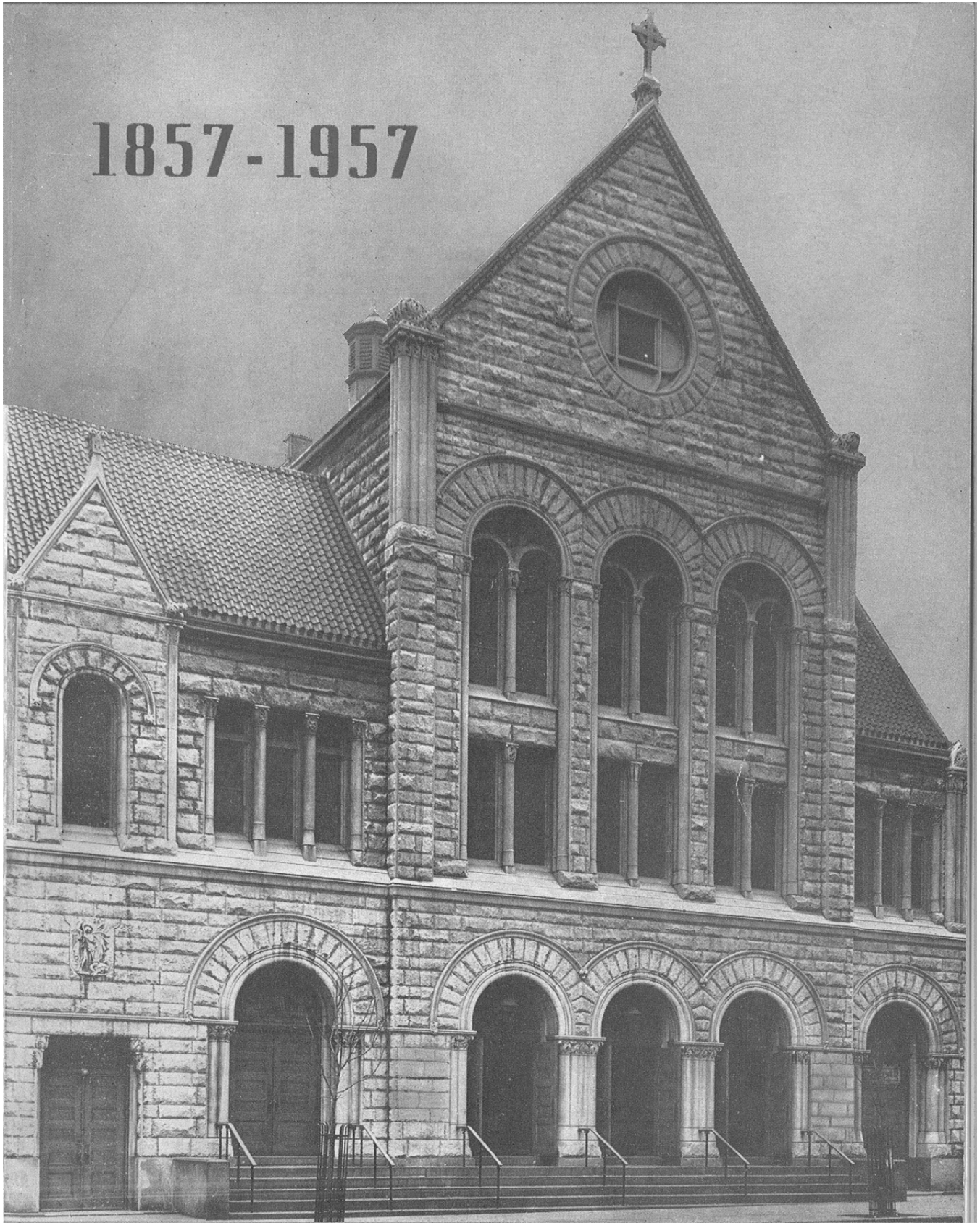


1857-1957



THE PARISH of SAINT MICHAEL

Dedicated
to
His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman

Vigilant Shepherd Vigorous Patriot

on the
Twenty-fifth Anniversary of his Episcopal Consecration

this
Record of the Parish of Saint Michael
is presented as a token of the love and loyalty
of its priests, religious and parishioners.



September 29th, 1957

Dear Monsignor Monaghan:

On the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of St. Michael's Parish, I wish to congratulate you, your Reverend Assistants, the devoted Religious and your loyal parishioners.

I join with all of you in thanking Almighty God for the manifold blessings and graces that have come to this parish from the bountiful hands of Our Heavenly Father through the gracious intercession of Our Blessed Mother during the past hundred years.

It is my prayer that Almighty God may continue to pour His divine strength upon the priests, religious and parishioners of St. Michael's Parish in order to enable them to continue to work for their own sanctification, the glory of God and the welfare of our beloved country.

With kind regards, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ,

F. Cardinal Spellman
Archbishop of New York

Rt. Rev. Msgr. John P. Monaghan, Ph.D.,
424 West 34th Street,
New York 1, N. Y.



His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York.

SAINT MICHAEL'S RECTORY

424 WEST 34th STREET
NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

September 29, 1957

My dear Friends of St. Michael:

My first duty is to thank our devoted assistant priests, the Religious of the Presentation and the loyal families and friends who have made and kept Saint Michael's a place of refreshment, light and peace.

St. Michael's is very old but we are grateful to God and the dedicated service of so many, clerical and lay, that the old parish is still very vigorous in a new environment of business and industry.

Probably the most distinguished virtue of the parish of Saint Michael was the extraordinary number of vocations to the altar and the cloister. Not only were the vocations many, they were of outstanding character and zeal.

I welcome an Alumnus of the Parish and its very dear friend, His Excellency Bishop McDonnell, the celebrant of today's Mass. In the "old days" he offered Mass at the altar as a priest of God; today he comes back to the rejuvenated parish, to offer the Centenary Mass with the fullness of the Priesthood, a Bishop of the Church.

In the midst of the joy of our celebration, we do not lose sight of those Priests, Religious and Parishioners who labored so well in the past to leave us this beautiful edifice in which we are gathered today and who are not with us today. Grateful we are to them and prayerfully do we recall them.

His Eminence has honored us by his presence. His foresight and the aid of his Building and Commodity Commissions enabled us to accomplish more efficiently a complete rehabilitation in our Church, and Convent and School. To him we offer our hospitality and the gratitude of our hearts.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

John P. Monaghan
Pastor



Right Reverend Monsignor John P. Monaghan, Ph.D., Pastor

Program
*Solemn Mass for the Deceased Priests,
Religious and Parishioners*

Friday, September 27, 1957

10:00 A.M.

Celebrant..... REVEREND JOHN R. SHELLEY
Deacon..... REVEREND RAYMOND M. COLLINS
Subdeacon..... REVEREND CHARLES C. WILSON
Master of Ceremonies..... REVEREND EUGENE J. SHERIDAN



Solemn Pontifical Mass
Sunday, September 29, 1957

11:00 A.M.

Celebrant..... MOST REV. THOMAS J. McDONNELL, D.D.
Deacon..... REVEREND THOMAS V. McMAHON
Subdeacon..... REVEREND FRANCIS X. CRONIN
Masters of Ceremonies..... REVEREND CHARLES C. WILSON
REVEREND EUGENE J. SHERIDAN

REVEREND HENRY J. BROWNE, Ph.D.

Preacher

RIGHT REVEREND MICHAEL A. McGUIRE

Archpriest

RIGHT REVEREND FRANCIS X. SCOTT

RIGHT REVEREND CHRISTOPHER J. McCORMACK

Deacons of Honor to His Eminence

RIGHT REVEREND ALOYSIUS C. DINEEN, P.A.

Assistant Priest at the Throne

HIS EMINENCE FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN

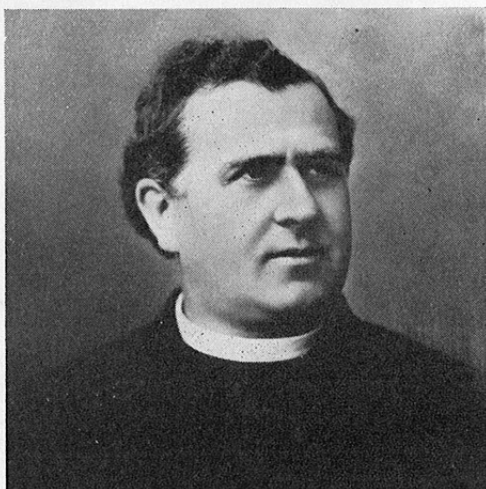
Presiding



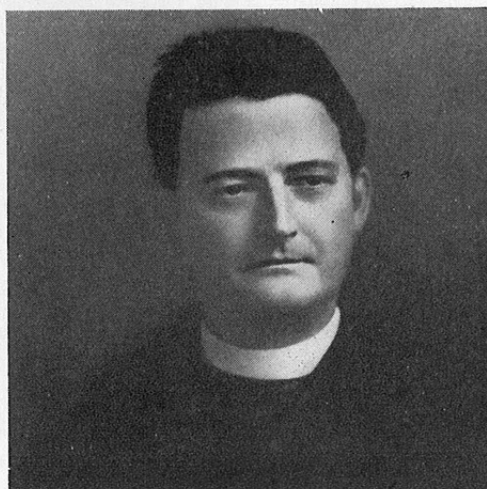
Interior of Church after Renovation



Rt. Rev. Arthur J. Donnelly
1857-1890



Rev. John A. Gleeson
1890-1919

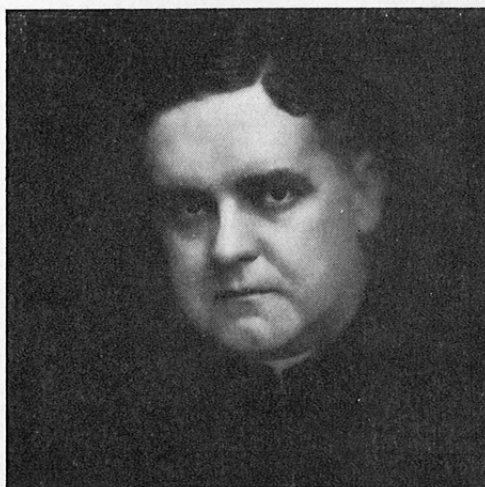


Rev. William F. Dougherty
1918-1921

Rt. Rev. John J. E. O'Brien
1921-1934



Rev. John J. Kiernan
1935-1951



Rt. Rev. John J. Stanley
1952-1954

Donations and Memorials

Bacco, Mrs. Carmela One set of Benediction Candles in memory of Vito and Daniel Bacco

Buttiglear, Frederick In memory of: Statue of Our Lady of the Assumption

Carroll, Miss Mary E. Tabernacle of Main Altar in memory of her parents,
Daniel and Mary Carroll

Crilly, Miss Eileen Church Lamp: In memory of George & Anetta Crilly, Michael and
Mary Watts, William Duncan

Cronin Family Antependium of Main Altar in memory of Richard and Ellen Cronin

D'Andrea, Mrs. Beatrice Annunciation Scene over Main Altar

Farelli, Rose In memory of: Silver Ewer and Basin

Knowlton, Dr. Isabel Tabernacle Veil

Lally, Mrs. Elizabeth In memory of William Lally: Processional Cross

Milius, Mrs. Mary \$200 towards Redecorating the Church

McCauley, The Misses Tabernacle Veil, in memory of Mary McCauley

McCauley, Teresa Church Lamp, in memory of Theresa and Mary McCauley

McMahon, Miss Kathryn Sanctuary Lamp on Main Altar: in memory of Martin and
Katherine Harrigan (grandparents)
Lamp at our Lady's Altar: in memory of Michael and
Anna Hayes (great grandparents)

New York Post Office Holy Name Society Gift of \$150.00

O'Brien, Mrs. Mary and
Carley, Miss Estelle \$100 in memory of the O'Brien and Carley Families

Pace, Margaret Altar Charts: in memory of Matteo Locaco

Romanello, Anthony Silver Altar Vases: in memory of Margaret Romanello

Rooney, Thomas J. New Pall: in memory of his brother, John Rooney

Schiavi Family Della Robbia at Church Entrance to the Convent

Shelley, Mrs. Ellen Lamp at St. Joseph's Altar, in memory of Patrick J. Shelley

Sullivan, Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Silver Candelabra, in memory of Living and Deceased Members
of the Sullivan and Toner Families

Summa Family Mass Candlesticks on Blessed Virgin's and St. Joseph's Altar,
the gift of Mrs. Salvatore Gargiulo

Taylor, Miss May E. \$100.00 towards the Redecoration of the Church

Vance, Robert Tabernacle Veil, in memory of William and Mamie Vance;
Set of Silver Benediction Candles



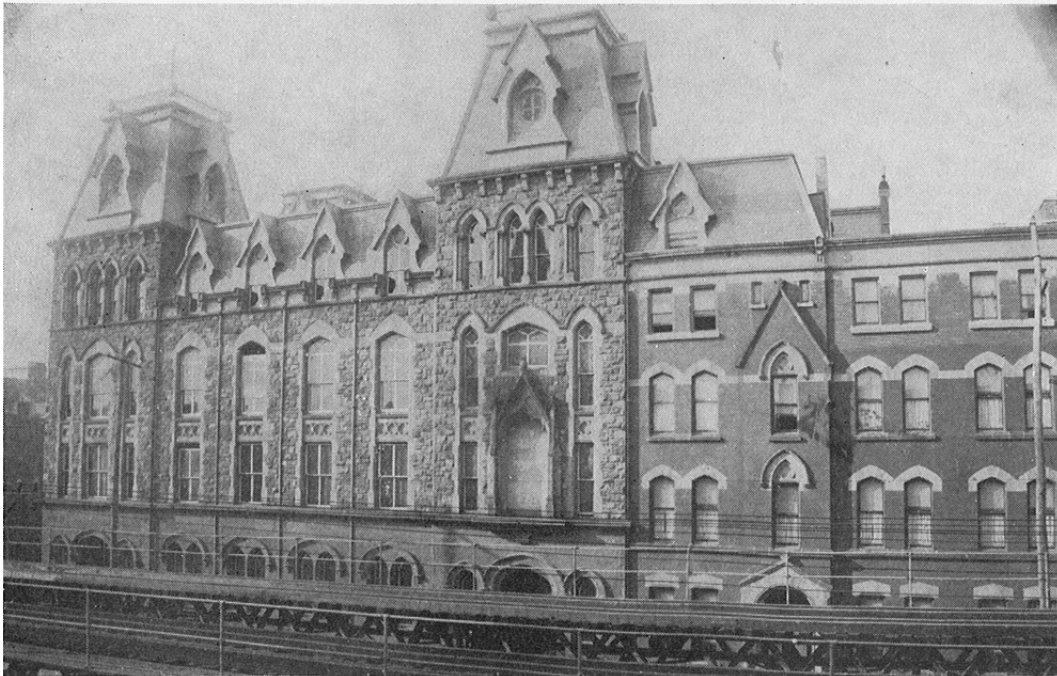
Old Church, Convent, Rectory and School, 9th Avenue & 31st Street, 1880's.

Golden Book of Remembrance

- Albanese, Mr. & Mrs. Anthony,
In memory of Vito & Daniel Bacco
- Attanasio, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph A. & Family
- Barrett, Mr. & Mrs. Harry
- Bathe, Miss Angela J.
- Berry, Miss Anna
- Berry, Miss Hannah
- Bourdon, Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin
- Beckingham, Mrs. Elizabeth,
In memory of her Mother, Mary McCourt
- Caffrey, Mr. & Mrs. Philip & Family
- Carney, Mr. & Mrs. George M.
- Carroll: Deceased Members of Family
- Carroll, Mary E.
- Cerbasi, Mr. & Mrs. Anthony
- Cinque Brothers
- Connor, John,
In memory of Margaret V. Connor
- Connors, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond
- Corbett, Miss Helen
- Cribbin, Miss Margaret
- Cronin, Richard
- Cronin, Richard: In memory of
- D'Andrea, Lillian & Vincent
- Donohue, Miss Ella
- Donohue, Joseph J.
- Drascovic, Alice & Matthew
- Dugan, Mrs. Agnes
- Eskendarin, Isabel
- Fallon, Mr. & Mrs. William
- Finerty, Cornelius & Agnes
- Flannery, Anne & Helen,
In memory of Alexander & Ellen Flannery
- Gaffney, Mr. & Mrs. Edward
- Gaffney, Mr. & Mrs. Hugh & Family
- Gaffney, Mrs. Sarah
- Gargiulo, Mr. & Mrs. Salvatore
- Garrity, Mrs. Charles:
In memory of Charles Garrity Leavy
- Grennan, Mary Ellen
- Hazel, Ellen: In memory of
- Hauptmann Family
- Hickey, Miss Nellie
- Hoffman, Mr. & Mrs. Gerard
- Horan, Mr. & Mrs. Patrick & Family
- Johannes, Mrs. Mary
- Johannes, Albert H., In memory of
- Kamfor, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph
- Kearney Family
- Kennedy, Mr. & Mrs. M.
- Keelty, Margaret:
In memory of Peter & Ellen Keelty
- Kelly, E. Hazel
- Kiernan, James J.: In memory of
- Kiernan, Mary Frances
- Kiernan, John & Catherine: In memory of
- Keenan, Mr. & Mrs. Harry
- Keough, Mr. & Mrs. James
- Lally, Mr. & Mrs. William
- Lenahan, Ann & Thomas: In memory of
- Lyons, Mrs. Thomas P.
- Lynch, Agnes Peoples & William J.:
In memory of
- McCarthy, James J.
- McCarthy, Mary
- McCauley, Mary Catherine
- McCauley, Teresa
- McCormack, Mr. & Mrs. Edward J.
- McDonald Family
- McGurty, Mrs. Anne
- McMahon, Stephen & Julia
- McQuillen Family
- McGivney, George
- McDonnell Family
- McQuade, Joseph F.
- Madden, Helen A.
- Madden, Margaret M.
- Madden, Mary
- Maksimik, Mr. & Mrs. William
- Marrin, Alice
- Marrin, Joseph
- Marrin, Mary
- Marrin, Patrick J.
- Martin, Mr. & Mrs. Frank
- Martin, Mary, Rose & Peter
- Martin, Peter F. & Rose
- Mecca, Beatrice: In memory of Mecca Family
- Milius, Mrs. Mary
- Murphy, Miss Annie G.
- Murray, Kathryn M.
- Murray, Mrs. Mary
- Murray, Mr. & Mrs. Martin
- Mortimer Family
- Naughton, Thomas: In memory of
- Nehls, Mr. & Mrs. William
- O'Neil, Joseph
- Ottone, Charles & Patricia: In memory of
Carmela Ottone & Gladys Bonten
- Patterson, Mr. & Mrs. George
- Powers, Mr. & Mrs. Robert M.
- Quinn, Daniel: In memory of
- Raba Family
- Rafferty, John & Anna
- Rooney, Thomas J.
- Ross, Mr. & Mrs. William & Family
- Romanella, James, Mildred & Patricia
- Romanello, Anthony J. & Margaret
- Rosilitz, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. & F.
- Santos, Louis F.
- Schiavi, Mr. & Mrs. A.
- Smith, Mabel
- St. Michael's Presentation Alumnae
- Summa, Carmela: In memory of
- Toner Family:
In memory of Living & Deceased Members
- Treadway, Edward
- Tully, Frances G.
- Tully, Laurence
- Tully, Patrick & Mary: In memory of
- Vance, Peter Joseph: In memory of
- Vernaglio, Mr. & Mrs. Michael:
In memory of Rose & Michael Vernaglio
- Wall, John & Mary
- Waudby, Anna M.
- Werner, Emily:
In memory of her Mother, Emma Werner
- Walsh Family
- Zaccagnino, Mr. & Mrs. John
- Zanin, Mrs. Louisa
- Zaremba, Gertrude
- Zaremba, Lucy & John
- Zeiner, Catherine M.



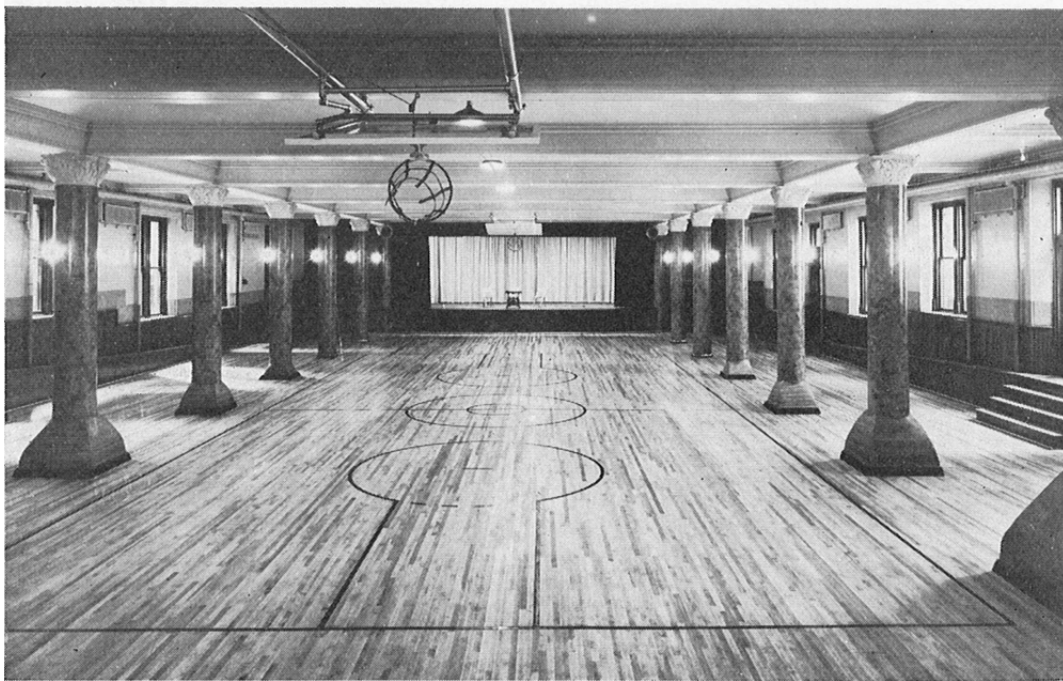
Laying of the cornerstone of the new St. Michael's Church, April 22, 1906.
In center, Father Gleeson, and behind him, Father Kenny.



