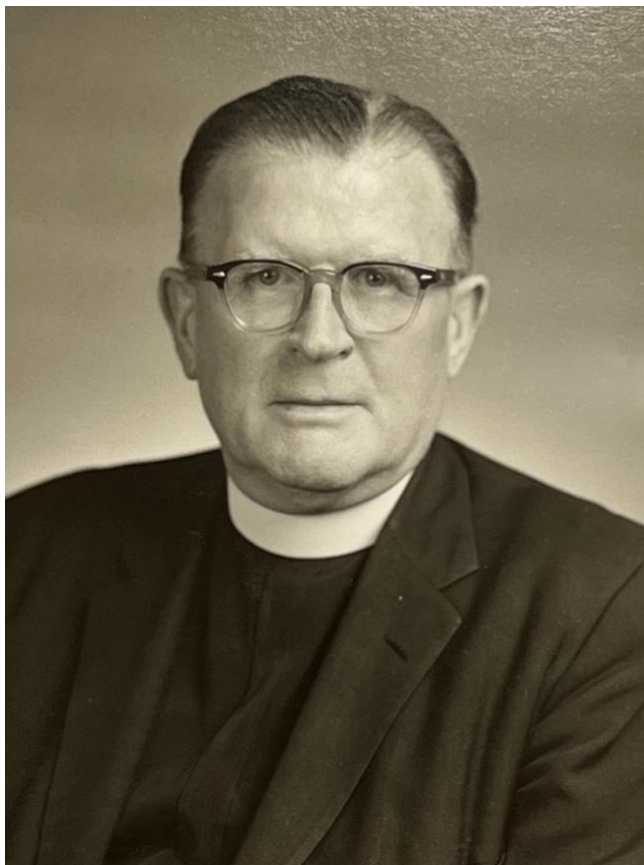


Key Moments in St. Peter's History

A series of historical highlights from the first 200 years of St. Peter – Libertytown.

Father John A. Mountain

Father John A. Mountain was born in Philadelphia and studied at Atonement College in



Undated photo of Fr. John Mountain

Courtesy, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Associated Archives at St. Mary's Seminary & University, Baltimore, Maryland.

Graymore, NJ; St. Mary's College and Seminary, North East, PA; St. John's Seminary in Little Rock, AR, and the Sulpician Seminary in Washington, D. C. He was ordained by the late Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia, on June 2, 1928.

Early in his pastoral ministry, he served as assistant pastor of the Shrine of the Little Flower in Baltimore, at St. Patrick's Church in Cumberland, and at St. Jerome's in the early 1940's; he then served at several churches in Washington and at St. Lawrence's Church in Jessup.

In late December 1951, Fr. Mountain was assigned to St. Peter's in Libertytown, arriving on December 21st.

The statue of St. Peter, now standing in front of the church, formerly stood at the location of the first church. It was on a pedestal that read, "Thou art Pete and upon this rock I build my church." "Pete" was the last word of the first line of the inscription and apparently the inscriber did

not "plan ahead" to get the last letter in the space available. Parishioners loved that it said "Pete". It seemed a nice, comfortable familiarity with our patron saint. But Fr. Mountain was not a fan, and he had the pedestal cement-washed to cover up the inscription. You won't see that pedestal now because it ended up becoming part of the foundation of the third church.

A later pastor, Fr. Paul Iaia credits Fr. Mountain for his especially attentive care of the sick of the parish, visiting them regularly with the Sacraments. Also, while he was assigned to St. Peter's, he accomplished some renovations to the parish rectory and built the parking lot next to the Parish Hall on land donated by James C. Sappington. Lastly, Fr. Mountain spent a lot of time checking parish records which was of great benefit to the priests who followed after him at St. Peter's.

Fr. Mountain was transferred from St. Peter's in Libertytown to St. Jerome's in Baltimore on February 15, 1958, and served there as pastor until 1968.

Although he didn't have to deal with a building fire while at St. Peter's, his next pastorate faced that challenge. On November 21, 1963, a fire was discovered in a waste basket in St. Jerome's school library. Firemen were called and they put the fire out. All 300 children were evacuated from the school.

The next day a larger fire occurred in the parish school. While the students were at lunch, a third-grade teacher saw a fire burning in the auditorium and ran for help. The fire spread quickly and it soon became a 4-alarm fire spreading to the ceiling and a loft, with over 30 pieces of equipment being sent to fight the fire. The 300 first through eighth grade students and their teachers were evacuated from the school and the grounds with no injuries. One of the teachers, a Sister, later said that the fire had been started by a local child who had been feuding with a student and entered the auditorium, setting fire to the drapes.

The next day the news was reported in some detail in the depths of the Baltimore Sun's news section, this story being overshadowed by the news of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy which occurred about an hour after the fire began.

Fr. Mountain retired in 1968. After his retirement, he moved to West Palm Beach, FL, where he died in hospital on October 27, 1979, at the age of 81. His funeral in Philadelphia was followed by interment in Holy Cross Cemetery, Yeadon, PA.