



HISTORY

The People of Cathedral Parish
1853-2003

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There are literally thousands of stories about the people who have been involved with the life of the parish over the past 150 years. Many left examples of faith and courage worthy of reflection as we celebrate our sesquicentennial anniversary. These are only a few of their stories.

Origins of the Cathedral.

When the Corpus Christi Caller announced the funeral of Mrs. Genoveva Cortez Rios de Riviera in February of 1923, it noted that Father Alvarez would be conducting the funeral services for this matriarch and that she had been born in San Antonio in 1810. Senora Riviera had moved to the Corpus Christi area when she was about 17 or 18 years old (circa 1827 or 1828) and was married to Antonio Riviera by Colonel Frederick Belden before then making their residence on the Belden property with Frederick and his wife, Maria Arocha. The obituary was a testimony to the presence of a population in this area even before it was known as Corpus Christi. The article was also a witness to the early Catholic population (including the Rivieras and the Beldens) who were initially served by priests visiting from such places as Laredo and Victoria for years prior to the establishment of a permanent parish in this area. Early records show that after the establishment of Kinney's Trading Post in 1839, Corpus Christi was visited by such priests as Fathers Estany, Querat, Padey, and Fitzgerald. Fr. Ubald Estany, C.M., was a Vincentian priest who came to Texas with Bishop Odin in 1840, resided on the San Antonio River, and visited villages in a circumference of 400 miles. Capt. W. S. Henry said that he even attended Catholic services at one of the houses on Kinney's ranch on August 3, 1845. It was Fr. James Fitzgerald, however, who began visiting our area about 1848 to say Mass and administer the sacraments for the growing Catholic community who met in homes like those owned by Richard Power and Cornelius Cahill. Richard Power was born in Waterford, Ireland, in 1804, and died in Corpus Christi on April 11, 1879. He arrived in this area while the future state of Texas was still a part of Mexico.

Cornelius Cahill was the son of Daniel Cahill and Mary McDonald and had emigrated from Ireland with the family to Quebec, then New York, and then New Orleans before settling in Illinois in the fall of 1838. In Illinois he lived near the homes of the Kinneys, Merrimans and others who would later become early Corpus Christi pioneers. While most of the Cahill family remained in Illinois, young Cornelius and his family continued to follow fellow citizens H. L. Kinney, Walter Merriman, and James Myers by moving to the Nueces Valley. Cornelius settled in Corpus Christi in the 1840s as an early merchant and Justice of the Peace. It was in his home that Fr. Fitzgerald stayed and celebrated Mass when visiting and began a collection to build a church for the community.

Fr. Fitzgerald's plans for a church were cut short when he was caught in a storm. Drenched with rain, he became sick, and in weakened health, died a victim of the yellow fever in Victoria on July 28, 1849, at only 28 years of age. Fr. James Giraudon succeeded Fr. Fitzgerald as pastor in Victoria and continued the practice of visiting such outposts as Corpus Christi, where he, too,

celebrated Mass in the home of Mr. Cahill on Water Street or in the home of Richard Powers on Broadway and Lipan.

In 1853 the community welcomed their first resident pastor. Father Bernard O'Reilly was assigned by the Bishop of Galveston (whose diocese included the whole state of Texas) to minister to the Catholics in the area. Fr. O'Reilly was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1821. He had studied at All Hallows College and came to the missionary area of Texas where he was ordained by Bishop Odin of Galveston in 1852. He initially lived with the Cahill family while he applied for citizenship and began completing Fr. Fitzgerald's plans to build a church. Father O'Reilly had relatives living in the area of Corpus Christi-San Patricio and presumably welcomed the opportunity to take up residence near his family.

The parish community Fr. O'Reilly served would in time reflect the strength of an immigrant nation, America. Irish and Mexican families are often mentioned in connection with the early parish; however, the records reveal a group that came from many different places and cultures and spoke numerous languages. Parish diversity also existed in education, income levels and age. There were those from the eastern states who had grown up and been educated in a much more sophisticated environment, worshiping along with those from a more modest background. There were numerous French parishioners, clerics and women religious. People from Spain, Germany, Switzerland and England attended Mass. All were to contribute to the growth and development of a young, vibrant community. Perhaps the fact that services were in Latin was a good thing, as the congregation spoke a variety of tongues. The soft tones of the priest saying the Mass in Latin must have provided a certain level of comfort to the people, hearing the prayers in a common language, familiar to all, regardless of place of origin.

The Building of St. Patrick's Church.

The year 1853 marks the beginning of the parish's sacramental records (prior to this, records would have been in such places as Victoria where the visiting priest actually lived). By 1855, services were being conducted in a little adobe church even prior to its completion in 1857. The church was built on a block of land donated by H. L. Kinney and bounded by Leopard, Tanchua, Antelope, and Caranchua Streets. It appears that this first church was built on Tanchua while the second church would be built on the corner of Caranchua and Antelope. The first church was only a small box about 40 feet on each side with a small bell tower and portico. Because of the many Irish in the community, the name "St. Patrick's" was given to the parish and the new church.

