

GOLDEN JUBILEE
ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

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ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH
1854-1904

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Golden Jubilee



HISTORY OF
ST. BRIDGET'S PARISH

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



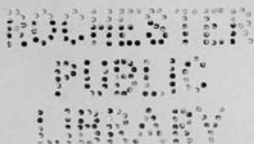
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RT. REV. B. J. MCQUAID
Bishop of Rochester

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NOTE.

In publishing this brochure it is fitting and right that credit be given Mr. James O'Hare Love whose labor in writing and compiling the work deserves our sincere thanks. We also desire to mark our appreciation of the assistance tendered by Miss Susie R. Quinn, whose researches among the monuments and traditions of the Parish have enabled us to present a history that is entertaining and correct.

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RT. REV. T. A. HENDRICK
Bishop of Cebu, Philippines

CHAPTER I.

St. Bridget's Parish was born in the mind of Bishop John Timon, of Buffalo, (in which diocese Rochester then was), who considering the needs of the people of the nothern part of the city of Rochester, appointed Rev. A. Saunier to take charge of the Catholics living there. Father Saunier was one of those apostolic men whom Belgium has given America and who bore such a large part in building up the church in America. Though the Catholics of the "Dublin District," as the portion of the city north of Atwater street now Central Avenue was then called weremostly Irish, Father Saunier was appointed to organize them into a congregation. The recollections of the Reverend gentlemen related by older members of the congregation show that good Bishop Timon's choice of a pastor for the church was not lacking in tact, at least.

St. Bridget's has a far better account of its beginnings than have most churches. The minutes of the first meetings are still extant and the ink seems to have faded but little. The first meeting was held on the evening of Thursday, April 21, 1854, in the basement of the French Catholic church on Ely street. It is related that the meetings was of "the Catholic inhabitants of that portion of this city lying north of Atwater street and east of the Genesee River, known as the Dublin District." It is stated that the meeting was

"for the purpose of taking into consideration the immediate necessity of building a church in the district in compliance with the wishes of the bishop of the diocese."

Here the founders of the Parish met their first pastor, Rev. Father Saunier. Mr. Richard Story was appointed chairman of the meeting and Patrick Conolly, secretary. Father Saunier and Mr. Story explained the object of the meeting. Mr. J. Lennan and others also spoke urging many good reasons for the immediate erection of a church in the district. The truly Catholic spirit of these men is shown by these words, which follow the account of the addresses:

"The meeting heard with much pleasure of the appointment of a pastor, and with humble thanks received the guarantee of their Bishop's kind consideration in their regard, and with zealous enthusiasm unanimously resolved that they should at once set about to carry out the Bishop's good and wise intentions in this enterprise."

The motion of Michael Madden, seconded by James Lennan, that a committee of five be appointed to select a suitable site on which to build the church that would best accomodate the inhabitants of the district, was carried. The chair appointed as such committee: Michael Madden, James Lennon, John Tracy, William Fitzgerald and James Claffy. On motion H. Mulholland, Richard Story and Patrick Conolly were added to the committee. Mr. Mulholland had good



RT. REV. BISHOP TIMON

reasons for not serving and on his stating them to the meeting, his name was taken from the list.

This is the first meeting, so far as the records go. So much space is devoted to it because beginnings are always interesting and while so much attention to detail might be out of place in giving an account of a meeting held when the church was well established, it is thought that none interested in the history of the Parish will object to reading all that is possible of what was done then. It is here given at length and other early meetings will also be given much attention on the same theory.

It may be well to remark here that it is said that there was a meeting held before this one. Tradition says it was held at the residence of Michael Madden, on St. Paul street and that the following gentlemen were present: Charles Buckley, James Lennon, Richard Story, Michael Madden, Patrick Connolly, John Tracy, William Fitzgerald, James Buckley, John McDonald and William Punch. These are all names of frequent recurrence in the early history of the church and it is quite possible that tradition is right. It is also possible, however, that this meeting is the second one held by residents of the district, one week after the first meeting recorded in the minutes of the early gatherings. This second meeting was held in the large hall of Madden's Hotel.

CHAPTER II.

In the official records of the church the second meeting is declared to have taken place April 27, 1854.

The meeting was for the especial purpose of hearing the report of the committee appointed to select a site for the new church. Mr. Story again presided and Mr. Conolly again acted as secretary. Mr. Conolly also gave the report for the committee. The report declared that the committee had examined different lots in the vicinity which was considered most central—"and that in the judgment of the committee and others whose opinions are valuable in such matters," a lot described as being 120 feet on Summit Park, or(Hand street) and extending 300 feet to Gorham street, having a like frontage of 120 feet on Gorham street, was "most central, desirable and eligible of any which can be had." The committee was unanimous in favoring the lot and recommending its purchase. The report was accepted and a motion that the lot be purchased was unanimously passed. A resolution that a committee of twenty be appointed to procure subscriptions and purchase the lot also went through unanimously. The committee was named as follows:

Messrs. Story, Leahy, Fitzgerald, Madden, Tracy, Lennon, Claffy, P. Anderson, McDonald, McDermott, J. Reilly, M. McCarthy, Gannon, Waters, William Punch, J. Clancy, C. Burns, M. Anderson, McElroy, and P. Conolly.