Ninth Avenue view of Old School and Rectory, 1890's.



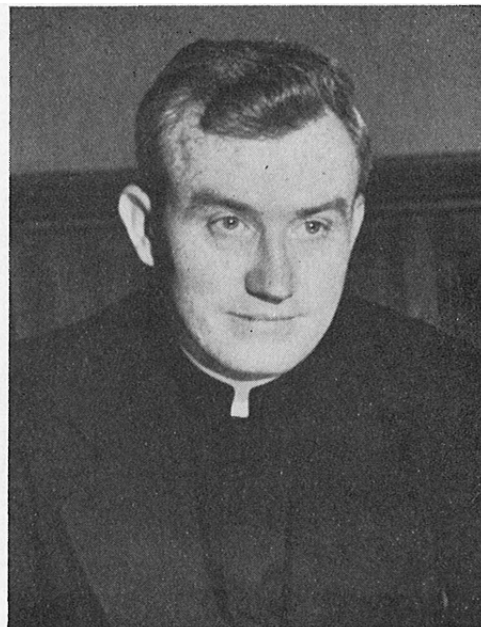
Main Altar before renovation.



Auditorium and Gymnasium.



Rev. Raymond M. Collins
Chaplain, N. Y. Post Office Holy Name Society



Rev. John R. Shelley
Asst. Director of St. Michael's Schools



Rev. Charles C. Wilson
Director of Parish Catholic Youth Organization



Rev. Eugene J. Sheridan
Director of Spanish Catholic Action of Parish



Rear of Church, Convent and Schools, 1957

The Parish of St. Michael
1857-1957

A Century of Grace on the West Side

THE CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL
NEW YORK
1957

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Parish Planted

A century ago native Americans were beginning to laugh at the stage caricature of the Irishman at the same time that the real thing was planting a serious and lasting memorial to himself as well as to his God. This was in the form of a parish on Manhattan Island. The farm allure of the mid-western states by that time had been added to the mining appeal of the far west but yet many immigrants were staying in New York and would add to the frontier population only in the sense of pushing northward the edge of the city. Thirty-fourth Street had been cut through from river to river only twenty years earlier and Seventh Avenue reached the Harlem River only the year before in 1856. The masts of the Yankee clipper ships rimmed the lower island and steamships were just beginning regular trips to deposit new settlers at Castle Garden which had opened at the Battery as an immigrant station in 1855. A Democrat, James Buchanan, who was pleasing to many Catholics and a personal friend of Archbishop John Hughes took occupancy of the White House March 4th, 1857 and the pro-slavery Dred Scott decision of two days later aroused anew the national argument which would lead to the irrepressible conflict of four years later. More important still for the history of the new parish was the financial panic which began in August, 1857. The situation soon resulted in troops guarding public buildings against mobs as within a month thirty to forty thousand idle workers were found in the city.

That was the very summer that the redoubtable Archbishop Hughes, who had made not only New York but all the country aware of the presence of Catholics, decided on a new parish on the west side of the island between those of St. Columba on the south and Holy Cross on the north. It was to be bounded by 28th Street on the south and 38th Street on the north and to extend from Sixth Avenue westward to the Hudson River. Its establishment came at a time when the archdiocese contained a flock of an estimated 280,000 and was served by 110 priests. The Catholics of New York were ministered to by St. Vincent's Hospital and two orphanages also under the Sisters of Charity, as well as by homes conducted by Sisters of Mercy and of the Good Shepherd. There were twelve "literary institutions" for girls and four for boys as well as about two dozen "free schools," and fourteen Sunday schools in the city. There were in addition three conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and popular pious associations such as the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Confraternity of the Rosary. There were five churches for German Catholics in Manhattan in-

cluding St. Francis and St. John the Baptist within the borders of the newly designated parish. Apart from the French church of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Anne's, whose parishioners were more old native stock, the other seventeen parishes were almost completely Irish in the makeup of priests and people.

It was, indeed, to such a poor immigrant working class area that Arthur J. Donnelly was assigned. He seems to have chosen himself St. Michael as the patron of the parish. This thirty-seven year old priest was a native of Athy in County Kildare but his parents had brought him as a lad of about seven to New York City where he attended St. Mary's parochial school. At fourteen he had gone to work for a drygoods firm doing business in New York and Paterson, New Jersey. This company failed in 1836 and Donnelly in dealing with Lord and Taylor, one of their creditors, secured himself a position with the better established company. After eight years there he was secure enough in a position of some importance to branch off on his own to enter into a business partnership with his cousin, David P. Campion under the name of Campion and Donnelly.

The then Bishop Hughes in opening the first really successful seminary of the diocese, St. Joseph's at Fordham, appealed not only for support but also for vocations. One who heeded him was Donnelly who in 1847 at an age when most priests were already ordained began his studies for the priesthood. He had to take up the study of the classics with a group of teen-age students before advancing to philosophy and theology. In the college section of Fordham, where he began, one of the Jesuits, Isidore Daubresse, became his spiritual advisor and life-long friend. He was ordained at St. Patrick's, Mulberry Street on October 6, 1852, and according to one version, that very evening was commissioned by the bishop to begin a church in the Manhattanville district of the city. His business acumen was soon put to use and in three years he had built the first church of the Annunciation at the expense of \$35,000 leaving a debt of only \$11,000. This talent led the bishop to appoint him procurator of the seminary in the fall of 1855 and to direct him to organize the congregation attending the seminary church into what became the parish of Our Lady of Mercy. At Fordham he shared for two years with the priests of the diocese who conducted the seminary in the training of young aspirants for the priesthood and it apparently left a deep impression on him.¹

The parochial district allotted to Donnelly in the summer of 1857 seemed at first of little promise. The pastors to north and south were not

¹ *Catholic News*, March 20, 1890, Nov. 9, 1907. John G. Shea (Ed.) *The Catholic Churches of New York City* (New York, 1878), pp. 523-525. "History of the Church of St. Michael, 1857-1891," *Association of St. Michael, Members Book, 1891* (New York, 1891), pp. 17-30.

convinced of the need and Donnelly's own survey was so discouraging he asked to be allowed to build a church on the east side and further downtown. Archbishop Hughes, however, insisted and instructed him also to put the church midway between the older two and west of 9th Avenue. In August the new pastor purchased for \$11,250 three lots amounting to 105 by 100 feet beginning ninety-five feet west of 9th Avenue on the north side of 31st Street. On the rear of the site was a row of delapidated two storey frame buildings typical of the shanty quality of much of the area. Despite the hard times which Donnelly with the rest of the country found himself facing he held on to the property through borrowing from friends and unashamedly collecting at his parishioners' doors. The old frame buildings were systematically gutted and strengthened and a brick extension toward the street added so that the pastor was able to accommodate 600 at his opening Mass at 10:30 on September 20th when the Vicar General, William Starrs, preached. The brief card of announcement distributed in the neighborhood concluded, "The collection will be taken up immediately after the sermon." Even on his first Christmas, nonetheless, it came to only \$140.²

The neighborhood reflected the growing pains of New York. There were lumber yards and stone cutting establishments, coal yards and stables. Thirty-seventh Street and Tenth Avenue had the beginnings of a slaughter house section, while the Hudson River Railroad passenger depot at 31st and 10th hinted at another future development. Right up against the new church on the west was a wallpaper factory, an indication of an industry that soon was notable in the area. The outstanding landmark was the Institution for the Blind situated on land presented by James Boorman between 33rd and 34th Streets on 9th Avenue, where the Y.M.C.A. and J. C. Penney now stand. The use of Boorman Place to designate a row of better class three and four storey brick houses on the south side of 33rd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues kept alive the name of one of the estate owners of the rural days of the section. A New York State Arsenal stood on the northeast corner of 35th and 7th.

Other institutions of this area, which was known politically as the Twentieth Ward, included a Presbyterian Church on the northeast corner of 31st and 9th and a Methodist Episcopal edifice on the north side of 30th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues which is used today for the publishing of a newspaper. There was a Methodist church on the south side of 34th Street off 8th Avenue and a Baptist one on the north side of 29th west of 9th Avenue. The charming Episcopal church on the southeast corner of 29th and 9th alone seems to have survived. More lasting too were the three "Ward Schools" within the new parish, number 32 on the north side

²"History," p. 32; Convent Scrapbook, "History of Church of St. Michael," from an unidentified Association booklet; Financial Reports, 1857, 1858.

of 35th Street off 9th Avenue, number 48 on the southside of 28th west of 9th Avenue, and number 48 on the south side of 28th west of 6th Avenue. At the same time the schools in the parishes to north and south were educating about 350 children apiece and the Germans to the east were taking care of about 750.

Among these sights, and sounds, and smells differing so much from the country areas he had known for five years Father Donnelly took up residence. His quarters, which he rented for thirteen dollars a month, were opposite the church in the first floor of a house. He took his meals at first at the neighboring parish houses or with parishioners and sometimes put his cleaning talents to work on his rooms and also on the humble church building. Into the religious functions he conducted there was injected an awareness of St. Michael's struggle for survival. For example, on the first Christmas there were Masses at 6, 8, 9, and 10:30 and Vespers and sermon at 3:30. There were collections at all and at the last Mass the seat money regulations of Sunday were enforced. These consisted of renting a chair from an usher for three cents since there were no pews. This seat money was a new custom in New York and St. Michael's did it from the start. When the pastor raised the tax to five cents there was grumbling and even complaining anonymous letters. Donnelly spiked the protests by pointing out that the house of God belonged rather to his debtors, the carpenter, mason, and roofer and after the debt was paid off something might be done about paying fees at the door.³

Donnelly was not beyond begging but he also had other approaches to the raising of money. He used a lecture by Dr. W. P. Morrogh, president of the Fordham seminary, on the early martyrs to take in \$500 against his first year's deficit and the next year Dr. Levi S. Ives, the convert Episcopal bishop of Delaware, brought in over \$800. In the second year the parish gave out over \$100 for the new American College in Rome and also for the "Jubilee Alms for the Propagation of the Faith."⁴ Similarly in the midst of this financial struggle the pastor subscribed personally \$100 for the new St. Patrick's Cathedral.⁵ On the personal side he became concerned about his lodging after an assistant came in the person of Father Dominic Teixcheira, a Polish priest, who had been ten years in the country and who remained at St. Michael's until 1871. He was somewhat limited in the public use of English but he was of great help particularly in taking Vespers almost every Sunday. Functioning as overseer of carpenters and masons the pastor put up a building for both their needs and the future in the sum-

³"History," pp. 34-35.

⁴F. R., 1857-1858.

⁵Donnelly to Hughes, March 31, 1859.

mer of 1859. It adjoined the church to the east on 31st Street and cost a little over \$13,000. Such demonstrations of ability in finance had by that time so impressed the archbishop that Donnelly was assigned to introduce a uniform and more systematic book-keeping in the parishes of the archdiocese. This required a great deal of patience and tact as well as his business experience. For example, St. Anne's refused the examination while St. Stephen's struck him as needing a complete overhauling of its financial records. The Jesuits were deliberately avoided and the Redemptorists were not quick to cooperate.⁶

As the parish prospects brightened the pastor planned for a new church building. Pew rents were bringing in over \$2,000 a year and entertainments at Palace Gardens with tickets at twenty-five cents yielded an average of \$1,000 for 1859 and 1860. Another saving was made by the fact that James McGee from 1860 began to give free sexton service. Support came through the \$1,000 profit on fifty cent admissions to Dr. Cahill's discourse on transubstantiation given at Cooper Institute on April 17, 1861. The greatest support and a really lasting plan—Donnelly could never have guessed it would last for three quarters of a century—which also resulted in a certain cohesion within the parish was the "St. Michael's Church and School Building Association." It was begun in 1861 and its object was to complete the church and to provide schools for the free education of the boys and girls of the parish. The method was the collecting of weekly dues of from five to twenty-five cents. The pastor was president and there was an auditing committee of laymen representing each street in the parish whose names appeared on the annual financial report. In the light of the history of interfering lay trustees which the Church in New York had suffered under for the previous half century this was a unique feature. Even more unusual was the fact that the Association was to have charge not only of the dues, gathered systematically by moderately compensated collectors, but also of all donations, Sunday collections and pew rents. According to the constitution, from the seat money alone the pastor was to carry the ordinary operating expenses such as priests' salaries, and the choir and sanctuary costs. Every year the president was to check and certify paid up dues books for the members. By 1867 the pastor was giving one evening a week to the business of receiving collectors and other affairs of the Association. There were spiritual benefits of membership in a monthly Mass for living and another for the dead on specified days each month. All deceased members and 'founders', who were those who gave a donation in proportion to their income, were to have a Mass for their souls on the day after All Souls Day. From an income of almost \$3,000 in dues the first year the Association was bringing in over \$5,000 by 1865.⁷

⁶Donnelly to Hughes, Jan. 30, 1858.

⁷"History," pp. 43-45, 50; F.R., 1861-1865.

In 1861 with hope and a debt of \$20,000 the pastor built a basement that ran back one hundred feet from 31st Street around the existing temporary building. Then he roofed over the old structure and removed it from within without any interruption in Sunday Masses. On September 29th of that year Archbishop Hughes performed the dedication service of the basement and preached on the theme, "My house shall be called the house of prayer." In congratulating both priest and flock he pointed out how the grandeur of the most humble Christian church surpassed that of the temple of Jerusalem. In place of the manna and the tables of the law and the rod of Aaron they would find in their church the fulfillments of these prototypes, the Eucharist, and the living voice and authority of the Church. He described how they would come to pray in St. Michael's from birth to death. He reminded the faithful they were a royal priesthood, "you are partakers in the priesthood—you unite with the priest, and concentrate all your thoughts and intention upon the act he is performing." Finally the great prelate exhorted them always to enter their church with that purity of heart, uprightness of intention, and decorum of conduct which would indicate a people appreciative of the sacred character of the House of God.⁸

The next year the Civil War was raging still more fiercely and the working class homes were sending men off to battle. The parish was able, nonetheless, to put up a church tower 105 feet high and a front wall 80 feet wide on the 31st Street side. Donnelly chose the stone himself from quarries in New York and New Jersey and blended colors in the facade in a way that attracted enough public curiosity that it became something to see while on a Sunday walk. Even thirty years later some of his admirers thought this innovation was still being copied in the building of fashionable residences. During the war years building activity continued to the tune of almost \$50,000. By July 5, 1863 a further form of the church was ready with a new entrance on 32nd Street although there the edifice was only twenty-five feet wide. On that day Donnelly's friend of seminary days, James Roosevelt Bayley, Bishop of Newark, lectured on his trip to Rome in what was billed as a congratulatory mass meeting of the congregation in their new church. Actually the 32nd Street plot had been purchased for a school house but as yet only a room under the church floor was available for such a purpose. The lecture sponsored by the Association added another \$1,000 to the over \$7,000 gained in May by the first Ladies' Fair conducted in the almost completed building. Despite this help by the end of 1863 the debt stood at over \$34,000.

That year was marked also by Father Donnelly's part in an affair that received national attention, namely, the New York draft riots. The inequi-

⁸Lawrence Kehoe (Ed.) *Complete Works of the Most Rev. John Hughes, D.D.*, II (New York, 1865), 354-358.

ties of the conscription law which allowed for paid exemptions and substitutes brought on violent reaction in the city by the summer of 1863 among the poorer class and particularly the Irish. On July 11th, the day of the selecting of draftees, rioting and pillaging began. The outburst was sufficiently bad for the governor to ask the sick Archbishop Hughes to plead for peace and this he did from his balcony window at 36th Street and Madison Avenue, mostly to God-fearing people rather than to the culprits. In the midst of this excitement a mob appeared in 31st Street near the Presbyterian Church and apparently threatened to burn it down. The facile linking of the Protestant ministry with the abolitionist cause wherein they saw the root of their troubles may have been behind the crowd's unruly design. Despite his denial of what he considered an exaggerated version of the event which appeared in the *Sun* Donnelly did disperse the group. There were most likely some of his own parishioners among them and the tradition persisted that he used the technique of offering his church for burning first. It was said for a long time too that the Presbyterian rector made a gift of three chairs for a sedilia which were used in the sanctuary of St. Michael's for many years. Whether from gratitude for this occasion or just neighborliness the minister and eight elders from across the street did attend Donnelly's funeral years later.⁹

The parish continued throughout the war to see the preparation of the church edifice according to the plan of the pastor worked out with T. S. Wall, the architect. The progress went from the carting of stone and putting in of iron to the installing of gas fixtures, the painting of frescoes and the placing of stained glass windows. Meanwhile their interests were not wholly parochial for they helped to support the seminary and the orphans, the Sisters of Mercy work and the Catholic reformatory. Parish life in 1861 included a mission given by the newly founded Paulist Fathers and in 1864 there was a picnic for all at Jones' Woods and later on in the year a lecture by the pastor at Cooper Institute on his trip to Europe. The big event of that year was, however, the dedication of the church which had been slowly going from drawing board to reality. The solemn dedication was performed on April 10th by William Starrs, then the administrator of the archdiocese since the death of Archbishop Hughes three months earlier. The church address was given as 254 W. 32nd Street. This was on the ticket which sold for \$1.00 and admitted one to the morning service and Vespers at 7:30 in the evening when Bernard J. McQuaid, then president of Seton Hall College, preached. The pastor and the Association could hardly ever relax their efforts in the face of a debt then at the \$33,000 level.

The continuing strain on Father Donnelly showed in his request for a six months leave of absence. He sailed for Europe in June and while in

⁹"History", pp. 41-43.

Rome had a specially indulgenced medal of St. Michael prepared for the five-year members of the Association. His return saw him still as active as ever. With the idea of a school which had been with him from the outset he began in 1865 to acquire the lots around the church on the 31st Street side, on 9th Avenue, and west of the avenue on the 32nd Street side. Hence by 1866 the total indebtedness was \$63,590 but the fourteen lots held were surpassed only by the new cathedral for size of holdings. Meanwhile the Ladies Fair brought over \$5,000 in 1865 and \$3,000 the next year. Donnelly's concept of school "founders," by then meaning those who gave at least \$100, realized over \$10,000 in 1866. This was some indication of wealth in the parish even though he could recommend to the Vicar General only four residents, including a dyer and distiller, who might give \$500 apiece toward the new cathedral.¹⁰

By 1867 the church had been incorporated under the state law of 1863 and thereafter only the two lay trustees, the first of whom were Edward Fitzpatrick and Michael Canning, were the pastor's auditing committee. They had to agree to the changes in the now inadequate 100 x 80 foot church that began to be made in 1867 and 1868 when the building in its full width was extended through the block to 32nd Street. This edifice was dedicated on May 17, 1868 by Archbishop John McCloskey who also preached on the occasion. It was not surprising then that the year 1870 saw the parish debt soar to its highest peak of over \$133,000. But the same year the fees of the more comfortable "founders," a festival at Apollo Hall at 6th Avenue and 23rd Street, and the ever working Association brought in a record receipt of over \$62,000.¹¹

The great challenge of this situation was faced with a parish curtailed in size, for the new Holy Innocents in 1866 cut off the territory east of 8th Avenue to 33rd Street and east of 7th Avenue to 28th Street. A St. Michael's assistant, John Larkin, was sent to take charge of that parish. Always for Father Donnelly the greatest work to be accomplished was the education of the children and it was to that he turned more vigorously when what amounted to the fourth stage of the church edifice was finished. To meet it he constantly aroused his people by exhortation to keep the faith of their offspring and to improve their lot even in this life through education. His sermons in this regard were even quoted word for word by some of his impressed congregation. All the ability of this businessmen-priest was to be used not only in zeal for God's house but increasingly for the instruction of many unto justice.

¹⁰ Donnelly to Starrs, Dec. 29, 1864: "History," pp. 49-52: F.R., 1864-1866.

¹¹ Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 517: F.R. 1867-1870, which correct the "History," p. 53, figure of \$183,000.

The First Schools

The story of the schools of St. Michael's really begins with the founding of the parish. It was noticeable in the very first months that very few children came to Mass and the pastor's grief was deepened by the knowledge that half of the children in the public schools of the neighborhood were Catholic. A Sunday school was opened consequently and a special Mass assigned for the children. At first barely a hundred attended and those with great irregularity. Persistent efforts continued to be made as, for example, by using the Sisters of Charity as teachers at least in 1865. By 1867 there was an average attendance at the Mass and Sunday school of over 1,200. This was due especially to the efforts among the young of Father Harry C. McDowell. The situation was aggravated in those days by the use of the Protestant Bible in the Public Schools while their defenders spoke of their non-sectarian character and the sufficiency of religious training at home. As anxious as he was for schools Donnelly did not think he had sufficient means to follow the axiom of school before the church, but he planned carefully to have it grow out of parochial life. He foresaw the problem not only of building but of maintaining and knew that failure on the first try would have very bad effects. The need was obvious especially since the immigrant parents had neither the time nor ability to give religious instructions themselves. St. Michael's answer began to take shape after 1861 through the Association.¹

In 1866 the basement of what was intended for the girls' school was excavated at 31st Street and 9th Avenue with Archbishop McCloskey laying the cornerstone on June 10th. The work of extending the church itself through to 32nd Street held up progress on the new building temporarily. When work began again it involved also a building for use as a boys' school. There followed several years of shifting which without maps or pictures of the time is difficult to visualize. In the summer of 1870 the four priests (who included Henry Prat besides those already mentioned) moved from their residence next to the church west of 9th Avenue on 31st Street to temporary quarters on the north side of 32nd Street. The rectory was then adjusted for use as a boys' school. The permanent priests' house was built at 383 9th Avenue during 1869 and 1870. Its cost in all Donnelly's reports was bracketed with that of completing the exteriors of the boys' and girls' schools which made a total of over \$72,000. In 1871 and 1872 the interior

¹"History," pp. 45-46: *Member Book*, 1878, p. 4; F.R., 1865.

of the girls' school which had not yet opened was completed at the expense of \$47,000 more. Then the boys' school was moved around in 1873 to a building prepared on the south side of 32nd Street adjoining the church and what had been planned for them was left to be prepared for the sisters who came the next year. Throughout this period L. J. O'Connor was the architect and William Salmon a most obliging mason or builder whom Donnelly thanked publicly for his generosity. By that time it seemed that the physical structure of St. Michael's had reached completion for the first time.²

More important still was what had been accomplished for education. First of all the pastor's zeal for the priesthood had led him to form the "Latin School of the Church of St. Michael" in 1867 from which came the boys' parochial school three years later. A talk on vocations to the Sunday school boys was concluded with the invitation to those thinking themselves inclined to the priesthood to present themselves to the pastor. Of those who responded twenty-five were selected and of those eight were to persevere till ordination. They were given preparatory training by priests and laymen until they were ready for St. Francis Xavier which then included college as well as academy level and from there they applied to a bishop or religious superior and went on to theological studies at home or abroad. Over twenty years later Father Donnelly recalled sadly how it had produced vocations so successfully that the Vicar General, William Quinn, "complained pretty loudly that St. Michael's was presenting more than its share of candidates for the Seminary." He described his reaction, "Thinking it prudent not to encourage vocations that might not be accepted I merged the Latin into the parochial school."³

The rules of the school under Donnelly's direction were put into Archbishop Corrigan's hands when he began planning for a "little seminary" for the archdiocese later in the century. The unique character of that St. Michael's school in the history of the Church in the United States warrants the full quoting of its rules. They were prefaced by a quotation from the pastoral letter of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866 admonishing parents to encourage priestly vocations. The students were enjoined:

- "1. The Students of this School shall not use Tobacco at any time, or in any manner or form.
2. They shall not use Intoxicating Drinks, or enter, without grave reasons, any place established principally for the sale of such drinks.
3. They shall not visit any Theater, Circus, or Ball.

