The Church of St. Philip Neri

Jim Roese, 2006

A History

About the Church of St. Philip Neri

Founded in 1840, the Church of St. Philip Neri became the ninth Catholic church in Philadelphia and its neighboring districts, joining Old St. Joseph (1733), Old St. Mary (1763), Holy Trinity (1788), St. Augustine (1796), St. John the Evangelist (1830), St. Michael (1831), St. Francis Xavier (1839) and St. Patrick (1839). It is one of the most historic institutions in the city of Philadelphia:

- ***The first*** church in the Philadelphia Archdiocese to be founded as a *free* church — relying on freewill contributions instead of pew rentals and annual fees, which were customarily collected from parishioners at other Catholic and Protestant churches both in Europe and America.
- ***The first*** free Catholic school in the Philadelphia Archdiocese — one of the seeds of what would later become the parochial school system in the United States — was opened at the Church of St. Philip Neri in 1841. Staffed originally by lay teachers, the school became one of the first in the nation to be taught by nuns, originally by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and in 1850 by the Sisters of St. Joseph.
- ***The first*** commission of Eugene Napoleon LeBrun (1821-1901), a well-known Philadelphia architect, who designed the church at the age of 18. He would go on to design Philadelphia's Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Academy of Music.
- ***The first*** diocesan program of the Forty Hours Devotion in the United States was opened at the Church of St. Philip Neri on May 26, 1853. On that date, the Feast of Corpus Christi, Bishop John Neumann (1811-1860) — now St. John Neumann — introduced the devotion at our church in honor of our patron, St. Philip Neri, who had introduced the Forty Hours Devotion in Rome three centuries before.

Lastly, the Church of St. Philip Neri is historic for its unwelcome role as the focal point of the most violent Nativist riots in Philadelphia. The Southwark riots of 1844, with our church at its epicenter, were the first time in our city's history that government troops were forced to raise arms against civilians to maintain public order.

Packard & Bell Lithographers, 1880, Philadelphia Archdiocese Historical Research Center

Beginnings

Our parish is situated in the oldest part of Philadelphia, settled even before the arrival of **William Penn** (1644-1718) on Oct. 28, 1682. The area surrounding the Church of St. Philip Neri became the new home of Swedish immigrants in the early 1600s, who serviced the burgeoning shipping industry at the city's port as shipbuilders, rope and sail makers, chandlers, outfitters and other trades. Its earliest recorded name is Weccacoe (also spelled Wiacacoa, Wicaco, Wicoco) — from the Lenni Lanape tribe's word for "peaceful place." Its name has changed twice since then.

Francis Place, c. 1695, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

In 1762, this fast-growing suburb was annexed as a new municipality of the city. The area was informally named Southwark, in remembrance of a London neighborhood on the south bank of the Thames. The name became official in 1854 as referring to our specific community within Philadelphia. The district extended from South Street to Passyunk Avenue, and from Broad Street to the Delaware River.

In the late 1970s, our community was rechristened Queen Village to recognize the role of **Queen Christina** of Sweden (1626-1689) in promoting the original settlements. Ironically, Queen Christina was forced to abdicate her throne in 1654 because of her conversion to Catholicism, which was outlawed in Sweden. She moved to Rome, became the friend of four consecutive popes, and was buried in a tomb in St. Peter's Basilica.

Sebastien Bourdon, c. 1652, Stockholm National Museum

Parish Roots

The need for a new parish to serve the Catholic people in Southwark was evident for years before the Church of St. Philip Neri was established in 1840. When Pope Pius VII established the Philadelphia diocese in 1808, an estimated 10,000 Catholics resided in Philadelphia — just over 20 percent of the city's population at the time. By the mid-1850s there were about 136,000 Catholics in Philadelphia — 34 percent of the city's population.

Catholics living in Southwark attended the Churches of Old St. Joseph and Old St. Mary since their founding in 1733 and 1763, respectively, in the Old City district just to the north. But overcrowding and distance made the faithful of Southwark desire a Catholic church in their own neighborhood.

In 1836, Andrew Steel bought a site on the east side of Fifth Street, between German and Plum Streets — now Fitzwater and Monroe Streets, respectively — for the first Catholic church in Southwark. Steel had been an early benefactor of the Church of Old St. Joseph. **Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick** (1797-1863), the third bishop of Philadelphia, who was then Coadjutor Bishop of Philadelphia and administrator of the diocese for the ailing Bishop Henry Conwell, Philadelphia's second bishop, decided that the time was not yet ripe for construction.

