

Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish History

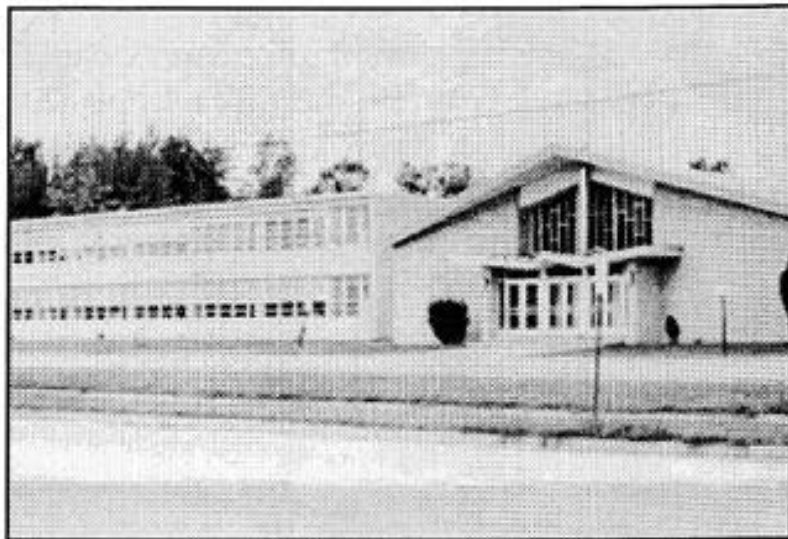
On February 17, 1959, His Eminence John Cardinal O'Hara, C.S.C., Archbishop of Philadelphia, announced the establishment of a new Roman Catholic parish in Swarthmore. The Rev. Charles A. Nelson, assistant rector of the Church of St. Gregory's in Philadelphia, was appointed its first pastor and the new parish was named Notre Dame de Lourdes by the Cardinal on the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11, of that same year.

Father Nelson graduated from St. Charles Seminary and was ordained in 1933 by Cardinal Dennis Dougherty. The son of Patrick and Mary Nelson, he was born in Philadelphia.

The site of the parish buildings was and still is located on a 10-acre tract of land at Fairview Road and Michigan Avenue and took over part of an area that was served by Our Lady of Peace Parish in Milmont Park and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Morton.

Founding Tidbits

The first duty of every pastor is bringing his congregation together in a place adequate for Divine services. The College Theatre, located on Chester Road, was placed at Father's disposal thanks to the generosity of Mr. Norman Silverman, manager. The first Mass was offered in the theater on the second Sunday of Lent, February 22, 1959, with a floor lamp to light the lectern for the Reading of the Word. The amount of the first offerings came to \$742, which provided the nucleus of



Notre Dame de Lourdes Church and School circa 1981.

funds needed for the renovation of the rectory which was in pretty poor condition. Thanks to a group of good men of the parish who gave up their evenings and Saturdays, the job was completed with the help of donations from various sources.

Then followed the days of organization, with meetings here, there and everywhere. On Tuesday, February 24, 1959, a meeting of the men of Notre Dame was held in the home of John Rumsey on Vassar Avenue in Swarthmore. Various committees were chosen to facilitate the organization of the new parish. Mr. Rumsey was appointed Church Historian by Father Nelson.

On Sunday afternoon, March 8, 1959, a Reception and Tea was given in honor of Father Nelson by the Women's Auxiliary. Also in attendance were Rev. I. Walter Nall and Rev. Joseph Stranzl of Our Lady of Peace Parish where the reception was held. Over 400 women presented the pastor with a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes and a donation of a purse enclosed in a miniature church.

On Thursday, March 19, 1959, Father Nelson was honored at a reception

given by the Knights of Columbus in Springfield. The Knights presented Father with a chalice; the De La Salle Council, a Paten; and the Alhambra Group, a Ciborium.

On Sunday, April 12, 1959, the Holy Name Society of Notre Dame de Lourdes celebrated its first Mass/Communion Breakfast at Our Lady of Peace Hall.

The Ways and Means Committee of Notre Dame held a meeting at the home of Mrs. Anthony Fairbanks, 234 Park Avenue, on Wednesday evening, April 22, 1959.

By April of 1959, confessions were being heard on Saturdays from 4 to 5 p.m. and 8 to 9 p.m. in the rectory. Although Sunday Masses were still celebrated in the College Theatre, a daily Mass at 8 a.m. was now celebrated in the rectory (or in the barn). The barn was renovated by the men of the parish shortly after they finished work on the rectory. The newfound meeting room was more than welcomed and appreciated since it provided a setting for the first Christmas party, the Christmas Bazaar, morning Masses, and the Holy Thursday nocturnal adoration. There can be no doubt that at times



Rev. Charles Nelson, Christmas 1963

people were on the point of freezing to death during the winter and being eaten alive by insects during the summer months, but apparently, no one complained about the inconveniences.

