

**125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLESSED TRINITY PARISH  
OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS**



**HOLY MASS AND ANNIVERSARY BRUNCH  
CORPUS CHRISTI SUNDAY - JUNE 11, 2023  
WITH AN ABRIDGED PARISH HISTORY**





## Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River celebrates 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

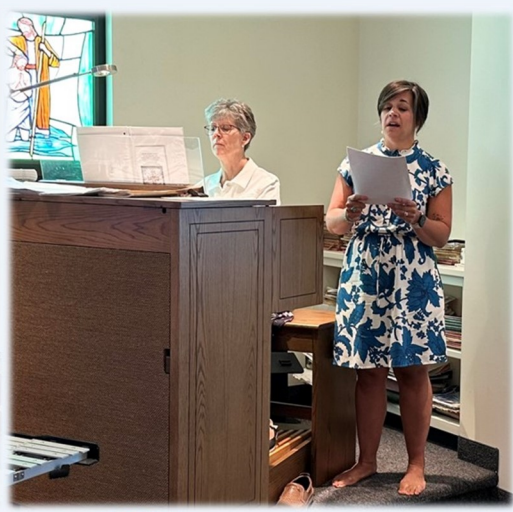
On Sunday within the octave of Corpus Christi June 11, 2023, Blessed Trinity Parish of the Polish National Catholic Church in Fall River, Massachusetts celebrated our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The glorious celebration began with Holy Mass celebrated by our Prime Bishop, the Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky. Our Eastern Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski gave a beautiful homily and concelebrated the Mass along with our pastor, Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich. Our bishops were greeted with bread and salt by Thomas Cory and Robert Bradbury welcoming them to Blessed Trinity for this historic occasion. Our parish youth sang "All Things Bright and Beautiful" with Dylan introducing it on the glockenspiel.

Our parish cantor Laurie Dionisio sang Praise God during the offertory.

Eric Nemkovich served as the lector for this Holy Mass.











An Anniversary Brunch and program followed Mass in our parish hall. Fr. Sr. Rob welcomed everyone in our full hall and introduced Kathy Nemkovich as the MC for the program. Bishop Paul Sobiechowski offered the Invocation, BMC Matthew Oliveira of the US Coast Guard led the pledge of allegiance. Thomas Cory gave the toast and we enjoyed a delicious brunch prepared and served by the Veterans' Kitchen of Fall River.

The history of the parish was presented by our parish youth giving 10 Fun Facts highlighting some interesting and important events in the life of our parish. Greetings and sincere appreciation were given to Blessed Trinity Parish, Fr. Rob and Kathy by Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan, Fall River Police Chief Paul Gauvin, FRPD Officer Jonathan Ferreira (Representing the Fall River Patrolman's Union), Fall River City Councilors Linda Pereira and Laura Washington, Massachusetts State Representative Carole Fiola, Massachusetts State Senator Michael Rodrigues and Fall River Veterans Service Officer Michele Hamilton.

Fr. Sr. Rob gave a reflection on this milestone celebration recalling the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the parish in 1998. A vision was created at that time which has become a reality with our merger and building a new church facility in 2005. This allowed our parish to be more active and effective in opening our doors for the betterment of our Fall River community in the Holy Name of Jesus. Prime Bishop Mikovsky thanked the parish for their efforts in the past and encouraged us to continue to do the work of our Lord Jesus Christ through Blessed Trinity Parish in our Fall River community.



## 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLESSED TRINITY PARISH - JUNE 11, 2023

WITH PRIME BISHOP ANTHONY, BISHOP PAUL, MAYOR COOGAN, SENATOR RODRIGUES, REP. FIOLA, COUNCILORS PEREIRA & WASHINGTON, FRPD CHIEF GAUVIN, FRPD OFFICER FERREIRA AND FALL RIVER VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER HAMILTON













Our parish chose this occasion to commemorate Clergy Appreciation weekend in our PNCC. This was done by our parish youth thanking Fr. Sr. Rob for his service to our parish with a banner highlighting some of the ways that he has impacted their lives. The banquet concluded with Prime Bishop Mikovsky giving the Benediction and his Apostolic Blessing.

Thank You to Prime Bishop Anthony and Carol Mikovsky, Bishop Paul and Karen Sobiechowski, our Precious Parish Youth, the Veterans' Kitchen of Fall River, Mayor Coogan, Senator Rodrigues, Representative Fiola, Chief Gauvin, Officer Ferreira, Councilors Pereira and Washington, VSO Hamilton, our Cantor Laurie Dionisio, our organist Ed Paluch, our Altar Servers and all who made this day so special and beautiful.

