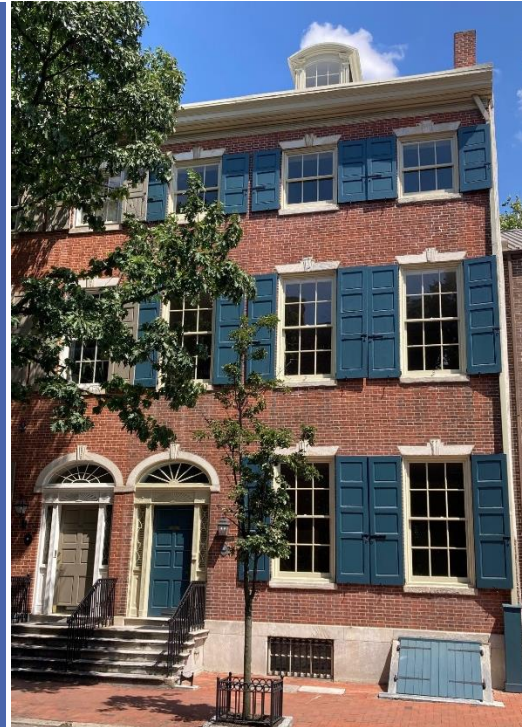


American Catholic Historical Society

263 SOUTH FOURTH STREET | PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106 | WWW.AMCHS.ORG



FALL 2024

From Our President

Dear members and friends,

The Fall seems to come around faster every year. Please take the time to read this edition to reminisce or learn something new about our Society. I hope that if you have not attended our events, you will get excited to be a part of what we do this coming year.

Our commitment to developing our board continues with the addition of new members Kris Jaeger, Margaret McGuinness, and Patrick Shank. We thank departing members Matthew Slutz, John Grogan, Ed McMerty, and Tia Pratt for their time and service.

Our research travel grant had a successful first year. It is just one more way that we are advancing scholarship and broadening our outreach.

We have continued our support of "Mother Overbrook: The Legacy of

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary", a feature length documentary from Deo Gratias Films.

The 2023 Barry Award Dinner honoring Theresa and Paul Murtagh was a great success. Please make plans to attend the 2024 award dinner on Friday, November 22, 2024, which will honor Joseph McLaughlin, Jr., the chairman and CEO of Haverford Trust. His father was the Society's inaugural Barry Award recipient.

As always, many thanks to all of you for continuing to be members, subscribers, and advocates of American Catholic history, and in particular the work of the American Catholic Historical Society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael H. Finnegan".

Michael H. Finnegan
President, ACHS



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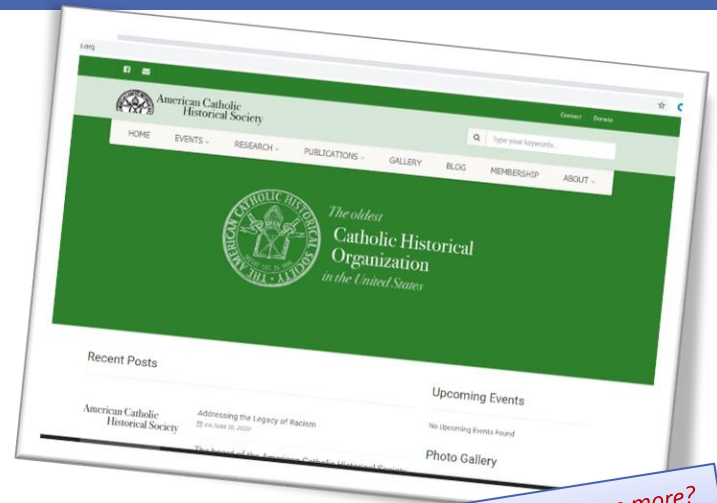
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About the ACHS

Founded in 1884, 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.



Want to learn more?
Visit our website:
www.amchs.org

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- A subscription to the Society's award-winning quarterly journal, *American Catholic Studies*, with free online access to back issues.
- 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.
- Knowledge that you support the ongoing mission of the Society!

Roman Catholic High School's Ambassadors

If you've been to one of our in-person events, you might have noticed the presence of some young men—often decked out in purple polos or cardigans—lending a hand. These dedicated helpers are members of Roman Catholic High School's Ambassadors Club, and we're grateful for their ongoing support.

