

# *Communities of the Word*

STORIES OF THE CHICAGO PROVINCE



**THE NEW JERSEY DISTRICT STORY, 1941 – 2012**

*A Parishioner of St. Peter Claver Parish,  
Asbury Park, New Jersey*



The story of the Divine Word Missionaries involvement in several African American parishes, and by extension, the Hispanic ministry, in New Jersey is closely aligned with the beginnings of St. Joseph Mission House in Bordentown, New Jersey.

In January 1941 Father Provincial Humel visited Bishop William Aloysius Griffin of Trenton with Father Bruno Hagspiel, who was an old friend of the bishop. The bishop was very gracious and promised to consider the matter, but could not give an immediate answer, because he had similar requests from other religious communities. The provincial suggested that the bishop should call on the Divine Word Missionaries if he needed priests to work among African Americans. After receiving assurance that he would consider the matter, the provincial left for Girard, while Father Hagspiel went to Jersey City. The very same day the bishop, who had considered the matter, got in touch with Father Hagspiel. Since the latter could not break his engagement, they met in Pennsylvania Station in New York City, and between trains discussed the question of opening a parish for Blacks in Trenton in the near future. This led to the early appointment of Father Joseph Ford as first pastor of the contemplated “Church for the Colored.”<sup>1</sup>

The following letter from Bishop Griffin came to Father Provincial Humel a month later, on the Society’s assuming responsibility for two parishes for “the colored.”

Bishop’s House  
901 West State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey

March 27, 1941

Dear Father Provincial:

This will serve to confirm our verbal understanding and agreement, namely that the Fathers of the Society of the Divine Word are to take charge of the Colored parishes in the Cities of Trenton and Asbury Park, within the confines of the Diocese of Trenton.

It was further understood that the Fathers of the Society of the Divine Word be given a foundation in the Diocese of Trenton, the terms and conditions of said Foundation to be established and determined when property suitable to these needs, and approved by us, is secured.

With a blessing upon your work, and every good wish,  
I remain,

Sincerely in Christ,  
William A. Griffin  
+Bishop of Trenton<sup>2</sup>

### **OUR LADY OF THE DIVINE SHEPHERD, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY**

On April 1, 1941, Father Joseph Ford arrived in Trenton to be the first pastor of the newly established “colored” parish: The Church of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd. He lived at the cathedral rectory while the “new” church building, a former Negro Masonic temple, was being remodeled. He moved into his new quarters on June 15. The church was dedicated on October 5, 1941.

The style of the building of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd is different from most other churches. This building, located at 44 Pennington Avenue, was constructed in 1928 as the state headquarters of the United Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, Prince Hall Affiliation (a black Masonic organization). The building was also called the Grand Lodge Masonic Temple. In 1941 the building was sold to the Catholic Diocese of Trenton, which had formed an all-black congregation at the request of its African-American Catholics.



Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd, Trenton, New Jersey.

Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd was one of two all-black congregations in the diocese; the other was located at Asbury Park. Two years later, Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd School opened, operating as the city's only black Catholic parish school until 1997, when it merged with the school at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Over the years many men have given their best years to this rewarding work in inner-city Trenton. Of note were Father Joseph Ford, the first pastor, and Fathers Peter Heier and Bernard Kowalski. The eulogy for Father Edward McGuinn in the Appendix to this chapter gives testimony to the work of all the confreres who served at Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd.

When Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd had served the African-American Catholic community of Trenton for 60 years, the U.S. Congressman from the Trenton, New Jersey, area recognized Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd in these words:

Mister Speaker, I rise today to honor Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Roman Catholic Church in Trenton, New Jersey, as they celebrate their 60th Anniversary.

In 1941, 60 years ago, in response to a petition by the African-American community, The Most Reverend William A. Griffin, Bishop of Trenton, established Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church to accommodate the spiritual needs of a local Trenton community who sought solace and guidance in their Roman Catholic faith and black heritage.

The new parish had its beginnings in the former Masonic Temple on Pennington Avenue, where it remains today. On June 14, 1941,<sup>3</sup> Bishop Griffin blessed the new church and officiated at the first Mass. Since its beginning the Society of the Divine Word has staffed Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd. The Society of the Divine Word has the great distinction of being the first congregation to create seminary opportunities for black men. At present there are about 6,000 members in the Society of the Divine Word working in 62 countries around the world.

One of the hallmarks of this vigorous religious family is its international character and multi-cultural configuration. Teams of missionaries are made up of members from many different nations and cultures working together for the Kingdom of God as a concrete sign for our divided world that such cooperation is both possible and desirable.

