



Sacred Heart School, Muenster, Texas.

Built on a Foundation of Faith

100 YEARS STRONG — 1924-2024
RED BRICK SCHOOL BUILDING

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This December 8 will mark the 100th Anniversary of a significant moment in the history of our Parish: the laying of the cornerstone of Sacred Heart Catholic School's red brick elementary building in 1924. Just like Sacred Heart Catholic Church, this beloved structure truly stands as a testimony to the faith and generosity of our predecessors. It's hard to think of a better symbol of their love of God, willingness to sacrifice for Him, and desire to educate and pass on their Catholic faith to their children.

A Golden Jubilee History of the Sacred Heart Parish, 1889-1939, Muenster, Texas, authored by Rev. Joseph P. Fuhrmann, O.S.B., Ph.D., gives a wonderful account of how this definitive building came to be. The original frame school building erected in 1890, and its later additions, had become "somewhat dilapidated and not quite up to date" by 1919, according to Father Frowin Koerdt, O.S.B., Sacred Heart's pastor at the time. Knowing something had to be done, and that before anything could be done money must be available, Fr. Frowin started a School Building Fund on May 11 of that year. Fundraising activities began—monthly Sunday special collections, the urging of parishioners to make donations, socials, picnics, and entertainment, and finally, taking up pledges of contributions.

After five years of fundraising, the time to begin construction arrived. Plans for the new school building were drawn up by Ludewig and Dreisoerner of Saint Louis, MS, and the building contract was awarded to A. H. Richter of Fort Worth. Further demonstrating our ancestors' love for

God and willingness to sacrifice for Him, it was agreed at a Parish meeting held on July 13, 1924, that Parish members would do the needed excavating and haul the materials to the building site without pay.

Come July 19, members of the School Building Committee staked the plot, and Fr. Frowin blessed the site. A few days later, actual work began. Then, on December 8, 1924, the 25th anniversary of Muenster's founding, came the laying of the cornerstone. It truly was a day of celebration! The laying was preceded by a Solemn High Mass, an address, a dinner, and a procession. Abbot Ignatius Conrad, O.S.B., and His Excellency, Bishop Joseph P. Lynch, then solemnly blessed the cornerstone, engraved with the monogram of the St. Benedict's medal. Also blessed was a commemorative document to be enclosed within the cornerstone. The document's opening words: "May God be glorified in all things and the Blessed Virgin Mary!"

The building, "*fix und fertig*" (ready to go), was blessed by Bishop Lynch exactly one year later, December 8, 1925.



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One must look back in history to realize what a marvel this building really was, how advanced it was for its time, especially for a small town like Muenster. An article by Joe M. Leonard appearing in The Gainesville Register on June 27, 1926, and reprinted in A Golden Jubilee History of the Sacred Heart Parish, gives a detailed description of the building:

The accompanying illustration gives only slight indication of the magnificent monument to education that has been erected in the little town of Muenster, 17 miles west of Gainesville. To say that it is one of the finest plants of the kind in any town of equal size in Texas, and that few if any cities of 25,000 population have an institution of greater magnitude, is well within the bounds of reason. The school has been occupied since September, 1925. Whoever visits it, praises those who planned and built it and expresses admiration for the spirit of self-sacrifice and progress displayed in its erection by the people of Muenster. The school cost approximately \$100,000.00, all of which was raised by private contributions of the people in that community.

The materials used were steel, concrete and rugged face brick in four colors. The building is 128x62 feet; contains eight classrooms, each 23x32 feet; an auditorium, a dining room, a kitchen; a library, a teachers' restroom; and spacious halls, besides everything that can contribute to the health and comfort of the pupils and teachers.

An Impressive Building

Entering the building from the west, one is impressed by the

immaculate appearance of the school. Just inside, the floor is of tiling. The walls are tinted a rich cream color. Steam radiators are suspended on the walls, out of way. The steel stair railings are painted black, while a portion of the walls alongside the stairways are a deep maroon.

Most of the classrooms are of uniform size, containing from 40 to 50 steel desks. On the walls are sturdy slate blackboards. Upper portions of the sidewalls and the ceilings are tinted plaster, with panels on the ceilings. Adequate light and ventilation are furnished by numerous windows and doors. Each classroom has its cloak room, also built in bookcases.

On each floor one finds drinking fountains. Toilets and lavatories also are provided on each floor, and numerous rooms have been provided for teaching music and for other uses, later to be turned into classrooms when the need arises. The building is amply supplied with electric lights. The long halls are floored with red tiling, which harmonizes nicely with the surroundings. Irish green tile is used on the sidewalls of the south entrance lobby.

The "inner man" has not been overlooked, provision being made

for him with a kitchen and a large dining room, where meals may be prepared and served when desired.

The auditorium will seat a large crowd. It is equipped with a splendid stage, two dressing rooms, and a motion picture machine. It also affords room for displaying specimens of the work done by the pupils, and recently there was such a display shown there. The auditorium has two entrances from the outside, on either side of a ticket door.

Practically Fireproof

Safeguarding the lives of the occupants of the building, there is an adequate fire escape with swinging doors that cannot be locked. The entire building is practically fireproof. The outside guttering is of copper and practically indestructible. All windows are screened.

Heat is supplied from a big boiler in the basement. The equipment of the entire building is complete and modern to the last degree. Ninety thousand face bricks and 240,000 common bricks were used in the construction.

On top of the building, facing the south, is an imposing statue, made of Italian marble, presented to the school by Edward Fette. Beneath the statue is an inscription, "Sacred Heart School."

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Nearly one hundred years later, how blessed we are. This same building still provides students with the outstanding, faith-filled education their ancestors so willingly sacrificed to ensure for future generations. The building's importance in the history of the community of Muenster was officially recognized on December 8, 1995, when it was Designated Historically Significant by the Muenster Texas Historical Commission.



This thoughtfully constructed edifice has stood the test of time, still beautiful and well preserved, inside and out. Through the decades, whenever the need arose, parish family members have donated time, talent, and treasure to help with its upkeep. Performing a labor of love, volunteers painted its classrooms and restrooms, varnished, refinished wood floors, washed windows, deep cleaned, culled and organized its attic, cultivated its flowerbeds, whatever the need.

Today, beholding the interior's immaculate appearance, much praise and many thanks go to its cleaning crew of one, Lorena Hernandez, for the tremendous and professional service she has lovingly performed for more than 20 years. Single-handedly, she keeps the building shining top to bottom, even waxing the tile hallway floors every summer. Says Lorena, "The school is my second home. I take care of it the way I take care of my own home. I feel good making the school nice and clean for everybody."

In addition to its refurbishments, the building has seen major enhancements through the years, among them ceiling fans, AC window units, a new roof, rewiring, additional exterior lighting, new windows and blinds, and new varnished wood entrance doors.

Currently, two still-needed enhancements remain, the completion of which is contingent on the Parish Capital Campaign. First, HVAC installation to provide a more quiet and comfortable learning environment, helping both teachers and students better focus, be the climate hot or cold. Secondly, renovations to the restrooms to make them ADA compliant and allow for increased privacy.

In honor of those generous, faith-filled souls who came before us, may we all help to make sure this grand old building, which has served so many, be it in schooling, religious education classes, or Vacation Bible School, continues to be a monumental tribute to "the little town of Muenster."

