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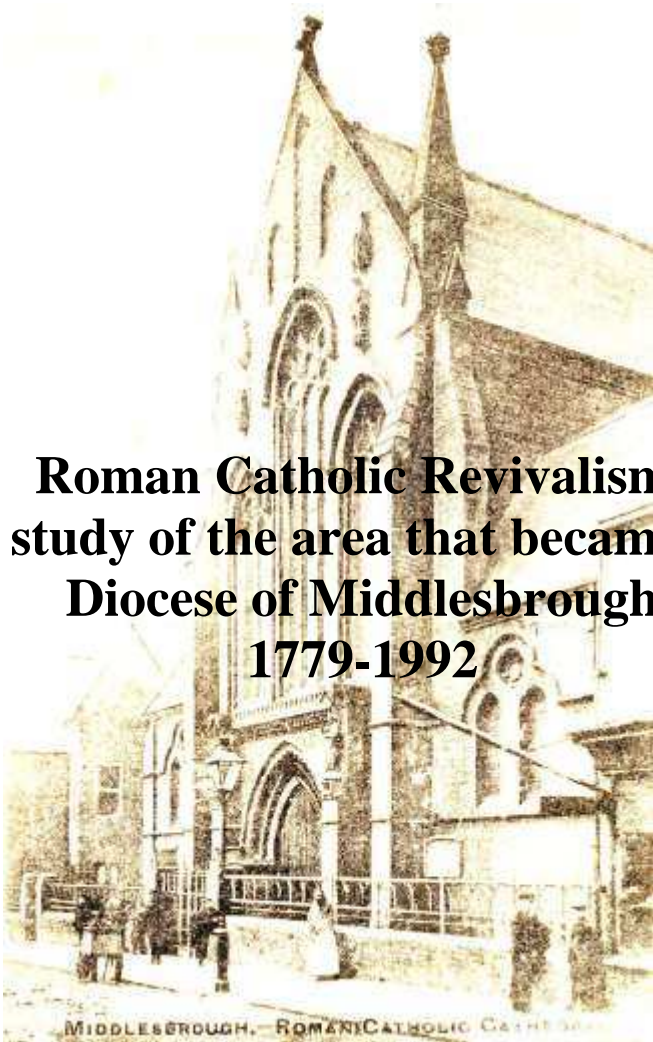
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**Roman Catholic Revivalism:  
A study of the area that became the  
Diocese of Middlesbrough  
1779-1992**

**Margaret H. Turnham, B.Ed., M.Th.**

**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to provide a grassroots study of the diocese of Middlesbrough (1779-1992), in order to contribute to the history of the English Catholic community since it emerged from the Penal Times. Secondly, it is an examination of the manifestation of revivalism and renewal in Catholic devotional practice.

The geographical extent of the study covers an area of Yorkshire with a strong recusant history, and that period has been well-served in Catholic historiography. However, writing on the period following the easing of the Penal Laws on Catholics and into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is remarkable for the paucity of references to the diocese and the area that it covers. Therefore this study sheds light upon a particular Catholic community that has been largely invisible to historians.

Although the Catholic community itself might appear to be invisible, the devotional practice within it offers many insights, such as the extent to which the social culture influenced the practice of faith. Therefore it teases out and examines the changing nature of devotional practice, and compares it to aspects of Evangelical revivalism that provided the surrounding religious culture. It also examines the influences that came to bear upon the community itself, assessing their importance in the revival and renewal of faith of the people within it. By examining the history of Catholic devotional practice in this area of Yorkshire, it comes to the conclusion that revivalism and renewal are integral elements in Catholic devotion and as a result Catholics and Evangelicals have more in common with each other than their adherents have been ready to acknowledge.

## **Acknowledgements**

There are many people who have helped and supported me over the past few years without whom this doctoral study would not have been completed. First and foremost my thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Frances Knight, who has guided me throughout with patience and humour as well as understanding when family affairs intruded upon my time. Attempting a Ph.D. by studying part time and living at a distance from the University requires a supervisor with a lot of patience and some ingenuity in solving the inevitable difficulties that arise. Frances provided both and I am humbled by the fact that her confidence in me never wavered.

I must thank also the Rt. Rev. Terence Draine, Bishop of Middlesbrough for his support and encouragement and in giving his blessing for me to ask the 2009 Lourdes Pilgrims and the diocesan priests for their help.

Thank you to those priests of the diocese who kindly helped me in the survey of 2009. So often, such requests are filed in the litter bin; therefore I am truly grateful for the excellent response to my request for help.

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A special thank you must go to Jane Harpin. Little did she know what she was starting when, in 2003 she challenged me to start using my brain and I nervously embarked upon a Master's degree in Church History. Her continuing support, encouragement and friendship have been essential.

Finally and most importantly my thanks go to my husband and children. Without their unfailing love, support and encouragement I would not have started, never mind finished this thesis. My husband Derek especially has read and commented on every page, debated with me, calmed me down, fed me and at times reminded me to sleep, ably supported by the others. It is to Derek, Michael, Helen and Philip that I dedicate this work with my love and gratitude for being such a fantastic family. Thank you.

## Abbreviations

AA	Ampleforth Archives
BIUY	Borthwick Institute, University of York
CWL	Catholic Women's League
DVDP	Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul
ERRAS	East Riding Record and Archive Service
FCJ	Faithful Companions of Jesus
HCM	Hull Catholic Magazine
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
LDA	Leeds Diocesan Archives
MDA	Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives
NEDG	North Eastern Daily Gazette
RICA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium

## Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	ii
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	iii
<b>List of Maps</b> .....	vi
<b>List of Figures and Photographs</b> .....	viii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Part One: The Diocese of Middlesbrough 1992 and beyond</b>	
1.1: An introduction to the diocese.....	16
1.2: Pastoral organization of the diocese.....	22
1.3: Spiritual and liturgical life within the diocese.....	29
1.4: Lay Life and Apostolic Action.....	37
1.5: The Religious Climate in 1992.....	40
1.6: Conclusion.....	42
<b>Part Two: The Emergent Church 1779-1879</b>	
2.1: The Protestant Climate of North and East Yorkshire 1779-1829.....	43
2.2: The Emergence of Public Congregations .....	52
2.3: A Century of Religious Orders 1779-1878.....	72
2.4: Revolutions 1800-1850.....	89
2.5: Towards a new Diocese 1850-1879.....	122
2.6: The diocese of Middlesbrough 1879.....	144
<b>Part Three: The Native Church 1879-1929</b>	
3.1: Into the Twentieth Century 1879-1918.....	157
3.2: The priorities of Bishop Lacy.....	170
3.3: The Contribution of the Religious.....	189

3.4: New Ways.....	200
3.5: The Transitional Years 1918-1929.....	223
<b>Part Four: An Irish Church 1929-1963</b>	
4.1: The Irish Picture.....	238
4.2: The Building Blocks.....	251
4.3: Devotional Practice 1929-1955.....	270
4.4: Mission and pilgrimage 1931-1955.....	282
4.5: The Ebbing Tide 1956-1963.....	295
<b>Part Five: A Changing Church 1964-1992</b>	
5.1: A New Reformation 1963-1978.....	311
5.2: The Changed Church 1978-1992.....	340
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	357
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	365

## List of Maps

1. Catholic Dioceses in England and Wales.....	19
2. Parishes of the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1992.....	25
3. Parishes in Hull 1992.....	25
4. Parishes in Middlesbrough 1992.....	27
5. The geography of the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire in the Nineteenth century.....	44
6. The 1851 Religious Census: Places of worship in the North and East Ridings (excluding Hull and York).....	47
7. The 1851 Religious Census. Places of worship in Hull.....	48
8. The 1851 Religious Census. Places of worship in the city of York.....	48
9. The physical geography of the mission field.....	62
10. The distribution and density of the Catholic Population of the North and East Ridings in 1780.....	62
11. Missions and centres of Population within the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire at the end of the Eighteenth Century.....	63
12. ‘Ampleforth Country’ showing Missions and Mass stations of the Benedictine Community in 1993.....	79
13. Missions in 1851.....	92
14. 1851 census showing Catholic population.....	93
15. The Missions in the North and East Ridings by Luigi Gentili 1845-1848.....	121
16. Ireland showing the three counties where most immigrants to the Diocese of Middlesbrough originated.....	125
17. Middlesbrough Mission 1869.....	127



18. The Middlesbrough Mission circa 1876.....	130
19. The diocese of Beverley.....	139
20. The diocese of Middlesbrough 1879.....	146
21. Middlesbrough 1840.....	162
22. Middlesbrough in 1914.....	163
23. Diocesan Parishes 1929.....	180
24. Hull in 1904.....	185
25. Middlesbrough in 1904.....	187
26. Distribution of the Religious 1929.....	191
27. Middlesbrough in 1929.....	235
28. Middlesbrough Churches in 1939.....	253
29. Diocese of Middlesbrough 1955.....	258
30. Middlesbrough 1939.....	259
31. Churches in Hull 1939.....	262
32. Parishes in Middlesbrough 1968.....	306

## List of Figures and Photographs

1. The gender and age profile of lay respondents.....	18
2. Brief Statistical overview of diocesan development from 1879-1978.....	21
3. General statistics about the Diocese of Middlesbrough in 1992.....	21
4. The origins of the priests in 1992.....	23
5. Index of Church Attendance in Yorkshire 1851.....	46
6. Comparison of the different denominations in the city of York 1764-1851.....	46
7. Marton Church.....	65
8. Estimated Catholic Population in 1780.....	67
9. Catholic Missions founded in Yorkshire until 1851.....	90
10. Catholic Population in 1781 and 1851.....	94
11. Hedon Church.....	102
12. Chapel at Middlesbrough 1847.....	107
13. St Charles Borromeo, Hull.....	111
14. Wesleyan Methodist Growth in York and Hull at time of Caughey's Missions.....	118
15. The icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.....	133
16. The Chapel at Middlesbrough 1865.....	135
17. Middlesbrough Cathedral 1879.....	136
18. St Wilfrid, York.....	140
19. The age profile of secular priests in the diocese of Beverley 1879.....	147
20. Richard Lacy, First Bishop of Middlesbrough.....	157
21. Church buildings - Middlesbrough census 1904.....	164
22. Total attendance – York 1901 census and Middlesbrough census 1904.....	165
23. Percentage of population attending worship– York 1901 census and Middlesbrough census 1904.....	166
24. The original presbyterate by 1886.....	176
25. Locations in the diocese where the ‘native’ priesthood was nurtured 1879- 1929.....	177
26. Seminaries where priests trained 1879-1929.....	178

27. Our Lady and St Edward, Driffield.....	182
28. St Joseph's, Pickering.....	184
29. Number of Missions providing Public Weekday Masses.....	206
30. Most Popular Hymns.....	212
31. The Corpus Christi procession of 1937.....	233
32. Thomas Shine, Second Bishop of Middlesbrough.....	238
33. The estimated Irish Catholic Population 1931.....	241
34. Unemployment percentages.....	255
35. Distribution of new churches 1930-1939.....	258
36. Baptisms in central Middlesbrough 1921-1951.....	261
37. Age range of the Presbyterate 1929.....	266
38. Nationality of priests selected by Shine 1929-1955.....	267
39. Marriage Statistics in Central Middlesbrough.....	278
40. Organization of the Legion of Mary.....	286
41. Numbers of Converts.....	289
42. Middlesbrough Cross being carried to Walsingham.....	290
43. Bishop Brunner, third Bishop of Middlesbrough.....	295
44. Statue of our Lady of Mount Grace.....	301
45. 'Native' Vocations in Province of Liverpool 1937-56.....	303
46. Priests needed in province of Liverpool 1957.....	304
47. Priests ordained by Bishop Brunner.....	304
48. Population of Middlesbrough.....	307
49. Stained glass window at Sacred Heart Middlesbrough.....	308
50. Bishop John Gerard MacClean Fourth Bishop of Middlesbrough.....	309
51. Middlesbrough Population 1951-1981.....	314
52. Priests ordained 1967-1978.....	316
53. Responses from priests.....	318
54. Responses from laity.....	319
55. Most revered saints.....	329
56. British martyrs and saints.....	331
57. Re-ordered interior of St Joseph, Stokesley.....	336
58. Bishop Augustine Harris, Fifth Bishop of Middlesbrough.....	340

59. Interior of the new Cathedral.....343  
60. Priests ordained 1979-1992.....345

## Introduction

The aims of this study are twofold in that firstly it provides a grassroots study of the diocese of Middlesbrough (1779-1992) in order to contribute to the history of the English Catholic community since it emerged from the Penal Times. Its second aim is an examination of the manifestation of revivalism and renewal in Catholic devotional practice.

The reasons for choosing this particular area of the country are multifarious; but the main one has been a personal interest in the history of the writer's home diocese. It is also a diocese that covers an area of Yorkshire with a strong recusant history and that period has been well-served in Catholic historiography, noting in particular the work of Hugh Aveling in the genre of Catholic local history studies<sup>1</sup> and the Catholic Record Society. However, as will be seen in the historiographical discussion, writing on the period following the easing of the Penal Laws on Catholics and into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is remarkable for the paucity of references to the diocese and the area that it covers. Thus, one objective of this study is to shed light upon a particular Catholic community that has been largely invisible to historians.

Although the Catholic community itself might appear to be invisible, the practice of faith within it has many insights to offer and questions to pose that other historians might wish to explore in other communities, for example the extent to which the social environment influenced the practice of faith. Therefore the other objectives of this study are to tease out and examine the changing nature of the devotional practice and compare it to aspects of Evangelical revivalism, which provided the surrounding

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<sup>1</sup> Aveling, H., *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire 1558-1790* (York 1960) *Northern Catholics* (London 1966) *Catholic Recusancy in the City of York* (London 1970).

religious culture as well as examining the influences that came to bear upon the community and assessing their importance in the revival and renewal of faith of the people within it. As a result, four questions have been asked, which the evidence needs to answer: what changes in the geographical and social environment have contributed to the practice of Catholicism? What agencies have contributed to the practice? What have been the characteristics of Catholic practice in the area? Finally, how does it compare with the practice of Evangelical Christians?

By examining the history of Catholic devotional practice in the area of Yorkshire that makes up the Diocese of Middlesbrough and by addressing the aims, objectives and questions stated above this study asserts the thesis that:

**Revivalism and renewal are integral elements in Catholic devotion and as a result Catholics and Evangelicals have more in common with each other than their adherents have been ready to acknowledge.**

### **Historiographical Review**

Catholic historiography has, in the past thirty years spawned several different genres ranging from the general history of the English Catholic Church to detailed studies of a particular community within a definite timeframe. The general histories have for the most part had two prevalent themes; firstly, a focus on the ideas and actions of the nineteenth century hierarchy, especially those who became the cardinals.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the development of a ‘fortress mentality’ within the Catholic Church during the first half of the twentieth century, characterising it as an inward-looking and defensive

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Holmes, D., *More Roman than Rome* (London 1978) Norman, E., *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth-Century* (Oxford 1984).

church untouched by decline.<sup>3</sup> Another genre of literature examines specific themes within English Catholicism, with the impact of Irish immigration providing a particularly fruitful stream of exploration.<sup>4</sup> The examination of a particular community, drawing on the insights of social history, provides a third genre of literature though one that is still without many examples. With its two defined aims of examining the concepts of Catholic revivalism and renewal and tracing the history of one particular Catholic community, this study has two interlinked, but nevertheless distinct historiographical issues encompassing a specific theme and a local study. As a result it will be less ambiguous to discuss them separately beginning with revivalism.

The first writer to explore the concept of Catholic revivalism was Jay Dolan, who traced the relationship between Evangelicalism and Catholicism in the United States of America.<sup>5</sup> He argues that the nineteenth century Catholic parish mission had its antecedents in pre-Reformation Europe and that they shared many characteristics of the Protestant revivalist meetings such as the saving of souls, a call to conversion, increased piety and carefully choreographed events. He concludes that Catholic revivalism was the major organ in introducing Ultramontane practices into the American church. His study remains the only major text on the subject.

In regard to England, there have been six references to such a relationship, but none of the writers concerned have undertaken a full length study comparable to that of

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<sup>3</sup> For example Hornsby-Smith, M., *Roman Catholic Beliefs in England: Customary Catholicism and Transformations of Religious Authority* (Cambridge 1991) Norman, E., *Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council* (Oxford 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Swift, R. and Gilley, S., *The Irish in the Victorian City* (1985) Mullet, M., *Catholics in Britain and Ireland 1558-1829* (London 1998) MacRaild, D., *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain 1750-1922* (London 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Dolan, J., *Catholic Revivalism. The American Experience 1830-1900* (Indiana 1978).

Dolan. Additionally, they are divided between those concerned with the nineteenth century and those concerned with the twentieth century. In 1983, Gerard Connelly examined the work of secular missionaries in Lancashire during an age that he described as the Evangelical era of the Catholic Mission (1773-1850) and concluded that it would be difficult for historians to continue isolating the Catholic revival of this period from the Evangelical revival of the same period.<sup>6</sup> Gerald Parsons in his study of religion in the Victorian era limited Catholic revivalism to the use of missions conducted by some of the Religious Orders in order to introduce Ultramontane practices.<sup>7</sup> But Mary Heimann in acknowledging the 'clear parallels' between aspects of Protestant and Catholic revivalist practice in the second half of the nineteenth century takes issue with the purely Ultramontane perspective.<sup>8</sup> She argues that the lifeblood of Catholicism lying in its prayers, devotions, missions, guilds and confraternities reflected the general concerns of Victorian Christianity with its emphasis on the sinfulness of man, and resultant need for perfection of the soul, and the desire for heaven on earth. She concludes that this resulted in an English Catholic church that 'was not an outpost of Rome but remained both English and a Catholic community.'<sup>9</sup> Finally, Frances Knight in her recent study of nineteenth century Christianity briefly acknowledges the correlation between Evangelical and Catholic Revivalism particularly in terms of the techniques used by missionaries.<sup>10</sup> Like Parsons however, this is a general study of Victorian religion rather than a specifically

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<sup>6</sup> Connelly, G.P., 'The Secular Missioner of the North in the Evangelical Age of the English Mission' *North West Catholic History* (1983) 8-31.

<sup>7</sup> Parsons, G., *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol.1* (Manchester 1988) 223-225.

<sup>8</sup> Heimann, M., *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (London 1995).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>10</sup> Knight, F., *The Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London 2008) pp138-142.



researched Catholic history and can only provide a clue rather than a detailed account.

Studies relating to the twentieth century are equally sparse in the treatment of Catholic Revivalism. Debra Campbell, in 1986, looked at the rise of the laity-led Catholic Evidence Guild in England and America during the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> In this article predating the revisionist stand of Heimann, Campbell contends that there were two factors in both countries that led to the rise in lay Catholic evangelists, namely the introduction of Ultramontane practices and an upsurge in immigration particularly from Ireland. Finally, in a more revisionist vein Alana Harris compares the missions carried out by Fr. Patrick Peyton and Billy Graham in the nineteen-fifties and concludes that the same principles, namely a form of Christian revivalism animated both men in their crusades to reach a mass audience.<sup>12</sup> Only Heimann in her analysis of Victorian Catholic devotion offers anything approaching the work of Dolan in America, and even then it is only one theme of a multi-layered study rather than a specific scrutiny of the concept.

Turning now to local studies of a Catholic community it needs to be admitted that areas of the country that have generated the most studies are those where the preservation of records has been exemplary such as the dioceses of Birmingham and Salford. Salford, in particular has been fruitful for Catholic local history; like the North Riding of Yorkshire it is an area rich in the recusant tradition and has been the focus of several major studies, including John Bossy's seminal study on the

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<sup>11</sup> Campbell, D., 'The Rise of the Catholic Lay Evangelist in England and America' *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 79:4 (October 1986) 413-437.

<sup>12</sup> Harris, A., 'Disturbing the Complacency of Religion? The Evangelical Crusades of Dr Billy Graham and Fr. Patrick Peyton in Britain 1951-54' *Twentieth century British History* Vol. 18:4 (2007) .

emergence of an English Catholic Community (1975), Steven Fielding's social history of Irish Catholics in Manchester 1890-1939 (1988), and more recently Alana Harris's study of the transformation in Catholic Spirituality 1945-1980 (2008) although this latter is not a local study per se.<sup>13</sup>

For John Bossy, the keyword in his title was 'community' for what he examined was neither a set of beliefs nor an account of an institution in the period between the Elizabethan mission and the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850. Instead he looked at a group of people who had shared beliefs and patterns of behaviour and from it drew generalizations about English Catholicism in that period. He asserts this group of people belonged to the English non-conforming tradition and its history was one of gradual growth and assimilation into the religious culture of the country. His argument for the revival of Catholicism being seen as a non-Protestant response to the Evangelical Revival is taken up in Part two of this study.

Using a different region of England, the area that became the Archdiocese of Birmingham, Judith Champ also explored the concept of assimilation and its apparently opposite concept separation, during the years 1650-1850 in her thesis of 1984.<sup>14</sup> Her assertion that congregational development can only be understood in the context of a new wider survey that encompassed contemporary social, cultural and industrial changes – a social history that was only becoming possible at the time of writing – underpins her history of a community whose assimilation in the seventeenth

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<sup>13</sup>Bossy, J., *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (, London 1975) Fielding, S., *The Irish Catholics of Manchester and Salford: Aspects of their Religious and Political History 1890-1939* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Warwick 1988) Harris, A., *Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion 1945-1980* (Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis University of Oxford 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Champ, J., *Assimilation and Separation: The Catholic Revival in Birmingham 1680-1850* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Birmingham 1984).

and eighteenth century made possible its distinctive voice in the nineteenth century and that this was a continuous process.

Jennifer Supple-Green in her 1990 study of Catholicism in Yorkshire 1850-1900 also looks at assimilation, but from another perspective; that of assimilation within the Catholic community. She hypothesises that in Yorkshire the Catholicism that was espoused was a mix of old Catholicism, Irish folk Catholicism and new Ultramontane practice and questions whether this might be an exemplar of practice throughout the country.

Other studies have reverted back to older historiographical themes including that of Graeme Foster in 2004 who has correlated the concerns of the bishops of Nottingham from 1850-1915 with those of the English hierarchy and assessed how they affected the development of Catholicism within the diocese.<sup>15</sup> Steven Fielding has looked at the Irish Catholic community in Manchester and Salford in the early part of the twentieth century from a social and political history viewpoint rather than a church history one, but his study is worth noting for its use of some church records. He drew the conclusion that Irish Catholics contributed to an atmosphere of sectarianism in the area through the church isolating them from Mancunian social and political life and leaving them ‘culturally Janus-faced; they were neither fully Irish or completely Mancunian.’<sup>16</sup>

Alana Harris in the most recent study has, in her analysis of the transformations in Catholic spirituality in the second half of the twentieth century, also based her

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<sup>15</sup> Foster, G., *'Middle-England Diocese, Middle-England Catholicism' the development of the Diocese of Nottingham 1850-1915* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Hertfordshire 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Fielding, op.cit., 1.

research in Salford, but unlike Fielding has used a cross-section of the Catholic population in both age and cultural background. Although, as previously noted it is not strictly a local study, it nevertheless should be included in this survey for two reasons. It shares a similarity of purpose in shedding light upon a Catholic community and it is the only study of its kind that examines such a community in its reactions to the Second Vatican Council, which was such a watershed in twentieth century church history. By using the medium of oral testimony it extends the methodologies utilized in such histories away from social history to what she terms 'lived religion'. By this means she seeks to disprove the classic account of the Council as being a means of 'jarring change, marked rupture and teleological decline,' but contends that it was part of a broader climate of continuity in Catholic social identity and spirituality.<sup>17</sup>

This survey of the local studies about English Catholic Church history reveals that that is a genre that is still in its infancy. Early examples followed the lead of John Bossy in utilizing the wider reflection of statistical analysis with social history to look at the specific question of the place of Catholics in England. Both Supple-Green and Foster looked at the diocese as a unit of study thereby widening the concept of what made up a Catholic community while Harris though returning to the micro-community scenario introduced the concept of oral history into the genre.

### **Sources used in this study**

A major barrier to producing extensive local studies of the English Catholic Church lies in the state of many archives and researchers have to operate under many constraints. Over the years since the foundation of the diocese of Middlesbrough the

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<sup>17</sup> Harris, *Transformations* i.

economic stringencies have been such that the resources have not been available to provide anything like the level of archiving that is now generally expected of organizations. It is important to note also that Catholic archives are governed by the Code of Canon Law and operate by the thirty year rule, but occasionally a bishop might declare that all information of a particular nature in his diocese such as *Ad Limina* reports be kept in what is termed the secret archive.<sup>18</sup> Historically it took time for Catholics to gain confidence in keeping records as they emerged out of penal times and the alteration of diocesan boundaries that took place at various times meant that relevant material might be kept in more than one diocesan archive. An example of this are the records for the diocese of Beverley, where material relating to the East and North Ridings between 1850 and 1879 is kept mostly in the archives at Leeds, but some has been given to the diocese of Middlesbrough. Neither diocese holds a list of what relevant resources the other holds. Some dioceses gave little importance to preservation of records for many years and a case in point is the archives in Middlesbrough, where resources such as the bishops' correspondence or financial records of the diocese have been lost and a somewhat haphazard method of filing and cataloguing items has been employed, which is being rectified slowly by the current archivist, David Smallwood, whose help has been invaluable.

Given the constraint of the archives outlined above, the use of primary source material is varied in both its context and amount. Given that the dissertation is about Catholic devotional practice it seemed that the most efficient way of gathering information about the second half of the twentieth century was to ask both the priests and laity concerned. To this end a randomized and anonymous written survey was

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<sup>18</sup> Caparros, Thériault and Thorn, (eds.) Code of Canon Law 1983 (Montreal 1993) §486-491.

carried out in the spring of 2009 with ethical approval given by the University of Wales Lampeter, under whose aegis this dissertation was commenced.<sup>19</sup> Comprehensive details of the study are given in Part One of the dissertation (pp16-19) but it is worth noting here the comparatively high percentage of responses from the priests, driven I believe by the effort to re-assure them that anonymity would be maintained through not using adhesive materials that might be suspected of concealing a code, and only numbering the responses as they were returned. Both sets of surveys produced a high degree of common purpose between the priests and the laity as well as providing data that equated to Alana Harris's concept of 'lived religion.'

Archival material varied from the genre of parish histories that provided facts but no analysis to pastoral letters, and ad clera of the bishops, synod minutes and the decrees that governed the life of the diocese until the Code of Canon Law was promulgated in 1918. In particular, a serendipitous discovery of a cache of pastoral letters from Richard Lacy lying unopened in the private library of the bishops of Middlesbrough opened a previously unknown thirty year window on his episcopate enunciating as they did his concerns and teaching. It was frustrating however that so much material such as the majority of pastoral letters from the time of World War One onwards was missing as it made it difficult to ascertain exactly what was being taught to the people by their bishops and the lack of correspondence made it hard to discern the concerns of the laity. In parish files it was possible to find record books, visitation reports, parish registers and other ephemera, which gave an insight into parish life and their individual histories. A particularly fruitful resource was a set of magazines produced

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<sup>19</sup> Transfer to the University of Nottingham took place in Summer 2009, with Advanced Prior Learning granted for the eighteen months work at Lampeter.

by Catholics in Hull from the nineteen-thirties until the early nineteen-seventies with the exception of the war years. They painted a picture of a community that was growing steadily in confidence, but at the same time struggling to maintain a sense of identity with the diocese particularly with the see town of Middlesbrough being in the extreme north of the diocese whilst they were in the extreme south. The vast area of rural Yorkshire that lay between the two centres was more than just a physical barrier, it was also a cultural barrier and the two extremes seemed unable to bridge it. Finally a variety of missals and other devotional books within the Bishops' private library were made available to me by permission of the current Bishop of Middlesbrough which charted an account of the changing nature of devotional life within the diocese.

Printed primary sources also provided a rich seam of evidence. For the earliest period it was necessary to look outside the Catholic community at returns of Papists, electoral returns and Anglican Visitation returns as well as work done under the aegis of the Catholic Record Society. A separate source is provided by the newspapers and in particular the local press, which frequently reported on matters pertaining to the local churches. The veracity of the reporting can vary with much depending on the attitude of the journalist or the editor. For example, in the 1850's and 1860's The Hull Advertiser had a Catholic editor and so there was much favourable reporting. In York during the same period the local paper had a Protestant editor and the reporting of Catholic affairs was more hostile. In Middlesbrough, the local paper in the 1870's had a Methodist editor, but the reporting of Catholic affairs was usually friendly due to the respect in which Richard Lacy, mission priest and then bishop, was held. Thus it can be seen that this source needs treating with caution and consideration made of what may be termed 'the hidden agenda'.

The paucity of reference to the diocese in Catholic history writing has already been referred to. There is only one local study namely Jennifer Supple-Green's study of Yorkshire Catholicism 1850-1900 where she examines the material and administrative revival of the Catholic Church in the years following the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850.<sup>20</sup> Her main area of interest however is the West Riding of Yorkshire, which from 1879 comprised the diocese of Leeds. In wider studies of English Catholicism, there is a similar dearth of reference to the area; for example, in Archbishop George Beck's collection of essays commemorating the centenary of the restoration of the Hierarchy published in 1950, there is but one reference to the diocese and that is in a footnote of a chapter about the early bishops.<sup>21</sup> There is one non-academic history of the diocese written by a local priest in 1978 to celebrate the centenary of the diocese. This history, written by a busy parish priest provided a much-needed sketch/outline of the history of the diocese and as such carried no expectation of academic rigour or in depth analysis. Because there was no time for the author to check his sources subsequent research has revealed a number of factual errors.<sup>22</sup>

### **The structure of the thesis**

The evidence contained in the study is divided into four sections characterized by four different phases in the life of the Church and preceded by an introduction to the diocese as it was in 1992. This section uses as its basis the thoughts and observations of diocesan priests and members of the laity taken from the 2009 study and further excerpts from the study have been used throughout the dissertation as applicable.

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<sup>20</sup> Supple- Green, J., *The Catholic Revival in Yorkshire 1850-1900* (Leeds 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Beck, G. A. (ed.), *The English Catholics 1850-1950* (London 1950) 194n1.

<sup>22</sup> Carson, R., *The First Hundred Years* (Middlesbrough 1978).



The first section *The Emergent Church*, which covers the years 1779-1879, provides an introduction to the situation in which the new diocese of Middlesbrough found itself at its inception. It argues that there is evidence of a spiritual rigour comparable to that found in the dominant non-conformist ethos that had grown up in the area, the similarity in the non-conformist practice of church planting as missions were gradually established,<sup>23</sup> the influence of the return of religious orders acting like sects innovating change into the church,<sup>24</sup> and the use of missions to evangelise. The concept of saving souls was common to both Catholicism and the Protestant traditions; they had shared priorities in founding schools in order to pass on the habits of religious devotion to both children and parents<sup>25</sup>. In addition, there was renewed emphasis on Eucharistic devotion, whereby Catholics consider the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, - a form of crucicentrism, familiar to Evangelical Revivalism.

*The Native Church* examines the fifty-year episcopate of Richard Lacy, the first bishop of Middlesbrough (1879-1929) and argues that the desire to foster a 'native' Catholic Church remained strong. Although an Irishman by birth, Lacy's formation was at Ushaw and Rome. His allegiance was to Rome, but his leadership in the diocese was centred on the tradition that had built up in the area over the previous century. In this it supports the conclusion drawn by Supple-Green that in Yorkshire a church developed 'in which traditional English piety, Irish folk religion and Roman exuberance combined to form a vigorous and varied religious life.'<sup>26</sup> Lacy concentrated resources on building up missions away from the industrial conurbation

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<sup>23</sup> See for example Watts, M., *The Dissenters* Vol. 2 (Oxford 1995) 135.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Finke, R. and Wittberg P., 'Organisational Revival from Within: Explaining Revivalism and Reform in the Roman Catholic Church' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol. 39, no. 2 (June 2000) 154-170 accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1387500> 12/08/2008.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Watts, *The Dissenters* p64 and Sharp, J., 'Juvenile Holiness: Catholic Revivalism among Children in Victorian Britain' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35(1984) 220-239.

<sup>26</sup> Supple-Green, J., *op cit.*, 276.

on the banks of the River Tees, where the majority of the Catholic mainly Irish population lived. It was 1901 before a second church was built in Middlesbrough for example. He fostered a ‘native priesthood’ with their seminary training concentrated on Ushaw and also used St Joseph’s seminary in Leeds as a ‘finishing school’ for priests coming from abroad and Ireland. He encouraged the use of missions to revive faith, worked hard to promote Catholic education, and looked to the religious orders for help. Lay involvement and activism in guilds and sodalities and movements such as the Knights of St Columba were also encouraged.

A noticeable change occurred in the Catholic ethos of the diocese with the arrival of Thomas Shine to the diocese in 1922, first as coadjutor to the ageing Richard Lacy and then as bishop from 1929-1955. In the section, *The Irish Church* the abandonment of the emphasis of Lacy on a native Catholicism is examined as Shine looked to what was happening in Ireland in its immediate post-independence era, and assimilated Irish practice into the spiritual life of the diocese. Evidence will be produced covering devotional processions, architecture, excessive church-building, and recruitment of priests as well as Catholic Action and a new approach to Mission and evangelisation of people who were already Catholic. However, the first chapter in this section (3:1) notes the correlation between the underlying rationale of Irish Catholic practice and the rationale for Protestant fervour in the island. Evidence will also be presented that questions the historiographical assumption that the church prior to the Second Vatican Council was a fortress untouched by the decline seen in other denominations.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Norman, E., *Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council* (Oxford, 1986) Ch. 5 Rocket, J., *Held in Trust* (London, 2001).

The Changing Church examines the era after the Second Vatican Council although it was not until the episcopate of Augustine Harris, (1978-1992) that a balance began to be restored between the Irishness of the Shine church, which his two immediate successors largely maintained, and a more English interpretation of the norms of the documents of the Second Vatican Council. It was a time that saw a return to the 'native church' espoused by Lacy that once more embedded Catholicism in the Christian culture of the surrounding locality. As a gentler approach was fostered to devotion the underlying concern was still that of conversion, driven by a sense of revival and renewal of faith particularly noticeable in the rise of the Catholic Charismatic movement and on the opposite extreme the restoration of some of the devotional life of the church that had been lost in the immediate post Conciliar era.

From this it is hoped that the concept of Catholic revivalism in England will be given the recognition it deserves and that, despite the limitations of some of the evidence, the Catholic faith of the people living in the diocese of Middlesbrough that is enshrined in its devotional practice is accurately portrayed.

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## **Part 1**

### **The Diocese of Middlesbrough, 1992 and beyond**

#### **1.1: An Introduction to the diocese**

Presenting an overview of the diocese of Middlesbrough in 1992 at the start of this dissertation serves two purposes. It provides a framework in which to introduce and identify aspects of the Evangelical nature of Catholicism that are rarely acknowledged. It also enables a picture to be drawn of the state of Catholic spiritual life within the diocese towards the end of the twentieth century. The influences that came to bear upon the situation pictured within these pages will then be investigated within the remainder of the dissertation. It is divided into four sections: the pastoral organisation of the diocese, its spiritual and liturgical life, apostolic mission and lay life, and the Christian tradition of the surrounding area. The subjects considered are open-ended in that no conclusions to each individual section are given; they are merely reflections introducing particular concepts, although a final conclusion will draw the different elements together.

#### **Personal testimony and reflection on the diocese**

Although official documents such as pastoral statistics give an overview of the diocese towards the end of the twentieth century, a more valuable resource is personal testimony and reflections from Catholics living within its boundaries. To this end a questionnaire was devised, designed to elicit qualitative rather than quantitative data about living as a Catholic in the diocese of Middlesbrough at the end of the twentieth century and this demarcation in time was made clear in the accompanying paperwork. It would both provide a human insight into

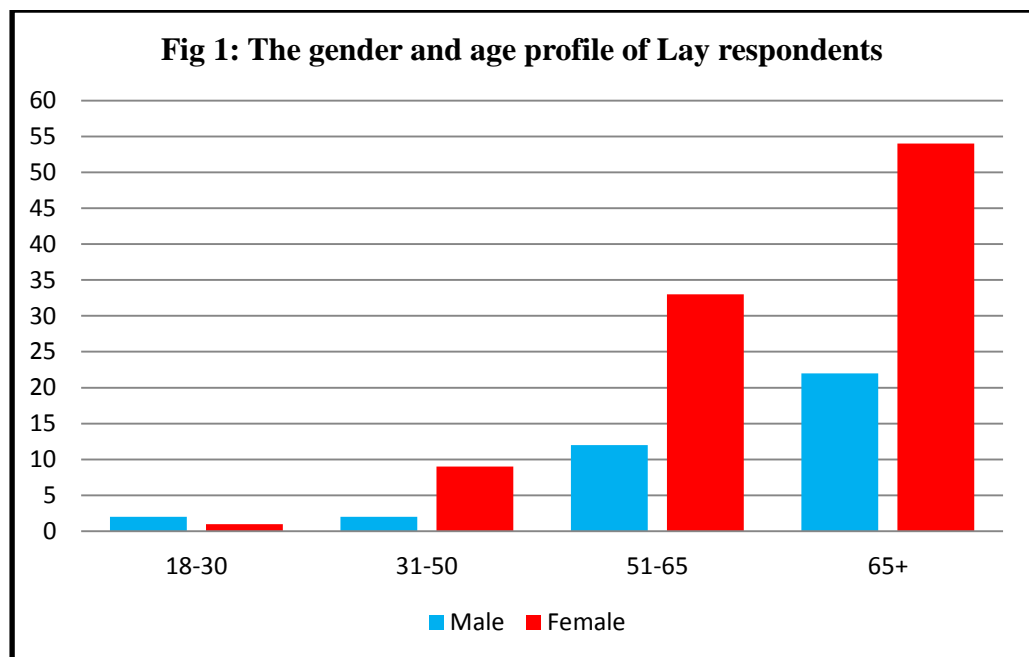
the statistics and a basis for asking the question about the nature of the influences that had come to bear on Catholicism in the diocese since the emergence of Catholicism from the penal times. Although the time frame of this dissertation ends in 1992, it was inevitable that some of the survey participants would reflect their current views as precision was impossible to obtain. The writer has tried to discount such instances, but admits some may have slipped through the net. The study was piloted in March 2009 and carried out during May 2009 to two groups of respondents; the priests and the laity. Although the two sets of questions reflected the same themes, there were slight differences in the phrasing of some questions to take account of the difference in status. Copies of all the paperwork are provided on the accompanying CD-Rom.

There were two basic conditions for the priests who were contacted as potential respondents; that they were priests of the Diocese of Middlesbrough and resident there since before 1990. As a result 69 priests of the Diocese were contacted as being eligible and 31 replied – a response rate of 45%. Quotations from this study in the text are identified by the number given to each individual priest survey (i.e. P9 = Priest number 9).

The pilot study of the laity was carried out within the confines of the Catholic parish of St Joseph, Stokesley. It was limited to people over the age of eighteen who were living in the area covered by the diocese of Middlesbrough in 1992. The main study was conducted under similar parameters, as outlined in the covering letter. The use of pilgrims taking part in the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes was a device to ensure that all areas of the diocese were represented inasmuch as an anonymous study allows. It could be open to the

accusation of bias insofar as attendance on pilgrimage can be regarded as a revivalist activity. The positive side to using such a sample was the fact that being in a heightened state of spiritual awareness made many respondents more thoughtful and open about their faith than was apparent in the pilot group, where difficult subject matter was often left blank.

In total 680 questionnaires were distributed and 20% were returned – a total of 138. The chart below summarizes the gender and age profile of the respondents except for three who did not disclose that information. Quotations from the laity within the text are identified by the gender and year of birth of each respondent (i.e. F1931 = a female born in 1931).



The research questions were divided into five themes: personal spirituality, the time of the Second Vatican Council, thoughts on Catholic people and places, the Papal visit of 1982, the Liturgy and the local Church. Themes and subjects were selected as having been identified as having particular significance for the English Catholic Church in general, such as the implementation of the

decisions of the Council, or having local significance such as the design of buildings, given that the diocese had opened a new Cathedral in 1986.

### The shape of the Diocese in 1992

**Map 1: Catholic Dioceses in England and Wales**



The diocese of Middlesbrough was founded in 1878 as a result of the division of the diocese of Beverley (established 1850). Its area is bounded by the River Tees in the north and the Humber estuary and River Ouse in the south – a

length of ninety-five miles. In 1982, the two parishes south of the River Ouse in the city of York, which had been placed in the diocese of Leeds in 1878, were given to the diocese of Middlesbrough in order to make the city of York a complete unit in one diocese. The diocese has boundaries with three other Catholic dioceses, and is a suffragan See within the Province of Liverpool (Map 1).

The majority of the diocese has always been thinly populated, with its general population mainly situated in the northern industrial area around Middlesbrough, and in the cities of York and Hull. Likewise the majority of the Catholic population has always been in its northern area, largely as a result of recurrent periods of immigration from Ireland, which continued until the nineteen-eighties. Such an intensive immigration pattern however, did not occur in York and Hull and their Catholic populations were correspondingly lower in numbers and percentage terms. Fig. 2 is a brief statistical introduction to the development of the diocese from 1879-1978, the years chosen being the change of Episcopal oversight. Fig. 3 is an overview of the diocese in 1992. The statistical information has been collated from numerous sources within the Diocesan Archives including yearbooks, maps and papers and reports contained within individual parish files.



**Fig. 2: Brief statistical overview of diocesan development from 1879-1978<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>Parishes</b>	<b>Mass centres</b>	<b>Secular priests</b>	<b>Estimated Catholic Population</b>	<b>General Population</b>
<b>1879</b>	41	6	39	33,000	105,634
<b>1929</b>	45	42	86	55,885	1,037,124
<b>1955</b>	74	51	140	97,855	1,160,000
<b>1967</b>	80	55	142	90,989	1,200,000
<b>1978</b>	93	87	153	88,786	1,160,570

**Fig. 3: General statistics about the Diocese of Middlesbrough in 1992<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Approximate area of Diocese in square miles</b>	4,000 sq. miles
<b>Number of parishes, chapels and mass stations</b>	95
<b>Number of priests: secular</b>	137
<b>Number of priests: religious in parishes</b>	7
<b>General population of diocese</b>	1,165,834
<b>Catholic population of diocese</b>	85,986
<b>Average Catholic population attending Mass during October 1991</b>	30,957

<sup>1</sup> MDA File N3/Reports and Catholic National Directories (Burns and Oates) 1880, 1930, 1956, 1967 and 1979.

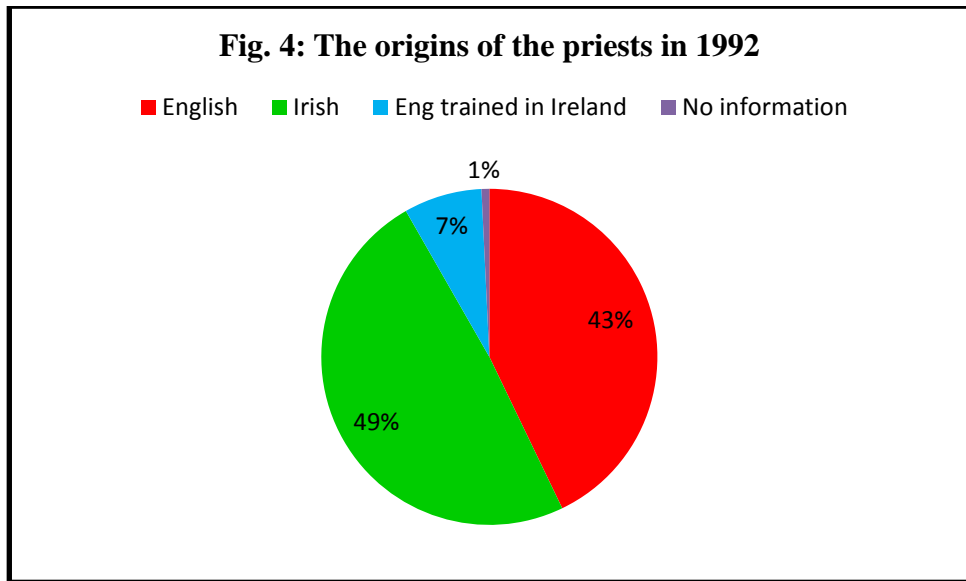
<sup>2</sup> MDA File N3/ Reports (1992).

## **1:2 Pastoral organisation of the diocese**

### **Priests and Religious**

At the end of 1992, the fifth Bishop of Middlesbrough, the Rt. Rev. Augustine Harris retired from active ministry, having reached the age of seventy-five. He had been bishop since 1978, translated from the Archdiocese of Liverpool where he had been an auxiliary bishop. He was the first bishop to assume office without prior knowledge of the diocese, either as one of its priests, or in the case of Thomas Shine, the second bishop, as the coadjutor bishop to Bishop Lacy for eight years. In 1981, an auxiliary bishop was appointed to the diocese based in Hull; initially this was in response to an idea to join the southern part of the diocese with the opposite bank of the Humber to create a new diocese in that region. The idea was dropped however in favour of the creation of the diocese of Hallam from parts of the dioceses of Leeds and Nottingham.

In 1992 about fifty per cent of the secular priests incardinated into the diocese were Irish and all had received their training at seminaries in Ireland (See Fig. 4). As a result their understanding of the needs of the English church and people varied. Their reasons for choosing the Diocese were diverse, but all centred on being 'surplus to requirements at home' (P9). Some English-born priests had also been sent to Ireland to train, particularly during the episcopate of the second bishop, Thomas Shine (1929-1955). Consequently their approach to ministry also had more in common with the Irish church than the English church.



The role of the priest was regarded by both priests and laity as being primarily ‘the spiritual and pastoral leader of the parish’ (M1959) and a ‘Man of prayer, reader of scripture, preacher, offers Mass and celebrates sacraments, Pastoral care, co-worker with Bishop’ (P5). There was concern that ‘extremely valuable sick visits and family visits’ were decreasing (F1964) through increasing administrative responsibilities. Priests generally were regarded as more approachable than in previous times: ‘I’m glad the days have gone when the priest was the authority’ (F1947), but still ‘unfortunately some priests had an importance they should never have. Some priests use the church for power and earthly acclamation’ (P21).

Although the Second Vatican Council had provided for the restoration of a permanent diaconal ministry in the church, this had not been adopted with any great enthusiasm in the diocese of Middlesbrough and by 1992, no permanent deacon had been ordained to work in the diocese.

Seven parishes were in the care of religious orders; the Benedictines at Ampleforth were the greatest providers of this, along with the Marists and

Franciscans. None of these parishes were under the jurisdiction of the diocese, although the Marists were in the process of handing over the parish of the Holy Name of Mary in Middlesbrough to the diocese. A male Religious order, the Brothers of St John of God ran a hospital at Scorton, and also a Pastoral centre on the outskirts of Middlesbrough. The Benedictines ran a Pastoral centre in York, and the Blessed Sacrament Fathers staffed one in Middlesbrough.

Some priests still had the help of Parish sisters, although the numbers and vocations in the ten active orders were falling. At the same time, the two female contemplative communities both based in York were flourishing. Despite a venerable history of Religious involvement in education throughout the history of the diocese, only the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Middlesbrough were still actively involved in running a school, (as were the Benedictines at Ampleforth). The Sisters of Mercy in Hull during the previous year had transferred both their Primary and Secondary schools into the care of the diocese and were taking up other work such as involvement with RCIA.

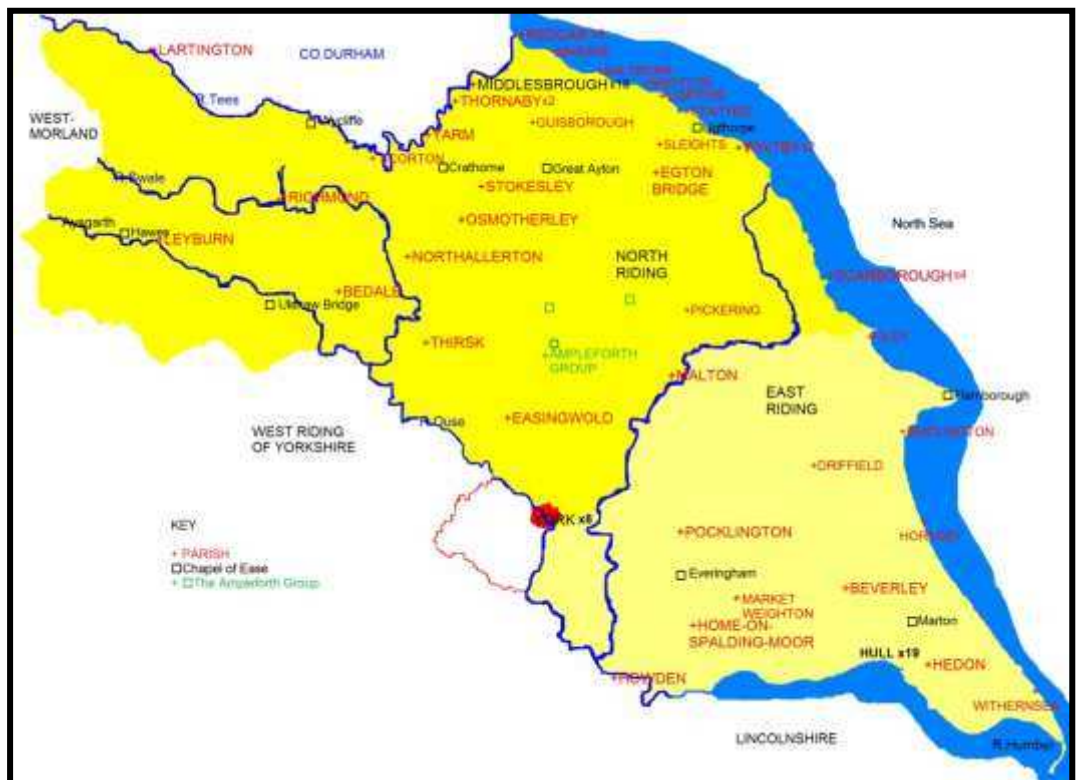
### **Parishes<sup>1</sup>**

In 1992, there were sixty-three parish churches and thirty-two chapels-of-ease where Mass was said on Sundays. (See Map 2) This included the use of two Anglican parish churches; at Flamborough during the summer months for the benefit of holiday-makers and at Hawes.

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<sup>1</sup>Statistical information taken from Diocesan Yearbook 1993.

Map 2: Parishes of the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1992



Map 3: Catholic Churches in Hull 1992



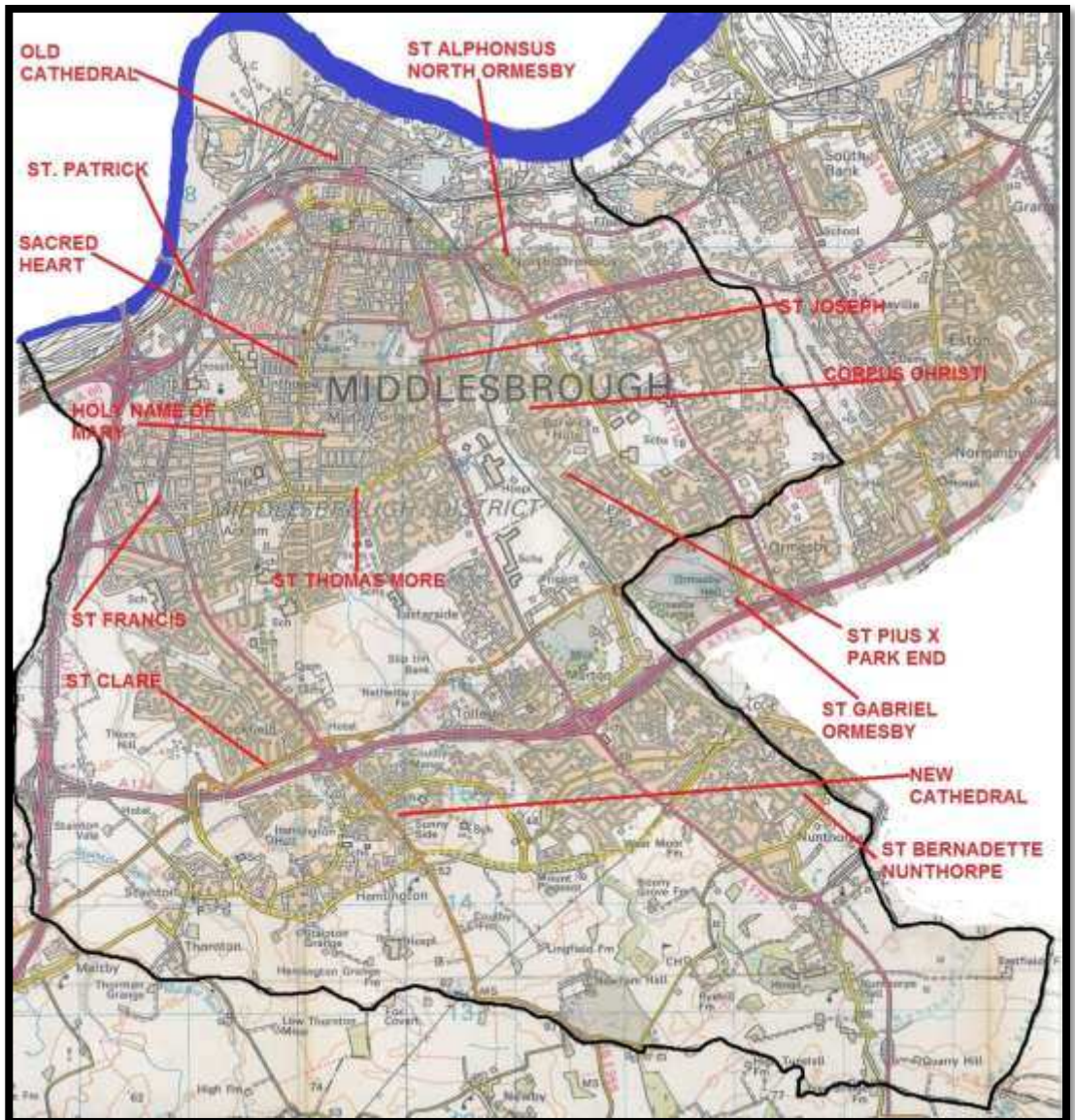
Between them, the towns of Hull and Middlesbrough had over half the parishes of the diocese within their boundaries; many established in the post-war period as both towns implemented town planning and slum clearance policies (see Maps 3 and 4).

Map 4, which illustrates the development of parishes in Middlesbrough, clearly demonstrates how the town itself was growing with parishes being established amongst the new housing estates that were being built, replacing the slums of the older part of the town. As a result the areas served by the Old Cathedral and St Patrick were no longer centres of population. Structural concerns regarding the Cathedral during the nineteen seventies called into question its continuing existence, and in 1984 a new Cathedral was commissioned by Bishop Harris. Situated in Coulby Newham, a new and rapidly extending housing area on the southern edge of the town, the new cathedral opened in 1986. A modern fan-shaped building, it gave rise to some teaching within the diocese about the principles that lay behind the liturgical reforms ushered in after the Second Vatican Council, although opinion remained divided on the effectiveness of the design: ‘I prefer a church with the altar at one end, not the half-moon design like the Cathedral’ (F1934) whereas someone else felt

I believe congregation feel more involved when the position of the altar is such that no one is far from it even at the back. Long narrow churches with small congregations can feel less friendly. (F1940)

The old Cathedral, by then a listed building, was left as a parish church to serve a rapidly shrinking population while its future was debated. Sadly no resolution was reached and after years of vandalism, it was destroyed as a result of arson in 2000.

**Map 4: Parishes in Middlesbrough 1992<sup>2</sup>**



### **Other places of worship**

As well as the parishes, and three pastoral centres already mentioned, there was also a pastoral centre on the coast at Robin Hood's Bay. Madonna House, staffed by a Canadian community, was primarily a centre for prayer and spiritual direction and used by groups from all parts of the diocese. In addition there was a residential youth centre at Lartington offering events and activities

<sup>2</sup> Map based on OS Map Landranger series 1: 50,000 (1985) Sheet 93 Middlesbrough and Darlington.

for the youth throughout the year, and the Youth officer based there also formed a close association with a local young offenders institution as a form of outreach.



### 1.3: Spiritual and Liturgical life within the diocese

#### Local devotion

Three shrines in the diocese provided both a link with the history of the area as well as places of pilgrimage. The Lady Chapel at Mount Grace was run by a community of Franciscans in conjunction with their care of the parish of Osmotherley. In addition to weekly masses and masses for different groups, there was also an annual diocesan pilgrimage to the Chapel on the Sunday nearest the feast of the Assumption. It had been started in 1958 and remained very popular. In York, at the shrine of St. Margaret Clitherow in the Shambles, Mass was said on Saturdays. In Egton Bridge, the parish church was also the shrine of Blessed Nicholas Postgate, the most popular local martyr whose life was celebrated at an open air rally each July with a Mass that also commemorated other English martyrs. This helped foster devotion in the diocese to those with a Yorkshire connection in particular to

...St Margaret Clitherow and Nicholas Postgate as local models and Ss. Thomas More<sup>1</sup> and John Fisher as English witnesses to the faith in a secular environment. (P1)

As a result of this devotion, several people from the diocese had been involved in the campaign for the canonization of Postgate and eighty-four other martyrs and made the pilgrimage to Rome in 1987 for the beatification by Pope John Paul II.

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<sup>1</sup> A tenuous connection firstly through the family of William Ullathorne, a Vicar Apostolic and first bishop of Birmingham who came from the North Riding, and secondly his links with John Fisher who came from Beverley.

## **Pilgrimage**

By 1992, going on pilgrimage with parish groups, with the diocese or individually, had become part of Catholic life for many people within the diocese. With the growth of cheaper and faster international travel it was becoming possible for a wider variety of people to reach corners of the world that were once only open to the wealthy and to experience Catholic practice in a more international setting.

Different places had a different meaning and focus, i.e. Marian focus at Lourdes and Knock, while the Holy Land is a journey through the earthly life of the Lord and in Jerusalem walking in His footsteps to Calvary. Compostela was a family pilgrimage for us – visiting the cathedral towns of France and on to the place associated with St James. It became a great journey of faith, travelling with faith-filled people, hearing mass daily, Holy Communion daily, liturgy gloriously enhanced by sacred music and a great feast of prayer and spirituality. A great renewal and renewal of promise in my life. (F1945)

I love going to Holy places – it's a chance for renewal, to pray where saints are buried, where they lived. Chiefly the Holy land is the place of pilgrimage –it's just wonderful. I continue to look forward to Pilgrimage. (P30)

## **Lourdes Pilgrimage**

Perhaps the major feature of the spiritual life of the diocese outside the parishes was the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes with large numbers making their way there by plane and coach, including many school parties from the Catholic secondary sector. Begun in 1952 many pilgrims returned every year: 'I go to Lourdes every year, the more I go the more I am drawn back.' (F1941).

Although for some it took on aspects of 'a holy holiday' (F1944) for others

It was very rewarding, helping sick pilgrims and uplifting to see them coping so bravely. It reminds me how lucky I am. I like the way Catholics of all nationalities are in the one place. It reaffirms that we are all family. It is also a really good social event. (F1964)

The centre of every pilgrimage to Lourdes has always been the sick pilgrims and the help given by the school groups enriched the lives of both parties as explained by Priest 10: ‘Lourdes – seeing young people bloom and grow in their faith, their working with the sick.’ Yet another ‘discovered my vocation at Lourdes’ (P27) and was at seminary in 1992.

### **Attendance at Mass**

As in any Catholic diocese, the centre of spiritual life was attendance at Mass at least on Sundays and on Holy days of Obligation. However the demands of an increasingly secular society had begun to present genuine difficulties for many Catholics to attend Mass on Holy days, although most priests were providing Vigil Masses as well as Mass on the day. The statistical picture presented in Fig. 2 shows that 36% of the estimated Catholic population attended Sunday Mass during the annual ‘mass count’ month in 1991, although the priests themselves felt the figure of 45% was a more accurate general proportion over the course of a year. The reality was however, that for many Catholics attendance at Mass was no longer ‘important otherwise I would attend regularly. I feel I can speak to God without Mass.’ (F1962).

For those who did attend however, the Mass was central to their lives and many found it a means of ‘Spiritual uplifting, Life doesn’t seem right without attending Mass’ (F1950). ‘On those occasions when it is impossible for me to go, I feel a great sense of loss. Going to Mass fulfils every need in me.’ (F1942). There were still those who attended because ‘You must attend Sunday Mass. It is a mortal sin to miss’ (M1934) but others were moving away from that position:

For a lot of my life it has been guilt, the implicit threat of what might happen if I didn't. Now I am getting away from that and going because I want to. (M1952).

Although worries were beginning to surface about a slow decline in the numbers of priests and vocations, for priests offering the Mass it was

A privilege. It is undoubtedly the *raison d'être* of the priesthood. For me it is a daily obligation. It is also the happiest moment of the day. I have always liked the 'in persona Christi'. It is a privilege (P5)

an obligation and duty of every priest for good of people. But more than that is the centre of my spiritual life as a priest. Is a privilege to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, Calvary made present, a privilege to be 'in persona Christi'. (P4)

### **Celebration of the Mass**

In 1992, the thirtieth anniversary was approaching of the publication of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; the first document produced from the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council, which provided a blueprint for liturgical renewal.<sup>2</sup> Despite a welter of post-conciliar documents that expanded and explained the norms of the Dogmatic Constitution,<sup>3</sup> there was still a degree of unwillingness from some to implement and accept some of the changes, such as Communion in both Kinds. Most parishes made use of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and Readers and a few priests encouraged the Laity to prepare for the Sunday Liturgy by studying the readings in groups or individually, but it was not widely taken up.<sup>4</sup> There was also still a sense of being in a period of experimentation with ignorance about the reasons for

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<sup>2</sup> Vatican II 'Sacrosanctum Concilium' (1963) Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy' in Flannery, A. (ed.) *Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* New Revised Study Edition (New York 1992) 1-36.

<sup>3</sup> Flannery Documents 37-281.

<sup>4</sup> MDA File N3/Reports (1992).

liturgical changes and the Christo-centric nature of the Mass that had been re-emphasised within the documents.<sup>5</sup>

Dislike attending Mass which does not have communion under both kinds, probably very good reasons, but wish that the priest would explain. (F1940)

... the changes in the way Mass was celebrated. For those who were open to it, there was a much greater freedom – but I think it was important that appropriate and good catechesis went along with this and I'm not sure this always happened which is why we still having to "sell" aspects of Vatican II two generations later. (P2)

I do not agree with the priest having his interpretation of the liturgy i.e. leaving out the Credo and Gloria. (F1934)

There were also the tensions created by the fact that people were living in an increasingly busy, but self-indulgent world.

I know that some would like to be away as soon as possible, but I think that the vast majority of people want to celebrate the mass with the priest as prayerfully as possible. The vernacular in the mass did much to help in this way. I think too that people want to see the priest to be as respectful and dignified as possible and not be sloppy. (P15)

I fear the people expect to be entertained by the priest. This may be a consequence of years spent every night in front of the television; People seem not to be fully engaged quite often, but rather sitting and watching. (P4)

### **Prayer groups**

Throughout the nineteen-eighties there had been an increasing local interest in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement, with monthly days of Renewal being held at Ampleforth. Some priests from the diocese started to attend an annual post-Easter retreat held in Leeds, and small prayer groups were meeting in various parts of the diocese, that one: 'always found the dynamic of the charismatic prayer group and Taizé prayer to be helpful' (P25). The

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<sup>5</sup> For a full and recent treatment of the transformations that took place in thinking about the Mass see Harris, A., *Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion 1945-1980* (Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis University of Oxford 2008). Chapter 2 .

juxtaposition of the two sorts of prayer in this statement could be considered startling as the key elements of Taizé prayer are stillness and reflective silence animated by simple chants and short Bible readings. Charismatic prayer also contains simple music, but instead of stillness there is movement, short spoken extemporary prayer and words of encouragement and often prayer and singing in tongues. Taizé-style services were also beginning to be used in the diocese by 1992 and several respondents commented on the fact that they ‘prayed best through singing especially Taizé’ (F1964).

### **Other Devotions**

There was real encouragement within the diocese for a renewal of devotion to the Eucharist outside Mass. With the advent of evening masses in the nineteen-fifties such devotional services had largely fallen into abeyance not only in the diocese, but in England generally as pointed out by Alana Harris.<sup>6</sup> In central Middlesbrough the John Paul Centre had been placed into the care of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, who provided a spiritual presence in the middle of the shopping area and a place of permanent Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Holy Hours at both deanery and parish levels were encouraged often in the context of prayer for vocations and world peace. Revised Rites had been produced for these devotions which meant ‘services are more intimate and conducive to reflection’ (M1938). Many people still said the Rosary privately, and Stations of the Cross particularly through Lent were also ‘helpful in reminding us of Christ’s passion and death’ (F1942). Much devotion was intensely private and could possibly be regarded as almost superstition. Two of the most favoured saints were Anthony and Jude- patron saints of lost property

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<sup>6</sup> Harris, Transformations 114.

and hopeless cases respectively. St Patrick was celebrated particularly enthusiastically in Middlesbrough reflecting the strong Irish antecedents of the Catholic community there.

### **Confession and Reconciliation**

One area of sacramental life however caused a lot of concern:

Many will agree that the faithful have a changed sense of sin, largely arising from less legalism in their moral concerns and awareness of excusing circumstances under positive law... As a result individual confessions are fewer and less frequent.<sup>7</sup>

The relaxation in rules governing abstinence and fasting, replacing them with more charitable works<sup>8</sup> meant that what many saw as a fear-inspiring ritual was no longer a necessary part of being a Catholic

“Confession” for most people means guilt shame humiliation and punishment’ (F1940)

Poor teaching confusing penance and penitence meant that something meant to be helpful was unhelpful:

I can understand why confession was initially set up in the early church and why the tradition has continued- the need to discuss one’s difficulties in life. However, the traditional way seems out-dated and to a certain extent threatening and off putting. (F1949)

Others felt that there was no need for a sacramental ministry

I find Confession very difficult. I find going to Church telling God my feelings and problems just as effective for me. (M1964)

Don’t like it, I feel when you feel you have committed a sin you ask God to forgive you. (F1933)

A new Order of Reconciliation had been promulgated by the church in 1973 and within the diocese strenuous efforts were being made to educate both

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<sup>7</sup> MDA File N3/ Reports. 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Paul VI, ‘Paenitemini. (1966) Apostolic Constitution on Penance’ in Flannery A., Vatican Council II More post Conciliar Documents (Dublin 1982) 1-12.

priests and laity in its practice. Second Rite services of Reconciliation were becoming more widely used in Advent and Lent and were becoming ‘an opportunity to unburden oneself, seek forgiveness and encouragement and rebuild a relationship with God’ (F1940) in a less threatening way.



## **1.4: Lay Life and Apostolic Action**

Mention of performing charitable acts has already been referred to in the previous section, but this was not a new idea, and many people within the diocese were involved with associations such as the Vincent de Paul Society, the Catenians, and the Knights of St Columba. The Vestment Guild celebrated its centenary in 1992 and many travelled to Lourdes to help care for the sick in different roles. Four Pastoral Councils, one in each natural area of the diocese met twice a year. They were made up of the priests, religious sisters and lay representatives from each parish and all officials were lay people. A major role was to be an advisory body for the bishop. They were also a means of communication between different levels within the diocese, and supported and encouraged evangelism, catechesis and apostolic action.

### **Lay Ministry**

Sacrosanctum Concilium had given or rather restored a new role to the laity. The very word 'Liturgy' from the Greek 'leitourgia' means the work or duty of the people; and it was this role, the 'full conscious and active participation' of the Faithful in worship that was restored.<sup>1</sup> The Mass was no longer the sole responsibility of the ordained clergy, which the laity attended 'as though they were outsiders or silent onlookers'<sup>2</sup> but a liturgy in which their rightful place as baptized members of the church was restored in song and silence, movement and stillness, and reading and responding. It is clear that little, if any of this was understood by many Catholics in the diocese thirty years later. For example, the use of congregational music was making very slow progress in

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<sup>1</sup> SC §14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., §48.

the parishes despite the appointment of a Director of Music in 1986 to inform, advise and encourage music. Misunderstanding particularly arose about the place of readers of the Word and, to a much greater extent the role of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. To some it seemed as though a new hierarchy was emerging that was necessary in view of an increasing lack of vocations to the priesthood, to others that it allowed them to continue being passive observers. Some priests too were uncertain in the light of inadequate preparation and training being offered or rejected and there were still a very few parishes with no lay participation.

Ministers may not have happened if priests had continued to be ordained at the rate they used to be. (F1939)

I understand the need due to shortage of priests, but I would prefer to receive communion from a priest. (M1955)

I think it's good to include more people. We can't all be passive. (F1964)

I think I could cope with them disappearing. Readers are still generally poor. Not sure Eucharistic devotion has improved. (P8)

I believe more time should have been given to preparing people for these ministries. I believe also on-going training should be in place for them. But it is difficult to explain to a Reader who has been in place for twenty years that a day's training would be helpful to them and the congregation. (P14)

### **Catechesis**

There was also growing lay involvement in catechesis within the diocese with training being given to laity to enable them to assist in sacramental preparation and RCIA. Lay involvement in all these areas was a more usual concept than in liturgical participation as female Religious had been involved in catechesis since the mid nineteenth-century, and teachers also had a long history of involvement. What was unusual was the opening up of catechetical responsibility to other people outside these two groups. One area of catechesis

that particularly benefitted from increased lay involvement was the preparation of adults to be received or baptized into the Catholic Church through RCIA. Promulgated by Rome in 1972, the Rite aimed to revive the practice of the early church of receiving adults through a series of liturgical Rites and lengthy catechetical stages. It emphasised that welcoming a new Catholic was the responsibility and ministry of the whole community not just the priest. It also emphasised the fact that becoming a Catholic was not a matter of learning credal formulas and instructions, but an entry into a life of discipleship and evangelism that was lifelong. There was concern that in parts of the diocese there was a failure to understand properly and implement the Rite and that the reception of adults remained much as in the pre-Council Church. This is further borne out by the inclusion of two articles within the Diocesan Yearbook produced at the end of 1992 that sought to explain both the Rite and its theology and encourage its wider use within the diocese.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Middlesbrough Diocesan Yearbook 1993.

## **1.5: The Religious climate in 1992**

By 1992, Catholics felt they were in the mainstream of Christian life both nationally and locally. There were three main reasons for this: the presence of Basil Hume, an Ampleforth Benedictine as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, whose personality and bearing had commended him to the English establishment; the impact of the Papal visit in 1982, which had included an event in York; and the setting up of a new ecumenical body in 1990, Churches Together in England and Wales, where for the first time Catholics were full members instead of observers as in previous ecumenical bodies. Of these three factors, only the final two had immediate consequences locally.

### **The Papal Visit 1982**

The Papal Visit created interest in Catholicism from all denominations, and with a para-liturgy rather than a celebration of Mass at York, many local non-Catholics felt able to attend and play a full part in the proceedings: 'It was a great ecumenical experience. The parish I was in Market Weighton had as many Protestants attending as Catholics.'(P19) 'My husband and I said our vows in front of the Pope and he blessed us which meant a lot to us both, as my husband was not a Catholic.'(F1933) For Catholics themselves, the visit was an occasion of a spiritual 'high' similar to the effect of a mission or pilgrimage but short-lived:

Fantastic, we went to York, had a wonderful day. A bit like Lourdes I think- everyone was happy, kind and good to be with. I think it brought out the best out of the crowd.  
(M1943)

I will always remember the day in York. With my own family among the crowd a wonderful feeling of solidarity and not afraid to be Catholic or apologetic (F1954)

I think it changed things for a while. Non-Catholics were as impressed as were we ourselves and then I believe we all got back to normal. (M1941)

### **Ecumenical Relations**

The main Protestant denominations within the diocese in 1992 were the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches and the Salvation Army. Friendship not unity was the hope for the new ecumenical structures, which on a local level mainly involved clergy fraternals and united services in Christian Unity Week, and at Easter and Christmas. After generations of discouragement from contact with other Christian Churches, many Catholic priests were wary in their support, although some members of the laity were extremely enthusiastic in their support, finding that there was much in common from shared music to social concerns.

## **1.6: Conclusion**

The picture of the diocese of Middlesbrough that has been presented in the foregoing pages appears to show a part of the Catholic Church that had become more confident with its place in the mainstream Christian life of Britain, yet was not fully at ease with itself or with its place in English Catholicism. A majority of priests came from Ireland or had trained there, and much of the Catholic population, particularly within the Teesside conurbation was of Irish extraction and Ireland was regarded as home, even though many had never lived there. Another problem within the diocese was the proliferation of churches within the two centres of Middlesbrough and Hull, the upkeep of which, along with schools, drained the resources of the diocese but there was reluctance to take the hard choice of closing those that had become surplus to requirement.

The spiritual and devotional lives of Catholics were in many ways diminished by a lack of knowledge as to the teaching of the Church, contained in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and beyond. This is not to say that there was no good practice and there was recognition that priests had done their best in less than favourable circumstances. There was real concern to find ways of renewing and reviving the spiritual and devotional life of the faithful living in a world that was growing more hostile to religious practice. This points to the essential nature of revivalism that it is both an on-going process, not a once-for-all experience and the remainder of this study looks at how this has manifested itself from 1779 onwards.

## **Part 2**

### **The Emergent Church 1779-1879**

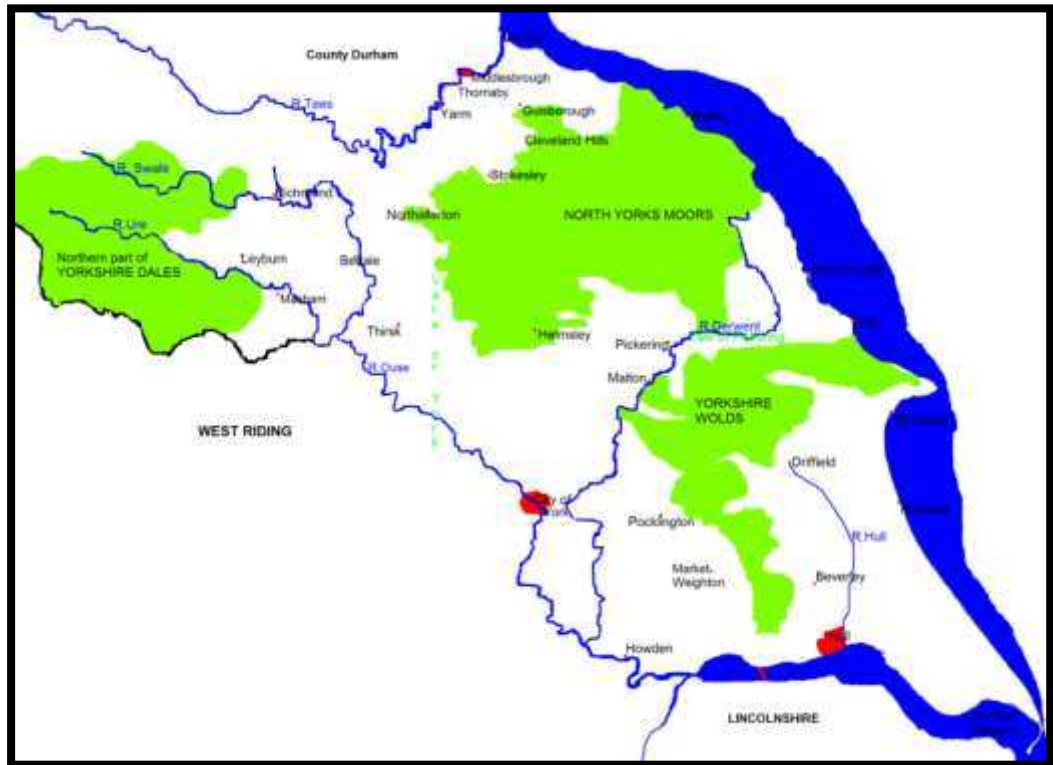
#### **2.1: The Protestant Climate of North and East Yorkshire 1779-1879**

For Roman Catholics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, life was governed by living in a Protestant state to a much greater extent than during the twentieth century and so a brief note about the religious climate of Yorkshire in the years leading up to the foundation of the diocese of Middlesbrough in 1879 is given here to provide a context for what follows. Space precludes a more detailed examination of issues and readers are pointed to the footnotes for indications of where more information might be found.

#### **The Decennial and Religious Censuses of 1851**

Evidence from the decennial census held in 1851 show that in mid-Victorian England the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire could be regarded as representing a microcosm of the whole country in geographical, social and economic terms. Within its boundaries was the growing industrial sprawl in the Teesside area, a number of small, but ancient market towns, such as Beverley, isolated rural settlements on the bleak Moors and the fertile plains of the Vale of York (Map 5). Socially, it reflected the growing overcrowding in its major urban centres of Hull, York and Middlesbrough due to a combination of immigration and the depopulation of rural areas as people moved into the towns to find work.

**Map 5: The geography of the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire in the nineteenth century**



In economic terms, Yorkshire as a whole illustrates the rise of the nouveau-riche industrialists and the demise of the county gentry in exercising power and influence. Many of the new industrialists, such as those who developed the new town of Middlesbrough were dissenters and their approach to life was based upon the religious values of Puritanism that emphasised hard work and disparaged waste and leisure.<sup>1</sup> For men such as Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan, the two earliest Ironmasters in Middlesbrough, success in business was proof of being part of the ‘elect’ predestined for salvation. However, it also led to their workers being forced to accept long hours and poor working conditions. As a result, problems of intemperance and gambling that provided

<sup>1</sup>See MDA. Turnham, M., From Emancipation to Aggiornamento 1829 – 1968 (Unpublished M.Th. Thesis University of Wales Lampeter) (2007) 13.



an escape from hardship and poverty were soon rife in a town that had started life with the intention of its Quaker founders that no alcohol be allowed within its boundaries. Lady Florence Bell summed up the situation of the ordinary worker in Middlesbrough when she wrote that ‘the main object of his life is to be at work; that is the one absolute necessity’.<sup>2</sup>

The single most important source of data regarding religious practice in the Victorian era is the Religious Census of March 1851 that was held in conjunction with the decennial census of population.<sup>3</sup> The reliability of the returns as a measure of religious practice needs addressing with caution for several reasons and these have been discussed at length in other places.<sup>4</sup> It is true to say that the results of the census were a shock to the country's leaders as on a superficial reading of the statistics, it appeared that people in England and Wales were much less religiously-minded than hitherto supposed; but with no comparable figures on the state of religious practice in preceding decades, talk of decline in religious practice is merely hypothetical.

