

4th Station Church
Sacred Heart, 387 Chestnut Street, Springfield
Established 1872

- Sacred Heart Parish was established in 1870 by Springfield Bishop O'Reilly to serve the expanding Irish population in the North End of Springfield
- The cornerstone for the first Sacred Heart Parish building was laid on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1873
- Reverend J.J. McDermott celebrated the first mass in 1874 on Easter Sunday in the unfinished building on Everett Street designated to be the parish chapel and school
- The school opened in 1877 by the Sisters of Notre Dame (the first teaching nuns in the Diocese of Springfield)
- By 1882 there was a convent and parsonage on the property. The cornerstone for the church was placed in 1888
- Architect James Murphy and the construction company of Toomey & Shea were involved in the construction of all buildings, including the Gothic style church
- Father McDermott took a break and traveled to France in 1891 for a well-deserved rest, however during his respite he passed away in Paris. The first mass in the unfinished church was for his funeral after his body returned to Springfield. Father McDermott was laid to rest on the grounds outside of the church
- Father Smyth was appointed pastor and overseer of the construction. Inside the interior a series of Gothic arches flow down the nave. Beautiful stained glass windows depict the saints, closer to the altar the windows portray events from the Life of Christ
- Sacred Heart Church in Springfield was dedicated October 18, 1896



- The church spires that were planned as part of the original construction had to be put aside. Springfield architect, Stephen Jablonski, designed and installed the "pinnacles" May, 1999
- Sacred Heart Church is the mother church of Our Lady of Hope and All Souls Church
- Sacred Heart is beloved by the alumni, known for its diverse parish community and is a witness as well as a landmark in the City of Springfield

Consider making a visit to our 4th Station Church for quiet prayer and meditation.

Lord, You deserve all honor and praise, because Your Love is perfect and Your Heart sublime. My heart is filled to overflowing with gratitude and the many blessings and graces You have bestowed upon me and those whom I love. Forever underserving, may I always be attentive and never take for granted the gifts of Mercy and Love that flow so freely and generously from Your Sacred Heart. Heart of Jesus, I adore You. Heart of Jesus, I praise You. Heart of Jesus, I thank You. Heart of Jesus, I love You forever and always. Amen.

May the spirit of the holy pilgrims inspire your prayers and reflections. Peace be with you!

The Sacred Heart Review.



Church of the Sacred Heart.

Bishop O'Reilly was not long in possession of his see before he realized that Springfield was too extensive for one parish; in 1874, therefore, he set apart, as a new parish, that portion of the city which is north of the Boston and Albany railroad, and appointed to its pastorate Rev. James J. McDermott.

Father McDermott had at first some difficulty in obtaining a church site, owing to the prejudice of some landholders; but, with a small piece of land, already owned by the bishop, as a nucleus, he succeeded finally in securing the present lot (with the parochial house), bounded by Linden, Chestnut, and Everett streets.

His energy prompted him to begin immediately the erection of the edifice which has for many years served as church and parochial school, the dedication taking place within a year of the inception of the project. Upon the completion of this undertaking, he built the convent; and he opened the schools in 1877, under the management of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

In 1887, the whole property having been freed from debt, he broke ground for the new church of the Sacred Heart, laying the corner-stone during the course of the following year. The tremendous labor entailed in building this magnificent temple undermined his constitution, and compelled him to seek a restoration to health in a

trip abroad. He sailed for the old world in May, 1891; but the hopes of his parishioners were shattered when the news came home that he had died in France two months after his departure. Father McDermott was buried, Aug. 11, 1891, amongst the people whom he loved, and for whom he had labored.

And as we look upon the noble structure that is now nearing completion, we can truthfully say that it is a grand monument to a grand man. Endowed by nature with a surpassing intellect; Father McDermott was the pride of his college mates; and in all his years in Christ's vineyard,—from his curacy in East Boston to his untimely death,—he was admired by all his associates in the ministry as a thoroughly representative priest, to whom the Almighty had given a plenitude of talent. Shortly after Father McDermott's death, Rev. Thomas Smyth, pastor of Westfield, was appointed to succeed him.

