

OUR HISTORY – THE FIRST THREE YEARS

It was the Post-War period. The first flush of the Baby Boom. Elizabeth II ascended the throne of England. Sir Edmund Hillary conquered Everest. The word “suburbia” was coined as families made an exodus to the edges of the city, seeking land and greenery and space for families. It was “Ozzie and Harriet” and “Father Knows Best”. Scientists marveled at the capabilities of the first commercial computer, called UNIVAC, which weighed 16,000 lb. DNA was discovered. Pope Pius XII declared the start of the Marian Year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Catholicism was growing in the U.S. and in Bucks County. It was 1953.

Two years earlier, the families who would become the founding members of the new Saint Frances Cabrini Church began attending Mass at Holy Trinity Church in Morrisville. Parents seeking a Catholic education for their children sent them to Holy Trinity. Later, students would transfer to Our Lady of Grace in Penndel, in closer proximity.

In that same year, the Fairless Works of the United States Steel Company was built, drawing a huge employment force into the area. The need to serve the explosive growth of Bucks County Catholics was evident and the Archdiocese responded. No one can explain the early history of Saint Frances Cabrini better than its founding Pastor, Father Joseph J. Heron.

Ordained in 1931, he celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1956. His first-hand, day-to-day memories give us a wonderfully detailed history of our parish's first three years. What effort could better open our Golden Jubilee history than to see our beginnings through the eyes of Father Heron. These are his words.....

HISTORY OF THE PARISH

On a rainy afternoon January 21, 1953, the writer of this brief sketch, the Pastor and Founder of the then-new parish of Saint Frances Cabrini, arrived in Lower Bucks County to begin the work of establishing a parish to serve the Catholic population of Fairless Hills and the immediate vicinity. Accompanying me on that day were the Most Reverend J. Carroll McCormick, D.D., pastor of Saint Stephen's Church in Philadelphia under whom I had served as a curate for eight years, Rev. William L. McBlain, Rev. Frederick Melley, Rev. Peter Fitzpatrick and Rev. Walter Conway. After a short tour of Fairless

Hills, the party drove to the Holy Trinity Rectory on North Pennsylvania Avenue in Morrisville where we were welcomed by the Reverend Joseph D. Gallagher, the pastor. From January 21st until March 15th, I lived as a guest of Father Gallagher in Morrisville and to him I owe a debt of gratitude for his kindness, his understanding and his helpful advice.

Before beginning the story of the new parish, it perhaps would be helpful to give some of the background, which was the reason for forming the new parish. As if by a miracle of modern speed and efficiency, what had been rolling, hilly farmland, was in the short space of two years changed into a town. For the ground on which the town of Fairless Hills is built was, generally speaking, farms belonging to these families: Messrs. Baker, Wendell, Farber, Brooks, Graham and Gallagher.

With the building in 1951 of the new steel plant of the Fairless Works of the United States Steel Corporation along the Delaware, the need arose to provide homes for the workers who would be employed there. The Danherst Corporation, builders of homes and communities, undertook the difficult task of meeting this need. Hence, the forming of a Catholic Parish to minister to the needs of the Catholics of the new Community.

The boundaries of the new parish were to be the Pennsylvania Railroad on the north, on the east — Glouster Road to be used as an air line to the Pennsylvania Railroad and to Fallsington-Newportville Road; on the south — Fallsington-Newportville Road; on the west — Emilie Woodbourne Road from Fallsington-Newportville Road to the Pennsylvania Railroad.

On Sunday, January 25th, an announcement of the formation of the new parish for Fairless Hills was made at all the Masses in Holy Trinity Church in Morrisville, to which parish Fairless Hills families formerly belonged. After the Masses on that Sunday, about fifty of the new parishioners informally greeted their new pastor. Immediately on Monday, January 26th, a canvass was begun of the Catholic families in Fairless Hills in order to acquire an accurate census. This visitation was continued until May of 1953, and it revealed that there were by that time about 350 Catholic families living within the new parish limits.

