History of Many Churches
Reaches Into Past Centuries

St. Gabriel Is Observing 200th Anniversary

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(7 P. Bayou Lagniappe Bureau)

ST. GABRIEL, La. — As the day of Christ's Resurrection dawns, attention is drawn to the churches of the Christian community, where the message of Easter is repeated throughout the year. And the days and events of the year, the week and monthly and even the day of Christ's Resurrection is celebrated. The parish itself was established in 1761, three couples were married, and on the 11th of that month, the child who was born on March 14 was immediately baptized. The church was broken. In November of that year, the Most Rev. L. Abel Calliouet, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans, officiated at the laying of the cornerstone of the new brick church. The cornerstone of the new brick church, dedicated on April 19, 1953, now stands in its aged dignity, as the archangel, which this year bygone centuries. One, of the early Acadian exiles them-ter a kind of life their homes in central Louisiana, has many of these in history that reaches far back bygone centuries. One of these is the Catholic Church Parish of St. Gabriel, named for the archangel, which this year observes a 200th anniversary. The year is the bicentennial of the ascension of the spirit of the church, constructed in 1769, was broken down piece by piece and removed from an original site farther upriver. The parish itself was established in 1761. There have been many Easter Sunday celebrations in this church parish through many decades of history-making events. A more recent church, dedicated in 1919, now houses the congregation today.

FIRST EDIFICE

But nearby stands that first edifice of cypress in which the early Acadian exiles themselves symbolically attesting to a Resurrection of the spirit after a kind of death in the destruction of their lives and possessions in Nova Scotia, poured out their gratitude to God as sun and showers of Easter time descended. The old church is not being utilized, but is being preserved as an historical monument, according to the pastor, Msgr. Louis E. Martineaux. It stands in its aged dignity 50 feet from the historic River Road. A thousand feet back from this winding highway is the new church where Easter Sunday morning parishioners will gather for 7 and 9 a.m. Mass and on Saturday at 7:30 p.m., there was the Easter Vigil, followed by Mass.

BAPTISMAL ENTRY

The church parish stands on a Spanish land grant given in the administration of Gov. Luis de Onzaga. It was around Easter-time in April, 1772, that the first Baptismal entry was made in the records of the church parish. The entry was made by Marie Joseph Hebert, and on April 22 was taken to the church where, the pastor recounts Father Angelus de Rivillargados, "I supplied the missing ceremonies and prayers, and to him I have given the name of Joseph Denot." The child was the son of Joseph Landry and Marguerite LeBlanc Landry.

Another child of this couple, Marguerite Poloni Landry, had been privately baptized, received the ceremony's role in the Community of Christians. The first marriage record is that of Pierre Landry of Ascension Parish and Margaretha Al- lein of St. Gabriel's parish. The third marriage entered in the records are Jean Baptiste Comte and Ann Como, both of this area. The first marriage was between Ignace Hebert and widow Rosalie Babine, both of St. Gabriel.

OHER WEDDINGS

In December, 1773, St. Gabriel welcomed Father Aloyoss, a Spanish Capuchin missionary, who remained only until January, 1774. By April 1774, Father Angelus was again serving St. Gabriel's, earning the title of its pioneer priest, his first recording here being Dec. 6, 1778.

A French Capuchin, Father Valentin, long associated with the Acadians in the Attakapas District and earlier among Indians of central Louisiana, was St. Gabriel's first resident pastor, starting in August, 1779. The move downriver two centuries ago was not the only one that the old church has undergone. Time and again the river has demanded more of the land and its banks and as its bank has accepted the encroachment, the church has moved farther inland.

Many generations' eyes have been on the old St. Gabriel church at Easter time, and the eyes of this generation are on it now, absorbing its history and role in the Community of Christians.