

THE FRIENDS OF OLD SAINT THOMAS
at Ivy Mills

Volume 15, No.1

Spring/Summer 2008

NEWSLETTER

Thank you Williamson Students!

Have you noticed the newly painted exterior of the chapel? The labor is due to the generosity of the students from the **Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trades** under the direction of their instructor, Glenn Tomlinson. We are most fortunate to be the recipient of the volunteer talent of these young men who pressure washed, scraped and painted the exterior wood trim up to the roof line, and the stucco on the rear sacristy area. Our sincere thanks to these students whose excellent work enhances the appearance of the 1852 Chapel.

The Carriage House

You have probably noticed some big changes taking place on the carriage house. **Luke Zimmerman, of Zimmerman Building and Remodeling**, has been working to make it structurally safe. The old lean-to and the cement floor on the side of the barn were removed, the overhang dismantled and rebuilt with new steel poles. A bollard was installed at the rear corner for protection. **Boose Roofing** installed a new asphalt shingle roof. The next step will be to have the building repainted and landscaped.

This building serves as a storage facility for the parish, and some of the outdoor lighting originates from this structure. The funding for this renovation is a joint venture between **FOST** and the parish.

FOST Second Collection

On the last weekend in January, a second collection was taken up for **FOST**. Mike Squyres spoke at all of the Masses to inform parishioners about the achievements and goals of **FOST**. He encouraged them to use the special envelope provided in the parish bulletin. We are gratified for the positive response, receiving over \$8000.

FOST was able to acknowledge donations to those who gave by check, but we want to take this opportunity to thank all donors. Your generosity will have a positive effect on our mission. Thank you!

St. Thomas/Ivy Mills Tours

Have you visited the Ivy Mills Homestead and the St. Thomas Historic District? If not, take advantage of the opportunity to visit and learn some interesting history! Free guided tours are offered on the 4th Sunday of the month from 1 to 4 pm. June through October. St. Thomas is also a designated "Passport to History" site.

If you enjoy meeting people and would like to learn more about our parish history, consider joining the St. Thomas/Ivy Mills Guides. You can commit as little or as much time as your schedule permits. Training and information packets are provided. No prior guide experience is necessary. Call Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835

Archdiocesan Bicentennial 1808 - 2008

Pope Pius VII established the Philadelphia Diocese on April 8, 1808. At that time it included all of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the southern half of New Jersey. The diocese was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on October 15, 1873 and elevated to an Archdiocese by Pope Pius IX on February 12, 1875.

Those who headed the diocese through the early years often found the job frustrating and difficult. The first Bishop, Michael Francis Egan (1761-1814), was not installed until 1810 because the Papal Bulls did not reach America until that year.

Egan, originally from Ireland, had come to America to minister to the Catholics in the Lancaster area. Later, he was appointed pastor of St. Mary's in Philadelphia. As Bishop, he resided at St. Mary's, but his tenure was full of adversity; his health was poor, and he had to deal with the contentious behavior of the lay trustees of St. Mary's. The trustees claimed they had the right to elect and depose their pastors. Egan's troubles were aggravated by the insubordination of two Irish priests, James Harold and William Harold, both of whom he had admitted to the diocese.

After Egan's death in 1814, the Bishopric of Philadelphia was offered to Rev. Louis De Barth and Rev. Ambrose Marechal. Both declined and returned the Bulls to Rome, citing the continuing troubles with the trustees of St. Mary's. In 1819, the Holy See then appointed Henry Conwell, Vicar General of Armagh, Ireland, to head the diocese of Philadelphia.

Bishop Conwell (1784-1842) was consecrated in London on August 24, 1820, and arrived in the United States on December 2, 1820.

During the absence of a diocesan leader, trouble continued to brew at St. Mary's. William Hogan, a brilliant but demagogic priest who was considered un-priestly, had ingratiated himself to the board of trustees. Bishop Conwell knew the Hogan situation had to be resolved immediately, and on December 12, Conwell revoked Hogan's faculties, causing a schism in the church that lasted many years.

Other errors in judgment by Bishop Conwell were the basis for additional trouble. Bishop Egan had dismissed Vincent Harold from the diocese, but Conwell recalled him and made him Vicar General.

