

The History of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church Reading, Pennsylvania

The Catholic Church in Berks County forerunner to the start of St. Paul's church in Reading

Old St. Joseph's — Philadelphia

The first Catholic congregation to be established in Pennsylvania was the Church of St. Joseph in Willing's Alley, Philadelphia in 1734 by Father William Greateon, S.J., a missionary from Maryland. In 1741 Father Theodore Schneider was sent by the German Province of Jesuits to minister to the Germans in Pennsylvania. Father Schneider, a professor at Heidelberg University in Germany, began teaching children at Goshenhoppen, now called Bally. In 1743 he founded a church, St. Paul's Mission, and later called Most Blessed Sacrament - and the original structure still stands there in all its historic glory and beauty. By 1755 there were an estimated 117 Catholics in Berks County, 50 of whom resided in Goshenhoppen.

Peaceful Settlers

When the Jesuit priests first came to Goshenhoppen - (from the Indian name for meeting place) they found friendly Indians and German pioneers who were Mennonites - often called German Quakers.

Catholics, Germans, and Indians got along very peace-fully. The Mennonites were led by an ex-priest named Menno Simon.

Father Greateon, Father Schneider, and Father James Neale bought 499 acres of farmland in the area in three different purchases. The present Most Blessed Sacrament Church was originally named St. Paul Cha-pel. Father Schneider, while building the first church at Goshenhoppen, began missionary work in Berks County as he and other Jesuits traveled to Reading in 1751, to Douglassville in 1780, and Hamburg in 1783.

The first recorded missionary baptism occurred in 1741 at the home of John M. Utzman of Falkner's Swamp - near Pottsgrove. The child baptized was Albertina Kohl. In 1743 the first person baptized in Bally was George Melchior. The registrations, now found in the church museum at Bally - of baptisms, weddings, and deaths - are reported to be the oldest in the original 13 English Colonies.

The Village of Bally

Father Schneider's original parish is considered the second oldest in Pennsylvania and was founded 34 years before the American Revolution for Independence. The parish school that he established (recently renamed St. Francis Academy), is one of the first, if not the first, to be opened within the bounds of the original colonies. The town of Goshenhoppen was changed to Bally by postal authorities as a tribute to the memory of Father Augustine Bally who labored indefatigably for his people in the surrounding countryside of southern Berks County.

In 1841 Father Schneider came to Reading when the population of the city was approximately 5,000 people. The few Catholics who settled in Reading shortly after its incorporation in 1752, received ministrations from the priests from Goshenhoppen who came on horseback at regular intervals to serve their spiritual needs. The first baptismal record of a Catholic in Reading is of Margaret Miller, baptized July 4, 1765. The first death recorded was Marie Chaumont in the

same year. Father Bally (1837-1881) led his people through the Civil War and was a young chaplain for the "Boys in Blue". The mission bell of old St. Paul's - replaced by most Blessed Sacrament - was cast in Paris (1706) and brought to Bally in 1741 where Jesuits served until 1889 when secular priests, led by Reverend Aloysius Mistele, took over.

Early Religious Prejudice

Despite all the progress and growth of Catholicism in Berks County, history would not be served if certain acts of bigotry and religious prejudice were not reported. Monsignor Leo G. Fink, in "From Bally to Valley Forge" chronicled a message from Berks County Justices of the Peace to Governor Robert Hunter Morris. It was the time of the French and Indian War and General Edward Braddock's defeat. It was reported: "Catholics showed great joy at the defeat of the British, and the local citizenry was subject to massacre, as Papists and Indians, armed and lurking around, with guns and swords, were a menace to all observers." In truth, Catholics had, at that time, celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi by participating in a procession in the Bally Church and Cemetery. The message to the governor asked for relief "to disarm and disable the Papists from doing injury to other people who are not of their vile principles."

The official response to Conrad Weiser, and the other Justices, indicated the matter was investigated, and "There was little foundation for the representation that Berks County Catholics posed a danger to any populace." Conrad Weiser's last will and testament promised to exclude his daughter (Margaret Fricker) from any interest on his securities if she educated her children in the Catholic Faith (July 31, 1760).

St. Peter's Mission

Reading was founded in 1748 by Thomas and Richard Penn (sons of William Penn).

In 1752 a modest chapel was built on the east side of Duke Street, now Seventh Street, between Franklin and Chestnut Streets, just opposite the site of the old Franklin Street Railroad Station owned by the Reading Railroad. In 1790 that original chapel was demolished and replaced by a small brick church. The Church was called St. Peter's Mission and Jesuit Missionaries visited there at regular intervals. When the site of the church was moved to South 5th Street, the graveyard and property was sold to Jacob Miller in 1845 for the sum of \$13,000.

In 1818, under the supervision of Reverend George Schoenfelder, the first resident pastor, the Church of St. Peter was incorporated and became an independent parish. The parish grew and prospered for over a quarter-century. German immigrants found a home there, a place they could work together, worship God in freedom, and build a better life for their families.

