Many changes over 4 decades

REV. HENRY BENIN

Father Joseph Berton with the Knights of St. Charles.

This is the fifth in a series of articles highlighting the history of our parish leading to its 125ᵗʰ anniversary. Previous articles and issues of "More Good News" are available at www.mountcarmelblessed-sacrament.com.

1950-1991

Father William Pizzoglio's assistant, Father Joseph Berton, became Mount Carmel's next pastor. Out of his 26 years of service, his most lasting contribution was the construction of the rectory on Jay Street.

Despite the disappearance of much of the surrounding neighborhood due to urban renewal, Berton was able to keep his flock together, even after many had moved elsewhere.

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The Rev. Peter Bortolazzo succeeded Father Berton in 1964. We still enjoy his contributions today, including the pews, the altar of the sacrifice, restoration of the artwork and the granite steps in front of the church.

During the pastorship of Father John Corraro (1973-79), the shrine to Our Lady of Mount Carmel was created, school renovations took place, a senior center and a park dedicated to the memory of St. Charles Borromeo, founder of the Scalabrini Order, were established. The next pastor, Father Carmelo Negro (1979-83) continued his predecessor's work and replaced the old organ and established "The Busy Bodies," an outreach group from the parish.

In 1983, when Father Henry Benin, former assistant to Father Bartolozzo, became pastor, once again there was an upheaval in the life of our parish. The diocese decided to close the school and the Sisters of St. Francis who ran it left. Benin successfully negotiated the renting of the former convent to the Italian Cultural Center and readapted the school as the catechetical center.

Before leaving in 1991, Father Henry recognized the changing demographics in the parish and urged his flock to embrace newcomers of other ethnicities.

Source: History of St. Mary of Mount Carmel (prepared by the History Committee for the 1996 centennial celebration)