Mr. Speaker, for 60 years, Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd has faithfully served its parishioners, ministering and providing services to the community. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd and to thank them for all of their contributions to the rich heritage and culture of Trenton, the Capital city of New Jersey.<sup>4</sup>

#### **“NEW PARISH—THE NEW CHURCH”**

In 2005 the diocese consolidated the Catholic parishes in Trenton, and Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd was merged with the Church of the Blessed Sacrament. In 2008 the merged congregation moved all services to Blessed Sacrament. Meanwhile, Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, one of the city’s oldest black churches, purchased the property of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd continuing its long association with the African-American community. Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd had been home to Divine Kidz Academy and Preschool Inc. This program is now part of the cathedral parish.

Due to the merger of the two parishes, the official name of the “new” parish is the Church of the Blessed Sacrament–Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd. Father Edward Tetteh was appointed the first pastor of the merged parish, followed by Father Guilherme Andrino in 2011. Father Andrino’s fellow Brazilian, Father Ernani da Costa Valeriano, joined the pastoral team in 2011 when Father Tetteh moved to a new assignment.

The combined parishes were able to create new ministries and merge the existing ones. A nine-member Parish Pastoral Council was installed in 2009. The council’s first task was to develop a new parish mission statement and constitution.



Knights of St. John's International at Blessed Sacrament—  
Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd.

The parish initiated the Knights of St. John's International in 2009 and then the Ladies Auxiliary in 2010, which makes this parish the first in the Trenton Diocese to have both a Ladies Auxiliary and the Knights of St. John's International.

One young lady of the parish joined the Oblate Sisters of Providence, whose motherhouse is in Baltimore, Maryland.

Another parishioner was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Kalamazoo in Michigan. Dr. Christian Nnajiofor was ordained a permanent deacon for the parish in May 2011.

With the merger, the incredible cultural diversity of the parish expanded. The parish is now composed of approximately 30% African American, 40% African (17% Nigerian, 17% Liberian and 6% from other African nations), 20% Anglo American, 6% Latin American, 2% Asian and 2% others. Parishioners come from Brazil, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Congo, Haiti, Ghana, Liberia, Trinidad, Panama, the Bahamas, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Philippines, and elsewhere. It is truly a witness to intercultural mission!

The parishioners are also diverse economically, ranging from poor to upper-middle-class. The parish boundaries include some of the toughest neighborhoods in Trenton troubled by unemployment, gangs, violence, drugs and poverty. The parish offers free health programs to the community, distributes food assistance, and collabo-



Blessed Sacrament–Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church.

rates with Catholic Charities to help with housing needs. The Trenton Community Music School offers programs at the parish, helping local youth experience a taste of the arts.

Despite all the good things that have taken place there are still emotional wounds from the merger. The parish continues to grow into one faith community out of the two former parishes with the many cultural backgrounds. While all liturgies are in English, liturgical styles range from traditional to gospel.

The parish has embraced a missionary outlook. It is part of an ecumenical, faith-based coalition of urban and suburban churches working to promote interreligious dialogue and cultural and racial-ethnic understanding. Annual parish missions and revivals invite non-Catholics from the neighborhood to have a taste of the parish's faith. The Church of the Blessed Sacrament–Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd is a vibrant multicultural missionary parish, exemplifying authentic intercultural mission.

### **ST. PETER CLAVER CHURCH, ASBURY PARK, NEW JERSEY**

Although St. Peter Claver Church celebrated its opening with a Mass of Thanksgiving in 1943, the actual beginning of the parish happened around the turn of the twentieth century when people started to migrate from the Chesapeake Bay area, St. Mary's County,

Baltimore and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Some of the names of these first settlers in the Asbury Park area were Barnes, Bryan, Butler, Coats, Nickels, Brown, Thompson, Walker, Cook and Roberts.

Some of the migrants came with their employers or with a promise of employment. They settled in this area and around Hightstown and Trenton, New Jersey. How far back their ancestors were converted to Catholicism is not known, but they were very strong in their faith. They attended Mass in the local churches of Holy Spirit and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Asbury Park, or at the Church of the Ascension in Bradley Beach and St. Rose in Belmar. Many of their children attended the local Catholic schools.

They formed the St. Benedict Society which was a source of strength and prayer for these black Catholics. The Society met in the members' homes once a week to pray the rosary, sing and praise the Lord, and discuss their problems. They aided the poor by raising funds and securing other help when needed.

As the families grew in size and more black Catholics came into the area, it was evident that they needed more space. The custom of the time was that each national or ethnic group should be served by their own church, and so Bishop William Griffin announced that the black Catholics were going to get their own church in Asbury Park and that "soon and very soon" they would also get a school where their children would be educated and grow in the faith. The church became a reality, but before his dream of a school became a reality, Bishop Griffin passed away.