Along with Irish and Mexican parishioners, other immigrants brought their own special talents and skills learned in their native lands and put to good use in the new parish. Artisan and master carver, Bloze Mathias Baldeschwiler from Switzerland, carved all the woodwork for the first small church. Unfortunately, none of his work survives; however, someday some small piece may be found. Records also show that Irishman, James McBride, helped with the actual building. It is probable that others, particularly the native born Tejanos, gave of their talents to build and adorn the church with the best that was available to them.

Three traditions of the parish - education, social service, and music - existed since its beginning. A fourth might be said to be outstanding generosity. Parishioners gave their material possessions as well as their talent and energy to the Church. Early wills record gifts of land and buildings. In 1858, the testament of Gilbert McGloin bequeaths a sizeable tract of land to Fr. O'Reilly for sale or use by the Church. In another will, widow Bridget Kelly left her home to the Church. Others gave as needs arose. From this generosity the parish was able to grow in its life of faith and service.

Father John McGee arrived in Corpus Christi in 1861. He immediately organized the building of a rectory on Antelope Street behind the church.

Tragedy in Corpus Christi.

The Civil War brought desperate times to the little village on Corpus Christi Bay when the Texas coastline was blockaded. Parishioners were adversely affected by events, which included severe food and supply shortages and the bombardment of the city by Yankee troops. One story that survives demonstrates the concern shown by early parishioner Rebecca Millard Britton for her former slaves. Citizens had been warned by the Yankee troops to evacuate the city prior to the bombardment. People fled by any means possible, but the poor had no means to accomplish such a move. Rebecca, hitching up a wagon, rushed to carry the family of Anna Moore Schwein and others to a safe place. Later, the wagon ride inland to a neighboring ranch and subsequent events were related by Anna in her memoirs.

Father John Gonnard, who followed Fr. McGee in 1863, concentrated on the educational needs of the community. He first built a two-story frame building on the church lot and named it "Hidalgo Seminary School," a boarding school for boys. Later a day school for girls was also opened, headed by Mother St. Claude who had come at the request of Fr. McGee.

Members of the parish continued their generosity to the Church. Contributions, large and small, to meet parish needs, came from many quarters and in a variety of ways. In 1866, an Irish widow from Tipperary, Catherine Bray, for one dollar, sold two acres of land to Fr. Gonnard to serve as the consecrated burial ground we know today as Holy Cross Cemetery. Though the cemetery has grown to encompass many more acres containing the remains of approximately 6,500 souls, it began with the gift of Catherine Bray. Several months later, her gift would fill a critical need for a large burial ground for the parish. Eventually both she and Father Gonnard would rest there. Catherine died of old age, Fr. Gonnard of yellow fever.

The ravishing yellow fever epidemic in the summer of 1867 took its toll on the citizenry, and parish families were sorely tried. Fully one third of the city's population died. The last death recorded was that of Fr. Gonnard. His death was mourned by the entire city as a profound loss to the community. He died after weeks of working day and night, not only with his own people, but also with any who needed help. The parish was left without its beloved pastor, many parishioners were dead, and its school was closed. A large number of small children were left as orphans, losing both parents to the "black vomit."

Many parish families suffered multiple deaths leaving the survivors devastated emotionally and economically. The Dunn family, for example, lost seven members, the Cahills lost two children; Mr. and Mrs. John Kelly died; as did Mr. and Mrs. John Whelan, and Dr. and Mrs. John Cleary. The city was in chaos

and put under martial law due to the large number of elected officials who had died, leaving the government without people to manage it. Numerous accounts of courage and compassion shown by clergy and laity of all denominations during the terrible siege remain in diaries, newspaper articles and official records.

People of the parish rallied, buried their dead and then set about restoring order. The assistant pastor, Fr. Peter Berthet, who also suffered from the fever, took over responsibilities as pastor of the parish after his recovery. He hired Professor Robert Dougherty to reopen Hidalgo Seminary so that children could continue their education. Adoptions of fever orphans were numerous. The Martin Kellys adopted his brother's five children, all under twelve. Years later, for the local newspaper, those children would re-count with fondness the love they felt from their adoptive parents.

The Cahills, still grieving the loss of their two children, adopted Katherine Cleary Cahill's two nieces and a nephew who had been left orphaned. Their descendants, five generations later, are still members of the parish family. In 1940, they donated the Cathedral's side altars in memory of their ancestors. Mary's altar was donated in memory of Elizabeth Cleary Mew, and St. Joseph's altar was donated in memory of Ellen Cleary Fitzsimmons.

