

St. Martin of Tours, Flaherty, Meade County, Kentucky  
**COMPILED BY SHELLY SIMS, ANN SIPES, AND MARY ANN  
WHELAN**

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The first church building dedicated to St. Martin of Tours that was erected in Flaherty, Meade County, Kentucky was built in 1848. Before the erection of the church, Mass had been held in private homes (stations) for almost three decades.

The first home or "church station" was that of Thomas Boarman, who settled about one mile north of Big Spring around 1822; followed by Ben Elders' home and then by Charles A. Craycroft's home. A story about the parish was told in the *Catholic Advocate* upon the dedication of the present church on 14 November 1894. Excerpts of that clipping are included below. An original news clipping was loaned to Ann Sipes by Father John Clancy. It provided one of the first histories written about St. Martin's and describes the progress up to the year 1894.

A magnificent ceremony took place at Flaherty on the 14 Nov 1894 when the Rt. Rev. W.G. McClosky D.D., bishop of Louisville, dedicated the new church of St. Martin's to the service of Almighty God. Long before the appointed hour thousands had gathered from near and far to assist. Precisely at 10 o'clock the Bishop began the ceremony. He was assisted by the Very Rev. Hugh Daly, Dean of Elizabethtown, and the Revs. Wm. J. Dunn, of Louisville, John Abell of Bethlehem, Thomas York, of Louisville, A. O'Sullivan of Daviess County, George Niehaus of Cloverport, Edward J. Hart of Colesburg, John O'Connor of Louisville, and J. J. Fitzpatrick, of St. Martin's Church.....

Altogether the ceremonies of the two days were such as to stir up devotion in the hearts of the careless and encouragement in the hearts of all. St. Martin's stands today a monument to the zeal and earnestness of the people of Flaherty....

Meade County was taken from Hardin County in 1823. Previous to that date there were but few Catholics in the territory now known as Meade County. It would seem that for some years before the formation of the county, that Mass was occasionally said by Fathers Badin, Nerinckz and Abell, somewhere in the vicinity of Flint Island. Later the mission of St. Teresa's was established there and is now under the charge of Father Raoux in a very flourishing condition. Besides St. Teresa's, there are two other churches in the county, St. Mary Magdalene at Payneville, and St. George's at Brandenburg. The latter, a neat frame structure, erected by Rev. John O'Connor....

St. Martin's congregation at Flaherty has kept up with the wonderful progress of Catholicity in the county. The present church of St. Martin's is one of the finest country churches in the diocese. It reflects credit on the architects, Curtin & Hutchings, of Louisville, who designed it and an honor on the people of the congregation who so earnestly and zealously began the work of its erection a little over two years ago. At that time Rev. J. J. Fitzgerald was appointed by the bishop to succeed Rev. James O'Connor, who is now pastor of Holy Cross, Marion County.

From the first, the efforts of Father Fitzgerald were generously seconded and his appeals promptly responded to by the congregation. At the first public meeting held to consider the advisability of beginning the work at once, a church building committee was organized by a vote of the congregation. The result was that the Messrs. Wash Medley, R. C. Craycroft, Joshua Lancaster and W.H. Edelin were chosen.... The cornerstone was laid 22 Jun 1893....

St. Martin's Congregation, although supposed to be one of the most important country congregations was almost completely overlooked by Webb in his admirable work, *The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky*. He mentioned that "Two other churches in Meade County, St. Patrick's and St. Martin's have been attended for a number of years by Rev. Martin O'Connor of Stithton, KY." This would be very well if St. Patrick happened to be in Meade County and if St. Martin's had ever been attended from Stithton either by Father Martin O'Connor or any other priest since the early days of Father Coomes's missionary work. The Rev. C. I. Coomes, whose name is held in benediction, attended this mission from Hardin County, both from St. Clare's, Colesburg, and from St. Patrick's, Stithton.

