

St. Martha of Bethany Parish The Shrine of All Saints

2020 Guide Book & Directory



8523 Georgiana Avenue • Morton Grove, Illinois 60053
847-965-0262 • www.saintmarthachurch.org

"A Catholic community welcoming all & seeking to know, love and serve God and one another."

St. Martha of Bethany Parish/ Shrine of All Saints

8523 Georgiana Ave, Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

Phone: 847 965-0262 • Fax: 847 965-2535

Website: saintmarthachurch.org

Email: stmarthachurch@yahoo.com

Dear Friends and Fellow Parishioners,

I am delighted to offer you this new Parish Directory as a reflection of who we are and who we will remain, especially since this booklet is being issued during the covid-19 pandemic, with its devastating effect on so many aspects of our lives that we used to take for granted and consider “normal.” At a time fraught with reasons for our keeping our distance from each other, our directory emerges as a statement that we are still a family, who loves, cares for, and prays for each other. It is an icon of our desire to keep in touch with each other and to use it to let each other know that no one is going through this difficult period alone.

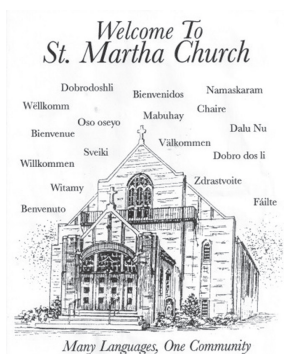


We are currently also engaged in a discernment about the combined futures of five local parishes: St. Martha of Bethany/Shrine of All Saints, St. Isaac Jogues, St. John Brebeuf, St. Peter and St. Lambert. So this directory is also a great act of faith in a future in which we will still remain a viable and alive parish. Please use this directory to keep in touch with each other. And please note that this directory is for the private use of our parishioners. It is not to be lent, sold or given to any person, company or agency for any purpose whatsoever. Everyone's cooperation is asked for and expected out of respect for the persons listed. Thank you & God Bless. With best wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Dennis B. O'Neill

Fr. Dennis O'Neill
Pastor



Mission Statement

“A Catholic community welcoming all & seeking to know, love and serve God and one another.”

Information on the Rites of the Church

Baptism - 1st Sunday, every Sunday at 1:00 PM, in the Small Church.

You may also have your Baptism celebrated during any Sunday Mass. Baptism preparation class, is held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM in the rectory. Class is required for new parents or those who have not attended a preparation class within the past 3 years. Please contact Deacon Tony Valdez at (312) 218-7719 for more information.

Marriage - Wedding preparation sessions are required. Please contact the rectory no less than 6 months prior to the proposed wedding date.

Anointing - Available day or night. Please call the rectory for arrangements.

Funeral - We suggest you work with the funeral home of your choice to begin your arrangements. The funeral director will call St. Martha Parish to coordinate dates and times. We are available to assist with Wake services, Funeral Mass preparation and Committal. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the rectory.

Reconciliation - Saturday, 3:00 - 3:30 PM or by appointment. Please call the rectory.

Mass Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

7:00 AM Small Church

Wednesday

7:00 AM, Communion Service, Small Church

Saturday

7:30 AM, Small Church

4:00 PM, Large Church

Sunday

7:00 AM, Small Church

9:00 AM & 11:00 AM, Large Church

Sunday

5:00 PM, Small Church

Roman Catholic Malayalam Mass

Celebrant:

Meet our staff

Rev. Dennis B. O'Neill, Pastor

Deacon Tony Valdez, Parish Deacon

Elizabeth Frake, Coordinator of Religious Education

Kevin Wood, Music Director

Lori Ronczka, Business Manager

Maintenance

John Wilkinson

John Ilo

Elizabeth Ilo

St. Martha of Bethany Parish

Shrine of All Saints

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Organizations

Councils

Finance Council

Parish Pastoral Council

Commissions

Spiritual Life

Religious Education/Faith Formation

Human Concerns

Parish Life

In the following pages, we will describe the mission and focus of each commission and the activities, events and ministries performed by committees and members of the commissions.



Finance Council

Function and Purpose

Mandated by Canon Law, this body serves the Pastor in an advisory and consultative manner. The members, chosen by the pastor from the community have demonstrated skills in business management and or finance and is not a part of the Parish Pastoral Council structure.

Members meet regularly, to review current and projected parish finances. They are also responsible for providing input to the pastor in any/all decisions according to strictly defined Archdiocesan guidelines. They are required to attest to the published semi-annual and annual reports which are prepared and submitted to the Cardinal.

Current Members led by Fr. Dennis O'Neill: Lori Ronczka, Bill McIntosh, Deacon Tony Valdez, Val Noronha

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Parish Pastoral Council

Peggy Friewer, Chairperson

PURPOSE

- The Parish Pastoral Council shall work with and assist the Pastor, Pastoral Staff and all other parish organizations in areas which are in harmony with the goals of this parish.
- While the group has no independent decision making authority, it does have a responsibility and obligation to provide input and recommendations to the Pastor & Pastoral Staff when called upon.

