Our Heritage

Our beautiful French Gothic Cathedral was originally dedicated in 1876 and rebuilt in two years by the Catholics of Savannah after the devastating fire on February 6, 1898 which destroyed all of the Cathedral but the outside walls and the two spires.

Photos in this issue courtesy of Paul Camp, Msgr. William O’Neill and the Georgia Historical Society.
CATHEDRAL HERITAGE ENDOWMENT FUND APPEAL WAS A BIG SUCCESS

A Message from Cathedral Rector, Father Gerry Schreck
Photo by Paul H. Camp

The Cathedral Preservation Society has been established to solicit and encourage contributions to the Cathedral Heritage Endowment Fund. In October and November of 2016 an appeal was made for donations and membership.

I am very happy to report that our appeal for the Cathedral Heritage Endowment Fund was very, very successful. Through this appeal, which was made to Cathedral parishioners and past donors to the Cathedral from throughout the Diocese of Savannah and beyond, a total of $173,000 was raised for the endowment, the largest amount we have ever raised. As of June 30, 2016, the Endowment Fund was valued at $1,819,537. With this latest contribution, the endowment will essentially be valued at $2,000,000.

As you know, only a portion of the interest generated by the fund is disbursed each year. That money is used for structural repairs and maintenance on the Cathedral. For the last three years, the annual disbursement from the fund has been used to reduce our indebtedness on the repair of the Cathedral steeples. Our ultimate goal is to build the endowment to at least $5,000,000, so that we will have sufficient revenue each year to meet the maintenance needs of the Cathedral.

My sincere thanks for the success of the appeal go to Dr. and Mrs. Luke Curtsinger who were the Chairpersons of the annual appeal. I also want to thank our hard working committee members: Dr. Frank P. Rossiter, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Rob Massey, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Sterritt, Mrs. Gretchen Reese, Mr. Charlie Ganem, Mrs. Catherine Kostilnik, Mrs. Loretto Lominack and Ms. Melanie Brooks. They did a terrific job, again!

I would also like to thank all of our generous donors and benefactors, who were able to make a donation to this annual appeal. I appreciate the sacrifices that you continue to make for the good of our Cathedral. It really is a treasure, and something of which we should be rightly proud. Every day when visitors come through our Cathedral they marvel at its beauty, and often stop to tell me how beautiful it is and how fortunate we are to have it.

As I look at our Cathedral, I often ask myself, “How did they do it? How did those faithful Catholics of Savannah make the sacrifices to find the funding to build and rebuild such a magnificent Church?” Obviously, they did it by faith and by a passion to make a statement about the Catholic faith in the city of Savannah. Our Cathedral is in itself a great tool of evangelization. It is amazing to see the awe and wonder in the eyes of visitors who enter the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Monsignor T. James McNamara, our former Rector, was often quoted as saying that every significant event in his life (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, and Ordination to the Priesthood) happened in the Cathedral, and that the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist is “the barometer of Catholic prestige in Savannah.”

As fortunate as you and I have been to be able to worship in such a grand Church, we must do what we can to hand on this Cathedral to future generations of Catholics and visitors to Savannah. If you haven’t already done so, please consider becoming part of the Cathedral Heritage Preservation Society and make a donation to the Cathedral Heritage Endowment Fund. I thank you for the sacrifices that you are making and for your generosity to the Cathedral.
Preserving Our Heritage

After 100 years, a major restoration took place in 1998-2000. Exterior structural repairs were made including a new slate roof. The church was closed for over a year to allow all the interior work to proceed.
Archbishop Thomas J. McDonough Circle  
Gifts of $10,000 or more  
The Abbott/Harty Family  
Dr. Luke Curtsinger / Coastal Empire Plastic Surgery

Bishop J. Kevin Boland Circle  
Gifts of $5,000 up to $9,999  
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Bishop J. Kevin Boland  
Cathedral of St. John the Baptist  
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St. Anne’s Catholic Church  
St. Williams Catholic Church  
Ann Tatum/ Students See Savannah  
Dr. Chris Whelan/ Whelan Chiropractic  
Robert E. White  
Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vaught  
Scott and Rhonda Voynich
Heritage Preserved

The stained glass windows were repaired and re-leaded, the Stations of the Cross were returned to their original multi-chromatic look and the murals were restored.
Monsignor William O. O’Neill Circle
Gifts of $500 to $999

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Patrick, Dustin, and Nicholas Alifi
Ancient Order of Hibernians Savannah
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Margaret and Tim Wallace
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Weiss
Mr. and Mrs. C. Michael Werntz
Dr & Mrs. Christopher M Whelan
Heritage Enhanced

Significant decorative enhancements also took place and several new liturgical features were added. The restored Cathedral was rededicated in November 2000 to honor the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Savannah.
Friends of the Cathedral Circle
Any gift up to $499

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Our Heritage Will Be Sustained for Future Generations

Members of the Cathedral Preservation Society attended a dinner on November 19, 2016 at the Savannah Golf Club to celebrate the conclusion of a very successful fundraising effort. The continued support of Preservation Society members will guarantee that this iconic landmark will be preserved for generations to come.
Gifts In Honor of / In Memory of

Patrick, Dustin, and Nicholas Aliffi
  In Memory of the first generation of the Aliffi family in Savannah: Grace, Sal, Yano, Ches, Frank, Tony, Joe,

John, Mike and Julie Estvander
  In Memory of our grandparents
  In Honor of our parents

Timothy D. Farley
  In Memory of John H. Farley, Jr.

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  In Memory of Hitchins /Taylor deceased members

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  In Memory of Albert J. Incorvaia

Dr. Catherine Dunn Kostilnik
  In Memory of beloved grandmother Marie G. Dunn

George & Cindy Lowerts
  In Honor of Monsignor Willie O’Neill

Lucas A. Neuffer
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Dr & Mrs. Christopher M. Whelan
  In Memory of Joseph A. Whelan
  In Honor of Moody D. Wharam, Jr.

Joseph and Angeline Theriault Mullin
  In Memory of the Deceased of the Mullin and Theriault Families

Lists reflect all donations through December 31, 2016
We invite everyone interested in helping to maintain this glorious setting for worshiping God, to join the Cathedral Preservation Society. For more information go to: http://savannahcathedral.org/join-the-society/