

(1)
Bicentennial Celebration
In the Beginning

The first fifty years
Two hundred years ago, in Eighteen O Eight
A journey began in this great state
A leader was appointed to expound the faith
The Diocese of New York got its first prelate
But Bishop Canconen never came to this land
He administered his diocese from far off Ireland
Napoleonic Wars then created much turmoil
The reason the Bishop never stepped on our soil
Under the circumstances he performed admirably
By correspondence with priests in the missionary
In the year of our Lord Eighteen Fourteen
Bishop Connolly arrived on the scene
A grim situation is what he found
Three churches alone for fifteen thousand
All of New York and northern New Jersey
Fifty five thousand square miles of territory
Yet just six priests to serve the laity
He had to do something urgently
The population was growing very rapidly
Tirelessly he worked; never did he cease

(2)

*To make a stronger more effective diocese
Erecting more churches was a priority
And increasing personnel within the clergy
He will be remembered most for this special feat
He established an orphan asylum on Prince Street
Run by the Sisters of Charity
Their first mission in New York City
The diocese's next Bishop was John Dubois
From France came he to Baltimore
A sulpician priest, a Parisian
To escape the perils of the French Revolution
In Maryland he founded a Seminary
The College of Mount Saint Mary
In Eighteen Twenty Six October Twenty Nine
He was appointed Bishop of New York, the third in line
Catholic numbers had grown rapidly in the diocese
He had to recruit priests from overseas
Because of a woeful lack in the See
This action taken was a necessity
So from Europe they came to the mission
To minister to one hundred and fifty thousand
He encouraged young men to go into training*

(3)

*And in Nyack, he erected a building
A seminary that never had an opening
What happened then was a tragedy
An occurrence he did not foresee
The building was burnt to the ground unfortunately
John Connolly founded one orphanage; John Dubois founded two
Before he died in Eighteen Forty Two
He ordained a priest who eventually
Was beatified in Nineteen Sixty Three
Who was born a Bohemian; a European
Who has since been canonized; Saint John Neumann
The year John Dubois died, on December Twenty
Coadjutor John Hughes replaced him automatically
And was appointed Bishop, the fourth of the See
The problems at that time were varied and many
And needed to be addressed with urgency
The diocese then experienced financial difficulties
And Nativists waged anti-Catholic hostilities
A shortage of priests and what had begun to unfurl
The religious disputes over parish control
The diocese was elevated to a Metropolitan See
And John Hughes was appointed Archbishop in Eightteen Fifty*

(4)

*New York's first Archbishop has an interesting story
With his parents he first entered this country
From Ireland they came, a migrating family
He worked as a gardener, very diligently
At the College of Mount Saint Mary
He studied at the Seminary, subsequently
He proposed a plan for education
Specific to the needs of Catholic children
It was taken into the church's core
At the third Plenary Council of Eighteen Eighty Four
The system held such powerful sway
It is still extensively used today
He founded Saint John's College, New York City
Known today as Fordham University
Archbishop Hughes, the scholar;
The educator and innovator
Served both Presidents Lincoln and Polk as Advisor
He is known today throughout the nation
As The Father of Catholic Education
He laid the corner stone to start construction
Of the New St. Patrick's Cathedral
But sadly died before its completion*

(5)

*Bicentennial Celebration
From 1864 thru 1918*

*The next leader appointed to the See
Was the Archbishop, John McCloskey
The first native of New York to enter the clergy
Young and eager at age twenty three
Was first appointed Archbishop of Albany
He served there for seventeen years, devotedly
He then returned to New York to head the See
To a population that had grown considerably
The number of Catholics had grown larger indeed
He opened eighty eight new parishes to fill that need
He began his term in office in Eighteen Sixty Four
And worked hard to assist children of the poor,
He assisted immigrants and the elderly
He devoted his time so selflessly
He was elevated to a Cardinal, the first in the See
The first American Cardinal, John McCloskey
Eighteen Seventy Nine ceremony, in an event historical
He opened the new St. Patrick's Cathedral*

(6)

