

Untitled

## History

The story of St. Ignatius Loyola Parish begins with Sacred Heart Parish, the first Jesuit parish in Denver. Sacred Heart was founded

by Rev. John Baptiste Guida, S.J. in 1879. The present church was completed and dedicated on April 25, 1880. Sacred Heart grew

so rapidly that in ten years the church was too small for the congregation. In 1890, lots were purchased at East 26th Avenue and

Ogden, and Loyola Chapel was built there in 1909

Almost from the beginning, Loyola Chapel was unable to handle the overflow crowds from Sacred Heart, and so plans were begun to

build a second large church, to be named after the founder of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius Loyola

In 1921, Fr. Charles McDonnell, S.J., pastor of Sacred Heart and Loyola Chapel, bought the block of land at York Street and 23rd

Avenue and in 1922 began building the monumental church that is the focal point of Loyola Parish. As soon as the basement was

completed, in 1923, masses were held there. The church was finished and dedicated on Columbus Day, October 12, 1924

In 1939, the basement of the church was divided into classrooms, and an elementary school, staffed by the Sisters of Charity of

Cincinnati, was started. Plans to build a school were delayed by the Great Depression. The school building was completed in two

stages in 1950 and 1954

In 1944, the Jesuits bought the house at 2309 Gaylord Street, across the street from the back of the church, to serve as the rectory

and St. Ignatius Loyola became fully separated from Sacred Heart Parish

St. Ignatius Loyola has played an extraordinary role in bringing about racial integration in the Denver Catholic Church.

By the end of

World War II, many African Americans were moving into the area just west of Loyola Church. Jesuit father, William Markoe, working a

both Sacred Heart and Loyola, insisted that African Americans should not be segregated, but should be allowed to attend the church

of their choice, and that they should be allowed to attend Loyola if that was closer to where they lived. He also insisted that African

American children should be allowed to attend school at Loyola

It may be hard for us to realize, but this was not the common view of many church leaders at the time. The work of Fr. William Markoe

and that of his Jesuit brother, John, was strongly opposed for years, and several times they were ordered not to work with African

Americans. But both Jesuits remained faithful to the higher call they heard from the Lord, and continued to work for racial integration

and social justice

Fr. William Markoe laid the groundwork for the efforts of Fr. Edward Murphy, S.J., pastor of Loyola from 1950 to 1970. He worked

hard to keep Loyola and the neighborhood integrated. In 1965, Fr. Murphy received two significant national awards.

The Reward of

Merit was conferred on him by the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute, Washington, D.C., for "outstanding contributions to

the betterment of race relations and human welfare." Later he was named "Man of the Year" by the National Negro Voters

Educational Council for notable efforts in the field of race relations

Other recipients of this award include: President John F. Kennedy, Walt Disney, Nat "King" Cole, and Duke Ellington

Through the efforts of many, St. Ignatius Loyola remains a truly integrated parish, reflecting the core belief of Jesus'

teaching that we  
are all sisters and brothers in the one great family of God

In 1996, through the efforts of many of the parishioners, Loyola's beautiful, Gothic-style church, was placed on  
both the National and

Colorado State Registers of Historic Places. With generous matching grants from the State Historical Society, Loyola  
has been able

to do some much-needed  
work on the structure of the building

At present, we are raising funds to continue to restore and renovate the church, and we are looking at ways of insuring  
the viability of

our elementary school

<http://www.loyoladenver.com/id22-m.htm>

Page 1 of 1

6/5/04 10:02 AM