

St. Margaret

Church 1905-2005

100th Anniversary



*Founded in Faith
Built in Hope
Rooted in Love*

Bel Air, Maryland



His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

cordially imparts the requested

Apostolic Blessing

to
Rev. Francis X. Callahan and the
Parishioners
of **St. Margaret Church, Bel Air, Maryland**

and invokes an abundance of divine graces

on the occasion of the

100th Anniversary of the Parish

October 1st 2005

+ Oscar Rizzuto

Ex Aedibus Vaticane Die 20. 9. 2005

Archiepiscopus
Elemosynarius Apostolicus



*Digitized 9/16/2022
Jack Shagena*

*Dedicated to the parishioners
of the Church of St. Margaret and the Mission of St. Mary Magdalen
and to the priests, deacons and religious, living and deceased,
who have faithfully served them,
and to those generations of Catholics to come,
may they cherish this legacy and preserve it for future generations.*

MISSION

*The Parish of Saint Margaret and Saint Mary Magdalen
of the Church of Baltimore
exists to proclaim joyfully the presence of Jesus
to those with whom we live, work and recreate.*

*We are part of the body of Christ who as a life-giving assembly,
witness to the Word of God. Open to the guidance of the
Holy Spirit through worship and learning, we endeavor
to form ourselves even more closely into the image of Christ.*

*Through service, we strive with all people of willing heart
for mutual promotion of justice and peace.*

**The Church of Saint Margaret
The Mission of Saint Mary Magdalen
Bel Air, Maryland 21014**

October 1, 2005

*May the Peace of Christ be with you today
And all the days of your life!*

"With a beginning so encouraging, with the continued goodwill of the faithful, and above all with God's Blessings, till now not wanting, the success of St. Margaret's is assured. Thus favored the little mustard seed must grow apace and become the veritable Tree of Life under whose mystic branches souls aspiring to the possession of God's kingdom will find sustenance and rest."

Rev. J Alphonse Frederick

Dear Friends,

The words of Rev. J. Alphonse Frederick, the first pastor, were prophetic and true when he wrote that the mustard seed would grow and become the Tree of Life. Our parish has grown from 60 families in 1905 to a vibrant life giving community of more than 5,000 families. We are truly God's people who exist to joyfully proclaim the presence of Jesus by witness to the Word of God and open to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit through worship and learning. We endeavor to form ourselves into the image of Christ through service as we minister to fellow parishioners, the citizens of Bel Air and Harford County, and beyond for the promotion of justice and peace.

Our 100th anniversary is a milestone to celebrate by giving thanks for the past, by enhancing the present and by assuring the future. Let us remember those who have come before us. Through their good works and deeds they created the faith community of St. Margaret. Let us also remember our current parishioners who give of their prayers, time, talent, and treasure and who make St. Margaret and St. Mary Magdalen a welcoming, life giving faith community. We pray for God's blessings that we may continue to live the gospel message by ministering to each other and our neighbors. May God bless you and your loved ones!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Francis X. Callahan
Pastor



OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

320 Cathedral Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201 • 410-547-5437 • FAX: 410-727-8234

October 11, 2005

St. Margaret Parish -- 100th Anniversary

Dear Friends,

It is a joy to extend heartfelt congratulations and prayerful wishes as you celebrate the 100th anniversary of St. Margaret Church.

Since 1905 when the church was built and established as a Catholic parish with the first Mass celebrated on October 1, 1905, St. Margaret has faithfully proclaimed the gospel and ministered to the spiritual needs of the surrounding community.

Along with Father Francis Callahan and the parish staff, all of you are to be congratulated on your own commitment to St. Margaret through participation in parish activities, religious education, including especially your wonderful school, and prayer.

May the Lord bless all who take part in this significant celebration with good memories of the past and renewed strength for the future.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Cardinal William H. Keeler
Archbishop of Baltimore



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF BALTIMORE
OFFICE OF THE EASTERN VICAR

September 15, 2005

Saint Margaret Parish
141 Hickory Avenue
Bel Air MD 21014

Dear Parishioners of St. Margaret Parish:

To you I write to extend my sincerest wish of congratulations upon the 100th Anniversary of the founding of St. Margaret Church.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express to you, the parish staff, and Pastoral Council the hope that the vitality and the ministry generated over the past 100 years will be even more fruitful in the years ahead. The presence of St. Margaret parish has provided a unique Christian influence upon the faith lives of the people in the parish and local community.

All of you should be proud of the pastoral ministry you have rendered in fulfilling the mission of the Church over the past 100 years. Because of you, your Christian faith and service, the Lord is better known, loved, and served in the Harford County area.

May this time of celebration be a time of gratitude to God and an inspiration to all at St. Margaret Parish for the years ahead.

God's best to you always!

Your co-worker in Christ,

Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski
Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore
Eastern Vicar

From Mustard Seed to Tree of Life

A Centennial History of St. Margaret Parish

Bel Air, Maryland

1905 – 2005

By

James E. Chrismer

© James E. Chrismer
2005



This Crucifix is now located inside the original church just above the entrance.



Holy Mass at Christmas time - note the crucifix behind the altar.

History of Saint Margaret Parish

Introduction

On May 1, 1905, Father J. Alphonse Frederick took a trowel in his hand, picked up a stone, scooped some mortar, and laid the cornerstone of a building's foundation. Little did he know he was sowing a mustard seed.

The small congregation of Harford County Catholics in 1905, that by the 21st century became one of the largest parishes in the archdiocese, was the vision of two church clerics. One, James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, was responding to the administrative needs of his day. The other, Father Frederick, desired to make attendance at Mass more convenient and to provide a school for his parishioners. Neither could have envisioned the transformation that was to occur in the years between 1905 and 2005.



*Fr. J. Alphonse Frederick
Pastor 1905 – 1918.*

The development of the Church of St. Margaret, like that of other successful parishes, is the chronicle of committed parishioners, enlightened leaders, and fruitful adaptations to changing forces within both the community and the Church. The story began at the turn of the 20th century, when Bel Air was a quiet and slow but purposeful community dominated by agriculture. At the same time the Archdiocese of Baltimore found itself struggling to adjust to social forces loosened by America's industrial revolution and the consequent growth of the Catholic population. The story continues today amidst the many dramatic changes that have enveloped both the Church and the county in recent years.

The Baltimore area, particularly its population and social institutions, was vastly different in the late 19th century from the city that first developed in the 1820s. America's promise of political freedom and economic opportunity had lured huge numbers of immigrants from countries such as Poland, Russia, Italy, and Lithuania. These refugees helped to produce a thriving diocese that was spilling out of its urban bounds and into adjacent areas. Natural increase and upward economic movement of earlier German and Irish arrivals likewise accelerated this geographical expansion.

Providing spiritual oversight and seeking to manage the growth of the Archdiocese, was James Cardinal Gibbons. A native of Baltimore whose parents were born in Ireland, Gibbons by the year 1900 was in the middle of a long and distinguished career that had earned him national popular acclaim. The first generation American earnestly believed in rapid assimilation of the newly arrived faithful and sought to anticipate larger Church needs while responding to local community demands. Between 1888 and 1908 Cardinal Gibbons oversaw the creation of two to three new parishes a year, including nineteen outside urban areas. Three of these nineteen were in Harford County: St. Mark (Fallston) in 1889 and St. Paul (Cardiff) and St. Margaret in 1905.

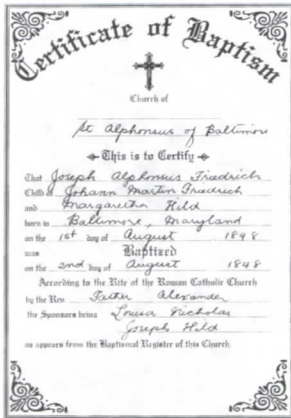
Father J. Alphonse Frederick

Father Alphonse Frederick, like Cardinal Gibbons, was the son of immigrants. His parents, Margaret Ann Hild Frederick and John Martin Frederick, unlike the Cardinal's impoverished Irish parents, arrived in the United

States from Bavaria and enjoyed a very comfortable lifestyle as proprietors of a popular Baltimore book and stationery firm. The family with its eight children worshipped at St. Alphonsus Church, one of whose priests at the time of Alphonse's birth in 1848, was Father (later Bishop and Saint) John N. Neumann, a close friend of the family. Young Alphonse, a lad with a delicate constitution, attended the parish school with other German youth, served as an altar boy, and left to begin studying for the priesthood at St. Charles College. The nation's first diocesan minor seminary, St. Charles was then located in Howard County adjacent to Dourghoreganon Manor, the ancestral estate of the Carroll family that had provided the land to the diocese.

At St. Charles the teenaged Alphonse joined with young men of varied backgrounds from around the country and became immersed in Catholic teaching and tradition. This process continued in more intense fashion with his move to St. Mary's Seminary, the nation's first major seminary, situated on Paca Street in downtown Baltimore near his home parish. Finally, on December 18, 1874, at 26 years of age, J. Alphonse Frederick became a Roman Catholic priest, following ordination by Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, a nephew of St. Elizabeth Seton, the foundress of the American Catholic school system.

Fr. Frederick was baptized Joseph Alphonsus Friedrich by Rev. Father Alexander August 2, 1848.



Fr. Frederick's Sisters Philomena Magdalena - baptized August 1, 1851, and Cecilia Maria Antonia on December 20, 1858, both with the last name "Friedrich".

Father Frederick's assignments through most of his priesthood were unusual for someone of his urban background. Bishop Bayley, needing priests especially for the city's burgeoning population, sent him first to St. Martin Church, a huge German parish on Baltimore's west side. Less than two years later, however, the young cleric, prompted by health considerations that were exacerbated by urban conditions, began what was to become a thirty-five year career of service to Catholics in Harford County.

In the fall of 1876, Father J. Alphonse Frederick accepted appointment as the second pastor of the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption, Clermont Mills (now Pylesville). This first assignment--and his succeeding years at St. Ignatius--lend insight into his eventual pastorate at St. Margaret parish. Within a month of his arrival at St. Mary's Parish, Father Frederick brought his mother and younger sister Cecilia to set up housekeeping for the three in the newly built rectory. During his two separate tenures at St.'s Mary's parish (1876-1880 and 1883-1889) Father Frederick sought to meet the spiritual needs of his congregation, maintain the day school begun by his predecessor, enhance the sanctuary of the small church, and generally care for the parish grounds set amidst the rolling countryside.

Located in the far upper reaches of Harford County in a bucolic area ironically called The Barrens, St. Mary Parish provided an ideal opportunity for promoting Father Frederick's interest in the natural environment. Here, during his decade-long tenure, the sensitive, urban-raised pastor grew in his appreciation of the county's flora and fauna. This love extended even to his priestly duties as he acquired additional acreage, laid out the grounds, cleared and graded the lawns, and planted an extensive number of shade trees.

Father J. Alphonse Frederick was a far more complex and cosmopolitan person than the image evoked by the classic notion of the simple country priest. To be sure, he was a prayerful and compassionate priest who cared deeply for the needs of his parishioners. He was a faithful interpreter of church policies and a dedicated steward of church facilities. He was a dutiful keeper of parish records who went about his duties in a zealous and dedicated manner and who extended due respect to his superiors. Throughout his priestly years his congregations

returned in abundance the love and respect he felt for them. Alphonse Frederick's personality and interests, however, extended far beyond this conventional picture.

Father Frederick was to a significant degree a Renaissance man, possessed of vastly more interests and knowledge than the typical person of his time. A voracious reader, he amassed what for the era was a substantial personal library numbering in the 100s and containing volumes of history, natural science, nature, as well as religion. He was, in the words of a contemporary associate "splendidly educated, widely read, and remarkably well informed on both church and secular matter."

Moreover Frederick was a faithful correspondent with a wide variety of individuals, including Harford's resident curmudgeon and historian, George Washington Archer, who shared the cleric's passion for uncovering and documenting the historical past. An especially exacting man with an ardor for detail, Frederick loved to pour over maps and plats for the data they yielded. He possessed a collection of Native American artifacts, some of which he amassed on his lengthy jaunts about the countryside. Along with the county's most prominent lawyers, judges, public officials, and physicians, he was a member of the Historical Society of Harford County, Maryland's first local historical society.

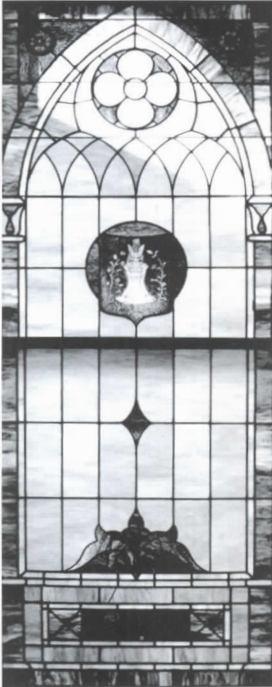
Scholarly nature aside, Father Frederick was also a caring, gentle, and sensitive individual with a keen appreciation for all that surrounded him. He had a lively and playful sense of humor, especially around young people. He loved nature. Nothing made him happier than hiking about God's outdoor domain, making field notes about the county's flora and fauna, and then reducing his observations and insights into literary endeavors, including lyrical narratives and poetry. His practical interest in the beauty of trees and plant life, and the joy it evoked, manifested itself in his abiding concern for proper landscaping and maintenance of natural areas over which he had charge. One parishioner recalled that flowers were everywhere when Father Frederick was pastor

After serving ten years in Harford's unspoiled northern region, Father Frederick in 1889 received a transfer to St. Joseph Church on Belair Road. After a brief stay (perhaps too close to the city air) he moved on to St. Augustine's, Elkridge Landing, a largely German parish at the head of the Patapsco. Again, after a short time and "at my own earnest request," the Cardinal sent him back to his beloved Harford County.

St. Ignatius Church

Father Frederick returned to Harford County in 1894 as the sixteenth archdiocesan pastor of venerable St. Ignatius Church at The Hickory. The expansive area that included the town of Bel Air possessed a congregation of many immigrants and persons of Irish descent, in addition to the sons and daughters of England who had always dominated Harford County's population. As occurred at St. Mary's Parish, Father Frederick's experiences at St. Ignatius provided him the opportunity to pursue interests and utilize skills he would need in the early years as pastor of St. Margaret Church.

The setting and buildings at St. Ignatius drew his immediate attention. Given his natural interest in the parish's important place in American church history and his love of the outdoors, Father Frederick turned quickly to refurbishing the grounds and the physical facilities. He purchased an additional 1+ acre on which sat an ice pond. He planted more trees and cleaned up and re-



Stained glass window dedicated to Fr. J. Alphonse Frederick

seeded the old part of the cemetery. Among the many structures on the near twelve acres of land were the rectory and the recently enlarged church, the bell tower, belfry, and the bell that was added by Father Patrick O'Connor in the years between 1865 and 1873. Father Frederick set about in the early part of 1898 to paint the exterior of the rectory and to clean and brighten the interior of the church, employing a prominent Baltimore firm to do the painting and frescoing. Cardinal Gibbons, present to administer Confirmation that fall, commented favorably on the work Father Frederick had accomplished.

A highly educated and well-read man with a strong belief that a parish could never fully succeed without a school, Frederick hoped to re-establish the parish school. Founded as early as 1871 by Father O'Connor, the school struggled along for at least sixteen years under several successors despite flagging support, minimal attendance, and financial losses. Finally, in 1886 Father Francis Fowler (a seminary classmate) bowed to the reality that fifteen students were insufficient to sustain the program and closed the only parochial school in Harford County.

The determined Alphonse Frederick refused to accede to the difficulties his predecessors had encountered. He prayed, he implored the parishioners to pray, and he regularly promoted the idea in his Sunday remarks. In addition, in 1901, he purchased from Mr. William Tucker, at his own expense, an acre of land across Forest Hill Road for locating a schoolhouse. However, all his efforts came to naught, and he reluctantly turned from--but never gave up--the idea of founding a viable parochial school. In 1911 he resold the land to Mr. Tucker at the same price he had paid a decade earlier.

The problems at St. Ignatius, like those that ultimately fated the school at the Pylesville parish, were economic, geographic, and demographic in nature. A rural parish such as St. Ignatius was unable to sustain a school. The parents were mostly poor farmers with little expendable income, the boundaries of the parish were extremely expansive, and the rural congregation was both scattered and ambivalent in its concern. Father Frederick's efforts at overcoming these forces were doomed to failure. Thirty-some years later he wrote a former parishioner that it is folly to establish a church (or a school) in the middle of open fields.

The Genesis of St. Margaret Parish

It was, very likely, Father Frederick's delicate health and his experiences with the school issue that turned his thoughts more towards Bel Air. Being a pastor of a rural parish in the late 19th century was a one man show. It meant spending long hours on the job and often traveling long distances, in all kinds of weather, at all hours of the day, on horseback or possibly in an open carriage.

Moreover, the St. Ignatius property at the time constituted a small farm or estate, complete with barns, a springhouse, an icehouse, outhouses, sheds, carriage house, and a chicken house. Despite help from a sexton and a housekeeper, the pastor was often involved in caring for the property and in raising, gathering, and preparing his own food. All of this was in addition to holding regular services, maintaining parish sacramental and financial records, trying to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful, and keeping up with archdiocesan and personal correspondence. In addition Father Frederick sought to pursue his own research and writing about local Catholic Church history.

Bel Air and Harford County in 1900



Yew Tree Inn, on Bond Street where Harford Mutual is now located.

Bel Air at the turn of the Twentieth Century was a thriving town of approximately 2000 people set amidst Harford County's rolling fields of dairy and grain farms. It had in the decades following the Civil War expanded greatly in terms of population, housing, and commerce, and was a well established center of business and government. Court House Square, with its array of lawyers' offices, banks, hotels, and its impressive new Masonic Hall (1886) and Harford National Bank (1889) witnessed the town's energetic and purposeful yet generally quiet existence.



Ma & Pa Railroad Station, Bel Air.

The town's prosperity showed through the many new buildings erected in the latter years of the nineteenth century. What today's residents consider vestiges of "old Bel Air" are likely part of the boom of the Victorian era of the 1880s and 1890s. In areas such as Rock Spring Avenue, Gordon Street, East Broadway, and Williams Street substantial homes of the Queen Anne style arose by the score. Working families enjoyed new homes constructed on Thomas, Lee, and Alice Anne streets.

Business and commercial entities also flourished and were the basis of the community's abundance. Served by the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad (often cited as the Ma and Pa, M&P, Ma & Pa, Misery and Patience, etc.) and intersected by numerous significant roadways, the town and environs became a center of lumber, building supplies, canning, and milling activity. A few present-day commercial properties on the town's northern edge in the

vicinity of North Main and Ellendale Streets even now witness to these pursuits.

Establishments such as restaurants, confectionaries, haberdasheries, and pharmacies, still located on or hidden by the facades of their modern Main Street replacements, developed anew or expanded their operations. Many had phone service and some even enjoyed electric lights in this relatively early period for rural America. Brick and slate sidewalks abounded in the business areas, as did substantial plank sidewalks in the neighborhoods.



Main Street, Bel Air, with three pharmacies.

Another indication of the community's wealth was the array of impressive and recently constructed church buildings. In particular the Episcopalians (1896) and Presbyterians (1881) had erected architect-designed edifices at the juncture of North Main and East Broadway, where they currently remain. The African Methodist Episcopal congregation had hired a local architect to design a classic Carpenter Gothic structure (1896) on the town's southern edge, and the Methodists (1888) had replaced a more modest building with a Gothic structure that exists today as an office building across from the armory. The approximately 125 Catholics in town still had to travel by horse or surrey the four miles north to worship at St. Ignatius.

The Founding of St. Margaret Parish

Father Frederick likely felt himself very confined at the turn of the century. His diminished physical capacity limited his ability to fulfill the duties as pastor to his expansive parish. This situation limited, especially, the opportunity to meet the needs of the increasing Catholic population at the Bel Air or southern extreme of the parish boundary. Moreover, Father Frederick no doubt felt plagued by a gnawing frustration at the inability to establish his dreamed day school at the Hickory location.

The idea of a parish in Bel Air was a long-standing one. In 1886 Cardinal Gibbons purchased a lot with the expectation of erecting a church on Franklin Street extended, near the Maryland Central Railroad Station (later Ma & Pa), from the heirs of Dr. William T. Munnikhuysen. Although such a location seems unseemly today, the idea, in fact, was at the time an enlightened one, given the accessibility the railroad afforded the many Catholics south of Bel Air, in areas such as Watervale, Fallston, and Long Green. This plan, however, proved unnecessary when St. Mark's Fallston was established in 1889.

