

St. Peter Claver School – Mobile, Ala.



When the first IHM Sisters arrived at St. Peter Claver in Mobile, Ala., in 1950, the school had already been open for 39 years, staffed first by the Franciscan Sisters of Cunegunda and then by the Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

The five-room school, housing 195 students in grades one through eight, was in the basement of the church. The convent chronicler reported that, after a very long train ride, "Work was begun in school with Northern gusto which waned greatly under the southern sun as the day wore on."

Because the school had been open for so long, the IHM Sisters became part of some long-standing traditions. Their students looked forward to participating in the annual Christ the King parade; in the school's Mardi Gras; the May Day procession and Field Day at Hartwell Field. The sisters also introduced some new traditions, such as school uniforms, the girls' choir and making sure the entire student body was enrolled in the Holy Childhood Association.

In 1954, with 181 students, the chronicler says, "Plans were made to raise money for a new school. Each grade will take a different month and project to work toward this goal." The parish instituted a "buy a brick" program to raise money as well. The parish hall was torn down to make



way for the new school, which opened Sept. 12, 1955.

In addition to the usual academic subjects, the 211 children attending St. Peter Claver during the winter of 1957-58 learned something unexpected from their teachers.

"A heavy snowfall caused much excitement...we taught the children how to make snowballs and slide on the ice!"

During 1963, our **Featured Class Year**, the school formed a new choir for the boys among the 247 students. **Jennifer Johnson** was Mardi Gras queen. During a period when segregation was the norm, the chronicler jubilantly wrote, "Our band was invited to participate in a...white parade..." for Washington's Birthday. The band was

also asked to play in the Easter parade. **Dominic Cooper** was selected to crown the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary that May. His attendants were **Patricia Withers** and **Constance Irby**. The 18 members of the class graduated June 2 at a 9 a.m. Mass.

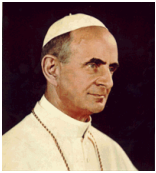


Enrollment at St. Peter Claver began a slow but steady decline during the remainder of the 1960s. By the fall of 1970, the school had only 168 children, and the bishop closed the school at the end of the year. Many students went to St. Matthew, "which our sisters will help staff this year coming up," according to the chronicler.

The archdiocese consolidated the parishes of St. Peter Claver and St. Vincent de Paul in December 1970 and renamed the new entity Prince of Peace Parish.

In 1963

Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to an audience of at least 250,000, during the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom."



Cardinal Montini, Paul VI, was elected pope following the death of Pope John XXIII.

The United States Supreme Court ruled that no locality may require recitation of Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools.



The first commercial nuclear reactor went online at the Jersey Central Power Company. The first liver transplant was performed. Valium was developed by Roche labs.

The First Family, by Vaughn Meader, received an Album of the Year Grammy Award. The Beatles released their first album *Please Please Me*.



France and West Germany signed treaty of cooperation which ended four centuries of conflict.

Shirley Booth, starring in *Hazel*, won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Continued Performance by an Actress in a Series (Lead). Don Knotts received an Emmy in the Best Supporting Actor category for his role as Barney Fife on *The Andy Griffith Show*.



The Los Angeles Dodgers swept the New York Yankees in the World Series; the Boston Celtics won the NBA Championship in six games over the Los Angeles Lakers; and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Detroit Red Wings four games to one for the Stanley Cup.

Poet Robert Frost, baseball great Rogers Hornsby and author Aldous Huxley died.