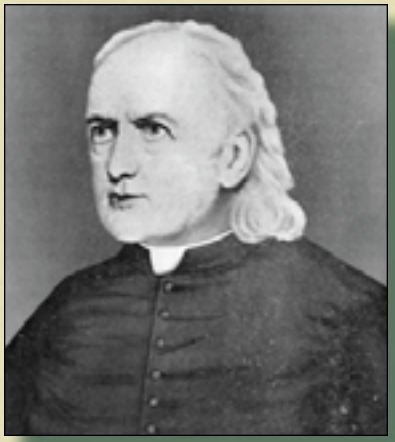
George Peter Healey, c. 1850, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

In 1840, Bishop Kenrick established the parish and named it in honor of St. Philip Neri (1515-1595), who is venerated for kindness and charity. Bishop Kenrick also appointed **Rev. John Patrick Dunn** (1809-1869, *next page, top*), the assistant pastor of the Church of Old St. Mary, as the founding pastor of the new parish. The Church of St. Philip Neri became the ninth Catholic church in Philadelphia and its neighboring districts.

Foundation

Shortly after Father Dunn's appointment, the original site for the new church was sold and the current site — on the south side of Queen Street, between Second and Third Streets — was bought because it was more centrally located to the parish population.

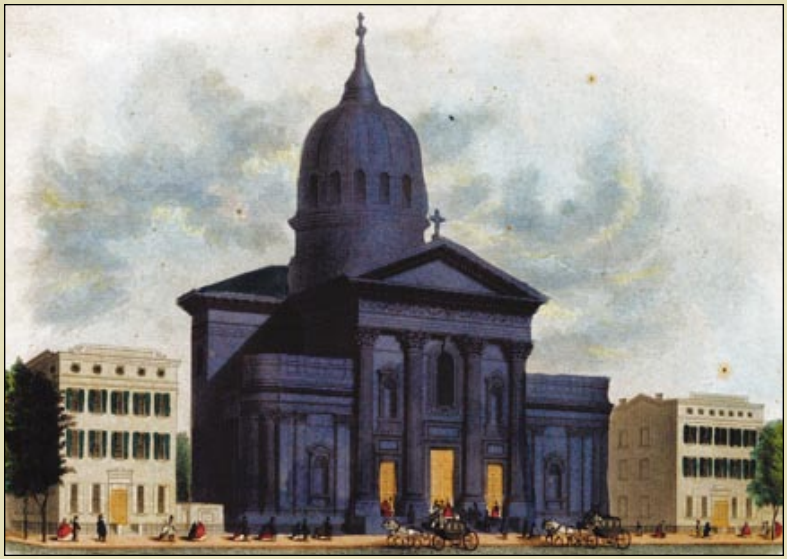
Father Dunn engaged **Eugene Napoleon LeBrun** (1821-1901, *right, center*), a well-known Philadelphia architect, to design our church as his first commission. Though only 18 years old, LeBrun was apprenticed for four years to **Thomas Ustick Walter** (1804-1887, *right, bottom*), a celebrated architect who is best known for his design of the U.S. Capitol. LeBrun learned his lessons well at a time when there were no schools of architecture. He would go on to design Philadelphia's **Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul** and the Academy of Music, and the Metropolitan Life building in New York City.



LeBrun's first commission — our church — reflects Walter's renowned American Greek Revivalist style. The classic lines of its exterior and interior design, its unadorned stucco façade, and its relatively unembellished interior made our church a textbook example of the style. These characteristics were also ideally suited to the small budget and short timeline for completion. **Bishop John Hughes** (1797-1864, *next page*) of New York, who would become the first Archbishop of New York in 1850, laid the cornerstone of the Church of St. Philip Neri on July 31, 1840. By February 1841, the walls and roof were up but still not plastered. On May 9, 1841, Bishop Kenrick dedicated our church and celebrated its first high mass.

