

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kentucky	
COUNTY: Scott	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 11 1973

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
St. Francis Mission At White Sulphur

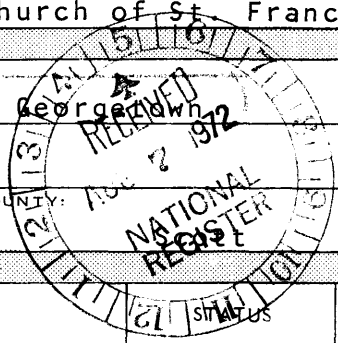
AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Church Of St. Pius, Church of St. Francis

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
U.S. 460 - 7 miles west of Georgetown

CITY OR TOWN:  
Georgetown

STATE: Kentucky      CODE: 21      COUNTY:      CODE: 209



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Most Rev. R. H. Ackerman, D.D. Bishop  
Diocese of Covington (Roman Catholic)

STREET AND NUMBER: 1140 Madison Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Covington      STATE: Kentucky      CODE: 21

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Scott County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER: Main & Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown      STATE: Kentucky      CODE: 21

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey Of Historic Sites In Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort      STATE: Kentucky      CODE: 21

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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COUNTY:  
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7. DESCRIPTION

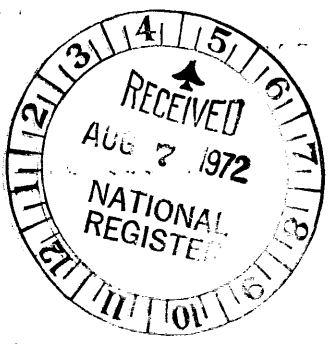
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Francis Mission was built in 1820 to serve the populous congregation of Catholics who had come to Kentucky from Maryland in 1786. The brick church of Gothic design with classical detail (fanlight detail, pilasters) is in excellent condition, having been restored twice in this century after decades of neglect, the Catholic population having for the most part moved away. Stained glass windows are mounted in the ~~door~~ <sup>pointed</sup> arch windows, four on each side and one above the door; these probably were added after 1820. A Gothic steeple with arched outlooks is mounted on the front part of the gabled roof. The brick was painted a dark red in 1971.

The interior of the Mission has floors and altar rail of ash; pews with button-closing paneled doors; arches borne by octagonal columns and a balcony from which the choir sings. Colors inside are light blue, white, and natural ash.

A terra cotta shrine to Our Lady of Fatima was established in the foreground of the church after the most recent renovation. A large cemetery is across the road from this shrine to Catholicism in Kentucky.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

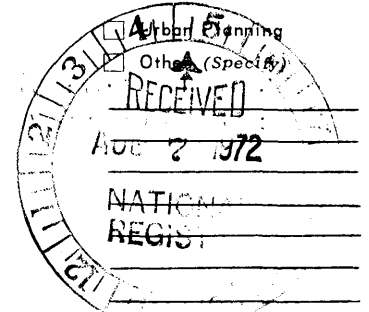
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1820

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This Gothic brick church on the Frankfort Pike in a now secluded rural community has stood since 1820, representing the oldest Catholic congregation in the present Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington, and the second oldest such congregation in Kentucky. But for the recalcitrance of its early congregations, St. Francis Mission as we know it today might well have assumed the role now held by the Cathedral at Bardstown.