First Social

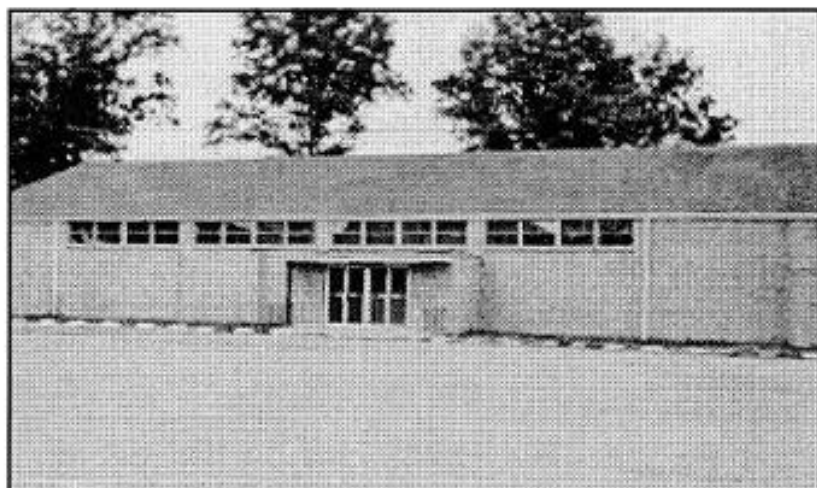
Notre Dame sponsored its first social affair, "The Spring Fling," at St. Kevin's Hall in Springfield on May 2, 1959. The proceeds from the dance (with refreshments and prizes included in the ticket price) were used for the building fund. Music was furnished by Bill O'Brien's Orchestra and the dance chairman was Thomas Ravelli assisted by Frank Rooney on tickets. James Lynn and John Rumsey were in charge of prizes. Silvio Copertino, B. Donnelly

and Frank Flynn were on refreshments. The Women's Auxiliary handled the decorations.

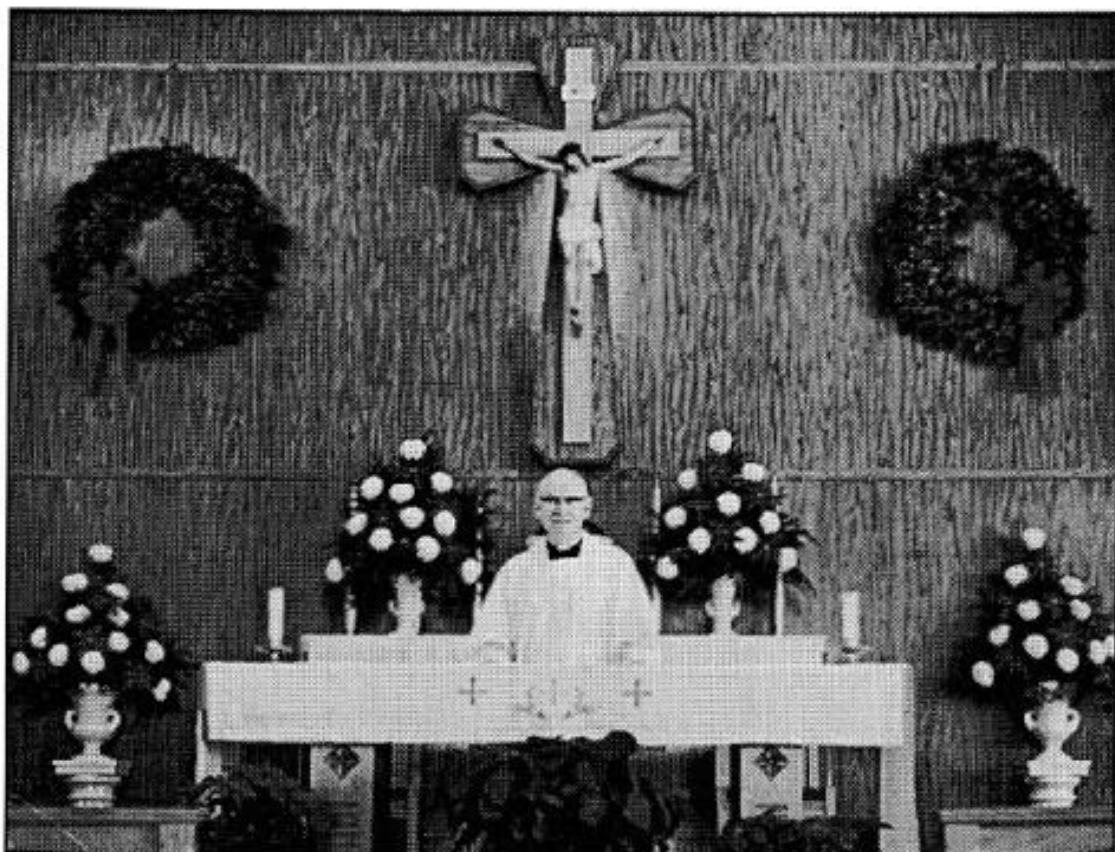
A meeting of the Women's Auxiliary was held on May 14, 1959, at the home of Mrs. Frank (Doris) Rooney, 1415 Michigan Avenue.

Picnic Time

A family picnic



Nelson Hall, circa 1981.



