

IHM Sisters Centennial 1923-2023

Father Edward V. Mullarkey and the expansion of Saint James School

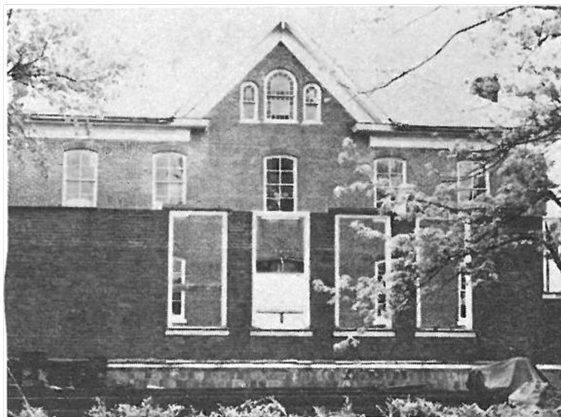
The following is an excerpt from Marge Castorina's book on *St. James School 1906 to 1981*, page 15.

When Fr. Edward V. Mullarkey arrived in 1931, Parish records for that year showed the following statistics: 85 families, 13 Baptisms, 10 First Communicants, and 85 students enrolled in Saint James School. To keep his small parish going, Father established close personal relationships with his parishioners. This laid a foundation for the support and cooperation he enjoyed in the years of building and growth that followed, which earned him the name "The Master Builder."



Father Mullarkey with a parish family

Within ten years of his arrival, Falls Church grew from a dreamy, country village to a rapidly developing young city. Where once there were not enough students, suddenly there was not enough room for the growing enrollment. First the stage in the large hall was converted to a classroom. Sister Severna who taught a 6th and 7th grade class on that stage remembers the crowded conditions and lack of storage space. She had an unusual advantage, however, as the back of the stage housed a tiny kitchen. When requesting a needed text, she was often asked, "Sister, is that one in the oven or the refrigerator?" Soon it became necessary to sacrifice the auditorium, the meeting place of all parish groups, which was partitioned into several additional classrooms. Even these measures could not keep pace with the rapid growth of the area and the increased demand for admission to the school.



From Broad Street in 1942, a view of the new school going up with the old school in the background.

At a cost of \$11,500 the land adjacent to the school was purchased. In 1944, Fr. Mullarkey celebrated his Silver Jubilee and used the War Bonds he received from grateful parishioners to pay for the erection of the first two classrooms. Although it took considerable effort to obtain the necessary materials, two classrooms became four, and then ten, and the building, including a library, cafeteria and an auditorium was dedicated in 1948. Even at that time, however, it was obvious that the facility was still too small to accommodate the growing Catholic population. Once again all extra space was converted to classrooms. In 1950, additional land was purchased and a new wing, housing nine classrooms and meeting rooms, was built.

*These years of expansion did not detract Fr. Mullarkey and the Sisters from their intense interest in the quality of the children's education. **1949 is a milestone in several respects; a Kindergarten was established in the little white house, the first lay teacher was hired, a CYO was founded to provide extracurricular activities, and, in May, the Sisters celebrated their Silver Jubilee in the parish.***

During his pastorate Fr. Mullarkey led the parish in meeting the many challenges of a changing community and at the same time managed to care for the spiritual welfare of his increasing flock. When he died in 1953, he left not only a legacy of brick and mortar, but a parish community numbering 1698 families (and a school enrollment of 1700 students).



SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2023, 12:00pm-4:00pm
IHM Sisters Centennial Celebration

In preparation for the celebration of the IHM Centennial, we want to share memories and stories of our wonderful IHM Sisters. Please contact our Development Director Kathleen Anderson, 703-532-8815 x223 or kanderson@stjamescatholic.org, submit your information online by scanning the QR code, or visit our home page, www.stjamescatholic.org, for further details on this celebration, including how to RSVP for the event.