

St. Mary's Church

*First Pastor ~ Father Louis Metayer
1885—1905*



Fr. Louis Metayer, the first pastor of Our Lady of

On September 28, 1885, Archbishop William Gross sent Fr. Louis Metayer to the small railroad town of Albany, Oregon, with instructions to establish a parish.

Father Metayer met with seven Catholic families in the Depot Hotel at Ninth and Lyon Street and celebrated Mass on Sunday, October 2, 1885. A few weeks later, he purchased an old school house from the Albany School Board for \$400 and had it moved to land the Archdiocese had purchased from Thomas Monteith ten years earlier.

Another \$600 was paid for remodeling, and the first Mass in this "maiden" home of St. Mary's in Albany was celebrated on Christmas, 1885.

Father Metayer spent the next 12 years adding on and re-working the old school house into an elegant and worthy church. He added more than twice the space of the original school house to the north.

A steeple was added to the front. The steeple grew to a belfry and eventually side steeples and a hexagonal baptistery were added.



Modeled after an abbey church in France, the second St. Mary's was dedicated August 17, 1898. It was clearly the "Gem of the Valley" as Archbishop Gross noted at the dedication.

Purchased for \$400, this converted schoolhouse became home to Albany's growing Catholic community in 1885

It became the treasure of the community with its pressed fir moldings, elegant furnishings and extensive stained glass crafted by Povey Brothers of Portland.

When he had first arrived, Father Metayer organized the children for religious instruction, and with the Archbishop, invited the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel to open an academy in Albany.

On the southern half of the block an impressive structure was built. Just a year after establishing the parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Academy opened. It was a day school to serve the local children, and a boarding school soon filled with Native American students transported from their reservations in southern Oregon and Alaska.

Father Metayer died in Albany on May 17, 1905, and was buried in the cemetery at Mt. Angel Abbey.



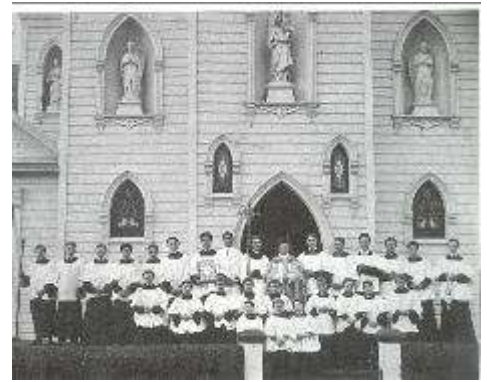
The second St. Mary's was dedicated on August 17, 1898— almost 13 years after the first Mass at the Depot



Pictured at left is Father Metayer and his clerical team after the church front of the original school house church was remodeled, 1886.

Pictured at right is Father Metayer and his clerical team in front of the second St. Mary's church around 1902 or 1903.

In both pictures you can see the processional cross. Our parish still has the crucifix. It is mounted on the wall of the Eucharistic chapel.



Above is St. Mary's Academy which was opened by the Benedictine Sisters by November 11, 1886, just a year after the parish was established.

In 1906, Father Lane authorized the purchase of **Father Metayer's home and converted it into a hospital** which was in full operation until 1927. With \$7,000 donated by the Albany community, a surgery wing and 17 ward beds were added to open St. Mary's Hospital. For sixteen months, it operated under parish auspices and then was turned over to the Sisters of Mercy.

In 1927, the Albany General Hospital was completed and the sisters closed their hospital. It became a boarding house and was later destroyed by fire. (at right)



On July 1, 1905, Father Arthur Lane was appointed the second pastor of St. Mary's Parish. His appointment carried responsibility for a vast mission territory stretching from the Pacific to the Cascades and south to Eugene City.



