

History of Holy Name of Mary Parish



Holy Name of Mary Church was founded in the Black community of Morgan Park on the southside of Chicago. It is the only church in the city to be built and founded by African Americans. There were two communities of Morgan Park. One white and one Black. The white side of Morgan Park boundary was west of Vincennes Avenue. The Black side of Morgan Park was from Vincennes to the west and Racine to the east. The northern boundary was 107th Street and the southern boundary was 115th Street. The community was almost self-sufficient, but a Catholic Church and school was absent in the community. Sixteen Catholic women forced the Archdiocese of Chicago to build a church/school for the Catholics in the community. It took many meetings and support from other churches in the community who contributed money for the church to be built, Beth Eden Baptist Church and Arnett Chapel A.M.E. Church. From 1937 to 1941 these women worked tirelessly for their dream of a church and school became a reality for Catholics in the community.

The parish priest, Father John Ryan, celebrated Mass in the auditorium of Shoop School until construction was completed January 1, 1942. The first Sunday Mass was celebrated the second Sunday of January 1942. The sixteen founders also wanted Black Sisters to educate their children, so the Oblate Sisters of Providence arrived in Chicago in the fall of 1942 with 110 children to be educated. This order of Religious Sisters was the first of African descent in the United States and the world.



Father John Ryan who later became Monsignor John Ryan



Cardinal Samuel Stritch

OBLATE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE



In 1951 the Sisters moved from 11159 S. Loomis to a convent dedicated by Cardinal Stritch on April 15, 1951. A hall was built by the men of the church and dedicated August 22, 1954. After having Mass in the school basement for thirty years, the construction of a church began on October 15, 1970 and the dedication and celebration of the new church was April 22, 1972 by Cardinal John Cody.

We will not forget that the church was built by a Black architect, Raymond Broady, who drew the plans for the church. Ernest Bush, a Black contractor completed the construction of the church. There is much to tell about Holy Name of Mary Parish that could be a history book of how African Americans fought for what they wanted for their community and children. This was a win, win for their tenacity.

NAMES OF FOUNDERS

Mrs. Ethel Badger

Mrs. Regina Benjamin

Mrs. Mildred Bostick

Mrs. Purnell Collins

Mrs. Lula Curl

Mrs. Admira Fitzgerald

Mrs. Neola Green

Mrs. Pearl Harrison

Mrs. Georgia Hervey

Mrs. Anderson Hesse

Mrs. Mary Lewis

Mrs. Josephine Poche

Mrs. May Rock

Mrs. Grace Spellman

Mrs. Electra Steward

Mrs. Louise Sutherlin