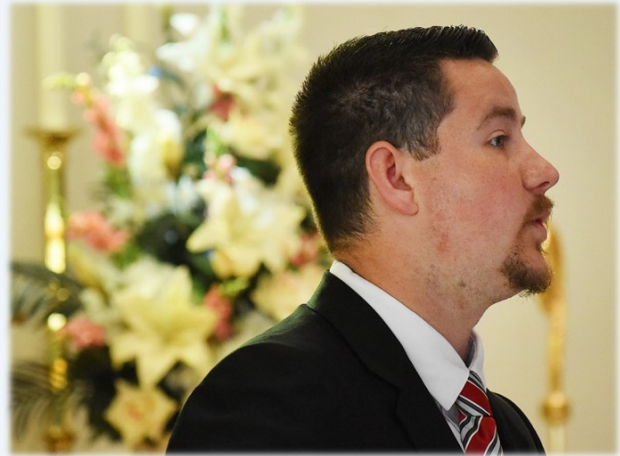
May God bless our efforts as we continue to live and spread the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in our greater Fall River community. May we be faithful in our discipleship each day that God gives to us and with truth, work and struggle we will succeed!

**125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLESSED TRINITY PARISH - JUNE 11, 2023**  
**WITH OUR PRECIOUS PARISH YOUTH CELEBRATING CLERGY APPRECIATION WEEK IN OUR PNCC**





125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLESSED TRINITY PARISH DURING HOLY MASS - JUNE 11, 2023 - HERALD NEWS PICTURES





**125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLESSED TRINITY PARISH  
DURING HOLY MASS - JUNE 11, 2023  
HERALD NEWS PICTURES - THANK YOU COLIN FURZE**





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## BLESSED TRINITY PARISH HISTORY AT 125 YEARS (1898-2023)

### FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

The path of a people seeking religious freedom, truth, justice and equality is a most toilsome one with its countless difficulties, trials and sacrifices. The work of a people undertaken to obliterate wrong and injustice, amend moral irresponsibility and dispel spiritual lethargy is most difficult but absolutely necessary to bring about a moral and spiritual revival and survival. This work was undertaken by the Polish National Catholic Church.

Some necessary background to our history is the life of the organizer of our Holy Church Bishop Francis Hodur, the decision of Vatican I and the response to it by the beginning of the Old Catholic Churches in Europe and the mistreatment of Polish immigrants by the hierarchy of the Roman Church at that time.

### PRIME BISHOP FRANCIS HODUR

The first Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church was Franciszek Jan (Francis John) Hodur. Born in Zarki, Poland on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1866, to Maria and John Hodur, he was one of seven children. Although his father was a tailor and farmer, the Hodur family was very poor, having little money for food and clothing. At the age of 10 Francis attended a small village school and showed much potential by completing his first four years of elementary school in three years.

At the age of 14 he left his impoverished living conditions and walked to Krakow, a distance of 33 miles from Zarki. There he enrolled in St. Anne's High School. Because of his academic ability, conduct and family need, his tuition to attend this preparatory school was waived.

During his high school years Francis faced many financial hardships; therefore, he needed to work, giving up sleep and food to do so. At one point he fainted in class due to extreme fatigue and was thereafter monitored by a social service agency. The agency arranged to have him stay in a room with several other students where he slept on the floor and studied in the corner of the room. Soon after, he went to live with a wealthy friend and classmate, Adam Krzyzanowski, and began tutoring many students from wealthy families, thus making enough money to support himself and assist his family.

People came to realize that Francis had a number of creative abilities. His artistic talents included painting and line drawings, as well as political cartoons. Another of his gifts was writing both poetry and lyrics for hymns and songs. Polish literature and history were among his favorite fields of interest. People began to recognize his outstanding spiritual and moral character, and they noticed how his ideals and principles were evident in his daily life. This idealism continued throughout his entire life.

Upon completing his secondary education in June 1889, he enrolled in the theological program at the Roman Catholic Seminary in Krakow that was affiliated with the Jagiellonian University. Due to his political activism, he was expelled from the seminary in 1892 and never completed the program. Hodur was part of the "Young Poland Movement," a group of seminarians and other university students that worked to improve the plight of the poor Polish peasants and to regain independence for Poland. [We note that at this time Poland did not exist as a country; it had been taken over and divided by Russia, Prussia and Austria.] The "Young Poland Movement" was led by Father Stanislaus Stojalowski, a charismatic leader who was called the "People's Tribune." Father Stojalowski's goal was to raise the level of human dignity, spiritual awareness and the living conditions among Poland's poor. Hodur was an admirer of Father Stojalowski and was highly influenced by his ideals. He continued to uphold these ideals even after Father Stojalowski's death.



The church authorities and the Austrian government of that time disapproved of the activities of the “Young Poland Movement.” Eleven seminarians, including Francis Hodur, complained about the living conditions at the seminary and the spiritual atmosphere there. One issue was the poor quality of the meals. In protest the students refused to eat the seminary meals, getting their food from the city instead. When the authorities of the seminary reported this to the bishop, he reacted by dismissing all those who were considered to be the ring leaders, including Hodur.

