Tracing family history is incredibly popular; record-breaking numbers of people worldwide now subscribe to genealogy sites and DNA testing. What many often overlook is a generational history of faith deeply embedded in their family trees. They diligently search church records for vital statistics but stop there. Yet, for so many of their ancestors, their Catholic Faith defined their lives and influenced their choices about where and how to live.

Building or adding your Catholic heritage to your family tree is not difficult. This article tells you where to look for evidence. Examples are from my family tree, which is largely centered in Cambria County, Pennsylvania, since that is my research focus. Many of my ancestors worshipped at St. Michael church in Loretto, a parish founded by Prince Gallitzin, and at St. Benedict in Carrolltown.

My family tree is fairly typical…no better nor worse than most….populated with saints, sinners and many in between. Catholicism deeply influenced its roots and, for many, continues to transform lives today.

Family Stories
Always start your Catholic family tree with stories from living family members beginning with your oldest relatives. In my case, that would be my mother, Frances McCann McGuire (born in 1919); my own interviews with my paternal grandparents, Charles and Sue Conrad McGuire, in the 1970s; and experiences and discussions with other relatives. Rosaries, scapulars, and religious artifacts such as statues or paintings can serve as a first discussion point for stories of faith. My mother has a tiny metal statue of the Sacred Heart in a metal container that was cherished by her Great Aunt Sarah from Ireland.

In the early 1920s, Mama remembers this aunt and her uncles going “to the Box” for confession, bringing food to the Ebensburg orphanage run by the Sisters of St. Joseph and seeing nuns with veils flying, pushing their small charges on the swings. Mama’s two sisters dressed her for her first Communion. Her mother was dead but her sisters, who later both became nuns, made sure she was ready for Jesus.

On his knees, her father, John H. McCann (1879-1954) prayed for his sons in combat during World War II and rejoiced when they came safely home. And she recalled his incandescent joy years later on his deathbed. At the moment of death, she said “his eyes were like a thousand candles. I never would have wished him back.”

Mama was close to her maternal grandmother, Anna Schettig Snyder (1864-1950), who shared stories of her own with her. As a child, her grandmother recalled walking miles to Sunday Mass at St. Benedict in Carrolltown when snowy roads were impassable for horse and buggy.

My paternal grandfather’s story was more enterprising than holy. An altar boy at St Michael church in Loretto in the 1890s, Charlie McGuire (1888-1982) and a fellow altar server tripped carrying the Easter water from the rectory to the church. Divine inspiration struck and the basin was quickly refilled from a nearby horse trough. Still, this story told me that he was an altar boy.

And, although I do not have his name, I will never forget a priest from Hollidaysburg who attended the wake of my paternal grandmother, Sue Conrad McGuire (1891-1976). “She sent me Mass stipends for years,” he told me. “I had to meet the family she loved so much and prayed for always.”

Diaries
Family diaries can beautifully illustrate how faith is a natural part of daily life. My great uncle, Ed McGuire (1875-1954), kept such a diary in 1900 when he was a young man in his mid-twenties living with his parents and siblings in Loretto. In January, he had worked for the Sisters of Mercy in nearby Cresson, then helped to build the latest church of St Michael in Loretto. Selected diary entries include:

- “Wednesday January 10th Rainy. Sleighing is gone – was at Father Kaylor’s funeral at Loretto – mass was in the hall – 17 priests present.”
- “Sunday Feb 4th Rainy all day- went to 1st mass – got my throat blessed.”
- “Sat March 3rd Nice day – thawing – …was at YMI [Young Men’s Institute, a Catholic organization] meeting – 14 present.”
- “Sat March 17th 6 degrees below zero – crowd worked till dinner time – got too rough - I went to confession this afternoon – fine sleighing – 8” of snow.”
- “Thursday May 24th Ascension Thursday – cloudy day – stone masons worked – I put in day watching for groundhogs and crows.”
- “Sunday June 3rd Laying of the corner stone of St. Michael church Loretto – very pretty afternoon.”
- “Saturday August 11 Warm – raised the circle for the chapel arch and tore down scaffold – very dry weather – rained a small shower this morning – went to church.”
- “Sunday Aug 12 Went early this morning – large crowd there – forty hours started at last mass – lightning
struck Chas. Tomlinson barn – tore roof up some.”