The death of Father Frederick's parents in 1895 and 1898, however sad and tragic for the family and friends, provided the opportunity for their priest son to set in motion the process to fulfill his vision for Catholics in the county seat. People of substantial means, the Fredericks left their assets to be divided equally among their several adult children. On November 9, 1900, Father Frederick purchased for \$3,500 at public auction three acres of land with a substantial house, a barn, and several outbuildings on Hickory Avenue (then Pennsylvania Avenue) in Bel Air. One particular attraction for the naturalist priest was the beauty of the property, especially its "fine selection of noble trees, hardwood and evergreen, on the extensive lawn."

Father Frederick's new property, then part of "suburban" Bel Air, was particularly well situated. Besides its bucolic character, it was adjacent to similar lands held by such prominent Bel Air citizens as Judge Walter W. Preston, former Congressman Edwin Hanson Webster (later owned by Superintendent of Schools Charles T. Wright), and lawyer Otho Scott Lee. For the next four and a half years Frederick leased the house and grounds to tenants for \$22 per month, and paid the requisite taxes while he determined exactly what he wished to do.



Masonic Hall served the needs of various area Churches.

By March 1905, prodded by such prominent Bel Airians as Judge Thomas H. Robinson and Clerk of the Court William S. Forwood, Father Frederick had determined a course of action. At month's end he wrote Gibbons requesting a live-in assistant (whose salary he would subsidize) and asking to be allowed to move to Bel Air to build a chapel at his own expense. Once again the 57-year old priest emphasized his increasing debilitation and his inability to perform all the duties required at a parish such as St. Ignatius.

Approval came swiftly, and on April 9, 1905, Father Frederick announced the plan at Sunday Masses at St. Ignatius. He assured the congregation that services would continue as usual at Hickory and that an assistant would arrive by the time the new chapel in Bel Air was completed sometime in the fall. In essence, the congregation in town would be a mission to St. Ignatius, the mother parish. The announcement could hardly have been a great surprise to the parishioners, many of whom were Bel Air

residents. An early sign of Frederick's concern for Bel Air Catholics was his long-term rental in 1894 of a meeting room for the establishment of a Sunday School in the town's spacious new Masonic Hall.

From the Spring of 1905 until the actual formation of St. Margaret Parish in 1907, the activities and finances of the two properties became co-mingled, as had previously been the case for the missions at Abingdon and at Pylesville, among others. The two shared the profits of the annual festival; start-up costs such as printing, supplies, and stationery appeared on St. Ignatius' ledgers; the sexton split his time between the different locations; and Father Frederick traveled back and forth overseeing the work on the new structure. Since Father Frederick paid the costs of the new building, no special collections were required of the parishioners.



Rectory as it appeared in 1936.

The inception of a separate parish in Bel Air took a major step toward realization in April 1907. That month Father Frederick moved from the rectory in Hickory to his two story frame house in Bel Air that, with subsequent additions, remains the rectory for the priests at St. Margaret. With him in two wagons he brought the very carefully packed library of approximately 1500 books he had accumulated over the years. Until the arrival of his assistant, Father Frederick would serve the entire parish of St. Ignatius from his base in the county seat.

A few weeks later, responding to their brother's invitation to re-join him in setting up the household and serving as housekeepers and caretakers, his younger sisters Cecilia and Philomena, ages 46 and 53 respectively, arrived in Bel Air on the Ma & Pa Railroad with furnishings to be used in outfitting the rectory. Shortly thereafter, Father Frederick's nephew, Alphonse Gauges, son of Anne Frederick, and a talented musician despite some physical disabilities, also became part of the family circle.

The Construction of the Church

The construction of the small chapel that continues to grace Hickory Avenue was from the start a community effort. Building began almost immediately, proceeded very rapidly, and was completed within six months. This suggests that Father Frederick had made his decision regarding the use of his property long before he announced it, and that his brother, George Frederick, a very busy and prominent architect in Baltimore, had well in advance provided his younger brother with a set of plans.



The New Chapel, early 1900's. The left-most window was replaced with a door.

According to Father Frederick most of the material and labor required to erect the little church was donated. At their own expense Patrick and Daniel Carroll dug the foundation. Henry B. Bruns, William S. Forwood, Jr., and Thomas H. Robinson, and several other men donated their services for the hauling. One account credits Samuel Magness with hauling the stone and sand from Winter's Run. On Monday, May 1, 1905, Father Frederick, with the assistance of masons James and Andrew Dunnigan laid the cornerstone. Richard Cahill, aided by William E. Lingan and James and Cleveland Calder, did the carpentry. According to Frederick, the masons and carpenters worked mostly gratis save for six days labor.

Although Father Frederick preferred to go about his project with little fanfare, the raising of the new church was a matter of considerable local interest. The *Aegis* and other papers of the era regularly printed updates on its progress, assuring readers that the church “will be in keeping with other buildings of a like character in Bel Air.” They documented the laying of and completion of the foundation, reported that the framing would begin in June, announced the name of the new church in September, and accurately predicted its completion and use by mid October.



*The Church
About 1910.*

The design of the original 200 person church was classic Carpenter Gothic, a far less complex and more inviting reflection of the Gothic Revival Style then in vogue in Bel Air. Of wooden construction and laid out on an east to west line, the chapel measured 60x28 feet above a rubble stone foundation. Batten and board walls to the north and south each featured four rectangular, double hung windows. A gabled, enclosed front entrance stood at the center of the west end, and was flanked to either side by smallish square windows that opened from top hinges into a gallery. A diamond-shaped louvered opening penetrated the upper reaches of the gables at either end. A small bell tower, topped by a cross, sat on the ridgeline at the west end. The sacristy joined the church at the east end of the south wall. Above everything was a slate shingled roof.

Despite its refined appearance the structure proved to be remarkably sturdy. Father Frederick insisted that only the finest materials be used and, upon completion, maintained that “there is, perhaps, no other building in town put up more substantially.” Recent renovators report that the chapel’s durability derives from its pillar and post construction, with one oak beam running the entire length of the structure. The roof consists of an interior series of hand-built oak trusses designed to bear the weight of the slate shingles. The exterior board and batten sheathing likewise is of thick oak planks. Ninety years after the chapel’s completion workers found absolutely no evidence of rot in the skillfully designed and lovingly maintained structure.

Father Frederick’s choice of the name St. Margaret was particularly appropriate. His “most saintly and lamented” mother was named Margaret. St. Margaret, a Roman martyr of the third century, was the patron saint of expectant mothers. John Frederick, his father, died on the eve of the saint’s feast day. And it was monies from the inheritance their parents left that Father Frederick and his sisters Cecilia and Philomena used to pay for the costs of construction and outfitting of the new edifice.

The simple nature of the original St. Margaret church (especially when compared with the elaborate designs of other recently constructed houses of worship in Bel Air) derives from Father Frederick’s ultimate intention for the building: he was erecting a schoolhouse. This reality no doubt amazes, maybe shocks, long time parishioners and residents alike. Surprises aside, Frederick’s real “plan” called for constructing the chapel, using it to hold religious services, and then after a number of years raising a “fitting,” “substantial,” and “rather handsome” church between the rectory and the original chapel.

This intention he expressed directly in a small pamphlet in 1908, writing that “the church proper has not yet been erected. The edifice used for Divine worship at present is simply the school building.” Organizing a school and dividing the chapel into classrooms would require construction of a convent in

the area behind the church. Frederick also envisioned establishment of "God's acre" or parish cemetery "before long in a suitable situation."

That Father Frederick's original ideas failed to materialize testifies to how busy his life became as he went about organizing the new mission. Most immediately he had to attend to the details of completing the new church while still being responsible for his pastoral duties at St. Ignatius.

On Rosary Sunday, October 1, 1905, at a very early hour, apparently without any announcement and with the sanctuary still lacking pews, Father Frederick celebrated the first Mass ever held within the confines of the town of Bel Air. Although several accounts suggest a few persons joined the pastor on this occasion, Frederick himself wrote that he said the Mass in private and invited only Alphonse Gauges to attend as altar server. Following the historic occasion Frederick rode to Hickory, ate breakfast, and introduced his assistant pastor, 53-year old Father John M. Barry from Emmitsburg, Maryland., at the second Mass.

Amidst Father Frederick's low key approach, life at the mission church took giant steps forward during the following eight weeks. On Sunday, October 15, the first public Mass occurred after pews had been put in place. Perhaps as many as 108 parishioners joined in the celebration, and Father Frederick offered a few remarks. The following Sunday Alphonse Gauges accompanied the singing of hymns on the organ. The first sung Mass took place on All Souls Day, November 2, 1905. Two and a half weeks later, on November 19, Frederick conducted vespers and benediction in the evening.

The actual physical character of the church building at this early point is somewhat uncertain. One Baltimore newspaper referred to the church as having "pretty stained glass windows" and frescoing on the "entire floors, and walls, and ceiling." Another account and an early photo strongly suggested that the building initially had clear glass windows and that stained glass was not installed until the late 1930s / early 1940s. Frederick himself wrote only that "within seven months after the laying of the first stones in the trenches, St. Margaret's was in trim and fairly speeding along." He also indicated that the walls were painted after Easter 1906.



*The Chalice inscribed:
To St. Margaret Church
Bel Air, MD
Philomena F in memory of
Our Sister Cecilia A. Frederick
Died 21 February 1915
R. I. P.*

Refinements aside, Father Frederick, his sisters, and nephew, Alphonse Gauges, bore many of the costs of outfitting the new church. Gauges donated the organ. Philomena and Cecilia Frederick paid for the altar and much of the furniture, and Father Frederick himself purchased through Benziger Brothers of New York most of the vestments, altar linens, candelabra and candle sticks, a ciborium, an ostensorium, and other liturgical items. Ten years later, following the death of her sister Cecilia, Philomena donated a solid sterling silver chalice with a 14 carat gold overlay that the church still possesses. The chalice Father Frederick used for regular services was most likely the chalice he received at his ordination.

The congregation paid the costs of such major items as the pews, carpeting, stoves, sanctuary lamp, censer and boat, and stations of the cross. In all, counting the price of the land, construction costs, and the furnishings, Father Frederick invested over \$7,000 of his inheritance into creating the mission church in Bel Air.

Once Father Barry arrived in Hickory to help with the operation of St. Ignatius, Father Frederick went about setting up a schedule of services for the mission church in Bel Air. Sunday masses were initially at 7 and 8 A.M (changed

1908
Saint Margaret's Parish.
Bel Air, Md.

On the annual recurrence of the Feast of the Blessed Saviour's birth and of this feast's octave, both such noted days
Greeting for extending cordial felicitations, I desire first of all to wish all my dear children of St. Margaret's a sincere God-bless-you, a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year. I desire also to avail myself of this auspicious occasion to offer the following notes, regulations, etc., which may be of interest and use to the members of my flock.

The mission of St. Margaret's was established in the spring of 1905. The new congregation numbered from the **Historical** start about one hundred and seventy or eighty souls, but only one-half of

*First page of a
 Parishioner Leaflet
 dated 1908, written
 by Fr. Frederick*

1	Rev. J. A. Frederick	1	1.40.00
3	Wm. S. Woodward, Jr.	4	2.00
3	Nathan S. Amos	1	2.00
5	Mrs. Mary Calade	3	2.50
5	Geo. H. Cahill	1	1.10
7	E. W. P. Sharden	1	2.00
7	Mrs. Mary Thompson	1	1.00
7	Mrs. Clinton Keaton	1	1.00
9	Wm. J. Harahan	2	
9	Chas. M. Carthy	2	2.00
11	Danl. T. Carroll	3	2.00
11	Mrs. Lella Coale	2	1.30
13	Wm. James Kelly	2	2.00
13	Mrs. S. T. Bradley	2	2.00
16	William Cahill	2	1.00
17	Mrs. Thos. J. Martin		
17	Geo. O'Donnell	1	2.00
19	Richard Cahill	3	1.00
19	Andrew Lagan	2	2.00
21	Adam Eider	5	2.00

*Pew Rental ledger,
 1907. Octavius Norris
 occupied the 1st pew.*

in 1907 to 7 and 9 A.M.), with vespers and benediction conducted at 7:45 P.M. Sunday school classes met at 2:30 P.M. Weekday masses were at 6:30 (later 7:00) A.M. Confessions were heard on Saturday evenings (presumably for parishioners living in town) and before Masses on Sunday. Meeting times of all services seemed to vary according to the season and the timetable of the Ma & Pa Railroad, which brought in worshippers and students from areas such as Watervale, Fallston and Long Green.

The work load on Father Frederick, already daunting enough, increased in the fall of 1907 when Father Barry fell ill for a protracted length of time. This required the delicate Frederick to double up on Sunday Masses, to travel great distances, and spend even longer hours in attempting to meet the needs of the sprawling congregation. Two years earlier he had written Cardinal Gibbons that his "ailments are increasing" and that he no longer felt able by himself to "do all the work required."

Cardinal Gibbons resolved the situation (and unknowingly set in motion a slow transformation of church history in the county) with the creation in October 1907 of St. Margaret, Bel Air, as a separate parish. Father Frederick resigned as pastor at Hickory, became the shepherd of the new congregation, and welcomed Reverend Thomas Stanton as the new pastor of St. Ignatius. At length Father Frederick was free to devote his energies entirely to the spiritual and financial success of the more compact town congregation.

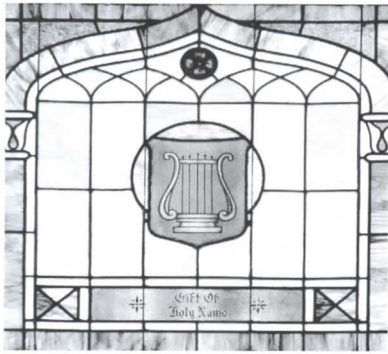
St. Margaret Church thus became the fourth (and initially smallest) parish in Harford County. The Mother Church of the others, of course, was St. Ignatius, founded in 1792, which had also spawned St. Mary (Pylesville) and St. Patrick (Havre de Grace). Pew rentals, a lengthy but now vanished tradition designed to serve in part as a parish census and a major source of revenue, indicate that St. Margaret at its construction had 108 registered persons, a number that rose during the year to "about one hundred seventy or eighty souls", and to near 200 by the end of 1906. Of this number Father Frederick indicated that 80 resulted from transferring from Hickory, and church records note that persons came from areas far beyond parish limits.

The boundaries established for the nascent parish clearly delineated the distinction between the now separated congregations of St. Margaret and St. Ignatius. In essence the borders of St. Margaret extended beyond Bel Air's outer confines three miles in every direction, with the exception of northward up what was then called Hickory Road (today's Business Route 1), where the boundary ended with the intersection of the road leading to the Bynum station of the Ma & Pa Railroad.

Thus defined the new parish began to evolve naturally through liturgical and chronological years. Services for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter, Holy Days of Obligation, and other special occasions were especially spiritually uplifting. A Paulist priest conducted a Mission within several months, and Father led the congregation in the Forty Hours devotions.

Many of these services featured music provided by twenty-one year old Alphonse Frederick Gauges and the young people's choir he organized in the fall of 1905. Possessed of a gorgeous singing voice despite a significant stutter when speaking, Gauges, who also suffered from a serious mobility problem, was a serious and gifted musician comfortable with traditional and classic liturgical compositions alike. One youthful parishioner years later contended boldly that "I don't think anybody ever understood music the way he did."

Social and religious organizations soon made their appearance, including the League of the Sacred Heart and the Sodality. An announcement occurred in March of 1910 regarding the Knights of Columbus, but there seems to have been little or no follow up. More significantly, reference to the Holy Name Society first appeared in parish records in October 1910. The Society, a devotional organization especially designed to promote frequent reception of communion among men, often served as beneficial and literary societies in immigrant communities. The chapter at St. Margaret's met on a regular basis and organized monthly Communion masses.



*Holy Name
Society Window.*

By January 1908 Father Frederick had the parish organized to the point that he published a small pamphlet account of "notes, regulations" and services "of interest and use to the members of my flock." After providing his readers with a very brief synopsis of the history of Catholicism in Harford County, he cited parish expectations for baptisms, funerals, weddings, and pew rental. In this latter respect he made clear that anyone unable to rent a pew or seat would be "cheerfully given seats gratis upon application to the pastor."

The now sixty-year old pastor also emphasized the policy concerning requests for priestly visits to the sick and dying. Urging families to inform him as soon as possible about any onset of serious illness, Frederick asked "not to be sent for unnecessarily nor during the night if it can be avoided." He also stressed that "very rarely and only when the urgency or peculiar nature of the case demands it" should families use the telephone to summon him, underscoring the importance of sending as a messenger a Catholic adult who could provide intelligent answers to questions involving the ill person's physical condition. The patient's ability to receive the sacraments no doubt was the factor in Frederick's stated desire to know about the person's consciousness, ability to speak, and to swallow.

After erecting the church building and establishing parish routines, Father Frederick turned to other improvements that illustrated the growing success of the congregation. By the fall of 1907, shortly after being officially established, the parish acquired statues of the Blessed Mother and of St. Joseph, which Father blessed at afternoon vespers before a large crowd.

A seemingly lesser undertaking that modern readers can nonetheless appreciate was the provision of a hitching post field. With increasing numbers of out-of-towners arriving on horseback and in buggies, "parking" became an issue, especially when parishioners tied their animals to the fences and Father Frederick's beloved trees. The solution was to create a "paved" field of hitching posts lined up in rows. Edward Kerr helped haul in the stones, and, in a victory for the territorial imperative, individual families quickly self-assigned themselves to "their" post.

More significantly, and of greater importance, Father Frederick contracted to improve and enlarge the rectory in a rather dramatic and striking manner. Using a series of jackscrews W. E. Ligan first raised the original structure thirty inches and constructed a stone foundation beneath it. Carpenters then erected an elaborate, thirty foot long, two story addition that created four additional rooms and brought the residence very close to its current appearance.



The Rectory Today.

Suggesting that Father Frederick's highly accomplished architect brother George was again involved, the southern end of the project incorporated bay windows below an end gable, within which workers included an elaborate shed window that faced the church. The front roof line featured two dormered windows looking towards Hickory Avenue. Completion of this rather sophisticated undertaking brought the residence very close to its current appearance and made it "more convenient and suited to the purposes of the parish."

The Establishment of St. Margaret School

Despite all these advancements one aspect of parish life no doubt, nagged at Father Frederick—the absence of a school. Had he had access to a suitable building and had there been present a sufficient number of religious sisters, Frederick, given his history at St. Mary and at St. Ignatius parishes, very likely would have established a parish school almost immediately upon the construction of the chapel. His opportunity came from a rather unlikely source in the winter of 1911.

Octavius Norris at the time was a sixty-eight year old bachelor with strong ties to several prominent Harford County families. His mother, Cassandra Lee Stump, was a daughter of John Wilson Stump of Oakington, Harford County, and his father, Septimus Norris, Sr., of Baltimore, had made a fortune in a famous Philadelphia locomotive manufacturing business. The Norris family was also closely related to Harford County's Archer family.

Octavius, a lawyer popularly called Judge Norris, traveled widely but lived in New York City. In 1897, he and his unmarried older brother, Dr. John Wilson Stump Norris, had Bel Air's notable builder Jacob Bull construct an impressive three story home on the southwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Dallam Place. Although the Norris brothers spent little time in Bel Air, they presumably knew Father Frederick rather well, having converted from their native Episcopal religion to Catholicism and being recorded in St. Ignatius records in August 1901 as baptized. Their respective godfathers were eminent parishioners, William Forwood, Jr. and Thomas H. Robinson. Doctor Norris died in the spring of 1907 while traveling in Europe.

What happened next was most likely not as "out of the blue" as usually intimated: Octavius Norris offered Father Frederick his home on condition it be used as a parochial school and convent. To believe Norris' offer was unanticipated suggests a lack of understanding of how Father Frederick went about business. He was an organizer, a planner, a coordinator, even a controller who understood situations and used his intuition to promote the interests of his flock.

