



HISTORY OF MOTHER OF CHRIST MISSION

Taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* February 5, 1965

Mother of Christ Mission in Findlater Gardens, Cincinnati, will officially open its new church hall and recreational center, above, on Sunday, February 7. Father Charles H. McGurn of St. Bernard Parish, Winton Place, who has charge of the mission, will bless the building and offer Mass at 4 p.m.

The building, located on a three and on-half-acre site at 5301 Winneste Avenue will seat about 300 in the church hall for church services. Moveable partitions will permit the hall to be divided into three separate rooms for catechetical classes, held there for grade school and high students who attend public schools.

Other facilities of the building include a wing containing a meeting room, kitchen, utility rooms, an office and a priest's room.

For the past 20 years, the mission used a community building in Winton Terrace for Masses and instructions. The new building, which was erected by the archdiocese, will permit the transfer of all the mission's activities to the new center.

Eugene Schrand of Cincinnati was the architect; Allan and Beischel of Cincinnati the general contractor.

THE HISTORY OF MOTHER OF CHRIST CHURCH

The history of Mother of Christ Church began in the spring of 1945. The parishioners attended Mass at the Winton Terrace Administration Building. On Christmas Eve 1964, the members of Mother of Christ celebrated the first Mass in their new building then called the Mother of Christ Mission.

Today, Mother of Christ Church is a parish of over 100 families. Although Mother of Christ is a Catholic and primarily African American, people of various backgrounds, cultures, and religious expressions have been touched and strengthened by its presence.

The current pastor is Reverend James Shappelle and the pastoral administrator is Ms. Jodie Bender.

Priests who have served the parish:

Reverend James Shappelle	1984 – Present
Reverend George Jacquemin	1975 – 1984
Reverend Thomas Axe	1970 – 1975
Reverend Charles McGurn	1949 – 1970
Reverend James Hoban	1949
Reverend Henry Naber.....	1946 - 1949
Reverend Robert Tinsing	1945 – 1946

Religious Sisters and Lay Pastoral Administrators who have served the parish:

Ms. Jodie Bender
Sister Mary Macke, O.S.U.
Sister Joan Krimm, S.N.D.

MS. LILLIAN KIMBROUGH

PARISHIONER OF MOTHER OF CHRIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

Most people in our neighborhood belonged to either a Baptist church or the A.M.E. church, like my mother. My dad was Jehovah Witness. Back then they were called “The Russell Lights.”

When St. Richard of Chichester church was built, it was a missionary church to convert the black people in Steele Subdivision (West College Hill) to Catholicism. The Sisters planned activities, like games, craft-making, and so forth to win us over, and it worked. My friends, Clarisse Martin and Viola Kimbrough and I were always anxious to get there... it was fun. After they won us over, they went about the business of converting us. It was kind of slick. We all decided to take Catechism classes and eventually were baptized by Father Hartke. I was 17 years old.

The First Baptist Church in our neighborhood offered movies on Monday nights for \$.20. My friends and I always went but never missed our classes at St. Richard.

I like order about stuff and appreciate the discipline and organization of the Catholic Church. It is not only a religion; Catholicism is a way of life.

I graduated from North College Hill High School right after I joined the church. My high school sweetheart had joined the Army and was stationed at Ft. Bliss in El Paso, Texas. When he sent for me, we were married in a Catholic Church on the Army post. Not long after our marriage he was sent to fight in Japan during WWII, and I returned home to Cincinnati.

Upon my return to Cincinnati, I resumed my membership at St. Richard's. Back then they had all of that Latin business going on (give me a break). I didn't understand a word they were saying, but I stayed. I knew that the Lord was present.

Catholicism is a part of my life. I ended up raising my three children alone and could not have done it without faith. I have always had a belief and faith that things will work out. That is what the Catholic Church has done for me.

I was determined that my kids would have better opportunities than I had. So, I sent them to St. Richard School. The white folks at North College Hill School treated blacks with contempt...it was awful! It was awful when I went there, and it looked to me that nothing had changed when



my children came of age for high school. Sports dominated at NCH, like it was the most important thing...instead of bookwork. The black guys that played sports were heroes during the sports season, but as soon as the season ended they were back to being mistreated, and I simply did not want that for my children. The Sisters at St. Richard cared about the children; it was quite different.

Viola is still my dear friend. It was her daughter that took my daughter to Mother of Christ, and then my daughter took me. My children and grandchildren are a part of The Mother of Christ family... my great-grandbaby was baptized there this year [2007].



