

A Short History

OF

St. Mary Help of

Christians Parish

and

The Aiken Missions

Aiken, South Carolina

Past — Present — Future

In June, 1853, the Right Rev. Ignatius A. Reynolds, D. D., immediate successor of the great John England as Bishop of Charleston, purchased the tract of land at the intersection of Park Avenue and York Street in the town of Aiken including the present church premises and the adjoining land now owned by the County of Aiken. At that time Aiken County had not been established, so the deed was recorded in the Office of the Clerk of Court for Barnwell County in Book GG of Deeds at page 35.

tion included twelve priests. They came up from Florida through Georgia and up the Savannah River, camping in the spring of 1540 at Silver Bluff on the South Carolina side of the river near the Indian Village of Cofitachiqui in the territory of the Aiken Missions. There were eight Spanish secular priests, a Trinitarian, a Franciscan and two Dominicans with the expedition which had as its objective the conversion of the natives to the Catholic Faith as well as exploration



Sketch depicting the first Holy Mass at Silver Bluff in 1540

When the Aiken Missions were set up as a parish the territory embraced seven counties—Edgefield, Saluda, Lexington, Barnwell, Orangeburg, and Calhoun. Later the new County of Aiken was carved out of parts of Barnwell and Edgefield Counties. The Aiken Missions covered an area of 6497 square miles.

Although the Aiken Missions were not formally established until 1853, the original traces of Catholicism in this region go back more than three centuries earlier to Hernando De Soto and the Spanish Conquistadores of his expedition in the year 1540. This expedi-

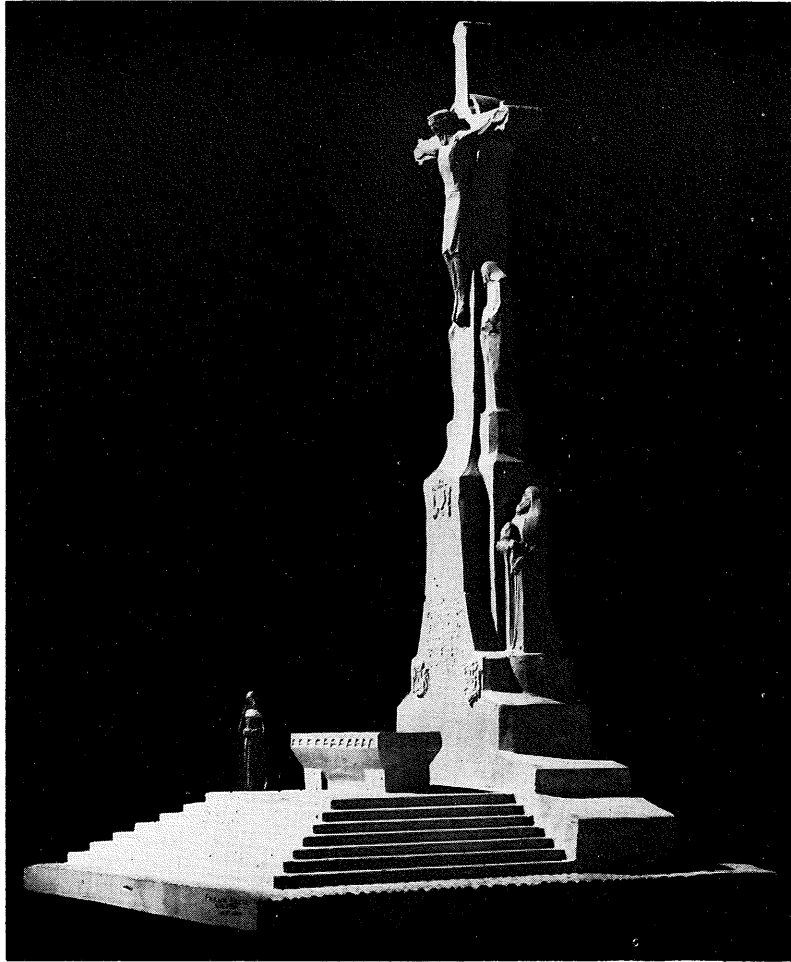
tion included twelve priests. They came up from Florida through Georgia and up the Savannah River, camping in the spring of 1540 at Silver Bluff on the South Carolina side of the river near the Indian Village of Cofitachiqui in the territory of the Aiken Missions. There were eight Spanish secular priests, a Trinitarian, a Franciscan and two Dominicans with the expedition which had as its objective the conversion of the natives to the Catholic Faith as well as exploration

While De Soto and his party were camped at Silver Bluff in the spring of 1540, the Cofitachiqui Indians provided them with necessary

supplies. Silver Bluff is so named because some of the strata of the high bluff have the appearance of silver glistening in the sunlight, but this is caused by the presence of a type of mica which is quite valueless. De Soto and his men thought this was silver, but they found out that all is not gold that glitters and all is not silver that glistens. So, in the late spring of 1540 De Soto and his Company decided there was no silver at Silver Bluff, packed up their equipment and proceeded westward towards the Mississippi.

founded Saint Augustine, expressed the wish to make Cofitachiqui his home.

The Right Rev. George Lewis Smith, present pastor of St. Mary Help of Christians Parish and the Aiken Missions, had Frank Aretz, well known ecclesiastical sculptor, of Pittsburgh, Pa., design a monument and shrine of Spanish style incorporating the castles and lions of the banner of Spain with an overtowering heroic Crucifix and outdoor Altar, but he has not yet been able to obtain title to the site at Silver



Proposed Monument and Shrine to be Erected at Silver Bluff

About five years after De Soto and his Conquistadores left Silver Bluff, Captain Juan Pardo led an expedition of soldiers and Franciscan priests through this territory. He, too, camped at the Indian village of Cofitachiqui near Silver Bluff where he erected a Cross beside the banner of the lion and castles of Spain. Captain Juan Pardo described the Indian village of Cofitachiqui as such a delightful place that Pedro Menendez de Aviles, who

Bluff to erect it. It is hoped that, if and when this shrine is erected, it will become a place of pilgrimage, not only for the Catholics of South Carolina and Georgia, but also for the people from north who come south for the winter and those who are touring in the vicinity, and that it will focus national attention upon the fact that Holy Mass was celebrated here over four hundred years ago.