An old baptismal register, now preserved at St. Martin's has this inscription: "A Record of Baptisms administered in the chapel of St. Patrick's and the station near the Big Spring." (this original book no longer is housed at St. Martin's but in St. Brigid's Church, Vine Grove, KY) From this register I find the first baptism administered by Father Coomes at St. Patrick's was 5 Jun 1831. From this date certainly, Father Coomes attended "the station near the Big Spring." In the time previous to the

erection of the first church of St. Martin's, Mass was said every month or two, first at the house of Thomas Bowman (Boarman), later at Ben Elder's and finally the priest having lost his house by fire, made his home with Mr. C. A. Craycroft, who had come from Washington County, KY where he had settled after his arrival from Maryland. Mass was said at the house of Mr. Craycroft until the erection of the church. This was accomplished after the many noble and self-sacrificing efforts, principally of Craycroft and Edward Lancaster. It is not surprising that the children of such fathers would be found working together in the same manner towards erecting a commodious church for the growing congregation of today...The old church was dedicated 27 Aug 1848, by Rev. David Deparcq, assisted by Rev. Frs. Augustine Deguaquier and C.I. Coomes, followed by a retreat of four days, the happy result of which was a general communion of one hundred and fifty persons....

Among the principal Catholic families living in this part of the country who were accustomed to hear Mass at "the station near the Big Spring," I find the following: John Shephard, Thomas Bowman, John Byrnes, Clement Gristy, George and John B. Medley. After these yet before the opening of the new church, we find Wm. Mitchell, James Pagett, Charles Peak, Abram Rhodes, Henry Cooper, Sylvester Wheatley, Peter Brown, P. P. Nevitt, and William Lancaster. Immediately after the erection of the church we have the name of Charles Jones, who died last year, having done his duty faithfully towards the erection of the present church of St. Martin's.

...After the dedication of the church in 1848, the first baptism recorded is that of Sarah Frances, daughter of William Bryan and Nancy Vowels, b. 17 Nov 1848, godmother, Sarah Ann Craycroft. (In Father Lyon's compilation of the records at St. Martin's, Sarah was actually born 17 Nov 1847, and had been baptized 12 Jan 1848, the original needs to be checked)....

The last Baptism recorded at St. Martin's by Father Coomes was administered on 26 Apr 1870, to Laura Isabel, d/o William B. Lancaster and Malvina Jane Dillard. During the long time in which Father Coomes had charge of this mission he was occasionally assisted by Fathers Wathen, Champige, R.A. Abell, Bekkers, and Degauquier. After Father Coomes came Rev. J. Ryan, and Rev. J. Creary, both of whom remained but a short time. In 1871, Fr. Barrett had charge and was succeeded by Rev. James Ryan in 1872. He is at present the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Alton, IL. During the pastorate of Father Ryan, a school was opened and a new pastoral residence was built, and attention given to many needed repairs. He was succeeded by the Father E. VanTroostenberge, who stayed just a short time. He died of yellow fever in the South, whither he had gone to nurse and assist the sufferers.

In 1873, Rev. James O'Connor became pastor...staying 17 years. He was succeeded by Rev. John J. Fitzgerald. Father Fitzgerald was no stranger to the people of St. Martins, as for a number of years he was in charge of St. John's and St. Ambrose's Churches in Hardin County and was spiritual director to the Loretto Sisters at Bethlehem Academy...When he was appointed to St. Martin's he was also charged to care for St. Patrick's at Stithton as a mission. St. Patrick's is attended about twice a month from St. Martin's. Occasionally Mass is also said at West Point at the house of Mrs. McCormack, about two miles from the railway station. Father Fitzgerald enjoys the trip on the handcar down the track. Mr. Lynch is section master at West Point and with right good will does he direct his men to "run the hand car down to McCormacks." Besides, when the mills at Grahampton are working and Catholics are in town, Father Fitzgerald has said Mass for them as they are far from church and too poor to pay for conveyances to attend at St. Patrick's, the nearest church. We hope to see the day that St. Patrick's may have a resident pastor. No better people can be found than those at St. Patrick's.

The new church of St. Martin's is of the simple gothic rather ornate style of architecture. It is built of brick, with trimmings of terra cotta and cut stone. The extreme dimensions are one hundred and fifteen feet by forty five. The main entrance is through the tower, which rises 86 feet and is surmounted by a beautiful cross. The clear story is over graceful arches resting on eight iron columns. These are surmounted by graceful and beautiful Corinthian capitals. Everything is well proportioned and finished in first class style. The donors of the stained glass windows are the Rev. J.J. Fitzgerald, Joshua Lancaster, Mary Rhodes, Mark Lancaster, W. T. McDonough, Joseph Brown, Mrs. McDonough, W. A. Brown, Miss Alma Brown, Mrs. W. A. Brown, P. P. Nevitt, Mrs. P. P. Nevitt, in memory of Thomas Ballard, J. H. Thompson for his deceased relatives, Mr. R. C. Craycroft, Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Medley, Mrs. Isabella Simms in memory of Michael Whelan, Charles Shircliff for his parents, Mr. W.H. Edelin in memory of Mrs. Eliza Edelin and Mrs. Donie Edelin, and Charles Jones, in memory of deceased relatives, and now it stands a memorial to himself.