²Special F.R., 1885: "History," pp. 53-54; F.R., 1870.

³Donnelly to Corrigan, Sept. 2, 1889.

4. They shall not visit any place of public amusement or resort or be present at any pleasure party without permission of the Rev. Director.

5. They shall not choose companions for play or recreation time, out of the circle of their own families or school, without the approval of such companions by the Rev. Director.

6. They shall not play on the streets, or appear in them otherwise than in an orderly and becoming manner.

7. The places for play or recreation shall be chosen by the Rev. Director.

8. The Students shall in the morning and afternoon, on arriving at the School, first make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

9. When the bell announces the end of each recreation, silence must be instantly observed, and all walk in ranks to the School-room.

10. When School is dismissed for the day, all must visit the Blessed Sacrament and recite the Rosary, and then depart straightway for their homes mindful of Rule 6.

11. On arriving at home they shall cheerfully perform such duties as their parents or guardians may require of them. It is expected, however, that parents will not impose on their sons who are Students of this School, duties inconsistent with their vocation, or that would occupy the time due to study and acts of piety.

12. Each Student, whether in School, at home, or abroad, shall always conduct himself in a manner befitting his professions as an aspirant for the Priesthood."

There was a total of thirteen such aspirants by 1869 according to the announcement of the *Catholic Directory*. By that time too it was costing the parish a total of almost \$900 for school salaries and books.⁴ Even after the regular school opened a special class survived at least during the 1870's for boys with signs of a vocation. They were given classes in Latin and Greek and prepared for Xavier and particularly entrusted with serving at the altar. A twofold tradition came out of Donnelly's school. One that became legendary was the number of St. Michael's boys who went on to the priesthood. The total over the century would seem to be over eighty but the boast of a hundred and even of a national record in this regard—which may or may not be true—has been rather common in the last few decades. For the first half century the vocations to the New York priesthood were

⁴F.R. 1869.

channeled through Xavier. After 1903 Cathedral College received most of them directly from grammar school into its preparatory department. Meanwhile the first pastor and his successor made it possible also for any graduate to go to Xavier for further education. Into this category fitted, for example, Benedict D. Dineen in the early days of this century. He is now a Justice of the Supreme Court of New York and still a prominent parishioner.

The free "male school" opened in September 1870 with seven women lay teachers and about 400 scholars. The assistant priests were of great help also. Father McDowell who would leave in 1873 to begin St. Agnes on the east side had the guidance of the young in his hands. He had a Children of Mary for girls over sixteen and a male counterpart called the Ave Maria Sodality. There were also the Angel Guardian Sodality for younger girls and the Sodality of St. Michael the Archangel for their age group among the boys. Finally there was the Sodality of the Infant Jesus for the pre-Communion children. The place of this priest was taken by John Lancaster Spalding, a Louisville priest, who had come to New York to write the biography of his uncle, Archbishop Martin J. Spalding of Baltimore (d. 1872). He stayed with the Paulists while preparing it for publication and then in 1873 he became senior assistant at St. Michael's. Spalding became the first director of the parochial schools and a preacher and lecturer well known and liked throughout the whole city. He served in the parish until he was consecrated Bishop of Peoria, Illinois, at St. Patrick's Cathedral on May 1, 1877. Little five year old Jimmy Kelly, who later became a lawyer and newspaperman, made a speech and presented him with a bouquet of roses in the school hall as a token of the children's regard before his departure for the west. This most literate prelate of the nineteenth century American Church, who was slight of build but aristocratic in bearing, may have learned something at St. Michael's for he later wrote at least a half dozen works on educational subjects alone. Moreover in 1880 a volume of his appeared entitled *The Religious Mission of the Irish People* in which he tried to convince them to get out of the cities and into rural areas. This very title was first used for a lecture he gave in 1874 to raise funds for a piano for the newly arrived Presentation Sisters⁵

It was on September 8, 1874 that the story of these nuns became intertwined inextricably with that of St. Michael's. The community had its origin with Nano Nagle of Cork in 1775. After convent education in France the foundress was so impressed with the need of Christian education for the children of the slums of Dublin and Cork that in a day when penal laws had eliminated such educational work from Ireland she established the Order of

⁵"Annals of the Presentation Convent of St. Michael's, New York, 1874."

the Presentation of Our Lady. The strong anti-British feelings even of the transplanted sisters made them like to recall it was 1775 when the Americans were shaking off the yoke of tyranny through Washington that the Irish through the formation given to their sisters and mothers under Mother Nagle were ridding themselves of the burden of ignorance and vice.⁶

It was to a house of these nuns in Kildare that Donnelly turned in the fall of 1873 using an introduction of William Byrne, secretary of the Emigrant Industrial Saving Bank in New York and brother of the superior. He also petitioned through Paul Cardinal Cullen of Dublin whose sister, Mother Agatha, was likewise at Kildare. The pastor seems to have killed his chances by the condition proposed that they send a hundred pounds towards purchasing the house for themselves next to the school. In general he intended that all the bother of ownership and support be assumed by them while the parish would merely pay \$300 a year per teacher. His other conditions about the competency of the teachers and that they would not be allowed to open any "select" or "pay" school near St. Michael's were more reasonable. In those days in the city besides free parochial schools often in the same parish there would be another under the same heavenly patron called an academy where the pupils paid tuition. Hence the Kildare community accepted instead a mission to Australia but turned Donnelly's request over to the convent at Terenure, County Dublin, which was under Mother Joseph Hickey. They explained his insistence on having a school absolutely free and on wanting nuns who were enclosed. Cardinal Cullen meanwhile was being advised by Archbishop McCloskey not to have the sisters hurry and at most to send out five or six to see if the New York offer should be taken. He warned further that they should remember that St. Michael's was heavily in debt.⁷

It is traditionally said that the depression days of 1873 held up Donnelly's negotiations for the sisters. Yet his parish income was \$47,000 for 1872, \$44,000 for 1873, and \$46,000 for 1874, with the only real drop experienced in 1875 when it went to \$38,000. The fact is he followed up his written proposals by going to Ireland in February, 1874, right behind another written invitation. At Terenure he was well received for his reputation had been enhanced with the nuns by Father Thomas Burke, the great Dominican preacher and friend of the community, who had stayed at St. Michael's while visiting in the United States. The Presentations agreed to come but the details were not yet settled. Donnelly was back in New York in a month trying to induce them to come to the parish by September with

⁶"Sketch of the Order of the Presentation," *Member Book*, 1891, pp. 83-87.

⁷M. Agatha Cullen to Donnelly, Kildare, Sept. 24, 1873: copy of Donnelly's ultimatum to Presentations from AANY: M. John Byrne to M. Joseph Hickey, Kildare (late 1873): McCloskey to Cullen, New York, October 20, 1873, original given to Sisters.

detailed descriptions of the new school. He relented on their ownership of property since he assured M. Hickey that their security in New York would be the good will of prelates, priests, and people. He revealed the source of a tradition that was to die hard concerning the high social standing of these cloistered ladies when he told of Mr. Byrne's publicizing the supposed fact that each nun had a fortune of two thousand pounds. Donnelly added:

This, on his authority, was stated to the people and as money is in a great measure the gauge of nobility here, the statement of Mr. Byrne enhanced the esteem for the nuns. It would not be well to disabuse the people too suddenly of the popular belief.⁸

From such a germ as this as well as from the real facts of their genuinely cultured back-grounds, their friendship with high churchmen, their use of lay sisters for domestic work, and their fully cloistered way of life came even the extreme belief among some people that they had to walk on carpet between the carriage and the front door of their house.

The famous Cardinal Cullen gave the last impetus needed to send the Sisters to St. Michael's. Even though their friend, Dr. Woodlock, favored Australia the Archbishop of Dublin favored America where twenty years earlier Presentation Sisters had successfully implanted themselves on the west coast. As Woodlock reported the cardinal's opinion:

He reminded me of the great success of the convent of your order in San Francisco, and also of the great good which is to be done for the poor children in the crowded cities of America. In New York itself, he said, there are about 500,000 poor Irish or nearly twice as many as in Dublin.⁹

The sailing date was accordingly set for August 27 from Queenstown. Cardinal Cullen appointed Mother Joseph superior of the band which included two other sisters from Terenure, two from Clondalkin, and one from the Tuam Convent as well as four young postulants. Donnelly thought of everything, from sending three samples of children from the parish who were with their aunt in Dublin to visit the sisters, to meeting them on the revenue cutter in New York harbor when they arrived September 8th on the steamer *City of Paris* accompanied by Father Joseph Hickey as their protector.¹⁰ The latter's sister, the superior, was heavily armed with a papal rescript that included permission to go on the mission, to admit and profess

⁸AMSJ, Donnelly to Rev. Dr. Bartholomew Woodlock of the Catholic University of Dublin, New York, April 11, 1874.

⁹Woodlock to M. Joseph, Dublin, May 6, 1874.

¹⁰Donnelly to M. Joseph, June 7, 1874: "Annals, 1874."

members of the community, to educate other than the poor and for compensation, to have a second house in the country, and to enjoy all the canonical privileges of the institute.¹¹

The welcome for "Father Donnelly's Irish sisters" in New York was a very warm one. They were taken to the girls' school building by carriage from the pier and they were immediately impressed. The convent building, however, was still being worked on and so the pastor took them to his residence where, as they later confessed, "they unfeelingly ate up the dinner prepared for the Parochial Clergy and left them totally unprovided for."¹² After marveling at the wonders of tomatoes and corn which they had never seen before the band split up with some going to the Mercies on Houston Street and others to the Ursulines on Henry Street. Some later had the chance to observe the school of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart on 17th Street before they entered their not too finished enclosure at St. Michael's on September 19th. On September 24th they met the children in the church and spent the rest of the week classifying them. On September 28th the two schools opened with Father Spalding addressing the children on their duties. The Presentations received the last sign of permanency when Archbishop McCloskey visited them a few days before Christmas and confirmed M. Joseph as superior. They grew in reputation and in numbers from the outset and received in January, 1876 their first American candidate, a parish girl, Margaret Keenan, who became Sister M. Rose Joseph and proved to be but the first of over a hundred of such religious from St. Michael's.

The Sisters had as part of their rule the religious instruction of adults and accordingly Donnelly announced on the First Sunday of Lent in 1875 that the grown-up women of the parish were invited that afternoon to the school. The nuns expected about fifty to come but about a thousand showed up and had to be crowded into the assembly hall where they listened to M. Joseph. At the pastor's request they were formed into the Sodality of St. Monica with a brief formula of a rule which included the notion of visiting the sick, sanctifying the Sunday by their meetings which were addressed by one of the Sisters, properly training the young, and promoting "peace, order and cheerfulness in Christian families."¹³

The nuns were not only a blessing but also a parish responsibility. Spalding was made their confessor and two years later their chaplain. Also in 1876 a more commodious choir was constructed in the school building for them. That same year Donnelly asked the congregation to provide a summer residence for them and the first contribution of \$100

¹¹ Woodlock to M. Joseph, Belgium, August 18, 1874.

¹² "Annals, 1874."

¹³ "History," p. 71.

was from Miss Annie Murray, the local public school principal! The pastor was able to give them a little home on the lake in the village of Cleveland in Oneida County in upstate New York that very summer and despite the distance they continued to go there until 1882. The assistant pastor, Stephen J. Nagle, the first product of the Latin School, served as their chaplain there. He also took over the direction of the schools when Spalding left and they were then with their almost 1,600 pupils, the largest parochial ones in the city. At the close of school in 1879 the pastor announced to 1,200 assembled in the basement hall of St. Michael's that all his hopes were more than realized in the Sisters. They had apparently heeded Cullen's admonition of sticking to elementary things in the classroom, although he had added:

But I suppose you will have to yield a little to fashion, and adapt yourselves to the wishes of the country. However, if you make the children religious and industrious, you will in the end do much good and obtain general approbation.¹⁴

Despite the new school and convent expenses Donnelly began in 1875 with an almost \$7,000 reduction what proved to be a ten year fight to pay off the parish indebtedness. Nonetheless, he did not curtail any activities. He was not even slowed up by the loss of part of his parish area in 1880 when the remaining portion east of 8th Avenue, namely from 28th to 33rd Streets was ceded to Holy Innocents. How much of a serious loss this was may be questioned since that territory formed part of what had become known as the Tenderloin, notorious for its brothels, saloons, and dance halls until about 1913. The Christian Brothers' residence and secondary school, Manhattan Academy, which had been on the north side of 32nd Street west of 7th Avenue, and therefore within the parish since 1863, moved away in 1887.

The increased population of the parish is probably part of the reason behind a rise in total income from over \$40,000 in 1880 to over \$60,000 in 1881. In that latter year when he got the Sisters off to the country the pastor enlarged their house and also the parochial chapel of Our Lady of the Presentation by sixty feet. This was used as the regular weekday church and for two children's Masses on Sundays. The Sisters from their cloistered vantage point thought it looked twice as big the next year. The prosperity

¹⁴Cullen to M. Joseph, Dublin, October 23, 1874.

of the parish and the zeal of its ladies were demonstrated by a five weeks fair which netted a sum which amazed all, \$20,000, and which paid for the improvements.¹⁵

One thing remained for the completion of the parish community and its organization, some provision for the care of its homeless children. The orphanages of the diocese were crowded and the others conducted in the city were feared by many Catholics as places where children would lose their faith to Protestant proselytizers. The pastor's proposal for a home was first made in the fall of 1880 and each priest was assigned a section of the parish to collect from. He also called a meeting of the more-well-to-do members of the parish whose backing he regularly enjoyed. A committee of four laymen with Mother Joseph Magdalen finally selected a site, the Frost Farm of seventy-three acres in Green Ridge, Staten Island, just in time for the Sisters to spend the summer of 1883 there. Seven children arrived on the Feast of St. Michael and the number was soon up to fifty, boys being in the majority, under the supervision of six nuns headed by M. Magdalen. Thus "St. Michael's Home" began for the destitute children of the parish under fourteen years of age. It was incorporated in 1884 with several lay pillars of the church included on its board, Peter J. Connelly, Michael Tobin, and James McDonald, which was headed by the new Archbishop, Michael A. Corrigan. The expenses not covered by city allowances were paid by the Association of St. Michael. The institution grew in holdings and equipment and personnel and to the parish was a most happy substitute for "monster institutions of the city." Priests, sisters and laity seemed to have agreed:

It would be a most happy thing for the city, could each Catholic parish establish and support its own country home, and have parental oversight of all its own children, thus cutting off the supply from which the large institutions are fed.¹⁶

The trend of child caring institutions did not follow St. Michael's plan but nonetheless the "country home" did great service. Admissions seemed to have been handled until 1925 through the parish. By that time very few children were coming from the parish area, destitution had given way to improper guardianship as a cause for admitting, and the string of Irish

¹⁵"Annals, 1881": "History," p. 57.

¹⁶"History," pp. 60-61. Convent Scrapbook, "Report on St. Michael's Home—Prepared for the Legislature of the State of New York, 1885."

names had been broken by a line of names predominantly Italian and Polish. Up to 1919 over 2,000 children had benefited from the home. The parish ownership and control was relinquished after almost half a century but the establishment continued under the Green Ridge Presentations who according to the rule of the institute in that day had become a separate community on May 1, 1890.¹⁷

St. Michael's parish would never lack for enthusiasm for its schools or for pride in them and their products. There is, for example, the rare phenomenon for this age of the alumnae association of the grammar school which still functions. Through the schools was exercised the influence of the tall, distinguished, white-maned first pastor. He gave to students and parents with their faith and morals a desire to achieve and a pride in accomplishment which the progress of their parish seemed to encourage. The tradition of a people, proud even when poor and to outsiders somewhat pleased with their achievements, had begun to take root on the west side of New York.

¹⁷ APSM, "General Register, St. Michael's Home, 1898": "St. Michael's Home," (admissions, 1896-1925): "Annals, 1890."

Consecration and Conflagration

A neighborhood in the New York of the age of the birth of the industrial city could not remain long unchanged. In a quarter of a century the area surrounding St. Michael's Church was seriously affected. The New York Central and Hudson River Railroad depot had moved eastward to 30th Street and 10th Avenue. Wooden frame buildings had generally given way to three or four storey brick ones. There seemed to be less small plants but several large piano factories had moved into the blocks of the parish and they would occasionally provide the spectacle of great fires that burned for days. Protestant missions seemed to have increased with a new Baptist Church on the north side of 33rd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues, a Presbyterian chapel down the street west of St. Michael's school and a Methodist one on 35th Street just east of 10th Avenue on the south side. None of these ever apparently became a cause of concern or friction to the parish of Irish Catholics. The still extant Northwestern Dispensary had begun its work of medical care for the poor on that corner of 36th Street and 9th Avenue.

In this changed setting the normal and unheralded life of an estimated 10,000 parishioners continued into the decade of the 1880's. Not only the day-to-day life of Mass and sacraments and Sunday Vespers and devotions like the rosary but also special means of encouraging the religious life of the people were evident. Over and above the societies for the youth already mentioned there had arisen since 1867 the St. Michael's Total Abstinence Benefit Society of which the pastor was spiritual director. He also organized a conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society which from 1877 when it collected over \$1300 for the poor whom the members visited ran down to merely \$658 by 1885.¹ Apparently it was more a lack of poor than of zeal, for the men of the parish were also organized into the Young Men's Catholic Lyceum with its own rooms apart from the church but under the inspiration of Father Thomas J. Ducey who in 1880 was commissioned to establish St. Leo's parish across the island. That group was the fore-runner of city-wide efforts like the later Xavier Union and Catholic Club of New York. Also in the mid-eighties the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had built up a membership representing nearly every family in the parish. That was the work of Father William J. O'Brien who in conjunction

¹F.R., 1877-1885.

with it established a Ladies Altar Society of the Sacred Heart which had as its objective also to serve as guards of honor during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on such occasions as the First Friday and the Forty Hours. It proved to be a predecessor of the League of the Sacred Heart which was instituted in 1890 in St. Michael's. The men of the parish again showed their taste for organizing and the American urge for self-improvement when in January 1883 a number of young ones began "Home Circle No. 1" for their moral and intellectual advancement. They had twice yearly corporate Communion preceded by a retreat, assisted the work of St. Michael's Home, and had club rooms where a young man might pass a sociable evening. Probably some of the same men joined the initial force of 500 who became members of the Holy Name Society at the first meeting in the parish on March 27, 1885. By contrast, Sunday School at that time became more the work of the Sisters instead of lay teachers and in 1885 a class of the blind inmates of the nearby Protestant dominated institution were made into the third class conducted by them.²

An interesting feature of parish life was the fact that by that time some of its own sons were returning to serve the people from whom they had come. Thomas F. Fitzpatrick and John F. Coffey were ordained at St. Michael's altar on February 21, 1880 and the former remained as an assistant until his death in 1884. He was preceded in death in 1881 by another assistant Father Nagle who was likewise a former altar boy and a little less than five years ordained. The same thing happened in 1889 when William J. O'Brien died as a priest in the parish of his boyhood after a ministry of five years. These three, all original candidates of the Latin School, were popular priests and in the case of Nagle the crowd at his funeral was so crushing that his remains had to be carried through the convent into the parish chapel and out by the school entrance on 9th Avenue. Similarly in 1890 Francis X. Hulse, another of Donnelly's proteges, died as an assistant after being ordained only three years. One would suspect that the rigors of youth in the neighborhood were matched by those of seminary life particularly in foreign countries.³

Much more than the financial story these young burned-out lives tell of the early days of St. Michael's but the victory over indebtedness was a symbol too—and one that was better documented. In 1885 Donnelly enlarged the sanctuary of the church to prepare for its consecration. Another fair realized over \$12,000 and this not only paid for the alterations but liquidated the last fragments of the debt. Hence the day was appointed for the rare privilege of having the church consecrated and it was to be on February 22, 1886. The pastor hoped by using the holiday to have his

²"Annals, 1885": Convent Scrapbook; "History," p. 71.