Mayor J. B. Murphy and his wife, Mary Margaret Healy Murphy, adopted two girls who were not related. Both had lost their parents. Mary Margaret would later, after the death of her husband, found a religious order of women, the Sisters of the Holy Ghost (now known as the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate) dedicated to the education of children at risk. These remarkable parishioners lived their faith through difficult times, which called for sacrifice and hard work. Their faith sustained them and they moved on.

Father de St. John arrived to replace Father Berthet in 1871. Though he had lived in Texas for four years, the new pastor did not speak English. He immediately placed himself under the tutelage of Robert Dougherty, a native of Ireland, who spoke several languages. It is said that the results of this effort were that Father St. John became a powerful preacher.

It was shortly after his arrival that four Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament arrived from Brownsville to take over the school for girls, which had been established earlier. The arrival of the Sisters, whose congregation had been established in Lyon, France, and whose members were from France, Ireland, Mexico and the United States seems an appropriate melding of nationalities for the young parish. The order was to have a great impact on the life of both the clergy and laity by providing quality Catholic education to rich and poor for over 135 years. Their accomplishments and contributions to the development of a faith community in Corpus Christi are truly without parallel.

The Second Building of St. Patrick's Church.

In 1874, the Most Reverend Dominic Manucy was consecrated Bishop for the newly established Vicariate of Brownsville, and because of conflicts with the people of Brownsville, he took up residence in Corpus Christi. Upon finding the little church of St. Patrick's in great need of repairs and with the population growing, he set about raising funds to build a second St. Patrick's Church. After struggling for two years, he still did not have sufficient funds. Upon learning of this situation, Capt. Mifflin Kenedy of the Laureles Ranch donated three bells, an organ, and a fresco painting for the ceiling, in addition to the necessary funds for the building's completion. While Capt. Kenedy was himself a Quaker, his wife Petra Vela was a devout Catholic. Their descendents would continue their tradition of dedicated support to the building up of the Church in South Texas.

Another benefactor was the architect-builder, Charles Carroll, who donated much of the labor and his time to keep the cost at a minimum. Carroll, a New York native, was the father of Mary Carroll, parishioner and former CCISD school superintendent, for whom Carroll High School is named. Others contributed as well to the new church. Mary Margaret Healy Murphy donated, among other things, statues still in use today. On Christmas Eve, 1881, the bells rang out for the first time, but services did not really commence in the church until November of 1882, as further work was needed.

A few years later, Eugenie Lavender, French-born and trained at the Louvre, gave freely of her talents to produce several fine paintings for St. Patrick's Church. One was a rendering of the church's patron, St. Patrick. Begun in 1897, the painting measures five by ten feet; it required the tiny 80-year-old Mrs. Lavender to stand while painting. When she died the next year, it was thought that the ordeal helped hasten her death. The painting, one of three surviving, hangs at Incarnate Word Convent. There are two others there: The Crucifixion, which hung behind the altar, and the portrait of another Frenchman, Fr. de St. Jean.

When local citizens refer to "Old St. Patrick's," it is to this second one, located behind the first church and situated on the corner of Antelope and Caranchua Streets. Many recall weddings, baptisms, funerals, and other rites with vivid recollection. Many more recall the church as it served Incarnate Word Academy students until it was moved in 1951. Children attended daily Mass and other services there as an important part of their Catholic formation.

Before coming to Corpus Christi in 1884, the Rev. Claude Jaillet, a Frenchman like many of the early priests and bishops after the separation of Texas from the government of Mexico, had served in several assignments and brought with him a wealth of experiences. He was to become the priest to serve St. Patrick's

parish the longest, as he would be in residence for about 45 years. Upon his arrival, repairs were already needed in the new church and a larger school was sought for Incarnate Word Academy, which had been established in 1871. The new school was completed in 1885 at a cost of \$15,000. Again the architect-builder was parishioner, Charles Carroll.

Fr. Jaillet helped the Congregation of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament secure a Charter of Incorporation from the State Legislature for the school, and it began to show wonderful signs of progress both in numbers of students and in academic achievement. Fr. Jaillet taught in the Academy daily, when possible, both religion and the secular subjects. He, himself, examined the pupils at the end of the school year. He was likewise on the Board of Examiners for public school teachers for a period of nine years. In 1888, he was able to realize another of his fondest hopes—a Catholic school for boys. The school opened under the title of “St. Joseph’s School for Boys” and was taught by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament.

As the parish grew in terms of providing for the needs of the people, individual acts of charity were also taking place and were chronicled in the newspaper. Evidence of one such kind act is found in the 1876 newspaper ad of wealthy rancher, John Timon. It states that any poor person needing meat for food may slaughter one of his calves, and they are to “just leave the hide for him.” In 1886, Mary Margaret Healy Murphy had established a hospital for aiding the sick and poor of the city. The newspaper noted, “This good Catholic lady is devoting much of her time and money to noble deeds.” In addition, she was meeting the serious needs of the sick.