Ignoring the problems associated with the raw data, John Wolffe notes that commitment to organised religion was comparatively high in Yorkshire, particularly in the North Riding as shown by Fig. 5 noting the Index of Attendance (IA) as a percentage of the population.

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<sup>2</sup> Bell, Lady Florence, *At the Works: A study of a manufacturing town* (1907) [This edition London 1985] 3.

<sup>3</sup> The Census Returns for Yorkshire are on Microfilm at BIUY Ref MFE 103, 11-118.

<sup>4</sup> For detailed references see Field C., ‘The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide for Local and Regional Historians’ *The Local Historian* 27 (1997) 194-217.

**Fig. 5: Index of Attendance in Yorkshire<sup>5</sup>**

England and Wales	Yorkshire	East Riding	North Riding	West Riding
58.1%	54.97%	58.8%	63.6%	52.9%

In regard to the North and East Ridings however, the overwhelming reality presented by the census was the strength of Methodism in its different forms, which exceeded the Church of England in both attendances and places of worship the latter being represented graphically in Maps 6-8. It reveals that the growth in Methodism was spread throughout the area, in some places being the only form of worship. Even the city of York that in the eighteenth century had a population that was 95 per cent Anglican<sup>6</sup> was being seriously challenged by Methodism, a trend first identified by the findings of an independent statistical analysis carried out in 1837<sup>7</sup> (Fig.6). Edward Royle persuasively argues that this represents a move from a monopoly to a free market caused by the inability of the leaders of the Anglican Evangelical Revival to contain their own success.<sup>8</sup>

**Fig. 6: Comparison of the different denominations in the city of York 1764-1851<sup>9</sup>**

Year	Total population	Total attendance	Church of England %	Total Methodist %	Congregational %	RC %	Quaker %	others %
1764	c24,393	2699 (families)	95	.22	1.18	2.8	.96	
1837	28,074	20,211	37.9	33.9	17.4	6.2	3.4	1.2
1851	33,303	22,616	48.2	29.1	9.5	9.3	2.0	1.8

<sup>5</sup> Figures from Wolffe, J., *The Religious Census in Yorkshire*. Borthwick Papers in Religion 108 (York 2005).

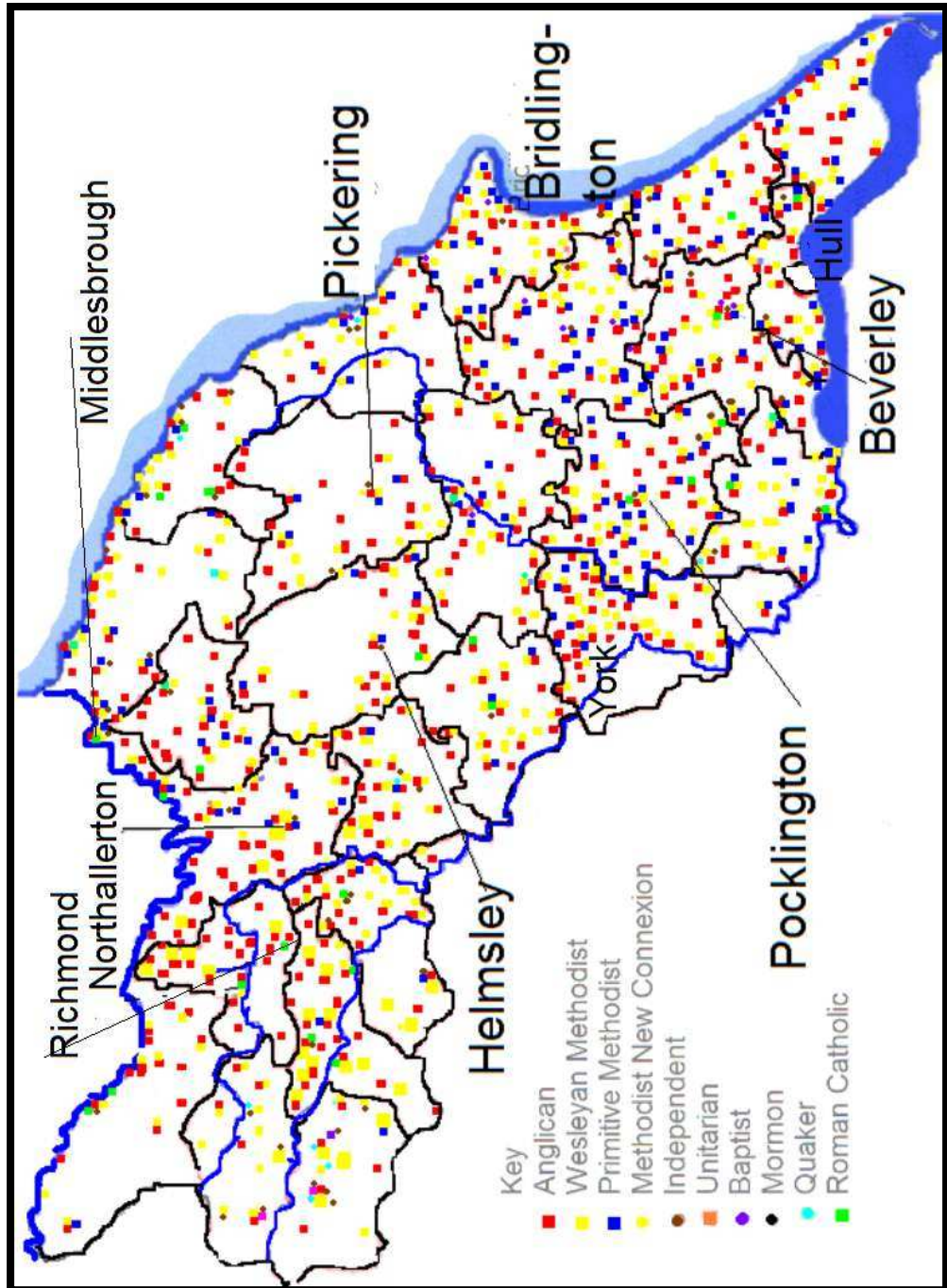
<sup>6</sup> BIUY, ref Bp. V. 1764/ret Visitation Returns of the Clergy 1764.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, J.R., 'Statistics re churches and attendance in York (Manchester Statistical Society)' quoted in Royle, E., 'The Church of England and Methodism' *Northern History* 33 (1997) 139.

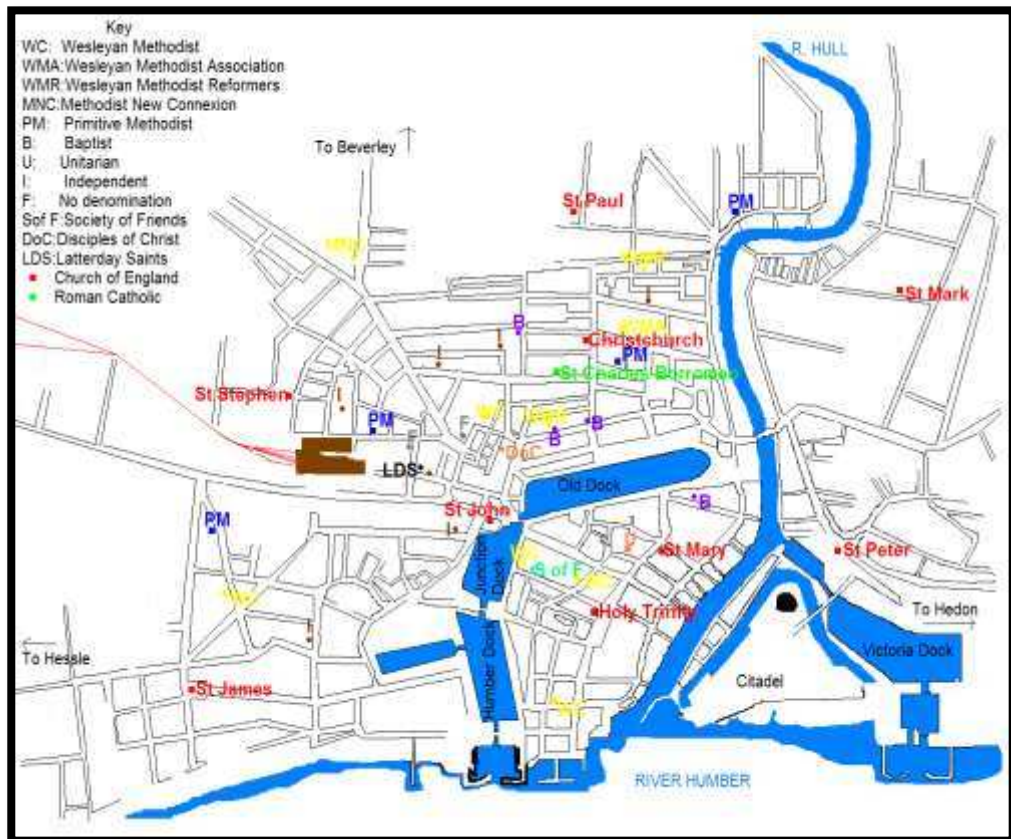
<sup>8</sup> Royle, *ibid* 137-161.

<sup>9</sup> Data taken from Royle, *ibid.* and Royle, E., *Non Conformity in the City of York* (York 1985) 3.

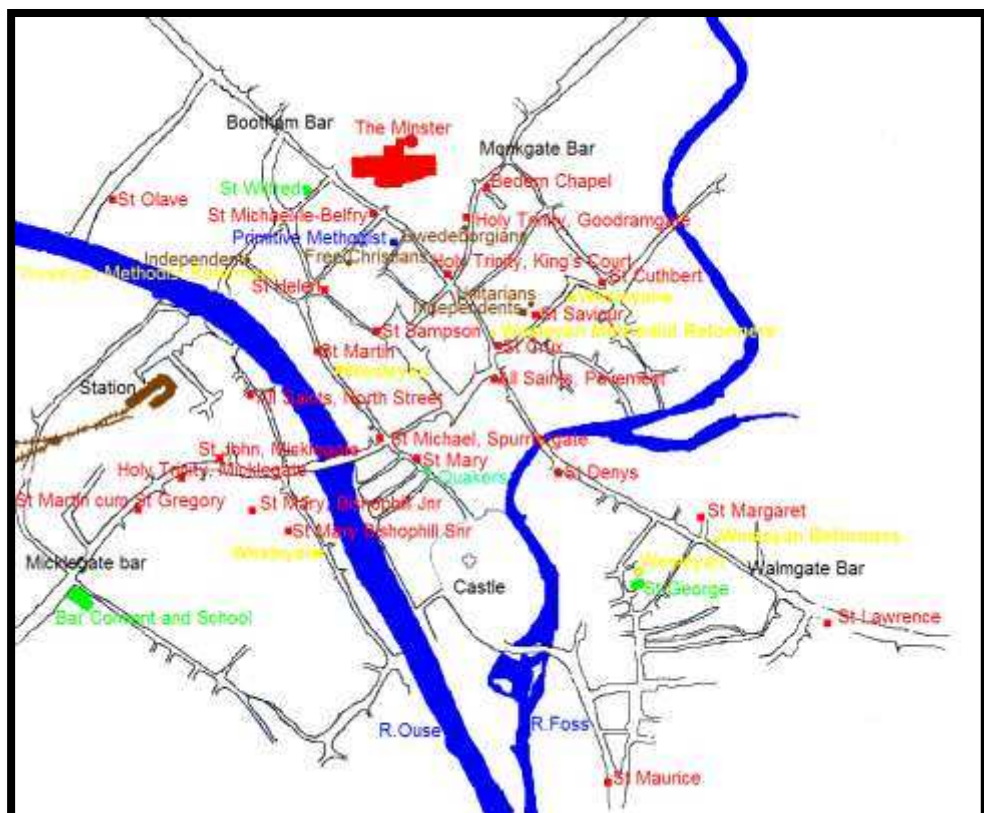
**Map 6: The 1851 Religious Census: Places of worship in the North and East Ridings (excluding Hull and York)**



Map 7: The 1851 Religious Census. Places of worship in Hull



Map 8: The 1851 Religious Census. Places of worship in the city of York



## **Anglicanism**

At the end of the eighteenth century the Anglican presence in the North and East Ridings was like that of the church nationally; of being an institution very much on the cusp of facing the challenges of urbanization and industrialization, which brought about an explosion in population and increased expectations of democracy. Both Hull and York were centres for the revival of eighteenth-century evangelical Anglicanism. However, there were inherent weaknesses caused by the nature of establishment that affected the rural communities as much as the rapidly growing urban ones; these included the legalities and cost of providing new churches, and the poor physical conditions of older church buildings which were addressed only gradually during the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Visitation records also show the provision of worship changing with more services, especially communion being offered.<sup>11</sup> But the same Visitation records reveal a growing sense of dismay at the growing strength of Dissent, in particular Methodism.<sup>12</sup>

## **Methodism**

Originally a fruit of the Evangelical Revival within the eighteenth century Anglican Church, the spiritual rigour that Methodism demanded as well as the opportunities it gave to working people, especially women made it highly attractive to many, although it was not an easy system to follow.<sup>13</sup> The fact that Methodism was regarded as part of the Church of England until after the deaths

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. See Royle, E., *The Victorian Church in York* (York 1983).

<sup>11</sup> See for example Royle E. and Larsen R., *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the diocese of York, 1865* (York 2006).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, e.g. Returns 615-638.

<sup>13</sup> For an extended account of early Methodist practice and beliefs see Munsey Turner, J., *John Wesley* (Epworth 2002) .

of the Wesley brothers may have contributed to its spread particularly in York then seen as a centre of Establishment and particularly influenced by the Evangelical churchmanship of its leading clergyman William Richardson (1771-1821)<sup>14</sup>.

The first half of the nineteenth century was a difficult time for Methodism with several secessions into new Connexions usually fuelled by the desire for more rigour in practice or more lay involvement in their organisation. Although Wesleyan Methodism was still the most numerous it became increasingly more conservative, clerical and middle-class, whilst the new Connexions remained more democratic and attractive to the working classes.

Transatlantic Revivalism being brought to Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century also changed the nature of Revivalism moving it from a passive waiting for the action of God to the deliberate fostering of conditions for revival by preachers. One of its major successes was in the growth of Primitive Methodism particularly in the East Riding where its' combination of lively camp meetings and a gospel of 'ruin, repentance and redemption'<sup>15</sup> appealed to those who felt excluded by both the parish churches and the Wesleyan chapels on account of their low social status.

### **Conclusion**

This brief survey of the Protestant religious climate in the North and East Ridings has shown that its dominant ethos was Evangelical with a strong tendency towards Revivalism in order to bolster waning faith. But by the middle of the nineteenth-century Methodism already was in decline and, like

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<sup>14</sup> See Royle, E., *The Church of England and Methodism* 137-161.

<sup>15</sup> Munsey Turner op.cit., 158.

the Anglican Church it seemed unable to hold the allegiance of the working class population when the fervour of conversion and revival became religious apathy, lost within the struggle to make a living.

## **2.2: The Emergence of Public Congregations**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the Catholic community of the North and East Ridings as it emerged from the penal times and began to develop as a denominational force in the region. It will show that there was need to accommodate the practice of the Catholic faith with everyday life in eighteenth-century England governed as it was by a calendar that reflected the Protestant nature of the Established Church.

### **The emergent Recusant Community of the North and East Ridings**

During the early eighteenth-century, the thrust of the Anti-Catholic Penal laws that had been in place since the reign of Elizabeth I, were changed in order to deprive Catholic gentry of the socio-economic means of survival and thereby prevent them financing and supporting the Catholic mission. As Aveling points out, this was persecution not for religious reasons but brought about by the assault of the Enlightenment and

inspired by a rationalist dislike of Catholicism as the bulwark par excellence of belief in supernatural religion, of political and religious obscurantism...to be helped to their inevitable graves by humane pressure and liberal propaganda and satire.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the limited success of the penal legislation, a combination of pressure from the Catholic gentry, including its Yorkshire members, and the Whig government's principles of liberty, a small measure of relief from the penal laws was granted in 1778; the first step towards full emancipation for the

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<sup>1</sup> Aveling, H., *Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire 1558-1790* (York 1960) 49.



English Catholic community and its acceptance as a legitimate religious denomination for the people of England and Wales.

It would be easy to assume from the above that the English Catholic community was made up entirely of gentry and their households, but this was not the case. The Return of Papists made in 1767<sup>2</sup> asked for a level of information about papists that was without precedent, including occupation and length of time resident in a vicinity. The returns show that in the city of York there were a growing number of traders and professionals who were Catholic, and in the rural areas there were small concentrations of Catholics who were not associated with one of the gentry's estates. This was in part due to the efforts of the missionary priests during the penal times and helped by the establishment of a regular system of Catholic Church government in 1685 when England was divided into four districts, each headed by a Vicar-Apostolic.

Ecclesiastical governance of this nature was the means used by the Holy See to give some immediate leadership in a country that was deemed to be of missionary status. Unlike a Bishop in Ordinary, a Vicar Apostolic had no powers in himself, but was directly answerable to the Pope, and could have his authority altered or revoked at any time. This state of affairs pertained until the Catholic Hierarchy in England was restored in 1850, although England was designated missionary territory until 1908. Yorkshire became part of the Northern District under the leadership of Bishop James Smith. Unfortunately, he had no sooner arrived in York in 1688, when the 'Glorious Revolution' occurred, which sent the King, James II, a Catholic into exile and put the

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<sup>2</sup> Worrall, E.S., (Ed.) Returns of Papists 1767(Southampton 1989).

Protestant William and Mary on the throne. Bishop Smith had to flee for his life, and found shelter with the Tunstall family of Wycliffe Hall, where he spent his remaining days. He appeared to be left comparatively in peace compared with his counterparts, who suffered terms of imprisonment, and constant harassment.<sup>3</sup>

Smith managed to carry out his Episcopal duties in a clandestine fashion, but maybe one of his most enduring legacies was the division of his districts into proper mission stations. Some of these were chaplaincies in the houses of the gentry, where the priest was maintained by the family. Others were districts, where a priest lived on his own in a cottage or series of cottages that doubled as clandestine chapels, and travelled around a wide area serving groups of Catholic farmers or minor gentry, who could not afford to maintain a chaplain. The priest was maintained from the accumulated funds of bequests, collections and contributions of food from the parishioners. The Missions were served by a mixture of secular and regular clergy, although most of the chaplaincies were held by regulars, either Benedictine or Jesuit, according to the preference of the family and were quite likely to change on the whim of the householder.<sup>4</sup> This sort of missionary activity may be correlated with the travelling preachers of the Dissenting tradition thereby supporting Bossy's thesis that Catholicism in this period was part of the Dissenting tradition.<sup>5</sup>

By 1778, the balance of leadership within the Catholic Community in the two Ridings was changing. The fortunes of the Catholic gentry depended on the

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<sup>3</sup> See Hemphill, B., *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England 1685-1750* (London 1955).

<sup>4</sup> See Aveling, H., *Northern Catholics* (London 1966) 384 for an example of this behaviour at Gilling Castle.

<sup>5</sup> Bossy, J., *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (London 1975) 398.

size and profitability of their estates, protection of its assets from the penal laws, and the securing of suitable marriages within a small socio-religious circle. Some decided to conform in order to protect their estates, others such as Marmaduke Constable of Everingham left the country altogether for long periods in order to live more cheaply abroad. Some smaller landowners did go bankrupt and their estates were liquidated. There were unintended benefits of the penal laws to the Catholic gentry, in that they became very highly educated in comparison to their Protestant counterparts. By educating their children abroad, Catholics reaped the best of European culture and thought, which was far ahead of anything offered by the English universities. However, contact with the French philosophy of the enlightenment also led to lapsation of faith on the part of some, such as William Constable of Halsham (1721-1791). It also led to the breakdown of his engagement to Anne Fairfax, daughter and sole surviving heir of Lord Fairfax of Gilling in North Yorkshire. Her father, who had reacted to the Enlightenment by becoming very rigorous in his faith, cancelled the engagement due to what he felt was the 'lax practice of his faith by William whilst abroad'. As a result William never married, and the Constable estates reverted to a distant cousin.<sup>6</sup> Likewise the Fairfax line also failed upon Anne's death and the estates reverted to distant Catholic relatives.<sup>7</sup>

It is possible to glimpse a picture of the devotional life experienced by Catholics in the area towards the end of the eighteenth century in the Report

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<sup>6</sup> ERRAS Constable –Chichester family papers. Ref DDCC.

<sup>7</sup> Cramer, A., Gilling Castle (Ampleforth 2008) 28.

submitted to Propaganda in Rome by Bishop Francis Petre, Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District in 1773:<sup>8</sup>

we know of Mass being heard in every church, of fasting and abstinence, of festal observance, of annual confession, of Easter Communion being generally observed by the faithful. Moreover festivals are numerous...In accordance with the tradition they fast on the sixth day. [my translation]

It is very much a picture of a faith that was restrained and inward-looking: for example festal observance meant a very sober time; as well as refraining from unnecessary work, it included confession, hearing Mass and spending the remainder of the day engaged in devotional reading. With no guarantee of Mass provision during the Recusant period, Catholics had learned to sustain personal piety by spiritual reading. Despite the ban on Catholic books and religious items being brought into the country, a large number of books of French and Italian devotional manuals translated into English had found their way across the channel, printed at Douai or Antwerp, and by the mid-eighteenth century they were being printed openly in London. Such restraint was not merely a result of the years of recusancy; it was characteristic of English religion generally in the early eighteenth-century and the impulses that animated the Evangelical Revival were a reaction to it. People like the Wesley brothers were hungry to save souls but found the existing church structures an obstacle so set up new structures within them. Likewise, as Catholics were assimilated back into the mainstream of the English religious life, they too showed hunger to save souls and bring the ‘lapsed’ back to faith, as will be shown in the following chapters.

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<sup>8</sup> J. H. Whyte reproduced the texts in ‘The Vicars Apostolics’ Returns of 1773’ *Recusant History* 9 (1967) 205-214.

In order to help the process of assimilation, the Vicars Apostolic had been petitioning Propaganda throughout the century for a reduction in the number of holydays of obligation. Dating from the pre-Reformation period, they were more numerous than on the continent and had become out of step with the contemporary way of life in England. Many of the gentry were by then employing non-Catholic workers, both in their houses and on the land, and their different religious requirements and work patterns needed to be taken into account, as well as events such as the farming year. The Vicars Apostolic had already, on their own initiatives, dispensed with a number of holydays in their Districts in order to make life simpler for Catholics. In 1777, Rome finally reduced the holydays to twelve, and gave permission for people to continue working on SS Peter and Paul and the Assumption, thereby allowing English Catholics to display a similar pattern of work to the rest of the population.

### **The Catholic Relief Acts and their reception in the North and East Ridings**

Despite their faith, the Catholic gentry of Yorkshire were not excluded from society, and many were beginning to spend much of their time in York or the spa town of Scarborough. Along with the decline in their numbers this caused major pastoral problems in the county as many insisted their chaplains travelled with them, thus depriving local communities of the services of a priest. This was particularly noticeable in York, where papist returns consistently reveal that not only was there a secular house-chapel situated in Little Blake Street and the Bar Convent served by former Jesuit priests, but three or four other chaplains providing Mass in the private houses of the gentry staying in the town every week. There was also an increasing desire for full recognition as loyal citizens of the nation, and this led to twenty years of

uncertainty and dispute as to what and how much of Catholicism might be compromised in order to achieve it. 'Old Catholics' including both Northern Vicars Apostolic of the period<sup>9</sup>, were determined that nothing should be changed for what seemed to them to be minor benefits for a few, and feared the reaction of a public still imbued with anti-Catholic prejudices; - a fear that seemed justified in the events of the Gordon Riots of 1780.<sup>10</sup> More liberal thinkers, including many members of the oldest Catholic families embraced what became known as the Cisalpine agenda. They believed that until English Catholics had put in place reforms that would demonstrate their loyalty to England and its sovereign, rather than an out-dated and foreign papacy, then the penal measures against them would continue.

The first Catholic Relief Act of 1778 (18 George III Cap.60) provided the first small measure of freedom for Catholics who swore an oath of allegiance to King George III, even though some, such as Simon Scrope of Danby Hall found it difficult. In 1784 he wrote that he:

had no desire to take any new Oath for Catholics... It was surely enough that ...Catholics had already taken an Oath to George III to defend him against all conspiracies and attempts against his person, throne and dignity... 'conspiracies' altogether too strong a word and 'that last word' 'so strong that I can't get over it'<sup>11</sup>

The measures was not enough however, for the Cisalpines, who extended their agenda to a reform of the English Catholic Church that would not only bring it closer to the Anglican Church, but also maintain the lay control of church affairs that had come about as a result of the English Reformation. Such ideas

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew Gibson who was succeeded by his brother William Gibson.

<sup>10</sup> See below p66.

<sup>11</sup> Aveling, H., Northern Catholics 381.

included the introduction of a vernacular Mass, a more democratic system of church government, whereby power to make appointments would be taken from Rome, and instead given to committees of the gentry in consultation with priests and a restored Episcopal hierarchy rather than the Vicars Apostolic. The Cisalpines also advocated the formation of a college in England rather than continuation of the tradition of sending young men to Douai and other continental seminaries for their education. Aveling notes that this nationalizing agenda quickly began to alarm some of the Northern gentry who were in sympathy with the wish for a restored hierarchy and lay control of English Catholic affairs, but did not want to break ties with continental Catholicism and Rome.<sup>12</sup>

The final stumbling block for many was the proposed second Relief Bill drawn up by the Committee to present to Parliament, which included an Oath of Allegiance that was unacceptable to many who still remembered active persecution against priests in particular, and the fact that in order to benefit from the measures, the oath would need to be taken. Not to take it however, would imply the holding of treasonable views. In 1787, Sir John Lawson of Brough, the northern representative on the Catholic Committee, convened to campaign for emancipation, drew up a written document protesting against both the oath and the proposed Bill that was signed by fifty-one of the other Northern gentry. In the event, the second Catholic Relief Act (31 George III Cap.33) that was passed by Parliament in 1791 repealed the majority of the remaining penal code for those who swore an Oath of Allegiance to the King, using an acceptable form of words that had been used for the Irish Relief Act

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<sup>12</sup> Aveling, H., *ibid.* 380f.

of 1779. In essence the Act extended to Catholics the provisions of the Toleration Act of 1687 that allowed Protestant dissenting worship in licensed chapels. However, the celebration of Mass in any building with a steeple or a bell was forbidden, thus preventing the possibility of calling the faithful to Mass. Catholics were also given the right to re-enter professions such as the Law, although the Religious were barred from teaching and no endowments could be given to schools and colleges, which ended for the time being the Cisalpine desire to bring Catholic seminary education into England.

In the event, continental revolution and politics dictated that some of the Cisalpine desires and fears for English Catholicism came about more quickly than it would have appeared in 1791. The onset of the French Revolution brought into England refugee priests and members of religious orders, who worked alongside the English Missioners, but introduced continental devotions and practices, and a more Ultramontane approach to English Catholicism. The French seminaries were closed and found new forms in England, such as the continuation of Douai in St Cuthbert's College at Ushaw, just over the border with Yorkshire in County Durham. The political problems of Ireland, not the continuing disenfranchisement of English Catholics was the catalyst for the Catholic Emancipation Act being passed in 1829 (10 George IV Cap.7), and finally the long-desired restoration of the English Catholic Hierarchy in 1850 came about not to make the English Catholic Church independent of the Papacy, but to restore even closer ties with it.



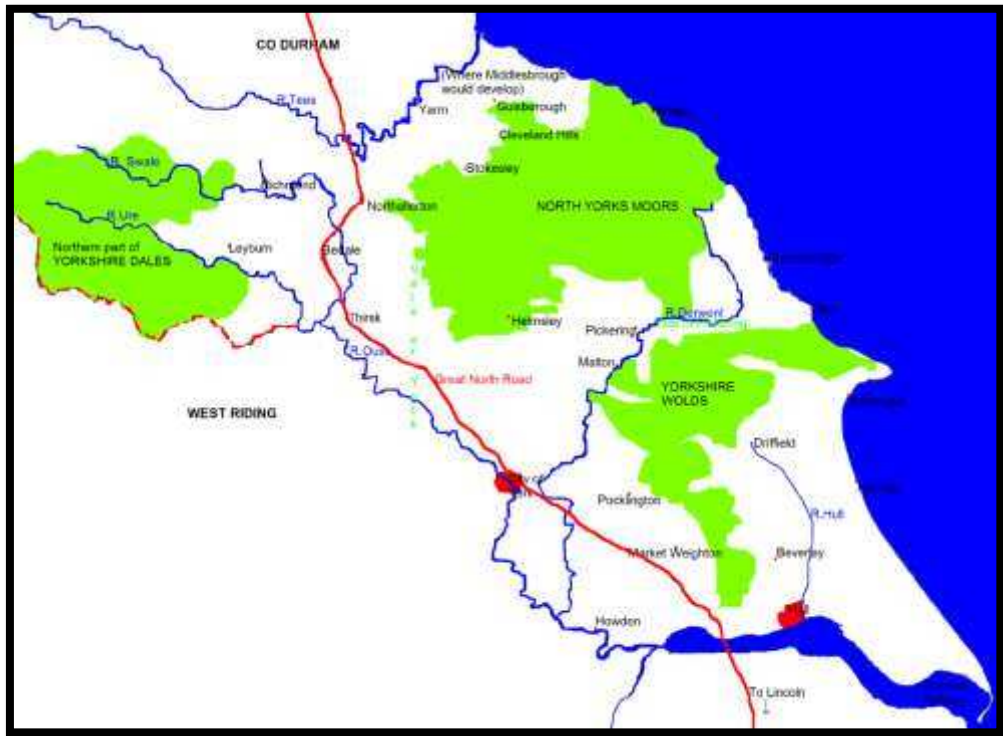
**1779-1800: New Priorities**

The disorganization and haphazardness of priestly provision in the Mission field before 1779, although understandable, probably accounts for the wide variation in numbers of Catholics in different areas of the two Ridings. It seems self-evident that where a priest could provide regular masses, teaching and the sacraments faith would be maintained and grow, and where there was no provision faith would wither and die. There were large swathes in the East Riding in particular where there is no evidence of Catholic activity throughout the eighteenth century; there was no history of Catholic gentry, and the Great North Road which seemed to form an economic barrier, was maybe also a barrier to the riding priests. This is best illustrated by reference to maps 9 and 10. The map of the physical landscape shows the wide swathes of desolate moorland and dales that make up much of the region, isolated from the only major highway, which ran through the low lying vale of York. Map 10 is a pictorial representation of the Papist Returns of 1780. It shows the effect that the physical landscape had on the work of the itinerant priests, as those areas that were hard to reach and travel through, such as the Wolds had a negligible Catholic presence. Judith Champ has enumerated the specific problems in estimating the Catholic population in this period and while accepting her analysis of there being an element of over and under estimation, it no way distracts from the premise outlined here, which adds another dimension to the question of Catholic demography in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

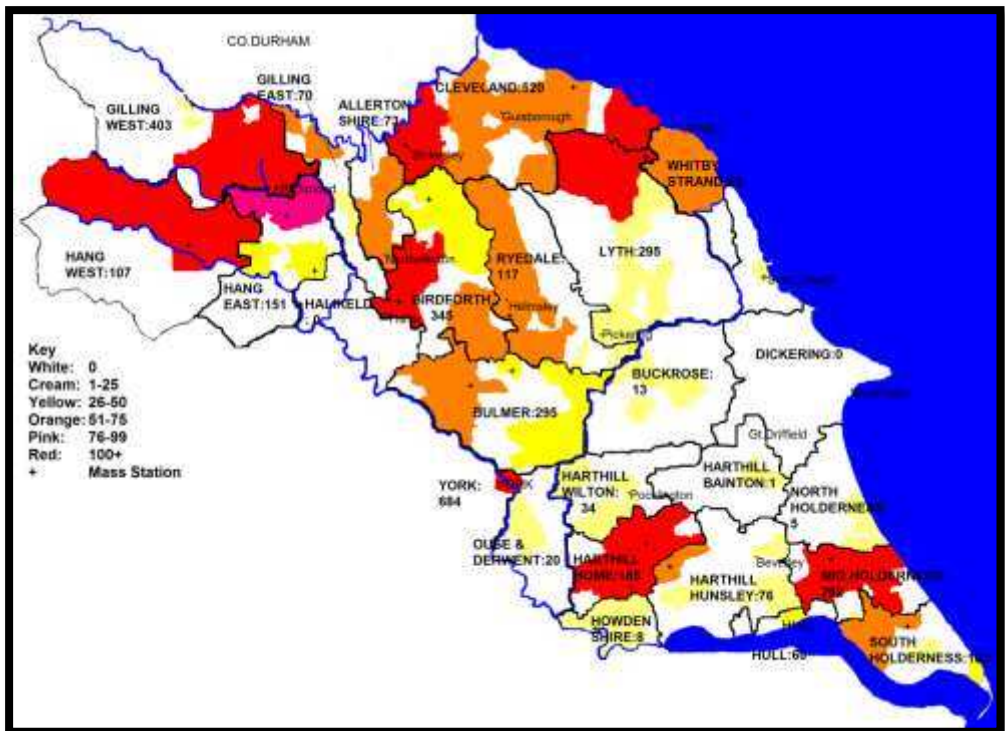
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<sup>13</sup> Champ, J., *Assimilation and Separation: The Catholic Revival in Birmingham 1680-1850* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Birmingham 1984) Ch. 1.

**Map 9: The physical geography of the mission field**

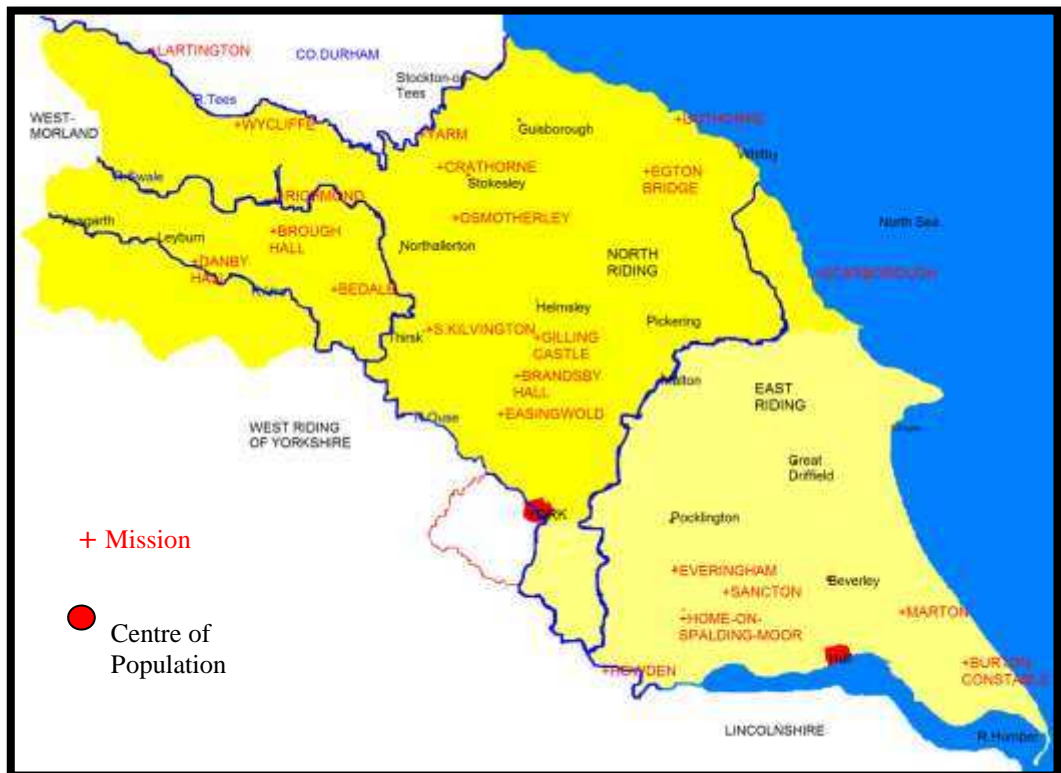


**Map 10: The distribution and density of the Catholic Population of the North and East Ridings in 1780**



After the passing of the Relief Acts, Catholic priorities began to change, in terms of the provision of Mass. It seemed to those living in the more rural parts of England, particularly in the North that the seigneurial missions established around country houses now needed to be replaced by independent missions in the centre of local populations. Map 11 shows that most of the missions in the area were of seigneurial origin, and that many of the local centres of population had no Catholic presence in them.

**Map 11: Missions and centres of Population within the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire at the end of the Eighteenth Century.**



Despite the expectations of the Vicars Apostolic that chaplains to the gentry had a wider responsibility to minister to all Catholics in a mission area, there were major barriers to them doing so: firstly the chapels were not easily accessible to anyone but the family and their servants, and secondly the gentry

themselves showed an increasing tendency to restrict the work of their chaplains to care of the family alone. Another problem was a growing assumption by the gentry, that they had the right to nominate priests - usually a Regular - to their chaplaincies without reference to the Vicar Apostolic or in some cases the Superior of the Order.<sup>14</sup> After the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1778, most Jesuits remained in their positions, but became secular priests and under the authority of the Vicar Apostolic, which eased the problem to a certain extent, as did the decline in numbers of the landed gentry able or willing to employ a chaplain.

### **1779-1800: East Riding and Hull**

Another solution to the problem of family chaplains was the actions of some gentry to endow a separate mission for the benefit of the surrounding Catholics who were quite often their tenants. An early example of this philanthropy can be found at Marton in the East Riding, where the Constable family of Halsham established a secular missioner for their tenants in the 1630's. At first, a moated house served as a house-chapel, and by 1717 a Catholic burial ground was established on its northern side. It is known that Parish Registers were kept from 1774;<sup>15</sup> and in 1789, when it was still illegal to hear or say a Catholic Mass William Constable built a small church next to the house (Fig.7). Presumably this was due to a residual sense of duty to his tenants in the light of his own lapsation from faith and the encouragement of the priest, Fr. Charles Howard SJ.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For examples see Aveling, Northern Catholics 383.

<sup>15</sup> PRO reference RG4/2377/3174/3175. A microfilm copy is held at ERRAS, ref MF2/6.

<sup>16</sup> See above p.55.

**Fig. 7: The chapel at Marton**

The mission area covered by the priest at Marton was extensive, reaching beyond the Holderness peninsula as far as Hull, at that time a fairly small but important port on the Humber estuary noted for its Protestant fervour. It had known anti-popery riots during 1688, when its Catholic Governor and other Catholics taking refuge in the town were captured by rioters, their chapel destroyed and the town declared as ‘being for William’. Archbishopal records show that in 1735<sup>17</sup> there were only four Catholics left in Hull; this had risen to thirty-three by 1767<sup>18</sup> and to sixty in 1780<sup>19</sup>.

From 1774 Fr. Howard rode into Hull about every six weeks to say Mass in a private house and perhaps encouraged by the growing numbers, in 1778, used a local solicitor as an intermediary to acquire a site in Posterngate to convert into a small chapel.

<sup>17</sup> Trappes-Lomax, R., ‘Archbishop Blackburn’s Visitation Returns of the Diocese of York’ in CRS Miscellanea Vol. 32 (1932 London).

<sup>18</sup> Worrall, E., (ed.) CRS: Returns of Papists 1767 Vol. 2 (1989 Southampton) 55.

<sup>19</sup> Aveling, H., East Yorkshire 65.

However, the chapel was destroyed less than two years later in anti-papal rioting that had spread from London in a campaign led by Lord Gordon and the Protestant Association aimed at repealing the First Relief Act. William Wilberforce, shortly before he entered Parliament as member for Hull wrote to a friend:

We were alarm'd last night [Sunday 11.06.1780] at Hull by a mob which burnt the Catholic chapel and attempted to pull down a private house.<sup>20</sup>

Further rioting in the town followed on the Monday, and on the Tuesday rioters threatened both Burton Constable Hall and Houghton Hall, home of the influential Catholic Langdale family; however they were intercepted before reaching their destinations.<sup>21</sup> Hull Corporation eventually paid Fr. Howard compensation for the loss of his property, despite the fact that Catholic chapels, unless they belonged to foreign ambassadors, were not protected under the terms of the 1689 Toleration Act, unlike registered non-conformist chapels. Fr. Howard abandoned the Posterngate site, and provided Mass in different rooms until, in 1799 his successor, a French refugee named Abbé Pierre Foucher provided a new public chapel on the rapidly growing northern flank of the city.

### **1779-1800: North Riding and York**

York, the only other major centre of population in this part of Yorkshire escaped the violence of the Gordon Riots, although Aveling claimed that there was 'explicit hostility to papists from religious-minded Protestants'<sup>22</sup>. However, the gentry clustered around Micklegate, where the Bar Convent with

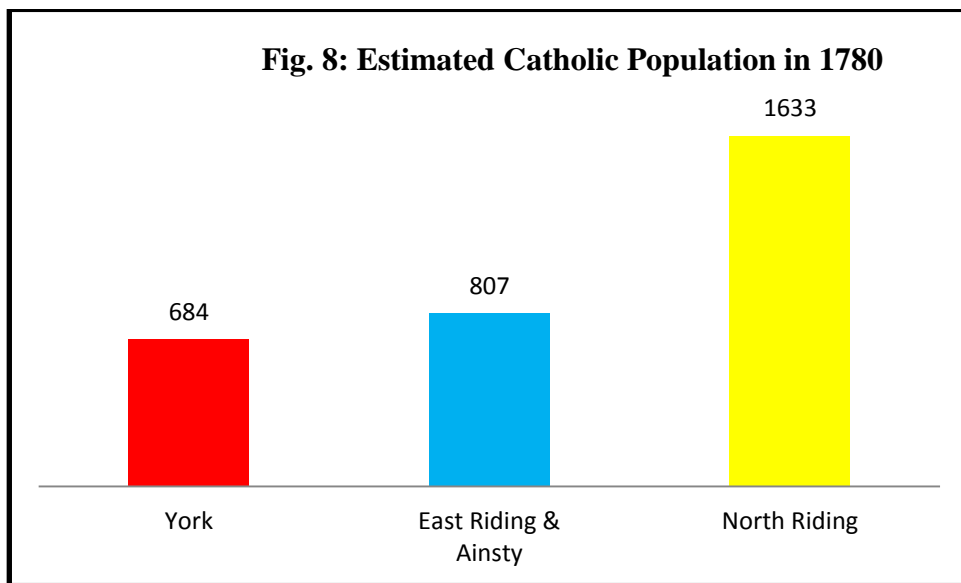
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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Williams, J H., 'Hull, Burton Constable and the Gordon Riots'. Northern Catholic History No. 38 (1997 NECHS) 39-51.

<sup>21</sup> See Williams 44f and n24 for an account of the projected attack on Houghton Hall.

<sup>22</sup> Aveling, H., Catholic Recusancy in the City of York (1970 CRS Monograph Series 2) 132.

its girls' school and a chapel that was open to the public was sited, were not the only Catholics in York.



The Papist Returns of 1780<sup>23</sup> tabulated in Fig.8 shows that the city had the highest concentration of Catholics in the entire area within its boundaries. This indicates that as well as the gentry other Catholics were beginning to find their way into the city from the rural areas outside. In fact there was a growing middle-class Catholic element growing up in the town, which was distinct from the gentry, but largely dependent upon them for financial well-being. Dependent on both groups were the unskilled, such as labourers, barbers, dressmakers and washerwomen, who relied on their Catholic patrons for their survival. To serve them a chapel attached to a priest's house was built in Little Blake Street in about 1760, but by the end of the century larger premises were needed and a new chapel was built in Lop Lane.

The priests based at Little Blake Street also had care of the Catholic community at Linton-on-Ouse, about ten miles outside the city; a former

<sup>23</sup> The area of the North Riding in its North West Corner was included in the Diocese of Chester, with censuses held at different times. The most comparative figure available relates to 1789 which estimated another 731 Catholics in that area.

seigneurial mission, the community there was the victim of a family line coming to an end, and with it the withdrawal of a resident Catholic priest to minister to them although there were invested funds for the maintenance of a priest, which covered the costs of the York priests. In other places where loss of a resident priest happened, papist returns show that Catholic communities began to wither away. For example, Stokesley in the North Riding had its mass house destroyed by a mob in 1746, an incident that signalled the end of active participation in mission affairs by the local Catholic squire; thereafter the active Catholic population relied upon occasional visits from an itinerant or riding priest and as a result the numbers had dropped from around sixty to twenty-one in 1781. Other communities were still preserving their low profile; In South Kilvington, the chapel provided by the local landowner looked like a farmhouse from the exterior, but inside there was a chapel two storeys high incorporated into the back ground floor. Other chapels were unfit for purpose, such as in Crathorne where:

...with regard to the present chapel, it may suffice to say that it was formerly a cow house, and besides being too small for the accommodation of those who have collected together, it is so excessively damp and cold, that one half of the year many are under the necessity of remaining at home; and not even the greatest diligence can preserve what is in the interior from taking damage<sup>24</sup>

After 1791, when Catholic chapels became legal, it was inevitable that priests would become stationary, as people would know where to find a priest, and the beginning of a stable mission life could begin. It also led to the start of a revival in the Catholic faith in the smaller towns such as Whitby and Pocklington, which would be largely unaffected by the Industrial Revolution;

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<sup>24</sup> MDA Pamphlet, The Bi-centenary of St Mary's Crathorne (1977).



but where the sight of a priest working openly among the people and offering Mass freely, reassured people that they could practice the Catholic faith. The congregation at Egton Bridge<sup>25</sup> built their first public chapel in 1797 and as a gesture of defiance against the ban on the ringing of bells, enshrined in the Second Relief Act, added an empty bell turret, which became known as ‘The Pope’s Head’, after a local preacher commented that ‘The Pope of Rome has raised his head in Egton Bridge’<sup>26</sup>.

### **1779-1800: Catholic Worship**

The pattern and style of public worship during this period is hard to define, as little was written down. Celebration of Mass was simple and restrained but the pattern of Sunday worship that was prevalent in the early part of the nineteenth century began to be established; namely Holy Communion being distributed about 8am once a month to those who wished to receive the Sacrament, Catholics from the whole area assembling to hear Mass in the late morning, and in the afternoon, the children receiving catechetical instruction, and the day ending with saying of the Rosary and Vespers.

The staple book for most Catholics from mid-century was *The Garden of the Soul* by Bishop Richard Challoner, first published in 1740 and Leo Gooch’s study of Yorkshire Clergy finances reveals that purchase of the book was a common expenditure by priests on arrival at a new mission.<sup>27</sup> Bishop William Ullathorne, in his autobiography reveals that his copy was in his sea chest when he left Scarborough to go to sea and that his father used it to conduct

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<sup>25</sup> This mission had a continuous history of Mass being said throughout the Recusant period, and in 1679, its Mission priest, Blessed Nicholas Postgate, who also originated from the village, became one of the last Catholic martyrs in England.

<sup>26</sup> MDA File Egton Bridge: Pattison, C., *A Bi-centenary Record of St Hedda’s Egton Bridge* (1990) 9.

<sup>27</sup> Gooch, Leo. *Paid at Sundry Times: Yorkshire Clergy finances in the Eighteenth Century* (Ampleforth 1997).

services for local Catholics when no priest was available to say Mass.<sup>28</sup> Bossy described it as achieving for the English Catholic a ‘comprehensive devotional structure which maintained the continuity of tradition while it renewed and adapted its data into forms appropriate to the situation.’<sup>29</sup> Elsewhere, its many readers have been described as ‘strong in the faith, somewhat reticent, solidly instructed and devout with a deep interior piety’<sup>30</sup>. Although undergoing many revisions, it never lost its basic premise based upon the Salesian spirituality of the way to holiness being found in the ‘bits and pieces’ of everyday life and living them with constant love and the awareness of God’s presence. The manual provided a means for a Catholic to spend the day with God beginning with Morning Prayer and ending with Night Prayer. Instructions and devotions for the laity to perform whilst hearing Mass were provided as well as a translation of the Mass; within the ‘Ordinary Actions of the day and the spirit *with which they ought to be performed*’ the Catholic was encouraged to work hard: ‘fly idleness as the mother of mischief...that the devil may never find you idle’<sup>31</sup>. Perhaps the major failing of the manual is that it was a manual for the educated. It required a depth of literacy that increasingly, as its share of the population grew, more Catholics in England failed to have. Instead they embraced the newer forms of devotions that were in essence of a more repetitive and responsorial nature. In this may lay the reason for the oft-cited criticism that Garden-of-the-Soul Catholics were devotionally deficient in the

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<sup>28</sup> Drake, A., (ed.)The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne with Selections from his Letters (London 1891) 13,30.

<sup>29</sup> Bossy, John, *op.cit.*, 364.

<sup>30</sup> Crichton, J.D., ‘Richard Challoner; Catechist and Spiritual Writer’ *Clergy Review*, 66 (1981) 269.

<sup>31</sup> Challoner, R., *The Garden of the Soul* (Belfast 1860 edition) 182.

light of the Ultramontane Catholicism of the Victorian period.<sup>32</sup> In many ways a similar failing can be discerned in Methodism, where, as noted earlier the Wesleyan branch began to be regarded as a more middle-class and Primitive Methodism in particular appealed to those who felt excluded on account of low social standing and lack of education.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown the steps made by the small group of Catholics in the North and East Ridings as they emerged from the penal days. It provided the springboard to all the future development of the Catholic faith in the area for without their efforts, financial help and example, the whole of the area would have been as barren as those parts of the East Riding already mentioned. In particular, it has shown that the energetic English Catholic Church that developed over the course of the nineteenth century had its roots in the quiet Catholic spirituality of the eighteenth century.

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<sup>32</sup> See Heimann, Mary, *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (Oxford 1995) for an overview of the historiographical debate. 5-17.

### **2.3: A Century of Religious Orders 1778-1878**

Before turning to the emergent church of the nineteenth-century, there is one category of people to explore who were constant influences upon the local spiritual inheritance, especially in the area of innovative practice and revivalism, namely the Religious. Although officially proscribed in England from the time of the Reformation, their influence had not been entirely lost, as many of the mission priests who served the recusant church had been members of the Jesuit or Benedictine Orders, although Franciscans and Dominicans also served. Their lives were indistinguishable from the secular priests serving the mission, but deep suspicion over their loyalty was harboured by the Vicars Apostolic in the case of the Jesuits in particular.

Female religious orders had initially disappeared completely in England at the Reformation, although many, like their male counterparts continued their existence on the continent. However, in 1669, Mary Ward founded the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>1</sup> and in 1686 under the leadership of Frances Bedingfield, the Bar Convent in York was opened that became the oldest convent in England still in existence, and played a vital role in preserving the Catholic faith both in the city and county of York throughout the penal times.

#### **The Bar Convent York**

The Institute, which had from its beginning been a pioneering venture, was based upon three principles; namely the absence of enclosure, central government under a Superior General, and works of charity within the local civic community, especially in education. The rule of life was based upon the

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth termed 'the Institute'.

Constitution of the Society of Jesus, a factor that was adopted within many of the new communities founded during the nineteenth century on the continent and in Ireland. Many of the local gentry sent their daughters to the Bar Convent School for their education, and also bought their town houses in its vicinity, making use of the chapel when chaplains were unavailable. After the influx of Irish into York, the Institute also ran the day school at the new mission of St George that catered for children of the poor throughout the city.

The Institute however, changed course during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Due to the Napoleonic wars, contact had been lost with the continental branches of the Institute, and so fearing that it had been suppressed, in 1816 the community in York asked permission from the Pope to be placed under the authority of the local Vicar Apostolic. At the same time they also requested that ‘instead of the liberty we now enjoy of going out of the house, we may be permitted to take a vow of enclosure’.<sup>2</sup> Both requests were contrary to the spirit of the Institute, and brought about a century of ideals that had been initiated, according to its historian Sister Gregory Kirkus CJ, from:

the French priests ...kindly adopted during the French Revolution [who] brought with them Jansenist ideas that infiltrated the community, tending to create a rigidity of spirit and narrowness of outlook<sup>3</sup>

This change from being ‘pious ladies’ under simple vows to being a religious order under solemn vows meant among other things that the wider work of charity that was exercised amongst the poor and sick ceased. New constitutions were drawn up by Abbé Nicholas Gilbert at the request of the Mother Superior.

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<sup>2</sup> Bar Convent Archives 3C/1 quoted in Kirkus, IBVM Sr. M. Gregory; *‘Yes my Lord’: Some eighteenth and nineteenth century bishops and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (pamphlet reprinted from *Recusant History* by Bar Convent no date) 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

The convent annalist at that time was quite clear that his work was supervised by the Mother Superior at every stage, and was finally completed ‘to her great satisfaction’<sup>4</sup>. This would suggest that the accusation raised against the Abbé of imposing Jansenist ideals upon the community was in fact false, and he was merely obeying the wishes of the Superior, who had already rejected an attempt by Rev. Benedict Rayment, the resident missionary in York.<sup>5</sup>

The constitutions not only transferred complete authority to the bishop, thus ending the essential independence of the original foundation, but also under the rules of enclosure, the sisters were to have as little contact as possible with the outside world, and were even exhorted not to look out of the street-facing windows, nor receive any news from the world as it was dangerous. There was no room for compassion and kindness, only authoritarianism and efficiency. As a result of the constitutions, the chapel was also closed to the public and altered from a light airy neo-classical space into a space dominated by heavy wooden stalls, where ‘choir sisters’ sat to recite the Divine Office – itself not a requirement of the Jesuit spirituality hitherto followed.

It seems ironic that such a pioneering Order should have adopted a quasi-monastic style at a time when new Apostolate orders were beginning to be founded on the continent and in Ireland and from the middle of the century were being invited to England to work openly in the new industrial towns alongside the mission priests. Meanwhile the sisters at the Bar Convent had adopted the full religious habit instead of their simple dresses, a monastic order with a strict division between ‘choir sisters’ and ‘house sisters’, and a

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>5</sup> See below p.71.

vocabulary that was reminiscent of medieval monasteries. Undoubtedly, rigidity had entered into the ethos of the Order, which must have sat uneasily alongside its Jesuit spirituality, and although it may have had its origin in the Jansenist ideals of some French émigré priests, its continuance, mirrored for example, in the changes made to the chapel, seems redolent of the move to revive the Gothic ideals of Catholicism in England, which its opponents regarded as ‘the emblem and advocate of a past ceremonial and extinct nationalism’<sup>6</sup>.

Although the Institute never took part in the controversy, it does serve to illustrate a debate that became a divisive issue within the English Catholic Church during the nineteenth century. Gothic revival in England was not initiated by Catholics, but released from the constraints of secrecy and caution engendered by the penal era, a new form of public ceremonial needed to be adopted. The Vicars Apostolic encouraged the more flamboyant style of worship from the continent, which became known as the Ultramontane devotions, whilst others such as the architect Augustus Pugin felt that a return to the practice of the medieval church was the only true expression of Catholic faith. The indirect censure of Gothic by the Vatican in 1839, when they banned the use of Gothic-style vestments in England was seen as ‘a death-blow to the Catholic cause in England, all the rights and privileges of a national Church are to be stamped out for ever’<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>. ‘The development of Gothic Architecture’ *The Rambler* (May 1859). 78.

<sup>7</sup> Purcell, E., ‘Life and letters of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle’ (London 1900) 219 quoted in Norman, E., *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford 1984) 237.

### **The return of the first female Religious Community from the Continent**

In 1878 there were five female and two male religious houses in the Diocese of Middlesbrough.<sup>8</sup> The return of the religious orders to England however had begun with the French Revolution and the abolition of religious houses. Those orders who had established themselves on the continent were forced to seek refuge in England and hope for a sympathetic reception from both the civil authorities and the Catholic community. Many of the gentry, who were sympathetic to the orders, through the educational opportunities they had provided for both sons and daughters offered hospitality albeit mainly in their remote country houses. Even so, the arrival of female religious did attract some interest from the general Catholic community, and certainly in the case of the English Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre who lived at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor between 1794 and 1796, their devotional practices revealed to the local Catholic population a glimpse of Catholic customs that were unknown.

The house where they lodged had been deserted by its Catholic owners in 1784, although a priest had been maintained to say Mass in the ground floor chapel and care for the mission. The annals of the community relate that the local ‘congregation came to our High Mass and Vespers... We sung High Mass and Vespers every Sunday and holy day accompanied by a forte-piano’<sup>9</sup>. The annalist also comments that ‘many Protestants used to come out of curiosity and to hear the singing.’<sup>10</sup> However, the mission priest continued to provide

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<sup>8</sup>There were two other female orders in York in this period; the Poor Clares Collettines, a contemplative order in 1864 and the Sisters of Charity of St Paul in 1874, another French congregation. The male Rosminian Institute of Charity came to Market Weighton in 1856 to take charge of a Catholic boys Reformatory.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Longley, K. *Heir of Two Traditions: the Catholic Church of St John the Baptist, Holme-on-Spalding –Moor, 1766-1966.* (Privately published 1969) 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*



the sacraments for the local congregation, and the chapel functioned alternately as mission chapel and convent chapel. It seems clear that the Canonesses wore secular dress rather than the habit except on special occasions, such as renewal of vows.<sup>11</sup> One feast day that the Canonesses observed was that of the Sacred Heart, despite the fact that it was not kept in England until 1856, when its practice was extended from France to the Universal church. As the nineteenth century progressed a special devotion to the Sacred Heart grew in England as part of the newer devotions from the continent that were being encouraged. As will be seen later, it did cause some unhappy repercussions in the town of Middlesbrough from some of the Irish Catholics illustrating that the debate for the soul of English Catholic spirituality was a multi-faceted one.<sup>12</sup>

### **The arrival of the Benedictines to Ampleforth**

Another casualty of the French Revolution was the English Benedictine Congregation who had three houses and one convent in France. There was also a house in Germany.<sup>13</sup> From the continent the President-General had sent out monks to help on the English Mission throughout the recusant period. Although the community at Ampleforth is primarily known for its work in education, in fact the Congregation themselves regard that as secondary as ‘the whole purpose of the Congregation was the Mission.’<sup>14</sup> Until the end of the nineteenth century each monk swore an oath, when making his profession that ‘I promise, vow and swear to go to Mission work (and come back) when and as

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> See further below p.127-8.

<sup>13</sup> At Dieulouard, Douai, and Paris. Lamspringe in Germany was a school and junior seminary. The convent was at Cambrai.

<sup>14</sup> Cramer, OSB, Anselm, *The Story of St Laurence’s Abbey and College Ampleforth*. (Ampleforth Abbey 2001) iv.

often as President and Superiors may judge fit'.<sup>15</sup> Towards the end of the penal times, there was criticism that the Benedictine missionaries had become too easy-going and conventional;<sup>16</sup> Viscount Fairfax of Gilling, for example, dismissed six Benedictine chaplains in rapid succession for lax practice during the 1760's. However, a Jesuit Chaplain also failed to please. Without funds the group had tried unsuccessfully to settle in various parts of England, before the President-General in 1802 'prevailed on Fr. Anselm Bolton OSB to give up his house and property at Ampleforth, to form the future Monastery of St Laurence.'<sup>17</sup>

Ampleforth was not intended to be anything but a monastic community working on the mission in Yorkshire, but in 1803, the community at Lamspringe was also forced to return to England. This was due to the secularization movement in Germany which, in the wake of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment suppressed all the religious foundations. It was originally decided that only the 'church students' would be sent to Ampleforth in order to complete their formation and the lay students would be educated in Lancashire. By 1805 the latter was broken up and Ampleforth began to take lay students also, which set the community on a road that has educated many Catholic men of influence in the Yorkshire area and beyond. Benedictine monks still worked on the Yorkshire mission field however, and a swathe of countryside in the middle of North Yorkshire is known as Ampleforth country (See Map 12).

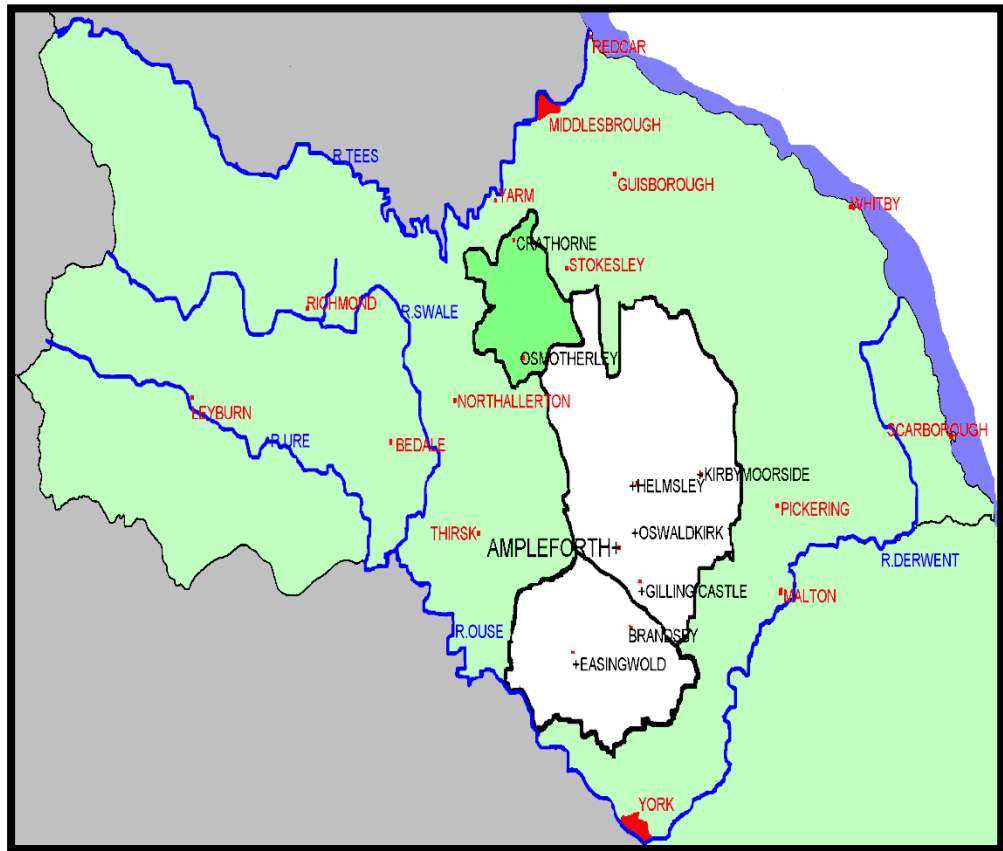
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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>16</sup> see Aveling, J.C.H., 'The Eighteenth-century English Benedictines' in Duffy, E., (ed.) *Challoner and his Church* (London 1981). 152-173.

<sup>17</sup> Cramer, *Ampleforth* 25 quoting from the *Biography of Athanasius Allanson* p 305 (no other details).

**Map 12: ‘Ampleforth Country’ showing Missions and Mass stations of the Benedictine Community in 1993.<sup>18</sup>**



One of the major problems for the monks was that the problems of living under penal laws were not relieved for them even in 1829, when most of the remaining penal sanctions were rendered inoperable by means of An Act for the *Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects* (X Geo. IV.).<sup>19</sup> Instead a clause was included that gave provision for the banning of male religious orders.<sup>20</sup> This was a direct consequence of the full restoration of the Jesuits in England just as the Bill was being debated in Parliament. The Jesuits, more

<sup>18</sup> Crathorne and Osmotherley are part of the Diocese of Middlesbrough, but have been looked after by monks from Ampleforth since 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Full repeal of all the penal code finally came in 1844 by means of a consolidated measure (7 and 8 Vict. Cap 102).

<sup>20</sup> X Geo. IV, cap XXVIII- XXXVII.

than any other Catholic group engendered fear and loathing amongst Protestants and the hostility aroused led to the subsequent inclusion of the nine clauses within the Bill. However, the 'Orders of Females' were excluded from the provisions, as not having the vote they were not considered to be a threat.<sup>21</sup> Despite a good deal of initial unease within the religious communities, the clauses were never acted upon; but it is clear from the 'Recollections' published in the Ampleforth Journal the monks did take great pains to be as unobtrusive as possible.<sup>22</sup>

there were no public professions until November 1850. Up to that time Professions were in private before two witnesses. The necessity for this precaution...was not diminished by the Emancipation Act, for though it legalized the residence in England of those willing to be registered as monks, it prohibited all future Professions. The aim of this law was to provide Monasticism with a quiet and gradual extinction.<sup>23</sup>

For eighty years, the local Catholic population was looked after by the community resident at the College and attended worship in the chapel, which to the community seemed to contain little ceremonial, but the description shows that it was more elaborate and extensive than anything the locals would have experienced previously:

Space for ceremonial was very limited; seldom was anything attempted beyond ordinary High-Mass and Solemn Vespers...As regards Processions little could be done, unless weather was favourable. But, outside, the arrangement of the walks was convenient. Of course the Procession of the year was at "Corpus-Christi;" the course was the same, with the addition that an altar was erected in the middle of the sloping lawn .... Here a halt was made, and Benediction given, the singing being usually accompanied by the Band. It was an impressive service.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., XXXVII.

<sup>22</sup> AA Ampleforth Journal 6-7 1900-1902.

<sup>23</sup> W.P.B. 'Old Recollections continued' in Ampleforth Journal 6 (1900-1901) 297.

<sup>24</sup> AA Ampleforth Journal 6-7 1900-1902.

As the pupils at the school were also present on these occasions, it would seem that the influence of the Benedictine Community at Ampleforth was much greater than just the education it provided. The ideas of worship and spirituality that the boys experienced whilst at the college would be filtered back to their homes and families, thus arousing interest in a more overt type of Catholicism, than had been seen since the Reformation.

This resulted in a form of revivalism within English Catholicism that was spread in many places by the work of the new apostolic religious orders who were founding houses in England. Some, particularly the new female apostolic Congregations were invited to settle in the Diocese of Beverley after 1850, working in the urban missions, and it is their contribution to Catholic revivalism that will be considered next.

### **Apostolic Congregations and Catholic Revivalism**

The history of the new religious orders within the new diocese of Beverley and subsequently in the Diocese of Middlesbrough, demonstrate the truth of the assertion by Finke and Wittberg that:

The [Catholic] orders have served as leaders for new religious movements, and they were often the source of creative adaptations to new societal circumstances. Unlike the [Protestant] sects they performed these functions within the boundaries of their church.<sup>25</sup>

The invitation by the new bishops to female religious communities in particular to found houses in England, was a direct result of the repeal of all the penal laws and the restoration of the Hierarchy. The Catholic community was now a national church and needed to provide Catholics with an infrastructure that

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<sup>25</sup> Finke R, and Wittberg P., 'Organisational Revival from Within: Explaining Revivalism and Reform in the Roman Catholic Church' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 2 (June 2000) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1387500> accessed 12.08.2008 154.

would enable it to function as such. As well as canonical obligations to such things as governance of dioceses and priestly formation, the bishops were also faced with the need to provide a proper network of missions, schools and Catholic institutions to promote the faith; a task that was made more urgent, by the arrival of large numbers of Irish immigrants in the aftermath of the famines and the rise of the industrial conurbations. The obvious group of people to help the bishops and priests with these tasks were female religious. Lacking an indigenous tradition of such, other than the Institute at the Bar Convent, which was undergoing its own crisis, the bishops had no alternative, but to look abroad for help.

Despite the fact that Ireland was developing its own tradition of female apostolic congregations, John Briggs, the first bishop of Beverley, initially looked to the continent for help. Probably in 1850, he felt that England was still closer to France in terms of a Catholic relationship rather than with Ireland. France had provided a place of refuge that had enabled the training of priests for the English Mission to continue throughout the penal era, and in return England had been a place of refuge for French priests and religious during the Revolution. There was already then a history of exchange of ideas in terms of Catholic practice. For their part, the French congregations would have seen the opportunities in England as a chance to begin furthering their missionary efforts into English-speaking territories that up to then had been denied them. The emphasis that was laid on mission is clear from the additional vow taken by the Sisters of the Assumption that was the first congregation to work in the diocese<sup>26</sup>. In addition to normal threefold promises of poverty, chastity and

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<sup>26</sup> In Richmond North Yorkshire, where they arrived in 1850.

obedience, the sisters also promised to ‘consecrate my whole life to extending the Kingdom of God in souls’<sup>27</sup>.

Their main work lay in field of educating girls above all to develop a ‘liberty of spirit and on a mission to Christianise modern society...where women could lead the way.’<sup>28</sup> Again, it was a member of the gentry, the Duchess of Leeds who enabled the work of the sisters to begin by setting up a Trust for the education of Roman Catholic girls in the north-east. As well as running the private school, they also ran a parish school for girls to augment the boys’ school founded in 1838.<sup>29</sup> Unusually for apostolic congregations the charism of the Congregation included choral recitation of the Divine Office and Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Presumably for this reason their freedom to move freely was hampered by the insistence of Rome in 1859 that enclosure be added to their constitution. However, in Richmond there is epistolary evidence that the sisters did leave the enclosure to visit the sick and bereaved, and to provide catechetical teaching to people within their own homes.<sup>30</sup>

Like the other congregations from France who were being invited to found houses in England, the sisters who settled at Richmond were Frenchwomen. All the congregations however, soon attracted English-speaking novices and in the field of education, where many of the congregations found their main apostolate, this was particularly important, as it made communicating with the

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.assumptionreligious.org/index.php?page=our-story> accessed 02/02/2009.

<sup>28</sup> Price, Richard. ‘I found only men’ *The Tablet* (02.06.2007).

<http://www.assumptionreligious.org/index.php?mact=News> accessed 02/02/2009.

<sup>29</sup> See p. 95.

<sup>30</sup> Wyman, V. and Minskip, D., *A History of the Catholic mission at Richmond (1724 to the Present)* (York and Richmond 1992) 10.

children easier.<sup>31</sup> Such a community arrived in Middlesbrough in 1872 at the invitation of Bishop Cornthwaite of Beverley.<sup>32</sup> The Faithful Companions of Jesus was the first French congregation to found a house in England, having been invited to London in 1830<sup>33</sup>. In that first convent, the Superior was the only sister to know any English, and that was very basic.<sup>34</sup> The five sisters that arrived in Middlesbrough were all native English-speakers.

On their arrival in Middlesbrough, as will be noted later, the Catholic community was growing rapidly and was of overwhelming Irish extraction.<sup>35</sup> It was split in loyalty between supporters of the previous mission priest, and his detractors who condemned newer devotional practices as superstition. Their primary task was education; they ran both the parish school and founded a small private day-school that brought in a small income. However, they also worked very closely with Richard Lacy, the mission priest, and his assistants in caring for and evangelizing the poverty-stricken Catholic community of the town. Both priest and sisters had arrived in the town within weeks of each other and as their convent record states:

Had we not, as it were, grown up together, shared in the toils and hardships of those first years? Our interests had ever run on parallel lines with his, and no jarring element had ever disturbed relations between us...no Bishop has ever associated himself so intimately with the lives and work of the F.C. of Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> In England, novices came from one of three groups, English-born, Irish-born and second generation Irish.

<sup>32</sup> Appointed 1861.

<sup>33</sup> Henceforth referred to as the FCJ's.

<sup>34</sup> Marguerite Julie Guillemet (Typed transcript FCJ Generalate Archives) 15.

<sup>35</sup> See Turnham, M., *From Emancipation to Aggiornamento 1829 – 1968* (Unpublished M.Th Thesis University of Wales Lampeter 2007) 123.

<sup>36</sup> *History of the Convent at Middlesbrough 1872-1928* (Typed transcript FCJ Generalate Archives) 31.



That their joint work proved effective is shown by an entry in the convent record in 1875, where they recorded that:

Our time was now fully occupied from morning till night: visiting the sick, poor, giving instructions and teaching in both the day and night schools... [in] 1875, the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was begun. Its object is to encourage the children to attend Mass and Sunday school. In its wake came another good work...a confraternity for the women of the parish who meet every month. It has been a wonderful stimulus to the awakening of Catholic practices among them.<sup>37</sup>

The sisters also played a leading role in preparing the people and the church for worship especially on the two major occasions of the opening of the new church in Middlesbrough in 1878 and a year later the consecration of Richard Lacy as first bishop of Middlesbrough. When the new church was opened, the sisters arranged for every sodality to appear in special uniforms with embroidered banners, much of the work done by the sisters themselves. In readiness for the consecration of Richard Lacy, with help from the houses in Paris and Liverpool, they ensured that ‘the vestments, altar-linen, etc. were worthy of the occasion.’<sup>38</sup> They also helped with catering for the banquet afterwards, which took place in their schoolroom. A much larger church also led the sisters into helping with new ventures such as in 1879 when:

For the first time a Procession of the Blessed Sacrament was organised at the opening of the Quarant’Ore. The community used every effort to prepare and train the children to strew flowers and carry out the solemn celebrations.<sup>39</sup>

By 1879, the sisters were an integral part of the mission especially in the field of developing and nurturing a Catholic spirituality in the Catholic community

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 8-10.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 26.

including running two schools, instructing Catholics in the workhouse, organising sodalities for women and children and visiting the sick.<sup>40</sup>

In the situation of Middlesbrough with no Catholic tradition to build upon, and no interest taken in it by indigenous Yorkshire Catholics, it is hard to assess where the impetus of the spirituality that developed came from. The priest, Richard Lacy was an Irishman, but trained at Ushaw College, and Rome, the FCJ Sisters, though on the whole English-speakers, retained the French ethos of the Congregation and like all houses were subject to the Superior-General of the Order, and successive ones did visit the convent.<sup>41</sup> The people they ministered to epitomised what the bishops regarded as the ‘Irish problems’ of a folk religion with little knowledge of regular attendance at Mass and a dependency on those they perceived as ‘being in authority’. Some aspects can be isolated; for example the concern to make the church beautiful by the sisters was characteristic of the French orders, who considered the physical surroundings English Catholics worshipped in to be inadequate and unfitting for its purpose. Additionally the harmonious relationship between Richard Lacy and the FCJ Sisters meant that there appeared to be no conflict of interest and purpose between them.

This was not the case in every mission. In Hull for example, during the early decades of their foundation the Sisters of Mercy had stormy relationships with the local priests mainly over the ownership of property and the provision of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 11 and 29.

chaplaincy care to the convent.<sup>42</sup> Unlike the other Congregations that settled in North and East Yorkshire, the Mercy Sisters were Irish in origin. They were also under the authority of the bishop rather than a Superior-General. Although, they did not have any direct influence on the provision of worship and devotion within Hull, the sisters were in charge of all the Catholic educational provision and as such influenced successive Catholic generations of children, and much later of many of the Catholic teachers.<sup>43</sup> The arguments that marred their early years in Hull should not overshadow the fact that the Mercy Sisters were an integral part of a campaign to secure a community that was ‘Catholic Hull’ in the midst of an extremely anti-Catholic local environment. They rapidly established a network of schools that were over-subscribed and secured government approval for their work. Their congregation attracted many local vocations, that later enabled them to work in other parts of the Diocese. They actively fought against becoming part of a new parochial complex in 1872 fearing that it would compromise both their independence and spiritual growth. In their schools they fostered a Catholic identity in their charges that was every bit as valuable as the practice of the faith encouraged by the FCJ’s in Middlesbrough. As Champ has pointed out when examining the work of the Sisters of Mercy in Birmingham the way forward for Catholic education was by using the best that society and the government could offer with the purpose of enhancing Catholic life.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For a detailed history of the Mercy Sisters in Hull see McClelland, M., *The Sisters of Mercy Popular politics and the Growth of the Roman Catholic Community in Hull 1855-1930* (Lampeter 2000).

<sup>43</sup> The Sisters of Mercy eventually became providers of Catholic teacher training as well as running the schools and their own day-school.

<sup>44</sup> Champ, J., *Assimilation and Separation: The Catholic Revival in Birmingham 1680-1850* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Birmingham 1984) 204.

**Conclusion**

It can be seen that the Religious Orders and Congregations who settled in what would become the Diocese of Middlesbrough came for different reasons: some were English orders re-founding their houses on English soil after the French Revolution; others came to carry out missionary work. The effect of both groups was the same however; they helped to revive a Catholic faith that had become restrained for obvious reasons during the penal times. In a new era, with many more Catholics living in England, a more robust form of the faith was needed, and although, as said above the heart of the debate was what form that more robust faith would take, it seems that in Yorkshire where the religious orders worked alongside the secular priests a synthesis of practice became the norm.

## **2.4: Revolutions 1800-1851**

### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the changes that occurred in the area that became the diocese of Middlesbrough until the mid nineteenth-century. It could be described as the time of Revolutions encompassing as it does the impact of the aftermath of the French Revolution, and the beginnings of the modern Technological Age with its roots in the so-called Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions. The character of the North Riding in particular was irrevocably changed in 1829 by the creation of a large heavily industrialized area on the banks of the River Tees that attracted many people to the area in search of work. By 1878, two-thirds of the Catholic population of the area lived there.

The change within the local manifestation of the Catholic Church necessary to meet the needs of these people could be considered a revolution in itself, combined as it was with the influence of continental Catholicism, political emancipation and from 1850, a restored Hierarchy that tied English Catholicism more closely to the papacy. Revivalism in the Catholic Church will be met in two forms in this chapter; the establishment of new missions indicated a period of growth following emancipation and the increase of confidence within Catholicism. It was not only increase of population growth that enabled this to happen however. An active missionary zeal can be seen at work in the parishes through Jesuits and some French émigré priests. Preaching and pamphlets fuelled intellectual debates, and the work of the Revivalist missionary Luigi Gentili was a major force in forming the new piety,

yet at the same time overtly illustrates the relationship that exists between Catholicism and Evangelicalism.