In 1735 an adventuresome young Irishman, George Golphin, established a trading station at the Indian Village of Cofitachiqui on the bank of the Savannah River. He built a fine brick house on the bluff with bricks imported from England, some of which are still there. During the Revolutionary War this brick house was used as a fort and was known as Fort Golphin. Sometimes it was held by the British and sometimes by the Colonists. Nearby is an old cemetery with over a thousand graves where those who died at the fort were interred.

Long before the Revolutionary War, occasionally a missionary priest would come up the Savannah River from Beaufort or Savannah by boat as far as Augusta and then trek overland up through this region by way of Fort Moore, the British outpost on the Carolina side of the Savannah River opposite Augusta, over the Pine Log Road and the Old Tory Trail to Fort Granby and on up to the Piedmont, trying to take care of the Catholics who had filtered into this region.

After the revolt in San Domingo at the turn of the 18th Century, several French refugees settled near Augusta and joined with the Irish in erecting Holy Trinity Catholic Church there in 1811. The Diocese of Charleston was not established until nine years later, in 1820, when it embraced all of Georgia, all of South Carolina, all of North Carolina and part of two other states. Father Michael Browne was the first pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Augusta. The Catholics from this region used to go there to receive the Sacraments from him when they could travel the roads.

In 1828, Father John Barry, who later became the second Bishop of Savannah, served this mission district and visited here periodically. In 1831, the Church of St. Andrew The Apostle was erected in Barnwell under the pastorate of Father John Barry. Bishop John England used to come there to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation and to preach. He was an outstanding orator and many non-Catholics came to hear him. The Church of St. Andrew the Apostle at Barnwell is still in good condition and is in regular use.

When the Diocese of Charleston was divided in 1850 and the Diocese of Sav-

annah was set up, Father Timothy Bermingham became the pastor of this mission district. In 1858, with the aid of the Irish Stone Masons who were brought over to hew a tunnel through the Wallhalla Mountain for a projected east to west railroad which was never completed, he started to build the granite block Church of Our Lady of The Immaculate Conception, which was dedicated on October 21, 1860, by Bishop Patrick N. Lynch, D. D., the third Bishop of Charleston. It stands today as solid as the day it was built and is noted for the beauty of its Norman architecture.

In February, 1840, Count James Achille de Caradeuc purchased a four-hundred-acre tract about five miles from Aiken. Count de Caradeuc was a French Army Engineer and a collateral descendent of the Duc de Montmorenci. He named his place the Vale of Montmorenci after the old dutchy of his ancestors north of Paris. The place is still known as the Vale of Montmorenci.

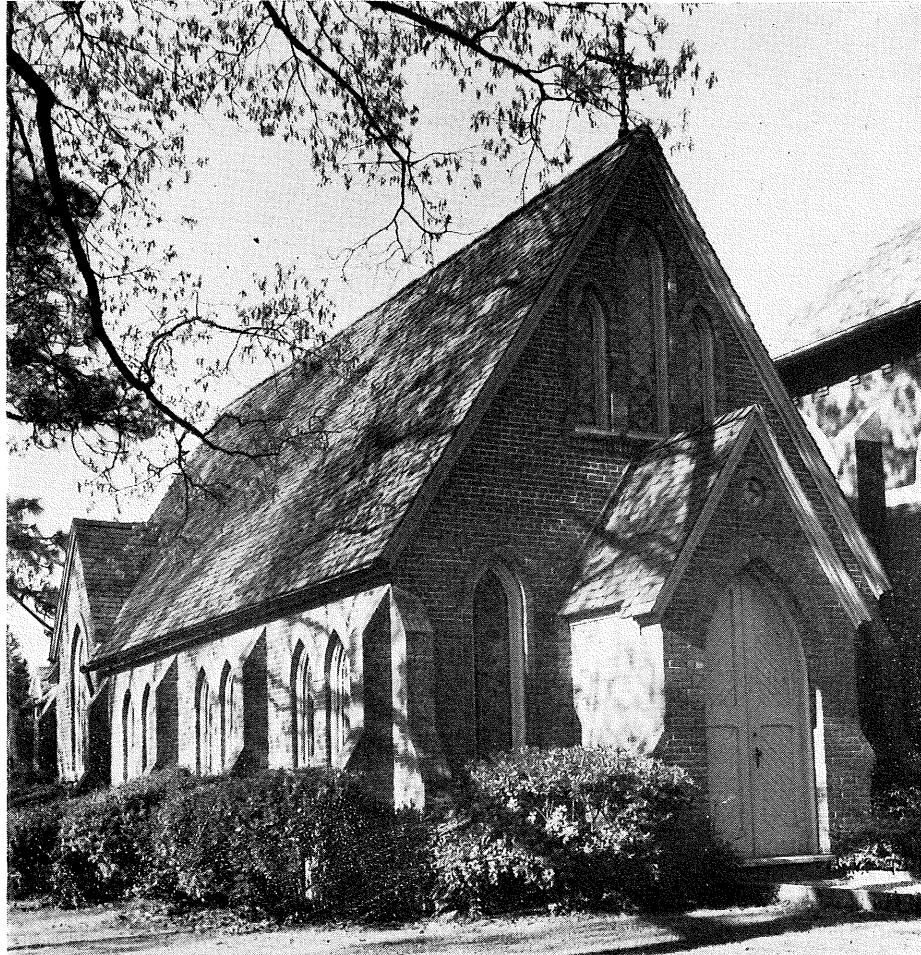
Count James Achille de Caradeuc and his family were prominent Catholics, as were the McDonald family who lived nearby. The priests of the Aiken Missions used to stay at the Vale of Montmorenci and celebrate Mass there whenever they had the opportunity as a cordial welcome always awaited them and the Catholics of the vicinity. Father John Barry was the first of the priests to stay there. Father Timothy Bermingham was an occasional visitor. Bishop Ignatio Persico was a close friend of the family and stayed at the Vale of Montmorenci frequently. Count James Achille de Caradeuc and his family lived at the Vale of Montmorenci for almost thirty years and then moved to Charleston.