³"Annals, 1881, 1884, 1889": Convent Scrapbook.

people free for the anniversary celebration every year. Within four years he realized that for his flock it was only nominally a free day and he sought permission to transfer the observance to the Sunday following the 22nd.⁴ On the original day several thousand copies of a gigantic sheet of a financial report covering the twenty-eight years of the parish history were distributed. It had already been commented on in the press and it was alluded to in the sermon of Bishop McQuaid as being unequaled by anything he had ever seen. In the period of less than three decades \$1,333,830 had gone through the pastor's hands and now every penny was publicly accounted for. It was indeed a day of triumph for the businessman as well as the priest in Donnelly. The *Catholic Review* of New York commented editorially how little money stuck to the sacerdotal fingers and said of the parish's unsurpassed feat:

It was not done by rich men and it was not done for the glory of men or for the advancement of selfish interests. St. Michael, Prince of the Celestial Hosts, was its patron and his unselfish love was its inspiration.⁵

Archbishop Corrigan performed the consecration ritual beginning at seven in the morning and that was followed by Pontifical Mass offered by Bishop John Loughlin of Brooklyn. The "old boys" of the parish and dignitaries of the archdiocese were the officers for the ceremonies. In letters of light over the high altar was the legend of Michael's name, "Who is like unto God." This was the altar backed by a three paneled crucifixion scene, while on the gospel side was the altar of the death of Joseph and on the epistle side the scene of Christ revealing His Sacred Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary. When the laity were admitted for the Mass they saw the sanctuary banked with many flowers. The special singing for the affair was done by the choir boys from St. Paul's Church on 59th Street.⁶

The sermon of Bishop McQuaid of Rochester, by that time a national figure in Church affairs, was featured in the press and distributed by the Association. The more interesting of his remarks are the significances he found in the story of St. Michael's. He had said in advance that he would be restrained about the person of his old friend, Father Donnelly, but he claimed that it was probably the first time in the history of the American Church that a bishop had been called on to consecrate a large and permanent edifice completed by one pastor. He recalled Archbishop Hughes' comments of 1861 in the basement church encouraging them to carry on the work begun and traced much more of the parish history too. In the

⁴Donnelly to Dr. McDonnell, New York, January 21, 1890.

⁵"History," p. 65.

⁶Convent Scrapbook: "History," pp. 62-67.

light of the social hostilities of the times it was not surprising that he alluded to the school buildings as a standing rebuke to the city which gave no taxes for their support, or that he claimed one Protestant minister received more in three years than all the priests of St. Michael's had received up to that date. In praising the business-like and efficient techniques of the pastor he said:

There was nothing miraculous in the accomplishment unless the finger of God is looked for in the zeal of the pastor and the faith and generosity of the people. God does not help those who sit down to wait for the heavens to fall. There is no blessing for the sluggard and the indifferent. Labor creates resources and generosity begets generosity till it grows into a habit. St. Michael's parishioners grew by practice into a habit of generosity. It was a virtue that never became rusty from lack of use.

Even more smacking of an Americanism or liberalism not usually associated with McQuaid, one of the conservative leaders of the hierarchy of that day, was his insistence that European Catholics might learn from the history of the parish what poor working people, when trusted, could do in terms of taking responsibility for their spiritual welfare without depending on the state or the wealthy class. He concluded with these words:

This diocese, every diocese in the United States, all countries in which religion rests on the voluntary offerings of poor people, owe a debt of gratitude to those who in this parish have made clear what people can do whose souls are in their work and who are untrammelled by traditions, customs, and state laws, which crush out individual responsibility and freedom of action.⁷

Over the school that day there flew the American flag, the harp of Erin, and the banner of St. Michael with its "Quis ut Deus." In his moment of triumph Donnelly spent the day in receiving congratulations from virtually all the pastors of New York, and especially his old alumni. In the evening there was solemn Vespers with Bishop Spalding of Peoria preaching. He really thought quite differently from Donnelly about large parishes in crowded cities but they were good friends. As the Sisters who witnessed from behind the screens the whole festivities recorded it Spalding "spoke long and lovingly of Father Donnelly and his life's work, alluding in filial terms to the happy days spent with him in St. Michael's."⁸

⁷Convent Scrapbook.

⁸"Annals, 1886".

A few months later with great calm Donnelly asked a division of his parish. As his chronicler put it stressing the pastor's concern for the peoples' spiritual welfare:

This was a new feature in the course of action of the rectors of city churches to petition that their territory be divided; it is usually the reverse, as the greater number of people the easier it is for the rector to see through his financial obligations.⁹

The split was not accomplished until after April, however, because during that month the pastor of St. Michael's was explaining to the archbishop that the desirable division for the new parish was the area between the river and 10th Avenue from 44th to 34th Street. He objected strenuously to moving this line over to 9th Avenue saying:

I assume that the new parish is to be formed for the benefit of the people and not simply to make a new parish. Then I defy any person to show how a new parish could benefit the people of Holy Cross and St. Michael's between 9th and 10th Avenues.

He was against the 9th Avenue line too as one that would result in zigzag boundaries but he would have granted the southern line as far as 32nd Street.¹⁰ He won out in his stand on the boundaries but not in a strong suggestion that the new pastor be Father M. A. Taylor.¹¹ Instead John A. Gleeson, an assistant at St. Mary's in Grand Street, was charged with opening St. Raphael's.¹² Gleeson begged collections for his new work at many rectories and on Sunday, May 16th, he appealed from the pulpit of St. Michael's. Father Donnelly supposedly coached him on how to approach his people and he went home with over \$800.¹³ The cutting off of St. Raphael's to the northwest resulted in a further assurance that the appellation of "Hell's Kitchen" which dated from the late century as a term to describe the toughness of the neighborhood above 39th Street would not with any accuracy be applied to the parish in the lower thirties.

Even from the manner in which he wrote to his archbishop it was obvious that Donnelly had become increasingly important as a figure in

⁹ "History," p. 72.

¹⁰ Donnelly to Corrigan, New York, April 3, 1886.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, April 18, 1886.

¹² *Catholic News*, June 28, 1919.

¹³ "History," p. 73.

archdiocesan affairs. In 1870 he was made a member of the council of the archbishop which after 1884 was known as the Board of Consultors. As early as 1871 he was secretary of the Clerical Relief Fund Association, a kind of insurance for the priests of the archdiocese. In 1885 he was negotiating with Archbishop Corrigan and Bishops Ireland and Spalding about providing some kind of pension for John Gilmary Shea, the lay historian of the Church in America. He expressed this interest again four years later when he suggested him as editor of a Catholic directory.¹⁴ At the synod held in the fall of 1886 he was made a missionary or permanent rector and this new status was given to his parish. This took place after a two months siege of illness which kept him at Poland Springs, Maine.¹⁵ About the same time he became spiritual director of the Catholic Club of New York. On May 9, 1887 after the death of Monsignor Quinn he was made Vicar General of the archdiocese, a position he shared with Thomas Preston, pastor of St. Ann's on East 12th Street.¹⁶

Before receiving that last honor and perhaps with some causal relation Donnelly was painfully involved in the scandalous affair of the Church in New York in that day, the case of Dr. Edward McGlynn. This very eloquent and popular pastor of St. Stephen's had defied the archbishop and participated publicly in the mayoralty campaign of November, 1886 which revolved around Henry George's single tax theories on private property. When McGlynn refused to go to Rome in January 1887 after he was summoned to explain his position, which denied the right of private property in land, Archbishop Corrigan continued to hold him suspended from his pastoral functions. Accordingly he sent Father Donnelly to administer temporarily the parish of St. Stephen's which was just across town from St. Michael's. This appointment was backed strongly by McQuaid who also stressed the idea that the ever unhappy financing of St. Stephen's might be straightened out by Donnelly. So St. Michael's had no pastor on Sunday, January 15th because he was at McGlynn's stronghold. He seems to have handled his painful task with great and patient charity. There was none of the righteous indignation that some of the press showed in their exaggerated accounts of how shabbily he was treated, nor any of the boorishness that some others attributed to him. Tradition backs the press in telling of how McGlynn's confessional was decorated with flowers, and how the altar boys joined the domestic help in striking, and St. Michael's boys had to be brought over, and how the police had to keep order in the streets. In the midst of this indignant strange Irish flock Donnelly reported:

¹⁴Donnelly to Corrigan, New York, January 28, 30, 1885; June 6, 1889.

¹⁵Donnelly to Corrigan, August 12, 19, 30, 1886.

¹⁶"History," p. 74: Convent Scrapbook.

Yesterday passed off quietly. I read this morning's Tribune and was surprised to learn of all the excitement. I saw or heard of none of it. I walked about at the early Masses and learnt that a conspiracy had been secretly established among the collectors not to act, so that no money was taken in the church. But as a compensation to this Dr. McGlynn sent through Dr. Curran *a request* that I *permit* him to hold his room for a few days till he would have an opportunity of arranging his papers. He remained here privately yesterday and left for Harlem in the evening.¹⁷

Within two weeks he was able to report a great collection of \$280 "*more than twice the average*" and that without disorder or ill-feeling being manifested. It is interesting to note that St. Stephen's was at least as large if not larger than St. Michael's and had no parochial school. There would seem to be a hint of difference of social status between the parishioners on either side of town or at least of habits of generosity in the fact that the average plate collection at St. Michael's at the time was \$800.¹⁸

On February 9th Charles Henry Colton replaced Donnelly as administrator at St. Stephen's and the latter returned happy to his own people. He continued to be a bulwark of assistance to his archbishop in the few years that remained of his priestly life. As vicar general his correspondence from 1887 to 1889 with Archbishop Corrigan reveals how he supported him further in the McGlynn case, which would see the principal excommunicated before its happy conclusion in 1893), how he worked on problems involving religious communities, how he advised on the placement of priests, the acceptance of candidates, and the plans for minor and major seminaries, and how he handled financial and real estate questions. It is interesting to note that his experience and position led what he called the "Italian Sisters" who were only two months after arriving under the leadership of Mother Cabrini to call on him on June 14, 1889. The little saint wanted to inquire how to get city support for her destitute Italian children whom she was already receiving into a house on East 59th Street. She obviously moved him to prompt action for the Irish pastor went immediately to the city commissioner to arrange an interview. His fears that the policy of discouraging aid to institutions where a foreign language was used would exclude these sisters from municipal assistance proved to be justified.¹⁹ A

¹⁷Donnelly to Corrigan, N. Y., January 16, 1887.

¹⁸Donnelly to Corrigan, N. Y., January 31, 1887: F.R., 1887. Cf. Frederick J. Zwierlein, *The Life and Letters of Bishop McQuaid*, III (Rochester, 1927), 15-24, and for the side hostile to Donnelly, Stephen Bell, *Rebel, Priest and Prophet* (New York, 1937), pp. 44-56.

¹⁹Donnelly to Corrigan, N. Y., June 14, 1889: Theodore Maynard, *Too Small a Small a World* (Milwaukee, 1945), p. 111.

recognition of all these varied parochial and diocesan labors came in an apostolic brief dated December 9, 1888 enclosed in a letter from Rome dated February 1, 1889, which made him a domestic prelate. That was at a time when there were probably not yet twenty in the whole United States.²⁰

By 1890 Monsignor Donnelly's health was failing fast. Hence Archbishop Corrigan in January when preparing to go to Europe called on him. The story was later told that the archbishop hinted at the bareness of the new prelate's uncarpeted quarters, and consequently Donnelly's sense of obedience overcame his distaste for luxury sufficiently to have him acquire a piece of linoleum and five cane-bottomed chairs.²¹ About that time too the pastor acted on his determination to resign if he reached seventy but Corrigan would not hear of it.²² Donnelly worked to the last and when he was missed from the confessional on March 22, 1890 it was a sign to the parish. With the nuns keeping prayerful watch all night and with his priests around him he died as a result of kidney disease ten minutes before the Feast of the Annunciation.²³ Ten thousand filed by his bier and three thousand attended the funeral with several thousands unable to get into the church. To some of them who were his flock he was probably remembered as a hard master. He had, for example, kept them standing behind a grill at the rear of their church if they did not pay their ten cents for a seat in the non-rented pews. Yet he had always preached so that they understood him and he had always shown an interest in their children. Bishop Francis McNierney of Albany sang the mass and Bishop McQuaid then had his chance to preach a fitting eulogy.²⁴

St. Michael's parish did not die even with the death of Monsignor Donnelly who had given it life and so long sustained it. The parish's sadness was doubled when shortly thereafter Mother Joseph the superior at the convent and the foundress who had led the original band of nuns also passed away. Life and work went on nonetheless, and then it was under the acting pastor, John M. Murphy. Negotiations continued, for example, to acquire a summer-time home for the Sisters at Fishkill, New York. This was accomplished by June of that year when the new superior M. Xavier Jones

²⁰ Giovanni Cardinal Simeoni to Corrigan, Rome, Feb. 1, 1889.

²¹ "History," p. 76.

²² "Annals, 1890."

²³ "Annals, 1890": "History," pp. 76-77.

²⁴ Convent Scrapbook: "History," p. 77.

led her community off for their annual retreat.²⁵ By the fall the archbishop had been back long enough from Europe to evaluate the examination which only those ordained for ten years and with three years experience as a pastor or administrator could take for a parish like St. Michael's. His decision was to send John A. Gleeson from St. Raphael's. He was a Tipperary man fifty-four years old who had been raised in Newburgh from the age of eight and gone to St. Patrick's school there. He had studied at St. Vincent's College, Latrobe, Pennsylvania and at Xavier before going on for his theology at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary at Niagara which prepared him for ordination in 1873. Before opening St. Raphael's he had been an assistant at St. Mary's, Grand Street. In his four years on W. 40th Street he had completed a temporary church, chapel, and rectory and was trying to pay for property and buildings when he was changed to an even larger task.²⁶

The traditions of the parish continued strong under the new pastor, who was installed on October 9, 1890. He was greeted with an entertainment given by the school children who by 1891 were at a number of 1,552 with eighteen nuns and one lay woman teaching the girls and little boys, and two nuns and nine lay women instructing the almost 600 boys. Even remodeling of buildings went on as in Donnelly's days. In June, 1891, the Sisters were sent off for three months to the country and the clergy took up residence in the convent. The objective was to tear down the rectory and to rebuild on a larger scale for the five priest residents. Furthermore the old assembly hall in the boys school was divided up into six large and bright class rooms. Back to St. Michael's came the almost never absent architect, mason, plumber and carpenter.²⁷

Then on May 4, 1892 a fire struck that put an end to much of such piece-meal planning. The janitor who lived in the house to the west of the church on the 32nd Street side detected smoke at ten in the morning and sounded the alarm. A police captain who happened along sounded two more which may have helped in keeping the bad results from being worse. The rear of the church was on fire but the boys were marched calmly out of their building even though on their way they could see the flames raging in the organ gallery. Father Curley assisted Miss Kate Quinn and her eight

²⁵ "History," p. 80: "Annals, 1890."

²⁶ "History," pp. 80-81.

²⁷ F.R., 1891.

teachers in the operation. The little girls were led out by the nuns on the far side of the buildings as if they were going to a play. The press as far away as the Boston *Globe* commented with praise on this excellent use of the fire drill technique.

During the fire Father Gleeson joined the Sisters on their convent roof, where they regularly recreated, to watch the progress of the flames and the fire-fighters. The assistant pastor, Bernard F. Brady, went into the church through the nuns' gallery to save the music after the Blessed Sacrament and the vestments and altar equipment were secure. He had to escape finally by breaking a window and jumping to a roof. The church building was half destroyed and the press announced that damages were about \$65,000.²⁸

After the days of its greatest glory when its church had been consecrated the parish of St. Michael had to face a tragedy. Gleeson immediately announced that Masses would be offered in the parish chapel while the whole church would be remodeled. Out of the burned remnant that survived the fire of 1892 would come the edifice recorded in the minds of old-timers of today as the old church on 9th Avenue.²⁹

²⁸"Annals, 1892": Convent Scrapbook, unlabeled and undated clippings of New York papers, May 5, 1892: *Catholic News*, May 15, 1892.

²⁹*Catholic News*, September 11, 1892.

IV

The Old Church

The St. Michael's that the parish would raise under the leadership of Father Gleeson was to be done all in one piece since he had a plan he wanted to see executed. It called for the 32nd Street front to be of Indiana bluff limestone, the tower at the rear to be retained, the roof to be elevated by six feet, the ceiling to be vaulted but the aisles to have groined arches. He announced also that there would be but one gallery in the new church and that at the rear for the choir. His more ecstatic expressions included: "The plaster work will be beautifully ornamented and the woodwork neatly polished." With such a prospect as this the congregation again gave of itself and attacked the challenge of an estimated \$180,000 expense. The first year saw an outlay of \$22,000 to such as L. J. O'Connor who was back again as architect although with the small fee of \$1,000 for 1892. The insurance paid only \$20,000. Hence the balance of \$700 of 1890 changed to the indebtedness on a \$25,000 loan in 1891 and was increased in 1893 to payments on \$75,000 after a \$50,000 loan was made from the Broadway Savings Bank. Meanwhile there came the hard times after 1893 which meant some falling off in receipts. It seemed, however, to be reflected only by the income from festivals. Perhaps the \$800 expended by the St. Vincent de Paul Society in 1892 as contrasted with the \$2,200 in 1894 indicated that the poorer suffered most from the depression of those days. This period of the nineties would begin to show something of the improved lot of St. Michael's people for bequests to the church gradually became another source of support for its work.¹

The pastor's personality must have helped considerably for Father Gleeson is remembered as big, genial, handsome, and loved by all. There may be much significance in the traditions that the rectory household help never changed during his pastorate and that the assistants found the place attractive enough even to go back for meals while on vacation. His executive ability seems to have been proved to his superiors by his work at St. Raphael's.² He kept alive pretty much the Donnelly pattern in his new assignment by continuing the Association and inserted in its annual booklet the year's financial report of the parish. The people received the same one he sent to the archbishop.

The new edifice was eagerly awaited partly because of the cramped quarters of the chapel on 9th Avenue. There was nonetheless held there the regular quarterly conference for part of the clergy of the archdiocese in

¹F.R., 1892-1894; *Catholic News*, September 11, 1892.

²*Catholic News*, June 28, 1919.

September 1892.³ Progress in building was evidenced when Mass was celebrated on December 10th, 1893 in the basement of the reconstructed church. Gleeson was not lacking in appeal to the better-off parishioners since he announced that special contributors to the building fund would have their names inscribed on a marble slab that was to be put over the church entrance as a mark of his appreciation. Since the names of the people are from that period it would appear that the memorial now is located inside the 33rd Street entrance of the church. Its more empty columns than full would indicate that the pastor did not do as well as he hoped.⁴

Finally the blessing was scheduled for Sunday, January 28, 1894. The papers carried much detail about the new building. It was seventy-five feet wide and ran back 200 feet to 31st Street. It would be lighted through fourteen windows from Munich which had been presented by prominent parishioners, including Thomas Stokes, Patrick Dempsey, Edward Fitzgerald, Michael Canning, Miss Kate Waters and Mrs. David Stevenson. The main altar was described as of rare design and composed of marble of various colors. The Sacred Heart altar was donated by James McDonald and the Blessed Virgin's by an anonymous benefactor. The new organ was said to be worth \$15,000 and to be "a magnificent instrument."⁵

In this last regard Gleeson's taste in Church music was more expensive than his predecessors. The average expenditure of \$700 a year for that aspect of public worship made in Donnelly's time was increased to over \$1,700 the first full year of the new pastorate. Thereafter in the church on 9th Avenue the paid choir under Professor Francis P. Hession, the organist, was an annual expense averaging \$2,000. They sang the traditional truncated three psalm vespers which continued in the parish but at 8:30 on Sunday evening instead of in the afternoon. The musical aspect of the dedication received very special attention. A chorus of fifty voices and a double quartette was backed up not only by the organ but by Seidl's orchestra procured for the occasion. There was no lack of soloists with Mme. Marie Salvotti, Miss Gertrude Danks, Walter Hampshire and Emil Coaletti getting billing in the press. The soprano solo was Mendelsohn's "Veni creator," while the Creed, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei were from Gounod's St. Cecilia's Mass. The same composer's graduale and recessional were played by organ and orchestra and the Kyrie and Gloria were compositions of Kallawoda. While Rampi's "Ecce sacerdos magnus" was sung Archbishop Corrigan proceeded over flower petals strewn by two little girls to the throne where he presided during the Mass.⁶

³ *Catholic News*, Sept. 25, 1892.

⁴ *Catholic News*, Dec. 10, 1893.

⁵ *Catholic News*, Jan. 14, 1894.

⁶ *Catholic News*, Jan. 28, 1894 and Feb. 4, 1894. The latter repeated word for word the account of the *New York Herald*, Jan. 29, 1894.

The archbishop consecrated the altars and performed the dedicatory ritual before Mass. It was after that, at ten o'clock, that the doors were opened. The church had been rebuilt to accommodate 4,000 (or so the papers said) mostly by removal of galleries and annexing ten feet of ground on both sides of the building. At its solemn blessing every inch was filled including standing room.⁷ The celebrant was Charles E. McDonnell, who had been chancellor in New York before going across the river in 1892 to be Bishop of Brooklyn. The preacher (as apparently was inevitable as well as desirable) was the Bishop of Rochester. It had been only eight years since his last sermon on such an occasion in the parish. Bishop McQuaid accordingly repeated much of its history and in addition eulogized the first pastor with "a touching allusion to the trials and hardships he endured uncomplainingly to build up the congregation." He spoke glowingly also of the efforts of Gleeson to crown the work of his predecessor and made the inescapable allusion to his causing "a beautiful church to rise, phoenix-like from the ashes of the old edifice."⁸ After the gospel the pastor expressed his gratitude in all directions and read a cablegram of blessing received from Pope Leo XIII, "Tibi populoque Papa benedicit," the simplest of formulas, "The Pope blesses you and your people." Even if they could not hear all of this the crushed congregation may have caught a glimpse of what was described thus:

The high altar and the interior of the church was decorated with great profusion of roses, callas and jasmine, the sanctuary rails, pillars and candlestick being entwined with wreaths of smilax, while the space around the altar was brilliantly illumined with wax tapers and electric lights.⁹

There was no doubt about the fact that the proud old parish could still put on a great spectacle with a floweriness in decoration and music that reflected the taste of the day that has since been called the gilded age. This spirit probably was evident too in the decor as well as the tenor of the remarks made at the luncheon which followed the ceremony. Father Gleeson's reputation for a good table and the warm hospitality of his rectory which was open to all added to the cordiality with which the over eighty priests and prelates (including Bishop John J. Conroy, retired Bishop of Albany) were his guests. That evening solemn Vespers and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament took place and a sermon was preached by Monsignor Joseph F. Mooney, vicar general of the archdiocese.