### **Growth of new Missions 1800-1851**

The Religious census that was held in 1851<sup>1</sup> in conjunction with the decennial census of population gives a clear indication of the physical development of Catholicism in Yorkshire during this period, and allows several conclusions to be drawn. It can be surmised from Fig.9 that the impact of the Industrial Revolution occurred earlier in the West Riding, and that area attracted the majority of the early immigration from Ireland to work in the woollen and textile mills, with many jobs particularly suited to the women and children. The iron industry centred on Middlesbrough had hardly begun, and the missions that were founded prior to 1821 in the whole of Yorkshire were still concentrated in the rural areas, although independent of the gentry's estates that had been the mainstay of Yorkshire Catholicism.

**Fig. 9: Catholic Missions founded in Yorkshire until 1851<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Decade</b>	<b>North Riding</b>	<b>East Riding</b>	<b>West Riding</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Pre 1800</b>	11	4	7	<b>23</b>
<b>1801-1811</b>	2	2	3	<b>7</b>
<b>1811-1821</b>	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>1821-1831</b>	0	1	6	<b>7</b>
<b>1831-41</b>	3	1	6	<b>10</b>
<b>1841-51</b>	3	1	9	<b>12</b>
<b>Not stated</b>			5	<b>5</b>
<b>Totals</b>	20 + Ampleforth	9	36	65 + Ampleforth

This leads on to a second conclusion that can be drawn indirectly from the evidence of the census; the dwindling influence of the gentry on Catholicism in

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2.1 pp.43-48.

<sup>2</sup> Figures obtained from the 1851 census returns, details of which included the date of the opening of a chapel, which for the Catholic Church also meant the establishment of a mission.

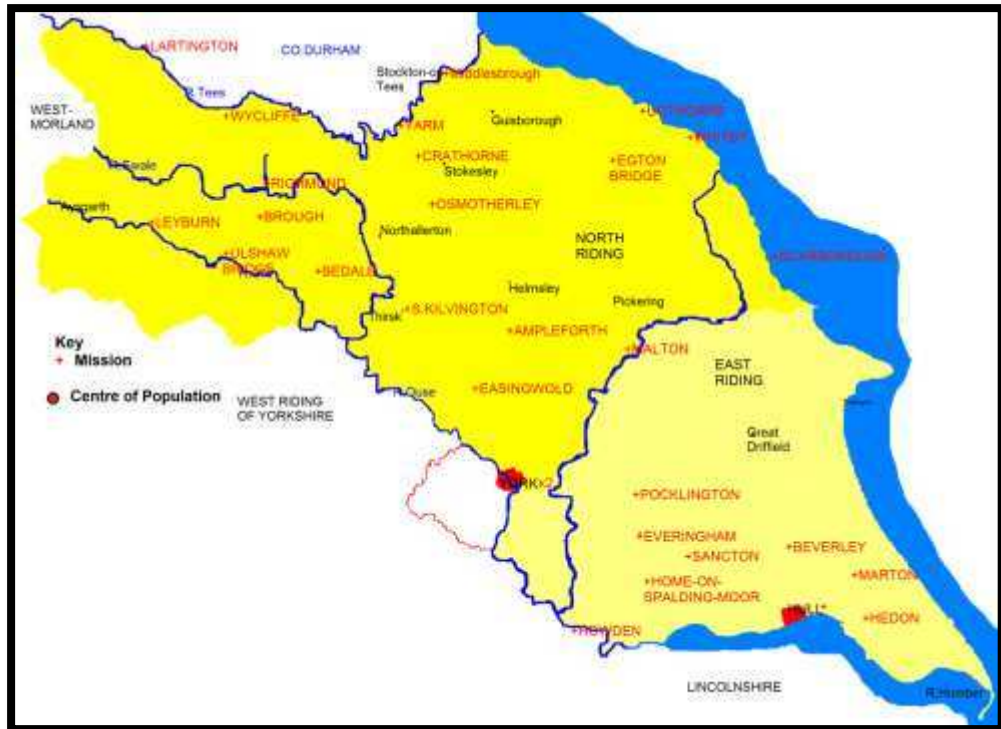
the area. Several more of the old families disappeared during this time, either by dying out, or retrenchment of their assets. The trend of building separate chapels started in the previous century continued; Charles Langdale of Houghton Hall built a separate chapel at Sancton in 1829, to provide for Catholics moving into nearby Market Weighton, and the Lawson family at Brough Hall, similarly built St Paulinus in 1837. The decline of the Fairfax family at Gilling Castle had led indirectly to the establishment of the Benedictine Ampleforth Priory, with its pastoral activities.<sup>3</sup> Other missions were also suffering from a dwindling interest; the Franciscan order, who had looked after Osmotherley throughout the penal era, had been forced to withdraw through lack of manpower and by the time of the census, both that mission and Crathorne were reduced to occasional masses; ‘no regular Mass about seven or eight a year’<sup>4</sup> served by the priest from Stockton-on-Tees. Lartington and Ulshaw Bridge were also without regular masses at that time (See Map 13).

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<sup>3</sup>See also Chapter 2.3 The arrival of the Religious pp.77-81.

<sup>4</sup>Borthwick Archives. ‘Yorkshire Religious Census Returns’ Microfilm ref MFE 117/534.

### Map 13: Missions in 1851



As noted earlier the reliability of the returns need addressing with caution and this includes their reliability as an indicator of Catholic growth. There were, in all probability, errors caused by estimation; for example by entering a round figure as in Middlesbrough, where the priest recorded an attendance of 500 for Mass. At this point in time it cannot be known whether some Mass Stations were missed by the enumerators. For example, it is known that the priest at Middlesbrough rode to Stokesley to say Mass in a local tavern, but there is no Catholic Return.

Your Lordship knows the out towns, Guisbro' 10 miles  
Stokesley 7, Ayton 7, Redcar 8. These all contain Catholics  
and at this time of year are my great dread.<sup>5</sup>

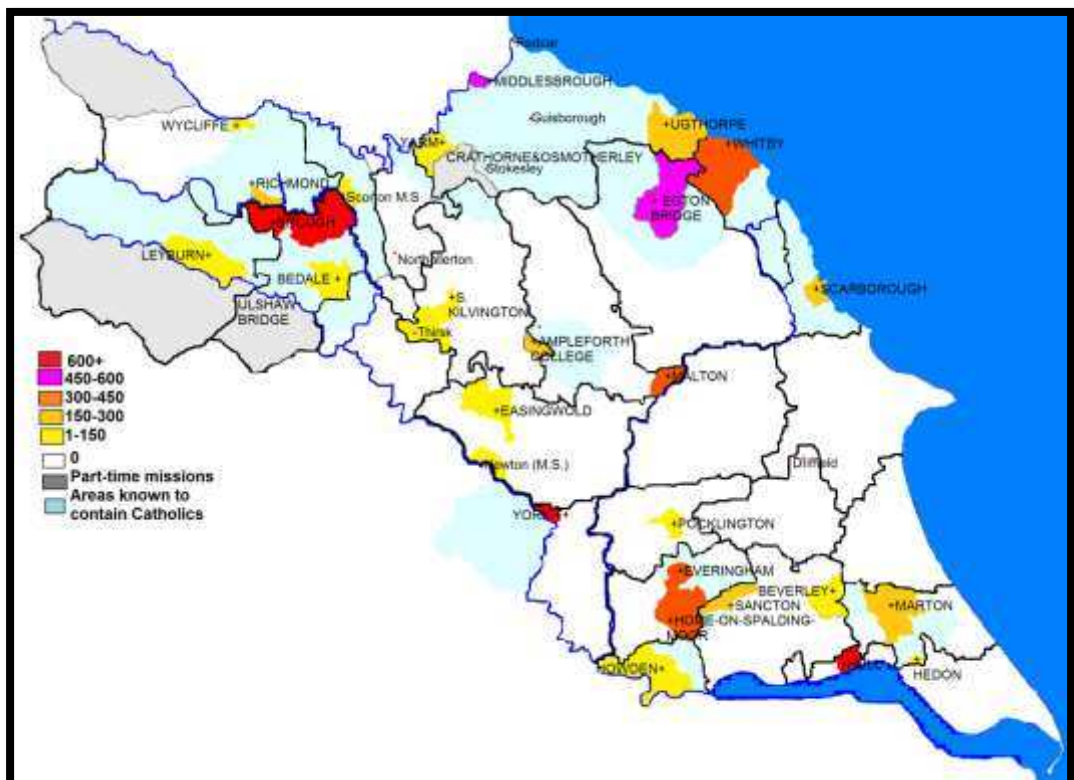
Finally due to fasting regulations then in force, Catholic Mass would only be celebrated during the morning, and the requirement to attend Mass meant it was easier to regard the attendances recorded in the afternoon and evening as

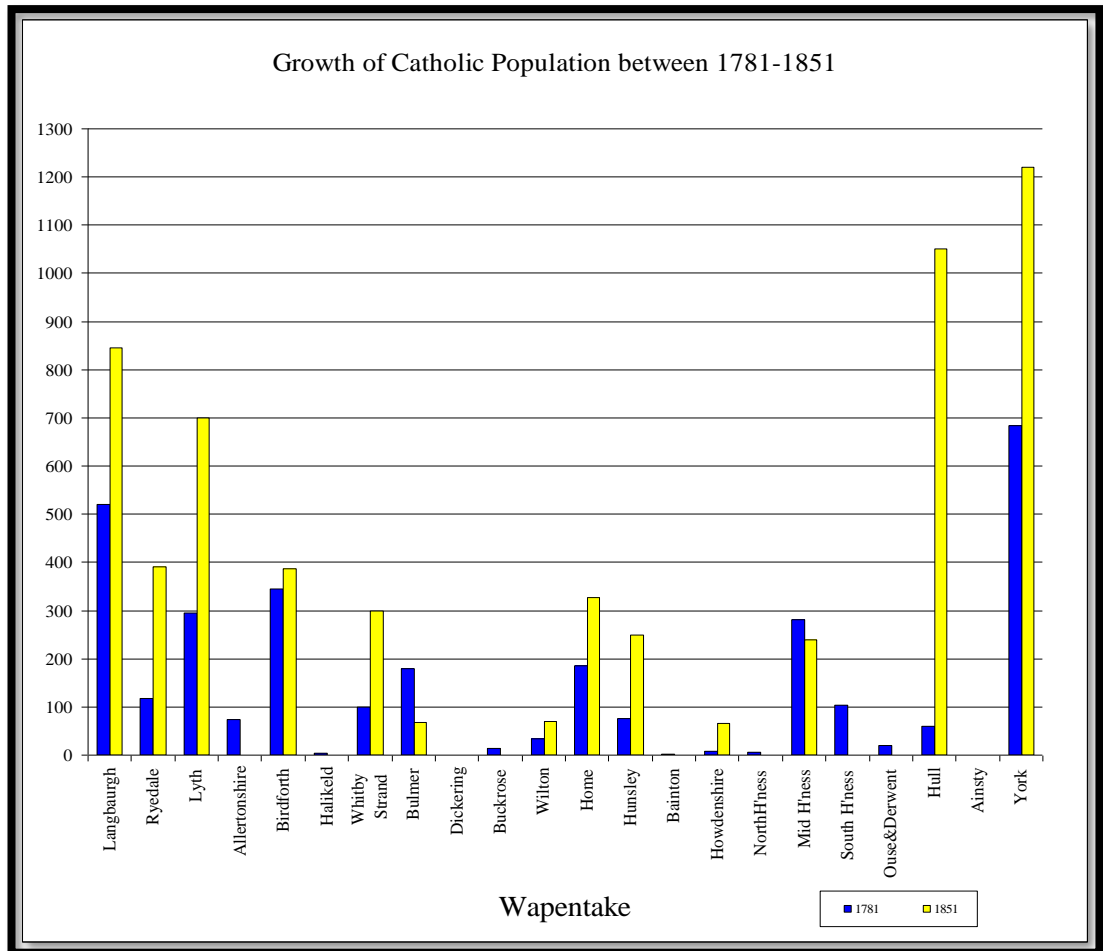
<sup>5</sup> MDA, File N/36. Fr Gibson to Bishop Briggs 13.12.1844.



‘doubles’, and disregard them in terms of estimating the size of the Catholic community. Taking these factors into account, there is no doubt that there had been considerable growth since the passing of the Relief Acts, although there were still areas, particularly in the East Riding where there was no Catholic presence at all (See Fig. 10 and Map 14). This was in part due to the movement away from rural areas by the general population in search of employment in the new Industrial towns; borne out by the large increase in numbers in the towns and the increasing economic deprivation of the countryside as the Agricultural Revolution evolved into the Industrial Revolution.

**Map 14: 1851 Census showing Catholic population**



**Fig. 10: Catholic Population in 1781 and 1851<sup>6</sup>**

### Early Growth: Conversions, Richmond and the Jesuits

Much of the immediate growth of Catholicism after 1800 came from conversions from the local population. In Richmond, for example, during the period between 1815 and 1825, when a Jesuit priest Fr. Robert Johnson SJ was looking after the mission ‘upwards of sixty persons are noted down as in *ecclesiam recepti*’.<sup>7</sup> In 1837, Johnson noted that:

the Rt. Rev. Dr. Briggs, vicar apostolic of the Northern District, gave confirmation in this chapel to the following persons: I do not find it recorded that Confirmation was ever

<sup>6</sup> Figures taken from the 1780 Papist Returns of Yorkshire, which excluded the North-West area between Richmond and Ulshaw Bridge, which was in the Diocese of Chester, and the religious census of 1851.

<sup>7</sup> Payne, J. O., *Old English Catholic Missions* (London 1889) 65.

given in Richmond before this day since the Reformation.  
Rob. Johnson.<sup>8</sup>

Of the fifty-six names given twenty-seven were converts. This is indicative of the charism of the Jesuits, who from their founding by Ignatius Loyola in 1534 were noted for their zeal in enabling conversions and the reconciliation of lapsed Catholics. Loyola was in the forefront of developing a new form of preaching on the continent using his spiritual exercises as a basis for parish missions, although it was the nineteenth-century before they were seen openly in England for the first time in the work of Catholic Revivalist missionaries such as Luigi Gentili a Rosminian.

The Jesuits were very successful in Richmond, a mission that they had served throughout the penal times until the Society was suppressed in 1773. They remained there as secular priests until 1794, and the appointment of a Benedictine monk. In 1814 it was returned to Jesuit care. Study of the registers provided by Payne shows that in comparison to the Jesuit missionaries, the Benedictine was more concerned with caring for the faithful, rather than conversion, which is indicative of the different charisms of the two groups. Success was aided in two ways, firstly by the use of education. Fr. Johnson opened a Sunday school in 1818 'for the instruction of poor children in reading, writing and the elements of their religion'.<sup>9</sup> By 1838, he was able also to open a day school; both institutions were undeniable attractions for parents with a latent faith to become more involved with its practice to ensure a basic education for their children. A second factor was the erection of a purpose-built

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Wyman, V. and Minskip, D., *A History of the Catholic mission at Richmond (1724 to the Present)* (York and Richmond 1992) citing Clarkson, C., *History and Antiquities of Richmond* (Richmond 1821) 208-9.

chapel in 1806 by Sir John Lawson; its description reveals the increasing confidence of Catholics to be open about their religion:

The chapel was ‘a neat stone building, about seventy-five feet long by twenty-five within the walls, well fitted up with forms and seats, and [able to] contain about two hundred persons.’ It contained a very fine ‘Tribune window’ depicting the Crucifixion... Another picture of the Crucifixion hung over the altar.<sup>10</sup>

In 1854 as the Catholic population continued to grow, the church was extended and a ‘beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary’, another stained glass window and an organ were incorporated into its features.<sup>11</sup> All of these indicate a growing influence from the continent, which in Richmond came from the arrival of the Sisters of the Assumption in 1850<sup>12</sup>.

The mission in Richmond could trace its roots back unbroken to the Reformation and the evangelical zeal of its pastor, which drew upon the ideals of his Jesuit Order, was paramount in its success. Many towns like Pocklington, in the East Riding, had no such tradition, and its nineteenth century history is very different.

### **Early Growth: Pocklington, Whitby and the émigré priests**

Pocklington a town on the main route between York and Hull, was surrounded by the houses of local Catholic gentry; Everingham, Holme Hall and Houghton Hall. Founded originally in 1790, by a French émigré priest, Abbé Foucher who probably said mass in a hired room; by 1807 a small independent chapel had been given by Miss Constable of Everingham. It was at this chapel that the future Archbishop William Ullathorne received his first early Catholic formation:

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Wyman and Minskip, Richmond 11.

<sup>12</sup> See pp82-83.

There was a little chapel at Pocklington with only two windows in it...The priest was the Abbé Fidele, a venerable French emigrant, long remembered there... for his piety, simplicity and charity. He used to kneel before the little altar in a Welsh or worsted wig, saying his prayers...he then rose up and entered the vestry, where in the sight of the little flock he pulled off his wig, powdered his head, and came in vested with his two servers for the Mass. I was told at a later period that he had four written sermons, and that when he had read the first words of one of them the congregation knew the rest by heart.<sup>13</sup>

By 1815, the Ullathorne family had left Pocklington, moving to Scarborough where it was felt that business would be better. The mission at Pocklington was also in a state of decline, unable to raise enough money from the congregation alone to keep a priest without the aid of its benefactress. By 1825 it had ceased to be mentioned in the *Laity's Directory*,<sup>14</sup> and Abbé Fidele himself donated money in 1830 for investment towards the benefit of the 'poor Catholic chapel of Pocklington'. In 1832, he wrote to the Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Penswick to tell him of the gift and encouraged him to gain the assistance of local gentry in order to add to the bequest and once more maintain a priest in the town. By 1850, Pocklington was being served by the chaplain from Everingham, but it was not until 1863 that a permanent appointment was once more made to the mission, and a new church provided.

The early history of the mission at Pocklington does introduce another aspect of the influences upon Catholicism in the area; namely the aftermath of the French Revolution and the arrival of the émigré priests. Strictly speaking this term is inaccurate as rather than leaving France of their own free will, the priests were deported by the Authorities for refusing to accept the new constitutional French church on the grounds that it was schismatic. It is hard to

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<sup>13</sup> Drane, A.; (ed.) *The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne* (London 1891) 2ff.

<sup>14</sup> An annual guide as to places where Mass was said.

know just how many French priests came to this area; Bellenger claims that there were ninety-four in Scarborough during 1796, and another forty-eight in York.<sup>15</sup> However local Mission records reveal that only twenty-three can be definitely identified as having a role in the North and East Yorkshire Catholic community during the span of twenty years that the majority of émigrés spent in exile.<sup>16</sup> This is a reflection of the situation of the émigrés throughout the country; they preferred to stay together in diocesan groups and remain aloof from the English Catholic Church: they ‘lived out their years in exile without external work and without excitement’<sup>17</sup>. Even when in a mission many behaved like Abbé Fidele at Pocklington, although greatly loved he remained a Frenchman; he communicated in his native language even in his retirement, he only had four sermons in English, and his ritualised behaviour before Mass were believed to be the actions of a Frenchman not an Englishman.

Pocklington is also an example of one of the failings that the English held against the émigrés, until the passing of time gave the period a rosier glow; a remembrance of help given in a time of clerical shortage. It was felt that the French émigrés started missions in places that were not viable in the long run thus rousing the expectations of the local laity, but when the situation in France eased, left without a backward glance, leaving the new missions to decline until an English priest could be found to renew it. That on the whole, the émigrés were directed to missions by the Vicars Apostolic seemed to be ignored.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Bellenger, A., *French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789* (Downside 1986) 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> Amongst the sources consulted were Payne op cit. Kelly op cit. Bellenger *French Exiled Clergy* and the list of priests who have served in the area covered by the Diocese of Middlesbrough, maintained by the Vicar General at the Curial Offices of the Diocese of Middlesbrough.

<sup>17</sup> Bellenger, D A., ‘The French Exiled Clergy in the North East.’ *Northern Catholic History* 12 Spring 1980 24.

<sup>18</sup> See Aveling, J.C.H., *The Handle and the Axe* (London 1976) 318.

Whitby also was a town where the local Catholic population would have probably remained under the care of the priest from Egton, if it were not for the presence of some French priests who could speak English, and were willing to work amongst the English Catholics relying on their pensions to keep themselves. The most notable of the French priests at Whitby was Abbé Nicolas Gilbert, who became missionary at Whitby in 1803, and gained a reputation as an able controversialist. The closeness of the émigré community was still an important factor in his life however, as indicated by Ullathorne in his autobiography:

Other French emigrant priests occasionally visited our house, [in Pocklington] and I remember one was Dr. Gilbert, a man of great dignity of bearing, who told us dreadful narratives of his escapes from the guillotine.<sup>19</sup>

The astuteness of the Vicars Apostolic in placing the émigré priests in coastal areas, as evidenced by the development of missions by them in both Whitby and Hull was twofold: Firstly, their use of the French language would ease the way for foreign mariners to attend Mass when in port, and secondly would not upset the English priests as much as the loss of the gentry missions to the French priests, with the resulting loss of support to the local mission. Although this seems not to have been a problem in Yorkshire, both Bellenger and Aveling record the contemporary unease felt by the native Catholic priests towards the French.<sup>20</sup>

The early history of the Mission at Whitby comes from a note in the Registers:

About 1774, there was not above 15 and in 1803, perhaps 70 – only 42 in y<sup>c</sup> Red Book- comm. at Whitby meeting in private houses till April 10, 1805, when y<sup>e</sup> new chapel was

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<sup>19</sup> Drane. Ullathorne 6.

<sup>20</sup> See Bellenger, French Clergy 54 and Aveling, The Handle and the Axe 318.

blessed: at Easter, 1815, there seem to have been 184 comm. at Mr Gilbert's- 1816 about 160 who applied to Messrs Woodcock and Haydock and in 1817 to y<sup>e</sup> latter stationed at Whitby since July 15, 1816.<sup>21</sup>

This brief note hides the fact that the mission was staffed only by French émigré priests until 1815 when it became safe for them to return home and where Abbé Gilbert became noted for 'his zeal in preaching missions ... He attacked with much force the doctrines of the revolution.'<sup>22</sup> Trained in Paris for foreign missions Gilbert's writings display the missionary ideal of putting across a clear explanation of Catholic teaching with the express aim of making converts. He also initiated a pamphlet dialogue with the local Wesleyan Methodist minister originally in order:

to refute the misrepresentation and calumnies, which this pamphlet [a reissue of John Wesley's *A word to a Protestant*] is intended to disseminate against our doctrines and principles<sup>23</sup>

This correspondence gave rise to an accusation that Gilbert had introduced controversy into the town, a charge he vehemently denied.<sup>24</sup> By means of public letters to his congregation, Gilbert furnished local Catholics with the basic theology of the Catholic faith, to enable them to refute the points made by the Methodists, thus making them probably some of the most theologically-educated laity in England; but he was also concerned to deepen their faith in other ways and produced a small manual of devotions<sup>25</sup> for the Sabbath, mainly composed or chosen by him to go alongside and 'improve' Challoner's *Garden of the Soul* by means of providing, for example:

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<sup>21</sup> Payne, *Catholic Missions* 78.

<sup>22</sup> See Nicholson, W., 'Nicholas Alain Gilbert; French Émigré priest 1762-1821' in *Northern Catholic History* 12 Autumn 1980.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert, N., *An Answer to the Rev. John Wesley's Misrepresentations of the Catholic Doctrines*. (Whitby 1811).

<sup>24</sup> Gilbert, N., *A Second letter to the Catholics of Whitby* (Whitby 1813) 5.

<sup>25</sup> Haydock, G., (ed.) *The Method of Sanctifying the Sabbath day at Whitby and Scarborough etc. by the late Rev N. A. Gilbert M.Pr.* (York 1824).



a still greater variety of Psalms etc... perhaps more agreeable to those who dislike paraphrases of the scripture (howsoever instructive to some, and generally adopted in French prayer-books) or, who would adhere invariably to BISHOP CHALLONER'S Vulgate version, though it may surely be improved.<sup>26</sup>

A controversial aspect of the influence of émigrés upon English Catholicism is the charge that they brought with them Jansenist ideas that created a rigidness and narrow outlook in their followers. It should be pointed out that Gilbert himself stands accused of introducing Jansenism, for he drew up the new Constitution for the Bar Convent in York around 1816, at the request of its Mother Superior enforcing enclosure, and transferring overall authority of the Community to the local Vicar Apostolic.<sup>27</sup> That these Constitutions were not typical of his work in general was explored when examining the revival of monastic and religious life in England that in many ways was the major force of change in the area resulting from the French Revolution, together with the resumption of seminary education in England which will be considered next.

### **Early Growth: Hedon and a new outlook**

The new mission at Hedon in South Holderness was established in 1804 to replace a much older mission at Nuthill Farm in the neighbouring parish of Burstwick. No records survive to explain why the change was made; but it is known that a priest resided at Hedon, the population of the borough was beginning to increase and it was situated at the centre point of the turnpike road between Hull and the remainder of the isolated South Holderness Peninsula making it a busy commuter centre.

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<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., 2.

<sup>27</sup> See p 74.

It would seem then that the move into the town was an example of the growing confidence of the Yorkshire Catholic Community to establish a more obvious presence in the county and a response to the movement of the population into the towns. Local folklore would appear to contradict this by asserting that an attempt was made to disguise the new church by building it of brick, in a simple fashion and in a secluded position. However the norm of the times was to build in a simple manner using a local material (which in Hedon was red brick)<sup>28</sup> Moreover, in Hedon, as with many other new chapels, existing dwellings on the land were utilised to make Presbyteries with the chapel being built in the garden behind it.

**Fig. 11: The church at Hedon**



The land at Hedon was bought by a group of four priests, including Joseph Swinburne who served his entire ministry in the mission and had moved its centre from Nuthill to Hedon. Along with one of his fellow purchasers,

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<sup>28</sup> As was the chapel at Marton built in 1774 and St Charles Borromeo, Hull built in 1829.

William Croskell, and George Haydock, who moved to Whitby in 1815, Joseph Swinburne had begun his priestly formation at the English College at Douai, and had it interrupted by the French Revolution and the closure and confiscation of the College by the French authorities in October 1793. The loss of Douai was felt to be an incipient disaster for upon it depended, not only a considerable proportion of the financial resources of the English Catholic Church, but also:

the welfare...of the English mission, which had received its supply of priests principally from that establishment. If...it was unfortunately lost, from what other source could the necessary supply of priests be obtained?...The secular establishments abroad did not supply collectively as many priests for the English Mission as the one effective college at Douai. It was then the hope and main prop of the Catholics of England.<sup>29</sup>

Whether this was a true picture of the state of affairs at Douai in 1793 is debatable, as the college was just starting to emerge from a period of maladministration and financial difficulty that occurred during the presidency of William Gibson and that had brought criticism and a lessening of support for the college from the clergy in England.<sup>30</sup>

The loss of the French colleges meant that alternative provision had to be made in England for the education of new priests. The Vicars Apostolic moved quickly to establish colleges for their students, and by 1794, the Northern District students were gathered together at Crook Hall, the forerunner of Ushaw. At its closure, Douai had on roll eighty-nine students, of whom thirty-four were seminarians. Twenty-two of these subsequently were ordained to

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<sup>29</sup> Penswick, J., 'The Reign of Terror' in Gillow, J., (ed.) *The Haydock Papers* (London 1888) 112.

<sup>30</sup> Milburn, D., *A History of Ushaw College* (Durham 1966) 12-25 for an account of the presidency of William Gibson (1781-90).

serve in the Northern District, which underlies the importance of Douai for the local mission.

The education provided by Douai was progressive in that it became the first college to educate sons of the gentry who were not looking towards priesthood, alongside the seminarians, and this dual training became a feature of the other foundations and was continued in the early English seminaries. This also allowed the Vicars Apostolic to circumvent the confused provisions of the Second Catholic Relief Act that on one hand stated that Catholics who took the oath could teach, but on the other hand stated:

that nothing in this Act contained shall make it lawful to found, endow, or establish any Religious order or society of persons bound by monastic or religious vows, or to found, endow or establish any School, Academy or College by persons professing the Roman Catholic Religion.<sup>31</sup>

It was a clause generally taken to refer to seminaries and no legal challenge was ever mounted against the foundations; but the Trustees of the colleges remained nervous, especially when, in 1816 the compensation paid by the French Government to the English Catholic Church for the loss of Douai, was kept by the British Government due to the fact it might be used for ‘superstitious purposes’.

The establishment of the mission at Hedon was in many ways the direct result of the events of the French Revolution, in that its priest, Joseph Swinburne gained a greater knowledge of his home country and the needs of the Catholic community than had been the case since the colleges were established in exile in the aftermath of the Reformation. Completing his training in County Durham, adjacent to part of a new industrial heartland, he and his fellow

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<sup>31</sup> Second Catholic Relief Act (1791) Clause XV.

students could observe that the nature of the English Mission was changing to focus on the towns. This, together with the freedom afforded by the easing of the penal laws would inaugurate a new type of missionary activity centred on reviving and revitalizing the faith of Catholics in a new environment of hostility – that of urban deprivation and industrial slavery.

### **Middlesbrough: A child of the Industrial Revolution 1829-1851**

A less obvious link between the last students of Douai and the gaining of full Emancipation for English Catholics in 1829 lies in the fact that Daniel O'Connell, 'the Liberator' was a student there until January 1793. He subsequently founded the Irish Catholic Association that along with the Catholic Board in England agitated for the full emancipation of Catholics. His victory at the County Clare elections in 1828 provided the stimulus for the passing of the *Act for the Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects* in 1829 that effectively negated the penal laws remaining on the statute book, although they were not fully repealed until 1844. It did, however allow lay Catholics to take a full part in the civic life of the country, although restrictions were placed upon where the clergy could minister and ecclesiastical dress was banned in public.

In that same year, land for a new port on the River Tees was bought by the Tees Coal Company, which owned mines in the South Durham Coalfield; part of that industrial heartland that informed the students of Ushaw as to the new nature of the Catholic Mission. The new town of Middlesbrough was situated behind the staithes of the port, and built to a simple grid pattern of four main roads radiating off a central square. The Quaker owners laid down strict rules

of living standards and conduct for the townspeople, reflecting their own ideal of ‘loving one’s neighbour as oneself’, but within a few years, it became clear that these were being ignored. Public houses could be found on every street despite a ban on alcohol, and substandard housing was being erected in every conceivable place to accommodate the rapidly growing population that had increased from 150 in the census of 1831 to over 5,463 in 1841.<sup>32</sup>

It was 1838 before a mass station was established for the Catholic population, meeting in an upper room, and until 1842 it was served from Stockton-upon-Tees. In the following years, the provision for mass moved to several other locations within the town whilst the Catholic community searched for land and the finance with which to build a permanent chapel, a task not achieved until 1847 (Fig. 12).

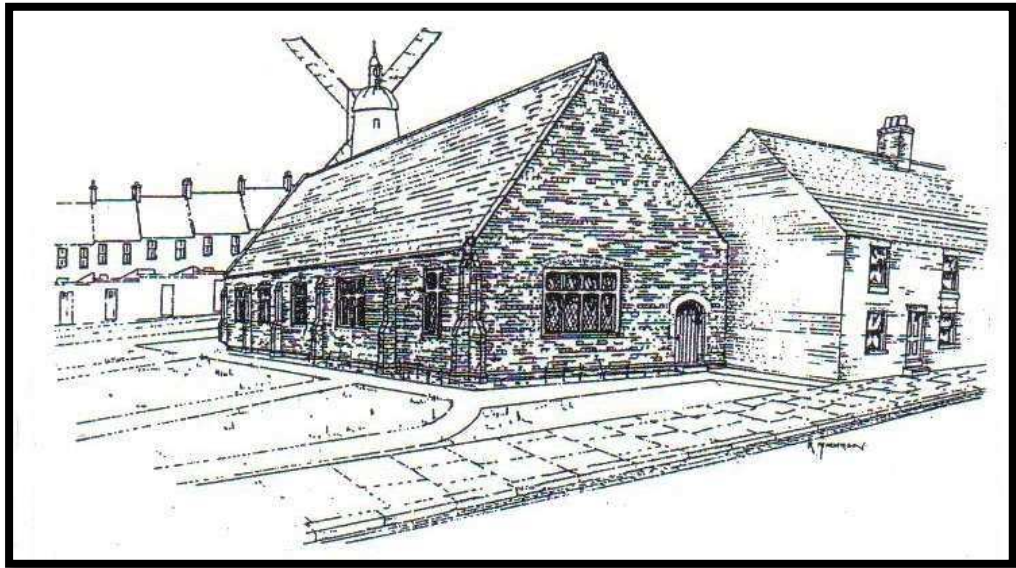
This highlights some of the difficulties faced by the English Catholic Church generally in establishing itself in new urban missions. In the case of Middlesbrough, there was little interest from the remaining gentry for a small but growing industrial centre situated on the River Tees, at the farthest reach of Yorkshire, if indeed they were aware of it:

The country and town parishes were very separate, and few of the old squires who were dismayed by the nests of factory chimneys could discern a new Catholic life developing behind the smoke and the iron wheels.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Turnham, *From Emancipation to Aggiornamento 1829 – 1968* (Unpublished M.Th Thesis University of Wales Lampeter 2007) for a more detailed study.

<sup>33</sup> Mathew, D., *Catholicism in England* (London 1948. [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] 186.

**Fig. 12: Chapel at Middlesbrough 1847**

Similarly the growing Catholic middle-classes preferred to support their own missions and poorer members, and had little or no interest in the new town with its overwhelmingly poor congregation.

The building of a new town also attracted itinerant unskilled migrant workers from Ireland. Contrary to popular supposition that immigration from Ireland only began when the famines wreaked havoc with its economy, there was a well-established practice of economic immigration throughout most of the first half of the nineteenth century, first to the countryside, and later into the towns. In Middlesbrough, 48% of the Catholic population in 1841 was Irish.<sup>34</sup> However, the discovery of workable ironstone in the Cleveland Hills in 1850 led to the development of a major iron industry that at its height contributed over a third of Britain's entire iron output. The ironworks began to spread along the whole lower reaches of the River Tees, and unskilled workers, especially the Irish, poured into the town to form a new and greatly expanded

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<sup>34</sup> See Turnham, *Op. cit.*, 80-82.

workforce. By 1851 the proportion of Irish amongst Catholics in the town had risen to 72% and this in itself proved problematic for the priest:

If my poor people, instead of been [sic] driven from their native home before they had acquired the rudiments of Christianity and afterwards compelled to wander about from place to place in quest of a livelihood, nearly always mixing with the infidel and the libertine ... if they had passed even the years of their ... youth where they could be trained in religious knowledge and practice, the trials of poverty would lose half their bitterness.<sup>35</sup>

An itinerant and largely male population made it hard to build a sustainable and identifiable community. The heavy physical work in the Ironworks meant there were few jobs suitable for the women, making it hard for them to find ways of supplementing the family income. In other parts of Yorkshire, work was available in the mills, thus attracting the families and therefore the women who were more likely to take the lead in matters spiritual. It also made it difficult to raise the money for a permanent chapel, the presence of which was even more vital in a situation such as Middlesbrough that had quickly developed a high level of social problems. The presence of a chapel with regular services, instruction and devotions enabled the priest to become a figure of authority and leadership amongst the Catholic community as well as providing a focus for combating the non-practice of the faith by many of the new arrivals who claimed a degree of Catholicity.

### **Hull: Establishment of a Catholic centre in a Protestant Town**

The establishment of Catholicism in Hull followed a different pattern to that of Middlesbrough. As noted in chapter 2.2, following the Gordon Riots the priest from Marton continued to travel to the town to offer a sacramental ministry to a

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<sup>35</sup> Letter by Rev Andrew Burns, priest at Middlesbrough to The Tablet 13.02.1858.



small group of Catholics; but it was not until 1798 that another attempt was made to establish a permanent mission in the town, this time successfully. Its catalyst and benefactor was Abbé Pierre Foucher, who was moved from Pocklington to Hull by the Vicar Apostolic. Foucher later noted that when he arrived in Hull, he found a congregation of about forty, yet within a year he had built a chapel and house by using his own money.<sup>36</sup> The poverty of the congregation meant that he

lived five years at his own expense, before there was any income, and together with what he has at different times sunk in the building, he has expended above £2000 of his own money to maintain himself, since he first came to Hull.<sup>37</sup>

By the time Foucher left Hull to return to France in 1820 he left ‘a numerous congregation and a fine establishment.’<sup>38</sup> There were also vestments and a painting of the Nativity that he had brought with him from France, which he used as the altar-piece. During the years he was in Hull, the town was transformed from a small river port and garrison town into one of the main ports of the country, shipping goods from the North and Midlands into Europe. Alongside this went a burgeoning whaling industry, all of which provided employment for local people living on the Holderness peninsula. Catholicism had to advance in the face of persistent suspicion from both Anglicans and Methodists, both of whom maintained a strict evangelical tradition. In terms of numbers it was helped by the establishment of cotton-mills, and by 1834 average attendance at Mass had risen to around 450.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Payne, J. O., *Catholic Missions* 69-70.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Gibbons, J., ‘Irish Immigration into mid-Nineteenth-Century Hull’ in Markham, J., (ed.) *Keeping Faith. 700 years of Catholic Life in Hull* (1999 Beverley) 49.

However, the passing of the 1829 Emancipation Act brought about two very different reactions in the town. Firstly it ignited vehement hostility from the evangelically-minded Anglicans, who feared the growth of Catholic influence upon the Established Church as a result of the new political power granted to Catholics. Petitions were submitted to Parliament during the time the Bill was being debated, and a large protest meeting held in the shadow of the gold equestrian statue of William III, erected in the previous century as a symbol of Hull's loyal Protestantism.<sup>40</sup> The argument put forward was that although religious freedom was an important concept, Roman Catholics could not be trusted with civil power, as they were under foreign influence and had no liberty of their own. To the relief of Catholics, no violence was perpetrated against them as had occurred in 1780, and a period of relative calm followed, with only occasional reports of anti-Catholic feeling.

The Catholic response to their emancipation was to open a new church as the chapel was felt to be inadequate

for the increased state of the congregation, particularly of the lower classes of society, and of the Catholics who for several years past have formed a considerable portion of the military stationed at this place.<sup>41</sup>

The new church, which was built of rough brickwork with a small entrance on the west side, did not please the congregation who used the local press to criticise the building as resembling a non-conformist chapel and not in keeping with the increased prosperity of the town. The dispute grew so heated, that the Vicar Apostolic closed the mission for two months to allow a period of cooling

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<sup>40</sup> Stublely, P., 'Catholicism in nineteenth-century Hull' in Markham, J., (ed.) *Keeping the Faith* (Beverley 1999) 81.

<sup>41</sup> MDA .File Hull/St Charles'Borromeo/1. Letter from congregation to potential benefactors 1824.

off. When the interdict was lifted a new priest, Joseph Render was appointed. He secured the money to enlarge and decorate the church; completed in 1835 it resulted in a Catholic chapel that was unique to the area at that time. It broke with the characteristic restraint of Catholic architecture and was a testament to a newly emerging sense of Catholic triumphalism.

**Fig. 13: St Charles Borromeo Hull<sup>42</sup>**



Like Abbé Gilbert in Whitby earlier, Render was noted for his preaching, which made many converts, and he also was a fine controversialist, particularly engaging with an Irish Protestant, Pastor Kerny. In order to deliver his evening lectures refuting the anti-Catholic polemic of Kerny, Render further improved the chapel by introducing gas lighting into the church.

Up to that time there had been no service in the evening – only afternoon prayers – and for confession on Saturday nights the penitents took their own candles!<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Pictured in 1970 but is very like the church in 1835.

The same writer also indicates the rate of growth of the Mission under Render: Upon his arrival in Hull, there was only one mass on Sunday, and afternoon prayers; later an early morning mass was added, and by 1848 an assistant priest was also necessary.

Although there had been an Irish presence in the town before the famine, much of it was brought about by the presence of the military, as noted in the letter of 1824. From 1845 onwards the numbers increased considerably as the immigrants were attracted by the establishment of cotton spinning and weaving industry, which provided work for the women, and the docks which provided unskilled labour for the men. By the time of the religious census in 1851, the numbers attending mass in Hull had risen from 40 at the beginning of the century, to 1020, and plans were being made to open another chapel in the area of the town where most of the Irish had congregated.

### **York: A town of contrasts**

To a large extent the Industrial Revolution passed York by, and the city was in a state of decline for much of the first half of the nineteenth century. The economic activity of the city continued to be selling goods and services, drawing upon the surrounding farming culture. As a result there was little scope for large-scale industrial employment, but this did not prevent an influx of immigrants into the city, first from the countryside, and from 1845, Ireland. They congregated in the most deprived areas such as Walmgate that already exhibited the same characteristics of deprivation as the industrial towns; viz.

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<sup>43</sup> MDA. File Hull/St Charles'Borromeo/1. Anon. Brochure of St Charles Grand Bazaar/ The Pastors of St Charles', Hull (April 1902).

high densities of population, low incomes, and poor standards of living coupled with serious public health issues.

The rise of other Northern cities, such as Leeds and Bradford, increased the problems that York was facing in terms of new investment coming into the city to help alleviate some of the problems. In 1833, at a public meeting in the town, the 'passing of the late period when the city was chiefly supported by the resident gentry with their families who came to reside among us'<sup>44</sup> was mourned, and later in that year a complaint was made to the Commissioners of the Municipal Corporation that 'Everything is going away from us and nothing is coming'.<sup>45</sup> However, there was one aspect of industrialization that York did embrace, and that was the railway, which arrived in York in 1839. A year later, a route to London was inaugurated, and by 1853, the town was the focal point of a rail communications network that ran in all directions. By then however, the problem of poverty was deep-rooted in the town and it was not until the early twentieth-century that steps were taken to improve the situation.

It was inevitable that the problems of the city impinged also upon its Catholic community, the shape of which changed dramatically over the first half of the century. The gentry were moving their town houses to London, a practice that became ever more prevalent after the railway developed. The original chapel at Little Blake Street that served the remainder of the Catholic population was replaced in 1802, the money being raised by public subscription, and the private finances of its priest, Joseph Gillow. Like many of the other early

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<sup>44</sup> Tillot, P.M., (ed.) 'Modern York: Economy, 1800-38' *A History of the County of York: the City of York* (1961) 256-262. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=36356>. Date accessed: 03 March 2008.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

chapels described above the York chapel was built in the style of a non-conformist place of worship:

A handsome brick building of modern architecture...and capable of containing 700 persons. It comprises a very large gallery neatly fitted up, also an organ gallery or loft, with other requisite appendages. Attached to the chapel are likewise convenient apartments for the residence of the officiating pastor.<sup>46</sup>

However, a later description of the chapel written in 1857 gives the impression of a more ornate and elegant building with:

...full length frescoes in and about the sanctuary... Over the vestry doors are two full lengths of St. Peter and St. Paul, and some allegorical subjects. The ceiling of the sanctuary is richly decorated. There is a commodious gallery at the west end, and on the south side is a small gallery or loft for the organ and choir.<sup>47</sup>

Whether the decoration was original or added at a later date is not known; but the present writer would conjecture that it was added later, as it bears the hallmarks of the neo-gothic style of architecture that dates from later than the original building of the chapel, and the fact that Hargrove did not remark upon it. He did comment that the congregation were ‘highly respectable as a body’; but in 1811 Joseph Gillow seemed reluctant to move without a named successor: he describes the congregation as ‘respectable and numerous’ but they were also vocal and took offence at being left even for a short time without a priest:

I have always been ready to start whenever your Lordship set me at liberty by sending some respectable Person to the far most respectable congregation in your district. I can assure your Lordship that it is the universal opinion of the clergy and laity that I cannot, without injuring my character, leave such a numerous congregation without a Pastor... I am sorry your Lordship is not aware of the uproar it would cause far

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<sup>46</sup> Hargrove, W., ‘History and Description of the ancient City of York Vol. 3’ (1818) 4 quoted in Minskip, D., .A new History of *St Wilfred’s*, Mission York (York 2001) 6.

<sup>47</sup> Whellan, T., History and Topography of the City of York Vol. 1 (Beverley 1857) 573 .

and near should I leave my People without a proper substitute.<sup>48</sup>

It would seem that several of the congregation, though not gentry, had absorbed the latter's supposition that it was their right to have a chaplain or priest to provide the sacraments for them, and they were not afraid to speak out. Another consideration that comes through in the correspondence is that they were somewhat unwilling to pay for the upkeep of their priest. The chapel still had a debt upon it, and one of Gillow's concerns seemed to be that like him, his successor had a private income. Ultimately it was agreed that the bench rents be doubled in order to pay off the debt and provide the new priest, Benedict Rayment with an income.

Rayment was a scholar who had published many translations of foreign spiritual works; he also provided for his congregation a manual offering practical advice on the spiritual life.<sup>49</sup> He continued with the strong musical tradition that had developed, including a sung High Mass on Sundays. By 1838, Hargrove was reporting that:

the Catholics have...greatly increased in York during the last twenty years, and it is now contemplated to take down the present chapel, and to build a very large and elegant...Church in its place.<sup>50</sup>

Although the registers show that there had been growth in the mission, for example, the annual rate of baptisms had doubled in the first thirty years of the century, to average about 60; the largest attended Mass recorded in 1837 was 450 persons, in a chapel that held seven hundred. It was not lack of room that prompted the wish for a new building; perhaps the real explanation was pride

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<sup>48</sup> LDA. William Gibson papers. doc. 697.

<sup>49</sup> See MDA: File York St Wilfred Books (2).

<sup>50</sup> Hargrove, 'The New Guide' (1838) quoted Minskip 3.

and the desire for a more prominent building, especially as the new Vicar Apostolic, John Briggs, had established his residence on the outskirts of the city.

### **Revivalism 1845-1848**

John Briggs looked after Yorkshire as both Vicar Apostolic and later Bishop of Beverley. He appeared to be the quintessential old English Catholic, and Wiseman seemed unfairly to suspect him of rejecting the Ultramontane agenda.<sup>51</sup> Whatever Briggs's feelings about the Papacy were, in matters spiritual he became a firm advocate of new practices that were gradually infiltrating into English Catholicism from the continent. He also became a firm supporter of the itinerant preaching missionaries especially Luigi Gentili, a Rosminian and a controversial character in that his travels around England gave him a unique perspective on English Catholicism. He regularly sent reports to Propaganda at its request. His supporters claim this was to enable the Holy See to obtain a complete picture of the situation in England in order to help their decision making, particularly about whether to restore the Hierarchy.<sup>52</sup> Others felt that he was acting as a spy wishing to make the English Church Italianate, and was therefore completely untrustworthy.<sup>53</sup> English priests who had been summoned to retreats given by him felt like John Lingard that

It appears to me to require a face of brass...for a foreigner to come forward and constitute himself the teacher and reformer of a whole national clergy, and in short of all, both clergy and

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<sup>51</sup> After Briggs's death in 1861, Wiseman seemed to indicate that his successor Robert Cornthwaite was preferable as he 'was a good man and thoroughly Roman, which nowadays is a very necessary qualification' in Cwiekowski, F. J., *The English Bishops and the first Vatican Council* (Louvain 1971) 52.

<sup>52</sup> Leetham, C., *Luigi Gentili*, (London 1965) 277-8.

<sup>53</sup> Schiefen, R., *Nicholas Wiseman* (Shepherdstown 1984) 135.



laity. What can he know of our people, their habits, their circumstances and wants, and the peculiar conduct to be observed by them, mixed as they are...would he make us Italians?<sup>54</sup>

For his part Gentili had a low opinion of the situation that he found in England on his arrival in 1835; it was only later that he discovered that within Catholicism ‘many things he had formerly attributed to sluggishness were to be ascribed to prudence.’<sup>55</sup>

The Church of England was in disorder and likely to break up, he was very impressed with zeal of the Methodists who made numerous converts...Catholics had no zeal; if they only had half as much as the Dissenters, they would soon make progress. Priests only said mass when their duties so required. Most of the day churches were closed and they did not even have a light before the Blessed Sacrament. They did not have public Rosary... sermons were cold and appealed only to the mind.<sup>56</sup>

In general, Gentili has been credited with bringing many unknown Catholic practices into England, such as public processions of the Blessed Sacrament, the May devotions, the Quarant’Ore and blessed medals. He tried to end what he saw as Jansenist practices that prevented frequent communion and promoted the regular Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. His biographer claims that ‘Gentili was not substituting post-Tridentine customs in a liturgical country, he was bringing colour to a bleak climate of religious practice.’<sup>57</sup>

Gentili’s Revivalist zeal had much in common with the Transatlantic Revivalism of James Caughey who was working in Yorkshire during the same

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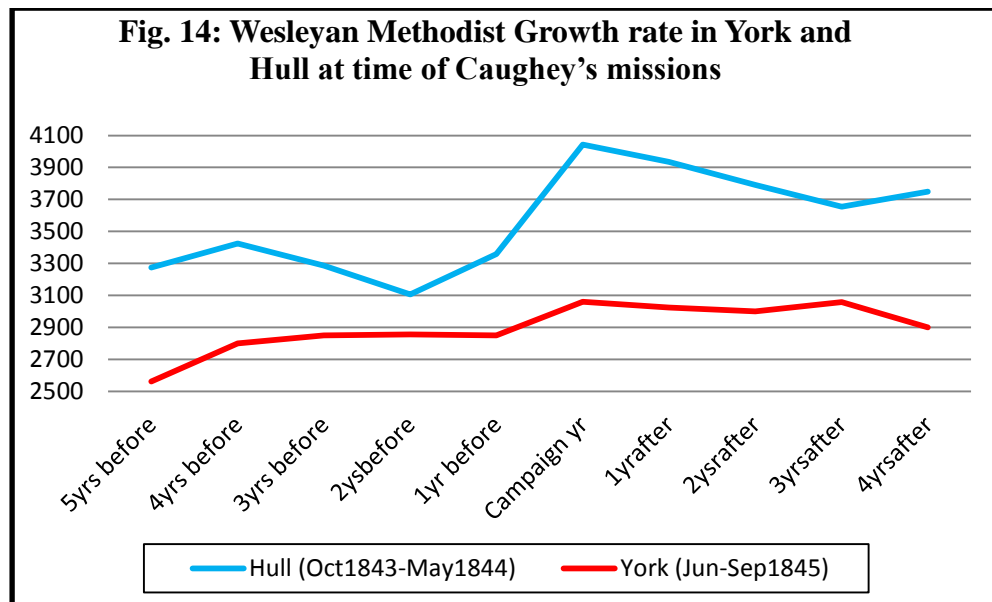
<sup>54</sup> John Lingard quoted in Schiefen, Wiseman 135.

<sup>55</sup> William Ullathorne quoted in Leetham, Gentili 161.

<sup>56</sup> Leetham, op. cit., 64.

<sup>57</sup> Leetham, op. cit., 2.

period. Caughey, whose work was of most benefit to the Methodists, based the majority of his later campaigns in Yorkshire including the cities of York and Hull, and brought growth when Methodist membership was in decline or a period of slow growth. However as Fig. 14<sup>58</sup> shows, the effect was quite short-lived and in both towns there was a steep fall in membership within a year of the missions as the immediate fervour died and people returned to their previous practice. He was also far less successful in York, with a larger middle-class population than Hull and its majority working-class population.



Both Gentili and Caughey were itinerant revivalists unfettered by restraints of administering a parish. The missions of both were most successful in the industrial cities. Both fostered the quintessential elements of evangelicalism; namely conversion, its urgency and its emotional impact upon the heart. Therefore in their preaching both men used similar and well-known techniques that included the use of biblical texts, the playing upon people's emotions and the use of grand gestures and dramatic pauses. Where they differed was that for

<sup>58</sup> Data taken from Carwardine, R., *Transatlantic Revivalism* [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.] (Milton Keynes 1978, 2005).

Gentili the conversion decision was sealed by reception of the sacraments of Eucharist and Penance and maintained through the sacramental life of the Church; hence the symbolic ceremony of renewal of baptismal vows on the last night that emphasised the place of the community in the life of the individual.

During the Mission, the Quarant'Ore would be introduced and preparation for this involved the practical steps of the people raising money for the candles and organising rotas of watchers. It was this devotion, introduced to England by Gentili to which he personally attributed the success of his missions, in that Christ was present in the Blessed Sacrament among the people. The mission ended with a general communion at which converts were received (in Hull there were five), making a profession of faith before the altar. Gentili was insistent that all communicants had been to confession and restitution was made a condition of penance. The missionaries, with help from the surrounding clergy spent many hours in the confessional, they also needed to instruct the converts, and, in recognition of the fact that the children had a vital part to play in Catholicism, as they would be the ones to pass the faith on to succeeding generations an hour every day was spent instructing those who would be making their first Confessions and Holy Communion at the end of the mission. Gentili, unlike the English priests who felt the correct age for such a step was at least ten years of age<sup>59</sup> believed that an earlier age was more appropriate, and so children as young as seven were prepared.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> E.g. See Challoner *The Catholic Christian Instructed* (London 1810).

<sup>60</sup> In fact, Gentili was ahead of his time in this, as the adoption of seven as the age for a child to make a first Holy Communion was not promulgated until the decree of *Quam Singulari* in 1910 by Pope Pius X.

John Briggs had first encountered Gentili on a clergy retreat in 1843, and the Yorkshire District soon became a familiar place to Gentili and his companion, Moses Furlong, a fellow Rosminian. Furlong, the son of an Irish immigrant was particularly successful with the rapidly expanding Irish population in the industrial towns possessing both a similar accent and character. Their first Yorkshire mission was held in Hull in February 1845 and then Briggs begged them to go to other parts of the District, in particular the industrialized areas. In November the first public mission in York was opened, but Gentili met with dissent from the ‘old Catholics’, the gentry who still lived in the city. They objected most strongly to his Marian teaching declaring it blasphemous, but Gentili, with the agreement of Briggs instituted the practice of a weekly public Rosary in the church, and also persuaded the people to erect a statue of our Lady.<sup>61</sup> In addition eleven Protestants also converted on the strength of the Marian teaching. As Map 15 shows, Gentili conducted nine missions in the North and East Ridings, but there were many more in the West Riding.

By the time Briggs died in 1861 the practices that Gentili had introduced into the District were firmly established in Yorkshire and regarded as a normal part of the Catholic faith. What Gentili and Furlong achieved in their itinerant ministry was summed up by Denis Gwynn commenting on contemporary reports of the missions:

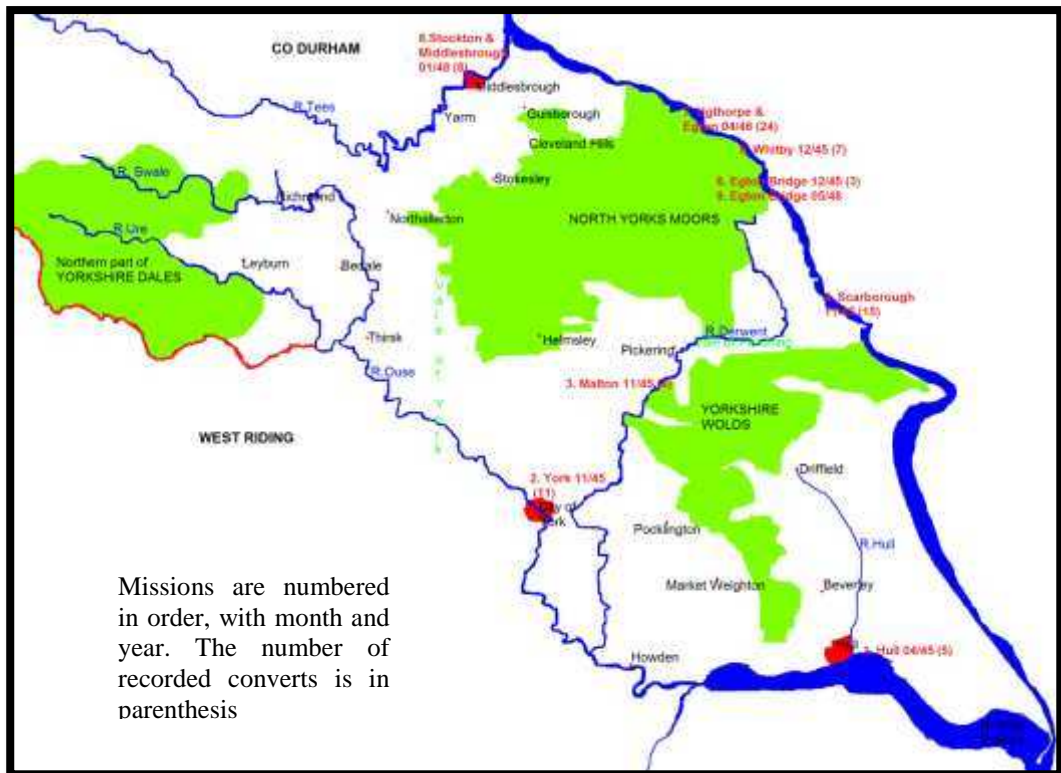
The missionaries had introduced a new atmosphere of brilliant lights and gay processions, which contrasted strongly with the seclusion and shabby surroundings in which Catholic worship had been conducted for generations while hope of revival had steadily receded.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Witness No.24 June 2009 87.

<sup>62</sup> Gwynn, Denis, *Father Luigi Gentili and the Second Spring 1835-1848* (Dublin 1951) 205.

**Map 15: The Missions in the North and East Ridings by Luigi Gentili  
1845-1848**



**Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that in first half of the century, the Catholic Church in the area had changed considerably, not only in terms of its membership, but in terms of its piety and its confidence in itself. Although many on both sides of the Christian divide in England would be loath to admit it, it is also clear that in fact the divide was not as absolute as it might have seemed and that Catholics and Evangelicals had much in common with each other.

## **2.5: Towards a new Diocese 1850-1879**

After 1850 and the restoration of the Hierarchy, it became easier for the bishops to formulate joint policies to deal with the problems that faced the English Catholic Church, in particular those brought about by the rise of a new industrial and urbanized England. Yorkshire may be viewed as a microcosm of the country as a whole, for in this period of its history, the effort of the local Catholic Church was directed away from the countryside and into the towns. All the denominations faced the same problems that urbanization brought about, namely poor housing conditions with its corollary of overcrowding and lack of adequate sanitation, intemperance caused in part as a reaction to the poor living and working conditions and the resulting high level of petty crime and violence committed when under the influence of alcohol. There was also a need to provide more places of worship and schools. All developed similar strategies to cope with the situation, with temperance organisations, self-help and friendly societies, and energetic building programmes. In Yorkshire the dissenting churches seemed to be the successful parts of the non-Catholic churches in this respect, attracting people by their evangelical fervour and strict moral codes. The Catholic response had many of the same characteristics, and throughout this chapter examples will be seen of a new spiritual rigour within new devotions, revivalist forms of evangelization, and the provision of churches to encourage the increase of practice and faith.

### **1850: A New Hierarchy**

The restoration of the English Catholic Hierarchy should not have attracted the furore of interest and anti-Catholic aggression that it did, being merely the internal

reorganisation of the affairs of a Christian denomination in England and Wales. The public debate that ensued does reveal, for Yorkshire in this particular case, the growing confidence of the Catholic community in publicly stating their faith as they did on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1850 in a public meeting called by the High Sheriff of Yorkshire, held in York castle and attended by an estimated ten thousand people.<sup>1</sup> The Earl Fitzwilliam, the opening speaker, after denying that there was an English Catholic population other than a few gentry, attacked them for being ‘monuments, respectable monuments of by-gone times...of the taste, of the piety...of by-gone times.’ In his reply, Charles Langdale of Houghton Hall declared that he had gone to York to ‘proclaim my belief in the patronage and protection of the blessed Mother of God’.<sup>2</sup> Of more interest however, was the distinction Fitzwilliam made between English and Irish Catholics. As a Protestant landlord in Ireland, he was prepared to build Catholic chapels for his tenants for that was the religion of the population. Despite admitting that there were groups of Irish immigrants in England, he did not afford them the dignity of being part of the Catholic population in England.<sup>3</sup> The scale of problems brought about by large-scale Irish immigration to England which increased the indigenous Catholic population were, in many ways just beginning to be realised by the new Hierarchy in their previous existence as Vicars Apostolic.

In North and East Yorkshire as indicated in chapter 2.4, there were growing Irish communities in both York and Hull, and with the discovery of workable ironstone in the Cleveland hills the small town of Middlesbrough was poised to grow in the words

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<sup>1</sup> As reported in the Yorkshire Gazette 23.11.1850, p5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

of William Gladstone ‘like an infant Hercules.’<sup>4</sup> Most of the people seeking work in its new iron foundries were Irish, and many were Catholic. However, urbanization was a problem equally challenging to the new Hierarchy as native Catholics continued to follow the demographic shift of the general population into the towns as noted previously. The social problems of the towns exacerbated the problem of ‘lapsing’ by both English and Irish Catholics, and although the emphasis is often put on the problems of the Irish Catholics only, this is a distortion of the situation in the years following 1850.<sup>5</sup> It has come about primarily because of the numbers of Irish involved as opposed to English Catholics. There is also reluctance by historians to depart from the influential ‘devotional revolution’ thesis in Ireland posed by Emmet Larkin in 1972 that appears to give reasons for the high level of non-practice by Irish Catholics, namely that before 1850 they did not practice the faith in Ireland either.<sup>6</sup> It does not take into account the fact that as in England the effects of the penal era resulted in a church that did seem to be undisciplined and ill-organised and dependent on gentry such as the Protestant Earl Fitzwilliam to build Catholic chapels. The lack of places to worship was particularly acute in the far North-west of Ireland and it was from this area of Ireland in particular that most of the immigrants to this part of Yorkshire originated. Finnegan has shown that Sligo was the origin of most immigrants to York;<sup>7</sup> Turnham has shown that it was Donegal in the case of

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<sup>4</sup> In 1862, when Gladstone first visited the town he declared that ‘Middlesbrough, it is true, is but an infant to what it is destined to be – an infant, but an infant Hercules.’

<sup>5</sup> For studies on the problems of the Irish in England see especially the work of Sheridan Gilley, for example in Swift, R. and Gilley, S., *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London 1985).

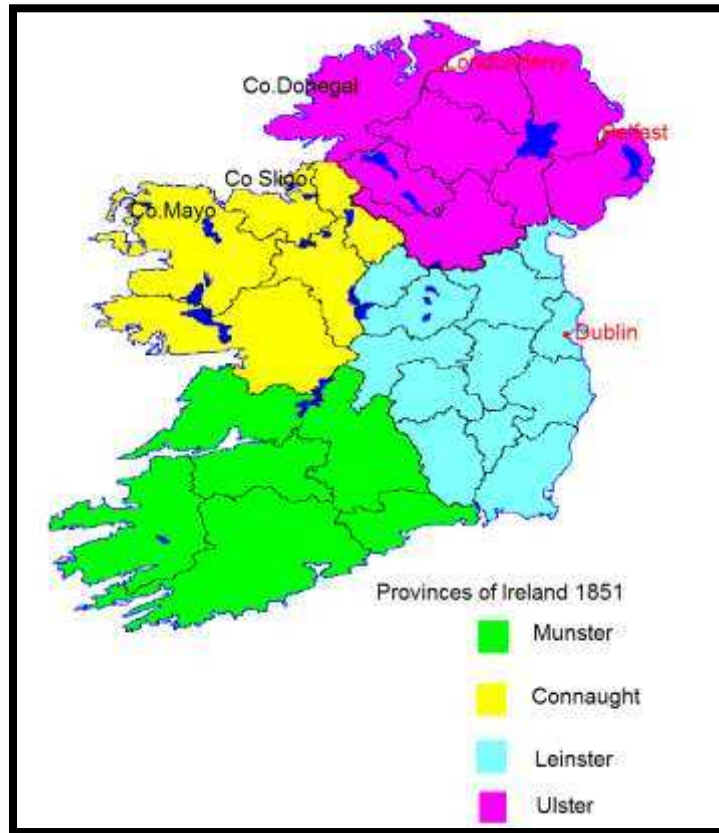
<sup>6</sup> Larkin, Emmet, ‘The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875’ in *American Historical Review*, 88:3 (1972). 625-52 .

<sup>7</sup> Finnegan F., ‘The Irish in York’ in Swift and Gilley, (eds.) *The Irish in the Victorian City* .



Middlesbrough,<sup>8</sup> and Gibbons that it was immigrants from Sligo and Mayo in Hull<sup>9</sup> (Map 16).

**Map 16: Ireland showing the three counties where most immigrants to the Diocese of Middlesbrough originated.**



In 1825 the Archbishop of Tuam whose archiepiscopal see encompassed that area, said that:

Out of 107 places of worship in the diocese, only eighteen had slated roofs. The others...were thatched and wretched, insufficient to contain the congregations and in many cases the public prayers were celebrated in the open air... but from 1820 onwards, a phenomenal rate of construction began.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Turnham, M., *From Emancipation to Aggiornamento 1829 – 1968* Unpublished M.Th Thesis University of Wales Lampeter 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Gibbons, J., 'Irish Immigration into mid-Nineteenth-Century Hull' in Markham J., (ed.) *Keeping Faith 700 years of Catholic Life in Hull* (Beverley 1999).

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.towardsthegoal.com/history/index\\_eng.html](http://www.towardsthegoal.com/history/index_eng.html) Archdiocese of Tuam accessed 08/04/2009.

As in England, the emphasis was on providing churches in new emerging towns, and it is this new institutionalized town-based church that started to replace the rural, home centred church of the penal days in both countries.

### **Middlesbrough: 1851-1871**

The struggles of Andrew Burns, the priest in Middlesbrough at this time serves as an example of the financial and spiritual problems that beset the new urban missions. In a document dated 1869 it was revealed that out of a total expenditure of £8260 spent within the mission since 1853, only ‘twenty pounds of the sum total was got outside Middlesbrough’.<sup>11</sup> He felt that the reason for this was due to ‘the absence of persons of wealth and independence in our congregation.’<sup>12</sup> Expenditure included the feeding destitute families during the periodic cycles of economic downturn that were a feature of life in the town; the need to twice extend the small chapel in order to accommodate the rapidly growing Catholic population, and the buying of land for schools and churches in the new areas of population that stretched from the mouth of the river Tees upriver to just east of Yarm (Map 17).

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<sup>11</sup> MDA File N1/36/2 Andrew Burns, General account of works of Charity.

<sup>12</sup> The Tablet 23.01.1858.

**Map 17: Middlesbrough Mission 1869**

Despite these achievements Burns' character and Englishness were not conducive to dealing with a mainly Irish population and moreover one where there was a lot of sympathy for the Irish nationalist cause with some small-scale membership of the banned Fenian Society. Although this is not the place to go into details of the breakdown of the relationship between priest and some of his flock, there are some clues to the nature and problems of Catholic spirituality in the town at that time.<sup>13</sup> In 1871, Bishop Cornthwaite placed the diocese under the patronage of the Sacred Heart being of the view that 'who does not feel especially drawn to the Sacred Heart, centre as it is of all his love for us?'<sup>14</sup> In Middlesbrough, monthly veneration of the picture had been instituted, together with its attendant 'reparations' from 1868. To many of the Irish this seemed as

<sup>13</sup> See Minskip, D., 'The Middlesbrough Troubles of 1871' in Northern Catholic History No 38 (1997) 52-66.

<sup>14</sup> MDA Cornthwaite Pastoral Letter 05.02.1864.

To say the least, a ridiculous form of devotion and to the pennies required to be thrown on the plate at the foot of the picture a dubious way of raising money. The monthly procession to the anything but highly artistic picture is strongly objected to by all intelligent Catholics, whose reverence for the object of worship is deep and sincere.<sup>15</sup>

By this time the Catholic Church in Ireland was in the midst of a renewal that would eventually lead it to become regarded as the most ‘Romanized’ Catholic nation in the world. But what Patrick Corish has termed neo-Tridentine Catholicism was a Catholicism that was strongly influenced by two factors that ultimately denied it becoming the life-affirming Catholicism envisaged by the Council of Trent. Firstly, the public culture of Ireland was still overwhelmingly the English Protestant culture; iconoclastic, militant and authoritarian. This in turn was perceived by the newly emancipated Catholic population that aspired to middle-class status as what was required in order to be considered ‘respectable’, the overriding virtue of Victorian society. Secondly, having been denied a full public Catholic life during the penal era, there were aspects of popular pre-Tridentine Irish Catholicism that still provided a religious mindset for many Irish Catholics, particularly those coming from the very deprived rural areas such as Donegal, the birthplace of many of the Middlesbrough Irish population. Michael Carroll sums up these characteristics as requiring a degree of repetition and orderliness, and a painful penitential experience coupled with a dislike of religious imagery that he claims was present even before the Reformation.<sup>16</sup>

Both factors can be seen to be influencing the events at Middlesbrough; the financial and intellectual backing for the nationalist cause came from men who aspired to become members of the middle-class in the town, which at that time was dominated

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<sup>15</sup> Letter from James McNamee to The Evening Gazette 01.10.1871.

<sup>16</sup> Carroll, M., ‘Rethinking Popular Catholicism in pre-Famine Ireland’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 34:3 (Sept 1995) 354-365 accessed from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1386884> 03/04/2009.

by members of the non-conformist tradition. They used the more populist dislike of religious imagery held by the majority of poorer Catholics to cause disruption to the establishment of a new devotion, both by decrying the artistic merit of the picture and linking the devotion to the raising of money, a practice that would bring disquiet to local Protestants with its redolence of matters swept away by the Reformation. As well as organizing regular walk-outs from the church while the devotion was being held,<sup>17</sup> they also linked their cause to that of requiring schools and churches in the wider areas of the mission, matters that were also high on the agenda of the other churches.<sup>18</sup>

Burns was replaced as mission priest in 1872 by Richard Lacy. As an Irishman he had an innate understanding of the community instincts of the Irish that his predecessor had not, and he gave a corporate identity to what Cornthwaite described as ‘this suddenly gathered together flock from every town in England and Ireland’ that had been missing up to that point.<sup>19</sup>

### **Towards a See Town: Middlesbrough: 1872-1878**

What Lacy achieved in Middlesbrough in terms of developing the Catholic spirituality of the people, he would later replicate as the first bishop of the diocese of Middlesbrough. By initiating the biggest church and school building programme in the country he gave the Catholic population of Middlesbrough a common purpose. As well, it addressed the concerns of the Catholic hierarchy that centred on combating the culture of materialism and expediency that had arisen in the aftermath of the Enlightenment and the mores of the Protestant work ethic that had fuelled the

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<sup>17</sup> MDA N1/36/2 Burns-Cornthwaite Correspondence.

<sup>18</sup> Minskip, Middlesbrough Troubles, and MDA N1/36/2 Burns-Cornthwaite Correspondence.

<sup>19</sup> MDA File N1/36 Letter from Cornthwaite to Cardinal Manning 03.08.1871.

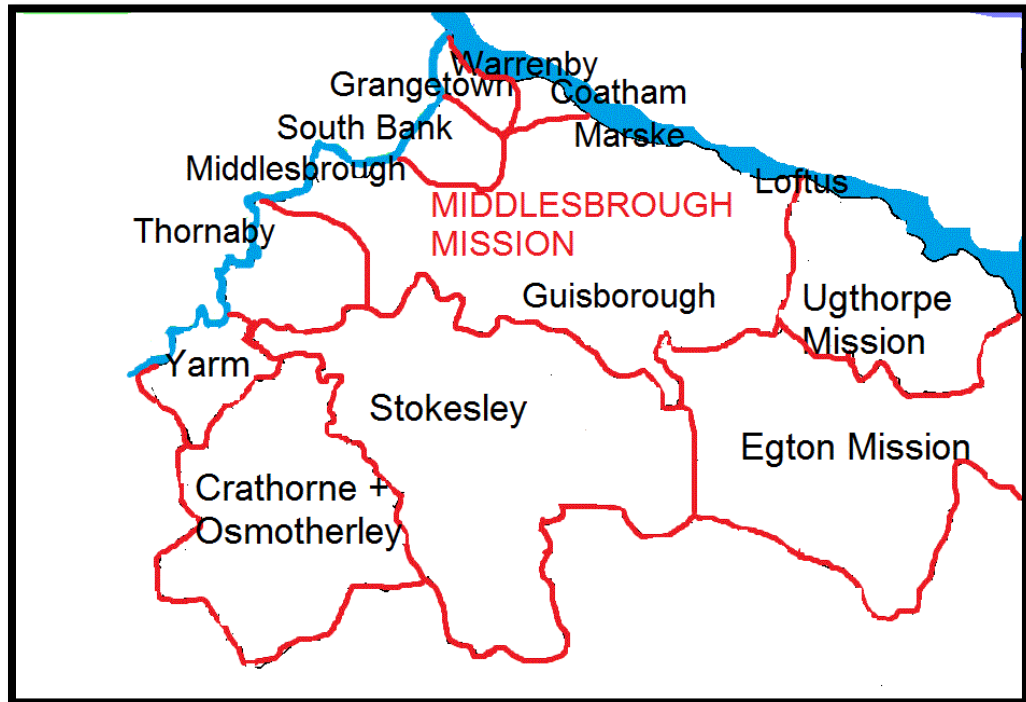
Industrial Revolution and brought about the birth of such towns as Middlesbrough and its attendant misery for so many of the population.

Lacy first addressed the need for a building at South Bank and by 1874 the first school-chapel was opened although it only became an independent mission in 1876. As can be seen in Map 18, the mission at Middlesbrough was continuing to become more densely populated as the steel industry continued to expand.

Therefore

every week, this zealous and indefatigable apostle went out (carrying vestments etc.) to some house or hall at Southbank Guisbro', Thornaby and surrounding villages, sowing the seed of the great harvest of souls that is being gathered in those places.<sup>20</sup>

**Map 18: The Middlesbrough Mission circa 1876**



<sup>20</sup> FCJ Convent Record.

Lacy also had the care of Catholics living further round the coast. Expansion meant that new communities were also springing up, such as Marske and Coatham to house the workers for the new furnaces. In 1873 Lacy told Cornthwaite that 'I am thinking of giving them a Mass at Marske on a Sunday sometimes if I can manage it'.<sup>21</sup> According to the letter, he and his assistant were already saying five masses between them at that time. Help came from Edward Riddell, a priest of independent means who had recently moved to Coatham. When in 1874, a new furnace was opened at Warrenby, he realised there was a real need for a church, and so with help from Lacy and Bishop Cornthwaite he bought land and built a church where he then served as Mission priest.<sup>22</sup>

By the time the new diocese of Middlesbrough was created in 1878, the rapid expansion of industry on Teesside had resulted in new missions being formed at Loftus and Grangetown also. The concept of providing a place of worship in communities such as in a hall that would enable an independent mission to develop was very much a reflection of the Evangelical practice of church planting and proved to be very successful.

The provision of schools and chapels in the growth areas of the mission, and the replacement of the school buildings in the town itself initially provided a means of both work for the unskilled labourers and a means of distracting attention away from Irish nationalist extremism. It was also a necessary move in the light of the 1870 Education Act whereby local School Boards were established to provide sufficient free places for all children whose parents wished to avail themselves of it. Cornthwaite emphasised in line with the other bishops that a Catholic education for

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<sup>21</sup> MDA N2/36 Letter of Father Lacy to Bishop Cornthwaite 29.12.1873.

<sup>22</sup> This area grew into Redcar.

every Catholic child was an important necessity so that ‘your children shall be like yourselves, perfect in Catholic faith’.<sup>23</sup> Anglicans and Methodists were as concerned as Catholics that the 1870 Act would increase the threat posed by secularism as all realised that their future lay in the promotion of what Catholics called ‘Juvenile Holiness’, a form of revivalism that not only ‘evangelized’ children in their own right, but also used them to either keep or bring their parents into the church. In many ways it is a reflection of the thesis that Catholic orders acted as catalysts for new religious movements, especially when viewed in the light of chapter 2.3, which demonstrated the extent to which religious orders were involved in education in all the three major urban areas and how in the case of the FCJ sisters in Middlesbrough, this gave rise to areas of further pastoral care.

Revivalist fervour was also encountered in the renewed use of missions particularly those led by the Redemptorist Congregation.<sup>24</sup> The Redemptorists were to have a profound effect on Catholicism in the Diocese of Middlesbrough. Not only did they conduct missions, but their mother house in Rome housed from 1866 the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Its arrival so inspired Richard Lacy that it led him upon becoming Bishop to place the new Diocese under her patronage, the first diocese in the world to be so dedicated.

I was fortunate enough to witness the glorious procession in which the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour was, for the first time borne from the Church of St Alphonsus through the streets of Rome: it was a sight never to be forgotten, and made a deep impression on my mind which time has not obliterated.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters. Pastoral letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster in Provincial Council 1873 8.

<sup>24</sup> The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (CSsR) was founded by St Alphonsus Ligouri in 1732 with a missionary charism.

<sup>25</sup> Lacy, R., Preface to the first English translation of the Manual of Devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (Rome 1884).



Shortly after writing this account in 1884, Richard Lacy had another profound experience when he went

to the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour...and offered up the Holy Sacrifice for a very special intention. Our Lady heard my prayer and vouchsafed me a miraculous cure of an internal ailment which has for the last nine years caused me much trouble and suffering, and has been a sad drawback to me in my work. The cure was instantaneous and complete... I felt confused at the thought of a miracle being wrought on me.<sup>26</sup>

**Fig. 15: The icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour**



The first Redemptorist mission in Middlesbrough was held in 1874 and lasted six weeks. The FCJ sisters record that many converts were received and many who ‘had given up their religion and its obligations were roused from their evil ways and returned to the Church...a real revival of Catholicity took place.’<sup>27</sup> As with Gentili,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> FCJ Convent Record 2.

the mission took the form of preaching, hearing confessions, visiting homes and celebrating Mass. There was also much use of the hymn written by St Alphonsus himself for use at parish missions. Translated into English in 1863, O Bread of Heaven was set to a melody by the Professor of Music at Ushaw College. One of the earliest of popular English Catholic hymns it allowed Catholics to sing with as much passion and fervour as their Methodist neighbours sang the hymns of Charles Wesley, and undoubtedly was used by the Redemptorists to heighten the fervour of their congregations.

