THE CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA PRESENTS

The Lambing Lecture on Cardinal Wright

Sunday, March 19, 1994
2:30 PM
Synod Hall

Meeting Updates:
Stained Glass and The Catholic Press

On Sunday, October 2, 1994, Nick Parrendo, President of the Hunt Stained Glass Studios, spoke to the Catholic Historical Society about Stained Glass in the Diocese. He provided the Society with a viewing of some slides of stained glass throughout the Diocese.

The most recent general meeting of the Society was on Sunday, February 12, 1995. Mike Aquilina, Editor of the Pittsburgh Catholic, spoke to the Society about the Catholic Press.

The Lambing Lecture, on March 19, will be on Cardinal Wright, coinciding with the exhibit currently displayed at Synod Hall. The exhibit is a selection of photographs from the Diocesan Archives.

Diocesan Oral History Project

Courtesy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Catholic Historical Society now has access to two tape recorders. The Diocese has also provided the Society with a list of retired priests who are potential interviewees.

The Society is now beginning to undertake this task of interviewing these individuals. Currently, there have been five members of the Society who have volunteered to be interviewers. If any other member of the Society is interested in becoming involved, please contact Anthony Joseph, the president of the Catholic Historical Society.
Gathered Fragments

From the President's PC

As the New Year is upon us, The Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania is continuing to offer the thoughts and reflections of Catholic history to the Diocese and community.

Most historians would attest to the fact that religion serves to study the norms and values of the faith, plus serves in a social capacity providing support to the faithful.

The Catholic Historical Society invites all to participate in these endeavors by not only continuing the testimony of the faith, but also by reinforcing society to withstand the difficulties of our times.

By understanding our foundations, we are better able to serve and to fulfill not only ourselves but also those whom we touch.

The Catholic Historical Society's firm desire is to continue this positive and enlightened approach of Catholicism not only in this new year but as an on going commitment to ourselves, our faith, and our community.

- Anthony P. Joseph, Jr. President

Sisters Challenged in Public Schools
by Sister Mercia Biter, C.S.J.

[Note: The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Baden, Pa., came to Western Pennsylvania in Ebensburg in 1869. From there they were invited to teach in schools throughout the western part of the state as well as Ohio and Maryland. In 1881, the school board in Gallitzin, Pa., hired them to teach the area children. Gallitzin was part of the Pittsburgh Diocese until 1901, when it was placed in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese.

In 1981, Saint Patrick Parish in Gallitzin celebrated the sisters' 100 years there. Sister Mercia Biter, C.S.J., wrote an account of the congregation's history for the occasion. In the following segment of her essay, she described how the parish came to be responsible for the education of the children, even though the public school board had originally hired the sisters.]

The pastor of St. Patrick's at this time was Father John Boyle. He had been an assistant in Ebensburg for a few years and was familiar with the work of the sisters. When he was appointed the second pastor at St. Patrick's in 1880, one of his pastoral goals was achieved when he was instrumental in bringing the sisters to staff the local school system.

The pioneer members of St. Patrick's mission were Sister Stanislaus McGinnis, Sister Regina Gunning, Sister Clare Berry, Sister Genevieve Ryan (later to become Mother Genevieve) and Sister Angela Bryan.

The first school was a long frame building used for social affairs by the parish and was called Fair Hall. This building was converted into four classrooms with folding door partitions. School opened in September 1881. Non-Catholic as well as Catholic children were enrolled, since the sisters had been hired by the public school board, not the parish. At the same time, a one-room school was opened at Tunnelhill, which accommodated the lower grades. Sister Genevieve taught in this school. Advanced pupils from Bennington and Tunnelhill attended the Gallitzin school. In 1882, Sister Mary Clare assumed charge of the Bennington school. The older students from Bennington and Tunnelhill returned to their own district and Sister Genevieve and Sister
Mary Clare each taught all eight grades.

