

THE FRIENDS OF OLD ST. THOMAS
at Ivy Mills

Volume 14, No. 1

Spring/Summer 2007

NEWSLETTER

Our Parish and the Archdiocesan Bicentennial

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is marking the bicentennial of the founding of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1808.

The April 5th edition of *The Catholic Standard and Times* featured an article titled: **Where it all began: St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Glen Mills.** This interesting and informative commentary brings attention to the significant influence our parish, the oldest in the Philadelphia Archdiocese, has had in the establishment of a viable Catholic community that today numbers approximately 1,458,000 persons.

An Invitation

This past year FOST acquired some photographs of former pastors. We plan to display these pictures permanently in the social hall; they will be in place in time for Hospitality Sunday in October. Please stop in!

Do you have any pictures relating to parish events (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, wedding, school or parish event photos)? We would be very grateful if you would lend them to us so we can have copies made and include them in our archives. Contact: Kathy McNichol at 610-558-0182.

Historical Notes

Reverend Ferdinand Farmer

From 1741 until approximately 1790, the Jesuits from Philadelphia ministered to the Ivy Mills congregation. The names *Greaton, Harding, Neal, Farmer, Beeston and Molyneaux* appear as serving here. They were considered 'pastors' to each of the mission congregations they served.

Father Ferdinand Farmer, whose family name was 'Steinmeyer', was born in Swabia, Germany on October 13, 1720. As a young man he spent three years studying medicine, but in 1743 he made the decision to enter the Society of Jesus.

Initially, he was sent as a missionary to minister to the German Catholics in Lancaster, PA. Upon arriving in America he changed his surname to "Farmer". In 1758 Father Farmer was sent to Philadelphia as assistant to Father Harding (who succeeded Father Greaton as pastor of Philadelphia in 1749) with the purpose of attending to the Germans of the parish in the city.

In addition to ministering to the German Catholics in Philadelphia, he journeyed as a missionary throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Father Ferdinand not only served his far-flung congregations, but also endeared himself to non-Catholic leaders in Philadelphia, a unique achievement for a Catholic priest at that time.

A description of Father Farmer made to the Rev. P. A. Jordan, S. J. indicated "he was tall and upright, of ruddy, pleasing countenance; graceful in manners and fluent in conversation; full of bonhomie and anecdotes. In his

deportment he was gentle, like his Model, but showing by the bright flash of his light-grey eyes that he could feel for his Master's honor and defend His cause." Father Jordan adds: "He was a philosopher and astronomer, intimate with the literati of his day, and in 1779 one of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, soon to be Philadelphia's pride." Father Farmer's mental attainments were of the highest order, and were recognized by the scholars and leaders of the time.

During the Revolutionary War individuals followed their personal judgment in the matter of aligning with England or the Colonists. Father Farmer declined to become Chaplain to a British regiment of Roman Catholics; however, he was the first to sign a 1783 address composed by the clergy, attorneys and physicians of Philadelphia commending General George Washington.

On his way to Annapolis to tender his resignation to Congress as Commander-in-Chief, Washington arrived in Philadelphia on December 8, 1783, and on Saturday, December 13, Father Farmer and the other signers presented their address to Washington. The text was published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on December 17, 1783.

The church in Philadelphia suffered an irreparable loss when Father Farmer died on August 17, 1786. His funeral was held in St. Mary's Church and was attended by all the Protestant clergy, the members of the American Philosophical Society (of which he was a member), the Professors and Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania and a very large number of non-Catholics in the city. *The Pennsylvania Gazette* of August 23, 1786 said of Father Farmer: "This worthy gentleman for a long series of years performed the duties of a Romish Clergyman, with much dignity and reputation."

We Need Help!

FOST is always in need of volunteers and we have many venues in which you can help. It is not necessary to attend meetings, and donating even a few hours of your time on an occasional basis would be helpful. Our immediate needs include someone with masonry experience to complete a few projects relating to the chapel, and additional tour guides. Help is always needed for care of the historic buildings and grounds.