Lacy also introduced his congregation to more recent aspects of the Catholic faith.

The FCJ Annals record that:

This year, 1876, was fraught with anxiety: our good parish priest F. Lacy's health became so enfeebled that the doctors declared his condition to be incurable without change of air.<sup>28</sup>

Lacy travelled to Lourdes for a 'cure which earthly physicians could not promise him.' The shrine at Lourdes was still a new phenomenon in the Catholic world; the place where the Immaculate Mother had appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in a series of apparitions during 1858. The Church had only accepted the veracity of Bernadette's experience in 1862 and in 1866 pilgrimages officially began. The Annals record that Lacy's sojourn in Lourdes did help restore his health, and from the record book of St Mary Middlesbrough it is obvious that the experience had moved him spiritually as well, for in January 1877, the people were informed that the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes had arrived and would be blessed the following week.<sup>29</sup>

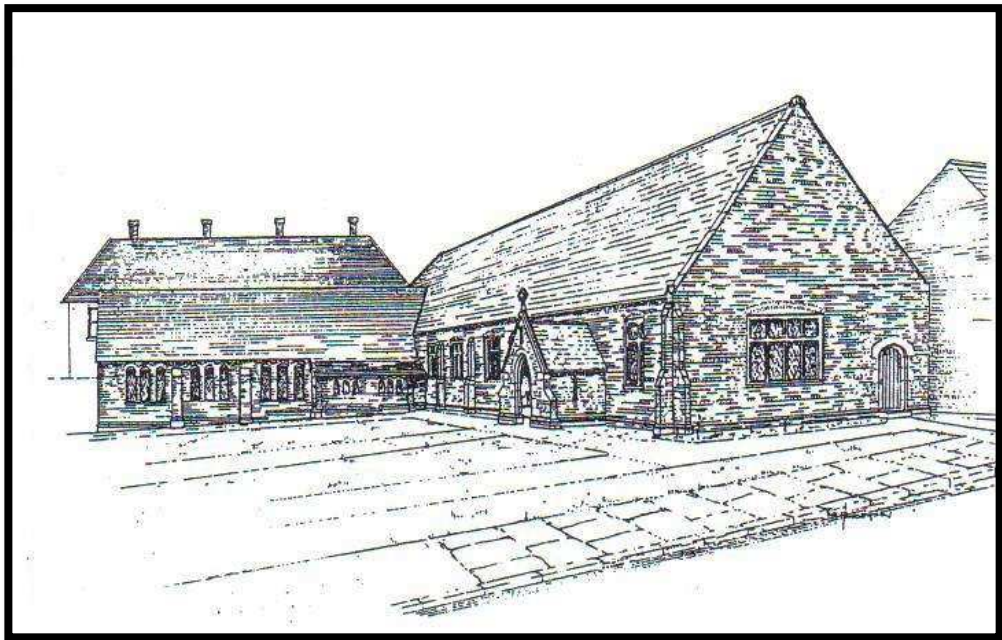
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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>29</sup> MDA S/2 St Mary's record book.

The last major problem facing Lacy, after his building programme in the outlying areas of the mission was to replace the chapel in the town itself. The small chapel had played its part in the Quarant'Ore from its earliest days, and Rosary with Benediction on a Sunday was also a long established convention. However, it was not an adequate setting for the rich ceremonial of some of these devotions, and the people wanted a more fitting building that looked like a church and also a building that would accommodate the numbers going to worship there. The local paper summed up the feelings of the people when its editor described the old chapel as 'a reproach to the Catholics of the town.'<sup>30</sup>

**Fig. 16: Chapel in Middlesbrough 1865**



Although in the neo-Gothic school, the architect of the new church, George Goldie had begun to move away from its vision of limited access to the 'Holy', and placed the emphasis more on the liturgical needs of the people. He also took into consideration the constraints of the local environment, which often meant building

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<sup>30</sup> Daily Exchange 21.08.1878.

Catholic churches in the overcrowded slums where the people had congregated. This was true in Middlesbrough where the available size and shape of the land dictated the architecture. Instead of a long chancel and solid screen a classical-like device was used whereby the Chancel was more like a platform abutting the Nave, and the Sanctuary was a shallow alcove at the back of the Chancel, but mounted on steps, so what happened at the high altar was clearly visible to the congregation.

**Fig. 17: Middlesbrough Cathedral<sup>31</sup>**



A lack of money prevented the full design of Goldie from being realised, with a planned tower never built. Transepts and the Baptistry were only added at the end of the century, together with the marble Altar, Pulpit and Stations of the Cross. Six months after it opened, the new church became the Cathedral church of the new diocese of Middlesbrough. By then Lacy was popular amongst the Catholics of Middlesbrough and respected in the area generally. Maybe his greatest achievements however, were the building of a fine church suitable for good worship, and uniting

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<sup>31</sup> Picture taken in about 1920.

the fractured mission he had inherited into a community that was considered worthy of becoming the title and centre of a new diocese.

### **York 1850-1861**

Change came to York, due to the rapid influx into the city of Irish immigrants in the wake of the famines. Although not all were Catholics, it increased the number of Irish Catholics in the town from 327 in 1841, to about two thousand in 1851. However, with no industry to attract them, York appears to be an unusual choice of destination. Frances Finnigan has shown that on the whole it was a transient population, with the majority employed as agricultural labourers in the surrounding countryside and as casual labour in the fairs and markets of the city; traditional sources of employment in Ireland, but not conducive to a settled lifestyle.<sup>32</sup> The immigrants were not made particularly welcome in York, even by the native Catholic population, who were still waiting for their new chapel, and being frustrated in their wish by the Vicar Apostolic:

There are unpleasant doings at York. The people think that the receipts of the chapel have been much greater than the present incumbent there represents, and want to know how things really are.<sup>33</sup>

Briggs was setting funds aside for a new church not to replace the Little Blake Street chapel, but to provide a church in Walmgate to serve the Irish population in that area. Designed in the neo-Gothic style by Joseph Hansom, St. George's opened in 1850, the year the English Catholic Hierarchy was restored, and was immediately designated as the pro-Cathedral of the new diocese of Beverley. It was also symbolic of the new priority Briggs was setting the Yorkshire Catholic Community; the

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<sup>32</sup> Finnigan, F., *op. cit.*, 59-84.

<sup>33</sup> Tate-Slater Correspondence quoted Minskip, *New History* 9.

mission to the poor. At the same time, maybe as a consolation to the more established chapel, it was given the new dedication of St. Wilfrid, commemorating one of Yorkshire's Anglo-Saxon saints. Perhaps it also indicated another new priority for Yorkshire Catholics: In his life St Wilfrid had close ties with Rome: in 1850, not only was the Hierarchy restored, but also closer ties with Rome firmly re-established.

### **York and the Priorities of Robert Cornthwaite Bishop of Beverley 1861-1878**

It can be considered a fair assessment of his work that after Robert Cornthwaite became Bishop of Beverley in 1861, the needs of Catholics in the North and East Ridings were ignored for ten years: whilst in the West Riding nineteen new missions were founded, not one was founded in the remainder of Yorkshire. One of Bishop Cornthwaite's earliest decisions was to move his residence from York to Leeds. Letters within the Tate-Slater correspondence held at Ushaw opined that it was because York had diminished in standing both as a city and as a Catholic centre.<sup>34</sup> However, what was not generally known at that time was that the brief appointing Cornthwaite as Bishop of Beverley made it clear that a division of the diocese was under consideration by the Roman authorities and as shown by Map 19, by moving to Leeds Cornthwaite ensured that he would be in situ for the more prestigious diocese. The greater concentration of Catholics was in the West Riding, and it also had the better financial support by wealthy Catholics, such as the Duke of Norfolk who owned large swathes of land around Sheffield.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ushaw College Archives: Tate-Slater Correspondence 01.10.1862.

<sup>35</sup> The division favoured by the gentry and clergy was a north-south divide from Scarborough to Todmorden on the Lancashire Border. They argued this would be fairer both in terms of numbers of priests and Catholic populations. See Turnham op cit., Appendix 2 for a full discussion.

**Map 19: The diocese of Beverley**

Although it would be seventeen years before the Diocese of Beverley was divided, the financial support of missions and the spiritual health of Catholics in the North and East Ridings were already being compromised. In York, for example, so little money was forthcoming from the local Catholic gentry that Canon Render decided to make personal appeals in Ireland for money to build the new church of St Wilfrid that replaced the Little Blake Street Chapel in 1865. Rebuilding was a necessity as Little Blake Street was subsumed into a more imposing approach to York Minster at the behest of the Dean and Chapter. The ensuing church, which replaced St George's as pro-Cathedral was redolent of French Gothic architecture, and despite accusations that with its tall tower, it was a deliberate challenge to the Minster, Cardinal Wiseman

declared at its opening that on the contrary, the French style showed the desire was not to compete.<sup>36</sup>

**Fig. 18: St Wilfrid's Church York**



### **Hull and the nature of priesthood 1850-1878**

In Hull, the mission was also given a new dedication in 1850; that of St Charles Borromeo, an inspirational figure in the fields of doctrine, catechism, discipline, and liturgy inaugurated by the Council of Trent, but largely unknown in England through historical accident. Like the renaming of the York mission, it reflected the closer ties

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<sup>36</sup> Minskip, *New History* 19.



with Rome and the centralising of authority after the restoration of the Hierarchy that was a particular hallmark of Cornthwaite's episcopacy.

One of the most important aspects of this was Cornthwaite's high view of the priestly vocation and upon taking office he quickly set about laying down guidelines for their priorities in a mission, its financial arrangements and the ongoing formation of the priests. He conducted in-depth visitations and instituted diocesan policies, which emphasised the centrality of the episcopacy. There was some initial resentment at this, particularly during Cornthwaite's early years when he moved many of the priests to new parishes, but others realised that it would help them uphold their own pastoral authority particularly in the urban areas. The gentry too found it hard to accept the new confidence felt by their chaplains and Thomas Constable complained to Cornthwaite that he regretted the passing of the obliging disposition and deferential attitude of earlier priests.<sup>37</sup>

A good example of the change of outlook experienced by the priests lies in Michael Trappes, who moved to Hull in 1848 and remained there until his death in 1873. Like most of the priests serving in the North and East Ridings, Trappes was an Englishman and brought up valuing the clerical independence that he had been ordained into, but by the mid 1860's he was valued by Cornthwaite as an advisor and friend, serving on several diocesan committees. Within the Catholic community of Hull he took seriously the needs of the young as the future of the Church. He was not only responsible for inviting the Sisters of Mercy to Hull, but also building two school-chapels in East Hull (1856) and in the West End (1871) 'to bring God's house nearer to those who, through poverty and misfortune, often stayed away from Holy Mass

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<sup>37</sup> LDA Thomas Constable to Bishop Cornthwaite 04.06.1867.

and neglected to send their children to school.’<sup>38</sup> This was where the Irish community in Hull mainly lived and in 1872 were identified by Hugh Heinrick in *The Nation* as living in

the only town I have known where whole families have separated themselves in idea and sentiment from their kindred and, renegades to Faith and Fatherland have ranged themselves on the side of England and infidelity. The general condition of the town is low.<sup>39</sup>

The comments of Heinrick would seem to indicate that indifference to religion was becoming endemic throughout the population of Hull. In 1865, Archbishop Thomson on his first visitation to Hull laid the blame for growing indifference within the Church of England in Hull upon the long incumbency of the Rev. John Bromby who was vicar of Holy Trinity from 1797 until shortly before his death in 1868 at the age of ninety-seven. He had vigorously opposed giving parish status to three new churches in the town, and as a result funds had dried up for more necessary building.<sup>40</sup> Within Methodism, local schisms and the Primitive Methodists’ ‘singing processions through the streets together with their earnest preaching of the gospel made great impressions on the humbler classes’<sup>41</sup> had diluted their influence. Noting how processions attracted the crowds, in 1871 at the laying of the foundation stone for his new school-chapel, Trappes made sure it was a spectacle:

About noon...crowds began to assemble around the site of the proposed new chapel, and, as the procession of Clergy and attendants came in view, a shout of joy arose from the assembled throng.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Markham, J., ‘Catholics in Hull Public Life’ in Markham, (ed.) *Keeping Faith* 101.

<sup>39</sup> Heinrick, Hugh ‘The Irish in England’ in *The Nation* 1872.

<sup>40</sup> Royle E. and Larsen R., *Archbishop Thomson’s Visitation Returns for the diocese of York, 1865* (York 2006). 216-228.

<sup>41</sup> Allison, K., (ed.) ‘A History of the County of York East Riding Vol. 1’ in *Victoria County History* (1969) 13 accessed from <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66776> 03.03.2008.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Markham, op. cit., 102.

Trappes' legacy was to make the Catholic population in Hull an accepted and respected part of the community. He joined in the civic life of the town rather than only looking inwards at his own community and as a result was felt by the Protestant community to be 'one of the best specimens of a frank, honest, liberty-loving English gentleman in this part of Yorkshire.'<sup>43</sup>

### **Conclusion**

As the papal authorities debated the future of the church in Yorkshire, those living there continued to consolidate the work of their predecessors in establishing a Catholic faith that was lively yet rigorous, charitable yet morally strict. Similar terms could easily be applied to the Protestant Evangelical faith; much of the schism in Methodism was due to the desire of members to be ever more devout in their faith. The strength of the Catholic response however, was that it remained within the bounds of the Church, tied ever more closely with the Papacy through the restored Hierarchy, avoiding the dilution of schism, which so weakened the influence of individual Protestant Churches.

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<sup>43</sup> The Tablet 03.04.1858.

## 2.6: The Diocese of Middlesbrough 1879

When the new Diocese of Middlesbrough was created in 1879, many things were in place to help its people meet the new challenges and fulfil the expectation that ‘another prophet has risen...who will be listened to with some deference and awe’.<sup>1</sup> The use of the term ‘prophet’ with its biblical connotations of conversion, teaching, and preaching the Gospel, by a newspaper editor who was very much involved with Methodist dissent in the town of Middlesbrough indicates the awareness of commonality between Catholicism and Protestantism. The aim of this chapter is to paint a picture of the new diocese in 1879 outlining the problems and the strengths that the division brought about in the area. Although, there will be no overt reference made to connections with Evangelicalism, certain themes will appear, such as evangelization, spiritual rigour, and extra-mural devotions and the need for buildings to enable communities to meet together for worship.

### **The new diocese**

The creation of the new diocese of Middlesbrough was announced on February 10th 1879 giving rise to immediate dissent from the Catholic gentry. They were particularly hurt by the division of Yorkshire, which to them represented a continuation of an unbroken Catholic tradition, and by the choice of Middlesbrough as the title of the new diocese. They felt it was unsuitable as the town ‘owing to the depression of trade is not likely even to retain its present position according to the opinion of those best able to judge.’<sup>2</sup> One went further in doubting that Bishop Cornthwaite realized

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<sup>1</sup> NEDG 10.02.1879.

<sup>2</sup> LDA, W144. Petition of the Laity of the County of York to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

How much these East Riding gentlemen of old Catholic family and name disliked the idea of such a dirty low hole as Middlesbrough being chosen as the name of their Diocese.<sup>3</sup>

The Catholics of Middlesbrough, who by then numbered about half the total Catholic population of the new diocese, were naturally the most enthusiastic about the elevation of their town to see status, an enthusiasm that was shared by its general population and put into words by the editor of the local paper:

The scene changes! Yesterday we are told that the ‘iron capital’ is doomed, and unworthy of further notice. Today another voice is heard, and we are told that Middlesbrough is destined to become greater in the earlier future than it has been in the brilliant past.<sup>4</sup>

However, the new diocese was much more than just the town. When Richard Lacy was finally named as the first bishop he acted in much the same way as when he had arrived in Middlesbrough. Then he had put the needs of the outlying districts of the mission before those of the actual town; now he put the wider needs of the diocese before those of the Middlesbrough mission.

#### **Indicators of Catholic devotional practice: the National Catholic Directory**

A useful initial indicator of the pattern of Catholic devotional practice in the diocese at its inception can be found in the National Catholic Directory of England and Wales 1880, which included the diocese for the first time.<sup>5</sup> It listed 47 Public Churches, Chapels and Stations of which five were independent of the diocese being part of the ‘Ampleforth missions’ (Map 20).

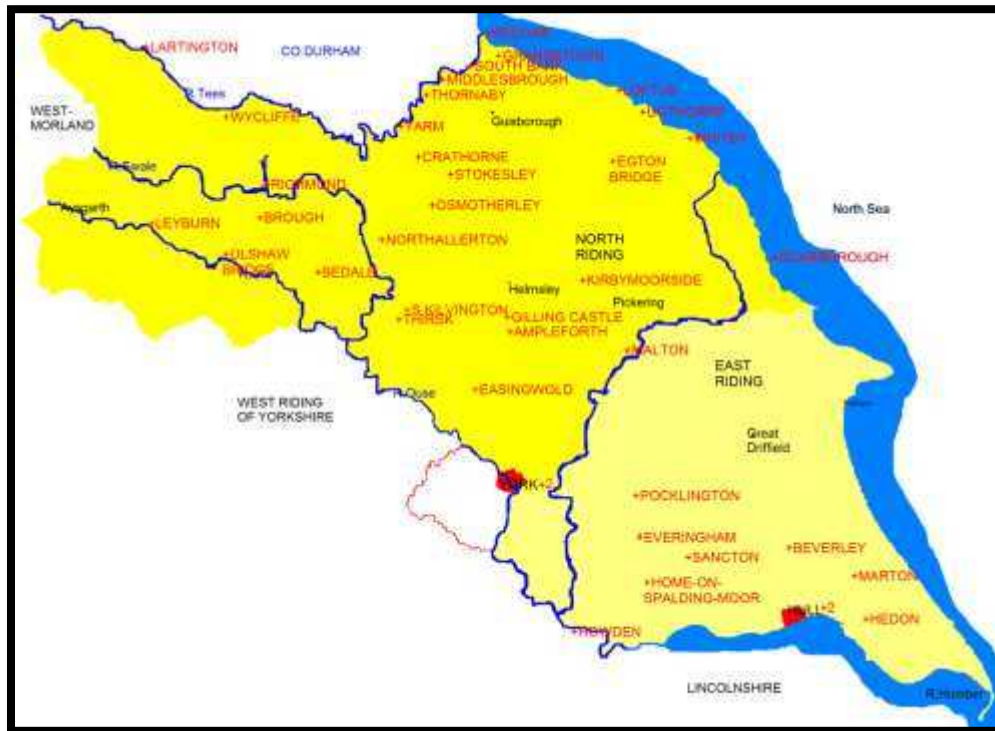
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<sup>3</sup> LDA. W144. Letter of P Radcliffe to Cornthwaite 04.03.1879.

<sup>4</sup> NEDG 10.02.1879.

<sup>5</sup> National Catholic Directory of the Catholic Church of England and Wales (London 1880).

### Map 20: The diocese of Middlesbrough 1879



There were forty secular priests including the Bishop and eight Regular priests on the mission. Thirteen of the places listed were of seigneurial origin and Loftus had neither church nor school, but met in a room over a shop. The total Catholic population was estimated as being just over thirty thousand.

According to the Directory the usual pattern of public worship was that which had developed as the church emerged from the penal times. On Sunday, Holy Communion was distributed early for those who wished to receive the sacrament. Mass followed later with Vespers and Benediction in the evening, occasionally supplemented by other devotions. Morning masses on Holydays and weekdays were also offered, but few advertised any other devotions during the week. Where they were offered a pattern is followed whereby Benediction happened on Thursday and Stations of the Cross on Friday. Only St Charles Borromeo in Hull advertised the fact

that it offered recitation of the Rosary. This is not to say these devotions did not happen elsewhere in the diocese however, just that they were not listed officially. Two other important considerations need to be taken into account when examining what the Catholic population was offered in terms of devotional worship; the age profile of the priests and the nature of the mission field. The present writer looked at the age profile in an earlier study with the following tabulated results.<sup>6</sup>

**Fig. 19: The age profile of secular priests who were serving in the diocese of Beverley in 1879**

<b>The Range of Ages</b>		
	Min	Max
Middlesbrough	27	81
Leeds	24	66
Beverley	24	81
<b>The Mode</b>		
Middlesbrough	77	
Leeds	31	
Beverley	36	
<b>The Mean Age</b>		
Middlesbrough	54	
Leeds	29.5	
Beverley	31.5	

It seems self-evident that with a very aged body of priests, there would be less devotional activity in many of the missions, especially when combined with the fact that many of the missions were of a large rural nature where the work patterns and distance would make attendance by the laity on any day but Sundays and Holydays very difficult.

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<sup>6</sup>Turnham, M., *From Emancipation to Aggiornamento 1829–1968* (Unpublished M.Th. Dissertation University of Wales Lampeter 2007) 63.

**Indicators of *Catholic devotional practice: Bishop Cornthwaite's Visitation Returns 1874 and 1878***

Another valuable resource is the Visitation Returns completed by the priests during Bishop Cornthwaite's tri-annual visitations of the diocese of Beverley.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately several Returns are missing including those of the Middlesbrough mission. However, those that are extant give an excellent picture of the spiritual life in the area in the years immediately prior to the division, both in terms of what was provided as spiritual nourishment and how the priests regarded their flocks. Questions in the Returns ranged from the material condition of the Mission buildings to the provision for children and the spiritual life within the Mission.

The Returns also bear out some of the assumptions made above on the basis of the information given in the National Directory. Howden was served by the oldest priest in the new diocese, Thomas Danson. His Return shows that he said Mass daily and gave Instruction, but provided no other devotional services, nor did he set up any guilds or confraternities for the very small congregation. Rural priests commented on the problems some of the laity had in getting to Mass because of the distance they had to travel. Alfred Watson at Brough Park travelled the nine miles to visit his outlying members occasionally, taking Holy Communion with him if necessary. Canon Walker at Whitby told the Bishop that eight of his flock travelled in 'using their own conveyance'. Others however made no special arrangements for any spiritual care. Both the mission priests in York reported that some Catholics outside the city had difficulties in attending Mass regularly as they were servants in country houses.

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<sup>7</sup> Held within the Parish files in the archives of the diocese of Middlesbrough and subsequent quotations in this section are taken from these Returns unless stated.



Provost Render also complained that some absented themselves from the sacraments, preferring to attend elsewhere, that is in Protestant churches.

### **The Returns: Questions about the spiritual development of children**

The provision made for the spiritual development of children is one of the areas particularly addressed in the visitation. Questions are asked about the physical condition of school buildings, the competency of the teachers and the financing of the schools. In regard of this thesis however, it is the questions that are asked about what devotional teaching is given that are important. Several priests expressed concern about the children who were not in school and therefore not receiving any instruction. Provost Render at York reported that there were a large number of children from the Irish community living in the Bedern who were not attending school despite being eligible. However, he also felt that although the children who did attend the Catholic school were proficient in their understanding of the faith, it was ‘unsatisfactory among the many children of English parents who do not go to our Catholic School’. It is clear from his answers to other questions that Provost Render felt that there was still a clear divide in York between the English and Irish Catholics that was examined in Chapter 2.4.

In St George’s Mission York, the priest also had problems with encouraging ‘Juvenile Holiness’ for he reports that children there attended Mass ‘badly on Sundays and even fewer on weekdays’. However, the experience of the priests in York does exemplify the major reasons for non-attendance at school by children in both the towns and the rural areas, as the Catholic population encompassed both elements. Children in the country were often required to work on the farms, particularly at times of heavy labour such as harvest. Additionally, the poverty level

of many rural areas was as acute as that found in the towns, and would preclude attendance at a Catholic school in the town on the simple basis of cost. It would be easier to send the children to the nearest Board school. In Leyburn for example, at the centre of a wide rural mission the school had to be closed for lack of funds. Poverty was also the main factor in non-attendance in the towns, where many children were sent out to work to supplement the family income.

An additional problem in York was the existence of several private schools, where the better-off would send their children. One of the choices was the Bar Convent for girls, but there was no equivalent for the boys. The priests at St George did try to offer more than just rote teaching of the catechism and Instruction to the children, by holding a monthly service of Benediction for them. Other priests also tried to offer more child-centred devotions particularly during Lent and Advent, but like the priest at Beverley, found the general experience of trying to teach the children as 'Not satisfactory on account of irregular attendance and the neglect of parents'.

### **The Returns: Questions about the provision of English prayers**

Bishop Cornthwaite was also interested in which '*Public English prayers*' were used in the missions and a distinct pattern can be discerned, apart from Render in York who used 'no public English prayers in services'. Prayers from *The Garden of the Soul* were most commonly used; in particular the Acts of Faith Hope and Charity before Mass and the *Salve Regina* after Mass were recited in many of the missions. The Jesus Psalter and English translations of different litanies found in it were also adopted. Canon Walker in Whitby used the English translation of the *Raccolta* on certain feasts, and with the Purgatorial Society that existed in the mission. The *Raccolta* was a collection of indulgenced prayers, novenas and pious practices that

were also applicable to souls in purgatory. Similar purgatorial societies also existed in the neighbouring missions of Egton Bridge and Ugthorpe under the patronage of the Holy Guild of St Joseph and St Hedda. Originally set up as a friendly society the Guild offered care of the sick and burial of the dead. A later priest at the mission wrote that the people at Egton Bridge had always believed that ‘a holy death to be the aim of every day’s activities’<sup>8</sup> Anecdotal evidence in the same pamphlet reveal that the Egton Catholics upheld a view of piety that was spiritually rigorous; a rigour matched in intensity by the non-conformists in the area. Because of its rigour, by 1879 the Guild was regarded as more influential in the mission than the priest on the spiritual lives of the people due to the strict rules for behaviour that were devised. In imitation of the non-conformist practice of having processional ‘Walks’, an annual Walk around part of the very rural mission accompanied by a band and ending at the chapel for a service and cold tea was inaugurated in 1868 on the feast of St Hedda, who was also the patron of the mission. By 1874, this had turned into a festival with a procession headed by a cross, and banners.

### **The Returns: Questions about spiritual formation**

The Returns provide evidence of other means by which the priests encouraged the faith of the people, and it is here that the difference between the work of missions of the industrial towns and the rural missions is most noticeable. The missions in both Hull and York provided more opportunities for participation in guilds and confraternities by the people. Although the object of the majority of the groups was to prevent the breakdown of family life and address the problems of intemperance, rather than increase participation in a particular devotion such as the Rosary, this was

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<sup>8</sup> Johnson, J., *The Holy Guild of St Joseph and St Hedda at Egton Bridge* (Bolton 1962) 6.

not ignored with both York and Hull having Rosary societies. In the rural areas, it was the latter that was of more importance, with no evidence of needing to address problems in family life. Answers in the Returns also point to a correlation between the provision of public worship and the existence of groups. In both Beverley and Howden, the priest only provided a basic range of services with no groups for lay participation. Both priests were elderly however, and both died within a short time of the new diocese coming into being.

In Stokesley, a heartland of Methodism and proud of its long connections with John Wesley, William Wilson was in a different position, struggling with the poverty of a rural mission. Until 1873 he had no proper church and no facilities; instead the congregation met in a converted granary loft in the yard of the Angel Inn. The poverty was so acute that only a chance donation from a benefactress in Dorset enabled a church to be built and there was no money for the other accoutrements necessary to providing a wider range of devotions. He also looked after the neighbouring missions of Osmotherley and Crathorne and his zeal to do what he could for the people in straitened circumstances meant he was regarded as ‘a dedicated priest who walked to Crathorne to offer Mass and struggled hard in conditions of poverty’.<sup>9</sup>

A final point of interest from the Returns is the availability of the churches being open for private prayer during the day. The majority of churches were left open in daylight hours illustrating the new confidence of the Catholic community, but Religious chaplaincies only allowed access to the churches at times of worship, maybe reflecting the wishes of their patrons although no reasons are given. St Charles

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<sup>9</sup> Hird, N., *Our Fathers of Faith* Vol. 2 (Leeds 2009) 480.

Borromeo in Hull was also closed except during services although the reason given was 'on account of thefts and irreverences'.

### **The Returns: Conclusions**

The evidence produced by the Visitation Returns is useful in reaching answers to the questions posed in the introduction to the chapter. Although it is clear that devotions such as the Rosary were beginning to regain a place in Yorkshire Catholic devotion, the overwhelming instinct of the priests was to retain a more restrained style of devotional life in keeping with the restrained yet rigorous piety of its antecedents. There was a certain amount of regard paid to the needs of the Irish community especially in the larger towns where they formed the majority of the Catholic population. However, it is only Provost Render in York who specifically makes a distinction between English and Irish Catholics; although as he also refers to Protestant as opposed to Catholic populations, it may be more of an indication of his thought patterns than any desire to be discriminatory. But the organizations set up in his mission do not reflect the usual concerns of priests with large Irish populations; that is left to the priest at St George York, who organized a 'Young Man's Society' as a prevention against public houses. In Hull, the Returns do present more evidence that the needs of the Irish community were considered by the provision of religious organizations designed to help family units. Without the Returns for the missions on Teesside where the majority of Catholics lived, it is not possible however to appreciate fully whether the needs of the Irish community had priority in the life of the new diocese.

### **Indicators of Catholic devotional practice: Other sources of evidence**

There are two extant sources of evidence for the Middlesbrough Mission; the Notice book of the Cathedral<sup>10</sup> and the FCJ convent record both referred to earlier. Both give a picture of a mission that was struggling to overcome the effects of poverty and deprivation amongst the population, as well as the problems of intemperance brought about by the hard and thirst-making conditions of the iron furnaces. Times of Mass on Holydays were designed to allow men on the early shift to attend before going to work and the confraternities and guilds were attuned to the need for moderation and restraint in family life. In 1877 a Temperance Confraternity for children was started to go alongside the League of the Cross for men.<sup>11</sup> Unlike the Returns, where priests rarely reported needing to attend Catholics in the workhouse, the FCJ Sisters regularly attended to give Instruction to the children and eventually the priests were allowed to celebrate Mass there also, after the Poor Law Guardians were convinced that they had no need to ‘fear proselytising’ activity.<sup>12</sup> After the new church was opened, there was greater possibility to enhance the devotional life of the mission, with processions of the Blessed Sacrament being instituted during the Quarant’Ore as well as processions in honour of Mary during the month of May.

As Bishop of the first new See to be created in England since the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, Lacy imposed upon the Catholic population of Middlesbrough the requirement that it had to take the lead in the new diocese. Only a few weeks after his Episcopal ordination the Cathedral priests were instructed to remind the people that:

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<sup>10</sup> MDA *St Mary’s Notice book 1876-1881*. Unpaginated.

<sup>11</sup> MDA Notice book 06.10.1878.

<sup>12</sup> FCJ Convent Record 14.

The collection for the poor missions made Sunday last was poor...We want a number of yearly subscriptions. It is our place to give an example to the rest of the Diocese.<sup>13</sup>

The message of Lacy to the Middlesbrough Catholics was that although they were poor, other missions in the diocese were even poorer and financial aid was imperative to enable Catholicism to grow. He also quickly established an Ecclesiastical Educational Fund to train a 'native priesthood.'<sup>14</sup> These were men who had grown up in the area of the new diocese and knew the traditions and ethos of the area and who would carry on the work of the priests that had been carried out in the previous one hundred years bringing the Catholic faith into the centre of the religious life of Yorkshire.

### **Conclusion**

As bishop, the clear intention of Lacy was that Catholicism in the new diocese would grow and develop from what already existed. This meant taking into account both the needs of the indigenous English Catholic community as well as his native Irish compatriots. Catholic historiography regarding this period stresses the role of the Irish immigrants in saving the English Catholic Church from extinction, the problems that they brought of lapsing from practice of the faith and the adoption of continental Catholic practice and Ultramontane agenda onto the English Church by the restored Hierarchy. By 1879, within the new Diocese of Middlesbrough, what Mary Heimann calls the 'new piety characterised by participation in a range of newly popular devotions'<sup>15</sup> had been established, but their spirit and the means by which this happened was very much in tune with the evangelical ethos of local Protestantism.

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<sup>13</sup> MDA, Notice Book 01.03.1880.

<sup>14</sup> MDA N3 Pastoral Letters for Advent 1880-1899.

<sup>15</sup> Heimann M., Catholic Devotion in Victorian England 34.

Moreover, it left Catholics in the new diocese poised to make a substantial contribution to the spiritual life of Yorkshire during the course of the twentieth century.



## **Part 3**

### **The Native Church 1879-1929**

#### **3.1: Into the twentieth century 1879-1914**

**Fig. 20: Richard Lacy, First Bishop of Middlesbrough**



## **Introduction**

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the general situation that pertained in Yorkshire and indeed Britain during the early years of the diocese. Social and economic considerations provide clues to the reasons for the worship and personal devotion that was practised by the Catholic population that will be discussed in the following chapters of Part Three. The effects of the social and economic situation were not unique to the Catholic mission however, but impinged upon all the churches in more or less equal measure. The second part of the chapter will examine their response and again provide a catalyst for discussion in the following chapters.

## **The Economic and Social Climate**

As the Victorian era drew to a close, both the social and economic conditions experienced by most local Catholics in their daily lives were far from ideal, and there was little or no improvement forthcoming. This was true whether they were living in the country or in the three large towns. Lacy explained the general scenario when, in 1895, he enumerated what he considered to be the main problems in society:

drunkenness in both men and women, also in the upper levels of society extravagance, indifference about religious obligations, relaxation of the chains of holy marriage; Home life is torn apart throughout the life of the nation; All over the desire for gold and sensual pleasures and also the foolishness of wealth are the greatest sins of this generation.<sup>1</sup>

In this statement, he expounded what has become the classic critique of life in the eighteen-nineties. As regards drunkenness it did appear to be decreasing and Lacy himself spoke less about it in his Pastoral letters as the new century dawned. But there were problems and these were exacerbated by the economic situation. On

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<sup>1</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Reports, Relatio Status Diocesis Medioburgensis 1895.

Teesside the economic buoyancy and optimism of the mid-Victorian period collapsed within the iron industry in particular. This was due to the unsuitability of the local iron ore to be converted into cheaper steel by the Bessemer process. Even after the development of an alternative process of ore conversion in 1879, it was slow to gain the market's confidence. Together with increased competition from abroad this resulted in a lingering trade depression that gripped the area until the events of the First World War provided a short term economic boom.

York too saw high levels of poverty amongst its Catholic population. Despite its position as a regional hub for the railway system, the economic basis for the town depended essentially upon its position as a centre for local agriculture and family-run manufacturing businesses particularly in the area of cocoa-processing and confectionery. Particularly influential in this regard was the Rowntree family, whose Quaker beliefs underpinned much of their development of this commodity at this time. For example in 1879, the introduction of hydraulic presses to squeeze roasted cocoa beans resulted in a cocoa drink that was marketed as an alternative to beer to sustain and refresh manual workers. It became known as a Quaker 'temperance drink'.<sup>2</sup> In 1901, Seebohm Rowntree published the results of a study into the lives of the working population in York.<sup>3</sup> It concluded that

The conditions of life obtaining in my native city of York were not exceptional,...and they might be taken as fairly representative of the conditions existing in many, if not most of our provincial towns.<sup>4</sup>

This included factors that thirty percent of the population lived in poverty, defined as income of less than £1 per week for a family of five, who would among other things

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<sup>2</sup> Royle, E., 'York in the Nineteenth Century' in Nuttgens, P. (ed.), *The History of York from Earliest Times to the Year 2000* (Pickering 2007) 264.

<sup>3</sup> Rowntree, S., *Poverty, A Study of Town Life*. (London 1901).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv.

be unable to contribute anything to their church or chapel and the wage earner would not have to miss a day's work.<sup>5</sup> A similar, but less-known study carried out in Middlesbrough in 1907 by Lady Bell came to similar conclusions.<sup>6</sup> That most of the Catholic population was found within this group of people is affirmed in two ways by Lacy in a national and a local context:

The faithful in England are for the most part either labourers or nobility. It is without the middle classes...

...Catholics are for the most part Irish workers or born in England of Irish parents especially around Middlesbrough, South Bank, South Stockton, Redcar, Loftus, Hull, York. However there are families known as 'noble' numbering about 10. In the big towns there are merchants known to be wealthy, but not many.<sup>7</sup>

The rural areas also had their problems with poverty as acute as in the towns. Many areas such as Swaledale were affected by rural depopulation as people continued to move into the towns in search of regular work. Agricultural workers enjoyed no guarantee of employment from week to week, particularly if the weather was bad. This general poverty and the lack of missions was a barrier to the growth and maintenance of the Catholic faith in many areas of the diocese.

Towards the end of the century Lacy enunciated what he felt mitigated against the practice of faith and what he felt the remedy was for his Catholic flock. It was this that fostered his priorities for his new diocese:

I give as an example a grievous evil that has prospered partly from the worst of modern society partly from the conditions that governs modern life; for on the days of the Lord and festivals it is often represented to the poor to enforce work that it is the custom to receive payment by the master in the tavern... Until the cure the faithful ... are not able to avoid the example of evil that is abundant everywhere...nevertheless in the Catholic faith devotion to the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 133-4.

<sup>6</sup> Bell, F., *At the Works* [1907] 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Virago, London 1985).

<sup>7</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Reports; *Relatio Status* Diocesis Medioburgensis 1892.

sacrament shown in hearing mass frequently, in heeding the Word of God, in the exercise of moderation and virtue, in assiduous prayer for catholic education where provision greatly needed at this time for our young, will the remedy be found.<sup>8</sup>

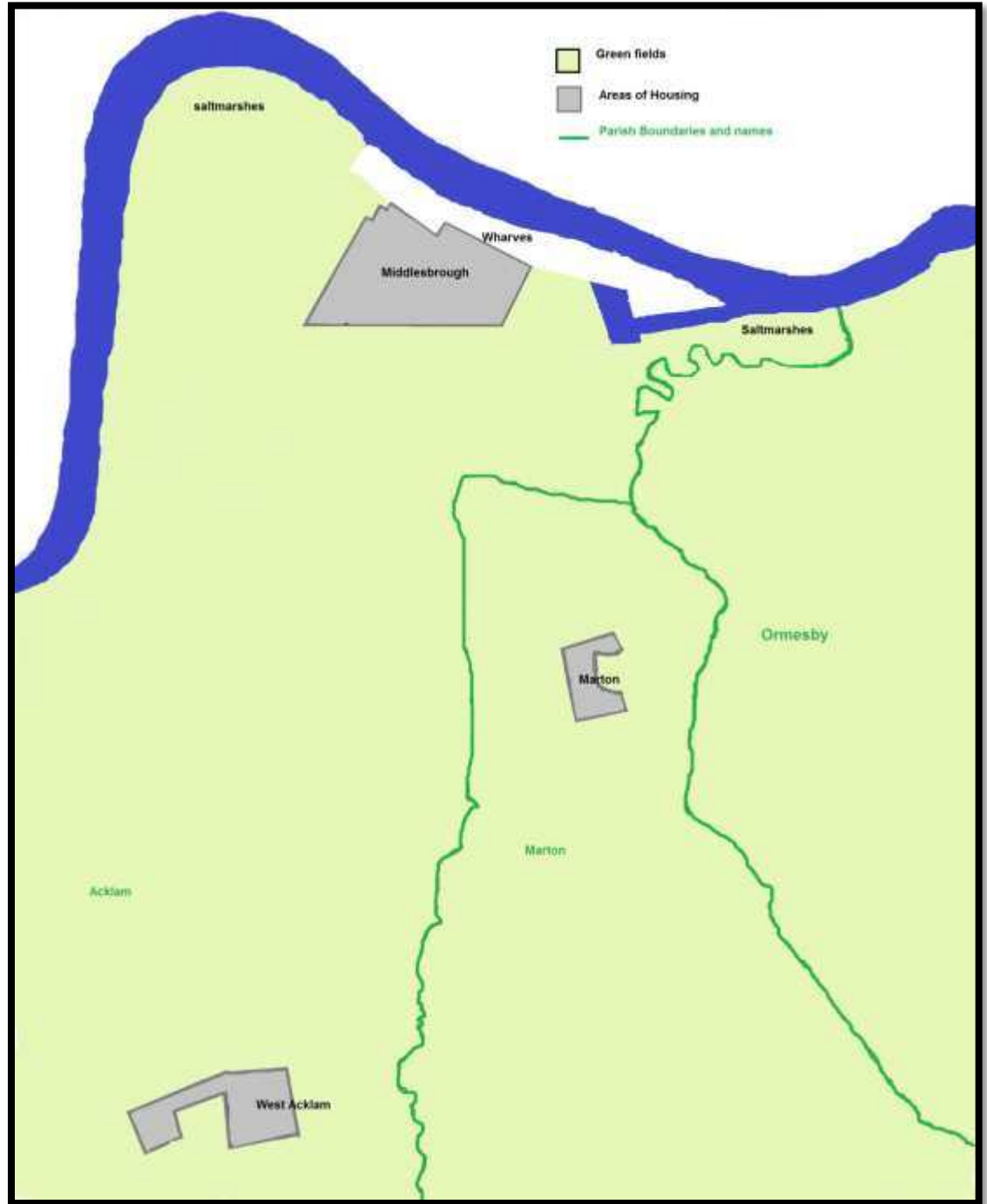
### **The Response of other Churches**

As the Victorian era merged into the Edwardian era the other churches found that they needed to adapt and develop their structures and worship to meet the new challenges presented by an urbanized and industrialized society. Suburban expansion of towns was led by the desires of people intent on improving themselves by moving socially upwards. Areas of more prosperous housing would be built in concentric circles moving ever further from the centre until it engulfed the rural villages. For example, Map 21 shows the location of both Middlesbrough and Acklam in 1840 and serves as a comparison with Map 22 which shows the same area in 1914. The geographical expansion of the town meant that Acklam bordered Middlesbrough, and indeed was about to be swallowed by the town. This was the fate of many rural parishes in England with their essential character and way of life altered forever by encroaching urban sprawls.

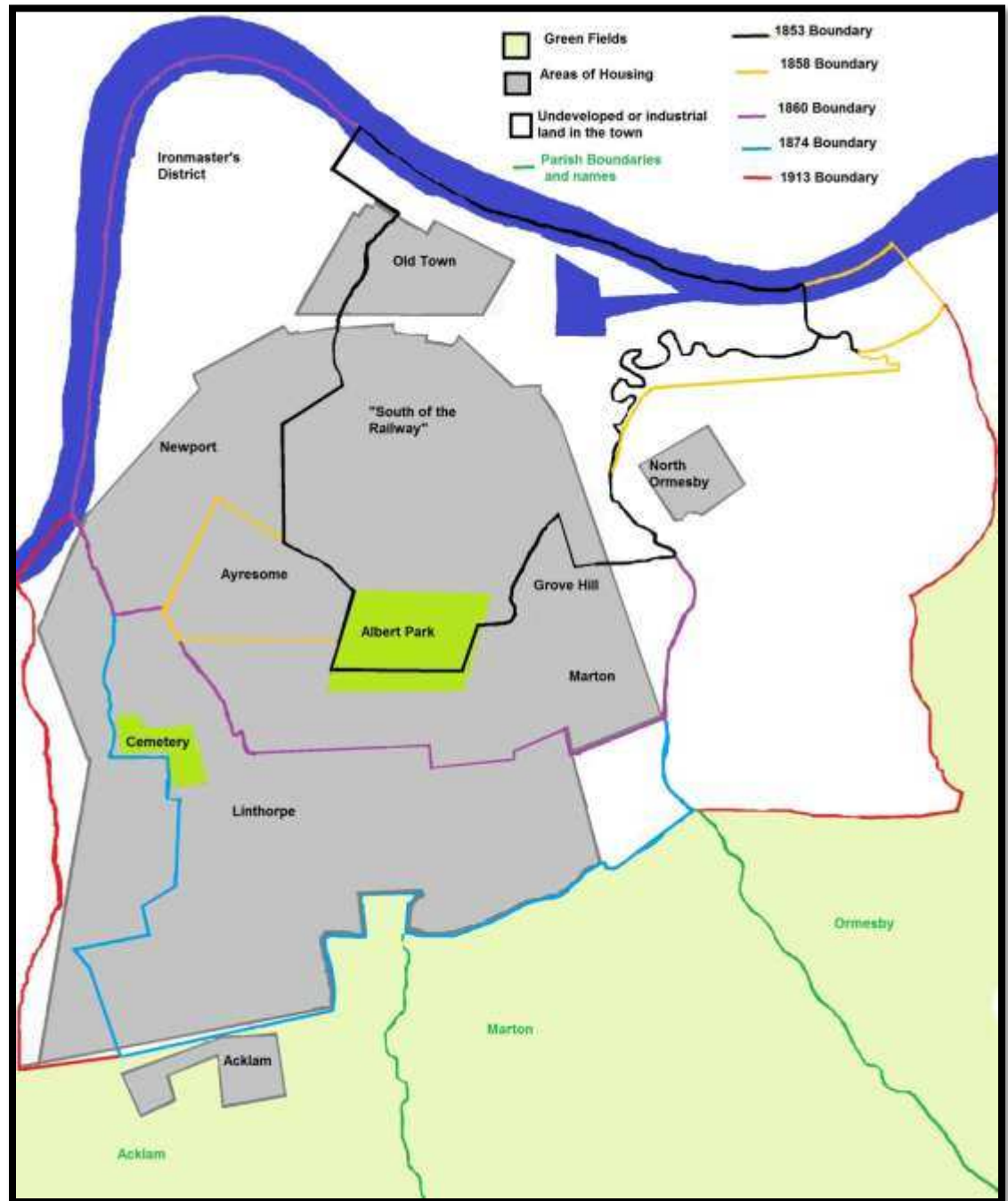
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<sup>8</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Reports; Relatio Status Diocesis Medioburgensis 1895.

Map 21: Middlesbrough 1840

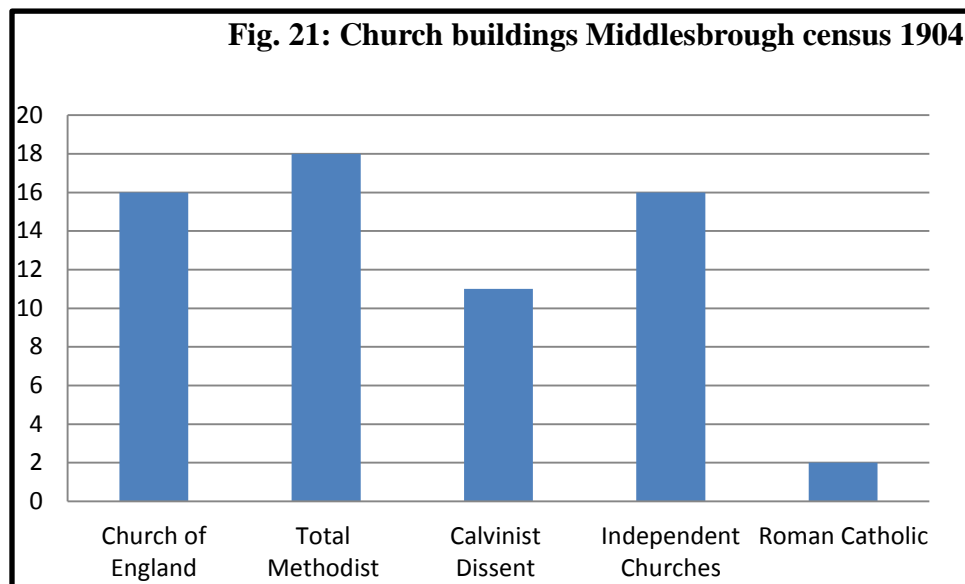


Map 22: Middlesbrough in 1914



The growth of Middlesbrough, also illustrates the need for church extension. The provision of churches for people to worship together and provide a base for evangelization was as much a preoccupation of the late Victorians as it had been for

the previous generation. The internal strength of the circuit system benefitted both Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists in that it enabled them to take risks in opening new school-chapels while being supported by the mother chapel. Larger chapels followed later if it was a success. The earlier generation of Anglicans had been restoring and rebuilding the dilapidated fabric of their churches; the later generation were engaged in building new churches in the rapidly expanding urban industrial areas. By 1874 there were five Anglican churches in the town and by the time the local paper held a religious census in 1904, there was Anglican provision in three-fifths of the town, although this contrasted with multiple non-conformist provision in all areas as shown in Fig.21.<sup>9</sup>



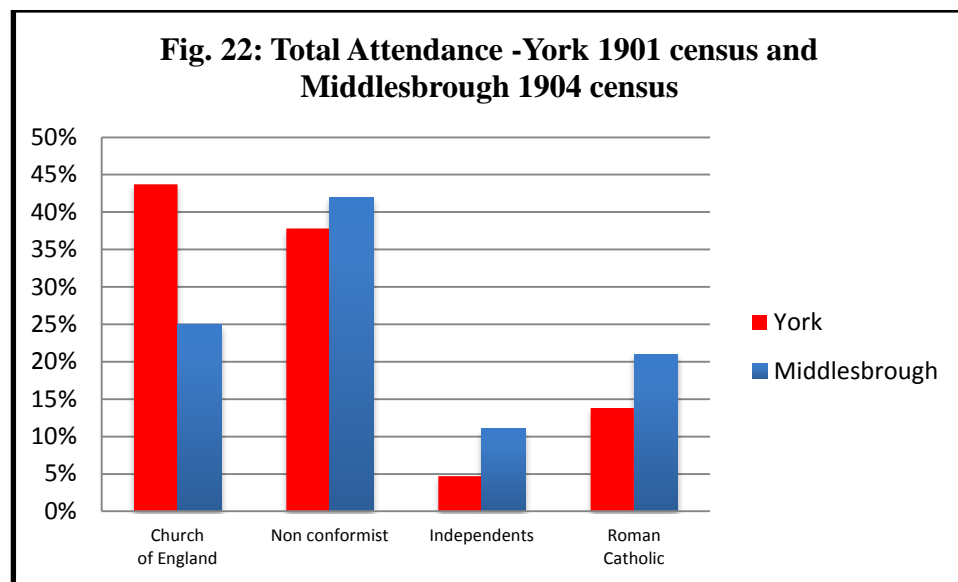
### Attendance at Worship

The Middlesbrough census, which was conducted over the four Sundays in May 1904 with every place of worship visited once by independent numerators, counted the congregation at the best attended morning service and the evening service, although

<sup>9</sup> 1. See Stubley, P., *Industrial Society and Church, Middlesbrough 1830-1914* (Bognor Regis 2001) Appendix III, 123-124 2. *Ibid.* 119-120.



afternoon services were included if held regularly. For the Roman Catholics the attendance at every Mass was counted, on the premise that no one would attend Mass twice in one morning. Fig. 22 shows that despite the progress made by the Anglican Church since 1874, it was still failing to meet the strong challenges posed by the non-conformist traditions in the town. The York census, part of Rowntree's comprehensive survey shows the continuing strength of non-conformism in a major cathedral city that had continued throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

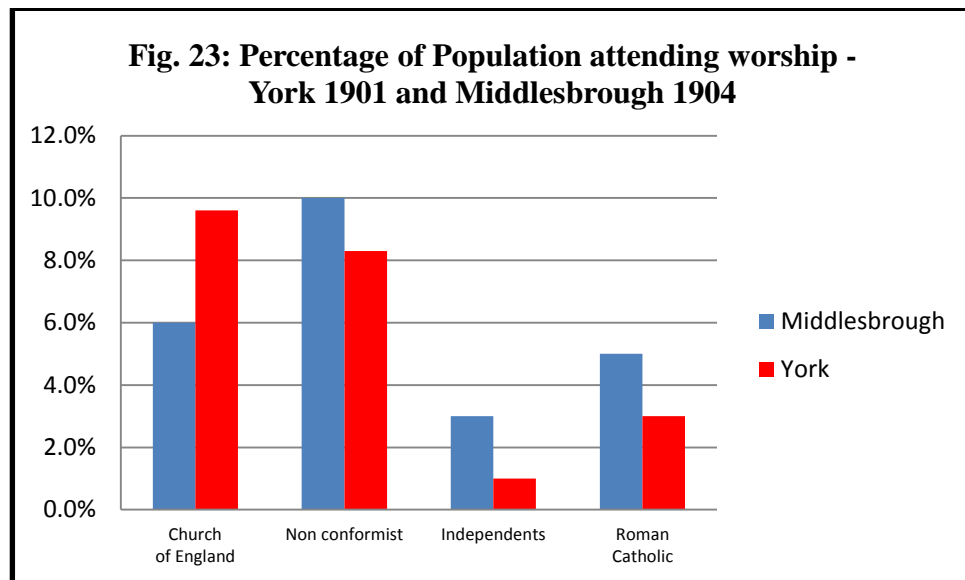


Both surveys show also the necessity of all the denominations accepting that the population at large was not attracted by formal religion. In Middlesbrough despite ample provision of places and variety of practice, only 23% attended worship during the census. In some mitigation, the decennial census of 1901 in Middlesbrough had revealed that unusually, the male population (47,553) was greater than the female (45,115)<sup>11</sup>, and Brown shows that it is females who are more likely to retain the

<sup>10</sup> Data from Stubley, 119-120 and Royle, E., *Nonconformity in Nineteenth -century York* (York 1985). 2.

<sup>11</sup> Figures taken from 1901 census of England and Wales, County Report Table 12.

practice of faith.<sup>12</sup> Questions were asked in the press whether Middlesbrough was a pagan town,<sup>13</sup> however in York, an even lower percentage attended worship. (Fig. 23)<sup>14</sup> The results also illustrate how Anglicans nationally needed to address the fact that they were no longer the Church of the nation, but merely the largest of a group of denominations competing to capture the minds and hearts of a populous that were not necessarily of a religious outlook.



### Patterns of Worship

The nature of Anglicanism in Yorkshire was beginning to change to reflect the inner pluralism of the church that was apparent at the beginning of the twentieth-century. The long-serving evangelical Archbishop Thomson (1863-1890) endeavoured to keep the developing Anglo-Catholic practice out of the diocese during his episcopate. His main interest lay in further developing the evangelical aspects of ministry encouraging the extensive use of Bible classes, social activism and missions.<sup>15</sup> In

<sup>12</sup> Brown, C., *The Death of Christian Britain* (Routledge 2001) 9-10, 58-87.

<sup>13</sup> NEDG 16.07.1904.

<sup>14</sup> as n10.

<sup>15</sup> *Yorkshire Gazette* 17.11.1888.

Middlesbrough, full Anglo-Catholic ritual was introduced to All Saints Church in 1884 by its vicar, John Burn but the use of incense and reservation of the Blessed Sacrament aroused the wrath of Archbishop Maclagan (1891-1908) who placed All Saints under an episcopal ban that only ended in 1936, many years after the deaths of both protagonists. The parish embraced some of the worst slums of the town as well as its industrial heartland; in the manner of many Anglo-Catholic slum priests in London, Burn developed strong Christian socialist views and campaigned endlessly against the poverty and injustice that was rife in the town especially the parsimonious attitude of the Board of Guardians towards relief during the frequent periods of industrial depression that engulfed the town.<sup>16</sup> In Hull, the evangelical traditions of the city were weakened by the appointment of an Anglo-Catholic E.J Tyser to St Mary's Church in 1892. He introduced daily Communion services and vestments and in 1897 made a sung Eucharist the principal service on Sunday morning.

The nature of Methodist chapel life also began to change in the last part of the nineteenth-century with an expansion of leisure activities to provide a complete environment for Methodists. Although the emphasis on prayer, Bible study, Sunday worship and social activism remained, rival claims for leisure time began to be offered by outside agencies and to address this, chapels began to offer their own activities with sports clubs, mothers meetings, and other social agencies. However, York Methodism was also at the forefront of another strand of Methodism in this era when during the eighteen-seventies the revivalist 'Holiness' doctrine or the attaining of Christian perfection on earth was promulgated at the New Street Chapel. It coincided with an internalization of revivalism by evangelicals to persuade adherents

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<sup>16</sup> Fullerton, T.G., *Father Burn of Middlesbrough* (Bradford 1927).

of the urgency of saving the lost, rather than reaching out to the lost directly. Originally a part of early Methodism that had fallen into disuse, holiness meetings incorporated features of ecstasy such as weeping, shouting and the public renunciation of symbols relating to former lives, particularly those considered sinful or leading to sinfulness.

Linked closely to the holiness tradition was the Salvation Army, which had started to establish itself in Hull and York around 1880, and slightly later in Teesside. With worship held in citadels designed like music-halls incorporating brass bands, revivalist choruses and an ethos that neither clerical nor sacramental, the Salvation Army combined two contemporary attitudes of British life, namely imperialism and a new piety. The first was reflected in the use of uniforms, flags and military language; the second was reflected in the use of Holiness meetings and the renunciation of sinful actions in preparation for sanctification. But it was the social rescue work for which they became best known that supplemented their primary motive of improving working class lives through means of evangelization and conversion.

### **Conclusion**

All the denominations would have agreed with the enumeration of the ills of society by Lacy for they were all concerned with similar matters to a greater or smaller extent. All the churches were developing their structures to meet the problems of rising populations particularly in the towns. While Anglicans concentrated on provision of buildings for the sole use of worship, non-conformists used the school-chapel form of church-planting, a concept that was also used by Lacy. The nature of worship was also changing with more variety being offered. The rise of both Anglo-Catholicism and the Salvation Army provided both colour and spectacle within

worship. Missions changed character and for the most part reached out to the converted rather than others. Catholics had already transformed their worship and where the missions of Gentili and the early Redemptorists were directed at the Catholic population, in particular the lapsed; now they became a means to convert England back to Catholicism. In 1914, imperialism, which had become a defining attitude of Britishness, became less triumphalist in the trenches. The churches too would be forced to re-evaluate their message, but as will be shown for Lacy, in his twilight years the dream of a Native church was just reaching its zenith.

### **3.2: The Priorities of Bishop Lacy**

The centrality of the Mass in the Catholic faith and the core obligations of Catholics to attend Mass weekly and receive the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at least once a year, means that the provision of adequate opportunities for Mass are the first priority of any bishop. This has several corollaries; priests are necessary to be ministers of the Sacrament, suitable places for its celebration need to be provided, and local communities of Catholics built up for mutual help and support. In the new diocese of Middlesbrough, there was much to be done in all these areas, and this chapter will demonstrate how concern for the faith of the local Catholic community, the provision of priests and the founding of Missions were all central to the episcopacy of Lacy from the moment of his consecration.

#### **A Catholic Identity**

One of the two most important symbols of Catholic identity in the new diocese was its Cathedral in Middlesbrough. Despite the fact that an estimated 14,000 Catholics lived within its boundaries, it was 1901 before another mission was established in the town making a clear statement of intent from Lacy that the Cathedral Mission was the spiritual heart of the diocese. This was reinforced in Pastoral Letters such as that of Advent 1900, where Lacy expressed his desire to complete the Cathedral, which had remained in its unfinished state for twenty-four years. He explained to the people that the Cathedral was ‘first in dignity and privilege as the mother-church’ but also was ‘the one church which belongs to the whole Diocese’ with strong ‘claims on the sympathies and support of the united flock.’<sup>1</sup> The second symbol was the bishop as Chief Pastor. With his Chair permanently fixed in the Cathedral, the two symbols

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<sup>1</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1900 7.

were inexorably linked, not only emotionally as man and building in Lacy's case, but ecclesially also. From his Chair, the bishop ordained new priests for the diocese, presided over synodical meetings and promulgated new decrees emanating from the Holy See.

Lacy used his Lent and Advent Pastoral Letters to teach the laity important matters about living a Catholic life as well as updating them on the material progress of the diocese. In Lent 1889 for example, he expounded on the Catholic teaching about the keeping of Sunday, in the light of 'the outer world [where] men are beginning to chafe under the restrictions of our English Sunday...its religious aspects never trouble them.'<sup>2</sup> The restrictions were a result of the 'rigidity of a Puritanical age [which] has never found favour' in the Catholic Church, which taught there were two characteristics marking Sunday as 'the Lord's Day...namely rest from servile work and attendance at the prescribed solemn act of public worship'. Otherwise a moderate amount of relaxation and reasonable amusement is tolerated as Sundays and Festivals are 'pre-eminently the poor man's day when toilers of the week may meet together and enjoy one another's society'. However, he goes on to decry the fact that in the towns particularly, 'vast numbers are living without God, without Holy Mass, and in culpable neglect of their Christian duties'. He feels much of the blame lies in intemperance and exhorts the faithful to fight against it; 'in particular the habit of Saturday night drinking and dissipation, which lead directly to the result the Church has so much reason to deplore.'

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<sup>2</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral letter for Lent 1889 [used throughout paragraph] 9-11.

For Lacy intemperance was the root cause of many of the problems preventing the living of a good Catholic life. It was a subject he returned to time after time in his letters; condemning the habit in women,<sup>3</sup> and quoting the words of William Gladstone that ‘the intemperance of the United Kingdom is the source of more evils than war, pestilence and famine...visiting us year by year in permanent activity’<sup>4</sup> As in the other denominations, abstinence societies in the form of confraternities were found in many missions; the League of the Cross for men founded by Cardinal Manning was particularly favoured in the diocese. Its constitution required its members to abstain totally from drink and each month meet in church for Mass and reception of the Eucharist.

The setting up of confraternities, guilds, Catholic clubs and Reading-rooms by the clergy was encouraged by Lacy as ‘remedies for these evils’ namely ‘theatres, music-halls and cheap literature [that] too often corrupt the most virtuous of our poor.’<sup>5</sup> Membership of confraternities was encouraged as a means of deepening faith and mutual encouragement, and Guilds such as the Needlework Guild that was established in 1892 were a means of providing some measure of material help to the poorer missions as well as social activities. Although accusations were made later that the provision of such leisure activities as Catholic clubs and reading-rooms encouraged the formation of a ghetto mentality, it was no more than the other denominations were doing for their membership as pointed out in Chapter 3:1 and all such activities were forms of internal evangelical endeavour, as shown by the expectations of Lacy in 1897 in Hull.

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<sup>3</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Lent 1897 8.

<sup>4</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1890 8.

<sup>5</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanæ Medioburgensis Annis 1881-1888 83.



It gives us additional pleasure to know that a Catholic club-room has been built as an addition to St Mary's School. We trust that the Catholic young men of the district will now form themselves into a thoroughly Catholic Association, not merely for their own recreation and pleasure, but for the furtherance of every Catholic interest.<sup>6</sup>

But there were signs towards the end of the century, that in the diocese, thoughts of missionary endeavour were turning away from merely reaching out to the lapsed, and instead became focussed upon non-Catholics. Prayer played a part in this and two new initiatives were set in train. Lacy decreed in Synod that the 'Sodality of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour' be established in every mission in 1892<sup>7</sup>, and in 1898 Pope Leo XIII established the universal 'Arch-Confraternity of Our Lady of Compassion for the return of Great Britain to the Catholic Faith' and this too was established in the diocese.<sup>8</sup> The former was particularly pertinent to the diocese because of Lacy's own devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, but it also signalled a change in the missionary approach of the Redemptorist Order towards making converts rather than reclaiming the lapsed.<sup>9</sup> The Arch-Confraternity, as well as the daily obligation of reciting one Ave Maria, also expected its Associates to perform good works, in particular 'the diffusion of Catholic literature among both Catholics and non-Catholics. In this way much may be done for the spread of Catholic truth.'<sup>10</sup>

There were two other planks of Catholic identity, the nature of its schools and attendance at Mass. More about Catholic schools will be discussed in chapter 3:3 when examining the role of the Religious communities. Attendance and assisting at

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<sup>6</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1897 8.

<sup>7</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis annis 1889-1899 22.

<sup>8</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Lent 1898.

<sup>9</sup> See below Chapter 3:5.

<sup>10</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Lent 1898 6.

Mass, ‘the Church’s chief act of public worship’<sup>11</sup> was an obligation and for Lacy explained by the above quotation from the Church’s doctrine. In his Advent Pastoral of 1889, Lacy reflects further on this in language that would be very familiar to Evangelicals.

It [Mass] is identical in every way save one with the great sacrifice of Calvary; for on the Cross JESUS CHRIST, our High Priest, offered His own most sacred Body and Blood to His Father in atonement for the sins of men.<sup>12</sup>

The four reasons for Christ’s sacrifice cited by Lacy would also be familiar language – ‘render to God the supreme homage’ He is due, a ‘return of thanksgiving for the gifts of nature and grace... lavished on His ungrateful people’, ‘make satisfaction for our sins by offering His body as a Victim on the Cross’, and finally to ‘purchase for us, by His blood, the gifts and graces we need to secure the salvation of our souls’. Obviously the one difference between Calvary and the Mass was that at Calvary Christ offered Himself ‘whereas in the Holy Mass He, by the ministry of the priesthood, offers the same Body and Blood to His Father...by a mystic death’.<sup>13</sup> Although it is at this point Catholic and Evangelical understanding differs, the language and the Christocentric and crucicentric nature of faith as outlined by Lacy reveal a common link between them.

Throughout his episcopate, Lacy urged the more frequent reception of the Eucharist by lay Catholics as affirmed at the Council of Trent.<sup>14</sup> As he explained to the clergy

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<sup>11</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1889 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> McHugh, J. And Callan, C., (eds.) Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests [15<sup>th</sup> printing] (Illinois 1982) 249.

in 1906 when referring them to the Decree Sacra Tridentina Synodus,<sup>15</sup> he clearly understood that people were reluctant to receive the Eucharist because of ‘consciousness of daily faults’ and counselled the teaching

of such souls to be patient with themselves and their own infirmities...Encourage such souls to approach frequently to Holy Communion...for he came...that they may have life and have it abundantly...this is the real mind of the Church on this point. It will take time to lead large numbers of people to a right understanding of it.<sup>16</sup>

It is clear that the identity of the Catholic community in the diocese was expected to be marked by a devout, public-spirited, and temperate attitude to life and with the priests to be co-workers with Lacy in the building up of the diocese for ‘a new diocese cannot be built in a day, nor can it be the work of one individual.’<sup>17</sup> What priorities Lacy held for his priests will be examined next.

### **Priests**

Lacy felt that there was ‘no graver responsibility of the Pastoral office than... making provision for the supply of priests’.<sup>18</sup> As noted in Part 2:6, the division of the diocese of Beverley had resulted in a small and aged presbyterate in the diocese of Middlesbrough, which limited the decisions that Lacy could make about the direction of the diocese for a considerable part of his episcopacy. In 1886, commending the Ecclesiastical Education Fund to the laity for the receipt of almsgiving, Lacy told them

Our wants are great, and our means very limited...our wants are multiplying far beyond the increase of our means. Were it not that we have been enabled to borrow the valuable services of a number

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<sup>15</sup>Pope Pius X., Sacra Tridentina Synodus 1905.  
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDWFREQ.HTM> accessed 02.07.2010; MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis Annis 1900-1911.

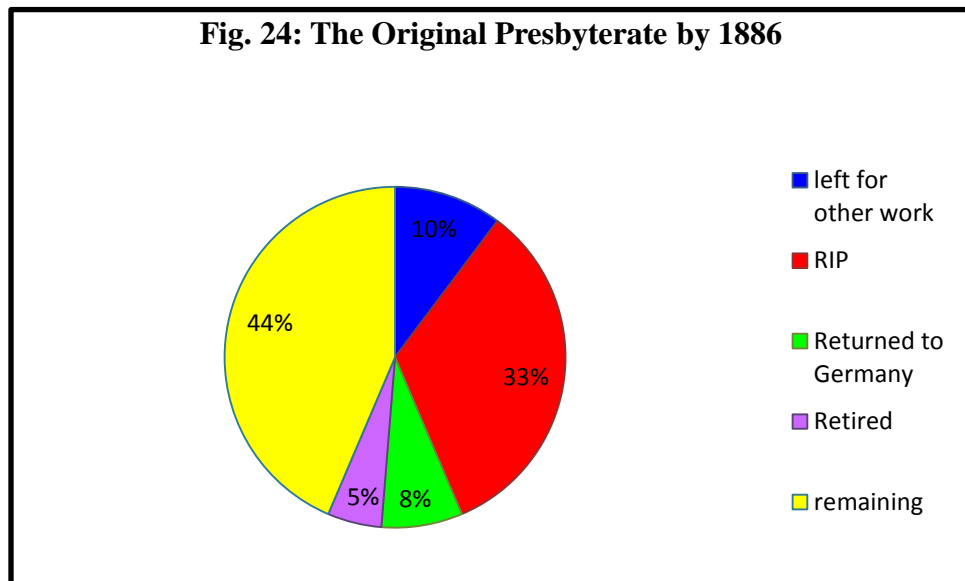
<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 94-5.

<sup>17</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis Annis 1881-1888 36.

<sup>18</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1894 5.

of Priests, the work of the diocese could not be efficiently carried on.<sup>19</sup>

By that year, the services of twenty-two priests of the original thirty-nine had been lost for different reasons, mainly through death. (See Fig. 24)<sup>20</sup> One had become the bishop of Northampton, and German priests in exile as a result of Kulturkampf had been allowed to return to their native home. As already stated Lacy's long-term aim was to provide a 'native' priesthood.<sup>21</sup> Borrowing of priests, particularly from Ireland, which was the main source, provided men able to say Mass, but who were strangers to the diocese and not in a position to develop a coherent identity for the diocese as a whole. Moreover, despite the large numbers of Irish Catholics who had settled in the diocese, the Irish priests were trained for a different situation – that of Ireland where Catholicism and nationalism were natural partners. This was not the case in England, where loyalty to the state had to be constantly proved.

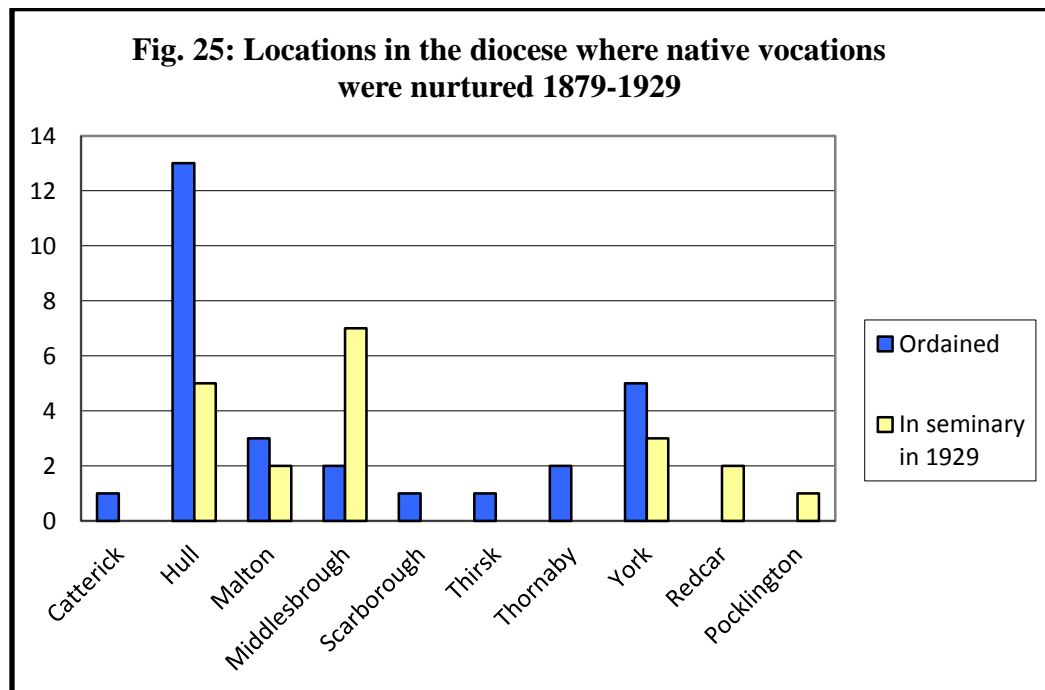


<sup>19</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1886 6.

<sup>20</sup> MDA. Extracted from database of priests who have served in the diocese of Middlesbrough.

<sup>21</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1894 6.

Despite his own Irish nationality, Lacy was not interested in Catholicism being associated with Irishness in the diocese. Rather he wished Catholicism to represent the universal faith that it was, and its priests to emerge from the people. As shown in Fig. 25, it is notable that the majority of ‘native vocations’ were found outside Teesside, from areas of the diocese with little Irish infiltration or sizeable Catholic populations.



The difficulties in establishing such a native priesthood were enumerated by Lacy in his Advent Pastoral of 1894 in a response to criticism over the slow progress in recruitment.

Sometimes impatience is shown that we have not more Priests, utterly ignoring the fact that so large an average of students fails to persevere... in spite of every human precaution in the selection and training of candidates...Another reason...is to be sought in our limited means...It may be well also to add that an increase in our Priests takes time. The average duration of an Ecclesiastical course is twelve years.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1894 5.

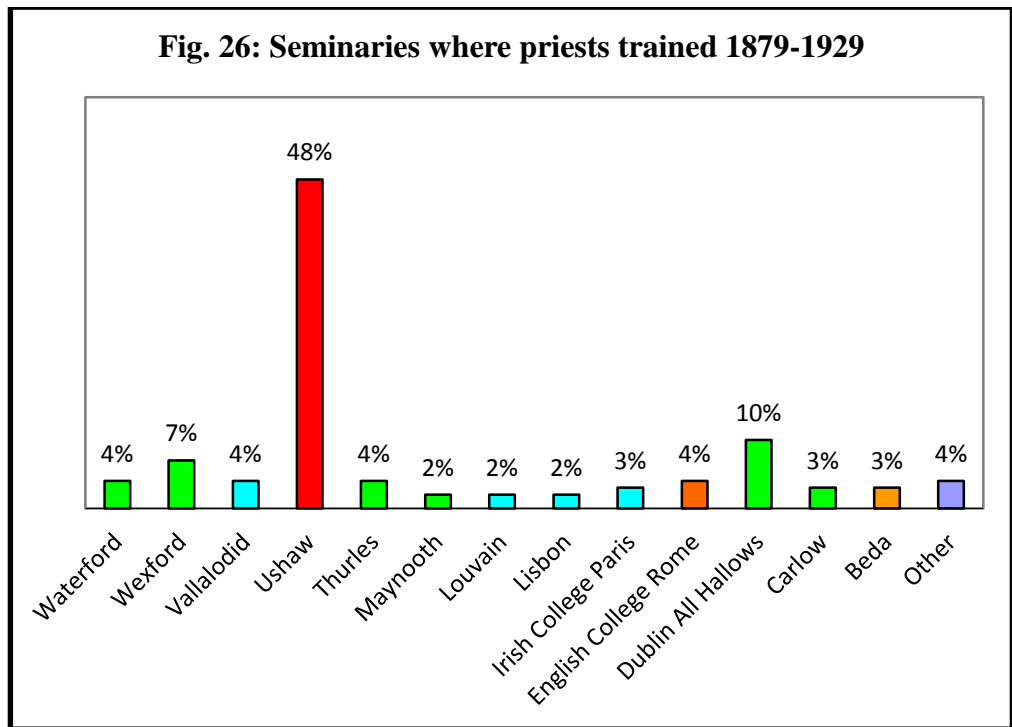


Fig. 26 shows where the seminarians from the diocese were trained with Ushaw being favoured. As with most seminaries, Ushaw also acted as a junior seminary and took lay students as well, providing their secondary education. In 1896, however, Lacy referred to the problems of the diocese not having its own junior seminary which would assist the process of selection and lighten the costs of training. One of his priorities in 1901 was to establish such a school in Middlesbrough under the leadership of one of the priests. However St. Brendan's as it was known faced many problems, including poor accommodation and a lack of highly trained staff. Neither was it particularly supported by the local priests, who felt that the junior seminary at Ushaw provided better formation.<sup>23</sup> However, there were at least two successes in that the third Bishop of Middlesbrough, George Brunner and his brother William, who became a senior priest in the diocese, both started their priestly formation at St. Brendan's. In 1904 the Society of Mary was asked to take the work over in a more

<sup>23</sup> See further MDA. File N/36 *St Brendan's Correspondence* .

expanded form.<sup>24</sup> By the end of 1902, Lacy could inform the people that ‘the number of our clergy has steadily increased, and we now have comparatively little need of external help.’<sup>25</sup>

It was in his annual visitation of the priests, detailed in Synod reports, that Lacy expressed his hopes for and occasionally, his frustrations with the presbyterate. He consistently emphasised the teaching aspect of priesthood, and the necessity of a strong spiritual life. In 1899, he ‘dwelt on the qualities befitting the Missionary priest. He must be obedient, humble, self-sacrificing- full of a large-hearted charity’. In 1884 he reminded the priests that raising money to pay off debts on schools, churches and presbyteries, and ongoing maintenance of the same was a practical priority, which had to be met before anything else in a mission. This was the financial burden that expanding the Catholic mission to all areas of the diocese entailed, but as Lacy himself had shown in Middlesbrough with the building of the new church in 1876-1878, it was also a means of bringing a community together.

### **New Missions**

As can be seen from Map 23, by the time Lacy died in 1929, there were parishes in every major centre of population in the diocese.<sup>26</sup> Each needed a church and presbytery and ideally a school also, which stretched the slender financial resources of the diocese to its limit. Additionally older buildings needed replacing or extensive maintenance, which in the poorer, rural areas was difficult to achieve, and the Diocesan Mission Fund was constantly overdrawn.<sup>27</sup> Some religious communities did

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<sup>24</sup> See below Chapter 3:3.

