Before the Parish of St. Peter, Carencro, was formally erected in 1874, the area from much earlier years was served by missionary priests among them the famous Father Miguel Barriere, a refugee from the French revolution.

After the establishment of Grand Coteau as a parish in 1879, the Carencro area was served from that point. Vermilionville (now Lafayette) was included Carencro in its jurisdiction after it became a parish in 1821, and when Breaux Bridge was established in 1847 priests from there came to Carencro.

In 1874, Archbishop N.J. Perche de New Orleans decreed the erection of St. Peter's Parish, Carencro, appointing the Rev. A. J. M. Guillot as resident pastor.

The first official act recorded was the baptism of Ambronne Cormier. The first couple married in the new parish were Jean Roger and Ursula Umie Ballou.

The first (local) record was of an infant, identified only as Pierre in the margins, written: "Il est un prématuré décédé dans le cimetière de Carencro (ville de St. Pierre)" (He was the first buried in the cemetery of the new parish of St. Pierre). Too soon there was another yellow fever epidemic and among its victims was Father Guillot.

In 1877, Father J. F. Suriray succeeded Father Guillot. He built a new church, but in 1881 the church was destroyed by fire. Father Suriray served only three years, and then for three years the parish was without a pastor. Father Maurus Wells was the next pastor and he served until 1885. He also built a church, but it was destroyed by a storm.

In 1889, Father F. A. B. Lafont became pastor of a parish without a church. Later the first church he built was replaced by another, but just as it was almost completed, another storm blew in from the Gulf, leaving the new church in ruins. The church was rebuilt and Father Lafont was transferred to Abbeville in 1890.

Before he left, he had sold the Sisters of Mount Carmel a site for a school, St. Ann's Convent was opened in 1897.

Again Fire

Father P. J. Grimeaux here of Cheneire Camlata, served from 1899 to 1902. Again a mordant stroke, and the church was burned to the ground. Before the ashes were cool, another was under construction, built by a young carpenter, Hector Connolly. Mr. Connolly was made a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Pius XII.

Among the memorable events in the new church was the first Mass in 1903 of the future Bishop of Lafayette, Father Roy Edwards, who was pastor of St. Peter's, Carencro, from 1947 to 1968, was named pastor emeritus on his retirement. Here he explains part of the coat of arms of the late Bishop Jules B. Jeanmard, first Bishop of Lafayette, who offered his first Mass in Carencro as a newly ordained priest. Msgr. Wassler designed many of the coats of arms of parishes which adorn pews in the church.

Ruth Ann, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Broussard, was the first student to graduate from the school, 1907. It was a one-room schoolhouse.

The St. Peter's School was a two-story building, the population was 4000 by 1910. The enrollment was 150. It was destroyed by fire in 1917. The school was re-painted, the cafeteria air-conditioned and re-equipped. The debt on the school was reduced, a perpetual care fund established for the convent and central parish walks constructed.

Through the years there have been a number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life from Carencro. Those living are Msgr. Charles Thibodeaux, S.J., and Father Wassler, retired. 

In 1947, Msgr. A. M. Wassler became pastor and served from that point. Very Rev. August Viel served as pastor from 1923 to 1936, and Father Roy Edwards served from 1936 to 1946 when he retired.

Msgr. Wassler

In 1947, Msgr. A. M. Wassler became pastor and during his administration remodeled and renovated the church into one of the most distinctive and beautiful in the state. The stained glass windows, imported from Europe, were designed especially for St. Peter's. The hand-carved pews, donated by individual families, were designed by Msgr. Wassler and reflect the history of the pioneer families of the parish.

The main altar, made in Belgium, is considered a work of art. For that reason, it was admitted to this country duty free, by a special act of Congress. It was on display at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 where it was seen and purchased for the Church of St. John the Evangelist (later the Cathedral) in Lafayette by Father E. F. Piro, pastor of St. John's.

When the Cathedral was razed in 1977, the altar was given to St. Peter's in Carencro by Bishop Jeanmard, in memory of his parents.

Also during Msgr. Wassler's pastorate, the new St. Pierre School, a school of religion for CCD classes, and St. Anne's School, a school of religion and for private students, was opened and a pipe organ purchased for the church. At his retirement in 1969, Msgr. Wassler became pastor emeritus and he continues to reside in Carencro.

With the opening of St. Pierre School in 1951, the Sisters of the Most Holy Assumption and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament took over the administration of the school. In 1971, St. Peter's School and Assumption School were combined under the name Carencro Catholic with the Sisters of the Most Holy Assumption in charge.

Father Ray D. Edwards

Present Pastor

Father Roy Edwards, who was pastor of St. Peter's, Carencro, from 1947 to 1968, was named pastor emeritus on his retirement. Here he explains part of the coat of arms of the late Bishop Jules B. Jeanmard, first Bishop of Lafayette, who offered his first Mass in Carencro as a newly ordained priest. Msgr. Wassler designed many of the coats of arms of parishes which adorn pews in the church.

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