The committee agreed to meet at the house of R. Story on Monday, May 1st, and the meeting then adjourned.

It will be seen from the report of the meetings held that no time was lost in setting out to obey the wishes



VERY REV. J. F. O'HARE.

of good Bishop Timon. Only two meetings and measures taken for the purchase of a site for the new church. We are accustomed to consider those days slow, but it is practically certain that in the present day of the much-vaunted "hustle" of business it would have taken several meetings and a much longer time to have gotten so far along in the work.

CHAPTER III.

The subscription committee met at the time appointed and Father Saunier, who was present, read two letters from the Bishop. One of these letters expressed the prelate's devotion to St. Bridget and his wish that the new church and Parish be called after the Saint's name, if agreeable to the congregation. The committee unanimously accepted the suggestion of Bishop Timon, as one might expect from a reading of the names of those composing it.

Following this action the committee "in order to test the practibility of the undertaking—before any definite steps be taken in regard to the purchase of the lot"—agreed to "preamble" and subscribed a certain sum each.

The preamble is interesting. It reads as follows:

"We, whose names are hereunto annexed agree to pay the sum set apposite our names for the purpose of purchasing a lot and aiding in the erection of a church in the district of this city known as the "Dublin District," to be called "St. Bridget's Church"—and we

hereby gree to pay one-fourth of this sum as soon as the contract for the lot selected, is made and confirmed, —and the balance of our subscription as soon as is necessary to carry on the building and complete the work."

In the pages devoted to the names of the subscribers to this fund are found the names of many besides the members of the committee, the whole subscription list being put together. The names included those of many families now well represented in the church, besides those of many formerly active in its support, but now unknown to the younger members. Some of the families have been wiped out by death. Some have moved away from the Parish. In the case of others the names have been lost.

The total amount subscribed or paid in at this time was \$1,373.29½. It should be remembered that shillings were in use in those days. As to how much was subscribed and how much of that paid, it is impossible to give the figures for the reason that the account was not well kept. In some cases there is no credit given for the payment of the subscription, though from the names of some, if not all of these it is evident that every cent of the subscription was paid. There are others who made no promise to subscribe, but simply gave a sum of money. The amount named is therefore arrived at by adding together the subscriptions, disregarding the credit or lack of credit for payment it, and the sums given by those who did not subscribe. For these reasons it might be well to omit the



REV. JAMES O'CONNOR

subscription list altogether from this history. However, a natural curiosity to know who subscribed the funds for starting this church is pardonable in the minds of its members of the present day, and since the list is certainly not correct, it would be unjust to give the amounts set opposite the names. There can be no harm, however, in giving all the names on the list, without specifying anything as to money subscribed or paid. The list is as follows:

Rev. A. Saunier, Richard Story, Michael Madden, Patrick McManame (probably McMenomy) James Claffy, John Leahey, P. Conolly, John Tracy, William Fitzgerald, John Clancy, James Lennon, Charles Buckley, David Nolan, Daniel Colburt, Charles Burns, John Gannon, John Calahan, James Buckley, Andrew Dolan, Michael Mooney, John Finn, James Rock, Dennis Carroll, John McDermott, John Mullen, James Ryan, George McGloon, John Melten(?), Frank Farrell, B.(?) Murry, Wm. Rourke, James Dailly, Felix McLoughlin, Michael Lynch, John Scully, Michael Casey, Thomas Flynn, Michael Gilde (or Gelde), John Kearns, Thomas O'Rourke, Michael Mahoney, William Clarey, John McNamara, Thomas Horn, John Moran, Andrew Coogan, Shearn Buckley, (of Greece), John L. Rafferty, John Pendegrass, Michael Heavy, Michael Clancy, Arthur Mildoon, Mrs. Fee, Thomas Kirley, Michael Burns, Dennis Regan, Thomas Griffin, Mrs. Doyle, Patrick Larkin, George A. Wilkin, Mr. Maher, Mrs. Monahan, John Hahn, S. Myers, John Burkhart, James McMannus, James Kirley, Mr. Berckry,

