



Key Moments in St. Peter's History

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

Fathers Stephen J. Chylinski and Donald G. Aery



*Figure 1 Fr. Stephen Chylinski 1962
Courtesy, Archives of the Archdiocese
of Baltimore. Associated Archives at St.
Mary's Seminary & University,
Baltimore, Maryland.*

Father Stephen J. Chylinski was born on October 29, 1897, in Baltimore, Maryland. Graduating from Loyola High School and Loyola College, he began his studies for the priesthood at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan. He thereafter transferred to St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. He was ordained on June 14, 1928, by Archbishop Michael J. Curley. His first assignment was to Holy Rosary Church in Baltimore.

Father Stephen J. Chylinski was transferred from All Saints Church, Baltimore, to St. Peter's Church in Libertytown as pastor, to be effective July 12, 1946.

Shortly after his arrival at St. Peter's, he was present at the picnic and tournament held at Pine Mountain Park on Wednesday, August 7, which was the largest in several years, and included the first jousting tournament held in several years. This event also celebrated the 125th anniversary of the founding of the parish in 1821. Hundreds of people lined up for the lunch and dinner meals. Fr. Michael Hyle, previous pastor of St. Peter's, also attended.

Fr. Chylinski completed several projects while he was pastor at St. Peter's, including constructing new buildings, painting and redecorating the church and rectory, and many other internal and external projects. He was involved in the local community, giving the commencement address to St. John's high school graduation in 1947 and an address on the destructiveness of Communism versus the virtues of freedom to the Frederick Lions Club dinner in November, 1949.

Other parishes at which he served were St. Joseph's in Barton and St. Peter's in Westernport, Maryland, (St. Joseph's and St. Peter's are now part of Divine Mercy) as well as Holy Rosary and Holy Cross (now part of the Catholic Community of South Baltimore) in Baltimore and vicinity. Following his pastoral work at St. Peter's, he was moved to the Sacred Heart of Mary Church (which recently merged with St. Rita's) in Baltimore, which he served from 1952 until his death on May 14, 1963. After a Pontifical High Mass was celebrated at that church, he was buried in Holy Rosary Cemetery.



Figure 2 Fr. Aery with Harriot and Jay Arnold May 1987

We include Fr. Donald G. Aery in our list of priests whose lives we are recalling, not because he was our pastor, because he was not; but because he was a living, breathing, suffering, imitator of Christ. He was born November 16, 1922, in Dunellen, New Jersey. He grew up near Albany, New York, and graduated from the Vincentian Institute in Albany, in 1941. He began his religious life as a brother in the Congregation of the Holy Cross. He administered farms in South Bend, Indiana, and in Valatie, New York. He was an avid skier, tennis player, and climbed mountains into his 50s. An active member of the National Ski Patrol, he was known as the “Skiing Monk.”

He graduated from Siena College in Loudonville, New York, and served as a counselor to drug abusers. He left his order to study for the priesthood, entering Mt. St. Mary’s in 1973, when he was 50 years old. He graduated and was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Albany on May 14, 1977. He served as associate pastor at St. Francis de Sales (now Christ our Light) in Loudonville, NY and pastor at St. Paul’s in Hancock, NY.

In 1980, after attending an annual reunion at Mt. St. Mary’s, he stopped in Frederick to visit friends on his way home to Albany. While there, he suffered a severe stroke and was taken to Frederick Memorial Hospital. One of the nurses who cared for him was Harriot Arnold, a parishioner at St. Peter’s. They become close friends, visiting him in the Albany NY nursing home where he was moved, after returning to his home diocese. The permanent effects of the stroke, which almost completely paralyzed one side of his body, required him to use a wheelchair. But Fr. Aery still wanted to be useful and Jay and Harriot Arnold agreed that he still had much to offer as a priest. They welcomed them into their home near Union Bridge to live with them and their 3 children at Heaven Sent Farm. This invitation meant making significant modifications to their 200 year old farmhouse to accommodate a handicapped person.

Fr. Aery served at St. Peter’s parish, in an unofficial capacity, from 1982 to 1987; alongside both Fr. Iaia and Fr. Nickol. He regularly celebrated Masses, heard confessions, and officiated at weddings and funerals. He was also active in the Hospice of Frederick County, where he counseled patients with terminal illnesses; the Baltimore area Cursillo movement; and many other community organizations. In May of 1987, the Parish held a celebration in his honor on the 10th anniversary of his ordination.

In 1987 he returned to Albany, living in a nursing home, where he died from a probable heart attack on October 7, 1988. A Requiem Mass was celebrated at the parish at which he served in Loudonville, NY, and he was thereafter buried in our cemetery near the statue of St. Joseph. At the Mass said for him at St. Peter’s on October 15, Jay Arnold noted Fr. Aery’s physical, mental, and emotional pain and the amazing pastoral work he achieved despite all that, and quoted his daughter Kelly, who said, “He gave everything, even when he didn’t have everything to give.”