

# CHS Lecture Scheduled for November 4th:

## **Rev. Peter P. Murphy to Discuss “Bishop Michael O’Connor—from Ireland to Pittsburgh”**

**Rev. Peter P. Murphy**, pastor of St. Alphonsus in Wexford, will speak to the Catholic Historical Society on Sunday, November 4th, at 2 PM in O’Conner Hall at St. Paul Seminary in Crafton. Father Murphy will speak about the efforts of Pittsburgh’s first Bishop, Irish native Michael O’Connor, to recruit new priests and sisters to Pittsburgh and to overcome anti-Catholic prejudice. All are invited to attend.

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### **About Father Peter P. Murphy**

Father Peter P. Murphy was ordained a priest by Cardinal (then Bishop) John J. Wright in 1968. He has been pastor of St. Alphonsus in Wexford for the past 14 years.

Father Murphy’s interest in Bishop Michael O’Connor began in 1978, when Fr. Murphy was assigned to St. Joseph Parish in Verona with Father Henry A. Szarnicki. Father Szarnicki had researched his doctoral thesis on the first bishop of Pittsburgh at the suggestion of Bishop Wright and presented Father Murphy with his published book based on his thesis.

The son of Irish-born parents (Peter Murphy from Inniskeen, County Monaghan, and Theresa Conroy, from Clifden, County Galway), Father Murphy became more interested in Bishop O’Connor’s Irish roots in County Cork as the years went on and as he, himself, became more familiar with traveling in Ireland.

In 1993, inspired by the talk of Bishop John B. McDowell on the Sesquicentennial Mass for the diocese, Father Murphy went to Cobh, County Cork, to find the home and the childhood history of Bishop O’Connor. Father Murphy also traced the bishop’s steps when Bishop O’Connor returned to Ireland’s Maynooth Seminary to recruit eight soon to be ordained seminarians for Pittsburgh service and to Carlow where he invited seven Mercy Sisters to return with him to Pittsburgh.

This adventure of “following Bishop O’Connor” not only proved to be a great success for Father Murphy but also interested historians and local people in Cork, the Mercy Sisters at Carlow, and the seminary directors at Maynooth.

Father Murphy has continued to research the Ireland landscape for ancestral homes. Three years ago in Stranoodan, County Monaghan, he found the remnants of the home of Annie Keelan, the mother of Bishop Hugh Boyle (Pittsburgh’s bishop from 1921-1950). This past summer, he explored the Island of Ananmore off County Donegal where he found distant relatives of Bishop Boyle and located the homesteads of his father and grandfather.

Father Murphy likes to think of himself as an ambassador to Ireland on behalf of the fruits of the Catholic faith that have come to Pittsburgh from Ireland.