Desiring peace, in 1826 Conwell capitulated to the trustees of St. Mary's by giving them the right to veto religious appointments and set salaries. Shortly thereafter, Conwell was summoned to Rome and forbidden to return to his see. He did return to Philadelphia and received permission to perform Episcopal functions, but without interfering in matters of administration. In 1830 Francis Patrick Kenrick arrived as coadjutor. Bishop Conwell spent his remaining years in seclusion and prayer.

Bells Were Ringing

Eighth grade students rang the chapel bell 200 times at 2:00 pm on April 8 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Philadelphia Archdiocese.

The Friends wish to thank the following for their financial support from June 2007 through March 2008

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The Friends meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 2:00 pm in the 1874 Rectory. All are invited to attend meetings.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS 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, 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.

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

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Please make checks payable to FOST and mail to the address above. Thank you.

2008

Our thanks to Litho Grafex Printing Services of Concordville, PA, for publishing this newsletter without cost to FOST.

THE FRIENDS OF OLD SAINT THOMAS at Ivy Mills

Volume 15, No. 2

Fall/Winter 2008

NEWSLETTER

Day of Remembrance

On Sunday, November 2, All Souls Day, FOST extended an invitation to members and guests to attend a special remembrance service in honor of deceased relatives and friends. The congregation came together at 2:30 pm in the 1852 church for Benediction, song and prayer.

Remembrance flowers were distributed at the end of the service, and for those who had family or friends buried in our cemetery, there was an opportunity to place a flower on their graves. The afternoon concluded with light refreshments in the 1874 rectory.

Let Freedom Ring

Since 2002, FOST has participated in this 4th of July bell ringing ceremony. Mike Squyres rang our bell 13 times at 2:00 pm. This brief tribute reminds us this national holiday exists because of the sacrifice and commitment of those early citizens who embraced and fought for the freedoms we all enjoy today.

Archdiocesan Bicentennial 1808-2008

Snapshot of the Third Bishop of Philadelphia

Francis Patrick Kenrick

Francis Patrick Kenrick (1797-1863) was born in Dublin, Ireland and at age eighteen was selected to study for the priesthood at the Propaganda College in Rome. His progress in clerical studies was rapid, and his knowledge of Sacred Text and the Scriptures, as well as his sanctity, marked him as a man of distinction. The rector of the Propaganda College, Cardinal Litta, had no hesitation appointing the youthful Kenrick to the Chair of Theology at Bardstown Seminary in Kentucky, a post he held for nine years. During this time he also taught Greek and history at St. Joseph's College in the same state, defended the faith in the public press, and engaged in valuable work in the missionary field.

In 1829, Kenrick attended the Provincial Council of Baltimore as theologian to Bishop Flaget of Kentucky. Kenrick was appointed Secretary of the Assembly and at this conclave it was decided Rev. Kenrick be appointed coadjutor Bishop of Philadelphia with right of succession. A short time later he was consecrated a Bishop in Bardstown, and at age 34 arrived in Philadelphia.

His welcome to Philadelphia was problematic, as a quarrel with the trustees of St. Mary's broke out, resulting in an interdict being placed on the church, a move that eventually led the trustees to give up the control of church funds. Kenrick soon obtained passage of a law to prevent recurrence of such conflicts by having the name of the Bishop substituted for those of the trustees in all bequests to the church.

Realizing how much the future of the church in Philadelphia depended on the availability of priests, Bishop

Kenrick began the foundation of a Diocesan Seminary in June, 1832, when he opened for lodging and instruction the upper rooms of his house on South 5th Street, and welcomed five students. The seminary was placed under the patronage of St. Charles Borromeo.

1832 was also the year the dreadful cholera epidemic devastated the city of Philadelphia. Under Bishop Kenrick's direction, the Sisters of Charity were sent to help the stricken. St. Augustine convent and school were used as a temporary hospital. Local priests continued to minister and comfort the sick. For these services, Bishop Kenrick was voted public thanks by the Mayor and councils of the city. Soon after this episode, the Bishop instituted a Diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Herald*. He also began the erection of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist to replace St. Mary's which had been a source of trouble for him and his predecessors.