*The Cardinal died in Eighteen Eighty Five
At the age of seventy five
Archbishop Michael Corrigan was his successor
A participant in the third Plenary Council in Baltimore
As representative of Cardinal McCloskey in Eighteen Eighty Four
He established in Dunwoodie, St. Joseph's Seminary
Where thousands of priests trained eventually
From his own inheritance Archbishop Corrigan
Donated the sum of fifty thousand
To finance a chapel for the Seminary
It was a gift of love not charity
A strong advocate for education
One of his first acts upon his succession
Was the Plenary Council Decree's implementation
During his seventeen year administration
Seventy five schools were opened by Michael Corrigan
Three hundred priests ordained and in addition,
Thirty new charities began operation
Well known for his pastoral attention
Towards the surging Italian population
This in Eighteen Eighty Five was steadily rising
He provided for them priests who were Italian-speaking*

(7)

*The Archbishop died in Nineteen Hundred and Two
At that time he was sixty two.
John Murphy Farley came here to study
In New York at Fordham University
Was ordained in Rome Nineteen Seventy
In Eighteen Eighty Five, appointed Bishop Auxiliary
The first in the New York Archdiocese
He succeeded Michael Corrigan as Archbishop of the See
Appointed a Cardinal in Nineteen Eleven, John Farley
Among his good works founded a preparatory seminary
Opened over fifty schools during his administration
And dealt with problems of immigration
He led the New York Catholic population
During the troubled years of World War 1
And also through the Centennial celebration
He died on September Seventeen
At age seventy six in the year Nineteen Eighteen*

**Bicentennial Celebration
From 1919 to Present**

*Patrick Joseph Hayes, a native son of the soil
Achieved life's successes through dedication and toil
Born and raised in New York City
He first attended La Salle Academy*

(8)

*Manhattan College, then Saint Joseph's Seminary
He served the Archdiocese as city pastor
President of Cathedral College and
Archdiocese's Chancellor
He was a credit to the nation and to his family
Consecrated in Nineteen Fourteen, a Bishop Auxiliary
And just three years later,
Vicar apostolic of the Military
In Nineteen Hundred Nineteen, Archbishop of the Holy See
His popularity grew in stature, more and more
He was elevated to Cardinal in Nineteen Twenty Four
He was deeply involved in agencies for charity
Many New York's Catholics were destitute and needy
He created a powerful network in the Archdiocese
The largest institution in the US for Catholic charities
So dedicated were his efforts and the true grit he had shown
As Cardinal of Catholic Charities, he had come to be known
He was a recipient of many foreign decorations
His warm personality brought him much adoration
He was well respected for the reverence and the dignity
That he displayed during celebrations and Liturgy
Patrick Cardinal Hayes died at age seventy, in Nineteen Thirty Eight*

(9)

*After a distinguished lifetime that was memorable and great
New York's next Archbishop was Francis Spellman
A native of Massachusetts, who was born in Whitman
He served as Secretariat of State in the Vatican
A post never before held by an American
He was asked and he acceded to serve this country
And was appointed apostolate vicar of the US Military
Valuable were his services in special missions
For both Presidents Franklyn D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman
An outspoken defender of religious freedom
One of the many dedications of Archbishop Spellman
Other worthy causes he championed were the rights of the poor
Racial justice and there were many more
He also ensured the proliferation
Of Catholic schools and other learning institutions
During his ecclesiastical administration
Over three hundred and seventy schools were built in the region
He was elevated to a Cardinal in Nineteen Forty Six
In Nineteen Fifty Two he established a missionary to Hispanics
He hosted the first papal visit to the Western Hemisphere
When in Nineteen Sixty Five Pope Pius XII came here
A religious leader respected worldwide*

(10)

*Many were his achievements before he died
A man truly loved throughout the State
Nineteen Sixty Seven, December second
He died at the age of seventy eight
On March first, Nineteen Twenty One
His birthplace, Manhattan
Another local son
Terrence James Cooke, the Archdiocese's next leader
Carried on the work of his predecessor
He was a student of the Cathedral College
And St. Joseph's Seminary
He earned a Masters Degree
In social work at the Catholic University
In Washington D.C
He served the CYO in New York City
While teaching at Fordham University
Became secretary to Cardinal Spellman
Sometime later in Nineteen Fifty Seven
In Nineteen Sixty Five was appointed Vicar General
In Nineteen Sixty Eight, Archbishop
And one year later elevated to Cardinal
During his administration*

(11)

