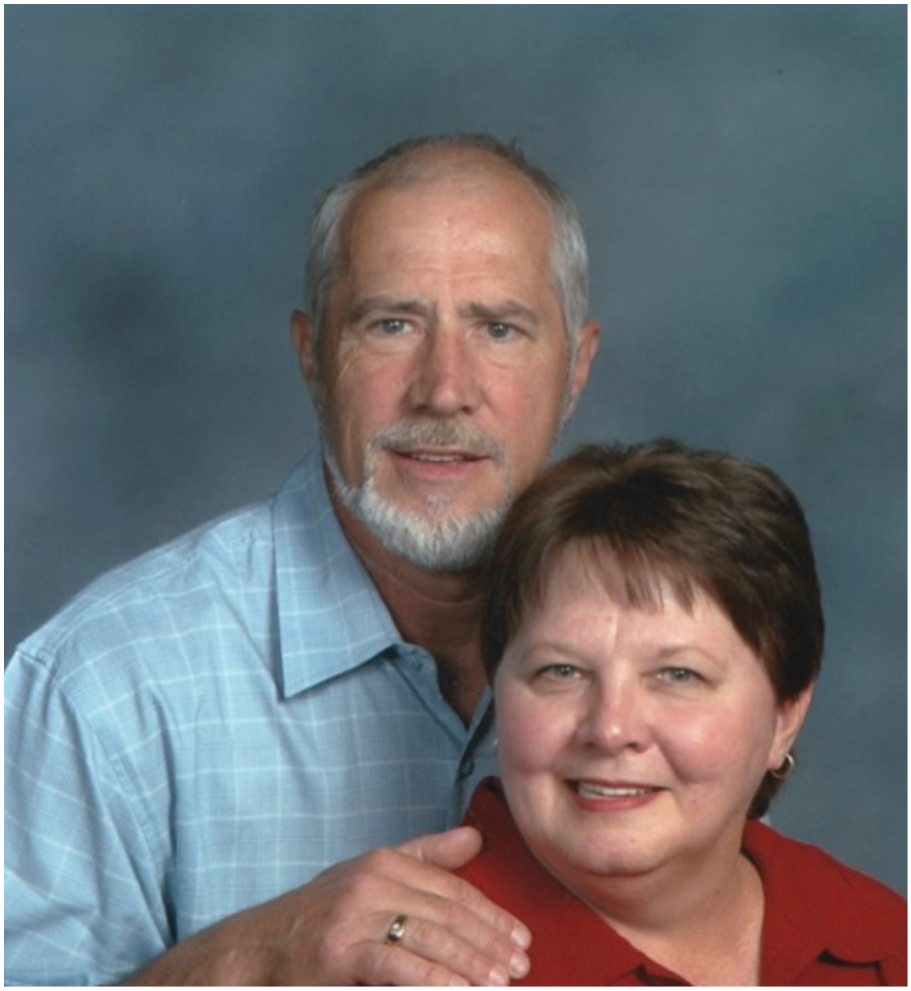
by

James H. Long Family



In honor of Roger & Grace (Huck) Randolph and family: Nathan, Justin, Trina, Aaron





In Loving/Memory of

Charles and Sandra Schilling

Married June 1st 1974 and lived their lives in Lowell

Their children are Donald Merrow, Mechelle Adams, Krisitin Offenberger, Stacy Leeper, and John Schilling

Congratulations to Our Lady of Mercy on 100 years!

In honor of

Eagle Scout Alex Bauerbach

Our Lady of Mercy

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Walick,

&

Sulzer

Families

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Fr. Timothy Shannon,

Pastor 2012-2019

In Memory of

Harold & Mildred Offenberger

&

Frank & Virginia Offenberger

by

Harold “Sonny”

& Rita Offenberger

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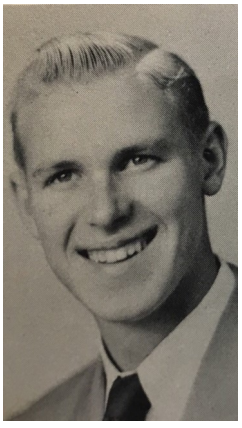


(1932-2008)

by

David and Joanie Yeomans

In Memory of

Albert and Helen Huck

Carol and Edna Huck

Harold Huck

Albert Huck Jr.