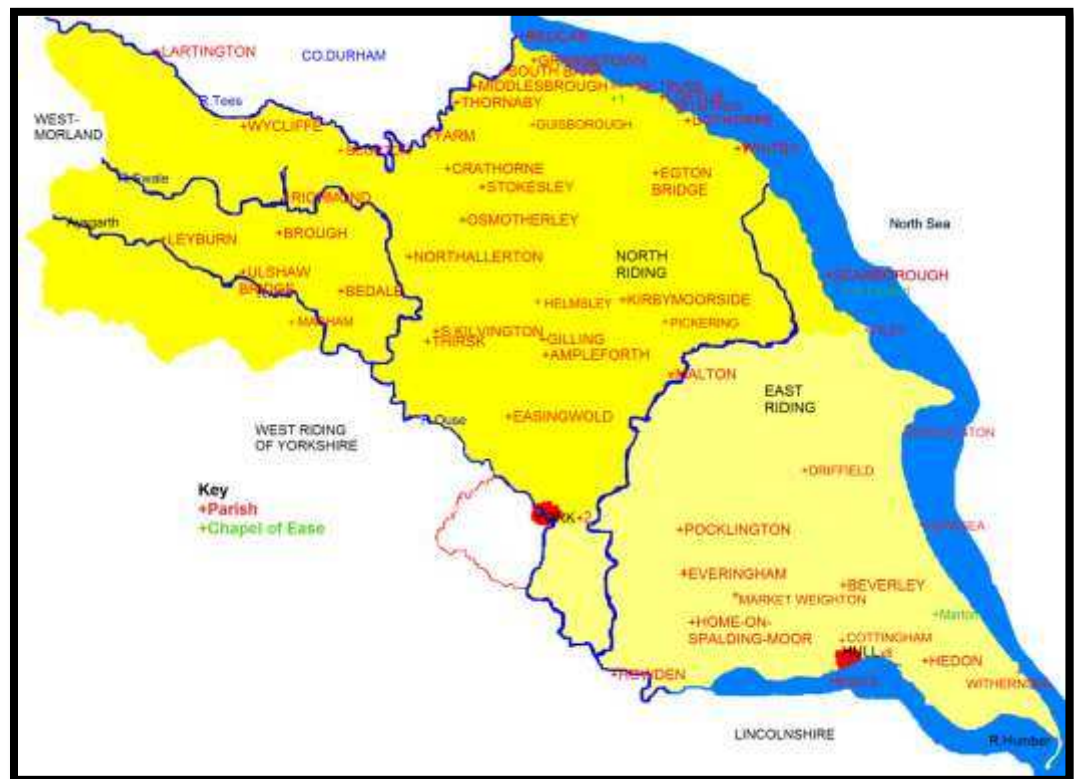
<sup>25</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1902 11.

<sup>26</sup> With the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1918, missions became parishes.

<sup>27</sup> See Lacy, R., Lent Pastoral Letters (1880 following) for annual details of accounts.

help in the erection of new missions, for example the Benedictines at Ampleforth established two new parishes in the centre of the diocese, which relieved the burden upon the diocese itself. It also needs noting that the establishment of new missions took place in two phases of Lacy's episcopate, the second being towards the end of his life when a coadjutor bishop had been appointed and will be discussed in chapter 3:5.

**Map 23: Diocesan Parishes 1929**



### **The Rural East Riding: Our Lady and St. Edward Driffield 1880**

As he had done in the Middlesbrough mission in 1872, Lacy as bishop made the outlying areas of the diocese his first priority. Driffield was known as the 'Capital of the Wolds' an area of the diocese that had not seen a Catholic place of worship since



the Reformation. The dominant Christian tradition was Methodist although by 1889, it is noted in the parish history that there were complaints from the Primitive Methodist lay preachers concerning competition from the Catholic priests in satisfying the religious needs of the local population.

the old easy-going parsons have nearly all passed away and now there are the praying, preaching, pastoring clergy working hard to satisfy the religious wants of the people and anxious to discredit our ministry.<sup>28</sup>

The area of the new mission covered some four hundred square miles, with Catholics scattered throughout working as labourers on remote farms or settlers from the traveller community who frequented the local hiring fairs held all over the East Riding. The first priest to serve the mission was newly ordained and on loan from the diocese of Westminster. He first established a mass centre in a private house, later moving to the larger Corn Exchange. By 1883, Lacy was reporting to the Synod that ‘land with an excellent house attached has been purchased at Driffield’ and the mission was formally inaugurated.<sup>29</sup> Two years later, an update informed the clergy that ‘an anonymous benefactress is building what promises to be a handsome church.’<sup>30</sup> Designed by Edward Simpson, an architect from Bradford, the church was a departure from his usual Gothic style, instead utilising the rounded architecture of the Norman era that met with a lot of approval<sup>31</sup> (Fig.27).

The bishop presided at the opening Mass in 1886, described by the local newspaper reporter as ‘a gorgeous scene, and to those versed in the “mother tongue” [Latin]

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<sup>28</sup> MDA. A History of Our Lady and St Edward, Driffield. (Unpaginated and unreferenced).

<sup>29</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis annis 1881-1888.36.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>31</sup> Driffield Times and General Advertiser 20.11.1886.

**Fig 27: Our Lady and St Edward, Driffield**

(with which we opine but few were acquainted) it would no doubt be deeply impressive.’ The homily was given by Fr. Bernard Vaughan SJ who was noted for homilies reflecting Catholic social teaching. On this occasion he reminded his hearers of the deprivation Catholics in the area had been subject to since the Reformation.

For 300 years they [Catholics] had been deprived of the light, but now, by the erection of that beautiful church, which was the only place within many miles where sacrifice could be offered through a legitimate ministry, they had the privilege within their reach.<sup>32</sup>

The mission was slow to thrive in an environment that harboured suspicion of Catholicism; by 1907 the Catholic population had shrunk to fifty-eight.<sup>33</sup> Revitalization began in 1908 with the appointment of Fr. Maurice O’Regan. He was associated with the parish until his death in 1958, apart from a four year period during the inter-war years. His success in firmly establishing the parish in a barren area of

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> MDA. Education Statistics report 1907( unarchived).

the diocese was centred upon his embodiment of the priestly qualities expected by Lacy, and summed up in the tributes paid on the celebration of his Golden Jubilee of Priesthood:

He has walked hundreds of miles visiting the sick. His Irish charm, and his inborn love of field sports, with his sound knowledge of farming and rural life have made him well known and respected over most of the East Riding... you can be justly called 'the Priest of the Wolds'.<sup>34</sup>

***Restoring a lost Catholic centre: St Joseph's Pickering 1903***

Pickering had been one of the mass-centres served by Nicholas Postgate until his martyrdom in 1679. Mass was not said there again until 1896, when the priest at Malton established a Mass at fortnightly intervals in the Salvation Army citadel. The arrangement ceased in 1900, but in 1901, a newly ordained convert priest Fr. Edward Bryan, was sent to Pickering, where he found few Catholics and resources. In order to build the mission up, Fr. Bryan struggled constantly in abject poverty and the account of his situation is chronicled in *The Tablet* between the years 1902-1926.<sup>35</sup> Likewise progress made in the mission is also chronicled, from the purchase of two small cottages in 1902, which formed a small chapel and schoolroom, to a fully equipped mission by 1913 with the completion of a Presbytery. Up to that point Fr. Bryan had lived in the loft of the cottages, and then in the unfinished tower of the church. In 1906 Dom Bede Camm commented that Fr. Bryan was following in the footsteps of Fr. Postgate in 'breaking up the hard and frozen soil and causing it to flourish.'<sup>36</sup> Not only was the tower incomplete when the church opened in December 1910, many furnishings such as altar rails and confessional still had to be provided. This did not

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<sup>34</sup> MDA. Driffield File. Unreferenced newspaper cutting.

<sup>35</sup> See also MDA. Pickering File. Bryan, E., *The Martyrs' Field* (privately produced pamphlet).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

prevent a High Mass being sung by monks from Ampleforth, with the Abbot leading the celebration due to illness of the Bishop. Fr. Bernard Vaughan again provided the homily, which carried overtones of the patriotism that had become part of the British identity and was heightened by the preparations for the coronation of King George V and its accompanying Festival of Empire in June 1911.

Jesus wants you to rally in that church as good Catholics to help others to know what that religion is which made England “Merrie England” and gave England those glorious charters of her liberty. Those who were not Catholics would do well to remember that they could not do better service than by helping Catholics become good Catholics because a bad Catholic could never make a good Protestant, still less could he make a good citizen.<sup>37</sup>

**Fig. 28: St Joseph’s Church Pickering**



By the time Fr. Bryan retired in 1934, he had completed the task Lacy had set him in 1901 of restoring ‘what has been lost by making known the beauty and

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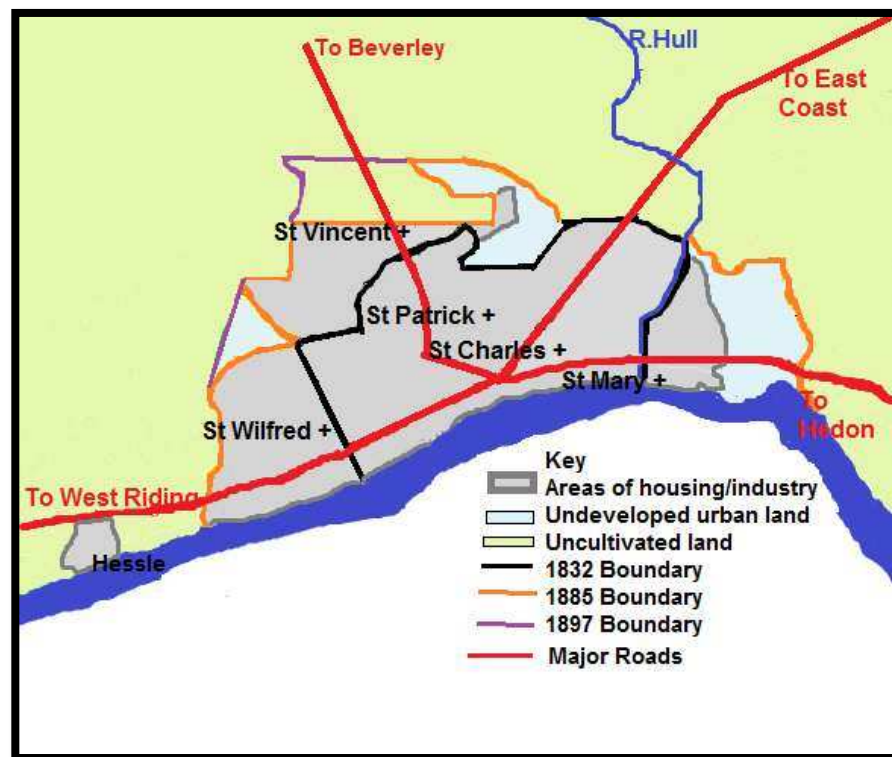
<sup>37</sup> MDA. Pickering File. Pickering Parish Catholic Magazine iii.

attractiveness...of the Catholic and Apostolic Church'<sup>38</sup> by leaving a well-established thriving parish.

### **The urban Areas: Hull and Middlesbrough**

With the division of York between the two new dioceses, there was no need for more missions in York during Lacy's episcopate. Both Hull and Middlesbrough were growing rapidly however, in terms of both area and population, but Lacy was careful in his planning. It was not until after the arrival of Thomas Shine as coadjutor in 1921 that parish provision in both towns expanded exponentially and would continue to do for several more decades.

**Map 24: Hull in 1904**



The expansion of Hull formed a town that resembled a half wheel with the major roads running out of it in a radial pattern. Boundary changes reflected areas of

<sup>38</sup> Carson, R., *The First Hundred Years* (Middlesbrough 1977). 155.

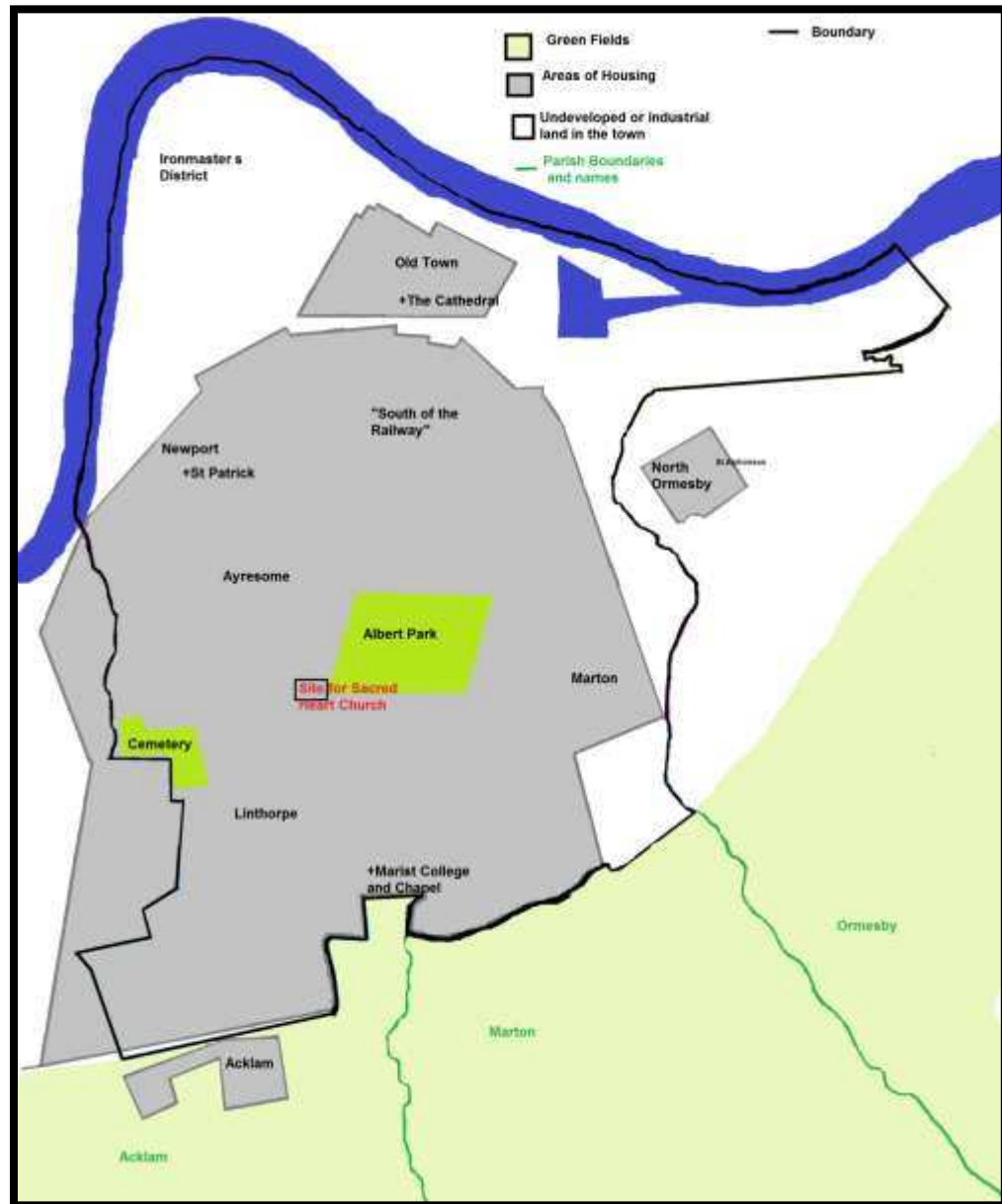
population growth, and Lacy used these and the pattern of major roads to establish the new missions of St Wilfred (1896) to the West and St Vincent (1903) to the North. (Map 24) St Wilfred had both church and school buildings, but St Vincent had a school-chapel until 1933 when sufficient money was finally collected for a church building.

In Middlesbrough, the separate community of North Ormesby was provided with a church in 1885 to ease the problems local Catholics had in getting to Mass at the Cathedral. It was 1899 before plans to extend Catholic provision in Middlesbrough itself were announced by the bishop.<sup>39</sup> (Map 25) Involving the building of two churches and three new schools, it was made clear that the support and co-operation of every Catholic would be needed in both spiritual and financial terms. In the heavily populated area of Newport, the building of St Patrick's church began almost immediately, for most of the money had already been raised. It opened in 1901 and became an independent mission, whereas the former school-chapel had been a mass-station served from the Cathedral. Land was immediately purchased for a new church on Linthorpe Road. As was normal, the schools had priority of resources and opened in 1906, with the building used as a mass-station served by the Cathedral priests. In 1911, a tin church was erected next to the school to serve as a chapel. Lacy had died before the church of the Sacred Heart that he had announced in 1899 was built.

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<sup>39</sup> NEDG 27.02.1899.

Map 25: Middlesbrough in 1904



### Conclusion

Lacy's aim was to make the diocese into a community that was held together by its shared Catholic identity, with devout congregations whose members were loyal Catholics and loyal citizens of England. To achieve this, clergy and people had to work together with their bishop to deepen their own faith, and make it attractive to

others, and so win converts, in addition to winning back the lapsed. They were also expected to raise vast sums of money by giving generously in order to generate the finance necessary to fund new missions and to nurture 'native' vocations to enable the central work of those missions to continue. The depth of commitment both displayed by Lacy and expected by him of others is yet another example of the evangelical nature of Catholicism that developed within this area of Yorkshire that had its roots in the strong recusant tradition as well as the strong evangelical ethos of the area that was explored previously.



### 3.3: The Contribution of the Religious

For Lacy, education and nurture were the two major means of fulfilling one of the earliest episcopal statements that he made: ‘The future of the Church in this land depends upon the training of the rising generation.’<sup>1</sup> It reflects the importance placed by the Hierarchy in general upon Catholic education as the means of disseminating the faith. There were also Catholic children who had been abandoned or orphaned and Lacy like his peers was concerned to

rescue them from a career of ignorance and vice. If we fail in our duty of charity, there are those who are active in...Philanthropy, who are both willing and ready to take our children and provide for their temporal well-being, but at the expense of the precious inheritance of Faith<sup>2</sup>

Nurture of Catholic adults was also necessary, requiring much work outside the liturgical life of a parish and also in caring for the elderly and infirm. As was becoming a common practice in the English Catholic Church, Lacy placed much of the work of nurture and education into the hands of the Religious, particularly the female Congregations whose apostolate was centred upon these very works. This chapter examines their contribution and that of the new male Religious who were invited also to the diocese in order take up work. First though the changing nature of the role of the Religious and expansion of their numbers in the diocese is discussed.

#### **The expansion of the role of the Religious**

Attention has already been drawn to the role of the Religious in the renewal and revival of the Catholic faith in the area of the diocese (Chapter 2.3), but the nature of their role increased exponentially as the diocese established itself as a part of the

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<sup>1</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral letter for Lent 1880 18.

<sup>2</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral letter for Lent 1890 8.

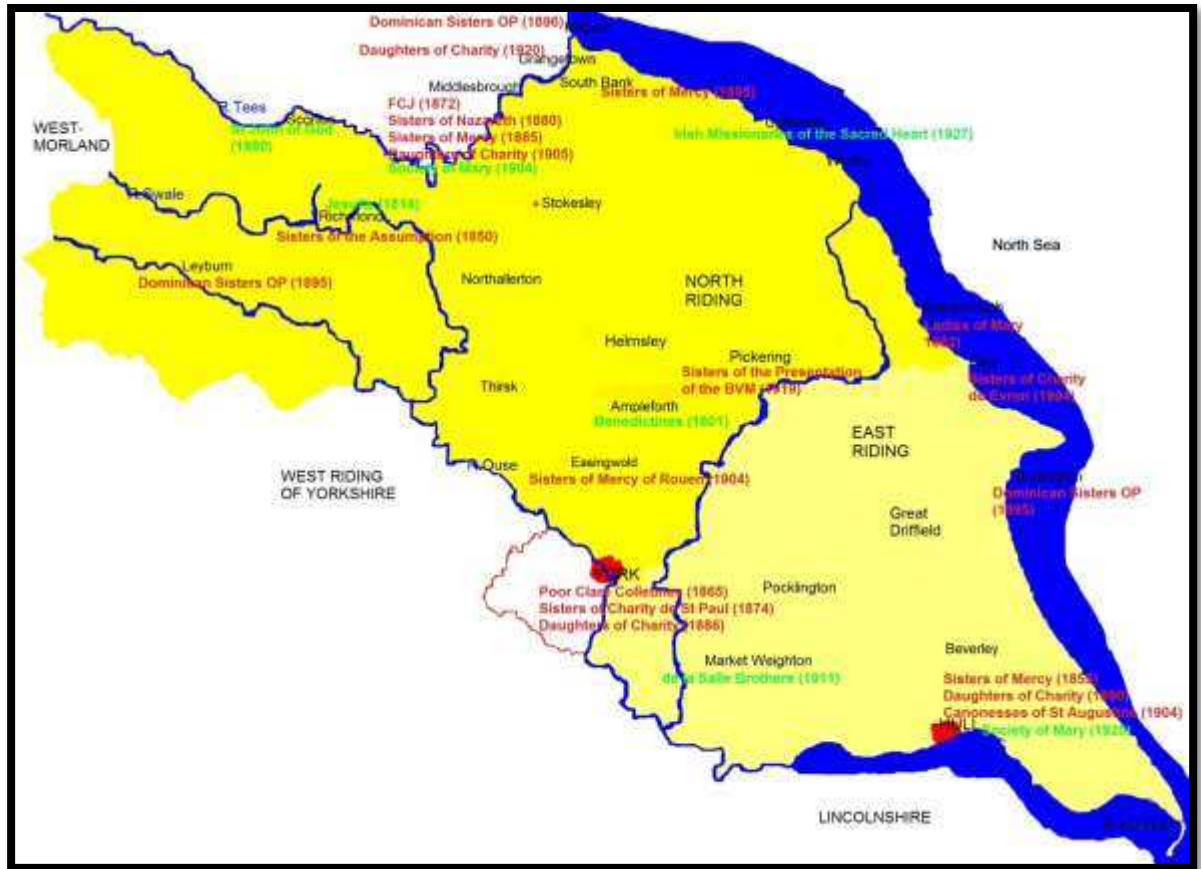
English Catholic Church. It will be demonstrated that there was a return of the pre-Reformation Religious role of providing hospitality and care for the local population, by the establishment of Catholic hospitals and nursing homes as well as provision for 'waifs and strays'. Nothing like that had been seen since the destruction of the great Abbeys whose ruins were scattered around the North Riding countryside in particular. In terms of education established communities were joined by numerous other Congregations continuing the work of providing the bulk of elementary education. Both also spent many years expanding their work into higher levels of provision, by extending current facilities or establishing branch houses.

In comparison with the diocese of Leeds, Lacy was again left at a considerable disadvantage in terms of the Religious already established in the diocese. The contribution of the Benedictines has already been noted in the previous chapter and in York the Bar Convent was on the wrong side of the divide. Although its private school continued to attract the more well-off Catholic girls from the Middlesbrough diocese, it had no other influence. Barbara Walsh in her social history of Roman Catholic nuns has illustrated the discrepancy between the two dioceses in maps and tables, as well as pointing out the lack of interest generally in establishing new foundations in the North-East.<sup>3</sup> From the low point of five convents in 1878, by 1929 there were 27 convents, fifty-one Regular priests and an unknown number of lay male Religious (Map 26).

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<sup>3</sup> Walsh, B., *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales 1800-1937* (Dublin 2002) 83-86, and Appendix II Table 17, 178-9.

Map 26: Distribution of the Religious 1929



The diocese benefitted from the arrival of a new wave of French Religious in the early part of the twentieth-century. Three French Congregations chose to settle in Hull, Filey and Easingwold respectively. All had teaching as their apostolate, but the Combe Laws of 1904 that banned Religious orders from teaching in France and their houses to be closed within a ten year period forced them into exile. Nursing orders were similarly phased out in the secularization process. All founded private schools in the diocese, and the Sisters of Charity of Evron, who settled in Filey, also provided the start of a new mission with their chapel used by local Catholics until their own church was provided in 1906 and a Benedictine monk appointed as mission priest.

The expansion in the number of Religious working in the diocese, and the attraction of many local vocations was of mutual benefit to the diocese and the Religious. It gave congregations such as the Sisters of Mercy the opportunity to accept invitations to work in other areas of the diocese and so expand their apostolate. It also gave the diocese a considerable number of female Religious who understood the people among whom they worked in much the same way as the 'native priesthood' that Lacy promoted. For this latter group, the Marist Order, who in 1904 opened a grammar school for boys in Middlesbrough that also functioned as a junior seminary, was seminal for the remainder of Lacy's episcopacy. Another advantage of the female congregations was the opportunities it gave women to gain qualifications and lead professional lives, in a manner that was not open to them within society in general. A notable local example of this may be found within the Sisters of Mercy in Hull, where 'Mother Dawson' was Superior from 1895-1915, in contravention of Canon Law and wielding as much influence and power as her brother Charles, the long serving Vicar-General of the diocese and Lacy's right-hand man.

Although not exclusively so, the work of Religious was concentrated upon the Catholic community and preservation of its Catholic faith. In this it reflected the current Protestant Evangelical position of preaching to the converted and improving the lives of the working classes by means of revitalization of faith. It also reflected the underlying desire of all the denominations to illustrate that its philanthropic work was a demonstration by example of the true Christian message. It should be acknowledged that although this work was rooted in much individual personal piety, human fallibility would ensure that there were some practical failings and mistakes. Being a Religious did not make any difference.

**Nurture: Medical Care**

Within the diocese, medical care was provided solely by male religious, most notably the Brothers Hospitallers of St John of God. A Spanish Order in origin it was founded in 1537 for care of the sick. The community that arrived at Scorton in 1880 was the first English branch of the Order and their hospital was created as a foundation for male ‘unwanted people’, such as the old and disabled. They took over buildings formerly run as a school by the Poor Clare sisters until 1857, whose chaplain had also provided Mass and the Sacraments for local Catholics. These stopped when the community moved away. With the advent of the St John of God community, Mass returned to Scorton through the offices of its chaplain, Fr. Grandet, and the area was made into an independent mission in 1885 when the chapel was registered as a place of worship and later, in 1897, was also registered for the solemnisation of marriages. The French-speaking Brothers caused a certain amount of initial suspicion amongst the predominantly Methodist population of the area, but eventually they were accepted. As a purely charitable foundation the Brothers were required to collect money in order to support the high costs of the hospital and ‘Brother Collectors’ became familiar figures throughout the region. The original buildings were replaced in 1913 and offered better accommodation and care, as well as doubling the number of bed spaces. However, the outbreak of war in 1914 had consequences for the hospital; among them a temporary change of direction into caring for wounded service personnel in a Red Cross ward.<sup>4</sup> The hospital closed in 2004.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information see: The Province of the Venerable Bede 125 Year Review.

### **Nurture: Welfare Work**

It was the concern of Lacy for the very vulnerable that prompted an early invitation to the Congregation of Poor Sisters of Nazareth to open a 'Nazareth House' taking in both elderly people and young girls. The Nazareth Sisters were originally part of the French Order the Poor Sisters who had been invited to England by Cardinal Wiseman in 1851. He was concerned about the needs of the destitute in London, especially the aged and children. However, in France the purpose of the Poor Sisters was care of the elderly poor and they did not approve of the work with children. As a result in 1854, the Sisters in England cut their ties with France and formed a new congregation the Poor Sisters of Nazareth with an apostolate to both the elderly and young. The Middlesbrough Home opened in June 1880, but with a constitution that prohibited any form of payment for their work, the Sisters were reliant on charity and alms-giving for food, clothing and money to give the people in their care.

In 1889, a 'Return of Waifs and Strays' identified over one hundred Catholic children in the workhouses of the diocese.<sup>5</sup> Many others were considered to be in danger of losing their faith because of the situation they were in, such as 'orphans... Children in non-Catholic hands...Children sent out to beg.'<sup>6</sup> Two kinds of solution were suggested by Lacy. Regarding the children in the Workhouses, the girls were to be taken into Nazareth House, and a new home would be provided for the boys in Hull 'with as little delay as possible.'<sup>7</sup> For the other children, Lacy desired that a Diocesan Rescue Society be set up with local branches in the large centres of population. By 1890 Nazareth House had been certified as a home for workhouse girls and a boys'

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<sup>5</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis. Annis 1889-1900 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

home was being run by the Daughters of Charity in Hull.<sup>8</sup> In addition a diocesan ‘Orphans Fund’ was set up, which collected alms from the faithful during the season of Lent in particular, and was used to help offset the debts incurred by the two homes in addition to the local fundraising in Hull and Middlesbrough. Care in the two homes included being given a general and Catholic education as well as training for future employment and both were subject to inspection by the Religious Inspector of the diocese.

### **Nurture and Education**

Although the work of many religious congregations overlapped into more than one area of concern, the apostolate of the Daughters of Charity in addition to dedicated parish work, also staffed schools and provided institutional care. Founded by St Vincent de Paul in 1633, the DVDP were the first Apostolate female Congregation to be recognized by the Church and grew to become its largest such organization. They had first arrived in the diocese in 1886 where they began work in St George’s Mission York, teaching in the school and carrying out social work within the mission. Being invited to establish a convent in Hull and running the boys home in 1890, extended their diocesan apostolate, and in 1905 it extended again to Middlesbrough where they settled within the area that would eventually become Sacred Heart Parish. Finally in 1921, they established another convent at Grangetown.

As records at St George’s shows, the work in school and the work in the parish were closely related:

Every effort in the last two years has been made to secure punctual attendance...Success to a certain extent has been secured, but there

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 13.

are trying circumstances connected with the children's homes that render many an effort fruitless. Some...come breakfastless often...it is hard to blame them...The Sister on the staff spends from 9-9.45 every morning going from house to house washing and dressing those who have no one to look after them. The homes are very poor and the young children suffer a great deal.<sup>9</sup>

The Sisters have been enabled to give a dinner of soup and bread to over 200 school children every day and also to over 150 more. The effects of the severe weather still last, and we again solicit your charity for the poor who feel them for some time to come.<sup>10</sup>

The welfare work at St George's also included running a lending library, and a Girls' Club as well as helping with the work of thirteen different Confraternities. This was in addition to the normal DVDP parish activities of visiting, caring for and nursing people in their own homes.

### **Education: Female Religious**

The provision of a Catholic education was the major priority of Lacy, and it was for this purpose that the majority of invitations to the Religious communities were made. The work of the Religious already in the diocese at its formation was in this area. Catholic education, at the elementary level was designed to present a basic general education, but primarily existed to teach the Catholic faith. The expansion into higher levels of education by the FCJ community in Middlesbrough and the Sisters of Mercy in Hull was designed mainly to provide young Catholic teachers for the next generation through Pupil-Teacher Centres. Both Communities had problems with the Local Authorities in gaining recognition for their Centres and in both cases the national Board of Education granted it without that local support. There was similar difficulty in granting recognition for the private Convent schools as secondary schools in the light of the 1902 Balfour Act. Both local authorities opposed the

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<sup>9</sup> *St George's York Infant School Logbook* 09.09.1898.

<sup>10</sup> *St George's York, Parish Notebook* 25.01.1891.



requests but again the Board of Education overruled the objections. Both Convent schools received grants, on condition that a number of free places were offered to children from the elementary schools. Under the leadership of Mother Dawson, the Sisters of Mercy developed higher aspirations of providing a Training College for teachers in Hull. This opened in 1905 at Endsleigh and the Pupil-Teacher Centre was phased out. After the First World War, the Pupil-teacher scheme was abolished nationally, and the college at Endsleigh became the main local provider of Catholic teachers.

In the Catholic elementary schools, within the diocese of Beverley, Religious Instruction had been standardized into a diocesan syllabus from 1876, a practice that was continued after the division. Laying down what must be known by the children at every stage; it was also used as the basis for the annual examinations conducted by the Bishop's Diocesan Inspector, who then published an annual report on educational progress in the schools of the diocese.<sup>11</sup> The syllabus provided a complete grounding in the practice of the Catholic faith including the Prayers, the Catechism, Doctrine and Sacred History. The requirement for the rote learning of texts and the catechism was emphasised in the accompanying *Observanda*. However, in 1907 a warning was sounded that there was an 'evil... that of cramming for an examination' particularly in Religious Knowledge where 'it is ruinous alike to soul and mind.' Signs included

the laborious way in which the prayers and other memory work are recited:...in the wild guesses to questions put in an unexpected form: and above all in the blank looks of the children when questioned on the work of the previous year.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters. Educational Statistics for the diocese of Middlesbrough. Various.

<sup>12</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters. Educational Statistics for the diocese of Middlesbrough 1907 5.

Although the imparting of most of the syllabus was felt to be safe in the hands of the teachers, Doctrine was always to be the responsibility of the priests for it was that area where knowledge was felt to be weak.

No instruction in 'Doctrine' is satisfactory if it not be imparted by the clergy themselves. From them it comes to the children, not as the School-lesson but as sacred truth, with the authority of the church, whose ministers they are.<sup>13</sup>

The formalized syllabus was not the only means of imparting the Catholic faith within the schools. The schools followed the Church's year, with Holy days of Obligation free of lessons; Mass was attended in the morning and the rest of the day given as holiday. Each day began with prayers and hymns, and most schools had a small oratory or altar permanently erected and decorated. Preparation for receiving the Sacraments was held in the schools, culminating with Confirmation at the close of the final school year when the children were aged fourteen. Catholic education was designed to produce generations of devout practising Catholics and the Religious were at the forefront of the work.

### **Education: The Marists**

The need for a junior seminary and the failed attempt to establish St Brendan's as a secondary school for boys has already been noted.<sup>14</sup> The Marists, who re-established a boys secondary school in 1904 faced similar problems to those that led to the failure of St Brendan's, namely attracting pupils in sufficient numbers to make a school viable, but were able to struggle on with financial backing from their Order, the use of their priests to act as supply cover in neighbouring parishes and using the buildings for other work such as retreats during school holidays. They were also able to open a

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<sup>13</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters. Educational Statistics for the diocese of Middlesbrough 1886. 5.

<sup>14</sup> p. 178.

boarding facility to take in boys from a wider area, which gradually helped their numbers to rise. It was not until after the end of the First War however, that the roll entered into three figures. Like the FCJ convent school, the boys' school had difficulties in being recognized by the Local Authority, although the Board of Education recognized it in 1906, despite no scholarships being offered at that time. As in the private convent schools, the diocesan Religious Instruction syllabus was not binding upon the Marists and they used their own syllabus of instruction. Neither were Lacy's hopes for a junior seminary nurturing a 'native priesthood' entirely fulfilled, for the major purpose of Marist involvement in education was to find English-speaking vocations for their mission territory in the South Pacific, rather than foster diocesan vocations.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that the Religious in the diocese continued their role described in Chapter 2.3 of being innovators of change and revival of faith. The female Apostolate Congregations provided role models to young women that were in advance of their time, and the Hospitaller Orders gave notice of alternative ways of service for men, who felt the priesthood was not right for them. Sharing the evangelical zeal for revitalization of faith and philanthropy as a practical demonstration of Christianity was not an easy task in the back streets of the three urban centres and such devotion needs to be acknowledged. Many lost their lives as a result of the disease and deprivation they shared with the people they were helping. Their extensive work in schools, carried out in the manner of the times ensured that basic Catholic teaching and devotions were known by most of the local Catholic population, and contact with the faith was maintained even if not devoutly practised by the majority.

### 3.4: New Ways

Historiography tends to define the period of Catholic history that encompasses the episcopate of Richard Lacy as the beginning of the ‘fortress church’, where an inward-looking community charted an unchanging course from within a mental drawbridge.<sup>1</sup> It certainly coincided with the entrenchment of Ultramontanism or centralization of ecclesial power within the Catholic Church that could be summed up in the aphorism of Pope Pius IX that ‘I am the tradition, I am the Church’.<sup>2</sup> Episcopal teaching and action were circumscribed by this centralized theology that Novak terms ‘non-historical orthodoxy’<sup>3</sup> – ‘a set of eternal principles... a building absolute and perfect in whose possession the faithful may stand safely and securely.’<sup>4</sup> The Modernist Crisis at the start of the twentieth century also reinforced the authoritarian attitudes, and the characterization of the era as that of a ‘fortress Church’ especially in England. Gilley though, describes the time as one of ‘equipoise’ when the Church grew steadily in numbers and experienced little internal dissent.<sup>5</sup> He argues that this was as a result of the First Vatican Council settling the questions of papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction, the codification of Canon Law promulgated in 1918, and the growth of clericalization. Another event, the promulgation of *Sapienti Consilio*, in 1908 may be added to the list.<sup>6</sup> Although it freed the English Church from its status as missionary territory under the jurisdiction of *Propaganda Fide*, its effect was to tie

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<sup>1</sup> For example Aspden, K., *Fortress Church* (2002, Leominster) who re-examines the concept and Hornsby Smith, M., *Roman Catholic beliefs in England: Customary Catholicism and Transformations of Religious Authority* (Cambridge 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in reflections on the First Vatican Council by Martina, G., *Pio IX (1867-1878) Vol. 3* (Rome 1990) 556.

<sup>3</sup> Novak, M., *The Open Church Vatican II* (New York 1964).

<sup>4</sup> Novak, M., ‘The Open Church 40 years Later’ in Ivereigh, A., (ed) *Unfinished Journey* (London 2003) 48.

<sup>5</sup> Gilley, S., ‘The Years of Equipoise 1892-1943’ in McClelland, A. and Hodgetts, M., (eds.) *From Without the Flaminian Gate* (London 1999) 21.

<sup>6</sup> Pius IX, *Sapienti Consilio* (1908).

the bishops closer to the Holy See by limiting their freedom in making local decisions. This chapter explores these hypotheses beginning with the increased jurisdiction of the Papacy upon local decisions and practice within the diocese, especially in the light of Lacy's wish to make the local church one 'native' to the area rather than an Italian mission, or Irish outpost. Worship and devotion are explored that provides evidence that contrary to the idea that having established the norms of the Tridentine Rite in England, Catholic liturgical and devotional practice remained unchanged. There were developments brought about by local custom and interest as well as papal decree. Finally, the rediscovered concept of pilgrimage and related to that, the developing idea of mission are explored, which once more reveal the shared interests of the Catholic and the Evangelical Christian.

### **Ultramontanism**

In England, the entrenchment of Ultramontanism initiated by Cardinal Wiseman and encouraged by his immediate successors, Cardinals Manning and Vaughan represented the full weight of the Tridentine tradition coming to bear upon the English Catholic Church for the first time. It brought with it a resurgence of the missionary spirit that had inflamed the European Catholic Church in the seventeenth century giving rise to Ignatius Loyola's Society of Jesus for example. The missionary spirit espoused both then and in the period of Richard Lacy's episcopate was centred upon one belief and claim; namely that the Roman Catholic Church was the one true church. Its head was the Pope in apostolic succession to Peter and it was from him that the church took its lead. As a corollary to this, the practice followed in the churches of Rome in terms of devotion and worship became the pattern for the universal church at large.

Much of the teaching of Lacy that is found in his pastoral letters and Synod addresses clearly endorses the centralizing attitude of the Holy See and Papal authority. For example in 1882, the clergy were informed that as a result of the promulgating of the Constitution ‘Romanos Pontifices’

Each mission in the Diocese will be required to contribute annually to the Peter’s pence Fund...The Bishop expressed his confidence that the Clergy’s zeal for the Apostolic See would make this tribute a success.<sup>7</sup>

In 1892, during a global influenza epidemic and in the light of a letter from the Holy See, the clergy were enjoined

to bring home to every member of the flock the duty of reparation which, on the authority of the Vicar of Christ they owe to the offended majesty of God.<sup>8</sup>

In 1893, when Pope Leo XIII was about to celebrate his Episcopal Golden Jubilee, Lacy emphasized the strength of the Papacy for the Church

They have taken away, one after another, the temporal supports on which the Pontifical Throne was thought to rest, and they find it, contrary to every experimental law, to be firmer than before.<sup>9</sup>

The emphasis on the centrality of the Holy See and obedience to its teaching enabled Lacy to enforce the establishment of a ‘native church’ within the diocese by emphasizing the Universal Church and local connections, such as the Yorkshire martyrs.<sup>10</sup> In devotional practice as in culture, people were encouraged to think of themselves as Catholic first and then consider their patriotic allegiances. It was not straightforward; for the Irish in particular Catholicism and national pride were closely entwined concepts particularly in their exile, and one fed the other as was seen in the

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<sup>7</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis Annis 1881-1888 27-28.

<sup>8</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral letter for Lent 1892 5.

<sup>9</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral letter for Lent 1893 4.

<sup>10</sup> See p.216.

annual St Patrick celebrations, which in 1895, Lacy curtailed despite his own Irish nationality

As this feast falls in Lent, we earnestly exhort all true and devoted children of this glorious Saint not to allow themselves to be drawn into such celebrations of his feast as neither the Saint nor the Holy Church, of which he was a Bishop, can approve. Let their chief aim be to make the celebration spiritual in character... ‘Balls’ on that day or on any day during the penitential time, we entirely disapprove of, and by our Pastoral authority, condemn; and we hereby strictly forbid the Faithful to take any part.<sup>11</sup>

Like the bishops in Ireland, Lacy also sought to discourage the popular ‘folk’ practices that had become attached to Catholicism in Ireland and brought to England with Irish immigrants. For example in 1898 he wrote to the Cathedral clergy

In cases where a ‘wake’ has been held over a corpse it is my wish and command that the prayers of Holy Church and the funeral rites be withheld from the same. –Let the people be encouraged to pray for their dead.<sup>12</sup>

It was probably from this time that a diocesan practice of families having a body at home the night before the funeral and praying the Rosary originated. However, both decisions regarding Irish practice illustrate that the spiritual and devotional practice that emerged during this era was marked by a combination of the sober piety preferred by the Holy See and the devotional reserve of English Catholics. The teaching was reinforced in the schools and sodalities and laid the basis for Catholic devotional practice in the diocese until the Second Vatican Council.

### **Worship: Cultural Catholicism**

Despite the best efforts of the clergy and religious, there were still a large number of Catholics whose devotional practice could be termed as ‘cultural’. They knew the obligations of their faith, and, despite not attending Mass regularly, expected the

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<sup>11</sup> MDA File N3/Pastoral Letters, Lacy, R., Pastoral letter for Lent 1895 4.

<sup>12</sup> MDA Cathedral Notebook 1914-16 dated 24.01.1898.

Church to provide ample opportunities for the rites of passage and sent their children to the Catholic school. Around the issue of childbirth, Mission notice books advertised weekly times for women to present themselves for churching, and also their babies for baptism.<sup>13</sup> From 1908, the full force of Tridentine marriage law was imposed upon the English Church with the promulgation of the *Ne temere* decree, on the validity of a marriage. As a result, people knew that they needed to be married by their priest for it to be valid. Although marriage between Catholics and non-Catholics were not banned, priests were not bound to agree to perform the ceremonies and could impose considerable demands such as the virtual requirement to convert upon the non-Catholic party before granting a dispensation. According to the records of Lacy, mixed marriages did not appear to be an issue of note. However in the interwar era, when increased social movement meant many Catholics came into closer proximity with non-Catholics than had hitherto been the case, the numbers of such marriages started to increase.<sup>14</sup> Bishop Thomas Shine in his Visitation diary as Coadjutor Bishop frequently preached on the ‘evils’ of such marriages, and also noted the exact number of adult converts he confirmed each year.<sup>15</sup> However, he did not distinguish between conversions due to marriage and conversions for other reasons some of which, as the present writer has previously shown, occurred as a direct consequence of the war and also the respect gained by the Catholic chaplains from the soldiers.<sup>16</sup> Finally, it was expected that the priest would be available at all times during the day and night to visit the sick and administer the Last Rites to the dying, so that even the lapsed were assured of a holy death. Together with those Catholics who

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Baptisms were performed on Wednesday and Friday mornings and Churching on Saturdays.

<sup>14</sup> See below fig 38 p278.

<sup>15</sup> MDA. Shine, T., Visitation Diary 1921-1946.

<sup>16</sup> Turnham, M., From Emancipation to Aggiornamento( Unpublished M.Th. Dissertation, University of Wales Lampeter 2007) 55f.



practised their faith more assiduously there was a worshipping Catholic community in every mission who have been described by one of their number as

Ghetto mentality with a hint of arrogance ‘we alone had the true faith’ anything to do with other denominations was discouraged – likewise mixed-marriages. But – there was a strong sense of community and people were proud to be Catholics (the reverse of the ghetto mentality) (F1928).

### **Worship: The Mass**

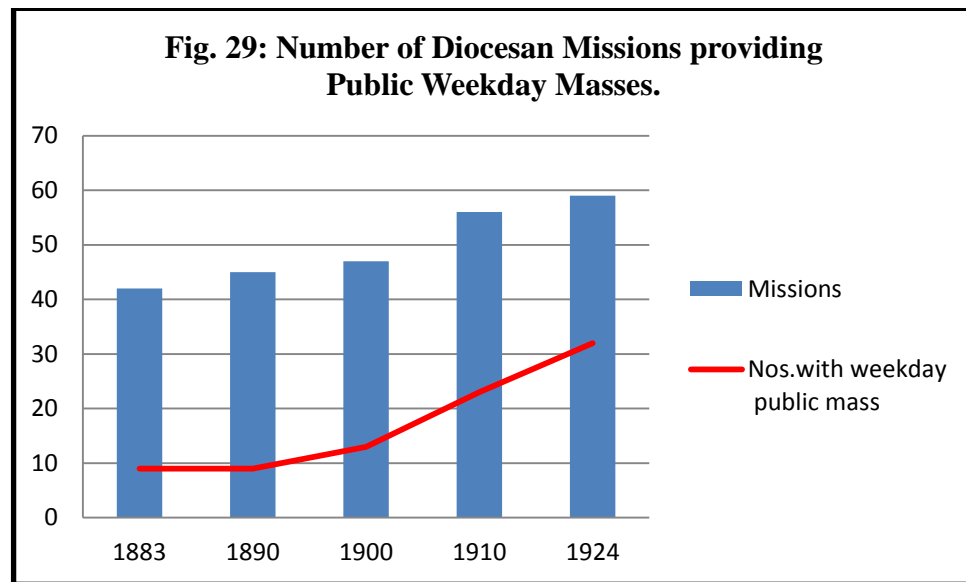
The Mass was central in Lacy’s understanding of a ‘native Church’ for it was the same in every church. Likewise, it also held the dioceses of the English Catholic Church together, and linked them with what happened in the Holy See. By the turn of the century when the diocese was firmly established, the English Church had in the words of Michael Richards, using contemporary evidence from C.C. Martindale and others ‘restored to the best of their ability and resources the whole setting and structure of the liturgy, but fresh inspiration was now needed.’<sup>17</sup> This state would pertain for most of the century until the Second Vatican Council and is echoed by one priest who was born in the post-war decade: ‘There was very little change in Church life from year to year. The liturgy did not vary and the Readings were the same every year’ (P31). Liturgists have pointed to the fact that celebration of the Tridentine Mass had become a matter of following the rubrics and that much seminary training was given over to learning by rote just what this entailed as it involved juridical and moral consequences for the validity of a Mass.<sup>18</sup> This is substantiated by another elderly diocesan priest who said of his seminary training ‘In those days the six

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<sup>17</sup> Richards, M., ‘Prelude: 1890’s to 1920’ in Crichton, JD et al (eds.) *English Catholic Worship* (London 1979) 8.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Pecklers, K., *The Genius of the Roman Rite* (London 2009) 19.

commandments of the church had become almost paramount.’ (P28)<sup>19</sup> It was also regarded by many laity as another devotion; albeit one performed by the priest for their spiritual benefit, while they ‘got on with their own private devotions such as the Rosary, 30 days prayer etc.’ (P9) The idea of the Mass being the property of the priest was strengthened by the fact that most weekday Masses were said in private well into the twentieth century (See Fig. 29)<sup>20</sup>.



Encouragement for the provision of more public Masses was given by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Mirae Caritatis* of 1902, when he restated the teaching of the Council of Trent that ‘it has always been the desire of the Church that at every Mass some of the faithful should be present and should communicate.’<sup>21</sup> More explicit teaching was provided in 1905, with the decree *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*<sup>22</sup> that also included the instruction that the sick and infirm in their own homes should not be

<sup>19</sup> This was a reference to the six precepts of the Church listed under Question 58 of the Penny Catechism.

<sup>20</sup> Data taken from relevant Catholic Directories of England and Wales.

<sup>21</sup> Leo XIII, *Mirae Caritatis* (1902) 16. Accessed <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/113mirae.htm>. 31.03.2010.

<sup>22</sup> See p178.

denied the opportunity to partake of the sacrament regularly.<sup>23</sup> Other opportunities were also provided for the faithful to receive communion; for example in 1901, though not promulgated until 1902, a faculty was granted by the Holy See permitting them to receive Holy Communion at Christmas Midnight Mass.<sup>24</sup> Midnight Masses were themselves a new innovation, as up to then the regulations in force were a Solemn celebration of Mass at 6.30am or thereabouts with Communion for the devout.<sup>25</sup> One major failing of the Tridentine Mass was its unchanging cycle of Readings and in particular the lack of readings from the Old Testament, which resulted in Catholics having a very limited knowledge of it and its importance in the story of salvation history. Likewise, most only had limited knowledge of psalmody, although some extra-liturgical services such as Vespers did include a small number. There was basic teaching about the major stories of the Old Testament within the Religious Instruction syllabus followed in the schools, and Lacy referred to it in a limited fashion in several of his Pastoral Letters. In addition, if people attended the Easter Vigil, which was celebrated early on the Saturday morning, they would hear passages from the Old Testament read as part of that Rite.

The pattern of Mass for Sundays and Holy days varied between the urban and rural missions. The normal pattern was for an early Low Mass, with no music or sermon, and notices about Mission activities would be given, sometimes at great length.<sup>26</sup> At least one early Mass would be advertised where Holy Communion would be distributed, meaning that the faithful could receive the Eucharist particularly during the period between Ash Wednesday and Low Sunday, set aside as the time in which

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<sup>23</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis Annis 1900-1911 95.

<sup>24</sup> MDA. Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis Annis 1900-1911 43.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. See MDA. File N/3 Pastoral Letters. Lacy R., Pastoral Letters for Advent 1901 14.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. see MDA Cathedral Notebook s – various.

the faithful could fulfil their Easter duties. Later, in the morning a Solemn or High Mass would be celebrated; with music, if there was a choir and also with a sermon. However, communion was limited to the priest. In all three major towns, multiple Low Masses were provided from the creation of the diocese, while in the more rural missions, such as Pocklington in 1883, only one mid-morning Mass was provided on a Sunday, with the implication that the faithful would not therefore be receiving the sacrament due to fasting regulations in force. By 1910, every mission was providing at least one early Low Mass and a later more solemn celebration.<sup>27</sup> On Holy days, in the major towns consideration was given to shift workers by the provision of a very early Mass around 5am, which would allow them to attend before starting work.

### **Worship: Participation of the Faithful**

As noted above, for many Catholics in England, the Mass was seen as a devotion rather than a sacramental entity. The reception of the Sacrament was only permitted after fasting from midnight and adequate preparation in the form of a full confession, absolution and performance of penance. The language used also implied the requirement for an extra degree of holiness, such as use of the term ‘devout’ in regard to the older Christmas regulations, noted above. In many of the churches such as St Patrick in Middlesbrough, the design meant the actions of the priest at the altar were remote from many of the congregation, and the prayers were inaudible. This added to the concept noted above that the Mass belonged to the priest and he viewed it as his devotion and there seems little doubt that to some the presence of other people was not altogether welcome:

Over 50 years there has been times when the offering of mass may have been a burden. Circumstances and the demands of God’s

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<sup>27</sup> n17. *ibid.*

Faithful people have made it an obligation and almost a nuisance. At other times an inconvenience when I was called to offer three or more masses consecutively which did not assist devotion. (P28)

As a result of these considerations, the Mass took on the subjective character of other devotions, which only concerned the life of each individual and their relationship both to the obligations of the Catholic faith and with God himself. It also reflects the essential nature of the Evangelical approach, whereby individuals have to make a personal decision to accept Christ into their lives and that relationship is paramount to any other action they may or may not undertake to bring others to a similar position.

It seems fairly clear that there were mixed messages coming from the Holy See about participation of the faithful in the Mass. On the one hand, there was the encouragement for more frequent reception of communion, but on the other, was the *Motu Proprio Tra le Sollecitudini* of 1903, that excited much comment by excluding women from any public role in music as it was a form of liturgical office. Men also had to be ‘of known piety and probity of life.’<sup>28</sup> That the letter caused some degree of difficulty was made clear by Lacy at the next Synod, when he told the clergy that the English Bishops had referred it back to the Holy See for fuller instructions.<sup>29</sup> In theory the Instruction was designed to restore to the faithful more participation in the Mass, by use of plainsong and its pattern of dialogue between cantors and congregation. In practice, in the major churches such as the Cathedral, the liturgical music remained the preserve of choirs, albeit with boys’ voices on the soprano line, and with no sense of the inherent dialogue. Congregational music was no more than a vernacular hymn at the end of a Sung Mass taken from *The Crown of Jesus* or *Notre*

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<sup>28</sup> Pius X *Motu Proprio Tra le Sollecitudini* 1903. 13, 14.

<sup>29</sup> MDA. *Synodi Diocesanae Medioburgensis Annis 1900-1911*. 65,97.

Dame Collections, or later, the Westminster Hymnal.<sup>30</sup> The second most notable change was the disappearance of the more dramatic music, such as Haydn's Nelson Mass that had been used at the opening of the Cathedral in 1876.<sup>31</sup> It was replaced by music of the Renaissance period and also contemporary Catholic composers, such as Richard Terry, the first musical director of Westminster Cathedral.<sup>32</sup>

One other addition involving participation of the faithful was the recitation of the Leonine Prayers after every Low Mass. Introduced originally in Rome by Pope Leo XIII in 1883 they were made a universal requirement in 1886 and reinforced by both his successors. Involving three recitations of Hail Mary followed by a Salve Regina it concluded with the Prayer to St Michael written by Pope Leo XIII. Its intention was the defence of the temporal sovereignty of the Holy See, which was continuously under threat from the new Italian state. In 1904, Pope Pius X added three final petitions to the Sacred Heart and in 1930, after the signing of the Lateran Treaty between Mussolini and Pope Pius XI, the latter changed the intention of the prayers to that of the freedom of Russians to profess their faith. They were finally suppressed in 1965 by the Vatican II decree *Inter Oecumenici* though in some parishes of the diocese, the prayer to St Michael and petitions to the Sacred Heart were subsequently added to the end of the Rosary.

### **Worship: Other Prayers and Devotions**

In the minds of some of the faithful, an important aspect of attending a Low Mass was the announcement of the notices, for there they would discover which and when

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<sup>30</sup> Hemy, H. (ed.) *Crown of Jesus Music* (London 1864), *Convent Hymns* used by the pupils of the Notre Dame Sisters (Liverpool 1891), Terry, R., *Westminster Hymnal* (London 1912).

<sup>31</sup> *Daily Exchange* 21.08.1876.

<sup>32</sup> See Sacred Heart Church Middlesbrough, choir library, which also includes music used at the Cathedral. Also Muir, T., *Ad Majorem dei Gloriam*; *Catholic Church Music at Everingham and Stonyhurst 1839-1914*. <http://www.bpmonline.org.uk/bpm5-admajorem.html> accessed 18/04/2007.

other activities in the Mission would be taking place. Membership of many of the different guilds and sodalities required as part of their discipline weekly meetings for prayer and the regular reception of Communion. Throughout the year special Sundays were designated when members of a particular guild or sodality would sit together dressed in their regalia, receive communion and meet afterwards for a social event. Catholic street processions were still illegal until 1926, so processions of the guilds and sodalities were rare in this period, although the law was flouted in many areas especially by the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom.<sup>33</sup> At the Cathedral, however, Marian processions took place inside the building every Sunday evening until in 1921 Thomas Shine took office as coadjutor Bishop and instituted outdoor processions.<sup>34</sup>

Other important notices were concerned with the provision of other devotions, especially Benediction, which as Mary Heimann has demonstrated was one of the most popular English devotions, a claim borne out by the evidence in this diocese. In 1883, most missions held a mid-week service of devotions followed by Benediction, and most also held a service on Sunday evenings of either Vespers or devotions both followed by Benediction and included a sermon. A similar pattern was found on Holy days of obligation. In 1924, the same still held true, although some of the more rural parishes had ceased having a mid-week service probably due to dwindling numbers, but instead concentrated on daily Mass provision. The Lenten devotion of Quarant' Ore, which had been started in the diocese of Beverley, also continued in the new diocese. The all-encompassing term 'devotions' frequently meant the public recitation of the Rosary and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament although other vernacular devotions could be chosen by the priest from the Manual of Prayers. This

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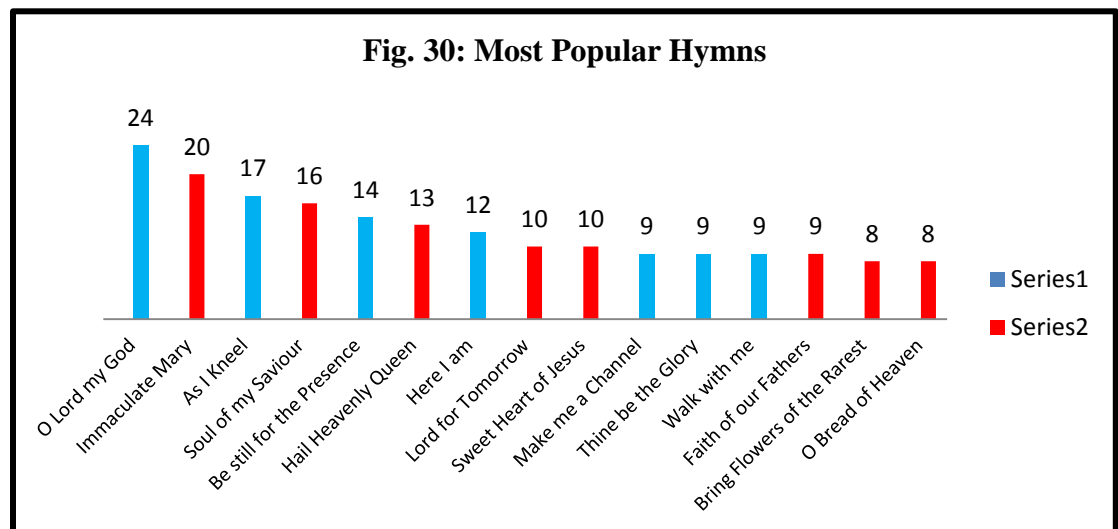
<sup>33</sup> See below pp216-7.

<sup>34</sup> 1. Middlesbrough Catholic Magazine Vol. 1:26 June 1929 (unpaginated). 2. See Chapter 3:5.

was first issued by the Bishops in 1886 to provide a standardized resource for the English Church because

the great variety of versions, which in the course of time had crept into the prayers contained in our popular books of devotion has seriously hindered the congregational use of English Prayers –an immemorial custom of our forefathers.<sup>35</sup>

For the faithful, the beauty of these devotions lay in the fact that they were allowed to participate and were often said in a dialogue form, particularly the Rosary. As well as the Latin Benediction hymns such as the Tantum Ergo, there was also opportunity to sing vernacular hymns honouring Mary, the Pope and St Patrick and a selection of English hymns were given at the back of the original publication.<sup>36</sup> When asked about favourite hymns in the writer’s survey, it was noticeable that several of the most popular hymns dated from this and the other early hymnbooks (Fig.30 Series2).



The increasing Marian devotion in this period had its impetus from the Holy See, in particular Pope Leo XIII who became known as the ‘Rosary Pope’ due to his fostering of the devotion through the course of eleven encyclicals and the

<sup>35</sup> Preface to The Manual of Prayers (London 1886) v.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



consecration of the month of October to Mary, Holy Queen of the Rosary. With his own personal devotion to Mary through her title of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Lacy encouraged the increase of Marian devotion within the diocese and in conjunction with that also encouraged the practice of family night prayers, including recitation of the Rosary if possible before a picture of the Holy Family, the feast day of which had been instituted in 1892.<sup>37</sup> His hope was that a family who prayed together would stay together, and in many of his Pastoral Letters, particularly around the turn of the century, his fears for the future of the family in an increasingly materialistic society were clearly spelt out.<sup>38</sup>

### **Pilgrimage**

The concept of pilgrimage within English Catholicism was not restricted to the medieval period. Judith Champ has shown that in the recusant era pilgrimage to Rome was allied to the Grand Tour undertaken by the gentry and underwent a full-scale revival in the nineteenth century with the centralizing of Rome within the Church and the emergence of mass cheap travel, which enabled groups of the newly emerging middle classes to journey more easily.<sup>39</sup> Other factors encouraging a revival of the practice were also evolving such as the encouragement of local causes for canonization of Reformation martyrs, the development of new cults in other parts of Europe, and the re-establishment of English Marian cults. All of these factors had consequences for the devotional and spiritual life of Catholics within the diocese.

Many of the early pilgrimages to Rome were organized nationally under the auspices of the Catholic Association beginning in 1898 with representatives from all parts of

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<sup>37</sup> MDA File N/3 Pastoral Letters. Lacy R., Pastoral Letter for Lent 1900 7.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. MDA File N/3 Pastoral Letters. Lacy R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1899.

<sup>39</sup> Champ, J., *The English Pilgrimage to Rome* (Leominster 2000) 9-10.

England. When pilgrims from Middlesbrough first took part is not certain, but the diocese was definitely represented at the Jubilee Pilgrimage of October 1900.

The Catholic Pilgrimage to Rome has proved a remarkable demonstration of loyalty to the Holy See... England has sent some five hundred working men to kneel at the tomb of the fishermen of Galilee and to pay their homage to the Successor of Peter... It is a joy to us to know that this diocese was well represented on the occasion by both clergy and laity, who as they knelt at the Holy places...doubtless made fervent remembrance of the brethren at home.<sup>40</sup>

While in Rome, the Pilgrims were expected to visit the four main Basilicas for prayer, Mass or devotions on at least two days in order to gain a Jubilee Indulgence.<sup>41</sup> What it meant to those who took part was explained by the secretary of the Catholic Association, Valentine Dunford, to delegates at the first National Catholic Congress that was held in Leeds in 1910. He felt that the necessities of modern life made such excursions a combined holiday and pilgrimage and needed to be treated as such. But, he concluded,

to take part in a continental pilgrimage, even if it be a pilgrimage-holiday is an excellent thing. It broadens the mind...increases and revives our Faith, by bringing directly before our eyes and our minds the great shrines and truths of our Holy religion, and it enables us to appreciate more fully the magnitude of that Church which has Christ for its head<sup>42</sup>

Rome was not the only place English pilgrims in greater numbers were finding their way to. Lourdes was becoming a popular destination also, and devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes was evident in the diocese, with a shrine dedicated to her at Egton Bridge in 1881 and the personal devotion of Lacy, following his stay there in 1876.<sup>43</sup> In

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<sup>40</sup> MDA File N/3 Pastoral Letters. Lacy R., Pastoral Letter for Advent 1900 2.

<sup>41</sup> The Times Issue 3609 16.03.1900 6.

<http://infotrac.galegroup.com.ezproxy.nottingham.ac.uk/itw/infomark/100/644/89443> accessed 03.10.2010.

<sup>42</sup> First National Catholic Congress, Official Report (London 1910) 135.

<sup>43</sup> See above p134.

1908, the fiftieth anniversary of the Apparitions at Lourdes, Lacy used his Lenten Pastoral letter as a discourse on the Lourdes phenomenon, pointing out that prayer for sinners, penance and pilgrimage were its vital components in obedience to the message given in the Apparitions. He also hoped that the diocese would be represented by pilgrims in Lourdes during the year, in response to the Bishop of Tarbes' invitation. It was 1928 before Lacy himself visited Lourdes again, but as will be seen in the next chapter, by then a strong pilgrimage link between the diocese and Lourdes had already been forged.<sup>44</sup>

The Great War temporarily halted English pilgrimages to Europe, but the rediscovery of the English Marian tradition and local causes for beatification and canonization ensured that Pilgrimage did continue, and York in particular had become a local pilgrimage centre for both Yorkshire dioceses. In 1884, Fr. Vandepitte the guardian of a Flemish statue of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy brought it to St Wilfrid's Church York, where the old chapter house had been furnished as a shrine to house the statue. Bishop Lacy presided at the solemn opening of the new shrine and the statue carried in procession to it. It became known as Our Lady of York, Mother of Mercy, and the practice of reciting the May devotions there continued for some years. In 1924, the shrine also became a war memorial for the dead of the First World War, but the devotion remained localized instead of gaining the national prominence hoped for by Fr. Vandepitte.<sup>45</sup> Quinlan suggests that this near suppression of the devotion was possibly an act of 'prudence' in order to forestall requests for the return of the statue to its Flemish home. But another reason could have been the development of annual

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<sup>44</sup> See below p292-3.

<sup>45</sup> Quinlan D., *Our Lady of York*. (Hinkley 1944).

Pilgrimages to York by the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom that began shortly after the death of Fr. Vandepitte.

The Guild was founded in 1887 with three specific intentions; the conversion of England, the rescue of apostates and the ‘forgotten dead’ for whom no-one else prayed.<sup>46</sup> Its members organised annual pilgrimages in honour of the English martyrs, and some members engaged in outdoor preaching, predating the Catholic Evidence Guild by thirty years. York, with its significant historical connection with recusant times as a place of Catholic martyrdom, was an obvious choice for a Northern Pilgrimage and in 1892, the first one was held with over one thousand Catholics attending. It was notable for several reasons; the events of the day crossed the diocesan boundary, the preacher at Mass Fr. Luke Rivington was a convert from Anglicanism, who had previously served at York Minster and following High Mass at St. Wilfrid’s Church, the Pilgrims processed along the road to the Minster and, with the permission of the Dean and Chapter, assembled in the nave to pray around the tomb of St William of York. The day continued with a street procession from the temporary church of English Martyrs in Blossom Street, to York Tyburn where fifty Catholics had met their death.<sup>47</sup> During the procession, which was led by a processional cross and with various banners and statues of Mary being carried, English hymns such as ‘Faith of our Fathers’ and ‘Martyrs of England’ were sung.<sup>48</sup> Interest in the English recusant martyrs had a high profile both nationally and locally in this era. In 1886, fifty martyrs had been beatified by Pope Leo XIII, including Bishop John Fisher, who had been born and brought up in Beverley. Margaret

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<sup>46</sup> The Guild of our Lady of Ransom accessed <http://saints.sqpn.com/ncd03771.htm> 13.10.2010.

<sup>47</sup> Blossom Street, where the Bar Convent was also situated was in the diocese of Leeds.

<sup>48</sup> The Antidote Vol. 3 (1892) 199.

Clitherow from York had been declared to be Venerable at the same time. Anticipation was high that these causes would be continued and more added to them. Rome also encouraged the development of such local cults and in 1913 the cause of Margaret Clitherow was formally reopened leading to her beatification in 1929.<sup>49</sup>

As in most places where the Guild organized processions of a religious character, the reaction of local people in York seemed to be that of curiosity and courtesy rather than hostility.<sup>50</sup> Questions as to their legality and expediency were raised by other Catholics rather than non-Catholics and were answered by Guild members at the National Congress of 1910, who compared their actions with those of the Salvation Army.<sup>51</sup> In 1882, the Salvation Army had successfully established in the High Court, the common law right of all British subjects to hold processions, including religious processions, provided they were not for an unlawful purpose. For a Catholic procession to be unlawful under the terms of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act section 26,<sup>52</sup> it required the participation of clergy in ‘exercising a rite or ceremony of the Church’, in other words a liturgical procession such as a procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Marian and other devotional processions were therefore legal. In addition, the wording of Section 26 only referred to clergy, therefore lay people were free to walk in procession carrying whatever emblems they wished and non-officiating clergy were also free to walk in such processions provided they wore dress such as cotta and cassock, which lay people could also wear. Regarding the expediency of such demonstrations, the speaker referred his listeners to their efficacy

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<sup>49</sup> As will be seen later these causes were ultimately successful with forty canonizations in 1970 and eighty-seven beatifications in 1987.

<sup>50</sup> *The Antidote*. 199.

<sup>51</sup> *Op. cit.*, 469-479.

<sup>52</sup> X Geo. IV, cap XXVI.

in renewing the faith of participants and the lapsed, which brings into focus the changing concept of mission within the Catholic Church during this period.

### **Mission**

In England, this changing concept was closely related with the growing confidence of the English Catholic Church and its place in the national life of the country. Instances of anti-popery agitation were rare occurrences, the most notable being the threatened violent intervention by militant Protestants to the planned Eucharistic procession during the London Eucharistic Congress of 1908.<sup>53</sup> In addition, offence was felt by Catholics throughout the Empire in 1901 at the legal need for King Edward VII to swear the ‘Statutory Oath’ the last remnant of the religious tests from penal days. Lacy declared it to be ‘discreditable to the nation, for it brands England as the most intolerant country in the world’.<sup>54</sup> Legal moves were commenced for its repeal although it was 1910 before it was rushed through by Edward’s successor King George V.

Coupled with the calmer atmosphere was the establishment in 1898 of the Confraternity of our Lady of Compassion for the conversion of England. As a result, the concept of mission changed from reviving local Catholic fervour to one of reaching out to non-Catholics and those with no formal religious affiliation at all. Examples of this change are seen in the flyers for missions at St Wilfrid’s in York: in 1899, the emphasis was clearly upon the faithful to ‘save my soul’ with priority given to the ‘faithful of the parish’. By the end of the era in 1927, the mission was centred upon explaining ‘what Catholics really believe’, providing opportunities for non-

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<sup>53</sup> See Anon., *The Story of the Congress* (London 1908) 65-72.

<sup>54</sup> MDA. N/3 Lacy, Letter to Priests. 27.02.1901.

Catholics to ask questions via the 'question box' and an open invitation issued to all.<sup>55</sup>

The Guild of Ransom also noted at the Leeds Congress that their processions affected not only Catholics, but Protestants also and in some cases brought about conversions. The speaker also noted that the processions were not a means of offence to the majority of non-Catholics, as many saw them as 'interesting shows, which appeal to the innate love of pageantry of which in recent years have witnessed so remarkable a revival'.<sup>56</sup> This was a clear reference to both the street processions of the Salvation Army and the developing trade union practice of organizing street marches and galas such as that in Durham, where miners processed through the streets of the city carrying their lodge banners and accompanied by brass bands. With the end of the Victorian era and the subsequent need for two royal funerals and two coronations during the first decade of the twentieth century, pageantry also held a higher profile nationally than had been the case.

The publication of the Papal Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 was a catalyst for a new form of mission and evangelism within the universal Catholic Church, for it led to the development of 'Catholic Action'. Although the political aspects of this movement never took root in the English Church, there was an increasing amount of social action and care provided by new lay societies and fraternal groupings that went beyond personal acts of piety and mercy performed for the sake of one's own soul. However, it is true to say that within the diocese of Middlesbrough as in many parts of the English Catholic Church, such work only showed green shoots before the First

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<sup>55</sup> MDA File York St Wilfrid, Various flyers for missions from 1899-1938.

<sup>56</sup> *Op cit.*, 479.

war. The Society of St Vincent de Paul had flourished in Hull from the founding of the diocese and had as its aim the giving of charitable relief to the poor. In 1892, *Bulmers Gazette* listed it as:

The Hull Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, in connection with the Roman Catholics, affords relief to the poor of that faith, and several poor orphans are supported by it in various Catholic Orphanages.<sup>57</sup>

Another early initiative within the diocese was also based in Hull with the establishment of the seventh Catenian Circle there in 1911. Founded in the Salford diocese in 1908, it recognized that there was an emerging Catholic middle class who were unsure of their place within a wider society. Known originally as the Chums Benevolent Association, it changed its name in 1910 to the Catenians and had as their aim support of each other and their local Catholic communities. The membership of the Hull Circle, like many organizations for men was decimated by the loss of life in the trenches of the First World War, but as will be shown in the next chapter, in many ways the war was also the catalyst for apostolic activity throughout the diocese as men returned with a new sense of determination to promote peace and justice, and women had also found new roles outside the home.

A final aspect of the new missionary outlook within the Catholic Church was found within the work of the Catholic Truth Society, a branch of which was founded in Middlesbrough in 1892. Originally founded in 1868 by Herbert Vaughan, later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, it published cheap pamphlets that instructed Catholics about their faith and educated non-Catholics about Catholicism. After Vaughan became Bishop of Salford in 1872 it had fallen into abeyance until 1884,

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<sup>57</sup> <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/ERY/Hull/HullHistory/HullHistory12.html> accessed 01.11.2010.



when an Anglican convert James Britten helped re-establish it, having seen Anglican tracts of a similar format published by SPCK. Local branches such as the one in Middlesbrough were set up to distribute the literature, mainly to Protestants, but to other Catholics also. It was a form of evangelism and the new pamphlets were more apologetic in tone than the original publications. The Middlesbrough branch in its early days had two main objectives: to distribute copies of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* amongst their fellow workers, and to oppose Anglican lecturers who, concerned about the possible disestablishment of the Church of England by a Liberal government, were at that time touring the country trying to persuade people that the Anglican church was the old Catholic Church in England, and the present Catholic Church schismatic.<sup>58</sup> Lacy felt the pamphlets, particularly ‘the controversial works would be useful when the question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England’ became a de facto political issue.

If they [Catholics] read up the subject now they would be prepared with facts that would floor any number of opponents. They must be prepared, perhaps at no distant date to hear this question discussed in the works among their fellow workmen, and make up their own minds one way or another.<sup>59</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In part, this chapter has explored the results of the increased jurisdiction of the Papacy upon local decisions and practice within the diocese of Middlesbrough that enabled its first Bishop to form a worshipping Catholic community that reflected both the locality in which it was set and the wishes and concerns of its Universal leaders, the Popes. It has also challenged the common belief that having established the norms of the Tridentine Rite in England, Catholic liturgical and devotional practice

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<sup>58</sup> MDA. *The Antidote* Vol. 3 (February 1892) 63.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

remained unchanged until the time of the Second Vatican Council. Local customs and interest of its rich recusant history as well as papal decrees and the opportunity to travel on pilgrimage all added to an increasing variety of opportunities for Catholics to express their faith. Finally, Ultramontanism instead of enclosing Catholicism into a fortress gave rise to new missionary endeavour, which once more revealed the shared interests of the Catholic and the Evangelical Christian in reviving and renewing the faith of local people in God.

### **3.5: The Transitional Years 1918-1929**

By the close of the First World War, Richard Lacy was no longer the youthful and energetic bishop of the late Victorian period. He was approaching his eightieth birthday, but canon law did not allow him to retire. In the next three years, he completed another cycle of Visitation visits and oversaw the implementation of the Code of Canon Law. In view of Lacy's age, in 1921 a coadjutor bishop, Thomas Shine was appointed to the diocese, to work alongside him, and for the next eight years the diocese entered a transitional period in that its bishop was still Lacy, but most of the decisions were taken by Bishop Shine. This chapter examines that period, in particular the continuation of missionary outreach and Catholic expansion. But it also looks at the early indications that after Lacy's death the diocese would take a very different pathway. It concludes with an overview of the first fifty years of the diocese.

#### **1916-1921**

The First World War took its toll upon the diocese; many Catholics fought and died in the trenches, and one diocesan priest, Fr. William Finn became the first army chaplain to be killed in action, when he fell at Gallipoli in 1915. Awarded a posthumous Military Cross, his death was a consequence of his refusal to stay behind the line and deny the men the Last Rites. It was while carrying out this priestly duty that he was killed as the following eyewitness account describes:

Dear Joe, the worst of all was we had a priest who came along with us. He was in the boat; he insisted on coming with us, as he said he would be wanted for the poor boys. They were all calling for him, but the poor priest could do nothing for them. He got out of the boat afterwards and made a great run for the beach, but the Turks

got him as soon he landed, for he was hit four times. He died that evening, but he was still asking for us up to the time he died.<sup>1</sup>

The need of the Catholic soldiers for the Sacraments emphasises one of the intrinsic differences between Catholicism and non-Catholic denominations, namely the importance of sacramental devotion, but in the trenches it became unwittingly a means of evangelical action, for as mentioned earlier the actions of the Catholic chaplains in the trenches led to a rise in male conversions in the post-war era.<sup>2</sup> Another sign of the importance of the sacraments for Catholic service personnel was the provision of 'Huts' on military bases by the Catholic Women's League (CWL). The League had been founded in 1906 as a source of women's social education and social work within the English Catholic Church and by 1911 had established branches in most dioceses, but not Middlesbrough.<sup>3</sup> However, in 1916 Lacy told his priests that he had invited the CWL president to found a branch in the diocese and that

One of the many good works in which the League is actively engaged is that of providing Huts for our Catholic Soldiers in the great camps up and down the country. These Huts are used by the Chaplains for the celebration of Holy Mass, and likewise the recreation of the soldiers. The Catterick camp... is need of such a hut...<sup>4</sup>

The Ninth Annual Report of the League confirms the establishment of a Middlesbrough Diocesan Branch in January 1917 specializing in the provision of Soldiers' huts which 'forms the chief War Work of the League and...afforded suitable and congenial work to many of the younger members.'<sup>5</sup> The provision of

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed: <http://corcaigh3.googlepages.com/theroyaldublinfusiliers> 20/02/2008 Serviceman's Letter home.

<sup>2</sup> See above p.204.

<sup>3</sup> See Kane, P., "'The Willing Captive of Home?': The English Catholic Women's League, 1906-1920' Church History Vol. 60:3 (Sept. 1991) 331-355 accessed: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3167471> 26/10/2010.

<sup>4</sup> MDA. File Ad Clera, Lacy, R., Ad Clerum. 15.07.1916.

<sup>5</sup> Archives of Catholic Women's League, Ninth Annual Report 1916.

Huts became a popular feature of the military camps and led to formation of the Catholic Huts Council to stimulate more funds for Huts within a number of other Catholic Societies.<sup>6</sup>

The ending of the war brought about a renewed sense of the need to work for peace and justice and in Catholic terms this resulted in an increase in apostolic action with new Fraternal and Societies being founded. One of the most popular was the Knights of St Columba, founded in Glasgow in 1919, but having its genesis in the American Order of the Knights of St Columbus, which provided welfare services among the troops in France. A Fraternal organisation for Catholic men, it centred on its members carrying out the seven Corporal Works of Mercy and serving the local bishop in whatever way they were asked. By 1921, Knights' Councils had been founded in both Middlesbrough and Hull and a Council was also established in York soon afterwards. Interest was probably widespread in the diocese as one of the Scottish founders was the father of one of the diocesan priests Fr. MacMullan, who had been ordained in 1918. However in Middlesbrough the genesis was directly linked to the American organization, through its founder Jackie Muir who had emigrated to Canada and whilst there attended a convention of the American Knights. Having decided to return to England he resolved to do something similar in his hometown and on his return to Middlesbrough in 1921 he immediately set up a Council in the town and the members became the backbone of the diocesan representatives on the English national pilgrimage to Lourdes that commenced in 1924. In Hull, the bishop asked the Knights

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

to take responsibility for the ‘hundreds of Catholic boys who had left school, [but were] ‘not touched by any other organisation or individuals at present.’<sup>7</sup>

### **Coadjutor Bishop**

The appointment of a coadjutor bishop in 1921 was recognition by the Holy See that the responsibilities of diocesan bishop were too great for a man of eighty-one to carry out without help, but Shine’s role was limited to the duties that Lacy chose to entrust to him.<sup>8</sup> From the extant papers of the period, it appears that Lacy handed over considerable authority to his coadjutor especially in terms of the Visitation process and missionary outreach, but retained control of the selection, appointment and ordination of priests.

