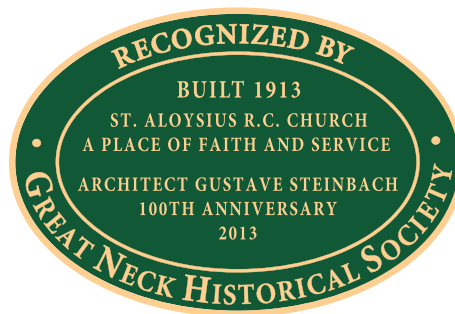


HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

To Identify and Honor Great Neck's Most Notable Homes & Buildings



ST. ALOYSIUS R.C. CHURCH, GREAT NECK, N.Y.

Saint Aloysius Parish of Great Neck was formed in 1876 by Bishop John Loughlin, the first Bishop of Brooklyn. The initial mass was held in a private home by the church's first Pastor, Reverend Patrick Sheridan, in February of that year. A few months later the first church building was finished (located on Middle Neck Road, farther back than the site of the present church), and the first service at that location was held on May 20, 1876. This original building was enlarged twenty years later, in 1896.



The Gothic-style church was constructed of wood and had a plain interior, with a wooden altar and opaque glass windows. It cost \$5,000 to build. The church could seat 200 worshippers, and the space was heated with kindling in a hot air furnace and lighted with kerosene lamps suspended from the church ceiling. One year later, in 1877, the first Rectory was constructed at a cost of \$2,734. It was later sold and removed to 36 Beach Road, where it still stands.

The present handsome brick church, dedicated in July 1915, was designed by the distinguished New York City architect, Gustave Steinbach, who was known for his expertise in building Roman Catholic schools and churches, many in the Byzantine Romanesque style. The Rectory was completed at the same time. The architect used simple, massive construction to suggest a quiet retreat. The drum of the dome is decorated with a brick and cement inlaid design, while the altar, platform and sanctuary rail are all of Botticino marble that is in harmony with the color scheme of the interior. Joseph P. Grace donated \$25,000 for the altar, in honor of his father, W.R. Grace. The piers supporting the dome and the columns are placed to allow an unobstructed view from the pews.



Five years later, in 1920, the Sisters of St. Joseph were brought in to lead the religious instruction of children at

St. Aloysius Academy. The new St. Aloysius school building opened in 1923.

Under the pastorate of Reverend Edward Donovan, who served the longest, for twenty-seven years, the Rectory was enlarged, a wing was added to the school, and the Convent was enhanced by a carillon tower and new wing. Subsequent renovations included the addition of a large library for the school. Monsignor Brendan Riordan came to St. Aloysius in 1970 as a newly-ordained priest. He was reassigned elsewhere in 1975, but returned to St. Aloysius to become Pastor in June 1998.

Numerous well-known men and women attended church services at St. Aloysius, including James Cagney, F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Bob and Ray, Bob Eberly, George M. Cohan and Kate Smith, who sang "God Bless America" at a church service.