Recognizing Judge Norris as a generous man of increasing years with no direct heirs and no need for so sizeable a home, Frederick, very likely, arranged to meet with the New Yorker and to advance the proposition that Norris eventually tendered. The priest had taken a similar approach with Cardinal Gibbons in regards to his quest for assignments to country parishes and in his appeal for an assistant at St. Ignatius in order to move forth with plans for a church in Bel Air. With Judge Norris' offer, his long-delayed vision began to take tangible form.

As with erecting the church Father Frederick took very quick steps to organize a process to involve the congregation. On Sunday January 22, 1911, he read parishioners a letter from Cardinal Gibbons approving the opening of a school. The next week he announced that "a most generous offer of a house and lot has been made for a parochial school," and on February 5th asked the women to meet with him after Mass and the men to return for a similar gathering that afternoon.

With Father Frederick hoping that classes would begin at the earliest possible time, financial matters required immediate attention. Amid "very encouraging reports about the school," fund raising efforts began with an oyster dinner on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. On the fourth Sunday of Lent the pastor announced the establishment of a school subscription fund. All children of parishioners up to the sixth grade were expected to enroll and would attend tuition free; non-parishioners would pay \$3 per quarter.



The Norris House as It appeared in 1966, was located where the present municipal garage is now located.

The months of March and early April were taken up with attending to the details of obtaining a teaching staff and preparing the Norris house for its new use. Parishioners converted the first floor into two classrooms and a chapel. The ladies of the parish went about furnishing the second floor as a convent. Meanwhile Father Frederick contacted Sister Mary Sebastian, the Superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. This was a religious order of teaching nuns from Bavaria who had come to Baltimore in the 1840s at the solicitation of Father John Neumann and who a young Alphonse Frederick had known from his days at St. Alphonsus.

Easter Sunday, April 17, 1911, was for St. Margaret Parish a day of momentous celebration and festivity. On that joyful occasion three women from the Schools Sisters joined the congregation at Mass and received the welcome of the parish. Father Frederick, with his usual sense of history, pointed out that the three were the first members of "any religious community of women [who had] at any ... time tarried with us in this county...to carry on their labor of love among our children." He expressed his special thanks for the "manifest goodwill of Reverend Mother Mary Sebastian, the munificence of good Judge Norris, and the special favor of Divine Providence" in bringing the sisters to "make their home among us."

The three women who arrived that weekend aboard the Ma & Pa train, Sister Mary Eusebia, Sister Mary C. de Lellis, and postulant Anna Gray (who would serve as housekeeper) were the vanguard of the scores of SSND's who for sixty-six years served the needs of the greater Bel Air community. Greeted by Alphonse Gauges and one of Father Frederick's sisters, they quickly settled into their home and, before imposing the rule of convent privacy, held an open house for parishioners. Father Frederick blessed the building on April 20th.

When formal sessions began Monday May 1, forty-three students reported, including 27 boys and 16 girls, grades one to six. The pupils, enrolled on April 20 and April 24, came from twenty-six different families and were overwhelmingly Irish in their ethnic background, as evidenced by the presence of numerous Carrolls, Cahills, Rahlls, Kerrs, and Quigleys. Only the Bodanis provided a clue as to later diversity in the parish and school makeup. The first, very brief academic year ended June 4th.

A brief examination of the public school system of the time lends perspective to the situation organizers and supporters of St. Margaret School faced. Bel Air was an expanding community of approximately 1300 persons surrounded by a series of small rural districts served by one and two-room buildings then in the early stages of consolidation into larger schools. In 1897 the Board of School Commissioners enlarged the brick 1882 school called the Bel Air High School that held classes for white students in grades one through eleven. African-American children attended the 1867 wooden two room school originally for the town's white population that had been moved from North Main Street to Hays Street.

The decision by parents, and to some degree the students themselves, to transfer to the church school was a difficult one. Firmly ensconced in their original place of learning, where most pupils at this early time would both begin and complete their education, numerous families hesitated to disrupt their children's progress by becoming part of so risky a venture. One early scholar expressed how she and her family resolved the dilemma, asserting that "feeling that the faith which had prompted the opening of the school could carry it through... my lot was cast... I have never regretted my decision."



Some of the first Pupils.

The following September, the first full year of St. Margaret School, opened with 55 students divided into seven grades and a high school commercial course. They came from the town and a number of surrounding areas. Some strolled across town to classes; others arrived via the Ma & Pa Railroad; others came in buggies with a parent; and yes, some had to walk the several miles, including through the inevitable rain or snowstorm in all kinds of extreme temperatures!

Life at St. Margaret School at this early period was a far cry from school life for today's students. Perhaps most notable was the need for students to use the wooden outdoor facilities in the back yard. Water during recess came from a bucket and a ladle on the porch, and a good number of students simply walked to their home for a cold or hot lunch made by their own mothers. On Friday afternoons the pastor came to speak to the students as a group, and one pastor had the habit of calling out each student's grades as he distributed report cards. On Sundays the Sisters expected students to sit with them in the gallery of the church. The curriculum for the girls included lessons in singing, piano, and embroidery.

Sadly, little information survives about the resilient group of Sisters responsible for getting the school off the ground. Sister Eusebia, the Superior, seems likely to have come primarily to help establish the Sisters in Bel Air and to enroll the students, as she left the following fall before the full school year began. Sister de Lellis succeeded Sister Eusebia and remained in that capacity until 1919, until replaced in quick order by Sister Alonza, Sister Felix, and Sister Ernestine.

Anna Gray appears to have thus far been lost to history, but not before making an impact far beyond what would be expected for the housekeeper. One former student expressed a particular fondness for the young aspirant, maintaining that she was "priceless" and "had a personal interest in all of us."

That same alumna enjoyed bringing fruit, especially persimmons, to Miss Gray at Sunday Mass and helping her smuggle it in her sleeves into the convent.



Sister Idaberga

Of all the nuns who arrived in those early years, the Sister whose legacy has endured the longest was Sister Idaberga. Born Anna Vorisek in Pilsen, a city in Bohemia, a province of the current Czech Republic, Sister Idaberga arrived as a 26-year old novice in September of 1913. The Order thought she had contracted tuberculosis and had sent her to the country in hopes that her health would improve. Despite her illness and a limited ability to speak English, Sister Idaberga's sunny disposition gladdened many a person as she went about the tasks of caring for the household duties for the convent and the original school. That Sister's health indeed improved is evidenced by her 57 year stay in Bel Air.

The operation of the school was from the beginning a group effort. Parishioners, even before the concept took reality, began to raise monies through a variety of means. Aside from Father Frederick himself, some particularly able individuals, including a William Lanahan—"a benefactor of our school," wrote the pastor—provided regular generous support. In addition to contributing monthly dues, congregants held bazaars or lawn fetes, strawberry festivals, card parties, suppers, and dances—often at the Masonic Hall or at the Armory on Main Street. In February 1912 students began to sell copies of *Our Sunday Visitor* newspaper in order to raise money for the school. At 1¢ a copy in so small a parish, one wonders how it was possible to make any profit.

Despite all these efforts St. Margaret Parish struggled with the economics of operating a house of worship and a school. On Sunday, July 7, 1912, Father Frederick delivered a firm message on the obligation to "bear our share of the expenses of the 'Church and the School'." He emphasized the need for all worshippers to "show their appreciation by a more liberal contribution," and implored more able parishioners to utilize pew rentals in providing "decent support of the pastor and defraying of other church expenses." He berated current pew holders for neglecting the commitment to maintain regular payments. The frustrated cleric, who had experienced similar situations at both St. Mary's and at St. Ignatius, concluded sternly, "This announcement has been made to you repeatedly and should not be forgotten."

The circumstances that prompted Father Frederick's strong message continued into the future. In 1923 Father Harry B. Sanderson, Frederick's successor, addressed Archbishop Michael J. Curley concerning his financial worries. Calling attention to the fact that his parish was "the smallest in Harford Co. & the only one having a school," he requested a grant of \$750 to help make ends meet. Sanderson assured the archbishop of his ability to sustain most costs but emphasized that it was the school that "breaks the elephant's back." About the same time Father Joseph A. White of St. Ignatius offered to "lift the burden of the school" from St. Margaret's but received no encouragement from the Archbishop.

Father Frederick Retires

With the school established and the parish growing in maturity, Father Frederick began to look towards retirement. At seventy years of age in 1918, financial concerns and the years of travel about country parishes had taken their

toll on his delicate constitution, and he felt the need for a less stressful life. Moreover, he and his family in 1915 had suffered the emotional loss of his youngest Sister Cecilia, who died of a heart attack in the rectory. Bel Air, with all the satisfaction it had provided and all the acclaim he had received, no longer had the appeal it once had.

Given the special circumstances in which he found himself, especially as caretaker for his 67-year old sister Philomena and his talented but handicapped nephew, Father Frederick approached Cardinal Gibbons with a request that he and his family be permitted to live at St. Charles Seminary, which by then had moved to Catonsville, Maryland. The Cardinal agreed and, following his resignation from St. Margaret Parish, effective June 1, 1918, the Frederick family moved to a house on the seminary grounds.

In typical fashion the meticulous priest had arranged all this behind the scenes before any of the arrangements were made public. Early in May he announced his plan to the congregation, and the following week preached his final sermon as a pastor. Cardinal Gibbons named as Father Frederick's successor the Reverend Harry B. Sanderson, 58, a former Anglican minister from Wisconsin who had converted to Catholicism before becoming a Roman Catholic priest after the death of his wife. Father Sanderson, himself beset with health problems, found great difficulty following in Father Frederick's shoes, and left St. Margaret Parish in 1924.



*Fr Harry B. Sanderson
Pastor 1918 – 1924.*

Meanwhile Father Frederick concluded financial arrangements with the Archdiocese regarding the properties he owned and the approximately \$18,000 he and his relatives had expended on the parish. In all legal right he could have requested repayment, but this was not in his nature, despite his recognized need to be able to support Alphonse Gauges after his own death. Assured of securing his own future and that of his other family members as a result of Cecilia's will, Father Frederick turned over the Bel Air property and waived all financial liability to the Archdiocese of Baltimore. A letter from the Cardinal agreeing to the publishing and celebration of six Masses annually "for the members living and dead of your family," and the deed, dated May 1, 1919, conveying the lands settled the matter.

Despite his illnesses Father Frederick continued to "live quietly" at St. Charles until his death, at age 88, in July 1936, at Bon Secours Hospital. At the time he was the archdiocese's oldest priest in terms of service. Alphonse Gauges lived eleven years beyond his uncle and died at St. Charles. Philomena died at some unknown point between her brother and nephew.

Alphonse Frederick, especially considering that his tenure as a priest coincided with the remnants of an era of suspicion and even distrust of Catholics, was widely esteemed by the Bel Air community. One local newspaper, remarked upon his retirement that Frederick "by his breadth of character, cordial but dignified manner and broad Christian work has endeared himself to all who have the honor of having been thrown [together] with him; and a powerful factor for good will have gone out from the community upon his departure."

Father Frederick's golden jubilee as a priest in 1924, six years after his departure from Bel Air, brought forth additional praise. Recalling his influence and the "big place he would eventually fill in the hearts of hundreds of people in the county," a front page article in the *Aegis* (far left column above the fold!)

concluded, "Irrespective of sect or denomination Father Frederick was loved by all who knew him ... a thoughtful highly educated scholar, of quiet and dignified manner, Father Frederick was popular with all."

Twelve years later Father Frederick's character and contributions remained clear in the mind of John D. Worthington, Jr., then editor of the *Aegis*. Writing in the long since retired priest's obituary, the Presbyterian Worthington referred to Frederick as "one of the most generous and perhaps most generally beloved priest ever to serve Catholic charges in Harford County." After detailing Father's local contributions, Worthington concluded, "He moved about his people quietly, and commanded the respect of all with whom he came in contact, so that he will always be recalled with fondness."

St. Margaret Parish between the Wars

The two decades following the First World War, like the era after the American Civil War, were years of comparative growth for Bel Air and its environs. After rather quickly enduring the adjustments necessitated by the conclusion of WWI, the area's economy began to take off, as the population expanded, the number of businesses multiplied, and the quality of life increased. The number of automobiles grew, consumer products became more available, well paying government jobs expanded, entertainment venues increased, and educational and professional opportunities for women improved. Even the Depression, always easier on largely self-sustaining, more rural areas, could only slow this so much. Formerly sleepy churches took on additional burdens.

For St. Margaret Parish the decades of the Twenties, Thirties, and early Forties were an era of slow but steady development. The town of Bel Air, and indeed Harford as a whole, experienced modest growth, although to the east the opening of Aberdeen Proving Ground and Edgewood Arsenal required the creation in 1921 of St. Joan of Arc Parish.

In Bel Air, an intensified demand for housing led to the expansion of earlier neighborhoods and the creation of new areas for homes. It was during this time that Father Frederick's original little country estate started to feel the pressure of increased numbers of neighbors, especially to its north along Conowingo Road (Hickory Avenue extended). Here the area called Ingleside developed on either side of West Broadway and of Webster Street. Likewise new housing began to appear along Hickory Avenue north of Pennsylvania Avenue, across from Shamrock, the very large estate of the prominent Archer family and the current site of the Bel Air Library and Town Hall and park. Father Frederick would not have been pleased at the loss of the trees and park-like settings.

One early, ironic, and somewhat sad effect of this demographic trend evident in Bel Air occurred in 1924, when Archbishop Curley gave St. Margaret Parish jurisdiction over St. Ignatius. Having lost so many of its faithful to its southern neighbor and with little hope for growth in the future (how far wrong church officials ultimately were!), the then 132-year old congregation was unable to sustain itself and was discontinued as a separate parish. Father White's final Sunday was July 20, 1924. In a day or so he cleaned out the rectory, locked the venerable church, and delivered the keys without ceremony to the new pastor. St. Ignatius remained a mission of St. Margaret for 47 years, until re-established in 1971 as a separate parish by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan.

Joining the two congregations complicated the matter of scheduling of services and placed additional burdens on the St. Margaret pastor, who now had to cover the two churches by himself. Permitted by church rules to say but two Masses a day, the pastors for many years alternated the two Sunday masses, celebrating the 8 A.M. Mass and the 10 A.M. at the other, and reversing the order the following week. Morning Masses were usually at St. Margaret Church.

A similar situation prevailed during Lent, with the Wednesday sermon and Friday Stations of the Cross being interchanged each of the four weeks. Easter, Christmas, and other special occasions required individual arrangements. The sites of First Holy Communions and the occasional Confirmation likewise varied, though the entire parish participated. May processions were held on the spacious grounds of St. Ignatius.

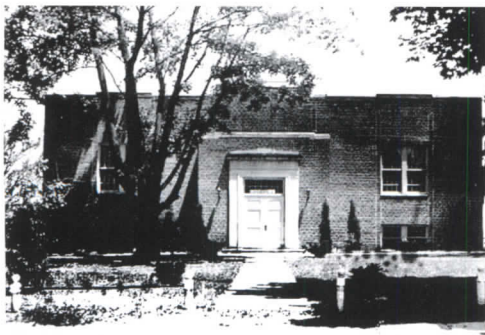


*Fr John H. Eckenrode
Pastor 1924 – 1937.*

This demanding situation, in fact, may possibly have hastened the appointment of Father John H. Eckenrode as pastor of St. Margaret Parish. In September of 1924, barely two months after Father White departed St. Ignatius, Archbishop Curley accepted the early retirement of Father Sanderson, who had complained of being run down physically and mentally, and appointed Father Eckenrode to the combined post. Eckenrode, a 44 year old native of Emmitsburg, was steeped in Catholic heritage, having been born within sight of and attended Mount St. Mary's Prep School, College, and Seminary amid the rolling fields and mountainous areas of rural Frederick County. In fact, on June 13, 1911, Eckenrode became the first priest to be ordained at the newly constructed chapel of the Immaculate Conception at the Mount.

The eminently likeable Father Eckenrode quickly displayed an interest in promoting activities of church religious organizations. He especially directed his energies towards the Holy Name Society, the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mother, and the League of the Sacred Heart. With a parish census of only 85 men and 110 women, organizational membership numbers from 1928 (obviously overlapping, as some persons belonged to more than one activity) of 75, 75, and 40, respectively, suggest a degree of popularity unmatched in the second half of the 20th century. The Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of America likewise grew with the Emmitsburg native's encouragement.

St. Margaret Parish Builds a School



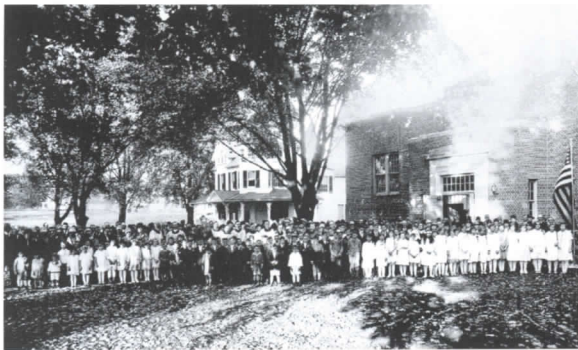
School about 1938.

Without question the single-most significant occurrence between World War I and World War II was the construction of a permanent school building. Despite its obvious financial costs and the short-lived debate over where to locate "an attractive school ... taking care of a goodly number of children...[and] complying with all the rules of erection for a school building," Father Eckenrode determined to forge ahead. On April 4, 1927, he purchased for \$6,625 a one-plus acre of land and a house north of and adjacent to the area of the rectory. This property, part of Judge Preston's original estate, was owned by two heirs of Charles T. Wright, Superintendent of Harford County Schools, friend of Father Frederick, and uncle of C. Milton

Wright, who in 1915 replaced him as Superintendent.

Construction began soon thereafter and the school (often called the original "old school") was ready by the fall of 1927. Especially for a building erected so quickly, St. Margaret School was a particularly impressive structure. Constructed on three sides of brick laid in English bond with attractive soldier courses paralleling the lintels, the two story building (covered some time between 1938 and 1948 with white stucco) consisted of two cloakrooms and four classrooms on the top floor and a large hall with a stage, two bathrooms, and a kitchen below. Eighteen large double hung windows of twelve panes over twelve panes on three sides of the building provided vast amounts of light and permitted much cross ventilation (never to be said of the lower floor!). The back wall facing east was of frame construction to facilitate a future addition. The total cost was \$42,500.

November 1, 1927, was a busy day for the parish--and especially the Sisters. On that Tuesday, the feast of All Saints, Archbishop Curley confirmed about seventy children and a small number of adults at St. Ignatius in the morning, and then traveled to St. Margaret in the afternoon to dedicate the new school. Accompanied by the pastors of neighboring parishes, the priest editor of the *Catholic Review*, the rector of the Cathedral (now the Basilica), and several other members of the clergy, the Archbishop headed what was then very likely the largest contingent of church leaders to assemble at St. Margaret.



November 1927
Dedication of
the School.

With the school relocated, the School Sisters of Notre Dame moved to the Wright home located next door to the school. The small-scale three story frame Queen Anne style residence was unlike any other dwelling in town. Converted into a convent with a complete chapel, the house (with subsequent additions) served the sisters for thirty-

three years and became the site of the parish's Wednesday morning Mass. Keeping watch over the new residence was Sister Idaberga, then in her fourteenth year of service to the school, joined by four teaching sisters. The superior was Sister Theophane, successor to Sister Ernestine, who remained as principal of the school until 1932, when Sister Clarissima replaced her.



First "on campus"
Convent.

Ninety-three students showed up on November 9, when classes began in the new building. How many this number represents above the enrollment of September 1926 (or even of September 1927), cannot be determined. By 1929 the number of students had swelled to 131, 62 boys and 69 girls, and represented young people from four parishes: St. Margaret(43), St. Ignatius(27), St. Stephen, Bradshaw (52), and St. Mark, Fallston (9).

To assist in transporting students to Bel Air from the northern areas of Harford County, Father Eckenrode used funds from the St. Ignatius account to pay a contractor to operate a bus and eventually to purchase, maintain, and warehouse a second-hand vehicle. The bus began its

route at Kalmia and traveled south on Route 1 to Bel Air. Dominic Rossi was the owner of the initial bus, and later Harry Tenly and Millard Harkins took responsibility for the church's vehicle. Fees collected from families of the student riders helped subsidize the costs.

By 1930 the enrollment figure exploded to 215 pupils, a number attributable to the growth in and the lack of a parish school in the north central part of Baltimore County. This number so taxed the facilities at St. Margaret that parishioners partitioned off part of the hall to create a separate classroom. This room became superfluous when St. Stephen Parish opened its own school in 1932, and the enrollment in Bel Air fell to a more realistic 102. Tuition at this time hovered in the vicinity of \$10 a year.

