

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

PONCE, PUERTO RICO

ON OCTOBER 8TH 1868 THE SPANISH MONARCHY COLLAPSES AND QUEEN ISABEL II GOES INTO EXILE. A LIBERAL SPANISH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS ESTABLISHED. THE FIRST SPANISH REPUBLIC IS PROCLAIMED, AND A CONSTITUTION THAT PROMOTES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS APPROVED.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THESE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES IN SPAIN, A GROUP OF PROMINENT CITIZENS MEET ON THE 20TH OF NOVEMBER 1869 IN ORDER TO FORM A NON-ROMAN CATHOLIC CONGREGATION IN THE CITY OF PONCE. THESE VERY WELL DISTINGUISHED PERSONS WERE OF ENGLISH AND DUTCH ORIGINS PRIMARILY. AT THE END OF 1869 THESE LEADERS HELD THEIR FIRST RELIGIOUS SERVICE IN THE HOME OF MR. OTILIO SOLOMONS. THE SERVICE WAS PRESIDED BY REV. ALLENS OF THE NEARBY DANISH COLONY OF SAINT THOMAS. OVER 200 PEOPLE ATTENDED!

FROM THAT TIME ON SERVICES WERE HELD WITH REGULARITY AND NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONDUCTED TO HAVE THE NEWLY BORN CONGREGATION UNDER THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF A CHRISTIAN NON-ROMAN CATHOLIC AUTHORITY. THIS EFFORT PROVED FRUITFUL WHEN THE ANGLICAN BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ANTIGUA, THE MOST REV. WILLIAM WALDRON JACKSON ARRIVED ON PUERTO RICO IN 1872. ON JUNE 4TH, 1872, THE SUNDAY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY, A SOLEMN SERVICE IS OFFICIALLY HELD RECEIVING THIS CONGREGATION INTO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. THE OFFICIAL NAME WOULD BE " THE CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY AND EVER-BLES TRINITY".

OUR CHURCH'S CORNERSTONE WAS PLACED DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY, 1873 AND BY AUGUST OF THAT SAME YEAR SERVICES WERE BEING HELD. ON JULY 23rd, 1874 THE TEMPLE IS CONSECRATED BY THE MOST REV. WM. WALDRON JACKSON OF ANTIGUA. THIS WAS THE FIRST NON-ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE SPANISH POSSESSIONS IN THE AMERICAS! THE GENEROSITY OF THE QUEEN VICTORIA OF ENGLAND TO HER SUBJECTS WAS DEMONSTRATED WHEN SHE DONATED ALL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES FOR THE TEMPLE TO BE BUILT. THESE WERE DELIVERED IN SECTIONS THROUGH CRATES FROM LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND TO PONCE PUERTO RICO.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE SPANISH REPUBLIC LASTED ONLY FOR THREE YEARS. AT THE FALL OF THE SPANISH REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT, THE MONARCHY IS RE-ESTABLISHED. DUE TO THE PRESSURE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HOLY TRINITY CHURCH WAS ORDERED CLOSED. NEW NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONDUCTED BETWEEN THE ENGLISH MONARCHY AND THE SPANISH COURTS. THE OUTCOME WAS THAT THE CHURCH WOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS SERVICES YET ITS FRONT DOORS WERE KEPT CLOSED AT ALL TIMES. THE ENTRANCE WOULD BE THROUGH THE SIDE DOORS. THE CHURCH BELL WAS TO REMAIN QUIET, OUTDOORS PROCESSIONS WERE NOT ALLOWED AND PROSELYTIZING WAS PROHIBITED.

THE BELL, AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL OF EXPRESSION REMAINED SILENT FOR ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY. AT THE ARRIVAL OF U.S. TROOPS INTO THE CITY OF PONCE ON THE 25TH OF JULY 1898, THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY BELL RANG JOYOUSLY WELCOMING THE TROOPS. AT LAST PUERTO RICO WOULD ENJOY A LONG DESIRED RELIGIOUS FREEDOM! SINCE THE ANNEXATION IN 1898, RELIGIOUS SERVICES HAVE BEEN HELD CONTINUOUSLY WITHOUT INTERRUPTIONS.

DUE TO OUR TROPICAL CLIMATE, WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TERMITES OUR OLD TEMPLE SUCCEMBED AND WAS EVENTUALLY TORN DOWN. A NEW CONCRETE EDIFICE WAS CONSTRUCTED AND CONSECRATED BY THE MOST REV. CHARLES B. COLMORE, EPISCOPAL BISHOP OF PUERTO RICO IN 1926.

THE CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY WELCOMES NEW ARRIVALS AND OUR GATES ARE KEPT OPEN FOR ANYONE TO COME AND WORSHIP WITHIN THESE HALLOWED WALLS. WE ARE GLAD TO HAVE YOU WITH US AND WE HOPE THAT THIS WILL BE THE FIRST OF MANY VISITS. PLEASE ALSO CONSIDER FOR TODAY, THAT THIS IS YOUR HOME OF PRAYER, THE HOUSE OF ALMIGHTY GOD FOR YOU AS WELL AS FOR US. GOD BE ALWAYS WITH YOU!

SUNDAY SERVICES AT EIGHT & TEN IN SPANISH, ENGLISH SERVICE AT NOON. PLEASE JOIN US!!!