



PILGRIMAGE TO OUR PAST

Celebrating 225 Years of Parishioners for Others

January 2019

Cura Personalis For All

This January will mark two events in the school calendars in the Archdiocese of Washington: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and Catholic Schools Week. As the students of Holy Trinity School observe its bicentennial, their commitment to social justice is still going strong. Holy Trinity's enduring growth from a mission church in America, to the home for immigrants and working-class people of Georgetown, to a cosmopolitan community of faith, continues the goals of Jesuit education.

The Jesuit fathers at Holy Trinity Church, led by pastor Benedict Fenwick, S.J., opened a school in 1818 for Catholic and Protestant boys of Georgetown on what is now N Street NW. The parish provided schooling for the children of Georgetown in various locations, including the original church (now the Chapel) building, until 1918 with the construction of the current school buildings.

During the first 130 years of existence of the parish schools their doors were open to children of Catholics and Protestants alike, except for one group—the black children who attended Holy Trinity Church. In the first church and for more than a century thereafter, descendants of African slaves and freedmen sat apart from their fellow white parishioners and received the holy sacraments; but they could not send their children to the parish schools. Instead, alternative schools, particularly for the religious instruction of



black children, were begun in Georgetown with support by the clergy.

Today, the reasons for a racial disparity such as occurred in our classrooms often confuse and shame the consciences of students of Holy Trinity School. Indeed, Georgetown was a segregated community, and its population was becoming increasingly divided through economic downturns, civil war, and finally the enactment of laws during the late 19th century to cement the divisions between the races.

The passage of laws providing for separate accommodations in transportation, housing, and education became a common feature of life in America. "Jim Crow" segregation laws prevailed in Washington, Virginia, and Maryland. Over a

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Parishioner Reflections

Trinity Players: From the Stage to the World

Remember Trinity Players? Beginning in 1976, it was Holy Trinity's theatre group, organized by Artistic Director Fr. Denis P. Moran, S. J., that produced plays put on in Trinity Theatre, now the renovated space called Trinity Hall. I joined the group to meet other parishioners and to learn something about theatre production. Working behind the scenes, mostly on costumes, I met lots of new friends. Judy Monahan, for one, taught me how to make those ruffles down the front of period shirts for men; what a clever trick! Another accomplished costumer with whom I worked and played was Linda Miller Nystrom. Often the work involved late evenings at the sewing machine to beat the clock before opening night. I also learned a bit about lighting, sitting in the lighting booth making sure the lights went up and down at exactly the

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Let's Celebrate

Tickets are on sale for the 200th/225th Anniversary Benefit on March 2! Enjoy an evening at Sequoia in Georgetown that includes cocktails, buffets, entertainment and live and silent auctions. Proceeds from the event will support Jesuit education and social justice programs. Tickets are \$100 until February 1. To purchase a ticket, please visit www.trinity.org/benefit. For more information or to donate to the auction, email HTbenefit@trinity.org or call (202) 903-2836.

Cura Personalis, *cont. from page 1*

lengthy and disputatious time, however, the courts began to put an end to such rules; and in 1954, the Supreme Court overturned many of the “separate, but equal” requirements in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Seven years earlier than this ruling, however, the Catholic Church in Washington finally took a leading role in eliminating the corrosive Jim Crow doctrine of segregation in the parishes and schools.

In 1947, the Baltimore Archdiocese was reorganized to create a new Archdiocese of Washington. Newly consecrated Archbishop Patrick A. O’Boyle arrived in Washington in March 1948. As a trained social worker and administrator, Archbishop O’Boyle came to Washington with a public agenda to desegregate the schools and parishes in the District of Columbia and southern Maryland. He was guided in his approach by Jesuit activists, John LaFarge, Richard McSorley, and Horace McKenna, to set admission goals quietly with each pastor and gradually to allow black students admission into the schools. Archbishop O’Boyle met separately with pastors in the city of Washington in 1948 and informed them that they should begin admitting students of color.

Holy Trinity School records the first admission of an African-American student, eighth-grader Adele Dodson, in 1953. Her previous school, St. Stephen’s, had closed the year before and the Sisters of Mercy found her a place in Holy Trinity School. Around the Archdiocese, Washington’s Catholic schools of higher education took a progressive stance in admitting African-American students. For example, five students were admitted to Georgetown University’s law school in 1948. Gonzaga College High School admitted seven students in 1949, over the objections of some parents at the high school. Archbishop John Carroll High School opened in 1951 with 17 African-American students in its 250-member freshman class.