Function

A diverse group of advisors, from many backgrounds, called by the spirit to serve and advise the pastor and our parish community, representing the four commissions and many committees, we serve as a bridge between the parish community and the pastor. It is our responsibility to provide input on matters that fulfill the statement of purpose and to listen to comments, concerns & questions raised by parishioners and consider that information in a prayerful way that results in attention, discussion, resolution and communication. They serve as “gatekeepers” or coordinators of all of the commissions and committees within St. Isaac Jogues to make sure everyone’s needs are met.

Participation

Registered parishioners can become a member of the PPC in several ways. Parishioners can be recommended or invited to join. We are always looking for prayerful, spiritual people to help guide the parish. If you are interested, please speak to Fr. Dennis.

Current Members:

Virgie Castillo	Paul Minx & Rita Minx	Kevin & Karen Rosienski
Anna Duerr	Erich Monzon	Joyce Salvador
Peggy Friewer	Val Noronha	Jim Wrzala Jr.
Jeannie Hofeld	Ed Ramos	



Spiritual Life Commission

“Promote and foster a deeper spiritual life through implementing meaningful experiences which encourage prayer, discernment, participation and reflection”

Altar Servers – Cathy Pauley

Youth servers (Grade 4 and older) assist at weekend Masses and weddings. Adult servers assist at daily Masses and funerals. Training provided.

Arts & Environment – Debbie Szachowicz

Plans and prepares the environment according to liturgical seasons with the use and care of plants and flowers, pictures and icons. More time and tasks surround decorating the church for Christmas, Holy Week and Easter.

Eucharistic Ministers – Cathy Pauley

Lay ministers mandated to distribute the Body and Blood of Christ during Mass. Training provided.

First Friday Adoration – 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM Small Church

Includes Divine Mercy and Rosary for Life

Holy Rosary & Divine Mercy Chaplet – Small Church - Mary Karapill

After Mass Monday, Tuesday, Friday & Saturday. Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM

2000 Hail Marys – Small Church

Third Friday after the 7:00 AM Mass

Lectors – John Golata

Proclaim the Scriptures at various liturgical celebrations. Training provided.

Liturgy Committee – Kevin Wood

Develop & enhance the liturgical life and worship environment of St. Martha. Some tasks include weekly liturgy & music, church preparation, Children's liturgy, Blessing of Baskets for Easter, Lenten Stations of the Cross, Nuptial Mass, Seder Dinner planning & coordination.

Ministers of Care – Pat Mc Kenna

Training & scheduling of the extraordinary ministers who support our weekly ministry of delivering communion to Bella Terra Nursing Home and the homebound.

Parish Mission – Fr. Dennis

Annual Lenten faith formation sessions with themed presentations by special speakers, occurring over three nights during Lent.

Prayer Groups – Rosemarie Rice & Rosario Calimag

Coordinates & supports weekly rosary prayer on Tuesdays, Family Holy Rosary Crusade, May Crowning, and Our Lady of Fatima in October

Sacristans – Cathy Pauley

Teams serve once a month to care for the details of our liturgical celebrations such as cleaning and preparing the sanctuary and cleaning liturgical vessels.

Spirituality Library – Mary Dalcobbo

Library with religious resource material you can borrow or purchase. The Library also holds an annual “Library Sale” to help raise funds for St. Martha.

Ushers – Pat Mc Kenna

Serve the community through a ministry of welcome, hospitality and assistance during Mass.



Saint Martha Parish Music Ministry – Kevin Wood, Director

Adult Choir Rehearsals

7:00 PM Wednesdays - Large Church (September - June)

Increasingly, there are more and more ways to participate in the musical life of our parish. The Adult Parish Choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings. Not only does this volunteer group lead a Mass each week but they offer special music throughout the year as well. It's also a great social network within the community.

Handbell Choir - A fun way to engage in the musical life of our parish!

Co-directors: **Sean Bieschke, Megan Bieschke and Sharon Smith**

Participation in our intergenerational handbell ensembles is another way to get involved in the musical life at St. Martha Parish. Currently there are three different ensembles. Join one, two or all three! Like our other music ensembles, no previous experience is required....just a love of music and a willingness to work at learning a new skill.

Resurrection Choir

This non-rehearsed choir provides musical support at funerals.

Members of the choir attend funerals as their schedules permit to aid in singing hymns, psalms and other responses.

Children's Choir

Meets on Monday nights at 6:00 PM before RE. All Students are welcome!

For further information on getting involved in the musical life of our parish, please contact our Parish Music Director, Kevin Wood. E-mail works best: stmarthachurch@yahoo.com, or if necessary, leave a message at (847) 965-0262.



