



HISTORY

Notre Dame de Lourdes Church is a testament to the Franco-American community in Saco, Maine. It was founded to accommodate the needs of the growing French - speaking population in the area. The structure was originally built as a theatre; the floor slightly sloping towards the altar gives evidence of this. The building was purchased from the Second

Baptist Church, and the parish was established by Bishop John Gregory Murray on December 1, 1928.

After raising the floor for the sanctuary and sacristy, adding kneelers and building a replica of the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, parishioners celebrated their first Mass on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1929. Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish began with 312 families and grew to over 1,000 households. It merged with other local parishes on July 1, 2008 to become part of Good Shepherd Parish.



Notre Dame de Lourdes School was also founded in 1929. For 22 years, classes were held in the church loft, attic, basement, and convent until a separate school was erected in 1951 at its current location at 50 Beach Street in Saco. The school was staffed by the Presentation of Mary Sisters for nearly 80 years and provided education for students from Pre-k

to Grade 8. Notre Dame de Lourdes Schools was closed on June 16, 2011.



Another important part of the parish was Our Lady of Victory Mission built in Camp Ellis under the leadership of Fr. Albert Charette. It served as a summer chapel for weekend Masses until 1989. After several years of neglect, devoted parishioners converted the chapel into a hall which was used for many years for school suppers, fairs and parish funeral luncheons. The property was sold in November of 2009.

Sunday Mass was celebrated for the last time in Notre Dame de Lourdes Church on December 27, 2009.