The Jesuit way of thinking about social action is governed by the principle, *cura personalis*, which translates as “care of the whole person.” It identifies a priority to respect the unique gifts, experiences, challenges, and insights of each person. The teachers and administrators of Holy Trinity School aspire to educate the “whole child” and to give every student what he or she needs to be a successful learner.

One activity that illustrates the principle of *cura personalis* is the school’s Gavigan Program, a parish-sponsored activity that provides scholarships based on financial need for students who otherwise could not attend the school. The program grew out of the efforts by an indefatigable Georgetown University professor, John Hirsh, working with Holy Trinity’s principal, Ann Marie Santora, to bring students tuition-free to Holy Trinity School from underserved areas of the city. Students from the university served as volunteer tutors to children in the Sursum Corda public housing co-op in northwest Washington, and they found potential students to attend Holy Trinity School.

In the early 1990’s, this committed group of educators brought students from Sursum Corda to Holy Trinity School. Individual parishioners stepped forward to underwrite the entire costs of education of the Sursum Corda students; but finding the financial resources to run this program was only one challenge to its success. Other challenges included convincing the parents of students to send their children across town rather than attending nearer schools. The Georgetown group persisted, however, and new students from Sursum Corda began to attend Holy Trinity.



Parents from Holy Trinity supported these students in myriad ways, including driving the CYO athletes back to Sursum Corda after practices and games, transporting students who had limited ways to get to school on time, and helping the families of the students to participate in the life of the school.

Building on its early successes, the school in the late 1990’s began a subsequent, more comprehensive scholarship program named after Fr. Thomas Gavigan, S.J. The admissions process was widened to provide scholarships for ten boys and girls from the larger metropolitan area. Today’s Gavigan students are provided a full tuition support and after-school tutoring by the teaching staff as well as a summer enrichment camp.

Today Holy Trinity School has 342 students, 89% of whom are Catholic. Of that population 29% of the student body identify themselves as members of a minority culture or race. A faculty diversity team sets goals and strategies for curricular and professional development; a parent diversity committee meets monthly; and later this month, thirteen students will attend a Middle School Diversity Conference hosted by St. Andrews School. The school’s admission and staffing policies promote racial, socio-economic, and intellectual diversity by relying on the strengths of *cura personalis*.

The growth of a diverse student body and staff does not merely overcome historical prejudices, but this policy stirs all of us to respond to the better angels of our nature. Holy Trinity school has educated children from Georgetown and the surrounding jurisdictions for two centuries. The school works to overcome unjust past practices and to give faithful service to the message of the gospels. The students of Holy Trinity School look forward to the next 200 years and to find God in every person.

—Duane Nystrom

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Reflections, *cont. from page 1*

right times and making the phone ring on stage when it needed to; somewhat stressful! But it was all fun, and a great way to meet people that I still see at Holy Trinity today. My favorite plays were the musicals and the children's plays (*Guys and Dolls*, *The King and I*, *Oliver!*, *Cinderella*...) Trinity Players and Trinity Theatre are only fond memories now, but my love for Holy Trinity continues.

—Kathy Flynn



Image courtesy of Andrea Saturn-Sanjana

Remembering the Trinity Players

A young lad in Tianjin, China, led me through the *hutong* alleyways to his family's museum dedicated to Chinese opera. His American accent was pure Louisiana. "Does your English teacher come from New Orleans?" "Why, yes, do you know him?"

Townpeople from Portico di Romagna, Italy (poet Dante Alighieri's old stomping grounds) moved an entire organ up the hill to San Benedetto in Alpe, so noted organist visiting from Berlin, Manfred Mainbauer, could perform in the Benedictine Monastery there.

These vignettes take me back to Trinity Players in Georgetown during the 1980s, where all who trod the boards or teched behind the scenes learned how to work together for a common purpose across generations and

cultures. To paraphrase Catholic novelist Graham Greene, "Trinity Players made me."

From lead roles ("Fumed Oak," from *Tonight at 8:30*) to casting and stage management (*Laura*, *The Elephant Man*), I put my training during Gilbert V. Hartke, O.P.'s summer drama program at The Catholic University of America to good use. Because it was community theatre, we Trinity Players all had different "day jobs."