Other areas where your expertise would be invaluable include grant writing, research, fund raising and publicity.

CCD, Scout, and Student Service Projects are always available. For more information about how you can aid our ministry or to volunteer, contact Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835.

Ivy Mills Homestead and Old St. Thomas Tours

Over the past several years, FOST has made great strides in fostering an awareness of the rich history of our parish and the early Ivy Mills congregation. Each year we see

an increase in the number of visitors to these historic sites. If you haven't toured the Ivy Mills Homestead or our historic buildings you have the opportunity to do so on the 4th Sunday of the month from 1 to 4 pm, June through October. To quote *The Catholic Standard and Times*: **Where it all began: St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Glen Mills.**

Please Remember . . .

Although we have previously addressed this issue, we would like to remind visitors to the chapel that hot, humid weather, and rain, are its enemies. If you open windows, please be sure to **CLOSE WINDOWS** before leaving. No one is available to return at the end of the day to close them.

Please **DO NOT PARK** your vehicle in front of the chapel or along the driveway in front of the old rectory, especially during construction. Large construction vehicles are using these driveways during work hours and two-way traffic is common in the evening and weekends. Parking in these areas impedes traffic flow, and as a result, the chapel steps and stone retaining walls have been hit several times. Lanes must also be kept free for emergency vehicles. Thanks.

Other FOST Information

During the summer months FOST meetings will be scheduled at various times to coincide with the availability of members. All are invited to attend meetings. Call Kathy McNichol at 610-558-0182 for dates and times.

After receiving many requests for the ceramic replica of the chapel (the first run sold out), FOST is considering contracting for a second offering of this item. If the decision is economically feasible, we will proceed. Let us know if you want one. Check parish bulletins for information.

Space constraints in this issue of the newsletter prevent us from including the names of donors who financially aided the Friends this past year, (May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007); however, we will acknowledge these benefactors in the Fall issue of the newsletter.

The beautiful console table in the rear of the Chapel and miscellaneous period furniture for use in the 1874 rectory were donated by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Valentine.

Save the date...FOST member's Mass is scheduled for Saturday, November 3rd.

Memberships and the Honor and Memorial Program are the PRIMARY SOURCES of INCOME for the Friends. The monies derived from these programs enable FOST to continue to maintain the chapel, 1874 rectory and outbuildings. Your support is critical to our success. Please consider becoming a member. Fill out the membership information and mail it with your check to the address listed below. (Membership year is the calendar year). Participating in the Honor/Memorial programs honors living persons and memorializes deceased individuals. For donations of \$25.00 or more the designated names are enrolled in the Old Saint Thomas Memorial Book, a part of our permanent archives. Recipients are notified by mail and donors receive a receipt. Members and donors are also acknowledged in this book.

**The Friends of Old St. Thomas
at Ivy Mills
PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**

Family Membership	\$15.00 _____	(Receipt to) Name _____
Individual Membership	\$10.00 _____	Address _____
Donation (detail below)	\$ _____	City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Total Amount Enclosed	\$ _____	Phone _____ e-mail _____

General Donation

The Donation is in MEMORY of _____ from _____

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Acknowledgement card to: (if different) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

THE FRIENDS OF OLD ST. THOMAS at Ivy Mills

Volume 14, No.2

Fall/Winter 2007

NEWSLETTER

A New Look

This past summer FOST volunteers weren't sitting on the beach enjoying ocean breezes or traveling to a relaxing destination; instead they spent much of their vacation working in the chapel.

Anyone who has tackled a major project at home knows there is always more work involved than originally anticipated, and our volunteers can attest this was the situation they encountered.

Worn carpet needed to be replaced and there were additional items that needed attention. After the volunteers removed the old carpet, it was necessary to **reinforce and replace areas of the sub-floor** in the chapel proper and balcony.

