

From The Morning News

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LAID THE CORNER STONE

Imposing Ceremony on the Site of the New Roman Catholic Church of St. Thomas — Parade of Societies in full Regalia to the Grounds — Bishop Monaghan Officiates

In the presence of thousands of people the corner-stone of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, at Fourth street and Grant avenue, named in honor of the late Bishop Thomas A. Becker, the first bishop of Wilmington, was laid yesterday afternoon by Bishop John J. Monaghan. The pastor of the church will be the Rev. John Connelly, the present chancellor of the diocese and first assistant at St. Paul's Church, who will continue in his present position and will administer to the wants of St. Thomas's from St. Paul's rectory. The new church will have a seating capacity of 450 on the main floor. The second floor of the building will consist of five spacious class-rooms for school purposes, which will be reached by a staircase in the rear of the building. On the third floor there will be a hall to be used for assemblies, concerts and meetings. The foundations, which are now completed, are built of Brandywine granite. The super-structure will be of red brick with sandstone trimmings, surmounted by a high pitched slate roof. The general effect of the architecture will be of the Gothic order, and a lofty cross will rise above the main entrance on the Fourth street side. The altar will stand on an elevated platform at Bayard avenue site between two sacristies each about ten by twelve feet, and the sanctuary will be lighted by two Gothic windows. Francis H. Carawell prepared the drawings in accordance with the suggestions of Bishop Monaghan, and the contractor John E. Healey. The church is to be completed by September 1, at a cost of about \$17,000.

The church stands on a magnificent lot of ground with high elevation extending from Grant to Bayard avenues, a distance of 340 feet, and having a depth of 111 feet 4 inches. It is located in a section of the

city which is developing rapidly and which promises soon to be thickly settled. The Woodlawn Company has already begun to develop its extensive tract of land extending from Union street to Woodlawn avenue, and from Fourth to Seventh streets, and this entire section will soon be covered with residences, fronting on the park now being laid out on Grant avenue.

In connection with yesterday's exercises, Catholic societies were well represented. The Italian Mutual Beneficial Society and the St. Antonio Society, headed by the First Regiment Band, marched from their headquarters, and on the way were joined by the Italian Democratic Club. Carmen DiMare, president of the two societies, was the marshal.

Another body was made up of societies who met at Shields Library Hall. Edward Babby, the county president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, was the chief marshal. At the head of the line was the Hibernian Knights, in command of Captain James Mullen, and accompanied by the Brunswick Fife and Drum Corps. Then came Divisions Nos. 1, 2,3, 4, 6 and 7 of the A.O.H., the respective aides being Robert Cottingham, Dennis Rowe, William Martin, D.T. Kilroy, Thomas J. Craven and John Mahoney. The Pioneer Benevolent Literary Association was in charge of C.W. Malcolm. St. Paul's St. Aloysius Sodality of boys was in line with the beautiful banner recently won in a contest; Frank Mooney led the boys. Members of Father Mayer and Delaware Councils, Catholic Benevolent Legion were also in line. The collection was taken up by members of the Hibernian Knights.

The clergy who took part in the ceremony, were in addition to Bishop Monaghan, the Rev. Francis T. McCarthy, S.J., of Washington; the Very Rev. J. A. Lyons, vicar general; the Rev. George J. Kelly, the Rev. W. J. Bermingham, the Rev. W. J. Scott, the Rev. F. J. Connelly, the Rev. Hugo Paff, the Rev. P. J. Hughes, the Rev. J. J. McKenna, the Rev. J. J. Dougherty, the Rev. E. A. McVeigh, the Rev. Father Jacquier, and the Rev. John J. Connelly, who acted as master of ceremonies.

The bishop dressed in solemn pontificals, with cope, mitre and crozier, preceded by the clergy and altar boys, marched in procession from

the Home of the Little Sisters of the Poor across Fourth street to the site of the new building. At the westerly end of the church, where the altar will be located a large wooden cross had been erected and there the solemn ceremony began. Blessing the spot with holy water, the bishop recited the antiphon.