Father Smyth was born in County Meath, Ireland, in 1848, was educated at All Hallows, and was ordained in 1871. Coming to this country, he was stationed at Holyoke, and was afterwards assistant for two years at Pittsfield. He was appointed

pastor of Westfield in 1874, succeeding Rev. Dominic Miglionico, and remained there until his acceptance of the Sacred Heart parish.

Rev. Austin O'Grady, Father Smyth's first assistant, was born in Jefferson City, Missouri, and came when quite young to Northampton. He was educated at the Northampton High School, Ottawa College, and Montreal Seminary, and was ordained Dec. 19, 1885. After a curacy of three months in Athol, he came to the Sacred Heart parish.

Rev. Francis J. Reilly, the junior assistant, was born in Moosup, Connecticut, removed to Milbury in childhood, and was graduated from Holy Cross College in 1886. After the full course of studies at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, he was ordained in June, 1891. He has been attached to the Sacred Heart parish ever since.

The new church is the masterpiece of architect Murphy. Truly cathedral in its proportions, it is one of the noblest buildings in Springfield, its brown-stone massiveness making it loom up as faith's challenge to error,—strong, invulnerable, and triumphant. Unfinished though it be, its lines are so clean-cut, and its order of architecture, a modification of Gothic with Norman touches, is so self-expressive, that one has not to wait for its completion to



Rev. J. J. McDermott, Late Pastor Sacred Heart Church, Springfield, Mass.

call it one of the grandest churches in western Massachusetts.

The interior, too, is eminently characteristic of architectural thought and artistic expression. As you enter the church, the immensity of the nave is uplifting. Supported on sixteen fluted brownstone pillars, the capitals of which are done in foil-work, the series of Gothic arches that underlie the nave-structure is most harmonious and inspiring, while the corbels that start from above the arch-joinings at the pillar-capitals lead up to the ceiling rib-work, beautifully elaborated in bosses and arabesques. From every one of the four corner-intersections of nave and transept spring thirteen glorious pendants that separate, fan-like, as they approach the ceiling, covering the dome with a network of ribbing expressive of architectural perfection.

The groin-work on the side-aisle ceilings is most pleasing to the eye, while the wainscoting of both side walls and transept, finished as it is in paneled plaster with cut-stone effect, gives a solid foundation to the architectural unity.

The general color of the ceiling is in ashes of roses, though this becomes olive lower down on the walls.

Just above the wainscoting, and extending around the body of the church, is a rich border in dado-work. In the clerestory there is a series of small stained-glass windows, under which, in the arch-facades that follow one another down the nave, the spaces are filled up by scenes from the Old and New Testaments,

every New Testament study facing its Old Testament type. This series of pictures is carried around to the cross walls of the transept, and even to the chancel, where, however, both

pictures portray studies from the life of Christ.

On the transept walls, flanking the great windows, are heroic paintings of the four evangelists. And when the windows (genuine works of art from Munich) and the Stations of the Cross, in stucco, will have been arranged in their allotted places, Father Smyth will have cause to congratulate himself on the harmonious excellence of the work to which he is devoting himself so unreservedly.

The apse is most exquisitely finished, eleven pendants meeting at its crown, and the intervening panels being richly decorated, at their very pointings, in Arabian conceits, while below these, and extending down to the toppings of the window arches, is a most pleasing exhibit of gilded ray-work.

The ceilings of the chancel-aisles are delicately groined and bossed, and will make appropriate canopies for the side altars which Father Smyth designs erecting.

Such is the church of the Sacred Heart today; and with the distinction of being the rector of what promises to be one of the finest churches in the diocese, it is no wonder that Father Smyth, in taking up Father McDermott's burden, is displaying so much energy in his desire to finish the great work.

In the parish school there are five hundred girls, the teaching body consisting of fourteen Sisters of Notre Dame.

With a school as good as can be desired, giving a better training for the duties of life than most schools, and with a high-school course that is most admirable in its results, the parish of the Sacred Heart is to be congratulated. And as one who has seen the marvelous exhibition of the school work of the Notre Dame schools at the World's Fair, the writer can say positively that the Sisters of Notre Dame have no superiors as teachers.