Although Bishop Ignatius A. Reynolds acquired the church premises here in June, 1853, because of the convenience the priests continued to celebrate Mass at the Vale of Montmorenci for many years. In 1859 the original Church of the Sacred Heart was built at Blackville. In 1898 the original church was replaced by the present brick church under the pastorate of Father Andrew Keene Gwynn, later Monsignor Gwynn, Protonotary Apostolic.

Bishop Patrick N. Lynch, the successor of Bishop Reynolds, was an ardent Confederate during the War

Between the States, or the Civil War as it is called in the north. He was born in Ireland but he came over to Cheraw, South Carolina, with his parents when he was a small boy and was reared in South Carolina. He made his theological studies in Rome and was ordained there. During the War Between the States, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, appointed Bishop Lynch as Minister Plenipotentiary from the Confederate States to the Vatican States. He

Lynch prepared to return to Charleston and Bishop Persico offered to accompany him and work among the liberated slaves. It was the summer of 1867 before Bishop Persico could obtain permission to leave Rome. When he arrived in Charleston the reconstruction period was at its worst and he decided it was not opportune to undertake the colored mission work at that time, so he offered to take charge of the Aiken Missions. He came here in the autumn of 1867



The Church of St. Claire of the Holy Cross

went to Rome in that capacity in 1863, but was not formally received as the Minister Plenipotentiary for the Confederacy. Instead, the Pope received him as the Bishop of Charleston.

While in Rome Bishop Lynch became acquainted with Bishop Ignatio Persico, a Capuchin Missionary, who had been Vicar-Apostolic at Agra until his health failed and he was obliged to return to Rome. When General Robert E. Lee surrendered and the War Between the States was over, Bishop

and before the end of the year he built the first parish church on the identical site where St. Mary Help of Christians Church stands today. It was a small frame structure built on brick piers.

Bishop Persico remained here for three years until 1870 when he was appointed Bishop of Savannah. He later resigned his See there and returned to Italy where he was appointed Bishop of Acquino and subsequently he was created a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII.

So the man who built the first parish church here in 1867 died as a Cardinal in Rome. Bishop Persico became an American citizen while here and was the second American citizen to be elevated to the rank of Cardinal; the first being Cardinal John McCloskey of New York who became a Cardinal shortly before him.

Bishop Persico was succeeded here by Father W. A. Merriweather, who was here for five years. He was succeeded by Father P. J. Wilson, who was pastor from 1875 to 1886. In 1878 the frame church built by Bishop Persico was demolished during a hurricane by being blown off its brick piers and crashing over the railroad tracks of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company which then ran down what is now Park Avenue in front of the church.

About 1875 Mlle. Celestine Elizabeth Eustis, the maternal aunt of Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock, Sr., began to come to Aiken during the winter season with her niece. Mlle. Eustis was an ardent Catholic, as was Mrs. Hitchcock. When the little frame church was destroyed she made immediate efforts to have it replaced with a brick church of enduring construction.

The renowned ecclesiastical architect, Renwick, was engaged to design the new church to be known as the Church of Saint Claire of The Holy Cross. Mlle. Eustis commissioned the noted French artist, M. Lorin, whose studio was in Chartres, to execute the painting on glass of St. Claire holding the Monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament aloft at San Damiano to ask Our Lord to repel the attack of the Saracens who were advancing towards Assisi. History records that the Saracens were turned back.

In addition to the main window, M. Lorin executed the two accompanying side windows depicting angels facing the center window. When these windows arrived by ship at the port of Charleston there was considerable controversy over their admission. The customs officials insisted they were stained glass and Mlle. Celestine Eustis maintained they were original works of art and entitled to be admitted free of duty.

The Church of Saint Claire is still used for special functions. It is a gem

of ecclesiastical architecture with a symmetry and proportion which evokes the admiration of those who see it. On July 1, 1898, Pope Leo XIII, who was a personal friend of Mlle. Celestine Elizabeth Eustis, granted an indult for the Church of Saint Claire specifying certain spiritual privileges including that of a privileged altar. This original, handwritten indult is framed and hangs on the wall today.

In 1892 Father F. A. Schmidt erected the first Catholic church in Orangeburg. It was dedicated on October 8, 1892, by Right Rev. Henry Pinckney Northrop, D. D., the fourth Bishop of Charleston.

In 1900, during the pastorate of Father Andrew Keene Gwynn, the Ursuline Nuns were invited to establish a Catholic school here. Father Gwynn was transferred to Greenville before the school was established but his successor, Father John A. Seidl, completed the arrangements. The Ursuline Nuns opened St. Angela's Academy here in 1901, which they conducted until 1906 when they transferred the Academy to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of the Diocese of Charleston, who have continued it ever since.

In 1903 Father John Seidl and the parishioners made plans to build the present church because St. Claire's Church was overcrowded with Catholic servants from the Colony homes during the winter season. The new edifice was named St. Mary Help of Christians Church. It was dedicated in 1905 by Bishop Northrop. St. Mary's Church is semi-Gothic in architectural style, with exceptionally fine beams and woodwork on the interior. The steeple is tall and slender and is a landmark towering over the whole countryside.

Father J. J. Hughes succeeded Father Seidl here in 1907 and the following year he was succeeded by Father Dennis P. Lanigan, who remained until 1915. During his pastorate the Mission Church of St. Joseph, now St. William's, was built at Mine Creek. He was also instrumental in obtaining Magnolia Inn at the corner of Richland Avenue and York Street for St. Angela's Academy.

