

# Key Moments in St. Peter's History

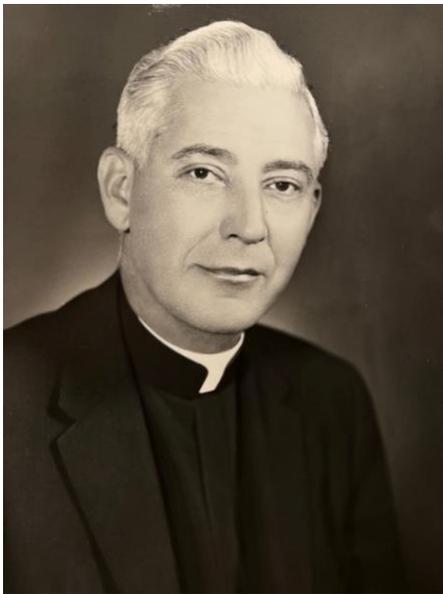
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*A series of historical highlights from the first 200 years of St. Peter – Libertytown.*

## **Fr. Martin W. Flahavan**

Fr. Flahavan was a man of varied talents. In the display case in the Narthex of the Church, is one example - a *Marian Children's Missal* with Martin Flahavan featured in photos celebrating Mass. This Missal, published by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, was designed to help children prepare for their First Communion, and was widely purchased throughout the country by parents for their children in the 1950's and 60's.

In all the parishes he was assigned to, he was perpetually active doing something to advance the mission of the Catholic Church. At St. Peter's, where he was assigned from 1961 to 1965, he constructed a basketball court, developed the largest Altar Boy Society in the history of St. Peter's, revived the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, organized an Usher Society, began high



*1962 photo of Fr. Flahavan*

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

school and adult discussion groups in cooperation with the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (known to many of us as CCD), made major maintenance improvements to the church and (old) rectory, renovated the parish hall, and developed a new well and water system.

While at St. Peter's, Fr. Flahavan was active in the local Red Cross and was a board member of that organization.

Many of the parishioners at St. Peter's and the Libertytown Methodist Church had brought to the attention of their pastors, Fr. Flahavan and Rev. Keith Smith, several issues of importance to Libertytown. They both were instrumental in the reactivation of the Libertytown Civic Improvement Association, which had been inactive for about a decade. They also offered their churches as meeting sites for the Association. Two big fires occurred in Libertytown during Fr.'s pastorate - one in 1961 and one in June 1964. Due to the efforts of the citizens the Libertytown Volunteer Fire Department was formed in November 1964. Little did Fr. know how critical, the fire department he helped create, would be to St. Peter's 40 years later when our own church

caught fire. St. Peter's still plays an observer and commentor role in the Association regarding town issues with the county and the state, most recently with the road and pedestrian traffic situations in town.

He conducted the first pre-Cana Conference in central Maryland in 1963. He also continued as the Advocate for the Matrimonial Tribunal of the Baltimore Archdiocese.

And if that were not enough, based on his more than 17 years of experience with the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) in various roles, he was appointed by Archbishop Shehan to be the CYO director for the Central Maryland Region, including parishes from Westminster to Hancock. Archbishop Shehan's goal was to establish CYO's in the region.

Father Martin W. Flahavan was born on November 11, 1917. He grew up in Baltimore and attended St. Charles College in Catonsville, graduating in 1937, and St. Mary's Seminary. He was ordained on June 8, 1943.

Fr. Flahavan also had ties to the local area. In 1938 he attended the Shook-Hovis Family Reunion, held at Mt. Tabor Park in Rocky Ridge. His mother, Loretta, and sister, Helen, also attended.

He was first assigned to St. Martin's, his home parish, as assistant pastor, for seven years. His second assignment was to St. Ambrose as assistant pastor for another eleven years. He participated in the 1950 Holy Year Pilgrimage to Rome, led by the Most Rev. Lawrence J. Shehan, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore. The pastor of St. Peter's at that time, Fr. Stephen J. Chylinski, also was on the trip. In the Spring on 1965 while at St. Peter's, Fr. accompanied then Archbishop Shehan to Rome for his elevation to Cardinal. In a four part article published in full by the Frederick Post, Fr., provided a detailed commentary on the proceedings, to his flock at home.

With fires a recurring theme for pastors of St. Peter's, on the morning of May 6, 1955, while Fr. was assigned to St. Ambrose, a fire broke out in the Jewish nursing home across the street from the parish hall. Three alarms were sounded for the fire and all 10 city ambulances and one Fire Department ambulance responded to it. Only three people went to hospital, there were no deaths and all 58 patients and the staff were moved and cared for by church staff and local volunteers. St. Ambrose opened up the parish hall as a triage area and made stretchers, cots, chairs, tables, etc. available for use. Fr. Flahavan and the other two assistant pastors helped move patients from the building and assisted them throughout their ordeal. At the end of the day, the home was sufficiently saved that the patients and staff moved back in! Later the local Jewish rabbi came by and thanked the priests at the parish for their help during the event.

After St. Peter's, Fr. Flahavan was assigned to St. Mary's in Pylesville, MD, in October 1965. He was then assigned to St. Luke's in Sparrows Point in 1967.

Fr. Martin W. Flahavan died on December 14, 1972, while serving at St. Luke's and he was buried from that church on Monday, December 18, 1972.