



## A History of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church Cedron, Missouri

*The following is primarily derived from "Assumption Catholic Church - Remembering Our Heritage" © 2005*

The earliest records of Assumption Catholic Church at Cedron places the year of its institution as 1838 and it is the oldest of its denomination in Moniteau County. Fr. Ferdinand Helias, S.J., the "Apostle of Central Missouri," was the first priest to visit Cedron as early as 1838 and offered mass there in the home of Mr. Weber and at Pisgah in the house of John Fay. According to some histories, Cedron was the fourth of seven churches founded by Fr. Helias, while others list it as the fifth.

The first church building was built of logs on two acres of land donated by Ignatz Becker (Baker) from his farm in Linn Township in 1843. The building was 30' x 32' and was constructed at a cost of \$50. Originally known as Becker's Church, it was later changed to Assumption Church of Moniteau. On the Feast of the Assumption on August 15, 1855, during the pastorate of Fr. U. Joseph Meister, the church was given the name Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and is now commonly known as Assumption Catholic Church at Cedron.



In 1857 a 16' x 16' log school house was constructed, with 20 children in attendance, and Joe Schweitzer was a teacher. In 1886 a new 24' x 30' frame school was constructed with 35 children in attendance. A later frame building was erected and is still standing. About 15 feet from the school stands a rebuilt outhouse that replaced the original. The school was closed in 1931 and the children attended public schools at Jamestown or Prairie Home. The building was converted in 1951 into a hall for young people and for meeting purposes. For a time, an annual

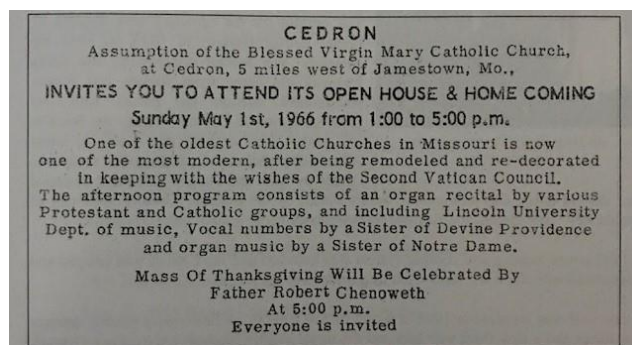
Vacation Summer School was conducted for children and young people of the parish. Two nuns from St. Andrew's School at Tipton were requisitioned each year as teachers.

During 1867-1872 a new 50' x 30' brick church was constructed at a cost of \$3,000. John Baker was 12 years old when the present building was completed. Mr. Baker, who was 92 at his death in January 1952, was at that time the oldest communicant of the church. The church bell, a gift from John and Mary Heinen, originally had been mounted on four tall logs which stood at the southeast corner of the church and later in a bell tower erected in 1888. In 1903 during the pastorate of Fr. Puetz, an additional 31 feet was added to the building, including a vestibule with bell tower and a sanctuary, at a cost of \$2,456.



On November 11, 1903 the Very Rev. Thomas F. Lillis, the Vicar General of the Kansas City Diocese, dedicated the church. In 1914, new windows and a metal ceiling were put in the church and the church was painted (frescoed) at a cost of \$950. In the summer of 1951, the church was completely renovated and decorated, and a new floor installed, under the supervision of Fr. John F. Walsh. This was done with the aid of parishioners and friends, many of them from Kansas City.

Under Fr. Robert Chenoweth, an extensive program was begun to carry out the wishes of Pope Paul VI and the Second Vatican Council to modernize both Catholic services and the buildings themselves. The old altars were removed and replaced with a new modern altar in a walnut finish facing the congregation. The tabernacle was placed on a shelf directly behind and elevated behind the altar. A shelf to the left of the tabernacle was mounted to the wall for the wine and water for mass. Tile floors were laid in the sacristies and sanctuary; the remainder of the church was carpeted. The stained glass windows were also repaired at this time. The color scheme was chosen by Sister Anita of the Sisters of the Divine Providence. The color for the sanctuary was one shade of yellow and the nave was painted another shade of yellow. The windows and all trim were done in red and white. The church was carpeted in brown and orange tweed. The new electric organ added to the beauty of Holy Mass. It is believed that the communion rail was removed in 1966.