The staff is incredible. They truly seem to love what they do. My mother is well-cared for and happy. Feels like home."
- Holly A., Daughter of Resident

While dealing with the struggle of finding a safe place for my grandmother, Auberge's atmosphere and staff really helped. The warmth that you feel when you enter is the same feeling when I would visit grandma. The moment I walked in, I knew she was going to be in good hands, and very satisfied with our decision!"
- J.P., Grandchild of Resident

I would like to praise the staff at The Reserve for all their hard work and dedication to keeping our loved ones safe. During this pandemic they have been nothing short of exceptional. The communication with families is constant and I feel comfortable knowing that my loved one is safe and loved. I cannot praise the staff enough for truly loving their residents."
- Marilyn L., Family Member of Resident

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Human Concerns Commission

Peggy Freiwer – Chairperson

“Promote social justice and empowerment to the marginalized in our neighborhoods and beyond. Support those in need.”

Domestic Violence Outreach – Peggy Friewer

Provides support and encouragement to individuals & families suffering violence.

Ministers of Praise – Pat Mc Kenna

Support and encourage the prayer experience for any/all homebound who wish to participate in some way in the nurturing of the parish community

Pro-Life Committee – Paul Berg & Donna Hedrick

Encourage and promote a pro-life environment within the parish and support local and national pro-life activities including Women’s Center Baby Bottle collections and Wreath Sales.

St. Vincent de Paul – Fr. Dennis O’Neill

Our mission is to help those in need within our community. Our Group serves the poor with food and financial assistance for rent, utilities, medical bills, transportation and other urgent needs. We support local food banks, which store and distribute non-perishable items that are primarily collected from parishioners via food drives. We also organize Christmas Giving Tree events for our sister Parish, St. Agnes. Perhaps even more importantly, we try to help with encouragement and prayers.



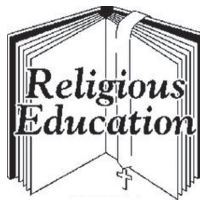
Ecumenical/Interreligious Committee – Fr. Dennis O’Neill

Seeks ways to learn about and engage with other faith communities and faith traditions in the area. We offer presentations, attend Ramadan celebrations, host Passover dinners and participate in the annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Service.

St. Agnes of Bohemia Sharing Parish – Sharon Okrzesik & Pat Pearson, David & Olga Kessler

Our parish shares with St. Agnes of Bohemia in Chicago. We accept donations of food and household items and deliver to the parish.

Friendship, support through monetary gifts, toys, schools supplies and other donations have forged bonds for years.



Religious Education & Faith Formation

Adult Enrichment – Fr. Dennis

Parish Mission Lent Series and various other presentations, including the “History of The Saints” which encourage adults to continue learning, growing and being formed in their faith.

Baptism Preparation - Deacon Tony Valdez

Preparation meeting held monthly for parents asking for their child to be baptized. It is held the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the rectory and lasts approximately 1-½ hours. It includes an explanation of the sacrament as initiation, its history, symbols and the importance of parents and godparents in passing on our Catholic faith and tradition. Baptisms are scheduled the first Sunday of each month at 1:00 PM in the small church. You may also choose to have your child baptized on any Sunday at Mass. Other arrangements are available for special circumstances. To plan a baptism, please call Tony Valdez.

RCIA – Deacon Tony Valdez

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a process that welcomes adults seeking to be baptized, Christians who wish to join the Catholic Church, and baptized Catholics who desire to complete their initiation with Confirmation and Eucharist.

Soup Suppers – Ann Barry

Lenten faith formation sessions, held three or four weeks during lent with speakers and modest meals of soup, bread and salads, shared together with St. Isaac Jogues.

SPRED – Gerry & Terry Gangloff

A process of sharing faith (through symbol) and friendship with adults who are mentally challenged. Each of 12 sessions helps connect them to the experience of celebrating the Eucharist with the faith community. Every participant has a helper catechist.

Religious Education – Elizabeth Frake, Coordinator

St. Martha Parish offers a religious education and faith formation program which includes worship and study for children attending local public school in first through eighth grade. St. Martha's is where they learn to practice their faith traditions and values of their Catholic faith. Our Catechists share their faith with great dedication.

First through eighth grade attend class on Monday evenings from 6:45 PM to 8:00 PM. We generally hold classes for three weeks with the fourth week off each month. Every family receives a Religious Education School Calendar.

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist are celebrated in second grade. Candidates should be registered and active Parish members. All students must attend both 1st and 2nd grade to receive the Sacraments.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in 8th grade. Candidates must also be registered in the parish and complete the 7th and 8th grade religious education programs to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Children's Liturgy of the Word – Family Mass – the third Sunday at 9:00 AM Mass. Children serve in leadership roles and share their experience with the parish.

For more information, please call Elizabeth Frake at 847 965-0262.



Parish Life

Jim Wrzala – Chairperson

“Enhance the feeling of faith & family at St. Martha, promote fund-raising to help sustain a healthy parish, provide opportunities for community gathering.”

Block Party – Paul & Rita Minx

Summer event for the parish and community.

