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PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



Cathedral Immaculate Conception Church

13/12/2015

Portsmouth

98 Summer St - Portsmouth - United States of America



As the first parish in Portsmouth – originally known as St. Mary’s – Immaculate Conception has also been labeled the “mother church” of St. Catherine of Siena and St. James parishes, which were established in the 1950s.

St. Mary’s was established as a parish in 1851. The parish acquired a parcel of land known as “Circus Field on Mason’s Hill” at the corner of Summer and Chatham streets. A simple church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin on October 8, 1952. It was destroyed in a suspicious fire November 27, 1871. A brick church was built and dedicated April 9, 1874, and renamed Church of the Immaculate Conception. At this time, it was part of the Diocese of Portland (Maine) and in 1884, transitioned to the Diocese of Manchester (New Hampshire) when the latter diocese was established.

By the early 1930s, the 1874 brick church was found to be structurally weak and too small to meet the needs of the growing parish. Demolition of that church and construction of the present-day church occurred in 1933-34. However, the stained glass windows of the old church were preserved and installed in the new one.

The Roman Catholic community of the greater Portsmouth area, which formerly consisted of three parishes served by multiple priests, now exists as a single parish. Beginning June, 2006, the unified Catholic community of Portsmouth is now known as Corpus Christi Parish, though the three churches retain their original names.