*He was responsible for the construction
Of the Catholic Center
This is now the Archdiocese's Head Quarters
He created the Inter-Parish Finance Commission
Also the Inter-City Scholarship Fund
For parishes and schools in need of financial assistance
Before he died in Nineteen Eighty Three
He hosted the visit of Pope Paul II to New York City
So many people wanted just to be
Present to hear his eulogy
St. Patrick's Cathedral was packed to capacity
With thousands of mourners from the laity and clergy
To bid him farewell
So great was his popularity
Yet still underway, Nineteen Eighty Four it began
The cause for his canonization
He will be a Saint one blessed day
For this we all hope and pray
John Joseph O'Connor,
Was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
On Fifteenth January, Nineteen Twenty
His parents, the descendants of an Irish family
He studied at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary
He was ordained in 1945, on fifteenth December
A joyous day; a day to remember
He earned a Master's Degree*

(12)

*In Advanced Ethics, from Villanova University
And a Doctorate in Political Science
From Georgetown University, in Nineteen Seventy
In Nineteen sixty six, the 26th October
He was made a Prelate of Honor
Of His Holiness, a Monsignor
Consecrated to the episcopate by Pope John 11
Thirteen years later
He was named Bishop of Scranton, Pennsylvania
In Nineteen Eighty Three
He was appointed one year later
Archbishop of the New York See
He led with honor and discipline
And stood firmly by traditional Catholic doctrine
He discharged his duties to a plan
He was named, the Patron Saint
Of the working man
Because of his support and involvement
In trade unions and the labor movement
He advocated unity among religions
And participated in inter-faith ecumenical relations
He denounced anti-Semitism very strongly
He wrote a letter of apology
To Jewish leaders, for past harm done
To their community
A Good Samaritan, humanitarian, a wise and just man*

(13)

*He advocated for the disadvantaged
Throughout the world
And used the power of the pulpit
For his advocacy to be told
At age 75, his resignation was submitted
But by the Pope, was not accepted
At that age, resignation is required
But he persevered as the Pope so desired
On May 3, 2000, John Cardinal O'Connor
Succumbed to a brain tumor
Just three days prior
To the announcement of his successor
He often preached about life; the sanctity
In defense of the unborn, especially
This, his most notable ministry
Will remain forever his legacy
After a service very solemn and somber
His body was interred in the crypt, under the altar
Of St. Patrick's Cathedral
Well-wishers and mourners
Were present at the funeral
Edward Michael Egan was born in Oak Park, Illinois
On April 2, 1932, a baby boy,
To his parents, a bundle of joy
He earned his first degree
A Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy*

(14)

*From Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary
He then went to Pontifical North American College
In Rome, Italy
To continue his study of theology
There, in 1957, on 15th December
He was ordained by Bishop Martin J. O'Connor
He then obtained a license in Sacred Theology
From the Pontifical Gregorian University
He served the Archdiocese of Chicago
As co-chancellor
He earned a doctorate in canon law
In the year Nineteen Sixty Four
He first served our Archdiocese, in the capacity
Of Vicar for Education and Bishop Auxiliary
From Nineteen Eighty Five to Nineteen Eighty Eight
He was appointed Bishop of Bridgeport,
In Connecticut State
In the year 2000, the 11th of May
For Cardinal Edward Egan a special day
He became Archbishop of the New York See
He began to lead enthusiastically
He made vocation to the priesthood a priority
He revamped the Yonkers Seminary
And each year he personally
Conducts a day of prayer and reflection for the seminary
Five others and the cardinal*

(15)

*Were named to the Supreme Tribunal
Of the Apostolic Signature
The church's highest court in matters of Canon Law
He is interested in social communications
He hosts a weekly program, on Satellite Radio station
He discusses a variety of topics
Including reflections on Scripture and Catholic education
Sacred music, human interest stories, guidance spiritual
And broadcasts Sunday Mass from the Cathedral
Cardinal Egan shares with New York his vast experience
A storehouse of knowledge and scholarly brilliance
The twelfth leader of the New York See
For his good health, strength and safety
We solemnly pray to God Almighty every day
The New York Archdiocese
Has come a long way
Two hundred years ago to this present day
The journey long and the struggles great
But we always benefited from a wise prelate
And strong conviction and powerful faith
We face the future with a smile
God walks with us each step of every mile*

*By: Oscar Richards
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Archdiocese of NY Bicentennial Celebration - 2008*