



As we recognize the 100th anniversary of the Diocese of Raleigh, let us briefly walk you through the rich history of our mission diocese.

IN 1789, FATHER JOHN CARROLL was appointed the first Catholic Bishop in the United States. At that time, he headed the Diocese of Baltimore, which comprised the entire country. During a visit to New Bern, North Carolina, Bishop Carroll met and became friends with Judge William Gaston, a great statesman and one of our state's first and best-known Catholics.

In 1820, the first dioceses established in the South were in Richmond, Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina. The Diocese of Charleston's territory included Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Most Reverend John England, Charleston's bishop, visited our area in 1821.



In 1868, the state was designated a Vicariate Apostolic, with **BISHOP JAMES GIBBONS** installed in Wilmington as its administrator. Among Gibbon's great works was the baptism of Dr. John Carr Monk of Newton Grove. The conversion of Dr. Monk had a great effect on this rural area, which would eventually become home to the largest rural parish in the state.

In 1886 Thomas Frederick Price became the first native North Carolinian to be ordained a Catholic priest. Father Price would become known as the "Tar Heel Apostle" for his tireless efforts to spread and establish the Catholic faith across North Carolina. In 1911, together with Father James Walsh, Father Price received the blessing of Pope Pius X to form the Catholic Foreign Mission Society, today known as Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. In 2012, Father Price's Cause for Beatification and Canonization was opened.

Father Price is also credited with founding Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Raleigh when, in 1899, he founded the Catholic Orphanage at Nazareth, the forerunner of all the works of Catholic Charities.

Nazareth, North Carolina had its own postmark and was the home of the Holy Name of Jesus Chapel. Part of the land would later become the site of Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral, where we sit today.

Monsignor Michael Begley, who would later become the first Bishop of Charlotte, was director of Catholic Charities for many years with the assistance of four Trinitarian Sisters. With the division of the diocese in 1972, to create the Diocese of Charlotte to the west and the Diocese of Raleigh to the east, the Sisters of Charity from Emmittsburg, Maryland arrived to staff the Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Charities office.

Today, services are provided to all 54 counties in our diocese. The range of support provided by Catholic Charities now includes Disaster Services, Food Pantry Services, and Immigration Legal Services. Nearly 200,000 people are served in our diocese by Catholic Charities each year.



ST. KATHARINE DREXEL, founder of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters, is credited with the start of Catholic Schools in our area as she began a decades long financial commitment to the St. Mary Parish in Wilmington, helping to extend the church and to build and support a school led by Maggie Robinson. St. Mary School in Wilmington remains open to this day.

St. Mary School was followed by St. Joseph School, founded by Father Price in 1887 in New Bern. St. Joseph School was taught by a lay faculty until the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary arrived from Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1925. St. Joseph School later merged with St. Paul School. The Sisters continued to lead St. Paul school until 2009.

As Parish membership grew, Catholic Schools were established across the state and are today a most important part of our Catholic Ministry. Our Catholic Schools are now taught by completely lay faculties, but we are indebted to the many Religious Communities who staffed our schools in the early years. Led by the Sisters of Mercy, the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, NY, and the IHM Sisters of Scranton, many Sisters came to North Carolina as true Missionaries and were a strong and active force in bringing our Catholic Faith to North Carolina.

The Diocese of Raleigh was established on December 12, 1924, by Pope Pius XI.



FATHER WILLIAM HAFEY of Baltimore was named the first Bishop. At the time, the diocese had a Catholic population of 1,200. Sacred Heart Church, constructed in downtown Raleigh as a parish church with a seating capacity of 320, was designated the Cathedral for our new diocese.

Bishop Eugene McGuiness followed as the second Bishop of Raleigh and continued the work of evangelization across the state. At the end of Bishop McGuiness' term, there were 12,000 Catholics in the diocese.

Appointed in 1945, Bishop Vincent S. Waters, the third Bishop of Raleigh, asked the Holy Father to name the Blessed Virgin Mary the patroness of the diocese under the title of the Immaculate Conception. In 1953, Bishop Waters ordered the end of racial segregation in all churches, schools, and institutions in the diocese.

During this time, the diocese also had a "Motor Chapel" that evangelized across the state. It would also transition from its mission work to serve as an information booth at the State Fair and a Catholic book mobile library.

In 1972, the diocese had grown to approximately 70,000 Catholics. That year, at the request of Bishop Waters, Pope Paul VI created the Diocese of Charlotte from the western half of the Raleigh diocese.

Our fourth Bishop, **F. JOSEPH GOSSMAN**, presided over a 30-year period of great growth in which our Catholic population grew to 250,000 and new parishes and schools were erected.

In 2006, the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge was named the fifth Bishop of Raleigh. Bishop Burbidge oversaw the construction of a new and much larger Cathedral, to be named Holy Name of Jesus, which was dedicated on July 26, 2017.

At the appointment of Holy Father Pope Francis, Bishop Luis Rafael Zarama was named the 6th bishop of Raleigh and installed on August 29, 2017. Today more than 500,000 Catholics reside in the Diocese of Raleigh.

In 2023, the Diocese of Raleigh Eucharistic Congress began a year of diocesan-wide celebrations to mark our 100th anniversary. The Congress gathered the faithful from across our diocese to focus on the great gift that we have in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.



From the Eucharistic Congress, **THE CENTENNIAL MONSTRANCE**, which holds the Eucharist, was hosted by each of the eight deaneries across the more than 33,000 square miles which comprise our diocese.

Today, we are blessed to be gathered back in Raleigh to celebrate a century of our growing in the body of Christ.

Learn More and Celebrate with the Diocese.
dioceseofraleigh.org/centennial

