

MASS OF THANKSGIVING ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE MARIANISTS IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2009 @ 10:00 A. M. Sacred Heart Chapel- North Catholic High School

The Society of Mary, Marianists, founded by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade in 1817, is celebrating the arrival of the first Marianists in Pittsburgh, one hundred and fifty years ago. Here is a brief history of their presence in the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

St. Philomena (1859-1883)

St. Philomena, founded in 1839 at Penn Avenue and Fourteenth Street, was the third church of Pittsburgh. The Redemptorists were given charge of this parish. Saint John Neumann, C.Ss.R. served as pastor. In 1859, nine years after the Marianists came to America, four Brothers came here to teach. From this school came Brother John Kim, who became Inspector General of the entire society of Mary.

St. Mary, North Side (1871-1939)

For nearly ninety years the Marianists have educated the youth of northside. In 1871, amidst a deadly epidemic of small-pox, five Brothers came to St. Mary's, the mother church of the Northside. The Brothers taught the boys and the Benedictine Sisters taught the girls. From this school came many Marianists. Among these were Father Lawrence Yester, Brothers Michael Schleich, and Bernard Schad. The Brothers left the school in 1939 and opened North Catholic. The Benedictines from Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe staffed the parish church.

St. Michael, South Side (1882-1934)

This, the mother church of the South Side, was established in 1846. The Passionist Fathers invited the Brothers to conduct the “Knaben Schule” here in 1882. Many Marianists came from this parish. Among these were Brother Eugene Paulin, former Provincial Inspector, and the Wehrle and Reich brothers. After fifty-two years of teaching, the Brothers left the school in 1934.

NORTH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL (1939)

To many Pittsburghers, St. Joseph’s Orphanage, established in 1851 atop Troy Hill, is a memorial landmark. The School Sisters of Notre Dame staffed the orphanage. In 1939, Bishop Boyle built on this property the second modern diocesan high school and asked the Marianists to staff it. In 1959, the Centenary of the coming of the Marianists to Pittsburgh, the Holy Father, Pope John XXIII sent his apostolic blessing to the then principal, Brother Charles Eckhardt, S. M. and the school community. In 1959, North Catholic was celebrating twenty years and boasted that 3,528 graduates have taken their place in the world. Many graduates have distinguished themselves in their careers. Each day the Marianists pray to the Mother of God and ask her protection and guidance for their students. Today, North Catholic remains a Marianist-sponsored educational institution.