The task of organizing the efforts to pay the increasing costs of the parish, especially the \$38,000 mortgage on the school, fell to Father Eckenrode. With generous assistance from the various organizations, including the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of America, as well as the many individual parish volunteers, the church organized card parties in homes, the school hall, at a fruit stand in Kalmia, and even in the Bel Air Armory. And, yes, the ubiquitous Catholic bingo games also began during the pastorate of Father Eckenrode. In all these instances, players paid admission, purchased refreshments, and helped to promote parish unity.

Traditional fêtes like those begun as early as 1905 likewise were a source of parish revenues. The school children themselves sponsored a strawberry festival and luncheon at the home of one parishioner. Summer bazaars such as today's Fall Festivals and traditional suppers produced especially significant incomes, as did a Holy Name Society rally and other programs sponsored by the Sodality, Catholic Daughters of America, and the Knights of Columbus.

Father Walter Read becomes Pastor



*Fr Walter L. Read
Pastor 1937 – 1945.*

In June 1937 Archbishop Curley, in need of a respected leader to energize essential improvements at a Baltimore area parish, selected Father Eckenrode as the new pastor of St. Mary Church in Govans. Having watched him complete thirteen fruitful years at St. Margaret and earn the admiration and love of his steadily growing flock, the Archbishop recognized that the larger, more challenging congregation needed his talents. Parishioners in Bel Air and Hickory agreed but were, nonetheless, sad to see him leave.

This emotion manifested itself at a grand breakfast reception held in Father Eckenrode's honor on Friday, June 25, at the Kenmore Inn, then Bel Air's grandest venue. Many of the comments spoken on that occasion complemented remarks at Father's 1936 silver jubilee concerning his kindness, his "earnest efforts," and his wisdom. The *Aegis* observed that "Father Eckenrode has exerted a great influence among the parishioners of both St. Margaret's and St. Ignatius churches. Through his service in both, a healthy spirit of cooperation has grown and today is much in evidence." Representatives of the Holy Name Society stated that Father's "meek and humble disposition has captured our hearts" and trusted that the priest would "live to enjoy and celebrate his Golden Jubilee, and that some of us may find him and celebrate with him."

Father Eckenrode's replacement was Walter L. Read, the "Santa Claus priest." Father Read, 44, who proved himself in eight years to be a man of action, arrived in Bel Air in time to celebrate Mass on Sunday, June 27, 1937. A native of Baltimore, he had most recently served at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in rural Frederick County—his first pastorate. Here the retiring but surprisingly debonair priest was able to enjoy the outdoor life he relished, especially fishing, a pursuit his transfer to Harford County encouraged.

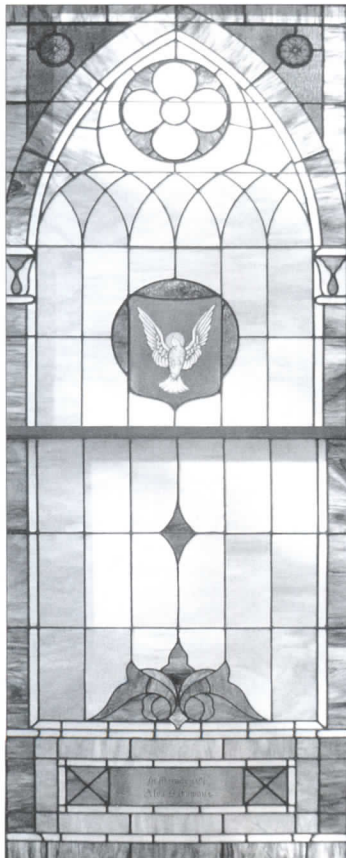


The "Famous" Bell.

Perhaps the single most remembered incident associated with Father Read was his posting of a "letter to Santa Claus" on the church doors at St. Ignatius and at St. Margaret on the evening of Saturday, December 11, 1937. Read at all Masses the following morning, the letter listed items (and costs) the new pastor believed the respective churches required. Among the items for St. Margaret were a church bell, a new liturgical tabernacle, drapes for the altar and the statues, and a complete baptistry.

Read's unique appeal was completely and immediately successful. Most dramatic is the story regarding the bell. Immediately after Mass, just after Father Read had divested himself of his vestments, Mr. James P. Famous entered the sacristy. Famous, a 63-year old farmer and recent widower from the Watervale area, agreed to donate the bell in honor of his wife Alva. With great alacrity, Father Read purchased the bell, had contractor Elmer Wilgis install it, and arranged for Mr. Famous to be the first to ring it on Christmas Eve.

Even more dramatic were Father Read's decisions involving the church building. After three decades of service, St. Margaret Church still had clear or translucent windows, not uncommon for such a relatively young rural parish. In addition, as the number of parishioners increased, Masses became more crowded, despite additional services being moved from St. Ignatius to St. Margaret. At some point, very likely in the late 1930s, Father Read arranged to have stained glass windows installed. At the same time, certainly after June 1938, he contracted to enlarge the church itself.



Window in Memory of Alva B. Famous.

The new windows would, no doubt, have greatly pleased Father Frederick. The eight side windows, four running the length of each side of the original structure, feature a pointed arch design that venerates the Ten Commandments and the seven sacraments, while complementing the Gothic character of the building. Double hung to provide air flow, these windows memorialize Father Frederick (who died in 1936) and seven persons of parish families who died between 1930 and 1939—Famous, McCarthy, Shanahan, Fitzpatrick, O'Connell, Robinson, and Dietrich. Two other windows, square, single paned, hinged at the top open into the gallery and of similar but truncated design, commemorate the Sodality of the Blessed Mother and the Holy Name Society. These windows, all lovingly restored, remain today.

The addition to the church was very subtle and very much in harmony with the 1905 structure. Essentially what Father Read did was to knock out the wall behind the altar, build a new wall approximately twelve feet to the east, and create a new sanctuary. This change created space for

two additional windows and the opportunity to enlarge the sacristy. The colored windows, significantly different in design from those in the now enlarged nave of the building, feature scenes from the Celebration of the Mass and from the Birth of Christ. The former is in memory of Father Read's parents, and the latter memorializes a member of the Pons family who died in 1941. Directly above the communion rail Read installed at the ceiling and within the interior gable a triangular architectural feature reminiscent of a pediment. This element lent a degree of sophistication, and visually helped to define the area of the new sanctuary.

Only a person with a careful eye can from the outside readily detect Father Read's skillful addition. The three walls and the roofline of the addition are slightly lower than those of the original building, and the sacristy projects beyond the back of the original church. The stained glass windows are smaller than those in the main body but in proportion to the walls, and the new foundation is of cinder block as opposed to the rubble stone of the original. Composition shingles, not slate, cover the new roof.

Another change was most apparent to some of the youngest parishioners. In the fall of 1942, despite economic pressures, Father and principal Sister Dolorosa boldly added a kindergarten program of twelve students. No other school in the county had such a program at the time. So successful was the experiment that the parish the following year constructed a small attached annex entered only from outside the building proper. Mrs. Russell McComas, the first lay teacher in the school's history, had charge of the program from its outset, and was later aided by Sister Reparata.

Father Read is also responsible for two other changes, one significant and unfortunate, and another small but extremely welcomed. It was, in all likelihood he, responding to fashion (or perhaps faulty brick), who arranged to put white stucco on the walls of the school. Anyone who has seen photos of the attractive building as it first appeared (better yet, seen the actual brick during the occasional repairs to the stucco) can appreciate the error of that decision. On a more pleasant note it was Father Read who in 1940 installed cushioned kneelers in the church. At \$5 per pew, parishioners for over a quarter century were decidedly grateful for Father's thoughtfulness.

St. Margaret and World War II

Unlike its predecessor, the Second World War impacted life in the United States and Bel Air in many significant but non-dramatic ways. As the county population expanded, but with the greatest amount of growth occurring in the Edgewood and Aberdeen areas, Bel Air experienced a modest shortage in middle class housing. Property owners erected some smaller new houses but were more inclined to divide larger homes into apartments.

With security concerns elevated but not considered an immediate critical threat, the townspeople sought to go about their business but with a heightened sense of commitment and community. St. Margaret parishioners joined their fellow citizens in supporting recycling and scrap metal drives, aided the various Red Cross appeals, acceded to the need for rationing, donated used clothing for refugees, joined in sewing drives, purchased war bonds, and tolerated the many shortages of consumer goods. Workers with the national government or for firms

with government contracts endured increased hours with an enhanced sense of purpose.

Many men of the parish either enlisted or, after October 1942, became subject to the draft. Company D of the local National Guard (eventually part of the 115th Regiment) received an early call up, only to find themselves quarantined for a month due to an outbreak of measles. In time the unit joined with hundreds of other local men and women, including scores of St. Margaret parishioners, to fight in the country's defense. One of the happiest single experiences of the war occurred when a parishioner, an intelligence specialist fighting in Italy with the Army Air Corps, found himself in the family's ancestral town and was able to surprise his mother with a visit after a six year separation! Needless to say, the startled mother had a hard time recognizing her son, appearing so abruptly and out of place in his grungy combat army gear.

The demands of the war affected parish life as well. One involved increases in weekday and weekend Mass attendance, owing to an expanding congregation and enhanced piety among Americans generally. In January following Pearl Harbor Father Read inaugurated Sunday Holy Hour or War Devotions "to beg God's protection of the boys in the service, to offer expiation for crime and irreligiousness throughout the world and to intercede for a speedy and just termination of the conflict."

One change that helped serve two purposes involved the former rectory at St. Ignatius. No longer needed for its original purpose after St. Margaret took over jurisdiction of the Hickory mission, the parish had rented it out to members of the congregation. During the war Father Read divided the building into two apartments, thereby increasing parish revenues while making the apartments available for servicemen and their families. After the war, Mrs. Helena Lightel, whose husband died in 1945 and who became a teacher at St. Margaret School, moved into one of the apartments with her five children. One daughter, Joan, who had eagerly responded as a child to Sister Corinne's magical cricket, entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame and later came to teach and serve as Director of CCD programs at St. Margaret.

In the meantime, the parish curtailed or eliminated other activities for which there was insufficient time or support. Suppers and lawn festivals came to an end as did the ever-popular bingo games. The proposal to build a driveway at St. Ignatius encircling the back part of the property, including the rectory and the cemetery, was put on hold "because of the uncertain times, until the defense work and the European conflict would be over." Most significantly, plans for a huge sesquicentennial celebration of St. Ignatius Church had to be scaled back.

Ironically, it was on December 7, 1941, before word of the attack arrived, that Father Read first mentioned the idea of a gala celebration of the church's founding. Despite the tragedy, plans for the September 20, 1942, festivities continued until July, when Father and the committee decided on a greatly scaled-back commemoration "due to war conditions." For one day at least, some 450 persons, from both St. Margaret and St. Ignatius Churches, put the war aside, celebrated Mass and their Catholic heritage, and enjoyed good food and fellowship.

The Years after World War II

Father Read in his eight years at St. Margaret had become known and loved as an imaginative, energetic, and resourceful pastor, a man with “a deep inner spirituality” who got along with parishioners of all ages. Archbishop Curley recognized that Father Read, like his predecessor, was ready for even greater challenges than those found in Bel Air, Maryland. On Palm Sunday, March 18, 1945, Father Read announced he would be leaving St. Margaret, where, he “has spent the eight happiest years of his life.” On April 1, 1945, the departing pastor hosted a reception for his successor, Father John H. Twamley. Five days later Reverend Walter L. Read became pastor of St. Francis de Sales in Washington, where he remained until his death in 1963.

The years following World War II brought many changes to Harford County, Bel Air, and St. Margaret Parish—indeed the world. In the case of St. Margaret the primary factors were the Baby Boom and the Vatican II Council.



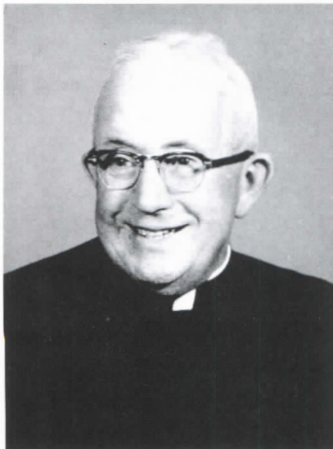
*Fr John H. Twamley
Pastor 1945 – 1947.*

Father Twamley's tenure at St. Margaret was short and lacking in impact. He celebrated his first Mass in Bel Air on April 8, 1945, and his last on November 3, 1946. During his stay the fifty year old Twamley had the joyful opportunity to lead the parish in celebration of the war's end. For the most part he was a caretaker-type pastor, continuing the policies of his predecessors and rigorously enforcing church teaching. Long time parishioners recall his beautiful but lengthy sermons that exceeded an hour in duration. Church historians and archivists rue his aversion to what he considered “clutter” and his decision to discard parish records in an effort to consolidate files due to a shortage of storage space.

With the war over, areas such as Harford County began to boom.

After the calamitous times of the 1930s and 1940s, many people, especially returning service personnel, wanted quiet communities in which to settle, to raise a family, to retire, and to be close to grandchildren. In 1940, before U.S. entry into WWII, the population of Harford County was 35,060. Ten years later it stood at 51,782, and by 1960 the population had doubled the 1940 figure, rising to 76,722.

Bel Air and environs closely represented the county trends. In 1940 some 1,885 people lived within the immediate area of the town, and another 7,800 lived in adjacent areas of the 3rd Election/Census District. Five years after war's end in 1945 the figures were 2,578 and 10,009. In 1960 the totals were 4,300 and 17,335. The figures for the 3rd District represented a 28 percent increase from 1940 to 1950, and an astronomical growth rate of 73 percent between 1950 and 1960.



*Fr Joseph McCourt
Pastor 1946 – 1958.*

In hindsight Father Joseph McCourt appears to have been the perfect pastor for the situation St. Margaret faced. The first impression observers noticed following Father's arrival in November 1946 was his energy and quick wit. Seemingly born with a twinkle in his eye and with a zest for life, the forty-seven year old Irishman had graduated from Loyola College, worked as a reporter for a major Baltimore daily paper, and begun the study of law before deciding on the priesthood. With his tales of Irish lore and gift of blarney, he interacted well with people of all backgrounds. And he always had time to get in a round or two of his beloved golf (possibly involving a bet!) with priest friends and

parishioners, including the late horseman Fritz Boniface.

As might be expected Father McCourt was a man of action. Inheriting a \$3,000 debt from Father Read's construction jobs (an amount today far less than what is collected at a single weekend mass), he retired the sum in five years while accomplishing tasks left unattended in previous years. In addition to undertaking the refurbishment of St. Ignatius Church, Father McCourt saw to the painting of the interior and exterior (basic St. Margaret white) of the church; he purchased an electric organ; and in 1954, in a move of great long term significance to the future of the parish, he acquired for \$27,500 three acres of land, the Lee Estate, immediately south of the church building. For the next fourteen years this land served as playing fields for the school and as unpaved parking for the cars that arrived in increasing numbers for Sunday Mass and other parish functions.

The growth of and demographic changes in St. Margaret during Father McCourt's tenure can best be seen in school enrollment records. In 1946, the first full year following war's end, the school registered what was regarded as a reasonable 194 students. Six years later, with the Baby Boom generation first beginning to reach school age, the number reached 237. At the start of 1955, some 265 students jammed the four original classrooms, though areas in the lower hall no doubt were also being used for classrooms. The number of graduates over that period increased from twelve to 26. Space was indeed at a premium.



Addition to school is under construction.

With this in mind the dynamic pastor in 1955 set in motion a campaign to construct a major addition to Father Eckenrode's original building. Without waiting for a build up in surplus funds or even gathering written pledges of financial support (talk about faith!), Father McCourt secured architect Paul Gaudreau, arranged for construction bids, and formed a New School Committee headed by William E. McGuirk and Helen Kelly, Assistant Chair.

On Sunday, July 17, 1955, the group officially launched the public phase of the project by issuing the first of a series of newsletters called "The Express."

These urged parishioners to pledge their fair share and kept them abreast of what they called the "crusade's" progress toward the stated goal of \$100,000. In the course of his "Letter from the Pastor" McCourt made a statement no sane clergyman would make today: "We hope work on the new school will have begun by the time you read this!"



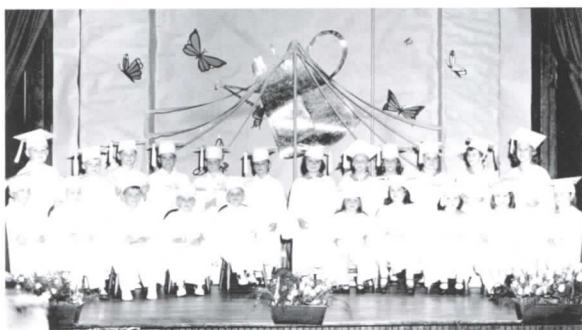
Dedication with Archbishop Keough, also Fr McCourt, Fr Evans, Fr Fitzgerald, and Msgr McCormick with other Priests and altar servers.

Work both began and ended on time, and on June 10, 1956, Archbishop Francis P. Keough blessed the gleaming white stucco addition. One story in height and featuring walls of glass windows, the four classroom extension sloped gently down the property into what had originally been the grass playground. With a total of eight classrooms the

school, now with 342 pupils, in theory could now house each grade in its own space. That this was not, in reality, the case is witnessed by the boys of the Class of 1959, to this day annoyed that during the seventh grade, its female students shared a room with the Class of 1958.

The lengthy structure was bright and airy inside, and permitted inside entrance to an enlarged kindergarten. An office space, bathrooms, and utility areas provided needed facilities (it even had water fountains!). Access to the upper floor of the two-story original was by way of a lengthy, steep, straight, one landing stairway. A mysterious set of stairs bent its way down into the dark nether lands of the lower assembly hall.

To offset the loss of the playground immediately adjacent to the building, the parish developed an approximately three acre grassy area across the driveway and behind the rectory and church into playing fields. These stretched all the way to today's Lee Way and to the backyards of homes on McCormick Street (the area occupied today by the Bel Air campus's three newest structures). The ball fields featured substantial wood and wire backstops that attracted large number of players and spectators. The mental image of the lively young Sister Nathan playing soft ball, dodge ball, jump rope, and hopscotch during recess remains vivid for students of the late Fifties and early Sixties.



*Kindergarten
Graduation 1956.*

With a new school building came a number of innovations. Most notable was the adoption in 1956 of a school uniform. The boys wore dark blue pants, white shirts, and a dark blue tie bearing the monogram SMS. Girls dressed in a white, short puffy-sleeved blouse with a Peter Pan collar, a dark blue jumper, and a dark blue bow tie. The jumper featured a blue diamond insignia with name of the school stitched in yellow. Girls also wore blue beanies for church services. Though mothers with several boys balked at the idea of all the starch and ironing that would be required, most adults thought everyone looked grand; the students, accustomed to wearing "normal" clothes, were not so certain at first.



*Fr McCourt at a
Sodality Luncheon
meeting, early 1950s.*

With Sister Letitia as principal, the school began to adapt to the new realities of post war America. As additional students poured into the school (375 in 1957, 403 in 1958, 443 in 1959, etc.), the administration hired more laywomen as teachers, improved the library, and promoted formation of an organized Mothers' Club. Mother volunteers likewise provided enrichment opportunities for the students and, with the Sodality, often served as the prime fund raising arm of the school.

By this time the Cold War had begun to affect the daily life of the school. Students recall with mixed reactions the regular atom bomb drills, the admonitions (especially the Chinese, whose "poor starving souls" students had, before 1949, been asked to pray for), the addition of "one nation *under God*" to the Pledge of Allegiance, and the propaganda-laden movies and television shows. And then there was the incident involving that airplane!

It was a pleasant Wednesday in Bel Air. The time was about noon, December 9, 1953, and students at St. Margaret were at lunch. Some were eating, either at their desks or downstairs in the hall; others were outside on the playground, running about and enjoying the refreshingly cold air. Suddenly an enormous explosion rocked the area as a huge mass of fire erupted high overhead. Then there occurred a second, smaller, but equally frightening explosion. A ball of fire began descending toward the eastern part of town, and smaller sized flames scattered as they too fell earthward like fireworks on the Fourth of July. Large and small strange-looking objects began to tumble and scatter into yards and fields surrounding St. Margaret. One especially large article fell into the front lawn between the rectory and the church. Students watched in awe as they stood mesmerized out on the grounds. Many especially recollect seeing a parachute descending into the nearby area.