...Besides the above donations many others have been made. The Stations of the Cross, by Mrs. W. H. Edelin, a new missal by Mr. R. C. Craycroft, a fine crucifix, by Ben and Will Whelan and altar cards by Mrs. Dan Whelan and James Brown, the large candlesticks by Mrs. Snyder and the ladies of the congregation, the altar linens by Mrs. Schwabenton, Mrs. P. P. Nevitt and Mrs. Will Craycroft, besides handsome donations from Loeb & Soloman of Vine Grove and Myers & Jacob of Big Springs...Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cissell donated over two thousand dollars before their deaths.

...Other names mentioned as contributors to the work were Mrs. Mary Catherine Brown, Augustus Brown, F. T. Whelan, Charles Jones, Joe Hall, Richard Flaherty, Robert Spalding, B. W. Ritchie, Mrs. Mary Bickett, Lee Hagar, Thomas Hagar, E. C. Hardesty, W. L. Wright, C.A. Montgomery, John P. Osborne, J.W. Newton, J.W. Medley, J. F. Knott, Mrs. Mary Rhodes, Mrs. Eliza Bickett, Fred Edelin, F. M. Lancaster, R. E. Yates, Charles Shircliff, Joseph Peak, M. W. Flaherty, Richard Norris, Joseph Medley, W. B. Lancaster, Robert A. Craycroft, G. C. Redmond, W. E. Pendleton, W. T. McDonough, Joseph C. Brown, H. P. Jones, W. T. Hughes, G. T. Bickett, J. A. Snyder, W. Craycroft, A. A. Ray, W. H. Hagar, H. T. Peak, A. S. Craycroft, J. H. Thompson, P. P. Nevitt, E. M. Whelan, John Buckman, Mrs. John Mattingly, Joshua Lancaster, E. V. Buckman, R. A. Hamilton, Mrs. Sallie Hardesty, C. H. Peak, Lee Berry, Francis Ritchie, F. E. Hardesty, J. O. Cosby, B. W. Talbot, E. O. Bickett, J. V. Redmond, Ben Lancaster, Edward Lancaster, John Brown, Mrs. Ida Owings, Rev. Anthony Sullivan, William Osborne, Hilary Rhodes, Mrs. Hilf, Mrs. Elizabeth Bickett, Mrs. Bowman, Mrs. Overton, Mrs. Arnet, Ed Ritchie, George Corbett, Lavie Hobbs, Ben Whelan, William Whelan, Doctor Cosby, Sr. , R. A. Nevitt, Matilda Mitchell, Elias Ray, Joe Bickett and many others. In the beginning when we were seeking ground on which to make the bricks, after many others in better circumstances refused us their property, Mr. Flaherty came forward to tender us his best field and if necessary all his fencing....When a post office was opened here, Mr. Flaherty as chief petitioner, requested the name of St. Martin's be given the post office, as that is the name given the community; but by return of the Post Office authorities it was overlooked for the equally Catholic name of Flaherty...

I must not omit to mention the fact that St. Martin's justly boasts of one of the very best choirs in the diocese among the country congregations. Miss Rebecca Brown...took charge when Father Fitzgerald came. She was assisted by Miss Alma Brown, Miss Frankie Craycroft, who is the principal singer, by Misses Ella Flaherty, Carrie Cooper, Nannie Craycroft, Katie Flaherty, Edith Craycroft, Victoria Craycroft, Hallie Craycroft, and by Messrs. James and Jerome Cooper, J. Edelin, Lafe Whelan, Damien Cooper, S. Lancaster, J. Whelan, and John Osborne.

The choir of St. Martin's was assisted by the St. Paul Juvenile Brass Band of Louisville at both the ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone and the dedication. This band is composed of small boys under the leadership of Professor Hollywood, and under the care of Father York.

Shelly Sims, a member of St. Martin's Historical committee, wrote in 1986 that Thomas Boarman's home was located on what is now the Johnny Mitchell Road, and that Ben Elder's home stood on the present Joe Hamilton farm on KY 1600, west of Flaherty, on the way to Big Springs. The C. A. Craycroft home stood at the foot of Bee Knob Hill, presently the farm of Linda Magar Hobbs.