The political climate of his homeland at that time, his desire to provide a better life for the poor, and the fact that the church would not ordain him as a priest drove Francis Hodur to go to America. Hodur came to the United States, hoping to realize his calling to become an ordained priest, as well as to fulfill his vision of helping Polish immigrants establish themselves in the New World.

On the last day of 1892 Hodur boarded the ship, the *M.S. Sorrento*, bound for America. Three weeks later, on January 23, the ship arrived at Ellis Island in New York Harbor. Because he had no sponsor when he arrived, Hodur had to spend some time in a temporary shelter on Ellis Island. After submitting letters to a Polish newspaper indicating his plight, he was finally sponsored by the Rev. Benvenuto Gramlewicz who brought him to Nanticoke, PA. Father Gramlewicz arranged with Bishop O’Hara of the Scranton Roman Catholic Diocese to enroll Hodur in St. Vincent’s Roman Catholic Seminary in Beatty (now Latrobe), PA. He completed his seminary studies and was ordained to the priesthood in Scranton, PA on August 19, 1893, by Bishop O’Hara. His first assignment was as assistant pastor at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish in Scranton, PA.

At Sacred Hearts Father Hodur demonstrated his concern for the plight of the Polish people by refusing to collect money from the poor Polish immigrants. Father Hodur’s superior, the Rev. Richard Aust, condemned him for his unwillingness to collect this money that supported them as priests. Because of this Father Hodur was relieved of his position and was assigned to offer Holy Mass for the nuns in a local convent. In August 1895 Father Hodur was appointed as rector of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Nanticoke, PA. This parish had been organized after a dispute arose between Father Gramlewicz and his parishioners. In addition to his priestly duties Father Hodur was actively involved in many church organizations, as well as the Polish National Alliance and the Polish Youth Alliance. He also organized a theatrical group that performed many of the plays that he wrote.

Father Hodur became known as a friend of the Polish immigrants, encouraging them to persevere in their work, to improve themselves and to retain their sense of self-worth. Through all of his work and teachings Father Hodur came to be recognized as a tireless and dedicated shepherd of souls in the coal mining region of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

#### VATICAN I AND THE DECLARATION OF UTRECHT

In 1869 Pope Pius IX called a council (meeting) of Roman Catholic bishops from throughout the world to be held at the Vatican in Rome, Italy. This council, called Vatican I, was convened to plan for the future of their church. The Vatican is where the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, resides; it is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, just as Scranton, Pennsylvania is for the Polish National Catholic Church.

Two major decisions regarding the Pope were made at this council and they drastically changed the Western branch of the Church. The first decision was Papal Infallibility. This means that when the Pope speaks on faith or morals in his official capacity for the Church, he does so without error. The second major decision was Universal Jurisdiction of the Pope. This states that the Pope has sole authority and complete control over the entire Christian Church.

There were some Roman Catholics who could not accept these two decisions. Some of these Catholics, including bishops and priests, came together and organized Old Catholic Churches, which included parishes in Holland, Germany and Switzerland.



The bishops and clergy of the Old Catholic Churches of Holland, Germany and Switzerland gathered together in Utrecht, Holland in 1889. They prepared a statement of their beliefs that included their rejection of the two decrees regarding the power and authority of the Pope. These decrees were rejected because they were not found in the Holy Scriptures and in the Tradition of the Undivided Church. This statement of faith (beliefs) is called the Declaration of Utrecht. "The Old Catholic Churches, united in the Union of Utrecht by the Declaration of Faith of 24, September 1889, traces its faith, its orders, its sacraments and its liturgy back through the ages to the ancient church of the first centuries, that is to the Church of Christ and His Apostles."

This declaration is important to us because, when Father Hodur was consecrated a bishop in 1907, he had to agree with and sign it, as did the bishop of Austria and the bishops of other countries. The Declaration of Utrecht continues to be a significant document of faith for the Polish National Catholic Church today.

As stated above, the Declaration of Utrecht specifically states that Papal Infallibility and Universal Jurisdiction of the Pope are rejected. These new teachings, granting power and authority to the Pope, are rejected because they are not found in the Holy Bible or in the Tradition of the Undivided Church. Note that when we say the "Undivided Church," we mean the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Jesus Christ through His Apostles. The Church was undivided until 1054 AD, when it split in two: the Orthodox Church (Eastern) and the Catholic Church (Western).

#### IMMIGRATION AND INDEPENDENT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

As various ethnic groups emigrated to America, some sought political and/or religious freedoms and some sought a better life for themselves and their families. Those immigrants who were devout Roman Catholics sought representation of their ethnicity in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in their new land. In the early 1850's the Irish immigrants complained about the disproportionate number of French bishops and pastors as compared to those of Irish descent. As the Irish gained more representation in the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the German immigrants then began to protest the lack of German bishops and pastors. "By the 1850's, the Germans had their first bishop in the United States and gained the right to have their own ethnic ... parishes." (Wieczerzak, p.1) The same situation regarding the lack of representation in the Roman Catholic hierarchy would be experienced by the Polish immigrants after their arrival in the United States.