Free Library of Philadelphia

Free Library of Philadelphia



First Free Church

In his address to commemorate laying the cornerstone, Bishop Hughes made an historic announcement. The Church of St. Philip Neri would be the first free church in the Philadelphia diocese — it would forego the pew rentals and annual fees that were customarily collected from parishioners at other Catholic and Protestant churches in Europe and America. Bishop Hughes said:

> ***Shall I offer you a motive to contribute generously to the erection of the church? If so, it is to be found in the principle on which it is to be erected. It is intended to be a church free of access to all — free to the rich, free to the poor. Its equally open door shall invite the passing and wearied Christian to enter and refresh his heart before the throne of Him in Whose Presence there is no distinction, unless between the sinner and the saint.***

Pew rents were a substantial source of income for churches at the time, accounting for more than half of all collections at some churches. Collected quarterly, semi-annually or annually, pew rents were commonly used to ensure a steady income that could be used, for example, to pay down debt on new buildings, undertake renovations or support general upkeep and maintenance. Pew rent payments entitled donors to sit in a specific pew reserved for them, often with their names on the pews. In some churches, reserved seat holders also had the privilege of electing wardens and other church officers. Rents varied by the desirability of the pew's location — those closer to the altar (or to the heating source) commanded higher rent than those at the back of the church.

The practice of charging pew rents was frequently a source of contention within parishes. Pew rental created an elite caste of wealthy parish members who enjoyed privileges not available to all members, which conflicted with the Christian principle of equality. Many also felt that pew rents discouraged growth in church membership, especially among the poor in the parish. Pew rents gradually fell out of favor and were widely abandoned by the turn of the 20th century in favor of freewill offerings made at weekly mass collections.

While the Church of St. Philip Neri was the first in the Philadelphia diocese to be founded as a free church, old habits died hard. A small number of parish members still elected to make pew rent donations. The earliest financial records of the church show pew rent collections of $817 in 1897. However, this represented just five percent of total 1897 income for the church. Pew rents dwindled to just $18 in 1919, less than one-tenth of one percent of church income that year. Pew rents came back in vogue at the church in 1930, when $322 was collected (1.2 percent of total income) and lasted until 1951, when $2,078 was collected (4.2 percent of total income).

Currier and Ives, c. 1856-1907, Library of Congress

First Free School

Eugene Napoleon LeBrun's original design for the Church of St. Philip Neri demonstrates that it was intended from the start to serve another unique purpose. It would house the first free Catholic school in the Philadelphia diocese — one of the seeds of what would later become the parochial school system in the United States. The church itself was intentionally set 12 feet above street level so that the ground floor could accommodate two large schoolrooms for boys and girls, as well as a chapel.

In September 1841, Father Dunn opened the St. Philip Neri Parish school. Staffed originally by lay teachers, in 1850 the school became one of the first in the nation to be taught by nuns. The Sisters of St. Joseph, who arrived in Philadelphia from France in April 1850, took responsibility for the education of girls at the parish school. To meet the quickly growing demand for enrollment, the first Girl's Parochial School and Convent was opened in March 1852 at **778 South Front Street** *(below, left)* under the guidance of Mother Magdalen Weber, Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

In September 1880, a new Girl's Parochial School and Convent was opened at **408-410 Christian Street** *(below, right)* to accommodate increasing demand; the boys moved from the church's basement into the old girl's school. In 1882, the boys moved again into a building on Moyamensing and Christian Streets that was once St. Ann's Widows' Asylum for Boys, and the Sisters of St. Joseph taught the boys there starting in 1900. By 1900 parish school enrollment stood at 688 students — 368 girls and 320 boys.

In 1904, **Father James F. Trainor** sold the school property on Christian Street and began construction of a new and imposingly larger school building with an adjacent convent on Moyamensing Avenue, below Christian Street *(below)*. The new school building and convent opened in the fall of 1905 to better serve the needs of the students and sisters. Under succeeding pastors, improvements to the school and convent were made and the school gained a reputation for excellence.

In the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, the construction of Interstate 95 severely impacted the population of the parish. To make room for the new highway, entire blocks of homes in Southwark were demolished. As a result of this demolition and other population shifts, hundreds of Catholic families moved from the parish. In 1964, the parish registry included 711 families and 2,405 individuals. By 1980, the parish population declined by 40 percent to 448 families and 1,401 individuals.

Not surprisingly, enrollment in the parish school also declined sharply. In 1964, 410 students attended the school. By 1980 enrollment had declined by 73 percent to 110 students. That year — after 130 years of continuous service — the Sisters of St. Joseph withdrew from teaching the girls and boys of the parish school. While it continued operating with Christian Brothers and lay teachers, the St. Philip Neri Parish school eventually closed in 1991 because of low enrollment.

The dedication and service of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Christian Brothers and the lay teachers who taught generations of students at the St. Philip Neri school were remarkable and commendable. Their many contributions to the St. Philip Neri Parish and their untiring efforts on behalf of its children will always be deeply appreciated.

