

YOUR PARISH

Taneytown parish embraces Catholic legacy

By GEORGE P. MATYSEK JR.
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When Maryland Catholics faced religious persecution in the early 1700s, Taneytown was an area where many found refuge.

“Laws were passed that made it illegal for Catholics to attend public celebrations of the Mass or to teach the faith,” said Monsignor Martin Feild, pastor of St. Joseph in Taneytown. “They were persecuting priests and making it hard for people to practice their religion. To get away from that, Catholics settled here.”

Two hundred twelve years after it was formally established as a parish, St. Joseph continues as a beacon of Catholicism in Carroll County. Parishioners are proud of their rich history and bracing for growth that might require a new church in the coming years.

St. Joseph’s first pastor, Father Demetrius A. Gallitzin, is especially in parishioners’ prayers these days, according to Monsignor Feild. The circuit-riding former pastor is under consideration for sainthood by the Vatican and parishioners have circulated prayer cards to boost his cause.

The son of Prince Dimitri Alexeivitch Gallitzin, envoy of Catherine the Great of Russia at the Hague, Father Gallitzin was the second priest to be ordained by Baltimore Bishop John Carroll. According to a parish history written by Helen Arnold Gorman, Father Gallitzin traveled by horseback covering a 250-mile radius to serve Catholics from all over the region – including Harpers Ferry, Cumberland and Hagerstown. He earned the nickname “Apostle of the Alleghenies.”

“He was here for a few years,” said Monsignor Feild, noting that Bishop Carroll

appointed Father Gallitzin to his Taneytown post before reassigning him to western Pennsylvania in 1799.

“We would love to one day call him a saint,” the pastor said.

Throughout its long history, St. Joseph has always been a small parish. With retirement communities and housing

developments moving into the area, that could change in the coming years.

There are currently 601 registered families in the parish – up from 500 seven years ago. Seventy-five of those new families have come from Carroll Vista, a new retirement community in Taneytown.

Because the parish’s church seats only 250, the pastor said a new church will likely need to be built to accommodate projected growth. The existing church, which was built in 1876 for \$4,965, would be converted into a chapel. That won’t happen for several years, Monsignor Feild said.

“It’s a long-range plan,” he said, pointing out that a new church would cost about \$12 million.

Parish leaders are currently studying the possibility of tearing down the old rectory to expand the parish hall.

St. Joseph maintains an active social outreach program, supporting a clothing ministry and hosting a food bank. The Mission of Mercy, a free medical van, also makes regular stops at the parish.

“We are deluged with requests for help,” said Monsignor Feild, noting that the parish helps with cash assis-

tance for people with emergency needs and also makes referrals to human services.

The 76-year-old pastor described his parishioners as people committed to their church and their faith community.

The parish is known for its Lenten fish fries that attract visitors from through-

‘They are wonderful people. And they laugh at my jokes.’

– Monsignor Martin Feild

out the area, he said.

“No frozen patties for us,” Monsignor Feild said with a laugh. “We use pollock or catfish, and we bake it ourselves and make salmon cakes. It tastes really good in my experience.”

Calling St. Joseph his home for 14 years, the pastor said he is delighted to be stationed in Taneytown. He often enjoys strolling through the town to greet people.

“They are wonderful people,” he said, pausing for a moment before adding, “and they laugh at my jokes.”



CR Staff/Owen Sweeney III

Tom Barron displays a prayer card for the canonization of Father Demetrius A. Gallitzin. Father Gallitzin, known as the “Apostle of the Alleghenies,” was the first pastor of St. Joseph in Taneytown.

ST. JOSEPH, TANEYTOWN, AT A GLANCE



Monsignor Martin Feild

Location: 44 Frederick St.

Founded: 1797

Families: 601

Religious Education Enrollment: 137

Pastor: Monsignor Martin Feild

Pastoral Council President: Ken Tregoning

Deacons: Darrell Smith and Stanley Wise

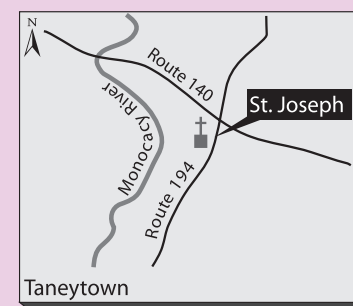
Religious Education: Terry Smith

Office Secretary: Barbara Keilholtz

Phone: 410-756-2500

Fax: 410-756-1260

Mass Schedule: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.; Saturday, 4:30 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.



NEXT WEEK: NEW ALL SAINTS, BALTIMORE