After this excitement the parish then in its thirty-seventh year went back to its normal ways. For example, almost daily there was the baptism of babies and the annual totals as from the beginning of its history con-

⁷*Ibid.*, and *Members Book*, 1908.

⁸*Herald*, Jan. 29, 1894.

⁹*Ibid.*

tinued between five and six hundred. Yet to its own people and often to outsiders it was beyond the normal. This was demonstrated again in May of 1894 when a New York Catholic Educational Exhibit was held at Grand Central Palace. Those were days of great interest in Catholic education since for several years within the Church in the United States a controversy had been raging about the accommodation which would make the parish school part of the public system, as had been done in the Poughkeepsie plan for twenty years. An imitation of this in Minnesota whereby religion was taught only after school was inaugurated by Archbishop John Ireland. In the public discussions that followed Archbishop Corrigan had led the side which advocated the straight parochial school system. Successful and well-supported schools like those at St. Michael's were therefore a matter of great pride and arguments in stone. There had been a Catholic educational exhibit at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 and that had led to local ones. In New York the work of St. Michael's pupils received congratulatory comments from all over the country.¹⁰

This occasion led the *Catholic News* to feature the parish schools in a front page story. It traced with reasonable restraint the achievements of Monsignor Donnelly and the Presentation Sisters. The exhibition materials of note included several large and much admired maps created by the younger boys. Merit was noted in crayon drawings and class work in mathematics and bookkeeping was called very creditable. A long list of diligent youngsters was named among whom a scholar of the third primary grade might be singled out for remembrance, Aloysius Dineen, at present pastor of St. Agnes Church. The school was apparently doing some unique things including the nuns' teaching vocal music, drawing, and painting. The girls of the upper class had exhibited some of their crayons, pastels, and paintings. Compliments were used on an exhibit called, "Little Folks Geography." This was a subject taught to the girls in the second primary grade and done with these visual aids. St. Michael's girls had also established a reputation for school theatricals and entertainments, and they were then busy preparing for an opera entitled, "A Fairy Bridal."

The part of the clergy in the conduct of the school was quite real and according to constant prescriptions of councils and synods. The pastor was technically responsible and was warmly interested in the work but his assistant, John M. Curley, a graduate of the parish school himself, had supervision over the schools. During a year he even examined all the children at one time or another on their subjects. It was for the Sisters to do the daily work of instruction and to follow the course of studies issued by the infant Catholic School Board in 1887. It was they who were principally responsible for the high rank, particularly of the girls school in the archdiocese. Yet they too realized Curley's importance especially with the boys

¹⁰ "Annals, 1894."

with whom he spent most of his day. One of the religious features he had for the youngsters has an old but yet new aspect to it. This was the Holy Rosary Society which consisted of 165 members of whom fifty were boys. Each mystery was represented by an appropriate banner, and the blue, red, and white badges worn were symbolic of the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the rosary. The fifteen decades were each represented and each prayer was represented by an individual. This society held its edifying and colorful procession on the first Sunday of each month. The young scholars were not allowed to forget the intellectual purpose of school because they enjoyed membership also in the Apostleship of Study.¹¹

The influence of the priest in the schools was a deep one in old St. Michael's. When Father Curley died at Saratoga in July 1897 after serving seven years as director the grief of Sisters and people attested that. Donnelly had been a great influence in his life and he seemed to copy the parish founder in the pulpit. He was a sort of link between the early days and the new, and it is probably from his pen came the historical memoir prepared for the Association book in 1891 which has proved so helpful for the story of the parish from 1857 to that year. His death came eleven years after his ordination in Rome and his American College fellow alumni came from across the country to honor him, while former pupils from the parish schools poured into the city from summer resorts. Dr. Edward J. Hanna of the Rochester seminary, who later became Archbishop of San Francisco, delivered the eulogy. The rare text of such words spoken over an assistant of that day was preserved in print. In asking for prayers he said interestingly: "A priest's life is a hard one, especially in the great metropolis, harder, I think, than elsewhere in the world." He summed up Curley's parochial life with these words: "The aged, the helpless, particularly the poor experienced his kindness, and the little ones of Christ's fold were his especial charge." A younger brother of the deceased, Daniel J. Curley, also an alumnus, was ordained in 1894 and became in 1923 the Bishop of Syracuse and simultaneously for several generations the proudest boast of the school.¹²

The directorship of the schools passed quickly to several priests all of whom endeared themselves to the Presentation Sisters. Bernard F. Brady handled it until he was assigned to form a parish at Hunts Point in the Bronx in June, 1899. The convent's sadness was recorded with the note that he had "labored zealously and faithfully." Even more praised was the next man, Peter F. Guinevan, who also had only two years in the school position. Of him the Sisters recorded, "zealous, pious and gentlemanly, he left his stamp on the many good works accomplished by him during his curacy at

¹¹ *Catholic News*, June 10, 1894. Sister Patricia Ann, O.P., "The Administration of Parish Schools in the Archdiocese of New York, 1880-1900," *Historical Records and Studies*, XLIV (New York, 1956), 68-74.

¹² *Members Book*, 1898.

St. Michael's." That priest had served the parish since 1890 and in 1901 was made pastor at Tuxedo. His successor, Arthur J. Kenny, was equally popular and served nine years. He seems to have been the last priest who functioned as official director of the schools in the old sense. The trend throughout the school system was toward clerical supervision only on the diocesan level and that of course could not be so close or constant as it had been on the parochial level.¹³

The pastor too came in for his share of adulation and that in a more public way. His silver jubilee of ordination on June 7, 1898 was the occasion. The parish lay trustees began a committee operating a few months in advance. Their plan to raise a purse resulted in more money pledged than Gleeson had succeeded in obtaining even when he planned the new church in 1892. The exact amount of this gauge of popularity remains unknown. For the jubilee Mass he used a new silver chalice presented to him by his assistants. The evening reception was held in the church basement and set a new record for crowding. The musical program was heavily Irish with even Professor Hession playing such airs on the piano. A delegation of children began a special song and the people then brought down the rafters by joining in on it. There may have been a few suppressed smiles for this was the opening verse:

Our Pastor 'tis of Thee
Great Father Gleeson, we
Thy Children Sing.

The chorus gleefully asserted.

Our Parents' Joy and Pride
Our Big Friend staunch and tried,
Sing we might joyfully,
Thy Jubilee.

The Hon. John J. Delaney, a parishioner, and Justice of the Supreme Court of the State, was a little more moderate. He recalled Gleeson's accomplishments, congratulated him, and thanked God for him. The Judge's characterization of St. Michael's was:

We present to you, therefore, today a spectacle of great and flourishing parochial institutions, a congregation in which there exists not the slightest shadow of dissension, a people and their priests in perfect harmony, every devotion necessary for their spiritual well-being earnestly in practice and a rising generation being tutored in heart and mind to reflect in their lives today and in the years that are to come, the glory of the Great Pastor whose representative in the midst of us it has been your privilege to be as to have you has been our happiness.¹⁴

¹³"Annals, 1899, 1901."

¹⁴*Members Book, 1899.*

The very next day the pastor was received by the school children. There was an address by one of the girl pupils to which Gleeson responded with an admonition that stressed two virtues, gratitude and docility. The day after that he was at St. Michael's Home on Staten Island and there he went through it all again, but that time with benefit of fife and drum corps. The warm greeting there indicated how the parish institution under Mother Teresa, who had died the previous year, had succeeded in maintaining a homey non-asylum atmosphere.¹⁵

The effort of opening the new church and supporting the large school and home operation was a very heavy burden on Gleeson. The debt on the parish at the end of 1894 was over \$140,000—a higher mark than Donnelly's highest. The pastor paid off some \$15,000 the next year and took a mortgage on the property for \$125,000. That debt was not reduced until 1899 when \$10,000 of it was paid off, but meanwhile the payment of over \$5,000 a year interest for three years was another drag. One of the consequences was that the charitable collections allowed so frequently in the past were made fewer than previously and usually, apart from diocesan ones, only the needs of some poor bishop or the relief of a public disaster were allowed to be pleaded for before the congregation. Over the first four years of the new century the indebtedness was reduced to \$50,000.¹⁶ The numbers and generosity of the people held up remarkably but the pastor's health gave way somewhat under the strain. In 1903 he took a trip to Ireland for a four month rest accompanied by Father Brady. His cordial relations with his nuns were illustrated further by his visits to their sister convents in Ireland and his assurance to them on his return that they "came of good stock!"¹⁷

By 1904, as the nation waited for Teddy Roosevelt to put down his big stick and get on with the taking of Panama, another great shock was in store for the Catholics of the west side. Even the Presentation enclosure had heard rumors as early as the fall of 1902. They were to the effect that the Pennsylvania Railroad was planning a new terminal and general depot within the confines of the parish. At that time Father Gleeson interviewed the just installed Archbishop John Farley and some of the railroad people and received reassurance merely that the buildings of St. Michael's would not be disturbed. The rumors flew again in 1904 and the Sisters prayed to Our Lady of Good Counsel and St. Joseph to protect the future of the parish.¹⁸ The pastor meanwhile had received the word and was meeting with the archbishop and his councilors about the future.¹⁹ His formal request to his ordinary read:

¹⁵ Convent Scrapbook, clippings and programs.

¹⁶ F.R., 1894-1904.

¹⁷ "Annals, 1903."

¹⁸ "Annals, 1904."

¹⁹ Gleeson to Farley, April 23, 1904.

As the site now occupied by St. Michael's Church is to be purchased by the Pennsylvania R.R. I respectfully ask your permission to *sell* the same and to *secure* enough property for a church, school, convent and rectory, within the present parish limits, and one block either immediately *north* or *south* of our present location. My reason for making this request is to guard the purchase of property with the *fullest secrecy*, thereby preventing unnecessary expense. If the owners in the neighborhood even suspect the property we are seeking, it will be necessary to pay an exorbitant price, for that which, in secrecy, we can obtain for a moderate sum.²⁰

From then on the big move was paramount in all minds and the normal parish life again faced an interruption. That life in the old church is hard to reconstruct even physically for the interlocking pattern of the buildings was complicated and to certain extent differed from time to time. Old timers speak of entering from 9th Avenue through a school door and hence through a kind of alley to go into the parish chapel which was used for daily Mass and closed on Sunday except for the children's Masses. The main church fronting on 32nd Street was closed during the week. Before the days of frequent Communion, promoted by Saint Pope Pius X, the faithful of the parish sometimes went to the chapel to receive during Mass rather than at the rail of the high altar. There too the nuns in a private cloister near the altar prayed and through shuttered slats occasionally made signals to call youngsters to run errands or to carry messages. The professions of the Sisters took place, however, in the large parish church and even the secular press often noted with reverence the beauty of those ceremonies.²¹ Another well-recalled feature of the old plant which is unpictured and difficult to describe was a circular iron stairs of extraordinary width which led past the Sister's private chapel and up to the main school corridor. It was down this the little girls were led during the 1892 fire and it is remembered as very much of a daily thoroughfare. All of these things, familiar sights of many childhoods and pious haunts of grown-ups, were to go. Hardly even the site can be said to remain for it was excavated and become part of the open tunnel from 32nd to 31st Street on 9th Avenue where travelers are first hit by New York day-light. Only the altar, the windows, and facade of the church remain as physical links with the old St. Michael's.

²⁰Gleeson to Farley, May 4, 1904.

²¹Convent Scrapbook.

Monument on Thirty-fourth Street

There were naturally certain advantages among the disadvantages of the complete uprooting of the parish buildings. Even though 34th Street to which the church was moving had introduced the crosstown horse car in 1895 the accompanying noise could hardly compete with that of the elevated which had been rattling along above 9th Avenue for over a quarter of a century. It ran, of course, at first storey level and passed directly in front of the school. From the point of view of the teachers they would leave with no regret classrooms which faced at least in part on the "EL." The old rectory was on 9th Avenue too, next to Walsh's butcher-shop and the more inescapable type of institution, Burke's funeral home. To the more elderly nuns, particularly, parting from the only home they had known in religion, since it was motherhouse and novitiate, and moving only a few blocks that they had never walked on was a real and tearful cross.

The change mercifully took some time to accomplish. When the Pennsylvania Railroad officials opened negotiations to acquire the church property for the tunnel to its newly proposed terminal Father Gleeson entrusted dealing with them to David A. McClure, a well-known New York lawyer of that day. The pastor always attributed the fine results to his efforts. The terms agreed upon amounted to an exchange. The railroad company purchased a site selected by the pastor just west of 9th Avenue on the south side of 34th Street running through to 33rd Street. It supposedly costs upwards of \$400,000. The further agreement was that the company erect on the new location a church, school, rectory, and convent. The whole expenditure of the railroad was to go to a million dollars, hence it would seem Gleeson would have been interested, as he told his archbishop, in getting the property as cheaply as possible. As the Sisters must have heard from the pastor: "All the dealings of the Company's officials were most courteous and honorable."¹

The location of the new property was a little beyond where Gleeson had suggested to Archbishop Farley and it put the edifice very close to the 10th Avenue and 34th Street boundary line. The immediate surroundings were the brick homes of Hudson Place. For another generation across the street

¹ "Annals, 1904"; *Members Book*, 1908; *Catholic News*, November 16, 1907. The Pennsylvania Railroad's records of the transaction were destroyed in a fire in the Philadelphia Board Street Station over thirty years ago. Letter of Bayard H. Roberts to author, Philadelphia, May 23, 1956.

would be private homes with iron fences around plots of grass in front of them in which lived some of the more comfortable parishioners and perhaps what were the pre-war elite of the section. That first decade of the twentieth century saw the first of the radial changes that would eventually decimate the parish population. To the east, hotels and theatres, loft buildings soon to hold a garment industry, and even Macy's then on 34th Street. While the first better type apartment house would be built west of the church during that period it would also be true that farther west the railroad yard environment made more encroachments on the tenement dwellers. Soot fell on the drying wet-wash of an increasing slum area. In such a setting there would grow up the coal-stealing youngsters who became at times the gangsters of the years that followed. Technologically, stables were making way for garages. Religiously, an index to a residential area going down was seen in the fact that only a new synagogue appeared on 35th Street east of 8th Avenue. Sociologically, two new spots on the map were the Hudson Guild on 28th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues and the Christ Church Memorial Building on 36th Street east of 9th Avenue. They opened with the idea of helping the area socially through the application of the ideas and techniques of the settlement house which had become a partial but palliative answer to the miseries of American slums.

Gleeson's second grand plan, a kind of pastor's dream, was more easily carried out than when he reconstructed the old church in 1894. An example of his care was evidenced on Presentation Day, 1904, when he conducted the architect, Napoleon LeBrun of N. LeBrun and Sons, into the community room of the Sisters. They were then given a chance to examine the plans of the whole new St. Michael's. The pastor already knew something of their mind because he had asked a few weeks previously what they wanted in their new convent and with one voice he had been told closet space in the cells. The nuns' ideas were sketched for this man who bore the name of a father who ranks as one of America's most famous church architects. They later admitted that great freedom was allowed them even in making alterations afterwards when the building had begun. They were always grateful to LeBrun for his personal interest in giving them a comfortable and cheery home.² He could not help the change of scenery they suffered since they were only a few years in the new convent at 419 W. 33rd Street when the red brick dwellings they looked out upon were torn down to make way for two huge loft buildings from which would soon come the whirl of machinery.

The worst feature of changing the location of the church and its adjacent buildings was the loss of parishioners it entailed. The demolition covered practically two square blocks of the parish, and that consisting mostly of housing, from 10th to 8th Avenue between 31st and 33rd Streets,

²"Annals, 1904."

except for the rows along the north side of 31st and along the south side of 33rd between 9th and 10th Avenues. During 1905 many of the old parishioners joined the exodus out of the parish, and some of them from very comfortable private homes. From these first exiles and those that followed over the years of change ahead there grew up a kind of expatriated parishioner who came back to St. Michael's on special occasions or at least to be buried. This first great loss was demonstrated in the decline of the number of baptisms in the year to below the 400 mark for the first time since 1859 when it had achieved that level initially. The amazing thing was the school attendance instead of dropping went up slightly to an average of 1,150 girls and little boys and over 400 larger boys. They had to endure school rooms filled with the noise and dust of excavating and that condition outdid the strain suffered by the teachers who for years had competed with the elevated trains.³

On April 22, 1906 St. Michael's, which had seen blessings galore and even a consecration, had its first church corner-stone laying. It was a Sunday afternoon and the procession proceeded from the old church to the new site. It was to move at four o'clock but to be doubly sure the men were assembled at 2:30 in the basement. Up 9th Avenue went a cross-bearer and acolytes with lighted candles. These were followed by a band, a guard of honor from the men's societies, delegates from the Knights of Columbus, officers of the church groups with their various regalia, and a long line of altar boys in cassock and surplice and also other school children. There were then city officials, a reception committee, and a double file of priests in front of Archbishop Farley and his attendants. It was a really exciting scene for the people of the parish and the demonstration attracted thousands who lined both sides of 9th Avenue. What struck many of the faithful most forcefully was the sight of the archbishop "in full canonical robes with mitre and crosier actually walking up the middle of the avenue!"⁴ On 34th Street after the children sang the national anthem and the men's chorus rendered "Lead, Kindly Light," Archbishop Farley did the blessing and the trowel work, and Monsignor Mooney spoke. The crowd wearing their tri-colored memorial buttons all joined in singing "Holy God" to conclude a great afternoon.⁵

The progress of the new buildings was a matter of special interest to the Sisters whose lives had become so deeply a part of the life of the parish. To the last they found the sturdy housing of St. Michael's praise-worthy for it stood strong even against the nearby blasting of the tunnel out of Manhattan's bed-rock. Yet every new forward step on the 34th Street project

³"Annals, 1905."

⁴"Annals, 1906."

⁵*Souvenir Programme*, courtesy of Mrs. Julia McMahon.

interested them, whether it was the report of extra men working, or another storey finished. During this time they had their last profession in the old convent and church and one of those two religious in 1906 was Sister Mary deSales who has had her golden jubilee but still functions very actively in the eight grade at St. Michael's. Two days after that joyful event, on April 18th, the Sisters were shocked by news of the San Francisco earthquake and the losses sustained by their sister community in that area whose two houses were demolished. The St. Michael's nuns sent a donation at once to be of help on the coast. Their kindness was quickly repaid in May when a special envelope collection was taken for them to help furnish their new convent. This was the first appeal in their thirty-two years that the Presentation Sisters had ever made to the people of the parish. The parishioners' appreciation had another outlet also. As the Sisters went to the train for their country stay that summer Father Gleeson arranger for their carriages to go through 33rd and 34th Streets so that they could see the progress on the new establishment. As they peered demurely from the windows they found themselves distracted further by a cheering demonstration of affection by St. Michael's people along the curbs. They were extra happy going away that year too because twenty-five out of twenty-eight of their girl graduates had passed for admission to the Normal School (which later became Hunter College) to prepare to be teachers.⁶

In the fall of 1907 finally all was in readiness for the dedication. It was set for Sunday morning, November 10th. Gleeson's builders, Heddon and Company of Newark, New Jersey had reproduced old St. Michael's on 34th Street and had done it quite literally. All the materials used in the building of the church were new except the facade. A contemporary account verifies that every stone was numbered and removed and reassembled:

The artistic stone front of the old church was retained and reset stone for stone in the new building. The magnificent marble altar of the old church was also rebuilt in the new. The fine stained figured Munich windows are also from the old church. All the rest is new.⁷

The day was celebrated in a double sense for it marked also the fiftieth anniversary of the parish foundation. Archbishop Farley officiated at the solemn dedication and then a Solemn Mass was celebrated by Daniel J. Quinn, S.J., president of Fordham University. Naturally he and all the officers of the Mass were St. Michael's boys and naturally Bishop McQuaid preached! The only new points in his message concerned the necessity of Christian education which he linked with his praise of the parish schools. Gleeson's dinner afterwards in his now most palatial of all New York rectories was

⁶"Annals, 1906."

⁷*Catholic News*, Nov. 16, 1907.

attended by seventy-two priests and about twenty-five laymen. The former must have examined the individual suites of rooms, sitting room, library, bedroom, and bath, with some envy. Monsignor Mooney, the Vicar General, was toastmaster for that festivity.

New York was again made very much aware of the parish on the west side. The *Catholic News* carried a full picture from across 34th Street on its front page and the million dollar plant was described in detail. It is substantially the church and other buildings as they stand today. There was then a basement chapel seating 2,000, as the upper church did, and with a height of eighteen feet. The church was described as of Romanesque architecture, seventy-five feet wide, 200 feet deep, and sixty feet high. The school and convent were defined as being in Gothic style, with the school's 60 x 100 feet space able to accommodate as many as 1,700 pupils and the convent with its forty-seven feet frontage able to take care of thirty Sisters. An electric elevator and a paved roof for recreation were thought to be the latest in conveniences for them. The altar in their chapel which was dedicated to the Sacred Heart had been consecrated by Auxiliary Bishop Thomas F. Cusack on November 5th. The only thing apparently denied to the priests' house was an elevator for the pastor's ideal of three rooms apiece for five men was carried out, and in addition there was almost as much room again for the domestic help. It too was Romanesque, had a forty foot width, and connected to the church by a large baptistry. With great accuracy one press account concluded: "The work has been most satisfactorily done, and now St. Michael's parish has the most complete and up-to-date set of parochial buildings in the city."⁸

The new church did not suffer from any lack of use of its facilities in that happy pre-1918 period which is remembered for its carefree character symbolized by the nickle can of beer available at the corner saloon. There was a reflection of stable home life even in the long stays of assistant priests in Father Gleeson's rectory and in the way they affectionately called him, "Boss." In 1907 the curates were Arthur J. Kenny, William J. Johnston, John A. Lane, and James M. Winters. This group was undisturbed until Francis F. Hanretty took Kenny's place in 1911 and James F. Kelly took Winters' place in 1918. The make-up of the congregation remained very consistently Irish with a little German admixture. This did not mean that other nationalities reflecting the wave called the new immigration were not present in the neighborhood. In 1903 St. Clare's Church for Italians opened in 36th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues under the Italian Franciscans, and by 1905 it had a school with 140 pupils. Similarly, just north of the parish on 40th Street off 9th Avenue St. Clemens Mary a national church for Poles, opened in 1909 and by 1913 it had about 160

⁸ *Catholic News*, Nov. 9, 1907.

children under instruction. These necessary steps to preserve the faith of those speaking only foreign languages delayed the dissolution of the almost totally Irish character of St. Michael's.

