

In 2026, Holy Trinity Catholic Church of Corn Hill celebrated its 137th year as a parish in its beautiful twin-spired Gothic church.

The history of our parish and church began in the 1880s. The parish was established in 1889 by ancestors of some of our current parishioners, mostly from Moravia and Bohemia. Over time, they came to be most often identified as Czechs, but included other ethnic groups such as Germans and Irish.

Under the spiritual guidance of the Diocese of Galveston, Rev. Jacob Lauth was the first pastor in Corn Hill. With the help of parishioners, he built the first church here in 1889, which was named Immaculate Conception. It was actually a small chapel and had only room for the priest at the altar and Mass servers while parishioners stood outside.



In 1891, Rev. Joseph Chromcik arrived to serve as pastor, and a second, larger church was constructed with a high steeple and bell. The new church was dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity and was named Holy Trinity Catholic Church after the church in Ostravice, Moravia, which was the former home of many Corn Hill residents.

Education was important to the early Holy Trinity parishioners. The first school was built in 1899, staffed by the Sisters of Providence. In 1901, a larger three-room school was built with two rooms for school and a third room for the priest's residence. In 1924, a new school was constructed with 4 classrooms on the first floor and an auditorium on the second. The Sisters of Incarnate Word would come to teach the children. Holy Trinity Catholic School was open until 1968 when declining enrollment forced its closure. The building was used for religious instruction classes until 1986 when the Religious Education (RE) building was constructed. The old school was demolished in 1990. Removed from the auditorium was the stage curtain. This drawing of “The Orient” from 1940 is currently displayed in the main entrance of the RE building.



“The Orient” stage curtain, which measures at 16 ft wide and 7.5 ft in height, was drawn and painted by Theresa Martinka Kubena in 1940. As a novice art student, and with the assistance of Msgr. Joe Valenta, she did the work for a total cost of \$35. The picture was selected, “The Orient” and it was enlarged onto

meat market wrapping paper, in one inch squares. It was then traced on to the canvas, square by square. Working with oil paints would have been too expensive, so she mixed oil paints with enamels and painted the picture in 14 days, sometimes finishing at 10 p.m. then walking alone the 5 miles to her home. The school building where the picture stood for many years has since been torn down, and the picture now resides in the RE/CCE Building.



Several priests served the young parish over the next nine-year period, including Rev. Joseph Pelnar, Rev. F.G. Sebik, Rev. V. Chlapik, Rev. Frank Pridal and Rev. Frank Machan. The first rectory was built in 1911.



In 1912, Holy Trinity's first resident priest, Rev. William Skocek, along with the parishioners began work on the current church. The sanctuary was dedicated by Most Rev. Nicholas Gallagher, Bishop of Galveston, in 1914. Father Skocek served until 1922.

Becoming the longest-serving pastor, Rev. Msgr. Ignatius J. Valenta, a native of Corn Hill, served from 1922-1957. During his tenure, a two-story school, a new residence for the Sisters of the Incarnate Word,

who now taught the children of Holy Trinity, and the present rectory were built.

In November 1947, the Diocese of Austin was founded, bringing the Church leadership much closer to home.

In 1957, Rev. George Doscocil came to Corn Hill and served as pastor until October 1963. He was followed by Rev. Thomas Matl, who served until his death in October 1966. Rev. George Bonhard was named his successor in 1967 and served until 1969.

During the next 16 years, Holy Trinity saw eight different pastors. Rev. Royce Hughes came to Corn Hill in June 1969, and his brother, Rev. Harold Hughes, joined him as an assistant pastor until their departure in 1972.

Rev. Edward Jordan served from December 1972 to June 1973, followed by Rev. Mike Leary serving from June 1973 to January 1974, Rev. Henry Gottschalk serving from August 1974 to February 1975, Rev. Gideon Stram serving from July 1975 to July 1979, Msgr. George Tydlacka serving from July 1979 to February 1980 and Rev. Charles Michalka serving from February 1980 to April 1985.



Rev. Joe Van Anh Nguyen served as pastor from April 1985 to August 1987. Under Father Joe, Holy Trinity built a religious education/parish hall in 1986. Today, that same building continues to serve as the religious education building and is home to the parish offices.

In 1987, Rev. James O'Connor was appointed as pastor of Holy Trinity, followed by the return of Msgr. Gideon Stram in September 1988. Msgr. Stram served as pastor for two more years before retiring.

Msgr. Arthur Michalka was assigned pastor in June 1990 and served Holy Trinity parishioners for 16 years. He oversaw the building of the Parish Activity Center, which became the new home for many events, meetings, reunions, weddings and church bazaars. In April 2004,

Deacon Gene Davis was assigned by the bishop to Holy Trinity and served as deacon until his retirement in September 2013.