The fellowship and earnestness of the old parishioners has been retained throughout all these years. There is no better community in which to live than that of St. Martin's and Flaherty. In 1983, a committee was formed under the guidance of Rev. Joseph Irvin Mouser to study and preserve the history of the parish. Shelly Sims, a lifelong member of St. Martin's wrote a short history. Much of the story of St. Martin's at Flaherty was told by Shelly as she knew it through 1986. She mentioned in her opening paragraph the "influx of Catholics into the newly organized Meade County after 1823." Many Catholics came over into this area from Nelson, Washington and Marion Counties. They settled first in the northwestern area of Meade County where St. Theresa's was established in 1831 by Reverend Charles Ignatius Coomes. Shortly after this a church was erected at Plain Dealing on Otter Creek, then one in the Stithton area (presently a part of the Fort Knox reservation.) The first St. Patrick's church was erected on that tract of land which today adjoins the main Post cemetery at Fort Knox. As the population of the county increased, more people settled in the southeastern area of Meade County between Big Spring and Otter Creek. (Father John Lyons, former archivist, wrote that Coomes rode a circuit of parishes covering possibly 200 miles; Father Coomes kept beautiful records in all these parishes, ats).

The Rev. George Niehaus began a 19 year pastorate in 1895. The furnishings for the inside of the church were completed as donations were made. The bell was not installed in the belfry until 1901. (Wayne Whelan, who worked for many years as head of maintenance for our parish remembers that the year "1896" appears on the bell.) A new shingle roof was put on the rectory and the big cross was erected in the cemetery at the location of the first church.

Reverend George Friedrich came in 1914 and stayed until 1926. During his stay a white frame school building was erected. The three story building had grades one through eight on the ground floor and the second floor was living quarters for the nuns from Mount St. Joseph who taught at the new school. A kitchen area dining room and laundry area for the nuns were in the basement. There was a large attic area on the third floor. From 1934 until about 1949 this area became a dormitory for Catholic girls living and attending school here. Many attended from Rhodelia and Payneville in the "lower" end of Meade County. Several of these girls married into Flaherty families.

Reverend Joseph Gettlefinger came as pastor in 1926. High school classes were added by Father Joe. In 1933, Father Fred Gettlefinger, brother to Father Joe, came. With the arrival of Father Fred there was an era of growth and change that hasn't been rivaled since.

A new high school was built in 1935 and again the people of the parish furnished money, labor and material. A large building was torn down in Fort Knox to get the lumber and the giant beams that it contained, the only cost being to haul it away, clean to the ground. This seemed an easy task and soon the men had the building down to the foundation, only to find that it was sitting on a solid concrete block. The men

chipped away at it for days and hardly made any difference . It was plain to see that this would take months, if not years for them to get rid of the concrete. Father Gettlefinger noticed that every morning hundreds of soldiers poured out of the nearby barracks to do their callisthenic and then stood around doing nothing. He went to their commanding officer and suggested it might be a good thing if they were doing something useful. Soon hundreds of soldiers were working on the block of concrete and in a few days it was gone.

The new gymnasium was equipped with a movie screen and projector and family movies were shown every Sunday afternoon. Many an old farmer watched Shirley Temple dance across the screen there.

A gas well had been drilled on a farm several miles from church and the cost of pipe made piping it prohibitive until Father found a supply of second hand pipe to do the job. The gas was used in the church, school buildings, as well as the homes and businesses of Flaherty.

A water well was drilled between the white frame school building and the church and a water company formed for the entire town.

Father Fred bought two school buses with his own money and established bus routes for the school. He converted the attic area of the nuns' quarters into dormitories for young ladies so that the Catholic girls from St. Theresa's and St. Mary Magdalen's could board there and attend Catholic High School. This practice was discontinued about 1950 as St. Martin's had by now become a Public School and buses traveled to all parts of the County.

Rev. Paul Martin Russell came in 1939 and he continued with renovations and improvements. An old building that had been remodeled for shop use was torn down and a new building was erected for use of the Future Farmers of America. A pipe organ was installed in the church and this necessitated lowering the choir loft. A complete renovation of the church was done in 1946. The church heretofore had been painted all over in a light tan color. After the re-decoration, it was done in a very ornate and symbolic style with bright colors and stencils which made a refreshing change. The cornerstone for a new gymnasium with stage, bleachers, restrooms, dressing rooms, was laid in 1947 and was finished early in 1949. It was the largest gym in the area for a time and district ball games were held there. In 1950 the old gym of the building that Father Gettlefinger supervised was converted into more classrooms.