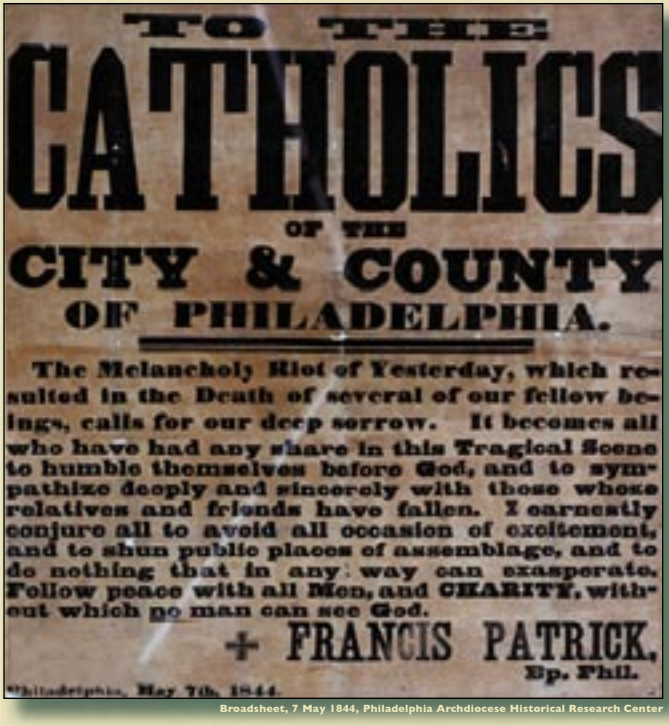
Nativist Riots in Philadelphia

The new model for free Catholic education taught by nuns and brothers was spurred, to a large extent, by generally anti-immigrant and specifically anti-Catholic sentiment of the times. During the early 1800s, Philadelphia was mainly inhabited by American Protestants. Its outlying areas, including Southwark, were where new immigrant Catholics chose to settle. The waves of Irish Catholic immigrants, in particular, came to be viewed as a threat to "native" working-class people. The fact that Irish newcomers were willing to work for lower pay was seen by many as the cause of driving down wages for all.

Many Protestants and members of the American Nativist Party believed that the Pope had a plan to take over America. The Irish were singled out as the most dangerous immigrant group because of their papal loyalty over centuries of persecution. At a signal from the Pope, the Nativists claimed, the Irish might well rise in a bloody revolution or a political coup at the ballot box. In the 1820s and 1830s, native Protestants and immigrant Catholics often clashed in election riots, fights between volunteer fire companies, and ethnic and religious quarrels.

In the 1840s the use of the Protestant version of the Bible in public schools became a flash point of contention that further fanned the fires of intolerance. When Bishop Kenrick prevailed on school authorities to allow the Catholic version of the Bible as well, many Protestants were outraged.

In 1844 the American Republicans — a Protestant Nativist group — announced that they would hold a meeting in Philadelphia's Third Ward, an Irish stronghold in the Kensington district. On May 3 and again on May 6, the Irish repelled their unwanted visitors with force. After the second incident, in which a young Protestant man was killed, the city was in an uproar. On May 7, a Protestant mob marched to the Irish section. On that day and the next, the mob burned down more than 30 homes. The Church of St. Michael was set ablaze as was the Church of St. Augustine, along with its monastery and splendid library. Firemen were kept away. When **Mayor John Morin Scott** (1789-1858, *next page, below left*) pleaded for calm, he was struck on the head with a stone and knocked unconscious. At least 14 people were killed or injured.


TO THE
CATHOLICS
OF THE
CITY & COUNTY
OF PHILADELPHIA.

The Melancholy Riot of Yesterday, which resulted in the Death of several of our fellow beings, calls for our deep sorrow. It becomes all who have had any share in this Tragical Scene to humble themselves before God, and to sympathize deeply and sincerely with those whose relatives and friends have fallen. I earnestly conjure all to avoid all occasion of excitement, and to shun public places of assemblage, and to do nothing that in any way can exasperate. Follow peace with all Men, and CHARITY, without which no man can see God.

+ FRANCIS PATRICK,
Bp. Phil.

Philadelphia, May 7th, 1844.