- “Tues Dec 25th Green XMas morning – got to snowing about 8 and got rough – went to late Church and vespers – Fr. [Ferdinand] Kittell had a bad cold – all at home for dinner.”

Family Names
Children’s names provide invaluable clues to religious affiliation and respect for clergy.

It is hard to miss the underlying Catholicism of children baptized: Pius, Linus, Clement, Cornelius, Ignatius, Aloysius, Regina, Philomena and Bernadette. Prince Gallitzin’s names of Demetrius and Augustine travel down many generations of my family and others from Cambria County. Not all recipients appreciated the dignity of these princely names, which were frequently abbreviated to Gus, D.A. and Met. Father Modestus Celestine, a Benedictine monk stationed in Carrolltown during the 1850s, had many namesakes. My mother’s grandfather was John Celestine (1856-1903). My dad’s great uncle was Celestine Albert (1851-1917).

My ancestress, Sarah Glass McGuire (1820-1906), and her husband, Michael Luke (1811-1852), named three of their four sons for priests once stationed at Loretto: Gibson Henry after Father Matthew Gibson, John Hayden after Father Thomas Hayden and the above cited Albert Celestine.

Family Letters
Letters from family members can vividly portray their faith as evidenced by this letter from my grandmother’s great uncle, Peter Conrad (1817-1888), written to his brother, Thomas (1821-1880), on Sept 19, 1868 after Peter moved to Illinois.

If we could all live together again in visiting distance of each other, in some good country, and have Doctor Gallitzin to preach for us, we might enjoy many happy hours together. But as that good old Revd. Father once went before us into the Mountains to preach and prepare a place for his friends to gather around him and to be happy: So he has again gone before up into illimitable regions to await with anxious solicitude, our Coming; where we may remain in fraternal love forever. And visit each other freely, not by the tedious and dangerous way of steam boats & railroads but by a happy and swift transition on the Wings of Divine love.

Peter’s brother, James, who is my ancestor, wrote the following to his son, Frank, in 1879 after Frank and his brother, Albert, moved to Kansas. “Mother [Susan Coons Conrad] was much pleased to hear of you having Church services and that Albert and his wife are making such good use of it.”

Photographs
Family photographs provide visual evidence of religious affiliation and practices; pictures of baptisms, first Communions, and marriages are found in almost every Catholic family.

Here are two photos from my Family Tree.

The first shows my Dad’s sister, Peg McGuire, and her husband, Bob Sutton, on their wedding day in 1945. The priest in the photo is Father James Quinn, who was stationed at St. Francis Xavier Church, Cresson.

The second photograph is of my mother’s sister, Sister Mary John Blanche McCann, O.P.; this one is a bit less typical. My aunt was a cloistered Dominican nun sent to Kenya to help establish a monastery. The nuns had special permission to see Pope John Paul II on his African visit in 1980. Someone in the crowd pushed my aunt who fell to the ground. The Pope jumped out of his vehicle to help her up.
Bibles & Religious Books

Your family may also have Bibles or other religious books around your home or in the care of another relative, historical society or online.

My early McGuire family once had a rare copy of the 1790 Carey Bible, the first Roman Catholic Bible printed in the United States. I saw it in the Prince Gallitzin Chapel House in Loretto in 1975.23 While I have no idea how or when my family acquired the Bible, its presence in a pioneer household showed a deep commitment to the faith and connections to the infant Church in colonial Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Another religious book linked to my McGuire family is Tales Explanatory of the Sacraments published in 1847. Gifted to my widowed ancestress, Sarah Glass McGuire, in 1857 by her sister and brother-in-law, this book was presumably valued by both giver and recipient.24

And Christ in His Church: Her Dogmas and Her Saints, a third book from my Conrad ancestors, belonged to my grandmother’s parents, Simon and Catherine Burns Conrad. Published in the 1880s, this book documents family records, is well read and held together with large black tape. Presumably Simon and his daughter Sue (my grandmother) did the extensive reading; census records show that Catherine could not read.25

Church Sacramental Records

These records tell many stories beyond the all-important names and dates recorded.

First, the presence of your ancestor in such records shows a commitment to Catholic sacraments. Adult baptisms are especially interesting since they identify an-
cestors who made a conscious decision to join the Church. This was the case for two of my ancestors, Elizabeth Bard/Barth Luther (1770-1835) and her daughter-in-law, Rebecca Smith Luther (1795-1854).