MS. BARBARA REID

PARISHIONER OF MOTHER OF CHRIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

My mother was a young woman when she fled the South, from Alabama. It was the time of the Great Migration. On her path north, she met my father in Tennessee. He must have been stationed there in the Army, because I have always been told that daddy was the first altar boy from St. Ann's to fight in WWI.

While they were courting she became sick...caught malaria. Back then, black folks suffered from non-existent health care. Hospitals wouldn't accept them, and unless there was a black doctor around, (fat chance) they went without medical care. My father nursed her the best he could, and they fell in love. He brought her to Cincinnati where they married and had children. She was always a sickly woman, though... dad took care of her, my brothers and sisters and me.

Dad saw to it that we were baptized and went to church; Father McGarity baptized us at St. Anthony on Budd Street.

I remember one summer; the health department came to our house and quarantined us because of momma's malaria. We stayed in the house all summer. Talk about cabin fever! Well, one day, my father had about as much as he could stand. He got all of us children ready and took us for ice cream, quarantine or no quarantine.

It was not long after that that my mother died. It was August 19, 1943. Looking back, I imagine that dad was so distraught, that he drank all of the time. I always say, "My momma died and my daddy got drunk." He was not like that while momma was alive. Why, he taught us to read before we started school. In any case, our lives sure did change after momma died.

My father sent my sister and me to Girls Town in November 1943 around Thanksgiving.

I was eight. The nuns were so mean. I was a bed wetter and they didn't just whip me... I got whuppins! I guess it didn't occur to anybody that I was in crisis. My mother was dead, my family torn apart and I was in a strange place, with strangers.

Girls Town had three buildings for colored girls. One was for little colored girls, called St. Peter Claver House, a second building was for the older colored girls, and the third was for troubled colored girls... we never saw them. The white girls were kept completely separated from us... Jim Crowe was around then. Well, not only did they live in a different building than we did: they were fed differently than we were...we got the scraps... barely any meat at all. I used to cry because the food was so nasty. One nun had been around black folks before and kind of knew the seasonings that we were accustomed to. So sometimes she would pour gobs of bacon grease into our green beans. I would tear them up, it was so good, but it made me sick as a dog.

We lived just like the nuns did. We got up before the crack of dawn and attended Mass at 5:30 am, had breakfast and then went to classes. After school, there were tasks assigned to each of us. My task was to clean the nun's house. There was a great big stairway that I had to keep spotless... I even cleaned their bathroom and was just a little girl.



There was a big sewing room that had I don't know how many sewing machines... it was a sewing factory. When I got a bit older, my task was to fold the garments that were made there.

I left Girls Town in 1952 at 17 years old; the sisters placed me with a family in North Avondale, on Beechwood Avenue as the mother's helper. I was angry about it but didn't have anywhere else to go. My father died when I was 16. I rebelled: wouldn't go to school. I discovered black folks downtown and would slip out of the house to hang out with them. I just loved Central Avenue I would go to stage shows at the State Theater to see acts like "The Brown Skin Mollies." I had been so sheltered and restricted all of my life, that when I got a taste of freedom... it was on.

One day while I was tasting my freedom, a young man flirted with me and got my attention. While we courted, he took me to meet his big family: his parents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and cousins. His family wrapped their arms around me and for the first time since I was eight years old, I belonged to a family. I was more in love with the family than I was with him. I got married at St. Joseph's in 1953, which I had joined as soon as I left Girls Town... I have always gone to church.

The Good Shepherd Sisters that raised me gave me everything that I am. While times were hard, I knew that God saw everything. I always say: "God takes care of babies and fools." I think that if I had to do it again, I'd go that same route.

My favorite Scripture is Hebrews Chapter 11, where Paul writes:

1. Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see.
2. Because of faith the men of old were approved by God.
3. Through faith we perceive that the worlds were created by the word of God, and

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that what is visible came into being through the invisible. 4. By faith Abel offered God a sacrifice greater than Cain's. Because of this he was attested to be just, God himself having borne witness to him on account of his gifts; therefore, although Abel is dead, he still speaks. 5. By faith Enoch was taken away without dying, and "he was seen no more because God took him." Scripture testifies that, before he was taken up, he was pleasing to God. 6. But without faith, it is impossible to please Him. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who seek Him. 7. By faith Noah, warned about things not yet seen, revered God and built an ark that his household might be saved. He thereby condemned the world and inherited the justice which comes through faith.

Please read it, the entire chapter.

I have always been encouraged to know that God sent Abraham to a foreign country and kept His promise to make him the father of as many descendants as there are stars in the sky and the sands of the seashore. I love the story of Joseph who was sold into slavery; God brought him out. I think about how Moses' parents sent him away in order to save his life. God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross, but the same sea swallowed the Egyptian army.