On April 11, 1943, the opening ceremony and Mass of Dedication of St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church was celebrated in the presence of Bishop Griffin. Father Vincent Smith, one of the first black priests to be ordained, presided. The homily was given by Father Joseph Ford. Also in attendance were Fathers John Buys and Emil Lesage, Trinitarian Father Marcellino Romagno, and Fathers John Farrell and Emmet Monahan of the Diocese of Trenton. Bishop Griffin was assisted in the dedication ceremonies by Divine Word Provincial Father Francis Humel, Msgr. John O'Hara of Ascension Church in Bradley Beach, and Msgr. Thomas Reilly, vicar general of the Trenton diocese. The Mass was sung by the Blessed Martin Choral Society of New York City, and the altar servers for the Mass came from Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church in Trenton.



St. Peter Claver, Asbury Park, New Jersey.

The chronicler of Bordentown describes the dedication in this way:

*March 1943* seemed to be an extraordinarily busy month:

On March 3, 1943, Father Provincial Humel visited the Bordentown Community and brought the news that Father John Buys would be pastor at St. Peter Claver parish in Asbury Park, with Father Vincent Smith as his assistant. On March 8, 1943, Father Smith arrived at Bordentown to spend a few days before taking up his work in Asbury Park on March 12, 1943. St. Peter Claver parish would be the second African American parish in the Diocese. The first parish was Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd in Trenton. Both parishes were staffed by the Divine Word Missionaries as part of the agreement that Bishop Griffin required in granting permission to the Society to open the House in Bordentown.<sup>5</sup>

There is an interesting entry in the Bordentown chronicle in which the scribe writes, “On March 30, 1943, Father Buys and Father Smith are presented to the Bishop and are given substantial financial backing.”<sup>6</sup>

The scribe continues on April 11, 1943,

Dedication of St. Peter's Church at Asbury Park. A beautiful day. All the Brethren except Brother Joe attended. The church was beautifully decorated. The Rectory was very presentable. The ceremonies were impressive, although the little sanctuary cramped our style! Father Vincent Smith was celebrant (*coram Episcopo*).

Father Buys read the gospel and the announcements. Father Ford preached an eloquent sermon. The Bishop thanked everybody. The rest of us made ourselves useful or inconspicuous. After Mass, the dinner at a public dining hall was not such a success due to overcrowding. Speeches after dinner were good."<sup>7</sup>

Father Joseph Ford in his homily at the Mass of Dedication on April 11, 1943, comments:

The establishment of a parish for black people means neither isolation nor segregation but that the parish has taken upon itself an identity as a unit, as a part of the One Church. Different racial and national groups often have their own parish, but each church belongs to all.

Almost a year after the dedication of the church, a convent was purchased and the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell, New Jersey, arrived for catechetical work. Sister Marion and Sister Teresita were two of the first Sisters who did so much for the children and the parish. In 1952 these nuns were replaced by the Oblate Sisters of Providence of Baltimore, Maryland. They were members of the first black Catholic group of religious to be established in the United States. They remained with the parish until 1984, when they left St. Peter Claver to work in Catholic schools in other inner-city areas.

Mother Philomena and Sister Timothy were among the first Oblates to serve St. Peter Claver, and Sister Fatima and Sister Stephen served the longest in the parish. In 1984 Sister Betty Rosser, a School

Sister of Notre Dame, arrived as director of religious education. In 1990 this ministry was taken over by lay members of the parish.

In June 1977, under the leadership of Father August Langenkamp, the parish broke ground to build a youth center, which was dedicated in October 1978 by Bishop George Ahr. Since 1998 the youth center was used for Sunday Mass and religious education classes. The building has been used primarily by the Sisters of Mercy to educate inner-city girls from the fifth through the eighth grades. The school is owned and operated totally by the Sisters of Mercy.

Before the youth center was built in 1978, St. Peter Claver Hall was used for many parish and community social activities and other events. The hall was used for fund-raising dinners sponsored by the Altar and Rosary Society, St. Vincent de Paul Society and Men's Club. Other activities included calendar teas, wedding receptions, Sodality Girls "Queen Contests," fund-raising dances, summer school and Bible school classes, and many other events. One of the most popular uses of the hall was the weekend fund-raiser BBQ Dinners. It was also used for boys and men's basketball games. This hall was well used and well worn.

All these activities kept the parish members and the local communities closely tied together, as well as bringing in many converts to the Catholic faith.

Since the founding of the parish, members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society have been active in reaching out to and serving the needs of the surrounding communities. Two of these men, John Cook and James Nelson Butler, were ordained permanent deacons for the diocese in May 1980. Sadly Deacon Butler died in 1989 and Deacon Cook in 2002.