Fil-Am Group – David Calimag

Monthly meeting to pray the Novena of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and to encourage full participation of the Filipino-American community in parish activities, while maintaining the unique culture of the Philippines. The group promotes the Feast of San Lorenzo, Simbang Gabi, sponsors parish fundraisers and organizes various outside events.

Golf & Dinner – Jim Wrzala

Annual fundraising outing in August, with dinner & prizes.

Parish Benefactors

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Hospitality – “Kitchen Sisters” – Mary Pabst, Sharon Strohe & Carol DiSimone

Members of Parish Life organize and host refreshments after Mass and for special events.

New Parishioner Luncheon – Jeannie Hofeld

Welcome luncheon for new parishioners and families with short presentations from members of committees and commissions to share information and encourage participation.

Parish Picnic – Ed Ramos

Annual picnic – open to all parishioners and families with kid’s games & entertainment. Donations of food and cash are accepted to help defray costs.

Parish Raffle – Jim Wrzala

Annual parish fundraiser.

Rectory Christmas Open House – Fr. Dennis & Staff

Annual Christmas celebration on the second Sunday in December. Open to all parishioners, families & friends.

Restaurant Nights – Jim Wrzala

Held quarterly during the year at local restaurants who provide rebates to St. Martha. Helps provide support to local businesses and creates opportunities for parishioners to gather together.

St. Martha Seniors – Bob Roman

Open to all seniors, our goals are to promote service and spiritual growth to our Parish and social activities for our members. Seniors meet monthly for lunch and meetings at which local speakers present a variety of relevant topics. Membership is limited. If you’re interested in joining, please call Joann.

St. Joseph Table & Auction – Jay Rossman, Kathy Colby

Special Mass with an Italian focus, followed by traditional St. Joseph Table (meatless). No charge. St. Martha’s Annual Auction is conducted immediately following Mass & meal.

St. Patrick’s Party – Pat & Char Mc Kenna

Irish celebration, with food from Harrington’s, Irish dancers and entertainment. Helps to raise funds for St. Martha.



Shrine of All Saints

Archbishop Cupich celebrated Mass at St. Martha on All Saints Day, November 1, 2015, dedicated the newly installed stained glass windows and went on to designate St. Martha Parish as the **“Shrine of All Saints.”**

The Pastor, Fr. Dennis O’Neill explains that his curiosity and deep interest in church history led him to extensive research over the past 20 years and a personal collection of over 3000 different saint relics. While selling relics is a sin, rescuing them can be a virtue. He has found priceless collections of relics available on the internet. After much research, including several trips to multiple European destinations to confirm the validity of relics available on-line, he decided to make St. Martha Parish their new home.

The “big church,” originally built as a “multi-purpose” room, has been transformed into a place of honor where people are never separated from the saints. Over the past 18+ years, his collection was placed in protective cases and installed in the “big church.” To make the “multi-purpose” space a more reverend worship space, stained glass windows of Marian events, created in the 1920’s, rescued from an old Chicago church, long closed, were also installed.

About Relics

A relic can be anything from the past that has survived to the present. In some branches of the Christian Church, relics are more specifically either the bodily remains of the saints, or their clothing, items used, things they touched or which were touched to their remains, or things associated with the life of Christ or of his Blessed Mother. Throughout history, many people have venerated holy relics, because saints’ bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit, through which each of them in their own individual ways, channeled the presence of Christ to their contemporaries. In the early Christian era and the Middle ages, people believed that the aura and the energy of the saints continued to exude from their remains, even after their deaths. Just as people who knew the saints personally during their lifetime often experienced them as radiating Christ’s Presence through the many ways they were a blessing to others, so honoring their remains and their images were considered valid ways of honoring them and imploring their assistance.

St. Martha Parish/Shrine of All Saints provides the following:

1. Welcome & Hospitality: St. Martha is the patron saint of hospitality. Her example is extended in her parish. St. Martha Parish has a reputation of welcome and hospitality, as we celebrate many religious and secular events with parishioners and non-parishioners alike.

2. Share knowledge of Church History: Fr. Dennis O'Neill will personally direct groups, both large & small, through Church History with the saints. Recent groups include a pilgrimage from Christ the King and St. James Armenian Church. In addition, he has conducted several multi-week lectures on "Church History with the Saints" with parishioners and others from surrounding parishes providing a tangible connection with the saints. Religious education that starts with the Catechism could continue for our Religious Education students, RCIA candidates, seminarians and others who are seeking more information. Fr. Dennis authored a Relic Chapel guide 8 years ago and has published a second book, *Relics in the Shrine of All Saints* to serve as a "guide" to the relics, their history and culture of the times.