The parishioners continued the same generosity which had been characteristic of the days when the flag of Erin flew over the old school. Gleeson did not hesitate to expend over \$16,000 in the first two years for "improvements" in church and rectory. It soon became apparent however, that his big financial burden would be St. Michael's Home. The sum expended for school purposes there went from less than \$2,000 to over \$7,000 in 1908. In 1910 the parish expenses for its Staten Island project were almost \$40,000 for new buildings and renovations. The next year the payment on contracts for new buildings at Green Ridge was over \$171,000. Hence the debt of the parish at the end of 1911 was \$43,300 and in another year it reached \$167,100. It was with a certain reasonableness that the archdiocesan official who checked such reports questioned whether the indebtedness should be called that of the parish or rather one that was on the Home. It continued, however, to be carried as a parish undertaking and expense. By the end of 1918 and of Gleeson's administration the amount owed had been whittled down only to \$163,000.⁹

The pastor seemed not only unperturbed but even serene as he reported to the Association members with really impressive photographs and word pictures of the chapel, convent, hospital, and boys and girls buildings at Green Ridge. He wrote of the Sisters' work at the Home and of the fact that "thanks to the generous cooperation of St. Michael's parishioners, the children are well housed, fed and clothed, as well as prepared for the secular and religious life."¹⁰ At the end of 1916 these words were not written with just ordinary meaning. That year had been marked in New York by a great upheaval during which Catholics thought their orphanages were being attacked in the charges of negligence that were leveled against welfare institutions by the Commissioner of Charities. The result had been an investigating committee appointed by the governor and a great deal of press warfare in which clerics were also involved. Gleeson and the Sisters had willingly complied with the findings of a state examination in 1899 which had criticized the Home on the matter of the number of beds in a dormitory. As early as 1910 he had been annoyed and had protested the high-handed attitude of several examiners from the City Comptroller's office. He was subject to that scrutiny because the dependent children were aided by public

⁹F.R., 1907-1918.

¹⁰*Members Book*, 1917.

funds. Apparently with such experience behind him and a good physical plant at Green Ridge the head of St. Michael's Home had nothing to fear from public inspection.¹¹

In those same years the parochial schools graduated about a hundred boys and a hundred girls each June. The pastor at least was happy with their record in keeping up with archdiocesan and state regent requirements. In fact the shepherd was sanguine about the whole condition of his flock. His "address" to them at the end of 1916 spoke of their "peace and prosperity hitherto unknown," and asked Christ's guidance for them "in the ways of truth, justice, and prudence, of Christian forbearance in our dealings with our neighbor in every walk of life, of every creed, color and clime." In this slight recognition of the changes in that section of the city and the resulting frictions Father Gleeson also advocated prayers of gratitude for America's freedom from involvement in the war then raging in Europe. Of matters at hand he wrote:

In local affairs the parish is progressing favorably during this happy era of peaceful prosperity. The Mass attendance in proportion to our declining numbers is excellent, the various church societies hold their regular quota in numbers and the confessional and altar-rail are always crowded with both penitents and pietists. Herein lies the secret of our success and happiness, we seek first God and His Kingdom and then all things else are added unto us.¹²

The parochial vitality was seen through the activities of the fifteen societies. Rather unique, at least from the point of view of today, was the ladies auxiliary to the St. Vincent de Paul Society and a pious association in honor of St. Anthony. This latter dated from 1903 and was designated not only to propagate that saint's devotion but also to assist the poor. Another very necessary function was performed by members of the "St. John Berchman's Sanctuary Society" which in its Jesuit heavenly patronage that dated back to 1889 would indicate that the altar boys did not escape the influence of the Jesuits at St. Francis Xavier. One of them, Father Patrick Casey, was the pastor's favorite preacher and was a steady in the St. Michael's pulpit. A more prosaic work was done by the noble sounding "Order of Ushers."

Over and above these organized aids to piety there was always pastoral admonition. Two points especially that Gleeson brought home reflect the liturgical life of the parish. He insisted that although the archdiocese had

¹¹File on St. Michael's home, O'Brien Papers; Gleeson to Monsignor Patrick J. Hayes, July 16, 1910.

¹²*Members Book*, 1917, p. 15.

not ordered it, on account of the social and economic condition of most of the faithful in New York, that they follow the spirit of the Church and be married at a Nuptial Mass. He made it quite clear that it was a mistake to consider that "the *display*, as it is sometimes erroneously termed, of a Nuptial Mass is the property and right of the rich and not of the poor." The parish would provide it no matter what the social status. Secondly, Gleeson fought the old world mentality that did not want the priest called to administer the last rites until it was too late to do so most properly and fruitfully.¹³ Of course, if the sick parishioners were in the French Hospital, by then long established on 34th Street but moved to west of the church, there was not much chance of being missed for St. Michael's priests served it as faithfully then as they still do on its new site in 30th Street. The Holy Cross Sisters took care of that hospital while across the street from the church Episcopal nuns managed St. Mary's Hospital for Children. The priests occasionally had calls there also and a mutual admiration likewise developed between those neighbors.

Living memories of the period of Father Gleeson make it a sort of golden age in the history of the parish. For the last time it was a closely knit homogeneous community. Doctors, lawyers, and teachers, as well as priests and prelates had come out of the school and given it prestige. There was a sense of unity and belonging as mothers gathered, for example, in the Mothers' Club, or neighbors took care of one another in illness. Hardly anyone locked his door in the tenements and an abuse of this trust could only be the work of an outsider. Crimes of violence are not much recalled from that time but yet history records that after 1910 a faction of the Gopher Gang controlled the territory south of 42nd Street on the west side down to the kingdom of the Hudson Dusters.¹⁴ The immediate neighborhood of St. Michael's remained as yet somewhat spared although chances for its youth to go wrong were increasing. The fact is that in the same tenement on 35th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues were incubated gang-leader of the Gophers, Owney Madden, who went to Sing Sing for a shooting in 1914, and the two McMahon brothers who became priests.

War and the accompanying noble experiment of Prohibition were the two blights that followed. The parish sent off almost 500 young men, with hardly an non-Irish name among them, to fight for their country and ten of them never returned.¹⁵ At home about 100 women parishioners made up a Red Cross unit that knitted socks, scarfs, and wristlets for the boys

¹³ *Members Book*, 1917, pp. 24-40.

¹⁴ Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of New York* (New York, 1927).

¹⁵ Historical War Records of the National Catholic War Council, preserved on microfilm at the Catholic University of America.

overseas. In 1920 and 1921 a unique memorial service was held on Decoration Day when a field Mass was celebrated in Chelsea Park at 28th Street by Father Hanretty in his capacity as chaplain of the Knickerbocker Council of the Knights of Columbus.¹⁶

On Sunday, June 22, 1919, the parish heard seventy-three-year old Father Gleeson preach on the gospel of the master who prepared the great feast. The next day at lunch he died of a hemorrhage surrounded by his loving assistants and his sister Nora. On June 26th with Archbishop Hayes presiding and with over 100 in the sanctuary and the church crowded to capacity his friend Monsignor Mooney preached for him for the last time. This editorial eulogy is certainly the one that tradition has preserved of this well-beloved pastor:

In physique he was like a giant, with a cast of countenance to resemble an Apollo. His character was of the virile type, with a demeanor simple and unassuming, and colored over with a wholesome, sunny, glowing sense of humor, making him attractive in the way of winning souls for Christ.¹⁷

The black drapes of death remained on the church front a great deal in those few years. In May 1920 the first assistant, William J. Johnston, died and the new pastor who had come in November, 1918, survived only eighteen months in that position. He was William F. Dougherty, the first St. Michael's priest alumnus to go back as pastor and probably the last to do so as the result of competitive examination. It was not only a permanent rectorship but still one of the largest parishes in the city. Father Dougherty had been stationed in parishes on the lower east side, Transfiguration and St. Theresa's until 1902 when he opened a mission for Catholic seamen on West Street along the waterfront. In 1906 he began St. Athanasius parish in the eastern Bronx and put up a brick church. He showed similar enthusiasm in his brief period at St. Michael's. Added by an accidental fire in the spring of 1920 which destroyed the Sisters' Fishkill summer home and gave the parish coffers \$20,000 in insurance he reduced the indebtedness by the end of 1920 to \$135,000.¹⁸ He mercifully died

¹⁶Hanretty to Hayes, May 3, 1921.

¹⁷*Catholic News*, June 28; July 5, 1919.

¹⁸F.R., 1919-1920.

on April 21, 1921 after an operation for the removal of a brain tumor and the parish was again in mourning.¹⁹

This most short-lived of St. Michael's pastors is remembered best for perhaps two things. He installed new electric lighting in the church which by its very structure never had been known for its brightness and was difficult to illuminate well. More than that even, his fine singing voice which boomed out over those of the children as he went up and down the church aisle leading them also lifted the hearts of his people.

After 1919 the children were more completely than ever the charge of the Presentation Sisters. At that time Mother Raphael took over the management of the boys' school after the regime there of Miss Nellie Nagle, sister of the priest director of years earlier. The nuns were also moving sufficiently out of cloister to appear in church with the children during services. The community already had a foundation in the Bronx at Our Lady of Solace and after 1921 when the present mother-house, novitiate and summer home was opened independently at Mt. St. Joseph's, Newburgh, the complete identification of the order and the parish was at an end. It was not so clear within the community where for a long time there survived the notion that there were just two kinds of members, St. Michael's girls and all the others.

As a new era opened for the world a new period of parochial history began also since once again under God's grace both the men and the times made the story of St. Michael's.

¹⁹ *Catholic News*, April 30, May 7, 1921.

VI

Fun and Fear

The roaring twenties were only yesterday but out of the whirl that was the jazz age must come also part of the history of the parish. St. Michael's started the 1920's probably over 7,500 strong but throughout the decade it continued to be depleted of people. The garment industry's lofts replaced many of the little houses in areas of the parish between 8th and 9th Avenues. In the early twenties in one summer alone hundreds of children at a time were withdrawn reluctantly from the school as their families moved away. New apartments in the Bronx and Brooklyn and homes in Long Island and New Jersey and other outlying regions in this period of prosperity drew newly-weds and even established families out of a retrogressing neighborhood of cold water flats and "pent-houses" that looked out on the 9th Avenue "El." The noise on 34th Street of trucks and trolleys would eventually be enough to drive the French Hospital out of the block.

To this prospect there came in 1921 a new pastor fresh from parishes in the country. He was the kindly, and gentlemanly, but somewhat aloof John J. E. O'Brien. A native of St. Stephen's parish he had been a student at the old Manhattan Academy on W. 32nd Street within the parish but when it closed he went to Sacred Heart Academy at Clason Point which later became La Salle Military Academy. After graduating in 1886 he worked in a business house for two years. He then entered Manhattan College and after four years went to Troy Seminary for two years and thence to Rome. He returned a priest in 1898 with the degree of S.T.L. Father O'Brien became a curate on the lower and upper east side, at Immaculate Conception and Holy Rosary, until in 1910 he went to be pastor at Pocantico Hills and three years later to St. Mary's in Poughkeepsie.

Father O'Brien came to the west side after successfully completing a model school and he showed constant interest in education in his new parish. To many of the parishioners his interest in collections and not what they stood for in terms of supporting the schools seemed to loom larger. Lists of names appeared even monthly in the *Church Bulletin* whereas the paid up members of the Association had been advertised but annually in the membership books. The results of the special collections for the patronal feast and for Christmas and Easter were printed down to the child's five cent piece. On the bottom of a report of a \$2,000 result he printed, "Can we conduct St. Michael's Church and School properly with this revenue? Is not a Dollar a Sunday from those who can afford it, an absolute necessity?" Or as the pastor put it in the 1923 annual listing, "SERVICE,

spiritual and substantial is what will bring this parish to a Second Spring and one other requisite: Don't be an Unknown Catholic." This latter phrase was a favorite theme and it appeared on a leaflet printed for a census in 1921 with the following advice:

Join one of the Church Societies—Introduce yourself to your priests. Don't leave the responsibility to them. Pick out one of the five and let him be your visible link with the Church. The sheep should know their shepherds and the shepherds will try to remember their sheep.

The assistant priests again were in the parish for a long time. Through most of the 1920's those who served a considerable time and practically together covered the whole decade were merely James F. Kelly, John J. Corley, Stanislaus J. McGovern, Charles J. Quinn and Joseph A. Doyle. Father Kelly was in charge of the school until he received the parish of St. Theresa's at Briarcliff in 1926. As an Irishman from the other side and also as the school man he had a place of importance. He was known as "Jazz" to his colleagues but as a terror to the parish youngsters of whom over 1,200 were in the school. The report card carried a set of rules and these were also promulgated in the *Church Bulletin*.¹ His slogan was, "A quarter to nine," every child to be in school by that time, in church on Sunday by that time, and in bed every night with home-work completed by that time. This tall, thin, ruddy-faced, white-haired priest patrolled the streets and "Putso here's Foder Kelly," was a warning cry that sent the boys scurrying to their homes. Those that were apprehended were led to their parents held with a peculiar effectiveness by the ear.

It seems to have been Kelly who inspired the beginnings of the St. Michael's Dramatic and Glee Club although it was left to piano-playing Father Corley to carry it on. This and other groups that followed its lead kept the youth of the parish to the forefront for years and gave entertainment to all. Amateur shows began to thrive and to take up the energies of literally hundreds of parishioners. There were at times three or four a year often filling the church hall with 600 for several performances. This near-mania was not just the usual entertainment put on at graduation time by the schools, such as in 1922 when the eighth grade girls performed a one act operetta, "Florinda or the Rose and Pearl." Nor was the new thing merely traditionally Irish, although it retained some of that. It smacked more of nearby Broadway but yet was always wholesome. Of course something like it was occurring in other parishes but St. Michael's was bigger and better, and more often. In 1922, for example, the united societies put on

¹ Nov. 1923.

"A Fine Dey in Courte" in January at the Palm Garden on 58th Street and Lexington Avenue, the Children of Mary presented "Starlights" in April, and the D. and G. Club, as it was called, did "Officer 666" in November. In 1924 even the altar boys presented for three evenings a "novelty musical revue" called, "Just Kids."

The mid-year of the decade may be taken as the climax according to available evidence. In January there was the annual entertainment and reception with the usual heavy souvenir journal replete with advertisements and the ordination pictures of the assistants, no matter how old they had grown since that time. That show was a revue called, "Jingles of 1925." In February there was the Boys United Societies doing "Yes and No," a musical comedy revue, in May the D. and G. did a straight play, "A Full House," and in November there was another "annual entertainment and reception!" This was a revue entitled, "Who's Who in 1925," and a sample of the songs were "Paddlin Madelin Home," and "You're Just a Flower from an Old Bouquet." Finally, at the end of the same month the Junior Social Club gave an all girl minstrel show. John (Doc) Malloy, who survived longest as a favorite and even directed shows toward the end of the twenties, missed being in only that last effort of hectic 1925.²

The parish obviously shared in some of the giddiness of those prosperity days. Yet there was a great seriousness about the vast numbers that participated in the four weeks of mission conducted by various religious orders during the first years of the decade. The time allotted was cut down within about ten years to two weeks. Similarly the parishioners responded generously with time and means beyond their quota to the annual Catholic Charities appeals which began in 1920. Their own Father Kelly was annually relieved of duty to give full time to the work of the collecting campaign. The faithful never knew how often they were spared many paragraphs which the pastor crossed out of Cardinal Hayes' long pastorals on the charity drives and other questions. Nonetheless, the announcements were always ample and time-consuming. They never lacked for pleas to generosity since a Farmers' Loan and Trust mortgage for \$125,000 hung over the pastor from his arrival until 1928. In this connection he knew he lost support because his people went elsewhere and yet they claimed to be going elsewhere because he continually asked support. In 1926 O'Brien made a late Mass available with these words: "We don't like a Mass at mid-day on Sundays. We do not approve of it—but if St. Michael's parishioners want it they may have it. This is one more effort to have parishioners attend Mass in their own church on Sundays and holydays."³ The Italian church on 36th Street and the friars churches to the east, which were ceasing to be so German, were obviously being used by many as well as St. Raphael's and even Holy Innocents.

²Programs and journals in APSM.

³*Church Bulletin*, Feb. 1926.

Father O'Brien did much to make St. Michael's attractive. He was after all a Roman trained cleric (and very active in the North American College alumni) with a cultivated taste when it came to beautifying God's house. He began in 1925 with a new marble statue of St. Michael for the sanctuary and then there was a smaller one of the Virgin for her altar. This was matched by one of St. Joseph which is likewise on that side altar still. The pastor negotiated for this last piece of work from Naples and once it was straightened out that the Christ Child was not to be seated but standing at the feet of Joseph the evidently unusual and handsome result was achieved.⁴ The next attempt later in 1928 was hardly as successful since correspondence and a personal visit did not forestall the arrival of a beautiful image cut from Carrara marble but so gigantic as to be suitable more for a hillside than a sanctuary. This Sacred Heart had been measured to match the St. Michael on the other side of the church but the latter's wings and the devil under his feet confused the issue. It was finally moved outside around the block to the 33rd Street end of the church by the present pastor.

As early as the spring of 1927 Father O'Brien had received permission to go ahead with redecoration up to the amount of \$20,000.⁵ He remarked about that time of the financial condition of the parish, "As yet we have not reached the depths. I hope we never will. At the same time they are blasting all around us, maybe that means the milleneum."⁶ He continued with renovations and by the end of 1929, the year he installed a new Angelus chimes, St. Michael's had spent over \$32,000 in the cause of beauty. However, with the settlement of the St. Michael's Home problem which turned it over to the Green Ridge Presentations the parish was left with only a floating indebtedness of about \$15,000.⁷

O'Brien had not been long on the job when he saw the incongruous position of the parish carrying the high debt and managing a home for orphans that had less and less real connection with the parish. In 1921 he began negotiations with archdiocesan officials looking to a separating of the two accounts. The board of directors still met however at the rectory and the pastor, away from the scene, had to be concerned with reports of and from all kinds of commissions, boards, and officials relating to the Home. By the mid-twenties he was getting some slight amount of money for educational expenses from Catholic Charities. The final settlement was arrived at amicably in 1928. According to it the Home was to raise \$170,000 to give to the Church of St. Michael. Out of that O'Brien, as agreed, paid off the \$125,000 mortgage and put the remaining \$45,000 in the parish treasury.

⁴Frederick Lupi, S.J. File in O'Brien Papers.

⁵T. G. Carroll to O'Brien, May 9, 1927.

⁶O'Brien to Carroll, January 20, 1927.

⁷F.R., 1928, 1929.

The connection of practically a half century was severed. The parish made thereby a great contribution to the child welfare system of the archdiocese for the Home functions to this day, now under the Sisters of Mercy who care for over 250 children.⁸

The September of the year of the crash, when the youngsters sang in their musical, "Are We Downhearted? No" the church decorating was finished. The basement, which was usually used for religious purposes only in Holy Week, had been serving as the church during the four months of painting. The congregation was happy to return and to find a sparkingly refurbished place of worship. The electric fixtures were remade, and the colors were brighter with an ivory tone prevailing. The great mural of the crucifixion high over the main altar, which was lighted for special occasions, was described as the work of an American artist, Lee Woodward Ziegler. It represented Christ at the moment after death with Mary and the Magdalen and John, and fourteen figures representing the choir of angels. On Sunday evening, October 6th, the new statue of the Sacred Heart was unveiled and blessed with Monsignor Michael J. Lavelle, rector of the cathedral, preaching. The pastor explained how the size emphasized the importance of the devotion.⁹

There were not many days filled with glorious ceremony as in the earlier years of St. Michael's. Cardinal Hayes was unable to be present for Father O'Brien's silver jubilee of his priesthood in June, 1923, but he did write an appreciation of his zeal. It was more like the old days when the archbishop did come in October, 1924, to commemorate the golden jubilee of the arrival of the Presentation Sisters in New York. He was present in the sanctuary accompanied by Auxiliary Bishop John J. Dunn, and later visited the convent as well as the rectory.¹⁰ The day that was really much waited for was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the parish. The pastor gave it as the reason for the renovation of the church but was reported:

If one wishes for more reasons, he adds that the neighborhood is being so improved that a second spring is only around the turn; and the great reason of all, the people of the parish wished the church to be a fitting place for the tabernacle of the Host High.¹¹

The improvements could not have been much more than the widening of the street in front of the church in 1928, the large Webster Apartments directly across from it which had opened a few years earlier as an apartment-hotel for women, the busy Y.M.C.A. on the corner of 9th Avenue and perhaps a few new apartment houses on the same block as the church. But

⁸ St. Michael's Home File, O'Brien Papers.

⁹ *Catholic News*, Sept. 28, 1929.

¹⁰ Hayes to O'Brien, June 24, 1923; O'Brien to Hayes, June 25, 1923; O'Brien to Hayes, July 24, Oct. 27, 1924.

¹¹ *Catholic News*, Sept. 28, 1929.

wait for the second spring he did, while it tarried around the corner with prosperity.