Reaction was quick. The Sisters, like many other local residents aware of on-going international tensions, feared a bombing was in progress. Those in the classrooms ordered the students down onto the floor and under the desks. The Sisters who were on the playground herded the children down the outside stairs and into the assembly hall, where the other Sisters and students had remained.

As quickly as the excitement broke out, calm returned as word reached the school that an experimental plane from nearby Martin Airport had exploded above the town. The parachute many students had seen was the parachute of one of the two pilots (one lived, another died) as he descended into the woods where today's Homestead Village exists. Despite the brevity of the excitement, the Sisters had a difficult time getting students to keep their minds on the remainder of the day's lessons.



The pressures of the Cold War aside, St. Margaret School was in the Fifties a happy place for students and parents. Particularly festive occasions were graduations, the class First Communions, and the First Friday celebrations followed by breakfast in the lower hall (the hot chocolate was especially memorable). May Processions honoring Mary Our Queen, often scheduled on Mother's Day and soon after first Communion Sunday, were joyful occasions for everyone involved (assuming the temperature was not too hot for all those revelers wearing their best clothes!).



Altar Boys gather, and Sister helps prepare for May Procession.

Held on the grounds of St. Ignatius and overseen by a whirlwind Sister Corinne, May Processions were colorful affairs that drew students, parents, relatives, and parishioners alike. Altar boys wore their red cassocks, members of parish organizations carried bright religious banners, the First Communion class displayed their white clothes, and school children processed in their Sunday best. Everyone, urged on by the Sisters, sang May and Blessed Mother hymns. At the end of the line came Father McCourt as though cast for a movie, singing away and loving every minute of the festivities.

The highlight of the day occurred after the procession had filed into the church. While the congregation sang "Oh Mary, We Crown You with Blossoms Today," one eighth grade girl (selected by her classmates or possibly by her teacher) placed a crown of wildflowers atop the head of the Blessed Mother's statue. Additional hymns ("Tis the Month of our Mother") and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament concluded the commemoration.

Sister Mary Corinne McDevitt

Find anyone between the ages of 40 and 75 who went to St. Margaret School, and you almost certainly know who her/his first grade teacher was. Sister Mary Corinne was celebrated throughout her forty year career in Bel Air. Starting in September 1930, with love and patience Sister introduced hundreds of six and seven year olds spanning three generations at St. Margaret School to the world of Catholic education.

Sister Corinne, in the mold of Father Flanagan, never met a child she didn't love. Everyone who came through the door of her room on the top floor at the back left of the original building was a child of God. Grades didn't matter; race, gender, ethnicity, wealth—nothing mattered but that these were the little people whom Jesus spoke about, "suffer the little children to come unto me." Everyone was Sister's "little Topsy."

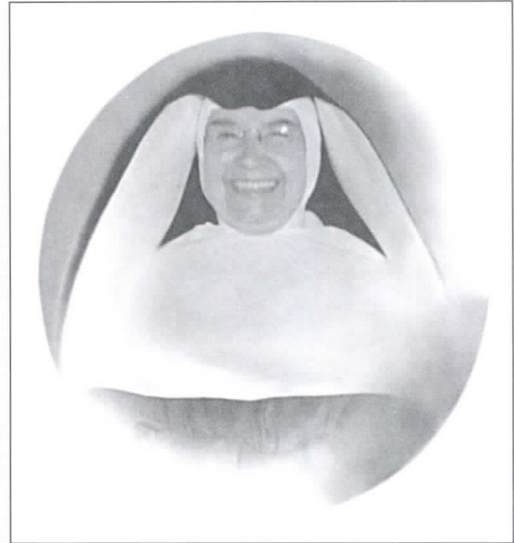
The recollections of Sister Corinne are the stuff of legends. What graduate doesn't remember the "piggy wig tail" and the morning exercises (arms twirling east, arms twirling west, north and south). Who, after being instructed to put his/her head down for the daily nap, didn't occasionally awake to find a candy treat on their desk? What boy didn't relish being chosen to use the pole to adjust the window? What student didn't delight in getting those beautiful holy cards or having the opportunity to make greeting cards for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day? What boy or girl didn't bask in those regular hugs?

And who can ever thank Sister Corinne enough for preparing them for First Penance and First Communion, and for organizing the Eucharistic service (with water fountains duly taped up to avoid accidentally breaking the then required fast). What child or parent cannot recall the image of Sister's scurrying about (the word seems to have been invented to characterize Sister Corinne) as she organized the inevitable group pictures or succeeded in arranging everyone in proper order for the annual May processions. This brings up Sister's ubiquitous "cricket."

For younger readers the cricket takes some explanation. A small 1½" colored metal toy shaped like a bug, the cricket makes a noticeable but not intrusive sound when pressed between the thumb and index finger. Sister Corinne used the device to signal to the students when to sit, stand, move in file, and especially to genuflect at religious or other formal ceremonies. This usually occurred when students were lined up, always shortest to tallest and often wearing white clothes or dressy attire. Since Sister certainly must have occasionally misplaced a cricket, graduates wondered over the decades where she got all those magical trinkets.

One story from the 1950s illustrates Sister's innate wisdom and sense of proportion. A few minutes after instructing the students to put their heads down for the early afternoon nap, Sister Corinne took the occasion to lean over, her face towards the blackboard, and start picking piles of books off the floor. One mischievous fellow (name happily withheld) quietly sat up and, using the fingers of both hands, pretended to aim an imaginary slingshot in Sister's direction. Another boy (name reluctantly withheld) immediately shouted for attention ("Sister, Sister"), and eagerly related for all to hear what had occurred while Sister's back was turned. Sister Corinne's reaction: to gently berate the second boy for failing to follow her instructions by looking up to see the first boy and for being so eager to "tell" on someone for so innocuous an offense.

The year finally arrived in the 1970s when Sister Corinne, approaching her eightieth birthday, could no longer handle the physical demands of teaching first graders. Sister Corinne's decision to leave



the classroom disappointed parents, younger siblings, and Sister herself. But the time had arrived for Sister to rest. Her retirement brought to an end the seemingly endless stream of fortunate "little topsies" and a remarkable era (far larger than a chapter) in the history of St. Margaret School.

Born on July 16, 1894, Helen A. McDevitt was one of nine children of Bernard and Bridget McDevitt, a working class family in County Donegal, Ireland. In 1914, at the age of twenty, Helen left her parents and five siblings to follow her sister Margaret to the United States. Settling in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the young woman quickly took a position as a maid for a private family, a position she held for five years.

Although young Helen had known since childhood that she wanted to devote her life to God, she had not acted on that resolve. Finally, in 1919, at age twenty-five and following a mission led by a Passionist priest, Helen decided to pursue her life's goal. Encouraged by her confessor, she entered the Motherhouse of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Cambridge and was accepted into the novitiate. On August 8, 1922, Helen McDevitt was invested with the habit, and two years later took temporary vows as Sister Mary Corinne.

After serving at St. Mary School in Bryantown, Charles County, Maryland, Sister Corinne arrived in Bel Air in 1930 to begin the assignment that lasted the remainder of her career. Sister Corinne was then 36 years of age and had the previous summer professed final vows. At that time St. Margaret School enrolled approximately one hundred students, with each teacher required to "double up." Sister Corinne assumed the position of first and second grade teacher. For many of the following 47 years Sister taught a combined fifty to sixty children in one of the four original classrooms of the 1927 building.

Sister Corinne would have been the first person to acknowledge that when God closes one door, God opens another. After Sister left teaching, she remained at St. Margaret and was an active member of the Legion of Mary. With other ladies she made hundreds of visits to infirmed, lonely, and sick parishioners. She continued to be a model of praying the rosary. Sister's work with the Legion would hardly have surprised her former students, for whom Sister Corinne day in and day out provided a loving and gentle example of Christian kindness, dedication, humility, charity, and faith.

At length Sister Corinne felt compelled to leave St. Margaret Parish. She moved in 1977 to the Mother House on North Charles Street in Baltimore, and then to Villa Maria in Glen Arm. Here she joined her old friend Sister Idaberga. In 1984 Sister Corinne returned to Bel Air for a reception in celebration of her Diamond Jubilee, sixty years as a School Sister of Notre Dame. On February 25, 1985, God called Sister Mary Corinne home, where she and Sister Idaberga continue to watch over the parish and especially the children of St. Margaret School.

Twenty years after Sister's death, no matter who occupies it, what purpose it serves, or what number the administration puts above the doorway, hundreds of graduates of St. Margaret School still refer to the room at the back left on the upper floor of the "old" school as "Sister Corinne's Room."



...see Sister Run!

Miraculously, rain never seemed to mar May procession Sunday.

Father Evans and the 1960s

By 1960, with the number of students nearing the 500 mark, parish officials faced the inevitable: the need to build a new school and eventually a new church. Bel Air and environs were still growing at an enormous rate. Close to 1,000 families belonged to the parish. Class size in some instances had become astronomically large (there were sixty-three students in 3rd grade in 1959), and first and second graders found themselves in classrooms in the basement of the convent and of the 1927 building. Yet the school was winning national competitions, and a waiting line for admission had developed.

Into this situation stepped Father Evans. A humble and highly intelligent priest with two advanced degrees, Terrence J. Evans arrived at St. Margaret in February 1958 following inner city assignments in Washington and Baltimore and at rural St. Mary Parish in Pylesville. For the next twelve years, throughout the tumultuous Sixties, Father Evans proved a highly resourceful leader of a burgeoning suburban parish at a time of upheaval in the nation and church.

One simple but effective change during Father Evans' tenure was introducing in 1958 printed parish bulletins. By eliminating the need to interrupt the Mass with a series of lengthy oral announcements, Father increased the time for liturgy and ensured a uniform flow of information at the many Masses. Another, more significant administrative milestone came in response to an archdiocesan directive from Cardinal Shehan that all parishes be incorporated. Father Evans named Edward D. Higinbotham and LeeAnna McComas Kelly as incorporators for St. Margaret and John O'Neill and Mrs. Louise Wilson for St. Ignatius.



*Fr Terrence J. Evans
Pastor 1958 – 1970.*

One of Father Evan's favorite accomplishments was supporting efforts by several parishioners in January 1963 in forming a chapter of the Legion of Mary. Deeply devoted to the Blessed Mother and interested in ministering to the sick and lonely, Father Evans, as the first Spiritual Director, met weekly with the group, shared the Rosary, and taught Bible Classes.

Since its founding, the presidium at St. Margaret Parish (a second recently formed) has by one estimate conducted 50,000 visits to assisted living facilities, private homes, hospitals, senior housing, and nursing homes. In addition, its many members, male and female, have transported hundreds of persons to weekend Masses.



*Father Evans' "New School" – First Classes
in September 1962.*

Closely related to Father Evans' love of the Blessed Mother was his seeing to the needs of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Over the years the convent building had greatly deteriorated, and crowded conditions required some of the Sisters to utilize attic cubicles created by sheets hung

over rope lines. Father moved quickly to erect a new convent. He relocated the Sisters to temporary quarters at the vacant Circle Inn on North Main Street (since demolished and replaced by one of Bel Air's ubiquitous banks), and contracted for a new convent. This was in September 1959.

On November 5, 1960, Sister Rosalia and the other Sisters moved in to their new spacious and functional (but not terribly attractive) brick structure. Sadly, the very unique Wright house was destroyed in the process. Ironically, never in the future would the Sisters come close to having a need for all fourteen bedrooms the new building provided.

With housing for the Sisters improved, Father Evans was able to turn his attention to matters involving the school. On a personal level he believed it important that the pastor be more involved with school and the students. In particular he enjoyed strolling the area near the playground, rosary or breviary in hand, as some of the smaller students rushed to surround the obviously shy, bear-like priest.

With Father Evans at the lead, plans for a "new" (indeed, a second) school building went forward. Construction for the separate structure to accommodate students in the upper grades was put on the fast track, and by 1962 it was ready for occupancy. Designed to double available space, the two story brick building included eight classrooms, a gymnasium with a stage, a locker room, a kitchen, and an office. Shortly after this time the school curriculum switched to a department system and began to develop programs for gifted students.

Reflecting the adage, "build it and they will come," enrollments continued to mount. The new spaces quickly filled, and almost immediately the locker room became a classroom. Principal Sister Marie Edwin created two sections of each grade level, one generally taught by a sister and the other by a lay person. In 1963 there were approximately 100 first graders in two classes, and by 1968 an estimated 632 students jammed the two buildings, said to have a capacity of 400.

The Second Vatican Council and St. Margaret Parish:

The era of the 1960s and 1970s constituted a period of great social and political upheaval for the American people. Issues involving Civil Rights, feminism, the Vietnam War, political corruption, the crusade to eliminate poverty and to protect the environment—all led to great turbulence in the nation. For Roman Catholics, the decades of the 1960s and 1970s were especially unsettling as the faithful sought to cope with changes in American society as well as in their own Church.

In the fall of 1962, Pope John XXIII convened the first church council in over 100 years. Its goal, the pontiff said, was *aggiornamento*, to bring the church up to date. Lasting almost three years, the Second Vatican Council issued sixteen official documents that seemed revolutionary to lay people, but, in fact, simply formalized discussions and debates that had been occurring within the church since the 1940s. These pronouncements rested on the belief that theology changed, that it was dynamic, and that church life should change as the theology changed. The Council, says Notre Dame historian Jay P. Dolan, put to rest the "age of Tridentine Catholicism" and affected a new era "rooted in the past but living in the present."

Of the many areas of change, Dolan believes five were of the greatest significance. The first was in the area of liturgy, the manner in which Catholics prayed. This reform impacted especially the celebration of Mass in a number of substantial ways. A second involved the new understanding of the Church as the people of God, the biblical concept of church as the mystical body of Christ that led to a greater sense of collegiality within parishes. Closely related was the notion of the servant church in service to the human family and in promotion of social justice. Ecumenism was another area of emphasis, encouraging efforts at religious union rather than focusing on distinctions and separation. A further, particularly weighty point, according to Dolan, was the idea of religious freedom.

St. Margaret Parish became one of the leading congregations in the archdiocese in implementing the spirit of Vatican II. Several factors contributed to this transformation, welcomed by some, doubted by others, and bitterly opposed by yet another group. One factor was the comparatively short history of the parish as a congregation. At 55 years of age with a growing number of parishioners, St. Margaret was a "new" parish with no immutable traditions. Another was the relatively youthful age and advanced education level of a very large percent of the parishioners. A third was the learned habit within the parish of having to adapt to changes. A fourth was the coming to St. Margaret of two young priests particularly steeped in Church teaching to assist in leading the parish along the paths determined by Rome.

Father Raymond Wanner, looking much like the altar boys with whom he celebrated Mass, arrived in Bel Air in 1959. The first Assistant Pastor in the history of St. Margaret, Father was an energetic, creative, highly intellectual man whose talents complemented those of Father Evans. Wanner was of particular help in energizing the youth of the parish, and working with several mothers in planning CYO activities. In addition, he aided Father Evans in raising funds and quickly retiring the mortgage for the new convent.



Fr Raymond Wanner

Very much in tune with advanced thinkers within the Church, Father Wanner, at Father Evans' direction, began putting into practice the first of the liturgical reforms discussed within the Council. An early focal point of some of these changes was the restoration of the 1905 church building.

Save for Father Read's restrained renovations of the 1930s, the church looked much as it had during Father Frederick's time. In line with preliminary Vatican II suggestions, the sanctuary received a "cleaner" look in an effort to reduce distractions to the faithful. The two substantial pedestals supporting the statues of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph disappeared. The figures themselves, sporting bold painted bursts of light behind their heads, now sat atop spare, shelf-like supports. Pastel blue and pink paint covered the stenciling and stars that for years had stretched around the peripheries of the walls in the sanctuary and throughout the nave. Two angel statues and several pieces of furniture departed, replaced by a simple stand for a lector, who stood to the left of the altar.

To say that the liturgical reforms of Vatican II engendered controversy is to deal in understatement. Like their counterparts across the country, numerous parishioners of St. Margaret of varied ages and backgrounds balked as Father Evans and his young Assistant Pastors introduced reforms involving the celebration of the Mass.

The priest now faced the congregation. Majestic altars stood unused, replaced by simple wooden tables. Gone was the use of Latin and the need for missals. Sacramentals vanished or were minimized; the rosary seemed forgotten. Church services became noisy, Lay people took on major roles during worship services, even distributing Holy Communion. Folk singers replaced the choir (piano OK, but guitar and tambourines!). At "rehearsals" before Mass some priests nearly demanded parishioners respond with enthusiasm to new, unfamiliar hymns. One middle-aged female congregant at the time reached her breaking point at such a rehearsal before Easter Sunday Mass in the church hall. Jumping up from her folded metal chair, she pumped her fist in the air and screamed, "You're not going to ruin my Easter," as she stomped from the hall and out to the jammed parking lot.

St. Margaret Parish Builds a New Church



"New" Church Steering Committee.

If you wanted a seat at a weekend Mass at St. Margaret Church in the mid 1960s, you needed to arrive 20 minutes early. With Harford County's population edging towards the 30,000 mark, and with additional weekend Masses failing to put a dent in the overcrowding, parish officials knew the time had come. No matter the expense or other concerns, St. Margaret Parish had to build a new church. Scheduled Masses at St. Ignatius at 8:30 and 10:00 A.M. and in Bel Air every hour from 7 A.M. to Noon came nowhere close to being sufficient (even with persons

standing outside on the steps and sidewalk, and with the school gym available for particularly large overflows). The time had come.



Ground Breaking Ceremony.

Planning for the new facility began in 1966, and ground breaking occurred on July 6, 1967. Assisting Father Evans on that occasion was Father Alphonse Rose, an Assistant Pastor who had arrived in 1964 when Father Wanner became Head of the John Carroll School. The 36-year old Rose, a Baltimore native with a particular interest in Advanced Theology, was a vital addition to St. Margaret Parish. Evans was increasingly beset with the variety of illnesses that would soon force his retirement, and Cardinal Shehan had made very clear that parishes were to move ahead in adopting the changes of Vatican II.

Fathers Evans and Rose, working with Architects Sylvan L. Goldstick and Calvin Kern Kobsa, came up with a design that complemented the contemporary appearance of nearby public buildings and accorded with the Commission for the Implementation of the Decree on Liturgy. The church was to consist of three major parts—a baptistry-gallery area, an 825 seat nave and sanctuary, and a chapel for approximately 100 worshippers. Religious symbolism and spiritual guidelines dominated the design of virtually everything in the building.

Inviting worshippers into the baptistry were two 9-foot high bronze doors featuring colored, fired enamel panels depicting bursts of sunlight. These represented the



Church Gallery at Christmas time.

Gates of Heaven. Beyond the entry, within the octagonal shaped brick baptistry, and at the lowest level of a three step (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) cove, stood a huge baptismal font of Italian marble. With its constantly moving water, the font symbolized the ancient Christian tradition of believers' descending into a pool of living water and emerging to new life in Christ.

The 36-foot long gallery, with its walls of multi-colored glass that contribute to a sense of serenity and prayer, led by way of six-sided (the days of creation) brick pavers into the church proper and ultimately up the center aisle to the sanctuary area. More symbolically the gallery represented the passage through life from baptism, to death, and ultimately to resurrection in Christ, whose massive, resplendent wooden image hung in triumph above the altar.

For the priests and the architects, planning the design of the nave and elevated sanctuary involved the greatest amount of thought. Every feature of the space directed the attention of the faithful to the sacred actions that occurred in the sanctuary. These characteristics included the pitch of the ceiling, the radial pattern of the pews, and the lack of designs or images in the stained glass windows.

Additionally, plaster-covered steel beams leaned inward as they rose to meet the steel framed flat roof. At the nine foot level slanted four-foot bands of dark wood strips wrapped around the interior before they terminated behind the altar in two ten-foot wide vertically inclined bands that ran from the sanctuary floor to the roof. Between these lengthy bands hung the magnificent image of the Risen Christ, originally set off by a series of various sized perforated copper and bronze panels suspended in a random pattern from the back wall as it sloped downward to the floor.