On Sunday May 1, 1966, an open house and homecoming was held and over 500 people came during the afternoon. The program consisted of an organ recital, followed by a Mass of Thanksgiving. Organ selections included Miss Virginia Snead, Jamestown Baptist Church. Vocal selections were by Miss Marianne Schoenthal of the Jamestown United Church of Christ, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Herbert Schoenthal. Sister M. Aloysia, Sisters of Divine Providence, was accompanied by Mrs. Norma Roesch, Jamestown United Church of Christ. Mr.

Gant of the Lincoln University Music Department, along with Mr. Mitchell, also offered organ selections. Other organ selections were by Miss Linda Clay, Jamestown United Church of Christ, Mrs. Annie Beckemeier, Jamestown Lutheran Church, Mrs. Frances Alexander Jamestown Methodist Church, and Sister M. Edwin, Sisters of Notre Dame.

A new roof was installed in 1998 at a cost of \$10,000. In 2000 major termite damage was found and a new floor was installed. Repairs were made to beams above the ceiling and the tin ceiling was refurbished. The stained glass windows were removed and repaired beginning in 2006.

The first baptism administered at Cedron was on August 6, 1839 by Fr. Helias. The first baptisms are entered in the books at Taos, where Fr. Helias lived most of his missionary life. Fr. Helias administered the first Baptism at Pisgah on August 16, 1839. In the early years, infant baptisms were done in the parents' homes. The first baptisms in the Assumption Church of Moniteau were recorded as those of Gertrude Weingartner on February 24, 1852, followed by that of Joseph August Wittman on June 26, 1853. In a list of early baptisms, there are thirteen listed from December 1851 to March 1855, including the names of Fischer, Strickfaden, Dick, Zey, Baker, Klein, Imhoff, Weingartner, Wittman, Heinen, Schweitzer, Emriche, and Walterscheid.

The first recorded marriage was that of Peter Walterscheid and Genoviva Imhoff by Rev. Edward Jakob, on May 6, 1884.

In 1884, a priest house was built at a cost of \$500. In 1908 a new rectory was constructed at a cost of \$1,800. In 1965 the 10-room frame dwelling was sold to Tom and Suzy (Imhoff) Green, the great-great-granddaughter of Ignatz Baker.

The ground for the cemetery was donated by Ignatz Becker (Baker) in 1843. Some of the cemetery's oldest known markers are those of Anna Joest in 1846 and Joseph Heinen, 11-month old son of J & M Heinen in November 1848. Two other early dates are those of Ignatz Becker (Baker) in 1851 and Anna Marie Emriche in 1853. Many early markers no doubt have been lost, disintegrated by time and the elements. In 1952 the cemetery was fenced completely; the entire financial aid came from friends and former parishioners outside the parish who had relatives buried at Cedron. Today the fence is no longer there and no one seems to know what happened to it. In 2003 a new cross was made by John and Donnie Dilse and designed after the old cross.



Through the years, Cedron has been ministered to by either a resident pastor or as a mission of Annunciation Parish in California or St. Andrew's Parish in Tipton. The last regular mass was held on August 29, 1993. Most of the remaining families joined Annunciation Parish in California or Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Boonville. The church property remains a part of the Diocese of Jefferson City under the care of Annunciation Parish, with on-going expenses paid by the Friends of Cedron.

Assumption Catholic Church at Cedron, with its historical link to Fr. Helias and through the dedication of its caretakers, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is open for special occasions such as weddings, funerals, and special holiday church services.

Donations for upkeep are always appreciated and can be sent to Assumption Church at Cedron, c/o Annunciation Parish, 310 Mill St., California MO 65018. Friends of Cedron maintains a Facebook page where upcoming events and other information can be found.