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New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter

VOLUME VII NO. 1

WINTER 1988

Newark—fifty years as an archdiocese

December 10, 1987 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Province of New Jersey and the elevation of the see of Newark to the rank of archdiocese. The occasion calls to mind not only the local history which led to the creation of the new ecclesiastical jurisdiction but also its ties with the ancient traditions of the Church. Since the time of the Roman empire the Catholic Church has traditionally adjusted its jurisdictional boundaries to those of the civil authority. The very term "diocese" is adapted from the divisions of the 4th century Roman empire upon which the ecclesiastical boundaries were modelled.

The establishment of the first American diocese at Baltimore was occasioned by the political separation of the United States from England in the American Revolution. Bishop John Carroll's jurisdiction embraced the entire United States. As the number of Catholics grew, new dioceses were established in 1808. New Jersey was divided, generally along the line of the colonial separation of East Jersey from West Jersey, between the dioceses of New York and Philadelphia. For 45 years this boundary divided the state into two ecclesiastical jurisdictions until in 1853 the see of Newark was established, with all New Jersey as its responsibility. The first two ordinaries, James Roosevelt Bayley and Michael Augustine Corrigan, led the diocese through a period of rapid

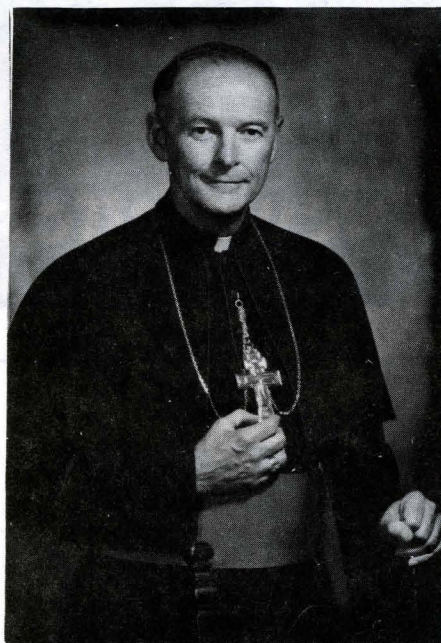


Thomas J. Walsh, first archbishop of Newark.

expansion caused principally by the heavy influx of German and Irish immigrants, with smaller sprinklings of other groups. During his 1877 *ad limina* visit to Rome, Corrigan proposed the division of the state into two dioceses and in 1881, after his transfer to New York, the diocese of Trenton was created. Trenton embraced the 14 southern counties of the state, and Newark retained the seven northern counties. Both dioceses remained part of the ecclesiastical province of New York. Bishops Winand Wigger, John J. O'Connor and Thomas J.

Walsh presided over Newark until 1937. In December of that year, the Holy See separated the six southern counties of the state from the Diocese of Trenton to create the Diocese of Camden, and the three north-western counties from Newark to create the Diocese of Paterson. At the same time, Newark was made an archdiocese and became the metropolitan see of the new Ecclesiastical Province of New Jersey. Thomas Joseph Walsh, the fifth bishop of Newark, became its first archbishop, a position in which he served until his death in 1952.

