



Key Moments in St. Peter's History

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

Fr. Paul Peter Iaia



Figure 1 Fr Paul Iaia

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

Paul Iaia (pronounced “yaya”) started his pastorate at St. Peter’s on February 21, 1973. The road that brought him to us was long. He was born in New Britain, CT on December 16, 1930, and there attended St. Mary’s School.

His studies for the priesthood took him to St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, CT, St. Bernard’s Seminary in Rochester, NY, and St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, MD. He was ordained on May 26, 1956, at the Basilica of the Assumption in Baltimore, by Archbishop Francis P. Keough.

Fr. Iaia was first assigned as associate pastor to Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Middle River; All Saints Parish, Baltimore; St. Patrick’s, Havre de Grace; and St. Charles Borromeo, Pikesville. He was appointed pastor of St. Peter’s in Libertytown on February 21, 1973.

He was an active achiever (perhaps an overachiever) at St. Peters. In the religious education program he began the St. Peter’s Youth (SPY). He wrote a brief history of health care at St. Peter’s, which he observed had been begun in the time that Fr. Thomas Haggerty was administrator, in 1943, and continued with some periods of inactivity, through the pastorates of the several priests, to his own pastorate. While some of the priests included remarks, such as the person’s ailment (asthma, cancer, cardiac, stroke, etc.), Fr. Iaia did not enter any remarks in the book. And during his pastorate the families registered, grew from 125 when he arrived in 1973, to 300 in 1983.

He oversaw the total renovation of the interior of the Church and several other improvements to the Academy building and the campus grounds. The renovation of the church included modifications to the sanctuary, repainting and rewiring, installation of a new heating and air conditioning system, new carpeting and kneelers, and the old painted pews were stripped, stained, and refinished. Four classrooms were added to the basement of the Academy building.

A handicapped ramp was constructed behind the church. The total cost of the project was \$110,000, about \$325,000 in today's money.

Auxiliary Bishop and Western Vicar P. Francis Murphy said the Dedication Mass on Sunday, February 20, 1983, that marked the completion of the project. Bishop Murphy said he "was extremely impressed by the beauty of the newly renovated church". He was also impressed by how the renovation reflected the visions of the Second Vatican Council and how the integration of some of the more traditional aspects of the old church were incorporated in the new. Fr. Iaia noted that the completion of the renovations coincided with his 10th anniversary as pastor of St. Peter's.

A Silver Jubilee Mass was held in February 1981, to celebrate Fr. Iaia's 25th Anniversary of his Ordination. During the Presentation of the Gifts at the Mass, one of the gifts was the letter sent by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan appointing Fr. Iaia to his first pastorate, at St. Peter the Apostle Church, Libertytown MD, on February 21, 1973.

A farewell reception for Fr. Paul Iaia was held on Saturday, March 9, 1985 immediately after the 6 PM Mass, in the Parish Hall (known today as Sappington Hall).

Following his time at St. Peter's, he was pastor at St Mary's in Pylesville, followed by an educational sabbatical in Rome. Returning from Rome, he was pastor of St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor. Later he became the Senior Priest at St. John in Frederick and Pastor Emeritus of St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor. Retiring in 1998, he moved to Bethany Beach, DE, where he served in the Parish of St. Ann's.

He died suddenly on March 8, 2006, at Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, MD. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 14 in Bethany Beach. His funeral Service was held in New Britain, CT, on March 21 with a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Ann Church followed by burial in St. Mary's Cemetery in New Britain.