In July 1989, at the invitation of Bishop John Reiss of Trenton, Pope John Paul II sent two "Families in Mission," also known as the "New Evangelization" or "Neo-Catechumenate" to the parish. These families were from Italy. Under the spiritual leadership of the pastor, Father John Wadeson, they fostered the Neocatechumenal Way throughout the diocese. Along with members of the parish, they formed the first team to begin evangelizing the diocese. Father Wadeson had a very difficult time in other ways with some who wanted to move the church outside of official Church teaching.

At the same time the parish was extremely blessed and continues to be blessed by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. These Sisters minister in the parish and throughout the local communities serving the poorest of the poor. The Sisters' mission has provided a much-needed hands-on religious component to the inner-city neighborhood. St. Peter Claver parish has been greatly enhanced by the partnership established with the Sisters of Mother Teresa in addition to the dedicated and zealous Divine Word Missionary priests and Brothers over the past sixty-plus years.<sup>8</sup>

Three Divine Word Missionaries who served at St. Peter Claver deserve special mention.



Fr. Vincent Smith, 1893-1952.

Father Vincent Smith was a member of the first class of African-American Divine Word Missionary priests ordained in the United States, in 1934 at Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The four were initially assigned as priests to work in the newly created Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Lafayette, Louisiana. In 1943 Father Smith was assigned to the Eastern Province to do pastoral ministry with the African-American community in the Trenton Diocese where, during the years from 1943 to 1948, he worked at both Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd parish in Trenton and St. Peter Claver parish in Asbury Park. He was esteemed and loved by the people he served and was a sought-after confessor for many of the diocesan priests. Since there was no New Jersey District community at the time, he belonged to the Bordentown community.

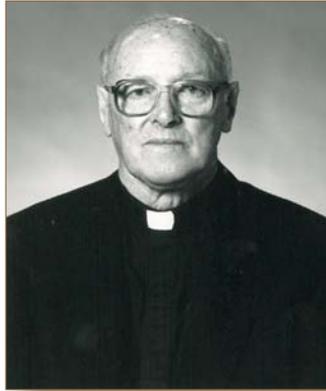
After spending some fruitful years in pastoral ministry, Father Smith asked for a dispensation from the Society of the Divine Word to join the Trappist order.



Fr. Bernard Kowalski, 1904-1975.

The third pastor of St. Peter Claver is noted for his innovations. Father Bernard Kowalski, a former missionary to China, was affectionately known by all as Father Benny. The innovations he brought to the parish were needed basic programs: parish missions, convert classes, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) summer programs. He also engaged the young people on outings to the Big Apple, where Coney Island was a favorite spot. Father Benny also involved people in the Altar Society and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. And, as in most places the Sunday collection needed to be supplemented, Father Benny organized the BBQ Dinner and the Chicken Dinner.

Father Kowalski was known by some as a tough, no-nonsense, but very compassionate and fair priest who would always deliver great soul-searching homilies. He remained close to some at St. Peter Claver even after he moved to the pastorate at Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd.



Fr. Joseph Gunning, 1913-2008.

Father Joseph Gunning merits mention for his role in the growth and development of the parish. He served the parish at a time when racial tensions were high in Asbury Park. Father Gunning always involved himself in the civic community. He was friendly and outgoing. The poor, the needy, and the homeless always found a friend in him. He worked very hard with members of the local organizations—for example, Head Start and the Interfaith Clergy Committee—and with the parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society, Altar Rosary Society, Parish PTA, Men's Club and youth groups.

Under his leadership, the parish did a lot of fund-raising to help meet parish needs. These fund-raisers included weekly bingo, annual car raffles and three-day auctions. Father Gunning helped in other areas, such as giving out weekly loaves of bread to folks in the neighborhood (Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary made this possible). He would make monthly trips to Boston to bring back hundreds of pairs of sneakers to give or sell to children and adults for \$1, but only if they could afford to pay that much. Otherwise they were free. Other activities included annual trips to amusement parks for the kids, New York Mets baseball games, celebration dinners and weekly teenage dances in the parish hall. Father Gunning served as chaplain for the local Knights of Columbus Council (parishioner Herbie Mack was Grand Knight).

Other accomplishments by Father Gunning worth noting are that he established the first parish council. (St. Peter Claver had one of the

first parish councils in the diocese.) He made it possible for Bishop Harold Perry to be the principal celebrant at the parish's twenty-fifth annual celebration in 1968. This was the first time that many had ever seen a black Catholic bishop in person.

When Father Gunning left the parish in 1974 to go to his new assignment as rector of the Miramar residence in Duxbury, Massachusetts, some St. Peter Claver parishioners organized a charter bus trip to visit him for a weekend at Miramar's residence and retreat house. The group spent a most enjoyable, spiritual and memorable weekend with Father Gunning and Father Lawrence Poetz.