Dale Huck

Hilda Arnold

by

Robert and Alberta Huck



In Memory of

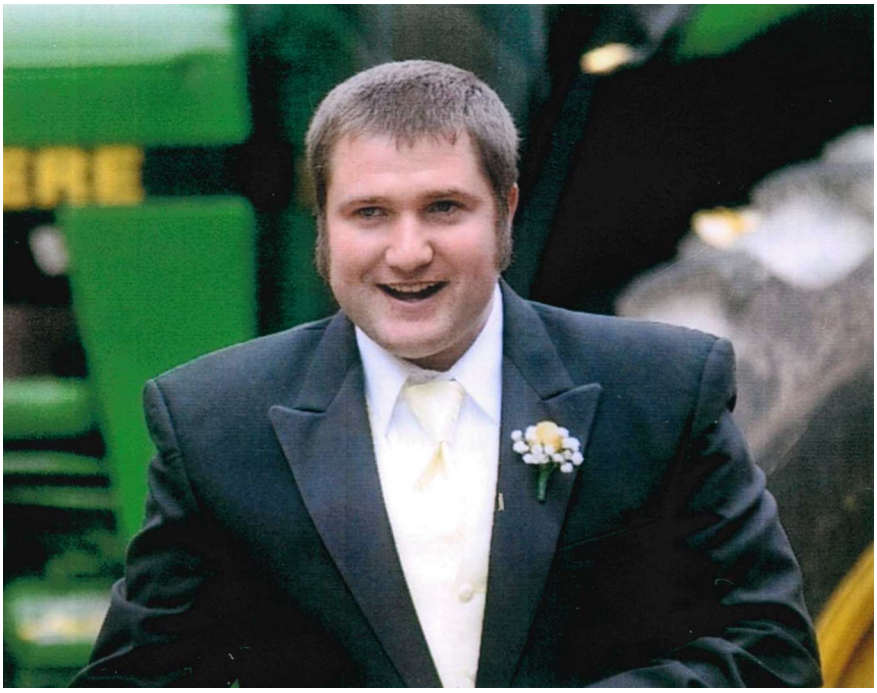
Howard Dunn

Roy and Esther Engle Family

William and Myrtle Dunn Family

by

Emma K. Dunn



In Loving Memory of

Travis John (TJ) Fagan

1986-2018



In Loving Memory of Herbert and Clara Huck



In Memory/Honor of

Max & Tess Huck, Neil & Joyce Huck, Virgil & Martha Huck, Kenny & Pat Huck, Bob & Jeanette Schwendeman, Jerry Huck, Kenny & Evelyn Arnold, Charles & Lillian Schilling, Roger & Grace Randolph, and Dale & Marian Statler



In Loving Memory of

Helen M. Fliehman
1929 – 2011

Kelton Fliehman & Family



In Loving Memory of

Tina K. Schaad
1953-2005

Evan & Heather Schaad



Acknowledgments

Emily Teachout, Diocese of Steubenville Archivist

Fr. Bradley Greer, Diocese of Steubenville Chancellor

Diocese of Columbus Historical Society

Current and previous priests of Our Lady of Mercy

Fr. Wayne Morris

Gus Letto

Jane Ann Rauch

Mildred Schwendeman

Chris Palmer

Kelton Fliehman

100th Anniversary Committee Members

Elanda Fliehman

Martha Fliehman

Jennifer Morris

Evan & Heather Schaad

Ed Schilling

Jim & Cindy Schwendeman

Helene Wilson

This brief jubilee history book of Our Lady of Mercy Parish is primarily based on available church records, former pastors' notes, and personal interviews with individual parishioners. An attempt was made to research our historical record from various sources. If there are inaccuracies in this book, the responsibility is due to the interpretation of available records. We regret any errors or oversights.