3. Ecumenism: St. Martha Parish, home to a Korean Presbyterian congregation and a Greek school share Protestant and Orthodox Christian interfaith experiences on a daily basis. Earlier this year, members of the St. James Armenian Church conducted a vespers service in veneration of the holy relics. Fr. Dennis took the opportunity to "share" relics of St. Jude Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew, both whom evangelized Armenia with the pastor. The Armenian congregation was extremely grateful. Fr. Dennis' collection contains many "doubles" which he is happy to share.

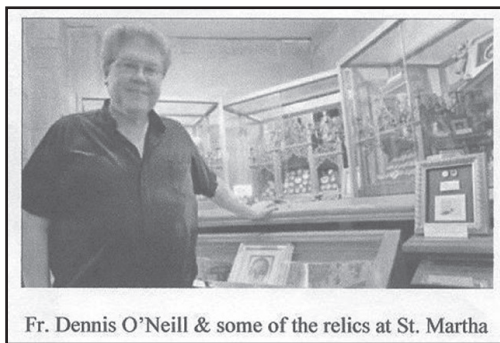
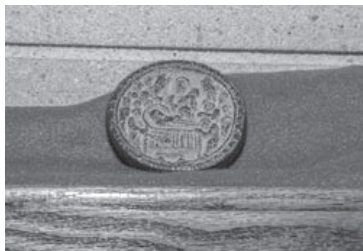
The Relics come from three primary sources.

1. Poor Clares of Lyon, France who were custodians of French relics saved during the French Revolution.
2. Abbey of Stavelot-Malmedy, Belgium
3. Palace chapels, belonging to noble families throughout Italy because the chapels no longer have chaplains. Most recent acquisition from the Borghese Palace, Rome, Italy.

For more information on the Shrine of All Saints, call the rectory or visit the website at shrineofallsaints.org.



The Dormition showing Mary with the apostles, excavated in Madaba, Jordan in 2001 by Dr. Reem Hajjal. Oldest known depiction of this subject in the world. Approx 500 – 550 AD



Fr. Dennis O'Neill & some of the relics at St. Martha

Parish History

St. Martha Catholic Parish was founded in November, 1919 when Cardinal Mundelein appointed the **Reverend Martin Schmidt** to undertake the organizing of a “mission” church in Morton Grove. Fr. Schmidt met with Mr. Harrer and Mr. Loutsch, who informed him that the residents desired their own independent church and had already established a bank account to that effect. Cardinal Mundelein had already chosen the name of St. Martha for the new church, and had expressed the desire that it should welcome everyone, and not belong to a specific nationality. Under Fr. Schmidt’s direction, the committee searched for a suitable space. They rented the building at 6238 Lincoln Avenue, which at that time was an abandoned saloon, for \$25 per month.

Fr. Schmidt directed the new parishioners on constructing a sacristy and refashioning the bar to make an altar. The first parish Mass celebrated in this building was attended by representatives of about 40 families. The village lent the new church chairs which had to be carried back and forth every weekend. Fr. Schmidt received a donation of oak pews from Fr. Smythe in Evanston.

Someone donated a used organ and the local children sang in the new church choir. Under Fr. Schmidt’s direction, property was purchased comprising eleven lots, having a frontage of 330 feet and a depth of 178 feet on Georgiana and South Park Avenues from the Huscher family for \$2700.00.

In 1922, Fr. Schmidt relinquished his position at St. Martha to devote his full attention to his own parish in Glenview.

The Fathers of the Divine Word assumed charge of St. Martha’s, appointing the **Rev. P. P. Paunder** to succeed Fr. Schmidt. However on December 4, 1922, St. Martha’s was raised to the status of a permanent pastorate and the **Rev. Frederick J. Bergs** was appointed the first permanent pastor. Fr. Bergs had previously worked for the Catholic Indian Mission Bureau in Washington, before becoming an army chaplain during WWI. During his first six months at St. Martha’s, he lived with a parish member until he could rent housing across the street from the parish grounds.

Since the parish had amassed a nest egg of some \$16,000, a loan was secured and plans for what would become the small church were drawn up by Arthur Foster of Chicago, along the architectural lines of English Gothic. Ground was broken in July, 1923 and the corner stone was blessed by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. F.A. Rempe on September 9, 1923. Use of the temporary store was discontinued upon the celebration of the first Mass in the new church on December 16, 1923. The building was blessed on May 4, 1924 by the Most Rev. Edward F. Hoban.

Construction of the rectory was begun in May, 1925 by E. Brielmaier and Sons, and completed in October of the same year. The total investment in the parish buildings was estimated at \$42,000. The new parish was actively engaged in fund raising, with significant funding in the early days coming from the parish picnic and the fall bazaar, as well as the weekly collection, which included seating fees, and the Catholic Women's Club and Ladies Sociality card parties. Winter fuel collections and building fund donations are recorded in 1925, our first available financial records.