On Saturday, January 31st, the first baptism in the newly organized parish took place in Holy Trinity Church, Morrisville, when Donald Joseph Vingless, son of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Vingless of 220 Austin Drive, was baptized.

The first concern of the new pastor was to find a place in which to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays for the people. Through the kindness of Mr. John O'Hear, then president of the Fire Company of Fairless Hills, permission was granted by the Fire Company for the use of their hall for Sunday Mass. The Ladies Guild of the Nativity Parish in Philadelphia and the Cornelia Connolly Association of Mission Helpers very graciously donated the Altar furnishings, such as Altar Cloth, Missal and Stand, Altar Cards and Candelabra.

The First Mass was offered on Sunday, February 15th at six o'clock A.M. by the pastor. The altar boys were Richard Shea and Paul Chapla.

Following are the names of those present at this first Mass: Mr. and Mrs. John Bonner, Frank Deacy, Joseph A. Cmar, Albert L. Cmar, A. J. Washo, Francis A. DeMichele, George Palsa, A. J. Ferlic, H. J. Watling, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Paul Heilig, Mr. and Mrs. John Catzin, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McKittrick, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Fred Zeglin, Mr. George Guogas, Mr. Lewis Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. William J. Lynch, Mrs. Eugene Lane, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Sterling, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Crossen, Mr. William Freiwald, Martin L. Shea, Patricia Shea.

Four Masses were said that Sunday and for some time later, at 6:00, 8:00, 10:00, and 11:00 o'clock.

At the start of the parish for about three weeks, priests from Saint Vincent Seminary, Germantown, Philadelphia came to say Mass.

Special mention should be made here of the great help that the Fire Company was to the parish in its infancy. The use of the Hall was given on Saturday evenings for Confessions, on Sundays for Mass and on Wednesday afternoons for Religious Instruction Class, also in the summer for the Religious Vacation School and on other occasions for social affairs. There was never a question of rent or any fee to be paid to the Fire Company. More than just giving the use of the Hall, the individual members of

the Fire Company aided us by their cooperation in setting up the hall on these occasions. Our deep felt appreciation is extended to the Fire Company for all they have done for us, and the Parish of Saint Frances Cabrini will ever be grateful to them.

One of the more important events of the new parish was a general meeting of the parishioners, which was held in the Fire House on Thursday evening, February 5th. A crowd of one hundred and forty-four parishioners gathered to greet their new pastor, who spoke to them and placed before them the needs of the new parish and asked for their loyal support. The welcome that was extended on this occasion showed the interest that all those present had in the great task that was theirs. That the interest of the parishioners has not failed, and that the task has thus far been successfully completed is evidenced by the progress that the parish has made in the short space of three years.

To unite our men, a Holy Name Society was formed at this time in the parish during the month of February 1953 with Mr. John Fissingner as president.

On March 15th, two additional Masses were added to the Sunday Mass Schedule, the Masses then being 6:00, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30 10:30, and 11:30. Father Francis Smith, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers and a member of the faculty of the Holy Ghost Seminary in Cornwells, PA, and Father Phillip Hankinson, a Franciscan priest from Washington, DC, came every weekend to assist with the Sunday Masses.

Father Smith assisted the parish until May of 1954. Father Hankinson only served the parish until June of 1953. From June 1953 to September 1953, Father Thomas Florentine was the priest who assisted on weekends. Like Father Hankinson, Father Florentine was a Franciscan priest who came from Washington, DC where they were students at the Catholic University.

During the first year of the existence of our parish, very frequently the pastor was aided in his parochial duties by the help of his friend and classmate, the Reverend William L. McBlain, a former Navy Chaplain who at that time was on sick leave. To describe Father McBlain would require a man talented in the art of description, but all our parishioners know and love him for his wit, humor, and his honest and direct manner of speech. His

energy, enthusiasm and companionship were invaluable to your pastor during those early days.