Broadsheet, 7 May 1844, Philadelphia Archdiocese Historical Research Center

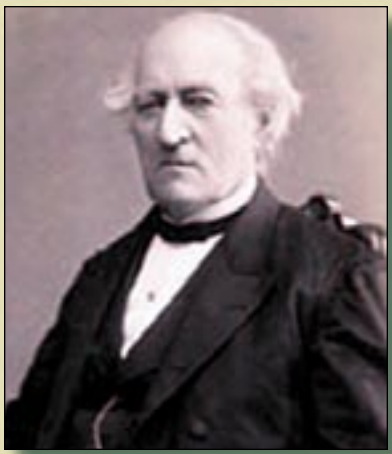
Bishop Kenrick closed all churches on the Sunday after the attacks in an attempt to calm the riots. Stating that it was better to let all churches burn than to shed one drop of blood, he urged Catholics to offer no resistance and to trust the courts to deal with those arrested for violence. But the juries acquitted the Nativists and convicted the Irish Catholics. In its June 18 report, the grand jury convened by the city blamed the riots on imperfect law enforcement, alleged attempts by Catholics to ban the Bible from public schools, and disruption of legitimate meetings by recent immigrants.

H. Buchholzer for Baillie & Soule, 1844, Library of Congress

Our Church Besieged

Emboldened by the grand jury report and public sentiment, the American Nativist Party planned a massive anti-Catholic rally on Independence Day. On July 3, Father John B. Dunn was warned in a letter from a lay teacher in the church school that Nativists might attack the church that night, and that attempts would be made to burn the church if the attack failed.

William H. Dunn, the brother of Father Dunn, requested permission of government authorities to organize volunteers to defend the church. In the meantime, William Dunn trained 100 men in the church aisles, using broomsticks as rifles. **Major General Robert Patterson** (1792-1881, *below, center*), commander of the Pennsylvania militia, placed his troops on alert, mindful of the Kensington riots fomented in May by Nativists. Patterson also permitted members of the church parish to take steps to defend themselves. **Governor David Rittenhouse Porter** (1788-1867, *below, right*) authorized the formation of a company to protect the church and to procure 25 muskets from the Frankford Arsenal, which were taken to the church basement.



William Curtis Taylor, c. 1876, Free Library of Philadelphia

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

William Curtis Taylor, c. 1876, Free Library of Philadelphia

Nativists at 228 Queen Street, a house adjacent to the church on the west side that would later become the church's rectory, observed the firearms transfer. They incited a mob numbering in the thousands to besiege the church and demanded that **Sheriff Morton McMichael** (1807-1867) search it and remove any firearms. At 8 p.m., the church was searched while watchmen were posted in front. Twelve muskets with bayonets were discovered and taken to **Commissioner's Hall** (*next page*) on Front Street between Catharine and Queen Streets. By 11 p.m., most of the mob remained in force on Queen Street and a second search of the church for arms was made. The search uncovered 53 muskets, 10 pistols, a keg of powder and a box of ammunition. Sheriff McMichael decided not to remove the weapons from the church, fearing that it would likely excite the crowd. He deputized the search party and they remained in the church.

At midnight on July 6, Patterson ordered a company of volunteer City Guards to clear the street and placed sentries at Second and Third Streets. Within an hour, most of the crowd dispersed. At 2 a.m., the arms discovered at the church were taken to Commissioner's Hall. The City Guard remained in possession of the church all morning. By noon, a crowd numbering about 1,000 gathered in the streets around the church.

At 2:30 p.m., **Major General George B. Cadwalader** rode into Queen Street on horseback. At 7 p.m., Sheriff McMichael arrived with a posse of some 150 men. They cleared Queen Street from Second to Third Streets, and constables were stationed on both sides of Queen Street. Later that evening, the military presence was reinforced by additional troops. The crowd also increased. At 11 p.m., the troops stationed three cannons at Second, Third and Queen Streets. Cadwalader and a platoon of men then charged the crowds at Second Street, driving them down to Christian Street. They then cleared Second Street in the opposite direction, and Queen Street above Third Street and below Second Street. At Third Street, Cadwalader threatened to fire a cannon on the crowd after stones were thrown, injuring the militia and constables. The mob gradually dispersed.

J. Sartain, c. 1842, Library of Congress

On the morning of July 7, most of the crowd had gone and the militia departed, except for three units left in charge of the church. When it was discovered that one of the units was Irish Catholic — the Hibernia Greens — mobs choked the streets again, now reinforced with four-pound and 16-pound cannons commandeered from the nearby docks. One of cannons, loaded with large pieces of iron, was discharged at the rear wall of the church with little effect. However, the missiles flew 100 yards through the neighborhood to the fright and dismay of residents and pedestrians.

An agreement was worked out with the Nativists and the soldiers defending the church to let the militia leave unharmed, provided that a group chosen by the Nativists would take charge of the church. However, when the militia left, the mob broke the agreement. They severely beat some of the militiamen, ransacked the Church of St. Philip Neri and tried to set fire to it. Cadwalader, with the backing of the governor, returned with a strong force and evicted the Nativist-approved group from the church in the early evening.

