From Our President

It’s hard to believe that a year has gone by since we revived our newsletter last fall. I certainly hope that everyone had a chance to read it and learn about (or relive) the Society’s exciting events and accomplishments.

This newsletter continues our effort to keep our members informed about what has taken place over the course of the past year, and to keep you up to date on planned events for the coming year. As you read through this issue, I hope that you will be as excited as we were about the new Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the exhibit of our Thomas Eakins painting “The Translator” at PAFA, the many lectures and socials at the Society’s house, and our Annual Barry Award Dinner.

Our Society is blessed with a passionate and dedicated Board of Managers who manage our finances, maintain our Society House Collections, plan our events, and handle the editorial duties and publication of our award-winning journal, American Catholic Studies. If you’d like to learn more about the Society, I and the other board members are eager to meet and talk with you at any of our functions.

Thank you for continuing to be members, subscribers, and advocates of American Catholic history, and in particular the work of the American Catholic Historical Society. Please continue to share our work and let us know of any areas of interest for future exhibits and lectures. We have been at our mission for over 130 years, and with your help, we will be around for hundreds more.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Finnegan
President, ACHS
About the ACHS

Founded in 1886, the American Catholic Historical Society (ACHS) was established for the purpose of collecting and preserving materials related to the history of the Catholic Church in the United States and for documenting the contributions of Catholics to the building of the nation. It is the oldest historical society of its kind in the United States.

An independent, non-profit organization, the ACHS continues to promote the documentation and interpretation of the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. It accomplishes its ongoing mission by publishing an award-winning academic journal, American Catholic Studies; sponsoring public lectures and other society events; and supporting the preservation of its historical collections located at the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Membership in the society is open to all persons who share an interest in the history of American Catholicism.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- A subscription to Society’s award-winning quarterly journal, American Catholic Studies.
- Discounted pricing for the ACHS’s annual lectures and other events.
- Invitation to regular social gatherings, including our annual Christmas Party, St. Patrick’s Day Social, and Summer Garden Party.

A New Home for the Archives

After more than two years of planning, the archdiocesan archives have a new home. Previously housed in the basement of St. Martin’s Chapel at the seminary, the archives are now located in the former school of Our Lady of Ransom parish in Northeast Philadelphia. The facility underwent extensive renovations, including the installation of compact shelving to hold the collections and a new heating and air conditioning system. Visitors will be delighted to find a dedicated research room and ample workspace.

The Society was extensively involved in the planning process for the new archives since our materials form a core part of the collection. We are delighted that the archdiocese has made this substantial investment in preserving the historical record of Catholicism in the Philadelphia region. Their ever-growing collections now include the archives of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and the papers of their foundress, St. Katharine Drexel.

The new archives—now renamed the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia—will be dedicated by Archbishop Chaput on Thursday, September 21.
The 2016 Barry Award

Every year, the American Catholic Historical Society’s bestows its Commodore John Barry Award upon someone whose professional accomplishments and contributions to the church and the community have been deemed outstanding.

This past year, on November 18, that honor was given to Donna Crilley Farrell, the Executive Director of the World Meeting of Families. In that role, Farrell was responsible for overseeing and coordinating all aspects of that historic gathering, which brought Pope Francis and millions of other visitors to Philadelphia in September 2015. Through her tireless efforts, she worked to ensure the event’s success and helped communicate Catholic values and teachings to a worldwide audience. Without doubt, she is a most worthy recipient of the Barry Award.

Farrell, a native of Delaware County, began her career as a television reporter and anchor for several stations, including WB17 in Philadelphia, after having earned her degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She later spent fourteen years at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, including eight as director of communications. In May 2013, she received the papal cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice for her service to the church. She currently serves as Vice President of Corporate Communications for Independence Blue Cross.

The dinner was held in the Lincoln Ballroom at the Union League of Philadelphia. Former local news anchor, Pat Ciarrocchi, served as mistress of ceremonies and Robert J. Ciaruffoli, the chair of the dinner committee, gave the presentation address. Music for the evening was provided by the choir of Cardinal O’Hara High School, Farrell’s alma mater.

We are grateful to all those who attended the dinner or served as patrons and benefactors. As our sole fundraising event of the year, proceeds from the Barry Dinner help sustain the work of the Society. The donations received help us maintain our facilities, expand our public programming, support historical research, and underwrite the publication of our award-winning quarterly journal, American Catholic Studies.
American Catholic Studies

American Catholic Studies – the oldest, continuously published Catholic scholarly journal in the United States – is committed to encouraging research and publishing articles on the American Catholic experience. The quarterly journal features broad-ranging scholarship that contributes to our understanding of Catholicism in the American context as it intersects with history, literature, culture, politics, art and architecture, theology, and popular movements.