Dominating the area of the angularly-shaped sanctuary, set five steps above the floor of the nave, were the massive altar and the pulpit. The altar, wrote the architects, was the "magnetic and architectural center of the congregation." Reminiscent of a table draped in cloth for a festive meal, the five-ton, highly polished Italian marble rock recalled the "stability which Christ left with his Church in founding it on a rock." Also dominating the sanctuary was the pulpit, of similar design and of the same material as the altar to its left. Here, during the instructional part of the mass, the priest proclaimed the Word of God, just as he celebrated the Word made Flesh at the altar during the sacrificial part of the Mass



Chapel Sanctuary

The third component of the new church, the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, continued the architectural character of the church proper. The chapel allowed for multiple functions by smaller, more intimate gatherings, including the celebration of daily Mass. Included in the chapel was the church's tabernacle wherein resided the consecrated hosts.

Excepting some subsequent alterations in design and some necessary renovations over the years, the church dedicated by Cardinal Shehan on April 20, 1969, remains the main church of St. Margaret Parish.

However skillfully conceived, imposing in appearance, grand in scale, and rich in its appurtenances, the building had numerous detractors. Many, but not all of these critics, were also opponents of other reforms of Vatican II. At a million dollars the church cost far too much. The space was cold, the décor

austere, the acoustics too noisy. The atmosphere was too Presbyterian; the design too intellectual. The new church, in short, failed to convey a sense of “sacred space,” as critics understood the concept. One long time parishioner, although convinced by his wife to pledge generously to the building fund, refused ever to set foot in the church. In similar fashion, other disenchanted individuals transferred their registration to nearby parishes.

Parish officials and the passage of time helped alleviate some of the congregation’s concerns. A staff member and Father Rose, who became pastor in 1970, conceived a novel plan to reduce the principal (thus the interest) on the mortgage, asking able parishioners to lend the church \$1,000 without interest. Rugs, colorful banners, and bolts of cloth suspended from the ceiling provided color and warmth. The quality of music improved as the parish employed a full time professional director of music. Sound barriers went up, and statues appeared in the chapel and in a small shrine on the rectory’s back lawn. And, of course, as time elapsed more people became accustomed to the changes of the 1960, which themselves gradually became the norm.

It was during this time that the long relationship between St. Ignatius and St. Margaret came to an end. Forced to close in April 1967 because of fears concerning the safety of its roof, St. Ignatius Church in the next few years underwent substantial repairs. Long time parishioners convinced Cardinal Shehan to re-open the building, end its status as a mission church, and to re-establish it as a parish within the diocese. On May 21, 1971, St. Ignatius became an independent parish with Monsignor Arthur C. Slade as Pastor.

*“... when St. Ignatius
had to close due to
it’s unsafe roof, it
was Mr. Green
who’s duty it was
to lock the doors.”*

Collegiality, Education, and Outreach Activities, 1970 – 2005



*Fr Alphonse G. Rose
Pastor 1970 – 1976.*

With the new church’s resolving its most immediate need, St. Margaret was now able to concentrate on other reforms of the Second Vatican Council. These required involving more lay people in significant aspects of church life and developing activities and organizations that reached out to the larger community, especially its needy, and to other faiths.

Father Rose was a major proponent of Christian Outreach and empowerment of the laity. Before his appointment as pastor of Cathedral Parish in Baltimore in 1976, Father Rose promoted a number of important programs that continue to affect St. Margaret today. In all cases he received great support from countless volunteers. These activities include the delivery of food items to area needy following the Thanksgiving Day Mass; ecumenical programs involving prayer, bible study, and discussion with members of other local faith groups; support for the FISH program; and formation of a county Alcoholics Anonymous chapter.

One remarkably successful initiative from this period that continues today is the First Friday Mass and luncheon. Begun in 1969 by members of the Parish Community Relations Committee, the program originally provided small numbers of senior citizens (would you believe only nine seniors as an initial group!) with a regular meaningful social opportunity. The activity took hold and grew in number. By 1983 coordinators secured local organizational and business sponsors to assist with and underwriting the costs of serving upwards of 200

William Lee Green, Sr.



William Green lies peacefully and very still in Section 1 of St. Ignatius cemetery. The place where he rests affords a direct view of the historic church, as though he was still caring for the 1792 building. His grave marker is a modest one, set amidst the more elaborate monuments of descendants of Irish and Italian immigrants. Nearby are the grave stones of his parents. His father was a slave. Parish rolls, including early pew rental lists, refer to the son as being "colored". Worshippers recall him and his family seated in pews in the back of the church. To long time parishioners of St. Ignatius and St. Margaret churches, much of this seems paradoxical, yet these circumstances and situations were very typical of the life of William Lee Green, Sr.

Dressed in his customary dark pants and checked shirt, he moved with ease and direction. Never in a hurry and slowly puffing on his pipe, he was a model of perpetual deliberate motion. Not inclined to take breaks, he nonetheless delighted in stopping to talk with young schoolboys or girls. Concerned that duties be carried out with proficiency, he relished opportunities to share with eager adolescents the way things worked or were done (imagine the excitement of a 6th grade altar boy first shown how to ring the church bell before Mass at St. Margaret).

Quietly desirous of completing a task and moving on to the next, he remained patient with talkative co-workers. A man of dignity and pride, he willingly performed the most humble of chores. Respectful of employers and authority, polite to all, and quick to tip his hat to ladies, he remained above subservience. Known to pastors and other close friends as Will or Bill, to everyone else he was "Mr. Green."

Mr. Green, born in 1891 at Sharon, Maryland., came from a background of hard work and determination. His father, Jacob Green, was for a number of years a slave with the Ady family before being emancipated during the Civil War. Some time before 1900, Jacob and his free-born wife Mary (Presbury) sent young William, one of their twelve children, to live with a married daughter. Soon after the turn of the 20th century, William Green lived for a number of years on the farm owned by Elizabeth Cain, the widow of James Cain, a prominent member of St. Ignatius parish. As Catholics, both the Ady and Cain families no doubt introduced Jacob Green and his family to the practice of the Catholic faith.

Many people today regard the idea of working sixty years for a single employer as a total aberration. To Mr. Green such a feat represented dedication and loyalty. First hired as a boy in 1904 by Father Frederick, he pumped the organ, helped in the garden, scythed the tall grass, and lent a hand in cutting and storing ice. In time he also painted, aided contractors, maintained the buildings, and saw to it that the rectory and church were warm in the winter. This required his waking at 4 A.M. and walking four miles to church in time for morning Mass. In an era before backhoes and other power equipment, he dug graves, mowed the lawns, raked the leaves, pruned the bushes, and shoveled the snow, with occasional help from his wife and grandchildren. Such activity lasted until his 60s.

As he matured Mr. Green's duties expanded to areas of greater responsibility. He served as custodian, caretaker, and sexton in the church buildings; helped with arrangements in the sanctuary; and served as head usher at St. Ignatius. When visiting priests came to help out at weekend Masses or during vacations, Father McCourt would leave instructions only on matters involving Eucharistic hosts, assuring the clergymen that, "Bill Green will tell you anything else." In April 1967, when St. Ignatius had to close due to its unsafe roof, it was Mr. Green whose duty it was to lock the doors.

Sharing Mr. Green's life at St. Ignatius and St. Margaret was his wife, Bertha, one of eleven children of Shadrack (Shade) and Mary E. Dorsey. Born in 1892, she and William Lee Green married in October 1915 in the rectory at St. Ignatius (her family was non-Catholic), and together had four children. Two of their daughters remain as parishioners of St. Margaret. In addition to responsibilities at the family homestead on Johnson Mill Road, Mrs. Green helped keep house for the priests at St. Ignatius and assisted Sister Idaberga at the convent in Bel Air. As a younger woman, she helped her husband wield the pick and shovel needed to dig the graves at St. Ignatius. She died in 1986, twelve years after her husband left for his heavenly home, as a result of complications from a broken hip.

William Lee Green, Sr., went through life unsuspectingly and effortlessly leaving an indelible memory in the minds of the people whose lives he touched. For over sixty years he served his God and his church with such love and quiet grace that thirty-one years later people smile broadly as they recall their association with the beloved "Mr. Green." When he died in 1974, he left a legacy likely never to be matched. Perhaps a comment by the late Deacon Jack Hickey sums up best the life of this remarkable man. Mr. Green, he asserted, was "as saintly an example of a Catholic gentleman as I've ever met in my life."

seniors (Catholic and Non-Catholic) a month—all without dues, meetings, minutes, or elected officers.

Another highlight of parish Outreach efforts was the adoption in 1975 of a 14-person refugee family from Vietnam. After spending weeks in Guam, Wake Island, and Arkansas, the Nguyens (ranging in age from 83 to 5 years) arrived *en masse* on a blustery, snowy day in December. Generous parishioners arranged to provide them with a home, furniture, jobs, transportation, education, and health care. In the following thirty years the younger family members have gone on to complete their education, marry, acquire homes, and move into the mainstream of American life. So successful was this effort that the parish in subsequent years went on to adopt the Szarama family, who came to the United States after fleeing Poland and spending three years in a relocation facility in Germany.

Lay men and women began to serve the parish in a number of important capacities. These positions included being on the Parish Council; serving as cantors, lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers; heading various committees; teaching CCD class; and studying for the permanent diaconate. Parents became responsible for preparing their children to receive First Penance and First Eucharist. Of particular significance, Father Rose in 1974 hired Patrick Goles, a teacher at John Carroll School and a candidate for the diaconate, as the first lay principal of a parochial school in archdiocesan history. In time Mrs. Patricia Krysiak, Mrs. Natalie Boyd, Miss Amelia Mike, and Mrs. Jane Dean also came to serve as principals of the school.

Religious education programs for parish youth experienced great revitalization. Since Father Frederick's era, the parish had sought to varying degrees to provide for students not in Catholic schools. First the church rented a small hall. Then lay people met small numbers of students in their homes. The Sisters invited young people to meet with them after school, either in the convent or a classroom. As time passed and numbers grew, early pastors took a more organized approach, scheduling groups of wide age spans to meet in the school building.

During Father Rose's twelve years at St. Margaret the number of children enrolled in religious education classes soared. To meet this demand the parish organized the Department of Religious Education and hired outside educators, a priest and a lay woman, as heads. The department, affiliated with the diocese's Office of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, consisted of a Pre-School, a Home Religion Program (grades 1-3), the Junior School (grades 4-8), and the Senior School, which met at John Carroll School. By June 1970 the School of Religion involved a total of 887 students meeting bi-weekly with 95 teachers, only five of whom were religious.



Fr James B. Carey
Pastor 1976 – 1986.

In some ways the second half of the 1970s and first half of the 1980s proved to be a period of retrenchment for the parish. In 1976 Father James B. Carey succeeded Father Rose as pastor after serving as his assistant for a few years. A gentle, soft-spoken man with the appearance of the scholar he was, Father Carey preferred life behind-the-scenes, in contrast to the highly visible, gregarious, and animated Father Rose. A former Christian Brother and principal at Calvert Hall, Father Carey delegated much responsibility to his Assistant Pastors, especially to the highly capable Father Lloyd Aiken.

In 1977 the School Sisters of Notre Dame informed St. Margaret Parish that they could no longer staff the school. This decision, realistic as it was, given the dwindling number of vocations and the declining percentage of Sisters to lay teachers, nonetheless saddened hundreds of students and parents, as well as generations of alumni. Three years later the parish, in a decision it came to regret, sold the new convent building to Harford County government for \$305,000.

In a related area, the growth of the numbers of students in both the parish school and the school of religious education slowed or declined. In 1972, the administration had decided, especially given the competition from the newly opened Southampton Middle School, to eliminate grades 7 and 8 as a financial drain. In a classic case of "unforeseen consequences" the enrollment of younger students began to drop significantly as numerous parents transferred their children to nearby St. Joan of Arc or St. Stephen Schools. The enrollment in 1986 was 350 students, down from the 500-some of the 1970s. The overall enrollment of students in the CCD program in 1980 remained largely the same as it was ten years earlier.

Despite Father Carey having to undergo surgery for the disease that eventually ended his life, he and his assistants continued to promote parish renewal in the spirit of Fathers Evans and Rose. Programs in pastoral health care, Marriage Encounter, Engaged Encounter, and shared services with Emmanuel Episcopal began. The parish hired full time coordinators for the School of Religious Education and Youth Ministry, and adopted a second Vietnamese family.

Sadly, perhaps what most parishioners remember about this era were the need for major renovations to the church and unrest within the school community. Some of the structural problems were relatively minor. Concrete sidewalks about the new church began to heave. The heavy front doors, especially in view of the sidewalk issue, proved burdensome and in need of replacement. Leaks appeared in the church building. Contractors completed the largely cosmetic repairs, and the matter was settled.

Much more problematic were the faults within the new church. In December 1984, Father Carey reported to parishioners that the sixteen-year old structure was in need of substantial renovation in three areas. The flat roof had deteriorated to the point that leaks threatened the structural integrity of the building. The lack of insulation in the roof and side walls, combined with the highly inefficient and failing boiler, had driven heating and cooling to astronomical levels. And, potentially worst of all, asbestos existed in the white stucco of the ceiling and walls of the church.

The repairs required to fix these problems, involving hundreds of thousands of dollars, took place at the end of Father Carey's tenure and during the first years of his successor, Father Francis X. Callahan. Engineers determined that the roof and its insulation deficiencies could be corrected without closing down the building, but the matter of the stucco, the asbestos, and the lack of insulation in the walls required the removal of all contents and the complete closure of the facility. For six months, between May and November 1989, the celebration of Mass and other services occurred in the school hall and in the auditorium of John Carroll School.

Following correction of these defects parish officials carried out significant changes in the original design of the new church. In the Baptistry renovators removed the three steps down, raised the recessed area to the level of

the floor, paved the new area with sunburst color tiles, and repositioned the font. They also eliminated the oak accent ribs and the hanging metal plates on the wall behind the sanctuary. Chairs replace pews in the choir section, and the suspended Glory of Christ statue was located more towards the rear of the sanctuary.

Problems internal to the school administration and faculty led to a short-lived drop in school enrollment in the mid Eighties. These occurred just as school spirit had risen dramatically with the return of the 7th and 8th grades and receipt of accreditation by the Middle States Association. In 1984, with Pat Gole's leaving education for the business world, Father Carey had appointed Mrs. Patricia Krysiak, a veteran educator relatively new to St. Margaret School, as school head. Mrs. Krysiak, a strong-willed individual with a top-down, "do-it-now" philosophy of leadership, immediately instituted a series of changes in the near 75-year old school. Significant numbers of long-time teachers resigned in June 1985, citing clashes in personality and leadership style, as Father Carey remained in support of Mrs. Krysiak. In 1986 Mrs. Krysiak resigned, and Mrs. Natalie Boyd, a twenty year veteran teacher at St. Margaret, became principal.

Father Callahan Becomes Pastor



*Fr Francis X. Callahan
Pastor 1986 – Present.*

With Father Carey's illness-forced retirement and Father Aiken's appointment to Annunciation Parish, St. Margaret found itself in need of a new pastor. In August of 1986, after serving at numerous parishes and at the Catholic Center in Baltimore, Father Francis X. Callahan came to St. Margaret Parish from Baltimore's Corpus Christi parish. A graduate of Mount St. Mary Seminary, Father Callahan over his nineteen years at St. Margaret has guided the parishioners of St. Margaret toward fulfillment of the spirit of renewal contained in the decrees of the Second Vatican Council.

Harford County and especially Bel Air (the 2000 Census indicated there were nearly 75,000 people in the town's two Zip Code Numbers) continued to experience enormous growth in the final several decades of the Twentieth Century. When Father Callahan arrived, church records indicated 2,384 families belonged to the parish. By 1990 the number had risen to 3,385 and to over 5,000 at the Millenium. In 2004 the number stood at 5,250 families and a total of 18,115 persons. For a parish committed to education of its young and to the concepts of collegiality and service, these numbers represented both great opportunities and great challenges.



*Parish Office and
Pre-School Facility.*

Among the physical challenges were parish facilities. Once again the church and school buildings (despite 1990 rental of the former Bo-Peep Day Care Center) had become too small to accommodate the throngs of people (and cars!) that flocked to St. Margaret. Planning began in the early 1990s for a reconfiguration of the current property, renovation of some existing facilities, acquisition of additional property, and construction of both a new church and of another school building

The first major steps in the overall design took shape in the winter of 1995. In January the parish completed construction of a new two-story Parish Office and Pre-School

Building at the far end of the parking lot between the 1962 school and the new church. The following month volunteers completed refurbishing the old church. They removed the walls and barriers that had divided the main floor into offices, uncovered and cleaned the stained glass windows (estimated to require 80 person-hours each), restored the woodwork, and created a large open space useful for various type gatherings. Called the Father Alphonse Frederick Adult Education Center, the renovated building also houses The William D. Borders Library of religious materials.



*St. Mary Magdalen
Multi-purpose
Center.*

A little more than two years later, April 12, 1997, William Cardinal Keeler dedicated a new multi purpose mission center off Churchville Road in the Fountain Green area. Located on 13.5 acres of the Wagner farm purchased in 1993, the award winning mission church of St. Mary Magdalen seats 600 persons and serves as the site of two weekend Masses.

The culmination of the ten-year plan occurred September 20, 2001. On that date Bishop William C. Newman dedicated the St. Mary Magdalen Education Center. The home of St. Margaret Middle School (grades 6 through 8) of St. Margaret School, the structure features a well equipped media center, high school quality laboratories, and mobile lap top computer centers.



*St. Mary Magdalen
Education Center.*

While all this construction was taking place, striking landscaping transformed the Hickory Avenue property between the old school and the new church. Much of the macadam (and most of the traffic congestion) vanished, replaced by winding brick walkways, conversation areas, benches, paving blocks, ornamental trees, grassy areas, and masses of flowers chosen to bloom during all seasons. Additionally, designers incorporated an attractive planted berm to facilitate vehicular movement in the area.

Another eye-catching improvement to the campus was the creation of the Marian shrine and prayer garden. Its central feature was a four foot tall, white Italian marble image of the Blessed Mother. The statue had originally been donated in 1988 by interested parishioners and located between the rectory and the original church. Seeking a more private area for quiet meditation and prayer, planners developed an area on the south side of the chapel, incorporating the statue, a brick patio with memorial plaques, benches, and plantings. Father Callahan presided at the re-dedication on September 20, 2001, as a gentle rain from heaven fell on the assembled believers.



*Shrine and Prayer
Garden dedicated
To Mary.*

With the conclusion of the spectacular building program, Father Callahan in an October 2002 interview stressed that “we’re not going to see any more bricks and mortar.” He indicated that completion of improvements to the physical plant permitted an even greater emphasis on the service involvement of the laity within

both the parish and the community at large. That Father Callahan encouraged a “collaborative ministry” comes as no surprise to anyone who has examined the parish *Directory of Ministries* handbook dated fall of 2004. Divided into broad categories, including Sacramental Preparation, Development, Religious Education, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Outreach, and Liturgy, the 24-page pamphlet describes 82 opportunities for parishioners to commit their time, talent, and treasure to “loving service.”

Certain programs and issues have been of special importance to Father Callahan and parishioners involved in Outreach efforts. These include Anna’s House for abused women, the plight of the homeless, AIDS Ministry, the Cooperative Food Ministry, Birthright, Habitat for Humanity, and Home Partnership, Inc. Recent highly successful initiatives involve the ministries to Upper Chesapeake Hospital and the Harford County Detention Center. In 2004 alone clergy and lay persons accounted for over 1,000 visits to the hospital and 110 visits to the prison. The school has also joined in Outreach efforts with its on-going involvement with The Sisters Academy of Baltimore and with St. Rose of Lima School in Haiti.

Activities and organizations such as these encourage parishioners and the clergy to utilize their talents in areas of particular personal interest while also working with individuals of other faiths and other Christian denominations. Forty years following the closing of the Vatican II the documents of the Council continue as a powerful guide to the life of St. Margaret Parish.

Given the sheer size of the Parish of St. Margaret and St. Mary Magdalen, its enormous numbers of varied activities and outreach efforts, and its committed clergy and dedicated parishioners, it is no wonder that Father Callahan proclaimed the parish to be a “city of God.” Public testimony to that statement came in Father’s seventeenth year as pastor, when the St. Margaret received the award as the outstanding non-profit organization in Harford County for the year 2002.

