

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, Saint Ignatius Roman Catholic Church, North Glenwood and West Loyola Avenues, Chicago, was founded by priests of the Jesuit order. In 1906, a twenty-acre site was purchased for the establishment of the parish and what would become Loyola University. Sheridan Road, the southern end of the property, was the site of the first frame church for the parish, designed by Prindiville & Egan of Chicago, and constructed at a cost of \$25,000. The first Mass was celebrated in this building on February 24, 1907. The Reverend Louis Kellingens, SJ, was appointed the first pastor of Saint Ignatius Church. The parish, formed from territory belonging to Saint Jerome and Saint Ita parishes, claims the smallest boundaries in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

In November 1910, Father David M. Johnson, SJ, was appointed fourth pastor to the parish. The following year, he purchased land further west on Loyola Avenue, where construction for the parish school commenced in May 1912. (A second school building would be connected to the first in 1921.) Later that year, the parish purchased the adjoining property for expansion of the parish plant. Ground for the present church and adjoining rectory was broken on May 30, 1916, and the cornerstone was laid by Bishop Edmund M. Dunne, of Peoria, Illinois, on August 27, 1916. The church, of Roman Renaissance-style architecture and seating 1,200 persons, was designed by well-known Chicago architect Henry J. Schlacks and was patterned after the Church of the Gesu in Rome. (Many Jesuit churches around the world take their inspiration for design from this historic building.) Construction cost is reported to have been \$200,000. It features a simple façade of gray Bedford stone, dominated by six enormous carved columns, each a solid piece of stone standing thirty feet in height and weighing thirteen tons. At the rear of the building is a six-story campanile. The edifice was dedicated by Archbishop George W. Mundelein on September 16, 1917. Reverend George Lane, SJ, in *Chicago Churches and Synagogues*, quotes these words from Mundelein:

The churches of the Jesuits have always been noted as repositories of the finest works of art. We see [here] the faithful observance of one of the traditions of the Society. In every great city you will find the richest, the most ornate, the most beautiful of the churches is the Jesuit church, while their residence is of the poorest. You will find in the Jesuit churches the choicest paintings of the masters, the finest compositions of music, the most eloquent of preachers in the pulpit, and the most crowded congregations in the pews. So today we welcome Saint Ignatius among the best architecturally of our Chicago churches, a monumental basilica church that will grow even more beautiful with the years.

The focal point of the interior is the baldachin, inspired by that in the Basilica of Saint Peter in Vatican City. Ten oil paintings by Chicago artist Augustine Pall adorn the ceiling of the nave, depicting the life of Saint Ignatius. Much of the interior work was carried out by Saint Louis artists. The side altars and stations of the Cross were painted by Charles Bosseron Chambers. The enormous stained-glass windows were executed by the Emil Frei Art Glass Company. The present organ, described below, also came from Saint Louis.

The November 1, 1917, edition of *The Diapason* announced that J. C. Deagan Musical Bells, Inc., was to install a set of fourteen tubular tower chimes in the 185-foot tower. A keyboard was installed in the sacristy to be played by the organist. Considered an important novelty for the era, the article continued:

The feature that makes these chimes especially adapted to church use is a new type of electric action recently perfected by Mr. Deagan. This action, which is equipped with powerful projecting and recoil magnets, is so simply made that with reasonable care it will give a lifetime or more of service without requiring attention. Each action is equipped with a relay that requires only a light current, of low voltage, to operate. Great economy in the installation is due to the fact that a very light wire suffices to connect each action to the corresponding key on the manual. The installation cost is reduced to a minimum and is so simple that any electrician can do the work. The chimes may be played from one or more keyboards, which may be at almost any distance within reason, and any scale of range up to twenty tones chromatic, covering the entire range of the average singing voice, may be had. Other attractive features of these tubular chimes are their exceedingly low cost, which is but a fraction of that of cast bells; also the accuracy with which they are tuned, their freedom from clanging partials and overtones, and their consequent remarkably sweet and sympathetic tone quality. A set of chimes of real musical merit is of incalculable publicity value to a church. Such a campanile as that installed in Saint Ignatius Church, on which an extensive repertoire of sacred selections and favorite hymns can be played, becomes the cherished possession of the entire community.

