

Norbertines to move priory from Claymont: Archmere again will use Patio for school functions

By Gary Morton
Staff reporter

CLAYMONT

Norbertine priests will move their monastery from the campus of Archmere Academy to southern New Castle County as early as the end of this year.

The move comes in the wake of tensions last year between some of the Norbertines and members of the school and alumni over use of the Patio, the building that houses the monastery, known as Immaculate Conception Priory.

The Norbertines have purchased a 20-acre piece of land south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal near Middletown for \$545,000, Abbot E. Thomas DeWane, who has been administrator of the priory since April 2001, told *The Dialog* last week. The property, at 1269 Bayview Road, includes a large, three-bedroom house, but before the move can occur, Abbot DeWane said, another house must be built so the facility can accommodate all 10 members of the priory. A chapel also will need to be built, he said.

If construction begins soon, Abbot DeWane said, the new priory could be ready by the end of the year or in early 2003.

Abbot DeWane, acting on behalf of Immaculate Conception Priory, transferred the deed to the school building and grounds, including the Patio, the former Raskob



The Dialog/Don Blake

The Patio, on the grounds of Archmere Academy in Claymont, has housed Immaculate Conception Priory since 1996. The priory will move to land near Middletown, possibly by the end of this year.

family mansion where the Norbertines started Archmere Academy in 1932, to Archmere Inc. in February. In return, he said, "there is a financial agreement for the relocation."

While the Norbertines no longer own Archmere, Abbot DeWane said, the co-ed high school will remain one of the order's ministries.

Archmere plans to use the Patio for classes, administrative offices and various school and alumni functions, said Tom Mallon, Archmere's development director. "It's going to be a focus of the daily life of the school," he said. The school's return to the Patio will be gradual, said Mallon, noting that some members of Immaculate Conception Priory will continue to live

at the Patio at least through the fall.

Five members of Immaculate Conception Priory live at the Patio, Abbot DeWane said. Two live off-campus in another house, while three others are in ministry elsewhere.

Four Norbertines will work at Archmere this school year, Abbot DeWane said, but none of them is affiliated with Immaculate Conception. Two of those priests — Father Timothy Mullen, headmaster, and Father Michael Collins, dean of students — are former members of Immaculate Conception but have transferred their affiliations, Father Mullen to St. Norbert Abbey in Wisconsin and Father Collins to Daylesford

Abbey in Paoli, Pa. The other two, Fathers Blaise Krautsack and Joseph McLaughlin, are affiliated with Daylesford Abbey.

Those four might continue to live at the Patio, Abbot DeWane said.

Use of the Patio by both the monastery and the school sparked tensions that erupted in April 2001, when Immaculate Conception's leadership team fired four top Archmere administrators, including Fathers Mullen and Collins. Students boycotted classes the day of the firings, and Archmere alumni and parents rallied behind the administrators. In an unusual move, the Norbertines' world leader came to Claymont the following weekend, accepted the resignations of the prio-

ry's officers and installed Abbot DeWane as administrator. Abbot DeWane then reinstated the fired administrators.

The Norbertines since have set up an independent board to govern Archmere. Immaculate Conception Priory was formed with 26

priests in 1996 when Norbertine Fathers at Daylesford Abbey, which had operated Archmere, split into two groups. The

Norbertines of Immaculate Conception Priory were given the title to Archmere and established their monastery at the Patio.

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Optimistic in the fight against abortion: Dramatic change due in our lifetime, says founder of Priests for Life



By Gary Morton



Photos by Don Blake

An invitation from his mother to go on a parish pilgrimage to the March for Life changed Father Frank Pavone's life.

Then a high school student on Staten Island, N.Y., Father Pavone came from a family that attended church each Sunday but did not exercise its faith much beyond that, he recalled. "We did not go to Catholic schools, nor were we real involved in parish activities."

But that 1976 March for Life, the gathering held each January in Washington to protest the 1973 Supreme Court rulings that legalized abortion, started the young Frank Pavone's transformation into perhaps the most recognizable priest in the pro-life movement. As founding director of Priests for Life, Father Pavone, 43, travels the country to spread the pro-life message.

"It was a very cold day and to see thousands of people marching and praying in a very determined way was a clear sign that something momentous was happening," he recalled of

the '76 march.

1976 was also the year Father Pavone felt called to the priesthood. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of New York in 1988 and became national director of Priests for Life in 1993.

Last year, Cardinal Edward Egan of New York recalled Father Pavone to parish work; the priest is now assigned to the Church of St. Roch on Staten Island. "I assist the pastor," he said, "but the assignment allows me to do my pro-life work."

■ *Father Pavone is scheduled to preach at Masses at Holy Savior Church in Ocean City, Md., at 5:15 p.m. Aug. 10 and 8:30, 10 and 11:30 a.m. Aug. 11. Holy Savior is at 17th Street and Coastal Highway.*

Father Pavone discussed the abortion issue in interviews with The Dialog.

How do you evaluate the pro-life movement today?

There's a cautious optimism. Polls continue to show that more and more people are taking the pro-life position.

Fewer and fewer doctors are getting involved in abortion. More and more abortion clinics are closing. More young people are getting involved in the movement.

The abortion industry is decaying from the inside. [Proponents] find themselves with a very strong legal backing for the legality of abortion but a real problem regarding the availability of it. And it is interesting to observe the arguments themselves. They used to say this is a choice between a woman and her doctor. Then it was a choice between a woman and her conscience and her doctor. Now defenders of abortion will usually say it is a choice between a woman and her God. The language has become more and more spiritual because they can't defend abortion on scientific grounds or technological grounds or sociological grounds.

We've appealed to God from the beginning, but that has never been as a substitute for other arguments. We see God not as an escape from those arguments but precisely as a founda-