By 1835, Bishop Kenrick realized the area comprising the Philadelphia Diocese was too large; he suggested a new see be established in Pittsburgh. Unfortunately, it wasn't until 1843 that his suggestion was implemented. Francis Patrick took up the laborious job of visiting his flock, usually in the summer months. During his 21 year reign, he visited the diocese end to end eighteen times! The trip wasn't easy as he noted in his diaries; rough weather was often encountered, especially in the mountains, and travel would be dictated by any means necessary, including, carriage, horseback, foot and boat.

Immigration, religious freedom, and worker's rights are issues we are still dealing with today. In 1844 those same issues were the nucleus for a reign of terror that overtook the city of Philadelphia when the **Nativist** or **Know-Nothing** riots took place. European immigrants, many of them Irish Catholic, were settling in the city and tensions from religious, economic and cultural differences caused friction between these newcomers and 'native born' Americans, who were mostly protestant. Rampant, untrue rumors regarding Catholicism and the influence of the Pope were fanning the flames of discontent. Reason was abandoned in favor of mob rule and violence ruled the day. Fighting, looting, and the setting of fires continued because district constables were unable to quell the disturbances. Catholics were the main targets of these riots and at least 30 of their homes and two Catholic churches were destroyed by fire. Bishop Kenrick did everything he could to stem the rioting, but at one point, it was necessary for him to flee the city disguised as a Quaker and seek refuge in the Willcox home at Ivy Mills.

On June 29, 1846, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, Bishop Kenrick issued a pastoral letter, announcing his determination to build a new Cathedral. Land for this building was acquired on 18th Street between Race & Summer Streets, adjoining the property that now housed the seminary; however, the Cathedral was not completed until 1864.

In 1851, Bishop Kenrick was transferred to Baltimore, an occasion marked by sadness for many Philadelphia Catholics, but also a time to rejoice for all the positive initiatives implemented by the good Bishop. The four original churches now numbered one hundred and two; the chaotic events that marked the tenure of his predecessors were replaced with order and stability. Most importantly, Kenrick had captured the hearts of Catholics and non Catholics by his gentleness, charity and ability.

His final act here became his greatest legacy. At Kenrick's request, Rome sent as the next Bishop of Philadelphia, St. John Nepoumecene Neumann.

Making a Difference

Volunteers and those who offer their time and talent make a positive impact on our ministry. We are thankful for the kindness of these good people and want to recognize their contributions:

- **Mike Cadden** from **Out of Site Tree and Stump Removal** for his generous contribution of equipment and labor to remove four tree stumps by the carriage house.
- **Eagle Scout Peter Gbur** and **Boy Scout Troop 154** for removing deteriorated landscape ties from the flower beds by the 1852 church and 1874 rectory, and installing new Belgian blocks.
- **Eileen Cincotta, Lois Taylor** and **Jim Meikle** for their ongoing work keeping the historic area grounds beautiful.
- **Barbara Doherty, Eleanor LiCalzi, Trish Glessner, Janice Montgomery** and **Kathy McNichol** for weekly cleaning of the 1852 church.
- **Mark Dougherty** for his donation of supplies for the cleaning of the exterior steps.

FOST has many volunteer opportunities. Call Bette Popiel at 610-358-4835 to see how you can help. You CAN make a difference!

We regret: Charles Bradley was inadvertently omitted from the list of donors to FOST in the last newsletter.

FOST Tours

Our 2008 scheduled tours that take place on the 4th Sunday of the month from June through October were well attended. We are grateful to many of our neighboring parishes who generously included the tour information in their church bulletins.

In October FOST conducted tours for St. Thomas 4th and 8th grades, for a group of students and their teachers from the W. B. Saul High School in Philadelphia, and for a group of high school students from Europe and Asia.

We could not offer this program without the help of our dedicated tour guides who make history come to life by sharing their knowledge of the St. Thomas Historic District and the Ivy Mills Homestead with visitors.

In recognition of their dedication, a 'thank you' breakfast for the guides was held on November 8.

Projects & On-going Maintenance

FOST had the front steps to the 1852 church re-pointed, re-grouted and sealed. Prior to the work, **Bette & Phil Popiel** put in many hours of labor removing stains that had discolored the steps. Additional emergency lighting and exit signs were installed in the church interior. Minor deteriorated wood on the carriage house will be replaced before the scheduled spring painting.

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PO Box 19, Chester Heights, PA 19017**

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