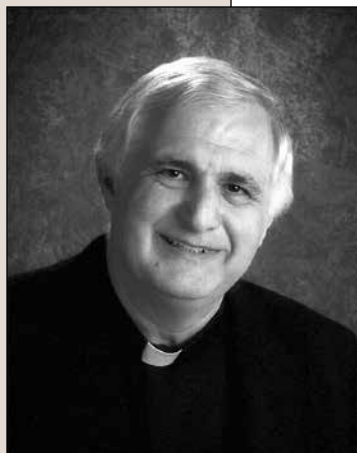




1912 100th ANNIVERSARY **2012**

SAINT NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE CHURCH

A Centennial Celebration



St. Nicholas of Tolentine
910 Watkins Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19148
215 463-1326

100th Anniversary Year (1912–2012)

To the Family and Friends of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church,

Celebrating 100 years as a Parish Church is quite an accomplishment. What we are celebrating is not a building, but a people who have been and are still dedicated to a particular building that represents who we are as a Catholic Community.

The good people of St. Nicholas Church, past and present, have a marvelous record of commitment to their Church. From the time of the Italian Immigrants who settled in South Philadelphia in the late 1800s until today, the values of faith, family and tradition have been the driving force of this Parish Community. That is why our Centennial Committee chose these important values as the theme for our 100th Anniversary Year.

The immigrants who migrated from Italy realized and understood how important these values were for them as newly arrived people and strangers in a foreign land. Faith, family and tradition kept them united and secure as they encountered the many difficulties and problems they found in their new land. Although they missed their towns and villages and the families they left behind in Italy, their experience here in America was made somewhat easier because they found support and community as a member of their Church—San Nicola di Tolentino at 9th and Watkins Streets. This Commemorative Book provides you with a vivid history in words and pictures of their experience; one that details how faith, family and tradition made a dramatic impact on the lives of so many people who were and are still a part of this Church Community.

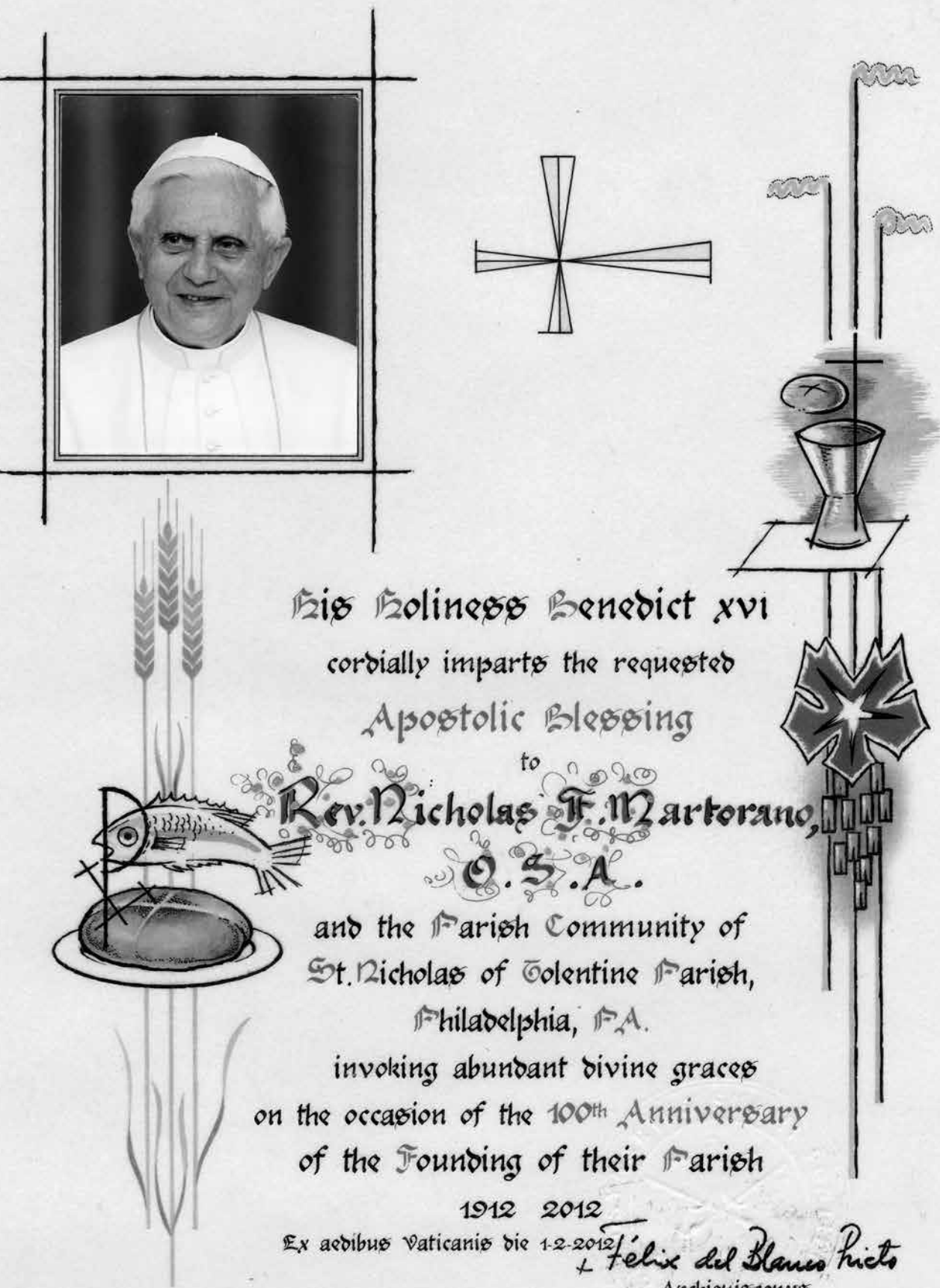
During this past year, we have been celebrating who we are as an Italian National Parish. Our Centennial Committee has worked diligently on many projects so that we do not forget the struggles of the parishioners of the past, but also to help us appreciate the culture, growth and achievements of these same people and those who would follow them. There have been many different activities and events that have helped us to be proud of who and what we are as a unique and special place of worship in South Philadelphia.

My heartfelt thanks and prayers go out to all those who were involved in any way during this year of thanksgiving. A special mention of appreciation is in store for our Centennial Committee who worked long hours sharing their talents in a variety of ways so that all of the people in our parish could enjoy our celebration of 100 years as a Church Community. Recognition is also given to those who prepared the pages of this book that tells our story. I hope that you enjoy this book as either a friend or as family of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church. God bless you and Cent' Anni!

With best wishes and prayerful thoughts,

Rev. Nick Martorano, O.S.A.
Pastor





SAINT NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINE

Nicholas Gurrutti was born in the village of Sant'Angelo in Pontano, Italy in 1245. His parents, middle-aged and childless, made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Nicholas of Bari, to ask his intercession on their behalf. Shortly thereafter, a son was born to them whom they named Nicholas out of gratitude.

At an early age Nicholas was greatly moved by the preaching of the Augustinian Father Reginaldo di Monterubbiano, prior of the monastery of Sant'Angelo, and requested admission into the community. He was accepted by the friars and made his novitiate in 1261. Nicholas directed his efforts to being a good priest and soon became renowned for his charity toward his confreres and all God's people. His religious formation was greatly influenced by the spirituality of the hermits of Brettino, a community located in the region of Le Marche where Nicholas was born and raised. It was one of the congregations that formed part of the "Grand Union" of Augustinians in 1256.

Characteristic of these early hermits of Brettino was a great emphasis on poverty, rigorous practices of fasting and abstinence, and long periods of the day devoted to communal and private prayer. As Nicholas entered the Order at its inception he learned to combine the ascetical practices of the Brettini with the apostolic thrust which the Church now invited the Augustinians to practice. At times, Nicholas devoted himself to prayer and works of penance with such intensity that it was necessary for his superiors to impose limitations on him. At one point he was so weakened though fasting that he was encouraged in a vision of Mary and the child Jesus to eat a piece of bread signed with the cross and soaked in water to regain his strength. Thereafter he followed this practice in ministering to the sick himself. In his honor the custom of blessing and distributing the "Bread of Saint Nicholas" is continued by the Augustinians in many places today.

Nicholas was ordained to the priesthood in 1271. He lived in several different monasteries of the Augustinian Order, engaged

principally in the ministry of preaching. In 1275 he was sent to Tolentino and remained there for the rest of his life. Nicholas worked to counteract the decline of morality and religion which came with the development of city life in the late thirteenth century. He ministered to the sick and the poor, and actively sought out those who had become estranged from the Church. A fellow religious described Nicholas' ministry in these words: "He was a joy to those who were sad, a consolation to the suffering, peace to those at variance, refreshment to those who toiled, support for the poor, and a healing balm for prisoners." Nicholas' reputation as a saintly man and a worker of miracles led many people to the monastery of Tolentino.

When in 1884 Nicholas was proclaimed "Patron Saint of the Souls in Purgatory" by Pope Leo XIII, confirmation was given to a long-standing aspect of devotion toward this friar which is traced to an event in his own life. On a certain Saturday night as he lay in bed, Nicholas heard Fra Pellegrino of Osimo, a deceased friar who Nicholas had known. Fra Pellegrino revealed that he was in purgatory and he begged Nicholas to offer Mass for him and for the other suffering souls so that they might be set free. For the next seven days, Nicholas did so and was rewarded with a second vision in which the deceased confrere expressed his gratitude and assurance that a great number of people were now enjoying the presence of God through Nicholas' prayers. As this event became known, many people approached Nicholas, asking his intercession on behalf of their own deceased relatives and friends.

Nicholas died in Tolentino on September 10th, 1305. He was declared a saint in 1446, the first member of the Augustinian Order to be canonized. Saint Nicholas' body is venerated in the basilica in Tolentino which bears his name. His feast is celebrated by the Augustinian family on this day each September.



OUR STORY

The birth of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church occurred during an era of great change in the United States and the city of Philadelphia. It was established in 1912, but its roots go back even further. Its early history unfolded at a time of unprecedented turmoil and controversy. The parish's continued existence is a great testimony to the resilient faith and profound spirituality of the members of the congregation.



Italian immigrants carried their religious traditions with them, such as the custom of this festival in honor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Feast held in the Abruzzo Region circa 1910.

America was always a nation of immigrants, but when the people of Eastern and Southern Europe began arriving in unprecedented numbers in the late 1800's, they were deemed less compatible and desirable than the earlier settlers. It was feared that their presence would likely damage American society, institutions, and culture. Italian immigrants were a large part of this new population and they were often met with hostility.

The Catholic Church in Philadelphia also faced a challenge in addressing what one Bishop termed the "Italian Problem." The new immigrants were undeniably poor, did not speak English, and carried spiritual beliefs and customs that were somewhat different from those of the largely Irish and German Catholics who held positions of authority in the archdiocese. In many ways they seemed out of place – their style of dress, their music, their zealous dedication to patron saints, and their peculiar emphasis on food as a critical part of their social and religious fabric.

When an earlier and smaller wave of Italians had arrived in the 1850's, Archbishop John Neumann showed great foresight in developing the concept of a "National Parish" – a church created specifically to minister to a particular ethnic group – hence the creation of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, the first Italian National Parish in the United States. But by the late 1800's, the number of immigrants in South Philadelphia had grown so tremendously that Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan decided he needed significant help from Italian-speaking priests. With the aid of his friend, Archbishop Sebastiano Martinelli, an Augustinian, he established a new parish - Nostra Signora del Buon Consiglio (Our Lady of Good Counsel) at 8th and Christian Streets in 1898. The Augustinians agreed to send three priests from Italy to begin this mission and they were given a huge mandate – the pastoral care of all Italians in Philadelphia, except for members of the existing parish of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi. It was also agreed that ultimately, upon the passing of the long-time pastor Fr. Antonio Isolero, even that parish would be turned over to the Augustinians.

People felt a great affinity for the new church and found a congenial home there. St. Mary Magdalen was long considered the "Genovese church", made up of mostly Northern Italians who had arrived a half century earlier and were firmly planted in the United States. The new arrivals from Southern Italy and Sicily clearly needed a place to call their own, and during its 35 years of existence, Buon Consiglio thrived, recording an amazing 10,000 marriages and 75,000 baptisms.

Unlike the archdiocesan priests who sought to have Italians assimilate, the Italian Augustinians encouraged and enabled the congregation to retain its original culture and personal identity. They became champions of ethnic pride and religious fervor. Pastor Angelo Caruso gave impassioned sermons in Italian urging the faithful to preserve their traditions. But by consistently delivering this message, he was implicitly challenging archdiocesan authority and soon this semi-autonomous colony of Catholics would be seen as a threat to church leaders. In a relatively short time, the Italian population in Philadelphia grew from an estimated 30,000 to more than 150,000, and began to rise in stature, education, and economic status. As this occurred, the Archdiocese became increasingly uncomfortable with having ceded such a burgeoning population to a specific order of foreign priests.

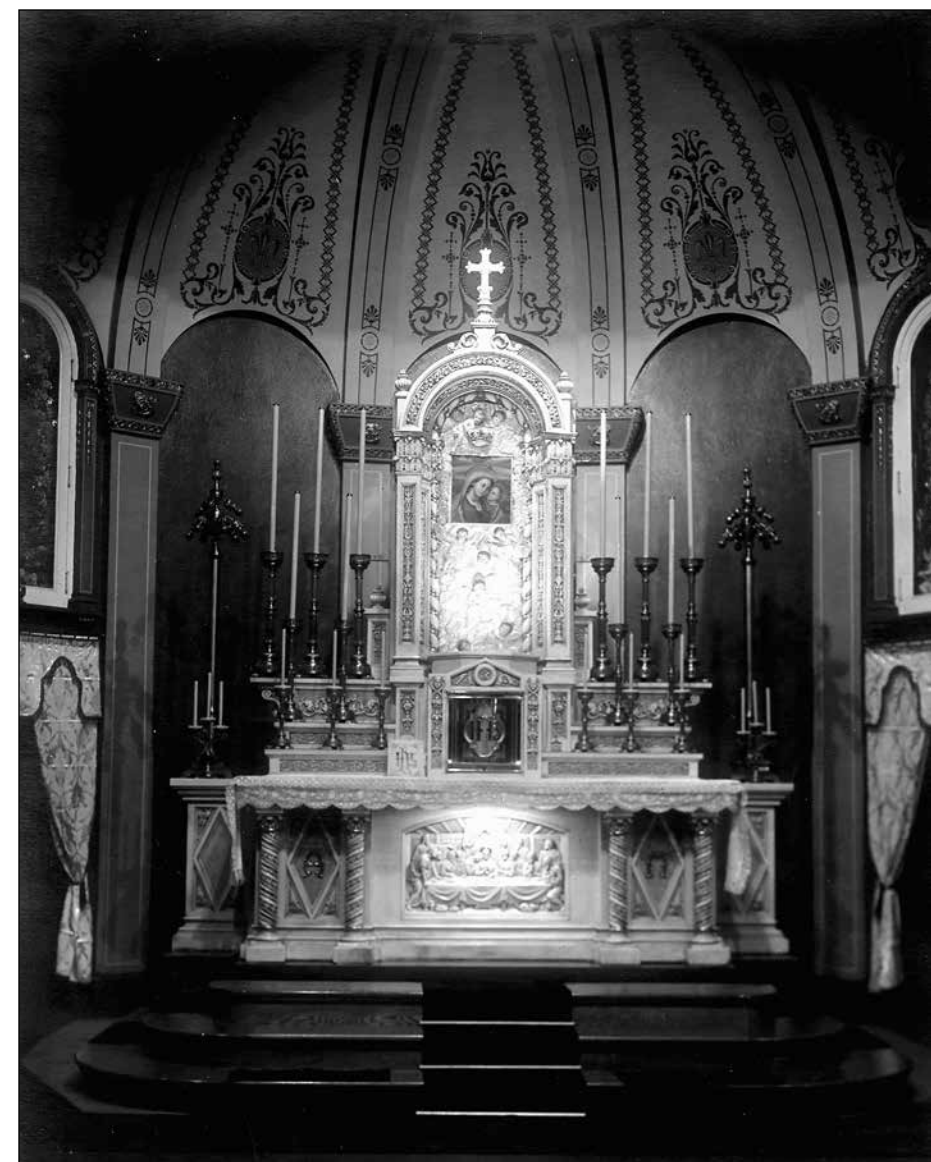
Soon the congregation of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish became overwhelming and an additional church building was sought, specifically for those settling below Washington Avenue. In early 1912, a suitable property became available. The Salem Evangelical Church at 9th & Watkins had been offered for sale to a Jewish congregation, but the deal fell through and the Augustinians were able to obtain it for only \$14,500, with the blessing of Archbishop Edmond Prendergast. On April 4th, an article in the *Evening Bulletin* lamented that "due to great changes in the character of the population in that neighborhood, the congregation of the Protestant church has dwindled", noting that the fleeing residents were being replaced by the new Italian Catholics.

