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New Jersey **Catholic Records Newsletter**

VOLUME VI NO. 3

SUMMER 1987



Interior of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Camden.

Golden Jubilee of Camden Diocese

December 1987 will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of two dioceses in the state of New Jersey, Camden and Paterson, and the raising of the diocese of Newark to the status of an archdiocese. Newark, Trenton, Paterson and Camden thenceforward comprised the ecclesiastical province of New Jersey. In celebration of the anniversary, the archdiocese of Newark and the diocese of Paterson will initiate year-long observances beginning in December 1987. The diocese of Camden, on the other hand, will bring to a close the series of celebrations which it inaugurated in October 1986. Speaking to a convocation of priests at Ocean City, Bishop George H. Guilfoyle, the fourth ordinary of the diocese, announced the jubilee year and called upon his audience to join him in looking back over 50 years of diocesan history, "but principally to be grateful, to learn from those who went before us and to renew our commitment to respond with faith and generosity to God's call today to each one of us."

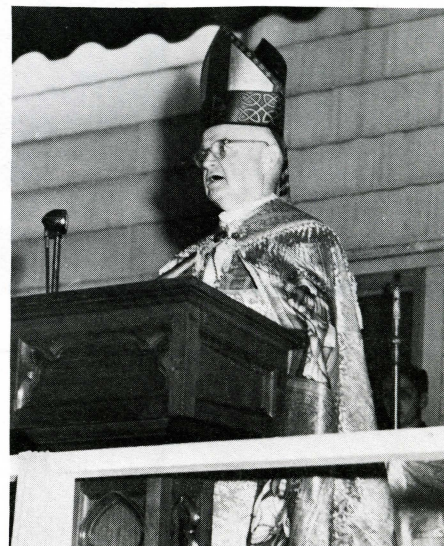
The diocese of Camden was formed by the separation of the six southern counties of New Jersey—Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem—from the diocese of Trenton, which from 1881 until 1937 embraced 14 central and southern counties of the state. The new diocese embraced 2,700 square miles, about 100,000 resident Catholics, 49 parishes, 75 diocesan priests and 11 priests of religious communities. Fifteen religious communities of women and five of men served in the diocese. There were 30 Catholic grade schools, five Catholic high schools, no Catholic welfare institutions. Still in the midst of the Great Depression following the Crash of 1929, the Catholic community of south Jersey faced a daunting challenge.

To lead them as first bishop of Camden, the Catholics of the area welcomed Bartholomew J. Eustace, a 50-year-old priest of the Archdiocese of New York and the son of Irish immigrants. Bishop Eustace was consecrated on



Bishop Guilfoyle preaches in the Cathedral.

March 25, 1938 and officially installed as Camden's first Ordinary on May 4. He accepted the task of organizing the new diocese and familiarizing himself with its priests, people and problems, and until the mid-1950s, when deteriorating health forced a curtailment of his daily program, he moved actively about the diocese, attending parish events, visiting rectories, schools and other institutions, constantly evaluating problems and seeking solutions. During his administration, 31 new parishes and 25 new missions were erected, new elementary and high schools opened and existing ones expanded, and four health-care institutions opened their doors. Bishop Eustace also initiated strong efforts to meet the needs of Black and Hispanic Catholics in the diocese, and to serve the migrant workers who picked south Jersey's crops. To coordinate many of these efforts, the Catholic Charities office was established in 1940. Ten years later, the diocese of Camden established its own weekly newspaper, *The Catholic Star-Herald*, the first issue of which appeared on May 11, 1951. By that time, Bishop Eustace had already suffered the first of three heart attacks which progressively reduced his activity. In 1956 he was suffering from cancer and died on December 11 of that year. In his nearly 19 years as bishop he led the people of the diocese in laying solid foundations for the future.



Bishop Eustace at Mercy Hospital, Sea Isle City.

In January, 1957, the Holy See appointed Justin J. McCarthy, auxiliary bishop of Newark, second bishop of Camden. Like his predecessor, the new bishop served most of his priestly career as a seminary professor, teaching Sacred Scripture and Homiletics at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington from 1927 until 1937, and then serving as spiritual director there until 1953. In 1954 he became auxiliary to Archbishop Thomas A. Boland of Newark. Bishop McCarthy was installed as bishop on March 19, 1957 and less than 48 hours later suffered a heart attack which severely reduced his activities for several months. But by mid-June he was again fully active. He devoted his brief episcopacy to expanding the Hispanic apostolate, to strengthening Catholic education in the diocese, and to developing lay and youth activities. He died of a heart attack on December 26, 1959, less than three years after his arrival in Camden.