In February 2006, Msgr. Emilian Foltyn, also a native of Corn Hill, became pastor of Holy Trinity. Being extremely proud of his heritage, Msgr. Foltyn brought back the Czech Mass celebrated each year on February 14, the feast day of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who are the patron saints of the Slavic people. After Msgr. Foltyn died unexpectedly in September 2012, parishioners worked together to keep the church strong and active for the next 10 months without a fulltime pastor. The Infant of Prague statue, as seen pictured above, was donated to the church in memory of Msgr. Foltyn.

Bishop Joe Vasquez named Father Stephen Nesrsta pastor of Holy Trinity in July 2013. Father Stephen, who is also of Czech descent, displays his vibrant love of God, respect for life and commitment to the traditions of the Catholic Church.

Holy Trinity Parish had six parishioners who answered the call to the priesthood. They were Msgr. Joseph A. Valenta, Msgr. Ignatius J. Valenta, Msgr. Tim Valenta (all brothers), Rev. Paul Nemec, Rev. Alois Pavelka and Msgr. Emilian Foltyn. Holy Trinity also had six



parishioners become nuns. They were Sr. Rose Kajs, Sr. James Huff, Sr. Angela Martinka, Sr. Mary Ann Martinka, Sr. Cyrilla Wolf and Sr. Emil Schlesinger (Slesinger).

Holy Trinity Catholic Church of Corn Hill celebrates two milestones in 2024. Founded in 1889, it is one of the oldest parishes in the Diocese of Austin. Could the early parishioners of Czech, German and Irish decent have known 135 years later the faith community they founded would be thriving? The parish is situated in a rural area but only a short drive away from one of the fastest growing regions of Texas. The number of families at Holy Trinity has grown in the last 10 years from 240 to 525 families.



In those early years, parishioners waited for a traveling priest to come and celebrate Mass. Holy Trinity's pastor Fr. Stephen Nesrsta now celebrates four Masses on the weekend.

The second milestone for the parish is the 110th anniversary of the church. The twin-spired, gothic church was dedicated in 1914. Called by some, "the cathedral on the prairie," the church can be seen from many directions. Its sanctuary above the main altar

was adorned with a painting of The Holy Trinity, which came from Moravia. That painting today is located on the right of the altar.

The present-day rectory was built in 1939 and has been home to the 17 priests who have faithfully served at Holy Trinity during the past 85 years. The white metal cross displayed in front of the rectory once stood atop the north steeple. It was struck by lightning in May 1986, causing a fire. The damage was limited to the steeple area, which was rebuilt.

Another unique landmark of the parish is its cemetery. For generations, parishioners have made the short walk from the church after a funeral Mass to the Holy Trinity cemetery. Overlooking the parish grounds and surrounding area, the solitude of this holy resting place provides much comfort to those with loved ones buried there.



The latest addition on our church grounds is Our Lady of Hostýn grotto in 2024. This devotion to Mary started in Moravia when Saints Cyril & Methodius brought Christianity there in the 9th century and built a chapel on Hostyn Mount, later dedicated to Our Lady of Hostyn. In 1241 Christian Moravians took refuge there from the invading Pagan Tartars who were spreading death and destruction. The Christians in danger and famishing for water appealed to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At her intercession, God sent a violent electric rainstorm that gave them the needed water, struck the Pagan hordes below with lightning bolts, saved the Christians on Mount Hostýn and halted the dreadful invasion of all Europe from the East. Devotion to Our Lady of Hostýn continues to this day as the Shrine is one of the most visited in all of the Czech Republic.



In A.D. 2024, this beautiful statue of Our Lady of Hostýn was donated in loving memory of Cyril & Eileen (Sladeczek) Rosipal. It was donated by Christopher and Charles Rosipal families and Hubert Tomasek family.

Holy Trinity parish has grown and changed during the past 135 years. Its members' love of God, family and service remain unchanged. Traditions continue such as the procession of the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi Sunday and the parish bazaar on the third Sunday of September.

Dedication and stewardship is very common for the Parishioners of Holy Trinity. Johnnie Simek, son of Joe Simek and Mary (Sladeczek) Simek lived in Corn Hill all his life and was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and served as Organist for 45 years during the tenure of 14 priests.

Ronnie Simek, son of Frank & Annie Barbara (Knapek) Simek also was a lifelong parishioner and resident of Corn Hill, had a beautiful voice and was choir director at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church for 37 years. He sang at countless church masses, weddings, funerals, and was well known for his beautiful singing of Czech hymns.



Fr. Stephen is committed to keeping the faithful focused on the presence of God through the celebration of the sacraments. Thanks be to God for the blessings of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.