

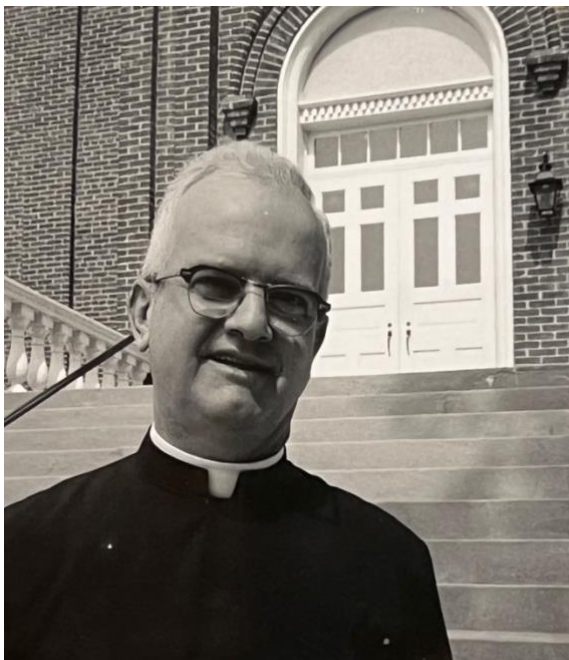


# Key Moments in St. Peter's History

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

## **Fr. Francis Aloysius Morrison**



*Figure 1 Fr. Morrison on the steps of St. Peter's, during his pastorate*

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

Francis A. Morrison was born on April 26, 1917, in Philadelphia, PA, the fourth of five children. He had two brothers and two sisters. A terrible tragedy struck their lives on March 21, 1925, when their mother passed away. Francis was about 8 years old at that time.

The family had moved to Baltimore by 1930. He started high school in 1931 and one of the those with whom he became friends in that first year of high school was Martin Flahaven, who also became a pastor at St. Peter's.

The war was coming and on October 16, 1940, he registered for the draft. The draft record notes that he was a divinity student at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and that he was six feet tall and weighed 170 pounds. The Federal Census of 1940 indicates that he had by this time completed 5 years of higher education, was living in Catonsville, and was 22 years of age. At some point his draft record was updated to reflect his new assignment at St. Mary's Rectory, 5502 York Road.

He was ordained at the Basilica of the Assumption on June 8, 1943.

Fr. Morrison served at St. Mary's in Govans, Immaculate Conception in Towson, and St. Mary's Church in Pylesville before coming to St. Peter's in Libertytown. He arrived at St. Peter's on October 2, 1965, replacing his high school friend, Fr. Martin Flahaven who, coincidentally, moved to St. Mary's in Pylesville.

One of the strengths of Fr. Morrison's pastorate at St. Peter's was his involvement with the local community. As examples of this, he participated in a 1966 Thanksgiving Eve service at

Libertytown Methodist Church. In 1969 the community Thanksgiving Eve service was held at St. Peter's to which local communities were invited and in which the pastors of the Walkersville United Church of Christ, the Woodsboro Lutheran Church, and Libertytown Methodist churches participated.

On Tuesday, December 22, 1970, a Live Nativity pageant was held at St. Peter's. A number of local churches participated in the program, each church providing costumes, properties, and animals for its part in the pageant, along with church members to play the various roles. The pastors narrated their parts of the pageant and a choir of members of all the church choirs sang carols. The participating churches were Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Zion, and Silverhill United Methodist Churches, the Unionville-Libertytown United Methodist Churches, Linganore and Keys Chapel United Methodist Churches, Mt. Pleasant United Church of Christ, and St. Peter's.

Fr. was also active in the Libertytown Fire Department, being elected one of the two chaplains of the department at its annual meeting in December 1969. The other chaplain elected was Rev. Daniel Henderson of the Libertytown Methodist Church. He attended other annual meetings, offering invocations and benedictions at those meetings.

He was also a member of the Community Relations Board of the National Alliance of Businessmen in his capacity as chair of the Frederick County Ministerial Association, the goal of which is the employment of minority group and disadvantaged American and to provide skills training as needed.

On Saturday, June 8, 1968, Fr. Morrison marked his 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination. A Mass was celebrated at St. Peter's at noon and that was followed by a reception in the church hall. Another anniversary that was marked was the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Second Church, in 1970. On June 21, 1970, an Anniversary Mass was celebrated by His Eminence Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore. Following the Mass, dinner was served to all at the Libertytown Volunteer Fire Department.

One of the hardest decisions that was made during Fr. Morrison's time at St. Peter's was to close St. Peter's School, which was one of the county's oldest parochial schools. It became obvious that the tuition costs and money that the parish could provide could no longer economically sustain the school. The school was incorporated into the Archdiocese school system in 1965 with the official name changing to St. Peter's School from Notre Dame Academy of Frederick County. Since that time, the School Sisters of Notre Dame was no longer financing the operations of the school and the parish was absorbing the costs formerly paid by the religious order. This approach being financially untenable, the parish council concurred with the recommendation to close the parish school at the end of the 1969-1970 school year.

In February 1973, Fr. Morrison was moved to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Woodlawn. One year later he passed away, February 25, 1974. He was the first of the 5 siblings to pass away, at the age of 57. A Funeral Mass was said at Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 10:30 AM on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, following which he was buried at New Cathedral Cemetery, Baltimore MD.