It is easy to see that St. Peter Claver is a committed and proud parish—proud of its ancestry and grateful for the Catholic forebears. The parish has been international in its makeup with members from Haiti, Jamaica, other Caribbean Islands, Africa, Spanish-speaking countries, Germany, France and others, in addition to its African-American families. They thank God every day and ask God's continued blessings in serving as true brothers and sisters in Christ, pledging to continue to grow in their faith, always leaning on the Lord.

### **OUR LADY OF PROVIDENCE, NEPTUNE**

In 1977 Father Pedro Bou was assigned as an assistant at St. Peter Claver by Father Provincial John Donaghey to be a Spanish-speaking presence for the growing number of Puerto Ricans who were attending Mass at St. Peter Claver. It became apparent that there would soon be a need for a new parish that would give greater attention to the many Hispanics moving into the area.

Because the Puerto Rican community was rapidly growing in numbers, the decision was made to establish a Hispanic parish. Thus, the parish of Our Lady of Providence in Neptune, New Jersey, was founded in 1981 by Father Bou who served this parish until May 1, 1992.

The members of Our Lady of Providence were originally of Puerto Rican background. As time has gone on, however, the composition of the community has changed. Now, the greatest number of people in the parish comes from Mexico. Today, the Mexican community and other cultural groups are taking hold of leadership in the pastoral work of the church.



Our Lady of Providence Church, Neptune, New Jersey.

On both the spiritual and social levels Our Lady of Providence has been very vibrant. The parishioners further social justice in many ways, including a food pantry and clothing dispensary, a program to assist immigrants with forms and regulations, and Providence Clinic, an independent medical clinic for the poor.

The community is also involved in the social needs of immigration. There is La Red Latina (a social service group that deals with grass-roots community issues), English as a second language (ESL) classes, the Providencia AA group, and the 180 Group that deals with domestic abuse.

After Father Bou's tenure ended in 1992, Father James Vorwerk was assigned to serve the community until 1997. Father Eugene Rochford followed until 2000. He was followed by Father Miguel Virella who served as the parish was merged with neighboring parishes.

In October 2006 a near tragedy was averted. An engineer discovered that the roof trusses of the church at Our Lady of Providence were in danger of collapsing. (The diocese had bought the church building from a Protestant group; thus it had a previous history.) This situation led to the closing of the church building and a re-location of Our Lady of Providence and merger with the Church of the Holy Spirit in Asbury Park. The Society still has a presence in the Neptune area for the Hispanic ministry.

## **MOTHER OF MERCY, INTERCULTURAL MERGED PARISH**

Interestingly, at this new location in the Asbury Park area after merging with Holy Spirit Church, the community of Our Lady of Providence experienced an increase of membership from 400 to 600 families. Many weddings and funerals have been performed, and hundreds of children have received the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The Diocese of Trenton continued to consolidate the churches of Asbury Park. From 2011 to 2013 Our Lady of Mount Carmel (mainly of Italian American heritage), Holy Spirit (mainly of Irish American heritage), Our Lady of Providence (mainly of Latino heritage), St. Peter Claver (mainly of African American heritage) and the Haitian community (mainly of French Creole heritage) combined their resources and united their faith communities.

Mother of Mercy was the name selected by consensus among the members of the transition committee for the new parish that was formed from the original four parishes and a bustling Haitian apostolate. The new intercultural parish brought together Hispanic, African American, Haitian, Irish and Italian faith traditions and cultures. Ministries were merged and programs were added including a youth group, children's choir and Bible study in English, Spanish and Creole. Formation was begun for a liturgy committee. Retreats were held and a nurses' committee and Spanish classes were added.

The histories of Our Lady of Providence parish, the Neptune home to an emerging Hispanic population, and St. Peter Claver parish, the lynchpin of the African-American community in Asbury Park, were visibly enshrined in the matrix of Mother of Mercy parish.

While Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the parish hub, with the church, school, hall and administrative offices based there, Holy Trinity Church continues as a worship site. A chapel was blessed and renamed for Nuestra Senora de la Providencia. The St. Peter Claver Outreach Center with its busy food pantry, an office for the parish's St. Vincent de Paul conference, conference rooms and large common area with a stage, is the parish anchor on the west side of town.

Father Miguel Virella remains as pastor of the consolidated parishes assisted by Fathers George Koottappillil and Florencio Lagura, along with Father Paul Janvier, a diocesan priest, who ministers to the Haitian community.<sup>9</sup>

## **ST. ANTHONY CLARET, LAKEWOOD, NEW JERSEY**

St. Anthony Claret parish was established during the 1950s in response to a great influx of Hispanic families to Ocean County, New Jersey, especially families from Puerto Rico. Jackson Township in central New Jersey and the surrounding territories were centers for immigration. Today, St. Anthony Claret continues to be the spiritual home to a growing community of Hispanic families.