Cadwalader had authority from the governor to treat any who opposed him as "open enemies of the state."The general announced that his men would fire if the mob did not disperse immediately. Bloodshed began when elements of the mob attacked one of his men. Cadwalader's unit fired on them and a battle ensued, which continued on and off through the night with musket and cannon fire, bricks, stones, pikes and knives.

By 2:30 a.m. on July 8, the streets were cleared. At 2:30 p.m., Sheriff McMichael issued an order to authorize the Southwark Board of Commissioners to organize a police force to relieve the military at 5 p.m., with the understanding that the district will be responsible for the preservation of the Church of St. Philip Neri. That afternoon, Gov. Porter arrived in Philadelphia and issued a proclamation for citizens to cooperate with the military in restoring peace.

On July 9, troops continued to arrive and the combined forces of the military and volunteer troops numbered 4,000. With peace restored, Patterson began to withdraw troops from the city the following day. In the evening of July 11, Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick took possession of the church. On July 14, mass was held without incident.


Benjamin R. Evans, 1873, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Aftermath

The Nativist riots in Southwark resulted in more than 20 dead and scores more wounded. A grand jury again blamed Catholics for providing the flash point for the riots, but also fully supported the military suppression of the riot and the arming of parishioners of the Church of St. Philip Neri.

Following the riots, Bishop Kenrick abandoned his efforts to influence the public schools and instead laid the groundwork for the Catholic school system. Public school systems gradually became less mainstream Protestant in orientation. After the riots, pressure increased to consolidate Philadelphia City and County, which was accomplished a decade later. It included a unified police force and a paid fire department better able to respond to emergencies.

Father Dunn, the first pastor of the St. Philip Neri Parish whose arming of parish members was lawful but perhaps unwise, was sent out of town by a displeased Bishop Kenrick until things settled down. After his return, Dunn took an extended vacation to his native Ireland, then transferred to Charleston, S.C. In 1853 he returned to the Philadelphia diocese. He died as pastor of St. John's Parish in 1869.

Father Nicholas Cantwell, Father Dunn's assistant, became the second pastor of the St. Philip Neri Parish. Appointed in 1845, he continued as pastor until his death 54 years later. During his tenure, the church building was thoroughly renovated and redecorated. While the boys continued to attend classes taught by lay teachers in the church basement, a new convent and school building was built for the girls at 778 South Front Street. The Sisters of St. Joseph came to teach in this first girl's parochial school in 1850, replacing the Sisters of the Good Shepherd who had taught there for a brief period.

Forty Hours Devotion

Bishop John Neumann (1811-1860) introduced the practice of the Forty Hours Devotion at the Fourth Diocesan Synod, April 20-21,1853. It initially met with significant opposition. Some priests thought the time was inadvisable, that the rage of Know-Nothing Nativism of the 1840s and 1850s would expose the Blessed Sacrament to profanation. However, the misgivings of some priests did not deter Bishop Neumann, who decided to go forward after a telling incident. One night, as he was working late and fell asleep at his desk, a candle burned down and charred some papers, but they were still readable. When Bishop Neumann awoke, he knelt to give thanks to God for His protection that a fire had not ignited, and then heard His voice:

"As the flames are burning here without consuming or injuring the writing, so shall I pour out my grace in the Blessed Sacrament without prejudice to My honor. Fear no profanation, therefore; hesitate no longer to carry out your design for My glory."

Fittingly, the Eucharistic Devotion was solemnly opened for the first time in the United States on the Feast of Corpus Christi, May 26, 1853, at the Church St. Philip Neri, which was named in honor of the saint who had introduced the Forty Hours Devotion in Rome three centuries before.

Bishop John Neumann (now **Saint John Neumann**) opened and directed the solemnity, lending his own monstrance and vestments. He stayed at the parish during the devotion. It has been recorded that Bishop Neumann scarcely left the church during the three days. The clergy and laity were deeply edified by this saintly bishop's example and his love for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Bishop Neumann then introduced the devotion to all parishes in the Philadelphia diocese and obtained special indulgences for the faithful attending them. The Forty Hours Devotion was so successful that other dioceses nationwide adopted it. At the Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866, the Forty Hours Devotion was approved for all dioceses of the United States.