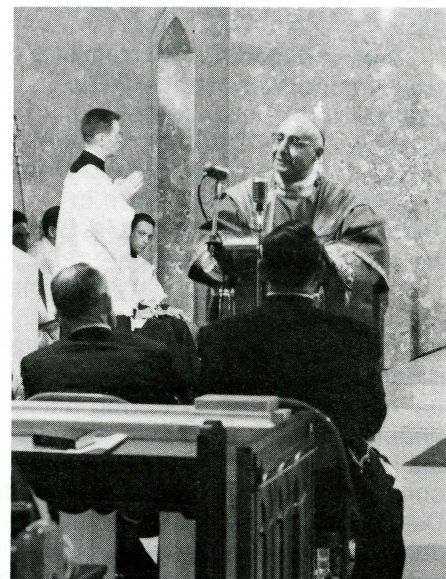
In the interval between the death of Bishop McCarthy and the arrival of his successor, Pope John XXIII electrified the world with his announcement that he would summon an Ecumenical Council and throw open the Church's windows. The papal statement stirred eager anticipation in some, cautious expectation in others, and tremulous fear in still others. The church of Camden, like the Universal Church, would live with these feelings over the next several decades.

On February 10, 1960 Camden learned that its next bishop would be Celestine J. Damiano, the 48-year-old son of immigrant Italian parents and a priest of the diocese of Buffalo. In 1947 Father Damiano had been called to serve in the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and five years later was made Apostolic Delegate to South Africa, where he was serving at the time of his appointment to Camden. In the seven years of his ministry in Camden, Archbishop Damiano continued the expansion of educational programs both in Catholic schools and in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and broadened the social welfare work of the diocese. Very mission-minded himself, he instituted a program under which Camden priests worked in the missions of Brazil. The archbishop participated in all the sessions of Vatican Council II and sought carefully and promptly to initiate in the diocese of Camden the programs adopted by the Council. Archbishop Damiano died suddenly on October 2, 1967 of a blood clot which blocked the passage of air to the lungs.

The fourth Bishop of Camden, Most Reverend George H. Guilfoyle, was named on January 10, 1968. Born in New York City, the son of Irish immigrant parents graduated

from Georgetown University and was admitted to the New York bar after completing legal studies at Fordham. Soon, however, he began to study for the priesthood and was ordained in 1944. He served in two parishes, then began a long career in Catholic Charities. In 1964 he was ordained bishop and became Episcopal Vicar for Staten Island, where he was serving when called to Camden. Bishop Guilfoyle's has been the longest tenure in Camden, and in some ways the most complicated, since it has fallen principally to him to lead in the adaptation of the Church of Camden to the decrees of Vatican II. New parish and diocesan structures and facilities have been developed, the permanent diaconate introduced, social services expanded. Special concern for the growing number of Hispanics in the diocese led to an increase in the number of churches serving them and to the recruitment or training of priests, religious and laity who are bilingual to staff diocesan facilities. Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, and Charismatic Renewal programs, among others, have served to strengthen lay spirituality.

Bishop Guilfoyle set the tone for Camden's golden jubilee celebration when he wrote in August, 1986: "We have much reason to re-



Archbishop Damiano addresses clergy in the Cathedral, 1960.

joice during the jubilee celebration, to render glory to God for His love and compassion among us during the past 50 years. The Church He established here nearly 50 years ago now has strong foundations and continues to build up His kingdom and spread His message. Yet, anything that has been accomplished has been under the direction of God's Holy Spirit and with His power as the source of all our strength and courage."

Corrigan Journal Available in December

Michael Augustine Corrigan's journal of his years as bishop of Newark from 1872 to 1880, edited by Joseph F. Mahoney and Peter Wosh, will be available in December. Jointly published by the New Jersey Catholic Historical

Records Commission and the New Jersey Historical Society, the book chronicles the bishop's activities as the chief shepherd of a rapidly growing flock between the Hudson and the Delaware rivers. Corrigan records the benchmarks of that growth—new parishes, new schools, increasing numbers of clergy and religious—and in so

doing adds substantially to our understanding of New Jersey in the Gilded Age. The 450-page, cloth-bound volume will be available from the New Jersey Historical Society, 230 Broadway, Newark, New Jersey 07104.

