

On Saturday, October 8, 2011, Most Rev. Gonzalo Gracía de Cortázar, bishop of Valparaíso, celebrated Mass in the parish church of Our Lady of Lourdes founded by the Assumptionists in 1911.

The Assumptionists arrived in this port city in February 1911, led by Fr. Gunfrid Darbois (brother of the first president of Assumption College, Fr. Thomas Darbois), and settled into the neighborhood known as Cerro de los Placeres which, at the time, had a small population that had just begun to return because of the huge earthquake that occurred in 1906.

At the invitation of the archbishop of Santiago, Juan I. González Eyzaguirre, the congregation established a parish there. At first they had no church and no rectory. The first Assumptionists were hosted by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, who ministered to women at a nearby prison.



It was on October 8, 1911, from the doorway of the sisters' chapel that a procession set to the site of the new parish. According to accounts of the time, Bishop Gimpert led a crowd that consisted of Assumptionists, other religious priests, diocesan clergy, Sisters of the Good

Shepherd, and some 5,000 faithful. The high school band from the local Colegio Salesiano added color and sound to the festivities. The new parish, not unlike many Assumptionist parishes in South America, was dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes.



Three Assumptionists were assigned to the parish, all Frenchmen. In addition to Fr. Darbois, there were Frs. Armand Guillon and Isidore Gayraud (later assigned to the College in Worcester as treasurer and eventually as president). Few at the time could have imagined the extraordinary growth of the parish over its 100 years of history, during which time it became a popular residential area of the city and the site of several universities, including the prestigious Universidad Federico Santa María.

Today the parish encompasses six separate sectors each with its own significant pastoral life and chapel, not to mention a number of important prep schools.







During the 100 years past, Fr. Ricardo Arellano [illegible] Chilean parish: 20 Frenchmen, one Brazilian, and 4