

CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE
HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- * Constructed in less than six months, this church was built for just \$65,000. The Church of the Immaculate is the oldest and largest standing Catholic Church in the Seattle area. The cornerstone was laid on May 4, 1904. Dedication ceremonies were celebrated on December 4, 1904 by Bishop O'Dea.
- * However the parish was founded by the Jesuits on September 12, 1891 on the Seattle College (now Seattle University) campus.
- * The Jesuits remained at the new 18th Avenue site until 1929 when Monsignor Theodore Ryan took over for the Seattle Diocese. At one time (under the Jesuits, priests from the Immaculate served as missionaries to places as far away as Black Diamond and Bremerton. In 1905, registered parishioners numbered 1068.
- * The church building originally seated 950 persons and at one time was the largest auditorium in the city. The interior handpainted decorations were not completed until the late 1920s and early 1930s. The cost for the paintings on the walls and ceilings came to about \$10,000. From the floor, the highest point of the church dome reaches 150 feet into the air.
- * The grotto, which is a smaller replica of the famous Grotto of Lourdes, was designed and constructed in 1930 by Mr. William Morgan, a Protestant, in memory of his daughter whom he had taken to Lourdes a few years before in hopes of a cure. The whole grotto, including the grill work and altar was paid for by the Casey family - of UPS fame - longtime members of the Immaculate parish.
- * The huge pipe organ, one of the finest in the northwest, was donated by Casey family in 1961, in memory of Msgr. Ryan.

INTERESTING NOTES

- The Sunday contribution envelope system - now part of every Catholic parish in the U.S. began and originated here at the Immaculate in 1919 - by a parishioner who was president of Pacific National Bank. This system was called - "Dollar a Sunday Club."
- During the late 1940s and the 1950s, the parish began to change from predominantly white members to a more diverse one including Afro-Americans, Filipinos, Japanese and Native Americans. By the 1960s, the minorities constituted the majority in the parish - especially the school (grade and high school.)
- Under the leadership of the late Rev. D. Harvey McIntyre, Immaculate was known as the Civil Rights parish in the Archdiocese of Seattle.
- In 1978, Father John Cornelius became the first Afro-American pastor in the Archdiocese of Seattle - when he was installed a pastor of the Immaculate.
- There is a museum at the back of the Church in the old Jesuit living quarters.