James O'Donoughue, John Rigney, Charles Burke, Miles Decker, Charles FitzSimmons, A. B. Hone, R. McDonnald, P. Kearney, John B. Hahn, James Madden, John O'Brien, Martin Costello, John Quinn, Michael McDonnald, Joseph Kavanagh, John Hayes, John Walsh, Patrick Madden, Richard Clancy, George Hand, Mrs. Margaret Doyle, Mrs. Margaret Marks, Mrs. Mary Clancy, Patrick Anderson, William Duffy, Mrs. Henry McDonald, Mrs. Mary Nelegan, Timothy Fitzgerald, Miss Catharine Menges, Michael Douglas, Timothy Donovan, James Hughes, Owen Cherry, Mary Ann Cherry, Steven Duffy, James Hogan, Patrick Wade, Mrs. Mary Dolan, Patrick Murry, Mrs. Sarah Campin, James Ray, Edward Duffy, Edward Doyle, Robert Carroll, Owen Rigney, Peter Conway, Felix Cosgrove, Joseph Davis, James Beatty, Cornelius Kinney, James Cochrane, Luke McGuire, Philip Little, Rose Hagan, Margaret Madden, Peter Leonnard, John Gorman, Mrs. Catharine Dolan, Michael Logan, Mrs. Mary Berry, Ed. McManus and wife, Catharine Rafferty, Mrs. Peter White, James Conway, Mrs. Ann Delany, Mrs. Ann Slater, David O'Connell and wife, Owen Mooney, Peter Camps, Robert McIntyre, Charles McFarlin, William Wade(?), Mrs. Mary Hurley, Mrs. McDermott, Thomas Doud, Mrs. Feeny, James Morrison, John Clancy, (Frankfort) Daniel Kennedy, Daniel Clancy, Ann Mulligan, Mrs. Darrian, Mrs. Mulligan, Mrs. Farrell, Mrs. McAtee, Mrs. Ferguson, Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Whalen, Mary Sullivan, Patrick Gavan, Joseph Groke, Ann Melroy, Thomas O'Hare, Michael Whalen, Joseph



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Morrison, Mrs. Ann Stinges, Dennis Coogan, James McGivern, Patrick McVay, Felix Farmer, Anthony Reilly, George McDermott, James Conolly, John Hagerty, M. Dwyer, James Cloonin.

CHAPTER IV.

May 8, 1854, is the date of the next entry in the records of the church and it tells of the purchase of the lot for the location of the church. The sum of \$25 was paid and an article of a deed received, the warranty deed to be given by N. H. Galusha on or before June 1st, "providing," says the record, "the Bishop of Buffalo approves of the purchase." When he had seen the lot, the Bishop formally approved the purchase of it and recommended that the work of building the church be vigorously prosecuted.

The deed for the lot was, therefore, executed on May 31st, and recorded at 9:30 a. m. in Liber 119 of Deeds at page 267. It was made to Rev. Augustine Saunier

Father Saunier immediately appointed a building committee, composed of James Claffy, Michael Madden, John Tracy, John Leahy, James Lennon and Patrick Conolly. Bids were received and the mason work was awarded to George Heberger. The quaintness of the language sometimes met with in these minutes of the early history of the church is best exemplified by the mention of the price to be paid Mr. Heberger, three and three pence per perch, the committee to furnish dressed stone for that portion of the

foundation wall which lies above grade. Three shillings and nine pence was to be paid Mr. Heberger, if he furnished the stone. A contract was also made with C. McDonald for sand at six shillings per load of one yard. W. J. Ameer received the contract for lime at ten cents a bushel. The committee, for the sake of economy, purchased from N. Osborne nine window frames and sashes, with stone sills and weights at \$11 apiece, and eighty pews at ten shillings apiece. They employed a laborer, F. Farrel, to dig the foundation at a shilling a yard. The committee even purchased separately a corner stone for the church from one Hagerty, his first name being lacking from the record.

The cornerstone was laid on Trinity Sunday, June 11, 1854. Bishop Timon officiated, assisted by Redemptorist Fathers from St. Joseph's church, Fathers Saunier and McAvoy, St. Alphonsus' Society, and St. Mary's Society. The procession formed at St. Joseph's church, and the spectacle must have been an imposing one, for the language of the (generally plain matter of fact) secretary glows with pious ardor in describing it. The Bishop and attendant priests and their assistants were attired in their robes of office and the societies wore their regalia as they marched through Clinton street to Hand, thence to the site of the church. The crowd in attendance is estimated by the secretary at between 5,000 and 8,000.

The next meeting of the building committee, held on June 14th, was one which created a small stir. First, Father Saunier presented his resignation as treasurer



REV. DANIEL W. KAVANAUGH
Rector

of the church, saying the business of this office interfered with his duties as pastor, and that he could not conscientiously retain the office. The resignation was accepted and James Lennon was unanimously chosen to fill the vacant office.

At this meeting the plans and specifications were examined and returned to the architect for correction.

A week or so after this the committee met and took up the matter of brick work, carpenter work and the like. Messrs. Louis and Joseph Charboneau were awarded the contract for the carpenter work, the contract price being \$1,591.97. The next evening another meeting was held and the brick work was given to Mr. Heberger.

It was the intention of the building committee to have the edifice ready for dedication on All Saints' Day of the same year, but work was delayed by some fault of the workmen. Father Saunier, however, was most active and managed to have it ready by the first Sunday of November, the 5th of the month.