Father Louis Forde, who is still living at Providence Hospital in Columbia, succeeded Father Lanigan in 1915 and remained here until 1929 when he re-

The Aiken Missions

Eight Counties in State of South Carolina - Diocese of Charleston - Edgefield - Saluda - Aiken - Lexington - Barnwell - Bamberg
 497 Mi. Population 228,703 Catholics - 123 - Churches - 8 - Mass Stations - 25



- η.B = † Designates a Church
 " = S " Home where Mass is said
- † Aiken - Mary help of Christ Church
 - † Edgefield - St. Mary's Church
 - † Mine Creek - St. Joseph's Church
 - † Windsor - Holy Trinity
 - † Blackville - Sacred Heart
 - † Barnwell - St. Andrews Church
 - † Orangeburg - Holy Trinity

Churches absolutely needed - yet which cannot be erected because of the Mission's poverty - at

- North Augusta, S.C.
- Williston, S.C.
- Springfield, S.C.
- Batesburg, S.C.

Map prepared by Reverend Dennis P. Lanigan in 1912

signed to retire and was succeeded by Father George J. Dietz. It was during the pastorate of Father Forde that Holy Trinity Parish at Orangeburg, now in charge of the Redemptorist Fathers, was cut off from the Aiken Missions and made a separate parish.

In 1932 Father Dietz replaced the old one-story, dilapidated rectory with the present modern brick rectory which was

designed by Julian Peabody, the son-in-law of Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock, Sr. He and his wife were drowned in the Morro Castle steamship disaster.

During his pastorate here Father Dietz was an indefatigable worker. He devoted much of his time and energy to helping the poor white people in the Horse Creek Valley. He purchased a school bus to bring about forty-five

children from the Valley, most of whom were not Catholics, to St. Angela's School. Father Dietz was well liked by people of all denominations in Aiken. They respected and admired his charity and zeal in helping the poor and distressed.

In 1938 Father Dietz requested the Most Rev. Emmet M. Walsh, D. D., Bishop of Charleston, to make St. William's Mission at Mine Creek a separate parish and let him go there. The Bishop acceded to his request and he went there as the pastor in 1938. Bishop William Russell, the fifth Bishop of

of Temporalities. After about a year Father Cox was appointed pastor of Stella Maris Parish at Sullivan's Island and Father George Lewis Smith has continued as pastor here ever since.

Father Smith was born at South River, New Jersey, where his family have lived for several generations. After graduating from college and law school he practiced law in New Jersey for many years. He is an Attorney and Counsellor at Law and a Solicitor and Master in Chancery in New Jersey and is also a member of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court. He was senior member



St. Mary's Rectory

Charleston, and the uncle of our present Bishop, did much to improve St. William's and was deeply interested in the work and the people there.

Father Dietz remained as pastor of St. William's Parish for several years, then became pastor of Stella Maris Parish at Sullivan's Island. He later died in Charleston.

Upon the transfer of Father Dietz to St. William's Parish, Father William John Cox, who was a former Episcopalian minister and a native of Bermuda, was appointed pastor here, with Father George Lewis Smith as Administrator

of Smith & Dickerson, Counsellors at Law, when he resigned and went to Rome to make his theological studies.

He was ordained to the holy priesthood on March 13, 1937, by Cardinal Marchetti Selvaggianni, the Vicar-General of Pope Pius XI, at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the Mother Church of all Christendom. On August 21, 1948, Pope Pius XII elevated him to the rank of a Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

After his ordination he volunteered to come to the Diocese of Charleston at the request of the Most Rev. Emmet

M. Walsh, D. D., Bishop of Charleston. In July, 1937, he was appointed Auditor of the Diocesan Tribunal and later a Pro-Synodal Judge. He also served St. Mary's Mission at Yorges Island. In December, 1937, he was appointed Administrator of St. Joseph's Church in Charleston where he renovated the church and rectory.

During the summer of 1938 Monsignor Smith attended the summer course in Hospital Administration at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in preparation for his assignment as Director of Hospitals for the

Last year he was elected a member of the National Blue Cross Commission to serve a term of three years as representative of the American Hospital Association. He was one of the organizers of the South Carolina Hospital Service Plan and has served continuously as a Director since its establishment in 1946. He served as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Hospital Division of the National Resources and Planning Board in Washington during World War II.

In 1949 Monsignor Smith made an extensive tour in Europe studying hospital



The Horse Creek Valley Handicraft and Welfare Center

Diocese of Charleston, which office he still holds. He served as a member of the Administrative Board of the Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada for over ten years.

He was Vice President of the American Hospital Association in 1945-1946 and President of the South Carolina State Hospital Association in 1947-1948. He was elected President of the Catholic Hospital Association and served as President during 1948-1949. In 1948 he was appointed by the American Hospital Association as a member of the Council on Prepayment Plans and Hospital Reimbursement and served four years.

facilities and needs in various places. In 1950 he was appointed as a Consultant of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau and as a member of the Faculty of the International Institute in Hospital Administration held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

During his pastorate here, Monsignor Smith has made many improvements in the parish. He has also devoted much of his time to helping the poor people, especially the children, in Aiken and in the Horse Creek Valley. In 1938 he organized St. Mary's Choir and engaged Mrs. F. E. Ardrey as Organist and Choir Director. In 1939 the modern, concealed

lighting system was installed to replace the old exposed wires and bulbs. In 1940 the beautiful Gothic Stations of the Cross, which were executed under Monsignor Smith's supervision at the Bernardini Studios in New York and which are in memory of Mrs. Brite MacDonald Shevlin, were canonically erected by the Most Rev. Emmet M. Walsh, Bishop of Charleston.

In 1940 Monsignor Smith persuaded Mother Marianne, the Mother-General of the Sisters of Christian Doctrine at Marydell, Nyack, New York, to send three Sisters of Christian Doctrine here

dispensary and clinic. The carpentry and hobby shop are in a second building which also contains the store room and garage.

The convent is located on a knoll in the rear between the other two buildings and contains the chapel and living facilities for the sisters. There are now seven Sisters of Christian Doctrine at the convent of Our Lady of the Valley. In 1942 a 30 x 60 ft. swimming pool with natural spring water was constructed and a log cabin with an open fireplace was built near the pool for Boy Scout and Girl Scout activities.



Sketch of Church of Our Lady of Peace

to begin their wonderful work in the Horse Creek Valley. He obtained ten acres of land between Gloverville and Langley, fronting on the old U. S. Highway No. 1, and began the construction of the buildings at the Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre.