The altar of Our Lady of Good Counsel, the first Italian Parish built by the Augustinians at 8th and Christian Streets, the parent church of the soon to be established mission of St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

The Augustinians sought a distinctive name for the church, and after some deliberation, it was dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, a 13th Century Augustinian, who was the first canonized saint of the Order and is venerated as the patron of the faithful departed. Father Giovanni Cerruti was put in charge at the age of 32.

On Sunday April 14, 1912 the church of St. Nicholas of Tolentine was officially dedicated with a lovely ceremony held at 3:00 PM. There was great joy among the people, as Italian religious and beneficial societies with brass bands and banners joined the celebration amidst a profusion of Italian and American flags and the children of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church singing hymns.

Sadly, the joyous mood changed that evening as word spread of an event that overshadowed the establishment of the new church – the luxury liner *Titanic* struck an iceberg only hours after the ceremony ended, and by the next morning it sunk, claiming over 1,500 lives. The Archdiocesan archives hold a page of



CATHOLICS BUY SALEM CHURCH

New Congregation of St. Nicholas
of Tolentine to Occupy Evangelical
House of Worship

AUGUSTINIANS IN CHARGE

Salem Evangelical Church, 9th st., below Morris, has been sold and will be dedicated as a place of Catholic worship on Low Sunday—a week after Easter. It will be known as the Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

The purchasers are the Brothers of the Hermits of St. Augustine, commonly called Augustinian Fathers, who are in charge of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Christian st., above 8th.

The sale was negotiated by Peter F. Kernan, real estate broker, the purchase price being \$14,500. This includes a three-story brick and brown stone rectory adjoining the church building, the price is regarded as low. The church property originally cost \$28,000. The lot is 70 by 70 feet. The church edifice, with an attractive gray granite turreted facade, has a frontage of 40 feet on 9th st., and a depth of 70 feet. It will accommodate about 400 persons.

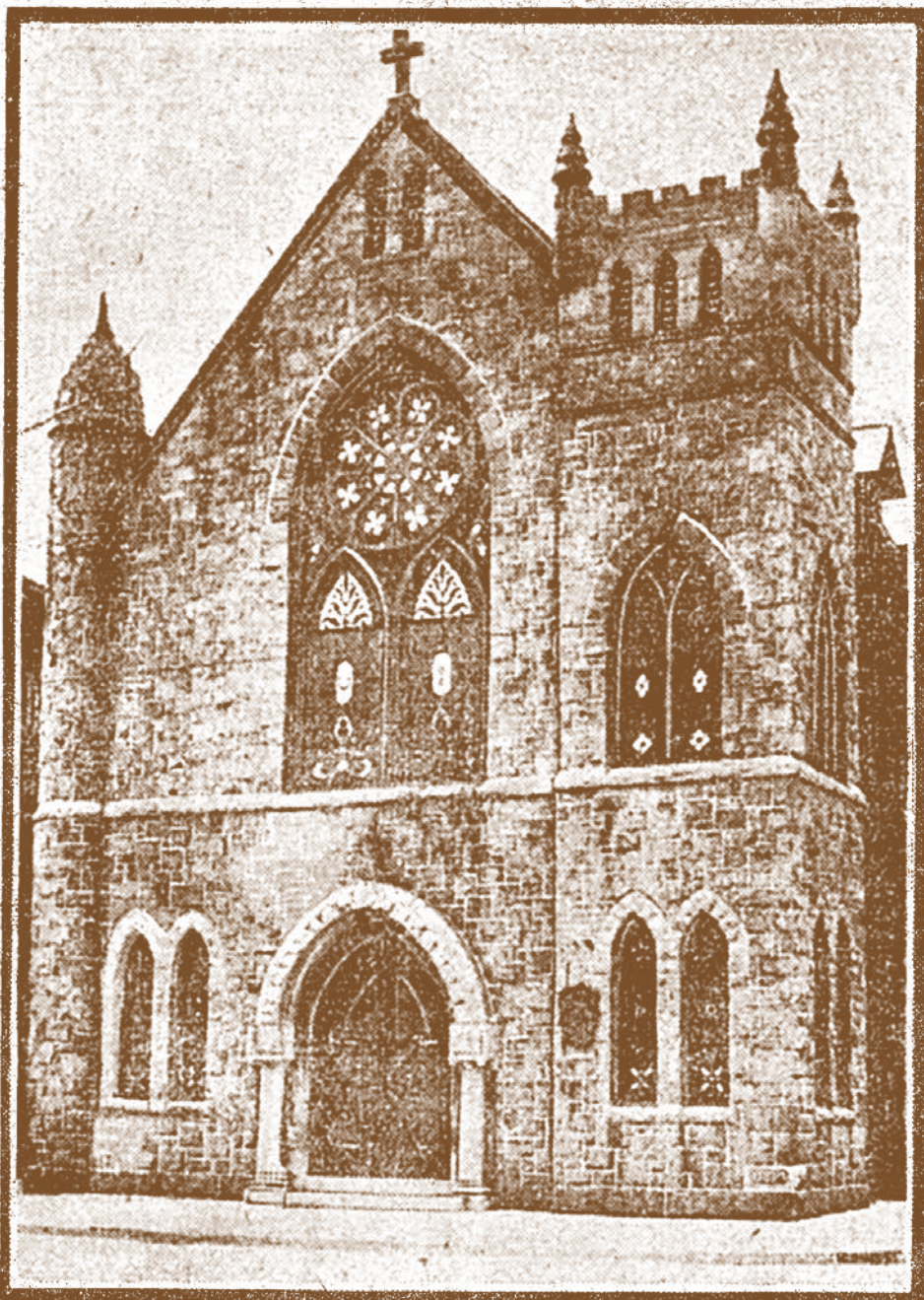
The congregation of Our Lady of Good Counsel is composed exclusively of Italians, and the new chapel to be opened under its direction will be for Catholics of the same nationality. Three Augustinian Fathers recently arrived at the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel from Rome, and will conduct a mission for the newly formed congregation. They are the Rev. Passidio Marabottini, the Rev. Ambrogio Colorito and the Rev. Antonio Bartolomei.

As the Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, the former Salem Church building will be dedicated Sunday, April 14, by the Very Rev. Martin J. Geraghty, O. S. A., provincial of the Augustinians. The ceremony will begin at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

The congregation of Salem Church has disbanded. For perhaps twenty years the members worshipped in the attractive edifice on S. 9th st., but owing to great changes in the character of the population in that neighborhood in later years, and the removal of older residents, the congregation disbanded.

The Rev. Charles H. Benseler was the last pastor. He had a sub-charge in Olney, where he now lives. The scattered members of the Salem Church, it is said, have joined other congregations of the Evangelical Association of North America in different parts of the city.

CHURCH PROPERTY WHICH HAS BEEN SOLD



SALEM EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Ninth st., below Morris, which has been purchased from the disbanded congregation by the Augustinian Fathers, and will be dedicated on Low Sunday as the Catholic Church of St. Nicholas, of Tolentino, for Italians.

SHOOTING STILL A MYSTERY

William Tribit Remains in Hospital,
and Housekeeper is Locked Up
in Media Jail

The condition of William Tribit, who

HALLAHAN'S

Children's

clippings from the week of April 14, 1912 with both a press release announcing the establishment of St. Nicholas of Tolentine and a copy of a letter from Archbishop Prendergast appealing for prayers for the victims of the disaster.

During its early years, St. Nicholas of Tolentine continued to serve as a mission church of Our Lady of Good Council, but its growth was vigorous nonetheless. During its first year, membership grew to 2,500 people and it established a Sunday school for the immigrant children – *Scuola Domenicale di San Nicolo*.

Father Alfonso Baldassarre carried on the work of Fr. Cerutti when the young priest became ill in 1914 and tragically died a few years later at the age of 39. Fr. Baldassarre proved to be a major figure in the history of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, serving for 12 years. His ambitious leadership helped the church develop and become a significant presence in South Philadelphia. With growth, came a need for a larger church, and Father Baldassarre responded. In 1916, the original chapel was demolished and work began on a new building. Masses took place in a house at 1720 South 9th Street, in which the first floor had been converted into a long hall. With no church to be had, wedding photos were taken in studios with a church image superimposed in the background.

Father Baldassarre's desire to build an important edifice led him to select an award-winning Italian architect, Nicholas Seraccino, who had studied in Naples and maintained an office on Broadway in New York City. Seraccino had recently completed two structures in Manhattan – The Church of the Sacred Hearts of Mary and Jesus, which bears a striking resemblance to St. Nicholas, and his masterpiece – the church of St. Jean Bapiste which stands at 72nd and Lexington in the upper east side and is considered the most significant Catholic Church building in New York, other than St. Patrick's Cathedral. Serracino's elegant and simple neo-classic design for St. Nicholas was quickly realized and the new church opened in one year.

The next major task was to address the need for a school. Fr. Baldassarre's 1922 Annual Report listed 1,006 baptisms and 185 weddings in a single year, so it was clear that a proper school was required. Cardinal Dennis Dougherty recognized this and wrote an impassioned

Vol. II.

Gennaio 1925

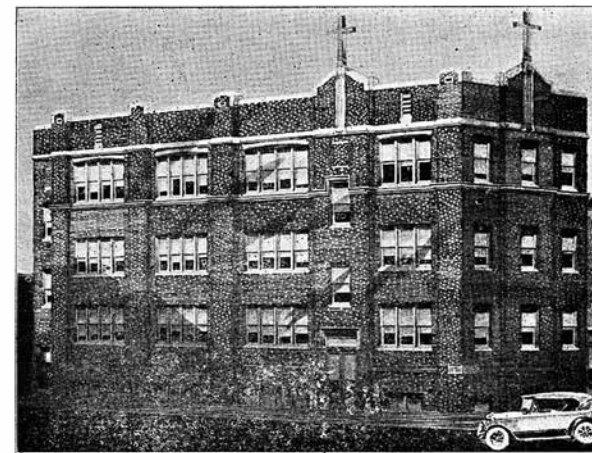
No.1.

Il Nostro Bollettino Parrocchiale

Chiesa di S. Nicola da Tolentino

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Residence 1718 So. 9th St. — Phone, Oregon 3115 W.



ST. NICHOLAS NEW ITALIAN PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

Now on Way of Construction in 9th & Pierce Sts.

In charge of the Augustinian Fathers

letter to the pastor urging him to proceed with the project, exclaiming that "the Italian children run the risk of falling into the hands of Protestant proselytizers."

Fr. Baldassarre developed plans that called for the purchase of land on the site of St. Mary's Cemetery at 10th & Moore Streets, but was told by the diocesan Consultors that Canon Law forbade construction that would disturb graves. Ironically, 30 years later, the same laws were overridden to accommodate the building of St. Maria Goretti High School. Nonetheless, a smaller lot at 9th and Pierce was chosen and the new school opened in September of 1925, staffed by the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis who would remain there for 26 years.

As St. Nicholas of Tolentine thrived, all was not well among the leaders of neighboring churches and the policy makers within the diocese. As early as 1926, the pastor of St. Mary Magdalen complained to Cardinal Dougherty that the Augustinians were keeping him in a state of "constant agitation" by their incursions into his parochial territory. Fr. Filippo Pambianco was now leading St. Nicholas and was known for his eloquent speaking, strong personality, and expressive pen. A series of

A pamphlet published in 1925, in Italian and English, announced the construction of the new school building.

CROWD ATTACKS POLICE DETAIL IN CHURCH DISPUTE

(Continued from the First Page)

tor, whose removal they are protesting, threatening bodily violence and exclaiming: "He left us last night, we don't want him back."

Although the Rev. Dr. Francis J. Furey, secretary to Cardinal Dougherty, in a statement, explained that changes planned are to the best interests of the parishioners in a changing community, the protestors have sent a cablegram to the Pope at Rome asking him to intervene.

Such protests, however, according to those versed in church law, cannot be carried direct to the Pope.

Manhandling of the policemen, including many high ranking officers, came on the heels of other exciting incidents which kept the parishioners on edge throughout the day.

Assistant Superintendent Taylor, Inspectors Rankin, Driscoll and two others; several police captains and a detail of patrolmen pushed through the gate, up the steps and into the church vestibule.

"Get out," shouted the crowd inside. Then, as those in the churchyard pressed from behind, others inside the church met the police officials in the vestibule and began to push them toward the exit.

About this time two mounted policemen rode up to the steps and cleared the path through which the officers and policemen inside made a hurried exit, swinging their club, but apparently not striking anybody, as they retreated. The gates then clanged shut and the police officials gathered outside to talk over future procedure.

WOMAN HITS MOUNTED POLICEMAN WITH ROPE IN CHURCH ROW



An angry parishioner of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, 816 Christian st., holding her baby in one arm and a coiled rope in the other hand to strike at police who forced their way into the church this afternoon. Some parishioners drove police out and slammed the churchyard gates.

■ An article in the Evening Bulletin on May 4, 1933 reported the protests of the Italian American Catholics in South Philadelphia upon the announcement of the closing of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish.

contentious letters illustrate the growing controversy surrounding the reach of Augustinian authority that was wielded from Good Counsel and St. Nicholas. The issue would not go away, even when Fr. Pambianco departed Philadelphia after being accused of writing a poem that was not complimentary of the Cardinal.