In 1880 a group of Polish exiles in the United States, who had fought to free Poland from its oppressors, organized the Polish National Alliance (PNA). The PNA worked tirelessly for Poland's independence. Membership in it was open to all Polish immigrants regardless of their religious beliefs and affiliations. It was immediately challenged by Polish-American Roman Catholic priests who organized the Polish Roman Catholic Union. These two organizations were in constant conflict with each other. In some instances, PNA members were denied the Sacraments in church, evicted from the church proper and excluded from membership in various organizations and societies.

In the summer of 1894 Father Anthony Francis Kolaszewski, a pro-PNA priest from Cleveland, Ohio, brought several independent parishes in the Midwest and East together to organize the first independent movement. The bylaws of his Cleveland parish served as a model for the other parishes. The bylaws called for "congregational ownership of property, congregational elections of pastors, and complete supervision of parishes by elected committees." (Wieczerzak, p.4) A Polish National Church Committee was formed and initiated a synod in August 1894 to which Rene Joseph Vilatte, an independent bishop was invited. Vilatte's goal was to establish a multi-ethnic American Catholic Church. However, "the Cleveland gathering wanted an exclusively Polish ethnic ecclesiastical organization." (Wieczerzak, p.4)

The next centers of Polish American religious "independentism" were Chicago and Buffalo. In Chicago the Poles were dissatisfied with the pastorate of Father Joseph Barzynski and rallied around



his assistant, the Rev. Anthony Kozlowski. In January of 1895 he led the people in organizing an independent Polish Catholic parish, called All Saints. Two years later he called a meeting (synod) of representatives of independent Polish parishes and at that meeting Kozlowski was elected to be their bishop. On November 21, 1897 he was consecrated in Bern, Switzerland by Bishop Eduard Herzog of the Swiss Christ Catholic Church, one of the Old Catholic Churches. "At the First Synod of this new Church (officially called "The Polish Catholic Church") held on March 14, 1898, it accepted a Church Constitution and a Catechism based on the principles of the Old Catholic Churches...." (Włodarski, p. 16)

#### THE SCRANTON STORY – ST. STANISLAUS CATHEDRAL

In early October 1896 three lots were purchased in the 500-block of East Locust Street, a short distance from Sacred Hearts Parish. On December 19, 1896, the new parish was chartered under the name "St. Stanislaus Polish Roman Catholic Church of Scranton, Pennsylvania." The name indicates that this group desired to remain within the Roman Catholic Church. In February of 1897 on a cold winter day a delegation from the new parish requested that Bishop O'Hara consecrate their new church. "The bishop categorically refused to bless the new church, inasmuch as the committee refused to surrender the deed of St. Stanislaus Parish to the control of the bishop." (Minutes of St. Stanislaus Parish, p. 21) The bishop further rejected their request for a parish priest to be appointed.

The people again turned to Father Hodur and offered him the pastorate of their new church. This was a decisive moment for Father Hodur. If he accepted the pastorate, he would be disowned and, most likely, ex-communicated by the Roman Church. If he chose to lead this independent Catholic parish, it would mean a life of struggle, trial and suffering.

On the evening of March 14, 1897, Father Hodur arrived in Scranton and met with the congregation. They seriously discussed the actions they were taking. Sympathetic to the plight of these Polish immigrants, he chose to accept the invitation of these people to lead their church. Father Hodur formally accepted the pastorate of St. Stanislaus Parish. On Sunday, March 21, 1897 Father Hodur celebrated the first High Mass in the new St. Stanislaus Church, which was still in the process of construction. The first organizational meeting of the parish also took place on that day.

Father Hodur proposed a "Church Constitution" that was unanimously accepted and the first parish committee was elected in accordance to it. Soon after, Father Hodur established and published a weekly newspaper, the *Straż* or "The Guard." The first issue was published on Saturday, April 17, 1897. The purpose of the *Straż* was to be a true "Guard of our divine rights and the herald of a better future to come." (Włodarski, p. 52) Through the *Straż* Father Hodur challenged several Roman Catholic teachings, including papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction. The solemn consecration of St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, Church took place on July 4, 1897 and was performed by Father Hodur.

Father Hodur did not intend to break away from the Roman Catholic Church. He was hopeful that the demands of these immigrants would be granted within the framework of the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, in January 1898 he traveled to Rome to present the National Church (Kościół Narodowy) Program, created by the St. Stanislaus parish committee and co-signed by the neighboring churches of Nanticoke, Wilkes-Barre, Plymouth, Duryea and Priceburg (now Dickson City). The program called for: (1) legal ownership of church property by the local parish; (2) parish governance by parish committees elected by parishioners; (3) appointment of pastorates of priests approved by the Parishioners; and (4) appointment of Polish bishops by priests and parishioners, subject to confirmation by the Pope. These four points are still integral to the operation and function of Blessed Trinity Parish and the entire PNCC.