The Reverend Amandus Hillman, a priest of the Oblates of Saint Frances deSales, who teaches at Northeast Catholic High School for Boys in Philadelphia, came to say Mass on Sundays on September 27, 1953, and has been a very helpful assistant ever since.

Because of the lack of facilities, it was impossible to hold the complete schedule of Holy Week services in 1953. However, on Palm Sunday, Palm was blessed before the six o'clock Mass and then distributed after the other Masses. On Good Friday evening, devotions were held in the Fire Hall.

On February 22, 1953, an open house was held at the Mershon House on Oxford Valley Road. The parishioners came loaded with all sorts of gifts for the new pastor with which he was to furnish the rectory. Along with many useful household gifts, a sum of \$457.00 was given to the pastor.

On March 11, 1953, the pastor took up residence at 215 Coventry Road in Fairless Hills, a house that the Danherst Corporation rented to him. Here he was living amongst his people and was available to them, and hence better able to serve them. The residence on Coventry Road served as a Rectory until September 15, 1955, when Father Heron and Father Mullen moved into the new rectory on Oxford Valley Road.

We must pause here and pay respectful tribute to the late Mrs. Catherine Flaherty, the first housekeeper to serve the priests of Saint Frances Cabrini Parish. Mrs. Flaherty, whom God called home very suddenly on December 10, 1954, was a woman admirably suited for the position of looking after the material wants of the priests; quiet, respectful and always genial, she spent herself in the task of being another Martha. May her soul rest in Peace.

On August 17th, 1953, the deed for the ground on which the parish buildings were to be erected was conveyed by the Danherst Corporation to the Archbishop. Now the pastor was free to go ahead with plans and immediately engaged an architect for the school building: Mr. Bernard Roney, who ordered a survey of the parish lot.

In September of that year, a change was made for the children of the parish attending parochial school. Formerly, they had attended Holy Trinity School in Morrisville.

Now, they were assigned to Our Lady of Grace School in Penndel, because of its nearness to Fairless Hills. Bus transportation for the children was provided by the Neibauer Bus Company of Bristol. Ninety-three boys and girls began their studies in September and, by the end of the school year, one hundred and four pupils were receiving their education from the good Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the school in Penndel.

A delegation of about 40 members of the Holy Name Society took part in the Archdiocesan Parade and Demonstration in Philadelphia on Sunday evening, October 11, 1953.

A Parish Turkey Drawing and Bingo party was held on November 23rd in the Fire Hall. With the wonderful support of parishioners and friends of the Parish, the sum of \$1,436.00 was realized.

The First Christmas Day was an eventful one in the story of the parish's history. High Mass was celebrated by Father Heron at 5:30 AM on Christmas morning. A parish choir under the capable direction of Mr. William Alexander sang the Mass. Considering the fact that the choir only had two months of practice and that practice was not regular, a remarkable rendition of the Mass was given. The Altar was adorned with a new Tabernacle, the gift of the Catholic Women's Guild. A beautiful new red velvet dossal or backdrop had been erected, while the front of the Altar was adorned with a new antependium of silk cloth. All the Masses were crowded and the numbers receiving their Infant Saviour were very great. Truly, it was a most happy day in the new parish.

On February 17, 1954, a birthday party in honor of the Parish's first year of existence was held in the Community Center. Music and dancing were the order of the evening. This affair found many of the parishioners in attendance, having an enjoyable time making the acquaintance of their fellow parishioners.

During Lent of 1954, Rev. Edward Koob, Assistant Pastor of Our Lady of Grace Church in Penn del, gave a course of sermons on Sunday evenings at the Community Center. As happened in 1953, it was impossible to hold the ordinary Holy Week services because of the lack of facilities. Hence it was again necessary to seek larger quarters for Sunday Mass in order to accommodate the fast growing congregation — new families were constantly moving in. Through the kindness of the School Board, permission was granted for the use of the Auditorium for Sunday Masses in the Oxford Valley School, located on Trenton Road.