By the early 1930s, the Archdiocese recognized that the time had come to re-examine its strategy of ministering to Italian-speaking Catholics and to reign in the authority of the Italian priests. Cardinal Dougherty determined that the agreement granting exclusive pastoral care to the Augustinians had been made without the proper consent of the Consultors and should be abrogated. Further, it was decided that Our Lady of Good Counsel parish should close and its Italian-speaking parishioners be dispersed to other nearby churches. In the Cardinal's de-

sign, the parish, which had become highly symbolic of semi-autonomous ethnic identity, had to disappear. It was therefore ordered that the Italian priests and the canonical foundation of Good Counsel would formally be transferred to St. Nicholas of Tolentine. The decree was reluctantly accepted by the Augustinians.

The Archdiocese announced these plans on May 3, 1933 amid great dismay, protest, and rebellion by many in the Italian community. A huge public demonstration exploded on the streets of South Philadelphia, and by nightfall, a crowd of 1,500 people converged on the church. The crowd prevented the pastor, Fr. Aurelio Marini, and his assistants from leaving the rectory, ultimately holding the pastor under house arrest for months. As the protests continued, national and international help was sought. A delegation met in Washington, D.C. with the Italian Ambassador to the U.S., while others sent a cablegram to Pope Pius XI begging for his intervention. Despite these actions, Cardinal Dougherty stood firm, and Our Lady of Good Counsel was closed. The

action left a permanent scar on the local community and severely damaged their view of the Cardinal. When he arrived for Confirmation ceremonies at a nearby parish later that year, police were called to guard him from possible harm.

With all of this upheaval and sadness, many took comfort and pride in the expansion of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, finally declared an independent parish in 1932. In the next 2 years, membership grew from 900 families with 4,800 individuals, to 2,300 families and nearly 12,000 people. In the new parish, the people found a refuge from the storm of assimilation. It was a place where they could maintain the traditions they brought from their native land, particularly a dedication to their patron saints. Societies were established for dozens of Italian saints, each with a suitable statue, banner and feast day. These societies and their corresponding processions were a significant demonstration of faith for the people, and along with the distinguished organizations of the Sodality and the Holy Name, gave the parishioners a strong sense of place.

In 1933, Fr. Claudio Fabrizi was appointed pastor of what was now an official parish, and his long tenure and strong leadership steered the church into the modern era. During his 22 years at St. Nicholas, Fr. Fabrizi achieved much success. He liquidated an existing debt of more than \$200,000 early in his tenure while the Depression raged on; he expanded and updated the school building, built a new convent, and in 1951 secured the Religious Teachers Filippini to replace the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis. The Filippinis brought a great passion for education to the school. The first group of Sisters to arrive included many who would become revered and beloved figures in the parish. The Filippinis have remained a vital presence at St. Nicholas for over 60 years and their reputation for providing quality education is a great source of pride.

Fr. Fabrizi and his assistants of that era are well remembered and admired to this day by senior members of the parish. Names such as Fr. Anthony Cirami, Fr. John Positano, Fr. Ambrose Colorita, Fr. Joseph Toscani, and three future pastors – Fr. Peter Toscani, Fr. Louis Diorio, and Fr. Joseph Gattinella remind many of the great stewardship that St. Nicholas was blessed with over the years. The guidance of these priests helped the congregation cope with the difficult

times of the 1930s and 40s. During times of war the church provided solace and inspiration to keep the faith. Some parish priests served as chaplains in the armed forces, such as Fr. Cirami in World War II and Fr. Gattinella in the Korean Conflict. When World War II was coming to a close, a memorable Communion Breakfast was held to pray for 25 young men from St. Nicholas who died in the war. Their fathers were in attendance and were awarded gold certificates. Fr. Positano celebrated the Mass, and in honor of the fallen soldiers, led over 300 parishioners in procession to the Adelphia Hotel on Chestnut Street for the breakfast.

Fr. John was a popular figure and an accomplished musician who led a band prior to becoming a priest. After his ordination, he continued to play his clarinet at parish gatherings. His musical endeavors ranged from leading a St. Nicholas of Tolentine big band to sitting in with the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

The decade of the 1960s was a time of great change in the country and in the Catholic Church. Fr. Angelo Allegrini was appointed to lead the parish through these years and he served as pastor from 1961 to 1971. The decrees of the Second Vatican Council dramatically altered the day-to-day practices of the faithful. As Latin was replaced with the vernacular at Mass, St. Nicholas began to conduct services in English and Italian, and maintains a Sunday Italian Mass to this day.



■ The parish thrived in the 1930's and 40's under the stewardship of Fr. Claudio Fabrizi, seen here with the school class of 1938.

“
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The parish always placed a high priority on providing meaningful and beautiful liturgies, and has been blessed with the dedication of many talented priests and lay people. Fr. Stephen Bordi and Fr. Adolfo Toccafondi were notable in the area of church music. Fr. Bordi was an accomplished organist and artist, and Fr. Adolph composed a great deal of music that continues to be performed. Today, the parish choir and cantors provide inspirational music at the Masses and steadfast readers enthusiastically proclaim the word.

To accommodate the wide range of changes dictated by Vatican II, Fr. Allegrini decided that the church should be modernized, and in January 1964 he undertook a major renovation at a cost of over \$180,000. Many parishioners still remember attending Mass at the Savoia Theatre on Broad Street during the reconstruction. A few years later, the nation's baby boom produced such a large number of children in the parish that a new school was needed for additional classrooms. It opened in 1968 and Archbishop John Cardinal Krol came to bless the new building in a memorable ceremony.

During Fr. Allegrini's tenure and that of his successor, Fr. Joseph Gattinella, who returned to St. Nicholas as pastor in 1972, activities in the parish continued to thrive as many organizations remained active and the parish school became even more vibrant. During the 1960s and 70s some faithful priests from an earlier era returned as assistants: familiar faces like Fr. Diorio and Fr. Pete were joined by Fr. Eugene Zega from Italy and Fr. Cherubim Formosa Kerr from Malta. Another important part of the parish fabric during this time was Boy Scout Troop 248. Many dedicated parishioners worked with the scouts and developed a proud tradition.

In 1977 a young parishioner named Nicholas Martorano was ordained into the Augustinian order. Fr. Nick initially served the Augustinians at their prep school in Vineland, NJ but ultimately

returned as pastor of St. Nicholas in 1984. As a native son, Father Martorano recognized the unique assets that his parish possessed – the strong commitment, enthusiastic spirit, and deep faith of its members. During his long tenure, he has embodied this resilience and determination and has kept the parish on a firm footing. He has been a committed leader through difficult times, enlivening the parish liturgies and the celebration of the sacraments, providing innovative religious and social programs, and enhancing the reputation of the school.

In 1987, on the occasion of St. Nicholas of Tolentine's 75th anniversary, Fr. Nick reinstituted a parish procession. The annual event has grown over the past 25 years into a renowned day-long festival that celebrates church traditions and authentic Italian culture – in many ways reflecting the very history of the parish itself and proudly displaying it for all to see.

St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church has not only survived over one hundred years, but has thrived as a beacon in South Philadelphia, striking the right tone – a strong desire to evolve and move forward in the face of modern challenges while staying true to the faith and ever mindful of its distinctive ethnic roots. The motto of the parish's centennial “Faith, Family and Tradition” is drawn from its own specific ancestry, but the sentiment speaks to all Christian people – serve the Lord in every aspect of your life – internally and externally, at home and in the world outside, in word and in deed, reverently and boisterously, in spirit and in song, and whenever possible – with food!

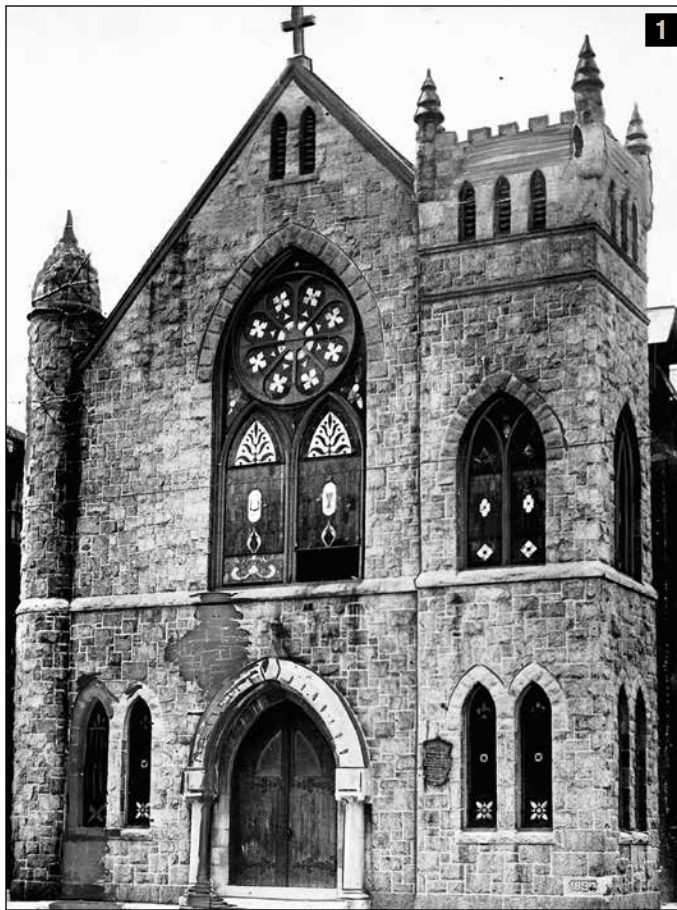
This account was assembled by Peter Spina based on research and essays by Rev. George DeMarco, O.S.A. (*Saint Nicholas of Tolentine 75th Anniversary*), Rev. Michael DiGregorio, O.S.A. (*The Italian Augustinians in Philadelphia*), and Dr. Richard Juliani (*St. Nicholas of Tolentine and the Italian Catholic Experience in South Philadelphia*).

■ **Opposite Page: (Top)** There was much growth in the parish and the school during the 1960s, as evidence by this 1968 photo of First Holy Communion children. **(Bottom)** Pastor Fr. Nick and Principal Sr. Mary Esther welcomed parish friend Bishop Louis DeSimone for confirmation ceremonies in 2008.



[1] The Old Salem Church was purchased in 1912 and served as the first building of Saint Nicholas of Tolentine [2] Architectural rendering of the new church building designed in 1916 [3] Newspaper clipping announcing

establishment of Saint Nicholas [4] Newspapers reported the sinking of the *Titanic* which occurred on the same day the church was consecrated [5] The new church was still being built during the 1916 wedding of Alessandro and Lucia Marconi so an appropriate setting was created in the photographer's studio [6] Altar servers John and Jack Milano in 1917



1

ITALIAN CHURCH DEDICATED

Old Salem Evangelical Structure Now Catholic House of Worship.

In the presence of several thousand persons the new Italian Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, at Ninth and Morris streets, was yesterday afternoon dedicated by Rev. Michael Geraghty, O. S. A., provincial of the Augustinian Fathers. The ceremonies opened with a procession of the various Italian Catholic societies, who marched from the neighboring churches with brass bands and banners, bearing figures of the Blessed Virgin.

Father Geraghty passed through the building blessing the walls with the prescribed liturgy. He was attended by about fifty members of the clergy. A number of hymns were sung in Italian by the children of the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Eighth and Christian streets. Two sermons were delivered, the first in English by Father Geraghty and the second in Italian by Rev. P. Morabottini, O. S. A., who has recently come from Rome to work among the Italians here.

Among the clergy who were present were Rev. J. Bartolozzi, of Our Lady of Good Counsel, O. S. A.; Rev. T. Ambrosia, O. S. A., of Rome, and Rev. J. J. Mundeani, O. S. A., of St. Vincent's, Germantown.

The new Church of St. Nicola was formerly the Salem Evangelical Church. It was purchased a few weeks ago by the Augustinian Fathers because of the large number of Italian Catholics in the neighborhood. The parish will not be distinctive, but will be a mission under the care of Rev. J. Bartolozzi, prior of the Augustinian House of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The property consists of a lot 70 feet by 70 feet, a substantial granite church with a frontage of feet on Ninth street, and an adjacent house, which will be used later as a rectory. The original price of the property was \$28,000.

The Church has a seating capacity of 400, but will in time be enlarged. It is probable that the former rectory will be used temporarily as a parish school.

The congregation of the Salem Lutheran Church became scattered because of the change in population in the section during the last ten years, and the last pastor of the church, Rev. Charles H. Beuseler, is now residing in Olney, where recently he became an assistant

3



2

REV. A. BALDASSARRE, RECTOR. N. SERRACINO, ARCHITECT, 1170 BROADWAY, N. Y. C. CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLENTINO, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

"All the News That's Fit to Print."

Vol. LXXI, No. 14,946

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 1912. PRICE: 10 CENTS

THE NEW YORK TIMES

4

TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG; 866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH; ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE, NOTED NAMES MISSING

Col. Astor and Bride, Isidor Straus and Wife, and Maj. Butt Aboard.

"WOLF OF SEA" FOLLOWED

Women and Children Put Overboard and Not Supposed to be Safe on Carpathia.

PERISHED AFTER 8 HOURS

Vertical List of Deaths of Women and Children.

FRANKLIN WRECKED, ALL DIED

Wreckage of the liner scattered 10 miles west of Newfoundland.

DEATHS OF THE LOST LINER

A BRILLIANT SIGHT (THE SHIP) AS SIGHTED BY THE CARPATHIA

The ship was seen by the Carpathia at 10:30 P.M. on April 14. It was a large ship, with four funnels, and was seen to be in distress. The Carpathia went to the rescue and found the ship on April 15 at 1:00 A.M. The ship was found to be a wreck, with the bow and stern visible above water. The Carpathia rescued 866 people, but the ship sank with 1250 people on board.

Biggest Liner Plunges to the Bottom at 2:20 A.M.

DEADENED THEIR TOO LATE

Except to Pick Up the Few Stragglers Who Were in the Lifeboats.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

Carpathia Carrying Bodies to New York with the Survivors.

SEA SEARCH FOR DECEASED

The Carpathia Starts at 10:30 A.M. on April 15, with the Bodies of the Dead.

DEATHS OF THE LOST LINER

Only 1000 of the 2200 People on Board Were Rescued.

THE LOST TITANIC BEING TOWED OUT OF BELFAST HARBOR.