While in Rome, Father Hodur met first with Cardinal Ledochowski and then with Father Cormier. He was told that his efforts were fruitless and that he must submit to the authorities of the



church or face exclusion. He returned to Scranton, met with his congregation and reported on his trip to Rome. Upon hearing the report of Father Hodur, the congregation unanimously voted to sever their ties with the Roman Church and to work diligently in building the "National Catholic Church." Father Hodur received an official letter of excommunication, prepared by Bishop Hoban and dated September 29, 1898. During an evening meeting with his parishioners on October 2, 1898 Father Hodur gave a lecture to the people about Hieronim (Jerome) Savonarola, a monk who was burned at the stake in Florence, Italy on May 23, 1498 for trying to reform the Church. Father Hodur then burned the excommunication document and had the ashes thrown into the creek near St. Stanislaus Church. The formal break with the Roman Catholic Church took place on Sunday, December 16, 1900, during a parish meeting. "The assembly decided to ask Father Hodur and the priests who supported him, not to look to the Vatican any longer, but to teach the people in the spirit of the Polish Church, and that they would stand loyally at their sides and help organize the National Church, the Polish Catholic Church of America." (Włodarski, p. 70)

Contrary to widely-held belief, the Polish National Catholic Church was not organized so that Mass could be celebrated in the Polish language. From 1897 on the Holy Sacrifice of Mass was celebrated in Latin. However, on Christmas Day of 1901 Father Hodur did celebrate Mass in the Polish language for the first time.

#### ORGANIZATION OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PARISH TO BECOME BLESSED TRINITY PARISH IN FALL RIVER

The organizers of Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Fall River fulfilled the words of instruction and caution given to these immigrants on American soil by Fr. Francis Hodur in Scranton, Pennsylvania and Fr. A. Klawiter. Fr. Hodur stressed strongly in 1897: "You are not going to surrender property, the Polish soul and Polish youth as property of foreign bishops, but rather, you shall gather, organize and work beneath your own banner in the name of mutual good and the salvation of the Polish people." "I Fr. A. Klawiter, traveling through Fall River in 1898, spoke to the people and left them with a two-fold message: respect your political and religious freedom and do not surrender your church property to the Roman Catholic Church."

These words of concern for the immigrants filled their minds and touched their hearts. These people were freedom-loving people and seekers of truth. They sought freedom, happiness, peace of mind and soul, spiritual security and the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. They believed firmly that freedom is an inalienable gift of God and humanity should have it and employ it and cherish it in life. They believed that the people should possess ownership of their church property because it that they who maintain it and support it with their hard-earned and often tear-stained money.

The organizational meeting of Blessed Virgin Mary Parish was held on June 22, 1898 in the Brayton Methodist Episcopal Church on Globe Street. The devotional prayers were conducted by Father Antonowicz and the legal portion of the proceedings were under the direction of Milton Reed Esq. The presiding officer was Valentine R. Prymus. A corporation composed of members of the newly formed parish would own and manage the church. It was stressed that ownership of the church property would be vested in the parish members and that this church property would not be owned by any bishop. The Brayton Church was purchased by the people and regular services were held in it. The first parish committee was comprised of: Valentine R. Prymus, Jakob Bigos, Wojciech Urban, Franciszek Zwolinski, Stanislaw Irla, Jan Ziobrowski, Benedykt Krojinski, Wawrzyniec Cudak, Bronislaw Paskiewicz and others. The charter was issued on July 13, 1898 by William M. Olin, Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Blessed Virgin Mary Parish – the First Polish Parish in Fall River was the Fifth Polish National Catholic Parish that was organized. They were a part of the a growing movement across the Northeast



and Midwest regions of the United States with areas of Polish Immigration. Father Francis Hodur preached at Blessed Virgin Mary Parish on March 19, 1900 and selected the theme: The Crucified Christ and the Polish Priests in America.” At this time the parish also purchased a parcel of land for a rectory.

The first few decades of the parish were difficult years: there were bright moments which brought happiness and spiritual contentment and then those sorrowful and sad experiences which the faithful people endured. In the early years parishioners lived through an abyss of persecution, assaults and attacks. It was necessary to pave their way, step after step, leading to God’s truth and God’s righteousness with a persevering and courageous march forward. Persecution has two good effects on the parishioners; on one hand, it united the people with a bond of true brotherhood and linked them together as children of one family. On the other hand, persecution awakened in them this conviction, that they began a great and holy work and this kind of work always has opposition.