New Site for St. Peter's Church

By 1845 the congregation had outgrown a little church, and a lot was purchased several blocks away at 326 South 5th Street. A brick church was erected and dedicated May 24, 1846, and estimated 3000 people of Irish in German dissent made of the body of parishioners. The presiding church leaders were Bishop J.B. Purcell, Cincinnati; Bishop M. O'Connor, Pittsburgh; and Reverend Joseph Fey, Supervisor of the Redemptorist priests of Philadelphia. During this time. Due to this custody of priest, the parish was without a pastor. Father Bally would travel to Reading to celebrate mass and administer to sacraments as often as possible.

Bishop Neumann

A regular visitor to Berks County in the decades before the Civil War was Bishop John Neumann, C.S.S.R., the 4th Bishop of Philadelphia. He purchased property at 225-227 South 5th Street for the purpose of building a parochial school. He proposed to the I.H.M. Sisters (Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe, Michigan) to staff the school. The Sisters accepted and development of a parish school was completed in July 1859. Bishop Neumann, affectionately labeled the "Little Bohemian", celebrated the first Mass in the chapel and blessed the building that remains, 135 years later, St. Peter's Elementary School. Initially there were separate schools for boys and girls, and 400 children were enrolled.

Father James Cleary

Saint Peter's Church, as it stands today, was enlarged in 1870, and rebuilt in 1900, largely due to the efforts of the Reverend James E. Cleary, Pastor from 1889 until his death in 1904. The church was dedicated on Sunday, July 2, 1905, by his eminence, James Cardinal Gibbons. Father Cleary's crypt is found on the south side of the church facing 5th Street.

As our country grew, many others came to search for freedom and opportunity in Reading and Berks County. The iron industry and the building of railroads and canals drew many Irish and German Catholics to Reading.

The Founding of St. Paul's and other National Parishes

Reverend Charles J. Schrader (Pastor, 1860-1865)

Due to experience between the German-speaking and English-speaking Catholics in Reading, in 1860 Archbishop James Wood decided that a separation of the parish was advisable.

Accordingly, the Reverend Francis O'Connor was appointed to minister to the English-speaking people while the Reverend Charles J. Schrader was appointed Rector of the Church of St. Paul, to be built for the German people. He received a stipend of \$600 a year for personal housing. Father Schrader was given a 225' x 80' lot at 9th and Walnut Streets from an Anthony Felix, Sr. Bishop Wood came to St. Peter's Church on Trinity Sunday, 1860, to seek support to build a church for German-speaking Catholics in Reading. On September 6, 1860, the cornerstone for St. Paul's Church was placed by Father Schrader and witnessed by several hundred faithfuls. Thus, amid the ominous clouds of the impending Civil War, St. Paul's Church was born.

Father Schrader died in 1865 at St. Joseph Hospital, Philadelphia. The Reverend Gerhard Wallmeyer (1865-1867) was named Pastor and was respected in the community. He started a small school for boys. He died of typhoid, and many local factories closed for his funeral. In February 1867, Bishop Wood appointed a third pastor, the Reverend George Bornemann.

A beloved public figure

Monsignor Bornemann, who celebrated his golden jubilee as a priest in 1915, was born October 5, 1838, in Lingen, the province of Hanover, Germany. He came to America in 1854, attended St. Vincent's College, and in 1862 went to Philadelphia's St. Charles Borromeo, 13th and Race Streets, to study for the priesthood. He was ordained June 22, 1865, by Bishop James F. Wood. He celebrated his first mass at Saint Alphonsus Church in New York City. He was assigned to the Church of Assumption, Philadelphia, and later to Saint Peter's in New Castle, Delaware. During the Civil War as a seminarian, he ministered to both union and confederate soldiers in Maryland.

and Delaware. After the death of pastor Wallmeyer, Bornemann was assigned to St. Paul's in 1867. He became percent rector in 1884. Father Bornemann, although from meager beginnings, became a beloved public figure trusted by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. He associated with both rich and poor. He was in regular communication with George Baer, president of the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad. Although a native German who retained a natural affection for his birthplace, he was, nevertheless, a true and loyal son of his adopted country. he always appealed to his flock to uphold American traditions. In 1867 he began a parochial school in the church basement. The teachers were of the IHM order.

Sisters of Christian Charity

In the early 1870's Father Bornemann requested Mother Pauline Mallinkrod, later beatified, founder of the German Sisters of Christian Charity, to bring her sisters to St. Paul's to preserve the German language, culture, and customs in the parish school. Sisters Cassiana, Alma, Materna, Corona, Fabiana and Beata comprised the first faculty as they moved here from Wilkes Barre. Daily classes were held from 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Oral exams were held twice a year, each session lasting for two weeks. There were 3,000 people in the parish and 400 students in the new school dedicated by Bishop Wood. In 1871 the church was enlarged, a 200 foot steeple was erected, and a new rectory was completed.