On Ascension Thursday, May 22, 1941, Bishop Walsh formally dedicated the Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre. The main welfare building is in the shape of a "T" and is 74 feet wide by 60 feet long, containing a large auditorium with a stage and various rooms for handicraft work and other activities, as well as a kitchen and a small medical

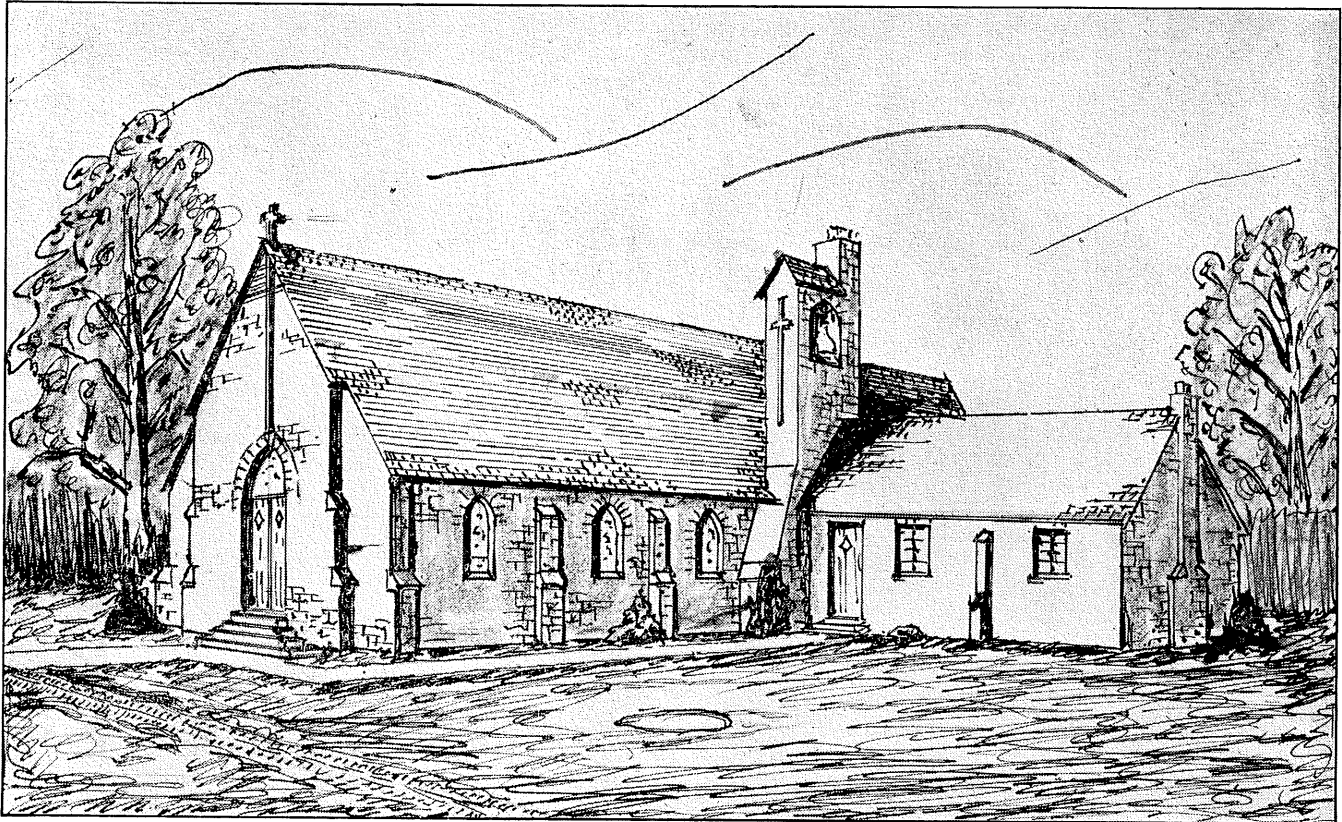
The Sisters of Christian Doctrine have done and are doing phenomenal work at the Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre and have done so much to break down pre-existing bigotry and prejudice against Catholics in the Valley and to spread the Faith. Most of those who come to the Welfare Centre are not Catholics. The sisters try to help all who come to them, especially the children, regardless of their creed or denomination. They use a station wagon to go around visiting the people and helping them.

In 1942 Monsignor Smith obtained a building on York Street near Richland

Avenue in Aiken, which had been built by the Presbyterians for a colored-girls' school and which had been vacant for some time, at a very reasonable cost. The Bishop of Charleston turned this building over to the Redemptorist Fathers who established St. Gerard's Mission and later St. Gerard's School for the colored there. Four colored Oblate Sisters of Providence staff the school which has a present enrollment of about 140 students in the six grades, most of whom are not Catholics.

As soon as World War II ended he started construction of the Church and Hall of Our Lady of Peace on a beautiful hill-top site at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Sideral Street running through to Summerhill Road. He also began the construction of the Church of Our Lady of the Valley adjoining the Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre at the same time.

Both churches were designed by Father Michael McInerney, O. S. B.,



Sketch of Church of Our Lady of the Valley

In 1942 the chime recording system was installed in St. Mary's Church and two years later a large bronze bell in memory of Mrs. Marshall Russell was put in the belfry and equipped with an electric bell ringer. In 1943 the sanctuary was renovated and the rubber tile installed, and the following year the floor of the church was covered with asphalt tile. Later the beautiful light green carpeting was donated as a memorial to Annette Marie Smith Clayton, the deceased sister of Monsignor Smith, by her husband, William S. Clayton.

Monsignor Smith worked many years to establish a church in North Augusta.

AND THE AIKEN MISSIONS

the famous Priest-Architect of Belmont Abbey and are constructed of Salisbury granite stone. They were completed at the same time and were both dedicated on Sunday, December 22, 1946, by the Most Rev. Emmet M. Walsh, D. D., Bishop of Charleston.

The Church of Our Lady of Peace and the attached parish hall have modern lines and do not follow any traditional style of church architecture. The church has a seating capacity of 212 and is attractively finished on the interior as well as the exterior. Over the front entrance there is an original Indian limestone statue of Our Lady of Peace executed by the well

ELEVEN

known ecclesiastical sculptor, Frank Aretz, in his Pittsburgh studio.