In preparing the church for dedication the ladies of the Parish, whose work heretofore was that of seconding the efforts of the committees in charge, were called upon and responded heartily and well. These good women worked until a late hour preparing the church for dedication.

The ceremony of dedication was performed by the Vicar-General of the diocese of Buffalo, Very Rev. William O'Reilly, Bishop Timon being at that time in

Europe. He was assisted by Father Saunier, Rev. Father Dole, C. SS. R., and Richard Story, then a student of St. Joseph's College, Buffalo.

Father Saunier preached the sermon, one intended to arouse the zeal of his hearers. Thus was the congregation of St. Brigdet's organized.

The first altar boys of the new church were Charles Buckley, Patrick Cox, Nicholas Burke, James McDermott, John Buckley, Michael Fitzgerald and Michael Kennedy.

The church itself was a small brick building, and the pews were purchased from the Methodist church on Fitzhugh street, that church standing on the present site of the Protectives' fire house. The altar was ornamented with blocks of wood covered with red paper, upon which were the candlesticks of wood, painted white and one of the ladies of the Parish had to lend a linen sheet to be used as an altar cloth at the first celebration of mass in the new edifice. The pulpit was a small one and when the preacher stood in it he could almost touch the ceiling. Two stoves, wood-burners, near the doors, heated the church, while light was furnished at evening services by candles. The windows were not of stained glass. There were two aisles and the gallery across the rear of the church was shared by the children and the choir. The choir was composed of some of the older children of the Parish accompanied by a small melodeon; one Mr. Dick was



ST. BRIDGET'S SCHOOL

the first organist and director, who was succeeded shortly by Mrs. O'Donnell.

A house which still stands on Hand St. opposite the school was rented for the pastor. In the barn behind this house was the first school taught by two Sisters of Mercy. They were succeeded after a time by a Mr. Godfrey, the school being removed to a dwelling further west on the other side of Hand street. Father Saunier himself taught Catechism, besides preparing the children for school "exhibitions" and the like.

On November 12th of this year Father Saunier named from the pulpit the men who were to manage the temporal affairs of the church. They were Michael Madden, James Lennon, James Buckley, John McDonald and Patrick Conolly. This committee was appointed for one year. Father Saunier was the treasurer and Mrs. Conolly the secretary of this committee.

Here the tale of the beginnings proper of the church comes to an end. The committee held but one meeting between the one held the Sunday of its appointment and June 15, 1855 when James Claffy was added to it. Father Saunier's salary was fixed at \$600 at a meeting held a couple of days later. Mr. Claffy took up the first instalment of the cost of the church on January 20, 1855, besides paying the balance due on the lot. The church was therefore indebted to him the sum of \$2,499.64.

Of interest is the note of the formation of an altar society composed of three persons, Miss Mary

Buckley, Miss A. Story and Miss Eliza McDonald. On August 23, 1855, Bishop Timon fixed the boundaries of the English-speaking churches of the city, St. Patrick's Immaculate Conception, St. Mary's and St. Bridget's. The southern line of St. Bridget's ran through Andrews street to North street to the New York Central railroad and along that steel highway to the city limits. The Parish included all north of that line and east of the river. At the same time the Bishop defined the duties of priest and people in regard to the support of the church and the administration of the sacraments, confining both, except under necessity, to their own Parish. On February 10, 1856, at a meeting held after vespers a charitable aid society was formed by the ladies and gentlemen of the Parish, under the presidency of Father Saunier. There was also a Young Men's Mutual Aid Society.

In 1856, Father Saunier left to return to France. The people of the Parish were indeed saddened at the departure of the earnest and zealous priest who had started them on their way so well. They showed their appreciation of him and his efforts for their salvation by presenting him a purse of \$500. The members of the Parish marched in procession to the church before him and when he had taken his place in the sanctuary strewed flowers before him. A black flag was hung from a window of the parochial residence for thirty days as a sign of their sorrow.

It is of interest to note here that the first baptism in the new church was that of Mary, the daughter of



REV. JOHN BRESNIHAN

Patrick Conolly, the worthy secretary whose records have told us well the story of the early days. The piety frequently evinced in these records bore fruit in his own family, for, grown to womanhood, Miss Conolly became a member of the Order of the Sisters of Charity, her name in religious being Sister Gabriela, Thomas O'Rourke and Mary Campin were the first couple married in the church. Mrs. O'Rourke is still living to take part in the golden jubilee of the Parish. Rev. Richard Story, pastor of the church of the Nativity of the B. V. M., Brockport, sang his first high mass in the little church whose son he was, during the pastorate of Father Sauniers.

CHAPTER V.

From the time of Father Saunier it becomes somewhat difficult to trace the pastors in their order. Older members of the congregation say that a Father McGuire succeeded Father Saunier. His name does not appear in the records, and if he did act as pastor, his term was a very short one, for Father Thomas O'Flaherty became pastor in 1856, the year of Father Saunier's departure. His pastorate was also a brief one, for on October 11th of the same year Rev. Daniel Moore has in the books an accounting of the furniture left the congregation by Father O'Flaherty.

