

Dec. 1, Victims of the Fire at Our Lady of the Angels School

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Dec. 1, 2009 NCR Today

On Dec. 1, 1958, a fire at Our Lady of the Angels parochial school in Chicago killed 92 children and three nuns.

Our Lady of the Angels was at 909 North Avers Avenue, at the intersection with West Iowa Street. Over 1600 children, mostly Italian-American, attended the school.

For detailed accounts of the fire, stories of the victims, stories of the survivors, maps and models, news reports from December, 1958, and many pictures, including "the defining image of the Our Lady of the Angels fire, seen around the world, and made into a moving fire prevention poster", please click [here](#). [1]

The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary who died in the fire were Sister Mary Clare Therese Champagne, Sister Mary Seraphica Kelley, and Sister Mary St. Canice Lyng. (Sister Mary Seraphica's charred body was identified in the morgue by her number in community, 2764, found on her cincture.)

For "Stunned With Sorrow," an article about the nuns from *Chicago History* by Suellen Hoy, author of *Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past*, [2] click [here](#). [3]

For Wikipedia's article on the fire, click [here](#). [4]

For Wapedia's article, click [here](#). [5]

(The fire at Our Lady of the Angels was not the first school fire in Illinois in which nuns and students died. In 1884, at Immaculate Conception Academy in Belleville, four School Sisters of Notre Dame and 22 boarders were killed. Among the nuns was the superior, [Sister Mary Jerome Heil](#). [6])

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Links:

[1] <http://www.olafire.com/Home.asp>

[2]

<http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?sts=t&tn=good+hearts+catholic+sisters+in+chicago%27s+past&>

[3] http://gapersblock.com/detour/a_tragic_day_in_chicago/Stunned_with_Sorrow.pdf

[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_the_Angels_School_fire

[5] http://wapedia.mobi/en/Our_Lady_of_the_Angels_School_Fire

[6] <http://www.bnd.com/yourlife/story/950378.html>