Other parishioners were active as well. Council 1202 of the Knights of Columbus was established in Corpus Christi in 1906. Charter members included John Dunn, Pat Cody, Pat Whelan, James and Dennis McBride, F. J. Mulligan, and William Cody. By 1912, the first convention of the Knights of Columbus was held in the city. Not only did parishioners support the Church and its work, many were actively involved in civic life. Lists of elected officials for city and county show parishioners were judges, sheriffs, constables, mayors, aldermen, treasurers, and clerks. Parishioners also served as first responders in times of crisis. A picture dated from the late 1800s of the Shamrock (Fire) Hose Company shows a number from the parish.

Creation of the Diocese of Corpus Christi.

On March 23, 1912, Pope Pius X created the Diocese of Corpus Christi and St. Patrick's Church became St. Patrick's Cathedral with Bishop Paul Nussbaum, C.P., as the bishop. Bishop Nussbaum was to face serious problems during his administration. The 1916 and 1919 storms were both major hurricanes causing loss of life and property damage. He also faced an influx of clergy and religious due to the Mexican Civil War. They were not able to support themselves and needed help. A major epidemic hit, leaving many dead, including his most trusted staff.

Parishioners likewise faced the harsh realities caused by storms, disease and poverty, but many responded showing great courage. In August, the 1916 hurricane struck the city. Parishioner John McManigle, Deputy Constable, and others manned a Ford touring car through 90 mile-an-hour winds to move more than 150 women and children away from the frame structures that were their homes to the safety of more substantial buildings. Newspaper headlines sum up the event by saying, "Heroes of the Storm Brave Death in Removing Women and Children to Safety."

Two and a half years later, a virulent influenza epidemic hit the city, killing many of its people. Fr. Paulinus Doran and Fr. Scheid, Cathedral pastor and his assistant, who also served as staff to Bishop Nussbaum, were among the victims. The two men died within minutes of each other in January of 1919, while the disease gripped the city. It was reported that during the outbreak there had been a funeral every day in the Cathedral, which gives some idea of the impact of the epidemic on the parish.

On September 14, 1919, the deadliest storm ever to hit the city took its toll on the parish. In its aftermath, people learned of the examples of true heroism that had occurred. One is the story of Canadian-born nurse, Sister Thais DesRoche, C. C. V. I. She had, during the height of the storm, insisted on going to assist her patients who were trapped in a wing of Spohn Hospital, which was being battered by huge waves. Her commitment of service cost her her life. Her remains were found washed up across the bay.

Another dedicated parishioner, Mrs. Winnie Van Cleve, the first local woman to be elected to the State Board of Regents of the Catholic Daughters, was lost along with her husband, Robert. They were probably swept from their Water Street home, which was directly in the path of the storm. Many more parishioners were affected either by loss of loved ones or loss of property. Over 300 people were believed dead, though accurate mortality counts were impossible. Devastating property loss occurred in the area below the bluff, where many people lived at the time.

Father Malachy O'Leary, pastor of St. Patrick's, initiated the parish response to the suffering after the storm. A relief center was opened, along with a soup kitchen, for the victims. The Knights of Columbus served thousands of meals and provided clothing and supplies sent by other Councils from San Antonio and Dallas to storm sufferers. Headed by Grand Knight, Thomas B. Southgate, and Field Secretary, Robert Rehm, the center stayed open for a month. The grisly task of recovering human remains and rebuilding what was destroyed lasted for many more months. Once again, the people lived their faith and left examples of generosity and compassion, which at times reached heroic proportions.

In spite of the turmoil of the times, in 1914, two years after the formation of the diocese, the Catholic Daughters Court 246 was established in the parish. One can only imagine what these women faced shortly after receiving their charter: the loss of one of their most active members, Mrs. Winnie Van Cleve, epidemics, storms, war and all manner of attending chaos. It is to their credit that they persisted, and even to this day they remain a viable and important part of parish life.

Bishop Nussbaum felt great stress with the financial burdens entailed in the disastrous damage caused by the 1919 storm, the non-English speaking clergy with no way to make a living, and the loss of his two assistant priests. Consequently, while making his ad limina visit to Rome, he sought leave to return to his religious community (the Passionists). The community was dismayed at losing their bishop, but parish life continued.