While making mention of the change to the School Auditorium, it is quite appropriate to make public acknowledgment of the valuable help of many men of the parish who very graciously gave of their time in aiding the priests each week in setting up the Altar and chairs, first at the Fire House, then at the Community Center and, finally, in the Oxford Valley School. The Fire House was usually set up for Mass on Saturday afternoons, but at the Community Center and at the School, it was necessary to wait until 10:30 or 11 o'clock on Saturday evenings since both buildings were in use for other affairs at earlier hours. In the fear that the names of some would be omitted inadvertently, no effort will be made to list them, but the parish will ever be in their debt. So, a grateful "thank you" is expressed to the helpers, one and all.

In February of 1954, construction was begun on our Chapel Auditorium under the direction of Mr. Martin Feeney, builder. The building was to serve many purposes. It is built of concrete block with a buff stucco finish, thus blending in with the color of the School, Convent and Rectory. The building measures 110 feet in length and 44 feet in width. Much of the work in the interior of the building was done by the men of the parish, thus saving a considerable sum of money. Equipped with three altars, and a wrought iron sanctuary rail, it serves its first purpose of being a parish church. The Chapel was used for the first time on Sunday, October 10, 1954.

An event of great importance to the parish happened during the month of May 1954. On May 20th, Father L. James Mullen took up his residence as the first resident curate of the parish. With the actual construction of the chapel underway, the building of the school to be started shortly and the planning of a Convent and Rectory about to begin, along with the increase of Catholic families, the need for an assistant priest was apparent.

Fortunate indeed were the pastor and people in the assignment of Father Mullen. Young and vigorous, and blessed by God with a most pleasing disposition and personality, Father Mullen has endeared himself to all of us. His wholehearted interest and support of all the parish activities cannot be estimated here in a few words. Father Mullen was ordained on May 30, 1953, by His Excellency, Archbishop O'Hara, in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. The first appointment Father received was as Assistant Pastor at Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, in Pottsville, PA where he served for one year before coming to Fairless Hills.

An outstanding event in 1954 was the blessing of the ground and the groundbreaking ceremony for the new parochial school, which took place on July 18, 1954. After many days of making plans and revising them, the final plans drawn by the architect, Mr. Bernard W. Roney, were approved by the diocesan authorities. The plans were submitted to various builders and the low bid of \$171,970.00 presented by the Ertel Construction Company of Camden, New Jersey, was accepted. The contract for the school was signed on July 12, 1954.

Father Heron, the pastor, blessed the ground and turned the first spadeful of earth; next, the earth was turned by Father Mullen, the Assistant Pastor. The Rev. William L. McBlain spoke on the subject of Catholic School Education. Approximately 300 people were present, as were ten priests from neighboring parishes. In a short time, actual construction of the school began, and soon the progress of the building was watched with interest by the parishioners. It is a one-story building, well-lighted through the use of skylights in all eight classrooms. A Superior's office, a medical room and boiler room complete the building, which was constructed of light buff brick.

Beyond bricks and mortar, a Catholic School is a very real, concrete answer to a real need in a child's soul. A few years ago, the Bishops of the United States issued a very important statement about education. It was entitled: *The Child — A Citizen of Two Worlds*. It was a wise reminder that every child born into this world is meant to be educated for a twofold citizenship. The child is the future citizen who must assume adult responsibility in the land we all love; but, still more and more important, the child is the future saint who must spend his eternity in God's own kingdom, the heavenly country for which we are all yearning. Catholic education is training for citizenship on earth and in

heaven. Education, in this full sense of the word, is not a haphazard pouring in of an abundance of mere factual knowledge. It is rather a drawing out, a development of all the talents of nature and grace that God put into a child precisely because that child is called to be a citizen of two worlds.