When a new organ was installed some seven years later, the chimes were connected to the instrument. The original Deagan set was replaced some decades later, not quite surviving a "lifetime or more of service." This second set has been restored and can be used to play rolls.

In 1912, the parish purchased an organ from Casavant Frères. This one-manual and pedal instrument of about nine ranks with tubular pneumatic action was constructed at the firm's South Haven, Michigan, plant as their Opus 2. What happened to this organ is unknown, as no further information is available in church records.

In June 1924, *The Diapason* announced the purchase of a four-manual instrument from the Geo. Kilgen & Son Company (Chas. C. Kilgen) of Saint Louis, Missouri. The contract for this instrument was signed in May of that year. The article continued:

The case of this organ is beautifully designed and will be built of plaster, fifty-four feet wide and forty feet high. It will consist of five arches. In the middle of each arch will be a statue of an angel. The case was designed by John Ebersson, one of Chicago's famous architects. The pastor of the church is the Rev. D. M. Johnson, SJ, and it is his intention to use the organ for educational recitals exploiting the beautiful music of the Catholic churches. Stephen H. Erst designed the specification and will preside at the organ.

The angels of the arches of the organ case appear to have never been installed. The arches contain a series of columns, reminiscent of similar features in the church's façade, altars, communion railings, and other features. The pastor's avowed commitment to the arts in Catholic culture is reflected elsewhere in his ministry: the parish constructed a theatre which became well-known throughout the country for its community productions. The specification followed, indicating an instrument approaching seventy ranks. In fact, this specification, noted below, was drawn from thirty-four ranks.

The Great division is in the center of the organ façade in the rear choir gallery. Above this is the Choir division. Tonal egress has been covered with a large painting, which has been recently raised to improve the organ's speech. The Solo division is located to the left and the Swell to the right. The console, with stop tablet control, on a moveable platform, is kept under the painting in a small alcove of the shallow balcony. Manual compass is the standard 61 notes (C-C); pedal compass is 32 notes (C-G). The Great and Solo divisions are on unit actions; the Choir Division and the Swell Division (except for the unit Bourdon and Fagotto/Oboe ranks) are on straight ventils chests. There are two independent Pedal stops.

Information supplied by George Nelson of Seattle, Washington, notes that Kilgen carried out further work on their Opus 3319. In 1929, as Opus 4408, and in 1934, as Opus 5217, alterations or repairs were made by Kilgen, but no alteration to pipework appears to have been made. As the decades passed, the parish experienced a decline in its membership and finances, and the organ began to fall into disrepair. In 1977, the Reverend Jim Serrick, SJ, altered some eleven ranks of the organ in an attempt to bring the organ into line with the tastes of the time. This consisted of re-pitching and re-scaling of pipes, including cutting pipes of 8' pitch to sound at 4', 2', and even 1'. In the early 1980's, the parish sought bids from various builders for projects ranging from re-leathering the organ to rebuilding to replacement with a new instrument. None of these proposals was accepted. By 1987, wind had been cut to the Swell division in order to allow much of the remainder of the organ to work in an acceptable fashion. In 1993, Brian and Teresa DuSell were named music directors to the parish, and an on-going process of restoration of the organ was begun. Much of the work was carried out by Brian DuSell and interested parishioners, while other portions were carried out by Gerald Kinsella, David Wigton of Michigan, and American Organ Supply of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Much of the restoration for the Great and Solo divisions has been completed.

Information for this article was gathered from A History of the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago, edited by the Reverend Monsignor Harry C. Koenig, STC, Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 1980, volume 1, page 418-421; Chicago Churches and Synagogues: An Architectural Pilgrimage, by the Reverend George A. Lane, SJ, Loyola University Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1981, pages 144-145; The Diapason, November 1, 1917, page 3, and June 1, 1924; The Organs of the United States and Canada Database, compiled and produced by George Nelson, Seattle, Washington.