Father Charles Nelson, 1977, on the front of a Christmas Card.
(Property of Gerald Penrose.)

was held on the parish grounds on Saturday, May 30, 1959. Each family brought their own lunch and beverages were supplied. (I believe you could call this the "First Corn Boil"). The chairman of the committee was Mrs. Edward Micka with Walter Bryan, Charles Buchan, Thomas Wolfe and Thomas Belden assisting.

On Saturday, June 20, 1959, the Women's Auxiliary sponsored a Bake Sale at the entrance of Martel's Market on Chester Road (now a sports clinic). Mrs. Paul (Ceil) Duke of Blackrock Road was in charge of the event. She was aided by Mary Jane Povey, Dolores Flynn and Barbara Kelly.

During the week of July 19 - July 26, 1959, the College Theatre sponsored a motion picture benefit for Notre Dame with proceeds going toward the building fund. Jill Giannetti of Fairview Road was in charge of the benefit and the movie, "The Young Philadel-

phians," starring Paul Newman, Barbara Rush and Alexis Smith, was featured.

Groundbreaking Ceremonies

Finally on Sunday, December 20, 1959, ground-breaking ceremonies were held for the new "chapel" and school. Nearly 200 parishioners braved the cold weather that day to see Father Nelson turn the first spadeful of dirt and give a short talk. Assisting Father Nelson in the ceremonies were Rev. John J. McGovern of St. Kevin's Parish, Springfield, and Rev. Denis O'Neill of St. Eugene's Parish in Primos.

Originally, a "proper stone church" was to have been built at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Fairview Road, but Father Nelson was notified by the Archdiocese that the funds were not available to start construction. So, it was decided that what was to be the



The Rev. Charles A. Nelson, rector of the Church of Notre Dame de Lourdes in Swarthmore, gets help from little Martin Shea, 4, in breaking ground for church and school buildings for the new parish. Among clergymen watching are the Rev. John F. McGovern and the Rev. Dennis F. O'Neill. (The above photo and caption were published in the Delaware County Times. Property of Sue O'Conner.)

school gym would serve as the church. According to Father Nelson, the target day for completion of both structures was August 1, 1960. The "chapel" would seat 850 people and the school would contain 16 classrooms, four of them unfinished.

School History; Church Opens

Notre Dame de Lourdes School opened on Wednesday, September 7, 1960, with an enrollment of 404 (or 417) children in its eight grades. Workmen fought against time to have the new school ready for opening day. Many of the desks were installed on Tuesday afternoon. Staffed by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Principal Mother Miriam Carmel, Sister Marie Pierre, Sister Maria Josefa, and Sister Charles Isabel greeted the students on the first day of school, along with four lay teachers, and Murphy, the parish

dog. Known to both children and adults as "Murph," he became a constant companion to the Sisters. Because the grounds were not yet paved, the children walked on wooden planks between the school and the street.

Father Nelson gave his full support to the goals and endeavors of the school. His deep devotion to the Blessed Mother was reflected in his design of the school emblem which has as its center a prominent "M" for Mary.

Through the years, "Thank you Bingos" were held for the benefit of the Sisters of St. Joseph to help defray the many expenses of everyday living. By May of 1968, there were eight Sisters living in Notre Dame's convent. The proceeds from cakes sales, 50-50 raffles and lunches served at school on Wednesdays and Fridays were also donated to the Sisters.

Mass was celebrated for the first time in Notre Dame de Lourdes Church, "Chapel," on December 8, 1960, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In June of 1965 work was started to convert the cafeteria in the school into four additional classrooms to reduce the size of the classes. Father Nelson stated that the parish expected to absorb the cost of \$17,850 without adding to its present indebtedness. Some of the money was already set aside from the weekly Offertory Collection and the remainder was expected to

come from a similar source during the next year. Plans for a new parish hall were being discussed. And for the first time the parish exceeded \$3,000 in its collection for the Archdiocesan Catholic Charities Drive.

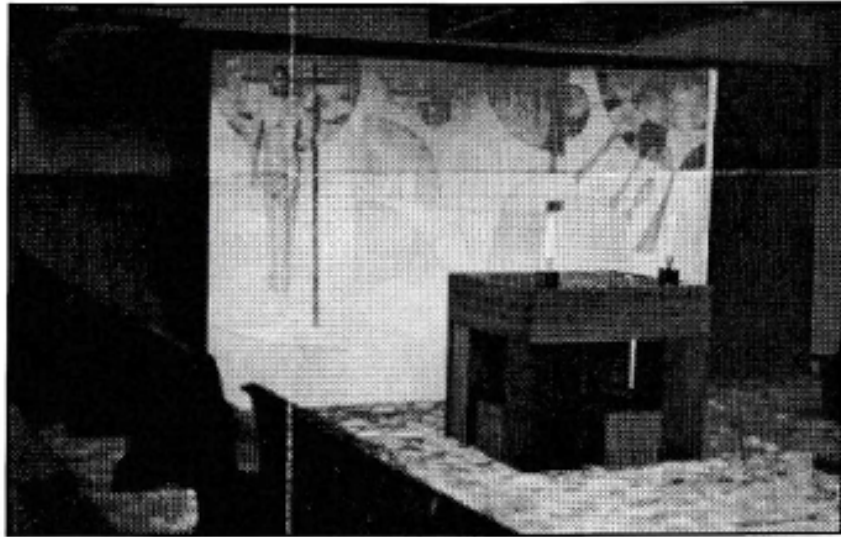
The sixth annual Corn Boil was held on the church grounds on Saturday, July 24, 1965,