Father Bornemann's honors, responsibilities, and creations over six decades:

1868 Founded Leo House in New York to assist and protect German immigrants.

1872 Bought a two-story building at 12th and Walnut Streets from the Vollmer Estate to build St. Joseph Hospital. Father Bornemann supervised the laying of drains and sewers at the site. The Sisters of St. Francis, Glen Riddle, facilitated the hospital. There was a small-pox epidemic at the time.

1880 Bought and dedicated a church - St. Cyril and Methodius, at 6th and Laurel Streets for people of Slovak origin.

1882 Bought and directed the building of a new convent for Sisters of Christian Charity.

1886 Named to the first Philadelphia Diocesan School Board.

1888 purchased land and helped to establish St. Mary's Parish for Polish speaking Catholics.

1889 Purchased the old Leippe Mansion at 4th and Pine Streets to construct a home for girls — the first House of Good Shepherd. (He later donated land in Glenside, at the edge of the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge, to build a modern \$180,000 House of Good Shepherd). The institution was dedicated June 21, 1900. From 1900-1915 over 2,500 girls of "unfortunate circumstances" were housed at this home maintained by the Magdalene Sisters.

1889 Bought Property at 12th and Spruce Streets and helped open St. Mary's Church for person of Polish heritage.

1890 Celebrated Silver Jubilee (25 years ago priest) with reception at Grand Opera House. Major address by George F. Baer.

1893 Enlarged St. Joseph's Hospital to accommodate 600 patients.

1894 Donated land for St. Michael's Seminary in Hyde Park. The Seminary had been a boarding school for girls under the wheel of Henry Felix. This project was later abandoned. The seminary was changed into a sanitarium for female religious at a cost of \$30,000 largely ascribed to Father Bornemann. The site was leader, turned over to missionary sisters of Sacred Heart from

Germany, and later, became their mother house. Father Bornemann later bought an adjoining farm and gave it to the Missionary Father's of the Sacred Heart for use as a seminary.

1894 Purchased 54 acres in Hyde Park for the creation of county-wide resting place for Catholics—Gethsemane Cemetery.

1895 arranged to build Saint Cecilia Chapel, a beautiful brownstone edifice at Perkiomen Avenue and Spruce Street, built by Theodore I. Heizmann in memory of his mother—Mary Cecilia Heizmann. The pews were made of quartered oak and accommodated 300 people. The side windows were made in Munich, Germany, and the vestments were made in Lyons, France.

1894 Started orphan asylum for boys next to the convent at St. Paul's.

1904 Bought abandoned Protestant Reformed Church at Schuylkill Avenue and Green Street and established Holy Rosary Mission Church for Italian-speaking Catholics.

1904 Guided and monetarily assisted in the creation of Nativity B.V.M. Parish for Ukrainian Catholics (founded by Byzantine Rite Archeparchy).

1906 Rebuilds St. Mary's Church in Hamburg.

1906 Assisted Bernardine Sisters by donating land in Millmont to build an orphanage and convent (present site of 54-acre Alvernia University).

1906 Donated 17 acres of land and the Neversink Mountain Hotel to the Berks County TB Society (This landmark was earlier destroyed by fire as he sought to convert it into a sanitarium and hospital).

1907 Rebuilt St. Paul's Parochial School at cost of \$251,000.

1910 Named Domestic Prelate (Monsignor) by Pope Pius X.

1913 Contributed financially and spiritually to the founding of St. Anthony's Parish (8th and Bingaman Streets) for Lithuanian-speaking Catholics.

1913 Assisted in opening of Reading Catholic High School at 225 South 5th Street at the two story structure that housed St. Peter's Elementary School. This school served Catholic teenagers until the founding of Holy Name High School in 1964.

1914 Contributed financially and spiritually to the founding of St. Anthony's Parish (Millmont) for Polish-speaking Catholics.

1914 Renovated old vacant public school at 3rd and Franklin Streets to build parochial school for Holy Rosary Church (later called Cabrini Academy). Personally contributed \$20,000.

1915 On the grounds donated by the Wyomissing Industries, at High Boulevard in Wyomissing (now a parking lot for Vanity Fair), he supervised the construction of a church and school and thus established Sacred Heart Parish. His nephew, the Reverend Charles J. Bornemann, was named the first pastor.

1915 Arranged to build a new steeple at St. Paul's Church to replace the former 200' tower which was destroyed by lightning. The tower had to be dismantled by order of city safety inspectors.

1915 Golden Jubilee (50 years a priest) – banquet at Berkshire Hotel at 5th and Washington Streets, attended by 500 including 2 bishops and 39 priests. Later a reception was held at the Hippodrome Theatre at 8th and Penn Streets. A committee chaired by Charles Vogel raised \$50,000 (\$1,000 for each year of Rev. Bornemann's pastorship) to apply to restoration and beautification of exterior of Church.

