

ATRIUM TOUR

(17) Our Lady of the Angels Stained-Glass Windows

Oldenburg Sisters of St. Francis

The Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, are a congregation of Catholic women religious founded in 1851 by Mother Theresa Hackelmeier, who arrived from Vienna, Austria, to minister to German immigrant families. Rooted in the Franciscan tradition, they are dedicated to prayer, community life, and service, guided by values of justice, reconciliation, and peace. They follow the Rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and seek to respond to the “needs of the world” through Gospel-centered living.

The sisters established both Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception and Marian University (originally Marian College), which relocated to Indianapolis in 1937. Their ministries have extended across education, healthcare, parish life, and social services.

The Oldenburg Franciscan Sisters began their ministry in Ohio in 1876 when they accepted their first school, St. Clement. Within fifty years, they were serving in 25 schools throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In 1926, marking the 50th anniversary of their arrival in Ohio, the sisters were invited to found a secondary school—Our Lady of the Angels High School. Their association with OLA continued for 56 years, until the school’s closure in 1984.

Our Lady of the Angels High School

In September 1926, Archbishop John T. McNicholas asked Mother Clarissa Dilhoff, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, to establish a high school for girls in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

In July 1927, Archbishop McNicholas formally announced a new educational initiative that created a centralized archdiocesan high school system. Under this plan, Cincinnati parishes became “tributary” to designated central high schools for both boys and girls. The girls’ high schools included:

- St. Mary High School – Opened in 1908 and originally staffed by diocesan priests, it became an all-girls school in 1927 when the boys transferred to Purcell High School. In 1963, it was renamed Marian High School and placed under the leadership of the Sisters of Charity. Marian later merged with Purcell High School in 1981.
- Seton High School – Founded in 1854 as Mount St. Vincent Academy by the Sisters of Charity, it was renamed Elizabeth Ann Seton High School in 1927 following the arrival of girls from Elder High School.
- Regina High School – Opened in 1928 under the Sisters of the Precious Blood. It closed in 1977, with students transferring to Marian High School, Mount Notre

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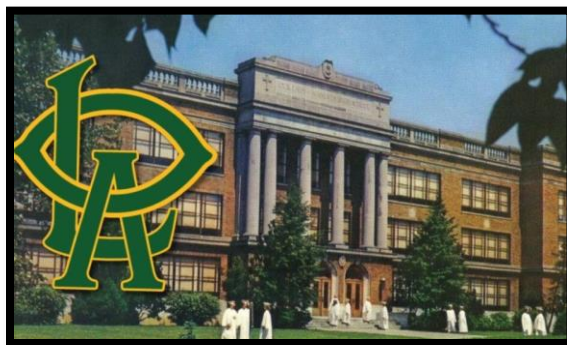
Dame, or Our Lady of the Angels.

- Our Lady of the Angels High School (OLA) – Also opened in 1928 and operated by the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg. When it closed in 1984, Roger Bacon High School became coeducational.

To establish Our Lady of the Angels, the Sisters of St. Francis purchased land in St. Bernard from Bernard H. Wess for \$65,000. The school was designed by architect Henry P. Hess of St. Louis, with George Michaelis of Indianapolis serving as general contractor.

Groundbreaking took place on July 16, 1927. The cornerstone was laid on October 4, 1927—the Feast of St. Francis—and the school was formally named *Our Lady of the Angels*. The 1929 *Domina Angelorum* yearbook describes the occasion:

“The solemn procession of clergy, religious, and school children formed at St. Clement School and moved to the site of the new building. Here, in the most solemn manner, His Grace performed the ceremonies prescribed by the Church. The many voices then united in singing ‘America’ and a hymn to Our Lady. Father Juvenal Berens, O.F.M., then delivered an eloquent address on Catholic education.”



Constructed at a cost of \$700,000, the building was completed in less than a year. It was officially dedicated on August 28, 1928, in a ceremony presided over by Archbishop McNicholas.