Right now there are four generations of my immediate family that are members of Mother of Christ. I am the matriarch. I believe! That is what has helped me.



Baptism, Mother of Christ Church, from left to right: Mary Johnson, Michael Johnson, Norman Barnett and Father Michael Paraniuk. (1987).

Ms. ROSA YOUNG-BOGGS

PARISHIONER OF MOTHER OF CHRIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

Interview by Mr. Greg Pierson

I was born on May 6, 1922 in Livingston, Alabama. My birth-mother's sister and her husband Martha and Richard Young became my adoptive parents when I was six months old. We lived in Bessemer, Alabama. The city of Bessemer got its name from an engineer, Sir Henry Bessemer who developed a method of making steel. Besides being noted for its steel mill – railroad Pullman cars were also manufactured there. Our community was completely segregated – schools and churches.

My father worked as a hook-man on the L & N Railroad. Dad was also a deacon and an ordained Baptist minister. When I was twelve, he became sick and died before a pastorate became open. He was self-educated and read everything he could get his hands on. My father loved books and would read to me and help me with homework. One of the things I loved most about him was that he didn't believe children should be whipped. In our house, mama was the disciplinarian. She insisted that we be honest and there absolutely was no lying. The only spankings I had as a child were for trying to get away with something rather than just telling the truth. Even though I was the only child, I learned early on to make friends – our yard was always full of children. Where we grew up, we knew all the neighbors and mama seemed to know when someone needed help and she was always eager to help. Mama sang in the choir and her involvement in church affairs and activities were a way of life.

As a child, I was baptized in a river by pastor, Rev. Ravigee of New Zion Baptist Church. The church gathered and there was lots of singing and rejoicing. At the age of fifty-four, a friend invited me to her Catholic Church. A year later, I completed my religious instruction. On February 22, 1981, at Our Lady of Presentation Catholic Church, I received the Sacrament of Confirmation and my grandson was baptized and received First Communion.

My faith and God and the witness of faith that my godmother has exhibited have kept me strong. I rely on the strength I get from prayer, my prayer partners and the brothers and sisters I get together with to study Scripture and to share our faith experiences. I've also been spiritually nourished through sacred songs: "He Touched Me," "His Eye Is On the Sparrow," and "Amazing Grace." Fr. Al Lauer who was a charismatic priest was most instrumental in my spiritual growth. He taught me how to read and understand the Scriptures, and how to apply it to my daily life. Through the study of Scripture, I have come to love the Lord more deeply. It's hard to pick a favorite Scripture, but if I were to choose one it would be Psalm 103:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me,
bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget his benefits – who forgives iniquity,
who heals all your diseases...who crowns you
with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with
good as long live so that your youth is
renewed like the eagle's.

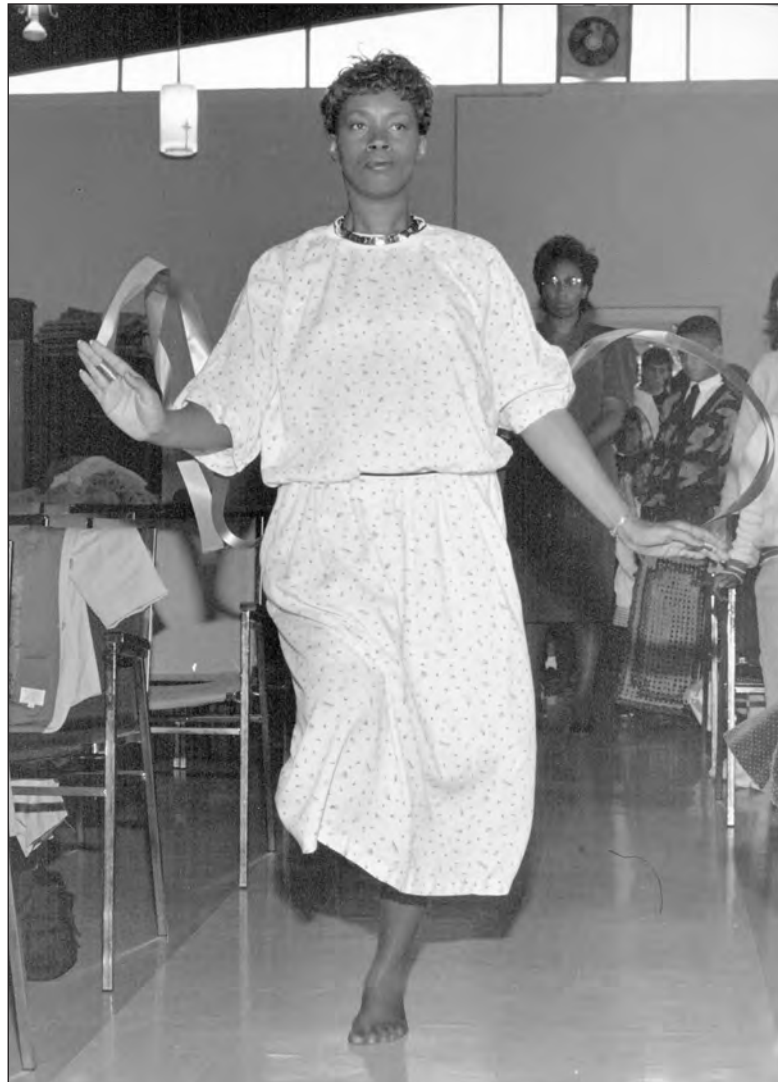
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In the past, I've participated in the charismatic church community where we had daily Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, healing services and prayer meetings.

