



# Old Bohemia Historical Society

*Dedicated to the restoration and preservation*

*of*

*St. Francis Xavier Shrine*

Founded 1704

Winter 2020

Incorporated 1953

## **From the President's Desk**

I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health. We are now in our tenth month with the new board of The Old Bohemia Historical Society. We have been very busy since the new board took office. We held a Pancake Breakfast fundraiser at Applebee's and cleared over \$1,600 as well as a "Beat the Economy" yard sale on the grounds of Old Bo and made over \$1,300. We are excited to report that the Diocese of Wilmington has graciously offered to help us with the upkeep of St. Francis Xavier Shrine. They have hired a part-time maintenance person to clean and do minor repairs. The Diocese has also offered to assist with our utilities and insurance so that we can concentrate on raising money for major projects and repairs. We are currently working on obtaining estimates for a new heating and air conditioning system for the church and rectory as well as repairing the windows in the church. We would like to keep as much of Old Bo intact as we possibly can. As I am sure you are aware, with such a historic site, it is an everyday challenge. With that in mind, we have established committees to focus on such pressing topics as Preservation, Conservation and Restoration and Fundraising to name a few. Keep an eye out for news on exciting coming events! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [ursitti@verizon.net](mailto:ursitti@verizon.net).

Blessings,  
*Kathy Ursitti*

## **Society Membership**

The Old Bohemia Historical Society strives to obtain advice, talent and funds to preserve Bohemia Plantation as an inspirational and historic shrine in memory of those who forged the Catholic faith in the young colonies that would become the United States of America. Board members are stewards of the donations received from members and benefactors to secure the most value for the monies entrusted to them.

Your 2020 donation will support renewed preservation of the collected artifacts, necessary repairs and restoration of the buildings, and increased efforts to promote the story of this important site.

Membership runs annually from January 1 to December 31. Members are remembered at the Annual Mass in April. Individual memberships are \$30 and family memberships (1 address) are \$50. Please use the enclosed envelope to remit your tax-deductible membership donation.

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## Feast of St. Francis Xavier

Fr. Chris Hanley celebrated Mass in honor of the Feast of St. Francis Xavier on Tuesday, December 3 at 6:30 pm at St. Francis Xavier Shrine. A hearty crowd braved the chilly weather to participate in this annual event.

St. Francis Xavier was one of the Catholic Church's greatest missionaries. He was born in Pamplona, Spain in 1506, the youngest child in a



large family. At the age of 18, he left home to attend the University of Paris. There he met Ignatius of Loyola and joined the gathering that became the Society of Jesus (Jesuits.) Francis was ordained and sent on the new order's first missionary expedition to the east coast of India.

Traveling with a delegation from Portugal, Francis took little but a few clothes and books. Even though he suffered terrible sea-sickness on the long journey, he converted his quarters into an infirmary and cared for the passengers and crew when nearly everyone fell ill with scurvy.

Francis traveled the coast of India and throughout the Philippine Islands. He offered Mass with lepers each week and baptized thousands. He approached people with the Gospel by becoming one of them, eating humbly and sleeping on the ground. He died after 11 years of missionary work. It is fitting that the Jesuits who settled Bohemia Plantation named the church in honor of St. Francis Xavier. Like him, these men were missionaries spreading the faith in the New World.

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## Priest Cemetery Beautification

The Jesuit cemetery behind the church has been refreshed thanks to an Eagle Scout project undertaken by Jacob Cierniak. The work included scrubbing the moss and dirt off the brick enclosure around the graves and repainting the railings. A stone pathway was installed between the cemetery and the back wall of the church. Gates were then constructed and mounted at the ends of the path to



limit access to the air conditioning units. The project also entailed repairs to the gazebo including replacing the damaged fascia, building six new benches, and power washing and sealing the deck.

Scouts interested in performing their Eagle Scout project at Old Bo or groups wanting to help with a service project can contact Joe Whelan at 443.553.5937 for ideas.

