

in a  
**Word**™

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**Celebrating 100 Years of  
Enduring Faith, Education  
and  
Evangelization  
in the Mississippi Delta**

Photos by: Rev. James Pawlicki, SVD



# Celebrating 100 Years of Enduring Faith, Education and Evangelization



***Sacred Heart Church in Greenville, Mississippi celebrated 100 years on August 31, 2013. This historical Church that is located in the Mississippi Delta was the birthplace of the first seminary for African American Catholic men.***

***Bishop Dominic Carmon, SVD, Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, delivered an extremely rich and personal homily that day. What follows are the words he spoke on that historic occasion of "Celebrating 100 years of Enduring Faith, Education and Evangelization"***



Sacred Heart Church in 1930

This week is a time to remember. Wednesday was the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It was a week-long celebration of events at the National Mall and throughout the nation, featuring (focusing on) the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his "I Have a Dream" speech as the clarion call of the Civil Rights Movement and the challenge to continue the unfinished business of equality and justice for all Americans.

Today we gather in Greenville to commemorate and celebrate the establishment of Sacred Heart Catholic Church - "Celebrating 100 Years of Enduring Faith, Education and Evangelization." As we celebrate this anniversary, we are reminded that this Parish was born out of a dream, a vision, a concern of a local Pastor who saw the need to share the Catholic faith, to provide education and to evangelize the Colored people of Greenville (that's what we were called in those days - Colored people)

Father A. J. Korstenbroek, Pastor of St. Joseph Church in Greenville, made his dream known to Bishop John Edward Gunn of Natchez. On January 10, 1912, Bishop Gunn officially signed the decree for the erection of the parish. And he entrusted the building and staffing of the new parish to

the Divine Word Missionaries who had begun ministry to Colored Catholics in the Diocese of Natchez in 1905. With a substantial contribution from Mother Katharine Drexel (now Saint Katharine Drexel), the Foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, property was purchased and the building program was begun immediately. By the end of summer 1913, the new parish had adequate facilities for church services and a new school. The Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit staffed the school.



*The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters were the backbone of the school. Despite the location in North Mississippi the school grew and grew. At one point enrollment reach over 630 students!*



God blessed the new church and school with rapid growth. While the new school was providing a solid foundation in academics and faith formation for the children, the church was putting in place programs to educate and form adults in the Catholic Faith. Those early Divine Word Missionaries were pleased with the response of the people to their efforts to bring the Gospel of Jesus and education to the community.

**However, they were convinced that African Americans would not become Catholic in large numbers until they had priests and Brothers of their own race. So**

**they held a meeting on December 14, 1914 to discuss this subject and agreed unanimously to begin plans to establish a Black clergy in Mississippi. Six years later, with the approval of Bishop John Gunn of Natchez and the blessing of Pope Benedict XV, Father Matthew Christmann, at that time Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, began the first seminary for Black candidates in the United States on these hallowed grounds of Sacred Heart Parish in the Fall of 1920. In 1923, however, Father Christmann moved with Saint Augustine Seminary to a permanent location in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. That effort was also successful.**

**The first class was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Richard Gerow on May 23, 1934 - Fathers Anthony Bourges, Maurice Rousseve, Francis Wade and Vincent Smith. By the middle 60's over one hundred African American priests were ordained at Saint Augustine Seminary. And nine of them have been appointed to serve the Church as bishops.**

Among the many significant events that crown the history of Sacred Heart Parish are two First Mass celebrations - Father Herman Porter on Sunday, June 29, 1947, and (15 years later) Father Charles Dixon-Burns, SVD, a graduate of Sacred Heart School, celebrated his first Mass here on March 25, 1962.

We are truly blessed to be here this morning "Celebrating 100 years of Enduring Faith, Education and Evangelization." You can be justly proud of a long list of achievements and numerous contributions that you the people of Sacred Heart have made to the Church and the people of the Greenville community. Sacred Heart is the church of your great grandparents, the church of your grandparents, and the church of your mothers and fathers. Every generation collaborated with their Religious Leaders to fashion a parish where God's people are cared for with great pastoral sensitivity and total dedication. It is your responsibility now to continue that tradition and ensure that Sacred Heart continues to be the church of your children and your grandchildren.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us of the message that the Divine Word Missionaries brought to Sacred Heart in 1913 and that they preached throughout their lives - the same message repeated throughout the last 100 years. That message is Jesus' command to love one another as he loves us.

As we reflect on the centennial of the Parish and Jesus' command to love one another, we might ask, Is love really what the people of Sacred Heart and the world need today? Bear in mind that this command of Jesus is taken from his teachings at the Last Supper. He had almost finished his ministry on earth, the ministry given to him by his Father. Throughout his ministry, Jesus had cured the sick, removed fear and oppression from people's lives, fed the hungry, spoke the truth, and raised the dead to life. Jesus was all about life, love, and inviting his Apostles and

followers to have the same attitude. At the end of his ministry, Jesus realized that what the world needed most was love. The love that Jesus taught is the only weapon that will conquer the world and bring peace to the nations.