under the general chairmanship of Fred Iacono. Pony rides, a carousel, fire engine rides, corn and other foods were featured throughout the day and TV performer Sally Starr appeared for entertainment. Joseph Daniels was the corn cook. John Simpson and Frank Flynn were chairmen of admissions; Mrs. Edward Fagan, kitchen; Mrs. Malcolm (Ann) Clark, chuckwagon; Mrs. Anthony DiGiacomo, booths; Mrs. John McGowan, wheelbarrow of cheer; Carmen Piriano, pizza; John Jones, refreshments; Patrick Fitzgerald, games; and Malcolm Clark, property.

The new parish hall, now known as "Nelson Hall," was opened with a gala holiday party on Sunday, December 12, 1965.

First Year With New Liturgy

An article in *The Swarthmorean*, dated January 7, 1966, stated that the parishioners of Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish had just completed their first full year of worship under the new liturgical changes which had come about as the result of the recently concluded Second Vatican Council. Congregational hymn-singing, something unusual or unknown at Low Masses, was now an important feature of all the Sunday Masses. The four



St. Bernadette's Chapel located in Notre Dame school.

hymns sung at each Mass were, and still are, the Entrance, the Offertory, the Communion, and the Recessional hymns.

In order to raise both the quality and volume of the singing at Mass, a group of parishioners met on the Wednesday evening before the first Sunday of the month to practice the hymns that were to be sung. They were led by Mrs. Delores Flynn playing the church organ.

Another important change was active participation in the responses by the congregation. For the first time many of the prayers said by the priest and the congregation were in English rather than in Latin.

Another new liturgical development was the institution of the position of "lay commentator" during Sunday Masses. The commentator was to read aloud certain prayers as well as certain comments on them. This duty had been devolved on 25 parish men, each taking the role approximately once every five weeks.

A final change in the Mass was the elimination of certain traditional prayers, such as the Last Gospel, and the priest's saying certain prayers at the side altar rather than at the altar itself. While the many new developments meant changes in long-accustomed

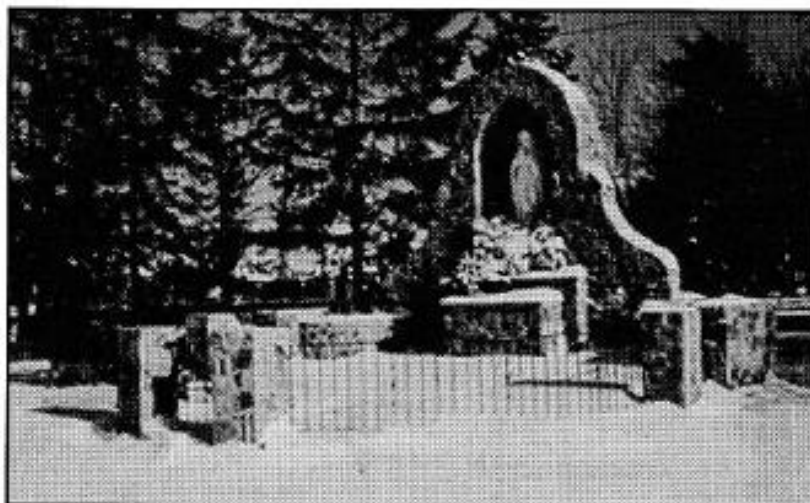
habits of worship, the parishioners appeared to welcome them.

Father Nelson Retires; New Pastor Announced

Father Nelson, who turned 75 during the month of April, 1978, retired after 19 years as Notre Dame's spiritual leader. There was a week-long celebration in his honor. It started with an Opening Day Liturgy and was followed throughout the week by a Children's Liturgy, a parish show, a candlelight procession from the Church to the Grotto of Our Lady, and a piano recital featuring Annette DeMedio. The celebration closed with a Mass at Notre Dame and a dinner at the Drexelbrook Country Club. All parishioners, past and present, were invited to honor "a man of true dedication and love."

Jane Byrne also retired. Ms. Byrne, the rectory's housekeeper since the parish's founding in 1959, was honored at a Mass and a farewell party on May 17, 1978.

On June 6, 1978, Father Joseph Fonash was installed as pastor of Notre Dame de Lourdes. Father Fonash came from St.



The Grotto



Notre Dames de Lourdes Church, Christmas 1963

Raphael's Church in Philadelphia. A graduate of St. Charles Seminary, he was ordained in 1939 and served in several parishes in Philadelphia. He also served as a Navy Chaplain in World War II and the Korean War with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Losses

Father Charles A. Nelson died on November 25, 1979, at Mercy Catholic Medical Center. He was 76 years of age. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered by the Most Rev. Gerald V. McDevitt on November 29 at Notre Dame. Concelebrating the Mass was Father Nelson's brother, Rev.

Thomas W. Nelson. Interment was at Holy Cross Cemetery in Yeadon.