1916 A two-story annex to St. Paul's School was added at a cost of \$12,000.

Original Architecture of St. Paul's Church

- Romanesque architectural design.
- Comprised of red brick with buttressed walls reinforced with steel.
- Entrance doors from 9th Street are double oak.
- Nave is 112' by 55'.
- The interior design is in High Renaissance, based on 16th Century Pompeian.
- The center aisle widens six pews from the altar for funerals and access to altar for communion.
- The north and south sides of the church are flanked with cloisters or alcoves in which are located shrines, altars, confessionals, and a Baptismal font.
- Windows in the side chapels were made by J.M.

Kase of New York.

- There are four main groups of windows. Each group had a saint portrayed who dominated a certain era of church history.
- On the south side the windows comprise women saints.
- On the north side the windows comprise men saints.
- The main stained glass windows were made in Germany
- The communion rail is made of Carrara Bianco marble.
- There are three altars - the main (high) altar, and one for the Blessed Mother, and one for St. Joseph.
- The supportive massive columns of the main altar are genuine Italian Breccia Violette marble.

Original description of St. Paul's Church

The church of St. Paul, of Romanesque architectural design, is constructed of red brick with buttressed walls reinforced with steel throughout. The vestibule of the church is very large and extends the full width of the building. Concealed radiation, enclosed in marble casements, is an attractive, as well as practical feature. Three massive double oak doors give entrance directly from Ninth Street. At each end of the spacious vestibule, wide easy stairways lead to the gallery or choir loft, where pews are installed for additional worshippers who are unable to gain access to the church proper. In the oak paneled gallery is located the organ which furnishes the music for divine services. An oak front casement screens the organ and louvers that control the tone volume. The large mission crucifix, formerly in the old church, is affixed to the center of the panel screening. Between the console and the organ, there is a large space which the choir occupies at High Mass. From the vestibule, four marble steps lead directly into the main auditorium of the church. Immediately upon entrance, one is struck with the devotional atmosphere that prevails in the well-lighted and beautiful church. The nave of the auditorium is fifty-five by one hundred and twelve feet, with high vaulted ceiling into which is constructed a gravity system of ventilation. The interior of the building is in High Renaissance, based on Pompeian. It belongs to the sixteenth century and typical prototypes of this style ornamentation are found in the Villa Madam outside Rome, by Raphael and Julio Romano. Also, the Loggia, as well as several of the other rooms of the Vatican are also done in this design.

Death of an "Institution"

In the era after World War I, Monsignor Bornemann grew tired and physically weaker, even while remaining mentally alert. His assistants, Reverend Leo Letterhouse and Reverend Francis W. Walters, directed the parish for several years during Bornemann's last years. In 1920 it was noted that Monsignor Bornemann conducted 1,668 marriage ceremonies, baptized 6,774 children, offered first communion to 8,000, and confirmed 5,500 parishioners in 53 years of dedicated service. It was estimated he directly spiritually affected over 30,000 residents of Reading and Berks County. On Monday, March 3, 1924, at 1:45 A.M. - a veritable mortal Christian institution, in the personage of Monsignor Bornemann, passed into eternity. He was conscious to the end. An old friend and fellow missionary, Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, had visited him the previous day at his rectory home at 151 N. 9th Street, on the way to his hometown of Girardville. Monsignor Bornemann was 85, the oldest priest in the Diocese of Philadelphia. In his last will and testament, he gave all his monetary gains (\$64,000) to local schools and churches, and the major share went to St. Joseph's Hospital, Reading Hospital and Homeopathic Hospital. He specifically stated he wanted a funeral without ostentation with no sermon. He noted in his own penmanship: "The Lord for whom I have labored knows my many shortcomings, and I have no wish to be praised by men."

Excerpt from *Reading Eagle*

At 6:00 A.M. on Monday, March 3, 1924 - "the city of Reading stood still, and quiet, - all people stopped, and paused on their way to work. The entire city knew the tolling of St. Paul's Church bell (it was rung 85 times to honor each year of his life) meant a great person, a great Christian, and a great leader was gone from their midst." His funeral was held on Friday, March 7th as countless thousands of people, young and old, Catholic, and non-Catholic line 9th Street for the "most massive funeral in Berks County history." "Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice - If you seek His monument, look around."

