



### **History Of Corpus Christi Church.**

Corpus Christi Parish - 70th Anniversary 1935-2005,  
Cleveland, OH. CAP at Orchard lake.

Corpus Christi Parish was established by His Excellency, the Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs on August 9, 1935. At the same time, the Seventh National Eucharistic Congress was being held in Cleveland. In honor of this event, the parish was named Corpus Christi, from the Latin words Corpus meaning body and Christi meaning Christ. Rev. Anthony B. Orlemanski was appointed the first pastor. Since that time we have been "one Body in Christ."

The first Mass was offered on August 15th, 1935, the feast of the Assumption, at the Pearl Road Recreation Center. Perhaps this is why we have a special devotion to Our Lady. During the next few months, Fr. Orlemanski oversaw the start of several parish organizations including the Young Ladies Sodality, Rosary Sodality, and the Holy Name Society.

The need for a church building grew quickly. On October 18, 1936 Bishop James A. McFadden and the Corpus Christi community broke ground at 4124 Stickney Ave. for a new church. Mass was celebrated in the new church on Christmas Eve, 1936. Bishop McFadden dedicated Corpus Christi Church on November 14, 1937.

The parish members prayed, sacrificed and worked hard to make their Church a home for all the Polish families in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood. They were also well aware of what was happening in our world and nation. The Great Depression and World War II were taking their toll on all. They decided to dedicate a Sacred Heart of Jesus statue as a memorial to the soldiers who died in the war. So, on May 31, 1945, the statue was blessed. (This statue still remains in a garden plot facing Pearl Road in front of the Church and School building. Each year on the Sunday before Memorial Day the Polish American Veterans attend Mass and process out to the statue for a Memorial Service.) The parish was continuing to grow. Property was purchased at 4850 Pearl Road. Groundbreaking for the new Church and school was on April 19, 1953. Rt. Rev. Floyd L. Begin came and laid the cornerstone on July 12, 1953. What a joyous occasion this was.

Corpus Christi Elementary School opened in September, 1954 with an enrollment of 430 children. Eight Sisters of St. Joseph, from Marymount, made up the first faculty. The Sisters worked with a dedicated staff of lay teachers to lead the children of the parish to Jesus as they grew academically. The dedication of the new Church and School took place on November 21, 1954. The Most Rev. Edward

F. Hoban, Archbishop of Cleveland celebrated this momentous occasion with the parishioners.

In 1955, St. Anne's Altar and Rosary Guild was officially organized although activities had taken place since 1948. Their card parties and other activities allowed them to give a substantial monetary gift

to the parish each year. (The present Nativity used at Christmas was their gift to the parish a few years ago. Also, this past year they started attending the 10:00 AM Mass on the first Sunday of the month as the Guild in earlier years had done.) The custom of praying the Rosary at the wake of a deceased member has been a source of consolation for the Guild as well as the families.

In 1960, Corpus Christi celebrated its Silver Jubilee - 25 years of service in God's name. A Pontifical High Mass was celebrated on November 13th. Most Rev. Floyd L. Begin, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland, was the main celebrant and homilist. Later that evening there was a Silver Jubilee Banquet at the Ampol Club.

Fr. Orlemanski remained the pastor until his retirement in 1971. The parish had a Retirement Tribute on the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 13, 1971. His replacement would be Father Edmund Gackowski who was pastor until his retirement in March of 1974.

Father Joseph Jarzynski became the new pastor shortly after that. Father Joe worked with the newly formed Social Concerns Committee to establish a monthly food collection. (Our St. Vincent de Paul Society carries this on even today.) Father Joe worked hand in hand with the Holy Name Society sponsoring several activities for the parish. They established the monthly maintenance fund and the monthly Harbinger newsletter. Their attendance at the 10:00 Mass on the second Sunday of the month still continues today. The HNS also prays the rosary at the wake of a deceased member, bringing consolation to the families. The Knights of Columbus meet regularly and have helped our parish in various ways. Many First Communicants are grateful for the rosaries they have provided. Youth Ministry was alive and well at Corpus Christi. Because of the dedication of many present and past parishioners, the Youth Ministry program affected over 1,000 young people through the years beginning in 1985. The renewals, retreats, and programs helped them to grow spiritually and to reach out to our homebound parishioners.