The tile floor in the altar area and foyer had layers of wax and various finishes. **Removing years of grime** was a time-consuming task and often required working on areas by hand. The original granite threshold slab connecting the foyer and chapel was discovered and after it was cleaned, a decision was made to leave it exposed.

The radiator grills damaged after years of use were **replaced with new metal grills**. The radiator covers were also **repaired and stained**.

The paneling along the back wall was **removed and new plaster applied**. Toward the back of the church on the St. Joseph altar side, it was necessary to plaster an area that had significant moisture damage. A perfect color match was made for the **paint** that now covers the newly plastered walls.

New lighting fixtures were installed on the underside of the balcony, but first a **major re-wiring job** had to be done. New concealed **wiring for electrical outlets and microphones** throughout the altar area was completed and a **new microphone and amplifier were installed**.

After the **heating system repairs** were completed it was time for a **major cleaning**. The antique red velvet chairs were **spruced up** and placed on the altar. The finishing touch was the installation of the **new liturgical red carpeting**. The transformation is quite pleasing. We hope you will take a few minutes to visit the chapel to see these improvements.

We are most grateful to the dedicated volunteers who gave so much of their time to make this refurbishment a reality: Bette and Phil Popiel, Trish and Fred Glessner, Marianne and Mike Squyres and Joe Dragon. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Mark Dougherty/Keystone Structures and Chuck O'Keefe/Confident Controls for their contributions of help and supplies with this and numerous other FOST projects.

News Briefs

Members of The Friends of Old St. Thomas and their guests were invited to attend the FOST Mass on Saturday evening, Nov. 3. Rev. George W. Bur, S.J., from St. Joseph's University officiated at the Mass. A reception followed in the 1874 Rectory.

Harvest Day Festivities included a hay ride sponsored by FOST. Thanks to Mark Willcox, III and Joe Dragon for their help. The ride generated a profit of \$600 for the school.

Tours of the Ivy Mills Homestead and our historic campus are offered on the 4th Sunday of the month from June through October. Tours for students and other groups are conducted when requested.

Help From Eagle Scouts

The Friends are most appreciative of the work Eagle Scouts Jim Gannon and Douglas Ralph did when they selected St. Thomas as the site of their Eagle service projects.

Jim coordinated the laying of the pavers in the old horse shed and Doug supervised the construction of the permanent Marian garden in front of the 1874 rectory. We thank them for jobs well done!

FOST welcomes any student or scout seeking service hours. We have small and large projects available.

If you have experience with masonry work and would like to help with some projects in the chapel, The Friends can use your help. Contact Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835 for volunteer opportunities.

The Church Bell

Did you know the bell in the chapel steeple is about the size of the Liberty Bell? Father Walsh was the pastor at the time it was acquired and these words are engraved on the bell *"Jos Bernhard No 120 Nth 6 St Philada St. Thomas Church Ivy Mills April 8th 1860 Pastor Revd N. Walsh Gloria In Excelsis Deo."*

Once again, this past 4th of July, the bell was rung thirteen times to commemorate Independence Day.

This coming spring, the Archdiocese is asking all parishes to ring their church bells two hundred times on Tuesday, April 8th at 2:00 pm to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Philadelphia Archdiocese. We hope to include our students in this historic bell ringing ceremony.

What Can a Nickel a Day Buy?

Actually, for less than a nickel a day a family can become FOST members for \$15.00 a year! Higher membership numbers would be most helpful in aiding the Friends in continuing the necessary maintenance needed in the chapel.

Many grant sources are quite restrictive when it comes to funding a church building, so your financial assistance is extremely important to our ministry.

In the near future we have some costly repairs that will have to be addressed including a **new roof, exterior painting, and refurbishment of the stained glass windows**. These are costly expenditures, but to proceed we must raise the necessary funds. Can we count on you to help?

