

## Saint Joseph Mission Church



*The Meeting of Father Peter Henry Lemke O.S.B. and Prince Demetrius Gallitzin*

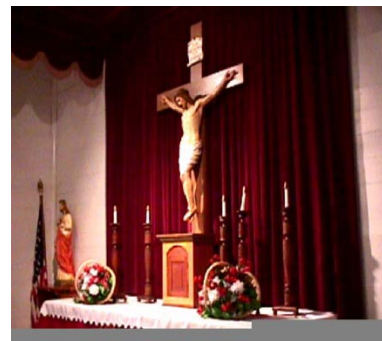
Saint Joseph Mission Church is a trim and slightly little white structure standing alone in the countryside. But it bears silent testimony to the work of Prince Demetrius Gallitzin, Apostle of the Alleghenies, and Rev. Father Peter Lemke, O.S.B. first appointed pastor of the little white mission church. The structure itself, however, proclaims to all who see it as a symbol of the great love the Catholic Pioneers had for their religion. Hidden from sight, and yet forming the basic structure of the church, is the old log church built in 1830 by the labors of those who rest in peace in the nearby cemetery.

If the voices of the dead could be heard, they would tell of the hardships the Catholics in the early nineteenth century met and overcame to establish a church: they would tell of the meeting of Prince Gallitzin and Father Lemke on the Munster Loretto Road; they would tell of the defense of Prince Gallitzin by John Weakland; they would tell of the arrival of the Benedictines in America and their Work here.



This little mission church, the fruit of the zealous labor of the Catholic Pioneers, was the center of Catholicism in Northern Cambria County between 1830 and 1849. Were it not for their deep love of the Faith, it is difficult to say whether or not Northern Cambria County would be largely Catholic as it is today. Saint Joseph's had a humble beginning as a log church, and today it stands, essentially a log church. In its history one finds nothing startling or momentous. But, directly or indirectly, Saint Joseph's has sent good men and good women – people of all professions and trades in all walks of life to all parts of the United States. These men and women were thoroughly drilled in the principles of Christianity, which Prince Gallitzin and Father Lemke labored so studiously to instill; men and women deeply rooted in the foundation of true Americanism, which is the result of their Catholic heritage.

Just as the world history of the Middle Ages cannot be separated from the history of the Catholic church of that time, so also the early history of Northern Cambria County is almost identical with the history of Catholicism in this area. The communities of Loretto and Carrolltown, for example, are the result of the work of two priests. The growth of the many nearby towns increased, no doubt, with the development of the Catholic mission in those communities.



Today, hundreds and hundreds of Catholic in Pennsylvania, especially in Northern Cambria County enjoy the blessings of a Catholic heritage which was cradled and nourished within the hallowed log walls of Saint Joseph's Mission Church at Heart's sleeping Place.

Truly, Saint Joseph's Church stands as a shrine in honor of the Catholic pioneers.