The damond jubilee in 1932 was carried off in the grand manner. As the parish news release put it, "despite the hard times some note of joy and celebration must be sounded." The old pride came to the fore as the claim of a national record with eighty priest alumni of the school was made and the figure of at least a hundred girls in religious life was added to it. The parish story was retold as the pastor appealed for a "spiritual homecoming" to the old parishioners. Every night for a week beginning on September 26th there were services with a different St. Michael's alumnus preaching. The Solemn Mass on October 2nd was celebrated by Monsignor Arthur J. Kenny and the sermon mostly on Donnelly was preached by Michael A. Reilly. The Pius X School choir saved the day musically by their presence. Bishop James E. Kearney of Salt Lake City, a particular friend of the Presentation Sisters, also arrived for the celebration.¹²

It was through the Sisters' work in the life of the parish particularly that the dark days of the depression after 1929 were somewhat lightened. The empty space in a school which had seen numbers dropping from near 1,700 to about 1,000 in the middle of the 1920's led Sister Mary Baptist, then and for so long afterwards the principal, to suggest to the pastor that the class of girls of June, 1924, might be kept on for further training in business subjects, especially since they were willing and places in girls' high schools were not too plentiful. Father O'Brien agreed and a two year commercial course was begun with a little over a dozen girls. By 1926 a full four year academic and commercial course was being offered and it was necessary to expend a little parish money for the change-over. That same year the first eighth grade of boys was kept over for a semester's commercial course. Five years later as the grammar school ran between five and six hundred pupils the pastor agreed to let boys into the high school. The secondary department went co-instructional with an average of 100 students and sometimes with the help of religion teachers from the rectory. The students came gradually from outside the parish particularly from Long Island. The boys stayed until 1946 when there were thirty-six in the last class. By that time the demand for admission on the part of girls had increased and the over-all picture of boys high schools in the archdiocese had improved under the leadership of Archbishop Francis J. Spellman. It is interesting to note that in the fifteen years the deeply embedded traditon of St. Michael's, carried on by the nuns, took hold and at least ten of their former students have been ordained priests. Meanwhile the grammar schools, fed its students only from the homes on the local streets, diminished. This was brought home by the fact that in 1929 there ceased to be two principals and the offices of the boys' and the girls' schools were combined.

¹² *Catholic News*, Sept. 17, 24, Oct. 8, 1932.

That was the Prohibition era and as such was full of amusing and tragic tales some of which found their way to the parlors and confessionals of St. Michael's. The parish had its quota of speakeasies, the secretive back-room counterparts of the corner saloon. In the trade of illegal liquor, of course, modern organized gangsters with political connections, and even a certain respectability found their origin. The carrying of guns was all part of it and the west side, including the very space outside the rectory on one occasion, had its scenes of gun battles. There was little wonder that the priests of the parish harped constantly on the theme of keeping youngsters off the streets at night. One such message put it in dire terms of the bully on the street corner with a foul mouth who corrupted boys who loved the streets. It concluded grimly: "Association with this leader will corrupt the strongest mind of a young boy, and a post graduate course in Sing Sing is the natural consequence."¹³

To alleviate somewhat the social problems within the parish, at least during 1926 and 1927, the rectory used the service of the Parish Visitors. These professional social workers did family counseling. They also were utilized to visit homes in order to get the public school children to attend Sunday school. There were over 150 children in that category as school opened in 1927 despite all the room in the parochial school.¹⁴ The aggravation of the situation by the depression was seen in the reactivation of the St. Vincent de Paul Society which by 1931 was distributing over \$1,300 a year. However by 1933 the parish itself was in the red with a debt of over \$4,000 and so expenditures were cut all around. The receipts had dropped from the \$64,000 level in 1929 to the \$33,000 level by 1934.¹⁵ Father O'Brien had one brilliant idea presented to him to earn \$3,500 for the parish but Cardinal Hayes told him that he had no faculties "to grant such an unusual permission." The request had been to allow a private group to use the church, with the Blessed Sacrament removed, to present a miracle play for the benefit of the unemployed.¹⁶ Help for the unemployed was not all so uplifting for as one walked across town from the Post Office to Penn Station he passed dozens of men selling apples. The people of the parish were perhaps a little more than others inclined to feel neglected. Even the youngsters realized that there was no ball field or a bit of grass between 28th Street and 52nd Street along their west side. And then the Charles H. Hussey Democratic club on 34th Street stopped giving them Christmas presents!

Parish activity on a social level—which was never unconnected with fund raising—continued in a somewhat different pattern in the 1930's. The

¹³ *Church Bulletin*, Nov. 1923.

¹⁴ Parish Visitors File in O'Brien Papers.

¹⁵ F.R., 1929-1934.

¹⁶ O'Brien to Hayes, Oct. 20, 1931; Hayes to O'Brien, Oct. 24, 1931.

bazaar was commonly used with its hawking tables conducted by the various societies. There was always the inevitable journal of advertisers. About the mid 1930's the annual parish affair moved over to the Hotel Pennsylvania (now the Statler) on 7th Avenue. Before the dancing began there was entertainment. By that time amateur theatricals had fallen before the power of radio and movies. The new shows were provided by some of most famous night clubs such as the Cotton Club and the Village Barn. Bill Robinson, the famous tap dancer might walk on, or N.T.G., the impressario, waltz on, or Jimmy Braddock, world's heavyweight boxing champion take a bow. These shows were made possible through the kindness of parishioners with the proper connections in the entertainment and sports worlds.

In the transitional period of prosperity, depression, and recovery there was always one constant factor. There were twenty-two young men studying for the priesthood in 1929 and twelve in 1932. Fathers Quinn and Doyle, especially, continued by their interests the ancient Donnelly tradition and have lived to see its fruits. The servers at the altars were organized into bands with an hierarchical arrangement of official functions, from torch-bearer to master of ceremonies, which impressed the dignity of their office on them. From among them went a steady stream into Cathedral College.

The second spring that Father O'Brien predicted did not come to St. Michael's. As he walked through the parish with his cane taking his exercise it must have become increasingly evident it was not to be. In 1934 he accepted the pastorate of prosperous St. Agnes on the east side where he became a domestic prelate and died at the age of eighty-one on September 25, 1951. The old order changed rapidly. Father Doyle was gone and after the advent of the new pastor in February, 1935, Father Corley would die the next year and the familiar ever young smile of everyone's friend, Father McGovern would be seen no more on 34th Street for he went to buccolic pastorates in Irvington and at present in Spring Valley.

Before Father O'Brien left St. Michael's he buried "Chris" Kelly. It was an unusual occasion for he preached a eulogy but no one remarked about it or even was surprised when he called him a confessor of the Faith. Mr. Kelly for over fifty years had served his parish in one capacity or another, as usher, strength of the Holy Name Society, and in general, keeper of the church and support of every parish activity. He had also given a son and two daughters to religion. He was an alumnus of the school and a kind of bridge between the old that had been and the new. His life, in a way, epitomized much of the story of the loyal laity who had made St. Michael's great.

VII

Hope Renewed

What follows can hardly be called history. If it be necessary to end history with something less let it be the fruits of an effort to observe and remember.

The new pastor who came into seemingly dying St. Michael's in February 1935 simply moved up the west side from St. Columba's. John J. Kiernan was born in 1889 in Immaculate Conception parish on East 14th Street. He attended St. Francis Xavier College and, after working an interval, also Dunwoodie. After his ordination he was assigned to St. Ambrose in 1916 but in October 1918 he went into military service. His army chaplaincy work was especially on transports carrying troops to France. In October, 1919 he was assigned as an assistant to St. Columba's under Thomas A. Thornton, who became his model of business-like pastoral excellence, and there he remained for the next twenty-six years. His priesthood in New York was then spent exclusively on the west side and he often bragged of it. In 1920 he became the first chaplain of the Post Office Holy Name Society. The central building facing the terminal was completed in 1914, on a site where St. Michael parishioners once lived, and so, there was a certain poetic justice in that even some little of the spiritual care of its many employees should return to the parish priest.

Father Kiernan's energy had some immediate results. The records show that parish income went up at a rate of about \$4,000 a year to reach \$50,000 by the end of 1938. The year before that he had wiped out the last remaining indebtedness. There was a vigorous attack on the physical maintenance situation, with much painting and plumbing work being done throughout the plant. A complete pointing up of the brick and stone work assured the buildings for the future and improved the appearance. Father Kiernan's great contribution was to have supplied the stitch in time to save the physical monument of the parish.

The means used to finance all this were multiple. The St. Michael's Association, however, which had faded in strength very much in the previous pastorate was discontinued. That veteran idea from 1861 had certainly had consequences in winning support for the parish. In its place was substituted a monthly school collection. Then a box was put at the door to collect seat money and a window at the side to make change. Bingo was introduced in the church basement although it never became the big fiend-

attracting type. A rental was charged against the extension of Manhattan College which used the school building on Saturdays for classes for sisters going on for degrees. No angle was missed as the pastor even instructed altar boys that he would grant them their S.T.L., standing for "Save the Lights," if they were prompt in turning them off. Money came in also by increasing the vigil light area and at the same time diminishing the size of the candles. Room was made in the rear of the church for shrines by removing a number of the pews which had formerly backed up almost to the swinging doors. These seats were never missed in an edifice that never knew a capacity crowd any more. For the passer-by as well as parishioners Father Kiernan instituted the noon-day Mass and the increasingly popular Miraculous Medal novena took the place of the Little Flower devotions on Mondays, and for awhile it was conducted three times a day.

About 1938 a considerable and expensive renovation was made in the basement of the church. The slanting floor, on which dancing and basketball had been unique experiences, was removed and the back of the hall leveled with the front or stage end. That left a small balcony effect in the rear about five feet above the floor but an attractive gymnasium resulted. This change was naturally of great value to the high school, especially, so long as it had boys. Father Kiernan was not keen on having boy students since he thought them apt to be hard on property. Branch 22 of the Catholic Boys' Brigade which from 1930 had been introducing dozens of youngsters to hikes and camping in the country, and to first aid, crafts, and military drill also went by the board partly for lack of a warm welcome. The new gym, for example, was increasingly less used by parish youngsters into the 1940's. For their athletics and socials they went elsewhere in the neighborhood particularly to Christ's Church and the Hudson Guild even though their teachers lamented those connections or viewed with alarm those influences. During this pastorate, on the other hand, the high school facilities were built up on the more academic side through the improvement of library and laboratory facilities. All that was under the inspiration of Sister Baptist but Father Kiernan controlled the purse strings. It was often suspected that his own money supplemented the parish funds for some of those good and lasting improvements.

The busiest traffic in the parish seemed to be through the rectory. The stable parish assistants gave way until the early 1940's to a succession of priests that practically matched the number seen in the previous two administrations. They in turn could do little to keep activity alive and the parish appeared in the light of its past to be a mere ghost. There were the traditional entertainments and receptions for some years but other society life was practically dead. Father Harry Wolff conducted a study club and Fathers John Conway and Edward McCabe in pre-gym days did something

with the young men. There was a uniformed baseball team for awhile in the thirties and on Saturday afternoons some basketball at the 28th Street public gym which sometimes sent the young priests into confession boxes with tired muscles. Sick calls at the French Hospital were something that never ceased nor did the interminable parlor callers off the busy thoroughfare outside the rectory. A certain halt was put on the changing of personnel when Raymond Collins and John Shelley arrived in 1942 and Charles Wilson a few years later. Father Shelley as an alumnus personified an old parish tradition of the old boys returning to serve as priests in St. Michael's. These assistants have continued in the parish up to the present time.

St. Michael's underwent the second great undermining of its history in the second half of Father Kiernan's pastorate. The school children rode through the Lincoln Tunnel in buses to celebrate the first day it opened but there was really little cause for joy since it had driven more people away from the parish. This exodus of the early 1940's could not match the numbers ousted by the railroad changes of the early century but then in the early fifties came an extension of the project to finish up the job. In the name of progress three tubes fed traffic into the neighborhood but sucked out the parochial life-blood, the faithful parishioners, until what was left was an emaciated ghost. The church was left to stand, as if avoiding doom only by yards, at the mouth of the tunnel. The parish territory would miss, if only by a block at the southern end, anything like a housing project that might have brought people back to it. One small blessing came after 1940 when the elevator was torn down and in what proved to be the greatest improvement on 9th Avenue since the removal from the streets of push-cart Paddy's Market above 37th Street.

The presence of the Post Office Holy Name Society gave some sign of life occasionally to the parish. They had their memorial masses and helped the pastor celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination in 1941 when the noted Paulist, James Gillis, preached for the jubilarian. The work of chaplain was inherited by Father Collins who still serves in that capacity. Their room in the rectory basement was a convenient headquarters and their influence worked well enough to have a mail box hung on the chaplain's front railing. When Father Kiernan broadcast from the annual Holy Name communion breakfast much of the parish listened with great interest. He usually was seated at such affairs with the Roosevelt Postmaster General, James A. Farley, with whom he was proud to be on friendly terms. Part of the listening pleasure, particularly for the young tight-lipped west side youngsters, was the radio experience of the pastor's broad "a."

One aspect of the service of the parish continued to be emphasized. It was becoming a place of service to transients. To the older boarding houses,

and small hotels, particularly east of 9th Avenue from 34th Street southward there had been added the better hostelries like the Sloane House and later the first real hotel in the parish, the New Yorker. The pastor's bid for the patronage of travelers was first of all through signs. There appeared a neon cross that could be seen half-way to 8th Avenue because it was hung at right angles to the building. The pastor greeted all who came from the east as he stood at the church door all during the Sunday Masses that followed his own six o'clock Mass. The lament began to be heard that things would be so much better if the church were just one block farther to the east. The faithful remnant of the parishioners came mostly from the west of the area. They got their front door homage when over a hundred pictures of their boys in military service in World War II were exhibited in the foyer of the church by ex-chaplain Kiernan.

Even the rectory reflected what a fine central location could mean for a hotel. There were rooms available there and consequently priests doing special work in the archdiocese were assigned there just to have a residence. The first was the Reverend Gerald Fitzgerald, then of the Holy Cross Fathers who worked at the Military Ordinariate. Two others who were there longer and endeared themselves to many in the neighborhood were the late Right Reverend Thomas J. McMahon, then national secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, and the Reverend James E. Byrne, Professor of Latin at Cathedral College. The present residents are the Reverends John J. O'Shea, associate director of the Catholic Board for Mission Work among the Colored People, and Joseph T. Ryan, assistant chancellor of the Military Ordinariate.

The affairs of the parish during several years that Father Kiernan was invalided in the rectory devolved on Father Collins. He at first administered unofficially and then the official title of administrator was given to him. St. Michael's by all signs had become a downtown parish, a phenomenon of every large American city where Catholics settled many years ago. It was one somewhat on the fringes of the larger crowds of shoppers, workers, and sightseers that frequent other old church that have few parishioners. Nonetheless it still was not just a shell completely isolated in a district of warehouses and loading platforms as are others of its kind. Until the 1950's it was considered still to have a flock of about 500 families. It was to them the word went out on November 26, 1951 that John J. Kiernan had succumbed to his prolonged illness. Bishop Joseph P. Donahue presided and the deceased pastor's eulogy was preached by Monsignor McMahon. The Mass of Requiem was celebrated by Right Reverend John J. Stanley, then pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes.¹

¹ *Catholic News*, December 1, 1951.

It was the same Monsignor Stanley who was next sent to guide the fate of St. Michael's. For him it proved a kind of home-coming before death for he was a parish boy and had continued all his priestly days his devotion to the Presentation Sisters. He had been ordained in 1910 and by 1911 was an assistant at Our Lady of Solace in the Bronx, to which the nuns had first branched out from 33rd Street, where he remained for sixteen years. There his pastor was Daniel J. Curley with whom he remained always friendly and even attended on his death bed as Bishop of Syracuse in 1932. In 1927 he began to hold pastorates, beginning at Chappaqua, and then in 1932, St. Mary's, Kingston, and in 1939 at Our Lady of Lourdes. He had been made papal chamberlain in 1937 and four years later a domestic prelate.²

Like Father Dougherty, the other alumnus pastor of St. Michael's the second one did not have long to enjoy the pastorate of his old neighborhood which had changed so radically. He arrived in January, 1952. By dint of the devices by that time well established in the transient church and the continued generosity of parishioners and old friends of the parish the treasury was never empty. Monsignor Stanley's major achievement as pastor was fittingly enough that he improved the living conditions for the Sisters by renovations in the convent.

The portly and pleasant pastor liked being back in St. Michael's. He reminisced about its early days and events of archdiocesan history quite readily. His death came suddenly from a heart attack suffered while at Radio City Music Hall. It was on October 20, 1954 and he was buried three days later.

As St. Michael's neared the century mark there were sociological as well as physical changes. In common with all Manhattan Island the area was receiving American citizens from Puerto Rico and they were suffering under the usual unhappy conditions of new-comers. The grammar school with its few hundred children was as much Italian in makeup as anything. St. Clare's school closed in 1936 and that national parish itself had been transferred to St. Raphael's, the younger sister church of another archangel, which also brinks the tunnel. Parking lots multiplied in the section until the church is now completely surrounded by them. Rumors of new dis-possession orders fly regularly. Announcements appear in the press about enterprises that will build up the west thirties for business and commerce. There is very little planning for people as they are relocated by private agencies working for government bureaus at so much per head. The hardest core of St. Michael's people have proved to be the survivors in the housing on 10th Avenue including the part above 34th Street that the parish founder thought he had given away to the next parish to the north.

²*Catholic News*, October 23, 1954.

To lead the parish into an uncertain future there arrived on the scene John P. Monaghan, then not a domestic prelate but a simple priest. He came with an extraordinary background of training and experience. Now just passed the fortieth year of his priesthood he came to St. Michael's two and a half years ago, nonetheless, with great vigor and enthusiasm. Like his first predecessor he came out from Ireland, in his case from Tyrone, as just a lad. His desire for the priesthood was pursued through St. Francis College, Brooklyn (which has given him the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters) and into St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie. From there he was sent for study at the North American College in Rome where he was ordained.

The parallel with Monsignor Donnelly runs further because they both had a great realization of the necessity for education among the Irish in this country. The generations between had naturally changed the level to be emphasized from high school to college and graduate school. Monsignor Monaghan showed it by what he did himself and the encouragement he gave to many others. There are university professors and labor union officials working conscientiously in their important callings today because he encouraged them toward educational preparation for such vocations. He has taught subjects ranging from Biology in high school to Old English in post-graduate classes. That career had its start at St. Peter's on Staten Island. His further preparation included a Ph.D. in English from Fordham University in 1923. From that year until 1939 he taught at Cathedral College, the preparatory seminary, and subway commuted from the Corpus Christi rectory where he functioned also as a parish assistant. That location offered him the challenges of university contacts as well as of working class problems. There too he had an outlet for writing under many pseudonyms what filled the lively bulletin, *The Corpus Christi Chronicle*.

In the very days when St. Michael's was feeling the waves of depression and desertion a new influence was radiating strongly from Monsignor Monaghan. In 1937 he became a founder of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists along with a group of lay trade unionists. He was their chaplain then and is still the national chaplain of ACTU. That organization began the publication of the first Catholic labor paper in the United States, *The Labor Leader*, and sponsored the first real Catholic labor schools in this country featuring as lecturer their chaplain. For many years the paper's column, "Don Capellano," was another sounding board for comments on the social, economic, and religious scene for one who was considered worthy of his mantle by Monsignor John A. Ryan, the great scholar and activist in the field of social justice. In those days as he taught at various times Religion, History or English at Cathedral College the "Doc", as the students came to call him, opened many youthful minds for the

first time to an awareness of the Church's social teachings. There was also the more expected influence of inculcating in many a love of books through his position as librarian at that school.

A picture of Cathedral College twenty years ago includes this judgment on Father Monaghan:

"If he is not the most memorable prof of the thirties he is certainly the most quoted and from the point of view of an intellectual influence one of the most powerful priests not only in New York but in the American Church of our day. If he did not found a school of thought in the strict sense he formed a state of mind dominated by a Christian 'humanitas' which in the long run was probably more important."³

The active academic life of the present rector of St. Michael's came to a close when he was made pastor of St. Margaret Mary's in Midland Beach, Staten Island in 1939. There his ideas on education, partly formulated and seen in action earlier at the progressive school at Corpus Christi, were put into effect. A beautiful school was created out of a basement and a cottage and the children learned much of governing themselves and of the goodness in books, and plants, and art, and in the liturgy and sacred scripture. During his period on Staten Island besides a great local impact Monsignor Monaghan became very much in demand as a retreat master for priests especially at the retreat house of the Archdiocese of Chicago. His influence, again like Donnelly's, is seen also in the "old boys" in the priesthood of New York whom he has encouraged, as well as guided and chided, through their formative years and into the days of their ministry.

The monument on 34th Street represented a great challenge and the Monaghan reaction was the one traditional to the St. Michael's of old—to change and to improve. There has been accordingly accomplished a complete overhauling of the rectory with a disposal of an accumulation of fifty years and a renovation into a modern tasteful dwelling place. The red doors that appeared on 34th Street were the first outward sign of change within the church itself. In consultation with the well-known decorator, Robert Robbins, the pastor has remade the half century old edifice into something young and bright. It is already the object of very impressed comment on the part of visiting educators from distant cities as much as by grandmothers from suburban Long Island. Only pictures or memories of the contrast with the old can make the present sanctuary fully appreciated. The school too has been completely done over and just to be in it now is an educational experience, and again only the alumni can fully appreciate it.

³"Thoughts of the Thirties," *The Chimes*, XLVI (Jubilee, 1953), 38.

Life has indeed come back to the old parish under the present pastor. Hence there was much joy this August when in recognition of great work done and being done the Holy Father acting through Cardinal Spellman raised him to the rank of a domestic prelate. There is life in the liturgy when the peoples' voices are raised at Mass and there is community of life even in the distinctive weekly bulletin called, "Our Parish." The gym is alive again as the church basement has not been for thirty years as nearly every night in the week a flourishing CYO holds forth. In short, pride in belonging to St. Michael's has returned to the west side.

It would be absurd to say that there are imminent prospects of great hopes of new life being fulfilled. The nature of the neighborhood remains a great determining factor. There are only an estimated 1,400 Catholic adults and 350 children in the area, while the holy days bring the workers and transients to Mass to the number of 2,000. Obviously only St. Michael's Academy, now a well-recognized high school with its own proud traditions, keeps the large building on 33rd Street occupied. It is able to handle only about ten percent of the two thousand or so who take its entrance exams each year.

The future may hold great fulfillment for this now venerable parish and a real second spring. Even if under God's Providence it does not it can still be proud of its achievements in grace—the over 37,000 baptisms, the millions of confessions, the over 10,000 marriages performed before its altar, the innumerable Masses, the myriads of prayers. It can recall a unique fellowship of priests, nuns, and laity which has done and continues to do wonders for God and for His people.

St. Michael's, as proud as ever of its past, faces the future with hope renewed.