ORDER FORM

Please send _____ copy (copies) of *The Diocesan Journal of Michael Augustine Corrigan* at \$35.00 (plus \$1.75 postage and handling).

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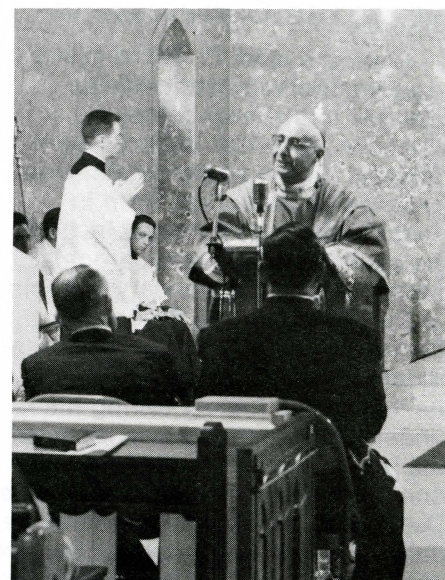
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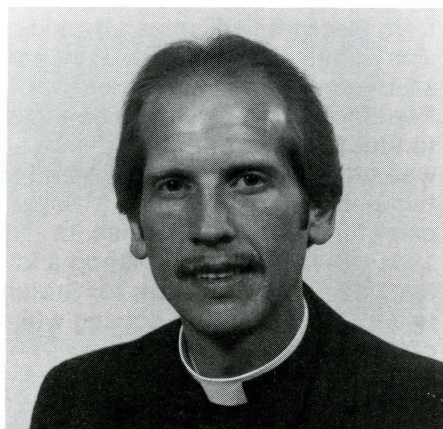
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Meet the Commission

Reverend Mark P. Dobrovolsky was the first representative appointed to the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission for the newly-established Diocese of Metuchen. Born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey in 1955, he attended public and parochial elementary and secondary schools in Carteret. Entering Seton Hall University Divinity School as a candidate for the Diocese of Trenton, he majored in history during his undergraduate career and received his baccalaureate in 1977. Upon completion of theological studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, he was awarded the Master of Divinity degree in 1980 and ordained to the priesthood for the Trenton diocese in 1981. Upon the establishment of the diocese of Metuchen he became a priest of the new diocese and has served as an assistant pastor in parishes in Warren and Woodbridge. His long-term interest in youth ministry led to an appointment as chaplain to Bishop George Ahr Regional High School, Edison, and involvement in numerous diocesan youth ministry programs. He is currently director of campus ministry and chaplain at St. Pius X Regional High School, Piscataway. A fascination with storytelling as a vehicle for preaching and teaching led him to pursue graduate studies in myth and folklore and membership in the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling. Intrigued by the history and archaeology of mesoamerican civilizations, particularly the Pre-Classic Maya period, he is currently engaged in graduate studies in that field. School vacations provide opportunities for on-site study and research in the Yucatan peninsula. In addition to his school assignment he serves as an assistant pastor at Sacred Heart Church, South Plainfield. For the Commission, he is a member of the public programs committee.



Reverend Mark P. Dobrovolsky.

Camden Diocesan History Published

Building God's Kingdom, a history of the diocese of Camden, was published this past summer as part of the celebration marking the golden jubilee of the diocese. Reverend James Betz wrote the first chapter, "Before the Beginning," which chronicles very briefly the development of Catholicism in the six southern counties of New Jersey before the establishment of the diocese on December 9, 1937. Monsignor Charles J. Giglio deals with the story of diocesan development in two chapters, "Before the Second Vatican Council" and "The Second Vatican Council and Afterwards." A final lengthy chapter incorporates capsule histories of each parish in the diocese. Profusely illustrated, the 300-page work also contains a parish family tree showing the descent of each parish from St. Mary's, Gloucester, which was established in 1848. The work is available in a clothbound (\$10.00) or softbound (\$7.00) edition from: Diocese of Camden, c/o Monsignor C. Giglio, Camden Diocesan Center, P.O. Box 709, Camden, New Jersey 08101.

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