Like Lacy, Thomas Shine was an Irishman, but unlike Lacy he had little experience of the Catholic Church in England before ordination. He spent a year at St Joseph’s Seminary in Leeds in order to gain some understanding of the diocese in which he was to be ordained as priest, namely Leeds, but otherwise all his formation was in Ireland. He became known as an efficient administrator, especially after the 1910 Catholic Congress, which he had organized. As bishop he was the epitome of the men who served as bishops in the English Church in the inter-war period, when their main task seemed to be managing and sustaining the material aspects of the Church and diocesan structures.

They [the Bishops] were administrators rather than scholars, men of efficiency, duty and devotion...the impression is of a church which had become confident and routinized; splendid in its pastoral machinery, but in some sense lacking the genius of inventiveness.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> MDA. File R Lacy. Text of speech by Lacy to Knights of St Columba Hull 1921.

<sup>8</sup> Code of Canon Law 1918 Canon 232.

<sup>9</sup> Norman, E., Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council. Paperback Edition (Oxford 1986) 109.

This in many ways sums up the difference between the first two bishops; in establishing the diocese, its structures and nature, Lacy was the last of those Victorian Bishops who had combined pastoral care with administrative skill and a sense of pioneering inventiveness that seemed to disappear as Catholicism became an accepted part of the religious landscape. Shine concentrated on the minutiae of Canon Law and ritual and establishing an overabundance of churches and schools, but crucially took his lead from Ireland rather than local and English tradition. Very aged priests in the diocese such as P28 recall that there was a difficult relationship between the two men and it seems to be borne out by the following comment made in 1950 when Shine was still Bishop:

If local patriotism in the various sees has not been sufficiently interested, if the successors of these prelates upon whom the burden fell of laying foundations have not been interested, who shall be expected to preserve their memory?<sup>10</sup>

### **St Philomena**

Although not a new cult in the diocese, the regard in which devotion to St Philomena was held in Middlesbrough was given recognition by adding St Philomena to the dedication of the new Sacred Heart parish. Served by a tin church that had been erected in 1911, the parish was formally separated from the Cathedral parish in 1926 and fundraising for a new church started in earnest by its first parish priest. Local devotion to St Philomena had been championed particularly by the FCJ sisters, whose foundress had held Philomena in particular regard. Despite the doubtful provenance of the name, the relics of a young virgin martyr who had become known as

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<sup>10</sup> Hughes, P., 'The Bishops of the Century' in Beck, G. A. (ed.), *The English Catholics 1850-1950* (London 1950) 194n18.

‘Philomena’ had earned the epithet ‘Wonder-Worker of the Nineteenth Century’ due to her powerful intercession and in an unprecedented act was recognized as a saint by Pope Gregory XVI in 1837 solely on this basis.<sup>11</sup> Like St Jude, her intercession was regarded as particularly powerful in hopeless or impossible causes, and in 1849 she was also named as patroness of the Children of Mary.

Since 1888, Philomena had been invoked as the protectress of the FCJ’s educational work in the town. To this end a small shrine had been erected in the grounds of the convent and school, which in 1885 had settled at Newlands on the outskirts of Middlesbrough and would be their home until 1963. In addition they had also purchased a painting of Philomena, which ‘holds a place of honour in our day school, where St Philomena is honoured by the prayers of the children, who attribute to her intercession, many favours.’<sup>12</sup> In 1922, such favours must have seemed double-edged, for in that year the community celebrated the Golden Jubilee of their arrival in Middlesbrough, but part of their work ceased with the closure of the Pupil-Teacher centre due to the abolition of that training system. A year later, the boarding facilities were also closed to allow room for the expansion of the day school, but the influence of the cult of Philomena was summarized by the Convent annalist thus:

St Philomena has watched over the destinies of the school from its first humble birth at Temperance Place, up to the present hour, where as a flourishing secondary school at the Newlands, it looks upon her as its tutelary patroness. To her patronage the nuns attribute the unvarying good spirit, the loyalty, the esprit-de-corps, which, all down the generations, are the heritage of the pupils.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See further: <http://www.saintphilomena.com/aboutst.htm> accessed 01.12.2010.

<sup>12</sup> FCJ Convent Record 30.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.



### **Pilgrimages and Processions**

The two principal devotional activities that emerged in this Transitional period were both catalysts for evangelical renewal of faith and means of evangelization for much of the remainder of the time-span of this study. Bishop Shine was the visible figure in both ventures, although the support of Bishop Lacy was integral to both. The first innovation was taking part in regular pilgrimages to Lourdes that began in 1924, which were led by Shine. The second was the institution of public processions to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi that began in 1926, which were entirely Shine's idea.

The Society of Our Lady of Lourdes organized its first English National Pilgrimage in 1922, inspired by the French National Pilgrimage and two years later one hundred pilgrims from the diocese of Middlesbrough joined over one thousand other pilgrims from across England and Wales. Organization of the pilgrimage, which had at its centre sick pilgrims accompanied by trained medical staff and lay helpers, drew heavily upon the experience of transporting injured soldiers back to England from France during the War. The hospital trains that had been developed for that purpose subsequently were made available for groups such as the Society to hire for the purposes of making Pilgrimage to Lourdes. The inspiration for sending sick pilgrims from Teesside and raising the necessary funding for them was the work of the Middlesbrough Council of the Knights of St Columba led by Jackie Muir. The Knights also arranged the transport of the sick pilgrims to Middlesbrough station and looked after them until the night train left on its journey to Victoria where the pilgrims gathered for the journey to France. They were there again when the pilgrims returned home; as were the press and many other curious townspeople for one of the

sick pilgrims, Thomas Hoy who had travelled to Lourdes barely able to walk, 'stepped out of the train and walked with normal ease and comfort'. Although the cure has never been officially recognized in Lourdes, it made a great impression upon the people of Middlesbrough as the local paper pointed out:

Middlesbrough rejoices over a Lourdes miracle in which one of her townsmen is the central figure. Mr Thos. Hoy of Wellington Street, who has suffered from a fixed hip for about 11 years, today returned from the pilgrimage completely cured...Three operations and specialists' treatment...availed nothing, but Mr Hoy had sufficient faith in the powers of Our Lady of Lourdes to make the long journey to the Pyrenean village. Sceptics have always doubted reports of cures, but seeing is believing, and those who knew Tom Hoy before he made that wonderful journey can vouch for the genuineness of his cure.<sup>14</sup>

Pilgrims from Teesside continued to travel to Lourdes with the annual National Pilgrimage, except when it was discontinued during the Second World War. In 1929, girls from the Newlands Convent school in Middlesbrough also travelled to Lourdes as part of the National Schoolgirls' Pilgrimage when

It was an unforgettable experience to waken on Easter morning, to the glad laudamus of all the church bells and...all returned spiritually refreshed.<sup>15</sup>

The experience of many of the early pilgrims was invaluable when, in 1952, it was decided to organize a diocesan pilgrimage travelling independently of the National Pilgrimage.

Although the early press interest in the pilgrimage declined, its interest in the Corpus Christi processions that commenced in 1925 remained constant; for in Middlesbrough it became one of the town's largest annual events drawing crowds from well beyond the boundaries of the town and diocese. Although a similar procession was also held

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<sup>14</sup> NEDG 28.05.1924.

<sup>15</sup> Blott, K., *A Hundred Years 1872-1972* (Middlesbrough 1973) 50.

in York, it never gained the size, support and longevity of the Middlesbrough procession. The genesis of the processions had diverse roots in the mind of Shine who inaugurated them, and the three main ones will now be briefly discussed. In its inaugural year of 1925, the form of the procession in Middlesbrough was in fact illegal for the Blessed Sacrament was carried through the streets in defiance of the remnants of the Penal Law that had not been repealed in England. Legislation to remove the most contentious clauses, including the prohibition on priests attending processions in canonical dress or exercising any rites of the Roman Catholic Church outside his church, came before Parliament in 1926 and became law in December of that year. Despite the assertions of the Archbishop of Canterbury during the debate that the restrictions had ‘long been dead’, there were still occasions when public outcry meant outdoor Catholic activities were prohibited, most notably at Carfin, Scotland in 1924, an occurrence that led to the new legislation.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, the contentious clauses had already been repealed in Ireland in 1920 by virtue of the Government of Ireland Act, during the period before the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. As a result, events such as the Corpus Christi procession were already regular features of Catholic life on both sides of the Irish border, which Shine who retained his strong family and emotional ties with his homeland would have noted. He would have also noted that after the withdrawal of the British from the Irish Republic, colour and public spectacle was no longer provided by British military display but by

...the Catholic Church in the annual public Corpus Christi street processions, May processions and other church-related events with the flags, bunting, banners,

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<sup>16</sup>1. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1926/dec/10/roman-catholic-relief-bill>.

2. <http://rememberwhen.gazettelive.co.uk/2009/10/an-article-of-faith.html> accessed 03.11.2010.

clergy in vestments, choirs bands and processions of girls in white and blue<sup>17</sup>

It was a similar effect to that orchestrated by Shine in the Middlesbrough processions that one local journalist summed up as having ‘made a deep impact on the cultural identity of our area.’<sup>18</sup> The processions became the most potent outward expressions of Roman Catholicism in the area and as the same journalist pointed out ‘everyone who lived at the time when they used to take place can remember them, no matter what faith they actually followed.’

The processions involved nearly all the local schools and lay associations, with a special role given to local Catenians who escorted the Blessed Sacrament. It was the involvement of the schools that provided the third consideration in Shine’s mind. May processions in honour of Mary had been held in individual parishes for much of Lacy’s episcopate and a significant part of the Corpus Christi procession was the bringing together of these individual May processions complete with May Queens and attendants into one large demonstration of Catholic witness. From his days in the diocese of Leeds, Shine would have also been acquainted with the practice of Whit walks or Processions of Witness held by non-Catholics that had begun in Manchester in 1801 and quickly spread into the West Riding of Yorkshire through a link with the brass band tradition that was common to both areas. As in the Middlesbrough Corpus Christi procession, a major derivative of the walks was the practice of having local May Queens and entourages take part, though their original Marian significance had been lost. Both the Whit Walks and the Corpus Christi Processions were potent

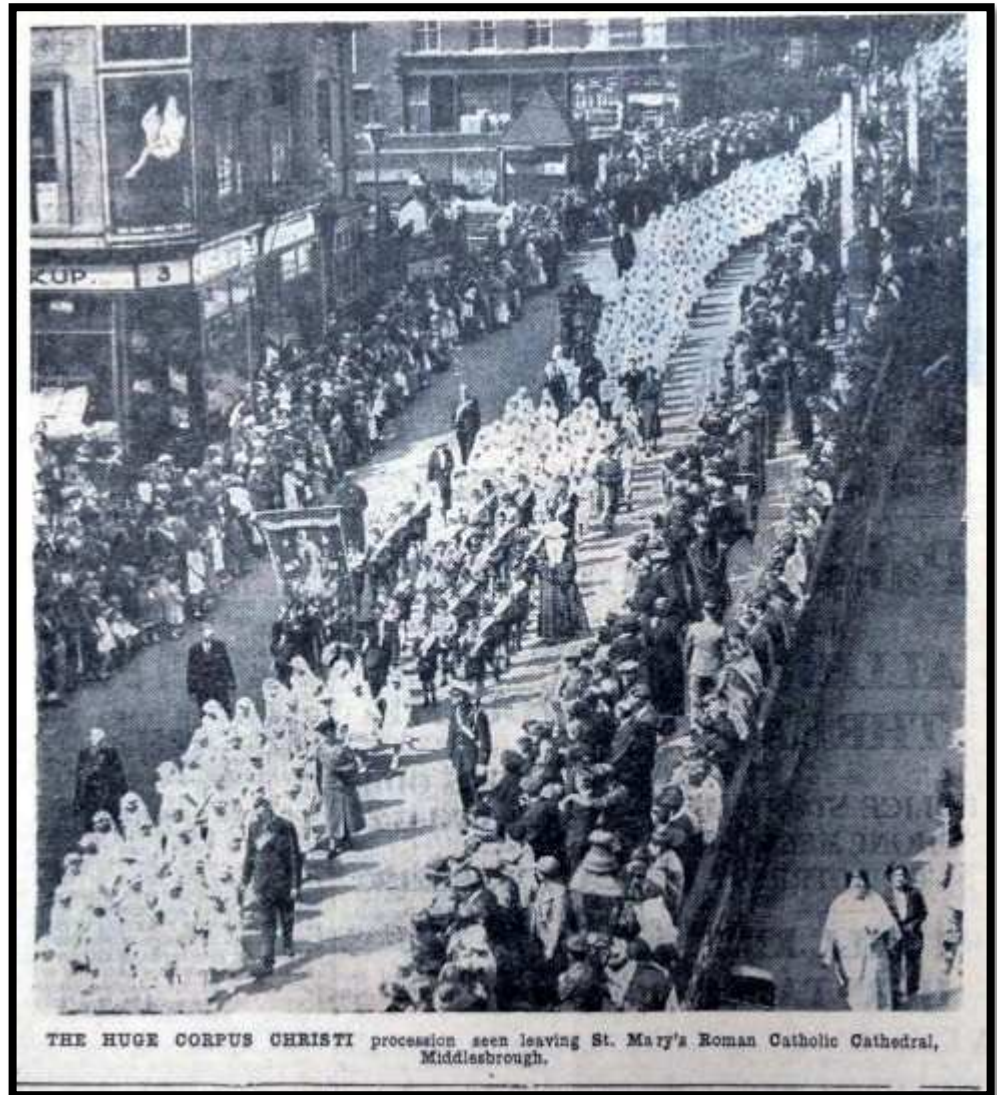
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<sup>17</sup> Turpin, J., ‘Visual culture in the Irish Free State’ in JEH Vol. 57:1 Jan 2006 73.

<sup>18</sup> <http://rememberwhen.gazettelive.co.uk/2009/10/an-article-of-faith.html>. Accessed 03.11.2010.

symbols of the vitality of the faith of their adherents and both were used as tools of evangelisation.

**Fig. 31: The Corpus Christi procession of 1937**



### **Parish Development**

The transitional period was a time of new parish development within the diocese that in some ways moved away from Lacy's urban vision for both Hull and Middlesbrough. In Hull, some of the development was the result of Catholic

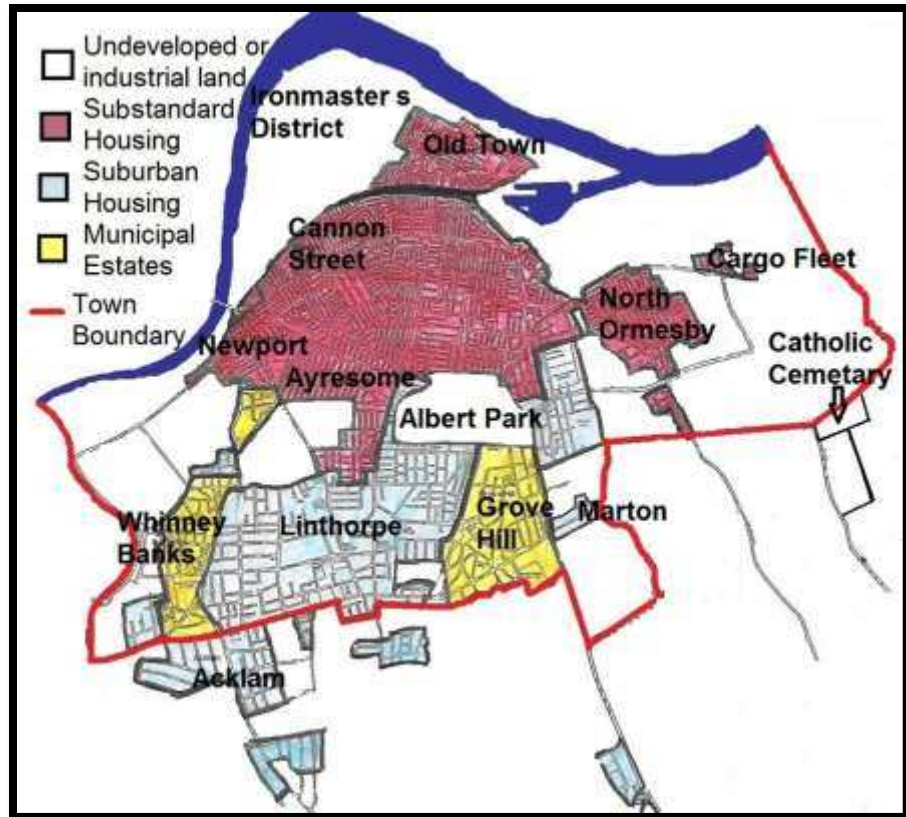
benefaction such as the gift of Sacred Heart church built in East Hull as a memorial from his family to Fr. William Finn, the military chaplain who died at Gallipoli. In the north of the town the Marists founded their second boys' school in the diocese at the request of Shine in 1925. To help with the monetary aspects of setting up the new school, a new parish was also created in North Hull, to provide financial support for the Marists alongside generous loans from the Sisters of Mercy, individual members of the local Catenian circle and Shine himself for the costs of the school.

The main external factor in parish development came from the fact that after the First World War local councils in England began to take responsibility for the provision of housing in urban areas instead of local industrialists. With no corresponding programme of slum clearance the new municipal estates were built on the edges of the towns and inhabited by people cut off from their local roots by 'wedges of suburbia', which in Middlesbrough, for example 'accentuated the disjointedness of the town.'<sup>19</sup> The response of Shine to the municipal building programme was to provide new churches for each new estate, something he began to undertake at this time in both Hull and Middlesbrough. By so doing, he departed from Lacy's policy in two ways. Firstly, the practice of providing school-chapels was abandoned for the provision of a church was the priority and secondly, in Middlesbrough the Cathedral, which for Lacy was the heart of the town's Catholicism, no longer acted as a mother church to chapels-of ease. Independent parishes were set up on the new estates, the first being St Joseph at Grove Hill in 1926. In the same year the remaining chapel-of-ease became the parish of Sacred Heart and St Philomena.

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<sup>19</sup> Glass, Ruth, 'An introduction to Middlesbrough' in Lock, Max, *The Middlesbrough Survey and Plan* (Middlesbrough 1946) 21.

Map 27: Middlesbrough in 1929



The repercussions of Shine's development policy will be discussed in the remaining sections of this work, as they were far-reaching and in hindsight not helpful to the development of Catholicism in the diocese. Excessive financial resources would become necessary for the upkeep of an overabundance of buildings; problems that have already been touched upon in reference to both Anglicanism and Methodism in the nineteenth century. It was a policy that would stifle Catholicism and sowed the seeds for a future decline in the diocese.

### **Conclusion: The achievements of Lacy**

Richard Lacy died in 1929 in the same week that his coadjutor bishop was in London for the celebrations of the centenary of Catholic Emancipation. If he had lived a few

months longer, he would have celebrated the golden Jubilee of his episcopal ordination. In that same year the town of Middlesbrough with which he had been closely associated for fifty-seven years also celebrated the centenary of its founding. As the last of the Victorian bishops who oversaw the development of the English Catholic Church into a body that was part of the mainstream religious life of the country and in its practice much closer to the Holy See than had been the case at his episcopal ordination, the achievements of Lacy provide a summary of that progress and also the evangelical nature of much that had been introduced into English Catholic practice.

The devotional life of Catholics had grown to an extent that would have been unimaginable to Lacy's earliest congregations who were still arguing about the validity of reparations to the Sacred Heart or walking many miles to attend Mass. The sacramental and devotional life taking place in the churches at the end of his life reflected not only a more mobile society, but an acceptance of the fact that devotions are derived from the Mass and are able to prepare and lead people to Mass.<sup>20</sup> This in turn points to the evangelical nature of devotions, for as noted on page 174, Lacy himself taught about the Christocentric and Crucicentric nature of the sacrifice of the Mass. Anything derived from the Mass must share these characteristics including Marian devotions, the common theme of which is Mary pointing the way to her Son. Devotions and Sacraments were also an integral part of parish missions and pilgrimages, again preparing and leading people to Christ present in the Eucharist and the hope for miraculous intervention, whether of a dramatic or quiet nature was as equally expectant as that experienced by Evangelical Protestants in revivalist

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<sup>20</sup> SC §13.



meetings. The parochial confraternities and the growing body of fraternal organisations such as the Knights of St Columba expected a depth of commitment from members as great as that expected from the Methodist meeting or the Salvation Army in its social work.

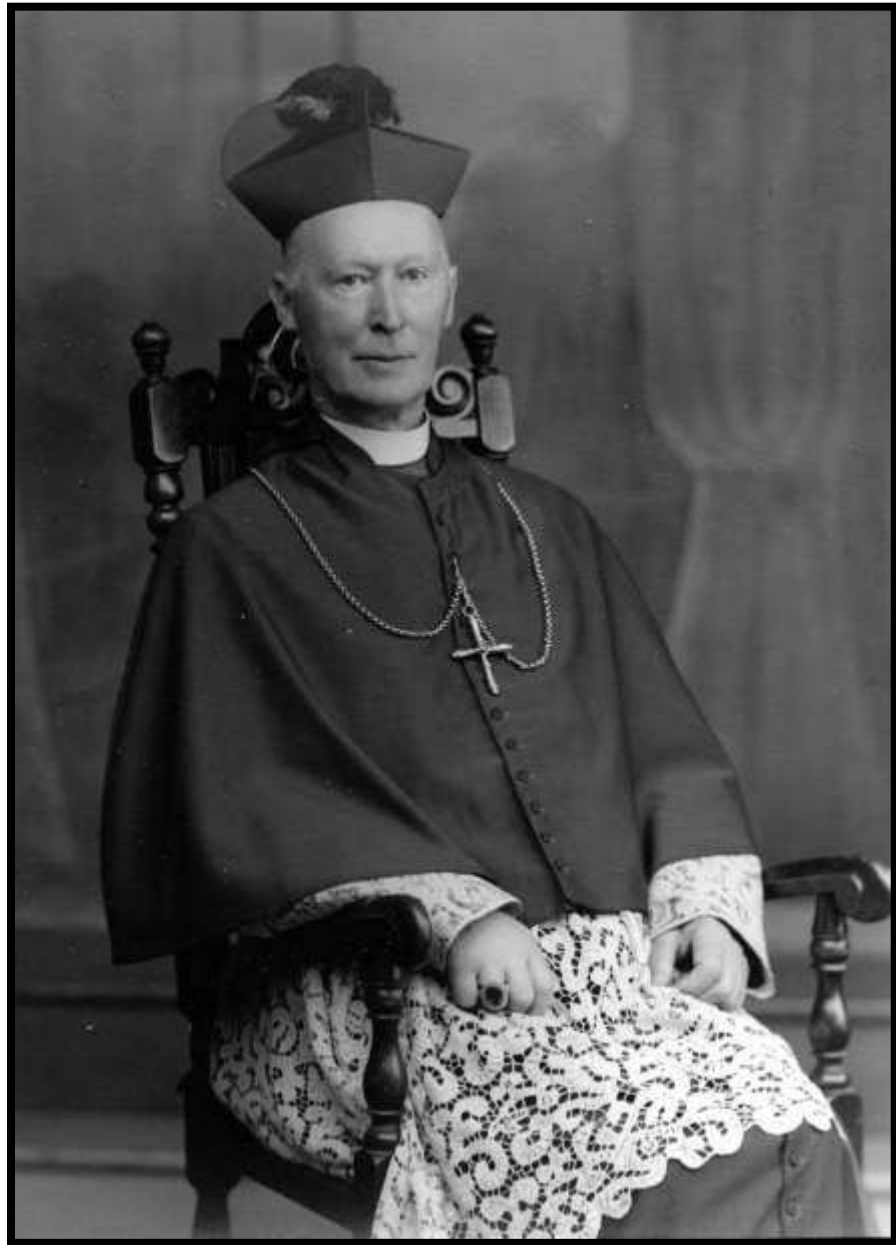
However, Lacy also understood the need for the Catholic faith to be rooted in the immediate situation of the people. Hence his desire to foster a 'native church' that was led by priests brought up in the area, taking note of the history of the area and the surrounding religious climate. At the beginning of his episcopacy it was still necessary for Catholics to prove daily their loyalty to England; by the end there was still some lingering anti-Catholic suspicion in the minds of a few, but it was rarely expressed openly. But that was not the main focus of Lacy's vision; he saw very clearly that for a faith to be truly evangelical in enunciating the message of Christ it needed to be relevant to the people receiving it. In the wider environment of the diocese, his hope was to embed Catholicism in the culture and history of all people resident in it, not just the Catholic population. He must have realised in his twilight years that his successor did not share this vision and concentrated to a much greater extent upon the perceived needs of the Irish diaspora. This is not surprising given the generation gap between Lacy as representative of the older style of Irishman and Shine as representative of the generation influenced by and sharing in the Irish renaissance which was triggered by the events of 1916. With the death of Lacy and the accession of Shine, the character of the diocese of Middlesbrough fundamentally changed as will be explored in the next section.

## Part Four

### An Irish Church 1929-1963

#### 4:1 The Irish picture

**Fig 32: Thomas Shine: Second Bishop of Middlesbrough**



In order to fully understand the nature of Catholic practice in the diocese of Middlesbrough during the episcopate of Thomas Shine, it is necessary to first understand the concerns of the man himself. He built a fortress that was clerically dominated and also in many ways inward looking upon the ‘needs’ of one particular group, namely Irish migrants to the diocese. Any concept of a Catholic ‘native church’ in Yorkshire largely disappeared and it becomes necessary to look to Ireland for a comparison of the revivalist impulses that may be seen. This will be achieved firstly, by looking at the upbringing of Shine in Ireland and secondly, by the concerns of the Irish Hierarchy in the period after partition and independence. Both topics will introduce events affecting the diocese of Middlesbrough that will be elaborated upon in later chapters.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Irish Constituency in the Diocese of Middlesbrough**

It is hard to know precisely the total number of Catholics who were of Irish origin in the diocese in this period, but there are certain factors that indicate their numerical supremacy especially on Teesside. In general, in 1931, 5.5% of the population of England and Wales was estimated to be Catholic, but with an estimated 20%, Middlesbrough and Teesside had one of the highest proportions in the country apart from Liverpool.<sup>2</sup> Research by Richard Webber on surnames in the area using electoral data from 1881 and 1998 concluded that electors with Irish names were ‘significantly over-represented in Middlesbrough’ having a score of 5.1 % against the

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<sup>1</sup> Main sources include:

1. Ferriter, D., *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* [paperback edition] (London 2005).  
 2. Cleary, J., and Connolly C., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge 2005).  
 3. Curtis, M., *A Challenge to Democracy- Militant Catholicism in Modern Ireland* (2010).  
 4. Whyte, J.H., *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1979* [2<sup>nd</sup> edition] (Dublin 1980).

<sup>2</sup>1) Taken from collated Catholic statistics <http://www.drgareth.info/CathStat.pdf>. Accessed 22.02.2011. 2) see <http://rememberwhen.gazettelive.co.uk/2009/10/an-article-of-faith.html>. Accessed 22.02.2011.

national average of 3.84%, in other words a difference of almost 33%.<sup>3</sup> He discovered also that in the later data that Irish names were ten times greater than the proportion describing themselves as Irish compared with a national average of only three times greater. He concluded that those describing themselves as Irish were probably first generation immigrants [and Irish immigration to Middlesbrough had continued until the nineteen-eighties] and so there was ‘an historic strong Irish community.’<sup>4</sup> Clearly, not all the Irish would be Catholic, but E.D. Steele points out that Irish Protestants were unlikely to have formed an appreciably different proportion of immigrants to that found within the Irish population, where census studies between 1861 and 1961 have shown a steady Protestant minority of just under 25%.<sup>5</sup> Importantly, Webber’s research confirms the present writer’s research that Donegal was the origin of the majority of Middlesbrough’s Irish immigrants, but that is an area where the Protestant minority is only 15% of the population, which may indicate a smaller than expected non-Catholic Irish community in the area.<sup>6</sup> Although no actual figures for the Irish Catholic population are available, an estimate may be made using the various elements noted above. (Fig. 33)

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<sup>3</sup> Webber, R., *Neighbourhood Segregation and Social Mobility among the descendants of Middlesbrough’s 19<sup>th</sup> century Celtic Immigrants* (Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis 2004) 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Steele, E.D., ‘The Irish Presence in the North of England, 1850-1914’ *Northern History* Vol. 12 (1976) 220-241 220.

<sup>6</sup> 1) Webber *op. cit.* 17. 2) See above p122 3) <http://county-donegal.co.tv/> accessed 22.02.2011.

**Fig. 33: Estimated Irish Catholic Population in the major urban areas of the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1931<sup>7</sup>**

	Middlesbrough	Teesside	Hull	Totals
<b>General Population</b>	138,274	72,734	313,544	524,552
<b>Estimated RC Population</b>	27,655	14,547	17,245	59,447
<b>Estimated Irish RC Population</b>	18,252	9,104	5691	33,047

Local comment also suggests that the Catholic community on Teesside was predominantly Irish:

When I was sixteen I asked my mother whereabouts in Ireland our family came from. I was devastated to find out we had no Irish blood because without it I was not a proper Catholic. I cried for days. (F1935).

I had Irish blood from a long way back on my mother's side, but my Irishness kicked in when I left school. The overwhelming ethos [in Middlesbrough] was Irish so people brought out their Irishness to fit in. (M1934)

It was totally different in Middlesbrough and Hull. In Middlesbrough most Catholics were Irish and terrified of the priests who were all Irish as well. They would hide if they saw one of them on the street. But in Hull, where we were more English, when we met the priest we'd wave and say 'Hi ya Father'.<sup>8</sup>

The journalist Paul Vallely, himself a local boy, comments that:

What I want to do is chart a trajectory through the life of the Catholic Church in England over the past half century, beginning with the church I grew up in as a boy in northern England where I was part of a community that still defined itself – though I didn't appreciate it at the time – very much in terms of its Irish immigrant roots.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 1)General Population figures taken from Census of England and Wales 1931(London 1934) 2)Catholic Population figures taken from Diocese of Middlesbrough Almanac 1933 3) estimated Irish Element based upon 66% for Middlesbrough and Teesside and 33% for Hull taken from Webber's analysis.

<sup>8</sup> In conversation with the writer January 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Vallely, P., 'On being an English Catholic: from minority to mainstream – and back again?' English Catholicism 1951 – 2008' London Newman Lecture 2008. Accessed <http://www.paulvallely.com/?p=146> 20.02.2011.

### **Thomas Shine**

Thomas Shine was born in 1872 in County Tipperary within the province of Munster. His father was a successful farmer and the family was considered part of the emerging Catholic bourgeoisie in the late Victorian era. As Thomas Inglis explains these 'strong' farmers had the ability to develop their land as a means of economic capital which was linked in turn to cultural social and symbolic capital which was found within the Catholic Church in the South and the Protestant churches in the North of the country.<sup>10</sup> It gave a religious character to Ireland that was almost unique: both Catholics and Protestants were encouraged to become 'good' examples of their faith treading a narrow moral and devotional path that was laid down and policed by their leaders in an authoritarian manner.<sup>11</sup> The question of land ownership and economic capital was important to Catholics long before the so-called rural idyll proposed by De Valera in the nineteen-thirties. Its main premise was that in order that economic capital was not lost the land must stay as one entity and not be divided between the following generations. As a result one son would inherit the land, whilst promising to provide for the others who entered the church or one of the professions. This is exemplified in the Shine family: Thomas was originally destined to become a doctor, his younger brother a priest, and the third brother to farm the estate.<sup>12</sup> All three were sent to Rockwell College, which was run by the Holy Ghost Fathers to provide a Catholic secondary education for lay students as well as being the junior seminary for the archdiocese of Cashel. The whole atmosphere of such colleges inevitably fostered vocations amongst the lay students such as Thomas, who decided

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<sup>10</sup> Inglis, Thomas, 'Religion, identity and society' in Clery and Connelly op cit., 65.

<sup>11</sup> For more on the authoritarian strain in the Irish character see Whyte op cit., 21.

<sup>12</sup> Carson, *The First Hundred Years* (Middlesbrough 1978) 227.

to proceed towards ordination rather than a medical career and was accepted by Thurles, the major seminary for Cashel at the age of sixteen.<sup>13</sup>

Thurles, like many of the major Irish seminaries at that time trained priests for both the local diocese and the foreign missions, the decision being based upon the results of the ‘concurus’ examination taken at sixteen with the best selected for work in Ireland. The fact that Thomas Shine was eventually sponsored by the diocese of Leeds and spent his last year at St Joseph’s Seminary becoming acclimatized to the Catholic Church in England, suggests that like many of the priests he later invited into the diocese, he was ‘surplus to requirements’ for Ireland and felt the underlying sense of rejection and need to prove oneself that that situation brought about.<sup>14</sup>

### **The face of Religion in Ireland**

Within the religious struggle in Ireland there was a need for both Protestants and Catholics to demonstrate a place of dominance and position and prove that they had the means to survive. It is not necessary in the context of this study to enter into the minutiae of Ireland’s modern religious and political history, but merely to record the details of the strategies used by both sides to attain dominance as there was much convergence.<sup>15</sup> It has already been noted above that for many Irish, it was important that they were seen to practice their faith well and in order that this might happen, certain ‘building blocks’ were required such as the provision of buildings and symbolic rituals provided that both gave a feeling of community solidarity to those

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<sup>13</sup> Kearney, J., ‘The Diocesan College’ in *The Furrow* Vol. 3:11 (1952) 580-587. Accessed <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27656096> 13.01.2011.

<sup>14</sup> See above p.22.

<sup>15</sup> See n1 for major sources.

taking part as well as the antithetical feelings of alienation engendered in those who were outside.

Inglis comments that in Ireland the act of attending church on Sunday has not merely being the means of attaining individual salvation but also ‘acts as a public display of community solidarity.’<sup>16</sup> This meant that churches and schools needed to be provided for every small community in order that the dominance of one group was established as happened successfully in the South for Catholics. It was also a message that was close to the heart of Shine and many of his priests during the period of his episcopacy. Shine’s stated aim was to build a church for every small community of Catholics within the diocese of Middlesbrough so that all might practice their religion easily.<sup>17</sup> Another symbolic form of domination found in Ireland was the use of public spiritual displays such as processions that alienated those not taking part. For Catholics these were principally Marian or Eucharistic and mention has already been made in the previous chapter of their importance for Shine. The equivalent for Protestants in the North was the annual Orange Marches, military parades and huge public bonfires that reminded Catholics of their minority position in Ulster.

### **Economics and Godliness**

The personal consequences for Thomas Shine of the land=economic capital equation that are outlined above, hides another facet of the bourgeoisie Catholicism in which he was raised and advocated throughout his life; that of a strict moral ethic relating both to marriage and sexual relationships in general in order to promote not the kingdom of God, but the wealth and economic stability of undivided areas of farmland.

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<sup>16</sup> Op cit., 60.

<sup>17</sup> MDA. Almanac and Directory for the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1930 Preface.



Keeping land intact had two corollaries; controlling marriage, which in turn meant controlling sexual relationships by strict adherence to Catholic teaching. This brought about an ethos of self-repression and self-denial that was central to being regarded as a ‘good Catholic’ for nearly a century. A similar ethos could also be seen in the Protestant Calvinist denominations in the North, where to be a good Protestant entailed holding ‘puritanical attitudes in sexual matters, conservatism and similar judgments [to Catholics] about what constitutes good and bad conduct.’<sup>18</sup>

There were however consequences for Irish Catholics; in particular generations of priests and religious with a cultural rather than personal vocation in that they had increased the wealth of the country by foregoing any interest in the land and enriched the religious standing of their parents who had given a child or children to the Church.

We may congratulate Fr. Collingwood and wish him many happy years in God’s service, and we may congratulate Mr and Mrs Collingwood, who have now given two sons and a daughter to God.<sup>19</sup>

To fail as a priest or religious was regarded as bringing shame upon a family and in most cases resulted in alienation from home, friends, country and means of support. For those, who had been rejected as native priests and forced to minister where a bishop would sponsor them, life must have seemed even harder as this priest indicated.

The Church was not compassionate as it should have been. This was true of a priest that fell by the way. He seemed to be treated as though worse than any other sinner. (P19)

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<sup>18</sup> Inglis. op cit., 72.

<sup>19</sup> HCM (April–May 1947). 10.

## **Fear and Godliness**

In the wake of independence a new foe was needed to replace Britain as the source of Ireland's ills. As a result Godliness in the persona of a puritanical moral ethic underwent a subtle change of meaning. It was no longer wholly a means of increasing the economy and gaining religious standing, but was needed as a cure for a new enemy –that of immorality that in the view of the bishops was dragging Ireland down to new ways of sinning. Both Ferriter and Curtis talk of the 'fear' that had existed within the collective mind of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy since the Modernist crisis that had peaked in the early twentieth century. That fear, which was that the Catholic faith in Ireland would be diluted, was fed at regular intervals by new threats such as communism, mixed marriages and most seriously, the violence and brutality of the civil war that preceded independence. As Cardinal Logue of Dublin wrote in 1924

Men are now engaged in a laudable effort...to repair the rack and ruin of the past... [and] restore prosperity. This ...is a more material reparation, but there is reparation which is less thought of but infinitely more important, to bring back our people to a sense of peace, charity, honesty and obedience in all things to God's law. Upon this reparation depends eternity.<sup>20</sup>

As excerpts from other Pastorals by Logue and his fellow bishops show, they felt there was one impediment to this reparation; the influence from sources imported into Ireland that corrupted the pure good Irish Catholic, in this case films, books, dancing and other 'worldly pleasures'.<sup>21</sup> At no point did the bishops feel they could admit the painful truth that the ruthlessness and cruelty seen in the Civil War came from within Irish people. McGoldrick explains that a characteristic tendency of the Irish people is

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<sup>20</sup> Logue, Lenten Pastoral 1924 taken from O' Callaghan, M., 'Religion and Identity: The Church and Irish Identity' in *The Crane Bag* Vol. 7:2 (1983) 71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30060600> accessed 19.01.2011.

<sup>21</sup> Excerpts from Pastoral Letters are quoted extensively in the secondary literature already noted.

the holding of a great sense of responsibility for what goes wrong, but characteristically denying or projecting the blame outwards.<sup>22</sup> This was true of the Irish bishops after the Civil War and as a result it was easier for them to continue blaming outside influences for Ireland's ills as they had done throughout the previous century, but assert their influence in the new state by supporting a militant Catholic moral crusade that was comprised of various groups coming together under the banner of Catholic Action:

Our main army of advance will consist of the formative and constructive societies [CTSI and CYMS<sup>23</sup>]...On the right, our eager new levies, the Knights of St Columbanus. On the left will flutter the banners of the Legion of Mary. Many other units will be gladdened by the spectacle of our Irish army of Catholic Action.<sup>24</sup>

Catholic Action was part of a universal movement in the Church that had started in the early twentieth century as a result of increased social awareness in the light of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. However, in Ireland attention was focused particularly on vigilance and censorship activities as a result of its particular history and the resultant desire to break away from British and Protestant influence. The need for purity in both life and faith was of paramount importance to both the Catholic leadership and Nationalist politicians alike. But as Ferriter suggests there was resistance to 'an enforced excessive piety' in Ireland.<sup>25</sup> Despite the presence of vigilance groups and clerical preaching, he points out that the Irish 'became one of the heaviest cinema-going populations in the world and were keen to drink as much

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<sup>22</sup> McGoldrick, M., *Irish Families in America*

<http://www.aislingmagazine/articles/TAM19/Irish%20families> accessed 08.12.2005.

<sup>23</sup> The CTSI was the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland and CYMS the Catholic Young Men's Society.

<sup>24</sup> Anon 'The Serried Ranks of Catholic Action' (CTSI 1934) quoted in Curtis M., *A Challenge to Democracy. Militant Catholicism in Modern Ireland* (Dublin 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Ferriter, *op. cit.*, 334.

as possible'.<sup>26</sup> The Catholic Church also failed in its attempt to become the established Church when the new Constitution was passed in 1937. He concludes that most Irish Catholics were able to distinguish between their theoretical devotion to faith and how they actually lived and were able to reconcile the differences quite easily when examining their consciences.<sup>27</sup> It also needs to be noted that in many of the moral campaigns such as that for censorship, the Protestant minority were as enthusiastic for legislation as their Catholic counterparts.

In Middlesbrough too, there was a sense of episcopal and clerical fear that the faith of Catholics would be diluted by daily contact with non-Catholics. Under Shine, the priests set up many more guilds and parish organizations, often imported from Ireland and these became the means of occupying their parishioners' spare time and preserving their faith. Shine probably felt that he was justified in concentrating the efforts and resources of the diocese upon the Irish not only because they were his fellow countrymen, but because of the high level of Irish immigrants that was noted above coming to the area whom he considered to be in need of the same care and protection from sin as that offered to them by his counterparts across the Irish sea. In England, the Irish were once again in the middle of the malign influences that Independence and a moral crusade had supposedly freed them from in their own country and not only the immigrants, but also the name of their country needed protecting. Even though the words below were written in 1925, the threat in Ireland had not gone away and was as pertinent at the end of Shine's episcopacy as at its beginning.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

There is a danger of losing the name which the chivalrous honour of Irish boys and the Christian reserve of Irish maidens has won for Ireland. If our people part with the character that gave rise to that name we lose with it much of our national strength, and still more of the high rank we have held in the Kingdom of God. Purity is strength, and purity and faith go together. Both virtues are in danger these times, but purity is more directly assailed than faith. The danger comes from pictures and papers and drink. It comes more from the keeping of improper company than from any other cause.<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Irish Catholicism by its nature has always contained a strong puritanical element often described as Jansenist possibly as a result of the period in the Penal times when Irish priests were trained in France in the area where Jansenism was influential. However, the puritanical vigour that was shown by the leadership in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was more a result of the bishops' own fears about the moral integrity of their people and doubts about their ability to control it adequately in the face of external pressures such as modernism or civil war. Furthermore, similar anxieties were expressed by the more Calvinist Protestant leadership in the North of the country and similar actions taken to counteract possible failings. For both sections of the community the priority was to be a 'good' example of their faith. Thomas Shine was very much a man of Ireland, both in upbringing and priestly formation and shared the fears of the Irish bishops in regard to Irish moral rectitude and the necessity of producing 'good' Catholics. Within the diocese of Middlesbrough there were a large number of Irish immigrants who were prey to the same errors and temptations as their compatriots at home. He would also be aware that among the immigrants were people escaping from the consequences of their actions in the fight for independence as well as those who wished to escape enforced

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<sup>28</sup> Evils of dancing. Statement of the Irish Bishops at Maynooth 06.10.1925 accessed [http://www.setdance.com/archive/evils\\_of\\_dancing.htm](http://www.setdance.com/archive/evils_of_dancing.htm) 23.01.2011.

piety or the sheer poverty of Ireland in that period. As a result his actions and initiatives in the spiritual and devotional life of Catholics in the diocese of Middlesbrough, which will be examined in greater detail in the remaining chapters of this section, show a greater resemblance to the concerns of the Irish Church and leave behind the concerns of his predecessor to establish a Catholicism native to Yorkshire and England.

## **4.2: The Building Blocks**

In order to mould the diocese of Middlesbrough into a Catholic community that reflected his priorities and concerns, Shine needed to put in place certain building blocks, which can be summed up as bricks and mortar and manpower. During his years as coadjutor bishop, the priority Shine gave to providing more churches was becoming obvious, with new churches and the setting up of a Diocesan Extension Fund to raise money for this being his initiatives. Changes in education provision also required the building of new schools or enlargement and alteration to existing buildings. New staffing levels were required and the contribution of the Religious in this area continued to expand, as did their social work especially in the Great Depression of the nineteen-thirties that affected the North of the country particularly badly. The establishment of new parishes required priests to serve in them, and it is in this area that the dependence of Shine upon his Irish heritage is most obvious. As will be shown, the numbers of Irish priests in the diocese increased exponentially during his episcopacy, whilst the number of ordinations of 'native' men to the diocese substantially decreased. In effect this was a form of Irish acculturation. Shine used the concept to introduce a mainly Irish clergy to the diocese of Middlesbrough to enforce his brand of Irish Catholicism. The causes and effects of this on the Catholic life and Revival within the diocese will form the final parts of the Irish Church.

### **Bricks and Mortar**

It is clear from reading the prefaces written by Shine for the annual diocesan almanacs that raising money to provide churches throughout the diocese was, in his mind the first call upon diocesan resources and charitable giving, for it was a constant

refrain in every edition.<sup>1</sup> But his interest in the new churches went further than merely raising the capital to build them; he formed a partnership with Frank Spink, a builder from Bridlington, designing and building several new churches that were erected in the inter-war years. He also influenced the design of other contemporaneous churches in Middlesbrough.<sup>2</sup> Frailty and old-age prevented a more active involvement in the post-war years, although growth of church plant continued alongside the repair of war damage especially in Hull.

The architectural design used by Shine rejected the neo-Gothic style that was the dominant style within both England and the diocese and instead reflected the Hiberno-Romanesque style that has been identified as the national expression of Irish Catholicism during the inter-war years.<sup>3</sup> Based upon the Italian Lombardic style, its most arresting features were campanile towers, rounded windows and carved doorways. All these features are found in the churches designed by Shine. In Middlesbrough, four such buildings were built in an area of one square mile that was in sight of its neo-Gothic Cathedral (Map 28). Together with its overwhelmingly Irish Catholic population Middlesbrough gives a clear signal of rejection of both the English style of ecclesiastical architecture and of England itself that for Shine and many of his compatriots represented the repression and destruction of their culture. In all, there are eight churches designed by Shine scattered throughout the diocese, but being scattered they do not make such a powerful statement as in Middlesbrough.

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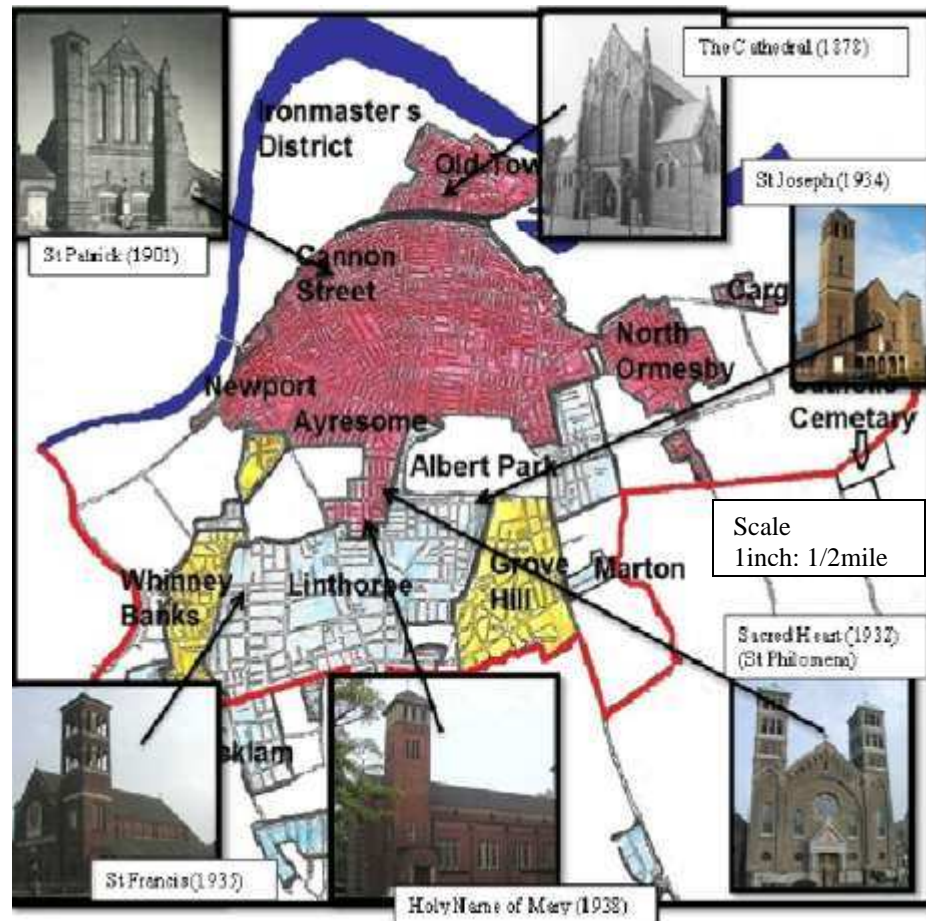
<sup>1</sup> MDA. Diocese of Middlesbrough Almanacs 1928-1956.

<sup>2</sup> The churches of St Philomena and Sacred Heart, and the Marist chapel of the Holy Name of Mary.

<sup>3</sup> Turpin, J., 'Visual culture in the Irish Free State' in JEH Vol. 57:1 (Jan 2006). 67-70.



Map 28: The churches of central Middlesbrough 1939<sup>4</sup>



During the twenty-five years of Shine's episcopacy, twenty-six new churches were built in the diocese. Considering the years of Depression in the nineteen thirties, the six years of war and the age of austerity that occurred after that conflict this was a remarkable achievement and could not have happened without the support of the priests and people. It does beg the question however as to the necessity of such a big programme of church building, what it achieved and was it sensible in a time of financial hardship. In the early years, three small chapels-of-ease were built with the help of the Church Extension Fund in sparsely populated areas of the diocese, to fulfil partially what Shine had stated was his aim:

<sup>4</sup> Based on Map 27 p235.

There are small groups of Catholics in villages here and there without a church and without the means of providing one...whose Faith is in danger of being lost through the want of Mass and instruction.<sup>5</sup>

The fear underlying Shine's thinking was the concept noted on p244 that in Ireland, unless people attended Mass together as a group exhibiting community solidarity, their faith would lapse. Additionally, it was also a means of demonstrating the fact that they were 'good' Catholics to their neighbours who attended the other churches and chapels in those villages.<sup>6</sup>

Similar reasons may account for some of the church building in the urban areas of the diocese, in particular Middlesbrough and Hull. But it should be noted that it gained a momentum of its own in Hull, with individual priests encouraging the building of new churches and the rebuilding of older ones. For example in 1952, when the building of St Bede's was begun on the Bilton Grange Estate, a post-war housing project within the parish of Sacred Heart, it was reported that

At last we may now record the great event in the life of the parish. All obstacles having been cleared we, the Sacred Heart Parish can now lay claim to having a daughter church in the city.<sup>7</sup>

This indication of planting churches was a concept found in Hull during most of the period encompassing both the episcopacies of Shine and his successor, Bishop Brunner. For example, by 1933, St Wilfred's was mother church to the new parishes of Corpus Christi and Holy Name and St Bede itself later became mother to three other new parishes. It was a policy that ultimately fell into the same problems that, for example, beset the Methodists earlier in the century when chapels that had been

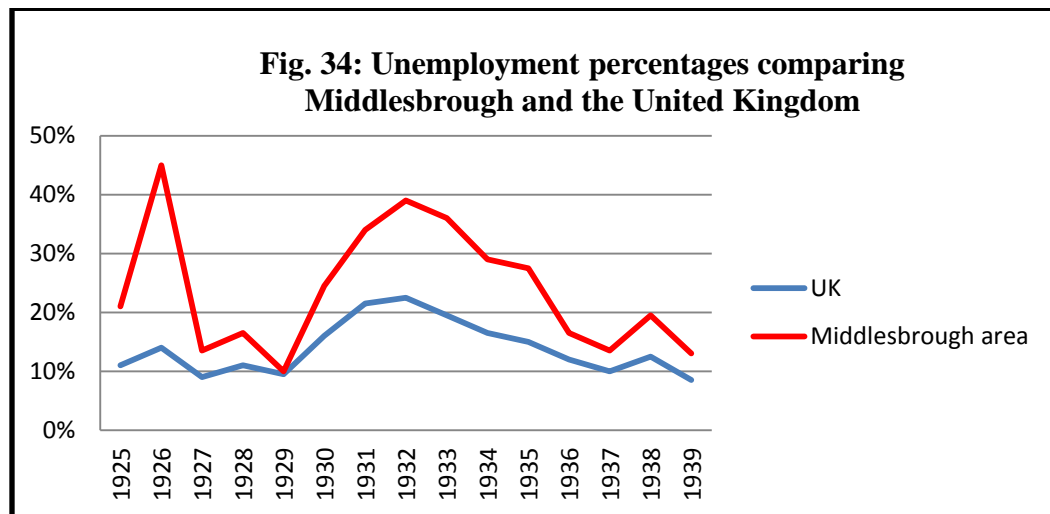
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<sup>5</sup> MDA. Almanac and Directory for the Diocese of Middlesbrough 1930 Preface.

<sup>6</sup> Hunton in the Dales, Newport near Howden and Lealholm near Egton Bridge.

<sup>7</sup> HCM (July-August 1952) 8.

established as part of a church planting programme, had to be closed as there were not enough people to make them financially viable. The question regarding the fairness of placing such a financial burden upon the people can be answered in two diametrically opposed forms. Firstly, it did produce a community spirit and ownership of the buildings in much the same way that Lacy achieved when building the Cathedral in 1876. However, there is an important difference between the two situations. In 1876, there was no Catholic chapel in Middlesbrough that was either suitable or large enough for worship. In the nineteen thirties, building more churches could be considered a luxury, although it would have provided labouring jobs in an economy that was struggling. In Middlesbrough, for example, unemployment was 15% more than the national average as Fig. 34<sup>8</sup> shows.



Lock comments that during the Depression unemployment was ‘worse in Middlesbrough than in the country as a whole and the bad years were felt much more severely’. He blamed the reliance upon one single heavy industry for the situation

<sup>8</sup> Data taken from Lock, M., *The Middlesbrough Survey and Plan* (Middlesbrough 1946) 92.

recommending a broader industrial base be instituted.<sup>9</sup> In that light, the financial burden was unfair particularly as the cooperation of the people was not always a totally willing matter but one of obedience as this respondent pointed out:

The priest was definitely in charge, his word was law. The priest decided everything...what work needed doing on the buildings but the laity raised the money... (F1935)

One young priest arriving in the town as assistant priest in 1934 was horrified by the unemployment and poverty that he saw in the town:

I had never experienced mass industrial unemployment before, and it was a terrible shock to see one of the richest countries in the world with unemployment and it's [sic] accompanying discarding of human dignity.<sup>10</sup>

As a result Michael O' Sullivan became committed to social issues and fought for 'housing, for jobs, on behalf of the children and the young, and against the brutalisation that was the lot of his parishioners in the bad old days.'<sup>11</sup>

The manner of church building in Shine's episcopate differed from his predecessor in one essential form; the practice of building school-chapels was abandoned and resources concentrated on providing from the outset a purpose-built church. St Aelred's parish in York and St Francis' parish in Middlesbrough also managed to build primary schools, but other new parishes such as Corpus Christi in Hull had to find other means of catechizing their children.

In a parish without a school there are many difficulties and setbacks; we must say, however, that the co-operation of the parents with the priests has been very satisfactory. This has been shown, not only in the attendance of the children at the Instructions, but also in

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> NEDG 'Mgr. Michael O' Sullivan' 26.03.1968.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

the number of children who made their First Holy Communion on Holy Thursday morning. We had nineteen in all.<sup>12</sup>

Another change in building policy came at the very end of the period when the church of St Pius X in Middlesbrough was opened in 1955 by Shine in his last public appearance in the diocese. With the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, which meant school buildings were not owned wholly by the parish, it had become more difficult for school halls to be used as a parish amenity, but a hall was regarded by many as an essential part of parish life in order to provide space for social and fundraising events. As a result the liturgical space in St Pius was designed to be used as both a hall and a church and pioneered the way for an age of Church-Halls being built. Found mainly on the new post-war housing estates they were used not only as a means of building up new Catholic communities, but also acted as centres for reaching out to the wider communities that peopled the new estates. It is at this point that the twin concepts of bricks and mortar and parish development overlap and the latter is divided into two distinct phases separated by the years of the Second World War, which became a watershed for an alteration in planning and priorities despite the superficial similarities of demography in Middlesbrough and Hull.

### **Parish Development to 1939: Middlesbrough**

Of the churches built in Shine's episcopacy only two ultimately remained as chapels-of-ease, namely Newport and Hunton. Some, such as the new churches in Middlesbrough were built as parish churches, others such as the two new churches built in Redcar became parish churches later. It is also clear that Shine concentrated his resources more on the Northern half of the diocese and Hull as the following table and map show.

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<sup>12</sup> HCM (June-July 1946) 14.

Map 29: Diocese of Middlesbrough 1955

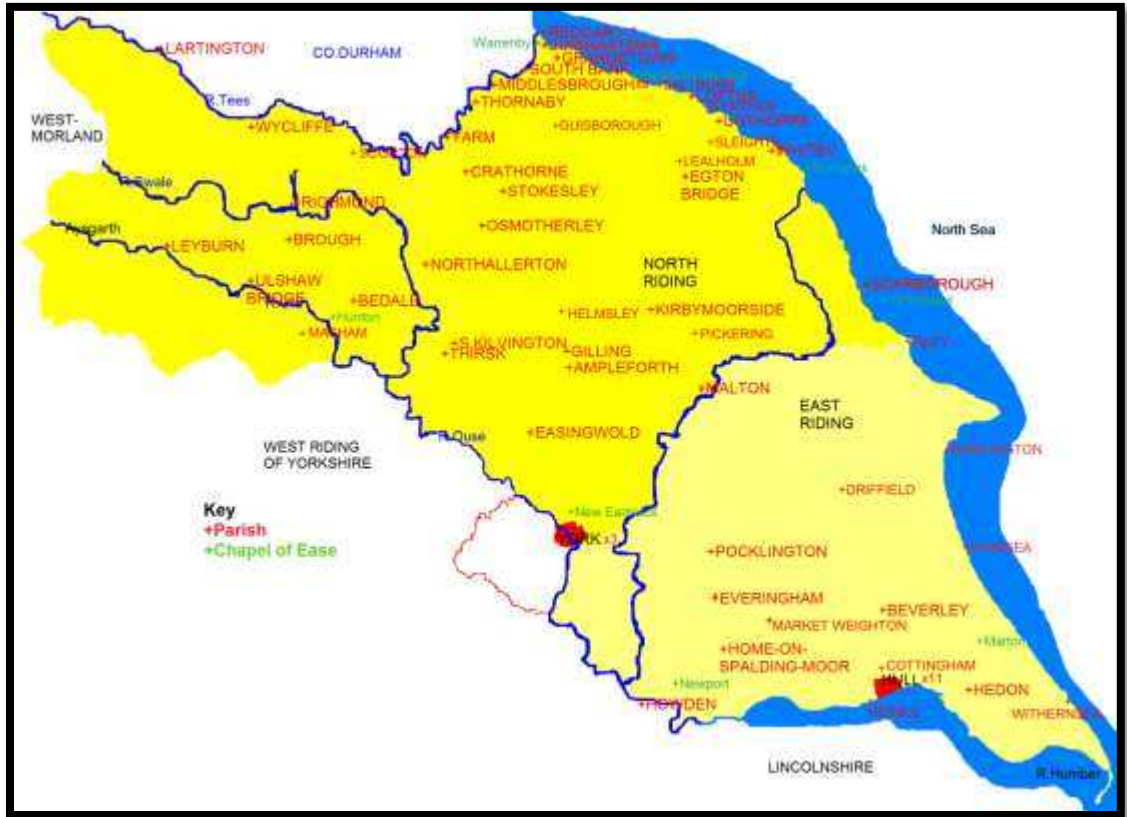


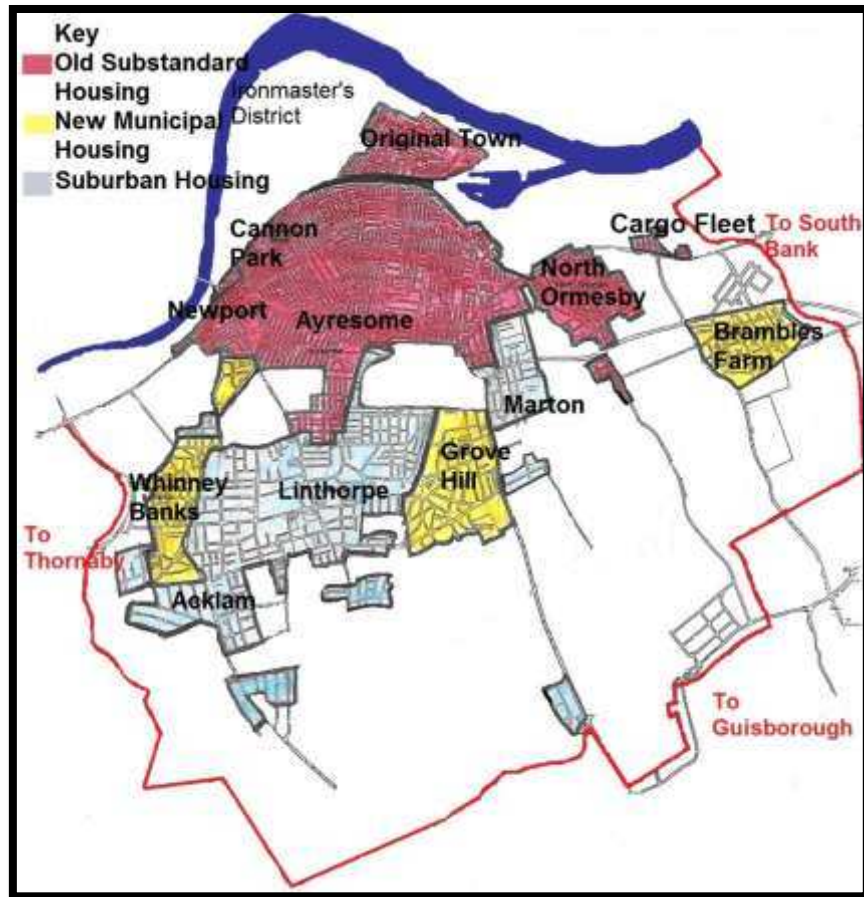
Fig. 35: Distribution of new churches 1930-1939<sup>13</sup>

	N.Riding	Middlesbrough	York	Hull	E.Riding
<b>New Churches</b>	7	3	1	2	1
<b>Replacement Churches</b>	2	1	0	2	1

It was noted on p. 234 that new areas of municipal housing began to be developed in both Middlesbrough and Hull as a result of local councils taking responsibility for housing. In Middlesbrough, there was beginning to be considerable development on the extreme eastern boundary of the town as well as the edges of the central areas (See Map 30).

<sup>13</sup> Information taken from Diocesan Almanacs 1930-1940.

Map 30: Middlesbrough 1939



People were moved into the new estates from the substandard housing areas of the old town and Cannon Street, but the empty houses were quickly repopulated by incomers to the town, drawn there by the large Irish population rather than the realistic prospect of employment. However, the wisdom of breaking up the old communities was called into question in 1946, by one of the contributors to a new development plan for the town.

There is a close mutual friendship between the housing estates and the north [the old town], for it is from there that the majority of tenants have come. They are still fond of their old streets and still frequent their old shops, churches and clubs. These visits are returned by Northerners who call on their relatives in the new council cottages and participate in some of their social activities...The bond between these two estates and their place of origin is particularly close because the estates are cut off by the

wedge of suburbia between them...Thus the disjointedness of the town has been accentuated by inter-war housing.<sup>14</sup>

The same disjoint happened within the Catholic community which had also become dispersed. The need to raise funds locally in the new parishes that were established meant loyalties were transferred away from the older parishes, but also the less faithful, who had attended Mass under the pressure of living in a close-knit older community no longer needed to identify themselves as Catholic and started to drift away from regular practice of their faith.<sup>15</sup>

The assumption by Shine, supported by his priests, that every new community needed its own parish should be questioned in the light of Middlesbrough in particular, where the distances between the new churches were less than a mile, and a similar distance from both the Cathedral and St Patrick's Church respectively (see above Map 28). The movement of people between the old and new communities, noted by Glass, led priests to distort upwardly their estimates of the Catholic population and this distortion of figures is borne out by a study of the baptism numbers that reveal that as the new churches were built, so the number of baptisms in the other parishes fell giving a smaller overall increase than might be expected from the expansive building programme of both the Church and the local council (Fig. 36)<sup>16</sup>.

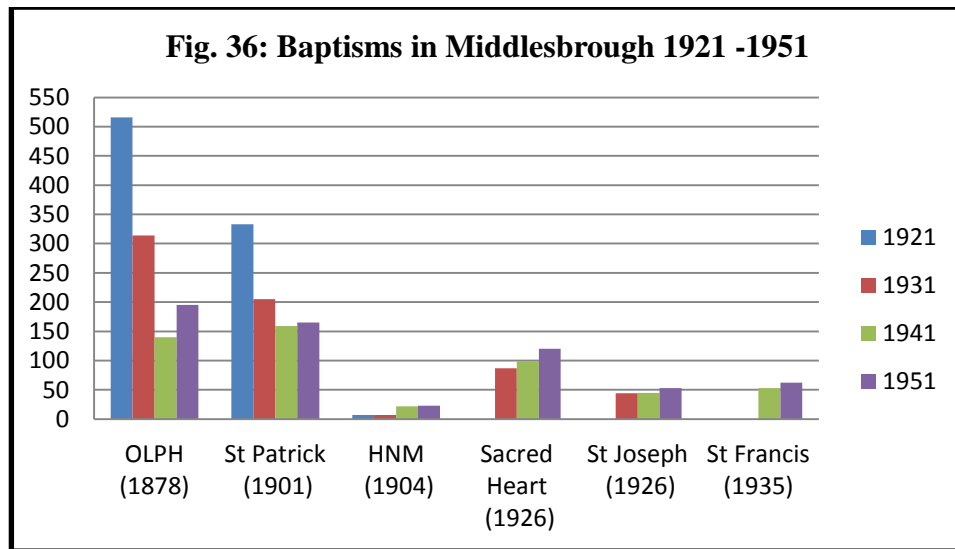
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<sup>14</sup> Glass, R., 'An Introduction to Middlesbrough' in Lock, M., op. cit., 21.

<sup>15</sup> See Turnham, M., *From Emancipation to Aggiornamento* (Unpublished M.Th. Dissertation University of Wales 2007) 61.

<sup>16</sup> Information taken from the relevant Baptismal registers.



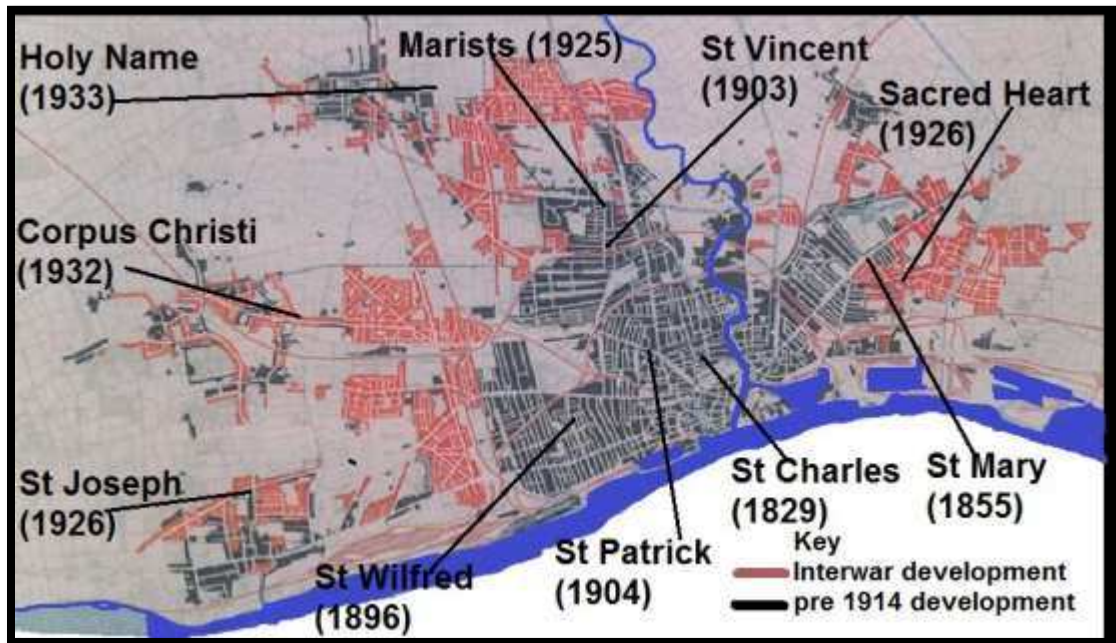


Middlesbrough is an example of how demography can obscure the answer as to whether the intensive bricks and mortar programme followed by Shine in the inter-war years was primarily a means of securing the salvation of the faithful in the midst of a morally corrupt environment or whether it was intended as a form of triumphalism designed to threaten the Anglican Church, who as the established church in England, was expected to provide churches for every community. Both have their place in the Irish culture that informed the thinking of Shine and the majority of the priests in the town at that time.<sup>17</sup>

### **Parish Development 1945-1955**

A similar picture to that of Middlesbrough was presented in Hull at the outbreak of war in 1939 as shown in Map 31 with areas of new municipal development having led to new Catholic churches and parishes. However, the cessation of hostilities in 1945 left the town facing the most difficult problems in the diocese and as such, is a good illustration of the considerations that had to be taken into account.

<sup>17</sup> See Turnham op cit., 109 for a breakdown of priest statistics in Middlesbrough 1929-1955.

**Map 31: Churches in Hull 1939<sup>18</sup>**

With its port and industrial facilities coupled with its proximity to the continent and position on a wide estuary, Hull became an easy target for German bombers to attack it particularly in the spring of 1941. Its ordeal was not widely known about for wartime fears concerning civilian morale meant that press reports about the raids merely mentioned ‘a town in the north east’ rather than naming it. In fact only London suffered heavier bombardment and Hull lost most of its centre and 95% of its housing stock was either destroyed or damaged with 60% of the population losing their homes. However, some areas of older substandard housing were left intact, which subsequently formed part of a slum clearance programme in the nineteen-sixties. Surprisingly, the Catholic churches escaped lightly, with only St Wilfred being destroyed- including the presbytery and school, and St Patrick needing extensive repairs. Post-war reconstruction was slow, partly as result of the redevelopment plan co-designed by Edward Lutyens and Patrick Abercrombie being

<sup>18</sup> Based on Map 1 Lutyens and Abercrombie, A Plan for Kingston-upon-Hull 1945 (Hull 1949) 11.

rejected by the Council, who commissioned it, and partly as a result of the building restrictions that were in force for a number of years. It was fortunate perhaps for the diocese that the Lutyens' plan was rejected, for it seemed to allow only for inter-denominational churches serving self-contained 'neighbourhood' units. Such an idea would not have been acceptable to the Catholic Church under any circumstances at that time. Instead of Lutyens' plan, the Council decided to follow its inter-war development, by enlarging the four municipal estates and adding three more to their number around the periphery of the town. Obviously the provision of replacement housing had the first priority on the limited building material that was available and the two churches worst affected found it difficult to gain the necessary licences and funding to repair and rebuild. In 1947 the priest of St Wilfred told his parishioners that contrary to rumours 'The date of the new church will be a mystery. There are no such things as pre-fab churches.'<sup>19</sup> Having met in the gymnasium of an old school since their church was destroyed survival had been a struggle for the faithful, as their priest recognized. Earlier that year he had written that 'the Blessed Sacrament Guild is to be reorganized... The war years and the destruction of the church, have not been without their effects'<sup>20</sup> but in 1948 he was able to strike a happier note

After 1941, it was only with great difficulties sometimes, that we were able to keep the idea that we were still a parish unity. Using what was at hand, in the best way we were able, and always thankful for what we had, it became a policy of holding on. At length, we see a start, at what is a policy of making some attempt at something more than a make-shift parish. We have been granted a licence to build a temporary 'church' on the Boulevard.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> HCM (June-July 1947) 14.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,(December- January 1947).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., (May-June 1948) 4.

It was 1957 before a new permanent church was built for the parish, but meanwhile after the repair of churches was completed, the practice of church planting restarted with the opening of St Bede's amidst fears that the faithful who were moved into the new estates would lapse in practice if not provided with a conveniently placed building.<sup>22</sup> Relocation of the people also gave rise to a new church being provided for St Joseph's to serve the enlarged estate on Boothferry Road.<sup>23</sup>

### **Religious**

Church buildings represented the core of Shine's bricks and mortar policy, but provision of Catholic schools was also a consideration, and the need to make the church the centre of every Catholic's life outside the workplace. In both these aspects the role of the Religious in the diocese had an important part to play especially in education, which for Shine meant that

The Catholic school is a means of Salvation; it is a necessary part of the Church's machinery in fulfilment of her mission...Our Catholic children must be trained as the Children of God. They must be taught ...how to live to save their souls.<sup>24</sup>

As a result by the mid nineteen-fifties every parish had its own primary school. Both the Marists and the FCJ continued to provide secondary education in Hull and Middlesbrough, adapting their schools at their own cost to meet the changing demands of the government for educational provision. Religious sisters also controlled the running of many of the elementary schools in the diocese, while the Sisters of Mercy expanded their training college at Hull providing many lay catholic teachers for the diocese and beyond. Additionally they opened the Holy Child elementary school in North Hull, using it as a demonstration school for the trainee

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., (Feb-March 1950) 10 (Oct-Nov 1951).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., (June-July 1952) 12.

<sup>24</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters. Shine, T., Pastoral Letter Advent 1930 4.

teachers at the college as well as providing elementary education for the children living within the Marist parish.

A sense of the work being done in the parishes by religious sisters and the extent of their outreach to non-Catholics can be found in the brief panegyrics to Sister Mary Imelda of St Mary's Hull given in 1946

Sr. Mary was untiring in her work for the Church and for the poor of the parish. On retiring from teaching in the school she devoted herself to the visitation of the sick and the needy. She presided at the meetings of the Mother's Union and never spared herself to make the Annual Sale of Work a good success.

The figure of a little lady so well known in East Hull will be seen no more. In the black habit of her faith Sr. Mary Imelda of the Sisters of Mercy...was a well-known and loved figure among her people. For many years she had been ministering to the material and spiritual needs of the people of her faith, and others too, who needed help and advice, and with her gentle manner and soft Irish brogue endeavoured to give that assistance sometimes so sorely needed, to those, irrespective of creed, who required it.<sup>25</sup>

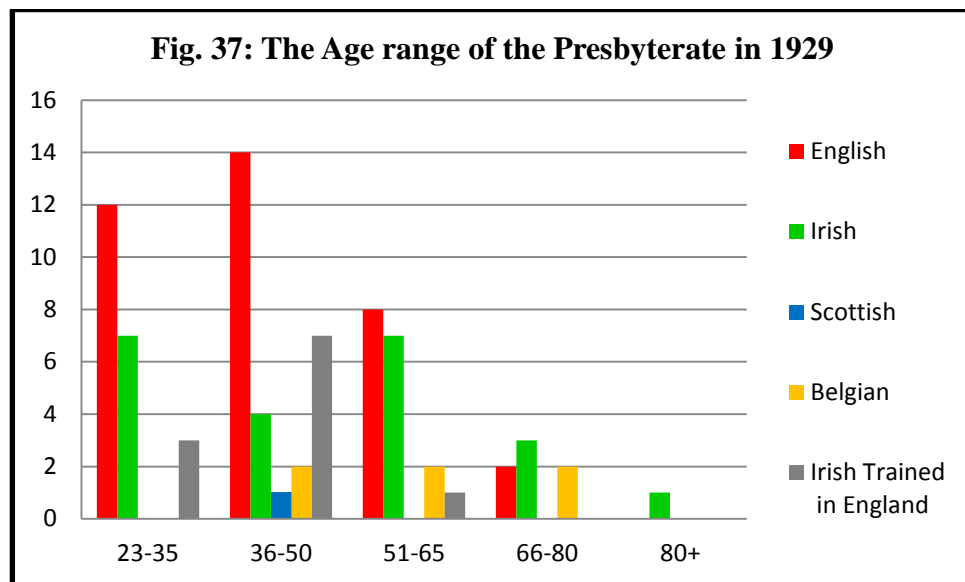
It was more usual that members of the DVDP were found working in the parishes for that was their Apostolate, and in the post-war years they increased their work in all three major urban areas, particularly in the new parishes that were being erected. However, in overall terms the history of the Religious Orders during Shine's episcopacy was not a fruitful period, for three well-established orders left the diocese, and although five Orders were welcomed into the diocese, four failed to flourish. Two Dominican convents also closed at Leyburn and Redcar leaving only their house at Bridlington.

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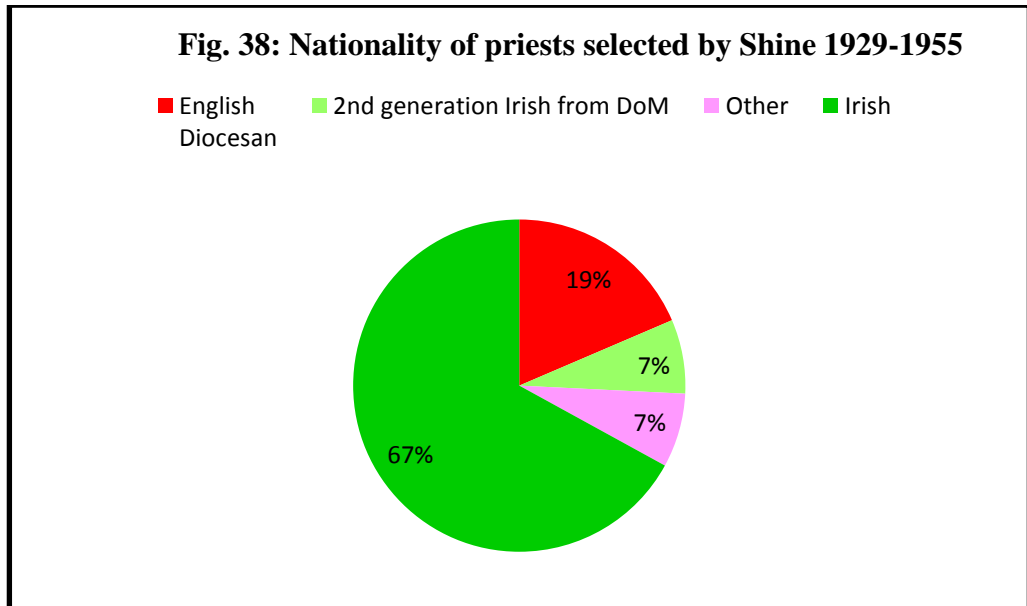
<sup>25</sup> HCM. (August-September 1946). 6, 11-12.