Father Fonash died suddenly on September 26, 1980, less than one year after Father Nelson's death. A Concelebrated Pontifical Mass of Christian

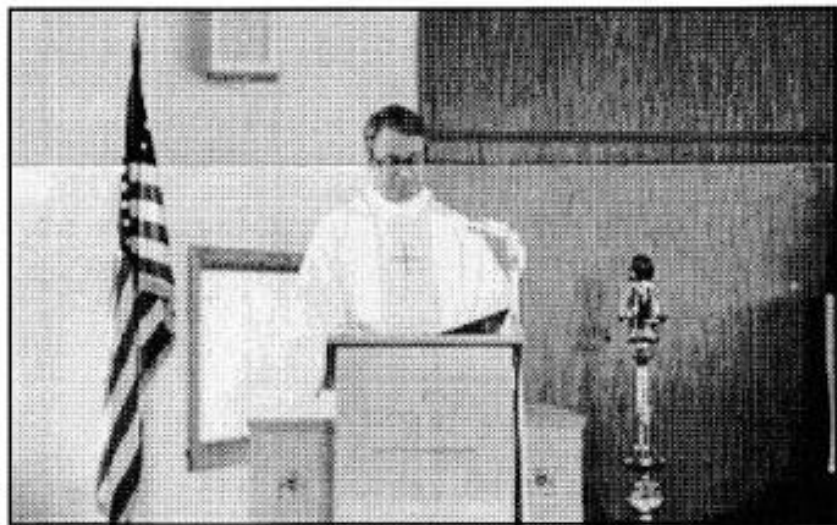


Fresco of Christ the Ruler on the Reredos behind the altar in Notre Dame's Church.

Burial was celebrated on September 30 at Notre Dame with John Cardinal Krol as principal celebrant.

Father Benonis Arrives as Pastor

In October of 1980, the Rev. William Benonis was named the new pastor of Notre Dame. Father Benonis, a native of Pottsville, was ordained in 1952. He served as assistant pastor in several parishes and spent 18 years as a high school teacher at Cardinal Dougherty High School. Before coming to Notre Dame, he



Rev. William Benonis, pastor of Notre Dame de Lourdes, circa 1981.

served St. Michael's Parish in Chester as pastor.

In 1981, the Sisters of St. Joseph undertook study to withdraw, and the difficult decision was announced that the Sisters would leave Notre Dame.

Believing in their parish school and willing to make the financial sacrifices necessary, the parishioners committed themselves to maintaining the fine educational program at Notre Dame. With the wholehearted encouragement of Father Benonis, and under the leadership of Ms. Denise Kerr, classes resumed in September of 1982, with an all lay faculty.

Today, the school continues to flourish under Mrs. Amy Apelian, the present principal. New programs which have been added are a Pre-Kindergarten class, specialists for the areas of music, physical education, computer literacy, the laser disc science program, "Windows on Science" and an Integrated Language Arts program.

Church Remodeled

Notre Dame de Lourdes formally opened its newly decorated church with a Pontifical Mass on Sunday, November 18, 1984, celebrated by Bishop Louis A. DeSimone, auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia and vicar general of the Archdiocese.

Taking a lead in this interior decorating project was Brother Don Mulvihill, an artist-in-residence on the grounds at the Marinists Center. (The Marinists left Notre Dame Parish in June of 1993.) Renovations started in February.

Now the church, which was to have been originally used as a gym, had a new look. The stuccoed walls hid the



Notre Dame is blessed at the 10 o'clock Mass on Sundays by the beautiful voices of the Guitar group. This photo is of the original group.

cinder blocks, carpeting covered the floor and there was a new feeling of spaciousness, without the multiple altars. All the priests were now at the main altar, and with several rows of pews removed, there was a sense of openness and focused reverence at the raised sanctuary.

The first bright and artistic things installed were 23 stained glass windows including a large rose window, whose abstract designs in deep reds and blues made a beautiful church-like appearance now. Brother Don did the windows, the large fresco of Christ the Ruler on the Reredos behind the altar, and the hand-carved wooden processional cross, and much more.

He also did much more than paint and sculpt and create stained glass windows. He did the walls, the baldachine (light over the altar), and, with the help of volunteers, the ceiling, which now presented an attractive wood paneled appearance with a pointed arched center and cross beams.

The only "outside" jobs were laying the carpet and pouring cement. For less than \$35,000, Notre Dame recreated itself. (Information from the *Delaware County Daily Times*, Nov. 16 issue.)

Brother Don was also responsible for turning an unused classroom into a beautiful chapel named in honor of St. Bernadette.

More Tidbits

- **First Baptism:** Daniel Joseph Haggerty, March 1, 1959. The Christening took place in the empty dining room of the rectory.

- **First Death/Funeral:** Susan C. Gaynor, February 21, 1959. Father Nelson celebrated her Funeral Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

- **First Marriage:** Sally Ann Damicus of Notre Dame and Walter Davison on November 28, 1959. Father Nelson celebrated the Wedding Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

- **Tuesday night Bingo** in Nelson Hall began on May 17, 1966. Admission was \$4.50/package with Ed Newton in charge.