Father Moore was an excellent bookkeeper and a good business man and the Parish flourished well until his departure in 1859. There is here another lack in the records; the name of Rev. Peter Barker, D.

D., mentioned as Father Moore's successor not appearing in them. The fact of his pastorate is attested by an item in the accounts of Rev. Father Payne, a later pastor, of the payment of \$50 to Dr. Barker on account of his claim.

The next pastor was Rev. F. McKeon, Father McKeon was a thorough organizer and an excellent business man. His energy was responsible for the enlargement of the church and its remodeling; the purchase of a new altar and the erection of one to the Blessed Virgin. He also purchased a new pulpit which was used in the present church until a few years ago. The illumination of the church by gas was also begun in Father McKeon's reign and the two stoves were replaced by a furnace. His piety was as great as his energy and ability and he largely increased the membership, of the Parish. Two priests here appear at the end of his pastorate or in the latter days thereof, of whom no distinct recollection is held by many of the older members of the Parish, Rev. M. O'Brien and Rev. Fr. Colgan. From the manner in which their names appear, it is probable that they assisted Father McKeon during his last days at St. Bridget's. Father O'Brien may have acted as pastor for a month or so in 1861, when Father McKeon was succeeded by Rev. William F. Payne.

Father Payne was in many respects like Father McKeon. He was a man of great force and pushed the material side of things. He, like Father McKeon, had a talent for organization and made the societies connected



REV. B. M. GOMMENGINGER

with the church lively ones, carrying out well the objects of their being. He was especially interested in the choir and secured several fine singers. He started a small subscription which was closely attended to, and kept going so that an organ which has come down to the present day, was purchased. He was very earnest about the adornment of the church, and his pious feeling in this regard, regulated by excellent taste, made St. Bridget's altars famed for their beauty. His eloquence was great and his fervent preaching brought many additions to the membership of the church. He gave impetus to the spiritual life of the church by having two missions preached by Redemptorist Fathers, one in 1862 and the other in 1863. The preacher of the latter mission, Rev. J. M. Jacobs, C. SS. R., preached the funeral oration at the grave of Colonel Patrick O'Rourke, a son of the parish, killed at Gettysbury. Miss Clara Bishop, organist of the church, had been united in marriage to the young soldier just before his departure for the front, and after his death she became the bride of Christ in the order of the Sacred Heart.

Father Payne remained as pastor of St. Bridget's until 1867, when he resigned. During his pastorate, in 1685, the boundaries of the parish were enlarged so as to extend the line from North street to Riley street, now that portion of University avenue between North street and Main street east, thence along that street to New Main street, now East Main, to the city limits. The original document making the change, in the handwriting of Bishop Timon, signed with his name is

preserved in the book of records. Father Payne's resignation was accepted with regret by the people of the Parish. Prior to this Bishop Timon died. From July to December 1864, inclusive, Rev. L. F. Miller was in charge of the Parish.

Rev. Nicholas Byrne was named to succeed Father Payne and took charge of the Parish July 12, 1867.

An accounting of the affairs of the Parish made in August 1867, shows the total indebtedness of the Parish to have been \$1,241.20. Father Byrne immediately began efforts to reduce this and was entirely successful. He held a picnic during the summer of his arrival and later a festival, the proceeds of which enabled him totally to free the church from debt.

In 1868 the diocese of Rochester was formed from the diocese of Buffalo and Rt. Rev. Bernard J. McQuaid was made its first Bishop. His arrival and reception in Rochester in which the people of St. Bridget's took part, are well remembered by many of the older members of the Parish. The congregation gave him a reception of their own, in addition to taking part in the larger general one.

Father Byrne's term as pastor closed in the spring of 1871, and the church was without a pastor until the fall of that year, when Bishop McQuaid sent Rev. James F. O'Hare to take charge. The impress of Father O'Hare's work in the parish still remains in the people. His zeal led to the church many new members and also brought back some old ones, who had lapsed. The Sun-



REV. ALEX. J. McCABE

day school was reorganized, a Christian Doctrine Society ty being formed among the adults of the congregation. This society relieved the pastor of a great deal of work in teaching Catechism, allowing him to exercise supervision over the school. A Conference of St. Vincent de Paul was also formed for work among the poor of the Parish. The Young Men's Society, which had lapsed, was formed anew, under the name of the Knights of St. Augustine. The membership of the Rosary Society was largely increased. Miss Agnes Madden was appointed organist during the first year of Father O'Hare's pastorate, when the choir was under the leadership of the late Thomas O'Rourke.