## Priests

The diocesan structure that Shine inherited in 1929 was, in the thinking of his predecessor, self-sufficient in terms of the presbyterate. For much of the twentieth-century portion of his episcopate, Lacy had not needed to borrow priests to serve the growing numbers of parishes and there were at least twenty-three seminarians at different stages of training who would be ordained for the diocese in subsequent years. As Fig 37 shows, few of the priests could be considered elderly and would expect to have many years of service to give the diocese.



Unhappy with the status quo, and seeming to regard as non-credible the possibility of Englishmen having a vocation, Shine instituted his aforementioned policy of inviting Irish priests to work in the diocese. The only exceptions were local men who were second-generation Irish or sponsored by their families or private individuals for training (Fig. 38).



It is notable that from this era, many students of the two Marist Colleges either became Marist priests, members of another Order or were ordained for other dioceses. Conservative estimates from (P26) give the total as over forty, and in the pages of the Hull Catholic Magazine there are constant references to the First Masses of priests from Hull who went on to serve elsewhere. Furthermore, a list of priests born in Hull in order of ordination reveals nineteen from this period who only served outside the diocese.<sup>26</sup> After the war, when Shine, because of failing health, was assisted by an auxiliary bishop, George Brunner, more native vocations were accepted, but a policy of sending them to Irish seminaries for training was established. As a result, during the episcopate of Bishop Shine, the diocesan presbyterate became dominated by Irishmen.

What was most striking was the provenance of the town's [Middlesbrough] priests. Three-quarters of them, maybe more, were Irish ...The town had a special relationship with a seminary in Thurles... but in those days so many were ordained specifically for the Diocese of Middlesbrough in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Terliz – as they pronounced it – that when one day a new priest arrived as the new curate at the next door parish, St Patrick's in

<sup>26</sup> HCM (March-April 1949) 16.

Thornaby, one female parishioner complained, in all apparent seriousness: "I think they've sent us an Anglican vicar by mistake." The new curate was Catholic. The trouble was he was English.<sup>27</sup>

In Ireland after 1910, when the college at Maynooth gained recognition as part of the National University of Ireland, and became a Pontifical University also, it took over the training of all priests for service in Ireland, and diocesan seminaries such as Thurles, where Shine had trained, were termed missionary colleges devoted to the training of men for service abroad. If the argument of Brophy is accepted, the training was of a lower quality than that given at Maynooth and in English seminaries, for 'the difficulties of pioneering life denied to them, polished oratory, elegance and literary output'.<sup>28</sup> Instead, they developed a practical priesthood that concentrated

on teaching the essentials of the Faith, bringing people to Mass and the sacraments, providing churches and schools for their flocks, building up the framework of an effective church organization which ensures the growth and spread of the Church.<sup>29</sup>

The net result of this policy was a generation of priests who were given a reduced understanding of the full nature of the priesthood. It left them able to catechize the faithful, but unable to evangelize them. It gave the men an inadequate concept of ministry and denied the faithful of their parishes the full fruits of Catholic faith and teaching. As this Irish priest said when talking about the pre-Vatican II church of his youth

No explanations were ever given. Catholics weren't told much. Keep 'em in the dark and feed 'em \*\*\*\*! But it didn't do me too much harm! (at least that is what I believe) [P10]

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<sup>27</sup> Valley, P., 'On being an English Catholic: from minority to mainstream – and back again? English Catholicism 1951 – 2008' London Newman Lecture 2008. Accessed <http://www.paulvalley.com/?p=146> 20.02.2011.

<sup>28</sup> Brophy, P.J., 'Irish Missionaries' in *The Furrow* Vol.3:1 (Jan., 1952) 26 accessed <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27655903> 13.01.2011.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



However unfair and belittling to the priests and the people that this policy was, it was exactly what Shine wanted in the diocese as demonstrated in a pastoral letter of 1934.

While churches are necessary they are after all in themselves only lifeless material. To make them instruments of salvation we need Priests. It is Priests particularly who prepare the way of the Lord to your souls. They instruct you; they are agents of God's mercy to you; they offer the Sacrifice of the Mass for you; they feed you with the bread of life; they come to you in difficulty and trial. They are a solace to you in your suffering and with the Viaticum they make you ready for the final journey which will be for you the way to the Lord.<sup>30</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The provision of Churches and parish schools for every community has been seen to be a priority, and in Middlesbrough, was competing with Anglicanism to be recognized as the dominant religious provider. In the following chapters, the means by which the other priorities of the Irish missionary were established in the diocese will be examined, in order that practice of the Catholic faith in the diocese of Middlesbrough, could be viewed as successful in combatting the fears of its bishop that without strong leadership from Irish priests, there would be a loss of moral integrity and loss of faith in the face of modernism.

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<sup>30</sup> MDA. File N3/Pastoral Letters. Shine, T., Pastoral Letter Advent 1934 8.

### 4.3 Devotional Practice 1929-1955

I knelt. Hiatus. Habit's afterlife...  
 I was back among the bead clicks and the murmurs  
 From inside confessionals, side altars  
 Where candles died insinuating slight

Intimate smells of wax at body heat...<sup>1</sup>

It is a misunderstanding of the Catholic Church in this period that it was unchanging for although the outward appearance could be interpreted as fulfilling what Seamus Heaney described vividly as the typical view of the Catholic Church at prayer in this period, there were new initiatives particularly in the area of popular devotions, but also in the Mass as the Church moved slowly towards the time when it would start to renew itself in the events of the Second Vatican Council and beyond. Looking at the devotional practice in the diocese of Middlesbrough in this period reveals that there were many changes particularly in the area of private devotion with emphasis on the family and Marian devotion. Changes within the Mass were less obvious, but happened nevertheless and were welcomed by the laity.

#### **'Statuta *Diæcesis Medioburgensis* 1933'**

The clearest picture of Shine's ideals for Catholic life in the diocese is to be found in the *Statuta Diæcesis Medioburgensis* 1933.<sup>2</sup> Containing over three hundred decrees, it paints a picture of what Shine expected to happen in every parish of the diocese in order that the priests, as 'God's co-workers' fulfilled their mission as 'instruments of God and dispensers of His mysteries; to tighten what was loose, to brighten what was rusty'.<sup>3</sup> This allocution introducing the *Statuta* summarised the priests' role by making four demands. They were expected to visit parishioners regularly for 'the

<sup>1</sup> Heaney, S., 'Station Island 111' in *New Selected Poems 1966-1987* (1990, London) 169.

<sup>2</sup> MDA, *Statuta Diæcesis Medioburgensis* (Middlesbrough 1933).

<sup>3</sup> MDA, Shine, T., *Bishop's Allocution for 32<sup>nd</sup> Synod*. (03.05.1933) 1.

visiting priest makes the Mass-going people.’ They also were exhorted to preach well not ‘an unprepared, incoherent lifeless collection of pious platitudes.’ Instruction of converts was another duty Shine expected to be a considerable onus for ‘clear careful patient explanation of the Catholic Faith will generally produce the fervent convert’ Finally, ‘work waits for us at home’ so all priests were expected to be in the presbytery by eleven o’ clock at night for ‘the out-late priest will be a get-up late priest and so, prayerless and unpunctual’. The first three of these ‘duties’ would be familiar in some respects to the evangelical minister or missionary, for visiting preaching and instruction of converts were all roles they would regard as important for the spiritual progress of their congregations and new members, thus showing again the correlation between Catholic and evangelical ministry that is so often ignored.

For the laity little had changed in parish life since the founding of the diocese; Mass was still the centre of parish life and it was still the papal wish that the sodality of the Most Holy Sacrament and confraternity of Christian Doctrine be established within every parish. Weekday Masses were commonplace and such devotions as the First Friday of devotion to the Sacred Heart and novenas to Mary and saints such as St Anthony were also popular and encouraged. Reflecting on this era, respondents painted a picture of a church where the laity had a very limited part in the central worship of the parish apart from boys who acted as altar servers, but where people were proud of their faith.

Church was a discipline. I had a spell as an altar boy and enjoyed the latin, but didn’t know what it meant ‘til I was much older- about 14.hated the Latin Gospel intoned by the priest, but loved singing the Latin paternoster because I knew it. It was only when I got to the age of some of the curates that I began to see them as real

people, before then all the clergy I thought were distant and severe. (M1928)

Legalistic rather than spirit-led. Rules rather than the love of God could lead to a sense of guilt. Ghetto mentality with a hint of arrogance – we alone had the true faith. Mass was in Latin with priest back to the people, lack of scriptural reading – no understanding or explanation of the liturgy of the Word. But there was a strong sense of community and people were proud to be Catholics. (F1928)

Familiar and predictable, I quite liked the Latin as it added to the importance and mystery. Certainly remember people reading their prayer books during Mass, often nothing to do with the Mass at all, but they were (or seemed to me) fervent. Worship more personal and private rather than as a community. Perhaps most significant Mass and other devotions were just a part of a normal routine which were agreeable to me. (F1930)

A quiet solemnity in which people in the pews could participate only to a limited extent and often did not understand the order or content of the Mass. Many would pass the time by saying the Rosary or by distracting themselves in some other way. (M1941)

The Latin Mass, sermons of doom and gloom, strict dress code for priests and religious. We were taught of a God of fear rather than a God of love. (M1932)

But outside the parameters laid down by Shine there was room for individual priests to respond to individual needs of their parishes or to initiatives from Rome or the diocese, which were not always obligatory, but felt to be life-enhancing. At St Charles Hull in 1953, the priest issued the following notice about lay assistance in the Christocentric offering of Mass:

Bored in Church? It is possible to be bored in Church. You can be bored at the Grand National if you do not take an interest in racing. A greater effort is needed in Church, because the exciting there are[sic] not visible and you have to try to fix your mind on hidden, but supremely real presences. People who follow Mass in their own Missals are unlikely to be bored. Using the Simple Prayer Book is almost as good. If you have neither of these books you can still follow the Mass closely. You can say the Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, thinking of the sufferings of Christ – for the Christ in the Mass is the Victim of Calvary offered once more to God for our sins. Another way is to watch the priest and to think of the different

things he is doing. The main acts of the Mass if we have them in mind supply plenty of food for thought and prayer...<sup>4</sup>

### **Marian Devotion**

One initiative was that of Fr. Mercer the first parish priest of Guisborough who restored the pre-Reformation Augustinian devotion to Our Lady of Guisborough in 1946 in thanksgiving for the safekeeping of the town during the Second World War despite it being on the flight path of German bombers. The bishop agreed to an altar-shrine being erected in the church along with a specially commissioned statue of Our Lady of Guisborough and Masses were said for the return of the old district of Cleveland to the Catholic faith.<sup>5</sup> Alongside this was the setting up of two Marian societies; a Third Order of the Servants of Mary or Servites and both junior and senior Praesidia of the Legion of Mary.<sup>6</sup>

A second new Marian devotion in the diocese was that of our Lady of Fatima, whose statue visited the churches in Hull in the autumn and winter of 1948/9 as part of a nationwide tour. The Fatima prayer had already been added on to the end of the Rosary prayers in 1930 along with the change of intention for the Leonine prayers from safekeeping of the Holy See to that of intercession for the people of Russia. Like the Leonine prayers, the intention of the novenas held in each church when the statue visited, was for Russia and world peace, and with the rise of communism seemed very apt. Devotion was continued after the statue had left by means of establishing the devotion of the First Saturday Communion of Reparation. Coincidentally the statue was in Hull at the time of the show trial of the Hungarian Cardinal Mindszenty, which gave extra significance to the visit and devotions, and

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<sup>4</sup> HCM (June –July 1953) 1.

<sup>5</sup> MDA. Diocesan Almanac 1946 73.

<sup>6</sup> See below for more about the Legion of Mary.

the clergy in Hull felt that it had been the cause of a real revival of faith among both practising and lapsed Catholics in the town

The great thing about Fatima, as about Lourdes, is that it renews and intensifies the real love of Our Lady, which is so deeply rooted in every Catholic heart; and especially in the case of Fatima, makes us rely more than ever on the abiding power of Mary's intercession for us...Novenas are, to a large degree wasted if we do not follow them up by making full use of the graces they bring.<sup>7</sup>

That interest was maintained in Hull for Our Lady of Fatima is borne out by the account of a major street procession in the town in 1953 with a dual intention; 'to honour Our Blessed Lady of Fatima publicly and to pray for our new Queen in her Coronation year.'<sup>8</sup> A statue was loaned by the parish of Withernsea and the procession followed the route of pre-Reformation processions from the Market Place through the streets of the old town 'the narrow street echoing to the sound of the hymns...for the first time for four hundred years brought to mind how often the air must have resounded to the *Salve Regina*.'<sup>9</sup>

In November 1950, Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary as an Article of Faith, the first and only instance of a Pope making an infallible statement since infallibility was promulgated at the First Vatican Council in 1870. Like the local interest in Fatima and Our Lady of Guisborough the teaching was defined as a result of conflict and catastrophe, for example, the rise of communism and the Korean war as *L'Osservatore Romano* explained

Filled with fear of new and more tremendous catastrophes and while the world denies us every hope, once again we raise our eyes to heaven, imploring Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, with those words which Pius XII gave us: 'that the Virgin moved to pity by the

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<sup>7</sup> HCM (November-December 1948) 1.

<sup>8</sup> HCM (November-December 1953) 24.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

massacres of her children, by so many wounds and so many anxieties, may strengthen souls, extinguish hatreds and rancour, obtain concord and may cause to shine that Christian peace under which alone all nations, both victors and vanquished, united not in violence but in justice and equity, can enjoy lasting and fruitful tranquillity.<sup>10</sup>

The definition of the Assumption dogma as an article of faith was welcomed in the diocese, and a few years later in 1958 the feast day became the focus of a new diocesan initiative, an annual pilgrimage to the Lady Chapel of Mount Grace.<sup>11</sup>

### **Family Devotion**

Another focus of Marian devotion was that of replicating the Holy Family in the Catholic family and this was clearly the message of Fr. Patrick Peyton and his Rosary Crusade of 1952 with its slogan 'the family that prays together stays together'. The primary function of the Crusade was to instil into every Catholic family the habit of reciting the Rosary together and Fr. Peyton had dedicated his life to this objective as thanks for being cured of tuberculosis. An Irish-born American he used a mixture of

all modern means of indoctrination and persuasion...(including) special pulpit sermons, a Crusade newspaper, school projects, posters moving pictures and large Family Prayer Rallies.<sup>12</sup>

Such tactics were also seen in the Evangelical crusades of the Baptist preacher, Dr Billy Graham who started his work at a similar time, illustrating once more the correlation between Catholicism and Evangelicalism. Alana Harris in the article cited in the footnote, has provided a detailed study of the two men and concluded that both had

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<sup>10</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano* 14.08.1950: translation from d'Alton, I., *The Church of Ireland and the promulgation of the dogma of the Assumption* 40.

<sup>11</sup> See below p300.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from Harris, A., and Spence M., "'Disturbing the Complacency of Religion'" the Evangelical Crusades of Dr Billy Graham and Fr. Patrick Peyton in Britain 1951-1954.' *Twentieth Century British History*, (Vol. 18: 4, 2007 481-513) 491.

an engaging style, athletic good looks, a charismatic personality and a cosmopolitan mentality. Both... were committed to reaching a mass audience with their version of Christian revivalism<sup>13</sup>

Preparations for Fr. Peyton's crusade coincided with the publication of the encyclical letter *Ingruentium Malorum* urging the keeping of October 1951 as a Rosary Crusade, which in 'filial obedience' Shine directed should be used as the basis of the sermon and instruction on the following Sunday.<sup>14</sup> Although frailty prevented him from attending the rallies of Fr. Peyton, he did sound a far more positive tone in his preparatory letter.

The world today is full of unrest: strife and suspicion and confusion exist among the nations; the Church is being subjected to a merciless persecution; and all around us we see uncertainty, broken homes and crime abounding...true peace can only be won if it is sought in God's way. This means leading the world back to God. The prayer we commend to you today is the Rosary...in the great Rosary Crusade, we are fortunate in having Fr. Patrick Peyton of the Congregation of the Holy Cross as Director.<sup>15</sup>

The diocese was the starting point for the 1952 English Crusade and rallies were held in Hull, Scarborough York and Middlesbrough. The editor of the Hull Catholic Magazine described the rally there as 'the most outstanding religious gathering that this City has ever known.'<sup>16</sup> Mgr. Lannen in the Diocesan Almanac reported that

All possible means were utilised and no effort spared to make the people conscious of the great value of a Family Home Rosary...Rosary sermons explaining and pointing out the beauty and unfailing power of this devotion were constantly preached in all the Churches of the diocese;[notes were provided by the mission team] pastoral Letters were read; Rosary films were shown; all forms of advertising were employed; and all the time the people were being roused to join and take part in the Crusade.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 488.

<sup>14</sup> MDA. File N3 Thomas Shine. Letter to priests 27.09.1951.

<sup>15</sup> MDA File N3, Thomas Shine. Pastoral Letter 07.04.1952.

<sup>16</sup> HCM June-July 1952. 18.

<sup>17</sup> MDA Diocesan Almanac 1953. 127.



The task of going from door to door to 'sell' the Rosary and collect the pledges was 'a man's job' and it was estimated that about seventeen thousand helped in the task. Women, children and the sick prayed for success and all were invited to attend the large organised rallies to hear Fr. Peyton speak about the effects of the family Rosary upon the home

the love, the protection, the confidence it gives to a man, his wife and his children...It was comforting and consoling, It gave us new hope...It was simple. It was compelling. It was clear. It was as usual lengthy, It could have all been told in ten minutes, but people did not want it that way. They listened with attention and few returned home without feeling this priest had some extra power of reaching down into the soul.<sup>18</sup>

In total 54,586 pledges were received, a total of about sixty per cent of the eligible Catholic population and its impact was still remembered by several questionnaire respondents.

The Family Rosary following Fr. Peyton's Rosary campaign. Good for family life in the 1950's. (F1936)

There seems little doubt that the success of the Crusade in part was created by the priests who supported it overwhelmingly; anxious, as was their bishop, to protect Catholic family life at a time when it was facing dilution from a rapid increase in mixed marriages and also family breakdown. Shine himself described the Rosary as bringing 'the protection of Our Lady to the families who need her now as never before.'<sup>19</sup> The concern that Shine felt over mixed marriage was evident in the Pastoral letter that he wrote in 1939 and ordered that it be repeated every Lent and Advent.

The number of mixed marriages in this Diocese is so appallingly great that we feel constrained to beg you to consider seriously what a mixed marriage means and entails, and its too frequent evil

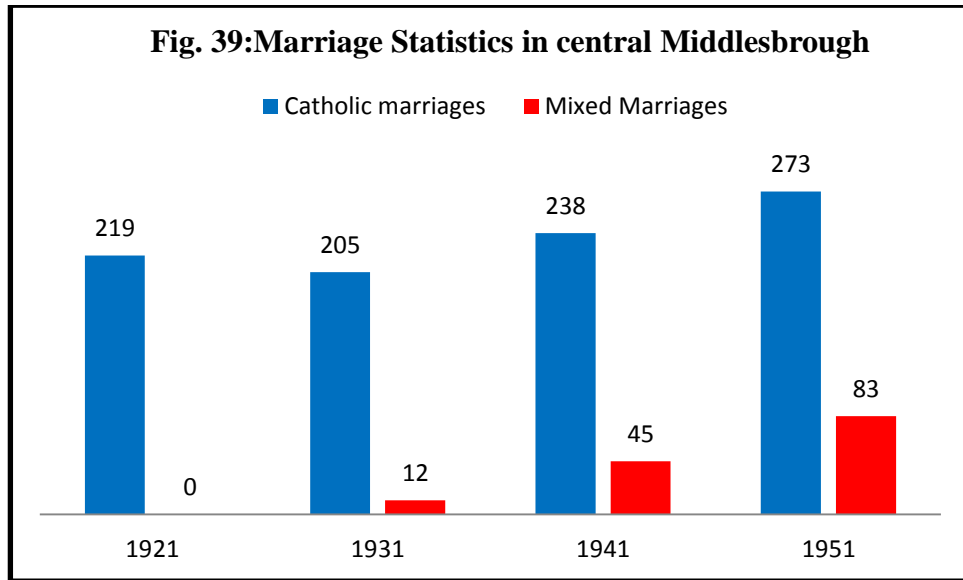
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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 128,129.

<sup>19</sup> MDA. File N3 Pastoral Letters. Pastoral Letter 20.05.1952.

consequences: the weakening of faith of the Catholic partner and the loss of the faith of his or her children.<sup>20</sup>

Looking at central Middlesbrough as an example of what was happening; the inexorable rise in mixed marriages from the interwar period onwards is evident (Fig. 39)<sup>21</sup>.



This was a result of the greater opportunities people had to meet non-Catholics in the workplace especially during the Second World War, when many joined the forces. However, the opportunities for greater mixing also had the opposite effect from Shine's fears as many non-Catholic partners converted to Catholicism on marriage.

I was brought up and confirmed in the C of E. Married a Catholic and went to Mass with him. Mgr. Kilbane, (the Father) was a great influence on me and a good mentor, it was then I decided to convert. (F1931)

In 1946, Shine returned to the theme of marriage in general and particularly of 'the blessing of children' and the need to be 'exemplary parents'.<sup>22</sup> By exemplary he

<sup>20</sup> MDA. File N3 Pastoral Letters. Pastoral Letter for Lent 1939. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Data taken from the relevant parish registers.

<sup>22</sup> MDA. File N3 Pastoral Letters. Pastoral Letter for Lent 1946. 5.

meant having family night prayers, regular attendance at Mass, and using the Catholic schools. In this way Shine believed the children would be protected from ‘the world’s standards [which] are soon and eagerly adopted by them. They are attracted by the glitter of materialism’.<sup>23</sup> As noted above in 4:1, the family was an important cultural concept in Ireland as Paul Vallely realised.

My first conscious memories of the community in which I grew up where of family gatherings in my home-town of Middlesbrough, only half-remembered from the haze of early boyhood: funerals, birthdays, parties at which the grown-ups would place dining chairs around the edge of the room and sit in a big circle, drinking bottled beer and port-and-lemons, and singing. Everyone was expected to take a turn. My Gran, I remember, always sang *If I were a blackbird*. My Mum, an Englishwoman, always did *I is for the Irish*. It wasn’t religious – though I seem to remember someone once singing *Faith of our Fathers* – “in spite of dungeon, fire and sword” – but our faith was woven into the weft of our quotidian identity. We took it for granted that all this was normal; it was only later in life, when I became *The Times* correspondent in Belfast and Dublin, that I discovered how culturally Irish was my upbringing.<sup>24</sup>

Guilds and sodalities were also a means of promoting family values both in the nuclear family, the extended family and the parochial family, and twenty-one new ones were introduced into the diocese during Shine’s episcopacy. They ranged from devotional sodalities to guilds for Catholic professionals such as teachers, or nurses and, as in Ireland, were encouraged as a means of cultivating a sense of family loyalty, and a standard of religious and moral behaviour, solidarity and charity to other members of the Catholic community. Other forms of family life were the religious communities and in the case of the female Orders, those that thrived in the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Vallely, P., ‘On being an English Catholic: from minority to mainstream – and back again? *English Catholicism 1951 – 2008*’ London Newman Lecture 2008. Accessed <http://www.paulvallely.com/?p=146> 20.02.2011.

diocese were those with Irish branches, and who also attracted local vocations. Those that failed in the diocese did not have this essential link.

### **Changes in the Mass**

Changes around the Mass came about as a result of initiatives from the Holy See, particularly in the 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei*. This more than anything paved the way for the reforms of the liturgy that would be enacted a few years later at the Second Vatican Council. The encyclical encouraged a more active role for the laity for example by praising those who explained the “Roman Missal” so that the faithful, united with the priest may pray together in the very words and sentiments of the Church’.<sup>25</sup> It also encouraged the use of ‘Dialogue Masses’

They are also to be commended who strive to make the liturgy even in an external way a sacred act...in which all share...for instance, the whole congregation...either answer the priest in an orderly or fitting manner, or sing hymns suitable to the different parts of the Mass, or do both, or...in high Masses when they answer the prayers of the minister of Jesus Christ and also sing the liturgical chant.<sup>26</sup>

These were introduced into the diocese but as this correspondent in Hull felt, not very successfully

From time to time during the course of the year the laity are urged to follow the Holy Mass with the aid of a missal and ‘the pray the Mass’. [sic]Why then, do the clergy though perhaps unwittingly, do so much which discourages this admirable exercise being carried out? One of the chief objects to using a missal is the difficulty of following the Latin, as spoken by the priest. In other parts of the world...I have never experienced the same inaudibility as to be found in English churches. After all only a small part of the Mass is said privately, the major part said for and on behalf of the people.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* (1947) 99 <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12MEDIA.HTM>. Accessed 30.07.2004.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> HCM (Sept-Oct 1956) 19.

The correspondent wondered whether it was due to the need for speed, in which case he suggested a shorter sermon or notices. With several hourly masses on a Sunday in the larger urban churches, speed was a consideration, but there was also the notion aired in Part three, that the Mass was a private devotion of the priest at which the people were present but not fully involved. The post-war period in England had brought with it the means and desire to travel abroad as will be discussed in the next chapter, and so, there was a broader appreciation as to what was happening on the continent and the faint rumblings of dissatisfaction with the practice of Catholicism at home.

### **Conclusion**

The picture given in this chapter is of a Catholic church that had become a fortress centred on the notion of family. The notion of family was of course very strong in Ireland as the means of social and economic capital and so would be familiar to many of the people in the diocese. There is also evidence pointing towards the correlation that may be found between Evangelical and Catholic practice in the area of Revivalism especially in the Rosary Crusade of Fr. Peyton. This leads on to consideration about the general area of Mission that will be considered next.

#### **4.4: Mission and Pilgrimage 1931-1955**

The concept of the lay Apostolate as part of the apostolate of the Hierarchy was a developing principle within the English Catholic Church in the inter-war years and afterwards. It saw a place for everyone within the evangelistic mission of the church both as witnesses and as a means of self-sanctification. Catholic Action, in particular was a means of allowing the laity to fulfil the Evangelical imperative of ‘making disciples in the whole world’ and this chapter explores three different ways in which this was enacted in the diocese of Middlesbrough. It also looks at Pilgrimage, in particular to Walsingham and Lourdes in the aftermath of the Second World War.

##### **Catholic Action 1936**

At the beginning of Advent 1936, under the leadership of the new Archbishop of Westminster, Arthur Hinsley, a joint pastoral letter was published by the bishops of England and Wales on the subject of the lay Apostolate. It focused on the teaching of two Papal documents, *Rerum Novarum* issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and *Quadragesima Annos* issued by Pope Pius XI in 1931, and called for the setting up of Catholic Action in every diocese under the leadership of the bishops. As noted on p247 Catholic Action was already present in both Europe and Ireland, but it had never been part of English Catholicism partly because of the lack of a Catholic platform in the political arena, but also due to an inward-looking complacency in the English Catholic Church:

on social and allied questions we Catholics in England and Wales have not been able to influence to any great extent the economic life of the country and the system on which it runs...we could have done more to change it...had we been less fearful of proclaiming

Papal teaching and more anxious to practise it ourselves, even on the limited scale which must necessarily be ours.<sup>1</sup>

New leadership and a fear of communism had prompted the bishops to speak out, for ‘Anti-God forces are sapping and mining the foundations of society. Never before was the apostolate of the laity so necessary.’<sup>2</sup> Although concerned with the lay apostolate Catholic Action was to be organised through the Hierarchy with the Archbishop of Westminster as its national president and individual diocesan boards with personnel chosen by the bishop. In the Diocese of Middlesbrough groups that would come under the banner of Catholic Action were present already, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Women’s League, but the pastoral letter called for increased membership of such groups and a co-ordination of the activities ‘so all may collaborate without losing their distinctive characteristics’.<sup>3</sup> To carry this forward in the diocese of Middlesbrough, twenty-nine objectives were outlined covering the three aims of Catholic Preservation, Catholic Extension and the solution of the Social Problem.<sup>4</sup> Charged with its organisation were a network of councils ranging from parish councils to five district councils and finally to a diocesan council that was ‘responsible to His Lordship the Bishop of Middlesbrough for the general direction of Catholic Action in the diocese.’<sup>5</sup> This network bears out the assertion of Kester Aspden that the role of the laity was that of ‘foot-soldiers’ with ‘independent action not an option’.<sup>6</sup> But this was precisely the role the laity was meant to have in this early dawn of the Lay Apostolate when even its architect, Pius XI wrote that Catholic Action had ‘no other purpose than the participation of the laity in the

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<sup>1</sup> MDA File N3 Pastoral Letters, Joint Pastoral Letter of the Hierarchy of England and Wales on the Apostolate of the Laity (Advent 1936) 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>4</sup> MDA Diocesan Almanac 1939. 101-2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>6</sup> Aspden, K., *Fortress Church* (Leominster 2002) 4.

apostolate of the hierarchy'.<sup>7</sup> For Shine, Catholic Action had become a necessity because 'it had become impossible for the clergy to deal single-handed with widespread indifference to religion' and more difficult for priests to gain access to the people 'especially in offices and factories.'<sup>8</sup> Hence a system in which like evangelised to like was the *raison d'être* of Catholic Action.

There is a general view amongst historians of the English Catholic Church that in most dioceses Catholic Action never got beyond the paper stage<sup>9</sup> but this was not the case in Middlesbrough with a bishop who shared the fears and concerns of his Irish contemporaries and wanted Catholic Action to 'save souls, to lead them to God'.<sup>10</sup> There can be little doubt that Catholic Action was intended as a revivalist movement; its object was to 'establish the reign of Christ throughout the world' as well as 'the perfection of its own members'<sup>11</sup> and within the diocese several new organisations were either established or brought under its banner, the main ones being the Catholic Evidence Guild (hereafter CEG), the Legion of Mary (hereafter LOM) and the Young Christian Workers (hereafter YCW). The CEG, founded in 1918, to some extent took over part of the work of the Guild of our Lady of Ransom, in having the aim of providing accurate information about Catholicism by trained lay evangelists at outdoor lectures. The first lectures were held in Hyde Park taking advantage of the soap-box oratory of Speakers Corner, and gradually spread to other parts of the country, including Middlesbrough and York by 1931. Each branch had a clerical spiritual director and weekly study classes were held to train the catechists in Catholic

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Pereiro, J., 'Who are the Laity?' in McLelland and Hodgetts (edd.) *From without the Flaminian Gate* (London 1999) 173.

<sup>8</sup> MDA Diocesan Almanac 1939 103.

<sup>9</sup> Pereiro, J., *op. cit.*, 172,177.

<sup>10</sup> MDA File N3 Pastoral Letters Shine, T., Pastoral letter for Advent 1937. 4.

<sup>11</sup> MDA Diocesan Almanac 1939. 105.

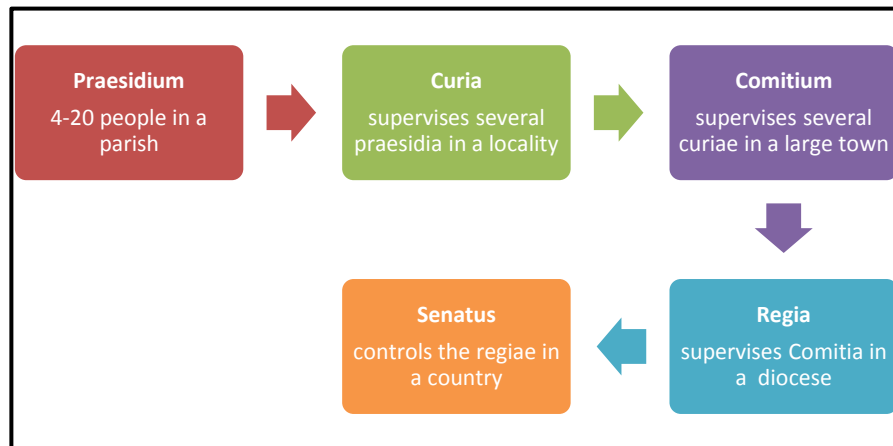


doctrine, history and practice that for the first time gave a group of laity from all walks of life a theological education that not only increased their personal knowledge, but equipped them to answer with verisimilitude the arguments and questions that came from their listeners and hecklers. That this was a departure from the traditional behaviour of English Catholics cannot be denied, and comparison may also be made with the street evangelists of the Salvation Army and the Methodist, Donald Soper, who began his London soapbox ministry in 1927. During the 1930's in Middlesbrough, up to four outdoor meetings were held each week, the main one being outside the railway station, which was considered to be the hub of town life at that time. In York, three regular outdoor meetings were held, both in the centre and on the new Tang Hall housing estate. As with many initiatives, enthusiasm and opportunities were curtailed by the Second World War and the local CEG was no exception, never regaining its vibrancy after the war.

The LOM was founded by Frank Duff in Ireland 1921 as an association of men and women 'banded together under the Standard of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces; in other words an army under the leadership of Mary.'<sup>12</sup> The organizational model of the LOM was the Roman Army, with the praesidium being the lowest unit of between four and twenty members meeting at parish level (See Fig. 40).

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<sup>12</sup> MDA Diocesan Almanac 1942. 76.

**Fig. 40: The organization of the LOM**

Active members were expected to attend weekly meetings of their praesidium and recite daily the *Catena Legionis*, the prayer of the Legion made up of the Magnificat and several shorter prayers. In addition they undertook different tasks based upon the needs of the parish, for example visiting the sick or bereaved in a parish. Auxiliary members supported the active members by daily prayer and junior members under the age of eighteen often held their own meeting, but were not allowed to make the Legion promise of service. The LOM's founder, Frank Duff was regarded with suspicion by the Irish Bishops, so the organization had a very slow start, but by the time of the Second World War it had become international and its role within Catholic Action was helping deal with the social problems.<sup>13</sup> All the urban areas in the diocese had Comitia, and Praesidia were often the result of missions, such as at St Charles in Hull.

We have also taken the opportunity of the Mission to establish in the parish the Legion of Mary... We are looking forward to great work done by the Legion, and since all work depends for its success

<sup>13</sup> See Curtis, M., *A Challenge to Democracy- Militant Catholicism in Modern Ireland* (Dublin 2010) particularly pp183ff for a more detailed account of the Legion and the role of Frank Duff in Irish Catholicism.

on the blessing of God we are particularly anxious to have as many auxiliary members as possible who undertake to pray daily for whatever works are being done by the active members.<sup>14</sup>

The YCW emerged in 1938 from the Belgian Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne movement founded by Joseph Cardijn in 1925. Essentially it was a movement to bring Christianity into the workplace and to keep young people in touch with God once they had left education - a matter of great importance to Shine

We are all familiar with the dangers which beset our boys and girls when they leave school. They have been sheltered, protected, and guided during their school years. Now the protecting hand has gone, they are no longer safe-guarded; they are for the first time in an atmosphere of perilous freedom. They witness bad example on every side; they listen to their elders voicing opinions which would undermine the sacred edifice of their faith and morality which has been so carefully built up in a catholic school...We see woeful losses in every large town.<sup>15</sup>

Young people were trained to evangelise their fellow young Catholics in the workplace and at the same time increased their own knowledge of their faith in a threefold programme of catechesis based on study of the Gospels, covering the basic tenets of 'See, Judge, Act' as this member illustrated

One day at work I was talking to two friends when one asked me if I was Catholic as my name was Irish. We were talking about different things when one girl said her father was Irish, so I asked her if she was a Catholic and she said she was but didn't go to Mass. I asked her why and she replied that two years ago she did not make her Easter duties and someone told that she was out of the Church and could not go again...I explained that you have to make your Easter duties at Easter or as soon after as possible. We talked about it for a while and I then asked her if she would come to Mass with me on Sunday and she consented...and we went together. Since then she has been a very good Catholic and intends to stay as such. You see, this girl only needed asking and if one only looked

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<sup>14</sup>(a) HCM (October 1938). 5 (b) For a list of Praesidia and Comitia in the diocese see Diocesan Almanac 194 77.

<sup>15</sup> MDA. File N3 Pastoral Letters. Shine, T., Pastoral letter for Advent 1937 5.

around there are many more suffering...just through wrong information...so help us with our work.<sup>16</sup>

Boys and girls who were over the age of fourteen met in segregated parish cells with a priest as chaplain and the YCW as one of the most successful groups in Catholic Action was invaluable in helping young people cope with the transition from school to the workplace, a problem that had concerned the clergy for over one hundred years.<sup>17</sup> There can be little doubt that this was a means of reviving and sustaining the faith of young people in much the same way that the concept of Juvenile Holiness had fulfilled a similar function in Victorian era.

### **Mission**

In October 1948, the English Bishops decided 'that the time has come for the Catholics of England and Wales to join in a sustained public profession of their Faith.'<sup>18</sup> The General Mission had two aims: to pray for world peace, and the conversion of England. During 1949 every parish in the country would hold a Mission run by the Catholic Missionary Society and focussed upon the teachings of the Catholic Church. In this way the bishops hoped a revival of the Catholic faith in the country amongst non-Catholics and the lapsed. The diocese of Middlesbrough was already regarded by its bishop and many Irish priests as missionary territory and had a recent history in holding annual mission weeks especially in Hull with reports written up as to their success or otherwise in the Hull Catholic Magazine.

The Mission at St Charles must have brought home to many people the realization of the extent to which the numbers in the Parish have fallen. In comparison with former missions one might say that this one was not well-attended...The population of the Parish has

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<sup>16</sup> HCM (September 1939) 3.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. See above p131.

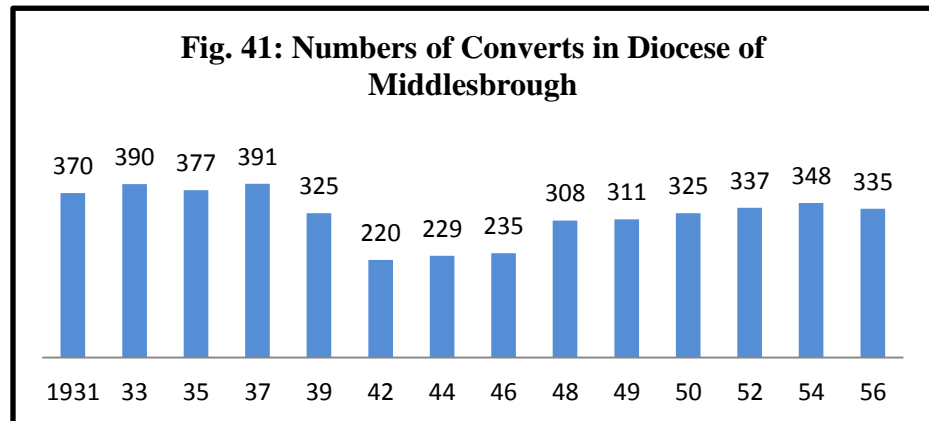
<sup>18</sup> MDA. File N3 Pastoral Letters. Joint Pastoral Letter on The General Mission, (February 1949) 3.

decreased so it no longer possible to fill the church every night... [But] the Mission leaves us full of hope for the future.<sup>19</sup>

Ten years later, the priest wrote

In every parish there is the sad tally of our losses...families once Catholic who have no longer any part in the Church's life: children baptised in the Church, yet still drift into Paganism; marriages contracted as a sacrament, now unconnected with the fruitful life of the church. Then there are the half-hearted Catholics, episodic in the practice of their faith...But even the best of our people are feeling the effects of the paganism that surrounds them everywhere...And it is for this purpose of reviving our faith, of giving us new energy and pleasure in the practice of our faith...these are some of the reasons why we have Missions.<sup>20</sup>

Looking at the statistics for conversion (Fig. 41)<sup>21</sup>, it would appear that in the diocese the General Mission was successful and provided a sound basis to build on for Fr. Peyton's Rosary Crusade in 1952.



### Pilgrimage

The onset of the Second World War curtailed many activities of Catholic Action and when it was over, new initiatives were needed to revive people's faith and look towards peace. One such initiative was a call from Pope Pius XII for a modern Crusade against 'the contemporary infidel...the spirit of evil that drives peoples and

<sup>19</sup> HCM (October 1938) 5.

<sup>20</sup> HCM (Jan-Feb 1949) 11.

<sup>21</sup> Data taken from relevant Diocesan Almanacs.

nations to war.<sup>22</sup> English Catholics were inspired by a Cross-carrying pilgrimage to Vezelay held in 1946 and a similar Cross-carrying Pilgrimage to the Shrine of our Lady in Walsingham was undertaken with fourteen heavy wooden crosses carried by young men from all parts of the country in July 1948. These then became the Stations of the Cross at the Catholic Shrine. The Cross which travelled furthest and ultimately became the fourteenth station was carried from Middlesbrough Cathedral a distance of 236 miles. Vincent Harrison was one of the walkers and his personal memoir tells how he was recruited by a young priest Fr. Peter Storey, in a way ‘I couldn’t refuse. I was twenty years old and well capable of the challenge.’<sup>23</sup> Each cross was identical made of solid oak weighing ninety pounds, eight feet high and six feet across.

**Fig. 42: The Middlesbrough Cross being carried to Walsingham**



<sup>22</sup> Lyons, J., and Furnival, J., *The Cross carrying pilgrimage of Prayer and Penance for Peace July 2-16<sup>th</sup> 1948*. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Personal reflection by Vincent Harrison to this writer August 2010.

The Middlesbrough cross met with an accident halfway through the Pilgrimage and needed repairs by a joiner in Grimsby. To keep in with the spirit of the event the pilgrims sang the Divine Office, and hymns and recited the Rosary on their journey towards Walsingham as well as making each day a devotion of Stations of the Cross with breaks every hour to pray an individual station. ‘Our overnight stays were in schoolrooms, church halls and private houses and we didn’t use hotels and pubs, but we did stop off at such places to use their toilet facilities’. One such overnight stay was at St Charles Hull where local Catholics of the town were encouraged to join the pilgrims for a short evening service, sermon and veneration of the Cross. The following morning there was Mass to which the locals were again invited before the Pilgrims left for their next stop which was New Holland in Lincolnshire.<sup>24</sup> The final night of the Pilgrimage was spent in an all-night vigil of prayer and penance before the Pilgrims carried the Crosses bare-footed along the final mile to the Slipper chapel, which served as the Catholic Shrine. Vincent, who had had to borrow a pair of boots in order to walk summed up the experience in the following way:

On the train [home] I looked out across the passing countryside, England and its freedom that had so recently been threatened. I reflected with much contentment that I’d personally contributed with prayer and penance for world peace... A couple of years ago I went back again. Again I visited the Stations of the Cross and there they stand, my cross is still there...it’s the fourteenth Station with its patched repairs, a tidy join and happy memories.

In the post-war period there was a renewed interest in pilgrimage to foreign places and European travel in general. Hull, being a port was particularly useful as a starting point, as were York and Middlesbrough with their good rail links to Dover and the boat train. Indeed St Charles Hull seemed to have quite a trade in Pilgrimage holidays

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<sup>24</sup> HCM (May-June, July – August 1948). 11,19.

Father Knowles is leading a party to Paris and Lisieux for a week of Pilgrimage and holiday...Another small party from the parish are going to Lourdes at the end of August, while Fr. McEnroe is taking yet another party to Rome towards the end of September. The impression grows that this is a much travelling parish.<sup>25</sup>

It may be argued that this rise of interest in Pilgrimage and travel to foreign shrines and centres of faith was not only a result of easier and cheaper travel abroad, but also a result of the break-up of local Catholic communities and increased awareness of the secular pressures that increasingly characterised English society and the still latent mistrust of Catholicism that existed. By travelling to foreign centres, Catholics were able to practise their faith openly for a short while without fear of prejudice and the renewal of faith that this brought enabled them to persevere in the faith in the more sober realities of their homes. Thus, pilgrimage became a form of evangelical endeavour renewing and strengthening the faith of individuals in much the same way as revivalist meetings and missions.

In 1949, after having been taken on pilgrimage to Lourdes by two parishioners, a young priest, Fr. Rickaby felt that a diocesan pilgrimage would be a good idea. He was inspired not only by the atmosphere of prayer in Lourdes, but also the sight of so many individual dioceses walking in the Torchlight Procession at night behind their diocesan banners. On his return home he obtained permission from Bishop Shine for such a venture, and after planning for three years, the first Pilgrimage to Lourdes organized solely for the diocese and by the diocese took place at the end of August 1952. The reason it took so long to come to fruition was 'nothing had been done in this way before, at least not by us and we wanted to make sure we were doing it right.

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<sup>25</sup> HCM (August-September 1951) 3.



That mattered for all the pilgrims but especially the sick.’<sup>26</sup> Unlike the pre-war national pilgrimages that the diocese had participated in, all the personnel such as nurses and brancardiers (the term means stretcher-bearer and referred to male helpers who were not trained professionals) had to be organised as well as the equipment for the hospital and journey, which was by sea and train. It had been decided that a minimum of three hundred pilgrims would be needed for the venture to be viable; in the end over four hundred travelled including thirty sick pilgrims and fifteen nurses.

Middlesbrough station must have one of the busiest in the North east today when hundreds of Roman Catholics saw the start of the Middlesbrough Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. The Pilgrimage...included thirty sick people who hope to be healed. Over 250 people went from Middlesbrough and at Northallerton and York the train was joined by others taking part...many of the sick people are paralysis cases. Among the Pilgrims who went from Middlesbrough were three sick children. One of them a boy is still suffering from the effects of bomb blast. ..They will stay in Lourdes about a week.<sup>27</sup>

It became the start of an annual diocesan pilgrimage that continued getting larger as each year passed and became one of chief means by which people’s faith was renewed and revived.

### **Conclusion**

Mission and Pilgrimage were both part of a developing lay apostolate that was driven by the clergy and considered as part of their work rather than independent action. Catholic Action was known to many of the priests and the Bishop through its work in Ireland where many of them had come from, which may account for the fact it became so organised in the diocese, when in the rest of England it never really established itself. Pilgrimage too, could be seen as a work of Catholic Action for it

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<sup>26</sup> Farrar, P., *Pushing Fifty* (Middlesbrough 2003) 23.

<sup>27</sup> *Evening Gazette* 04.08.1952 quoted in *Pushing Fifty* 26.

gave the laity a means of self-sanctification as well as fulfilling prayer intentions for the return of England to faith, and for the many individual intentions that were taken to Lourdes. Action and prayer were going together, and although Shine would have no idea about what would happen ten years after his death, he had placed the diocese in a position that meant if it wished it would be able to respond to the demands of the Second Vatican Council in a positive way. However, he had also built a fortress and the building blocks he had placed in terms of buildings and priests and a hierarchy of responsibility that moved from the top downwards could have the opposite effect of stifling the diocese in its response to the Council. Before looking at the direction in which the Diocese went, the years leading up to the Council under Bishop Brunner need to be examined.

#### 4.5: The Ebbing Tide 1956-1962

**Fig. 43: Bishop George Brunner 1956-1967**



## **Introduction**

Bishop Shine was succeeded six months after his death by George Brunner, a priest of the diocese, who had served as auxiliary bishop in the diocese since 1947. Already elderly, he found it hard to change direction from the status quo that he inherited and so the recruitment of Irish priests continued, as well as an extensive building programme especially of schools, in order that the diocese was fully compliant with the requirements of the 1944 Education Act. However, there were signs that all was not well in the diocese, and that decline in numbers and practice had begun long before the aftermath of Vatican II. On the other hand, there was a renewed interest in local Catholic history and devotion, especially to Our Lady of Mount Grace and the English Martyrs. Devotional practice was also affected by changes that emanated from the Vatican. Ultimately though, that part of the English Catholic Church which was the diocese of Middlesbrough was as unprepared for the Council as the other English dioceses, a state of affairs that made its implementation difficult.

### ***'Shepherd's Spy'***

In 1959, a silver Jubilarian, Fr. David Quinlan was asked to write an article for the Hull Catholic Magazine on the changes in the local church that he had noted over the lifetime of his priesthood.<sup>1</sup> A remarkably prescient article, it presents a valuable insight into the diocese in the years just before the Council painting a picture of a tired church that should have been ready for *aggiornamento* and the bringing up to date promised by John XXIII when he called the Council. He notes that the devotional life of the parish was no longer the centre of people's lives.

now people have too much to interest them in their own televisions,  
tombola sessions and other human interests while going to church

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<sup>1</sup> HCM (Aug-Sept 1959). 27-35.

has no human incentive...it needs...a real act of self-denial to be more than a 'Sunday Mass' Catholic.<sup>2</sup>

Old methods of reviving faith such as the parish mission were no longer effective tools for it

Half-fills the church with good Catholics, brings in a few careless Catholics, the odd lapsed Catholic, and leaves the majority completely disinterested. 'Gimmicks' have to be used to draw in a crowd, which departs as a crowd.<sup>3</sup>

Parish life was changing in other ways for the workload of priests was increasing as they fulfilled tasks formerly done by willing laity or religious overturning the system for running a successful parish.

Nowadays religious have withdrawn from parish life, from its societies and from visiting people in their homes. The laity are unwilling ...and teachers also have ceased to join in this work.<sup>4</sup>

It points to a decline in the sense of vocation amongst Catholics and it affected everyone. The next generation were not attracted by what the church could offer them and it was 'easier to get the youngsters to a hall for pleasure rather than a church service for the youth.'<sup>5</sup>

Despite the pessimistic tone of the article, Quinlan did end on a positive note when he hoped that the 'rapidly spreading liturgical movement' eventually would supply the devotional needs of each age with a flexible liturgy that captured the hearts and minds of the people it served and it is that work that is considered next.

### **Liturgical Change**

The majority of liturgical change in this period concerned the Holy Week Liturgies and the rules concerning the Eucharist fast. In 1951 the Easter Vigil ceremonies were

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 32.

restored to their traditional place of night time culminating with the first Mass of Easter at midnight. In 1955, the remainder of the Holy Week liturgies were revised with the aim that the faithful would be able to take a more active role especially by using the vernacular to renew their baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil and partaking of communion at the Mass of the Last Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday. This was only possible by the decision made in 1954 to abbreviate the required Eucharistic fast before receiving communion from midnight to one hour for the laity and three hours for the priests. This particular decision had repercussions far wider than the Easter Triduum for it initiated a period of experimentation in the timing of Mass particularly for evening celebrations both for Sundays and weekdays, which were henceforth permitted by the Vatican. That such experimentation took place in the diocese is documented in the diocesan almanacs and the pages of the Hull Catholic Magazine.

In years gone by, Sunday was a day of rest for almost everybody, and night workers...virtually unknown. Consequently, Sunday morning Mass was convenient for the majority of people. Alas, in this atomic age of 'progress,' Sunday to many people is fast becoming just another day and the army of night workers is growing yearly. These are the people, no doubt, the Holy Father had in mind when he gave his blessing to the rule permitting Evening Mass...I feel it would be much better for the night worker if he could go straight home to a well-earned rest and assist at Holy Mass in the evening refreshed and in comfort.<sup>6</sup>

Other changes in the Mass were occurring also. In 1955 the first use of vernacular language was permitted in the reading of the Epistle and Gospel. Dialogue masses, which had been common on the continent for several years and had gradually been appearing in England, were now permitted in the diocese whereby the people answered the Mass instead of just the servers and also joined in with the Ordinary

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<sup>6</sup>HCM (May-June 1957) 11.

parts of the Mass such as the Gloria and Creed. In 1960, the active participation of the people in the Mass was given Papal approval, by John XXIII, who had just become Pope:

The present Pope is most anxious that all of us take part more fully than ever before in our Mass and to do this, he has allowed ALL, repeat ALL, to answer the Mass as it is being said. The reason for this new privilege is that Mass is the Supreme worship of God in which all the faithful must take part together WITH the priest. It is not the individual act of the priest at the altar but the collective act of the WHOLE congregation. Too long the ordinary faithful have been silent observers at Mass...<sup>7</sup>

No longer was the Mass a private devotion of the priest at which the faithful were in attendance and in many cases making their own devotions.

Masses were also beginning to be described differently, for example many churches were introducing 'family masses' a low mass with English hymns being used, provided the Bishop's approval had been obtained. For one priest, he was hopeful that this would encourage more meaningful participation for both the children and adults present as he was doubtful the 'mere repetition of Latin words by people who in many cases have no idea of their meaning, gives any real sense of community of worship so greatly to be desired'.<sup>8</sup> Liturgical changes were not the only way in which Catholic devotion and practice was changing for at the same time there was a rekindling of interest within the diocese for the past Catholics of Yorkshire both in the recusant period and before.

### **Yorkshire Devotion**

In 1958, the diocese acquired ownership of a small Lady Chapel on the hill above the ruins of Mount Grace priory. The chapel that had served as a small cottage since the

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<sup>7</sup> HCM (Dec-Jan 1960) 5.

<sup>8</sup> HCM (April-May 1960) 12.

Reformation was eventually restored and dedicated in 1961 by Bishop Brunner. With the acquisition of the Shrine however, it enabled small groups to meet for prayer as well as the establishment of an annual pilgrimage on the Sunday nearest the feast of the Assumption in August. It became the custom for the Pilgrims to walk from the nearby village of Osmotherley and pray five decades of the Rosary whilst climbing the hill with Mass being celebrated on the plateau in front of the chapel. One small group that frequented the chapel was led by Fr. Peter Storey, who had helped raise enthusiasm and funding for acquiring the chapel.<sup>9</sup> The group held all-night vigils at the chapel starting with Evening Prayer, then recitations of the Jesus Psalter and the Rosary. Bible readings and hymns were interspersed with these devotions and each vigil would finish with Mass at six o'clock. Groups from other denominations would also use the chapel, including Anglican, Methodists and Quakers because they felt a sense of holiness about the area. Although the statue of Our Lady of Grace disappeared during the Reformation, there is a statue of the same name in Nettuno which was taken there from England at that time. There is no certainty that it came from the Yorkshire shrine, but in 1986 a copy was made for the new cathedral in Middlesbrough, providing a link between the cathedral and shrine and emphasizing its importance to the diocese (Fig.44).

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<sup>9</sup> As told to the writer by Marie Pearson, one of the group June 2011.



**Fig. 44: The Statue of Our Lady of Mount Grace**



Another facet of Yorkshire devotion is found in the opening of the cause for the canonization of the Forty Martyrs, which included Margaret Clitherow of York.<sup>10</sup> Weekly Saturday pilgrimages were organized to the site of her home in the Shambles that had been made into a shrine and Mass said there with the intention of canonization. The choice of the Forty Martyrs whose cause was being petitioned for

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<sup>10</sup> For a consideration of the cause of the Forty Martyrs see Harris, A., *Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion 1945-1980* (Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis University of Oxford 2008) 319-339.

by the English and Welsh bishops was, according to the official papers ‘because of a long-standing or growing devotion to these more than to the remaining martyrs’.<sup>11</sup> Many local people were disappointed that Nicholas Postgate, the last recusant priest to be executed in 1679, was not chosen also, for in Hull particularly under the auspices of the Sisters of Mercy at Endsleigh training college, a society had been formed to pray for his beatification and undertake research into the lives of the recusant martyrs. An annual pilgrimage was held by the Sisters and college students to Whitby, Egton and Ugthorpe, the places most associated with Postgate and regular masses for his beatification were said at St Charles Borromeo Hull.

### **Priests**

A decline in the numbers of vocations to the priesthood in the pre-conciliar period concerned all the northern bishops who commissioned a report from the seminary at Ushaw in 1957.<sup>12</sup> They concluded that the proportion of boys who did not finish their training at Ushaw was no greater than at other seminaries, but overall boys were leaving seminary more rapidly in the post-war period than at any time before. Several reasons were put forward for this decline; first of all, the rise in Grammar schools. Parents often encouraged their sons with scholarships to take up their place and go to seminary later. The corollary to this was the intellectual level of the boys who entered the junior seminary was lower than Grammar School level and ‘a handicap to the general studies of the College and may well be a discouragement to the individual.’<sup>13</sup> It was also felt that boys at Grammar school were more open to secular influences of

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<sup>11</sup>. Official papers on the cause for the Canonization of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. 1.

<sup>12</sup> MDA File/Seminaries. Vocations to the Secular Clergy of the Seven Northern Dioceses.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

pleasure and high-flying careers at a time when they should be under the spiritual influence of a seminary.

A second reason offered by the compilers of the report was that the modern home did not foster vocations.

Today there is a great lack of restraint and of discipline on the part of parents. The modern child is much more independent in his views and desires...Hence the modern boy finds it more difficult to submit willingly to seminary discipline...making for the probability that after five to seven years they will give up the struggle and leave.<sup>14</sup>

Several remedies were suggested including making Advanced level certificate courses available to suitable boys and a fuller programme of leisure activities provided, but no remedy was suggested for the ‘unsatisfactory home’ except the parish priests ‘instructing the parents in their duty of bringing up their children’.

Finally the writers of the Report studied the number of priests needed, especially native-born clergy. The following table (Fig. 45) that is reproduced from the Report shows that English vocations were dropping throughout the province in the period 1937-1956, but the drop in Middlesbrough was particularly noticeable given Shine’s preference for Irish priests.

**Fig. 45: Numbers of ‘Native Vocations’ in the Liverpool Province 1937-1956<sup>15</sup>**

	Hexham	Lancaster	Leeds	L’pool	M’bro	Salford	Shrewsbury	Total
<b>Total</b>	136	82	100	157	<b>32</b>	117	73	691
<b>1937-46</b>	75	45	48	95	<b>23</b>	74	43	403
<b>1947-56</b>	61	37	52	56	<b>9</b>	23	30	288

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

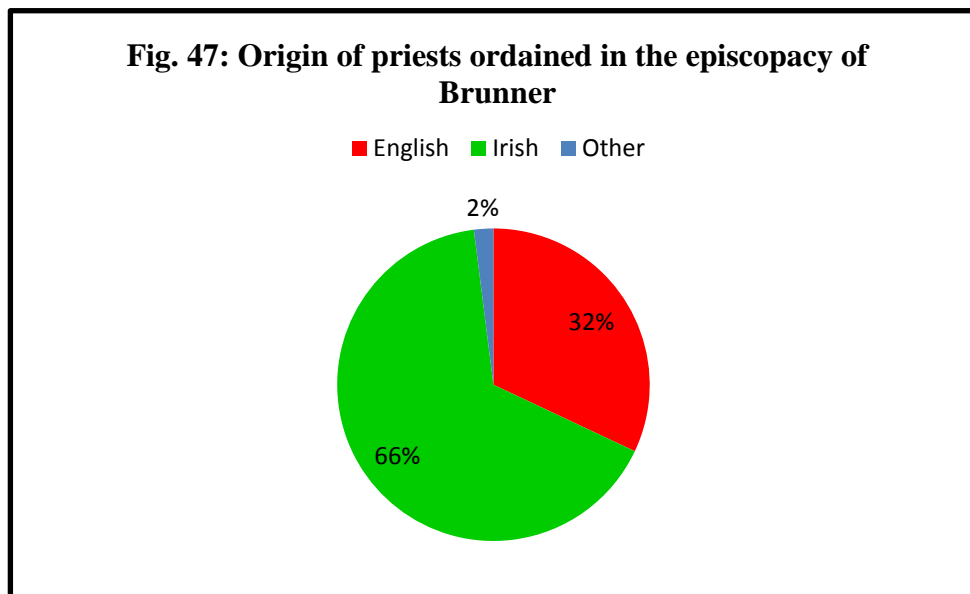
<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 23.

A second table (Fig. 46) tabulates the numbers of priests working in the Province in 1956 and how many more were needed each year given a working life of thirty-five years and how many given an ideal increase of 15%.

**Fig. 46: Numbers of Priests needed<sup>16</sup>**

	Hexham	L'caster	Leeds	L'pool	M'bro	Salford	Shrewsbury
<b>Nos. working</b>	353	166	300	539	<b>136</b>	409	157
<b>With 15% increase</b>	405.5	190	345	619	<b>155.5</b>	470	180.6
<b>Annual needed</b>	<b>Average</b> 11.5	5.4	9.8	17.6	<b>4.4</b>	13.4	5.1

Brunner was unable to fully respond to the Report as he had few native vocations in training when he took office, and as noted in the introductory paragraph he also preferred to a great extent to carry on with the policies he inherited. As the following chart shows the majority of priests coming to work in the diocese in the ten years of Brunner’s episcopacy were invited from Ireland though there was a rise in the numbers of native priests compared to his predecessor’s record.



<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 22

What of the priests in the parishes? On the whole, respondents to the writer's survey found the English priests more approachable than the Irish priests but the whole atmosphere of the church was somewhat repressive

The English priests were much more considerate towards their people. The Irish priests expected everyone to do exactly what they wanted with no questions asked.(F1941)

The Irish priests tended to be the way they were in Ireland, dominating lives which they did over there, and they thought they could come to England and do pretty much the same thing. Some of them were marvellous, and very approachable, but most of them were 'thou shalt not, thou shalt not'. (M1936)

The attitude of some priests meant there was a lost generation as they didn't pick up on the fact that even before Vatican II people wanted to ask questions and think for themselves rather than been [sic] told what to believe. The whole ethos was to practise your religion rather than live your faith. (F1939)

Mention was made previously about the limited training in the Irish seminaries that left many of the priests only able to catechise.<sup>17</sup> But in mitigation there was some good pastoral care, especially in the larger urban parishes where there might be several curates, each with their own district to look after, and unlike the parishes with only one priest and no parish sister, they were able to follow up 'mass missers' and be aware of changing family circumstances.

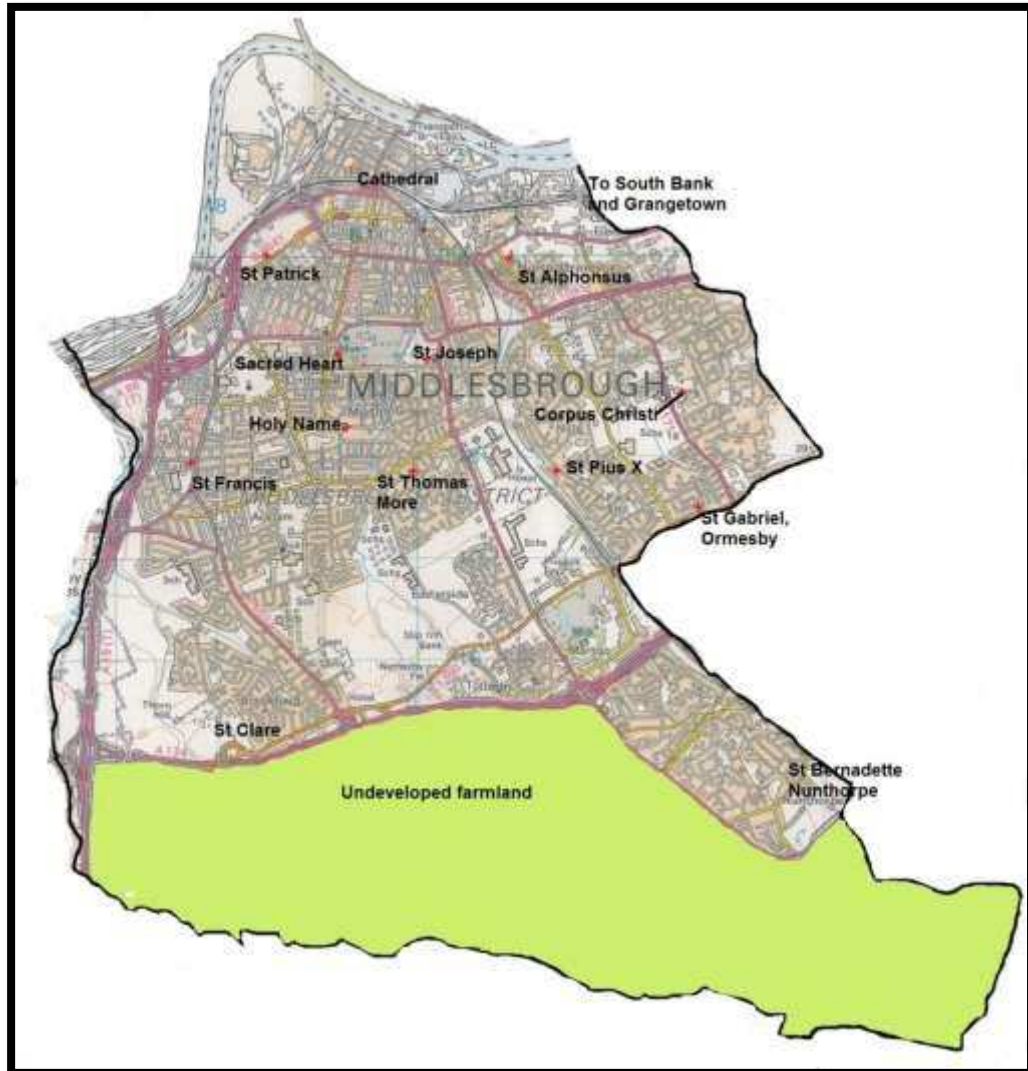
### **Building programme**

Another programme that continued in this period was that of providing new churches for the new municipal estates that were being built. During the nineteen-sixties local councils in all three major towns were able to begin slum clearance programmes and move people to new estates being built on the edges of the towns (Map 32).

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<sup>17</sup> See above p.268.

**Map 32: Parishes in Middlesbrough 1968<sup>18</sup>**

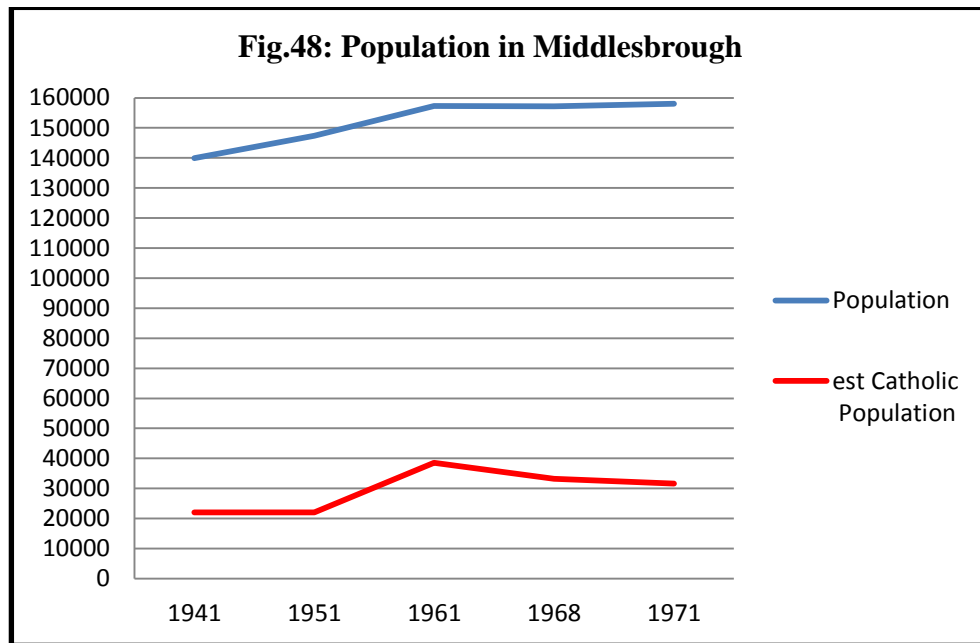


This had the effect of fragmenting the Catholic communities such as that around Cannon Street in Middlesbrough. The slum clearance programmes were also unfortunate for the long term survival of the older parishes in Middlesbrough; the area around the Cathedral was demolished and rebuilt in a lower density form, which over the years left the Cathedral in the wrong place with regard to population. St Patrick on Cannon Street faced even more difficulties for the dense housing around that area was cleared, but not replaced so by the nineteen-seventies the church was

<sup>18</sup> Map based on OS Map Landranger series 1: 50,000 (1985) Sheet 93 Middlesbrough and Darlington.

left isolated in the middle of an area of light industry and its residual population situated on the boundaries of the parish.

Fragmentation of the Catholic community was also exacerbated by another aspect of the Irish acculturation that was continuing, namely inter-parish rivalry between priests as to who had the best parish in terms of the biggest or most generous population. As in Hull during the episcopate of Shine, much of the motivation for creating new parishes came from the priests themselves rather than pre-determined pastoral need and forward planning. By the end of Brunner's episcopacy in 1967 four new parishes had been established in Middlesbrough making a total of twelve serving a declining Catholic population as Fig. 48 shows.<sup>19</sup>



Fragmentation of the Catholic communities was not the only reason the Catholic population was falling faster than the general population in Middlesbrough. The nature of Irish immigration was moving away from the families to single young men

<sup>19</sup> 1. General population figures taken from HMSO decennial Census data. 2. Catholic population figures taken from MDA Pastoral Statistics/ various years.

attracted to the town by the major construction work that was taking place down the river and also by the work in the steel furnaces. In a return to the practice of the early years in the town, they lived together in lodging houses and spent their free time in the pubs for the heat of the furnaces was a thirst-making environment. Many arrived as Pioneers who had signed the pledge in Ireland, but finding no real community spirit to support them in an environment very different from the rural areas of Ireland where they had come from, they lapsed both from their promises and their faith.<sup>20</sup>

Of the new churches built during this period in the diocese five were in the style of church-hall buildings that had been pioneered at the end of Shine's episcopacy. The buildings were functional as suited their dual purpose as parish halls as well as worship space, but in contrast at St Philomena and Sacred Heart church on Linthorpe Road, the priest Fr. Mark Crowley was engaged in a programme of decorating and beautifying his church. Mosaics for the walls were designed and installed including a Christus Rex covering the apsidal dome as well as a history of the arrival of Christianity to England and Ireland and the five Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

Twenty-one windows were commissioned from the Harry Clarke studios in Dublin portraying some of the parable stories, and a large Rose Window representing the Crowning of Mary in Heaven surrounded by symbols of the Litany of Loreto. Harry Clarke designs were influenced by the French Symbolist movement but also an intricate jewelled technique, which he had developed and the designs were much sought after. (See Fig. 49)

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<sup>20</sup>Turnham, M., *From Emancipation to Aggiornamento* (unpublished M.Th. dissertation University of Wales, Lampeter 2007) 73.



**Fig. 49: Stained glass window at Sacred Heart Church depicting the parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>21</sup>**



The real problem regarding buildings however in this era was not churches but schools. Education was still regarded as an important part of maintaining and teaching the Catholic faith as the following quote from Bishop Brunner shows

I am mindful of the fact that the first duty of every priest is his work for souls, and that Christian Education of the young is part of this work.<sup>22</sup>

There was need to provide secondary modern schools in line with the provisions of the 1944 Education Act and turn elementary schools into primary schools which pupils left at the age of eleven. To solve the cost of building the new schools a system of school tax was imposed upon every parish in order to spread the cost. It was based upon the numbers attending Mass and applied whether or not the parish had a school or would in the future be likely to have one. The Religious communities continued at

<sup>21</sup> Picture taken by Peter Grogan.

<sup>22</sup> MDA File. Ad Clera 1. Brunner G., Ad Clerum 06.11.59 2.

no cost to the diocese to provide grammar schools for both boys and girls in both Hull and Middlesbrough, in most cases building new schools.<sup>23</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Whether or not the situation of hidden decline in the diocese of Middlesbrough in the years before the Second Vatican Council was representative of England and Wales in general needs further research. It is clear however, that the adjective 'hidden' is appropriate for on the surface with the building of new churches and schools and continuation of the pattern of inviting Irish priests into the diocese it would appear that the fortress created by Shine was holding its own. However, the laity were moving into a pattern of attendance at Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation alone and evening devotions were less attractive than social events or home entertainment. There were some signs of growth in the rediscovery of Yorkshire's recusant and early Catholic history and in the relaxation in the way Mass might be celebrated, but one suspects these were adopted out of obedience by the priests. There was, however, a positive side of the concept of the ebbing tide in that as the notion of the Mass as a private devotion of the priest gradually ebbed away space was left for the changes ushered in by the Council. The Council was a watershed in the history of Catholicism in the twentieth century and how the diocese of Middlesbrough responded and whether the ebbing tide became a flood is the subject of the remainder of this study.

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<sup>23</sup> The exception was the Marist College in Middlesbrough, whose new building came at a later date.

## Part Five: The Changing Church

### 5.1: A New Reformation 1963-1978

**Fig 50: Bishop John Gerard McClean Fourth Bishop of Middlesbrough**



## **Introduction**

The changes in spirituality and devotional practice that came about as a result of the Second Vatican Council seemed to some to be a new Reformation with the casting off of many devotional practices and opportunities for spiritual growth and a diminution in faith and practice of Catholicism. In the context of the diocese of Middlesbrough and its immediate history of a form of Irish Catholicism it appeared to 'de-Irishise' Catholics breaking the bond between Irish patriotism and Catholicism replacing it with English Catholicism. But with the *raison d'être* of the Council being an updating and renewal of faith in the context of twentieth century culture, it was inevitable that there would be losses as well as gains both of which this chapter explores in the context of the diocese of Middlesbrough.

## **The diocese 1963-1978**

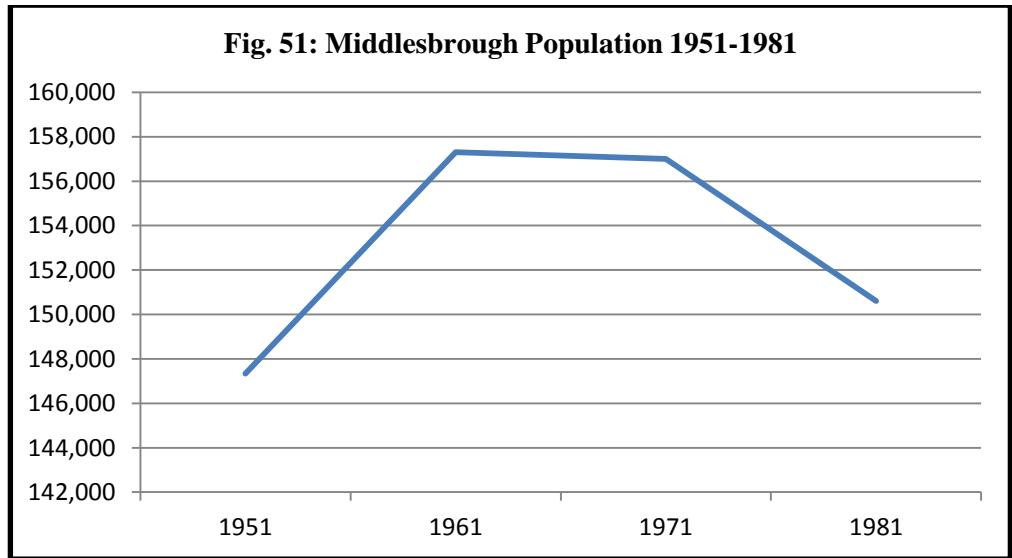
This was a period that saw the end of the episcopacy of Brunner in 1967. He had requested a coadjutor bishop in 1964 and Gordon Wheeler from the diocese of Westminster was appointed. He attended the remaining sessions of the Vatican Council and was expected to lead the diocese in the implementation of the changes that were necessary and was therefore well prepared for them. However, in 1966, he was translated to the neighbouring diocese of Leeds and in his place, a diocesan priest John Gerard McClean was appointed as coadjutor bishop. Within a few weeks of the consecration in February 1967, Brunner tendered his resignation from the See and McClean became the diocesan bishop. With no experience of the Council, he was in the unenviable position of learning and leading at the same time as his priests and people, many of whom were either struggling to understand why changes were happening or frustrated because the changes were too slow and hopes that had been

raised, perhaps unintentionally, in some people's minds for a new sort of Catholic Church that gave the laity an equal collaborative form of ministry, appeared to have been dashed. The documents of Vatican II were never intended to be implemented within a short period of time. They were more of an agenda for change to take place over years rather than months, but whether this was fully understood is questionable.

In many ways McClean continued with the policies of his predecessors; there was still a considerable number of priests recruited from Ireland, and there was also a disproportionate number of new churches built and new parishes founded in the three urban areas, both of which masked the decline in numbers of Catholics practising their faith. Reasons for decline did include the general secularization of the country and the subsequent pressure upon Catholics to think and behave in the same way as those people around them, but it was also an indication of the start of a slow movement to the south of England by the population in general with migration into the area not keeping up with migration out of the area.<sup>1</sup> For example, the chart of Middlesbrough's general population taken from the local decennial census figures illustrates how serious a decline it was (Fig. 51).

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<sup>1</sup> For studies on this subject see Bible Society 'Prospects for the Eighties: From a census of the Churches in 1979' (London 1980). and Gay, J.D., 'The Geography of Religion in England' (London 1971) quoted in Archer, A., *The Two Catholic Churches: A study in Oppression* (London 1986) 127.