Fr. Lawrence Wand, the third pastor, assumed the pastorate on August 1, 1928, with parish financial obligations totaling \$37,866.30 and cash assets of \$69.20 and unpaid bills of \$66.98. During the difficult years of the Great Depression, the parish was unable to make its mortgage payments, but Fr. Wand was able to avoid foreclosure by paying the interest on the debt. Even this required considerable community effort. Summer picnics and autumn "Schlactfests" were held in the area north of the small church, followed by dinners in the church hall- The Pine Room. During this time, parish children were attending the new St. Peter's School in Skokie or the local public school. By September 1928 Fr. Wand had requested catechists from the Sisters of Christian Charity in Wilmette. In response, two Sisters came every Saturday morning to St. Martha's to teach catechism and prepare the children for the sacraments.

In 1941, Fr. Wand was transferred to St. Philomena Parish in Chicago. He had successfully guided St. Martha through the Depression years leading up to WWII with understanding and kindness.

Cardinal Stritch appointed **Fr. Raymond J. Wilhelmi** as the fourth pastor of St. Martha's 140 families on April 20, 1941. Under his leadership over the next 27 years the parish experienced its greatest growth and campus expansion. During the war years, outdoor chimes were installed, the parish hall was renovated, and the church was redecorated. The Altar and Rosary Society was formed, and the first Christmas midnight Mass was celebrated. On December 1, 1944, the parish celebrated its Silver Jubilee with an 11:00 AM Mass followed by an anniversary banquet in the hall. Fr. Schmidt and Fr. Wand concelebrated the Mass, with the jubilee sermon preached by Fr. Wand.

In addition to activities to support the war effort, parish fund raising was relentless with an eye toward the future education of parish children. On October 28, 1945 a "Victory Fair" was held to celebrate the end of the war and the burning of the parish mortgage! All proceeds were directed to the growing "New School Building Fund." That same year, Fr. Wilhelmi celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination and the parish purchased the property south of the rectory to be used as a convent for the sisters when there would be a school.

In April, 1947 the Cardinal approved plans to remodel the parish hall to accommodate classrooms until sufficient funds were collected to construct a new school building. On September 3, 1947, 73 pupils enrolled in grades 1 through 4 and kindergarten with Sr. Stella Marie, Sr. Hildegarde and Sr. Celeste as teachers. The sisters remained at the mother house in Wilmette during the first school year, making the daily commute. The 5th grade was added in 1948, bringing an enrollment totaling 122 students and a fourth teacher, Sr. Rosaria. The property purchased in 1947 was remodeled, a chapel was added and the new convent was blessed on October 3, 1948. Sr. Louisetta was placed in charge of domestic duties.

The steadily increasing population of Morton Grove made construction of a new school building necessary. A “ground-breaking ceremony” was held on July 3, 1949 for the new building with the contract awarded to the Erik Bork Company for \$130,337.00. The doors opened for class on September 6, 1950 serving an enrollment of 192 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The new school was blessed and dedicated on May 6, 1951 by His Eminence Cardinal Stritch.

By 1952, school enrollment had increased to such a level that it was necessary to partition the temporary parish hall (the north wing) of the school building to gain additional classroom space, and to add an extension onto the convent to house the additional sisters needed to teach. The house north of the parish was purchased in 1953 and continues to be the home of the parish caretaker. In addition, a large extension was added to the rectory in 1954 to improve facilities.

Within a few short years, it had become obvious that the parish had outgrown its existing facilities, and a new fund was established to address the need for additional space. Over the next 3 years, the parish gradually collected the funds necessary to secure a loan and begin the next capital project. In 1957, the property at 6135 Lincoln Avenue was purchased from the Niessen/Nellessen/Boemmel family and in 1958, the property located between the convent and the public library was purchased from Edwin & Minnie Huefner. In April 1960 the property at 8603 Georgiana was purchased from the Yehl family and the existing house was demolished.

On June 12, 1960, the parish enjoyed a brief respite from the looming construction when they joined Rev. Roland Follman, OSA as he celebrated his First Solemn Mass at St. Martha, which was the first of such milestones for the parish.

An official groundbreaking ceremony for the Auditorium Chapel and Classroom Addition was held on July 17, 1960. The cornerstone was laid on November 7, 1960 at 12:20 PM. Construction proceeded quickly and the first Mass was celebrated in the new church at 7:30 AM on September 24, 1961. Total construction for the building amounted to about \$642,000. The new church was officially dedicated on May 20, 1962 by His Eminence Albert Cardinal Meyer at a 3:30 PM ceremony during which he also confirmed 318 children and adults from the parish.

On April 24, 1966, the parish celebrated Fr. Wilhelmi's 25th anniversary as pastor. St. Martha had grown to include 1400 families; 660 students attended school in 16 classrooms, and an additional 500 grade school and 125 high school students attended religious education classes. Two years prior, the pine room was remodeled and 2 activity rooms were added to the back of the church. A new principal's office was added in 1965. By 1966, the parish was debt free thanks to the loyal support and unending generosity of its parishioners. In April 1968, Fr. Wilhelmi was appointed Pastor Emeritus of St. Martha, and he lived with a parish family until his death in 1971.

