

## Our Catholic History on Bainbridge Island

Father (later Archbishop) Francois Blanchet, the pioneer missionary of the Oregon country, traveled by canoe through Agate Passage in 1840 and visited the Indians at their camp below what is now Suquamish. By 1843, Captain Wilkes records that there was already a crude Catholic chapel at this site. The priests who continued to serve the Catholic Indians of Puget Sound throughout the following decades also visited the new flourishing settlement of Port Madison on Bainbridge Island. During the late 19th century, we know that Mass was celebrated from time to time at the home of Phillip Wist, the local hotelkeeper.

As Port Blakely, in turn, became a booming mill town, its few Catholic families gathered about once a month for Mass at the home of one of the sawmill workers. In 1914, these families were able to build St. Andrew's Church. This church, built on the top of Blakely Hill continued in use until 1943.

About this same time, the Catholics of Winslow bought the old one-room Winslow schoolhouse and moved it across the street to its new site next to where the bowling alley now stands. In 1914, this new church was placed under the patronage of the Roman Martyr

St. Cecilia and officially established as a mission of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Bremerton.



St. Cecilia's Church (1914-1949)

St. Andrew's and St. Cecilia's were served first by the Redemptorist Fathers from Sacred Heart Parish in Seattle, and then after 1930, by the Jesuits from Seattle College (now Seattle University). For some 18 years, the much beloved Father Raymond Nicholas, S.J., celebrated Mass on the Island every Sunday.

Then, in June of 1949, St. Cecilia's was at last erected to full parish status and Father John Duffy became its first resident pastor. Even before this announcement, plans were already afoot to move units of the Island's wartime housing project to the new property at

High School Road and Madison Avenue, which had been donated by Louis Esterman (later Fr. Marian, O.S.B.) before he joined the Benedictine Order. The new St. Cecilia's Church was dedicated by Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly on November 27, 1949.

Others who have served as pastors at St. Cecilia's since 1949 include: Rev. Laurence O'Larey (1953-55), Rev. William Odgen (1955-61), Rev. Alfred Mathiensi (1961-69), Rev. Charles Crosse (1969-71), Rev. Gerald Moore (1969-74), Rev. Cornelius Harrington (1974-79), Rev. Donald Conger (1979-90), Rev. Joseph Erny (7/90-9/90), Fr. John Graisy (9/90-91), Rev. Ward Oakshott (1991-3/95), Rev. Gerard Clenaghan, OMI (3/95-6/95), and Fr. Patrick Godley (6/95- ).

In 1949, St. Cecilia's numbered a scant 100 families. Over the years, however, the Catholic population of Bainbridge Island began to grow. As more and more young families moved to the Island, the need for additional religious education classrooms became a real concern. The hall was no longer adequate. In the early 1980's the parish council formed a task force to study our long-range needs. Out of this committee's extensive study, there came eventually the historic decision to build a new parish church and hall at St. Cecilia's and to convert the

# S. Paula Turnbull Noted as Sculptor



Sister Paula Turnbull is widely known as a sculptor throughout the Northwest and beyond. Her latest major work, initiated by St. Cecilia's Women's Club, is a strikingly graceful statue of St. Cecilia sculpted for the Catholic church bearing that name on Bainbridge Island in Winslow, Washington. The figure, of copper tubing welded together, stands five feet ten inches tall. The palm in St. Cecilia's hand and the lyre on which the Roman martyr, patroness of music, is playing, are also of brass, while the face is carved of a redwood burl.

Blessing of the statue was held on November 22 last, feast of St. Cecilia, with Father Donald Conger, pastor, presiding. The parishioners are proud to have the only outdoor sculpture on the island. At their request, the copper was left without finish to oxidize naturally, taking on the greenish color typical of this metal when aged.

## Sculptures in Brass, Copper

Other recent sculptures of Sister Paula are the brass and copper figure of the church's patron at St. Peter's in Spokane, a large sculptural sign and figure of the Holy Family mounted on the exterior of St. Henry's Church in Grand Coulee, and the cross for St. Elizabeth's Community Hospital in Baker, Oregon. Sister's metal sculptures also include the paper-eating goat in Riverfront Park, made at the time of Expo '74, and the welded metal pieces that make up the Sculpture Garden at the Convent.

Among Sister's better known wood carvings are the statue of Blessed Marie Rose, SNJM foundress, in the provincial house, the Madonna and stations of the cross in Holy Names Center chapel, statues of Sts. Anthony and Jude of carved walnut in Kennewick, and the Holy Family at St. Mary's in Moscow, Idaho. Sister has worked with many famous sculptors, including Anthony Caro.

## Teaches by Class, Travel

Sister Paula's experience in art education is impressive too. She was a professor of art for over 25 years, first at Holy Names College in town and then at Fort Wright College. Sister has guided art study tours abroad including 10 January Terms in Europe, chiefly in Italy and Greece, and five spring terms to England, France, Spain and Italy.

Paula is a real student of art and is fascinated by knowledge in almost any field. She never seems to forget anything, and she integrates all into a broad picture of the whole art scene. Sister also has an unusual gift for bringing out the latent talent in students, and she often remains a mentor for life. She has just finished a copper piece for above the fireplace in a Lake Coeur d'Alene home and a 25 inch stoneware Madonna for the Christian Womanity group of Pleasant Hill, California.



## Our History

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Then fifty-four years ago, in Jun of 1949, St. Cecilia's was at last erected to full parish status and Father John Duffy became its first resident Pastor. Ever before this, plans were already afoot to move units of the Island's wartime housing project to the new property at High School Road and Madison, donated by Louis Esterman (later Fr. Marian, O.S.B.) before he joined the

Benedictine. Others who have served as pastors at St. Cecilia's since 1949 include: Rev. Laurence O'Larey (1953-55), Rev. William Odgen (1955-61), Rev. Alfred Mathieski (1961—69), Rev. Charles Crosse (1969-71), Rev. Gerald Moore (1969-74), Rev. Cornelius Harrington (1974-79), Rev. Donald Conger (1979-90), Rev. Joseph Erny (7/90-9/90), Fr. John Graisy (1990-91), Rev. Ward Oakshott (1991-95), Fr. Gerard Clenaghan (interim paster 3/95-6/95), Fr. Patrick Godley (1995-2000), Fr. Dennis Sevilla (2000-2003), and Fr. Sean O'Loughlin (2003- ).

In the early 1980's, the Parish Council formed a task force to study our long-range needs. Out of this committee's extensive study, there came the historic decision to build a new parish church and hall, and to convert the existing church and hall into classroom and meeting room space.

Years of fund-raising followed. On the holy night of Easter Vigil, April 18, 1987, the doors of the new St. Cecilia's Church were at last opened and the first Mass was celebrated. On May 24, 1987, the new church and hall were solemnly blessed and dedicated by Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen. On November 22, 1987, the Feast of St. Cecilia, the new statue of our Patroness was blessed.

In 2001, St. Cecilia's began a catholic school, under the name, Mustard Seed. In 2003, it grew to accommodate preschool, pre-k, kindergarten, and first and second grade.

For over eighty years, then, a group of believers, a community of love and faith, has worked and worshipped together here on Bainbridge Island. To all those who have made the building up of this parish possible we are truly grateful... Now we welcome you who are new to St. Cecilia's parish family and we invite you to pray and work with us that God may be better known and served and loved within our Island community.