As noted on Roman's website, the purpose of the Ambassadors Club "is to promote student leadership and avenues of service through real and practical public relations activities." As part of their preparation, they receive training in etiquette and deportment. ACHS board member Jim Fitzsimmons said that "the Ambassadors have been supporting our events at the ACHS since I was president back in the late 1990s. They serve as greeters, ushers, and waiters. They also help set-up and break-down for our various events and cover about six to eight per year."

The ties between Roman, founded in 1890, and the ACHS, founded in 1884, date all the way back to the inception of both institutions. Archbishop Patrick Ryan was not only the first president of Roman's initial board of trustees, but he also formally approved the founding of the Society in 1886. Additionally, Father Nevin F. Fisher, who joined the ACHS as a member in 1889, was also Roman's first rector, and over the ensuing years numerous Roman alumni and faculty have



served as members and officers of the ACHS, including many today.

Dan Dailey, a 2023 Roman grad and current sophomore at Widener University, fondly recalls his days as an Ambassador. "I became a member of the Club during my sophomore year," Dan said. "I loved working with the ACHS and especially working with Mr. Fitzsimmons – talking about Philly sports and our time at Roman." Dan added that he "would definitely become a member of the ACHS in the near future, possibly after my time at Widener University."

If history is a guide, the long-standing connection between Roman and the ACHS can be expected to continue well into the future. And it certainly wouldn't surprise us if an eventual ACHS President is not only an alumnus of Roman, but of the Ambassadors Club as well.

2023 Barry Honorees Theresa and Paul Murtagh



The Master of Ceremonies for the 2023 Barry Dinner was local broadcasting legend, Lou Tilley, a friend of Theresa and Paul Murtagh.

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

This past November, the Society was pleased to honor Theresa and Paul Murtagh, two individuals widely recognized for their tremendous faith, generous service to the church and community, and tireless dedication to many philanthropic causes.

Theresa, a life-long resident of Delaware County, graduated from Our Lady of Peace grade school, Cardinal O'Hara High School, Swarthmore College, and Villanova University School of Law. She served as Assistant District Attorney for Delaware County before working as legal counsel in the private sector. Paul, who emigrated from Ireland in 1985, worked in construction before starting his own company with his brother six months after his arrival. Today, Murtagh Brothers is a highly regarded residential construction firm noted for its projects throughout the Philadelphia area.

Active in many in many religious, civic, and cultural organizations, they are known for their charitable commitments and skill in cultivating support for a variety of worthy causes. The numerous testimonials at the dinner recalled how Paul and Theresa have a gift for bringing people together, opening their home to host fundraisers and build networks of friendship and commitment. Among the many groups that have benefitted from their efforts have been the Riddle HealthCare Foundation, the Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, and their home parish, St. Mary Magdalen in Media.

They have also taken up the mantle of leadership on many occasions, especially among local Catholic and Irish-American groups. Among her many notable roles, Theresa has served as president of the Catholic Philopatrian Literary Institute, is active in Legatus, and this past March she became the first female president of the Friendly Sons and Daughters of St. Patrick, which was founded in 1771 and whose early members included many of Philadelphia's influential patriots, including Commodore Barry. We congratulate them on a well-deserved honor.

BARRY AWARD DINNER – 2024



Save the date! The Society's annual Barry Award Dinner will be held on Friday, November 22, 2024, at the Union League of Philadelphia. We are delighted to honor Joseph McLaughlin, Jr. for his ongoing contributions to the church and society.

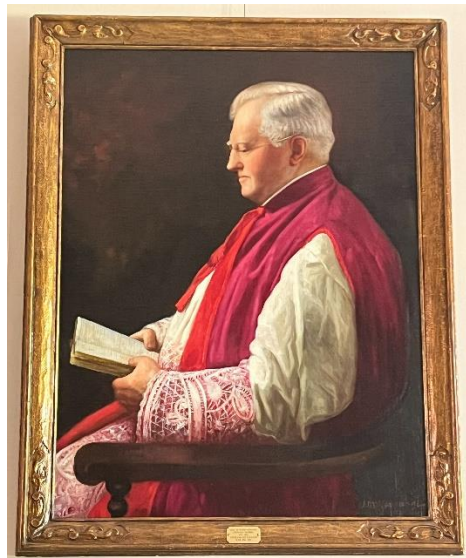
Active in civic and philanthropic life, Mr. McLaughlin is chairman and CEO of Haverford Trust. His father was the Society's inaugural Barry Award recipient.

We look forward to having our members, friends, and benefactors join us on November 22 as we celebrate the work of the ACHS and honor Mr. McLaughlin.