Father William L. Devereux was appointed the fifth pastor of St. Martha Parish in April, 1968 by His Eminence John Cardinal Cody. When he assumed leadership, the parish had already begun implementing some of the changes brought about by Vatican II and was participating in the archdiocesan wide Project Renewal Program.

On January 4, 1970, the parish began a yearlong celebration of both St. Martha's and Fr. Wilhelmi's Golden Jubilee with a special concelebrated Mass followed by a reception for the former priests and sisters and the parish at large. In October, 1970, Fr. Schmidt returned to concelebrate Mass with Fr. Devereux as part of the jubilee festivities for the seniors. The year culminated with a Mass officiated by His Eminence John Cardinal Cody and a Golden Jubilee/Fr. Wilhelmi Testimonial Dinner on November 15, 1970.

During this time the growth of the village and parish began to level off at a time coinciding with a shortage of Sisters which then necessitated the hiring of lay teachers. While there was no further need to raise funds for building, funds were needed to pay the increasing costs of providing a Catholic education. In the fall of 1972, "Martha's Vineyard" was born. For two weeks in January, the auditorium chapel, the pine room and the classrooms were transformed into cabarets, stages and restaurants. Although it required considerable effort on the part of the parishioners, Martha's Vineyard built community spirit and raised from \$30,000 to \$50,000 each year that it was held from 1972 to 1984.

Fr. Devereux had a deep concern for providing religious education for all the children in the parish. To this end, he enthusiastically supported the religious education program for public school children. He also inaugurated the SPRED program to offer religious instruction to the mentally challenged, although the program was discontinued after the original students graduated and there were no younger children to fill the program. St. Martha Parish mourned the loss of this scholarly priest when he died suddenly on October 18, 1975.

Father Eugene Faucher was installed as the sixth pastor of St. Martha Parish on January 3, 1976. Under his leadership, the parish became well known for its liturgies and for his fine homilies. St. Martha continued to hold the Vineyards through the 1970s until 1984, in addition to the capital campaign that was needed to remodel the auditorium chapel. As an offshoot of the 1983 Vineyard, the Fil-Am Association was born as a means of celebrating the cultural unity of St. Martha's Filipino parishioners. In addition to sharing cultural celebrations and religious devotions, the Fil-Am actively participated in fundraising efforts of the parish by holding the annual *Fantasy Dinner Dance*, donating the resulting proceeds to the parish.

Father Faucher brought about the implementation of the liturgical decrees of Vatican II when he renovated the large church as a worship space according to the Bishops 1 Document on the Liturgy. After two years of planning and one year of construction work, the renovated large church was dedicated on July 29, 1984 by Bishop Timothy Lyne. The primary goal of this work was the relocation of the sanctuary to its central position, around which the parish family could gather to praise and thank our loving God. The auditorium chapel retained its multipurpose functionality, continuing to be used as a gymnasium and a meeting place, as well as worship space for liturgies.

In 1989, after three years of planning by staff and parishioners, the St. Martha Parish Council was formed.

In the summer of 1995, Father Faucher concluded his pastorate of 19 dedicated years at St. Martha when he retired. He was loved by many and is especially remembered for his warm, pastoral manner and accessibility. Father Faucher supported the parish school, religious education programs and all activities pertaining to the training and betterment of youth. He was a very active pastor emeritus, but passed away in July, 2012.

Father Robert J. Burnell became the seventh pastor when he was installed by Bishop Conway on October 14, 1995. Father Burnell worked with parishioners to continue to modernize and renew parish facilities. The landscaping was enhanced with additional plantings and lighting to beautify the campus and provide more security. The old convent building was removed and the facade of the small church was extensively restored. The addition of stained glass windows to the small church began in 1996 with the "Holy Spirit" window above the altar, and continued with the "Triumphant Cross" window in the loft in 1999. In 2001 the stained glass was added to the entrance and the old wooden doors were replaced by glass doors etched with the symbols of the four evangelists. Shrines of St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Francis of Assisi and Our Lady of Perpetual Help were added to the small church.

A St. Vincent de Paul Care Group was established to help meet the needs of the parish and surrounding community. Also during Fr. Burnell's administration, First Friday adoration of the Blessed Sacrament began. As the new millennium approached, concerns over the viability of the parish school grew, fueled by decreasing enrollment, increasing education costs and changing demographics.

Over the years Fr. Burnell had continued to work with the school community, alumni and parishioners. As part of the effort to keep the parish school open, Martha's Vineyard was reborn as "Marthafest II, a three day summer-fest with carnival rides, food, entertainment and an outdoor Mass. Despite the support of the parish and community of this and other fundraising efforts, the financial burden and decreasing enrollment were unabated. The final graduation from St. Martha School took place in June of 2000.