Growth, Fire and Rebirth

Due to old age and increasing infirmity, Father Cantwell resigned from active work in the parish in March 1892 and his assistant, the Reverend James F. Trainor, was appointed the acting rector. Father Trainor, with the full cooperation of the parishioners, began to bring new life to the parish.

However, on October 14, 1897, a calamity rocked the parish. A fire nearly destroyed the Church of St. Philip Neri. The fire started in a livery stable to the east of the church, on the site of the present rectory. The east wall, roof and ceiling of the church were damaged, and the interior utterly ruined. The painting of the Immaculate Conception on the ceiling was destroyed, and the organ was crushed by debris. What was not burned by fire was damaged by water.

Father Trainor immediately drew up plans and specifications, and work was begun on rebuilding the church. Frank Rushmore Watson (1859-1940) was commissioned as the architect. In just 15 months the church was rebuilt and was solemnly dedicated on January 29, 1899, by Archbishop Patrick John Ryan, the Archbishop of Philadelphia.

Much of the church's current interior, with its beautiful stained glass windows, immaculate marble sanctuary, marble altars and handsome stations of the cross, date from this period. The Institute of Christian Artworks, now Franz Mayer of Munich, a German firm that specializes in fine art, architecture, sculpture, painting and stained glass, designed and constructed the stained glass windows. The original order of March 1898 included 12 windows depicting the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Espousal, Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation of Our Lord, Our Lord in the Temple with Doctors, Baptism, Our Lord Blessing the Children, Pieta, Agony in the Garden, Angel at the Tomb and Ascension. Four additional windows depicting Sts. Agnes, Aloysius, Philip Neri and Rose of Lima were also crafted, which include busts of Sts. Monica, Augustine, Anthony and Bridget, respectively.

At Monsignor Cantwell's death in November 1899, Father Trainor was appointed pastor. In 1990 Father Trainor purchased the site of the fourth and present rectory at 218 Queen Street. The rectory was ready for occupancy in the spring of 1903.

The parish and its school prospered for many decades. But with the construction of Interstate 95 in the 1960s and 1970s, the population of the parish was drastically altered. The parish and its school began to experience serious decline in the 1980s due to continuing population shifts.

Stained Glass in Catholic Philadelphia, St. Joseph's University Press, 2002, and Jim Roese, 2006

Present and Future

Starting in the 1990s, the fortunes of the Southwark and Queen Village communities have continued to improve. The St. Philip Neri Parish is benefiting from an influx of single, young professionals as well as couples with young children who are attracted to the area's history, diversity and affordable housing. Existing homes — some dating back to the 1740s — are being renovated and expanded, and there is a construction boom in new houses and apartment buildings.

In this rising tide, the Church of St. Philip Neri will surely be uplifted. The parish continues to adapt to the needs of its ever-changing community. All of the parishioners — from the "Two Streeters" of Southwark with their deep roots in the parish to the new young professionals of Queen Village — are committed to working and growing together to build an ever more vibrant Catholic community in the oldest of Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

In 2006, St. Philip Neri Church embraced St. Stanislaus Church (*facing page*), its neighbor on Fitzwater Street which has faithfully served Polish Catholics in Southwark since 1891, as a worship site. Secure in its historic past, the people of the St. Philip Neri Parish go forward as a Catholic community dedicated and committed to speaking and acting in Christ's name through fervent prayer and service.

Jim Roese, 2006

Pastors

From its founding in 1840 until the present, 95 priests have been assigned to service at the St. Philip Neri Parish and have served it zealously and faithfully. There have been 18 pastors, including our current pastor, Father Vincent F. Welsh. We are grateful to each of them for their many contributions to our parish and pray that they may receive a rich reward for their selfless labors.

