



# SAINT CLEMENT CHURCH

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1905–2005

*Nourished by Our Roots*  
*Sustained by Our Faith*  
*Branching Out to the World*



**Saint Clement Church**  
Chicago, Illinois



*This book is dedicated to those who set down roots in this holy place and to those who will reach out from here to the world after we are gone.*

*For the faithful who have gone before us at Saint Clement Church:  
We give thanks for the gifts of strength and beauty they have handed down to us,  
and we pray that their goodness, vision, and faith in God will live on in us.*

*For the faithful who will come after us at Saint Clement Church:  
We pray that they will keep our beautiful and beloved Tree of Life fresh and  
flourishing, and that it will continue to bear good fruit in their hearts,  
in the community, and in the world.*

***Lord, bear our prayer. Amen.***

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# ONE FINE DAY

## SAINT CLEMENT CHURCH



One spring Sunday in 2005, dozens of parishioners gathered on the plaza in front of Saint Clement Church after Mass, chatting with friends and family members, gathering groups to go to brunch, and enjoying hospitality offered by one of the many active parish volunteer organizations.

That weekend, 1,500 people participated in six Masses at Saint Clement. Presiding at these Masses were five priests: the pastor, the associate pastor, two resident priests who have other weekday assignments in the archdiocese, and one Vincentian priest who lives nearby.

Not long before, 18 men and women had joined the Catholic church at the Easter Vigil. Ten were baptized then and there; eight who had been baptized in other Christian traditions were received into the church. Four adults received their confirmation at the Vigil as well; and at other times during the year, 30 other adults had been confirmed. Several of the new Catholics were there on the plaza that spring Sunday, talking about the Mass of Thanksgiving coming up at the cathedral. The director of evangelization and her team of lay catechists and sponsors were pleased with the results of their faithful work.

Two families carrying smiling babies and long white baptismal gowns (and armfuls of baby supplies) walked through the cheerful crowd toward the open church doors. That year, nearly 250 infants were baptized at Saint Clement. Their parents had enjoyed their baptismal preparation sessions together, led by the director of evangelization and several members of the Clement Moms.

During that same week, 55 teens worked on service projects in preparation for their confirmation in the fall, guided by the director of religious education. Not long before, 66 younger children had made their first communion, under the guidance of that same busy director of religious education.

A bride-to-be stood in the shade of the blooming pear trees and told her friends about the music she and her groom had chosen for their wedding. That weekend, four couples were married in the upper church; there were 109 weddings at Saint Clement during the year. Each of these newlywed couples had enjoyed marriage preparation with several other engaged couples in dozens of Pre-Cana groups led by married couples of the parish.

That week, nearly a hundred musicians in four choirs rehearsed with two staff musicians. Thirty lay lectors checked to see if they were scheduled to serve at Mass next weekend, and so did a dozen bread bakers, a hundred eucharistic ministers, twenty altar servers, and a dozen sacristans, all under the guidance of their coordinators and the director of liturgy.

Dozens of men and women studied scripture that week with the pastoral assistant. Several more gathered downtown on their lunch hour to read the Bible together. Another group gathered with the pastor in the parish center to read and pray with the scriptures for the next Sunday.

Nourished by the sacraments, the scriptures, and the community of faith, hundreds of parishioners offered service to the Lincoln Park Community Shelter; Habitat for Humanity; our sharing parish in Chicago, Our Lady of Mercy; our sister parish in El Salvador, 22 de Abril; and more.

The parish register included more than three thousand households, ranging from people living by themselves to families of ten or twelve. More than a thousand parishioners volunteered to serve on at least one of more than a hundred committees, commissions, boards, teams, and ministries.

All these people, all this energy, all this love, all gathered around one parish church in Chicago. How did all this come to be?





OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

## ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

January 11, 2006

Dear Saint Clement Parishioners,

Congratulations and God's blessing on all of you as you mark your parish centennial. I especially want to congratulate you on the deep commitment to spiritual renewal that has been placed at the very center of the Saint Clement Centennial activities during this jubilee year.

From its very beginning one hundred years ago, Saint Clement has been a beacon of faith and of light to the Lincoln Park community on the city's near north side. Though the city and its people have continued to change over the past one hundred years, Saint Clement has remained a place of refuge and comfort, as well as a place where the Gospel of Christ has been clearly proclaimed and lived through all these years.

Your parish has been served so well by many dedicated priests beginning with your first pastor, Msgr. Francis Rempe. Religious women have certainly made a great contribution both with Saint Clement School, the parish's first endeavor, and some with significant roles as members of the parish staff. In recent years, incredibly generous and talented lay men and women have made Saint Clement a leader in lay ministry.

I congratulate you on your work in stewardship over these recent years. You have welcomed and incorporated new members and given them a real feeling of belonging and being part of the church that puts "faith into action". Your beautiful church is a jewel among the churches of the Archdiocese. Your reputation for prayerful liturgy and music is known well beyond your boundaries.

It is so important to praise and thank God for the ways he has worked among you and those who have gone before you in faith. The Tree of Life, painted in the apse of your church, is an apt symbol of your rich faith, your beautiful church building, the mystery of the Eucharist, which sustains us through our lives, and your works of justice and charity represented by the branches. Congratulations to Father Hickey and all of you.

You are in my prayers; please keep me in yours. Thank you and God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Chicago