5



6



S. NICOLA — Gruppo di Ragazzi della Scuola Domenicale





1

ANNUAL REPORT

2

OF THE
St. Nicholas of Tolentino CHURCH
1715 So. 9th St. Philadelphia Pa. (CITY OR TOWN)

RELIGIOUS STATISTICS

Number of Baptisms:—Children . . .	1004	Adults . . .	2	Total	1006
When was Confirmation last Administered? September 29th 1921					
Number of Persons Confirmed:—Children . . .	365	Adults . . .	33	Total	398
Number of First Communions:—Children . . .		Adults . . .		Total	180
Number of Adults who failed to comply with the Easter Precept					
Number of Marriages:—Catholic		Mixed		Total	185
Number of Children in Parochial School:—Boys		Girls		Total	
Number of Children attending Public School:—Boys 600 Girls 690				Total	1290
Number of Converts received during the year					

CONFRATERNITIES:

Name	St. Nicholas	Number of Members	300
"	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	"	200
"	Children of Mary	"	80
"	Sacred Heart	"	304
"	Guardian Angels	"	185
"	St. Cecilia Club	"	45
		Total	4173

BENEFICIAL SOCIETIES:

Name	St. Vincent de Paul	Number of Members	9
"	"	"	
"	"	"	
"	"	"	
"	"	"	
"	"	"	
		Total	

Catholic Population . . . about . . . 7500



3



Chiesa di San Nicola

1718 So. 9th Street

ORARIO DELLE FUNZIONI SACRE

DOMENICHE

Messe, 7-8-9-10-11. Dopo la messa delle 9 ci sarà il Catechismo insegnato da 4 Suore.
Catechismo, 2.30 p. m.

GIORNI FERIALE

Messa, 8 a. m.

CONFESSIONI

Sabato e giorni precedenti le Feste dalle 3.30 alle 6; dalle 8 alle 10 p. m.

GIORNI DI COMUNIONE

Prima Domenica, Società di S. Cecilia alle 8.
Seconda domenica, Congrega del Carmine alle 8.

BATTESIMI

Domenica, 12 e 4 p. m.
Giorni Feriali, in orario da convenirsi.

MATRIMONI

Prima del matrimonio è necessario munirsi della Licenza Civile e avvisarne il Parroco almeno tre settimane prima per le necessarie pubblicazioni. La Confessione e Comunione è necessaria per ricevere degnamente questo grande Sacramento. Il Matrimonio contratto innanzi ad un ministro protestante è invalido e sacrilego.

MALATI

In caso di grave malattia si chiami subito il Sacerdote, sia di giorno che di notte. Tutti procurino di tenere nella casa il Crocifisso, l'acquasanta e la candela benedetta.

FUNERALI

Messa bassa, 8 a. m. - Messa cantata o solenne, 9 a. m.

DIVIZIONI

1. Ogni martedì alle 7.30 p. m. Benedizione col SS. Sacramento in onore di S. Antonio da Padova.
2. Ogni Mercoledì alle 7.30 p. m. Benedizione col SS. Sacramento in onore di Santa Rita.
3. Ogni Venerdì, alle 7.30 p. m. Benedizione col SS. Sacramento in onore di S. Nicola da Tolentino, Protettore delle Anime Sante del Purgatorio.

Vicino alla Chiesa vi è l'Asilo Infantile ch'è frequentato attualmente da più di 40 bambini.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE

SUNDAYS

Masses, 7-8-9-10-11. After 9 o'clock mass-Sunday School for which there are 4 Sister.
Sunday School, 2.30 p. m.

WEEK DAYS

Low Mass, 8. a. m.

CONFESSIONS

Saturday and days before Holy Days, from 3.30 to 6; from 8 to 10 p. m.

COMMUNION DAYS

First Sunday, Society of St. Cecilia at 8 o'clock.
Second Sunday, Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, at 8 o'clock.

DEVOTIONS

Every Tuesday evening at 7.30 o'clock there will be Benediction with the Holy Sacrament in honor of St. Anthony of Padova.

Every Wednesday evening at 7.30 o'clock there will be Benediction with the Holy Sacrament in honor of St. Rita of Cascia.

Every Friday evening at 7.30 o'clock there will be Benediction with the Holy Sacrament in honor of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, Protector of the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

Near Church there is a Nursery in which now there are more than 40 children.

L'UNICO STUDIO FOTOGRAFICO D'AMERICA PREMIATO ALLA ESPOSIZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DI TORINO E IL PROSSIMO NATALE

Avvicinandosi le feste di Natale, è dovere di ogni buon Italiano ricordarsi dei suoi parenti amici, vicini o lontani, mandando loro, per l'occasione, un gradito ricordo.

Uno dei migliori ricordi, senza dubbio, è la fotografia: averne una buona, con gusto, arte ed eleganza, bisogna recarsi all'unico Studio Fotografico d'America, testè premiato all'Esposizione Internazionale di Torino cioè il Verna Art Photo Studio, 806 Christian St., che per tale occasione farà prezzi e lavori speciali.

Ricordiamo che gli impiegati del suddetto Studio sono tutti Italiani, e che qualsiasi lavoro è accompagnato da piena soddisfazione del cliente e dalla massima garanzia del direttore e proprietario Sig. Severino Verna. Per comodità della vasta clientela, detto Studio è aperto tutti i giorni, comprese le Domeniche, ed altri giorni festivi, dalle 8 di mattina alle 9 di sera. In esso si lavora tanto di giorno che di notte, avendo apparati elettrici di primissima qualità.

CORNERSTONE LAID FOR \$100,000 SCHOOL

AUG 24 1925
Great Crowd Attends Celebration of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish

VARE AND POMMER SPEAK

Church Societies Parade; Funds Collected by House-to-House Canvass.

The new school building of St. Nicholas of Tolentine parish, at Ninth and Pierce streets, was the scene of colorful exercises yesterday afternoon when the cornerstone was laid by Rev. Nicholas J. Vasey, rector of Our Mother of Consolation Church, Chestnut Hill, in the presence of nearly 2000 persons.

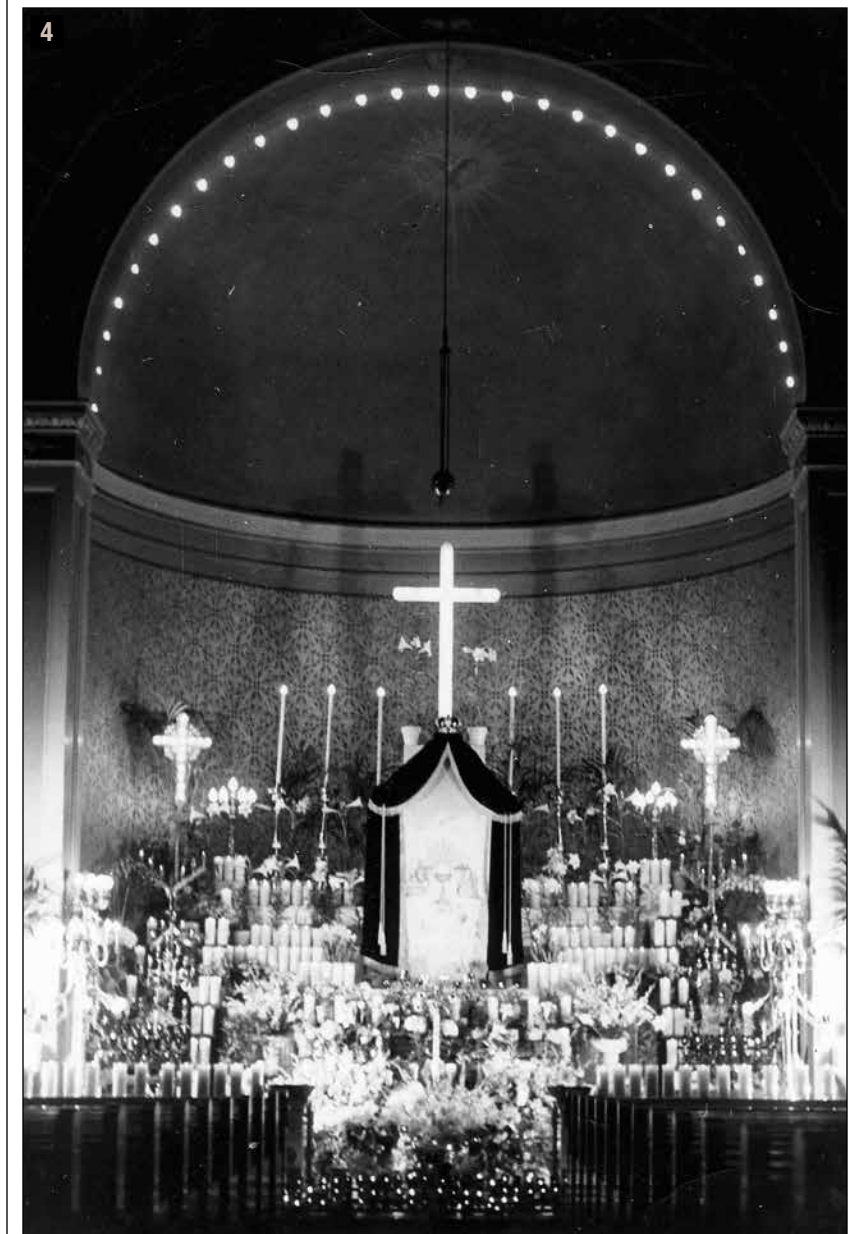
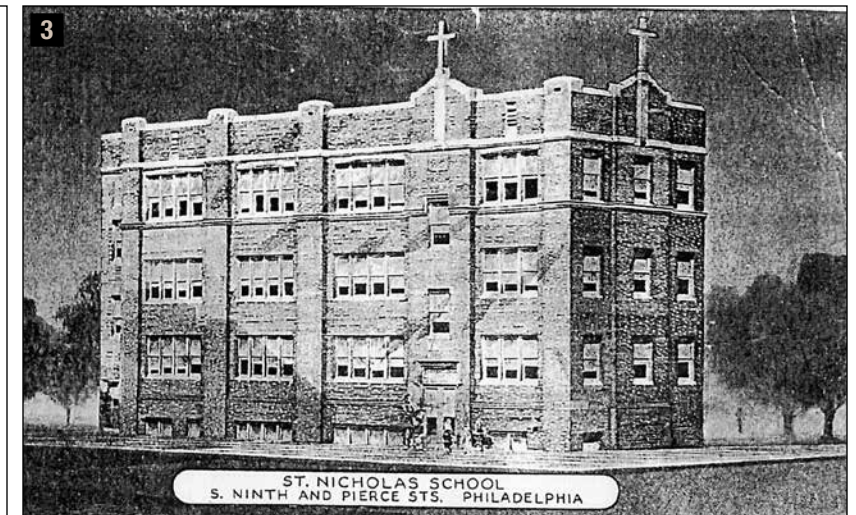
Preceding the laying of the parade with three bands and hundred parishioners in line marched through the neighboring streets which were gayly decorated with United States and Italian flags. The school, which is in an Italian parish, is nearing completion at a cost of \$100,000, raised by a house-to-house canvass throughout the parish. Rev. Alphonse Baldassarre is rector of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church, Ninth and Morris streets.

Father Vasey was assisted by Rev. Thomas J. Hurton, rector of the Church of the Annunciation, Tenth and Dickinson streets, and the sermon was delivered by Rev. William J. Lallou, rector of St. Philip Neri's Church, Germantown. Among other priests who took part in the exercises were Rev. L. M. Spirali, of St. Rita's Church, Broad and Ellsworth streets and Rev. Aurelio Ciantor and Rev. Ambrogio Colorito, assistant rectors at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church.

Congressman William S. Vare extolled the spirit of the people whose contributions have made the erection of the building possible and described his recent visit to Pope Pius in Rome. Henry Di Bernardino, a prominent parishioner, spoke in Italian and Councilman Charles J. Pommer, leader of the first ward in which the school is located, acted as chairman and made brief remarks. C. C. A. Baldi was noted in the throng busily engaged operating a miniature motion picture camera.

The school, which, it is expected, will be ready for use early in the fall, will be in charge of the Order of St. Augustine, of which Father Vasey is the local head. Anthony Schiavo was chairman of the committee which conducted the campaign for funds and was assisted by Father Ciantor, Peter Romagano, Joseph Perri and Frank Pinto. The building is three stories high and of yellow brick with terra cotta facings. Its dimensions are 111 by 32 feet. Benediction was held

2



THE ITALIAN AUGUSTINIANS IN PHILADELPHIA

By Fr. Michael Di Gregorio, OSA

1897 THE REQUEST

Archbishop Sebastiano Martinelli, O.S.A., Apostolic Delegate to the United States, responds to Philadelphia's Archbishop Patrick Ryan's request for Italian priests to minister to the tens of thousands of Italian immigrants arriving in Philadelphia. Archbishop Martinelli notes in his official register that Fathers Guglielmo Repetti and Angelo Caruso along with Brother Bernardino Falconi were to begin the mission and administer the new parish in Philadelphia that was to be established for the Italian people.

The Prior General names 27-year-old Father Caruso, from Avellino in southern Italy, as the superior of the new foundation; Father Repetti, 25 years old, from Genoa in the north, as pastor; and Brother Bernardino, at 36, the senior friar of the pioneer group, from Florence, as their assistant. The choice of friars from distinct geographical regions of Italy is likely made in a conscious effort to address some of the difficulties experienced by the new immigrants, most of whom are from southern parts of Italy, and who do not feel welcome at the only Italian parish in the city, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi.

1898 THE AUGUSTINIANS' FIRST PARISH

The formal inauguration of the parish of Nostra Signora del Buon Consiglio (Our Lady of Good Counsel) takes place. The friars purchase the former school building of Saint Paul's Parish at 816 Christian Street for \$25,000 and refit it to house the church, the parish office, classrooms, and a small friary.

1899 THE BIRTH OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CHURCH

Archbishop Martinelli blesses the cornerstone of the renovated building of Buon Consiglio and a month later a cross is raised atop the structure. Tragedy befalls the mission with the sudden death of Father Repetti on August 2, 1899. The pastor is one of the many victims of typhoid fever that strikes various parts of the city. Within six weeks, another friar, Father Agostino Cogliani, arrives from Italy, while Father Caruso assumes the pastorate. Archbishop Ryan blesses the church on November 26, 1899, with Archbishop Martinelli in attendance.

1901 GOOD COUNSEL'S PARISH SCHOOL

Father Caruso sees the need for a parish school and outfits rooms in the same building, the parish's only structure. The school opens with 320 pupils in six grades on September 8, 1901 in the presence of Archbishop Martinelli, who had contributed to its establishment both with moral support and financial assistance. In 1902, a second floor of the building is similarly equipped, so that there are now 12 classrooms for the 847 pupils. The Missionary Sisters of St. Francis from Peekskill, New York, are brought in to administer the school and to teach. The classes are, as Father Caruso had decided (and not without controversy), conducted both in English and Italian.

1906 1907 A SECOND REQUEST

Archbishop Diomedede Falconio writes to Archbishop Ryan in 1906 urging him to provide an additional church for the Italians who continue to arrive in great numbers. The following year, 1907, Saint Rita of Cascia is founded as a 'mixed parish' serving both Italian and non-Italian parishioners living on the west side of Broad Street. It, too, is entrusted to the Augustinians, but to the American Province of St. Thomas of Villanova rather than to the Italian friars.