The parish was founded by the Claretian Missionaries<sup>10</sup> in 1955 to serve these immigrants, at the urging of Mrs. Maria Figueroa, who was herself an immigrant from Puerto Rico. She and her family came to Ocean County. Her greatest desire was to serve the spiritual needs of the Hispanic population in the region with her large family.

At first, in 1957, a chapel was built in Cassville, Jackson Township, under the name of St. Anthony Claret. At the time, Ocean County was assigned to the Claretians, who administered the large Hispanic parish of Our Lady of Fatima in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Later, in 1973 land was bought on Ocean Avenue (Route 88) in Lakewood to build a new parish center. The activities held in Jackson were moved to a new and better location for the community. Then in January 1977 a parish center was blessed and dedicated by Bishop George Ahr of the Trenton Diocese. At this time St. Anthony Claret was declared a national Hispanic parish.

The Claretians served the parish well for thirty-eight years. In 1993 the Divine Word Missionaries took over St. Anthony Claret from the Claretians. Father Pedro Bou became the first Divine Word pastor and remained in this capacity until 2002. During Father Bou's term as pastor, the parish experienced new life and the construction of a new church building that was dedicated in the spring of 2002. The dream of many years, of having a new worship place, became a reality.

Over the years many Divine Word Missionaries came through St. Anthony. Their names reflect many different backgrounds. Father Rolando Danzine, who is no longer with us, was the first vicar. Fathers Miguel Ruiz and Miguel Virella both did their diaconate program in the parish under the supervision of Father Bou.

Later, they were joined by Fathers Manual Mayvett, Carlos Paniagua, and Francis Mansfield, as well as three theology students—two from Portugal and one from Catholic Theological Union—doing their Cross-Cultural Training Program (CTP) at the parish. The inter-

nationality of the Divine Word community made life interesting in the rectory and in the parish at large.

Father Walter Miller succeeded Father Bou as pastor of St. Anthony Claret in 2002, and Father Pelagio (Jun) Pateño became the parish's assistant pastor. Father Miller remained pastor until June 2008. At that time Father Jesús Briones became administrator of the parish.

Father Briones was followed as pastor by the return of the first Divine Word Missionary to be assigned to St. Anthony Claret, Father Bou. He returned to St. Anthony Claret and found things much different than what he left behind in 2002, just six short years earlier. The Hispanic population of Lakewood has grown in those years and so had the needs of the people on every level: social, psychological and spiritual.



St. Anthony Claret Church, Lakewood, New Jersey.

Father Bou recalled that the architect of the new parish church kept saying that “if we build a new church, they will come.” This is precisely what happened in Lakewood. There are now five weekend Masses – four in Spanish and only one in English.

In 2009 there were 296 Baptisms, 80 First Holy Communions, 48 Confirmations, 16 weddings, and countless Quinceanera Masses. It is evident that there is much pastoral work to be done at St. Anthony's.

Religious education programs for 400 registered children are vital to the growth of the parish community. Along with religious education programs, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program is flourishing. The parish sponsors fraternal organizations, including the Knights of Columbus, St. Vincent de Paul, and Grupo de Oracion prayer groups. It also is the site of the Lakewood Community Food pantry. In addition, they have a retired therapist on board twice a week who administers to those in need of therapeutic help.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

The Society of the Divine Word began offering pastoral care in the Diocese of Trenton in 1941 with the founding of a parish that served a black immigrant population in Trenton. Forty years later, the Society established another parish to serve the Hispanic population in Neptune, New Jersey. As time passed, the Society accepted responsibility for two other parishes in the diocese.

More recently the Diocese of Trenton has been involved in a process of consolidating parishes, personnel and resources to more effectively evangelize and reach out to the ever-changing community.

Throughout the years of growth and expansion as well as in the more recent times of consolidation and merger, the work of the Society of the Divine Word in the New Jersey District has focused on both pastoral care and social assistance programs, such as food pantries, support groups and ESL classes. Of special note is the concern with immigration issues that affect families that move to the United States in search of better lives. The parishes in the New Jersey District serve immigrants from Africa, Asia, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

## **PERSONNEL**

In 2012, seven Divine Word Missionary priests worked in the New Jersey District. They came from the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Ghana. The oldest confrere was born in 1945 and the youngest in 1977.

## APPENDIX

### District Superiors

From 1941 until 1973 the parishes in New Jersey were under the guidance of the rector of St. Joseph Mission House in Bordentown, New Jersey. In 1973 the New Jersey District was established.