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## Visual Improvements



A crew has been working diligently to make visual improvements around Old Bo. The church communion rail has been cleaned and polished, the walls in the sacristy have been scraped and painted, the stairs to the choir loft have been painted and the railing has been stained. Thanks to the generosity of Board Members Scott and Barbara Millar, owners of Worsell Manor, the floor has been cleaned and sealed. Outside, the holly trees at the church entrance have been trimmed and dead trees have been removed from the grounds.

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## Feast of the Immaculate Conception



A prayer service commemorating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception was held on Sunday, December 8. Vespers started at 4 pm. followed by a short concert presented by the Women's Schola of St. Joseph Parish, Middletown, DE. The program featured the Ave Maria and Magnificat in several musical styles. Rosemary Hadland was the musical director and Lauren Cataldi-May provided piano accompaniment. Refreshments provided by Society members were served following the program. In honor of Blessed Mother Mary, donations of diapers and baby hygiene items were collected for Catholic Charities Diaper Bank, serving families throughout Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

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## An Evening for Old Bo

Thanks to a very generous donation from Michael Hare, a special fundraising event for Old Bohemia will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2020. Mr. Hare, the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Wilmington Annual Tribute Dinner honoree for 2020, commissioned paintings of Old Bohemia by renowned Wilmington artist W. James McGlynn as a gift to a family member.

Mr. Hare has fond memories of spending time at Old Bohemia. His family would often attend Mass there and picnic on the grounds, hence the impetus for contracting the artwork. He used the opportunity to raise funds for Old Bohemia by having prints of the artwork made after the winter scene was completed.



The painting, '*Old Bo in the Snow*,' will be auctioned off at **An Evening for Old Bohemia: A Celebration of the Shrine of St. Francis Xavier Shrine** held at St. Joseph Parish Hall in Middletown, Delaware. The evening will commence with 5:00 pm Mass at St. Joseph Church, celebrated by a Jesuit priest from St. Joseph University in Philadelphia,. The fundraiser will follow at 6:30 pm. Old Bohemia was founded by the Jesuit order in 1704 and is considered the Mother Church of the Diocese of Wilmington. Mr. McGlynn will be on hand to sign prints of the painting which will be sold for \$100. Other items relating to the history of Old Bohemia will also be available for purchase.

Heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer and soft drinks are included in the \$40 ticket price. Musical entertainment will be provided by the Tim Laushey Orchestra. Invitations to the event will be mailed soon or can be ordered by sending an email to [OldBohemiaHS@gmail.com](mailto:OldBohemiaHS@gmail.com).

Mr. McGlynn has created paintings of many Delaware landmarks and churches. In his over 30 years as a professional painter, Mr. McGlynn has dove-tailed his artistic talent with his vast knowledge of Delaware history. He believes that a landmark-landscape artist should be well acquainted with the history, architecture and natural environment of his subject matter. His paintings have a unique softness with an appropriate amount of crisp detail to draw the viewer into the center of the overall image. Mr. McGlynn's paintings are sought after by art connoisseurs and are included in many public, corporate and private collections.

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**GIFT IDEA** Are you searching for a unique present for the history buff on your gift list? Would you like to learn more about the history of St. Francis Xavier Shrine? Consider purchasing Fr. Thomas Peterman's volume **Bohemia 1704-2004, A History of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Shrine in Cecil County, Maryland**. The book sells for \$50 and can be ordered through [OldBohemiaHS@gmail.com](mailto:OldBohemiaHS@gmail.com).



## 2020 MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 19	Annual Meeting 2 pm / Mass 4 pm
Sunday, May 17	Mass 4 pm
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day Mass 10 am
Sunday, September 20	Mass 4 pm
Sunday, October 25	Mass 4 pm
Thursday, December 3	Feast of St. Francis Xavier Mass 6:30 pm

St. Francis Xavier Shrine is available for special Masses and Catholic weddings. Requestor is responsible for scheduling a Celebrant. Please email [OldBohemiaHS@gmail.com](mailto:OldBohemiaHS@gmail.com) for more information.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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