1912 THE BIRTH OF ST. NICHOLAS OF TOLentino CHURCH

In succeeding years, the Italian population of South Philadelphia begins to shift, extending farther south in the city due to the extremely crowded conditions in the vicinity of Buon Consiglio. The friars see the need now to follow their people, as many find it difficult to travel to the Italian church for Mass and the sacraments, or simply choose not to do so. In February, 1912, the Augustinians purchase a former Protestant Church at 9th and Watkins to serve as a mission chapel for the mother church. It is dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, a 13th-century Augustinian, who was the first canonized saint of the Order and is venerated as the special patron of the faithful departed.

1925 ADDITIONAL PARISHES ADDED TO THE AUGUSTINIAN VICE-PROVINCE

The Prior General, Eustasio Esteban, establishes the two communities at Buon Consiglio and St. Nicholas of Tolentino as a Vice-Province of the Order. Father Nicholas Vasey is named Commissary General, but on a temporary basis. When Father Marini succeeds him in this position in 1928, a new period of growth begins as additional parishes are accepted under the direction of the Vice-Province: two in East Vineland, New Jersey with their four attendant missions and, in 1931, another in Dobbs Ferry, New York.

1932 THE CLOSING OF OUR 1933 LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

On November 24, 1932, Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia, with the agreement of the Augustinian officials in Rome, transfers the canonical foundation from Buon Consiglio to Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, thus moving the focus of the Italian Augustinian mission. In 1933, the parish of Nostra Signora del Buon Consiglio is officially closed by Cardinal Dougherty, to the great dismay, protests, and rebellion of many in the Italian community.

THE PASTORS

From 1898 to 1933, a total of 40 friars came from abroad to work among the Italian immigrants, 29 of them from Italy and 11 from Malta and Spain. But even after Buon Consiglio closed, 15 more friars came to staff the other houses that had grown from the first foundation of the Italian mission on Christian Street in Philadelphia, not to mention the native-born Italian Americans who began entering the Vice-Province in the 1930s.

THE PASTORS OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

Fr. Guglielmo Repetti (1897-1899)
Fr. Angelo Caruso (1899-1911)
Fr. Agostino Bonanni (1911-1912)
Fr. Daniele Scalabrella (1912-1914)
Fr. Tommaso Terlizzi (1914-1919)
Fr. Aurelio Marini (1920-1933)

OUR PASTORS

1912–PRESENT



Rev. Giovanni Cerruti, O.S.A.
1912-1914 (2 years)
(b. 1880 – d.1919)



Rev. Alfonso Baldassarre, O.S.A.
1914-1926 (12 years)
(b. 1867 – d. 1929)



Rev. Filippo Pambianco, O.S.A.
1926-1927 (1 year)
(b. 1879 – d. 1952)



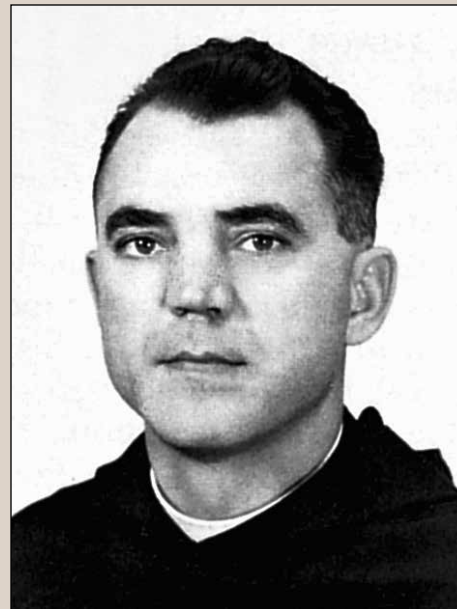
Rev. Eugenio Fiteni, O.S.A.
1927-1928 (1 year)
(b. 1884 – d. 1966)



Rev. Lorenzo Andolfi O.S.A.
1928-1933 (5 years)
(b. 1888 – d. 1962)



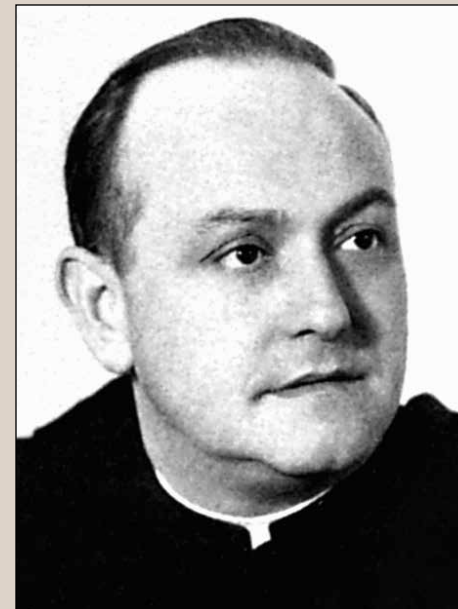
Rev. Claudio Fabrizi, O.S.A
1933-1955 (22 years)
(b. 1904 – d. 1970)



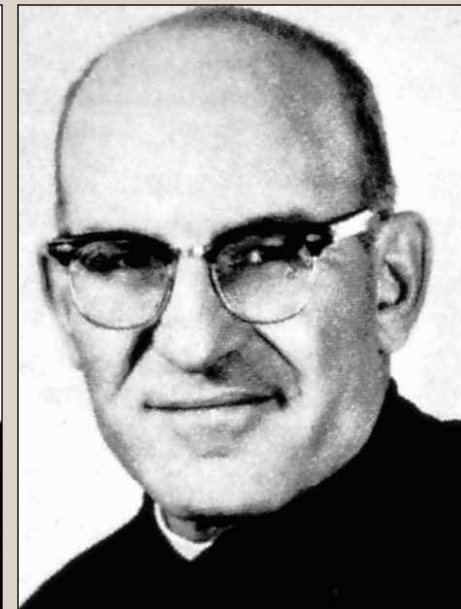
Rev. Peter Toscani, O.S.A.
1955-1958 (3 years)
(b. 1921 – d. 2001)



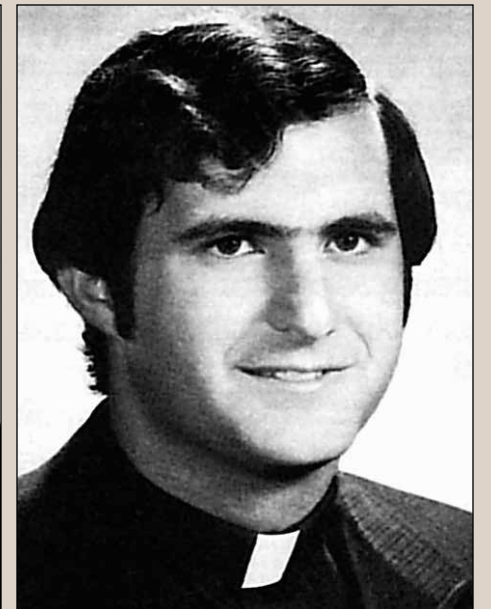
Rev. Louis Diorio, O.S.A.
1958-1961 (3 years)
(b. 1907 – d.1987)



Rev. Angelo Allegrini, O.S.A.
1961-1971 (10 years)
(b. 1920 – 1972)



Rev. Joseph Gattinella, O.S.A.
1971-1984 (13 years)
(b. 1917 – d.1987)

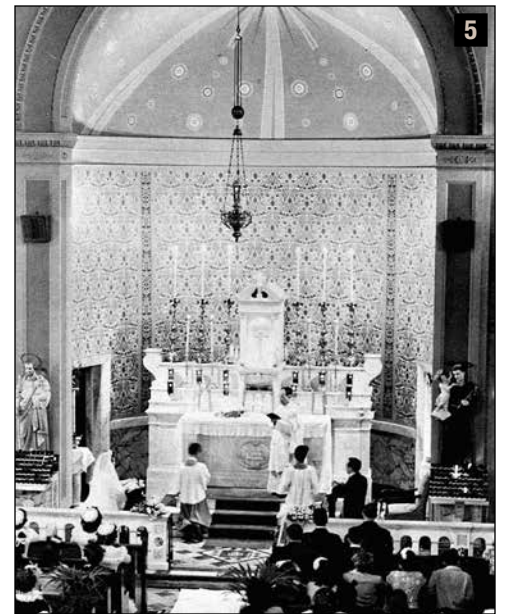


Rev. Nicholas Martorano, O.S.A.
1984-Present (28 years)
(b. 1950)

1933–1944

[1] Fr. John Positano Playing Clarinet in a Jazz Orchestra in 1933 Prior to Entering Priesthood [2] 1933 First Holy Communion at St Nicholas

Temistocle Spina [3] 1942 Communion Breakfast [4] 1941 wedding [5] Wedding Mass 1945 [6] School Class of 1943 [7] Fr. Cirami served as Army chaplain during World War II and is seen here with parish service members [8] Madonna de la Catena Society 1944



HEROES' MEMORIES HONORED

Gold Certificates Given 25 Fathers at Communion Breakfast

Gold certificates awarded in memory of their sons killed in the war were presented to 25 fathers of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church yesterday at the third annual military-Communion breakfast of the Holy Name Society at the Adelphia Hotel. JUL 9 - 1945 F.

Twenty-one overseas veterans were guests. After Mass, which was celebrated by the Rev. John M. Positano, O. S. A., 300 members marched from 9th and Watkins sts. to the hotel.

Speakers included the Rev. John J. McKenna, archdiocesan Holy Name director; Francis J. Burke, society president; Captain Bartolomeo A. Passanante, wounded Army flier, recently retired, and Americus V. Cortese, an assistant district attorney.





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Priest Leads Dance Band

Father John Positano of Philadelphia leads a dance band, a unit of his troupe of entertainers. The troupe includes 60 of his talented parishioners at St. Nicholas of Tolentine church. The group is busy entertaining servicemen and hospitalized veterans. Father Positano played the clarinet in Will Osborne's orchestra before entering the priesthood.



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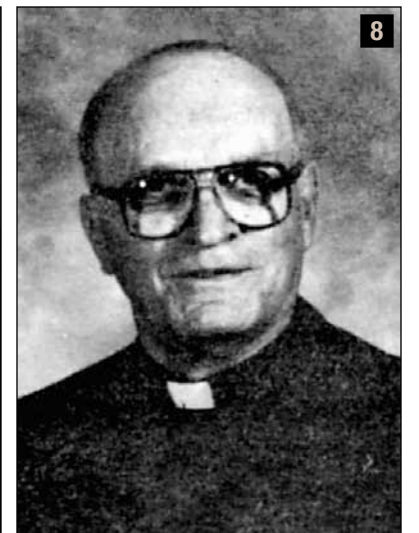
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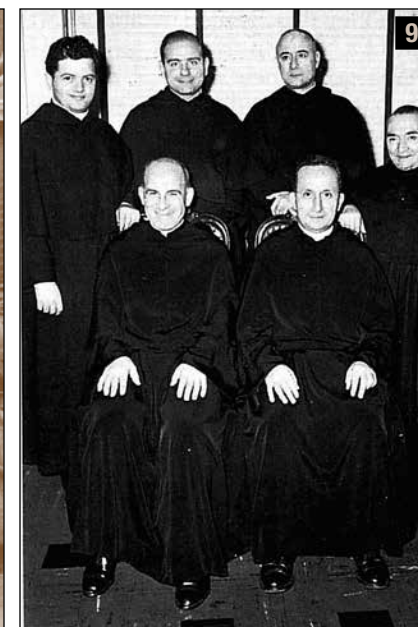
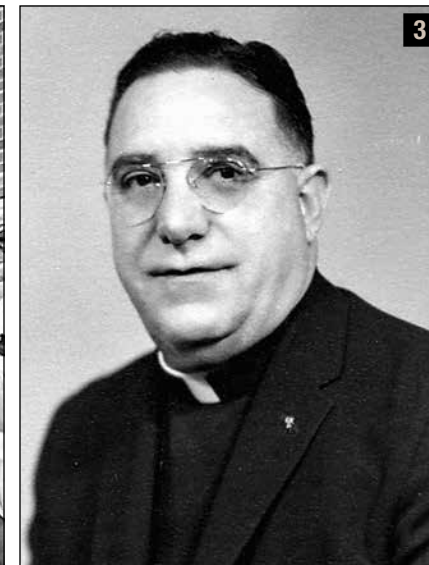
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AT DEDICATION OF NEW ST. NICHOLAS CONVENT



THE MOST REV. ENGELBERT EBERHARD, Prior General of the Augustinian Fathers for the entire world, is seen here (at left, wearing cope) just after the completion of the ceremonies of dedication of the new convent for St. Nicholas of Tolentine parish, 9th and Watkins sts., Philadelphia. Father Eberhard is speaking with the Rev. Claudio Fabrizi, O.S.A., pastor of St. Nicholas' Church, and members of the Religious Sisters Filippini, who teach in the parish school and will reside in the new convent. The sisters in white habits are Canonesses of St. Augustine, who conduct the parish nursery for pre-school children of working mothers. The dedication took place on Sunday, July 11. Attending the ceremonies were the Very Rev. Joseph M. Dougherty, O.S.A., provincial of the Eastern Province of the Augustinian Fathers, and the Very Rev. Francis X. Roth, O.S.A., vice-provincial of the German Province. Father Fabrizi plans to use the site of the former convent for the construction of a new school wing to accommodate increased enrollment for the 1954-55 school year. (Photo by ROBERT S. HALVEY)



THE PARISH SCHOOL

The impact of the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis and the Religious Teachers Filippini has spanned our entire history. These sisters, accompanied by lay teachers and staff, have imparted the Catholic values our children need.



The Fillipini Sisters who arrived at St Nicholas in September 1951 were (back) Sr Florence Rinaldi, Sr Josephine Schimizzi, Sr Grace Scordo, Sr Elsa Donato (front) Sr Mary Rose Del Bonis, Mother Columbina Musi, Sr Amelia Musi, Sr Rose Scarfa.

In 1923, Fr. Alfonso Baldassarre placed before the Archdiocese the need to build a school for the children of his congregation. His wanted to purchase land a block away from the church, but it was the site of St. Mary's Cemetery, and it would have meant disturbing the remains of those buried there. Instead, in 1924, construction began on a parish school at 9th and Pierce Streets. The finished school was three stories in height with 12 classrooms and expected to cost \$90,000. In September 1925, the new school opened and was staffed by the Missionary Sisters of St. Francis. By the late 1940s, Fr. Fabrizi wanted to purchase property adjacent to the school to provide space for a schoolyard so that the parish children would have a safe place to play. Fr. Fabrizi had first sought to achieve this objective in 1947, but deferred his plan as owners of the properties raised their selling prices. After five years of intermittent negotiations, Archbishop John O'Hara granted permission in 1952 for the purchase of the properties on Pierce Street to expand the parish school and provide a playground.

Shortly before that, in 1951, Fr. Fabrizi secured the Religious Teachers Filippini to replace the Sisters of St. Francis and staff the school. In May 1955, Fr. Peter J. Toscani received permission to purchase nearby property for the construction of an annex to the parish school, and in 1958, Cardinal O'Hara authorized Fr. Toscani to go ahead with the plan, at a cost of \$80,000.