Additional facts about St. Paul's Parish

- The Reverend Theodore Hammeke replaced Monsignor Bornemann and became the fourth pastor. He served from 1924 to 1928. His prior parish was St. Ignatius of Philadelphia where he served for 25 years.
- In 1927 the parish was so large it was divided into districts. Ushers were used for the first time to maintain order and to assure the comfort of parishioners.
- In 1928 the rectory was reconstructed, and a commercial high school was started to supplement the elementary school.
- George Haage (later of Haage Concert series) arranged for an organ to be transported to the church from the Arcadia Theater.
- Father William Hammeke replaced his brother, the Reverend Theodore Hammeke, who died May 13, 1928, suffering from pneumonia contracted supervising the replacement of the church roof and floor supports. Father Hammeke served as pastor for 21 years until his death on May 20, 1949, at age 86.
- Father Hammeke purchased the William Luden mansion at Hill Road and Clymer Street in October 1939. The estate was called Bon Air. On January 2, 1940, the new high school

- Central Catholic High (Monsignor Bornemann Memorial) was opened with an enrollment of 75 students. Groundbreaking for a new annex started on January 21, 1941. The cornerstone was laid on May 16, 1941.
- The annex for Central Catholic High School was completed on August 3, 1941, when the building was dedicated by Bishop Hugh L. Lamb, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia. The cost of the addition was \$110,000.
- The first graduating class was the Class of 1941 with 23 students. Their motto was: "In His Name We Go Forward." The class president was Paul W. Patton. The first principal was the Reverend Charles L. Allwein. Monsignor Allwein, 91, died February 7, 1995, at Holy Family Villa, Bethlehem, where he resided since 1977.

1943- Monsignor John Wachter succeeded Father Hammeke. When Monsignor Wachter died in 1955 there were 10,000 persons in attendance at his viewing.

1955- Monsignor Henry J. Huesman served St. Paul's and the diocese for the next two decades. He later became principal of Allentown Central Catholic, and was the first Superintendent of Schools for the Allentown Diocese (1961).

1956- St. Paul Church underwent second major renovation in its 96 year existence.

1957- St. Paul Rectory renovated.

1958- St. Paul Convent renovated.

1959- A new Assumption Convent to house the Sisters of Christian Charity was constructed at 1500 Eckert Avenue.

1961- New St. Paul Elementary School was completed (dedicated November 19, 1961).

1961- Rome announced the creation of the new Diocese of Allentown comprised of Berks, Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, and Schuylkill Counties. (February 15, 1961).

1961- Bishop Joseph McShea became the first Bishop of the Allentown Diocese.

St. Paul's Vietnamese Family

The Fall of Saigon - "Operation New Life"

The history of Vietnamese migration to the United States is relatively recent. Prior to 1975, most Vietnamese residing in the United States were spouses and children of American servicemen in Vietnam. On April 30, 1975, "the Fall of Saigon" ended the Vietnam War and prompted the first of two waves of emigration from Vietnam to the United States. Vietnamese who had worked closely with Americans during the Vietnam War feared reprisals by the Communist Party. 125,000 Vietnamese citizens departed their native country during the Spring of 1975. They were airlifted or fled Vietnam on U.S. military cargo ships and transferred to United States government bases in Guam, Thailand, Wake Island, Hawaii, and the Philippines, as part of "Operation New Life." Subsequently, they were transferred to four refugee centers throughout the United States: Camp Pendleton in California, Fort Chafee in Arkansas, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, and Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania. Initially, Vietnamese immigrants were not welcomed by the general American populous. This Act was established.

a program of domestic resettlement assistance for refugees who fled from Cambodia and Vietnam.

The Boat People

In 1977, a second wave of Vietnamese refugees began fleeing Vietnam. This wave of emigration lasted until the mid-1980s. The second wave began as a result of the new Communist government's implementation of economic, political, and agricultural policies based on Communist ideology. These policies included "reeducation" and torture of former South Vietnamese military personnel and those presumed friendly to the South Vietnamese cause, the closing of businesses owned by ethnic Chinese Vietnamese, the seizing of farmland and redistributing it, and the mass forced relocation of citizens from urban to rural areas that were previously uncultivated or ruined during the war. During this time approximately two million Vietnamese fled Vietnam in small, overcrowded boats. This group of refugees would come to be known as the "boat people." Most of the "boat people" fled the asylum camps in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, or Hong Kong and awaited acceptance by foreign countries.

Refugee Act of 1980

To assist Vietnamese refugees, Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 which reduced restrictions on entry to the United States. The Refugee Act of 1980 provided a definition of a refugee, created the Office of Refugee Resettlement, set the number of refugee admissions at 50,000 per year (unless in cases of an emergency), and allowed a refugee to adjust his or her status after one year to become a permanent resident and after four more years, to become a United States citizen. In addition, laws were also passed to allow children of American servicemen and former political prisoners to enter the United States. In total, the United States accepted 531,310 refugees and asylum seekers from Vietnam between 1981 and 2000.

