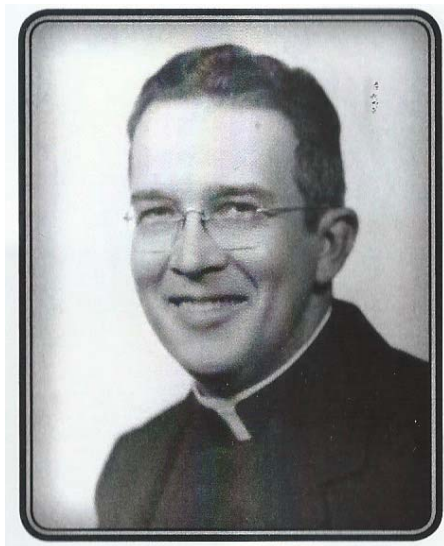


1958 - 1966: The Rev. Edward A. Griffin



Bishop John J. Swint appointed Father Griffin, Father O'Reilly's former altar boy, as pastor in 1958. He presided over the completion of the school's second floor, faith formation classes for children attending public schools, and an adult education program. Financial constraints prohibited the parish from constructing a new church. The new second-floor gym became the worship space in 1962 for celebrating the Eucharist.

Father Griffin attended the Second Vatican Council as an observer. On return, he prepared the parish for and initiated some of the changes following Vatican II. New evangelization efforts were evident with parishioners when they helped establish the Kanawha Valley Meals on Wheels program in later years. Changes in the Mass began.

Vatican II

In 1962, Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council in Rome. He wanted this council to be a spiritual renewal for the entire Catholic Church. When Father Griffin returned, he began a series of adult education classes to explain the coming changes. With the help of appointed parish commentators, he used the weekend liturgies as explanatory Masses to demonstrate the changes.

JFK

During the 1960 presidential campaign, Sen. John F. Kennedy came to Charleston over a weekend. A parishioner, Harry Hoffmann, who was the Charleston Gazette's political editor and part of the Kennedy entourage, invited Kennedy to attend Mass here. He came. After Mass, the senator stayed around and folks had an opportunity to meet him and shake his hand.

School Enlargement and Interim Church

Also in 1962, Father Griffin completed a funding drive and construction of a second story on the school to house a gym, two rooms, and a hallway to the convent. He wanted to build a new church, but since the parish did not have the resources, the gym became an interim church. Parish men, led by Myles Hughes, installed the pews. Marge Ruddle's husband, Pete, a carpenter, built the communion rail and ambo. A cry room was created but fell into disuse. The choir sang from an enclosed area at the rear. The gym space served without air-conditioning or handicapped access.

Parish men dismantled the original prefab church, which was sold to Good Shepherd parish in Glenville, WVa. It remains in service today. The old church site became a church parking lot.

Other Significant Matters

Father Griffin and parish men enthusiastically cleared diocesan property at the western end of Spring Hill, anticipating a proposal to build a second Catholic high school. A decision was made to remain at one central Catholic high school.

A diocesan drive, led in our parish by Mike Paterno, was successfully completed in 1963 to build a preparatory seminary in the Vienna, WVa., area. In these days prior to parish pastoral councils, Father Griffin used the gifts of trusted parishioners for advice and friendship. When he died suddenly, Father Albert Nuffelen provided very capable and likable help until a replacement could be appointed.

Father Griffin died January 19, 1966, at the age of 51.
He was pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish for 8 years.