In 1968, Fr. Angelo Allegrini built an additional school across the street which doubled the amount of classrooms available for students of the "baby boom" generation.

From 1951 to 2012 the Religious Teachers Filippini and a dedicated lay faculty staffed the school. These teachers had an enormous, positive influence on generations of parishioners. The quality of education they delivered has been of the highest caliber and the Catholic values they have instilled have been immeasurable. In 2012 our parish school merged with Annunciation Parish School to form St. Anthony of Padua Regional School. Once again, the Filippini Sisters and lay teachers accepted the challenge to serve the new institution, and faithfully serve the children of South Philadelphia.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1968

REVIEW (EAST) 23

New School Dedication On March 6

St. Nicholas' School dedication will take place on Wednesday, March 6 at 3:45 p.m. His Eminence, John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, will officiate.

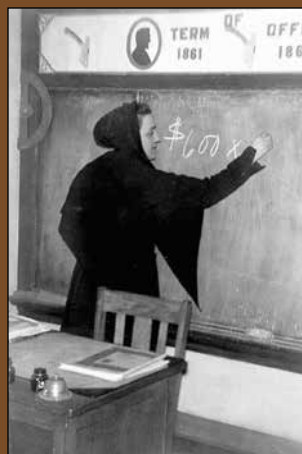
The new building will serve as

an annex to the present St. Nicholas School. The cost of the building was \$400,000. A parish campaign was organized to raise these funds.

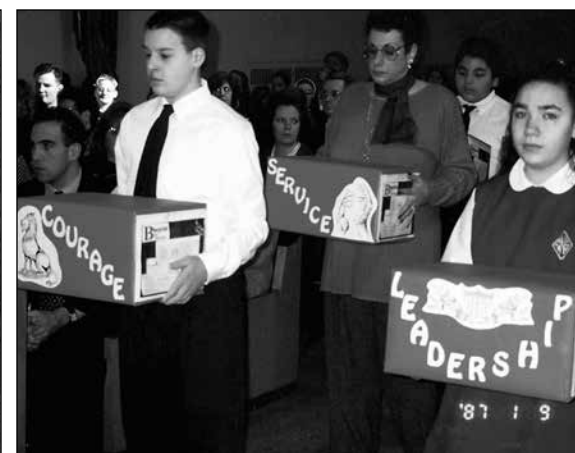
The new building, designed by South Philadelphia architect, John Sabatino, was constructed by the Albert Prossack, Co. The building has eight classrooms, doctor's clinic, auxiliary offices, and contains a parish social hall.

It is located on Pierce St., between 9 and 10th. st, opposite to the existing building. The present school enrollment is 1,000 pupils. The new building will be able to accommodate about 300 additional students.

The Very Rev. Angelo M. Allegrini, O.S.A., Pastor of St. Nicholas Church, organized the fund raising campaign, which is still in progress, to build the school. Under his direction this added facility of more space was built.



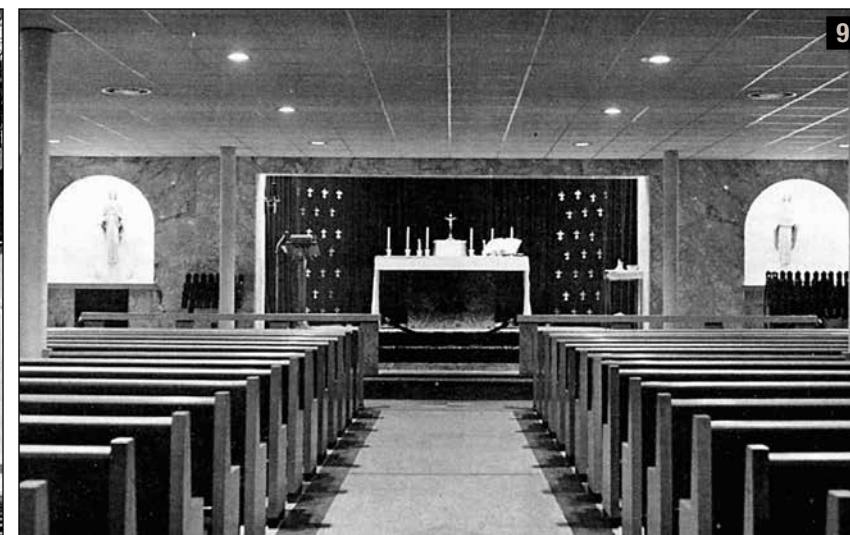
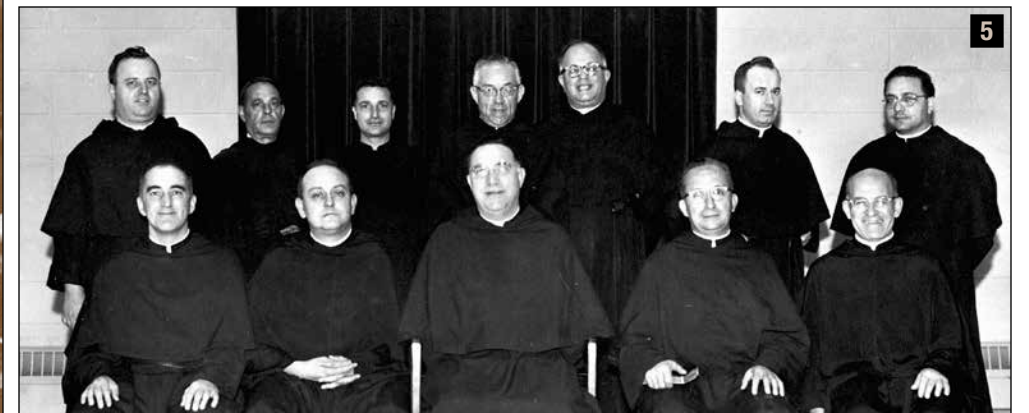
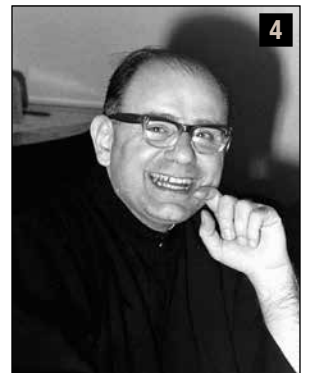
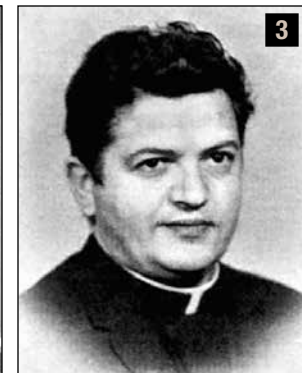
			<p align="center">Saint Nicholas School Philadelphia, Pa.</p> <p align="center">Class of June 1971</p> <div> </div>						



1962—1967

[1-2] May Crowning 1962 [3] Fr Stephen Bordi [4] Br Jude [5] Augustinians of the Vice Province in 1964 [6] Fillipini Sisters in 1962 [7] Parish Dinner in

1965 with Frs Pete & Joe Toscani, Fr Gattinella and Fr Allegrini [8] Newly renovated upper church [9] Newly renovated lower church [10] Christ the King Procession 1967



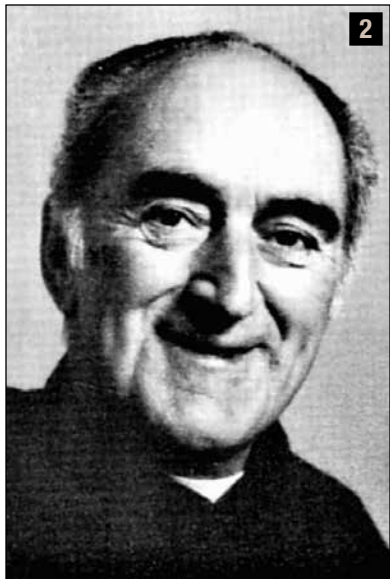
1967—1968

[1] Fr Adolph Toccafondi [2] Fr Joseph Toscani [3-5] A large number of Augustinians gathered in 1967 to celebrate the 25th Jubilee of Fr Adolph

Toccafondi [6] Fr Vincent Altimare [7] Parish Choir on Holy Saturday 1967 [8] Church ushers in 1967 [9] 1968 school assembly [10] 1968 ordination of Fr Vince



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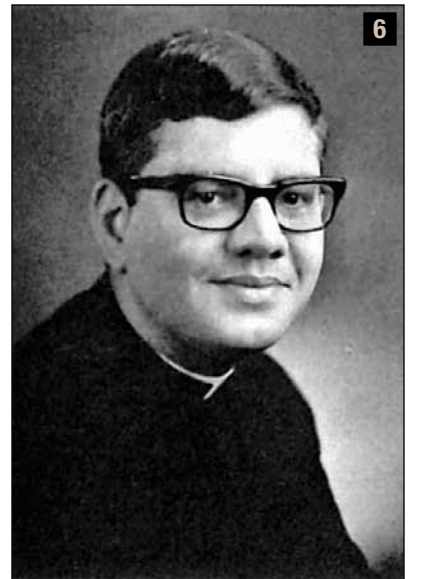
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THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1968

Cardinal Dedicates New School Annex

On Wednesday, March 6th, at 3:45 p.m., John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, dedicated the new school annex of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, located at 9th and Pierce sts.

The ceremony, including the laying of the cornerstone, was witnessed by at least two thousand people. On the same afternoon Cardinal Krol conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on 275 children of the parish.

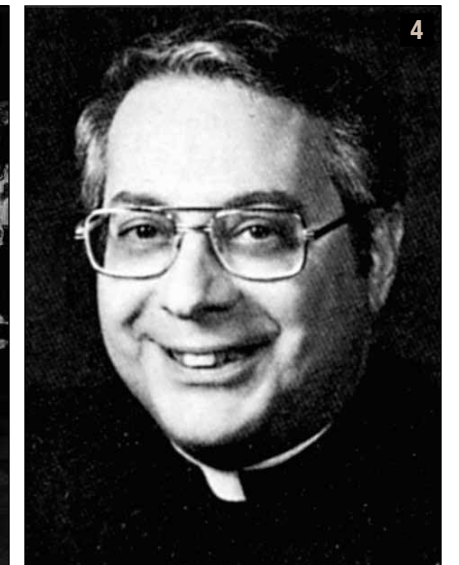
The school annex will accommodate 400 children. The present enrollment of St. Nicholas School is one thousand. The school annex, built at a cost of \$400,000, features eight classrooms, a large auditorium, a doctor's clinic, and a library.

It was designed by the architectural firm of John Sabatini Associates and was built by Albert Prossack Construction Company. The Very Rev. Angelo M. Alleg-



DEDICATION — John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, is seen helping to lay cornerstone as he dedicated new school for annex for St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish on March 6.

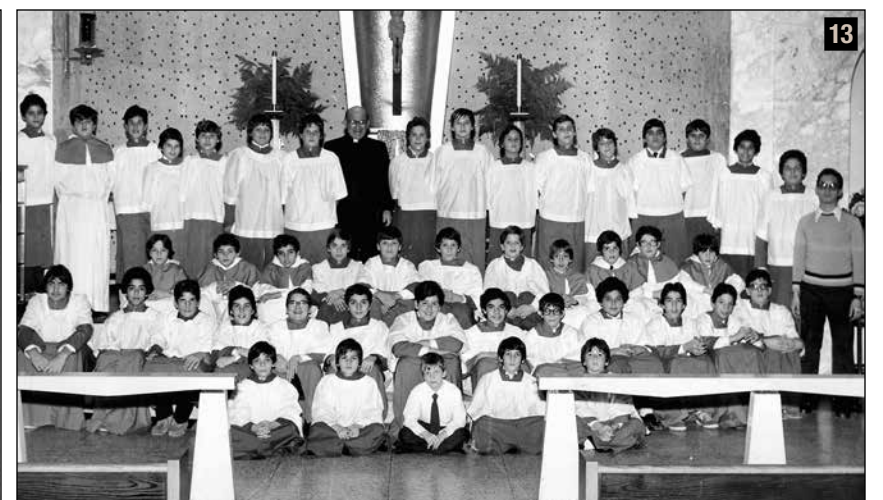
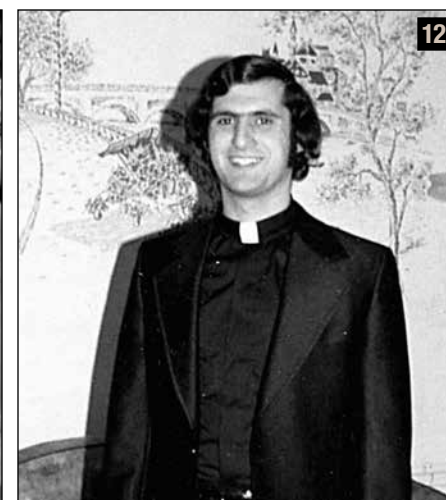
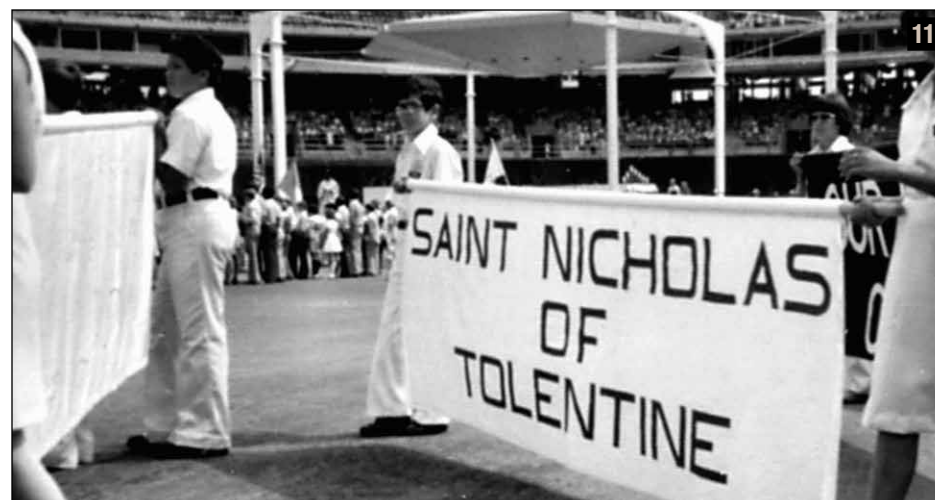
Photo by A. C. Evangelista



1972—1984

[1] Holy Name Society Dinner 1972 [2] Fr Larry Clark [3] Student concert 1972 [4] Class of 1973 [5] Boy Scout events were often accompanied by the local Fife and Drum Corps [6] Fr Allegrini Funeral Mass

[7] 1973 guitar Mass [8] Mass for the school in 1973 [9] Ushers in 1973 [10] Sr Marie led the school children on a visit to Mayor Frank Rizzo's office in 1975 [11] In 1976 Saint Nicholas was represented at the Eucharistic Congress held in Philadelphia [12] In 1977 Fr Nick Martorano was ordained [13] Pastor Gattinella with altar boys in 1978



THE ITALIAN FESTIVAL



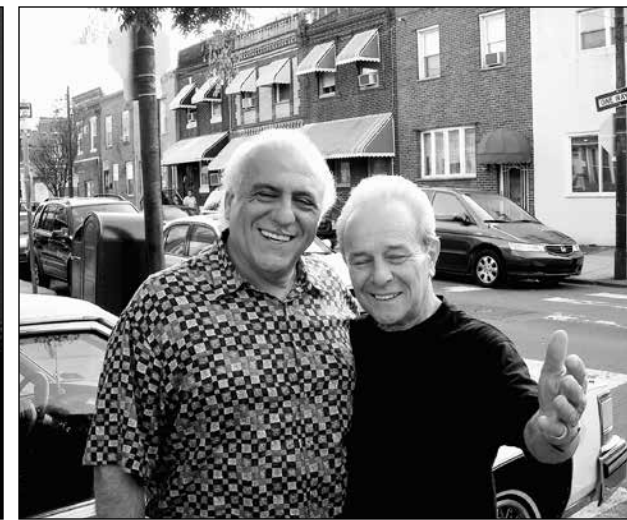
“
a colossal
festival
that celebrates
both the
congregation's
Catholic
devotion
and Italian
heritage
”

In 1987, on the occasion of the parish's 75th Anniversary, Fr. Nick Mar torano re-established the tradition of the Procession of the Saints and has conducted this powerful witness of faith every year since. The procession has been led every year by the legendary Verdi Band, an Italian marching unit that was established in the Philadelphia area in 1920. In the last decade, Saints Nicholas of Tolentine, Padre Pio, and Gianna Beretta Molla have been honored in the procession through the streets.