Local Sponsors

Upon arrival, America's newest immigrants were matched with one of nine voluntary agencies whose job was to coordinate the refugee's eventual resettlement with local sponsors into communities throughout the United States. Churches and families that were interested in sponsoring a Vietnamese family promised to provide food, clothing, and shelter to the refugees until they became self-sufficient. The sponsor was also responsible for helping the newly arrived immigrants find employment, registering their children for school, and general adjustment to American society. The goal of the government's disbursement policy was not to overburden a particular city's social resources but to assimilate the Vietnamese into mainstream society as quickly as possible. The government, however, had not considered the refugees' need to be a part of their own community or that most Vietnamese were not used to living in cold climates. By the 1990s, large numbers of Vietnamese migrated from their initial resettlement locations to join family and friends in metropolitan areas that were beginning to establish ethnic Vietnamese communities. Currently forty percent of all Vietnamese Americans live in Orange County, California. Other smaller established communities exist in San Jose, Houston and the greater Washington, DC area.

High Rate of Naturalization

Similar to other groups of Asian American immigrants, and Vietnamese American communities have revitalized many urban areas, like Reading. As a relatively recent immigrant group, most Vietnamese, Americans are either first or second generation Americans. As many as one million speak Vietnamese at home, making it the seventh most spoken language in the United States. A recent survey shows that in 83% of Vietnamese, American households, Vietnamese is the dominant language. Additionally, as refugees, Vietnamese Americans have one of the highest rates of naturalization among all immigrant groups.

Integrating into American Culture

Vietnamese Americans have adapted to American culture while keeping their traditions and religious values intact. Their value system includes high educational expectations and strong commitment to family ties. Because of the emphasis placed on education, a rapidly growing proportion of established Vietnamese Americans are now moving into professional, managerial, and entrepreneurial positions, especially in the high-tech sector and in locations such as Silicon Valley. In a relatively short time, Vietnamese Americans have added much to American society. Many have taken a profound interest in civic duty. Various cities in California, including Westminster and Garden Grove have seen Vietnamese Americans serve in public offices, while others such as Assemblyman Tran Thai Van, serve in statewide offices in California. Another notable Vietnamese American dedicated to public service is John Quoc Duong, who served under President George W. Bush, as executive director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Similarly, Vietnamese Americans have made an impact on the entertainment and athletic industries. Dat Phan won the first season of NBC's reality talent search program Last Comic Standing in 2003, while Dat Nguyen is a professional football player in the NFL, leading the Dallas Cowboys' defense as their middle linebacker.

Migration at High Rate

As a result of recent normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam, as well as continued high rates of poverty in Vietnam, it is expected that Vietnamese immigration to the United States will continue at a high rate, mainly through family reunification. According to the 2000 census, there are currently 1,223,736 Vietnamese Americans. They are the fifth largest Asian immigrant group behind Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, and Korean, however recent studies have shown that by this year, 2010, Vietnamese Americans will surpass all other Asian groups, with the exception of Chinese Americans, to become the second largest Asian American population in the United States.

Additional Facts/Information Relative to the Vietnamese

- Over 95% of migrated Vietnamese are Catholic.
- Most of the "Boat People" were fishermen.
- The Vietnamese literacy rate exceeds 85%.
- The Vietnamese (previously French Indo-China) have suffered injustices by various governments. since the 17th century Southeast Asians have had

11 7 martyrs within the Catholic Church.

- Major feast days are: Our Lady of La Vang and the Feast of the Assumption (August 15).
- Vietnamese Celebrate TET - Chinese New Year (Year of the Tiger).
- Vietnamese children are taught religion and the Vietnamese language every Sunday for two hours within youth groups after the 9:30 Mass at St. Paul's by adults.
- Allentown Bishop, the Most Reverend John O. Barres, in a May 2010 celebration, urged Diocesan Vietnamese faithful: "To open themselves to the Holy Spirit, to change the patterns of anger to mildness and gentle strength, greed and materialism to detachment and respectful stewardship - when you resist sin there is the opportunity to be strengthened in grace, what St. Paul calls the peace that surpasses all understanding."

St. Paul's Hispanic Family

A Decade of Growth of the Hispanic Family at St. Paul's

In 2001, with the permission of Father Andrew Ulincy, Pastor of St. Paul's, Father Charles Marciano, pastor of Saint Peter Church began a bi-monthly Mass in Spanish at St. Paul's Church for a six month period. During that time Father Ulincy, together with other priests, studied praying the Mass in Spanish at St. Joseph's Church, Reading. Weekly Mass began with Father Aram Berard, SJ, on Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM. In June 2004, Sister Maria Kane, (Sister Marie Arthur) and Sister Isabel (Sister Maureen Elizabeth Sell) Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary began their pastoral ministry at Saint Paul Church. At that time there were approximately 50 Hispanics who came to worship the Lord at Sunday Mass. At the request of Father Ulincy, the Sisters began to organize the Children's Religious Education Program which at that time was in the embryonic stage of development. They also initiated the RCIA process for adults as well as pre-baptismal classes. A choir began, and lectors were chosen. The Sisters, with the help of the laity, began the rosaries and posadas in the homes, the living stations on Good Friday and the annual Christmas enactment before Mass. They encouraged the laity when they expressed their interest in establishing the Cursillo movement as well as the Charismatic Renewal. A youth group was begun as a result of the process leading up to a National Youth Encounter.