In February of 1920, Charles J. Taylor became the first parishioner to be ordained to the priesthood. His ordination as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate in San Antonio and celebration of his first Solemn High Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral were announced with bold headlines in the paper. Taylor was born in Beeville, the son of Frank C. and Adelaide Lovenskiold Taylor. He was the grandson of prominent citizen and noted lawyer, Col. Charles Lovenskiold, and his wife, Sophia. Charles Taylor's mother died when he was only two years old, and he was sent to live with his aunt and uncle, Emily Lovenskiold Southgate and her husband, Thomas. The couple raised him as if he were their own. The Southgates were converts to Catholicism. Fr. Claude Jaillet also received young Charles into the Church in 1906. In 1908, at the age of twelve, he entered the Theological Seminary in San Antonio. In 1919, while still a deacon, he preached at St. Patrick's at the Christmas Midnight Mass and again at Mass the next day. His sermons were entitled "The Babe of Bethlehem" and "The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist." At the time he was 23 years old, two years short of the required age for ordination. After graduation and while awaiting Holy Orders, he served as assistant professor of Greek at the seminary. After his ordination, he was sent to Oblate posts in California and other areas of the western United States, serving primarily as hospital chaplain in several large

institutions. Interestingly, at the time of her death in 1924, his grandmother, Mrs. Sophia Clark Lovenskiold, had also converted to Catholicism and was buried from St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Following the resignation of Bishop Nussbaum, Monsignor Emmanuel B. Ledvina was appointed to the Diocese of Corpus Christi and was formally installed in St. Patrick's Cathedral on July 21, 1921. It was a time when the parish would witness controversial persecution of the Church by a revived Klu Klux Klan and the start of World War II. There are parishioners alive today who remember the acts of intimidation and violence perpetrated by the Klan against Catholics and minorities. Many more remember the privation and heartache of the war years.

Fr. John Lannon (later to become Right Reverend Monsignor) was the next pastor to serve St. Patrick's Cathedral and to become active in the leadership of the parish from 1928 to 1947. During this time, the Corpus Christi Diocese had the special privilege of having the first Hispanic native-born Texan to be elevated to the hierarchy when Bishop Mariano Simon Garriga became the Coadjutor Bishop of Corpus Christi on September 21, 1938.

When World War II broke out, parishioners were again affected by events around them. Men and women went off to war. The parish and the schools were filled with people brought to the city by the war effort on the home front. News began to arrive home of husbands, sons and brothers who were lost in battle. A large board was placed in the sanctuary bearing the names of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Fervent prayers were offered for soldiers and their families. One particular favorite of the women was the devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows. It seemed to meet the spiritual need of mothers, wives and sisters whose loved ones were in harm's way in a distant land.

Constructing the Corpus Christi Cathedral.

Growth of the congregation and fire damage to St. Patrick's Cathedral, only two months after Bishop Garriga's reception into the Diocese, necessitated the construction of a new cathedral. John Kenedy, son of Captain Mifflin Kenedy, donated land for the site of the new church. Pope Pius XII made it known to Bishop Ledvina that he preferred the name "Corpus Christi" for the new church, so the name "St. Patrick's" was changed at the time of the dedication of the new church.

The cornerstone was laid on March 1, 1940, and the Cathedral was dedicated on July 17 of the same year. Designed by architect Charles Monot, the Cathedral was done in a Spanish Colonial Revival style. Monot considered it to be his finest work. Later, he replicated the plan in a church in Oklahoma City, fittingly named Corpus Christi Church.

The building of the new Cathedral was financed with many gifts. There were large gifts made by the wealthy. Thousands of small gifts came in from school children, working people, and housewives. Catholics from the surrounding area churches donated to the project. Additional gifts came in the form of cash donations made to purchase the fine art pieces we see today: The Stations of the Cross, altars, marble baptistery, tabernacles, statues, and stained glass windows

Because of failing health, Msgr. Lannon requested a leave of absence in 1947, and Msgr. John F. Basso, who served as secretary to Bishop Ledvina, ministered as pastor of the Cathedral from 1948 to 1953. Upon the retirement of Bishop Ledvina in 1949, Bishop Garriga assumed full Episcopal responsibilities in elaborate ceremonies in the Cathedral. It was not until September 19, 1952, after the church building was paid for and the new stained glass windows and art work were installed, that Bishop Garriga presided over services for the consecration of Corpus Christi Cathedral. In the same year the City of Corpus Christi celebrated the centennial of its incorporation.

Because a cathedral parish has as its church the spiritual center for many others, parishioners are called to additional duties during diocesan events. Cathedral parishioners enthusiastically participated in this event, as they had done in the preceding years at diocesan functions. Graciously they welcomed others to the new Cathedral, which was to serve as the diocesan home for Catholics of a large area of South Texas. Adults sang in the choir and ushered, and youngsters served as altar boys. Behind the scenes, ladies of the Altar Society and Catholic Daughters tended to their duties, and men from the Knights of Columbus worked to do their part.

Shortly after the consecration of the Cathedral and the city's centennial celebration event, Msgr. Albert H. Schmitt took up the duties of pastor of the Cathedral in 1953 as the parish that originally had been St Patrick's parish celebrated the centennial of its establishment in 1853 and a "century of sacrifice."