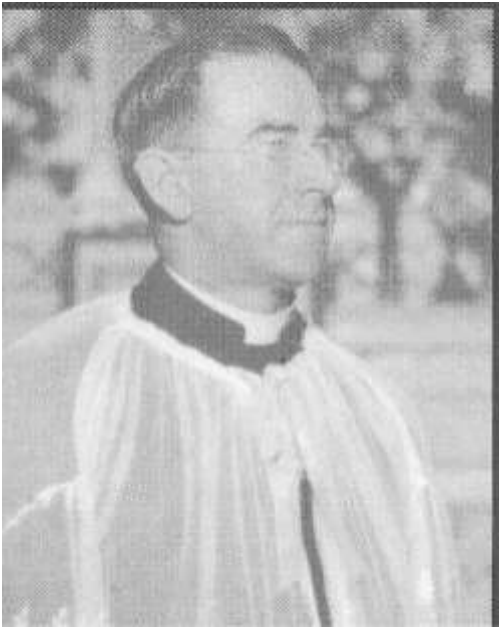
With the advent of electricity the original church was remodeled and redecorated. This church served the parish until the new church was dedicated on August 17, 1898. Pictured above is the interior of the church.



Father Albert Carmody was appointed third pastor of St. Mary's in 1926. Around 1932, to make room for a growing congregation, Father Carmody oversaw a church remodeling that cut back the size of the sanctuary from cathedral portions to one more suitable for a parish church. The choir stalls were removed, a less elaborate altar replaced the original and new pews were added to increase seating.



Most of what is visible in the above picture was destroyed in the church fire on October 29, 1989. However, we still have some of the candlesticks that are pictured. They are in the Eucharistic Chapel.



Father Waters served as pastor from 1933 to 1951.

The Knights of Columbus Council #1577 which had been established in Albany in 1911 was joined in 1948 by Court Our Lady of Perpetual Help of the Catholic Daughters.

Father Martin Doherty was appointed fifth pastor of St. Mary's in 1951 and guided the parish through a period of massive growth and increased lay involvement.

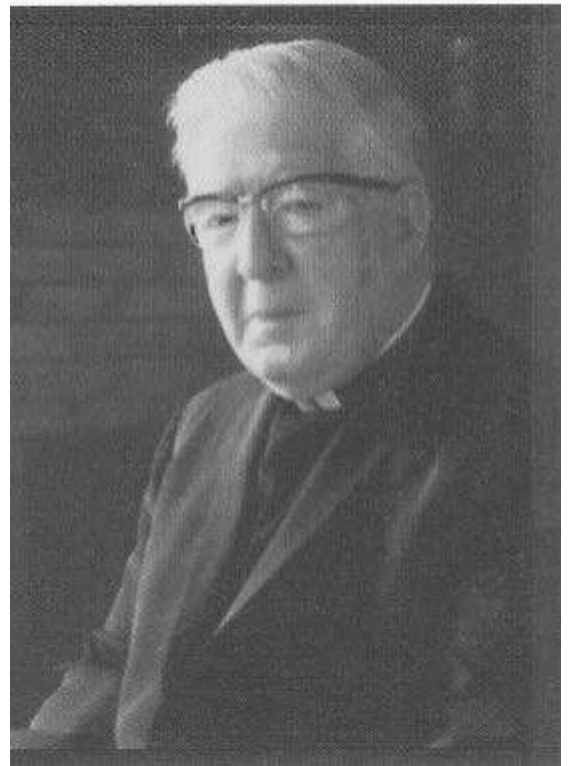
In 1952 the parish school had grown to 300 students. During that year, the parish bought the academy from the Benedictine Sisters for \$25,000.

In 1955, the Finance Committee set about a further renewal of the parish and began a campaign to raise \$100,000 for an all-purpose building.

The new building was completed a year later, and with volunteer and financial commitment from hundreds of parishioners, the parish incurred no debt.

The building housed a gymnasium which served as an auditorium for 700 people, and a basement dining room and ample kitchen.

Next, the Finance Committee began planning for a new school building. In 1969, the parish purchased and remodeled a duplex three blocks from the school to serve as a convent for the sisters.





In 1970 Father Mel Stead was appointed our sixth pastor. He served the parish until 1982.

The liturgical reforms of Vatican II begun in 1965 became permanently established with another remodel of the church in 1970.

The confessionals were relocated and the communion rail removed. They were crafted into a new altar.



In 1971, a new St. Mary's School was built. Pictured below is the groundbreaking for the school.

Fr. Stead is the tall priest on the far left. Archbishop Dwyer has the shovel and hard hat.

At right you can see the construction of the "new" school with the old school standing behind.



Father Pat Walsh served as St. Mary's seventh pastor from 1982—1994. Early in Fr. Pat's tenure, St. Mary's Soup Kitchen was formed with an all volunteer staff to serve the hungry of Albany. The Soup Kitchen continues today.