Principals of Our Lady of the Angels High School:

- Sr. Mary Lawrence Giering (1928–1934)
- Sr. Cephas Keller (1934–1941)
- Sr. Marie Dillhoff (1941–1947)
- Sr. Hortense Fougrousse (1947–1953)
- Sr. Therese de Lourdes Galm (1953–1960)
- Sr. Marie Dillhoff (1960–1962)
- Sr. Alethea (Natalie) Lamping (1962–1970)
- Sr. Jean Marie Cleveland (1970–1979)
- Sr. Marie Kathleen Maudlin (1979–1982)
- Sr. Anita Brelage (1982–1984)

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The three windows are dedicated to **Regina Nieb '42, Carolyn (Kreienbaum) McMahon '54, and Elizabeth "Betty" Jean Zanitsch '61.**

Regina Catherine Nieb, age 100, passed away on April 4, 2024. She was the beloved daughter of the late Fred H. and Marie (née Smith) Nieb. Regina retired after 36 years as a manager with Cincinnati Bell and was a dedicated member of the Telephone Pioneers of America. She also generously gave of her time in service on the Mt. Airy Auxiliary for Mercy Franciscan Hospital. A proud 1942 graduate of Our Lady of the Angels High School, Regina remained deeply connected to her roots. A former resident of Colerain Township, she spent the final years of her life at Llanfair Terrace Retirement Community.



Carolyn McMahon's life has been deeply shaped by the Franciscan tradition of faith, service, and generosity. From her early education at St. Clare Grade School under the guidance of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, to her graduation from Our Lady of the Angels High School in 1954, Carolyn embraced leadership and service. While at OLA, she served as yearbook editor and vice president of the Catholic Students Mission Crusade (CSMC), attending the national convention at the University of Notre Dame - an experience that left a lasting impression on her commitment to mission and community.



During her senior year, Carolyn met her future husband, George McMahon, then a sophomore at Xavier University and a proud graduate of Roger Bacon High School (Class of 1952). The two married on October 4, 1958, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi - symbolizing the shared values that would guide their 63-year marriage. Together, they raised two children, Jim (Roger Bacon Class of 1978) and Julie, and were blessed with three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The McMahon family's connection to Roger Bacon runs deep. In addition to her son, Carolyn's brother and several of George's brothers are also alumni. George was a devoted supporter of his alma mater, helping to establish the Class of 1952 Scholarship Fund and organizing class reunions. He believed strongly in giving back, crediting his Franciscan education for instilling in him a strong work ethic, self-discipline, and a lifelong moral compass.

Following George's passing in 2021, Carolyn has continued to honor his legacy through her own generosity. Inspired by the Franciscan values they both cherished, she remains committed to supporting the mission of Roger Bacon High School and ensuring that future generations benefit from the same faith-filled education that shaped their lives.

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Elizabeth “Betty” Jean Zanitsch lived a life centered on family, faith, and a warm, engaging spirit. Betty attended St. Patrick School in Northside and graduated from Our Lady of the Angels High School in 1961.

In 1963, she married Jim Stith of St. Pius Church. Together they made their home in Mount Airy, where they raised three children and were active members of Little Flower Parish. Betty later married Neal Walkenhorst, sharing companionship in the years that followed.



Betty spent her career as a hairstylist, operating a salon in Roselawn for many years. She had a natural gift for conversation and connection, and her work reflected both her creativity and her care for others.

She was also a talented singer who loved being on stage whenever the opportunity arose - bringing energy and joy to every performance, no matter the setting.

Betty passed away on January 11, 2003, at age 60, after a long and courageous battle with ovarian cancer. She is remembered for her resilience, her devotion to her family, and the lively, generous spirit she shared with all who knew her.

Her brother, Roger Zanitsch (Roger Bacon Class of 1962), and his wife, Megan, of New London, Ohio, have long supported Roger Bacon High School and the Franciscan tradition. This window is dedicated to Betty's memory, and to the memory of Our Lady of the Angels and its alumnae.