

## The Full Story about the Statue of St. Joseph

(that in 2006 was placed on the east side of St. Patrick's Church)

9/24/06 A Message from Sister Mary Alice

This is the story about the Statue of St. Joseph that will be placed at St. Patrick's. I found out from the company which I purchased the statue from where it came from originally. First, the company that sold me the statue: it is called King Richard's. They basically sell second hand church goods. Their website and store list items as diverse as stained glass windows, statues, chalices, marble altars, kneelers, etc. You name it and they probably have it. This company goes around the country buying up items at church auctions. They remove the items and bring them to Alpharetta, Georgia, where they are located. I purchased the statue from them. They told me that they bought it from a place called Villa St. Theresa in Darby, Pennsylvania. I tracked down the place and the Diocese (Philadelphia), as well as the Religious Order that ran the Villa (Sisters of the Divine Redeemer). I found out that this Order of Sisters had their motherhouse in Philadelphia. I called and visited with St. Mary Alice. We have since exchanged letters and pictures. This story will be continued next week

10/1/06 The Continuing Story of the Traveling St. Joseph Statue

In 1936, the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer bought 46 acres of the Woodburn Estate that included a stately Victorian Mansion. This home was built in 1881 by Alexander Scott, president of the Pennsylvania RR. Mr. Scott served as Assistant Secretary of war during the Civil War. He was also an associate of Andrew Carnegie. The Mansion became an orphanage and was called the Little Flower Institute. In 1958 the Mansion became a home for the elderly and was renamed Little Flower Manor. In 1977 they built a modern nursing home on the property and the old mansion became a kind of assisted living center and was called Villa St. Therese. It was closed a couple of years ago and sold along with some property to developers. The statue of St. Joseph stood in front of the Mansion from about 1936 until a year or so ago. Back in those days, such a statue might be purchased for \$25 because the sisters have record of the similar sized statue of St. Theresa being donated for that amount in the 30s. The sisters of the Divine Redeemer are a very small order with many elderly sisters. When I tried to talk to the sister who answers the phones, she told the historian of the community that I was calling from Alaska, and that our statue of St. Joseph was in Alaska. No, sister, I am calling from Nebraska. Stay tuned, there is more to come

10/8/06 The Continuing Story of the Traveling St. Joseph Statue

I would love to meet Sr. Mary Alice, the historian for the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer. When I sent her a packet of information about our parish (postcard, pictures, dedication booklet etc.) she responded with a packet of information about her order and the pictures of the mansion in front of which stood the statue of St. Joseph. She mentioned to me that the package from me arrived while she was in the hospital. She had some medical difficulties which put her in the hospital for three days of tests. She got better and they could not find what the trouble was. She referred to her time in the hospital as .three perfectly good days wasted in the hospital. The Statues of St. Joseph and St. Theresa were sold to King Richards of Alpharetta, Georgia. King Richards is a .ye olde and used religious articles store. I purchased the statue from them and it was shipped to Fremont. The shipping was itself quite the feat. The hands of baby Jesus are perfectly formed and His little thumbs are smaller than an adults little finger. Caution in moving such a statue to avoid breakage was uppermost in everyone's mind.

10/22/06 The statue has been placed on the small pedestal on the east side of the Church. Thank you to the Rabe Brothers and their crew for the brick work as well as Tom VanMeeteren with his tractor and loader. I also want to thank Krasne.s for the use of the fork lift and Dave Lammers and others from the store who ran the lift. When the statue arrived here in the middle of the summer we found that it had been painted. We contracted with a company out of Omaha who came and air-blasted it using soda. This cleaned most of the paint off. Then Tom Silva, Karen Lauer-Silva, Karen.s sister and I spent four hours on Labor Day weekend cleaning the remainder using dental tools. We also had to do a little stain removal because we found some rust. All of this came out well and the real Carrara Marble statue began to show itself. The only other thing we discovered was that Jesus.s little head had been knocked off at some point in the past. Its repair is in progress but soon this will not be noticeable at all. Now I have to take a good picture of the Statue and send it to the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer in Philadelphia. Thank you to anyone who had a part in this. the guys at Pete.s Custom Metal and all the folks who donated to the cause. Brad.s Electric is completing the work of getting a light to the statue. I.m sure as you read this all that will be left is the circular flower garden around the base. Fr. OK

#### Final Thanks

We dedicated and blessed the statue of St. Joseph last Sunday. Some have asked where the money came from for this. Well, let me assure you, it was all paid for. Not counting donated services, the entire project cost about \$6000. Donations for the project came from individuals and households within the parish. I would like to share a quote from a recent letter I received from Sr. Mary Alice Varga of the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer in Pennsylvania. 'Your letter came just at a time that we are meeting difficulties in trying to sell the property in Darby (outside Philadelphia). It is now over a year that we have had it in the hands of whomever is attempting to sell it. There are periods of elation of 'almost sold' and then some other difficulty will turn up. Along with humongous bills! But probably the difficulties are just a call to each of us 'to turn to Joseph' who was such a powerful patron for us in the youthful days of our American Province. Surely now, he will not disappoint us. Especially not after the good people of St. Patrick's Parish have given our St. Joseph statue a lease on life and a beautiful home in Fremont.'