In the fall of 1985 Corpus Christi celebrated its 50th Jubilee. Most Reverend Anthony M. Pilla, Bishop of Cleveland, was the main celebrant at Sunday Mass. In the homily Bishop Pilla thanked the parishioners for their willingness to make present in our world the love of Christ shown in the Eucharist. Father Joe started having health problems which led to his resignation as pastor. Father Ronald J. Szudarek became the Administrator and then the pastor in June of 1991.

Shortly after, two of our parishioners were ordained deacons: Mr. David Lundeen in May of 1992 and Mr. Charles Zawadzki in May of 1995. The parish warmly welcomed both of them. What a ministerial help they would be since Fr. Ron was the only priest at Corpus Christi at this time. We pray and thank all those priests who served as associates over the years.

In 1995 a group of Corpus Christi parishioners organized a senior group which came to be known as the Corpus Christi Classics. They meet two times a month for fellowship, service, and fun.

Two sisters were added to the pastoral staff during the nineties. We thank the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Mark and the Sisters of Notre Dame for allowing these sisters to minister here.

In 1997, the Sisters of St. Joseph ended 43 years of service here at Corpus Christi. In their honor, Fr. Ron dedicated a shrine of Our Lady of Czestachowa which was built on the site where the sisters' convent used to be. (We were most grateful to the two families who made this possible by their substantial contributions in memory of their loved ones: Ron and Janet Sekerak in memory of Henry and Geneveive Cole and the estate of Ruth Cusack. Ruth's estate requested that Patrick & Anne Cusack and John & Ruth Cusack be remembered.) All of the Sisters who ministered at Corpus

Christi were invited to the celebration of Mass and dedication ceremony on October 24, 1999. A light buffet was held afterwards.

With the departure of the Sisters, Corpus Christi School was put into the hands of an all lay faculty for the 1997- 1998 school year. It remained in these capable and dedicated hands until it closed in June of 2005.

Father Ron established a Vibrant Parish Life Committee in accord with the directives of Bishop Pilla. This committee helped form the content of the Parish Missions for the next few years. These missions helped the parish to grow and to realize that we are "richly blessed and highly favored". In 2003 Father Ron became ill which led to Deacon Chuck being appointed Parish Life Coordinator. Deacon Chuck and the Pastoral Staff continued to keep the parish going during Father Ron's absence. In September of 2005, with Father Ron's health deteriorating, he had to make the difficult decision to resign as pastor of Corpus Christi. We remember Father in prayer for his ministry here as the fourth pastor of Corpus Christi from 1991 to 2005.

### **Historical Data**

- Aug. 9th., 1935 — Corpus Christi Parish established by His Excellency, The Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs S.T.D.LL.D. Rev. Fr. Anthony B. Orlemanski, Appointed the first Pastor.
- Aug. 12th — The forming of the first Parish Committee.
- Aug. 15th — First Mass said at Pearl Recreation Center.
- Oct. 8th, 1935 — Young Ladies Sodality Organized.
- Oct. 22nd, 1935 — Rosary Sodality Organized.
- Nov. 1 Oth, 1935 — Holy Name Society Organized.
- May 17, 1936 — Purchase of site and Rectory 420 I Biddulph Ave.
- June 2 I st, 1936 — Childrens First Holy Communion.
- Oct. 16th, 1936 — Work on the new church building begun.
- Oct. 1 8th, 1936 — Blessing of the ground by the Most Rev. James A. McFadden S.T.D. Auxiliary Bishop.
- Dec. 25th, 1936 — First Midnight Mass offered in new church.
- Feb. 1 2th, 1937 — Blessing of the new Stations of the Cross by Rev. Raymond Micek, O.F.M.
- April 19th,—1953 — Ground breaking for new Church and School.
- July 12th, 1953 — Corner Stone laying for new Church & School, Rt. Rev. Floyd L. Begin.
- Nov. 21, 1954 — Dedication of new Church & School, by Most Rev. Edward F. Hoban, STD., PH.D., LL.D., Archbishop — Bishop of Cleveland.
- 1955 — St. Ann's Altar & Rosary Guild organized.

### **Pastors Serving at Corpus Christi:**

- Rev. Anthony B. Orlemanski - 1935-1971
- Rev. Edward Gackowski - 1971-1974
- Rev. Joseph Jarzynski - 1974-1991
- Rev. Ronald Szudarek- 1991-2005