

# The Florida Catholic

[Close](#)

Pensacola-Tallahassee Edition

## Cathedral observes 100 years of blessings

**By Peggy DeKeyser, Pensacola**

Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Parish concluded a yearlong celebration of its 100th anniversary with a series of events Sept. 8-10. The theme for the series was "One Hundred Years of Blessings." During the events, at least 100 persons were thanked for their contributions to the parish and its school.

Friday evening's celebration focused on the school and its accomplishments. Msgr. Michael Reed, rector, served as master of ceremonies.

Sister Elizabeth Knight, ASCJ, principal, presented awards to outstanding volunteers and contributors to the school, recognizing "those who have given so generously of their time, talent and treasure to Sacred Heart Cathedral School."

Msgr. Reed was also the master of ceremonies Saturday evening, recognizing and thanking those who have served the parish in numerous ways. Father Joe Fowler, parochial vicar, presented awards to the honorees.

Those recognized, in addition to Sister Knight, who has served as principal of Sacred Heart School since 1993,



COURTESY PHOTO

**A current view of the parish hall at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.**

included:

- Sister Marguerite Gibbs, IHM, who taught at Sacred Heart School from 1980 until her retirement in 1995 and now serves in pastoral ministry, tutoring children and visiting the sick at home, in the hospital and in nursing homes;
- Rita Reynolds, who has served as parish secretary since 1973 and whose grandfather was the contractor for the first Sacred Heart Church in 1907;
- Renie Warfield, bulletin editor, who has worked in the parish office for 22 years.



TFC PHOTO BY PEGGY DEKEYSER

Others who have contributed through participation in ministry and in stewardship were also recognized. Parish families concluded the anniversary celebration on Sunday with a covered-dish dinner.

**Father Joe Fowler presents Sister Elizabeth Knight with a print of the Cathedral by artist Nina Fritz, a parishioner.**

### **Brief history of parish**

Sacred Heart Parish began in 1905 when Bishop Edward P. Allen of Mobile, Ala., instructed Father Robert Fullerton, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Pensacola, to begin construction on a new church on the corner of Ninth Avenue and Jackson Street to become the fourth parish in the city.

An unnamed late September hurricane in 1906 destroyed the original structure that was nearing completion, leaving only portions of the walls standing. Reconstruction began immediately and the church was dedicated on April 18, 1907. Father Patrick Turner was assigned as pastor to the parish's 25 families.

Sacred Heart School began in a wooden home on the corner of Ninth Avenue and LaRua Street. In 1911, enrollment had increased enough to require a larger facility. The Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who later became Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, were the first teachers. In 1945, the Sisters of St. Benedict assumed teaching duties, followed the next year by the Sisters of St. Dominic from Michigan. Now Sister Knight is the only religious sister at the school. The current school building, which houses grades pre-K through eight and the Morningstar Program for students with developmental disabilities, was built in 1952. Also in 1952, longtime pastor Father Michael Daly received papal honors from Pope Pius XII. During his pastorate, parish membership

reached 500 families.

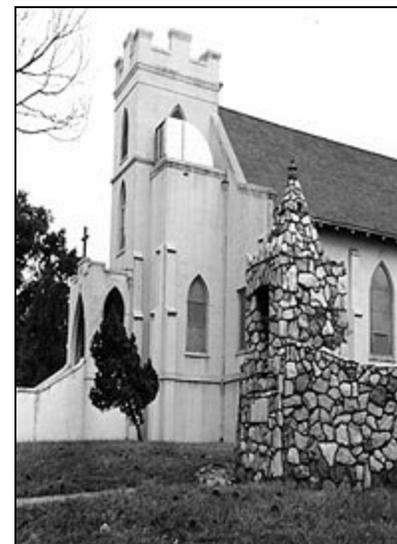
The current church was dedicated May 18, 1967, by then-Bishop Thomas Toolen of the Diocese of Mobile to which Pensacola still belonged. On Nov. 6, 1975, the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee was created and Sacred Heart Church was elevated to cathedral status, along with the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Tallahassee. Bishop Rene Gracida was the first bishop of the diocese, followed by Bishop J. Keith Symons, Bishop John Smith and Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ.

The bishop is the pastor of his cathedral parish(es), but because bishops have so many demands on their time, day-to-day operations of a cathedral parish are usually delegated to a rector. Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Parish has had nine rectors, beginning with Msgr. Raymond Mullins.

In the 30 years since the birth of the diocese, Cathedral Parish and School have continued to grow in membership and in service. The parish currently has 750 families. In 2003, the parish completed a new hall, complete with offices, full-service kitchen and meeting space. In addition to parish functions, the hall serves as a meeting place for the diocese and the larger community.

The school, with current enrollment of 283 students, added the Morningstar Program for children with developmental disabilities in 1989.

[Back to Top](#)



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Original Sacred Heart Church at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Jackson Street.**



**Sacred Heart School and Convent, c. 1911.**

Copyright © 1996-2006 *The Florida Catholic* Newspaper - All Rights Reserved  
498 S. Lake Destiny Road, Orlando, FL 32810  
Phone: 407-660-9141 • Fax: 407-660-2977 • Toll-Free: 1-888-275-9953