The statue of Mary as Our Lady of Fatima was erected in the yard adjacent to the rectory.

The pavilion in the picnic grounds was built by parishioners to accommodate the picnics and homecomings. It is still used today for family reunions and for parish activities, such as the annual Bible school.

The Flaherty Picnic was practically an institution. It was an annual affair and was looked forward to by young and old alike. (The first documentation for a picnic at Flaherty was in the Diocesan newspaper, *The Record*, dateline of June 25, 1892, in which it was reported from Meade County that "the members of St. Martin's Congregation are preparing for a grand picnic to be held on the church grounds, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The earnestness shown by each and every family in this work is sufficient to justify the prediction that this will be a first class picnic in every particular. The proceeds will be used towards the building of a new church. The object is undoubtedly a worthy one, and a large concourse of people will certainly attend. The pastor expects to meet all his old friends from St. John's and St. Ambrose's on that day." (excerpted from copies of old clippings sent to the historical committee by Father John Lyons) Former parishioners, friends and relatives came from all the surrounding counties and those from far away timed their vacations to Kentucky to coincide with the date of the picnic, the last Saturday of July. There was no other way they could see as many people as to visit the picnic. The dinners were legendary. The men of the parish started cooking beef and mutton the day before. The lady of the house brought 4 fried chickens, 1/2 gallon each of green beans, corn, cole slaw and strong sweetened tea along with two pies, and one cake and all the ripe tomatoes they could spare. Each lady was also expected to furnish at least one embroidered, crocheted or knitted item to be raffled in the linen booth. As more of the men left the farm to take public jobs and more of the ladies entered the work force they found that they neither had the time nor the energy to plan and execute the picnic. Instead it was agreed that the amount of the Sunday donations and special donations would be increased enough to bring in the amount to either equal or surpass the income from the picnic. The last annual picnic was held in 1961.

Father Russell's pastoral duties were expanded in 1961 when he assumed the duties of pastor for the mission of St. Sebastian in Muldraugh.

The eleventh of the parish buildings was the new brick elementary school between the white frame school and the church. This was built in 1958-1959.

With the arrival of Rev. John R. Clancy in 1967, the 28 year long pastorship of Father Russell ended. As Father Clancy implemented the changes required by Vatican II, we saw the last of the Latin Mass and started seeing the front of the priest as our altars were placed facing the congregation.

Father Clancy had the Rectory re-decorated and the church was also remodeled. Carpeting and new pews were installed as well as air-conditioning. The stained glass windows were cleaned and repaired and permanent storm windows

installed. Wrought iron railings were placed on the exterior steps, and the front apron was concreted. Indirect lighting was installed and the church's interior was painted in restful pastel shades. The stained glass windows were replaced on each side of the main altar, having been removed when the flue for the old coal furnace was added. The decorations gave the church a calm, elegant atmosphere and accentuated the beauty of the old wooden altars that were retained. Father Clancy also had much work done on the cemetery. Chain link fencing was installed and much landscaping was added.

The practice of having the men of the parish mow and trim the cemetery and grounds about every two weeks during the growing season was begun. In 1968, the Flaherty High School was consolidated with Meade County High School. As the FFA building was no longer needed for that purpose, it was remodeled into a parish hall to be used for meetings, wedding receptions, etc. The mission of St. Sebastian was closed in 1973 due to poor attendance.

Rev. Joseph Irwin Mouser came in 1980. He continued with the improvement of the grounds, and had many old rotting trees removed from the picnic area and new trees planted to replace them. Game courts were built and picnic tables and benches were built and installed. The exteriors of many buildings were repainted. The statue of Mary was relocated to a different area of the lawn. The rectory was restored inside and out. (This old house was built in 1879 according to stories gleaned from old Diocesan newspapers) A ramp for the physically handicapped was added at one of the side front doors of the church. The church was designated a Kentucky historical landmark in 1983.

After sixty-four years of service to St. Martin's by the Ursuline Sisters of Maple Mount the last Ursuline nun left the parish in 1983. The first white frame building which served as both school and home for the sisters was remodeled and the parish historical committee began to clean up and adapt the basement into an archives and museum for the parish and the community. This work was to continue under the encouragement of Father Helm.