Growing Hispanic Community

When Father Jaime Guzman, SJ, a Chilean priest missioned at St. Isaac Jogues, Wernersville, started celebrating Mass Sundays at noon, the Hispanic Community began to increase in number. Father Guzman helped the sisters setting up a pastoral committee which involved the laity in planning. In 2005, Deacon Francisco Najera was assigned to Saint Paul Church. He assisted Father Guzman with the liturgy and also initiated all-night adoration on the First Saturday as well as the celebration of the Guadalupe. Deacon Najera began pre-matrimonial workshops. In 2005, Father Guzman withdrew his services due to a Jesuit community

commitment. During this period Father John Flynn, OSA, traveled from Villanova every Sunday to assist in the needs of the growing Spanish community.

Full-time Ministry

In September 2006, Father Amira Jimenez, a Colombian native previously missioned in New York, began a full-time ministry at St. Paul Church. Since Father's arrival, the St. Paul Spanish-speaking community has grown considerably. In September 2007, Father Jimenez assumed the responsibility of the Religious Education Program which had reached 400. Father Jimenez continues to build on this foundation into St. Paul's Sesquicentennial Year of 2010; with the assistance of a team from Washington, D.C. Neo-Catechumenate was begun at Saint Paul's.

Origins of Present Day Community

The roots of the present day Latino-Hispanic population emanated from the Iberian Peninsula in migrations in the 16th and 17th Centuries. In 2010 the Caucasian population of St. Paul's comprised approximately 11 % of the church population. Over 83% are Latino-Hispanic, and 6% are Vietnamese. Half (50%) of the Latino-Hispanic population had origins in Mexico, followed by a large migration from New York City of families from the Dominican Republic. In descending order immigrants from Colombia, Peru, San Salvador, the countries of South America, Chile and Puerto Rico migrated to the United States seeking economic growth and religious freedom.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Hispanic population of Reading and Berks County hold great respect and reverence for Our Lady of Guadalupe, proclaimed by Pope John Paul II as the 'Mother of all America.' Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared in Mexico as the Mother of God to Blessed Juan Diego, an Aztec Indian, on December 9, 10 and 12, 1531. She left a Miraculous Image of her appearance on his cactus fiber cloak, or "tilma", which still exists today for all to see in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Our Lady came to offer faith, hope and consolation to the oppressed natives of Mexico and to reconcile them with their Spanish rulers. She put an end to the bloody human sacrifice of the Aztecs and converted ten million natives in the next 10 years! The Aztecs practiced human sacrifice as an offering to their false gods. Hernando Cortes and the Spanish conquered and evangelized them.

Spanish Rule

After the conquest, the Spanish rule of the natives was so severe that a bloody revolt was imminent. Bishop Zumarraga prayed for Our Lady to intervene to prevent an uprising, to reconcile the Spanish and the natives and to bring peace. He asked that he would receive roses native to his homeland of Castile, Spain as a sign that his prayer would be answered. On December 9, 1531, Our Lady appeared to Blessed Juan Diego who was a recently converted Aztec. She asked him to go to the Bishop and request him to build a church for her on the barren hill of Tepeyac which is now part of Mexico City. Our Lady wanted to show her merciful love to all of her children. The prudent Bishop asked Juan to ask the Lady for a sign. Juan did so and Our Lady promised to give him a sign. On December 12, Our Lady again appeared to Juan on Tepeyac Hill and told him to pick the Castilian roses which miraculously appeared there and

bring them to the Bishop as the sign for him to believe her request. Juan gathered the roses into his tilma and brought them to the Bishop.

Conversions

He opened the tilma to show them and, to everyone's astonishment, the Image of Our Lady appeared on it. The Bishop then built the church as Our Lady had requested. Human sacrifice ended in Mexico forever. Our Lady of Guadalupe, which means crusher of the serpent's head, brought the light of the true faith, crushed the false gods of Mexico, and established an era of peace. It has been scientifically established that the Miraculous Image is not a painting. There is no under sizing or pigment in the tilma. It should have rotted after twenty years but it has not decayed after 400 years. In 1921 the tilma survived unscathed from a bomb blast set off directly underneath it by Mexican anti-Catholics. Pope Pius XII said that the Miraculous Image was left by "brushes which were not of this earth" and "we are certain that as long as Our Lady of Guadalupe is recognized as their Queen and Mother, America and Mexico are safe." Pope John Paul II named Our Lady of Guadalupe as Queen and Mother of America and established December 12 as her Feast Day throughout America. He prayed at her Basilica, "Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of Peace, save the nations and peoples of this continent!"

National Shrine

In 1973, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops named Immaculate Conception, BVM, Allentown, Pa., as the national shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Most Reverend Sydney M. Metzger, Bishop of El Paso, Texas, headed the selection committee.