The Catholic Sister is a dedicated teacher who is skilled at bringing out the natural talent of a child. The child must be trained to make a living in a hardheaded, unsentimental world. Consequently, the Catholic School aims at giving knowledge of secular learning, which compares favorably with the best in our public school system. The religious Sister, however, is not meant to be a substitute for parental responsibility. Just as the Sister can only educate, or bring out the talent, which the child receives from its parents by God's wonderful Providence, so too, the Sister can do her classroom work well only against a background of normal Catholic home life. For advancement in secular learning, reading, writing, and arithmetic, the child needs more than skilled teachers. The child needs also the encouragement, interest, supervision and inspiration of Catholic parents. The Catholic School was never meant to be a substitute for the Catholic home.

The Catholic Sister is also a dedicated teacher skilled at bringing out a talent of grace which God infused into the child on its baptismal day. On that day, seven great virtues were put in the child's soul as tiny seedlings of holiness. There are the three Theological Virtues called Faith, Hope, and Charity. There are also the four Moral Virtues called Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. These must develop and grow into sturdy flowerings of holiness. The child's God-given power for goodness must be drawn out by the Sister who has her heart set on the things of God. Only by nurturing those baptismal gifts can the child grow up in Christliness. That is the big business of life. By succeeding in it, a man or woman wins the right to be a citizen of God's world throughout eternity.

In 1954, our new school was blessed in having dedicated women, Sisters of the Immaculate Heart. These women, who are other Marys, preside over the growth of Christliness in our children. In this age, which has been called *The Age of Mary*, we feel that they have special graces to do this great work with a Mary-like skill. God bless them! They are wonderful!

Moving into the Fall season of this busy year, Sunday, October 17th, was the date of the parish Marian Year Pilgrimage. The parish organized a motor cavalcade to Our Lady of Grace Church in Penndel and thence to the outdoor shrine of Our Blessed Mother located at the site of the Immaculate Conception Church in Levittown. The Rosary was said and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament given at both places. The final visit was made to our own chapel. About 200 people participated in the Pilgrimage.

A Triduum to mark the end of the Marian year was held in our parish beginning on Sunday, December 5th. The Rev. Joseph Dougherty, Assistant Pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Morrisville, preached the sermons during the Triduum.

December 8, 1954, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, witnessed the breaking of ground for the new Convent and Rectory. Father Heron again turned the first spadeful of earth and was followed by Father Mullen and Father Hillman. The ceremony was witnessed by a few parishioners who were on hand. The contract for the convent and rectory was awarded to Helwig Brothers of Glenside, Pa. Built of the same type buff brick as the school, the buildings blend harmoniously together. The convent has accommodations for twelve sisters, while the rectory has facilities for pastor, two curates and two guest rooms on the second floor. On the first floor, there are three offices, dining room, kitchen and pantry, and living quarters for two housekeepers. The cost of the two buildings was \$134,136.00.

Continuing the eventful month of December, a Triduum to pay honor to our Patroness, Saint Frances Cabrini, was held prior to her Feast, December 22. The Triduum began on Sunday, December 19th with the Rev. Martin J. Barrett, Assistant Pastor at the Incarnation Church in Philadelphia, preaching the sermons. Father Barrett, from whom the pastor had previously received a first class relic of Saint Frances Cabrini, had formerly been a curate at Saint Donato's Church in West Philadelphia, where the then-Mother Cabrini had taught some years ago. His Excellency, the Most Reverend J. Carroll McCormick Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, honored the parish on its Patronal Feast Day by celebrating Mass at 6 PM. Previous to the celebration of Mass, the Bishop blessed our Chapel Auditorium.

The second Christmas Day in the life of the parish was again celebrated in a most fitting manner. A Solemn Mass was offered at Midnight with the Reverend Pastor as celebrant, Father Mullen as Deacon and Father Hillman as Subdeacon. For the observance of our Patronal Feast and the Feast of the Nativity, beautiful dossals were erected behind the three Altars. The Main Altar had a cloth of gold-texture dossal trimmed in red velvet, and the side Altars were adorned with deep red velvet dossals. The new Statues of Our Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph were put in place on the side altars.