That purpose was fundamentally entertainment, but whether thought-provoking (*The Runner Stumbles*) or sheer fun (*Oliver!*), the Jesuit mission was strong. We had actual Jesuit directors (Denis P. Moran, S.J., Frank Moan, S.J.) and

pastors (James English, S.J., James Connor, S.J., Lawrence Madden, S.J.) who brought church and theatre together to explore our Christian heritage (*The Second Shepherds' Play*) or to use the magic of the theatre (*Mr. Blue*) to communicate God's message and the mission and values of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

Trinity Players thrived for about two decades during that twilight period before Washington's vibrant professional theatre scene became what it is today. As a young person, I was privileged to learn from professional actors (Joseph J. Scolaro) and directors (Henry Carter Schaeffer, Pat Murphy Sheehy) and phenomenally talented amateurs, many of whom were or are Holy Trinity parishioners (Joseph Niegowski, Linda and Duane Nystrom, Rosemary Chalk, Laura Meagher). The Trinity Players volunteered their time and expertise for a renovation of the historic theatre.

Trinity Players Children's Theatre, under the leadership of dynamo Suzanne Christman Goldman, provided an opportunity for students attending different schools to explore their talents, learn new skills and simply shine. Friendships forged during *The Wind in the Willows* (Vera Maria Budway, M. Walsh McGuire) are still going strong almost 40 years later.

As I navigate through the phalanx of theatregoers and tourists in New York City on my way across town some days, I duck into St. Malachy's Church--The Actors' Chapel and say a prayer of gratitude for those fellow Trinity Players who made the world a better place through their industry, their creativity and their love.

— Andrea Saturn-Sanjana

BE A 2019 TRINITY PLAYER



As part of our Founder's Day Weekend, October 5 & 6, we will present the play *Mystery on Holy Hill* by Dr. Duane Nystrom. Casting for the show will happen in May, so we need volunteers to fill the behind-the-scenes roles. If you have a talent in these areas and want to be a part of the production, please contact Lisa Dittmeier aldittmeier@trinity.org.

Remembering Fr. Thomas Gavigan

To parishioners present during Fr. Gavigan's leadership, he is known as, "The Second Founder of Holy Trinity Church." He became pastor at the time of the Second Vatican Council and successfully introduced all the many changes in parish life that were demanded by the Council. As the altar, and now the celebrant, faced the people, his homilies gradually educated parishioners about the meaning of and the reasons for the changes that were introduced. Gavigan brought congregational singing, lay involvement and a social conscience to the parish. He invited guest celebrants and preachers to join him, and his passion for ecumenism led to friendships with the pastors in the neighborhood who eventually formed the "The Ecumenical Clergy Association of Georgetown."

Gavigan's battle cry was "the parish is the people!," and he executed this belief by establishing a parish council and supporting adult education pro-

grams and the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) and the Young Adult Community (YAC) programs at Holy Trinity. Inspired by the life of St. Peter Claver, a 17th-century Jesuit who ministered to slaves in the West Indies, and by Dorothy Day, the founder of the 1830s Catholic worker movement, Gavigan was committed to social justice. He inaugurated the parish Social Concerns Committee, which developed a variety of programs which provided inner city agencies serving the poor with Holy Trinity volunteer staff members, as well as provided funding for these agencies.

After his retirement as pastor, Gavigan continued to support and care for the parishioners of Holy Trinity. He and Sister Alma, S.S.J. worked together to minister to the sick and elderly shut-ins. According to parishioner Catherin Hotveldt, "Father Gavigan had a wonderful tradition of standing at the back



Fr. Gavigan with 14-month old Christine Kettmer at a party celebrating his 50th Anniversary as a Jesuit in 1982 (photo courtesy of Washington Post/Georgetown University Archives)

of church at the close of Sunday 11:30am Mass. He said he was there in case someone needed him."

After serving as our pastor, Fr. Gavigan served as an Associate Vicar at Holy Trinity from 1970 until his death in 1993.

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We hope you will join us on March 2 to celebrate the 225th Anniversary of Holy Trinity and the 200th Anniversary of Holy Trinity School. If you can not attend the Anniversary Benefit, please consider supporting the event by donating to the auction or making a donation on the website. You will also be able to bid on silent auctions items and register for "sign-up" parties on the event website beginning February 23.

www.trinity.org/benefit

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