

Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Church: 25 Years

by Silvana Giuriato-Dick, Our Lady of Grace Parish

From a thousand old photographs to delicate newspaper clippings there are signs everywhere that anniversary celebrations for Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Church have begun. This year commemorates 25 years but its rich history actually spans almost 50 years, dating back to 1964. It was then that two distinct parishes were born, St. Andrew's Italian Church and St. Clement Church, but a generation later adversity would ultimately bring them together under one roof of faith.

Both communities prayed for remedies and in 1984 the Holy Spirit made his presence known through an invitation from Bishop O'Byrne for them to unite.



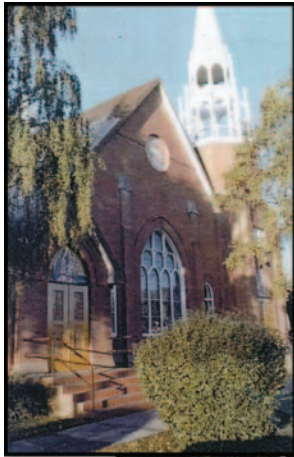
Under the watchful care of Our Lady this new faith community became known as Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Church. Built on the site of St. Clement over a long bitter winter this beautiful building is now a prominent landmark overlooking our city's skyline. Under the guidance of Fr. Ugo Sturabotti and Fr. Jimmy Puttanickal, and previously Fr. George Puramadathil, the church serves Catholic families throughout the city.

Rich in religious culture some original artwork remains in place including the priest's chair, carved in Northern Italy by Miu Scmalzl; mosaics painted by world-renowned Italian artist Trento Longaretti; and the 'Pearl of Beauty', an impressive pipe organ purchased from Calgary's Performing Arts Centre in 1990. With seating up to 300, the lower hall is often used for parish activities

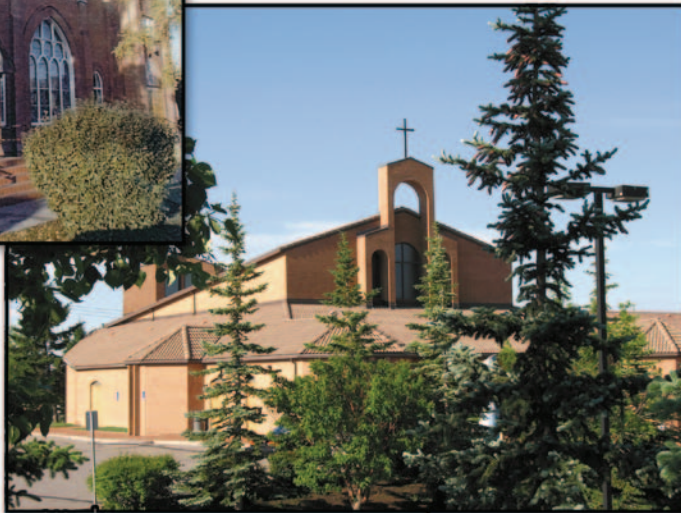
and rented out for private functions, while the upstairs hall, added in 1999, serves as a meeting room.

Along with customary ministries and sacraments Our Lady of Grace is proud to offer mass celebrated in both English and Italian. Other unique opportunities include the Alpha Course and Catholicism 201 while the church hosts one of Calgary's few groups that make mission rosaries for third world nations. We are also blessed with the Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception who provide access to world-wide charitable organizations and whose leadership will help us flourish in the many years ahead.

Please see page 13 for details of our upcoming celebration on October 2; and visit our newly updated Web site at www.ourladyofgrace.ca.



St. Andrew's Italian Church, the first church in the Diocese where the altar was placed so that mass could be said facing the people.



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Their story begins when, under the guidance of Fr. Angelo Sacchi, St. Andrew's Italian Church was formed. Notable for its artwork of carved doors, sculptures, mosaics and frescoes it was the first church in the Diocese where the altar was placed so that mass could be said facing the people. It was an idyllic existence until the congregation outgrew its building, with no hope of expansion.

Less than 5 miles away, in the years before Deerfoot Trail, St. Clement was a small and humble church constructed from two 1940 army barracks on the hill in Belfast. Under the guidance of their pastors, beginning with Fr. Louis Malo, they dreamt of building a new church but 20 years later it was doubtful the church could be built by St. Clement's parish alone.