Cambria County legend claimed that Elizabeth’s husband, Conrad, who was a mercenary soldier from Germany and reported descendant of Martin Luther, was converted by Prince Gallitzin who often visited the Luther home. The jury is still out on the Martin Luther connection which could not be through a legitimate line. And there are no church records showing that Conrad was ever baptized.

However, Prince Gallitzin did convert Elizabeth and baptized her children. As sacramental records show, timing of these baptisms is interesting. Elizabeth’s two young sons were baptized the month before she was. Her own baptism was “conditional” as she may have been previously baptized as a Lutheran. Baptismal record entries are as follows:

Luther, Joannes (Conradi/Elisabethae) b. 04-_ 1800 bp. 09-04-1808 gp. Henricus Losher/Anna Clara Losher

Luther, Wilhelmus (Conradi/Elisabethae) b. 08-13-1802 bp. 09-11-1808 gp. Emericus Bender/Catharina Blatt

Luther, Elisabeth (omitted/omitted) b. 05-07-1770 bp. 10-09-1808 gp. omitted/Catharina Marshall

Luther, Anna Maria (Joannis Conradi/Elisabethae) b. 04-11-1796 bp. 10-09-1808 gp. omitted/Elisabeth Keyler

Luther, Christianus (Conrad/Elisabethae) b. omitted bp. 04-16-1809 gp. Joannes Holland/omitted

Luther, Jacobus (Conrad/Elisabethae) b. omitted bp.
Rebecca (1795-1854) was the non-Catholic wife of Christian (Christianus/Christopher) above. She and Christian started their family in 1815 but her first three children were not baptized until 1820. Rebecca may have had initial concerns about Catholic baptisms. Many years later, in 1849, Rebecca herself was baptized by Father Peter Lemke as indicated by this record:

“LUTHER, Rebecca…wife of Christianus Luther… bp. 05-19-1849 in the monastery chapel of Carroll-town…”  

Sacramental records may also indicate that an ancestor’s home served as a Mass house, a frequent occurrence before churches were widespread. The Goshenhoppen Registers, the earliest surviving Catholic records in English in the United States, indicate that the home of one of my ancestors, Christian Henrich, was often used as a Mass House from the 1760s to 1780’s. Here are some examples from the dozens of baptisms recorded at this location in Northampton (later Berks County), Pennsylvania:

Henrich, Christian, of Christian Henrich and his wife Magdalen, born June 11, 1768; baptized July 31st, in Christian Henrich’s house, at Mons Acutus; sponsors Christian Henrich and his wife, the child’s grandparents  

Stabler, Elizabeth, of Adam Stahler and his wife, Mary, born January 19, 1775, baptized March 19 at Christian Henrich’s house at Asperum Collem; sponsors John Weibel and Margaret Henrich  

Keffer, Eva Rose, of Matthias Keffer and his wife M. Elizabeth, born August 10, 1785, baptized September 18, at Christian Henrich’s house at Asper Collem; sponsors Michael Hartman and his wife, Margaret  

Catholics served by the priests from Goshenhoppen often followed a well-known Catholic “trail” that crossed colonial Pennsylvania in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In my family, church sacramental records clearly trace a pattern of family migration from one Catholic settlement to another.

For example, my ancestor, John Coons (1766-1854), was born in Berks County (served by priests from Goshenhoppen), married in York County (now Adams) served by priests from the Jesuit parish of Conewago and finally buried in Cambria County in Prince Gallitzin’s settlement of Loretto:

Kuhns, John, of William Kuhn and his wife, Eliza-

If you are fortunate, you may also be able to track religious records across countries. Sacramental records show my mother’s family in County Armagh, North Ireland, Lanarkshire in Scotland where they moved during the Famine years, and finally Cambria County:


Patrick McCann April 3, 1848 John McCann & Sara MacElheran. St. Margaret Parish, Airdrie. Lanarkshire, Scotland. Diocese Motherwell. (This is my mother’s grandfather.)

Sara McCann April 17, 1853. John McCann & Sara McIlheron. St. Margaret Parish, Airdrie. Lanarkshire, Scotland. Diocese Motherwell. (Sara McCann is the “Aunt Sarah” cited under Family Stories.)