Prime Bishop Hodur’s last visit to the parish came in the 1940’s when he confirmed youth in the parish. During his visits to the parish Bishop Hodur baptized many parishioners and preached God’s Word with zeal.

In 1944 the parish relocated to Center Street purchasing the Pilgrim Congregation Church building after this Church joined with the Central Congregational Church. This church was blessed and dedicated by Bishop Joseph Lesniak of the Eastern Diocese who was a former pastor at Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. This was the second of four locations for the parish.

#### BLESSED TRINITY’S VISION AND DREAM FOR THE FUTURE REALIZED!

The vision and dream for Blessed Trinity Parish began in 1998 during the Centennial Year celebration of Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Fall River. As that parish celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a vision was developed to plan for future generations of National Catholics in the greater Fall River area.

The first step in this process was a letter sent in August of 1998 from Blessed Virgin Mary Parish to Holy Trinity Parish in Fall River to discuss a possible merger between the two parishes. Holy Trinity Parish responded favorably to this letter. Both parishes held special parish meetings to elect their representatives to serve on the Merger Committee and in November of 1998 the Merger Committee held its first meeting.

The meetings were productive and all wanted to worship and work together for the good of our National Catholic Church in the Fall River area. In 1999 both parishes voted overwhelmingly to merge. The merger became official on February 29, 2000. The parishioners of both parishes voted to name the newly merged parish – Blessed Trinity Parish. The Merger Committee became the Blessed Trinity Organizational Committee. The name change for the parish became official in May of 2000.

On the Solemnity of the Institution of the PNCC (the second Sunday of March) in 2000 a special meeting was held where it was decided to begin the process to construct a new church facility on Plymouth Avenue in Fall River. The Solemnity of Pentecost in June of 2000 was another special day when for the first time a parish committee for Blessed Trinity Parish was elected and also a building and fundraising committee were elected. The following Sunday (Trinity Sunday) in June of 2000 an outdoor Mass was held on the site of our new church building and parish hall complex. A sign announcing the “Future Site” of Blessed Trinity Parish was erected and it was blessed following the Mass. This was a joyous day as the merger of the two parishes was celebrated and our vision for the future continued to unfold.

The building and fundraising committees were off to work and more meetings were held than anyone cares to remember. Their initial work culminated on Trinity Sunday in June of 2001 with the



unveiling of the design of the new church facility and our “Moving Forward in our Faith” fundraising campaign began. During this time the parish worshipped in our Center Street church while our Winthrop Street location was used for all of our parish meetings. This changed in 2002 when our Center Street property was sold and our parish would now worship at the site of the former Holy Trinity Parish on Winthrop Street. A Service of Deconsecration was held in our Center Street church on July 26, 2002. The move was completed in November of 2002 when our pastor and his family moved into the rectory at 37 Winthrop Street. As a part of our building plan the Winthrop Street rectory received a second-floor addition, major first floor reconstruction and a driveway.

During 2003 the Building Committee was extremely busy as the final design and budget for the project was finalized. Their work was presented to the annual congregational meeting in February of 2004 during which it was unanimously accepted. Following this monumental decision, a letter of intent was executed with Anthony Nunes Inc. by Thomas Cory and Fr. Rob Nemkovich on behalf of the parish. Our vision and dream was to finally become a reality.

On April 4, 2004 (Palm Sunday) our Groundbreaking Ceremony was held. Our Prime Bishop, the Most Rev. Robert Nemkovich, blessed the ground. Our contractor, architect and project manager were there alongside Prime Bishop Nemkovich, Fr. Rob and our parishioners as the first holes were dug with gold shovels. Site work on the project began soon after and the site became a very busy place. On Trinity Sunday in June of 2004 all of our parishioners and friends were invited to sign one of the beams that was to be placed in our new church. This was a time to pause and reflect on where we had been and on the fact that there was finally a hole in the ground.

September of 2004 brought more excitement as the foundation was finished and the building began to be constructed. Week by week more progress continued to be made and by Christmas of 2004 the exterior work was completed and the building enclosed.

2005 began with our utilities being installed and becoming operational. The finish work began and the date for our Dedication was set for none other than Trinity Sunday – May 22, 2005. Pews began to disappear from our Winthrop Street Church as David Sarna, using his God-given talents, made the new side altars, a pulpit, tabernacles and an offertory table with the wood from the old pews. His labors will be remembered for generations to come.

On Sunday, April 17, 2005, following our Sunday Mass the new cross for the steeple was blessed and carried from the old church on Winthrop Street and installed by our pastor, Fr. Rob Nemkovich. Sunday, April 24, 2005, saw the second Deconsecration Service for the Blessed Trinity Parish family as our new home for worship was ready for us on May 1, 2005. Our vision and dream for the future was only possible with the grace and blessing of Almighty God. His Hand and Spirit has without a doubt guided our labors. To Him be the praise and glory and honor now and forever more!