Father Dennis B. O'Neill became the eighth pastor of St. Martha Parish of August 15, 2001. His first task was to begin the work of revitalizing the parish community. During his first year, the "Tomorrow's Parish" process was used to survey the parish to develop a common sense of hopes and dreams for the future. The leadership team became the core of a reconstituted Parish Pastoral Council. Work continues through the Council's commissions to ensure that the vision which emerged will continue to be realized.

Repair and modernization of the parish campus continued as nearly all of the roofs were replaced, most of the older sections of the plant were rewired and stained glass clerestory windows were added to the small church. A small cafe and Spirituality Library were established from refashioned classroom space. The former convent garden was landscaped into a lovely meditation garden in 2004, and is now expanding to include a fountain centerpiece. The following year, parishioner Patrick O'Hara completed the beautiful painting of St. Martha (which is currently in the vestibule of the large church) which became the focal point of the entirely renovated "Plaza of Life" in front of the small church. The names of our loved ones and friends fill the plaza, while a pathway leads to the new disabled access chair lift for the small church. The plaza was dedicated by Bishop John Manz, an alumnus of the school.

To fulfill a common desire for a less functionally austere worship space in the large church, a comprehensive program was begun to enhance the decor. The seating was replaced with more comfortable and attractive chairs through the generosity of the Fil-Am Association. The platform of the altar was simplified by Scott Sander, whose late father Bernard had directed the major remodeling project of the 1980s and built most of the sanctuary furnishings in both churches. New chairs for the celebrant and two assistants were installed in the sanctuary as well as new carpeting there and in the hallway. Wall hangings were added, along with additional banners to camouflage the wall speakers. In addition, Fr. O'Neill established the relic chapel in the large church when he donated his extensive collection to the parish. The number of saints whose remains rest in the chapel is currently well over 3000. On May 16, 2008 during a beautiful ceremony which included our combined choirs in a multifaceted program, the new shrine of Our Lady of the Grove was dedicated, which features a large monstrance that houses a relic of Our Lady's hair, as well as the painting "Our Lady of the Grove" by British painter, Courtney Davis.

As part of the 90th Anniversary celebration, new stained glass windows were installed in the small church. Now completed, the windows depict saints representing the many countries from which our parishioners have come. The smaller windows under the choir loft depict saints representing music in the liturgy.

A desire for a family friendly liturgy was identified during the “Tomorrow’s Parish” process. While families are always welcome in our community and a special Children’s Liturgy of the Word is offered at all weekend Masses except the 7:00 AM, the monthly “family Mass” was established which brings special emphasis to the youngest members of our parish, with music at these liturgies is provided by our liturgical Band. The Fil-Am Choir has provided the music for a Mass each month since 2007.

St. Martha continues to be not only a prayerful community, but also a parish family that knows how to celebrate. During the average year at present, there are many events which reflect the unity in ethnic and cultural diversity which characterize St. Martha Parish - the annual St. Patrick’s Dinner Dance, St. Joseph Table and Auction, Pasta Dinner, Mother Teresa Night (from our Indian parishioners) and a Greek Fest, sponsored by the Hellenic Educational Society, whose students currently study in the school building. The Garum Christian Church, a Korean Presbyterian Church, currently rents our Scout Room for a space to meet and pray.

Throughout St. Martha’s interesting history, its members have been known for their friendliness, cooperation, hard work and good spirit. It has weathered the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, global turmoil, rapid growth and loss. It has worked to purchase land, build and educate, and has sponsored innumerable social activities along the way. But most important of all, it has been and continues to be a source of spiritual nourishment for its members.



Biography of Saint Martha



St. Martha Feast Day: July 29th

Martha was the sister of Mary and Lazarus. They lived in the little town of Bethany near Jerusalem. They were dear friends of Jesus, and he often came to visit them. In fact, the Gospel tells us: “Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary and Lazarus.” It was St. Martha who lovingly served the Lord when he visited them. One day, she was preparing a meal for Jesus and his disciples. She realized that the task would be easier if her sister would help. She watched Mary sitting quietly at Jesus’ feet, listening to him. “Lord, tell my sister to help me,” Martha suggested. Jesus was very pleased with Martha’s loving service. However, he wanted her to know that listening to God’s Word and praying is even more important. So he said gently, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious about many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part.”

St. Martha’s great faith in Jesus was seen when her brother Lazarus died. As soon as she heard that Jesus was coming to Bethany, Martha went to meet him. She trusted Jesus and felt the freedom to say: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Then Jesus told her that Lazarus would rise. He said, “He who believes in me, even if he die, shall live. Do you believe this?” And Martha answered, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.” Jesus worked a great miracle and raised Lazarus from the dead!

Later, Jesus came again to have supper with Lazarus, Martha and Mary. St. Martha served them at table as always. This time, though, Martha had a much more loving attitude. She served with a joyful heart.

Sometimes we don’t like to do certain chores. They seem heavy and unpleasant. At those times, we can ask St. Martha to give us a joyful attitude. We can ask her to show us that the littlest thing we do becomes beautiful when we do it for Jesus.