CHURCH SPOTLIGHT

Ascension of Our Lord Church continues to grow

By BROOKE GOLDMAN
Staff Reporter

LAPLACE - Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church has been in existence for 22 years, but its physical presence was just built.

The Rev. Benjamin Piovan got involved with the church on July 2, 1979. They were carved out of St. Joan of Arc Parish and used to meet for mass in St. Charles Catholic's music room.

Piovan came to America in 1955 from Italy, where he studied seminary while in high school. He was sent to America by his superiors because of the lack of personnel. He grew up in Northeast Italy, in a city named Padua, where St. Anthony is from.

He taught at schools in New Jersey, Florida and then moved on to Marrero before coming to LaPlace.

In 1985, Piovan moved into the church rectory and has lived there ever since.

In 1982, Ascension of Our Lord built its school and mass was moved to the school's cafeteria. As they continued to grow with the school, another classroom building was added and in 1989 they added a temporary church. This church served their parish for 12 years.

As the school gained students, preschool was added and a chapel was opened to serve members 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"As the growth continued, the school needed space and we needed a permanent church," said Piovan.

Piovan and other members gained permission to build the new church. "This church is permanent as far as anyone can see," said Piovan.

Construction began in March of 2000 and the building, located at 1900 Greenwood Drive in LaPlace, was complete on May 27, 2001.

It holds 900 people and was designed by architect Ron Blich and contracted by the Brice company.

"This is the first church built in 30 years by the archdiocese that looks like a church from the outside as well as the inside," said Piovan. "It is a sacred building and not just a simple assembly hall."

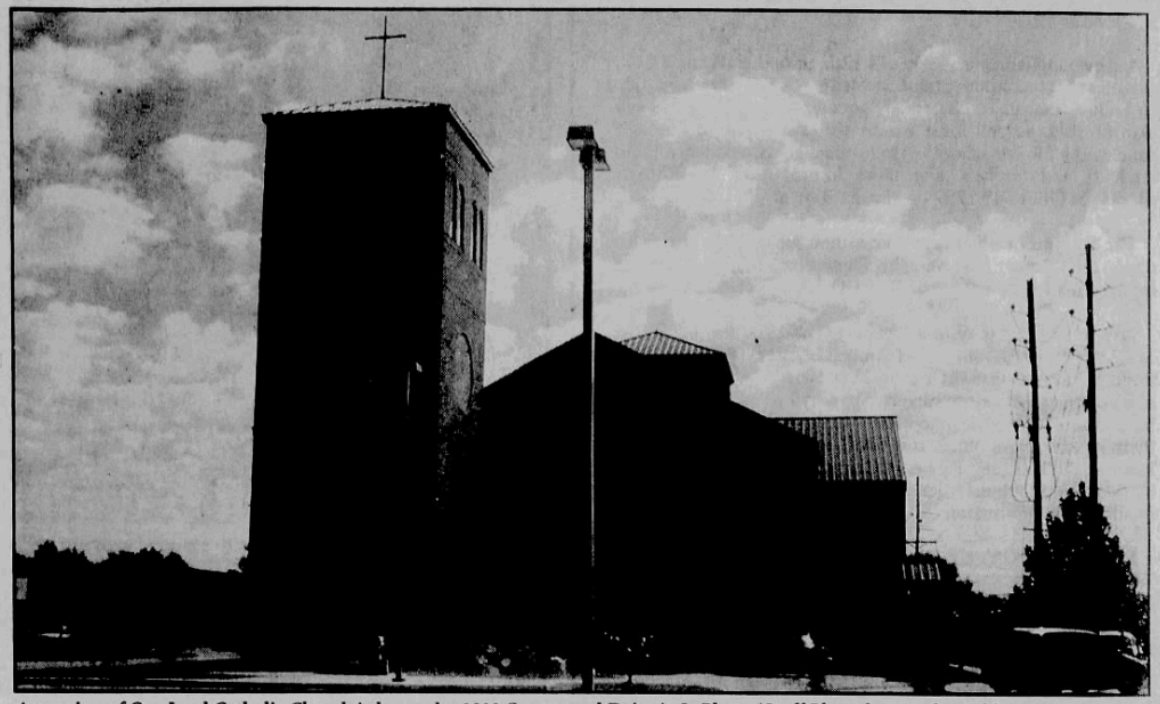
Statues and a large crucifix are being installed inside the church as well as a tabernacle in the center. The stain glass windows came from a church in New Orleans which closed a few years ago.

"Everyone is happy with this, even the visitors are happy with it," said Piovan.

Ascension of Our Lord School currently houses 500 students from preschool to eighth grade. Besides the school's curriculum sports, the church offers the community soccer in the fall and spring and baseball in the summer.

For Grandparent's Day, the church ran out of seats and had to add 300 more, allowing the full capacity of 1,200 inside the church.

"If the church gets any bigger, we'd have to start a new parish," said Piovan.



Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church is located at1900 Greenwood Drive in LaPlace. (Staff Photo by Brooke Goldman)



The Rev. Benjamin Piovan came to America in 1955 from Italy and has been involved with Ascension of Our Lord Church since 1979. (Staff Photo by Brooke Goldman)