This thesis examines the history of Catholic architecture in the Borough of Queens, New York, under the administration of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Buildings constructed in Queens during the Diocesan building boom from 1915 to 1945 are significant in their use of innovative styles and materials, and will be the focus of this thesis. Catholic buildings designed during this time period are worthy of study because they represent a break from traditional forms and functions of church architecture. In contrast to Catholic buildings of the 19th century, these buildings are multifunctional, modern in their use of materials, and varied in architectural style. Also, the Diocese of Brooklyn from 1915 to 1945 centralized building project control and modernized Catholic architecture from an administrative level. This kind of centralization of oversight was not before seen in architecture of this type in the area.

To understand this process and argue for these buildings’ significance I studied Catholic architecture in Queens County. I surveyed all existing Catholic buildings in the current day Borough of Queens, researched the individual buildings and important architects. This led to the determination of the period from 1915 to 1945 as an important time architecturally for the Diocese of Brooklyn in Queens for their increased degree of modernization and use of architectural styles. Among this group of buildings some specific projects were significant in this time period: St. Andrew of Avellino Church, St. Francis de Sales Church, St. Francis de Assisi Church, St. Margaret’s School-Chapel, Our Lady of Lourdes School, Blessed Sacrament School, Blessed Sacrament Church, and Most Precious Blood Church. These buildings have impressive exterior and interiors in terms of style and modern materials or are wonderful examples of mixed-use that are important during the time period. I focused on the work of important church architects, including: Talbot Hamlin, Henry J. McGill, A.F. Meissner, Henry V. Murphy, and Robert J. Reilley.