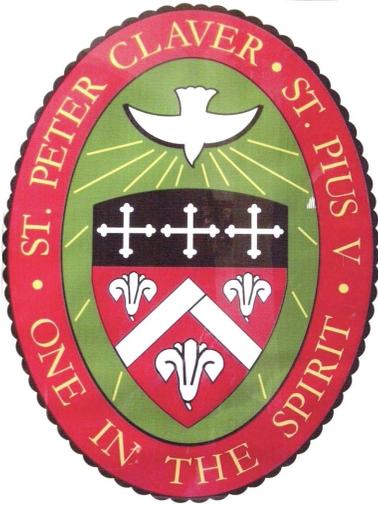


## OUR PARISH HISTORY



Saint Peter Claver Catholic Church and St. Pius V Catholic Church, each has a long history of dedicated service to the African American Community of West Baltimore. Both have been served by the Josephite priests and brothers from their beginnings.

Established by the Josephites, Saint Peter Claver Church was dedicated on Sunday, September 9th, 1888, shortly after the canonization of Peter Claver. It is perhaps the first parish in the world dedicated to the saint, known as the "Apostles of the Slaves."

Standing on its original site on Fremont Avenue at the junction of Bloom Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, St. Peter Claver Church was envisioned by the Josephites to serve African American Catholics who had to travel great distances to East Baltimore for Mass. It also afforded the opportunity for the pastoral training of Josephite seminarians who lived and studied a short walk from the first site of their seminary on Pennsylvania Avenue and St. Mary's Street.

Over twenty-five vocations to the priesthood, permanent diaconate, and vowed religious orders, who serve throughout the country and other parts of the world, have come from St. Peter Claver. The parish enjoys a legacy of involvement in civil rights, archdiocesan service, national Catholic Church leadership, community housing and creative parish programming which feed and continues our mission today.

The roots of St. Pius V Church began in 1907 as St. Barnabas Church located at Biddle Street and Argyle Avenue. When the congregation outgrew its first home, parishioners proudly marched to their new church, St. Pius V located at Edmondson Avenue and Schroeder Street, on July 12, 1931. Their pastor was a Josephite. The parish thrived among the middle and lower class community of Harlem Park in Southwest Baltimore.

St. Pius V has a tradition of community outreach, participation in civic affairs, health care and a socially and religiously involved youth ministry. The parish has produced two priests, at least five women religious and two permanent deacons, one of which was the first African American Permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Both St. Peter Claver and St. Pius V were well known and respected for their Schools. Thousands of children from the community received a first rate education from lay teachers, the Franciscan Sisters of Glen Riddle, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, priests and brothers. In later years the schools became part of a cluster school named after Josephite Father Charles A. Hall.

Since 1968, the community of West Baltimore experienced many changes. While efforts at urban renewal had some success, there was a resulting decline in neighborhoods. Population decreased which affected membership in community churches. For St. Peter Claver and St. Pius V, there remains a core of parishioners from the neighborhood, and many dedicated parishioners living beyond West Baltimore who continue to be committed to their parish.

In 2005, St. Pius V moved to St. Peter Claver. Today, St. Peter Claver and St. Pius V serve the community and the church as "One in the Spirit." We have a common mission and serve together as "missionary disciples," as Pope Francis calls us to be. One in the Spirit, we remain true to our identity as a Josephite parish, and our mission to serve God and the African American Community of Central West Baltimore.