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Father August Langenkamp    | 1973–1979    |
| Father Edward McGuinn       | 1979–1985    |
| No District Superior listed | 1985–1991    |
| Father John Wadeson         | 1991–1995    |
| Father Timothy Donnelley    | 1995–2002    |
| Father Miguel Virella       | 2002–2011    |
| Father Pedro Bou            | 2011–2014    |
| Father Guilherme Andrino    | 2014–present |

### Pastors

#### *Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd, Trenton*

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Father Joseph Ford       | 1941–1946  |
| Father Vincent Smith     | 1947 -1950 |
| Father Alexander Leedie  | 1951–1952  |
| Father Peter Heier       | 1953–1962  |
| Father Bernard Kowalski  | 1963–1974  |
| Father Victor Butler     | 1975–1978  |
| Father Edward McGuinn    | 1979–1986  |
| Father William Hegarty   | 1987–1992  |
| Father Timothy Donnelley | 1993–2002  |
| Father George Kintiba    | 2003–2003  |
| Father Edward Tetteh     | 2004–2005  |

#### *Blessed Sacrament / Divine Shepherd, Trenton*

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Father Edward Tetteh     | 2005–2011 |
| Father Guilherme Andrino | 2012–     |

*St. Peter Claver, Asbury Park*

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Father John Buys         | 1943–1950 |
| Father Vincent Smith     | 1950–1952 |
| Father Bernard Kowalski  | 1951–1962 |
| Father William Hagan     | 1962–1964 |
| Father Joseph Gunning    | 1964–1974 |
| Father August Langenkamp | 1974–1984 |
| Father Anthony Hemphill  | 1984–1986 |
| Father John Wadeson      | 1986–1996 |
| Father Gerhard Vogel     | 1996–2002 |
| Father Marek Pardon      | 2003–2004 |

*Our Lady of Providence, Neptune/Asbury Park*

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Father Pedro Bou       | 1981–1992    |
| Father James Vorwerk   | 1993–1998    |
| Father Eugene Rockford | 1999–2001    |
| Father Miguel Virella  | 2002–present |

*St. Anthony Claret, Lakewood*

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Father Pedro Bou     | 1993–2003 |
| Father Walter Miller | 2004–2008 |
| Father Jesús Briones | 2009–2010 |
| Father Pedro Bou     | 2011–     |

**District Members who were not pastors**

(The year of their arrival in the District is listed.)

*Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd, Trenton*

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Father Dennis Guiner      | 1947 |
| Father Alexander Leedie   | 1951 |
| Father John Kist          | 1951 |
| Father William Hagan      | 1954 |
| Father Richard Thibeau    | 1964 |
| Brother Doug Edmonds      | 1970 |
| Father Thomas Leibold     | 1971 |
| Brother Joseph Piotrowski | 1971 |
| Father Norman St. John    | 1976 |
| Father Paul Connors       | 1979 |

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| Father Donald Ehr       | 1984 |
| Brother Patrick Hegarty | 1987 |
| Frater John Khien (CTP) | 1990 |

(CTP = Cross-Cultural Training Program)

*St. Peter Claver, Asbury Park*

|                               |      |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Father Alexander Leedie       | 1947 |
| Father Dennis Guiner          | 1952 |
| Father Lawrence Archey        | 1953 |
| Father William Hagan          | 1960 |
| Father Joseph Gunning         | 1963 |
| Father Thomas Leibold         | 1964 |
| Father John Wadeson           | 1971 |
| Father August Langenkamp      | 1972 |
| Father Anthony Hemphill       | 1977 |
| Father Pedro Bou              | 1977 |
| Brother Michael Szramoski     | 1979 |
| Brother Thomas Joseph         | 1981 |
| Brother Rogers Hannan         | 1987 |
| Frater Dominic Quang (CTP)    | 1990 |
| Frater Chau Pham (CTP)        | 1993 |
| Frater Robert Ratajczak (CTP) | 1994 |

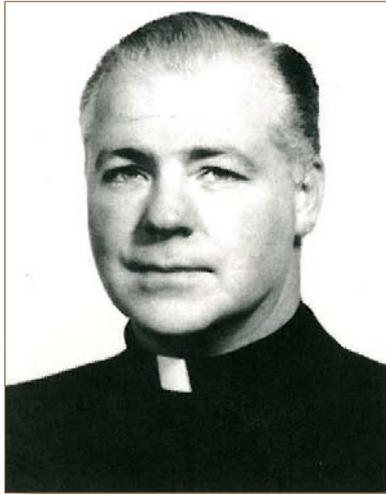
*Our Lady of Providence, Neptune/Asbury Park*

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| Father James Liebner    | 1986 |
| Father James Vorwerk    | 1992 |
| Father Eugene Rockford  | 1998 |
| Father Carlos Paniagua  | 2001 |
| Father Bernard Espiritu | 2010 |

*St. Anthony Claret, Lakewood*

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Father João Rodriguez       | 1998 |
| Father Miguel Virella       | 1998 |
| Father Rolando Danzine      | 1999 |
| Father Manuel Myvett        | 1999 |
| Father Pelagio (Jun) Pateño | 2004 |

## APPENDIX: EULOGY FOR FATHER EDWARD MCGUINN



Fr. Edward McGuinn, 1928-1986.

