

Our Lady of Consolation Church is Charlotte's only Black Catholic Parish. Founded in 1955, its history traces back to 1941 when Bishop Eugene McGuinness invited the Redemptorist Fathers to reach out to the African-American community. In those early years, it is noted that thirteen black Catholics gathered in celebration with Father Petrach at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Oaklawn Avenue, where there were both living quarters for the priests and social rooms for the members. After the priest and people began spreading the faith, the congregation grew, and a second parish was established, Saint Mary's, which was located on McDowell Street. Masses were held at each site.

On December 15, 1955, the Most Reverend Bishop James J. Navagh, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Raleigh, came to Charlotte and merged the two parishes, creating Our Lady of Consolation, Charlotte's fifth Catholic parish. By 1956, four buildings (a church, rectory, school, and convent) were erected on Statesville Avenue, a location was specifically chosen to serve the predominately Black congregation. The church, rectory, and convent were occupied in January 1957. The Oblate Sisters of Providence from Baltimore, Maryland, with Mother Mary Angela, O.S.P. as Superior and Principal, operated the Black centered school, which later closed in 1988 due to financial problems.

CHARLOTTE

Our Lady Of Consolation School Opened In 1957

CHARLOTTE — Our Lady of Consolation, parochial school located in the northwestern section of this city, was opened on January 28, 1957, staffed by the Oblate Sisters of Providence from Baltimore, Maryland.

The school consisted of kindergarten through grade four with 55 students. Today Our Lady of Consolation is comprised of pre-school based on the Montessori method, with students attending between the ages of three and five, kindergarten for five year olds, grades one through eight and a Day Care section. The school is staffed by six Oblate Sisters of Providence, eight full time lay teachers, three part time teachers, three teachers aids and two day care personnel.

Our Lady of Consolation emphasizes the education of the whole person, moral and character training are integral parts of all activities so that the student can become an active, participating and contributing member of the changing society in which he lives today. The curriculum is flexible and opened, it includes all the basic elementary courses, it considers individual differences, experimentation in the use of modern methods and approaches to learning situations. Music, art and physical education are regular courses throughout the grades on a departmental basis. A strong modern math and science program prepares the student for further studies in these fields.

An individualized reading program enables each student to develop reading speed and power at his own rate. English grammar and literature are very important parts of the curriculum. Students are introduced to the short story, novel, poetry and writing skills in such activities as news casting and other creative writing and learning situations.

Although eighty five percent of the student body is non catholic, religious education holds a prominent place on the curriculum. Some of the religious activities include classroom liturgy, discussions on world religions and God in the life of youth today. A student body worship service is

held once a month in which students of all faiths participate and take part in the planning.

Enrichment courses available at Our Lady of Consolation this year include guitar lessons, sewing, typing, two foreign languages, drama, painting, and drawing and stitchery.

A strong athletic program has been a part of the curriculum of O. L. C. for many years. This year the athletic committee was headed by Sister Mary Sharon and Mr. Robert Simmons. The girls and boys varsity teams participated in the league tournament bringing back several trophies. The cheerleader squad was under the direction of Sister Mary Sharon. The athletic season was closed this year by a banquet sponsored by the committee for students and parents involved in the program.

The students take part in the SRA National Testing Program once a year. Grades seven and eight participate in the National Educational Development Testing service conducted by the SRA testing service for senior and junior high students.

The Home School Association of O. L. C. is an active contributing and supporting segment of the school. Grade mothers along with the Education Board play a very important part in bringing home and the school together and making it a unit of community service.