The journal has won numerous awards from the Catholic Press Association over the years, including First Place for General Excellence among scholarly journals for four of the past five years.

Consistent excellence in topics, editing, design, and presentation. This publication...attracts solid scholars who offer relevant topics of current interest.
– Catholic Press Association

Published at Villanova University, the journal reaches a national and international audience through our agreements with JSTOR and Project MUSE, scholarly databases that provide full-text digital access to member libraries in the United States and internationally.

Your membership in the American Catholic Historical Society automatically subscribes you to American Catholic Studies. All members are subscribers, and all subscribers are members!

The Translator on loan to PAFA

One of the Society’s treasures is its portrait of Msgr. Hugh T. Henry by celebrated Philadelphia artist Thomas Eakins. Henry, a seminary professor and former rector of Roman Catholic High School, is perhaps best remembered for his translation of early Latin poetry. He also served as the president of the ACHS from 1897 to 1898.

A gift to the Society by Henry himself, the portrait is familiarly known as “The Translator.” It depicts Henry in his academic robes at work at his desk. Seen faintly hanging behind Henry’s shoulder is a portrait of Pope Leo XIII, a nod to Henry’s work translating some of the pope’s own poetry.

After hanging for many years at the archdiocesan seminary, the Society recently arranged for the loan of the work to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Visitors can see it on display in PAFA’s main gallery. A digital replica of the painting also hangs on the first floor of the Society’s house, where a copy of the portrait of Leo XIII that appears in Eakins’s work hangs next to it. Take a look next time you visit!
ACHS News and Notes

Great things are happening at the ACHS! We’re happy to have this chance to share news of some of our recent accomplishments and tell you about the good work we’ve been doing.

First, a little housekeeping. Those of you who visited the society this past spring may have noticed a new piece of furniture on the first floor of the house—a beautiful oak roll-top desk. Actually, it’s not really all that new. Recently restored after sitting in the archdiocesan archives for many years, the desk was once owned by Martin I. Griffin, one of the founders of the Society. A prolific writer and editor, he penned numerous books and articles chronicling Catholic contributions to the nation, including a biography of Commodore John Barry, the father of the U.S. Navy, and a three-volume history of Catholics in the American Revolution. We are honored to have his desk on display once again.

If you’re looking for even more reason to visit the ACHS, we’re pleased to announce the opening of our newest exhibit, *Images of Sanctity*. Have you ever opened an old book only to find a holy card flutter out? Catholics have long treasured these tokens, but how many know their history? That was the premise that inspired the Archives of the Archdiocese of New York to put together a wonderful display of holy cards, tracing their history from 1800 to the present. We are delighted that we were able to work out an agreement with them to bring the exhibit to Philadelphia. The materials will be on display at the ACHS and available for viewing during all of our events throughout the year. Don’t miss the chance to see this wonderful exhibit while it’s in town.

There have also been some exciting developments for *American Catholic Studies*. This past year we were invited for inclusion in JSTOR, the leading digital archival repository for scholarly journals. They have agreed to digitize, at their expense, the full run of ACS as well its predecessor, *The Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*, going all the way back to the 1880s!

This agreement will make a wealth of earlier scholarship available to scholars and researchers. At present, under our agreement with Project MUSE, only issues from 2011 onward have been available digitally. Now, our partnership with JSTOR will allow more than a century of scholarship to be accessed electronically, reaching more than 10,000 institutional subscribers.

At present, JSTOR has completed digitization of *American Catholic Studies* from its inception in 1999 up through 2014 (under our agreement, the three most recent years of the journal are “embargoed” and available only through MUSE). Scanning of the *Records* is currently underway and should be complete within the next few months.

Speaking of digitization, did you know that old issues of the *Catholic Standard and Times* are now online? Text-searchable copies of the newspaper from 1963-1968 have been scanned and made available by the Catholic Research Resources Alliance as part of their ongoing newspaper digitization project. Visit [www.thecatholicnewsarchive.org](http://www.thecatholicnewsarchive.org) to browse through them and learn what was happening back in the day.

Finally, the ACHS would like to extend our congratulations to two of our board members, Dr. Nicholas Rademacher and Dr. Patrick Hayes, who have been invited to serve on the historical commission working on the cause for beatification of Fr. Bill Atkinson. A member of the Augustinian order and native of Upper Darby, Atkinson was the first quadriplegic ordained to the priesthood. Known for his compassion, sense of humor, and zeal for life, Atkinson is remembered fondly by those he encountered in his ministry. The task of the historical committee is to gather materials and documents pertaining to Father Atkinson’s life and its “heroic virtue.” Their findings will become part of the report submitted to the Vatican and will hopefully help lead to the formal recognition of Atkinson’s sanctity.
Recap of Our 2016-2017 Events

Exhibit
Our exhibit for 2016-2017, “Pages from the Past: Books from the ACHS Collection,” looked back at the publications collected and produced by the Society. It displayed books and other print material that conveyed the importance of the Society and its members to the creation and cultivation of research on the history of American Catholicism.