Monsignor Ralph J. Chieffo, Paul Murtagh, Theresa Murtagh, and Michael Finnegan.



Portrait of Msgr. Bernard A. McKenna



At our annual St. Patrick's Day Social this past March, the ACHS was honored to receive a very special donation from one of our longtime members, Marita Krivda Poxon: a portrait of Monsignor Bernard A. McKenna (1875-1960), a prominent member of the Philadelphia clergy during the middle decades of the twentieth century and former president of the Society (1941-1944).

Ordained in 1903, McKenna is perhaps best known as the first director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, from 1929 to 1933. In that role and previously as secretary from 1915 to 1929 to the shrine's first rector, Monsignor Thomas Shahan, McKenna worked tirelessly to raise funds for the shrine's construction. Upon his return to Philadelphia, he served as rector of Holy Angels parish in the West Oak Lane section of the city from 1933 to his death.

It was at Holy Angels that Ms. Poxon and her family got to know Monsignor McKenna, their pastor. Her brother worked as sexton at the church, and the portrait was given to him after Monsignor McKenna's passing. He later gave the portrait to his mother, who subsequently left it to Ms. Poxon. After hanging in her home for many decades, she wanted to ensure that it continued to receive a place of honor and knew of no better place than the ACHS. The portrait, by painter Joseph Malachy Kavanagh, is on display on the second floor of the Society's house. We are grateful for this magnificent and meaningful addition to our collections.

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 wide-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 received numerous awards from the Catholic Press Association over the years, including First Place for General Excellence among scholarly journals on several occasions.

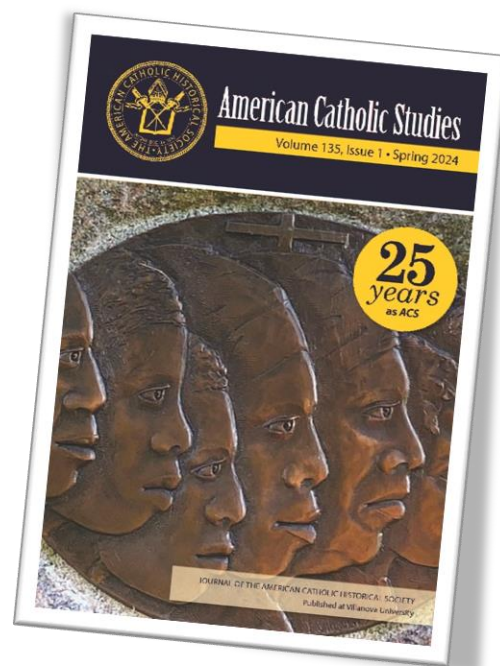
Consistent excellence in topics, editing, design, and presentation. This publication...attracts solid scholars who offer relevant topics of current interest.

– 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!



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ACHS News and Notes

Among the news from this past year, the ACHS is pleased to welcome three members to our board of managers: Kris Jaeger, Margaret M. McGuinness, and Patrick Shank. Ms. Jaeger, the director of development and community relations at St. John's Hospice in Philadelphia, brings valuable experience in development and fundraising. Returning to the board after a hiatus, Dr. McGuinness is professor emerita of religion at La Salle University and former co-editor of the Society's journal, *American Catholic Studies*. Mr. Shank is archivist at the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which holds the ACHS collections. We look forward to working with them to advance the Society's mission.

Last year, the Society established a new research travel grant to help support scholarship. The award provides up to \$2500 to a scholar or researcher working on any project related to American Catholic history who needs to conduct research in any archive, library, or repository in the five-county Philadelphia area. Aware that many scholars lack institutional support to conduct research, we wanted to help do our part to help sustain historical study. We also wanted to draw attention to rich collections held by local archives, religious communities, and other organizations.

After reviewing submissions, the society was able to split the award and fund two researchers: Dr. Ramon Luzarraga and Ms. Meave Sheehan. Luzarraga, associate professor of theology and religious studies at Saint Martin's University in Lacey, Washington, visited Philadelphia this summer to conduct research at the Redemptorist Archives at St. Peter the Apostle parish to study the order's Caribbean missions. He will be sharing some of his research findings with the Society for our February lecture. Sheehan, an independent scholar, received support to conduct research on Nicola D'Ascenzo, the noted craftsman and stained-glass artist, whose papers are held by the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. His work can be found in many local churches, including the Cathedral of Ss. Peter and Paul, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Francis de Sales.