There are stained glass windows throughout and a Wurlitzen Electronic Organ is installed in the choir space. The fourteen Stations of the Cross are hand carved by Joseph Noe, who also executed the life-size Corpus for the Crucifix over the Main Altar. The parish hall is equipped with a modern kitchen and has a large open fireplace.

The Church of Our Lady of the Valley, adjoining the site of the Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre, is of rural Gothic style with granite construction throughout and a red tile roof. The interior is of rough texture, finished in the spirit of the early English Gothic with open timbered ceiling. Each of the stained glass windows symbolizes one of the great virtues of Our Blessed Lady.

The Corpus of the Crucifix over the Liturgical Altar; the Stations of the Cross; and the Statues of Our Blessed Lady and Saint Joseph are all carved by hand by Joseph Noe, an expert woodcarver. There is an attractive bell cote on the side with a silvery-toned bell in the belfry. The Church of Our Lady of the Valley has a seating capacity of 210. A wing contains the sacristy and an attractive meeting room with an open fireplace.

In 1947 the new steam vapor heating system was installed in St. Mary's Church and a fine Wurlitzer Electronic Organ equipped with chimes was provided.

In 1947 Mrs. Harry La Montagne, nee Beatrice Kinney, a winter resident of Aiken, gave Monsignor Smith the exquisite life size bronze statue of the Virgin and Child by Gustave Dore', which won the third prize in the world competition of sculpture in Paris in 1880 and which her father purchased in Europe and brought back as a gift to her mother.

This statue has been placed in an attractive setting behind a wrought iron grille in the left vestibule of St. Mary's Church. The beautiful baptismal font is on the opposite side in the right vestibule of the church.

When Monsignor Smith was elected



Virgin and Child by Dore'

President of the Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada he had to travel extensively in the fulfillment of his duties. He asked Bishop Walsh to set up North Augusta as a separate parish with a resident pastor at the Church of Our Lady of Peace. In July, 1948, the new Parish of Our Lady of Peace was cut off from the Aiken Missions and placed in charge of Father Joseph J. Murphy, the present pastor there. It is now a flourishing parish.

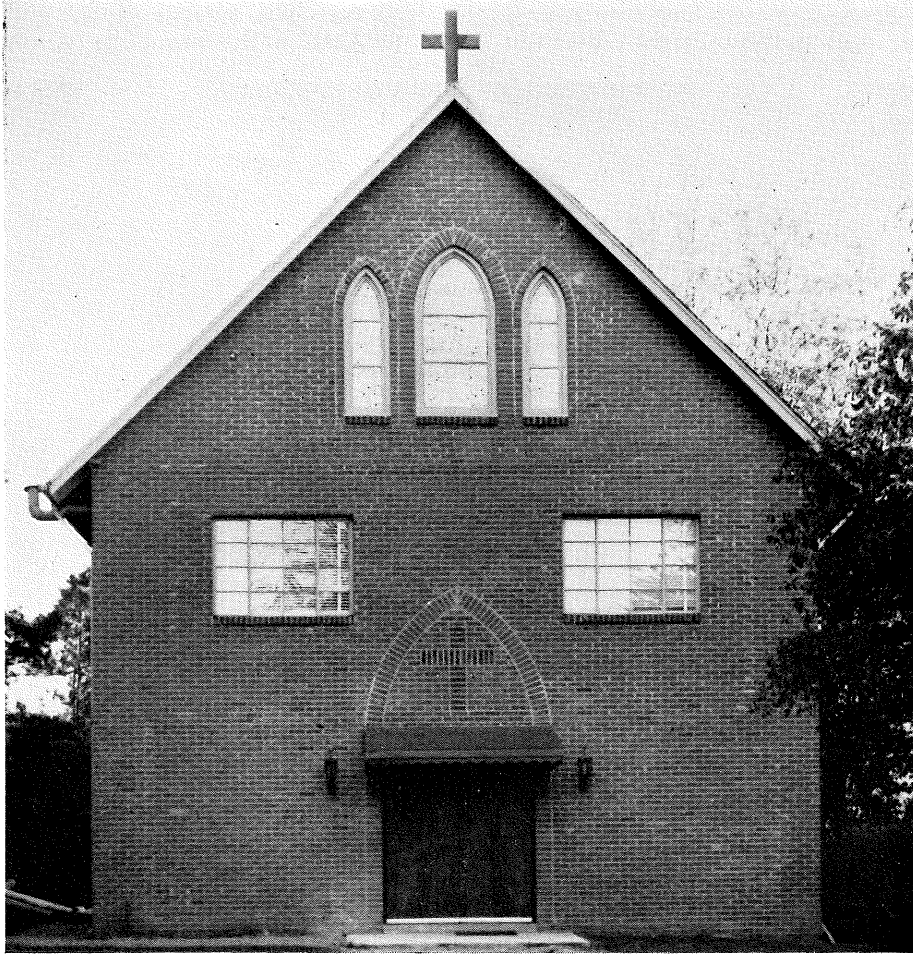
In 1949 Monsignor Smith bought the residence adjoining the Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre and renovated it for a future rectory for the Church of Our Lady of the Valley. When the Savannah River Plant of the Atomic Energy Commission was started Monsignor Smith asked Bishop John J. Russell, S. T. D., the present Bishop of Charleston, to send a resident priest

to the Valley and set up a new parish there.

In June, 1952, the new Parish of Our Lady of the Valley was cut off from the Aiken Missions and Father Myles Morris was appointed resident pastor. The Horse Creek Valley Welfare Centre was excluded from the new parish and Monsignor Smith continues to direct this project.

renovated and redecorated and new stained glass windows installed throughout as a memorial to Mary Elizabeth Smith, of South River, New Jersey, the mother of Monsignor George Lewis Smith, who died on August 24, 1951, R. I. P.

