

# Mary Comes Home

## *The Assumption of Mary*



The best calls I receive as Archivist are the ones that start, “My family has had this for generations...”

Back in 2021, I received such a call about a 24” plaster statue of the Assumption of Mary. The donor’s grandparents had been married at our predecessor parish, the Church of the Immaculate Conception, in 1897. When the old church was shuttered for good, they had obtained this statue from the church and it became a family treasure. The donor was ready to bring her home to The Basilica.

I have only two photographs of the interior of Immaculate Conception church. While this particular statue is not in evidence, they do show the 1876 plaster statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, now located near the church elevator. Based on faith, and her resemblance in both style and color to the Sacred Heart, it is not a stretch to believe this smaller statue also once found a home at Immaculate Conception.

Draped in blue and white robes, reddish-brown hair falling uncovered down her back, Mary stands with eyes uplifted, putti angels at her feet. Her paint was chipped and scraped in places, because the family adorned her with rosaries, but before donating the family generously had her restored to her original glory.

Her initial caretakers, Thomas and Margaret (O’Connor) Dwyer, were lifelong Minneapolis residents. Thomas was born to Irish immigrant parents in Minneapolis and baptized at Immaculate Conception in 1871. He later worked for the post office for 30 years and served as manager of the Mail Carriers’ amateur baseball team. Thomas and Margaret had three sons, Clare, Harold, and Bertram, and one daughter, Beatrice. After marriage, the family lived in North Minneapolis and were active parishioners at the Church of the Ascension.

The statue can be found in a niche case at the base of the choir stalls in The Basilica. ✚

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