As a part of the centennial celebration, Sr. Mary Xavier Holworthy, I. W. B. S., published her history of Cathedral Parish: A Century of Sacrifice – A History of Cathedral Parish 1853-1953. This work, which began as her master's thesis at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, in 1939, has become the foundation for much of the published material on the Diocese and the Cathedral, in particular. While working on her thesis she said, "I became so fascinated with the life and work of the early missionaries in Southwest Texas that I resolved to continue." That she did. Sr. Xavier spent countless hours pouring over archival records in various places and interviewing many parishioners in the course of adapting her thesis into a short book. Her second book, *Diamonds for the King* (1945), is the story of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Texas, 1852-1945. In 1948 she produced *Father Jaillet: Saddlebag Priest of the Nueces*. It was used in a recent editorial in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* to reflect on challenges facing the city of Corpus Christi today. In 1996, at the request of the San Diego, Texas, Historical Society, the book was reprinted and is currently recommended reading for seminarians in the Diocese of Corpus Christi. A convert, Sr. Xavier was born Mercedes Claire Holworthy in 1890 in Denver, the daughter of a well known and highly respected Episcopalian minister, Rev. Alfred J. Holworthy. After arriving in Corpus Christi, he enrolled her at Incarnate Word Academy in order to secure the best education possible for his daughter. Though quite rebellious at first, she was eventually won over by the Sisters. As a youngster of 12, Mercedes decided to become a Catholic, but her Oxford-educated father would not hear of such a thing. Determined to become Catholic, she studied her catechism for over a year and was secretly baptized by Fr. Jaillet in 1903. She reported in a biographical sketch that when her parents were finally told of her conversion, her mother said, "There is no use crying over spilt milk; if you are going to be a Catholic, for God's sake be a good one; a good Catholic is a saint, but a bad Catholic is the devil himself." Mercedes was received into the convent of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1909 and made her final vows in 1910. Her early years were devoted to teaching music and the elementary grades. After receiving her M. A. in history, she began a long teaching career in which she taught religion, history and what was then called secretarial training - typing and office procedures - to hundreds of Corpus Christi students. She also served as diocesan archivist, being the first person to hold the position.

Death claimed Bishop Garriga in February of 1965, and he was entombed in the crypt chapel of the Cathedral where the remains of his predecessor already rested in peace. With his passing, the southern four counties of the Diocese of Corpus Christi were split off to form the new Diocese of Brownsville; and the

former auxiliary bishop of Corpus Christi, Adolph Marx, was appointed the first bishop of the new diocese.

On September 1, 1965, Corpus Christi Cathedral and the larger community greeted the new bishop of the Diocese, Most Reverend Thomas J. Drury. As the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were promulgated, Bishop Drury began renovation projects on the Cathedral in order to comply with the new liturgy. During the administration of Bishop Drury, parishioner Hannah Haegelin was asked to help compile and display the rich history of the Cathedral and its parish. The purpose was to help educate the parish and diocesan community concerning its heritage. She and Sr. Genevieve Palmer, diocesan archivist, began to compile and organize the historical record of the church using much of Sr. Xavier's writings and adding relevant material to update the story. From this, Hannah developed a presentation for visitors touring the Cathedral. For the next 29 years, this dedicated volunteer showed hundreds, if not thousands, of people through the church, explaining the various elements as they walked through. For a number of years she also maintained a museum in an upstairs room above the sanctuary. Many people, including children, were able to see and hear explanations of various liturgical objects, thereby increasing their understanding of the significance of each piece. The many children of the diocese who toured the Cathedral affectionately knew her as "Miss Hannah." The hundreds of thank you letters she received from them were among her favorite possessions. Her generous gift of time, energy and knowledge were sorely missed when she died unexpectedly in 2001.

The New Musical and Liturgical Ministry.

On the day of our nation's 200th birthday, July 4, 1976, Monsignor Richard J. Shirley, a descendent of one of the pioneer families of Corpus Christi, took over the pastorate of the Cathedral upon the retirement of Monsignor Schmitt, who had served the community of Corpus Christi Cathedral for over 20 years.

Under Msgr. Richard Shirley the parish expanded the musical and liturgical ministry of the Cathedral and initiated a new Cathedral Concert Series for the larger community. In keeping with the parish tradition of education, he again reopened the parochial school. He joined in ecumenical outreach to the needy in the establishment of Metro Ministries and the Loaves and Fishes kitchen. These ministries in music, education, and social service were all a part of the parish's tradition from its earliest days.

