

Church of the Blessed Sacrament

Faith and Sacrifice Build a Parish

A Eucharistic Community

For fifty years, Blessed Sacrament Church in Jackson Heights, Queens, has been the embodiment of a eucharistic community. It was founded and nurtured on the motif of thanksgiving: the English translation of eucharist. The parishioners have dedicated themselves to the words of Jesus Christ who instituted the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament :

Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat;' he said 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them. 'Drink all of you from this,' he said, 'for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.'

The Burgeoning of Queens

Massive Catholic immigration to the United States originated with the Irish potato famine in 1845. Although New York City was a major port of debarkation for the new settlers, the surrounding counties remained basically rural well into the twentieth century.

The Diocese of Brooklyn, under Bishop John Laughlin, which once included all of Long Island, was not established as an offshoot of the Diocese of New York until 1853. Catholics living in the western end of Queens County were widely scattered over the country landscape; most of them lived in the small villages of Long Island City, Winfield, Maspeth, Newtown, Jamaica, and Flushing. In 1898, what is now Nassau County was united to Queens County. Also in that same year, the western section of the county became incorporated into the Greater City of New York, which included Brooklyn, the Bronx, Staten Island, as well as Manhattan; the eastern part of Queens became the newly independent county of Nassau. Obviously, the earliest Catholic churches in Queens County were founded in these small settlements. The residents in what is now Jackson Heights probably attended Mass in St. Mary's in Winfield, Our Lady of Sorrows in Corona, or in one of the churches in Long Island City.

The area, as previously mentioned, was predominantly farmland until post World War I migration from Manhattan accelerated the rate of residential and commercial development. As the people saved their hard-earned money and found better jobs, they felt they could afford to commute from New York City to Queens and pay a higher rent in what was called