I, R. [Robert] Kiernan hereby certify that, on the 1st day of June 1905, at St. Aloysius Church Martin Haverty and Sarah McCann were by me united in marriage…” (St. Aloysius Church, Summit, Pennsylvania, was Sarah’s home parish.)

Church Histories

Parish histories can also provide snapshots of your ancestors’ religious priorities and practices.

For my family, the Souvenir of Loretto Centenary October 10, 1899 recaps information from Prince Gallitzin’s records and other sources. Another source is a 1925 booklet, published by Rev. Modestus Wirtner O.S.B. entitled The Benedictine Fathers in Cambria County. The Souvenir Of Loretto Centenary recounts the story of Prince Gallitzin’s first visit in 1796 to Loretto, which at the time was called McGuire’s Settlement. Few dispute that someone from McGuire’s Settlement traveled 130 miles to Conewago to find a priest for a woman who was very ill and wished to be baptized. The Souvenir book states that Margaret O’Hara McGuire, wife of Luke McGuire, made
this journey. Another source claims that Rachel McGuire traveled to Conewago. The identity of the traveler may be questioned but there’s no doubt about the deep faith and charity of one of my ancestors. Prior to the building of St. Michael church in 1799, priests said Mass in the home of Luke McGuire, who was the son of Rachel and husband of Margaret.

References to church donations and sacraments are also addressed. Some examples of donations include:

- A 1794 contribution by my ancestress, Rachel McGuire, supported the Church in the early years of McGuire’s Settlement (Allegheny) before the advent of Prince Gallitzin. “I received from Mrs. Rachel McGuire a dollar for her part of the sum that ought to be spent in buying a horse for the priest serving the parishes of Huntingdon, Sinking Valley, Allegheny, Path Valley, etc.” Allegheny December 15, 1794 Louis Sibourd, Priest

- The Souvenir Of Loretto Centenary includes a reprint of Bishop John Carroll’s 1799 letter to Prince Gallitzin giving him permission to take possession of the land donated to the Church by Rachel’s husband, Captain Michael McGuire. Wrote the Bishop, “I readily subscribe to your proposal to take charge of the congregations…and hope that you will have a house built on the land granted by Mr. McGuire.”

- This donation is also found in The John Carroll Papers. “Capn. Michael Maguire, living on the desk (slope) of Alligany…offers 200 acres of very good land and a good horse to a priest…” (The date was estimated at 1799 but must have been earlier since McGuire died in 1793.)


- Father Wirtner’s booklet identifies my family members who subscribed to the building of St. Joseph Church/Hart’s Sleeping Place in 1829 and St. Benedict church in Carrolltown in 1847.

Just like donations, sacraments are also addressed in parish histories:

- Prince Gallitzin’s early records include pascal Communions, pascal confessions and confirmations in 1810 and 1811. My ancestors are well represented including Rachel Brown McGuire and the parents of Sarah Glass McGuire.

- The confirmations of George Glass and his wife, Susan Daugherty Glass, indicate how difficult it must have been to receive confirmation in those pioneer times. They were clearly Catholic in earlier years…baptizing their children and serving as baptismal sponsors…but were not confirmed until Bishop Michael Egan of Philadelphia visited Loretto in the fall of 1811.

- In 1899, almost a century later, the Centenary book records the first Communion and confirmation of my grandfather, Charles McGuire, and the confirmation of his sister, Zita….descendants of Rachel McGuire and George and Susan Glass.

Religious Archives

Diocesan archives and archives for religious orders can also enhance the religious history of your family tree…both for laity and consecrated religious. Such archives provide much more than the sacramental records sometimes housed there. You may find parish histories, family trees built by religious, school records and letters from or to religious.

The Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore contain an 1807 petition from more than 100 of Prince Gallitzin’s parishioners, defending him against unfounded charges that were later recanted. Luke McGuire informed Bishop Carroll in an introductory letter to the petition that “if your Lordship should be pleased to remove our Pastor we are very sure that you would never have it in your power to send us one that would please us as well.” Other ancestors who signed the petition included Jacob and George Glass, and John Byrne.

Many years later, archival records of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Baden provide new insights into the life of Luke McGuire’s granddaughter, Elizabeth Kean. Known in religious life as Mother Mary Austin, she was the founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph in western Pennsylvania when she and two other sisters established the Mt. Gallitzin Seminary for Boys in Ebensburg, PA in 1869.