The Cathedral Concert Series was a continuation of the musical tradition. The parish has a long musical history replete with examples of parishioners' outstanding gifts of time and talent. A newspaper account of what was probably the first concert of sacred music in the parish is dated 1888. As mentioned previously, Rebecca Britton was the first to provide the congregation with accompaniment for their hymns in the 1850's. Though the records of subsequent organists are incomplete, we do have some information which includes examples of some remarkable service to the parish. In 1874, it was reported "Catholics were elated over the possession of a Mason & Hamlin organ with three key-boards and twelve stops. Mr. DePlanque, the organist, and Father St. John are entitled to much credit for their efforts to improve the church music." Louis DePlanque was a Prussian born photographer who, with his family, arrived in the city in 1868 from Matamoros to set up his studio. His familiar back mark is to be found on hundreds of 19th century portraits of area citizens. DePlanque apparently also devoted considerable "untiring energy" to a fund-raising event for church repair that same year. The Corpus Christi Gazette reported on two days of entertainment, held at Market Hall, which included "music, vocal and instrumental; dramatic performances, grave and humorous, and an ice cream festival." Parishioners performed all entertainment. The net proceeds were \$330.50. It is not known how long DePlanque served as parish organist; he died suddenly in 1898 at age 56.

By 1882, Emily Lavender McManus, daughter of the artist, was playing the organ for the choir, which was composed of just seven ladies of the parish. They were: Mrs. M. T. Gaffney, Mrs. Thomas Hickey, Mrs. David Murphy, Miss Mary FitzSimmons, Mrs. John McTeirnan, Mrs. James McGloin, and Mrs. Charles FitzSimmons. These ladies sang at the dedication of St. Patrick's Church. In 1888, a newspaper account recalls that the church was packed to overflowing to hear a lecture and sacred concert. The concert, under the direction of Mrs. McManus, was highly appreciated. The lecturer, an eloquent

Jesuit preacher, Rev. Father Flynn, was heard with marked attention. His subject was education and the free school system. A collection taken up for the poor amounted to \$50. The Caller conveyed the thanks of Rev. Jaillet and Mrs. McManus to those who assisted in the concert, as well as to the many persons who attended the occasion and gave money for a good cause. The paper termed the event a grand success and stated that good order kept the whole evening commendable.

Later, the choir grew in size and was composed of both men and women. Parishioner Roy J. Hebert directed it. Though a native of Canada, Hebert had studied for the priesthood at the Oblate Seminary in San Antonio. Gifted with a beautiful voice, he learned a great deal about liturgical music during his seminary years. After leaving the Oblates, he later married Rachel Bluntzer and moved to Corpus Christi. Still wishing to serve his Church, he began his work with the parish and the choir. The choir practiced weekly and was always ready for both parish and diocesan events, including the many weddings and funerals held in the church. At the 1940 dedication Mass for the Cathedral, Hebert acted as both choir director and soloist, responding to the Latin prayers offered by the celebrant, Bishop Ledvina. Though Roy and the choir had sung many Masses before, this time the Mass must have been extraordinary, given the circumstances. This was the first time anyone had sung in the new Cathedral. The choir, previously used to the small space of St. Patrick's and its tiny organ, was now singing for a large prestigious group of clergy and laity in the new Cathedral with its grandly scaled nave, soaring ceiling, large choir loft, and massive new organ. The difference in the acoustics must have been astonishing.

Accompaniment for the choir was in the capable hands of parishioner Francis Blossman who began his incredible career as a lad of 13. On Easter Sunday morning in 1904, the choirmaster at St. Patrick's discovered the organist had left town. There was only one resort—to find 13 year old Francis, son of Corpus Christi's leading grocer and piano student under the tutelage of Sr. Augustine at the Convent. Sometime later, after much persuasion on the part of the Sisters, a chunky, badly-scared-knee-panted boy walked up the aisle between rows of staring people and took his seat at the old pipe organ for the first time in his life. "Don't be frightened," Sr. Augustine whispered to him, "just imagine all those heads out there are cabbage heads instead of people." So short-legged he was unable to reach the foot pedals below, Francis pressed the keys to the organ for which, up until that time, he had been allowed only to pump the bellows. Easter Mass was held that morning in St. Patrick's. After that Easter, Francis played for Mass once or twice almost every Sunday for the next 49 years. In addition to playing at Mass, hardly a week went by that he did not play for a wedding or a funeral. In addition to these duties, for a time early in his career as an organist, he directed the choir as well. During his many years of service, not only did he play the old hand-pumped organ but he also mastered the newer model, a much more complex instrument, acquired by the Cathedral

in 1940. At the time of his death on New Year's Eve, 1953, he lacked three months of having served the parish for 50 years.

It was this tradition of music and liturgy that Msgr. Shirley honored when he hired Greg Labus and Lee Gwozdz as new music directors and initiated the Cathedral Concert Series. Meanwhile others like Joan Hamill and parish volunteers had carried on a tradition of good liturgical music between the time of Mr. Blossman and the arrival of Lee and Greg.

During these years of liturgical transition, the crypt chapel of the Cathedral was also enlarged and enhanced through the skills of parish architect, James Rome, and artist Michael Tracy, in order to serve for daily Masses. Because the spatial needs of the bishop's offices necessitated a move of the parish offices and living quarters from the chancery building, parish architect John Wright designed a new rectory, dedicated in September of 1979.