The Friends wish to thank the following for their financial support from June, 2006 through May 2007

Mrs. Mary Archer	Mr. Patrick Dooley	Ms. Dorothy Lutterell	M/M Fred Reichle
Mr. Joseph F. Assenmacher	M/M P. Dougherty	Mrs. Dorothy Machonis	M/M Victor F. Rispoli
M/M Ernest Atene	M/M Peter Dougherty	M/M Andrew MacNeal	Miss Edith Rosato
M/M Robert D. Bennett	M/M William Dougherty	Dr. & Mrs. William Manella	Ms. Mary M. Rowley
M/M William G. Blaney	M/M Joseph Dragon	M/M Angelo Maraldo	M/M Martin Saparosa
M/M Arno Braunlinger	M/M Jason Emmick	M/M Michael V. Marchlik	Mrs. N. Lois Scheib
M/M Edward Brock	Mr. James Fawcett	Ms. Penny L. Martin	Ms. Anne W. Schlotter
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M/M Joseph Brooks	Ms. Anne R. Fox	Mr. Martin J. McCormick, Jr.	Dr. & Mrs. James F. Shields
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M/M Michael H. Cadden	Mrs. Dorothy Gekowski	Ms. Karenann McFarland	Ms. Betty Slenn
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Ms. Constance A. Campisi	M/M Alfred Glessner	Ms. Catherine McLaughlin	Ms. Catherine W. Slobojian
M/M Charles Carabello	Mr. Robert Goodson	M/M John McManus	M/M Stephen A. Slobojian
M/M Fred Carlidge	M/M William Grant, Jr.	M/M Donald B. McNeal	M/M John H. Smith
M/M James Cavanaugh	M/M John P. Hanlon	M/M George C. McNichol	M/M Raymond B. Smith
M/M David Chartier	Ms. Mary Pat Headley	M/M James K. Meikle	M/M Michael Squyres
The Civitella Family	Mrs. Ann Hickey	M/M Paul C. Milles	Ms. Theodora Strates
M/M Thomas Clardy	M/M Robert Hollett	M/M Michael R. Milligan	M/M Eugene Strolle
M/M Robert Clarke	M/M Richard J. Holt	Ms. Marie J. Montella	Mrs. Ann Louisa W. Swency
Ms. Edna Cochran	Ms. Annette Iacono	Ms. Janice M. Montgomery	Ms. Patricia Spangler
M/M Gregory Comisiak	Sister Helen Jacobson, OSF	Mrs. Margaret Mulqueen-Schad	Ms. Florence A. Tate
M/M Ronald Coppola	M/M Buford Jones, Jr.	M/M Joseph Munnis	M/M Lawrence Taylor
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Ms. Rosemary Coffey	M/M Donald Kasper	Ms. Dolores J. O'Donoghue	Mrs. Dorothy Thomas
Ms. Elaine Crowley	M/M Charles Kennedy	M/M Anthony O'Hara	Ms. Patricia Toland
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M/M Joseph Donlan	M/M Robert T. Lucci	Mr. Edwin Poplawski	Mr. Mark Willcox, Jr., Esq.
M/M Daniel Donovan	Mrs. Anna K. Lutsky	M/M Francis J. Reed	M/M James E. Winn
			M/M Joseph M. Wrzesniewski

The Friends meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the 1874 Rectory. All are invited to attend meetings.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Memberships and the Honor and Memorial Programs are the PRIMARY SOURCES OF INCOME for the Friends. The monies derived from these programs enable FOST to continue to care for and maintain the chapel, the 1874 rectory and outbuildings. Why not join FOST today? Fill out the membership form and mail with your check to the address listed below. Participating in the Memorial and Honor programs honors or memorializes individuals. For donations of \$25 or more, individuals or groups may enroll the name of a living or deceased person in the Old Saint Thomas Memorial Book, a part of our permanent archives which is displayed on special occasions. Recipients are notified by mail and donors receive a receipt.

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PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017

Family Membership: \$15.00 _____ Individual Membership: \$10.00 _____ Donation: \$ _____

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