

## HOLY ANGEL PARISH, GARY, IN

Holy Angels Parish was founded in September 1906 as the first Catholic Church of Gary with the first Mass being offered on September 26, 1906. Fr. Thomas F. Jansen who came from St. Bridget Parish in Hobart, IN began celebrating Mass in a tavern at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway. The first church building was a combination school on the first floor and church on the second floor. It was built on the Sand Dunes when Gary was a new city. Holy Angels School opened its doors in 1909. The School Sisters of Notre Dame were the first Religious to teach at the school.

The representing nationalities among the founding parishioners from Eastern European countries were Irish, German and Italian. The early settlers were part of the construction of the Steel Mill, buildings for businesses and homes for workers. Hundreds of men were coming to Gary from everywhere, seeking employment and fortune and they brought their families here to make their future homes.

By the time the parish observed its Silver Jubilee on April 22, 1934, it was supported by 650 families totaling 3,000 persons. Also by the time the anniversary was being observed, Holy Angels School had an enrollment of 500 pupils.

Under the directions of the Bishop, the Monsignor began plans for a new expanded church that would be separate from the school. With the deepest desire to proceed, Msgr Jansen was called home to God at the age of 69 on February 28, 1942. He had been pastor of Holy Angels for thirty six years.

Fr. John A. Sullivan was appointed as the second pastor of Holy Angels. It was during his tenure that he continued with Msgr. Jansen's plans for a new church with a projected cost of \$300,000. Eventually contracts were completed and constructions was started. By October 26, 1947 the cornerstone was laid.

The final Mass in the old church with parish assistant Father A. Van Nevel, was scheduled for 9:00 am January 29, 1950. The dedication of the new church was at ten o'clock with a procession and solemn high Mass celebrated by Bishop John Francis Noll before a congregation numbering more than one thousand.

When Rev. Andrew G. Grutka, was consecrated bishop on February 25, 1957, the title of "Cathedral" was added to the name of Holy Angels as the new seat of the Diocese of Gary. This meant that the parishioners had a challenge to continue being a parish

community while being the Mother Church of the Diocese of Gary.

The second and third wave of ethnic groups came in the 1940's with the hiring of Blacks and Latinos for the Gary Steel Mills. Some became members of Holy Angels in the 1960's with the closing of St. Anthony and Sacred Heart Churches. Many Blacks and Latinos became Parishioners when they sent their children to Holy Angels School.

The school would continue to stand until August 8, 1965 when both the school and convent were demolished and replaced by a two story \$1.2 million facility that included a school, convent for the sisters and multi-purpose areas that would have a social hall, cafeteria and a gymnasium.

Holy Angels School would continue until June 7, 1994 when the name would be changed to Sister Thea Bowman School. The school would eventually operate as a separate facility from the Cathedral and become a Charter School.

To this day it continues to grow in students and faculty and a high school is planned for the fall of 2007.

Celebration in both Spanish and English became more common in the 1980's. Special celebrations of San Juan Bautista in June and Our Lady of Guadalupe in December became part of parish life.

Holy Angels is a Parish that is oriented to building Community and is welcoming to all ethnic groups.

We have learned to be welcoming, hospitable brothers and sisters to all who come to the Cathedral. We are happy to be a living witness as a parish of the racial and ethnic diversity of the Diocese of Gary.

### **Pastors of Holy Angels**

1906-1942	F. Thomas Jansen
1942-1963	John A. Sullivan
1963-1968	John C. Witte
1968-1971	Casimir E. Senderak
1971-1983	Don C. Grass
1983	Richard A. Emerson
1983-1985	Joseph A. Viater
1985-1986	William E. Vogt
1986-1992	Andrew Daniels, OFM Cap
1992-1997	Matthew Iwuji
1997-present	Robert P. Gehring