The year 1955 brought many firsts for the young parish. On February 2, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mother, candles were blessed in the Chapel, while on the next day, February 3, the Feast of Saint Blaise, a Blessing of Throats was given.

A second Birthday of the Parish was fittingly celebrated with a Valentine's Day Party on February 14 in the Auditorium. A large crowd of parishioners enjoyed a pleasant evening on that occasion.

Lent followed with two daily Masses at 6:30 and 8:30. Stations of the Cross were held on Friday evenings at 7 PM. Holy Week of this year found the Parish holding the complete services of the Sacred Liturgy. On Palm Sunday, the Palms were blessed before the 7:30 Mass and distributed after all the Masses. On Holy Thursday, a High Mass was sung at 8:30, followed with the Procession of the Most Blessed Sacrament to the Repository. The girls of the parish who attended Our Lady of Grace School in Penndel formed the Procession and sang a hymn in honor of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. During the day, the women of the parish on their turns kept watch before the Repository, while the men of the parish observed their watch during the night. On Good Friday, the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified was sung at 12 o'clock noon and was followed by the Stations of the Cross, the Reading of the Passion and the Veneration of the Cross. The Holy Saturday Ceremonies of the Blessing of the New Fire, Baptismal Water and Easter Water began at 7:30 in the morning, and at 8:30, High Mass was sung. The Feast of Christ's Glorious Resurrection began with a Solemn Mass at 5:30 Sunday morning, celebrated by the Pastor assisted by Father Mullen as Deacon and Father Hillman as Subdeacon. The large number of parishioners receiving Holy Communion on Easter was a source of great edification.

During Easter week of 1955, the beautiful Carrera marble statue of our Patroness, Saint Frances Cabrini, was erected in front of the Chapel. The Statue was the gift of an anonymous donor.

On April 29, 1955, His Excellency the Most Reverend J. Carroll McCormick, D.D., administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in our Chapel to 103 boys and 92 girls. This marked the first time that Confirmation was given in our parish.

The first wedding to be celebrated in our Chapel took place on May 7, 1955 with the marriage of Yvonne Vivienne Culiberg and Eugene John Reday. This happy and beautiful occasion was the source of great joy, not only for the families but for the whole parish family, as Father Mullen performed the double ring ceremony.

First Holy Communion was given in our Chapel for the first time on May 21, 1955 to 53 boys and 56 girls by the Pastor, who celebrated Mass on that happy occasion. Father spoke to the children about the importance of the wonderful event taking place in their lives for the first time, their God coming to their innocent hearts under the form of Bread, and exhorted them frequently to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion all the days of their earthly sojourn.

Forty Hours Devotion was held for the first time in the parish beginning on May 22 with a High Mass at 11 o'clock, which was sung by the pastor. The sermons at the evening Devotions of the Forty Hours were given by the Rev. Edward Koob. At the close of the Forty Hours on Tuesday evening, the men of the parish formed a guard of honor, walking in the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

During the summer of 1955, a Shower Fund was organized to help plan for the furnishings in the new school and convent. Many of our parishioners responded most generously, pledging the cost of religious articles such as statues, crucifixes and other various household furnishings for the convent. The sum of \$4,255.00 was realized.

On August 25, 1955, five Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary came to reside in the new convent. For several days previous, some of the good women of the parish had

scrubbed and cleaned most thoroughly the building, and also had stocked the larder with food for the arrival of the good Sisters. Mother Frances Teresa was the superior and the teacher for the fifth grade; Sister John Elizabeth, the teacher for the fourth grade; Sister Saint Elizabeth was the teacher for the third grade; Sister Ellen Marie, the teacher for the second grade and Sister Helen Marita, the teacher for the first grade.

On Sunday, August 28, the new school, convent and rectory were opened for inspection from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. All that time, many of the parishioners and their friends came to view with approval the buildings erected for their parish. Many were the expressions of appreciation for the modern school building, the commodious convent and well-planned rectory.