Under Father Pat's leadership the parish had developed a Master Plan for expansion of our facilities.

All that changed on October 29, 1989, when St. Mary's church was burned to the ground in an arson fire.



The first weekend after the fire, we celebrated Mass at LBCC's Forum. By the following weekend, St. Mary's gymnasium □ though damaged by water and smoke □ was prepared for Mass. It was cold, poorly lighted, and uncomfortable, but it was home.

And one of our few surviving pieces □ a golden gilded angel, the tip of her left wing broken off in her fall □ graced the altar.

From there we moved to "St Sears"; then to Memorial Middle School's cafeteria and finally to our family life center.



Pictured at left, St. Mary's celebrates 100 Years. We had a special Mass at Linn Benton Community College, so that there was room for everyone to attend.

From left, Fr. Tom Yurchak, Fr. Pat Walsh, Archbishop Powers, Fr. Mel Stead, Fr. Dan Adams.

In July, 1989, just a few months before the fire, the parish rectory was moved one block, from the corner of 9th & Ellsworth to the corner of 8th & Ellsworth where it stands today.

Though the distance was only one block long, the move took several hours.



Father Pat Walsh and St. Mary's parishioners raise their arms in blessing over the ground that had housed the first and second St. Mary's and on which the third (current) church would stand.

Father John Betts was appointed eighth pastor of St. Mary's in 1994. During this time the Hispanic population of Albany grew and, with it, the Hispanic ministry of St. Mary's Parish. The Missionaries of the Holy Spirit assisted on a regular basis so that Mass in Spanish could be celebrated weekly.

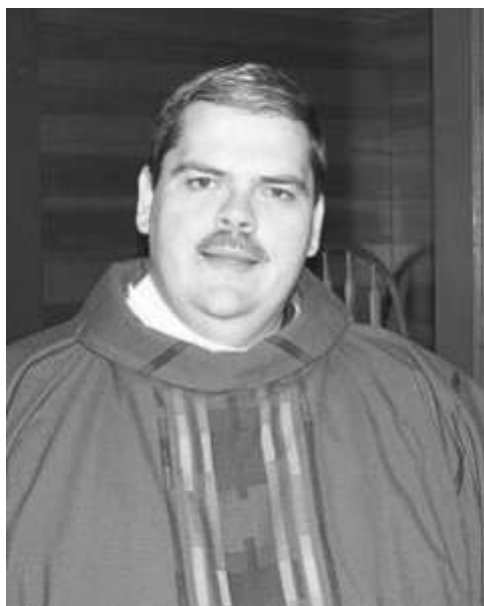


With the growth of the community came additional stress on meeting space. Father Betts with the assistance of the Administrative Cabinet and Pastoral Council continued a search for additional property to serve the parish. In summer of 2010, the parish purchased the Train House which would be used for additional office and meeting space for the parish.

Father Betts celebrated his 40th Anniversary as a priest in May of 2008. After several months of an extended illness, Father Betts was granted an early retirement in

Pictured above left is St. Mary's tabernacle. Father Betts was instrumental in designing the tabernacle. From the time of the fire to the creation of this tabernacle, we had to borrow tabernacles to use.

Pictured at right is the "Survivor", the angel that was rescued from the fire.



In July, 2010, Father Andrew Thomas was appointed the ninth pastor of St. Mary's Parish. On August 22, 2010, at a special Mass to celebrate the parish's 125th Anniversary, Father Andrew was installed by Archbishop Vlazny.

One of Father T's first official acts was to purchase the house at 724 Ellsworth St. This house is between the existing parish office and the new Train House. Father, along with staff, Pastoral Council and Administrative Cabinet felt it would be in the best interests of the parish to obtain this property.

Father T, at 34 years old, is the youngest pastor to serve our parish. He brings an enthusiasm and commitment to the School, liturgy and all the ministries of the parish.

With the purchase of the houses at 724 Ellsworth, the parish was able to add a parking lot behind all the houses and providing much needed parking for services.

In June of 2013, St. Mary's School closed its doors. Father Andrew Thomas served St. Mary's until May 1, 2014. Then Father Aniceto Guiriba III, who had been the associate pastor since July 2013 was appointed Administrator of St. Mary's.