Applications for next year's grant are due on February 15. Requirements and information on how to apply can be found on the society's website: <https://amchs.org/research/research-travel-grant/>

Dr. Nicholas Rademacher and Dr. Thomas Rzeznik receive the Trisco-Minnich Prize from ACHA president, Dr. Michael Pasquier.

This year marks an important milestone for the Society's journal: 25 years as *American Catholic Studies*. In 1999, through the vision of Dr. Rodger Van Allen, the journal was relaunched under its current name, replacing the older *Records of the ACHS*, whose first issue was published in 1887. Over the past quarter century, the journal has continued to thrive and earn distinction as one of the leading publications in the field.

To mark the anniversary, the journal has undergone a design refresh starting with the Spring 2024 issue. As regular readers will have noticed, the front cover now sports a new masthead and a larger cover image. Inside, some changes were made to fonts and layout to make the text more legible and visually appealing. A particular note of thanks goes to the journal's managing editor, Jeanette Fast Redmond, who spearheaded the design updates.

As part of the celebration, the journal will also feature a special anniversary issue this Fall. It will include a series of short reflections from leading scholars on how the field of American Catholic studies has grown over the past 25 years. Look for it next month!

In an equally celebratory note, the co-editors of *American Catholic Studies*, Dr. Thomas Rzeznik and Dr. Nicholas Rademacher, were honored this past January as the inaugural recipients of the Robert F. Trisco and Nelson H. Minnich Prize for editing, awarded by the American Catholic Historical Association (ACHA). In bestowing the award, the prize selection committee commended Drs. Rzeznik and Rademacher, who have respectively served as the journal's co-editors since 2013 and 2018, for the "generous support that they provide to contributors, especially to first-time authors and those early in their academic careers." Through their efforts, the Society's journal has earned a reputation as an important venue for articles, forums, and reviews in the field. We join the ACHA in congratulating them for this tremendous honor.



Recap of Our 2023-2024 Events



Mr. Leo Vaccaro speaks on St. Joseph's Parish and Prep during the Civil War



Ms. Bea Joyner shares the story of Black Catholic life at Most Blessed Sacrament in West Philadelphia.



Dr. Daniel Cosacchi talks on Pope Francis's models of Christian life.

The past year offered a rich and robust series of talks, lectures, and other events. Our fall season began on September 24 with Dr. Patrick Hayes, the archivist for the Redemptorists and a member of the ACHS board of managers, talking about the ACHS's late nineteenth century scrapbooks and what they reveal about the early history of the Society. He demonstrated their enduring value as mini-repositories, ones rich in detail about the networks and connections that shaped Catholic life in Philadelphia during the late nineteenth century.

For our annual fall lecture, we were delighted to welcome Dr. John McGreevy, Provost of the University of Notre Dame, via Zoom to speak on his new book, *Catholicism: A Global History from the French Revolution to Pope Francis*. Deftly tracing developments in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, he makes a convincing case for Catholicism's central role in the global movements that shaped the modern world.

Our spring season started in January with a lecture on the anti-Catholic origins of the American Revolution by Mr. Grant Stanton, a doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania. Looking closely at the print culture of the time and other sources, he revealed how anti-Catholic prejudice played a pivotal role in leading the American colonies to declare their independence from Great Britain as well as the founding of the new nation.

Then, in February, the Society welcomed Ms. Bea Joyner, who shared her efforts to document the history of Black Catholic life at Most Blessed Sacrament parish in West Philadelphia. Through photographs, interviews, and personal memory, she recalled how the parish welcomed and celebrated the presence and gifts of its Black Catholic community during the 1980s and '90s. Her remarks encouraged several in the audience to share their own remembrances of the parish. A video connected to her project can be viewed at <https://phillycam.org/show/2023/oneness-black-catholics-journey>.

Events continued with our annual spring lecture delivered by Dr. Daniel Cosacchi of the University of Scranton. He spoke on his recent book, *Great American Prophets: Pope Francis's Models of Christian Life*, which took inspiration from Pope Francis's historic address to Congress in 2015 which highlighted the example of Abraham Lincoln, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton.