- A weekly ad (or Church Note) in *The Swarthmorean* newspaper, which caters to the residents of the Borough of Swarthmore, was purchased for \$1.50 a week through a fund set up by Swarthmore residents Rosalie Piersol and John Logue.

- Over 400 people attended the eighth anniversary dinner-dance on Saturday night, February 4, 1967. Mother Superior Miriam Carmel, who headed the parochial school for its first six years and before being transferred to Cecilian Academy, Mt. Airy, was a guest of honor. Her successor, Mother Theodosia, and the seven members of the Sisters of St. Joseph who comprise



CCD classes are opened to elementary and high school students as well as pre-schoolers.

the faculty were also guests of honor. Co-chairmen of the event were Thomas Ward, Paul Duke, Mrs. Edward Collins and Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

- The ninth anniversary dinner dance was held on Saturday, February 23, 1968 in the social hall of the church. Former assistant rectors Rev. Harry F. Gaffney and Rev. Francis Carbine, Mrs. Florence Smott (Father Nelson's sister), the Sisters of St. Joseph and lay teachers in the school, were guests along with the present rector Rev. Charles A. Nelson and assistants Rev. Donald V. Heim and Rev. Charles Flynn OSA.

- In May of 1968, a group of parishioners called "The Sentimentals" entertained at the Naval Hospital. This group had entertained the parish with their talents at different shows presented in Nelson Hall.



Rev. Donald V. Heim
(1964-69)

- March 21, 1969. A \$2000 renovation of the church sanctuary in preparation for a new altar is underway. Carpeting is included in the project which is expected to be completed for Easter.

- John Logue and Rosalie Piersol also started a fund to purchase book racks for the back of the pews in church to hold hymnals and missalettes. The racks were purchased in February, 1974, as a 15th Year Anniversary Gift. The Golden Age Club organized the installation.

- "Down to Earth Christians," parishioners who devote their time and energy to beautifying the grounds around Notre Dame, was started in 1982 by Rosalie

Piersol. Today, Mr. Ed Roche leads these dedicated and talented parishioners.

- The last Sunday evening Mass was celebrated on November 20, 1983; 5:15 Mass on Saturdays started on November 26.

- 1985 saw the restoration of the distribution of Communion from the Cup and a growing number of Extraordinary Ministers of the Most Holy Eucharist, who administer the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the form of bread and wine at Masses and to the sick of the parish

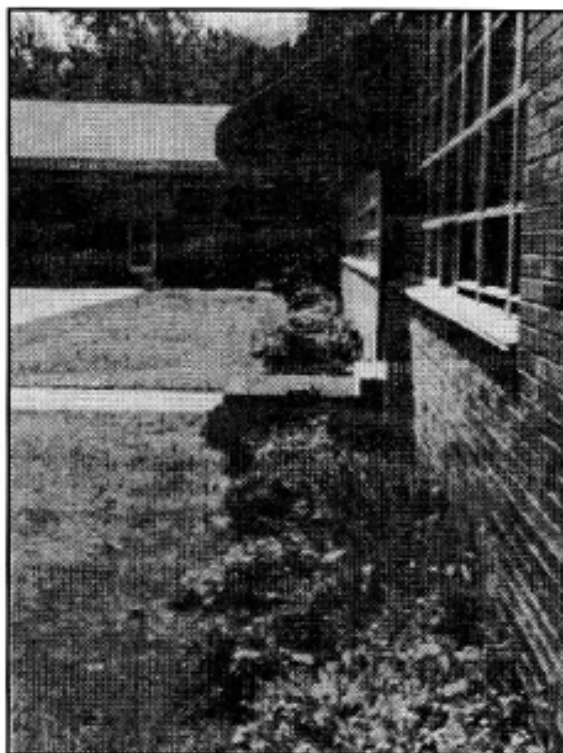
- In 1993, the first Parish Pastoral Council was formed. Members both elected and appointed were Father Benonis, Father James Farrant, Mike McAndrews, Jim Basilio, Bill Billbrough, Tom Ward, Pat Gorman, Peter Pepe, Amy Apelian, Paula Frattarola, Janet Fitzgerald, Mary Jane Povey, Sue O'Connor, and Diane Madison.

- In July of 1993, Notre Dame de Lourdes became a Tithing Parish.

- On June 5, 1994, parishioner Michael McAndrews was ordained a deacon, the first from Notre Dame. The parish celebrated with The Rev. Mr. McAndrews at a Mass of Thanksgiving on June 18. A reception in Nelson Hall followed the Mass.

Assistant Pastors

Notre Dame has been honored with dedicated assistant pastors throughout the years, beginning with Rev. Harry P. Gaffney (1960-1962), Rev. Francis A. Carbine (1962-1964), Rev. Donald V. Heim (1964-1969), Rev. Francis T. Menei (summer of 1969), Rev. Thomas F. Halloran (1969-1971), Rev. James F. Hughes (summer of 1971), Rev. Frederick K. Schmidt (1971-1973), Rev. Vito J. Carbone (1973-1979), Rev. Edward J. Enright, O.S.A. (1977-78), Rev. John F. McBride (1979-1984), Rev. Francis Schlett (1984-1985), Rev. Joseph



The grounds around Notre Dame beautified and maintained by the "Down to Earth Christians."