The new Church facility was consecrated on Trinity Sunday – May 22, 2005 by Prime Bishop Robert M. Nemkovich and Bishop Thomas J. Gnat. We wish to acknowledge those who helped us “Move Forward in our Faith” and who, with God’s help, made our vision and dream for the future become reality.

*Blessed Trinity Parish Building Committee:* Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., *Pastor*; Francis J. De-Temple, *Chairman*; Thomas Cory; Catherine Fortier-Barnes; + Thomas Godek; + Raymond Kowalski; Vasco and Paula Pacheco, + Tadeusz Plocica; James Sadeck and David Sarna.

*Blessed Trinity Parish Fundraising Committee:* Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., *Pastor*; + Lena Cory, *Chairperson*; + Constance Barboza; Thomas Cory; Catherine Fortier-Barnes; Joanne Oliveira; Paula Pacheco; Frances Plocica and Judith Sarna.



In 2006 our brothers and sisters at Holy Cross Parish in New Bedford contacted us at Blessed Trinity about a possible merger. After several meetings, prayer and worship together Holy Cross Parish merged into Blessed Trinity Parish in 2006.

Our new Church facility allowed us to Open our Door and Open our Hearts with God's Love to our greater Fall River Community. Having this church complex that allows us to do the work our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ commands us to do in His Name for the building of His Kingdom in meaningful and effective ways living out our discipleship. Today as a part of our great parish family we welcome and support our local community in numerous ways. We support the recovery community with weekly Narcotics Anonymous meeting and for many years weekly AA meetings. We host monthly Neighborhood Association meeting, the Kosciusko Club, Cub and Boy Scouts, a Grief Support Group and various efforts to impact and better our local Fall River community: National DEA Drug Take Back Days, Guns for Groceries events, Suicide Prevention and Awareness, the Fall River War Veterans Council and the Fall River Veterans Kitchen. Blessed Trinity hosts a Thanksgiving Day Community Turkey Dinner for anyone in need or alone on Thanksgiving. We partner with our FRPD and many others in the community for an annual Toy Drive that provides gifts for hundreds of children in need in our greater Fall River Community. Our outreach to our local and growing homeless population is ongoing with quarterly food drives. Also, several times a year hearty lunches are prepared for our unsheltered brothers and sisters in conjunction with Thrive and we also support the FAST (Fall River Addiction Support Team) with our FRPD to help feed those in need on a regular basis. Our city holds voting precincts 2A and 2B at Blessed Trinity parish as well. We have an annual sock drive to support our State Representative Alan Silvia's Warm Feet Program and each May a parish baby shower collection is held to help families in need with young children across our community.

Our youth play a vital role in our parish life, serving in many ways. One special day held every year in our Parish is the Youth Lenten Day of Caring and Service where our youth come together to put their faith into action helping many others in our community. Just recently our parish youth held a drive for our local homeless, collecting numerous items to help them showing our love, mercy, and care for our unsheltered brothers and sisters.

As we look to the future, we are excited for the opportunities Almighty God will give us to serve and love Him in our parish and greater Fall River community.

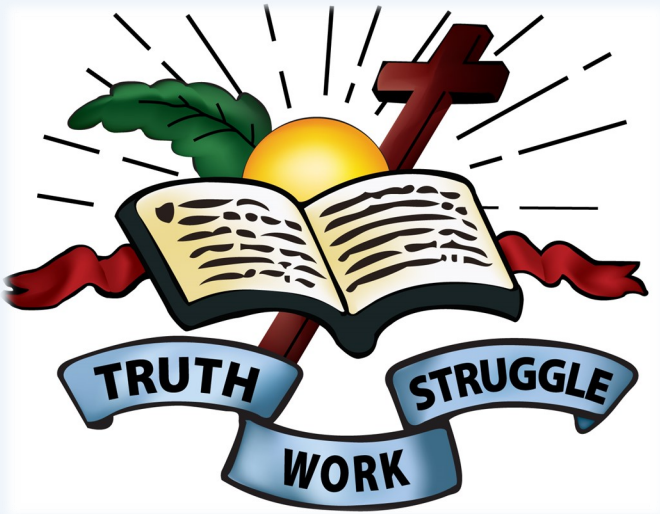
This parish history was compiled from the *100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History of Blessed Virgin Mary Parish Booklet (1998)*, *An Abridged History of the Polish National Catholic Church (2012)* and *Blessed Trinity's Vision and Dream for the Future Realized (2005)* by the Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr. on Trinity Sunday – June 4, 2023.