All these things were marks of the spiritual zeal which animated the young priest. He had, besides, a good business head and realizing that the Parish was becoming more thickly settled and that the membership of the congregation was growing fast, started a fund for a new and larger church building soon after taking charge. A subscription list was started and on the Sunday on which it first went around the congregation the sum of four thousand dollars was subscribed. On the Sunday following thirteen hundred dollars was subscribed and then work was begun to make more active efforts to increase the amount. Fairs were held and the people of Rochester, without distinction of creed, seemed anxious to help the congregation. The fund quickly grew and the work of excavating for the new building, the present one, was begun in June, 1872. The cornerstone was laid September 8, 1872. Mass

was celebrated by Father O'Hare, assisted by Rev. Father Smelser as deacon, and Rev. M. T. Fadden as subdeacon. Bishop McQuaid preached and confirmed a class of one hundred and seventy persons, many being adults. The actual cornerstone laying took place in the afternoon in the presence of several thousand persons, the societies of the church assisted by those of other churches marching in procession under the leadership of P. J. Dowling. Charles Coots was the architect of the new building and William Carroll and Dominic Murough were the builders. Bishop McQuaid in laying the cornerstone used the trowel which the late Bishop Timon had used in laying the cornerstone of St. Mary's Hospital. Work on the new building was suspended during the winter, and before the completion of the building three fairs were held in it, the sum netted from them being nine thousand dollars.

On Low Sunday, April 5, 1875, mass was celebrated for the last time in the old church on Hand street. On April 12, the following Sunday the new church was dedicated by Bishop McQuaid in the presence of a throng that far exceeded the seating or even standing capacity of the edifice. Bishop McQuaid was assisted by Rt. Rev. S. V. Ryan, Bishop of Buffalo, and Rt. Rev. John Walsh, Bishop of Kingston, Ontario, Canada, afterwards Archbishop of Toronto. The deacons of honor at the mass were Rev. Father O'Hare and Rev. William Gregg, of Penn Yan, Rev. Dennis English, of Canandaigua, was deacon of the mass, and Rev. James O'Connor, of Ovid, subdeacon. Rev. H. DeRegge,



REV. JOHN J. O'DONOGHUE
Assistant

chancellor of the diocese, was master of ceremonies, assisted by Rev. George Osborne, of Seneca Falls. Rev. M. O'Brien, at whose mass Father O'Hare had ministered for several years during his boyhood, was among the priests present in the sanctuary. The sermon at the mass was preached by Bishop Walsh, and Bishop Ryan was the preacher at the evening services. The choir, under the direction of Mr. George Oaks, rendered Haydn's Imperial Third Mass.

The finishing touches were given the church after this. M. A. Palda, a Buffalo artist, did the frescoing and painting. The Rosary Society donated a statue of the Blessed Virgin, which was placed on her altar, which was removed from the old church. The altar of the new church was of black walnut and is still remembered by even the younger members of the congregation. The total cost of the new church was \$33,000.

As soon as the congregation began attending services in the new church, work was begun on the remodeling of the old church building into a school. The school sessions were begun in it September 8, 1875. Six sisters of St. Joseph constituted the teaching force and there were three hundred pupils during the first year.

The joy of the people at the completion of their new church was soon overshadowed. Bishop McQuaid had noted sharply the excellent work of the young pastor and in April, 1876, announced the appointment of Father O'Hare as rector of the Cathedral. Father O'Hare preached his farewell sermon April 30th, and

many members of the congregation were in tears as they listened to his words of parting. Deputations had gone from the church to the Bishop in an endeavor to have him change his mind and leave Father O'Hare with them. At their earnest request he was present at Vespers on the afternoon of this Sunday. Little children of the school presented him an address, asking him to leave Father O'Hare with them. Their pleadings were of no avail. Bishop McQuaid told them their efforts had only made him the more determined to bring Father O'Hare to the Cathedral, as the priest who could inspire such attachment in his people was the one he wanted there. The people endeavored to show in some slight manner their appreciation of the work of Father O'Hare by presenting him a gold watch and chain and purse of money.

CHAPTER VI.

Rev. James O'Connor, of Ovid, preached his first sermon at St. Bridget's on the Sunday following the departure of Father O'Hare. The somewhat embarrassing circumstances under which he came to the church had been mitigated to a degree by the high terms in which he had been mentioned by Father O'Hare in the latter's farewell sermon. Father O'Connor made himself popular and beloved in a short time. His earnestness and zeal for the welfare of the Parish and its people in every way, soon reconciled them to the loss of Father O'Hare.



RECTORY.

Father O'Connor's energy led him to set out to reduce the debt of the church and complete the decoration of its interior. He placed handsome stations of the cross in the church soon after his arrival, the stations being the gifts of himself and various members of the congregations. An altar of the Sacred Heart, surmounted by a statue was placed on the west side of the church. The Rosary Society gave a new altar of the Blessed Virgin. A fair held in 1880 netted \$5,000 to the building fund of the church, and one the following year brought in \$3,000. A debt association was started and the sum of ten cents a week collected from the adults of the parish. A subscription was also started. His efforts were successful and on St. Bridget's day, February 1, 1883, the church celebrated its entire freedom from the debt. It was the first church in the diocese to be able to do this.