A contemporary related that “those who knew her in the pioneer days and who shared with her the toils and struggles of those trying times, love to relate evidences of her confidence in God in all she undertook for His great honor and

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<tr>
<th>St. Joseph Church/Hart’s Sleeping Place</th>
<th>St. Benedict Church</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Bierer $1</td>
<td>Joseph Bierer $3</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Coons $10</td>
<td>John Eckenrode $30</td>
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<td>John Byrne Sr. $5</td>
<td>John Luther Sr. $100</td>
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<td>George Snyder $50</td>
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It was said that Mother Austin firmly believed that “anyone with a good heart can be a saint.”

Wills
Wills often clearly express the deepest religious convictions and priorities of those whose earthly life is drawing to a close. On my tree….

Jacob Adams and his wife, Mary, were two of the early parishioners at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart built in Conewago in 1787. His 1822 will stated that eight years after his death, his property was to be sold and monies from his estate be used to purchase a house and lot for his wife, Mary, in McSherrytown, Pennsylvania or where most convenient provided “it does not exceed two miles from the Catholic Church at Conewago.” There’s no doubt that Jacob and Mary had a deep faith. Their son, Thomas (1799-1817), entered the Jesuit novitiate at Georgetown but died a few years later. While a widow, Mary Storm Adams raised her granddaughter, Elizabeth Conrad, who later became a nun, joining the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Rachel Brown McGuire made her wishes quite clear in her 1817 Cambria County will. She did not forgive family debts, specifying instead that monies owed her by her three sons-in-law and two sons were to be collected in full. She then did “give and bequeath to my well beloved friend, Revd. Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin the sum of one hundred and twenty dollars.” She also left $100 toward repairing or building a church at or near Loretto and another $100 for the use of the poor.

John Conrad, son-in-law of Jacob Adams, probated a will in 1832 that left all he had to his wife while she remained a widow with the exception that she pay “all of my just debts and pay to my friend the Reverend Demetrius A Gallitzin the sum of $100.”

Andrew Illig’s will probated April 16, 1833 required that his daughters Barbara and Magdalena and son John give his three minor daughters “sufficient schooling and to instruct them in our Holy Religion duties…”

George Snyder’s 1862 will included this gem. His son, Michael, inherited the farm with conditions, one of which is that he “take his mother (Margaret) to Church and back again free of charge.” This clearly showed Margaret’s priorities. What it says about Michael I’m not at all certain!

Newspapers: Secular and Catholic
Secular Newspapers
Obituaries are often the most valuable newspaper resource for your family history. Bearing in mind that few speak ill of the dead, you can find that obituaries provide clues to religious priorities and practices.

My favorite family obituary (published in 1906) is for Sarah Glass McGuire. I wonder how she expressed her “spiritual interest in the lives of her descendants.”

Mrs. McGuire, or “Aunt Sally,” as she was familiarly known to many people was a remarkable lady and possessed many admirable characteristics. She was fond of children and the company of the younger people generally whom she delighted to entertain by telling good stories of olden times. She was a consistent observer of the modern ways of the world and thus kept herself from becoming old.

She was charitable in both language and deed and endeared herself to all with whom she associated. She ever maintained a deep and careful interest in the material and spiritual welfare of her children and direct descendants and collateral relatives. She was an exemplary Christian and a lifelong member of the Catholic Church, having been baptized by and received her early training from the Sainted Gallitzen, first Pastor of Loretto.

Christian/Christopher Luther’s 1880 obituary overstated his age by about a decade but clearly demonstrated that he kept the faith he first embraced in 1809.

Mr. Christopher Luther resided for three quarters of a century in Northern Cambria. His age is asserted to have been 104 years … Up until quite recently he was able to walk from his home, about one mile south of Carrolltown, to that village every Sunday to attend Divine Worship and then foot his way back without apparent fatigue.

The Frank Conrad whose mother was happy to hear his family attended church also kept up the practice. His 1919 obituary stated that “Funeral services were conducted from the Catholic Church at Esbon (Kansas) … Mr. Conrad was a good citizen, a practical member of the Catholic Church…” I imagine that a practical Catholic was one who practiced!

Catholic Newspapers
The Pittsburgh Catholic is the oldest continuous Catholic newspaper in the United States. Issues from 1844 to 2001 are now available online through Duquesne University. If you are fortunate enough to have family from Western Pennsylvania, you may find ancestors there and a variety of information on Catholic family practices and affiliations.
In 1866 the paper reports contributions to St. Michael Seminary in Pittsburgh. Among the contributors were two of my ancestors: James Conrad and John Eckenrode.