To bring a new vision to the world, a call to love one another was the mission of Jesus. Jesus gave us a new commandment which was to love everyone as he loved. By this love will all know the disciples of Jesus. Humble love of God and neighbor was to be the guideline for those who would follow Jesus. Jesus called it a new commandment because he gave it to his followers as their distinctive mark. From then on, Christian society would be challenged with this new law. Real human progress in future ages would be measured according to the fulfillment of the law of love, the new commandment. Love of neighbor became the identification badge of every Christian. Non-Christians, in observing the Christian way of life, remarked, "See how they love one another."

**Today, as we thank God for "100 years of Enduring Faith, Education and Evangelization" at Sacred Heart, we pray for the gift of greater awareness, strength, and courage to wear proudly our identification badge of love so that, in all our relationships with others, we may be known as true disciples of the Lord Jesus.**

As you move into a second century of service to this community, may you continue to be faithful to the legacy handed down by your founders and their successors by the active living out of the precious gift of faith and love that the Lord has given you. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus and our Blessed Mother Mary continue to watch over you and protect you and help you to be genuine witnesses of the Lord to the community of Greenville. God bless you!

-Bishop Dominic Carmon, SVD  
August 31, 2013





## in a word or two



Josephite Father Paul Raymond Carignan, age 86, died in Baltimore, Maryland, Aug. 19, after a long illness. Interment was Aug. 29 in his hometown of Rumford, Maine, in the cemetery of Holy Savior Church.

After his retirement to St. Augustine Seminary in 2010 at Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, his illness forced relocation to

the Josephite retirement and recuperation facility, St. Joseph Manor, in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2013. A worsening condition hastened his end.

Father "Doc" Carignan was born Oct. 9, 1926, in Rumford, Maine, the son of the late William Carignan and Anna Cote Carignan. The youngest of five boys, he is survived by his brother, Dr. Roland Carignan, and many nieces and nephews. Father Carignan was educated in Rumford schools, St. Jean Baptiste and Rumford High School. He attended the Illinois College of Podiatric Medicine in Chicago where he garnered his D.C.S., a doctorate of Podiatric Medicine. He would make great use of his medical skills throughout his ministry. Wherever he served he brought medical services to the poor. Hence, his affectionate nickname of "Doc" was carried with him all his life.

In 1955, he began his Josephite career at St. Joseph Seminary in Washington, D.C., where in 1959 he received a BA in Philosophy. Father Carignan was ordained a Josephite priest June 8, 1961.

Father Carignan served much of his priestly career along the Gulf Coast, from Alabama to Texas. He served in New Orleans at St. Peter Claver Church and All Saints Church in Algiers, on the west bank of the Mississippi River. He later returned to All Saints in 1983 as pastor. While there, he wrote articles for the local paper, The West Bank Guide. On a weekly basis he used his podiatrist's credentials on his visits to the Fisher Clinic in Algiers, a service the poor often could not afford.

He served as assistant pastor at Holy Family Church, Natchez, Mississippi, at St. Raymond Church and Corpus Christi Churches, New Orleans and at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Washington, D.C., and Our Mother of Mercy Church, Houston, Texas. Besides his service as parish priest, he also was university chaplain at Prairie View A&M, Texas.

His other pastorates included St. James Major Church in Pritchard, Alabama, St. Theresa Church in Crowley, Louisiana, and at St. Therese of Lisieux Church, Gulfport Mississippi, from which he began his retirement in 2010.

Shaniqua Wilson informs us that the 25th Anniversary to the Priesthood of Revs. Charles A. & Chester P. Smith, SVD will be celebrated with a festive Mass on September 21, 2013.

The Mass will be held at St. Bonaventure R. C. Church which is located at 114-58 170th Street • Jamaica, NY 11434.

New York really wants to get the word out, so please spread the word!!! The celebration promises to be a GREAT time in the Lord!! The homilist for the Mass will be the Rev. Dr. James E. Goode, OFM, of Solid Ground Ministries. The Sr. Thea Boman Mass Choir's Ensemble under the direction of Darcel Whitten-Wilamowski, will be ministering in song along with renderings from liturgical dance ministries from across the State. Congratulations to "the TWINS" on their 25th!!



The Archdiocese of New Orleans held a prayer service on August 28 to remember the historic March on Washington.

Ansel Augustine, Director of Office of Black Catholic Ministries (on left with Archbishop Aymond), organized the inspiring event. Along with noted dignitaries, students from all the Catholic schools were represented. Photo below shows Archbishop Aymond with students from St. Mary's Academy.



**Divine Word Missionaries** is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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