Our Lady of the Altagracia Patroness of the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic has two Marian advocaciones: Nuestra Senora de la Merced, proclaimed in 1616, during the colonial era and Virgin de Altagracia, protector, and Queen of the heart of Dominicans. There are historical documents that prove that in the year 1502, on the island of Santo Domingo, already gave cult to the Blessed Virgin under the protection of our Lady of the Altagracia, whose painting was brought from Spain by Alfonso and Antonio Trejo, brothers who were the first European settlers of the island group.

Filipino Catholic Community

The Philippines was a Spanish Colony for hundreds of years until the Spanish-American War (1898) and its outcome created a type of 'American Protectorate' enduring through World War II when the islands were freed from Japanese occupation. The small colony of Filipinos in Reading and Berks County honor Our Blessed Mother as the "Flores de Mayo" (Flower of May) in a month-long flower festival annually in May. This celebration was introduced by the Spaniards in the Philippines after the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. The festivity commemorates the search for the Holy Cross by Queen Helena and her son, the newly converted Emperor Constantine. After the Holy Cross was found in Jerusalem and brought back to Rome, there was a joyful celebration for thanksgiving.

Abbreviated Chronological History of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church

- The first Catholic Church in Reading was St. Peter's church, founded in 1846 at 326 S. 5th Street.
- There were approximately 3,000 church members mainly of Irish and German descent.
- Bishop John Neumann, 4th Bishop of Philadelphia (1811-1860), was among early planners for a church in Reading.
- Due to language and cultural differences between German-speaking and English-speaking parishioners, Archbishop James Wood decided a separation was advisable.
- Reverend Charles J. Schrader was given a lot at 9th and Walnut Streets, and a cornerstone was laid for St. Paul's on September 6, 1860-amid the ominous clouds of an impending Civil War (1861-1865).
- The president of the United States was James Buchanan from Pennsylvania - predecessor to Abraham Lincoln.
- St. Paul's was built in a Romanesque architectural design, replete with supportive massive columns at the main altar of genuine Italian Breda Violette marble.
- The third pastor of St. Paul's, Monsignor George Bornemann, (1867-1924) improved and enlarged the church over a 57 year expanse of time.
- Monsignor Bornemann created a parish school in the early 1870's and invited the German order of nuns, Sisters of Christian Charity to operate the school with Mother Pauline Mallinkrod in charge.
- In 1871 the church was enlarged, and a 200 foot steeple was erected along with a new rectory (the tower was destroyed by lightning and rebuilt in 1915).
- In 1894 Monsignor Bornemann purchased 54 acres in Hyde Park to create Gethsemane Cemetery.
- In 1917 the exterior of St. Paul's was restored and beautified.
- In 1928 an organ from the Arcadia Theater was donated to St. Paul's by concert maestro George Haage.
- On January 2, 1940, St. Paul's purchased the William Lucien mansion and created Central Catholic High School.
- In 1956 St. Paul's underwent a second major renovation in its 96-year existence.
- In 1961 Rome announced the creation of the Diocese of Allentown with Bishop Joseph McShea named as the first bishop.
- A nine year renovation project (1986-1994) was enacted by Monsignor John P. Seitzinger (1985-1997).
- In 1981 the adjoining school building, no longer in use, was later leased to Prospectus, an adult rehab and training center.
- In 1997 Reverend Andrew Ulincy was named pastor.
- In 2007 the vacated school building was leased to the B.C.I.U. (Berks County Intermediate Unit).
- In the 1990's a sizable Southeast Asian Colony settled in north-east Reading and nearing the year 2000 a large group of Hispanics/Latinos began attending church.
- It is estimated the 4,382 member parish is comprised of Hispanic/Latinos (83%), Vietnamese (6%), and Anglo/Caucasians (11 %). Total of 1,747 families.

- Most recently (2008) the entire interior of St. Paul's was painted, redecorated, added air-conditioning and central-axis golden tabernacle was installed. The project was financed by a parishioner who wished to remain anonymous.
- Another benefactor has financed the restoration and activation of nine (9) bronze bells in the three (3) bell towers (one bell weighing 1 1/2 tons).
- In 2009 St. Paul's purchased 20 additional acres adjacent to Gethsemane Cemetery and the M.S.C. convent.

Pastors of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church

Reverend Charles J. Schrader: 1860-1865
 Reverend Gebhard Wallmeyer: 1865-1867
 Monsignor George Borneman: 1867-1924
 Reverend Theodore Hammeke: 1924-1928
 Reverend William Hammeke: 1928-1943
 Monsignor John Wachter: 1943-1955
 Monsignor Henry J. Huesman: 1955-1975
 Reverend Francis J. Fromholzer: 1975-1980
 Monsignor William E. Handges: 1980-1985
 Monsignor John P. Seitzinger: 1985-1997
 Reverend Andrew A. Ulincy: 1997-2010
 Monsignor Willam T. Baker: 2010-Present