An 1878 article discusses at length Prince Gallitzin's Memorandum Book referencing the 1811 confirmations at Loretto cited earlier. Children as young as two were confirmed. “Names of those who received the sacrament of confirmation from the Rt. Rev Bishop Michael Egan A.D. 1811....eight children of Luke McGuire ranging from 16 to 2 years…”

In 1928, an article announced that the Holy Name Society was gathering for a retreat dinner at the Duquesne Council Auditorium. Speeches were broadcast by KDKA. Among the speakers were Bishop Hugh Boyle and my grandfather, Judge John H. McCann of Cambria County.

And a letter to the editor published in the *Pittsburgh Catholic* in 1939 provided a wealth of detail about a Catholic family descended from Captain Michael McGuire. Harriet Wills Leix (1868 – 1959) recalled riding a horse, walking and later bicycling to receive religious instructions at St. Augustine Church in Cambria County. She listed her grandfather and his siblings as early subscribers to the newspaper. Her article also referenced a cousin who became a Holy Cross Brother and a sister who became a nun.

**County Biographies**

County or other local biographies sometimes shed light on religious practices as noted below:

Demetrius A. Luther, Sr. (1827-1910, a grandson of Conrad Luther and Elizabeth)… Religiously, Mr. Luther is a devout member of the Roman Catholic church and is active in all matters pertaining to the work of the same and the promotion of the cause of christianity. In connection with church he is a member of the Holy League.

**Tax Records**

Tax records can also tell a compelling story. During the French and Indian War, Maryland officials taxed Catholics more than the general population, fearing that these residents were loyal to Catholic France. In 1758, Michael McGuire Sr. (father of Captain Michael) petitioned the court of Frederick County, Maryland, to release him from paying high taxes. The petition was denied.

At the Maryland Hall of Records in Annapolis in 1975, I reviewed a tax document for Michael McGuire Sr. with the red sealing wax still on it. Written firmly across the front page was the word “Papist.” Historical accounts of anti-Catholic sentiment in colonial America can seem distant and academic; knowing and seeing that your ancestors faced such discrimination is immediate and contemporary.

**Other Sources**

Many other sources (too numerous to note) can also contribute to your Catholic family tree. Some examples include: historical societies such as the American Catholic Historical Society; cemetery and tombstone records; county histories; land records; genealogy resources overseas and many more.

Your family’s Catholic history will be unique to your heritage. Yet, you will surely find evidence that your relatives participated in the sacraments; cherished religious books, items and holy cards; donated land; money and time to the Church; participated in Catholic organizations; cared about the spiritual welfare of their spouses and children; and performed acts of charity. You may also discover that they went to extraordinary effort to do so…offering their homes as Mass Houses, choosing to live in Catholic communities, enduring overt discrimination and embracing vocations.

Today, as always, that Faith and those values are challenged daily in our secular culture. Keeping and passing on the Faith is challenging in the best of families. Linking your Catholic story to your family tree is a powerful way to connect and reconnect families … near and far … old and young…to the Church, its history and its teachings. As Psalm 16:5 proclaims and eternally promises, “You are my inheritance, O Lord!”

**Endnotes:**

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 9.
8. Ibid., 15.
9. Ibid., 18.
10. Ibid., 33.
11. Ibid., 35.
12. Ibid., 50.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.,76.
16. Ibid., 3.
18. Ibid., 42.
19. Peter Conrad to Thomas Conrad (brother), September 19, 1868, Thomas Conrad papers 1857-1988, Collection Number MC30 Box 1 Folder 7, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.
Helena, Montana.

20 James Conrad to Frank Conrad (son), February 23, 1879 letter, Private Collection of Mary Cavanaugh (great granddaughter of Frank).

21 Elizabeth Wallen photograph, Private Collection of Elizabeth Wallen (granddaughter of Peg & Bob Sutton).

22 Sister Mary John Blanche McCann, O.P. entered the Dominican monastery in North Guilford, Connecticut in 1961. She was one of the foundresses of the Dominican monastery in Nairobi, Kenya in 1965 and made her final profession there.