Father O'Connor's pastorate was a most successful one. His zeal for Catholic education was very great and the school prospered exceedingly under him. He fought for a high standard of scholarship and St. Bridget's became the "Banner School" of the diocese.

The Purgatorian Society, in aid of the suffering souls, was organized by him, and the Rosary Society and St. Vincent de Paul conference grew apace during his pastorate.

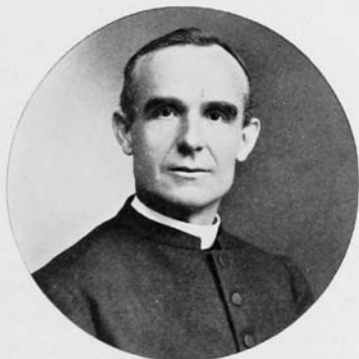
The thirtieth anniversary of the Parish was celebrated November 5, 1884, Rev. Richard Story, a son of the Parish, celebrating the mass. Several missions

were held during Father O'Connor's pastorate. One of the notable things was the disbandment of the choir which had given St. Bridget's church the reputation of having the best music and the finest singing in the city. The order of Bishop McQuaid in regard to church music led to this disbandment. The music of the mass was for a time rendered by the children, but later a leader was engaged and the choir once more became famous for its music.

Father O'Connor remained longer at St. Bridget's than any pastor who preceded or has come after him. He was transferred to the church at Seneca Falls in 1889. So dear had he become to the people that the same scenes witnessed at the departure of Father O'Hare were re-enacted when he left. He was a man sharp of tongue for abuses, yet kind of heart for the suffering and for the erring who showed willingness to repent. His enthusiasm for the sufferings of Ireland was great and he took part in all movements for the relief of her people, being one of the organizers of the Land League in this city. His excellent business capacity led him to organize the first branch of the Catholic Mutual Benevolent Association in this city. This was followed by others of a similar kind for women. All these benefit societies remain flourishing in the Parish to the present day.

CHAPTER VII.

Father O'Connor was succeeded by Rev. Thomas A. Hendrick, who came here from Union Springs. Father



REV. JOHN F. NELLIGAN

Hendrick was a man of large physique and of mind and heart as large. His work in the Parish was of the highest value and while not neglecting its affairs he took part in the public life of the city, state and nation and became well known throughout the land.

Father Hendrick devoted especial attention to the school and it was added to by his efforts and placed in excellent sanitary condition. He organized several societies among the young men and women of the Parish, as well as among the older people. Under him the church was thoroughly renovated and redecorated. His especial interest seemed to lie among the young people, and he was active in many ways in their behalf. When once he had made up his mind that a person was worthy he spared no effort to help him, and there are many to-day who owe their start towards prosperity to him.

Father Hendrick's zeal was not confined to the material things of the Parish and its members. He had several missions during his pastorate, and the spiritual results of them are yet apparent. Triduums, novenas and other things of the kind were common in his day. The devotion to St. Anthony and the helping of the poor of the Parish were other objects of especial interest to him.

Father Hendrick's labors outside the Parish were also great. He was a member of the Children's Aid Society, the Humane Society, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and held high office in all

of them, being president of the Humane Society when he left the Parish. Father Hendrick was one of the few priests of the city who took an open and active interest in the politics of the day and his acquaintance with the leaders of his party led to his appointment as a regent of the University of the State of New York. Father Hendrick was a frequent and popular contributor of articles to the leading magazines.

His popularity with the Republican administration is thought to have led to his choice for the bishopric of Cebu, Philippine Islands. When he was considered for this office, the administration let it become known at Rome that his appointment would be especially pleasing, and his nomination followed.

The news that Father Hendrick was to leave the Parish to become Bishop of Cebu was received with sorrow by the people and they took steps to show their sorrow in a practical manner. A substantial purse was raised for him in the Parish, for he was going without means to a poor people. The people of the city, irrespective of denomination participated in a farewell mass meeting in the Lyceum theatre a short time before he left. Many expressions of praise of him and his high character and ideals came that evening from the lips of Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic. The theatre was crowded to the doors. When Bishop Hendrick finally left the city on his journey to his distant see, a large crowd gathered at the Central station to witness his departure, despite the blizzard which raged.



REV. MICHAEL MADDEN

Though the formation of the Parish of Corpus Christi had cut off a large territory from St. Bridget's during the pastorate of Father O'Connor, it was not until the time of Father Hendrick that the population increased to such a degree as necessitated the appointment of an assistant. Rev. John J. Bresnihan was the first assistant and he quickly became a valuable aid to Father Hendrick. His popularity, especially among the young people of the Parish, was unbounded, and he used it freely to further their spiritual advancement. He was a tireless worker and his care for the business of the Parish was the cause of great material advancement during his stay in it.