Conclusion

As St. Margaret Parish concludes its centennial year, one wonders in amazement at all that has been accomplished and continues to be accomplished. With close to 20,000 parishioners, some 870 students in its school, a database of nearly 900 volunteers, and a 100-year record of contribution to the people of the community, it has indeed become a “veritable tree of life.”

Father Frederick would be very proud.

Biography and Acknowledgments

Jim Chrismer's relationship with St. Margaret Parish goes back to June 1945 when he arrived in Bel Air with his parents at age 1. Baptized at his family's ancestral parish of St. Joseph Church, Emmitsburg, Maryland, he was one of the early Baby Boomers to invade Bel Air following his father's discharge from the U.S. Army. He entered St. Margaret School in September 1950 and fondly recalls with great clarity Sister Corinne, Sister Paul Marie, Sister Nathan, and Sister Letitia. One of his favorite memories is serving as an altar boy during Father McCourt's tenure as pastor. Recollections of his classmates and their shared experiences over eight years continue to be a source of much delight.

Graduating from Saint Margaret School in 1958, he attended Calvert Hall, Mt. St. Mary's College, Villanova University, and the University of Virginia. In 1970 Father Charles Riepe hired him to teach History at John Carroll School. At John Carroll, where he continues to teach Advanced Placement and College Prep United States History, he served as History Department Chair for 25 years before resigning to have more time to research and write local history.



Jim Chrismer rings the "Famous" church bell, October 1, 2005, to announce start of the Centennial Year closing ceremony.

Jim Chrismer "returned" to St. Margaret School when his daughters Ellen and Lisa entered his *alma mater* in the 1980s. His wife Carolyn worked as a Librarian at Saint Margaret School for some of this time, including for a year or so in "Sister Corinne's room."

Mr. Chrismer wishes to express his gratitude to his parents, the late Catherine and Wayde Chrismer, for the sacrifices they made to send him and his siblings to St. Margaret School, and to everyone who agreed to be interviewed and provided personal detail. To Father Callahan for asking him to undertake this history, to Bernie Classon and Natalie Boyd for their work on the Centennial Committee and especially for organizing the very helpful set of notes and parish recollections, and to Mrs. Karen Saccenti for helping guide this project and for providing access to a collection of parish records. He credits also the students and administration of John Carroll School for their support of his many projects over the years, and the volunteers at the Historical Society of Harford County for their eager generosity in making available to one and all the Society's collections of Harford County materials. Finally, thanks go out to Carolyn for allowing the family dining room table to serve as this project's center of operations during the summer and early fall of 2005.

From Mustard Seed to Tree of Life

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Way Back When



Students playing ball, probably playing at the town ball field on Lee Street



St. Idaberga, Sr. deLellis, Sr. Serenus, Sr. Pulcheria, and Tabby - 1914.



Hickory Avenue looking south from St. Margaret Chapel toward the Norris House where the first classes were held.



Some of St. Margaret's first Students

James Ruff Small and Mary Roberta Smith were married by Fr. Frederick in 1897. Their son, John Wilson Small, went to St. Margaret School in 1911.



U. S. Post Office, Main Street, Bel Air

Graduations To Remember ...



Class of 1939



Class of 1941



Class of 1942



Class of 1943



Class of 1961



Centennial Year Opening Ceremony

October 2, 2004



Concelebrating: Bishop Newman and Father Callahan

100th Anniversary

Centennial Mass

October 1, 2005

*Cardinal Keeler and
Father Callahan greet
each other at the start
of the Centennial Year
Anniversary Mass*



Centennial Year Happenings ...



Rēdedication of the Old Church Cornerstone



Parish trip to Italy



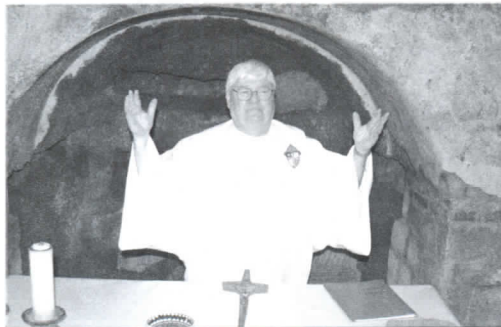
Swiss Guard



Parishioners await the Pope's arrival



*Papal audience with His Holiness
Pope Benedict XVI - June 1, 2005*



*Father Callahan celebrates Mass in
the "Catacombe di San Callisto"*



*Parishioners visit
the ancient city of
Pompeii with
Mount Vesuvius
in the background*

Parish Trip to Canada

*Parishioners and friends
gather for their Cruise to
Canada, and visit to the
St. Anne de Beaupre
Shrine*



Centennial Year Happenings ...



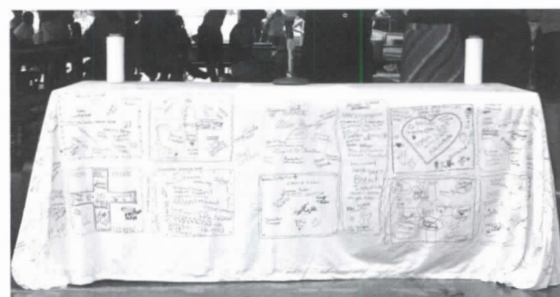
*Parish Picnic and Mass
at Rocks State Park*



*Religious Education Class put on skit about
about the Parish Centennial Year*



*Former school principals gather with
Father Callahan - Patrick Goles, Sister
Marie Mack, Natalie Boyd, and Jane Dean
at the school reunion April 30, 2005*

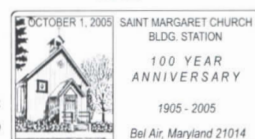


*Cloth signed by Religious Education
Students used as the Altar Cloth for
the Picnic Mass*

*Special postal
cancellation
commemorating
the Centennial
Year*



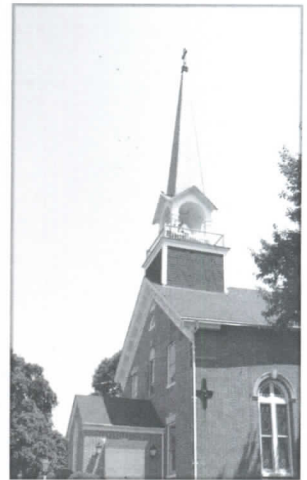
*Cancellation
Stamp*



*St. Margaret Campus becomes an
official postal station, with a commemorative
cancellation provided.*

Centennial Year Happenings ...

Bus pilgrimage to St. Ignatius, Chapel Point Maryland. St. Ignatius Church was founded in 1641 by Father Andrew White, an English Jesuit, who was born in London in 1579 and who was one of the first Jesuites to arrive in Maryland.



Parish Council Meeting - September 2005



Parishioners bring food to share with those in need.

We gather together to ask the Lord's Blessing

Thanksgiving Mass 2004



St. Margaret School children undertake a project to collect 1,000,000 pennies to help out their sister school, St. Rose of Lima, in Haiti.

Father Callahan and St. Margaret school children gather around the Million Penny collection.



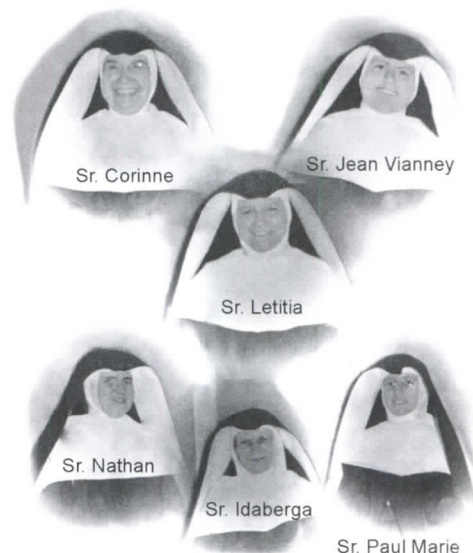
Children attending opening mass celebrating the beginning of a new school year - 2005.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame who have served at St. Margaret

Mary Alongan
Therese Maureen Allen*
Mary Rosalia Auth
Mary Ernestine Bahis
Mary Josita Baldwin
Mary Eucharist Baummer
Mary Enrico Bloom
Mary Gisela Bonet
Mary Alfonse Liguori Businsky
Mary Lillian Byrne
Mary Pulcheria Cahill
Mary Dolorosa Callahan
Mary Matthew Callahan
Mary Joselia Cathert
Louis Mary Cionci
Kathleen Cleary (Gerard Majella)
Mary Charitine Clifford
Mary Joselia Colbert
Mary Vera Curran
Edith Ann DeGiosio (Dolorette)
Mary Regina Dohlen
Mary Theophane Donovan
Mary Hilary Doyle
Kathleen Feeley (Marie Jerome)
Marie Antoinette Fiermonte
Helen Fish (Paulina)
Mary Amalia Gores
Anna Gray – Candidate
Mary Robertine Griffin
Mary Emedia Groh
Mary Berlindis Hanley
Patricia Hendricks (Sister
Jean Vianney)*
Mary Bonavita Holozschuk
Paul Marie Hynes
Mary Cyril Kane

Mary Winifred Kenney
Mary Henrietta Kloppenberg
Mary Maureen Leahy
Mary Corona Lindner
Rosemary Lindner (Cortona)
Mary Cletus Lyons
Marie Mack
Julie Ann MacLean*
Dorothy Malone (Dorotheus)
Mary Corinne McDevitt
Joanna Marrinan – Candidate
Mary Reparta Mayer
Mary Ernestine Moscati
Mary Ulicia Nagle
Mary Nathan Nee
Mary Hilaire O'Hara
Mary Roberto Owens
Gloria Arko Pfeifer (Sister
Frederick)*
Mary Veronica Prosser
Irene Mary Pryle
Mary Floretta Raum
Mary Eugene Raupach
Mary Quirilla Reuter
Mary Ardiene Roberto
Mary Camillus de Lellis
Rollenbach
Mary Eusebia Rupertus
Mary Serenus Ryan
Mary Alonza Schaefer
Joan Lightel Scheck (Sister
Joan)*
Mary Ernesta Schmidt
Mary Rosebia Schneider
Loretta Marie Schultz
Mary Alberta Sheridan

Mary Charissma Sheridan
Elizabeth Sokel (Sister
Marie Edwin)
Angela Cianci Szabo (Sister
Louis Mary)*
Agnes Van Rossum –
Candidate
Mary Margaret Alacoque
Van Rossum
Mary Basilia Verhaehen
Mary Idaberga Vorisek
Linda Winter Wanner
(Sister Philip Mary)*
Mary Louisa Wehage
Philip Mary Winter
Mary Lucinda Witman
Susan L. Wood (Sister
Susan)*



* Former Member

Associate Pastors who have served at St. Margaret

Lloyd Aiken
Charles Belzner
Martin Burnham
Michael Buttner
Michael Carrion
Joseph Cote
Jeffrey Dausen
Thomas Golueke

Stephen Gosnell
Paul Holthaus
C. Douglas Kenny
Robert Laciuga
Thomas Malia
Frank McFadden
George B. Moeller
Alan Nagle

John O'Brien
Thomas J. Penn
Joseph Schaefer
Raymond Scheck
Martin Strempeck
Raymond Wanner
Samuel Young

*Congratulations to St. Margaret Parish
On the Occasion of Their Centennial Celebration*

*from the Faculty, Staff and Students
of St. Margaret School*

*Established in 1911 through the
generosity of St. Margaret Parish*



ST. MARGARET SCHOOL

www.smsch.org

Elementary Campus: 205 Hickory Avenue • Bel Air, MD 21014

Middle School Campus: 1716 A Churchville Road • Bel Air, MD 21015

May God Bless You

Thomas and Betty Adams
◇
In Memory of Ruth & Lois ~ The Austin Family
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Bailey
◇
In Memory of Peter Barczak by Dorothy Barczak
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Philip Bauer
◇
Cynthia and Robert Beasman
◇
Kay and Joe Bogdan
◇
Mrs. Kathryn Bogdan
◇
Paul and Joanne Bowes
◇
Sarah R. Brown
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph J. Brown
◇
Pat and Rennie Bucci
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Campbell
◇
The Carr, Langrehr, Joens Families
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Jorge Ciappi
◇
In Memory of Thomas and Gene Conklin, Sr.
◇
Arthur and Mary Cordwell
◇
Edgar and Carolyn Crutchfield
◇
Dave and Diane Custer
◇
Ken and Carol Dawson
◇
Mrs. Anthony DeFavis
◇
God Bless Our Parish ~ The Delss Family
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Louis J. DeMaio
◇
Jack and Mary Dempsey and Family
◇
Peace & Love, Richard and Marianne Diacont
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Bernard F. DiAngelo
◇
Raymond and Esther Dombrowski
◇
Memorial William C. Donovan
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Dunphy, Jr.
◇
Mr. & Mrs. George A. Durst

Rick, Claire, Laura and Bryan Eckenrode
◇
In Memory of Dolly "Mom" Thim Edge
With love, Bill Edge and Family
◇
Let Us Pray For Another 100 Years! T. Ey
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Earl B. Ferguson, Jr.
◇
100 Best Wishes! First Friday Seniors
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Fitta
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Muhler
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher D. McKew
◇
The Flynn Family
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Woodson Francis, Jr.
◇
J. Raymond and F. deSales Gaeng
◇
The Georg Family
◇
In Memory of Robert M. Harrison, Jr.
Doris E. Harrison
◇
Edward and Rose Hendricks
◇
Congratulations ~ Dorothy B. Higinbotham
◇
100 Thanks St. Margaret, The Hinkles
◇
Alice Kolarik Hoff
◇
Molly & Ted Hoffman & Family ~ Praise God
◇
The Hojnacki Family
◇
Eloise Hopkins and Family
◇
The Howley Family
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Hubbard
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Matthew I. Hutton, Sr. & Family
◇
Peace and Prayers George L. Hyman Family
◇
Ted and Jeraldine Jenkins
◇
Ms. Rose Marie Jennings
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Albert M. Johnson
◇
Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Jones & Family
◇
Donald and Patricia Kaminski
◇
Mrs. Dennis Kennedy

May His Light Shine Upon You

Jean Smith Salamone-Kochowicz
In Memory Kogut and Welsch Family
In Memory of Debra Ann Kopczynski
Edward A. and Catherine D. Kraft
Mrs. George Krueger Jr.
The Kutcher Family
Mr. & Mrs. James Loskot
Mr. & Mrs. Paul E. Lynch Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Macko, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Maczko
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Manager
James M. Martin
Mr. & Mrs. David Martin
Joan & William Matejka
Mrs. Patricia McCrea
McMillan Family: Anna-Marie and Earl
Mr. & Mrs. Ray M. McNew and Family
The Metzgers Wm, Gen, Mere and Justin
Mr. & Mrs. John A. Miller, Jr.
Mr. James Monaghan
Mrs. Dorothy Mooney
Mr. & Mrs. Paul J. Moravec, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. John Norkaitis
In Memory of Cornelius F. Oberle
Mrs. C. F. (Rosalie G.) Oberle
In Memory of Oktavec and Kuczynski Families
Mr. & Mrs. Sean O'Neill
Mrs. Ted Pajak
Jack and Mary Parks
To Jesus through Mary. E. Passalacqua
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Patrinicola

Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Pavelka
Veronica Clarke Peden
Ploskonka Family
Emily E. Powers
The Protokowicz Family
Barbara B. Rabinowitz
Barbara Rabinowitz
Peter Reinmann
Raymond C. Reinmann
Mr. & Mrs. Earle Richardson, Jr.
Mrs. Katherine Riedlbauer
Rinaldi, Tony, Rita and Gina
Congratulations! Tony and Lorraine Rollo
John and Karen Saccenti Family
Brian and Jenny, Stephen and Angela
Nicholas and Joshua
Mr. & Mrs. John Schab
Mark and Kathleen Schneider
Mrs. Doris Shaffer
Bill and Kathy Shanks and Family
Love To All! Robert and Cecelia Siford
In Gratitude for God's Many Blessings
Carolyn ~ Chas ~ Joe Slimowicz
The Snarski Family
Mr. Joseph T. Sova, Jr.
Ronald C. Spahn
Miss Barbara Sparr
Miss Anna Sparr
Kenneth J. Spoerl and Family
Mr. & Mrs John Springer
Francis and Margaret Stallings and Family
Patricia Stasiak

With Gratitude To Our Patrons

John and Joan Stech and Family
 ◆
 Bernadine and Jim Stogoski and Family
 ◆
 Barbara Pitts Stratton
 ◆
 Terri Swam
 ◆
 Mr. Ronald Swatski
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. Michael Tamberino
 ◆
 The Tarquini Family
 ◆
 The Thatcher Family
 ◆
 August and Iris Thiel
 ◆
 Mrs. Kenneth Todd (Mary)
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis Topper
 ◆
 We Give Thanks to God, Sal and Cecelia Torrissi

Mr. Donald Urbani
 ◆
 Mr. William Vanden Eynden
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Vierheller
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. Tinh Vuong
 ◆
 Pat and Ed Ward ~ Good Memories
 ◆
 George W. Weiner
 ◆
 Rita and Will Wilcox
 ◆
 Charley and Audrey Wilson
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. Gerald A. Witasick Sr.
 ◆
 The Yantz Family
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. David F. Young
 ◆
 Vincent K. and Elizabeth B. Younger
 ◆
 Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Zalowski



*Patrick is baptized by
 Father McCourt in 1955.*

... from the Spicer Collection

*Photo taken in the Baptistry area of the Original Church,
 behind the rear pews..*

Twentieth Century

Twenty-first Century



*Nicholas is baptized by
 Father Callahan in 2003.*

... St. Margaret Collection

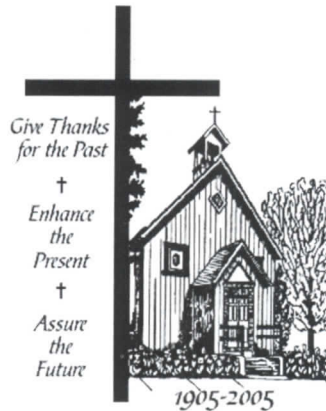
The Baptistry of the New Church.

In Celebration of 100 Years of Parish Community Life and Anticipation of the next 100 Years

~ Serving with Dedication ~

The Parish Pastoral Council

*David George, President
Tim Colt, Vice-President
Michelle Sullivan, Secretary*



*Jim Antal
Jeanne Close
Mike Eder*

*Joe Hughes
Frank Meadowcroft
Rafael Mejia*

*Patricia Stasiak
David Thomey
Thomas Wiegand*

Your Priests, Deacons and Parish Staff

*Rev. Francis X. Callahan, Pastor
Msgr. George Moeller, Senior Priest
Msgr. Martin Strempeck, In Resident
Rev. Martin Burnham, Associate Pastor
Rev. Richard Gray, Spanish Ministry
Karen Saccenti, Assistant Pastor
Patrick J. Goles, Deacon
Victor Petrosino, Deacon
Gregory Rapisarda, Deacon
Martin Wolf, Deacon*

*Rob Alford, Business Manager
Jane Dean, Principal
Carol Delss, Assistant Principal
Phil Federowicz, Assistant Principal*

*Jeff Winfield, Music
Josephine Magness, Outreach
Marge Troilo, Religious Education
Lisa Brown, Religious Education
Marie Dekowski, Adult Education
Karen Clemens, Youth Ministry
Brian Bourne, Youth Ministry*



***St. Margaret is proud to be among the first
Parishes of the Archdiocese of Baltimore
to have permanent deacons:***

*Klaus Opalka (ordained in 1972)
Jack Hickey (1973)
Patrick Góles (1974)
Gene Miller (1974)
Paul Ciesla (1983 – transferred from St. Joan of Arc)
Donald MacKnew (1986)
Donald Murray (1989)
Victor Petrosino (1999)
Gregory Rapisarda (2003)
Martin Wolf (2005)*

*James DeCapite (2003) Serving at St. Patrick Church
Gary Dumer (2003) Serving at St. Mary
James Sullivan (2003) Serving at St. Francis de Sales*

***Special Thanks to ...
The Centennial Committee***

*Betty Adams ♦ Katherine "DeDe" Anderson ♦ Jim Antal
Natalie and Earnie Boyd ♦ Bernie Classon ♦ Jeanne Close ♦ Frank DiAngelo
John and Candy Draksler ♦ David George ♦ Dorothy Higinbotham ♦ Germaine Hughes
Betty Hunter ♦ LeeAnna Kelly ♦ Vince Lagrotteria ♦ Madonna Lyon ♦ Elaine O'Neill
Carol Petrosino ♦ Ed Powers ♦ Jack and Karen Saccenti ♦ Chas Slimowicz ♦ Michelle Sullivan
Ellen Swartz ♦ Marge Troilo ♦ Ed Ward ♦ Charley and Audrey Wilson*

... all those who served on the following Sub-Committees:

*Decorating ✕ Centennial Book ✕ Hospitality ✕ Liturgy ✕ Memorabilia
Music ✕ Pageant ✕ Postmark ✕ Publicity ✕ Reunion ✕ Souvenir*

... those having supplied photographs from their collection:

*Elizabeth "Betty" Adams ♦ Thelma Bond ♦ Jim Chrismer ♦ LeeAnna McComas Kelly
Mary Flutka ♦ Janet Ruckle ♦ Jack Saccenti ♦ Patrick Spicer ♦ Mary Streett
S.S.N.D. Archives ♦ Charley Wilson ♦ St. Ignatius (Hickory) Archives ♦ St. Margaret Archives*



**Our mission is to enable all men to seek a personal
relationship with Jesus Christ**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."