23 Information about Carey Bible copied by author from original in fall of 1975 at Prince Gallitzin Chapel House in Loretto. Also described by Grace Murphy of Loretto in 1975 notes provided to author. Bible is no longer in Loretto and exact location in 2019 is unknown to author.

24 Book given to author by father, Leo P. McGuire, in 1997. It had been in the possession of his cousin, Louise Gauntner. Leo and Louise were great grandchildren of Sarah Glass McGuire.


30 Ibid., 54.

31 Ibid., 99.

32 Ibid., 31.


36 Patrick McCann,” Scotland, Roman Catholic Baptisms, 1848, accessed September 29, 2019, findmypast.com. Transcription does not show Sara’s maiden name but original image of register does.


38 Application for Marriage, Pennsylvania Marriages 1852-1968, accessed September 29, 2019, ancestry.com. License was obtained in Blair County, PA but marriage was performed in Cambria County.


40 Margaret and Matthew Bunson, Apostle of the Alleghenies Reverend Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, (Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, 1999), 57.

41 Kittell, Souvenir, 34.

42 Ibid., 206. The author viewed the original receipt in Cambria County in 1975 but does not know its current repository.

43 Ibid., 35.


45 Kittell, Souvenir, 247-48.

46 Wirtner, Benedictine Fathers, 20.

47 Ibid., 103-104.

48 Kittell, Souvenir, 207-218.

49 Ibid, 321-322.

50 John Carroll Papers, Archdiocese of Baltimore Archives, 1975. Copy of letter and petition sent to author by Rev. John J. Tierney. He made reference to going through 20 boxes of John Carroll papers and finding only this petition.


52 Ibid, 13.

53 Jacob Adams, Last will and testament of Jacob Adams, August 16, 1822, Probate Adams County, PA, accessed September 29, 2019, ancestry.com.


55 Memoir of Thomas Conrad (1821-1880), Thomas Conrad papers 1857-1986, Collection Number MC30 Box 2 Folder 9 Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives, Helena, MN.

56 Rachel McGuire, Last will and testament of Rachel McGuire, June 1, 1817, Probate Cambria County, PA, accessed September 29, 2019, ancestry.com.


58 Andrew Illig, Last will and testament of Andrew Illig, April 16, 1833, Probate Cambria County, PA, accessed September 29, 2019, ancestry.com.

59 George Snyder, Last will and testament of George Snyder, February 2, 1862, Probate Cambria County, PA, accessed September 29, 2019, ancestry.com.

60 Obituary for Sarah McGuire, Cambria Freeman, January 4, 1907.

61 Obituary for Christopher Luther, Pittsburgh Daily Post, March 29, 1880. Reprinted from Johnstown Tribune.


63 “Names of Contributors to St. Michael Seminary,” Pittsburgh Catholic, December 22, 1866.

64 “Memoirs of Prince Gallitzin,” Pittsburgh Catholic, November 6, 1876.

65 “Holy Name Men to Gather for Retreat Dinner,” Pittsburgh Catholic, April 26, 1928.


68 Frederick County Judgements, Part I, 1758, 174, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, MD.

69 The Papist reference was from either the above document or one of two tax records for Michael McGuire Sr. for his land “Resurvey on Patience Care” cited in Frederick County Debt Books for 1762 and 1763.
This photograph shows the Luke McGuire homestead first built in 1794 as a home for Luke McGuire and his new wife, Margaret O’Hara. It was used as a Mass House before Prince Gallitzin built the first St. Michael church in 1799. The man leaning on the fence is Luke McGuire’s grandson, George Luke McGuire. His wife, Matilda Luther McGuire, is shown in the yard with a cane or walking stick. Their son, Ed, whose diary is quoted in this article, is leaning from the top left window. The young boy standing to the left is Charlie McGuire, the author’s grandfather. This photograph was taken during Loretto’s Centennial celebration, most likely on October 10, 1899. Charlie and his sister, Zita (standing on porch with face obstructed by tree limb) both received sacraments that day; he received his First Communion and both were confirmed. They are both wearing ribbons to commemorate their special day. The young man sitting on the ground is Bill McGuire who helped Father Kittell with the Souvenir of Loretto Centenary book. Also pictured are other children of George and Matilda: Harry (to left of tree); Rose (sitting in yard); Ann (in top right window); and Bessie and Viola with their dolls. Note that the house is festively decorated and that the years 1794 and 1899 are prominently displayed.