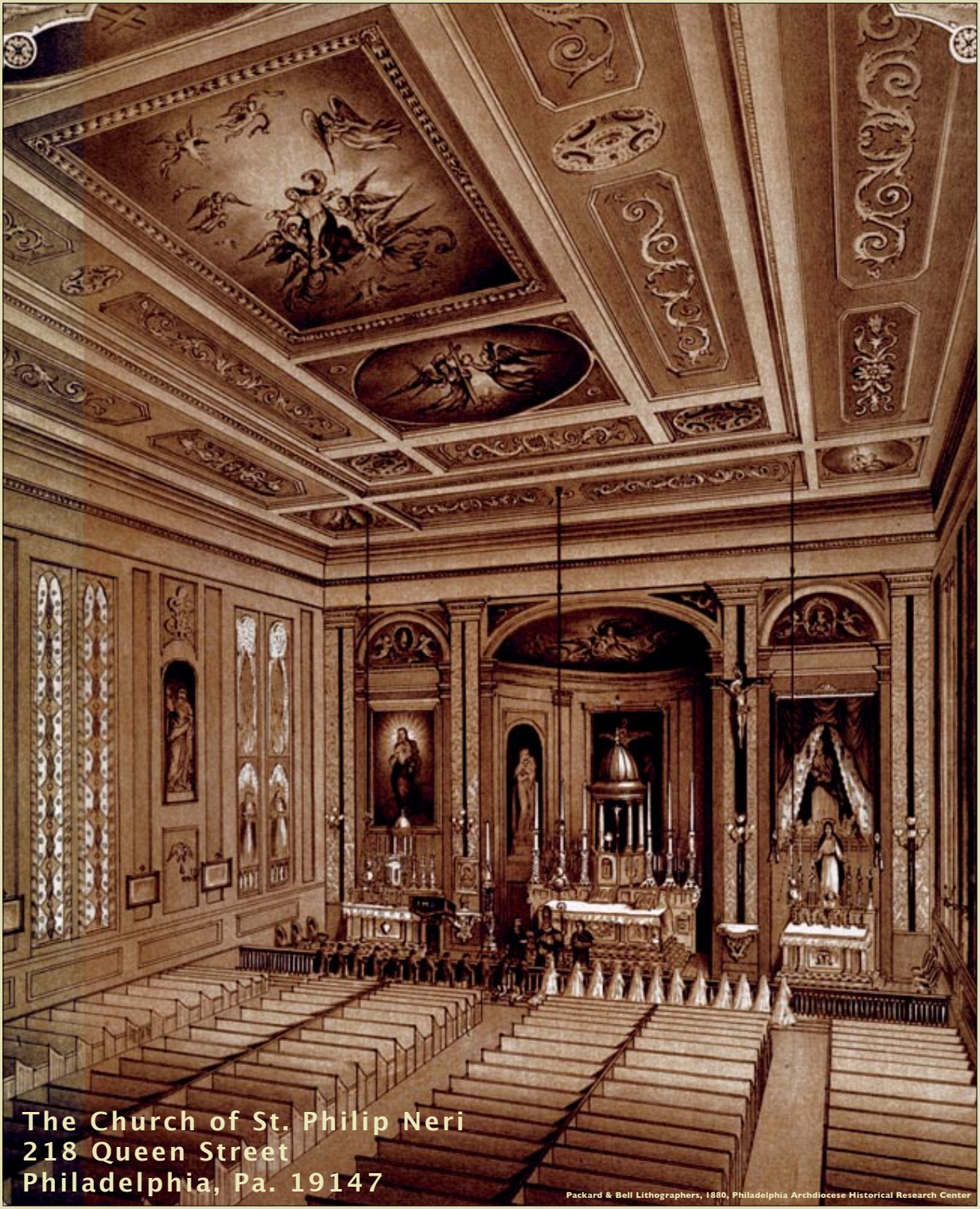
Rev. John P. Dunn (1840-1844)
Rev. Monsignor Nicholas Cantwell, V.G. (1844-1895)
Rev. Monsignor James F. Trainor, V.G. (1895-1913)
Rev. James Hogan (1913-1914)
Rev. John J. Rooney (1914-1920)
Rev. William J. Lallou (1920-1926)
Rev. Monsignor George T. Montague (1926-1932)
Rev. Thomas F. Ryan (1932-1937)
Rev. John W. Diamond (1938-1952)
Rev. Joseph A. Kenny (1952-1958)
Rev. Sylvester M. McCarthy (1958-1967)
Rev. Joseph F. Smith (1967-1968)
Rev. Thomas W. Wassel (1968-1972)
Rev. Joseph F. Sikora (1972-1991)
Rev. Robert E. Brennan (1991-1994)
Rev. W. Frederick Kindon (1994-1998)
Rev. Monsignor James J. Fitzpatrick (1998-2003)
Rev. Vincent F. Welsh (2003-present)

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil Mass	**5:30 p.m.**
Sunday Masses	**8 and 11 a.m.**
Daily Mass *(St. John Neumann Chapel)*	**7:30 a.m., Thursday & Friday** **8 a.m., Saturday**
Daily Mass *(St. Stanislaus Church)*	**7:30 a.m., Monday – Wednesday**

www.churchofstphilipneri.org

Jim Reese, 2006


The Church of St. Philip Neri
218 Queen Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19147
Packard & Bell Lithographers, 1880, Philadelphia Archdiocese Historical Research Center