Continued on page 2

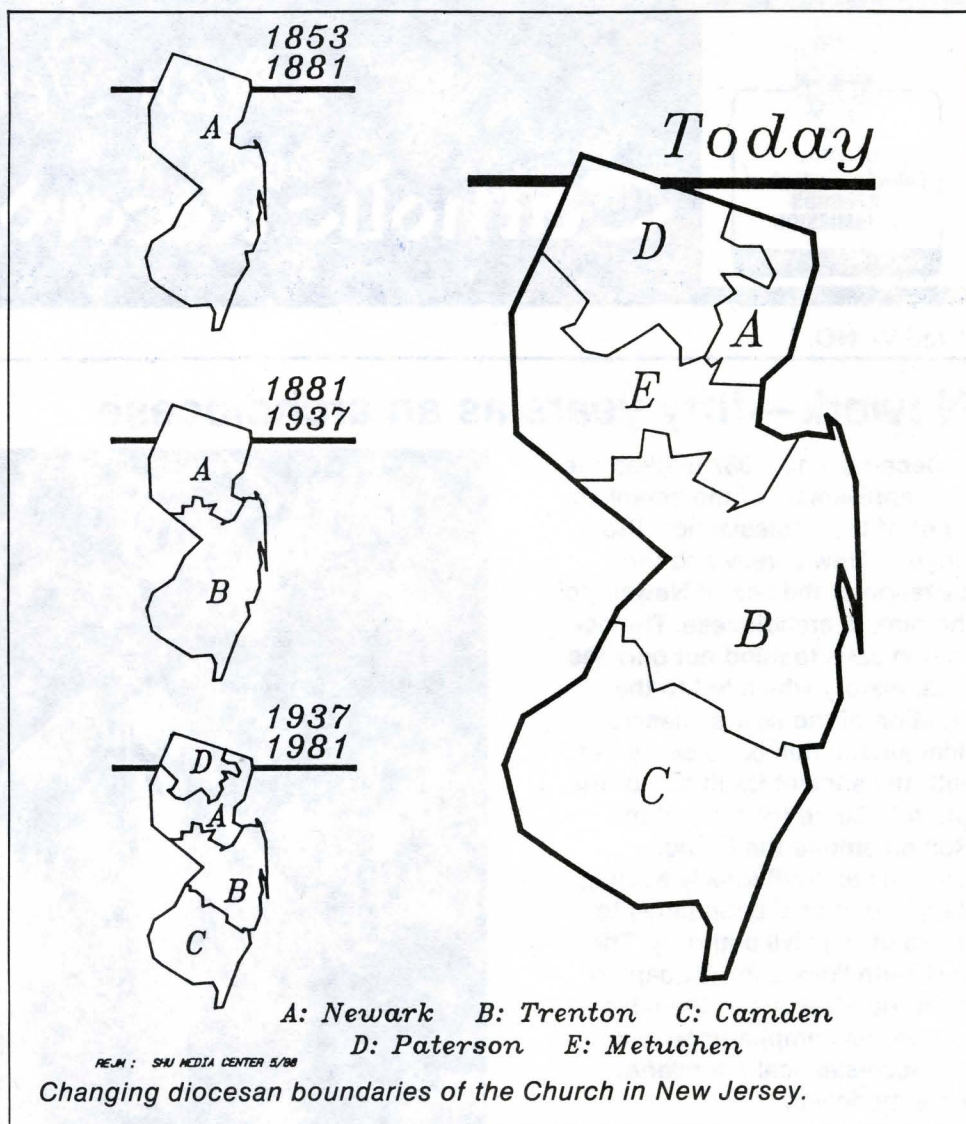


Most Reverend Theodore A. McCarrick, fourth archbishop of Newark.

50 years an archdiocese

Continued from page 1

New Jersey, in common with all the United States, was suffering its way through the Great Depression when Newark became an archdiocese. Throughout the state, the majority of Catholics resided in urban areas and the suburbanization of the Garden State had been interrupted by the hard times of the 1930's. Industrial centers like Newark, Jersey City, Camden, Trenton and Paterson were the focal points of Catholic life. Italians, Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians and all the peoples of central and eastern Europe had flooded into the state in the wake of the Irish and German migrations of the mid-19th century and the Church was still, at the outbreak of World War II, very much an immigrant church. The post-war period saw the suburbanization of American Catholics, and the bishops of the era—Walsh and Boland in Newark, Eustace and McCarthy in Camden, Boland and McNulty in Paterson, Griffin and Ahr in Trenton—faced with their people the task of providing churches, schools and hospitals in new settlements throughout the



state. In the older cities, too, the situation changed, as Blacks migrated north in increasing numbers and the vanguard of heavy Hispanic migration began to appear. One result of the Church's growth in this period was the establishment of the diocese of Metuchen, carved out of Trenton in 1981, thus completing the current configuration of the ecclesiastical province of New Jersey.

In the mid-1960s Vatican Council II opened a new era in the life of the Church at large and in the province of New Jersey. Vernacular liturgy, renewed emphasis upon social obligations, new conceptions of the mission of clergy, religious and laity—all modified the habits of Catholicism and brought about wrenching changes in practice for many. One

manifestation of a more collegial approach to church activity is the New Jersey Catholic Conference, through which the bishops of New Jersey coordinate many of their public actions and statements. The last 20 years have been an upsetting time for many Catholics, as they have tried to work through the changes induced by Vatican II and conform themselves to the vision of the Council Fathers.

Yet the anniversaries observed this year—Newark as an archdiocese, Paterson and Camden as dioceses—are indeed cause for celebration. They recall those doughty souls who first planted and nourished the seeds of the Church in this area, their successors who fed and watered in their turn and remind all that we are trustees for the future Church in New Jersey.



Peter Leo Gerety, third archbishop of Newark, seated left, greets his predecessor, Archbishop Thomas A. Boland.