D. Brandt (summer of 1985), Rev. Daniel J. Cavanaugh (1985-1988), Rev. Soccorso J. Saldutte (1988-1989), and Rev. James J. Farrant (1989-1993). In June of 1993, Rev. Joseph L. Maloney, a teacher at Cardinal O'Hara High School, began his residence at Notre Dame in June 1993, helping with parish duties whenever possible.

Notre Dame has also received wonderful help for Sunday Masses. Over the years the following priests have been there to assist our pastors: Rev. Charles J. McDevitt, Rev. Thomas J. Shea, O.S.A., Rev. Joseph Genito, O.S.A., Rev. Edward Doran, O.S.A. and Rev. Monsignor Michael F. Marley.

More Memories

- Father Nelson's old 1956 Chevy driving out of the driveway.
- The painted sign that said Notre Dame de Lourdes.
- Father Nelson's father patting Murphy's (the parish dog) head in the backyard on a hot summer's day.

- The long cold week of the Carnival when it rained everyday.
- Tom Wolfe spinning the wheels of fortune at the first Carnival.
- Joan Coleman mixing the punch at the first meeting after the men had made the repairs to the barn.
- Father Nelson planting roses in his rose garden, peeping toms slipping around taking pictures of Jeanette Ross on her knees, digging a bed for the roses.
- The very successful card party in Mrs. Raymond Mateer's home.
- Father Nelson leading Christmas Carols at the first Christmas party in the barn.
- Ellis Rumsey being a jolly old St. Nick.
- Father Nelson opening that big Christmas package at the Auxiliary party that contained the clock for the Rectory.
- Nancy Donnelly trying on hats at the Millinery sale.
- Terry Teeney, Vera Gianetti and Father Nelson counting money on the porch of the Rectory.
- The cute expressions of kids eating corn at the corn boil.
- The first day of school, children tripping over the boards that covered the dirt. Mother Miriam Carmel separating the boys from the girls.
- The first card party held in the new school hall and chaired by Kathryn Fahy.
- Marilyn Devine helping Father Nelson pull the trombola numbers for the fabulous prizes.
- Ann Lewis selling Christmas corsages at the Christmas Bazaar.
- The hairstyle show with Kitty Hathaway, Kathryn Fahy, and Kay Mahoney as models.
- Bill Whitton helping Santa Claus give out his toys to boys and girls. Lou

Cocci standing in a long line with his little one in his arms.

• Dolores Flynn playing the new organ in church for the first time.



Father James Farrant (1989-93)

• The first 40 hours with the Gold Vestments and our beautiful Altar.

• Marie Coleman making a visit to the Blessed Mother with her little one.

• The smiling Irish face of Jim Devine playing the role of "Father Devine," the pastor. Ben Maddesi with the glint in his eye playing the part of John O'Hara.

• Peggy Anderson singing, "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun," Millie Polmano singing, "Jingle Bells," and Father Gaffney singing, "Mammy."

• The first Christmas Cocktail party by the fireside of the K.of C. in Woodlyn with "Pep" playing his music for peppy Notre Dame de Lourdes.

• Bob Teeney's talent of decorating, showing up on the stage, the covering up of the Electric Bingo Board.

• Cozy Morley visiting Notre Dame's new Nelson Hall.

• Members of the Women's Auxiliary holding a spring fashion show in 1968. Mrs. Edward Collins was chairman of the event with Mrs. John Marinari in charge of reservations. Ms. Harry Linker was auxiliary president. The ladies of the club also modeled the clothing from a shop in Milmont Park.

• Notre Dame de Lourdes parishioners celebrated the 35th anniversary of the ordination of their rector, Father Nelson, with two receptions both held on Sunday, June 16, 1968, in the social

hall named in his honor.

- A parish farewell party for the Rev. Donald V. Heim was sponsored in the social hall on Sunday, June 8, 1969, by the Holy Name Society and The Grotto, the church's publication. Father Heim was transferred to St. Henry's Church in Philadelphia after five years as assistant pastor at Notre Dame. The Rev. Francis Menei, formerly of St. Donato's Church, Philadelphia, and a teacher from Cardinal Dougherty High School served Notre Dame during that summer.

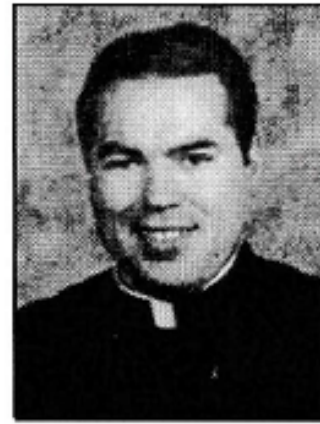
- Donald McGoldrick was elected president of the Holy Name Society for 1969-70. Other officers included Joseph McAndrews, first vice president; William Billbrough, second vice president; Edward Roche, secretary; Edward Newton, treasurer; and John Loughlin and John Mason, marshals.

- The Rev. Thomas Halloran assumed the duty of assistant pastor in September of 1969. Father Halloran was ordained in 1968 at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

- 1969. A meeting for the formation of a Catholic Youth Organization was held in the school hall on November 19. Elected were: Jack Mason, president; Kathy Rago, vice president; David Detweiler, treasurer; and Mike Martinelli, secretary. The CYO's first project was "Operation Santa Claus."

