

# **The Pipe Organs at St. Joseph's Church**

The original organ was built by the Odell Organ Company, which was founded by John Henry and Caleb Sherwood Odell in New York City in 1859. The company operated on West 42nd Street well after the turn of the century. By the time the company signed the contract for a new factory to be built in Mount Vernon in January 1928, the opus list had already grown to over 580 organs. Unfortunately this investment was ill-timed: the infamous 1929 stock market crash came 21 months later, and for the next few years production was a mere fraction compared to the boom of the teens and twenties. After a short time, the company moved to Yonkers, NY. The organ at St. Joseph's was a modest instrument of 16 ranks of pipes, and served our church for almost 60 years. During the mid 1980's a committee was formed to investigate the purchase of a new instrument that would meet the demands of an expanding music ministry. M. P. Moller Organs of Hagerstown, MD was selected to build a 4 manual organ of 59 ranks of pipes, and was installed in 1988. (The Moller organ retained the Chimes, Voix Humaine and two flute stops from the original Odell organ.) Mr. Thomas Brown, the consultant for the organ, played the dedicatory recital on September 18, 1988. Mr. Brown was invited back to Bronxville to play the 25th anniversary recital in May of 2013. Two weeks prior to the date of the recital the organ was destroyed when a plastic trash bag was sucked into the blower, shredded, then particles were distributed throughout the instrument. The bid for restoration of the organ was awarded to the Peragallo Organ Company of Patterson, NJ. Insurance covered the cost of repairing the organ, but a decision was made to have a total mechanical overhaul of the instrument which would save over \$200,000.00 in maintenance over the next ten to fifteen years. In addition to the complete restoration, several stops were added to the solo division. The organ is in “like new” condition, has been upgraded with new technology, and now consists of 74 ranks.