*Pictured is Fr. Rob and Joe Ferreria installing the Cross on our New Church Complex in 2005*





125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLESSED TRINITY PARISH - JUNE 11, 2023







*City of Fall River*

MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICIAL

*Mayoral  
Citation*

*be it hereby known to all that  
this citation is hereby conferred to:*

***Blessed Trinity PNCC***

*In honor and recognition of your*

*125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*The entire Citizenry*

*extends its very best wishes and expresses the hope for  
continued good fortune and success in all endeavors.*

***Given this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023***

*By: Paul E. Coogan*  
*Mayor Paul E. Coogan*





— The —

**City of Fall River, Massachusetts**



## Official Resolution

Be it resolved, that the City Council  
hereby extends its Commendation to:

***Blessed Trinity Parish***

***In Recognition of:***

*The celebration of your 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
1898 – 2023*

Be it further Resolved, that the Fall River City Council  
extends best wishes for continued success and that  
this resolution be entered in the Records  
of the City Council.

ADOPTED  
March 14, 2023

Proposed by: Linda M. Pereira

City Councillor

Joseph D. Caman  
President

Attest:

Alison M. Bouchard  
City Clerk





*City of Fall River, Massachusetts*

*Fall River Police Department*

*Letter of Appreciation*

*Be it hereby known to all that the  
Fall River Police Department  
Hereby offers its sincerest congratulations to:*

*Blessed Trinity PNCC  
Celebrating 125 years*

*Thank you for your many years of service and  
dedication to the City of Fall River.*



by. *Chief Paul Gawvin*  
Paul Gawvin  
Chief of Police





## *City of Fall River, Massachusetts Police Department*

*Office of the Chief of Police*



*Paul Gauvin  
Chief of Police*

*685 Pleasant Street  
Fall River, MA 02721*

**June 9, 2023**

**Very Reverend Robert Nemkovich Jr.  
Kathy Nemkovich  
Fall River, Massachusetts**

**Blessed Trinity PNCC Celebrating 125 Years**

In appreciation for your one hundred and twenty five (125) years of dedicated service to the City of Fall River. The Fall River Police Department would like to recognize the Very Reverend Robert Nemkovich Jr. and Kathy Nemkovich for their inspirational servant style leadership and their efforts to make Fall River a better place to live. We appreciate and revere our partnership and wish Blessed Trinity continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chief Paul Gauvin".

**Paul Gauvin  
Chief of Police**

**PG/pa**





Fall River Police Association  
Massachusetts Coalition of Police  
Local 1854

## LETTER OF RECOGNITION

Blessed Trinity Parish  
1340 Plymouth Avenue  
Fall River, MA 02721

On behalf of the Fall River Police Association, I would like to recognize Father Rob Nemkovich and the entire congregation of Blessed Trinity Parish for your many years of community service to the City of Fall River. Blessed Trinity has become a pillar of the community and one of the biggest supporters of the Fall River Police Department.

Blessed Trinity has opened its doors to the Officers of the Fall River Police Department in times of need and also to celebrate the sacrifice these officers give every day. Father Rob and the entire congregation are always the first to offer to volunteer their time and service to help with drug and gun buy backs, toy drives, or simply use of the building to hold meetings or peer counseling sessions.

Blessed Trinity has partnered with officers on countless occasions and has helped bridge the gap between the Police and the Community. Blessed Trinity continues to shine as an example to all other churches and community groups on how to best serve the community. And for that, not only does the FRPA want to recognize Blessed Trinity but also thank the Blessed Trinity for the love and support that has been given to our officers.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Ferreira  
President

Edmond Desmarais  
Vice President

Peter Daluz  
Treasurer

David Reed  
Secretary



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The House of Representatives



Be it hereby known to all that:  
The Massachusetts House of Representatives  
offers its sincerest congratulations to:

**Blessed Trinity Parish**

in recognition of

*your 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary and your years of service in our community.*

The entire membership extends its very best wishes  
and expresses the hope for future good fortune  
and continued success in all endeavors.

Given this 11th day of June 2023

At the State House, Boston, Massachusetts

by:

Ronald Mariano  
Speaker of the House

Offered by:

State Representative  
Carole Fiola





Commonwealth of Massachusetts

State



Senate

## Official Citation

Be it Known, that the Massachusetts Senate  
Hereby extends its Congratulations to:

Blessed Trinity Parish - Fall River

In Recognition of:

The Celebration of your 125th Anniversary ; and

Be it further Known, that the Massachusetts Senate extends  
its best wishes for continued success; that this Citation be  
duly signed by the President of the Senate and attested to  
and a copy thereof transmitted by the Clerk of the Senate.



By:

*Karen E. Spilka*

President of the Senate

Karen E. Spilka

Attest:

*Michael D. Hurley*

Clerk of the Senate

Michael D. Hurley

Offered by:

*Michael J. Rodrigues*

State Senator

Michael J. Rodrigues

Date:

June 11, 2023





***Through the  
Years our  
Parish had  
Four Locations  
Church and  
Globe  
Street***

***Our  
Winthrop  
Street  
Location***





***Our  
Center  
Street  
Location***



***Our  
Current  
Plymouth  
Avenue  
Location***