My current parish, Mother of Christ is a very friendly and welcoming parish. We try to encourage the young people so that they can steer clear of the streets. Fr. Shappelle and the Jesuit priest from the Claver Jesuit Community have been a blessing for us. And of course, a good church has to have a good gospel choir and our choir is one of the best. My faith in Jesus Christ and his Word has convinced me that obedience is better than sacrifice. Through obedience I have God's blessings, favor and rest. I have learned to love God, self, family and my neighbors.

I want everyone to know that God loves them and created them in his image. God has prepared a place in heaven for each person who has believed in his Son. I want everyone to know that the Catholic Church is very rich when experienced in its fullness. Yet, sometimes we get caught up into projects and programs to raise money for the survival of the church. And the result is that we suffer from spiritual malnutrition.

Sharon Monroe-Carr performs an intrepreative dance to open Kwanza at Mother of Churst Church in 1989.



MOTHER OF CHRIST MISSION

LOCAL TEENAGE VOLUNTEERS ENRICH SUMMERS FOR WINTON PLACE YOUTH

Catholic Telegraph Article – August 7, 1970

Every day for the past two weeks, approximately 115 Presbyterian and Catholic children between the ages of 5 and 12 have assembled at the Mother of Christ Mission for the Winton Terrace Bible School. Co-sponsored by the Rev. Arvin L. Sexton, pastor of Winton Hill Presbyterian Church, and Father Lawrence Strittmatter, assistant at St. Bernard Church, the school has provided summer religious instruction and recreation for area children since 1967. "The main idea behind the program was to supplement the released-time program that the children were getting through the school year," Father Strittmatter said, noting that it is "a very ecumenical school."

Volunteers from St. Clare and St. Vivian Parish Youth Clubs staffed the two-week program, which included daily religious education, recreation, refreshments and song fests. Mrs. Donald Hunt of St. Clare Parish, one of the original organizers three years ago, continues as a supervisor. When Father Strittmatter first requested help in launching the program, Mrs. Hunt "Jumped at the chance," as she put it. "I love working with children and this is a very worthwhile program," the mother of five admitted. Helping Mrs. Hunt was another St. Clare parishioner, Mrs. John Grebb, who also helped organize the program and recruited youth volunteers to be student group leaders. "We are trying to get the bible school children to take pride in themselves and their community," Mrs. Grebb said, explaining the purpose of the school.



Children at the Winton Terrace Bible School prepare for craft time during which they create some art project that relates to the biblical theme of the day. The school is co-sponsored by Catholics and Presbyterians in the area for children between the ages of 5 and 12.

Outlining the three-hour daily program, she said that either Father Strittmatter or the Rev. Sexton read a biblical quotation, and then followed up with a short parable explaining the theme of the quotation. The children then divided into groups according to age and the student leaders tried to help the children see how the quotation could be applied to their own lives. "Most of the biblical quotations dealt with loving others and respecting people, as we are trying to point out to these children that each person is important to himself, to others and to the community," Mrs.

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Grebb said. The children were given a recreation period and a “Kool-Aid” break and then joined together for a song fest.

The only qualification for student group leaders was that they be of high school age, according to Mrs. Grebb. A total of 47 boys and girls participated as student leaders in the Bible School. Mrs. Hunt, praising the volunteers, said, “All of the kids really stuck with the program and we never lacked willing volunteers. Other members of the organizing committee included, Mrs. Lauree Duncan of the Winton Hill Presbyterian Church; Mrs. Carl Anderson of the Mother of Christ Mission; and Mrs. Carol Fairchild of St. Vivian Church.