Through the efforts of a committee of dedi- cated volunteers, involved families and com- munity sponsors, the event has developed into a colossal festival that celebrates both the congregation's Catholic devotion and Italian heritage.

Over the years, the Festival has earned a rep- utation for featuring authentic Italian cuisine, great entertainment and a wonderful spirit en- joyed by the entire community of South Phila- delphia.

Entertainers at the festival have included The Four Aces, Charlie Gracie, Joe Piscopo, Ray Gelato, Billy Ruth, Frank Tenaglia, Nick Desid- erio, Mary Mancini, The City Rhythm Orchestra and many others.

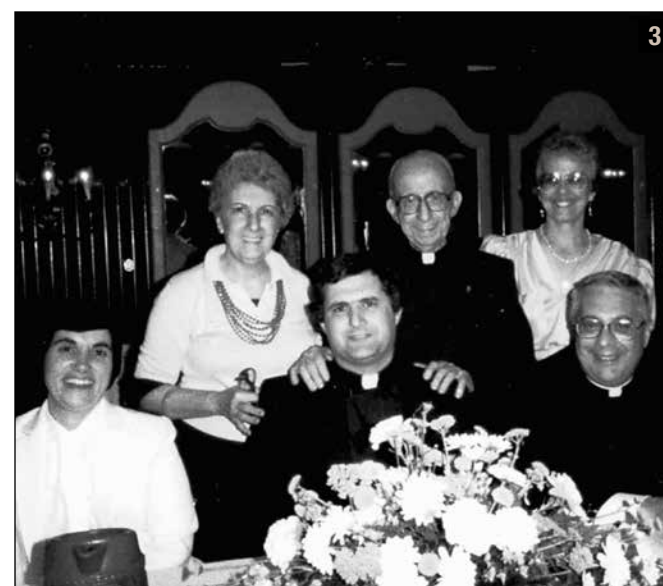
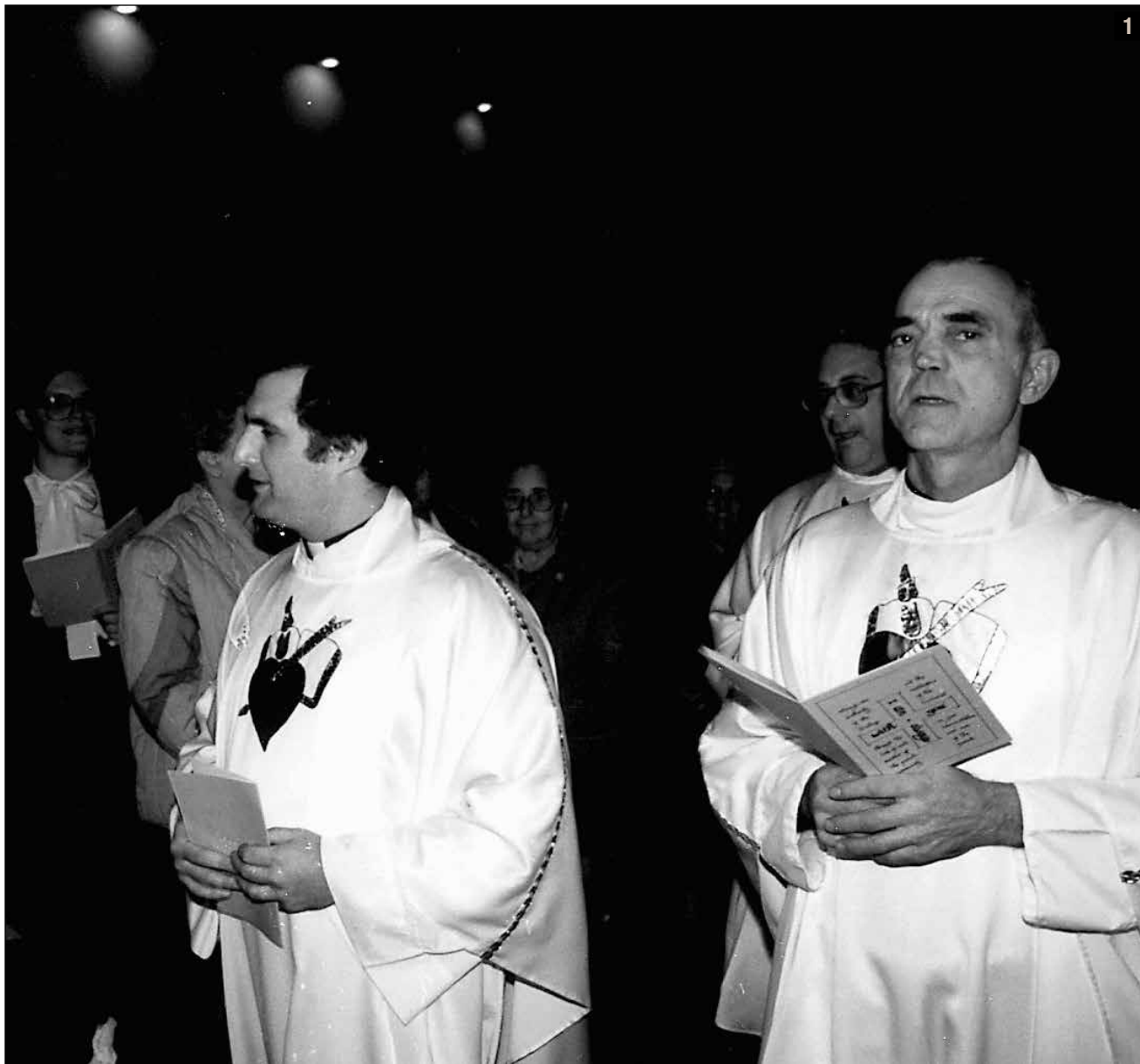


THE ITALIAN FESTIVAL



THE ITALIAN FESTIVAL

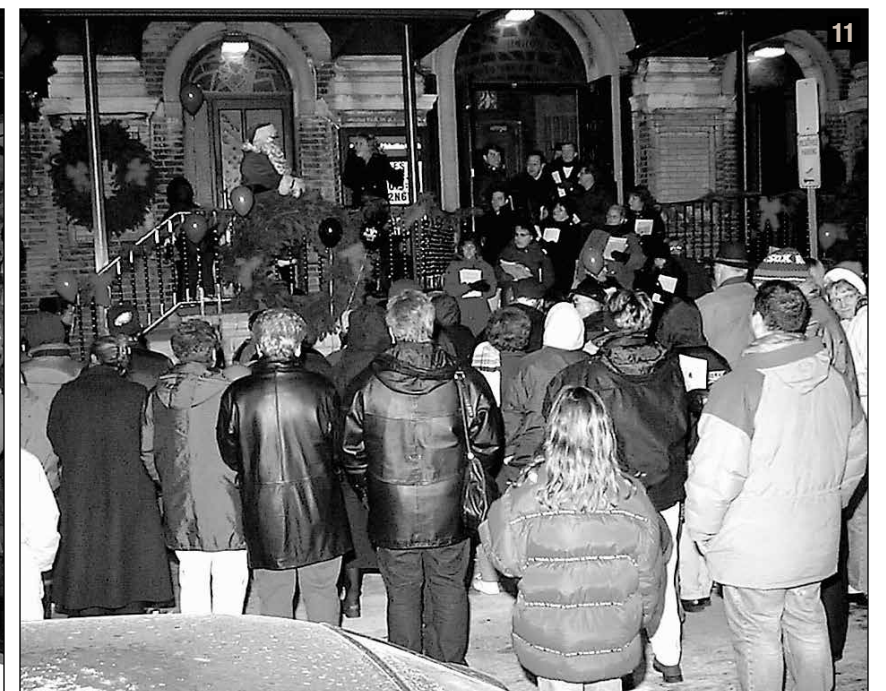
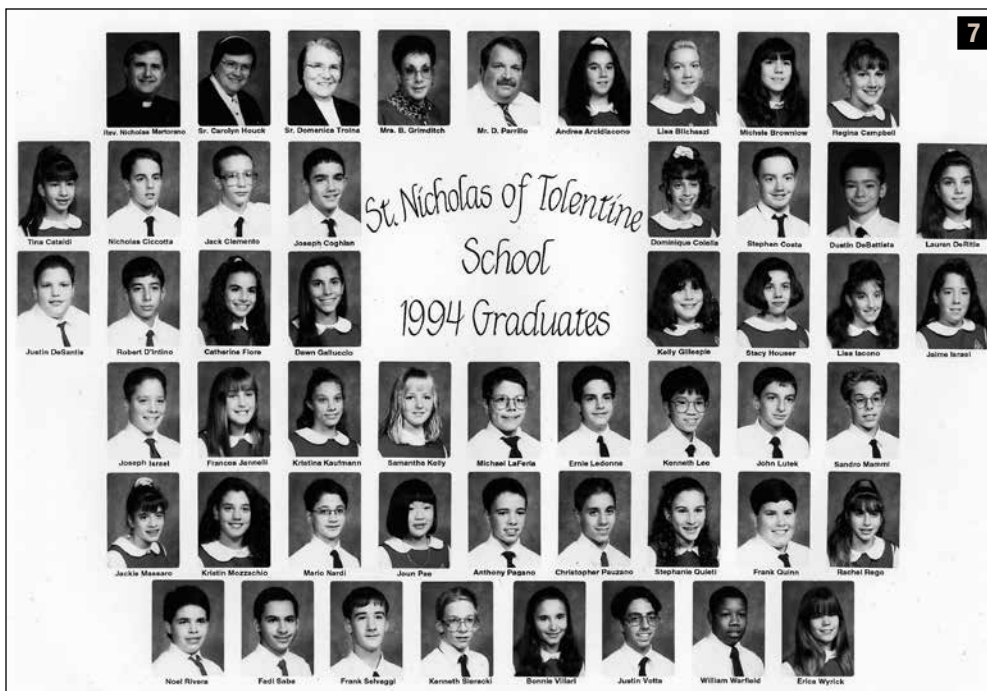
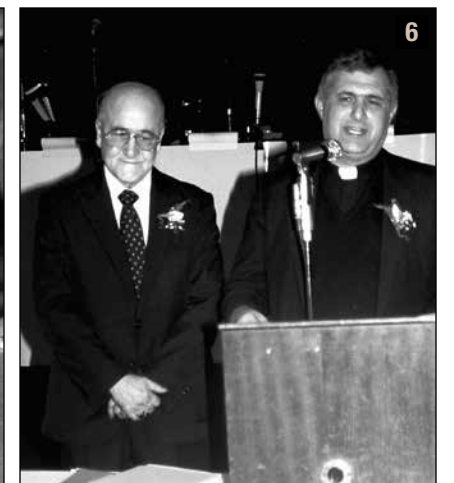
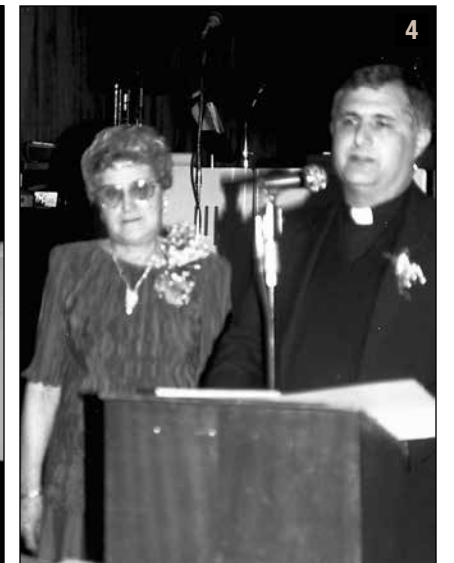
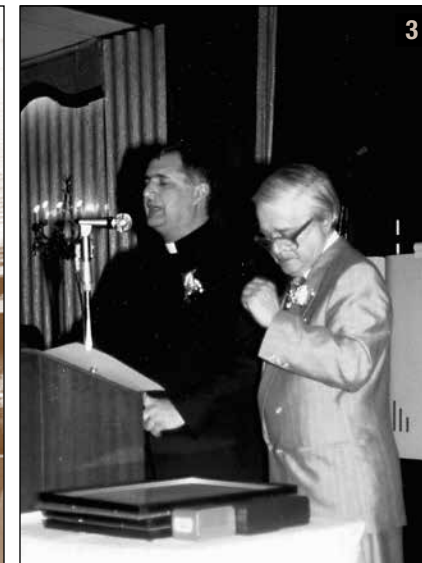




1988—1997

[1] 1988 confirmation [2] In 1991 the parish choir sang the National Anthem at Veterans Stadium [3] In 1992 the parish celebrated its 80th Anniversary and honored 4 parishioners with the St Nicholas Award

including Bill DeTore [4] Jennie Panvini [5] Dr Anthony Jannelli [6] Lou Nardini [7] Class of 1994 [8-9] The altar at Christmas [10-11] Christmas caroling on the church steps has been a great tradition at St Nicholas



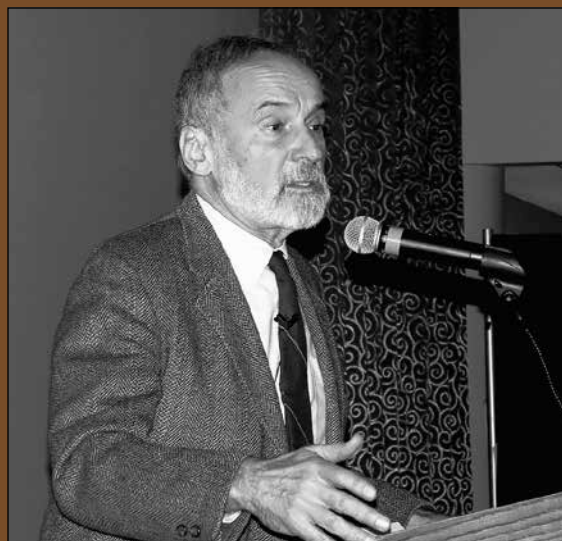
1998—2011

[1-2] The Altar at Easter [3] The Golden Age Club [4] 1999 altar servers
[5] Italian Festival 2007 [6-7] The procession for Corpus Christie
[8] 2008 First Holy Communion [9] Fr Nick and Fr John [10] Fr Nick and

Fr John were honored by the Pro Life Union of S.E. Pennsylvania with the Pro Life Award [11-12] Fr Nick's Silver Jubilee [13] 2009 Confirmation
[14] Fr Nick, Fr John and Fr Jim celebrating St Nicholas Feast Day



The history of St. Nicholas of Tolentine provides an important lesson for all of us who seek to understand how the past can become the prologue for the future.



by Dr. Richard Juliani
(excerpted from *The Italian Catholic Experience*)

After its first 100 years, St. Nicholas of Tolentine's persistence clearly demonstrates one outcome of the attempt to deal with the "Italian Problem." Of the 23 parishes established as national parishes, it is one of only two left in the city of Philadelphia, and a consistent and enduring reminder of that model. In fact, while its comparable parishes have almost entirely disappeared or been transformed beyond any recognition of their origins, it has not only survived, but thrives as a center of faith and community. Now as it celebrates its past rooted in its origins as a humble mission, it also marks its present viability as a parish. Although it has not always had a smooth history, St. Nick's shows that the national parish was more than a temporary solution, destined to pass away as Americanization transformed its people and assimilation absorbed them into a larger American culture and its society. St. Nick's has shown that it could survive, even be stronger than it was in earlier times.