Matthew 28:15

At Catholic Mens' Fellowship, we believe that all men are called to a new season of faith renewal.

- Find holiness and a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Fed by sacraments and liturgy.
- Learn and proclaim our Catholic Faith and the inexhaustible riches of Catholic Teachings and Traditions.
- Encourage other men to know and love God and neighbor.
- Want to take a more active role in the life of the parish and in support of our pastor and Church.
- Join other men in prayer, scripture, fellowship and the sacraments.
- Accept responsibility and accountability to bring Christ to others.
- Make daily your efforts to become the best possible disciple for Christ and His Church.

Every Catholic man is invited to explore, and to experience for yourself, the joy that comes from sharing your faith with other men; then discover the value of men's Fellowship.

**For additional information:
Contact the Parish Office @ (410) 838-4224**

Celebrating 100 Years of Service to Our Community





THE GOELLER FAMILY'S CENTENNIAL BLESSINGS

In 1963, my wife Maureen and I moved to Forest Hill from East Baltimore. We began attending churches in our area in order to select our parish. St. Margaret was the third church we attended, and we looked no further. We sat in the second pew from the rear on the left side of the original church. It's charm, the prospect of the soon-to-be-opened new church, and a warm greeting from Pastor Terence Evans had us hooked. We registered with Father Evans within the week and so began our faith journey with St. Margaret.

Our family has enjoyed many blessings at St. Margaret. Foremost, our daughters Christine and Valerie received all their sacraments - Baptism through Matrimony - at St. Margaret. As of this date, our grandchildren Kayla, Kaden, Julia, Anah, Emma and Kate have been baptized at St. Margaret.

St. Margaret has been very accepting of the Goeller family, encouraging each of us to share our time, talents and treasures in many faith-filled ways. We have truly flourished as a family because of our St. Margaret involvement.

Our family sincerely congratulates St. Margaret Parish on the occasion of it's centennial celebration and cherishes the reality that St. Margaret and St. Mary Magdalen will help us to continue our faith journeys.

WITH LOVE, GRATITUDE AND BEST WISHES,
GENE AND MAUREEN GOELLER AND FAMILY



Congratulations and Best Wishes
From the Polun Family

In loving memory of
Lt. Owen Eugene Sweeney, Jr.

His family extends
sincere congratulations
to St. Margaret Parish

In Memory
of
Edward D. Higinbothom



*In Gratitude
and Continued Blessings to
St. Margaret Church and
St. Mary Magdalen Mission*

*The Lesch Family
Warren, Marge, Bob, Dave, Laurie,
Suzanne, Michael*

In Thanksgiving

Beverly A. Martin
Fr. Michael T. Martin, OFM, Conv.

CONGRATULATIONS

With gratitude for the many blessings
of this faith-filled Community.

THE LONG FAMILY

Jim and Betty

Jim, Bill, Mary, Peter



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"Happy are those who dwell in your house!
They never cease to praise you."
Psalm 84: 5

**St. Margaret Church
Bel Air, Maryland**

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Hundred Years Service
to the Community

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Achille, Mary Ann,
Mark and Matthew*




FATHER ALAN NAGLE

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BE ETERNAL**

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and
Mary E. Burns
Married by Fr. Frederick
Children attended
St. Margaret School*

*John B. Anderson
Wm. H. Anderson
Thomas E. Anderson
Mary Louise Boniface
Katherine (DeDe) Anderson* 



*St. Clair
and
Beatty
Families*





**In Gratitude for the
opportunity to serve
Our Lady of the Snows
and
Mother of Mercy Praesidia
of The Legion of Mary
offer their sincere
congratulations on the
100th Anniversary of
Saint Margaret Church.**

**May the Blessed Mother
and her Divine Son
continue to bless us.**

*Thank You
for Our Wonderful
Foundation in Faith!*

*May God Continue
to Bless Our
St. Margaret Parish*

*Congratulations on 100 Years
of Loving Service to
the Bel Air Community*

Geoffrey and Jeanne Close

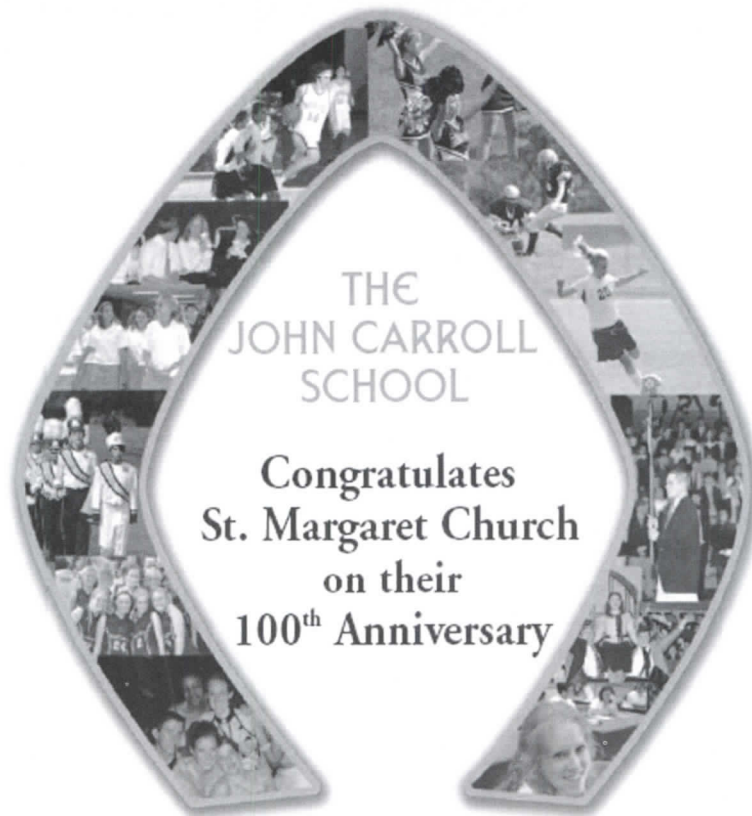
*In Gratitude
For
Blessings Received*

*Earnie & Natalie Boyd
Alan G. Boyd
John & Barbara Boyd Ward*

**Congratulations
to
St. Margaret Church
on your
Centennial Celebration**

Peace, Prayers and Love

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Hatem



**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
GLORIA ANNE MORRA
1929 - 1994**



DEAR GRANDMA GLORIA,

ALREADY IN HEAVEN BEFORE WE WERE BORN, NOW OUR
GUARDIAN ANGEL WATCHING OVER US.

WE LOVE YOU VERY MUCH AND MISS HAVING YOU IN OUR LIVES.

YOU WILL FOREVER LIVE IN OUR HEARTS!

LOVE,

T.J., NICOLE AND ALYSSA CHIASCIONE

Prayerful Congratulations and Best Wishes

to St. Margaret Church

and

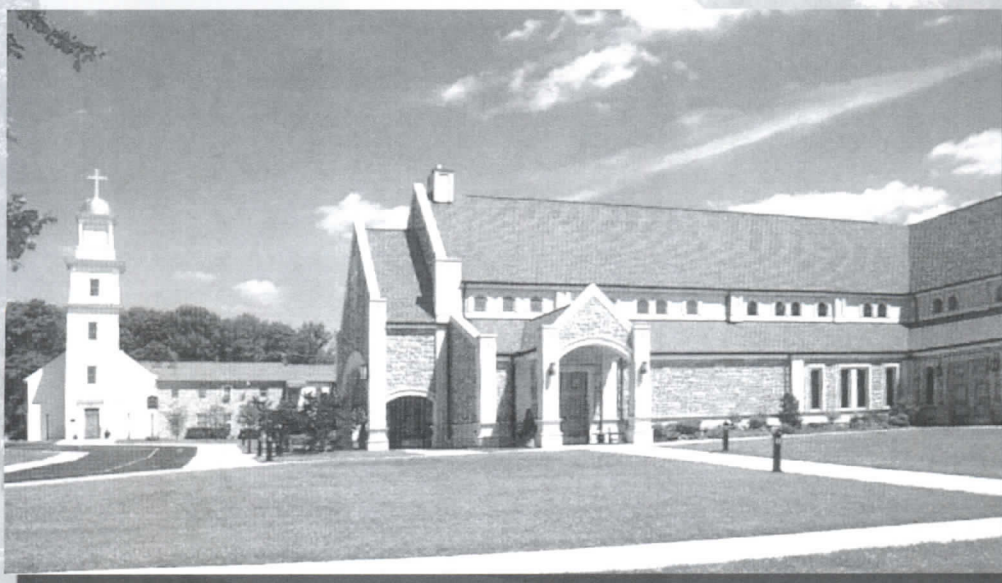
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as you celebrate

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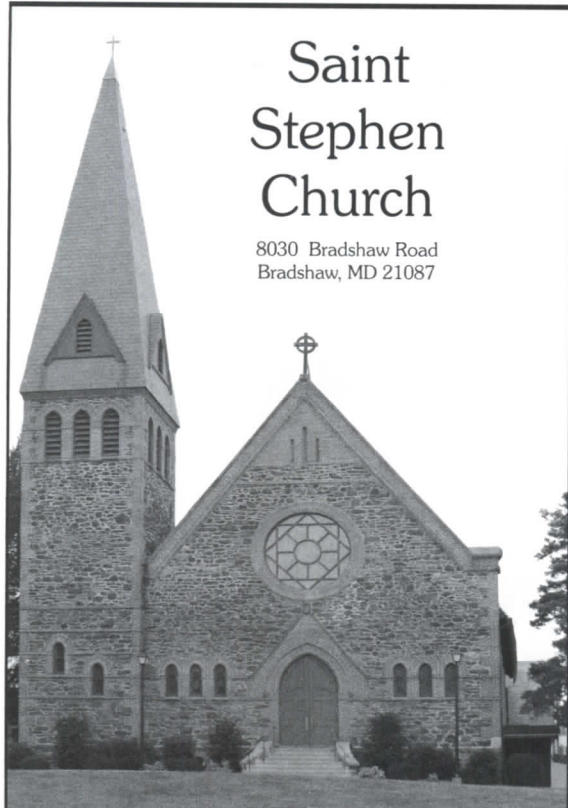
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Rev. William L. O'Brien and all the

Members of St. Patrick Church

extend our congratulations to

Rev. Francis X. Callahan and the

Members of St. Margaret Church on the

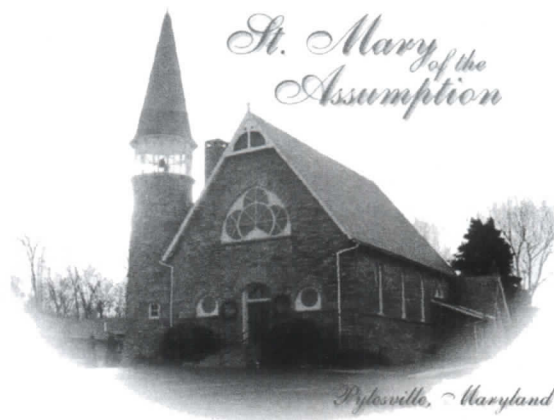
Celebration of their 100 year Anniversary

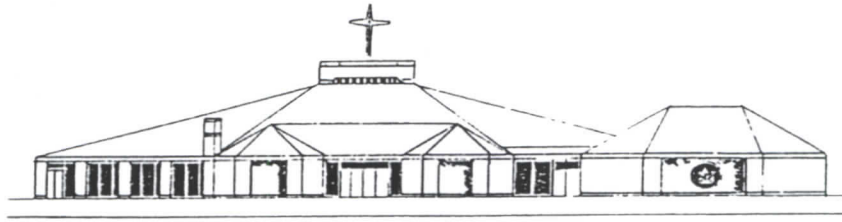
of service to the Bel Air Community.



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Church of St. Mark

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Ad Multos Annos

Birthright

Birthright would like to congratulate St. Margaret Parish on your 100 Year Anniversary. For the past 32 years the community of St. Margaret has played an important role in supporting the ministry of Birthright. Each year at the St. Margaret School Opening Mass, students bring gifts for Birthright. Thanksgiving baskets and the Christmas Giving Tree sponsor Birthright, as well as several of our families. Students of the third grade CCD Program have a baby shower for Jesus and bring gifts for Birthright. The Church invites us to host a table at the Ministry Fair and to speak about Birthright during the ministry weekend. Financially they have helped us since our early years, but all this is not what makes them stand alone. For a Parish this size, it is the personal touches that make St. Margaret so special. We can call the Parish Office if our client is in crisis, and you step right in and assist us anyway you can. Other places tell us we have to wait while they talk to a committee, or see if the family "qualifies" for help. While this may be important many families do not "qualify", but that doesn't make their immediate crisis any less. St. Margaret understands this and is willing to step in and help. It is truly God's word in action, and we are proud to be working in partnership with them.

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Congratulations and Best Wishes

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May your steady growth,
leadership, service, and ministry
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quality of life in our community
and region.



Nancy

**Thank you for your support
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The Committee to Elect Nancy Jacobs ■ Steven Wright, Treasurer

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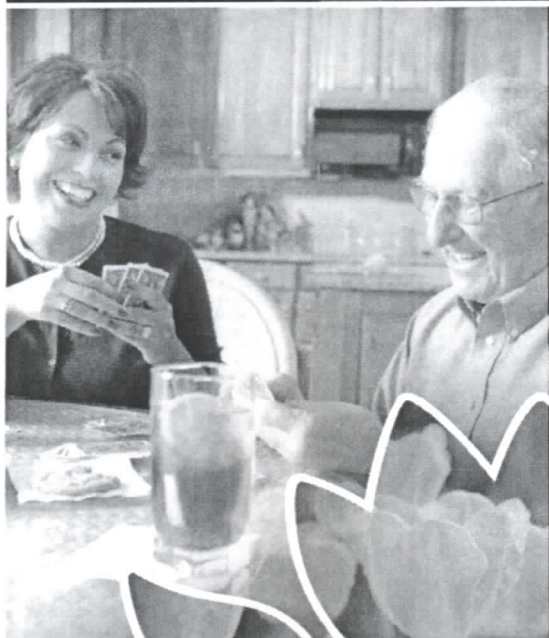
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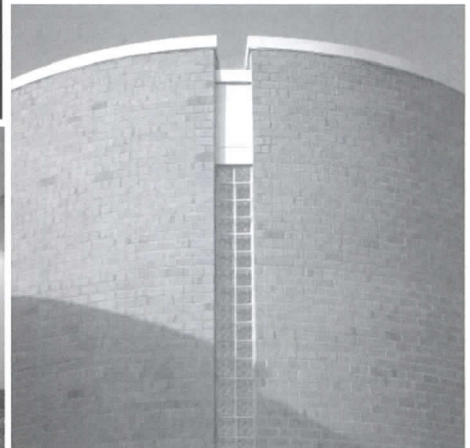
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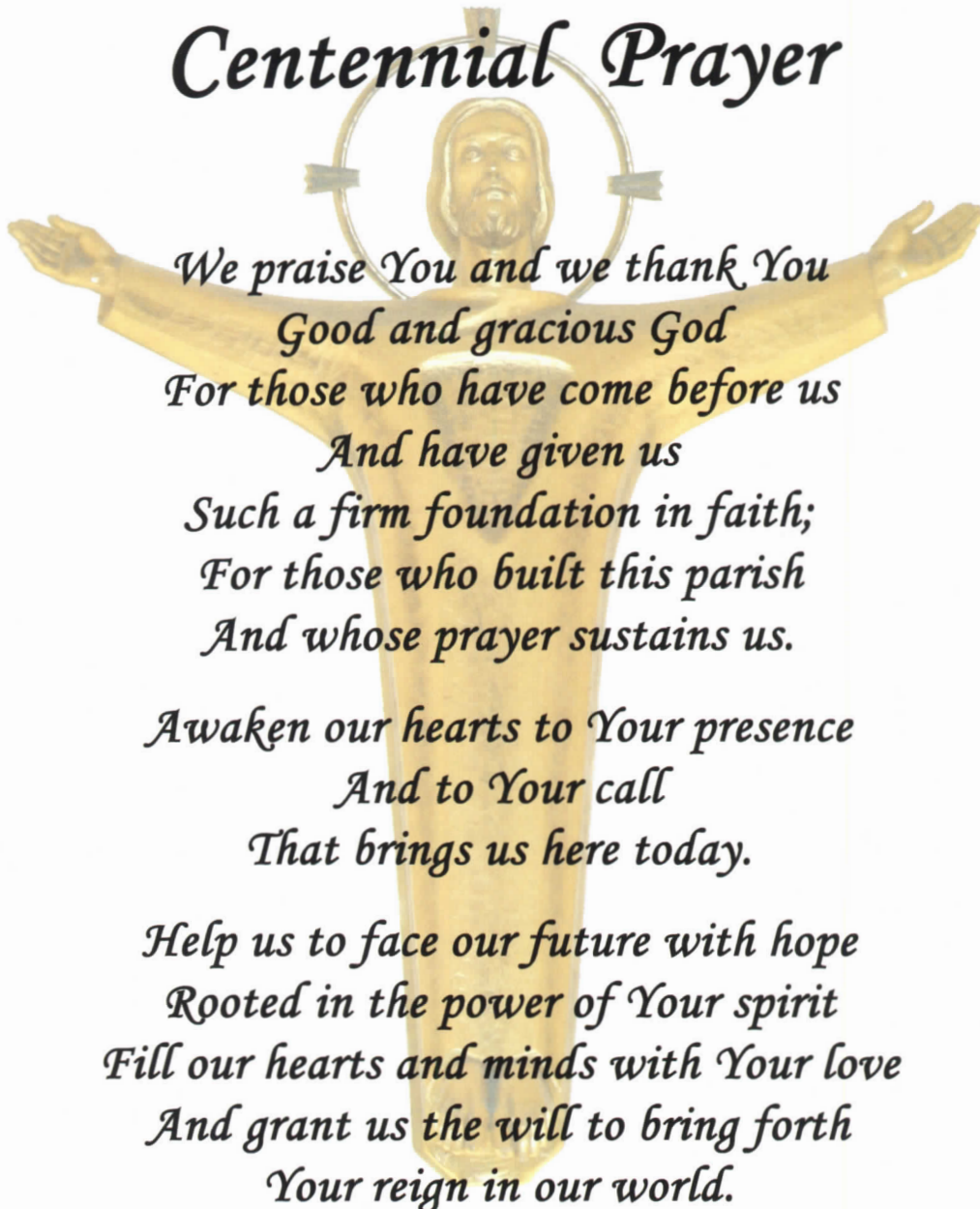
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Centennial Prayer



*We praise You and we thank You
Good and gracious God
For those who have come before us
And have given us
Such a firm foundation in faith;
For those who built this parish
And whose prayer sustains us.*

*Awaken our hearts to Your presence
And to Your call
That brings us here today.*

*Help us to face our future with hope
Rooted in the power of Your spirit
Fill our hearts and minds with Your love
And grant us the will to bring forth
Your reign in our world.*

*We make this prayer in Jesus' name.
Amen.*



St. Margaret Church
Dedicated
April 20, 1969



St. Mary Magdalen
Mission Center
Dedicated
April 12, 1997

