

8-17-18

CORRECTION TO THE RATIONALE PAPER THAT WAS CIRCULATED ON AUGUST 11 AND 12, 2018
AT ALL SAINTS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:

On p. 2 of the Rationale Paper the statement about St. Benedict's church "burning down" is incorrect. According to All Saints historians Betty Darnell and Carl Fahringer, St. Benedict's church did not "BURN DOWN". The authors of the Rationale paper, Yvonne and Tony Niemann, apologize for including this "rumor" they had heard several times without checking more closely into the history of St. Benedict's and the beginning of All Saints parish.

Here are the historical references that are more accurate:

1. *All Saints Church: Celebrating 175 years and more November 2005* states: Stephen Baldin (the first priest ordained in the United States) first said Mass in homes of parishioners around Little Mount in 1805 (p. 1). In 1808 the Little Mount mission was taken over by another circuit rider, Charles Nerinckx. Several sources state that Father Nerinckx "physically constructed the log church of that name" (St. Benedict's parish) from 1811 to 1815. It was recorded that, "50 worshipers packed the church for a jubilee in 1820".

Father Nerinckx served the parish until 1824 when he left to preach the Gospel to Indians in Missouri. During this time, Taylorsville was named the new county seat and the population began to shift. All Saints was begun in 1830 with "bricks fired on the property" (p. 2). During the Civil War, "Taylorsville's courthouse, like many across Kentucky, was burned, but the church (All Saints) escaped with only the musket ball that is still in its bell tower". [The fire at the courthouse may have fueled the rumor that St. Benedict's burned, but that was not true! And, when the steeple was repaired a few years ago, no musket ball was found!]

2. *History of Spencer County*, Mary Frances Brown, 1990 states: "Church building [St. Benedict's] was used as a funeral chapel until 1861.

3. *Back Trails*, Spencer Co. Historical & Genealogical Society, Vol. 10, No. 4 (March 2003), pg. 61 states: "Even after the parish center moved to Taylorsville in 1830, St. Benedict's served the parish as a cemetery and as a funeral chapel until the burial of Mary T. Mattingly in 1861."

4. *The Kentucky Explorer*, October 2005, p. 45, included an article written by Carl Fahringer, Deacon at All Saints: "With an active parish cemetery St. Benedict's Church was used as a funeral chapel until 1861. Even after it was falling apart in the 1870's this old church contributed its main beam, a 45-foot-long piece of yellow poplar, 16 X 18 inches in girth, to the present St. Michael's Church in Fairfield."

5. *Pioneer Faith, A History of St. Michael's Catholic Church Fairfield KY, 1792-2010*, Gilly Simpson, 2011, p. 91-92. Information provided by Betty Darnell, professional genealogy researcher, and member of All Saints:

“[Father Charles] Nerinckx had overseen the construction of the old church of St. Benedict at Little Mount, near Taylorsville. St. Benedict's fell on hard times after the construction of All Saints church, which was built under the supervision of Father James Elliott. Although many area residents were still being buried in the cemetery at St. Benedict's, the church was used only as a funeral chapel until 1861.

After it began to decay rapidly in the 1870s, discussion began about trying to salvage some of the materials. A prime example was the old church's main beam, a 45-foot-long piece of yellow poplar, 16 x 18 inches in girth, which was used in the construction of the current St. Michael's Catholic Church in Fairfield in 1883.

Perhaps as some sort of symbolism, this beam still stands as a sign of strength, the strength of those early priests as well as the early parishioners. Both contributed to the faith here and made it strong, like that poplar beam. They fought and struggled, with both the circumstances surrounding them as well as with each other. Yet over 200 years later, the spiritual and physical labors of Father Nerinckx still stand in the church where the modern parishioners try to carry on the faith that he helped to build here.”

CONCLUSION:

It is very important to check historical facts before publishing information! With all the historical references, the expert historians seem to agree that St. Benedict's church decayed in the 1870s, long after the present historical building of All Saints was erected. From the time All Saints began in 1830, the original chapel at St. Benedict's continued to be used as a funeral chapel. When St. Benedict's was no longer usable, the main beam was transported to Fairfield where it was used in the “new” St. Michael's church.

We hope this will help set the historical facts straight.

Yvonne and Tony Niemann