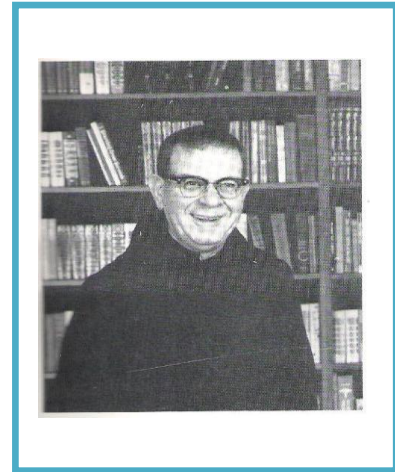


*A History of Annunciation Catholic Church
On the Occasion of the Hundredth Anniversary
1906 -- 2006*

Part I I I 1982 - 1999

Shortly, Father Maur Robira, O.S.B. made his appearance at Annunciation as associate to Father Bordenave, who was approaching his eightieth birthday and beginning to slow down noticeably. His previous assignments included teaching at the Abbey and weekend Mass duty to several churches, principally St. Christopher's in New Orleans and St. Peter's in Covington.

In mid 1982 it became apparent that Father Bordenave's malady was terminal, requiring hospitalization and retirement to the Abbey, where he died on August 22, 1982. Father Bordenave was noted for his geniality and kindness, to note but two of his endearing qualities. In his abler days he had been known for his great love for fishing and hunting. He found God in nature as well as through the daily celebration of the sacraments that insured the spiritual growth of our parishioners. Like his predecessor, Father Bordenave became a legend in his lifetime.

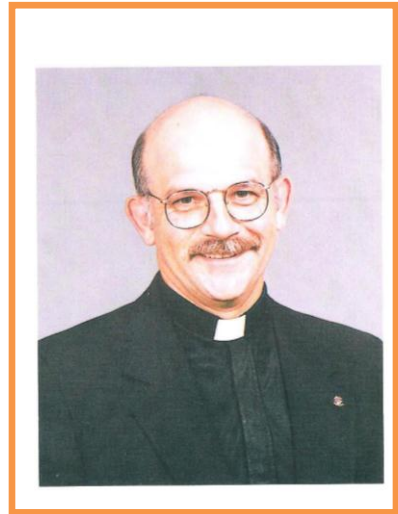


Father Maur Robira was appointed pastor of Annunciation just a few weeks prior to Father Bordenave's demise. For four years Father Robira cared for Annunciation Parish alone, even though it had grown in so many ways and demanded so much more of a lone pastor. A man who was always faithful to prayer and to the duties of his pastoral ministry, Father Robira effected much good that was not discernible to the eye. However, one fund drive and plant improvement we are all so thankful for was the protective covering of clear plexiglas he had installed on our priceless stained glass windows. Hurricane Katrina did some damage on the church roof and the Dobyns Center Adoration Chapel. Our beautiful windows came through the storm unscathed!!

A good natured, humorous person, very much able to laugh at himself, Father Robira tended to look kindly on others, while gently trying to adhere to the requirements of church law. He continued to pass on the light of Christ to the growing generations to pass through our doors. He was a man whose day was well ordered, allowing time and attention to details. Not given to attracting attention to himself, simple and unassuming, he went about his work for the people with deep dedication. The sacraments continued to be celebrated and the congregation grew closer to God and one another. Known for his passionate love of bowling, he even managed to bring his ministry in subtle ways to the alleys. He promoted the RENEW Program of small based religious prayer groups who met weekly. He led a group of parishioners on a pilgrimage to Medjorge, Yugoslavia in 1987. The youth program was popular under his guidance as it had been under Father Bordenave.

Following the usual pattern, another Benedictine priest associated with St. Joseph's Abbey joined Annunciation Parish as Father Robira's assistant. In 1986 Father Kevin Clark, O.S.B. arrived with years of experience at St. Peter's in Covington under his belt. Mid 1987 Father Robira was transferred to Covington and Father Clark was appointed pastor. Father Robira died at St. Peter's in 1993.

Father Clark brought to the parish much youthful, physical and spiritual vigor. He was noted for his work with young people and in the field of adult education. When he led several studies in the school cafeteria, it was packed every week with parishioners eager to develop their understanding of the church. The RCIA program came into full blossom and many people joined the parish community. Desiring to follow the example of Vatican II he instituted many new ministries and enhanced existing ones to serve the parish, including Lectors, Ministry of Holy Communion, Baptism seminars, Finance ministry, Pastoral Council leadership, youth groups and Religious Education, to name a few. An extremely effective preacher, he was very popular with his homilies. Detailed liturgies helped to make the sacraments more meaningful and masses much longer. A believer in physical fitness, he could be seen, many times with his dog on a leash, jogging about the streets at all hours.



Annunciation Catholic School continued to grow with Father Clark's blessings. In 1996 the latest building to the plant was added. It houses the library, named the Velma LeMaire Library in honor of the longtime volunteer librarian; the Computer Lab is on the north side. The Early Childhood Mary Paduda Education Center, with facilities for Pre-Kindergarten 3 and 4 year olds and Kindergarten, occupy the south side of the building. Father Clark resigned in the summer of 1999.

On 4th of July weekend of 1999, Father Lawrence Phelps, O.S.B. became the pastor of our community. With a wealth of spiritual knowledge and good will, and since he had never been pastor before, he took command of our parish with gusto and prudent forethought. Known for being a personable man, whose religion stems from deep within his heart, he soon began to regularly visit the sick, the needy and those who needed the special touch of a good parish priest. He quickly learned "the ropes" and in no time he was celebrating Holy Mass every week at Rest Haven Nursing Home.

Under his leadership and with a background in the banking business the parish improved. The Parish Council grew in ranks and stature. The School Board swelled to a healthy twelve members. Creation of the Parish Maintenance program provided a much-needed roof on the Church. Funds collected each month grew and financed several plant improvements. New wide sidewalks all around the church, upgrades on the air conditioning, removal of the Communion rail, new carpeting throughout the church, repainting and refurbishing all the statues, repainting of the Stations of the Cross and much more have been accomplished.

He has deep appreciation for our parish elementary school and the youth of our community. His school Masses are spiritual treasures that are truly inspirational. His homilies are not too long, but to the point. He doesn't brow beat the subject with constant repetition. He gives us much food for thought and meditation. He makes his point and that's that!