St. Bridget's was especially fortunate in securing as its second assistant Rev. B. W. Gommenginger, Father Gommenginger's sunny nature endeared him greatly to the people of the Parish and made him a favorite with all. An earnest worker and preacher and a man of exceeding great piety, he is affectionately remembered by those whom he formerly served as assistant pastor.

Rev. Alexander McCabe was the third assistant. Father McCabe was essentially a hard worker. Hardly ever absent from the Parish he took much of the detail of routine work from the shoulders of the pastor. He assumed charge of the school and under his management it prospered exceedingly.

It is worthy of note that the removal of these three young priests from the Parish was in each case, in the line of promotion. They were each given an opportu-

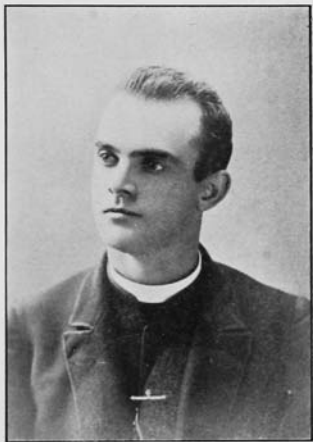
nity for the display of their undoubted talents in a wider field.

On August 1, 1903, Rev. D. W. Kavanaugh succeeded Rt. Rev. T. A. Hendrick in charge of the Parish and the first year of his pastorate was marked by many repairs and improvements in the church property. Completing the tower and placing in it a large and sweet-toned bell was part of the preparation for the Golden Jubilee. In this work he was ably assisted by his young and zealous coadjutor Rev. John J. O'Donoghue, who with the holy oils not yet dry upon his hands gave to St. Bridget's people the first ardent efforts of his lifes work on the mission.

CHAPTER VIII.

The blessings of God on this congregation is nowise marked more clearly than by the number of vocations to a religious life granted its children. Not to mention the large number of young women who have given their lives to Christ and his work, there are no fewer than fifteen priests who owe their spiritual birthright to St. Bridget's church. Their names are Revs. Richard J. Story, M. T. Madden, John F. Nelligan, John F. Hogan, John Butler, Arthur J. O'Connor, Thomas D. Kennedy, William P. Ryan, Michael U. Dwyer, Bernard O'Reilly, Bernard J. Lennon, Philip J. Golding, Louis F. Edelman, E. John Dwyer, John A. Conway.

The Golden Jubilee of the Parish was appropriately celebrated on Sunday, November 6th, 1904, by a



VERY REV. JOHN HOGAN

solemn high mass at which the Rt. Rev. Bishop was present and congratulated the Parish on its progress and strength. On this occasion mass was celebrated on the new altar in memory of John Kelly, a former member and generous benefactor of the congregation. In the afternoon the new bell was blessed with appropriate ceremony and its tones were heard for the first time in celebration of St. Bridget's Golden Jubilee.



APPENDIX A

Father Saunier—April 1854 to July 1856
Father Flaherty—July 1856 to October 1856
Father Moore—October 1856 to September 1858
Father Barker—October 1858 to June 1859
Father McKeon—June 1859 to December 1859
Father Payne—May 1860 to June 1867
Father Byrns—July 1867 to April 1871
Father O'Hare—September 1871 to April 1876
Father O'Connor—April 1876 to September 1891
Father Hendrick—September 1891 to August 1903
Father Kavanaugh—August 1st, 1903

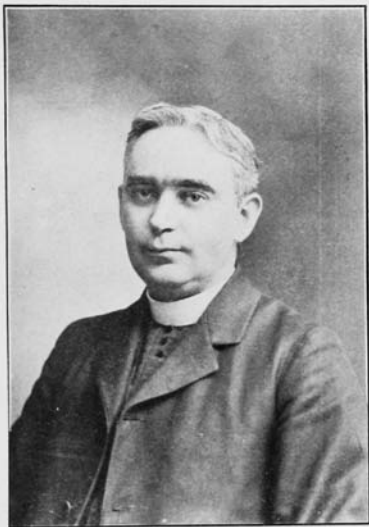
APPENDIX B

SYNOPSIS OF STATISTICS

Baptisms 2005

Deaths 903

Marriages 390



REV. MICHAEL W. DWYER



REV. T. D. KENNEDY



REV. ARTHUR J. O'CONNOR



REV. PHILIP GOLDING



REV. BERNARD J. O'RILEY



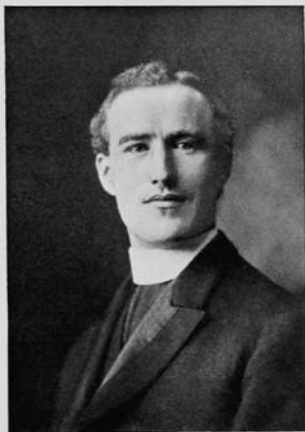
REV. WM. P. RYAN



REV. LOUIS EDELMAN



REV. EDWARD J. DWYER



REV. JOHN A. CONWAY

