



St. Mary of the Assumption's History



The first mass was celebrated in Santa Maria on August 20, 1905 in the opera house by **Rev. Mathias Ternes**. Fr. Ternes was ordained in Rome in 1902 and was assigned to St. Mary of the Assumption.

The original church of 1905 was located at corner of S. Miller and E. Cypress Streets. On Feb. 11, 1906 Rev. Stockman Chancellor of Diocese of Monterey and Los Angeles solemnly blessed and placed the cornerstone containing photo of Bishop Conaty and Fr. Ternes, land and building benefactors, choir members, the contractor, coins and other articles. It was dedicated to the Most High God in honor of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary. This cornerstone is currently on private property east of Santa Maria (Mussel's Fort).

Through the years, **Rev. Ternes** made many friends and converts and did much to promote good feelings towards the new church. When Rev. Cohen was serving as Pastor land the heavy rains caused the area by the church to be inundated with water, leaving unpaved streets in a sad state, he appealed to the city fathers. They did not see things his way so Fr. Cohen borrowed a plow and grader and fixed the streets himself.

During the first World War, **Father Dubbel** was a forceful man, he made many converts and he was instrumental in thwarting the budding KKK organization. Due to the part of his efforts, they were never able to establish themselves in this area.

On August 10, 1933, **Fr. Thomas V. Murphy**, an Irishman became Pastor. In 1936 he was able to get a note of \$20,000 to build the convent for the Sisters of St. Francis and parochial school. In 1948 a \$40,000 addition to the school was built and another \$40,000 for property across the street.

Monsignor Murphy requested the Sisters from same order to establish a hospital. On Nov. 2, 1939 a 35-bed facility was established on 125 Airport Ave (now S. College Dr.). The 10 acres donated by Capt. & Mrs. Allan Hancock.

2,000 families in Santa Maria are now Catholic so a new church needed to be built. The church was built in 1957 one block from the original church. The first mass was celebrated in the new church on Sept 14, 1958. The tower is 100 ft tall and is the tallest structure in Santa Maria.

With the increasing growth in Santa Maria, St. Louis de Montfort parish was created on March of 1963 in Orcutt (south of Santa Maria). St. Mary's parish hall was constructed on Feb. 2, 1966 at the original site of the old church. Two house and duplex near the church was donated to St. Mary's by Maria J. Vicente.

On April 27, 1973 a new parish was established St. John Neumann northwest of St. Mary's church. In 1974 Msgr. Marum was reassigned and **Msgr James Colberg** appointed as Pastor until 1999. **Fr. Riz Carranza** was appointed pastor to the present time serving 1300 families.