In these three schools, Gallitzin, Tunnelhill, and Bennington, no religion was taught during the regular school day. One-half hour of religious instruction was given to Catholic children each evening after school. After instructions, three sisters, Stanislaus, Genevieve, and Angela, gave music lessons to interested students.

The sisters taught in these buildings until 1893. At that time, a new brick structure was erected above the lower railroad tunnel by the Gallitzin public school board. There were six sisters and two lay teachers on the faculty. Sister Mary John Keenan was principal, assisted by Sisters Mary Gonzaga Cunningham, Mary Colletta Cooney, Mary Marcella Kennedy, Mary Sebastian McGrath, and Mary de Sales Welch. Miss Annie McGlade and Mr. Frank Gray were the lay faculty members.

One year later, in 1894, when Rev. Martin Ryan was pastor of St. Patrick's, a momentous question arose which was to have far reaching consequences. Members of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics challenged the right of the sisters to teach in the local school on the ground that they taught in the religious garb of their order. They brought charges to that effect. Judge A.V. Barker, who tried the case at Ebensburg during the summer of 1894, handed down a decree which dissolved the injunction against the sisters. He based his decision on the assumption that there was nothing in the Constitution to prevent any person from wearing whatever garb he pleased. The Junior Order of the United American Mechanics then appealed the case to the State Supreme Court, which sustained Judge Barker's decision.

Although the sisters taught the subsequent term, it proved to be their last, for in 1895, because of the agitation fomented by the trial of 1894, an act of legislation called the Garb Act (Act of June 27, 1895, Sec.1, P.L, 395) forbade individuals with distinctive habit to teach in public schools.

As a result of this situation, a new problem, which was one of providing facilities for the education of its children, confronted the parish. Since a suitable building could not be secured immediately, the sisters used the convent for needed classrooms. Later, the parish converted the old church into four classrooms. This structure had not been used since 1885, when the new church was erected. This served as St. Patrick School until 1958 when the present brick edifice was built.

On October 11, 1981, Father (Arnold) Gaus (pastor) and the parishioners of St. Patrick showed their appreciation to the Sisters of St. Joseph for their century of service to the parish.

† † †

Prince Gallitzin
by Monsignor Francis A. Glenn

Father Demetrius Gallitzin, alias "Father Smith", the second priest ordained in the United States, had been an assistant at Conewago, Pa., from where he went to McGuire's Settlement on top of the Allegheny mountains in August 1799. On Christmas night, he dedicated his log Chapel and thereby inaugurated the founding of Loretto, which developed into a center of several Catholic villages in the district. For this reason, he has well been called the "Apostle of the Alleghenies". In 1827, Bishop Conwell of Philadelphia appointed him the first vicar-general of Western Pennsylvania. Later, the bishoprics of Cincinnati and Detroit were offered him, but he loved his parish too much to accept these honors. He continued his apostolic labors until shortly before the creation of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, dying a saintly death, May 6, 1840.
Recent Publications

History of Immaculate Conception Published

Diocesan History Published
The Diocese of Pittsburgh has recently published a history of the Diocese. Shepherds of the 1843-1993: A Brief History of the Bishops of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, written by Monsignor Francis Glenn is now available for purchase. Contact the Pittsburgh Catholic for more information on how to obtain a copy.

Duquesne University History
Joseph Rishel, Ph.D. is currently in the midst of writing a history of Duquesne University. Publication for this book is tentatively expected in 1995 by the Duquesne University Press. Dr. Rishel will trace the University’s development from its founding in 1878 to the present.

Other Publications
Fr. Clement Pavlick, C.P. has recently compiled the publication Share the Spirit! Historical Record, St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center... Another publication is due out in the near future on the architecture of St. Bernard Church in Mt. Lebanon.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE SOCIETY. PLEASE BE SURE TO SEND IN YOUR DUES SO THAT YOU CONTINUE TO RECEIVE GATHERED FRAGMENTS.

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Gathered Fragments is a publication of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Any articles dealing with the history of the Catholic Church in the Pittsburgh Diocese are welcomed.