

On January 15, 1915, Fr. Brophy said the first Mass in the new Church. Then the old combination School and Church building was used exclusively for the School. As the population grew a portable building was added, which housed classrooms and bathroom facilities. The faculty was expanded to include lay teachers, and now there were eight grades with two classes for each grade. In 1939, three major improvements took place; the remodeling of the School; the redecorating of the interior of the Church; the removal of the portable building and erection of the new St. Monica School addition. In the redecorating of the new Church, the new polychrome ceiling was added, the side Altars were changed and the painting of the Adoration of the Magi by Clifford M. Ulp, which had been behind the Main Altar was removed to be placed elsewhere in the Church.

On January 22, 1948, the newly built wing of St. Monica School was opened, and Bishop Kearney blessed the new marble Communion rail just before Christmas. In 1957 a new Parish Center and Rectory was built on Monica St.

In the 70's, the Convent was sold and the new Rectory became the home to twenty-one Sisters working both in and out of the Parish. The Priests were located in a house at the corner of Millbank and Monica Street, and the Altar was moved down to the pew area. By 1979, lay teachers in the School had replaced the Sisters, so the Sisters moved elsewhere and the Priests moved back into the Rectory.

In 1991, the old school was sold to Sojourner House as a residence to help young women in transition. This facility is now known as Monica Place, and houses twenty-one apartments. In 1992, St. Monica's became part of the FIRST Cluster in the City of Rochester, which has become known as the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward.

The dedication, hard work and commitment of all of St. Monica's parishioners is still something at which to marvel and for which we are extremely thankful. The per capita giving remains high in all areas: time, talent and treasure. However, the common thread through all of this has been the Eucharist - our weekend Liturgy. It has made us a strong and vibrant community, striving at being one with the neighborhood, a people caring for and loving one another.

Happy 105th Anniversary St. Monica Church!

St. Monica Parish



1898 - 2003

The Story of Saint Monica Parish

Saint Monica

Monica was a Black woman who was born in North Africa, probably in Tagaste in 332 A.D. She was involved in an inter-racial marriage to a white Roman political named Patricius. Monica was a woman whose advice was often sought by other young women in her city who were also involved in difficult inter-racial marriages. She was a product of an interfaith marriage; she being a devout Catholic and her husband being a pagan formed in the Roman state religion.

In her marriage, Monica was a strong supporter of education. She and her husband made sure that their children received the best education of their day. Her son Augustine, who often referred to himself as a dark skinned Nubian, later went on to become one of the greatest reformers in the Church.

Monica's great charism was that she was a woman of constant prayer. Her prayer/faith life supported her in difficult times and eventually made her a role model for Augustine. In his Confessions, Augustine often commented that his later conversion to Christianity was due to his mother's devotion to prayer.

As we celebrate 105 years of St. Monica Church, the seventeenth Roman Catholic Church in the City of Rochester, we cannot help but realize that each anniversary recaptures the past. Today sharing resources with St. Augustine and Our Lady of Good Counsel Churches, St. Monica continues to remain a vibrant force in the Roman Catholic Community of the Nineteenth Ward. Following is a brief history of our beginnings.

In the late 1800's, much of the land in the southwest part of the city was either used for farms and nurseries or was undeveloped and travel was by horse and buggy. In 1895, Father John P. Brophy, was appointed by Bishop McQuaid to establish a parish, taking families from the parishes of Sts. Peter and Paul and Immaculate Conception. There were sixty-five families in the new parish and the cornerstone was laid on September 18, 1898. Mass was celebrated for the first time on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and the formal dedication was on January 1, 1899. This edifice was a combination of Church and School. The Church proper was on the second floor. The School on the first floor, with its four large classrooms opened its doors in January 1899 with six grades, three teachers and sixty-seven pupils. In 1904, there were 230 students all taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The five Sisters lived at the old St. Mary's Orphanage, which was on the corner of Genesee and West Main Street, and walked back and forth to school until they moved in 1907 to the Convent on Genesee Street across from the School. The new convent on Millbank St. was built in 1928.

By October 1914, the Parish had grown in size from 300 to 3,000 people so that it was time to consider the building of a new Church. The new church was designed after a fourteenth century basilica style and would seat 1,000 people. The total cost of the Church was \$75,201.26. The cost of the Italian marble pillars was less than \$275 apiece. They were brought from Vermont by rail, deposited at the crossing on Brooks Avenue (between Plymouth Avenue and Genesee Street) and brought to the Church by wagon.

(over)

We are looking at an example of a **tympanum**, described as a “space between the lintel at the top of a doorway and the arch shape above it. Characteristic of Norman and Gothic building; the remaining examples of contain a sculpture in relief” which is the case with the main entrance to St. Monica’s

We have the 12 signs of the Zodiac in the arch shape representing the heavens, the universe, or in Hebrew cosmos, the “dome” or “vault” of the sky.

In the center is our risen Lord Jesus Christ with extended arms reminiscent of his ascension into heaven and worshipped by two angels in a kneeling position of adoration.

It appears that we have a biblical version of the icon of **Pantocrator** in Byzantine art.

Why at St. Monica’s church? St. Monica (feast day-May 4) was very much concerned with the pre-converted Augustine, her most famous son, who was into Manichaeism that believed in the existence of good and evil and would link its beliefs with astrology, the forerunner of our modern astronomy.