“Place O Lord Jesus Christ in this spot the sign of salvation and permit not the destroying angel to enter here.” Then followed Psalm 82, “How Beautiful are Thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts,” after which the procession moved to the northeastern corner of the building where the corner stone is located and the bishop marked with a trowel the sign of the cross upon the stone, saying “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.” He then said the following prayer:

“Bless, O Lord, this stone and grant through the invocation of Thy Holy name that whosoever shall give help with a pure heart for the erection of this church may receive health of body, and reward for their souls, through Christ our Lord.”

The litany of the saints was then recited by the bishop and clergy all kneeling, followed by Psalm 126, “Unless the Lord shall build the house, they labor in vain who build it.”

The bishop then standing with mitre and crozier placed his right hand upon the stone, which was let down into its place, with the words, “In the faith of Jesus Christ, we place this first foundation stone, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” The bishop spread the mortar to receive the stone. The stone was then sprinkled with holy water and after the recitation of the miserere the clergy passed around the interior of the building reciting the 86th Psalm and the bishop blessing the foundation walls. The procession returned to the corner stone where the last prayer was said and the hymn “Come, Holy Ghost” was sung. After which the solemn pontifical blessing was given by the bishop.

The cornerstone is of highly polished granite. On the face is inscribed in Latin:

“Invocato Sancto Thoma Apostolo Anno Domini, 1903,” meaning under the invocation of St. Thomas the Apostle, in the year of our Lord, 1903.

The inscription is surmounted by a cross with the initial letters “I. H. S.” standing for “Jesus the Saviour of Men.”

The musical part of the program was well executed by St. Paul’s choir, assisted by the Philharmonic orchestra. L. B. Preston directed the signing. Mozart’s “Gloria” was beautifully rendered at the beginning of the ceremony, and the triumphal chorus by Gounod was given after the stone was laid. Preceding the sermon, the Veni Creator was sung and the services were closed by a grand chorus “Lauda Sion” followed by the grand “Te Deum.”

The preacher at the occasion was the Rev. Francis T. McCarthy, S. J., of Washington, D. C. Father McCarthy referred in touching terms to the Right Rev. Thomas A. Becker, in whose memory the new church is to be dedicated to St. Thomas the Apostle. Bishop Becker, he said, had labored long and faithfully for the diocese of Wilmington and though his field of labor had been transferred to Savannah, Ga., he never forgot the diocese or the people of Wilmington, and though he now lies buried far away, we may hope that he still remembers this diocese and prays for its people and for the present bishop, his second successor in the See of Wilmington by whom this memorial church is to be erected.

The speaker then dwelt at length on the life of St. Thomas the Apostle, quoting the words of Christ, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and have believed.” He spoke of the incredulity of Thomas springing from pride, which was so soon followed by his magnificent profession of faith expressed in those words, “My Lord and My God.” St. Thomas, he said, labored to spread the Christian faith throughout India, and there he not only confessed his faith in Christ as his Lord and God, but laid down his life in testimony of faith. So thorough was the work of St. Thomas that after the lapse of fifteen centuries, St. Francis Xavier, the new Apostle of India, still found vestiges thereof.

He then expressed the hope that the work begun on this new church under the invocation of St. Thomas would be blessed by Almighty God and brought to a successful completion.

Among the many Catholics organizations represented at the ceremonies were the St. Antonio and the Italian Mutual Beneficial Societies and the Italian Democratic Club numbering in all 380 men. Before entering upon his regular sermon, Father McCarthy addressed them in their native tongue to their great gratification.

Before the conclusion of the ceremonies, Bishop Monaghan thanked the clergy and the people for their attendance in such large numbers and expressed his great satisfaction at the prompt and enthusiastic response to the invitation on the part of the various Catholic Societies and organization of the city. He was delighted to witness this convincing evidence of the great interest which all felt in the erection of St. Thomas Church and he hoped it would be as the mustard seed, growing eventually into a large tree. The bishop then referred to the Rev. John Connelly who will have charge of the new church and parish, and who the bishop hoped, will receive the cordial support and assistance, in the erection of St. Thomas, not only of the people living in the vicinity of the church, and who will be directly benefited by it, but also of all the people of the city.