A tribute from a member of the Liturgy Committee of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd, Trenton, New Jersey, at the Mass of Christian Burial for Father Edward McGuinn on April 1, 1985.

Your Excellencies, Reverend Fathers, Sisters, and friends:  
I am here to speak on behalf of the Liturgy Committee of this parish. First, we wish to extend our condolences to the family of Father McGuinn and say to you that your grief is our grief and your loss is our loss. May God wipe away your tears and comfort you in your sorrow.

We believe that there was no group in this parish who had a more creative or more loving relationship with Father McGuinn than the Liturgy Committee. This committee was not limited to just a handful of us who met regularly with Father McGuinn on Monday evenings, but extended itself to embrace our Oblate Sisters of Providence, our laypeople who served as commentators and readers, and our choir, all of whom helped to enhance our work so that the liturgy became a beautiful Eucharistic celebration.

Father McGuinn liked humor. Laughter came easily for us who gathered around the kitchen table in the rectory. We were a happy group. You might have thought we were a bunch of politicians picking a presidential candidate as we sat in that smoke-filled room while the coffeepot gurgled on the stove. Coffee vendors of the world lost one of their best friends when they lost Father McGuinn.

At our Monday night meetings we rehashed what had gone on the Sunday before. We questioned ourselves: Did the theme, the music, the homily, the readings all blend? What could we do to improve the liturgy? The Monday night quarterbacking over, Father McGuinn began to hum some little innocuous tune like “Yankee doodle came to town riding on a pony, stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni.” That was our signal to get down to serious business. Put on our thinking caps. And what a learning experience it was for us sitting there with Father as he explained the historical background of the Scriptures, which we had read aloud after the opening prayer of the meeting.

Father McGuinn had a vast reserve of knowledge. He was deep, but he never flaunted his intellect. Nor did he ever patronize us. He didn’t look down on us. He respected our black heritage. Father McGuinn didn’t have to read a book on how to get along with “Us’ns.” He had an educated heart. And oh, how he loved to talk that talk. We used to kid him sometimes and say, “Watch it, Father. Back off that talk. After all you’re supposed to use the King’s English. Remember, Father, you are the pastor.”

In our meetings we talked about philosophy, ethics, psychology, psychiatry, and even the peculiar ways of the Irish. Sometimes we joked about the irony of our condition. Here we were sitting in this rundown rectory, reaping such an abundance of knowledge given so freely by a unique and gifted priest. Here in our midst sat one of the finest and most eloquent preachers in the whole Diocese of Trenton—bar

none. And yet we suspected that there were some affluent parishes that perhaps might look down upon us in our situation. But the joke was on them. It was we who felt pity for them, indeed, felt pity for all those people who had never known Father McGuinn or heard him preach.

It was fitting that God should send Father McGuinn to spell out his last days here with our parish family. It was here that he spent his noblest hours. It was here that he was fine-tuned, polished, and refined. It was here that he passed his final test, which prepared his entrance into Paradise. When Father McGuinn came to this parish in 1976 we were in despair. Standing here in this place, not knowing which way to go, he lifted our spirits. He showed us the path we should take. He set us on a new direction. He gave us a new vision of ourselves.

“Goodnight, Padre.” This is what Henry Hall (member of the liturgy committee) always said when we left the rectory after our liturgy meeting. “Goodnight, Father,” the rest of us chimed in. “We’ll be seeing you.”

And now Father McGuinn has gone. He has left us. And believe me, we will never see the likes of him again. He did not leave us alone. He left us a lot to remember him by.

Take your rest, Father McGuinn. Take your rest. You paid your dues.

You ain’t got nothin’ to worry about. You done good.

## NOTES

1. Chronicle 1:3, 4.
2. St. Joseph Mission House, Bordentown, New Jersey, archives (Divine Word Missionaries).
3. *Editor's note*: This date is inconsistent with other dates given for the foundation of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd.
4. Representative Christopher Smith to the United States House of Representatives on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd, November 1, 2001.
5. Chronicle 1:5.
6. *Ibid.*, 52.
7. *Ibid.*, 53.
8. See the appendix for a complete list of the priests and Brothers who have served in the New Jersey District along with the names of several students who completed their Cross-Cultural Training Program in the New Jersey District
9. *The Monitor*, Newspaper of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Trenton, June 24, 2014.
10. This religious order was founded by St. Anthony Claret, thus the name of the parish.