The windows are made of imported and domestic stained glass and were executed by the Mueller Studios of Zephyr



St. Mary's Parish Hall

In 1951 Monsignor Smith and the people of the parish made plans to erect a parish hall which was completed in the spring of 1952. It is an attractive two story brick building, 30 x 60 feet, adjoining the church. The lower floor has a complete kitchen, two meeting rooms, and a commodious lounge room. The upper floor is an auditorium. The interior of the lower floor is finished in knotty pine and the auditorium upstairs is plastered and finished in light green with an accoustic ceiling.

The interior of St. Mary Help of Christians Church has been completely

AND THE AIKEN MISSIONS

Hills, Florida, and Belleville, New Jersey. Three windows in the sanctuary, from left to right, represent The Agony in the Garden, the Blessed Sacrament in the Monstrance, and Christ Administering Communion to the Apostles.

The six large windows on the left side represent the Immaculate Conception, The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Nativity, The Presentation, and The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. The six large windows on the right side represent The Farewell of Jesus to His Mother, The Meeting on the Way of the Cross, The Descent from the

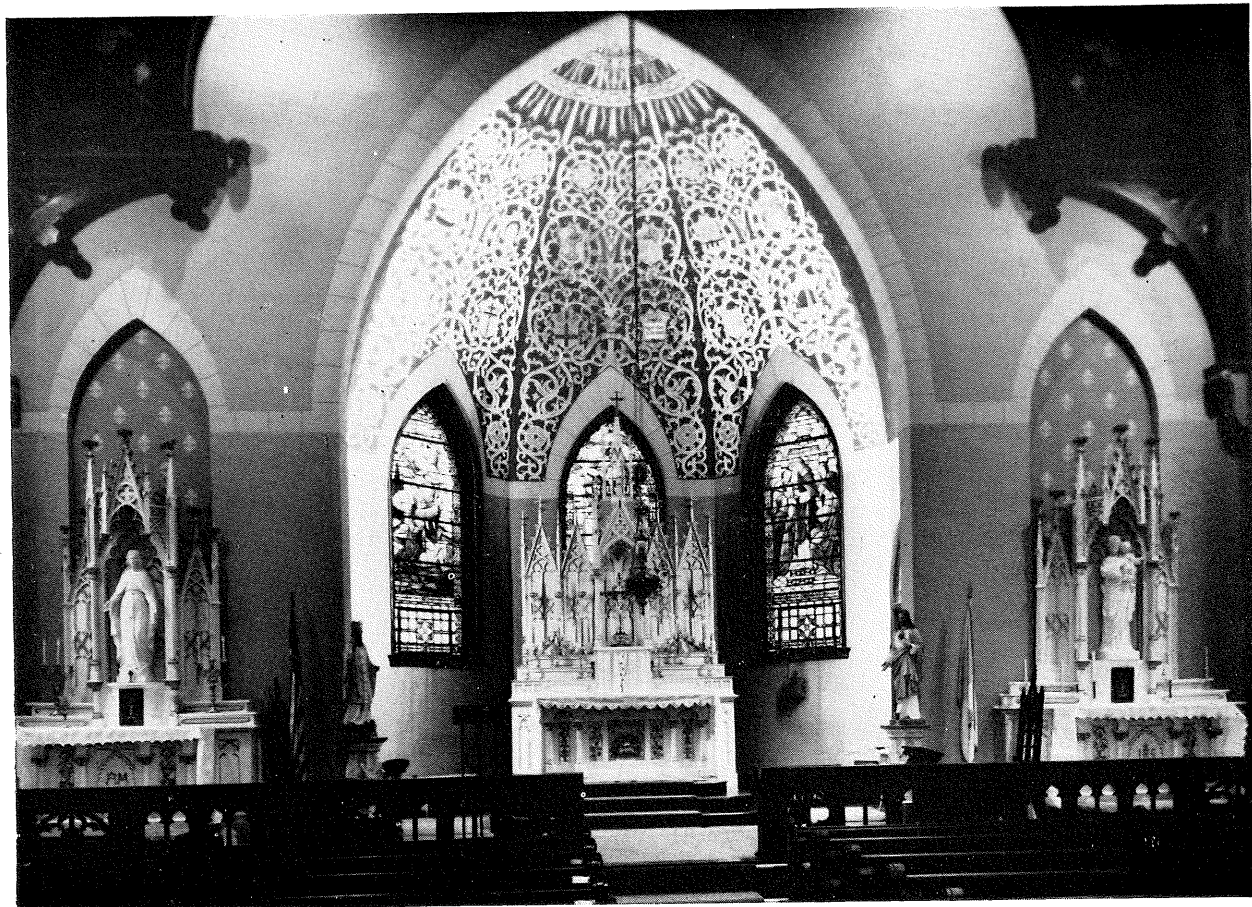
THIRTEEN

Cross, The First Easter at the Tomb, The Assumption, and the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin as Queen of Heaven. The triptic windows over the choir represent Christ the King in the center with St. Peter and St. Paul on either side. These eighteen large stained glass windows are richly colored and artistically executed and have already attracted great admiration from many people.

The decorating was done by the well known ecclesiastical artist Renardo

hols are those of the twelve Apostles, while the blue background represents the universe.

The symbol of St. Peter is the crossed keys and the upside-down cross. The symbol of St. James, the Greater, is the three escalloped shells. The symbol of St. John, the Apostle, is the Chalice with the serpent, signifying the attempt to kill him with poisoned wine in the chalice. The symbol of St. Andrew is the Cross in the form of an "X" on which



