First Lady of Maryland Comes to Newtowne Manor House

On Thursday, June 7th, First Lady Yumi Hogan visited the Newtowne Manor House to participate in a redbud tree planting ceremony to commemorate the St. Mary’s County Garden Club’s 80th Anniversary and our participation in the 2018 Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage. Fr. Rob Maro opened the ceremony with a prayer and welcomed the Garden Club members and the Newtowne Manor House Restoration committee.

First Lady Yumi Hogan congratulated the St. Mary’s Garden Club on its 80th Anniversary of preservation efforts for historic treasures in the State of Maryland. She read a Maryland State Proclamation given to the St. Mary’s County Garden Club which was accepted by Susan Tyner, President of the Garden Club.

Matt Morgan, State Delegate continued the ceremony by thanking Fr. Rob and congratulating him on being named pastor at St. Francis Xavier Church. Delegate Morgan recognized the Garden Club’s hard work in preservation of historic treasures and this year’s special project the Newtowne Manor House. He also recognized the Friends of Newtowne Manor House for their efforts to preserve and restore the 1789 Manor House.

Specially painted and decaled shovels with the Manor House picture were used by Mrs. Hogan, Fr. Rob and Beth Bonifant, Co-chair of the 2018 Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage to plant the 7 foot redbud tree donated by Wentworth’s Nursery.

God blessed Newtowne Manor with a beautiful sunny day. Mrs. Hogan was so gracious taking pictures and visiting with everyone in attendance. All enjoyed a cool drink and decorative cookies adorning the Garden Club’s 80th year logo under the shade of a nearby oak tree.
Mrs. Hogan, Fr. Rob and Beth Bonifant shovel the dirt to plant the redbud tree.

Left: Mrs. Hogan poses with Frank and Pat Greenwell. Above: Mrs. Hogan stops to talk with Isabel Rebarchick, Margaret Bridgwater and Pam Howe. Carol Perrie, Walt and Anne Hayes join in the conversation.
Georgetown University Research

At Georgetown University, members of the Manor House Restoration Committee have discovered many treasures depicting St. Francis Xavier Church and Newtown. The Woodstock Letters which were written by Jesuit priests tells of many breathtaking descriptions of life at Newtown. You may access these by going to Jesuit Online Library.

This particular excerpt was chosen because of the description of the lovely gardens and the use of the treasured flowers for the altar; this excerpt explains the love of the natural beauty here at Newtown and what a connection it makes at this particular time with the St. Mary’s County Garden Club and its 80th Anniversary. The Manor House Restoration Committee has a deep appreciation for all the members’ hard work and thanks for making the Garden Club Pilgrimage such a success this year.

Woodstock Letters, Volume XIII, Number 1, 1 March 1884

In St. Mary’s there is one place whose story is more sacred and more interwoven with the history of our holy religion in these parts than any other, and that is Newtown.

In former times the Newtown Manor was surrounded by so many outhouses and workshops that it seemed to stand in the centre of a village. A beautiful garden and an orchard that gloried in fruits of almost every description were at one time attached to it. Most of the fruit trees have died a natural death, or have been felled by the cruel axe, and the once lovely garden, that grew many fair and rare flowers for the altar, and in which our Fathers recited their office, and our Brothers told their beads, is now a thing of the past. Maryland is noted for its hospitality. But in no house in the whole state were guests more welcome, or more kindly received, than in Newtown Manor during the time our Fathers resided there.

Southern Maryland Genealogy & History Fair Day

The Friends of Newtowne Manor House was invited to participate in the Southern Maryland Genealogy & History Fair Day on June 30th at the College of Southern Maryland in LaPlata. The day long event included speakers featuring how to search genealogy, period dress and history as well as reading and understanding DNA use, kits and reports. There was more than 20 table exhibits. This event was sponsored by the Southern Maryland Family History Study Group and has over 75,000 contacts and members.

Meeting Attendance

All parishioners are invited to attend the monthly Manor House meetings. Typically the nights are alternated on Mondays and Thursdays. The next meeting will be held Thursday, September 27, 2018.

Oral History Project

The oral histories of St. Francis Xavier Church and the Newtowne Manor House are continuing to be collected. A special thanks to all who have been interviewed so far and to those who have asked the questions. If you are interested in being interviewed or conducting an interview, please contact Lynn Delahay, 240-925-6485 or Sarah Matisick, 301-247-7416.
Site and Interpretive Panels Installed

Over the past year, the Panel sub-committee of the Friends of Newtowne Manor House under the leadership of Steve Raley has been working with Jennifer Pitts, Project Manager on the FY18 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority grant. The Archdiocese of Washington has given approval of the panels. Although potential sites were chosen and approved by the Maryland Historical Trust, prior to the installation of the panels, an archaeology study was conducted on the site locations to insure protection of any artifacts discovered. The site panel located by the Church and two interpretive panels located on the northeast corner of the Manor House were completed and installed July 5, 2018.

Special thanks to Fr. Rob for his support, Steve Raley, Frank Greenwell, Pat Greenwell, Chris Senese, Carol Moody, Mike DeManss, Sarah Matisick, Mike Smolek, Archaeologist, Ruth Mitchell, Archaeologist, August Rowell, George Matisick, Drew Dowdell and Walt Hayes.