Father Mouser left the summer of 1985 and was replaced by our fifteenth pastor, Rev. John Helm. The parish continued to thrive and grow spiritually under Father Helm's pastoral care until 1992. During his time here there were two occasions when St. Martin's and the Buck Grove Baptist Church memberships met for joint services in the evening during Christian Unity Week, once at each other's churches. Rev. Dr. Floyd Price spoke at St. Martin's and Father John spoke the sermon at Buck Grove. Father John is remembered as a good homilist.

Father Harry Gelthouse served from 1992 until 1994; Father Tony Smith was assigned to St. Martin's in 1994 and served until 2002. During Father Smith's pastoral care, St. Martin's parish in Flaherty, Meade County, Kentucky was clustered with St. Brigid's

Church in Vine Grove, Hardin County, Kentucky. This occurred in 1996. This was a big challenge for Father Tony Smith and for the two parishes. Father Tony made his residence in the old rectory at Flaherty. He was continually challenging the parishioners to stay involved or become more involved in parish activities, having a good understanding of the challenges the church could face in the years to come. The two parishes worked well together. One of the cooperative efforts that began and still is a source of comfort to bereaved families is the Resurrection choir. Members from both St. Brigid's and St. Martin's still meet at Flaherty for funeral celebrations, even though 2004 saw this cluster being changed. Flaherty is part of Region 10 of the Archdiocese of Louisville and many of the parishes in the region attend our annual Corpus Christi procession. The forty-fourth annual Corpus Christi procession was held in 2005.

Rev. Christopher M. Scalise was assigned to Flaherty in 2002 and stayed until January of 2004. Father Jeff Gatlin served the parish for a short six months until the arrival of our present pastor, Father Paul Beach. When Father Paul Beach came in June of 2004, St. Martin's became clustered with St. John's in Brandenburg, also in Meade County, while St. Brigid's became clustered with another Hardin County parish, St. Christopher's, in Radcliff. The new cluster of St. Martin's and St. John's seems to be a good fit, while at the same time the two parishes retain their separate identities. St. Martin's continues to be a rural parish, while St. John's is a small town parish. There are ties that bind in the family connections between the two parishes that go back as many as eight generations.

St. Martin's and the Flaherty community have always reached out to neighbors in time of need. An article in the *Elizabethtown News* in 1939 about the community of Flaherty spoke about the great faith that "built the community." That article was published on June 6 and then was reprinted in *The Record* on Thursday, June 22, 1939. The author (unknown) spoke about Flaherty being "a story of people rather than a story of a productive earth." The writer continued: "It is a story of a thrifty, God-loving population directed by a modest and intelligent Catholic priest (Father Fred Gettlefinger). Many of those accomplishments during those years under Father Gettlefinger have already been mentioned. St. Martins' and the un-incorporated town of Flaherty are still tied together. The folks here care for their neighbors, whether Catholic or Protestant. The community plays together, grieves together and works together. We even celebrate together. One of those celebrations is the annual Senior Citizens Dinner held in the fall. A longtime member of the parish remembers that twelve to fifteen community members, both Catholic and Protestant, signed the note at the bank to build the present Flaherty firehouse. The firehouse was built in 1985 after money was raised at Tuesday night Bingo games held in St. Martin's parish hall. All Flaherty firemen are volunteers and none are paid, not even the fire chief who is a member of our parish. The fire department annually raises a large sum of money for the Crusade for Children, beginning with Lenten fish fries which are famous in the community.

Many parishioners have always been involved in the Flaherty Ball Park, both building the fields and playground areas as well as coaching the hundreds of children who participate on the teams. The youth of St. Martin's participate in activities every year at the Wayside Mission in Louisville. Children continue to play an important part in the church's activities, both liturgically and educationally. Presently, Sister Patricia McNamara, a Dominican sister from Springfield, Kentucky is our Director of Religious Education and she advises these activities through all life stages. There are over thirty parishioners involved in all stages of religious education. Many parishioners are now employed by the Meade County Board of Education and work in Flaherty Elementary School as teachers and aides, making very poignant witness to the old adage, "it takes a village to raise a child."

There are about 250 parishioners involved in other stewardship activities of the parish to include, altar servers, cemetery workers, lectors; music ministers, bereavement volunteers, sacristans, financial planners, and maintenance workers. On a recent Saturday over forty parishioners of all ages helped on the grounds, trimming, and repairing, and feeding the laborers. In 1852 Father Coomes recorded sixty-seven families consisting of 460 souls. Today there are over 476 families of more than 1425 souls. That same earnestness and strength of faith that was recorded in 1894 is alive and well today.