Televised Mass, Fellowship, and Central Catholic School.

The Diocese and Cathedral parish welcomed a new bishop, Rene H. Gracida, in 1983. During his administration, Msgr. Hugh Clarke and Msgr. Leonard Pivonka served the parish as rectors while further renovations were made in the Cathedral, with the addition of a Blessed Sacrament Chapel and presbytery. The parish (with diocesan and private support) also initiated a televised Mass each Sunday to spread the Gospel and give spiritual care to those confined by reason of age or disability. During this time, the schools of the Cathedral and neighboring Sacred Heart parish merged to form Central Catholic School with an expanded campus.

The parish had previously, during Msgr. Shirley's tenure as rector, initiated the custom of serving breakfast after the morning Sunday Mass. Fr. Hugh Clarke continued the practice. The breakfasts provided both parishioners and clergy an important opportunity to enjoy some fellowship and eat breakfast at the same time. Newcomers were welcomed to the community and many lasting friendships were formed. The success of the program depended on parish volunteers to keep things going in the kitchen, as the effort was an important part of the whole idea of fellowship in the hall. In 1989, long time parishioners Leo Luna and his wife, Benilde, began helping with this popular event. The Lunas, who had joined the parish in 1954, quickly became mainstays of the breakfasts. They served in this capacity for over ten years, buying the supplies, cooking and serving each Sunday morning. Leo, a devout Catholic, had been associated with the Cathedral since 1940, when he was an altar server. As a young man he served in the South Pacific with Naval Special Forces during WWII. After the war he returned to Corpus Christi and the Cathedral. Always wanting to serve the community in any way he could, he was active in a number of organizations. He served on the City Council; he was a member of the VFW, the Catholic War Veterans, the American Legion and the American GI Forum. At the Cathedral, he served as a member of the Parish Council, a Eucharistic Minister, and an usher. He was known as "Mr. Radio" in his professional life as a radio announcer in the Coastal Bend for over 50 years. The dedication and hard work of Leo Luna came to an end with his death in July of 2002. His was a truly generous spirit serving his country during war, his city as important decision maker, and his Church in a variety of ways, even to serving breakfast to fellow parishioners.

In Closing.

On June 15, 1995, Bishop Roberto Gonzalez was officially welcomed to the Diocese as Coadjutor Bishop, and with the retirement of Bishop Gracida, he became the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Corpus Christi on April 1, 1997. He devoted his time to the parish with an increased presence for liturgies, and he appointed Msgr. Michael Howell as rector of the Cathedral in the summer of 1997. Fr. Mike, a fifth generation native of Corpus Christi, arrived to find some things much the same as predecessor Fr. Jaillet had found 113 years earlier: a building in dire need of repairs. He and the Building Committee, a group of construction professionals who volunteered to help, set about to supervise the work of restoring the Cathedral's well-known bell towers which had deteriorated badly due to age and climatic conditions. The bell tower restoration and other work was completed in 2001. Additional restoration work remains to be done as funds become available. Improved landscaping and exterior lighting were also completed. In spite of a heavy schedule of parochial and diocesan duties, Fr. Mike has worked and encouraged others to help with the preservation, organization and documentation of the historic material and artifacts belonging to the Cathedral parish and the Diocese. His attention to history revealed an interesting connection with Cathedral's first organist, Rebecca Britton and her home, Centennial House, across the street from the church. It was in this same house that his great-great-grandfather, Joseph Howell, lived after the family's arrival in Corpus Christi in 1857. The availability of these records will help people understand other connections with the rich history of those who helped to build and develop the parish we have today.

On February 3, 2000, Bishop Edmond Carmody was named seventh bishop for the Diocese by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. He was installed on March 17, 2000—St. Patrick's Day, the patronal feast of the original Cathedral parish community. With Bishop Carmody, the Corpus Christi Cathedral family prepared to enter a new millennium and the celebration of their 150th anniversary as a parish.

The name of St. Patrick's is perpetuated in a parish on South Alameda, and the old St. Patrick's church building, with many of its furnishings, appointments, altar, stained glass, and other items, still exists as Our Lady, Star of the Sea Church, located in the beach area north of the Corpus Christi ship channel. The names of many early parishioners can be seen on the beautiful Victorian stained glass windows.

From humble beginnings in a small adobe church with only about twenty families to its enrollment of over 1000 families today, the Cathedral parish has been a vital part of the community in good times and bad—wars, epidemics, hurricanes, and depressions. Our church stands today as the beautiful Queen of the Bluff—a living monument to the faithful of the past, today, and those yet to

come. Their efforts to follow Christ's message of love and service to all are worthy of our reflection and thanks as we celebrate our 150th anniversary as a parish.