Sanctuary of St. Mary Help of Christians Church

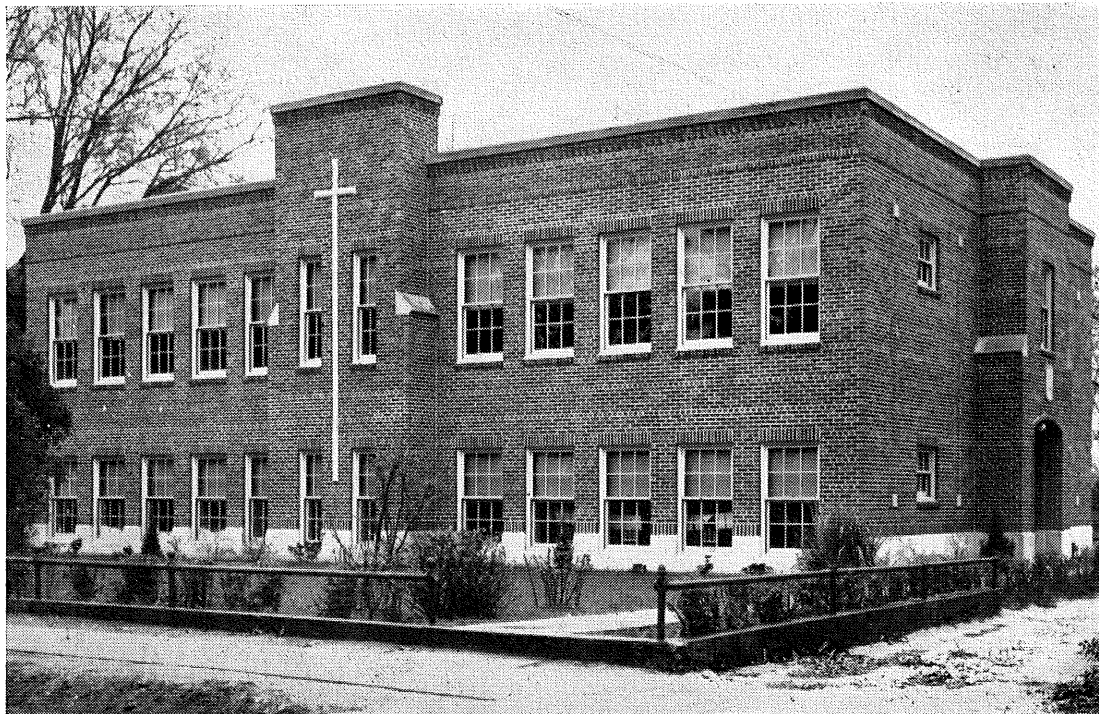
Ilario Panzironi, of New York City, and his assistants. The general scheme of the decoration is based on an overall of quiet grey tones accented with gold and color. The sanctuary is of strong blue and gold and throughout the body of the church touches of the color of the sanctuary constitute a unifying harmony and conform with the architectural spirit of the church. The woodwork of the ceiling has been polychromed in varying colors. In the sanctuary the gold ornament of the ceiling represents Christ as the vine with the branches. The sym-

he was crucified. The symbol of St. Philip is the tall, slender cross, and the loaves of bread. The symbol of St. Bartholomew, who was flayed alive, is the open Bible and the flaying knife. The shield of St. Thomas, the Apostle, shows the carpenter's square and the vertical spear with which he was slain. The symbol of St. James, the Less, is a saw with the handle upward. The shield of St. Matthew has three purses, referring to his original calling of tax gatherer. St. Jude, the Apostle, also called Thaddeus, has as his symbol a cross

shaped mast indicating his extensive travels. St. Simon's symbol is a fish and hook. St. Matthias has as his symbol the open Bible and primitive battle axe. St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, has as his symbol the open Bible bearing the word "Spiritus Gladius" and behind the Bible the Sword of the Spirit with the hilt in the form of a cross. All these symbols are placed in an elaborate vine-like ornament in the ceiling of the sanctuary and signify the branches which supply the Word of God throughout the World.

The parish has undertaken a Centenary Drive to raise funds to pay the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy for the building and premises the parish is purchasing from them.

With the establishment of our parochial grade school in September, 1955, the parish will have the necessary facilities for normal parish development. Certainly there could be no more appropriate way of commemorating the Centenary of the Parish than by providing the means to establish a paro-



St. Angela's Grade School

In 1952, a six acre tract of land was acquired on the Gregg Highway, about three miles from the church, as the site for the new parish cemetery and part of this tract is now being prepared for use.

Recently the parish agreed to purchase the present premises of St. Angela's brick school on York Street in Aiken from the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, whose Motherhouse is in Charleston, for the sum of \$45,000. The sisters will continue to use the building until the close of school in June, 1955, at which time it will become our eight-grade parochial school. The sisters are erecting a new high school building on Berrie Road adjacent to their new convent which they will continue to maintain.

chial grade school to coordinate the spiritual life and educational training of the boys and girls of the parish during the second century of its existence.

Father D. Francis Murphy, the present Assistant Pastor, has worked hard here since his assignment to the parish about a year ago. He has organized and directs the present choir and has set up the youth programs of the parish in addition to his many other activities. Father Murphy was born in Roxbury, Mass., on January 12, 1917. He made his theological studies at St. Charles and St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and was ordained on December 7, 1945. For several years following his ordination he was a member of the faculty of Bishop England High School. He also served as Assistant at St. Joseph's

Church in Charleston and later at St. John's Church, North Charleston.

Father Murphy's immediate predecessor here was Father Charles J. Molony who was here for three years and who did so much in Aiken and in Horse Creek Valley, especially for the boys. He was preceded by Father Peter Berberich who was here for a year. Father Nicholas Bayard and Father Francis X. Winum also each served here for a year.

Since the establishment of the Savannah River Plant of the Atomic Energy Commission in the area the parish has increased in members and the new parishioners have taken a constructive interest in parish affairs. The St. Mary's Women's Club, the St. Mary's Men's Club, and the Catholic Youth Organization have done much for the parish since they were established.

Chairman Alfred Sauerborn and the members of the Committee for the 100th

Anniversary Parochial Grade School Fund have been indefatigable in their work and have been successful in their efforts. All the members of the parish are grateful to them for everything they have done.

We are especially thankful to Mr. Elmer P. Foster for all he did to make this souvenir program possible.

A special tribute is due to Mr. Rhodes Watson, our talented and faithful Organist.

As we begin the second century of the existence of St. Mary Help of Christians Parish and the Aiken Missions we are encouraged by the present condition of the parish. There are evidences that the seed which was sown during the past hundred years by the zealous bishops, priests, sisters, and laity, both Catholic and non-Catholic, is beginning to come to fruition. We humbly ask Almighty God's blessing upon all who have had any part in the Lord's Work here during the past hundred years.

AD MULTOS ANNOS!