Many factors contributed to the longevity and success of St. Nicholas of Tolentine. For one, it has been blessed with a stable population in the neighborhood; a congregation that sought (and still wants) a church that has retained a traditional cultural character. It also has had creative leadership that has brought faith to the parishioners in a continually meaningful manner. But its success serves to clarify other issues as well. What is a national parish—in this case, founded for newly arrived Italians, when it is no longer an immigrant church as it was in its earlier years, but serves a congregation now mainly consisting of third- and fourth-generation Italian Americans? What role does it play not only in preserving their religious faith but in conveying their ethnic identity and culture in the wake of their assimilation as Americans? What the future holds must remain uncertain. If we learn from the past, we can only believe that St. Nicholas of Tolentine can look forward to a future in which it will not only still serve its people, but continue to celebrate their faith, culture, and community. In reaching this occasion, perhaps the only remaining point is to use the popular Italian phrase to salute the past century as well as to wish another 100 years of success to St. Nicholas of Tolentine as a parish, home, and haven for its people: "Cent' Anni!"

Read Dr. Juliani's entire essay on the parish website: www.stnicksphila.com



Centennial Inaugural Event! January 22nd Communion Luncheon
Solemn Mass 11:00 AM & Luncheon Immediately Following with Guest Speaker Dr. Richard Juliani
The IATSE Ballroom, Swanson & Ritner Streets, Philadelphia

Friday, May 18th Italian Traditions!
Book Signing
Cooking Demo & Tasting
Entertainment
Meet Author & Broadcaster **Lorraine Ranalli** as she discusses her humorous narrative about Italian-American culture "Gravy Wars".
Then enjoy a cooking demo & tasting with chefs **Maria di Marco** (Mamma Maria's) and **Roberta Adamo** (Penne Restaurant).
Plus music & folk dancing with **Vivace!**

Friday, June 22nd Experience the Journey to America
Day Trip to New York City
Ellis Island, the Tenement Museum, Plus Dinner in Little Italy
Includes all Admissions, Dinner and Bus Ride

Monday July 23rd Phillies
Phillies vs. Brewers
Italian Heritage Celebration
Citizens Bank Park - 7:05 PM
Group Seats \$30

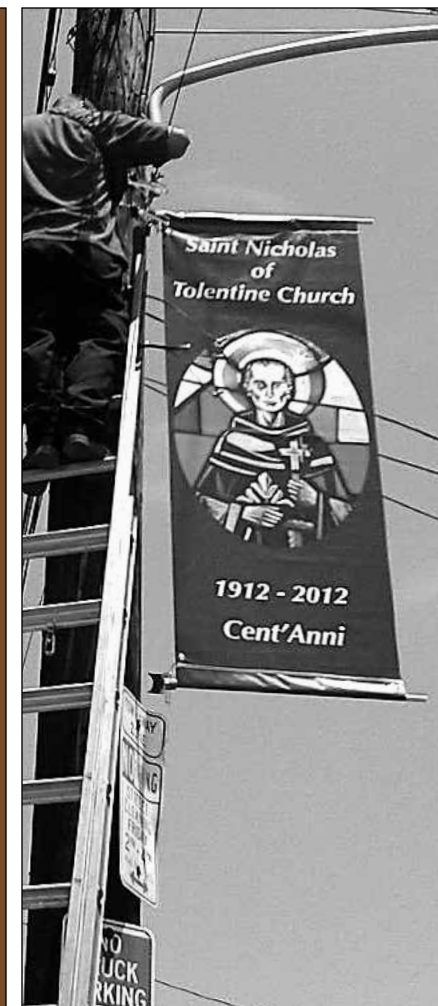
Tridium for Feast of St. Nicholas of Tolentine, September 10th-12th, 7PM
Three Nights of Mass and Reflection with guest homilist

Friday, September 28th Musical Extravaganza!
Amore: The Story of Italian American Song
Hosted by Author **Mark Rotella**
A stellar show with tributes to Mario Lanza, Frank Sinatra, Louis Prima & more! Starring the **City Rhythm Orchestra, Billy Ruth, Marc Antonelli, and Ray Gelato!**
Neumann-Goretti Auditorium
10th & Moore Streets, 7:30 PM
Tickets \$20

Sunday, October 7th 25th Annual Procession and Italian Festival
Noon to 9 PM

Friday, November 9th Jerry Blavat Dance Party
EOM Hall, Front & Moore St.
7:00 PM Tickets \$40

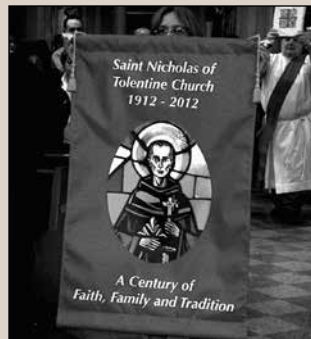
Closing of Centennial Year, Sunday, December 2nd
Mass of Thanksgiving at 11:00 AM



COMMUNION BREAKFAST

(January 22nd)

Our Centennial Year began with a beautiful Mass and Communion Breakfast with over 300 parishioners attending. Keynote Speaker Dr. Richard Juliani set the tone for the year-long celebration by sharing his research on Italian immigration and the Catholic Church's ministering to the new Philadelphia arrivals.



JERRY BLAVAT DANCE PARTY

(February 18th)

Jerry Blavat hosted a successful fundraiser in a fun night of dancing and socializing; a large parish turnout enthusiastically greeted South Philly's own "Geator with the Heater."

ITALIAN MOVIE NIGHT

(March 11th)

An evening of short films was combined with a fun Quizzo-style trivia contest on Italian-American movies.

THE JOURNEY TO AMERICA

(June 22nd)

A trip to New York retraced the steps of the Italian immigrants as parishioners visited Ellis Island and the New York Tenant Museum, ending with dinner in Little Italy.

ITALIAN HERITAGE NIGHT AT THE PHILLIES

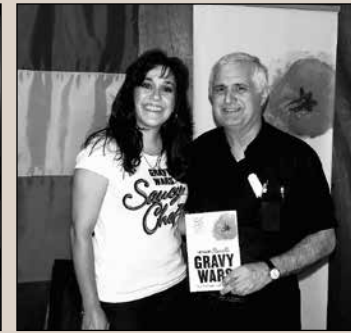
(July 23rd)

The parish participated in the Phillies Italian Heritage Night at Citizens Bank Park. Entertainment included the Verdi Band who performs every year at the parish festival.

ITALIAN TRADITIONS: A BOOK, A COOK AND MORE!

(May 18th)

Author Lorraine Ranalli discussed her book "Gravy Wars" while chefs Mamma Maria and Roberta Adamo presented a cooking demonstration of some classic recipes. Local Radio personality Paul Perrello hosted the event that featured food tastings and a Tarantella led by the Vivace Italian dance troupe.



CENTENNIAL MASS

2012 100th ANNIVERSARY





Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Church
Centennial Celebration
Sunday, April 29, 2012

2:00 PM Solemn Mass
Concelebrated by
Bishop Louis DeSimone & Bishop Michael Fitzgerald
St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church
9th & Watkins Streets, Philadelphia

4:30 PM Gala Event
Vie Ballroom by Cescaphe Event Group
600 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia - Free Valet Parking

Lavish Cocktail Reception
Buttered Hors d'oeuvres, Chilled Seafood Buffet,
Italian Antipasti, International Salads, Chef's Pasta Station
Music by 2nd Chance, Nick Desiderio & the Kraft Strings

Dinner Dance & Show
4 Course Gourmet Dinner
Filet Mignon/Crab Cake Duet Entree with Risotto, plus Tuscan
Salad, Sorbet, Tiramisu & Coffee, Capuccino at the Bar

Top Shelf Open Bar Throughout the Evening
Music and Dancing With
The City Rhythm Orchestra
Special Performance By
The Quaker City String Band
Dinner Show Starring Singer/Comedian
Joe Piscopo

Tickets \$80.00 per person
Available at Rectory Office - 910 Watkins Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148
215-463-1326





(April 29th)
Bishop Louis De Simone led concelebrants Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, Augustinian Prior Provincial Rev. Anthony Genovese, Pastor Rev. Nick Martorano and other priests from the Augustinian community and neighboring parishes in a joyous Centennial Mass. The parish community, past and present, gathered to give thanks for the 100 years of "Faith, Family and Tradition" that St. Nicholas of Tolentine has provided.



TRIDIUM

(September 10th, 11th & 12th)

To honor the parish's patron saint, a Tridium of Masses was celebrated in September for the feast of St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

Guest celebrant/homilist Rev. Tom Mc Carthy, O.S.A., reminded the congregation of the teachings of St. Nicholas and how he continues to serve as a great model of Christian life.



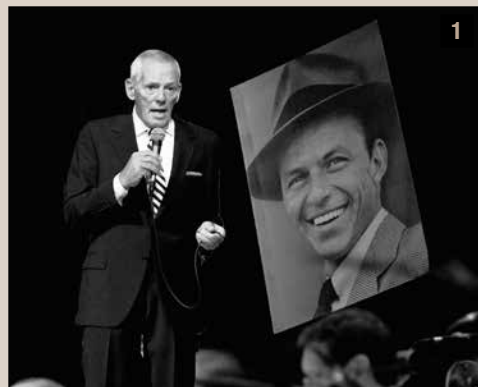
2012 100th ANNIVERSARY CENTENNIAL EVENTS

AMORE: THE STORY OF ITALIAN AMERICAN SONG

(September 28th)

An exciting concert, "Amore: The Story of Italian American Song", was presented at Neumann-Goretti auditorium. Based on the eponymous book by author Mark Rotella who also hosted the event, the show celebrated the many talented singers of Italian descent who dominated American music for decades. Among the accomplished vocal artists were Marc Antonelli, Billy Ruth, Steve Ritrovato, Jenna Esposito and Ray Gelato. They saluted such singers as Mario Lanza, Frank Sinatra, Bobby Darin, Connie Francis, and Louis Prima.

- [1] Billy Ruth
- [2] Marc Antonelli
- [3] Jenna Esposito
- [4] Mark Rotella
- [5] Steve Ritrovato
- [6] Ray Gelato



CENTENNIAL MASS

2012 100th ANNIVERSARY



CENTENNIAL ITALIAN FESTIVAL

(October 7th)

The Annual Italian Festival gave great witness to the Centennial Year's theme of Faith, Family and Tradition. Despite the rainy weather, a large crowd came out to demonstrate the generous spirit that exists among St. Nicholas parishioners and parish supporters.

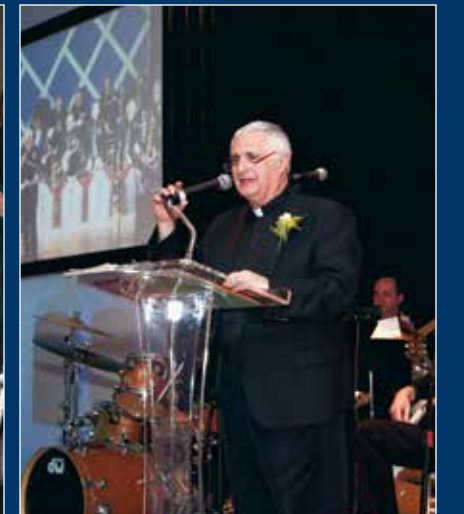


CENTENNIAL GALA

2012 100th ANNIVERSARY



(April 29th)
Following the Centennial Mass, a crowd of over 600 parishioners and friends gathered at the Vie Ballroom on North Broad Street for a gala celebration. The festive evening of fine food, music and dancing was a huge success and a testament to the affection and commitment so many area Catholics have for St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church. It was an unforgettable event, with a spirit of pride and camaraderie that will be carried forward as the parish moves into its second century.



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Barbara R. Ricci - devoted parishioner and friend
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Marilyn Grecco
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Mr. and Mrs. John E. Rossini & Family
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Ralph Squillace
Gaetena Stofanik
Mario A. Ucci
Elaine Vandeputte
In Memory of Lorenzo Vernacchio
Angie Virone
Zevin’s Drug Store, Inc.

THANK YOU

CENTENNIAL GALA

2012 100th ANNIVERSARY



Thank you to our **CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE**

Marie Alfonsi
Angela Allegra
Josephine Antenucci
Josie Bizzaro
Bob Buckley
Sr. Mary Esther Carsele, MPF
Joe Cavallero
Regina Cavallero
Floss Coley
Roseanne D'Armi
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John Girardo
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Angela Martello
Joanne Perri
Loretta Pomante
Frank Quinn
Barbara Ricci
Lisa Russo
Norma Russo
Loredana Sesso-Mroz
Peter Spina
Sue Tavella

We sincerely hope that the information gathered in these pages presents a true picture of the first one hundred years of Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Parish. We apologize for any omissions or factual errors. To the host of unnamed parishioners and community members who came to our assistance, we extend sincere appreciation, along with the hope that you are pleased with the results of our combined efforts. May all of us continue to grow in our faith and in our mission to serve our sisters and brothers and to respond with the same love entrusted to us by God our Father.

Photos of Centennial Mass and Gala by Mike Moffa.
Other Centennial Year photos by Bill McCovick and Donato Valentino.