Lectures
We continued our tradition of holding two formal lectures each year featuring the work of scholars who have recently published books on the history of U.S. Catholicism. This year we were proud to feature two young scholars teaching in Philadelphia.

In October, Dr. Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez of Temple University delivered “Madonna Immaculata: Mary as a Cultural Icon.” The talk discussed Catholic and Protestant attitudes towards Mary in nineteenth-century America. She argued that the debates surrounding Mary revealed much about how the two groups viewed women and each other.

In April, Dr. Jack Downey of La Salle University, shared his research into Dorothy Day’s spirituality. He spoke about how her “subversive holiness” was shaped by her encounter with Father Onésime Lacouture, SJ, and his retreat movement.

Local History Talks
We continued our recent series of talks on Philadelphia Catholicism with three fascinating presentations. In September, Sister Mary Helen Beirne, SSJ, spoke on the history of her congregation, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill, and their post-Vatican II years. Then, in February, Dr. William Watson of Immaculata University shared information about his ongoing archeological research into Duffy’s Cut, the 1832 site of a mass grave of 57 Irish Catholic railroad workers who came to build the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad. Finally, we welcomed Dr. Patrick J. Hayes, ACHS board member and archivist for the Baltimore Province of the Redemptorists, who spoke on “The Civil War Diary of Rev. James Sheeran, CSsR,” one of only a few dozen Catholic chaplains commissioned for the Confederacy.

Parties, Socials, and Special Events
At the ACHS, we’re known for our parties. Every year, we open the house for a St. Patrick’s Day Social, June Garden Party, and Christmas celebration. But this past year we also had a couple of special events on our calendar.

On October 30 – Halloween eve – local authors Marita Krivda Poxon, Thom Nickels, and Mal Whyte regaled us with an Evening of Ghost Storytelling. They told tales in the voice of Bishop Francis Kenrick, Agnes Repplier, Thomas Merton, and other notable Catholic “ghosts.”

On April 2, ACHS members enjoyed a special, docent-led tour of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts to view one of their newest acquisitions, Thomas Eakins’s The Translator, on loan from the Society. We also had a chance to see their acclaimed exhibit, World War I and American Art.
Our Fall Lecture will feature Eileen Markey speaking on the life of Sister Maura Clarke, one of the American churchwomen martyred in El Salvador in 1980.

This coming April, Daniel Moran will speak on Flannery O’Connor, her evolving career, and the shaping of her literary identity.

2017 - 2018 Calendar of Events

Sunday, September 17, 2017 @ 2pm
Dr. Maggie McGuinness, La Salle University
“St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in Philadelphia”
Free and Open to the Public

Tuesday, October 17, 2017
5pm social hour | 6pm dinner | 7pm lecture
Annual Fall Lecture
Eileen Markey: “A Radical Faith: The Assassination of Sr. Maura”
$15 members / $25 non-members

Friday, November 10, 2017
Barry Award Dinner
Honoring Dr. Rosalie M. Mirenda
Union League of Philadelphia

Friday, December 8, 2017 @ 6pm
Annual Christmas Party
$15 members / $25 non-members

Wednesday, January 24, 2017 @ 6pm
Dr. William Kurtz, University of Virginia
“Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America”
Lecture at the Union League of Philadelphia

Sunday, February 11, 2017 @ 2pm
Dr. Tia Pratt, St. Joseph’s University
“The Legacy of Systemic Racism in an Urban Parish”
Free and Open to the Public

Friday, March 9, 2018 @ 6pm
Annual St. Patrick’s Day Social
$15 members / $25 non-members

Tuesday, April 18, 2018
5pm social hour | 6pm dinner | 7pm lecture
Annual Spring Lecture
Daniel Moran: “Creating Flannery O’Connor”
$15 members / $25 non-members

Sunday, May 6, 2018 @ 2pm
Fr. Michael Di Gregorio, OSA, Villanova University
“The Italian Augustinian Mission in South Philadelphia”
Free and Open to the Public

Friday, June 1, 2018 @ 6pm
Annual Garden Party
$15 members and non-members

AND OTHER EVENTS AS THEY GET ADDED
Your Membership Sustains the Work of the ACHS. Join or Renew Today!

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*You can also join online at: [www.amchs.org/membership/index.html](http://www.amchs.org/membership/index.html)*