The first session in the new school began on Wednesday, September 7. The children attended the 9 o'clock Mass offered for them by the pastor, who welcomed them as the first pupils to the new school. In his talk, he remarked how fortunate they were to receive a Catholic Education from the good Sisters and urged them to apply themselves to their studies during the school term. Three hundred and seventy-one pupils were in attendance for the first five grades, which were the only grades in the new school for the first year. There were many problems to be solved with the opening of the school, but within a week or two, the school was functioning in a manner that was a credit to the Sisters in charge. The blessings of God on a parish from the education of the children in a parochial school cannot be measured by earthly or materialistic standards, but the beginning of Catholic education in any parish assures that parish of children of God trained by the zealous Sisters, not only in the worldly sciences but what is most important, in the science of heavenly knowledge.

On September 15, 1955, "Operation New Rectory" was the order of the day. With the aid of some good, strong men of the parish, the pastor and his assistant moved into their new home on Oxford Valley Road. This change of residence was helpful in the business of managing the ever-growing parish, which now numbered 750 families. Now there was ample office space in which to receive the parishioners; the priests who came to assist on the weekends had suitable living quarters; and more space was available for the clerical work entailed in parish business.

His Excellency, the Most Reverend John F O'Hara, C.S.C. honored the parish with his presence on Sunday, October 2, 1955 to bless and dedicate the new school. Forty-one priests and approximately one thousand people were present for the joyful occasion. The Procession of the Clergy formed in the rectory from which it proceeded to the Chapel where the first prayers for the Blessing were sung by the Archbishop and answered by the Cantors, the Reverend Andrew Lavin and the Reverend John McGovern. Then the Procession of the Clergy, preceding the Archbishop, went to the school, the boys and girls of our parochial school forming a guard of honor for the Procession. The Archbishop first blessed the outside of the building, then the interior, and blessed the Crucifix for the first grade which was put in place by the Deacon, who was the Reverend Edward Koob, Assistant Rector of the Church of Saint John the Evangelist, Philadelphia. The Subdeacon for the Ceremony was the Reverend Francis Donovan, Assistant Rector at the Church of Saint Dominic, Holmesburg, Philadelphia. Besides the clergy and laity previously mentioned, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Sisters of Saint Joseph and Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were present.

From October 16 to October 30, 1955, the first Parish Mission was conducted by the Reverend Patrick Flaherty and the Reverend John Hallahan, members of the Vincentian Mission Band. During these two weeks, much spiritual good came to the men and women of the parish who faithfully attended the exercises of the Mission.

In preparation for the Feast of Saint Frances Cabrini, December 22, a Triduum was held with the Rev. Joseph Foth of the Marist Seminary in Langhorne as the Preacher. Devotions were held at 7:30 in the evening and, on the Feast Day, a Mass was sung by Father Mullen, the Assistant Pastor, at 7:30 in the evening,

Christmas Day of 1955 was another joyful occasion in the life of the parish. A Solemn Mass was offered at Midnight by the Pastor, with Father Mullen as Deacon and Father Hillman as Subdeacon. Other Masses were said at 5:30, 6:30, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 and 12:15, and at all these Masses, large numbers of the faithful received their Infant Saviour in Holy Communion.

Thus concludes the history of the first three years of the Parish of Saint Frances Cabrini in Fairless Hills. All beginnings are fraught with problems and difficulties and so also was our beginning, but thanks be to God, through the sacrifice and cooperation of the

good people of the parish, the problems and difficulties have been met and solved. I would be remiss if I did not make mention of the great help that the parish has received from many friends outside the parish. Each year, they have given of their time and money in running Card Parties and helping in other financial ways to aid us in our work.

Had I a facile pen, I might elaborate on all the happenings enumerated in this brief history so as to enhance their importance and beauty. But, I leave to our all-knowing Father in Heaven to evaluate and reward the good that has been done for His honor and glory, now and in eternity.

*Reverend Joseph J. Heron
On the occasion of his
Silver Jubilee of Ordination 1956*