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Newsletter staff:

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Recent accessions acquired

Items made available to researchers in the archives of the Archdiocese of Newark, located at Seton Hall University include the following:

Papers of Thomas Joseph Walsh (1928-1952) 13 cubic feet. This collection spans the entire tenure of Walsh as bishop, then first archbishop of Newark, and contains personal as well as official material generated by or pertaining to Archbishop Walsh. This accession includes his appointment books for the years 1928-1952, petitions and correspondence from members of various parishes within the archdiocese, pastorals, circulars and form letters, financial statements, scrapbooks, sermons, photograph albums, incoming correspondence, invitations and programs, newspaper clippings and a Register of Ordinations, 1918-1951, begun by Bishop John J. O'Connor and completed by Archbishop Walsh.

Papers of Winand Michael Wigger (1881-1901) 2 cubic feet. This is an addition to previously available papers of the third bishop of Newark which includes

clerical and general correspondence received between 1883 and 1898, in English, French, German, Italian and Latin, handbills referring to mission work among Blacks and Indians, and the Lenten Regulations for 1893.

Papers of Michael Augustine Corrigan (1873-1885) 5 items. These items added to the papers of Newark's second bishop concern the Pius Union Delle Donne Cattoliche, and the issue of taxation of churches in 1876.

Papers of John J. O'Connor (1901-1927) 2 cubic feet. These are principally petitions for dispensations from banns, monetary appeals for mission work, diocesan insurance reports, including war insurance between 1904 and 1917, and financial accounts.

Papers of Thomas A. Boland (1952-1979) 8 volumes. This accession consists of bound volumes of Consolidated Revaluation Reports prepared by the Industrial Appraisal Company. The reports are based on concise descriptions of property —principally church buildings

—owned by the Archdiocese of Newark.

For further information, researchers can contact the archivist, Ms. Barbara Geller, at (201) 761-9476.

Call for papers

Saint Anselm's College, Manchester, New Hampshire, in observance of its centennial year, will sponsor a symposium; *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the catholic Tradition*, from Thursday, April 20 to Sunday, April 23, 1989. The conference will consider Catholic education in all its aspects, with a special section on Anselm of Canterbury. At an academic convocation during the symposium, a distinguished church figure, theologian or philosopher will be honored with the Saint Anselm medal. Those interested in delivering papers or presenting complete sessions at the symposium are invited to submit a one-page abstract to the committee by September 1, 1988. Send abstracts to Reverend George C. Berthold, P.O. Box 2278, Saint Anselm College, Manchester, NH 03102-9001.

Meet the Commission

Born in Jersey City, New Jersey, Reverend Robert T. Wister attended parochial grade and high schools and then studied at Seton Hall University, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1965. For the next four years he resided at the North American College in Rome while studying at the Gregorian University, where he received his baccalaureate in sacred theology in 1969. He was ordained to the priesthood on December 20, 1968 in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City. Returning to his native diocese, he served as assistant pastor at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Montclair from 1969 to 1974 and at the Church of the Ascension, New Milford from 1974 to 1976. Meanwhile, he undertook advanced study at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, earning a master's degree in 1973. From 1973 to 1976 he also served as assistant professor of church history at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington.

In 1976 he returned to Rome for graduate studies in church history, and in 1980 earned a doctorate in ecclesiastical history from the Gregorian University with his dissertation, *The Establishment of the Apostolic Delegation in the United States: The Satolli Mis-*

sion, 1892-1896. While pursuing his studies in Rome, Father Wister served also as an instructor at the Institute for Continuing Theological Education and as supervisor of the Program for Apostolic Formation, both at the North American College, and as an instructor in the overseas program of St. John's College, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Since his return from Rome, Father Wister has continued to serve as assistant professor of historical studies at the seminary, first at Darlington and now at Seton Hall. In addition, he regularly assists on weekends at the Church of the Epiphany in Bricktown. In 1975 he became Associate Dean of the Seminary, and in the following year assumed responsibility as Executive Secretary of the Archbishop Peter L. Gerety Fund for Ecclesiastical History, which sponsors lectures and research on church history.

His own research has resulted in several papers delivered to the American Catholic Historical Association at its annual meetings, including "The Establishment of the Apostolic Delegation," which was later published in *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Spring, 1983) and "Teaching Church History." In 1982 he addressed Seton Hall



Rev. Robert T. Wister

University's Mother Seton Convocation on the topic, "Seminary Education Then and Now." In addition he has addressed the National Catholic Education Association on "Teaching and Scholarship in a Seminary Environment" and has spoken to numerous other organizations.

His other activities include participation in the Annual Dialogue between the Pentecostal Churches and the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity (1980-1982) and the Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Archdiocese of Newark. He has also served regularly as consultant to the Columbia Broadcasting System on the Vatican and on United States Catholic affairs. He serves on the Commission's publications committee.



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