- In March of 1993, Father James Farrant (1989-1993) was notified by the Archdiocese that he was being transferred. Father Farrant was to become pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in North Philadelphia (a new parish combining the recently closed parishes of St. Columba, Most Precious Blood and St. Elizabeth). His involvement with the different groups of our parish, such as the Liturgy, the school, Pre-Cana, CYO, the Community Service Corps, Parish Council, CCD, the seniors, the minister, the lectors and cantors, among others, greatly enriched our

parishioners. Father Farrant's many gifts would be sadly missed by the people of Notre Dame. A farewell reception was held in his honor on June 13, 1993, in Nelson Hall.



Father Joseph L. Maloney,
resident (1993-present)

This is a brief history of our parish. Over the years, we have made progress with the help and the blessings of Almighty God, and the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. It has been a long and at times a very hard road, but we can all offer our thanks to God, and pray that we will continue to make progress imbued with the same fine spirit which has made us strong from the very beginning. (Taken from a 10th Anniversary calendar, author unknown.)

Information for this history of Notre Dame was obtained from the following sources: The Swarthmorean, The Delaware County Daily Times, parish bulletins, the 10th Anniversary calendar, Notre Dame de Lourdes School, Janet Schramm, Rosalie Piersol, Peggy Anderson, Mary Jane Povey and various original parishioners of Notre Dame whose help was invaluable.

Diane Madison, 1995





On September 8, 1996, Father Wm. Benonis (center) dedicated the former convent on the parish grounds as the "Notre Dame Center." Assisting Father Benonis is The Rev. Mr. McAndrews (left), Father Joseph Maloney (behind Father Benonis), and The Rev. Mr. James Basilio (right), along with altar servers and Eucharistic Ministers.

Additional Tidbits...

- On June 11, 1995, Notre Dame was blessed a second time when parishioner Jim Basilio was ordained a deacon. The parish celebrated with The Rev. Mr. Basilio and his family at a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by a reception in Nelson Hall on Sunday, June 25.

- When the Sisters of St. Joseph left Notre Dame School, six Marianist Brothers, who taught at St. James High School, moved into the convent. The Marinists left Notre Dame in June of 1993. On Sunday, September 8, 1996, Father William Benonis dedicated the former convent as the "Notre Dame Center." The Center is open for various parish meetings or get-togethers, and has offices for various groups and committees.

- The Notre Dame Youth Ministry held its first meeting and social on Sunday, September 15, 1996, for grades 7 through 12. Under the direction of John LaFaso, newly appointed Director of Religious Education

and Youth Ministry, and with the help of several adult parishioners and college students, the Youth Group meets on a regular basis with the accent on prayer, service, growth, challenges, and fun.

- Father William Benonis announced in the Spring of 1996 that due to the constant generosity of our parishioners over the years, bequests from deceased parishioners Lillian Jankowski and Marion Richards, myriad fund-raisers, and our tithing program, Notre Dame Parish had succeeded in clearing the debt. A Mortgage Burning Celebration would take place on Saturday evening, November 23, 1996, in Nelson Hall.

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Rev. Joseph Maloney, The Rev. Mr. Michael McAndrews, Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua, and Rev. William Benonis on Easter Sunday, 1995.

**PASTORS OF
NOTRE DAME DE LOURDES PARISH
SWARTHMORE, PA**

REVEREND CHARLES A. NELSON

1959 - 1978

REVEREND JOSEPH S. FONASH

1978 - 1980

REVEREND WILLIAM J. BENONIS

1980 - 2001

REVEREND KARL A. ZEUNER

2001 -

PAROCHIAL VICARS

† REV. HARRY P. GAFFNEY • 1960 - 1962

REV. FRANCIS A. CARBINE • 1962 - 1964

† REV. DONALD V. HEIM • 1964 - 1969

REV. THOMAS E. HALLORAN • 1969 - 1971

REV. JAMES E. HUGHES • 1971 - 1971

REV. FREDERICK K. SCHMIDT • 1971 - 1973

REV. VITO J. CARBONE • 1973 - 1979

REV. JOHN. F. McBRIDE • 1979 - 1984

REV. FRANCIS J. SCHLETT • 1984 - 1985

REV. DANIEL J. CAVANAUGH • 1985 - 1988

† REV. SOCCORSO J. SALDUTTE • 1988 - 1989

† REV. JAMES J. FARRANT • 1989 - 1993

RESIDENTS

REV. JOSEPH L. MALONEY • 1993 - 2000

REV. JOHN B. FLANAGAN • 2000 -

PERMANENT DEACONS

REV. MR. MICHAEL McANDREWS • 1994 -

REV. MR. JAMES BASILIO • 1995 -

WEEKEND ASSISTANTS

REV. CHARLES L. McDEVITT

REV. THOMAS J. SHEA, O.S.A.

REV. JOSEPH GENITO, O.S.A.

REV. EDWARD DORAN, O.S.A.

REV. MSGR. MICHAEL F. MARLEY

REV. JOHN J. VAN STONE