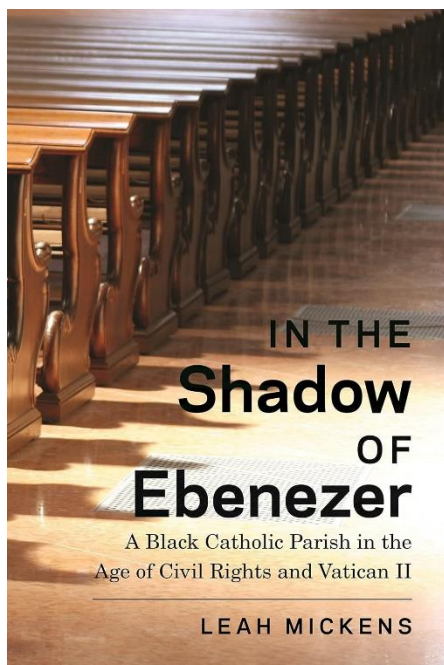
The year concluded with an exceptionally well-attended May lecture by Mr. Leo Vaccaro, a history teacher at St. Joseph's Prep, who spoke on St. Joseph's Parish and Prep during the Civil War. The presentation drew from the research he has been conducting for his forthcoming history of the Prep.

Did you miss an event? Recordings of several of our lectures are available on the ACHS's YouTube page: www.youtube.com/@americancatholichistorical8646.

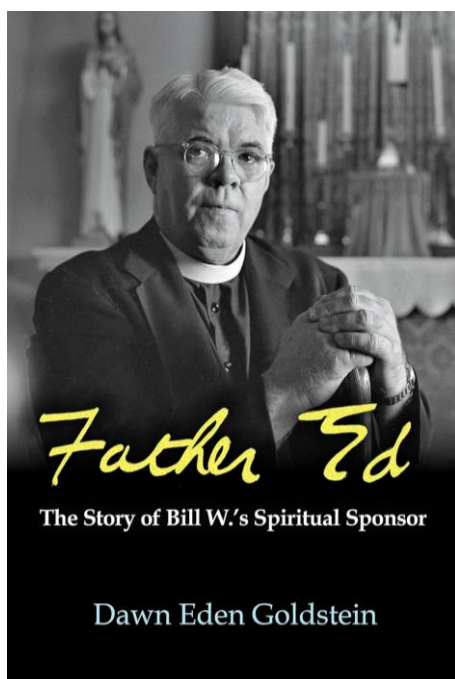
As part of our programming, the ACHS strives to provide a space and an opportunity for parish historians, amateur scholars, and other community members who are passionate about history to share their work with an appreciative audience. Those who are interested in sharing their research are encouraged to contact us at info@amchs.org.

Want to keep
informed about
our events?
Like us on
FACEBOOK!

2024 - 2025 Calendar of Events



Dr. Leah Mickens joins us via Zoom in October to speak on her new book, *In the Shadow of Ebenezer*.



Our spring lecture will feature Dr. Dawn Eden Goldstein speaking on her book, *Father Ed: The Story of Bill W.'s Spiritual Sponsor*.

Sunday, September 15, 2024 @ 2pm

Dr. Domenic Vitiello

The Sanctuary City: Immigrant, Refugee, and Receiving Communities in Postindustrial Philadelphia
Free and Open to the Public

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 @ 7pm
(via Zoom)

Dr. Leah Mickens

In the Shadow of Ebenezer: A Black Catholic Parish in the Age of Civil Rights and Vatican II
Free for members / \$10 non-members

Friday, November 22, 2024

Barry Award Dinner

Honoring Joseph J. McLaughlin, Jr.
Union League of Philadelphia

Friday, December 13, 2024

Annual Christmas Party

\$25 members / \$35 non-members

Sunday, January 19, 2025 @ 2pm

Fr. Thomas Betz, OFM Cap

The History of Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church, Philadelphia
Free and Open to the Public

Sunday, February 16, 2025 @ 2pm
(via Zoom)

Dr. Ramon Luzarraga

U.S. Catholic Missionaries and Their American Peoples
Free and Open to the Public

Friday, March 7, 2025 @ 6pm

Annual St. Patrick's Day Social

\$25 members / \$35 non-members

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

6pm Social Hour | 7pm Lecture

Dr. Dawn Eden Goldstein

Father Ed: The Story of Bill W.'s Spiritual Sponsor
Free for members / \$10 non-members

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 @ 7pm

6pm Social Hour | 7pm Lecture

Dr. Jeffrey Appelhans

Incense and Sensibility: Catholic Ascension in the Early Republic
Free and Open to the Public

Friday, June 6, 2025 @ 6pm

Annual Garden Party

\$25 members and non-members

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The Society is a non-profit organization as described under Code 501-C-3 of the Internal Revenue Service. All contributions are tax-deductible. ACHS membership is represented in all parts of the world. It consists of people of all faiths and has no restrictions on race, religion or national origin.

American Catholic
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