ASSISTANTS AT ST. MICHAEL'S

Dominic Teixcheira, 1859-1871	William J. Johnston, 1899-1919
Cornelius J. O'Callaghan, 1860-1861	Joseph T. McKeon, 1900-1903
Titus Joslin, 1861-1863	Edward J. Lewis, 1901-1906
John Larkin, 1864-1866	John A. Lane, 1903-1918
Michael Mullen, 1866-1867	James M. Winters, 1906-1922
Michael Mullen, 1866-1867	Francis F. Hanretty, 1910-1923
Harry C. MacDowell, 1867-1873	James F. Kelly, 1918-1926
Henry Prat, 1868-1873	John J. Corley, 1918-1936
Thomas J. Ducey, 1873-1880	James A. Carey, 1922-1923
John Lancaster Spalding, 1873-1877	Stephen J. McMenamin, 1923
William P. Costigan, 1873-1874	Charles J. Quinn, 1923-1928
Alban Craddock, 1874-1875	Stanislaus J. McGovern, 1924-1936
John A. Hurley, 1875-1877	Joseph A. Doyle, 1926-1932
Stephen J. Nagle, 1876-1881	Walter T. Kearney, 1933-1934
W. Henry Hoyt, 1877-1881	Peter L. Blake, 1934-1935
Edward J. Conroy, 1877-1880	John J. Mahoney, 1936
John F. Coffey, 1880-1882	John T. Conway, 1936-1938
Thomas F. Fitzpatrick, 1880-1884	John V. Mechler, 1936-1937
Charles A. Meredith, 1881-1883	Edward A. McCabe, 1936-1937
Edward A. Quinn, 1881-1885	Augustine E. Martell, 1937
R. Torre, 1883-1884	Harry J. Wolff, 1937-1939
William J. O'Brien, 1884-1888	Walter T. McNamara, 1937-1941
William H. Murphy, 1884-1888	Francis Campbell, 1938-1941
John P. Lonergan, 1885-1886	John B. O'Connell, 1940-1941
Malick A. Cunnion, 1885-1889	Cornelius J. Hance, 1941-1942
John M. Curley, 1886-1897	John J. Sullivan, 1941-1942
Eugene Smyth, 1887-1888	John R. Shelley, 1942-
Francis X. Hulse, 1887-1889	Raymond M. Collins, 1942-
Peter F. Guinevan, 1889-1901	William J. Fitzpatrick 1944-1945
William J. Ward, 1889-1890	Charles W. Blesch, 1945-1946
John D. Gillooly, 1890-1900	Charles C. Wilson, 1946-
Bernard F. Brady, 1891-1899	Eugene J. Sheridan, 1955-
Arthur J. Kenny, 1897-1910	

LAY TRUSTEES

Secretary of Parish

Francis D. Ryan, 1858

Edward J. Moore, 1859-1860

Members of Auditing Committee of St. Michael's Association

John O'Neil, 1861-1863

Edward Fitzpatrick, 1861-1864

P. H. Redmond, 1861

Edward J. Moore, 1861-1862

Peter Kearney, 1861-1865

James Dillon, 1861-1863

Michael R. Curran, 1861-1864

Thomas McCabe, 1861

Edmund Lyons, 1861-1862

M. Doolady, 1862-1863

Salvador Caro, M.D., 1862-1865

Trustees under Incorporation (1866) according to Law of March 25, 1863

Michael Canning, 1866-1917

Edward Fitzpatrick, 1866-1891

Daniel E. Kenny, 1903-1915

John J. Loftus, 1916-1930

Martin Downey, 1918-1929

Benedict D. Dineen, 1930-

James A. Skelly, 1932-1948

Richard Cronin, 1948-1957

Joseph Zanin, 1957-

**SISTERS WHO HAVE TAUGHT IN SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOLS
1874 - 1957**

Mother M. Joseph (Foundress)	Sister M. Concepta
Mother M. Xavier	Sister M. Frances
Mother M. Teresa	Sister M. Rita
Mother M. Magdalen	Sister M. Rose
Mother M. Michael	Sister M. Ignatius
Sister M. Augustine	Sister M. Anita
Sister M. Aloysius	Reverend Mother M. Benedicta
Mother M. Agnes	Sister M. Helena
Mother M. Stanislaus	Sister M. Teresa (Eakley) R.I.P.
Sister M. John	Mother M. Beatrice
Sister M. Gertrude	Sister M. Laurence
Sister M. Rose	Sister M. Paul
Sister M. Vincent	Sister M. De Chantal
Mother de Sales	Sister M. John
Sister Margaret Mary	Sister M. Ambrose
Sister M. Cecilia	Sister M. Bernadette
Mother M. Alphonsus	Sister M. Ursula
Sister Mary Bernard	Sister M. Austin
Sister M. Raphael	Sister M. Cecilia
Sister M. Regis	Sister M. Gabrielle
Sister M. Berchmans	Sister M. Fidelis
Sister M. Thomas	Sister M. Josepha
Mother Gabriel	Sister M. Regis
Sister M. Joseph	Sister M. Michael
Mother M. Clare	Sister M. Andrew
Sister M. de Sales	Sister M. Barbara
Sister M. Angela	Sister M. Xavier
Sister M. Catherine	Sister M. Aloysius
Sister M. Teresa	Sister M. Philomena
Sister M. Augustine	Sister M. Bernard
Sister M. Agnes	Sister M. Agnes
Sister M. Baptist	Sister M. Gertrude

Sister M. Perpetua
Sister M. Lucy
Sister M. Edward
Sister M. Dorothea
Sister M. Genevieve
Sister M. Brendan
Sister M. Madeline
Sister M. Vincent (Rush)
Sister M. Evangelist
Sister M. Carmelita
Sister M. Jerome
Sister M. Raymond
Sister M. Winifred
Sister M. Borromeo
Sister M. Stephen
Sister M. Eymard
Sister M. Lucita
Sister M. De Lourdes
Sister M. Elizabeth
Sister M. Loyola
Sister M. Veronica
Sister M. Paschal
Sister M. Jean
Sister M. Honoria
Sister M. Eugene
Sister M. Rosaria
Sister M. Francesca
Sister M. Stanislaus
Sister M. Berchmans
Sister M. Raphael
Sister M. Assumpta

Mother M. Jude
Sister Margaret Mary
Sister M. Chabanel
Sister M. Christopher
Sister M. Theophane
Sister M. Cornelia
Sister M. Loretta
Sister M. Theresa
Sister M. Agatha
Sister M. Martin
Sister M. Clare
Sister M. Vincent
Sister M. Justin
Sister M. Regis
Sister M. Louis
Sister M. Conrad
Sister M. Leonard
Sister M. Bernardine
Sister M. Teresa
Sister M. Bonoventure
Sister M. Luke
Sister M. Peter
Sister M. Alphonsus
Sister M. Matthew
Sister M. Patrick
Sister M. Daniel
Sister M. Vianney
Sister M. Colombiere
Sister M. Barnabas
Sister M. Valentine

LAY TEACHERS

Mary Bacon, R.I.P.	Mrs. Encarno Lorenzo
Theresa Beusse	Miss Lynn
Margaret Bohen	Cecilia Mallon, R.I.P.
Mary Brady, R.I.P.	Alice Meehan, R.I.P.
Miss Brooks	Gertrude Mescall
Catherine Carroll	Mrs. Thomas McCann
Ella Cashman, R.I.P.	Mrs. McCarthy
Catherine Cavanaugh, R.I.P.	Mrs. Margaret Sullivan McCarthy
Constance Cody	Mrs. Kathleen McDermott
Edith Cohan	Anna McDonough
Miss Coleman	Mrs. William McGrath
Gladys Conway	Mary Molloy
Anna Day	Margaret Mooney
Mrs. James Dempsey	Professor James T. Moore
Ann Doherty	Mrs. Anna Murphy
Justine Dillon	Mary Murphy
Virginia Donovan	Mr. Thomas Murphy, R.I.P.
Catherine Dowd	Mrs. Mary Blake Nestor
Margaret Downey	Kathleen O'Connor
Marie Eichmann	Eileen O'Leary
Mrs. Virginia Fallon, R.I.P.	Catherine Phelan
Miss Fogarty, R.I.P.	Mrs. Jeanne Duva Poli
Mary Foley, R.I.P.	Dr. David Powers
Mrs. Kathleen Kileen Fraser	Mrs. Suzanne Powers
Miss Gallagher	Ellen Quinn, R.I.P.
Mrs. Gallagher	Kate Quinn, R.I.P.
Helen Gay	Dorris Richards
Mrs. Ann Gillen	Lydia Salvati
Miss Goldborough	Mrs. Margaret Segers
Mr. Graham	Olive Selmer
Mrs. Frances Grassi	Anna Shaw
Miss Guilfoyle, R.I.P.	Mary Sheehy, R.I.P.
Lilyan Harty	Elizabeth Sherry
Mr. Frank Hession, R.I.P.	Josephine Shine
Mrs. Florence McCann Hoffman	Elizabeth Spence
Catherine Hogan	Mrs. Grace Skiba
Mrs. Catherine Javet	Mrs. Katherine Donohue Strong
Miss Kelly	Catherine Sullivan
Mrs. Catherine Kiernan	Mrs. Thayer
Mrs. Kingston	Margaret Walsh, R.I.P.
Miss Laning	

PRIESTS FROM THE PARISH OR THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Beglan, Joseph, S.J.	Hulse, Francis X.
Brice, Edward G.	Kelleher, Thomas F.
Britt, John J.	Kelly, Christopher, O.F.M.
Browne, Henry J.	Kenny, Arthur J. (Domestic Prelate)
Byrnes, Leonard, C.P.	Lee, Clement, C.P.
Carey, Austin	Lewis, Edward J.
Carey, James	Lewis, James V. (Papal Chamberlain)
Coffey, John C.	McAleer, Patrick P.
Connor, Joseph C.	McCarthy, Charles
Cronin, Francis X.	McCormack, Christopher
Crossey, John J.	McDonnell, Thomas J., Auxiliary Bishop of Wheeling
Cunningham, Bernard V.	McGuire, Michael A. (Domestic Prelate)
Curley, Daniel J.	McMahon, Thomas V.
Bishop of Syracuse (1923-1932)	McMahon, John J., S.J.
Curley, John M.	McNulty, Hugh, S.J.
Daly, John K.	Meredith, Charles A.
Degnan, William J.	Molloy, James
DeLargy, Francis X., C.S.S.R.	Minogue, Patrick J.
Dempsey, Arthur, M.M.	Murphy, Ambrose J.
Diamond, Wilfred	Murphy, Thomas
Dineen, Joseph P. J.	Murray, John
Dineen, Aloysius (Domestic Prelate)	Nagle, Stephen J.
Doran, Edward	O'Brien, Timothy J.
Doran, Michael G.	O'Brien, William J.
Dougherty, William F.	Petry, David (Papal Chamberlain)
Doyle, Thomas J.	Petry, Francis J. W.
Duffy, Thomas, O.F.Cap.	Quinn, Arthur (Domestic Prelate)
Egan, Thomas	Quinn, Daniel, S.J.
Evans, Alfred J.	Quinn, Edmund A.
Fitzpatrick, Thomas F.	Reilly, John B.
Flynn, Richard	Reilly, Michael (Domestic Prelate)
Gorman, Thomas	Rizzo, Carlo
Greene, William (Domestic Prelate)	Ryan, Thomas
Hanley, William A.	Scott, Francis (Domestic Prelate)
Higgins, Joseph, O.P.	Shelley, John R.
Holland, Thomas F., S.J.	Stanley, John J. (Domestic Prelate)
Hughes, Aloysius, C.P.	Sullivan, Daniel
Hughes, James T.	Verdon, John D. (Domestic Prelate)
Hughes, Joseph, O.P.	
Hughes, Philip, C.P.	

PRIESTS FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL

Carroll, John, C.S.P.	Kenrick, Edward F.
Dolan, Joseph, O.Carm.	Moore, William, O.F.M.
Finn, Laurence, O.C.S.O.	Mulligan, Robert
Fleming, Paul, O.S.B.	Reilly, George, O.F.M.
Hayes, Joseph, C.S.P.	Shopey, Eric, O.F.M.

RELIGIOUS FROM THE PARISH OR ITS SCHOOLS

Presentation Sisters - Newburgh

Sister Mary Agnes, R.I.P.	Sister Mary Jean
Sister Mary Alacoque	Sister Mary Joachim
Sister Mary Alphonsus	Sister Mary Joseph
Sister Mary Andrew	Sister Mary Judith
Sister Mary Angela, R.I.P.	Sister Mary Justin
Sister Mary Anthony, R.I.P.	Sister Mary Kathleen
Sister Mary Anthony	Sister Mary Kieran
Sister Mary Augustine	Sister Mary Laboure
Sister Mary Barnabas	Sister Mary Laurentia
Sister Mary Bartholomew	Sister Mary Liam
Sister Mary Basil	Sister Mary Leo
Sister Mary Berchmans	Sister Mary Leonard
Sister Mary Bernard	Sister Mary Liguori
Sister Mary Bernardine	Sister Mary Louise
Sister Mary Brendan	Sister Mary Magdalene, R.I.P.
Sister Mary Brian	Sister Mary Magdalene
Sister Mary Bridget	Sister Mary Majella
Sister Mary Campion	Sister Mary Mark
Sister Mary Canisius	Sister Mary Martin
Sister Mary Carmelita	Sister Mary Matthew
Sister Mary Carol	Sister Mary Matthias
Sister Mary Christine	Sister Mary Mercedes
Sister Mary Christopher	Sister Mary Michael
Sister Mary Chrysostom	Sister Mary Michel
Sister Mary Cletus	Sister Mary Monica
Sister Mary Colette	Sister Mary Nathaniel
Sister Mary Columba	Sister Mary Nicholas
Sister Mary Concepta	Sister Mary Padua
Sister Mary Conrad	Sister Mary Paschal
Sister Mary Consolata	Sister Mary Patrick
Sister Mary Daniel	Sister Mary Paula
Sister Mary Denis	Sister Mary Pauline
Sister Mary Denise	Sister Mary Perpetua
Sister Mary DeLourdes	Sister Mary Pierre
Sister Mary DeSales	Sister Mary Raymond
Sister Mary Dolores	Sister Mary Regis, R.I.P.
Sister Mary Dolorita	Sister Mary Richard
Sister Mary Dymphna	Sister Mary Rita
Sister Mary Edna	Sister Mary Rose, R.I.P.
Sister Mary Edward	Sister Mary Rose
Sister Mary Esther	Sister Mary Ruth
Sister Mary Eugenia	Sister Mary Sebastian
Sister Mary Euphrasia	Sister Mary Sheila
Sister Mary Fidelis, R.I.P.	Sister Mary Stanislaus
Sister Mary Fidelis	Sister Mary Stephanie
Sister Mary Genevieve	Sister Mary Teresa
Sister Mary Gerald	Sister Mary Timothy
Sister Mary Gerard	Sister Mary Thomas
Sister Mary Gertrude	Sister Mary Valentine
Sister Mary Immaculata	Sister Mary Ventura
Sister Mary James	Sister Mary Winifred, R.I.P.
Sister Mary Janet	

Presentation Sisters - Staten Island

Sister Mary Agnes	Sister Mary Cordis
Mother Mary Aloysius	Sister Mary DeChantal
Mother Mary Alphonsus, R.I.P.	Sister Mary Jerome
Sister Mary Assisium	Sister Mary Kathleen
Sister Mary Bernadette	Sister Margaret Mary
Sister Mary Borromeo, R.I.P.	

Other Orders

Mother Agnes, O.S.U.	Mother Jeanne d'Arc, R.S.H.M.
Mother Agnes, R.S.H.M.	Sister Joan Barry, S.C.H.
Sister Mary Assumpta, C.S.J.	Sister John Dominic, O.P.
Sister Mary Austin, O.P.	Sister Laurence Rosaire, Active Carmelites
Sister Mary Barbara, O.P.	Sister Loretta Josepha, G.N.S.H.
Sister Bernadette, F.D.C.	Mother Loyola, R.S.H.M.
Sister Mary Cajetan, O.P.	Mother Ellen Lynch, Cenacle
Sister Mary Capistran, Marist	Sister Mary Madeline, G.N.S.H.
Sister Mary Carmel, Nursing Sisters	Sister Martin DePorres, G.N.S.H.
Sister Mary Carmelita, S.B.S.	Sister Mary Mercedes, O.P.
Sister Catherine Bernadette, C.S.J.	Sister Maureen McCarthy, O.S.F.
Sister Mary Chrysostom, O.P.	Sister Mary Norah, O.P.
Sister Mary Clare, O.P.	Sister Mildred, O.P.
Sister Mary Concepta, O.P., R.I.P.	Sister Norine Therese, S.U.S.C.
Sister Mary Concepta, O.P.	Sister Mary Paschal, O.S.C.
Sister Mary Concepta, S.C.	Sister Raymond Therese, O.S.F.
Sister Mary Cyril, Visitation	Sister Mary Leonard, O.S.C.
Sister Mary DeSales, Christian Doctrine	Sister Rhea Marie, O.P.
Sister Mary DeSales, Columban	Sister Rosaria, Daughters of Mary
Sister Mary DeSales, C.S.J.	Sister Mary Sean, Active Carmelites
Sister Mary Dolorosa, R.S.M.	Sister Sean Ellen, G.N.S.H.
Sister Mary Francis, O.Carm.	Sister Mary Stanislaus, R.S.M.
Sister Mary Francis, O.S.F., R.I.P.	Sister Therese Marie, O.S.B.
Mother Genevieve, R.S.H.M.	Sister Mary Veronica, O.S.C., R.I.P.
Sister Mary Giles, S.S.N.D.	Sister Mary Veronica, O.P. (Sick Poor)
Sister Mary Ignatius, Pres. Watervliet, R.I.P.	Sister Editha Mary, S.C., R.I.P.

BROTHERS

Brother Daniel, C.P.
 Brother Giles, F.M.S.
 Brother Isadore, O.F.M.
 Brother Vincent, C.P.
 Brother William, S.A.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION AND THANKS

This history is meant to be a factual account of the hundred years of the life of St. Michael's parish. Mediation and further interpretation wait on the reader's pleasure. It does not include a full history of the Presentation Sisters in New York nor of St. Michael's Home, both of which would make interesting studies in themselves. It is based on published accounts of an earlier day, unpublished archival sources, fugitive published items, newspaper clippings, oral tradition, and personal memories. A rambling but informative memoir which brought the story up to 1891 and which is extensively used and noted in the first three chapters as "History" was the only really original and valuable example of the first type of source.

The archival materials were found in the following depositories: 1. Archives of the Parish of St. Michael. The usual parochial archive contains at best the registers of baptisms, confirmations and marriages. This one included also a file left by Monsignor O'Brien, correspondence, announcement books, and the printed bulletins. He seemed to have sensed the historical significance of even the theatrical programs used above. No complete set of the *Church Bulletin* nor of the earlier *Members Book* of the St. Michael's Association seems to be extant. 2. Archives of the Archdiocese of New York. The annual financial reports of the church (abbreviated F.R.) dating from 1857 to 1939 were used. Occasional letters from pastors to their archbishops were valuable, as was also a file under the name of the parish, ending in the 1920's, with some letters of priests and press clippings. 3. Archives of Mount St. Joseph. The "Annals" as they are indicated briefly in the notes were used for an account of the parish as seen through the eyes of the Presentation Sisters. They cover the period from 1873 to 1906. There was also correspondence concerning the coming of the nuns from Ireland and some clippings and such items as were preserved especially by the late Mother Gabriel.

Most of the fugitive published items and press clippings came from the convent at St. Michael's. One item, designated "Convent Scrapbook" was rich in materials up to Father Gleeson's time. It contained items printed by the Association, tickets to celebrations, obituaries, and other newspaper stories.

The traditions were gathered over the years but with a concentration of effort in the past few. Some memories were written down by people, others were gotten in conversation, and one session around the dinner table with a group of the alumnae provided a new type of oral source, a kind of social recall. These undocumented traditions were used only where no other evidence was available. The particular items were not acknowledged in the notes but sprinkled over the whole like seasoning. One may detect responsibility for certain periods only from the age span of those mentioned below who co-operated. The author is solely responsible for what happened to the stories after he heard them and also for the personal memories covering a period of thirty years.

Much background material was gleaned from volumes in the library of the New York Historical Society and especially from their collection of insurance maps and guide books. No specific literature on New York's west side has been produced as it has on more fashionable sections of the city. The *Catholic Directory* for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and volumes on American Catholic history were also necessary for providing a setting of the story.

It would take many words of thanks to acknowledge adequately the debt due to the Right Reverend John P. Monaghan who inspired this work. Thanks are due also to his assistants at St. Michael's for their kindness, with a special word for Father Shelley who saw this story through the printing.

The author's gratitude is expressed to the Right Reverend Charles O'Connor Sloane, rector of St. Joseph's Seminary, where the archdiocesan archives are housed, and to the Reverends Jeremiah Brennan, archivist, and John H. Harrington, librarian, and to the Reverend Mr. Patrick J. McCormick for their assistance and hospitality.

Mother Benedicta, superior of the Presentations of Newburgh, is sincerely thanked for allowing the writer into her community's archives and with her assistants making the work there so pleasant. The Sisters at St. Michael's, whom he already had much to thank for, are even more the object of his appreciation. Those who by supplying materials and memories and meals were most helpful were Sisters Lawrence, Baptist, deSales, and Michael.

Those who gave of memories for which the writer is most grateful—taking them in order of the chronological period they enlightened (with apologies to the ladies) were: Mary Kelly Mullaney of Middletown, New York, John J. Connor, Hon. Benedict D. Dineen, Anne Collins, Anna McDonnell, Theresa Lee, Gertrude Meschall, Reverends Thomas V. McMahon, Charles J. Quinn, Stanislaus J. McGovern, and the Right Reverend Joseph A. Doyle, the Reverends John R. Shelley and Thomas Murphy.

The staff of the New York Historical Society, especially Miss B. Esequelle, and also the office staff of the *Catholic News* are thanked here for their consideration. The author is grateful also to Joseph F. McQuade, with his patient printer and proof-reader. Finally he wishes to thank the Reverend Dr. Robert W. Wilde, classmate and friend, and constant companion on this little journey.

Henry J. Browne,
Cathedral College, N. Y.