Anti-authoritarianism was a characteristic of the first 35 years of the congregation at White Sulphur. The community was settled by Marland Catholics in 1786, the year that Georgetown was settled by Virginia Baptists. Priest after priest strived to establish Kentucky missions from their base at White Sulphur, including the Rev. Father Stephen Badin, first Catholic priest to be consecrated in the United States and of later fame as poet and as the "Apostle of Kentucky." For a few years the immigrants were served by the Rev. Charles Whalen, although he established no congregation. There were at least 14 families in the earliest days, and by 1794, when the church was established, there were 25 Catholic families in the neighborhood. Father Badin came to Kentucky in 1793, saying his first mass during Advent of that year at White Sulphur. He located his ministry there, traveling frequently to the distant Catholic neighborhoods. The first building stood about a half mile west of the present one. Attempts by parishioners to relocate the church property against the will of and without the knowledge of the bishop created great problems for the church. Father Badin wrote that "this congregation tried his patience more than any other during his priestly career." Between 1795 and 1799 Father Badin returned to this church only twice, having relocated in Nelson County near Bardstown. Subsequent priests served most of Central and Eastern Kentucky from White Sulphur, including the Rev. Antonius Angier.

Father Samuel Montgomery led in the construction of the present edifice, but controversy accompanied the construction. Father Guy Chabrat came in 1823, and his priesthood was enhanced when the Sisters of Nazareth established an academy at White Sulphur, the first Catholic school in eastern Kentucky. Finally in 1827, the unruly parishioners calmed down under the leadership of Father Francis Patrick Kenrick, who later became Archbishop of Baltimore. (see continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

IS THIS MARYLAND?

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Rev. Paul E. Ryan, History of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky, (Covington, 1954).  
 The Rev. W.B. Curry, "History, 1793-1922, Catholic Church, White Sulphur, Kentucky," reprinted in The Georgetown News, July 30, 1971.  
 Ann B. Bevins, "Church In Scott Called Cradle Of Catholicism in West," The Lexington Leader, Dec. 18, 1962; and "White Sulphur Church Had Trouble in Early Days," The Graphic, Georgetown, Kentucky, August 21, 1969.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"		38° 12' 28"	84° 41' 49"	
NE	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				
SE	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				
SW	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				

UTM  
 16/701630  
 4231170  
 CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: three acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Ann B. Bevins, Scott County Representative

ORGANIZATION Kentucky Heritage Commission and Scott County Historical Society DATE 3/20/72

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Route # 4 - Lexington Pike

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown STATE: Kentucky CODE: 21

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name [Signature]

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 8/2/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/11/73

ATTEST [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 4 4 73

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kentucky	
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(Number all entries) #8 Statement Of Significance

Five priests who ultimately became bishops served the congregation at St. Francis. These included Father Kenrick, discussed in the preceding paragraph; the Rev. Edward Fenwick, the Rev. Guy Chabrat and the Rev. Ferdinand Brossart. Bishop George Carrell, first bishop of Covington, established his second home and a seminary at White Sulphur in 1856. The seminary had as its stated purpose to train native clergy to "go forth to spread the faith throughout the new diocese just as pioneer priests had gone forth from White Sulphur to serve the whole of Eastern Kentucky..." The seminary called St. Stanislas Preparatory College, disbanded during the Civil War, after which the buildings were used as an orphanage under the Religious Brothers of Puy, France. The church became a mission of the newly consecrated St. John's Church of Georgetown in 1869.

In 1875 the third educational venture to develop under the Catholics at White Sulphur was instituted in the name of Mount Admirabilis by the Sisters of the Visitation. It grew from a 15 student to a 65 student boarding school for young ladies in 1885. In 1896 the school was moved to Cardome, home of the late Governor James F. Robinson.

In 1929 with the church showing serious signs of its years of neglect, Father Charles A. Towell resolved "to see that White Sulphur was again restored to the niche it deserved." He raised \$19,000 for its restoration. The Fast Of Corpus Christi was held at the church in 1933 when the mission was renamed to the patronage of St. Francis de Sales, having been under the cognizance of St. Pius for some time.

Further renovation, at a cost of \$53,000 was undertaken in 1951 under the direction of the Rev. Jerome P. Heuerman, priest at St. John's. The Diocesan centennial took place here in 1953.

Various Catholic writers have called St. Francis Mission "the cradle of Catholicism in the west;" a "rural rarity;" and "a church with a history inseparable from that of the Roman Catholic Church in America."