### **Roman Catholics or English Catholics**

The big change, of course, was the Second Vatican Council, a change so monumental that I won't try even to sketch out its impact here...Because it did not just, for me, replace arid formularies with a living faith, or emphasise the importance of conscience ...or make us feel – as Adrian Hastings once quipped – that “we're all Protestants now”. It was used by the emerging English Catholic middle class to, as it were, de-Irishise a church caught up in its dedication to May processions, The Rosary, Benediction, Novenas, First Fridays and all the other devotions so beloved of the Irish clerics of my youth. We had ceased to be Roman Catholics and become English Catholics.<sup>2</sup>

This quotation from Paul Vallely describes how he felt the Second Vatican Council impacted upon his practice of the Catholic faith and how it affected his family and friends in Middlesbrough. He notes that for him there were both positive and negative aspects to the changes brought into the church as a result of the Council. His allegation that the Catholic Church became part of the English middle-class bears echoes of an earlier writer, Antony Archer, who argued that in England the changes brought about by the Council betrayed the working classes that traditionally formed

<sup>2</sup> Vallely, P., 'On being an English Catholic: from minority to mainstream – and back again? English Catholicism 1951 – 2008' London Newman Lecture 2008. Accessed <http://www.paulvallely.com/?p=146> 20.02.2011.

the bedrock of the Catholic Church, and handed control of the church to the emergent middle classes whose main interest seemed to lay in making the Catholic Church as much like the Church of England as possible. In so doing it took

The road to becoming just another Christian denomination, without any very outstanding characteristics of its own, unable to make effective any particular demands as to belief or practice, primarily middle-class in composition, and giving its support to the prevailing ethos in which the fundamental rightness of the present arrangements is affirmed, and through which the interests of the powerful are sustained.<sup>3</sup>

Certainly with the advent of a vernacular language and more opportunities for lay participation in both the Mass and in decision making, it was perhaps inevitable that some devotions became lost, but this was a process that had already begun in the papacy of Pius XII with his encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943) and the practical changes that enabled its theological vision of the Church to be realized in the life of the faithful such as the relaxation of fasting rules, evening masses and dialogue masses. As one diocesan priest, Fr. Burke pointed out in 1963

one of the reasons for the changes which are taking place today is that only today is the Church able to come back to her normal course after been driven to tack into the wind by the gales of the Protestant Reformation... Changes are taking place that have their origin in this relaxation of tension and of counter measures which were so necessary in the times following the Reformation and that change is a necessary condition of her life...new things are as essential to the life of the Church as old ones.<sup>4</sup>

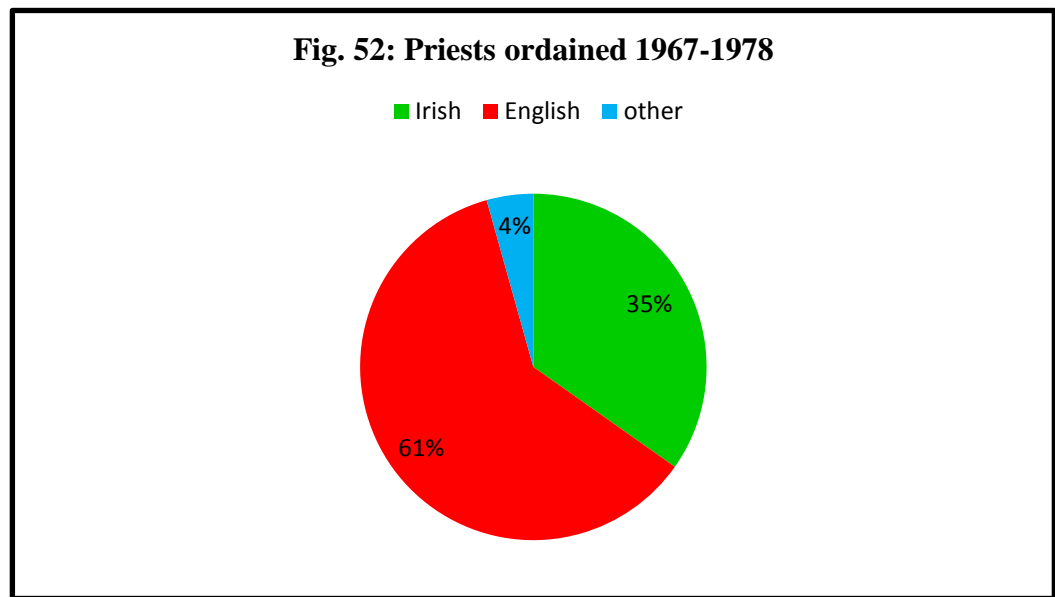
The use of Vatican II as a deliberate attempt to de-Irishise the Church as Vallely contends may well be a false assumption although it was an unintended consequence of the changes. Many of the practices that he assumes were brought to the diocese by the Irish priests were actually established at a time before the large scale immigration

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<sup>3</sup> Archer, A., op.cit 258.

<sup>4</sup> Burke T.W., 'They are changing our religion' in *Middlesbrough Diocesan Almanac* (1963) 98-100.

of the Irish to the area; in fact Teesside, where most of them settled, was still a deserted rural backwater. The work of Luigi Gentili in bringing a sense of revivalism and colour to English Catholicism in the area has been noted, and Mary Heimann in her seminal work on Victorian devotion demonstrated that the Rosary and Benediction were as much English devotions as Irish.<sup>5</sup> One factor that would appear to directly support Vallely's supposition is the nationality of priests who were ordained in the episcopacy of Bishop McClean, for the flow of priests from Ireland had begun to slow and for the first time for fifty years there were more men 'native' to the diocese ordained than invited from elsewhere (Fig. 52).



However, as the majority of Catholics still lived on Teesside, what his comments do reveal is the assumption by many Catholics in the diocese that Irishness still was considered to be an essential ingredient of being a Roman Catholic and the diminution of practice meant a diminution and even rejection of that Irishness.

<sup>5</sup> 1 See above chapter 2:4. 2. Heimann, M., *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (London 1995).



### **What about the Council?**

That change was not expected is indicated by the following question and response in the Hull Catholic Magazine shortly after the election of Pope John XXIII.

Q. Why have the Cardinals chosen such so old a man to be Pope?  
An old man may be very wise, but he cannot do much...

A. First Pope John is clearly a very outstanding person...such men are rare. And for the office of Pope wisdom and quality of soul may well be of such worth as to outweigh the physical disadvantages of old age...Decisions, not actions are the Pope's chief responsibilities...Again the choice of John XXIII may indicate that after a period of many changes and innovations, all this is to be consolidated and firmly established, and we may be looking forward to a time of stability and retrenchment. Such may be God's design... The Cardinals and the whole Church invoke the Holy Spirit before choosing, and the Holy Spirit will not have been wanting in His guidance; and even if today we do not yet see the significance of this new reign of Pope John, we may well want to eat our words when his reign has come to its end.<sup>6</sup>

It is sobering to realize that for priests such as the editor of the Hull Catholic Magazine the changes in Liturgy that had made the Mass and other ceremonies more available to the people were almost a step too far and a point reached that said 'enough is enough'. On the other hand, the question was intimating that change had not gone far enough. The ecumenical Council that was being born even as this question and answer were being published was, in the words of Pope John 'a new Pentecost'.<sup>7</sup> He further expanded upon this in a letter to the Bishop of Bergamo

My soul finds comfort in the thought that a new Pentecost can blow through the Church, renewing its head, leading to a new ordering of the ecclesiastical body and bringing fresh vigour in the journey towards truth, goodness and peace.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> MDA. HCM (Nov-Dec 1958) 15.

<sup>7</sup> Hebblethwaite P., 'John XXIII' in Hastings, *Modern Catholicism* 28.

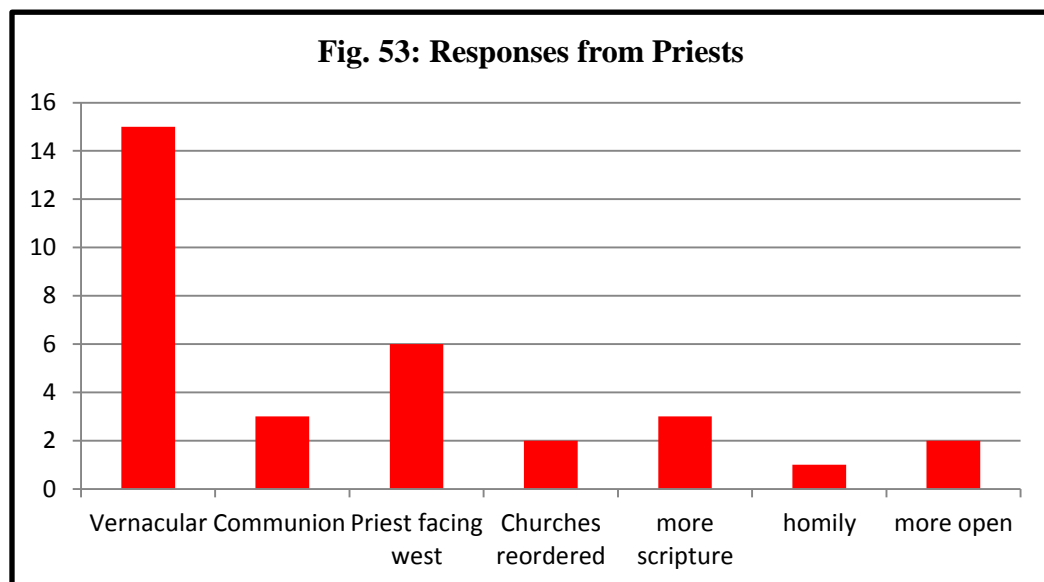
<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

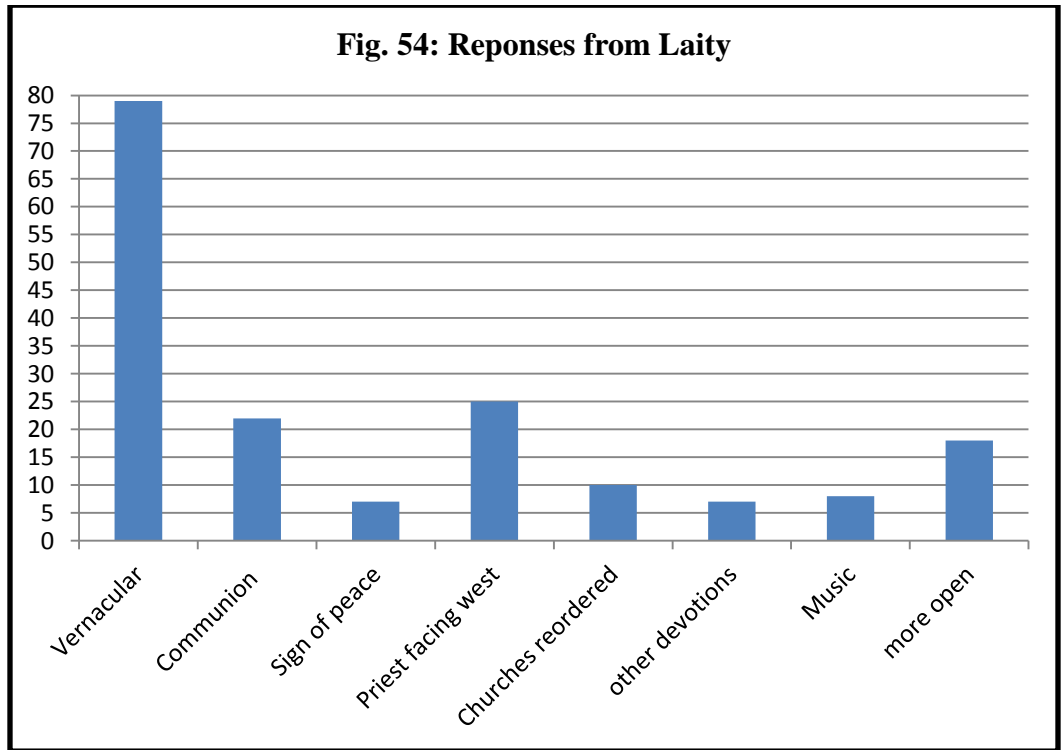
It is clear then that the purpose of John XXIII was an evangelical exercise of the highest order summed up in the term *Aggiornamento* or the bringing up to date of the church in the new secular world that it found itself in.

For people in the diocese it was the changes in the way Catholics worshipped that were the most obvious fruits of the Council reflected by many respondents to the writer's survey, such as this priest.

the changes in the way Mass was celebrated. For those who were open to it, there was a much greater freedom. (P2)

The replies to the question about what changes in devotional practice and the liturgy were most important to the respondents fell into eight categories for the laity and seven for the priests. They are tabulated below in figures 53 and 54. Unsurprisingly the results categories are fairly similar with the change to the vernacular language being the most noticeable and the change to westward celebration also causing interest.





### Changes to the Mass

The fact that the norms of Vatican II were implemented over a long period of time is nowhere clearer than in the changes to the Mass that occurred between 1964 and 1975. As well as the changes highlighted by the survey, there were new emphases in the theology of the Church and understanding of the Mass and the revised rituals and practices that they led to.<sup>9</sup>

Implementation of the changes to the Mass within the diocese was very much a formal process with little preparation given to either the priests or the laity. It was handicapped by the manner in which the Catholic Church in England regarded the education of its adherents. From 1850 onwards the main concern of the bishops had been the provision of schools as the primary vehicle for passing on the faith through

<sup>9</sup> See Harris A., *Transformations in English Catholic Spirituality and Popular Religion 1945-1980* (Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis University of Oxford 2008) for a full discussion of the theology and its effect on Christology, Mariology and the cult of saints.

rote learning of the catechism, which would be so ingrained in the memory it needed no further reminder, and a religious education syllabus that followed a similar programme. By the time a child left school, it would have all the knowledge about Catholicism that it was considered necessary to know. As a result, the opportunities for adults to develop their faith were traditionally few and far between. Homilies were only preached at the High Mass and were devotional in content concerned with holiness and the example set by the saints rather than related to the Gospel of the day and its challenges. The first fruits of the changes to the Mass brought about by the Council concerned homilies with a brief note from Brunner to his priests in 1964.

From the first Sunday of Lent a homily is ordered at all public masses on Sunday and Holydays of Obligation and must not be omitted.<sup>10</sup>

Devotional concerns were also the traditional hallmark of the Bishops' Pastoral Letters issued each Lent and Advent that unfailingly were admonitions on how to have a holy Lent or Advent by keeping the precepts of the Church in regard to fasting and abstinence and the avoidance of sin. But a change in this came from Bishop Brunner who from 1964 used his Pastoral Letters to give some explanation, reassurance and guidance about the changes, but how many people heard them is a debatable question. Most respondents to the survey said that they could not remember any information being given them; some had learnt what they knew from the Catholic press, and only two could remember hearing homilies about the changes.

In his first letter regarding the introduction of some parts of the Mass changing to English, Brunner attempted to capture the flavour of the Pentecostal ethos that invoked the Council for those who were able to listen to it.

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<sup>10</sup>MDA File Ad Clera 1/Bishop Brunner Correspondence. Letter 04.02.1964 .

We ask you to welcome these changes wholeheartedly. Try to remember that you are taking part in the beginning of a great revival within the Church. This is a privilege which many Catholics of the past would envy you.<sup>11</sup>

In a diocese such as Middlesbrough with a large number of Irish families and a growing Italian and Polish population, permission was given for a local bishop to permit liturgical celebrations in other languages provided the version used had ‘been approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority for that language’.<sup>12</sup> That this happened is borne out by the presence of both Italian and Polish Masses in Middlesbrough as well as the testimony of one of the priests

I was pleased when the Latin ended. I found the vernacular—whether in English or in Gaelic more meaningful to me and ever-so-much more helpful to those who had little or no knowledge of Latin. (P6)

The change to the vernacular in the Rites of the church symbolized a change in the underlying theology of the liturgy, for Latin was regarded as a sacred language, belonging to the clergy. Therefore by implication the liturgy also belonged to them. Use of the vernacular helped change the concept of the Mass in particular away from being a devotion of the priest that the people attended to something ‘encouraging more involvement and participation’(F1955). This more egalitarian understanding of the Church called for further reforms such as concelebration of the Mass that emphasised the unity of the priesthood and rapidly became widespread. But the full and active participation asked for in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* meant ‘confusion or even distress’ for some people, which merited consideration. Used to going to Mass and having its action flowing around them as they carried out their own devotions, it

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<sup>11</sup> MDA File Pastoral Letters/Bishop Brunner. Pastoral Letter 05.11.1964 1.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Inter Oecumenici’ §41 in Flannery, A. (ed.) *Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents New Revised Study Edition* (New York 1992).

was plainly a shock for some to have to concentrate on the Eucharistic action but as Brunner pointed out the changes were

meant only for their good – to help them to understand better the actions, prayers, readings and indeed the whole purpose and meaning of the Mass, to make it a more fervent act of adoration to the father in union with the Son and with each other. It will help them to see that we are not simply individuals who come to worship God but that we are all members of God's family, the people of God.<sup>13</sup>

Confusion was not helped by the fact that some experimentation with the liturgy of the Mass was being attempted by more adventurous priests. This had come to the notice of the bishop for in the same letter of February 1964 cited above, he drew their attention to Article 22 of Sacrosanctum Concilium that reserved all decisions concerning the regulation of the Liturgy to the Apostolic See and in some cases conceded to individual bishop's conferences

Therefore no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.<sup>14</sup>

By the time Brunner retired in 1967 only the canon of the Mass was still in Latin, although it was now said audibly. However in Advent of that year its language too was changed to English, following an indult from the Holy See. Meanwhile the Liturgical Commission or Consilium in Rome had composed three new Eucharistic Prayers and Prefaces for use in the Mass alongside the traditional Canon. Their use in England was not authorized until Lent 1969 when a suitable translation had been prepared by the International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL). The instructions for use of the different prayers indicated that some variety in where and how the Mass was celebrated, for example the use of the second Eucharistic Prayer

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>14</sup> Vatican II 'Sacrosanctum Concilium' (1963) Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy' § 22 in Flannery, op.cit.

was recommended for house Masses as it was ‘hardly solemn enough for Sunday use’.<sup>15</sup> The priests were also exhorted to give instruction and explanation to the people about the new prayers, ideally in study groups though it was admitted that ‘comparatively few will be able or willing to form study groups for intensive and detailed instruction though every parish ought to have some such groups.’<sup>16</sup> Otherwise the homily was to be used to answer two questions ‘Why are we to have new Eucharistic prayers? What is there special about them? Detailed notes were given and it is hard to resist the impression that they were as much to educate the priests as the people.

Since the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* the Consilium had been working on producing a new Rite for the Mass that encompassed the insights of that document, and which became known as the Missal of Paul VI and was authorized for use in its English translation from Advent 1969. Its drawback was that it used the translations for the Ordinary parts of the Mass approved for use only in the British Isles, while the authorities in Rome wanted all English speaking countries to use the same form. As a result a further change took place in 1975 to bring the British Isles into line with the rest of the English speaking world. Some of the new additions to the Mass did provide food for thought for some Catholics such as the addition of the doxology to the Lord’s Prayer, which was ‘normally associated with our separated brethren’.<sup>17</sup> One thing that did not alter immediately was the reception of Communion on the tongue, although again it appears that some experimentation with receiving communion in the hand was occurring for in 1974, McClean told the priests

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<sup>15</sup> MDA. File Ad Clera 1/McClearn Correspondence. Letter 2/69 (7.02.1969).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> HCM (October 1969) 7.

‘Holy Communion in the hand is absolutely forbidden in this diocese at the present time’.<sup>18</sup> It had been decided by the Bishops in 1972 after a period of experimentation and consultation not to seek an indult for the new practice, and this held until 1976 when the indult was sought and granted for those who wished to receive in the hand.

Another change that was taken slowly was the giving of the chalice to the laity.<sup>19</sup> At first this change in the reception of the Eucharistic species was limited in its use to occasions ‘determined by the Apostolic See’.<sup>20</sup> Hastings points out that this particular change was symbolically important because ‘on no point had Rome been more intransigent in the past in its reaction to Protestant insistence’.<sup>21</sup> However, it was an important part of the ‘active participation’ of the laity desired by Sacrosanctum Concilium<sup>22</sup> together with receiving communion in the hand and receiving a host which had been consecrated at the mass attended rather than from the tabernacle. A third change that was slow to be introduced was the greeting of the peace. It was not until 1971 that permission was given for its general use and this was only after a period of experimentation within small groups, which began in 1969. For this respondent it was good because it ‘fostered a sense of unity’ (F1928).

### **Music in the Mass**

A more active participation in the Mass meant in parishes such as St Charles Borromeo in Hull where there was a choir, it needed ‘to put away...figured and polyphonic music’ and instead assume a new role in leading the ‘congregation in

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<sup>18</sup> MDA File Ad clera 1/McClean Correspondence 6/74: 12.08.1974.

<sup>19</sup> SC §57 and §55.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., § 55.

<sup>21</sup> Hastings, A., A History of English Christianity 1920-1985 (paperback edition London 1987) 526.

<sup>22</sup> SC §14.



singing the praises of God'.<sup>23</sup> For the priest concerned this was a happy development and he, together with his choirmaster had looked for ways to fulfil Article 118 of Sacrosanctum Concilium that stated

Religious singing by the faithful is to be intelligently fostered so that...the voices of the faithful may be heard in conformity with the norms and requirements of the rubrics.<sup>24</sup>

As a result by the summer of 1965 there were three Masses being used that could be sung by the whole congregation; a *People's Mass* written by Dom Gregory Murray, the *Missa de Angelis* and an adaptation for congregational use of a four part Mass that had originally been written for the choir of St Charles. Not all churches were as fortunate as St Charles, although by 1969 with a change of priest music had faltered there. In 1966 the newly formed Diocesan Liturgical Commission issued guidelines for congregational singing.<sup>25</sup> Although the ideal was to provide a full sung Low Mass in every parish, it was admitted that this would be difficult for some. However, 'every parish should be able to introduce a recessional hymn after every Sunday Mass as the immediate first step.' Further use of hymns was suggested for the Entry, Gradual, Offertory and Communion in order to establish 'the experience of singing...as a normal part of assisting at Mass'. The lack of an organ was to be no impediment as the priest could lead the singing and the schools could be also involved both in learning new hymns and providing the leadership in singing them at Mass.

With little experience of singing hymns at Mass, there was a need for Catholic writers to produce suitable repertoire as well as utilising hymns from other denominations provided they fitted Catholic theology. With programmes such as the BBC's Songs of

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<sup>23</sup> HCM (June July 1965) 19.

<sup>24</sup> SC §118.

<sup>25</sup> MDA File Ad Clera 1/ Brunner Correspondence. Liturgical Commission Bulletin 1966 no.2 2.

Praise, there was a growing awareness among Catholics of this wider repertoire, but that is not to say they enjoyed singing them

With the arrival of our new curate...an all-out effort is being made to tackle the problem of our non-sung Liturgy...whether you can sing like a lark or not does not really matter – but do your best to take part in the singing of the Common of the Mass or of the hymns sung during Mass.<sup>26</sup>

New hymnals began to appear that ranged from the traditional catholic hymnal to folk hymnals and many priests experimented with different types of music at different Masses. For some it seemed as though the depths had been plunged, but others took a different view.

There are NO reasons for liking ‘folk masses’. ‘Folk’ and ‘pop’ are the music of the illiterate and uncouth.<sup>27</sup>

Less number of archaic hymns (F1954)

Introduction of folk style music was rather difficult as worship was not so reverent (F1936)

Of all the changes in the Mass, it seemed as though music was the element that caused the strongest feeling and as will be shown in the next chapter it led the successor of McClean to appoint a Diocesan Director of Music to help parishes come to terms with this problem. There were however, other aspects of the changes brought about in the wake of the Council that affected the devotional lives of Catholics outside the Mass and in some cases creating a strong feeling of loss.

### **Devotions and saints**

Despite Article 13 of *Sancrosantum Concilium* that encouraged the use of suitable popular devotions, the emphasis on the Mass as being the place where the family gathered together to share in the Eucharistic meal, gave a renewed prominence to its

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<sup>26</sup> HCM (February 1969) 12.

<sup>27</sup> HCM (May 1978) 28.

centrality in Catholic devotion.<sup>28</sup> With the advent of evening Masses especially, there were less opportunities for many of the devotions that hitherto had played an important part in the life of a parish. Another factor in the demise of many traditional devotions was the increased opportunities for a social life outside the Church, with cinemas, and dance halls, for example being inexpensive ways of spending an evening in the company of friends who were not necessarily Catholic. A list of church organizations present in the diocese in 1977 is notable for the absence of any guilds and sodalities such as the Children of Mary or the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, although more social organizations such as the Catenians or the Knights of St Columba were still in existence.<sup>29</sup> One priest writing in 1976 addressed this problem

‘Things are not the same any more Father, the church has changed’ we must have all heard or expressed such sentiments over the last couple of years. In tones of sorrow disappointment people mourn the passing of such devotions as Stations of the Cross, Rosary, Benediction, etc. But...the essentials do not change...maybe things haven’t changed as much as people. Yes, various devotions are disappearing but where does the fault lie? Their disappearance is in large measure due to the fact that the very people who bemoan their passing will not come to church to support them.<sup>30</sup>

Missions too had for the most part disappeared although in 1978 under the aegis of its new young priest, Sacred Heart in Hull held its first for nineteen years. The report of the mission given in the Hull Catholic Magazine gives some idea of how ideas about missions had changed.<sup>31</sup> During the first week, sixteen homes in different areas of the parish hosted House Masses and for those who attended some found their way back into the Church and they ‘certainly drew the people of those areas closer together.’ At

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<sup>28</sup> See Harris, Transformations p80, 101-110.

<sup>29</sup> MDA File N3/Reports. 1977.

<sup>30</sup> HCM (December 1976) 11.

<sup>31</sup> HCM (September 1978) 20.

the weekend a Mass for the youth was celebrated, and also a prayer Vigil for the feast of Pentecost using Scripture readings, meditations and prayers. This was a new departure fulfilling the hopes of Sacrosanctum Concilium for such services to become part of Catholic Liturgy.<sup>32</sup> Another new form of Mass that was celebrated was for the sick with Anointing and the laying on of hands. This was also a fruit of the changes of Vatican II in that the Sacrament of the Sick was no longer ‘a sacrament for those only at the point of dying’ but suitable for anyone who was ill or aged.<sup>33</sup> As a result of their experiences the people of Sacred Heart hoped that

Several things will grow out of the mission...House Masses, Youth Masses, Masses for the sick etc., and that it is up to us, priests and people.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the changes brought in in the wake of the Council caused real grief to some people, especially when the calendar of Saints was revised in 1969. The loss of St Philomena meant that the dedication of the Church of the Sacred Heart and St Philomena on Linthorpe Road in Middlesbrough, reverted to its original single dedication of the Sacred Heart to the dismay of its people and it was continued to be known as St Phil’s for many years afterwards. It must have seemed to many that the Church was abandoning the saints for their statues were disappearing from the churches and public Novenas to different saints were also abandoned. But in private their aid was still invoked as shown by respondents to the writer’s survey. (Fig. 55) It was still felt that they set a good example and were proof of God’s mercy. The continuing growth of the pilgrimage to Lourdes was a case in point, both to the

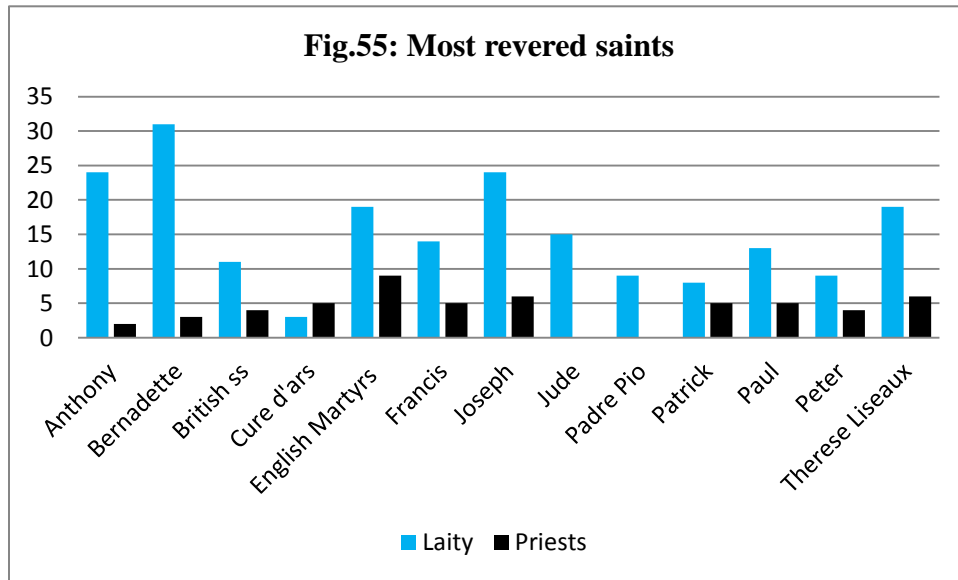
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<sup>32</sup> SC §35:4.

<sup>33</sup> SC §73.

<sup>34</sup> HCM (September 1978) 20.

important role of Mary and the example of St Bernadette that was such a central part of any pilgrimage.



Interest in the local history of the area also brought to people's attention the martyrs of the Recusant period. In 1970, Margaret Clitherow of York was canonized and the continuing disappointment that Nicholas Postgate had not been included in the forty martyrs helped start a campaign for his beatification.<sup>35</sup> In 1974 the first 'Postgate Rally' was held at Ugthorpe with the aim of increasing a strong local display of prayer and devotion to the martyr, these being the criteria for inclusion in names submitted to Rome for beatification and canonization. Thereafter the Rally was held annually alternating between Ugthorpe and Egton Bridge, the two villages most associated with Postgate and achieved some success with his inclusion amongst the eighty-seven martyrs beatified in 1987. There were some concerns raised that pursuing the cause of recusant martyrs was out of place in the light of the Conciliar decree on Ecumenism and the new spirit of goodwill towards Christians of other

<sup>35</sup> See above 302.

denominations.<sup>36</sup> Writing in the Hull Catholic Magazine in 1966, Patrick Doyle, a local historian felt that there was some justification for the concerns in that a concentration on the Post-Reformation history of Catholicism identified the Church with a persecuted minority and ignored the common heritage of Catholicism and Anglicanism from earlier times.<sup>37</sup> But, he added, such identification masked the real value of the Martyrs in that

they were witnesses of the Gospel, hot and not indifferent, prepared to give all up for Christ... It is also the responsibility of Catholics to acknowledge that Protestants have suffered barbaric treatment at the hands of Catholic persecutors both in England and on the continent.<sup>38</sup>

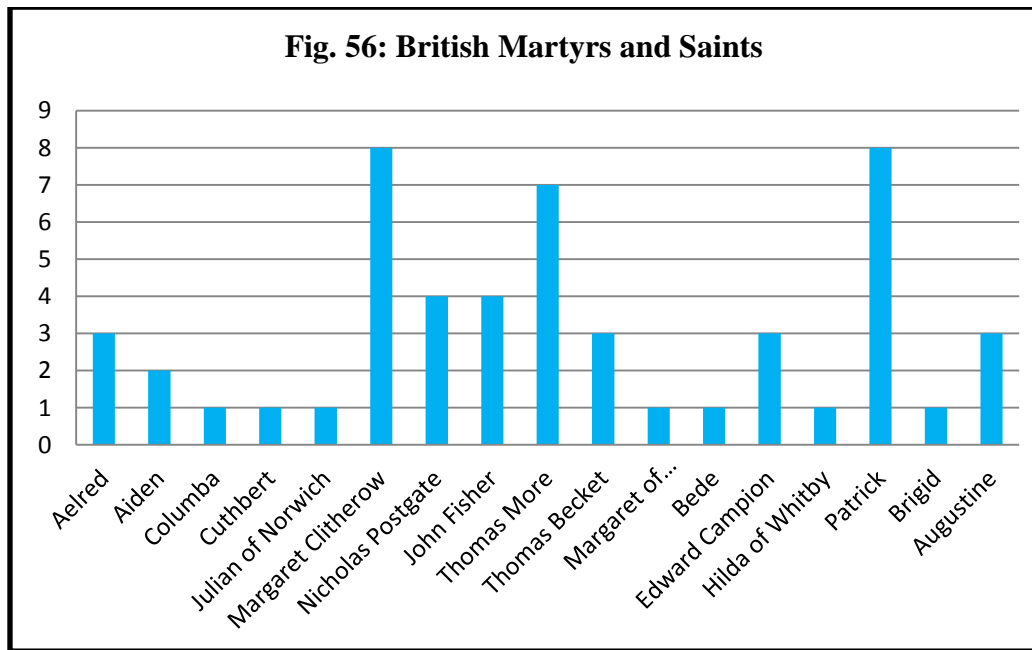
In other words, the evangelical zeal of the martyrs, both Catholic and Protestant, was a point of contact, not conflict with Protestants and this common heritage should be acknowledged. According to the writer's survey a new awareness about the common heritage of English saints shared by the Anglicans and Catholics did start to emerge for as Fig. 56 shows, of the British saints who were chosen as examples to follow by respondents to the survey, eleven were of the pre-Reformation church.

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<sup>36</sup> See Harris, Transformations 320.

<sup>37</sup> HCM (October 1966) 3.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3-4.



Perhaps the loss that caused the most distress was that of the annual Corpus Christi procession in Middlesbrough that was discontinued in 1972. In his letter to the people, McClean pointed to several reasons why its discontinuation was appropriate including questioning by groups of clergy religious and laity as to ‘whether one big procession is the most apt way of celebrating the feast’.<sup>39</sup> There was also the loss of the venue for the final Benediction, caused by the move of the Newlands Convent to new premises away from its former central position in the town with no suitable alternative venue available. What was not said, although it must have been a factor in the decision, was the reality that the numbers taking part in the procession were gradually shrinking. For example in 1966, twelve thousand people participated down from its heyday of thirty thousand or more in the nineteen-fifties. The Bishop ‘did not come lightly to this decision’ for as well as the doubts that were expressed there were also many representations for its continuance with one person questioning

<sup>39</sup> MDA. File Ad Clera 1/ McClean Correspondence. Letter 05.05.1972 .

Is this merely another way of opting out; of bowing to the pressures upon self-regard; or even perhaps the placing of work and inconvenience upon too high a pedestal?<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless McClean and his advisors felt that individual parish celebrations would be more devotional and more of a witness in an age of increasing indifference from the townspeople in general and annoyance at the disruption that it caused.

### **Prayer**

With the loss of opportunity being provided for many traditional devotions, Catholics began to discover new ways of praying. The use of prayer vigils has already been mentioned and there was also the restoration of the 'prayer of the faithful' in the Mass.

By this prayer in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for Holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world.<sup>41</sup>

That some priests considered laymen (for the Sanctuary area was still forbidden to women) were not capable of leading the prayers is clear from a note to the clergy from Brunner in 1966, which also highlights the difficulty some priests were having.

It has been brought to the attention of the Hierarchy that many parishes use the same intentions in the Bidding Prayer on nearly every occasion. They ask that you change them frequently, using the various intentions in the appropriate sections and remind you that there is permission given also for parish priests to compose suitable short intentions for themselves. These should be written down beforehand and not composed at the altar.

That there was a role for the laity in reading and leading the bidding prayers is emphasised by a bulletin from the Diocesan Liturgical Committee in the same year.

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<sup>40</sup> HCM (August 1972). Unpaginated.

<sup>41</sup> SC §53.



Competent laymen exercise a genuine liturgical function in reading the Epistle and the petitions of the Bidding Prayer... The Constitution declares the liturgy to be of its nature hierarchic and communal. In practice this means that the celebrant will allow others to perform those offices which are not strictly reserved to himself.<sup>42</sup>

Extempore prayer was a phenomenon that Catholics began to come across in ecumenical circles and gradually began to spread. In 1975 McClean asked his priests for the facts and their opinions about developments of Charismatic Renewal, Pentecostalism or Prayer groups within their parishes. The hub of the Anglican Charismatic movement in the diocese was centred on St Michael-le-Belfry Church in York under the aegis of David Watson a renowned Evangelical minister and it drew people from a wide area of Yorkshire, who attended his services regularly, or came to find out more and take it back to their own parishes. Although it had its antecedents in early American Pentecostal movements, there were also British antecedents in the Primitive Methodists and other Holiness movements of the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup> In the diocese, the Charismatic movement was centred at Ampleforth, where one of the monks, Stephen Wright had first come into contact with it in 1971.<sup>44</sup> He believed that the Council foreshadowed the Charismatic movement in its Pentecostal endeavour and that its fullest expression was baptism in the Spirit and the gifts that accompanied it, such as glossolalia and healing. The involvement of the Ampleforth Community in the development of the Charismatic movement was the modern manifestation of the role of the Religious in acting as agents of revivalism and change identified by Finke and Wittberg and discussed in Chapter 2.3.<sup>45</sup> By 1977 Fr. Stephen himself with the encouragement of his former abbot Basil Hume, had become the catalyst for the

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<sup>42</sup> MDA File Ad Clera 1/ Brunner Correspondence. Liturgical Commission Bulletin 1966 no.1 2.

<sup>43</sup> See above p 168.

<sup>44</sup> See <http://www.stephenosb.co.uk> for a full account of his charismatic journey. Accessed 01.09.2011.

<sup>45</sup> See above in particular p. 81.

Charismatic movement in the diocese, beginning days of renewal for the laity held at Ampleforth and encouraging his brothers and interested members of the diocesan clergy and laity to attend days of renewal and annual charismatic retreats, all of which were still on-going in 1992 and frequently included Anglican representatives at least in the early days.

### **Churches**

A brief reference has already been made to a change in the appearance of churches in the light of the Council decrees, and this was the disappearance of many of the statues, which some felt gave the churches a plain and utilitarian feel.<sup>46</sup> It was the reordering of the Sanctuary that was necessary, which provided the most obvious change however. Mass was now the action of a people who were in the words of St Paul (Romans 6:3-4) members of a common baptismal priesthood in Christ Jesus, a theme that was enlarged upon in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. As a result the priest was now expected to pray the Canon of the Mass versus populum that is facing the people instead of facing the altar and acting as the mediator between the faithful and God. This concept was further symbolized in the architecture of the Church where the priest in the sanctuary facing the altar was offering Mass for the people who were behind him. It radically changed the priest–faithful relationship for as this priest pointed out

the priest with his back to the people he is celebrating FOR the people, facing the people he is celebrating WITH the people. (P25).

As a result, altars either needed moving or temporary altars set up in the sanctuary, but new churches would be designed with westward facing altars.

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<sup>46</sup> HCM. (August 1969) 26.

The minimum requirements were an altar that was free standing, a lectern and a presidential chair. The altar was the focal point of the church and reserved for the liturgy of the Eucharist. The addition of a lectern emphasised the renewed emphasis on the Liturgy of the Word and the Presidential chair, the role of the priest in presiding over the liturgy of the Word. The use of temporary free standing altars was encouraged to allow the priest and people to experience the nature of a re-ordered sanctuary, so that they would be better equipped to decide later upon the permanent re-ordering, which required the consent of the Bishop.

New buildings such as the chapel at Endsleigh training college in Hull run by the Sisters of Mercy that was erected in 1965 was of course designed to take account of the new style. Built in a fan shape the sanctuary extended into the seating area, so that the actions of the priest could be easily seen by the whole of the congregation. When the college closed in 1976 as a result of the reorganization of teacher training, the chapel was handed over to the diocese and became the parish church of St Anthony.

Chance, in the form of a fire in 1973, allowed the re-ordering of the church at Stokesley in a more innovative way than its original more conservative re-ordering within the existing Sanctuary. The design of the oblong church was turned on its side, with a new Sanctuary area built on a shallow step on the North wall of the church and seating arranged around it in four blocks including on the old sanctuary area. Both the Altar and the font were carved out of Cleveland stone taken from the nearby hills and a new entrance added onto the South wall, the original entrance becoming a small Lady Chapel (Fig. 57).

**Fig. 57: Re-ordered interior of St Joseph, Stokesley**

In the episcopacies of both Bishop Brunner and Bishop McClean there were extensive building programmes often as result of new estates being built in the urban areas to replace the slums that were being demolished. In Chapter 4:6 the practice of Church planting in Hull was discussed and this continued into Bishop McClean's episcopacy with three new parishes being established as well as St Anthony's mentioned previously. At the same time it was feared that the parish of St Charles Borromeo was becoming a church without a parish for by 1968 its residents had shrunk from thousands to six hundred and most of the area was being redeveloped for shops, offices warehouses and other light industry; 'but the Bishop hopes that there will always be a need for a city-centre church'.<sup>47</sup> To facilitate this there was a daily Mass at lunchtime to cater for the local workers and shoppers who might not be able

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<sup>47</sup> HCM. (October 1968) 15.

to get to Mass in their own parish. In the still divided city of York, a similar programme of slum clearance was being effected and three new churches were built to serve new areas of population. In the North of the diocese within this period, nine new parishes were formed and two churches were rebuilt.

There was also the return to Catholic use of a pre-Reformation church, that of St Leonard in Malton. By 1966, it had become surplus to requirement for the Anglican church and with the tower that dominated the town's skyline needing extensive restoration work it was closed as a place of worship. In 1971, after lengthy negotiations it was handed over as a free gift to the Catholic Community in Malton and a nationwide appeal launched for the necessary work. Within a year this had been completed and paid for and on Easter day 1972 Mass was celebrated in public for the first time since the Reformation.

### **Ecumenism**

One of the principle concerns of the Second Vatican Council was the restoration of unity among all Christians and how Catholics should respond to it was set out in one decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*.<sup>48</sup> It admitted that the divisions between Christians were a scandal as if 'Christ himself was divided', but that lately there had been a desire amongst 'our separated brethren...fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians.' This decree provided guidelines and methods for Catholics so 'that they too can respond to the grace of this divine call'.

One way was to look at points of agreement between Catholics and their 'separated brethren' such as the common heritage of the pre-Reformation saints noted above.

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<sup>48</sup> Vatican II. 'Unitatis Redintegratio' in Flannery A., op cit., 452ff.

Another was to think ecumenically, which for many Catholics was very difficult for this was a completely new agenda that appeared to put in jeopardy that Catholic identity that had kept the faith alive in England for four centuries. However, in local terms small changes began to be made with Catholics attending and hosting ecumenical services at such times as Christian Unity Week. A major evangelization project entitled Call to the North was launched by all the leaders of local churches in 1971. All the Catholic bishops in the North of England agreed to ask their people to join in this three year project that was designed ‘to bring the message of the Gospel to the uncommitted people of the North of England.’<sup>49</sup> The programme was in three parts; spiritual ecumenism in the form of prayer was the programme for the first year. The second phase that began on Easter Sunday 1972 was a

Call to the Church to look out from itself to the world where life is impoverished through lack of faith and purpose and to unite with all Christians in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.<sup>50</sup>

It culminated in Lent 1973 with an intensive period of pastoral work by both the clergy and laity. The success of the venture was negligible in its effect, but it was useful in giving confidence and drawing together of church leaders of all shades of opinion both on a regional and local level.

### **Conclusion**

‘The Church became more open, and I think more welcoming’. (F1946) For this respondent, the hopes of Pope John XXIII for his Council – namely that windows would be thrown open to let fresh air into the Church was fulfilled as far as its devotional and spiritual life was concerned. Another respondent found it ‘easier to

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<sup>49</sup> MDA Ad Clera 1/McClean Correspondence: Letter 8/71. (05.08.1971).

<sup>50</sup> MDA Ad Clera 1/McClean Correspondence: Letter 11/71. (19.11.1971) 3.

relate to faith in general.’ (F1952). The ideals of the Second Vatican Council provided a blueprint for the Church in the modern world, but were never intended to be implemented over a short period of time. It is true to say that the developments of the post Second Vatican Council era were for everyone concerned little less than spiritual equivalent of the earthquakes and tsunamis that are a consequence of a rapid shift in the tectonic plates of the earth. In this chapter, I have tried to show how they changed the face of aspects of Catholic devotion and spirituality in the diocese of Middlesbrough in the late nineteen-sixties and the nineteen-seventies. By drawing attention to its elements of revivalism and renewal I have demonstrated how they had their precursors in the spirituality of the past history of the diocese that has been explored in earlier sections of this dissertation. The final chapter will examine how they became embedded in the identity of the diocese under the leadership of its new bishop, Augustine Harris.

## 5.2: A changed Church

**Fig. 58: Bishop Augustine Harris, fifth Bishop of Middlesbrough**





## **Introduction**

The summer of 1978 saw three popes in the space of three months, but for Catholics in the diocese of Middlesbrough, it was also a time of personal sadness as their Bishop, John McClean died suddenly. The new bishop, Augustine Harris was appointed in November of that year, one of the earliest appointments made by Pope John Paul II, and his first in England. Harris's episcopacy coincided with a more quiescent period in liturgical change, with settled forms of the vernacular liturgies in place and a more conservative approach to implementing the Conciliar decrees from the Vatican. This did not mean that there were no initiatives and challenges to face. This chapter will look at developments in the provision of pastoral care, the lay Apostolate, the Papal Visit of 1982 and firstly, the building of a new Cathedral.

## **A new Cathedral**

The need for radical decisions about where the Bishop's chair or Cathedra was placed predated the arrival of Bishop Harris. As early as 1975, it was realized that difficult decisions over the Cathedral would have to be made because the slum clearance programmes in Middlesbrough had depopulated the area. Bishop McClean decided to transfer the status of Cathedral to a church being planned for Coulby Newham, the last and largest development that was planned by the Council. It was a decision that was not without controversy; the Victorian Society objected to any plan that might adversely affect the structural integrity of the Cathedral, and local clergy were also unhappy at the plan to build a new Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> McClean's death in 1978 meant that the plans were delayed, but in 1984 it was decided that they should go ahead. In that year a detailed survey of the Cathedral was undertaken and many

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<sup>1</sup> Church Building (Winter 1986) 28.

structural defects were found, caused in the main by its foundations being affected by changes in the water-table of the reclaimed marshland upon which it was built. The report concluded that the building ‘must now be considered to be approaching the end of its practicable and economical life.’<sup>2</sup> There were other problems to be faced; the general economic climate was not good and in Middlesbrough particularly, the demise of the steel industry had left the town in a vacuum with large-scale unemployment and no prospect of a viable alternative economy being forthcoming. Building of the Coulby Newham estate had slowed with only a third of its housing stock built, although it was hoped to complete it over the following fifteen years. As a result any replacement Cathedral would need to be limited in scope and size, and the eventual listing of the old Cathedral meant that it needed to be retained as a building and kept in repair.

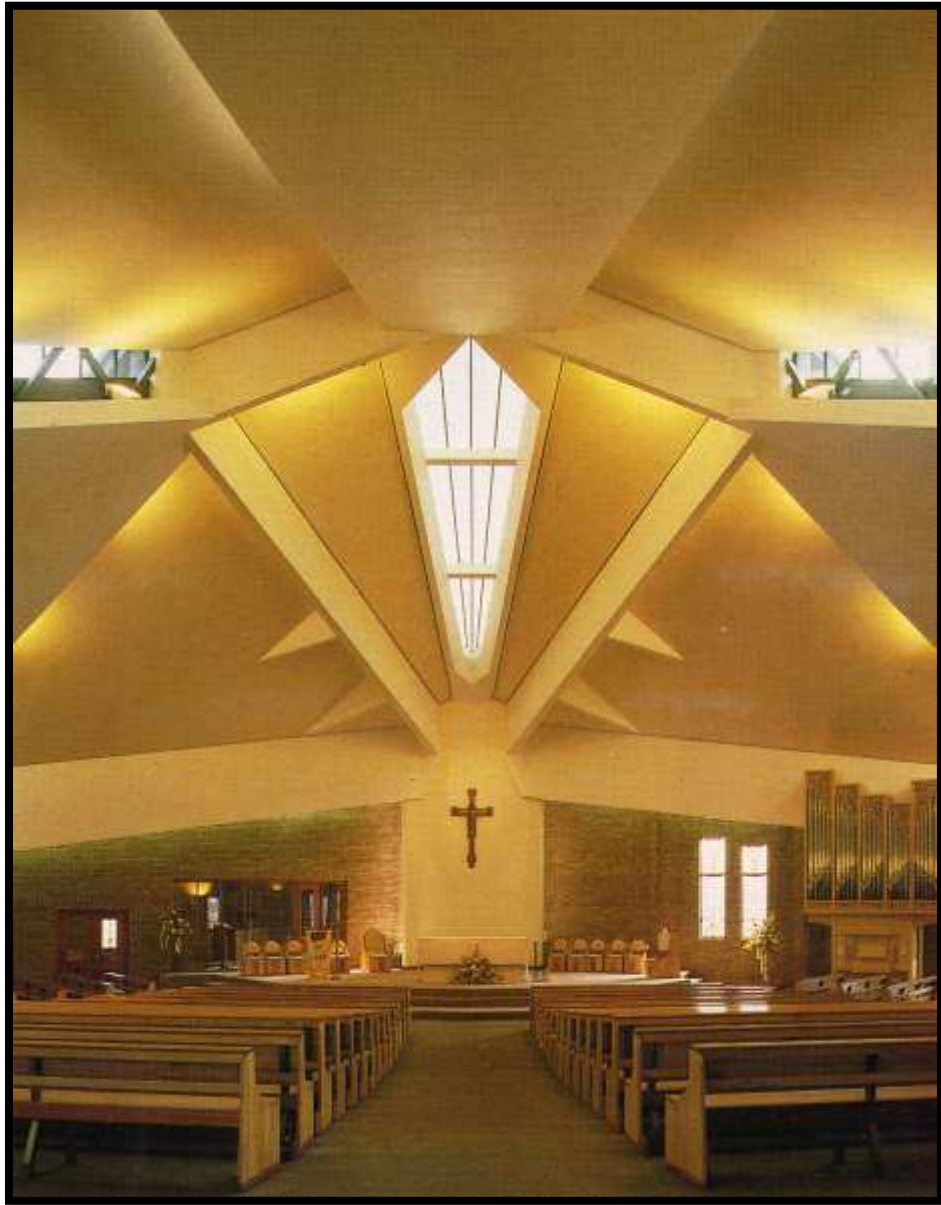
Small for a cathedral, but large for a parish church, the new Cathedral was designed in accord with the principles underlying the liturgical changes of the Council namely that services should be visible, audible and understandable, involving the whole congregation in active participation. To meet these requirements, it was built to a radial design, with a sloping floor and fixed seating. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel and parish hall adjoined the main church with glass screens so that extra seating areas could be provided if occasion demanded it. In May 1988, the new Cathedral was dedicated, and as the bishop pointed out

It is a spiritual centre of the whole diocese and also, a parish church serving the needs of a local community.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/Bishop Harris Correspondence Pastoral Letter. 31.03.1985.

<sup>3</sup> Diocese of Middlesbrough Year Book 1989 11.

**Fig. 59: The interior of the new Cathedral****Pastoral care**

The siting of the Cathedral where the people lived was one example of the pastoral care of the people undertaken in the diocese. Care of a different sort was given in both Hull and York as a result of the deliberations by the English Bishops on the diocesan boundaries in Yorkshire. In a letter of December 1979, they announced two

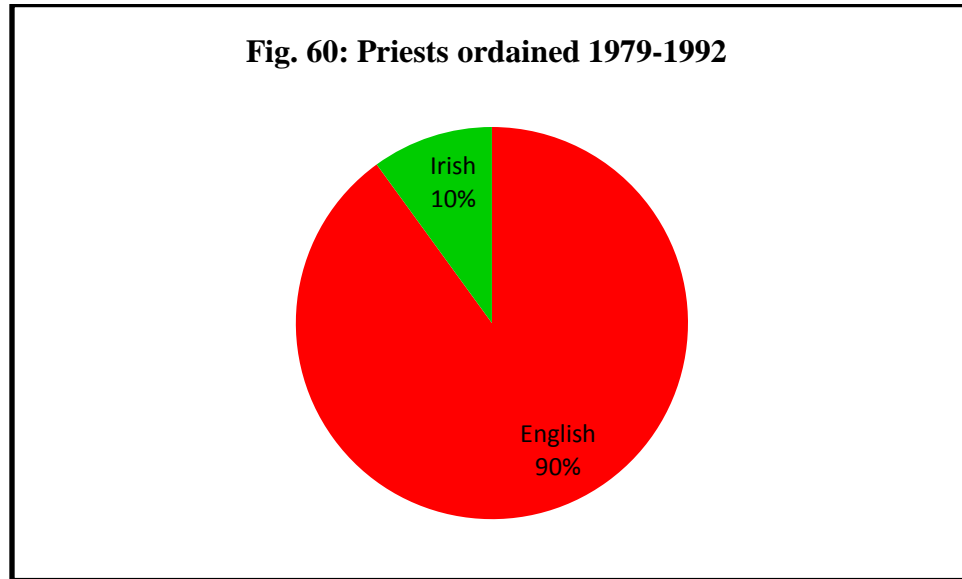
proposals affecting the diocese of Middlesbrough, firstly that permission be sought from the Holy See for the appointment of an auxiliary bishop who would undertake pastoral care of the people in the southern part of the diocese. At the same time given that all were agreed that the parishes in York should be united under one diocesan authority, the bishops agreed to recommend that the parishes of English Martyrs and Our Lady's Acomb that were in the diocese of Leeds be added to the territory of Middlesbrough.<sup>4</sup> In January 1982 permission was granted; Kevin O'Brien was appointed as auxiliary Bishop based in Hull and York, for the first time in over one hundred years was united under one diocesan bishop. As a result, the Sisters at the Bar Convent became part of the diocese for the first time. One of the first changes for the community came, not as a result of the boundary change, but because of the reorganization of secondary education in the city. They gave up their grammar school for girls and handed the buildings over to the care of the diocese to become a voluntary aided Catholic comprehensive school. In place of their school they took on a new educative role by opening a museum of Christian history in York and a residential youth centre for young people visiting the city. They also made space available for the diocese to open a catechetical centre in York run by members of the Benedictine community of Ampleforth.

Re-organization of the secondary sector in Hull saw the withdrawal of both the Marist Community and the Sisters of Mercy from their work and the Marists also withdrew from direct involvement in the Sixth Form College, Middlesbrough. However, both the Benedictines at Ampleforth and the Assumption Sisters in Richmond were still providing a private education for boys and girls respectively.

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<sup>4</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/ Bishop Harris Correspondence. Press Statement. 09.12.1979.

Obviously, the majority of pastoral care was provided by the priests and the episcopate of Bishop Harris was notable for the continued policy of ordaining men native to the diocese first and foremost.



But there were concerns about falling priest numbers and the comparative lack of vocations compared to previous times.

I want to speak about the number of priests who serve the diocese. It is a diminishing number. Some people talk about the shortage of priests. The phrase...can mean different things to different people. But...since 1978 the diocese has lost through death and retirement 31 priests. During the same period...only five have been ordained.<sup>5</sup>

In 1980 there were one hundred and twenty-five active diocesan priests and it was estimated that this would have reduced to one hundred by 1990. This was overly pessimistic, but in fact happened only two years later. The mean age of the priests was also increasing and it was assumed that the increase would be maintained as the large number of ordinations that took place in the episcopate of Shine was not subsequently maintained. Falling priest numbers affect the provision of pastoral care

<sup>5</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/Bishop Harris Correspondence. Pastoral Letter. 22.11.1981.

and meant that eventually there would be a need to rationalize the number of parishes in the diocese by closures and amalgamations especially in Hull and Middlesbrough.

Already in 1981 there were five parishes without resident priests.<sup>6</sup> But although these warnings were sounded no further action was taken and it was left to Bishop Harris's successors to make those difficult decisions.

### **Devotional Opportunities**

Pastoral care was also evident in the plethora of new devotional opportunities that were springing up in the diocese. One particular area of growth was in prayer groups, meeting either in an individual parish or in a locality. About half of the groups were facilitated by lay people, while others were led by priests or religious.<sup>7</sup> In both Saltburn and Scarborough, Catholics in small numbers took part in ecumenical prayer groups and there were also two charismatic renewal groups at Ampleforth and in Middlesbrough. Despite being a great supporter of prayer groups there was a note of caution sounded by the bishop that although the growth in prayer groups revealed a 'spiritual searching by the people of God' there was a danger that they may become 'eccentric' and divorced from a 'deeper appreciation of liturgical worship' to which they should ideally lead.<sup>8</sup> Harris further emphasised this in a pastoral letter of 1988

Our effort must not be confined only to the actual time of Mass. One hour a week – sixty minutes every seven days- that is the absolute minimum. We must be people of prayer – daily prayer. Our prayer life must be regular meetings with a God who is real and alive and present. Then, as we gather at Mass, we, all of us, will be on the same spiritual wavelength.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Information from Diocese of Middlesbrough Year books. 1986-1992.

<sup>8</sup> MDA File Bishop Harris 2 Serve the Lord with Gladness 11.

<sup>9</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/Harris Correspondence Pastoral Letter on our Sunday Mass. 21.02.1988.

Harris was also enthusiastic for pastoral or catechetical centres to be set up in the larger urban areas and they were an important part of his strategy to 'assist and supplement the work of parishes and deaneries in bringing the fruits of Vatican II more closely to the people.'<sup>10</sup> Mention was briefly made on the previous page of the setting up of the centre in York, and centres in Middlesbrough and Hull were also founded, staffed for a time by diocesan clergy and later by Religious communities. But whoever ran them their basic premise was the same namely to be places where people could easily drop in during the day and find there

Prayer, the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament; then the stimulus and help of meeting others, of talking and hearing expert talks, of reading and so of pursuing in formal and informal ways the urgent task of continuing adult religious formation in ways easily accessible to ordinary busy people in the context of their daily lives.<sup>11</sup>

The concept of continuing adult religious formation was new in the diocese. As discussed in the previous chapter, religious formation was considered to be the work of the schools and ended when the school leaving age was reached.<sup>12</sup> Bishop McClean had actively supported the new emphasis upon providing a homily at every Sunday Mass that was a fruit of the Council, but only a fortunate minority of the laity had had the opportunity to attend conferences and retreats at Ampleforth and other such centres to further their own personal development.<sup>13</sup> Anxious that local Catholics should be given the opportunity to enrich their understanding of how and why the church was changing and aware of the financial restraints upon many of them, the catechetical centres set up by Harris were the means of responding to these needs.

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<sup>10</sup> Diocese of Middlesbrough Yearbook 1987. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> See above 319-20.

<sup>13</sup> Diocese of Middlesbrough Yearbook 1987. 57.

Pilgrimage continued to be a source of renewal for many in the diocese. The Lourdes Pilgrimage, with people now travelling by air rather than train, and joined by travellers using coaches or finding their way independently, continued to grow in size. Of particular note were the school groups who travelled by coach and then spent their week helping the sick. For both groups it was a means of learning about each other and with each other

The first thing I noticed about the old and sick people was how cheerful they were, joking all the time, and the old ladies especially, talking and laughing with each other. Young people as well, in their twenties, with their parents taking care of them...made you realise how lucky you are and also not to take life for granted...You realise that the old and sick are still human and just like you in every way – but maybe what they look like.<sup>14</sup>

Both the Shrine at Mount Grace and the annual Postgate rally continued to attract followers and 1987 was a particular year for celebration as Nicholas Postgate was amongst eighty-seven martyrs beatified in Rome. But he was not the only one with connections to the area of the diocese for in total twenty-one of the newly beatified came from the old North and East Ridings. The growing number of pilgrims making the journey up the hill to the Lady Chapel of Mount Grace made the rebuilding of the Shrine essential and this was also completed in 1987.

Despite all the opportunities for renewal of faith the central act of devotion remained the Mass and there was real concern that for many people it was not the celebratory event that it should be

We have lost our urge to worship. We have chilled our sense of wonder. Even people who go to church show little joy and

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<sup>14</sup> Diocese of Middlesbrough Year Book 1991. 85.



enthusiasm. Church going has become routine, respectable and safe. So why go to Mass? Why have you come here today?<sup>15</sup>

Harris's answer was that the Mass was a time of thanksgiving and celebration, and that what was being celebrated was our redemption by God. Mass was not a time to be entertained, but a time that required effort from everyone

Attending Mass each Sunday and holyday is still a serious obligation, but should we not make it more that responding to a legal requirement. Every achievement requires sacrifice. Every true success depends on the effort we put into it...many have given their lives so that the Mass may continue to be celebrated in our land.<sup>16</sup>

Underlying his comments was a sense that the teachings of the Second Vatican Council about the Mass were still not understood by many Catholics in the diocese, in particular the active participation of all present at Mass. Also that after the many changes to the liturgy, things had settled down and there was a sense of over-familiarity with the texts that led to an effortless recital of them and the making of attending mass 'a formality' not a time for 'taking a stand' and celebrating together Christ's coming, death and resurrection and his invitation to follow him.<sup>17</sup>

### **Penitence and penance**

Another area of spiritual life in the diocese that became a priority was that of confession and reconciliation. It was not a new problem and for many such as this respondent to the survey it was as a result of bad experiences in the confessional when a child.

Sin-hell was drummed into us – if it was meant to frighten us it certainly did the trick. (F1931)

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<sup>15</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/Harris Correspondence Pastoral Letter on our Sunday Mass (21.02.1988) 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.,3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

The Church in the light of the conciliar document *Paenitemini* had looked for ways to make this sacrament easier for people and in 1973 promulgated a new Rite of Penance.<sup>18</sup> Underlying some of the changes there was, as pointed out by one of the priests

A good insight from Vatican II for me is that forgiveness is a multi-layered reality that is continuous from the necessary change of heart through to the signing and sealing of it in sacramental absolution. (P25)

Alongside the traditional Confessional, the new Rite provided for the opportunity of face-to-face Confession with the priest in Confession rooms, the second order Rite that provided for services of Reconciliation with individual confession and absolution, and the third order Rite that allowed for a general absolution to be given. Although this latter was designed to be used in a time of emergency when there was neither time nor enough priests to hear individual confessions, it had been experimented with in the diocese during McClean's episcopacy.<sup>19</sup> Harris himself encouraged the use of second order Rite services particularly during Lent and Advent and used them during the Lourdes pilgrimage also. As one priest observed

The people are no longer in my opinion going to celebrate this sacrament in a confessional. The only way forward generally is through services of reconciliation. (P3)

Along with his fellow bishops, Harris was also concerned to foster a wider sense of penitence amongst his flock. The season of Lent 1984 was set aside for catechesis on the role of penitence in the life of Christians in preparation for the reaffirmation of the

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<sup>18</sup> Paul VI, 'Paenitemini. (1966) Apostolic Constitution on Penance' in Flannery A., Vatican Council II More post Conciliar Documents (Dublin 1982). 1-12.

<sup>19</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/ McClean Correspondence.

Friday Penitential Observance that was detailed in the new Code of Canon Law.<sup>20</sup> A statement issued by the Bishops reminded people that all were obliged to do penance in imitation of Christ and ‘in response to his call’.<sup>21</sup> This would be a participation in the suffering of Christ himself as well as ‘an expression of inner conversion and a form of reparation for sin’. In the Church’s approach to penance and penitence there are once more shown to be similarities with the Evangelical emphasis on conversion and turning one’s life about and nowhere is there a clearer statement than the announcement that 1983 would be a Holy Year commemorating the 1950<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Redemption.<sup>22</sup> The crucicentric nature of Catholicism was clearly stated in the Bull *Aperite portas Redemptori* that announced the Holy Year.

The Church’s whole life is immersed in the Redemption and breathes the Redemption. To redeem us, Christ came into the world...to redeem us he offered himself on the Cross in an act of supreme love for humanity.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore it recognized the ecumenical aspect of Redemption

Celebrating the Redemption we go beyond historical misunderstandings and controversies and meet fellow-Christians on the common ground of being Christians, that is, redeemed. The redemption unites all Christians in the one love of Christ, crucified and risen.<sup>24</sup>

However, the Redemption was not the only occasion that the Evangelical aspects of Catholicism were highlighted for the nineteen-nineties were designated as a decade of Evangelism. The initial stages were overseen by Bishop Harris as he prepared to retire.

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<sup>20</sup> Code of Canon Law 1983 canons 1249-125.

<sup>21</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/Bishop Harris Correspondence Statement of bishops of England and Wales On Friday Penance. (undated).

<sup>22</sup> MDA File Ad Clera/ Bishop Harris Correspondence Notes on John Paul II, Bull ‘*Aperite portas Redemptori*. ’06.01.1983.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 7 .

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, 11.

## Evangelism

In 1990, Bishop Harris posed a question

If we are not hoping to convert people – if we are not hoping to change people – what is the decade of Evangelisation all about?<sup>25</sup>

He distanced himself from those who ‘badger unbelievers from the Bible’ but insisted that the essential task was to ‘proclaim the Gospel, to announce the Good News which is Christ’.<sup>26</sup> As at the end of the previous century when there was a rise in Revivalism and a search for perfection on earth, there was a sense of superstitious fear about the future and an upsurge in people engaged in a spiritual search often outside the mainline denominations. As Harris wrote

At the end of each century, and even more so at the end of a millennium there is a foreboding, an uneasy expectancy, when people take to the mountains either to be nearer to the heavens or far from floods and earthquakes or whatever disaster is programmed for the next century...recognise the genuine fear and the cry for help.<sup>27</sup>

As Lacy before him, Harris recognised the need for faith to be revived and renewed and already in the diocese various initiatives had been implemented that would forward the Gospel message that is sometimes known as the Evangelical Imperative of ‘proclaiming the Good News and making disciples of all the nations.’ RCIA already referred to in Part One<sup>28</sup> was not only a process for those seeking to become full members of the Church, but its sharing of the faith was also suitable for those ‘already on the pilgrim journey to God...Its principles and practice are readily applicable... to parish renewal itself.’<sup>29</sup> Other aspects of evangelisation were an integral part of the Church particularly in the Liturgy, starting with a ministry of

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<sup>25</sup> MDA File Bishop Harris 2 This Decade is for ever 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>28</sup> See above p 38.

<sup>29</sup> This Decade 7.

Welcome as people entered the Church and the Mass itself when ‘for one hour a week [people] enter a church building and this is their unique encounter with Jesus Christ.’<sup>30</sup>

In the Catholic schools it was estimated that there were seventeen thousand young people who made up the next generation needing to be introduced to Christ. Alongside the schools but with a brief that encompassed young adults and the renewal of their faith, a Diocesan Youth Service was established in 1990 under the leadership of a Youth officer. His vision was not catechesis in the faith, that was the role of the schools, but helping the young in their ‘relationships with each other and with God and ultimately to be a call to them to live a fuller life within the community of the Church.’<sup>31</sup> Mention was made earlier of the withdrawal of the religious from the state secondary schools that they had pioneered and a similar withdrawal was also taking place in the primary sector. In education as well as RCIA lay people were taking the lead involved as teachers and catechists and in the Ministry of Welcome were fulfilling a rightful ministry.

### **The Lay Apostolate**

The Lay Apostolate grew exponentially during the years that Harris was bishop of the Diocese as outlined on pages 37-38 above. In 1979, one hundred and seventy men and women, both religious and lay were commissioned as special ministers of the Eucharist. There were already a few religious and one or two laymen commissioned by Bishop McClean, but with changes to the rules regarding Communion, and the desirability of them taking Communion to the sick and Housebound after Mass on

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>31</sup> Diocese of Middlesbrough Yearbook 1990 101.

Sundays, Harris was keen to increase the number and scope of people recommended for this Ministry. The change in Rules referred to the giving of Communion in both kinds that was agreed by the Bishops in their Low Week meeting of 1979. As a result, it was to be much more widely available and therefore the use of Special Ministers would become more widespread since they would be required to help with the distribution of Holy Communion from the chalice. This was only one of the ministries within the Mass; Readers were already being commissioned and again Harris encouraged the use of women. The Ministry of Welcome has already been mentioned and music too formed a ministry. To help with this a diocesan Director of Music was appointed, who introduced many new forms of music into the liturgies at both diocesan and parish events. Music days were held to introduce some the new repertoire of music that had written since Vatican II and encompassing both the Catholic and Evangelical tradition, the latter which was also thriving. Music from the ecumenical community at Taizé was introduced in the liturgical framework of prayer and meditation and people trained in the practices of Cantoring and Animating the Mass. Even so, as it was pointed out on page 38 and 326 there was a lot of resistance to music in many areas of the diocese, though the liturgies during the Papal Visit of 1982 gave a vision of what could be achieved.

### **The Papal Visit**

The visit to England of possibly the most visible Pope in history included a visit to York, when the Sacrament of Marriage provided the theme for a para-liturgy. For Catholics, it was a visit that few imagined would ever take place, given the religious history of England and as these priests said

It was a wonderful gathering of believers around the the successor of Peter, and meant a lot to people of all ages. (P25)

It was a great day and a terrific lift to the Catholic people and to the clergy as well. (P15)

It was a pastoral visit and the Bishops were concerned that there would be proper spiritual preparation for it. Lenten Missions in every parish were encouraged as were prayer novenas leading up to Pentecost – the start of the visit. The involvement of young people was considered especially important as it was to this age group that the Pope particularly reached out to during his pontificate. But although the visit did give a spiritual lift to Catholics and those non-Catholics who attended, it needs to be admitted that like all revivalist opportunities the effect was relatively short-lived. In a pastoral letter of November 1982 Harris reminded local Catholics

Our response to Pope John Paul – our personal renewal - must be genuine – it must be complete, wholehearted. Remember his own words ‘as long as the memory of this visit lasts, may it be recorded that I, John Paul II came to Britain to call you to Christ, to invite you to pray’. That is the invitation of Pope John Paul. It is an invitation we cannot refuse.<sup>32</sup>

There were aspects of the Visit that lingered; it gave Catholics in England a new confidence in facing the world and had ecumenical importance at a time when the English Catholic Church was still finding its way in that arena. But it also needs admitting that it signalled a drawing back from the reforms of the Council, for Pope John Paul II was in many ways a conservative and his visit served to emphasise a new ultramontanism; a new concentration on the centrality of the person of the Pope and his role in the modern world. For some people especially amongst the laity this was a huge disappointment, whilst for others it was a great relief that the Church was not as unchanging as it seemed during the tumultuous years following the Council.

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<sup>32</sup> MDA. File Ad Clera/Harris Correspondence Pastoral letter November 1982.

**Conclusion**

The Papal visit to England would undoubtedly be counted as one of the most notable events for English Catholics during this period if they were asked to enumerate them. In contrast to the previous decade and a half of change it was a more quiescent period; Liturgy was settled, and Catholics felt more at ease with their place in society. In the diocese, although hard choices about the over-provision of churches were avoided, overall it was a time of consolidation and the provision of pastoral care, of reinvigorating the concept of prayer and devotion and of looking forward to the new Millennium and the challenges that it would bring. For this, faith needed to be revived and renewed and it was the message of conversion that was a common interest of both Catholics and Evangelicals that underlay the episcopacy of Augustine Harris that brings this study to a close.



## Conclusions

I was fancying the coming of the day when the bare fields we were traversing would be covered with a busy multitude, and numerous vessels crowding to these banks denoting a busy seaport

(Joseph Pease 1829)

This prophecy, by one of the founding fathers of Middlesbrough, unknowingly marked a seismic change in the manifestation of Catholicism in the area of Yorkshire that became the diocese of Middlesbrough. Fifty years earlier in 1779, as it emerged from the penal times, Catholicism was mainly but not exclusively, the preserve of local gentry and their households; fifty years later in 1879, the bare fields that became the town of Middlesbrough was raised to the status of a See town and the spiritual heart of a Catholicism that encompassed not only those gentry and their households, but large numbers of immigrants from Ireland and other parts of Britain as well as the continent and it was their spiritual well-being that was the chief concern of its leaders.

The aims of this doctoral study has been the examination of the evidence for the manifestation of revivalism and renewal in Catholicism and in collating that evidence from the diocese of Middlesbrough to provide also a grass roots study of a Catholic community, adding to the small body of such studies that already exist. Throughout the study there have been four underlying questions, noted in the introduction, by which the evidence may be judged and these are reiterated here for the ease of the reader.

- What changes in the geographical and social environment have contributed to the practice of Catholicism in the area?
- What agencies have contributed to the practice of Catholicism in the area?
- What have been the characteristics of Catholic devotion in the area?

- How does Catholic devotional life compare with Evangelical practice?

### **Geographical and social factors**

There can be little doubt that the geographical, social and cultural milieu of an area impacts upon the devotional character of the religious practice of its inhabitants for it is these things that help to give a community its ethos. This writer contends that there were two issues that coloured the formation of the Catholic community in the diocese; the establishment of an industrial behemoth on the lower reaches of the River Tees in the early nineteenth century that created a division in the diocese between its north and south aspects exacerbated by the geographical location of the Cathedral and administrative centre of the diocese in its northernmost corner. Secondly the pastoral concerns of the second bishop, Thomas Shine that led him to concentrate upon the needs of the immigrant Irish who had formed the majority of the population of the diocese to the disadvantage of the indigenous Catholic population.

Industrialization was not unique to the area, but the establishment of a completely new town to service it was unusual, for it resulted in a 'suddenly gathered together flock from every town in England and Ireland',<sup>1</sup> whose only point of identity with each other and the rest of the diocese was the shared Catholic faith. With no indigenous Catholic presence to form the nucleus of a mission, the church had to be established from nothing and for the majority, their expectations of the Church centred on what it could do for them in their everyday life such as relief from poverty, the presence of a priest at key moments in their lives such as birth and death, and the provision of schools and churches. There was also a homogeneity of class structure within the Teesside Catholic population that was not replicated elsewhere in the

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<sup>1</sup> MDA, File N/36 Copy of letter from Robert Cornthwaite to Cardinal Manning 03.08.1871.

diocese, for it lacked both the gentry and the middle-classes and the low regard in which the Victorian town was held in 1879 was vividly captured in the description of it being a ‘dirty low hole.’

The urbanization of the Tees and the expansion of both Hull and York signalled that the native English Catholicism of Yorkshire was changing from a rural gentrified church to a more urban one, a process hastened by the arrival of the Irish poor. Their numerical supremacy within the diocese was acknowledged by Thomas Shine who from 1929 encouraged an overtly Irish form of Catholicism which, unlike many places, was pervasive, encompassing every Catholic parish instead of being confined to one or two ‘Irish Catholic’ parishes in a given locality. His policies were carried on by his immediate successors and the perceived loss of the Irish identity of the church after Vatican II was both painful and a cause of resentment.

### **Contributory Agencies**

In a hierarchical organization, such as the Catholic Church, identity and faith are maintained by leadership, and it is this aspect that is now considered. It has been implicit throughout this study that there have been three major groups of people who have influenced the devotional practice found within the diocese the bishops, the priests and the religious.

In the timeframe of this study, the area that became the diocese of Middlesbrough moved from being part of the Apostolic District of the North, to that of Yorkshire, which in turn became the diocese of Beverley. It can be argued that the decision made by Robert Cornthwaite on how the division of Beverley was carried out was a grave mistake for it left the diocese of Middlesbrough with few benefits in terms of its

geography, financial prospects and priests. It was fortunate however, that its first bishop, Richard Lacy ruled for almost fifty years for in that time he was able to place the diocese on a stable footing and create a devotional life that was a synthesis of old English Catholic, ultramontane and old Irish practice. The emphasis of his successor Thomas Shine upon a form of Irish acculturation took place at a time when in most of the country, the long-held policy of the Hierarchy of Irish assimilation into the English Catholic Church appeared successful.<sup>2</sup> The relative longevity of Shine, who ruled for twenty-five years, hampered both his successors, who were incardinated priests of the diocese and found it difficult to formulate their own visions for the diocese. It was however, the challenges posed by Vatican II that proved to be the most challenging task they faced. Old age and infirmity left Bishop Brunner relying on the fact that his coadjutor bishop, who attended the majority of Council sessions, would be the one to implement the changes. However, his translation to the diocese of Leeds meant Bishop McClean was appointed having had no experience of the Council and needing to imbibe its message at the same time as the priests and people. As a result, it was more a formulaic implementation of the decrees than might otherwise have been the case, and it was Bishop Harris, who had the task of consolidating the changes and initiating the decade of Evangelism in order to prepare for a new millennium.

The nature of the presbyterate changed considerably during the timespan of the study. From a wholly English priesthood that was the direct successor of the riding priests of penal days, it became a largely Irish presbyterate. The priests who made up the initial presbyterate of the diocese in 1879 were considerably older than those of the diocese

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<sup>2</sup> Norman A. Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council (Oxford 1984) 114.

of Leeds and it meant that replacement priests were quickly needed as well as priests to extend the work in the diocese. As a result, many were borrowed from other dioceses, and as such had no loyalty to the diocese or the vision of its bishop. For his presbyterate, Lacy's vision was of a 'native' priesthood; men born and brought up in the area, and trained locally at Ushaw, the seminary in County Durham that served all the northern dioceses. It was the turn of the century before Lacy could claim that the diocese was self-sufficient in terms of numbers of priests. Shine had a different vision; with his own Irish heritage and cultivation of an overt Irish Catholicism he preferred to use Irish priests. They were able to fulfil his expectations in inculcating a form of Irish Catholicism, with which they had both experience of and sympathy with, but this was limited to a form of catechizing the faithful rather than evangelization. It was successful in that both Shine's immediate successors continued with the policy; it took a drop in Irish vocations and the desire of Bishop Harris to once more encourage local vocations that brought the policy to an end.

The role of the religious was important in innovating change and acting as a means of revivalism and renewal. Despite the proscription on religious orders in England after the Reformation many of the priests working on the English Mission were either Benedictines or Jesuits but the French Revolution brought in its wake a permanent return of the religious to England including the Benedictines who settled at Ampleforth. The growth on the continent and in Ireland of female apostolic orders led to many requests for branches to be founded in England after the restoration of the Hierarchy and several settled in the diocese providing education, welfare and social services as well as working in the parishes alongside the priests running the guilds and confraternities, instructing the children in their faith and promoting a form of

juvenile holiness that used the children to encourage the adults to practice their faith. As their work was gradually taken over by the secular authorities, particularly after the Second World War, so their numbers began to fall and by 1992, only one order was still active in education, although new avenues in adult formation and spirituality were being explored by other orders. A particular vocation of male orders such as the Rosminian and Redemptorist orders was the giving of missions and it was in this field particularly that similarities with the work of the Evangelical preachers may be seen. While the proof of commitment differed; for Catholics it was participation in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, the techniques used could be considered universal. Both would come into a particular area for a short time to preach a short and intense mission to a large number of people who had already been imbued with a sense of excitement and occasion. Preaching, rousing hymns and prayers were characteristic activities as was the message that lives needed to be turned around and religious commitment renewed in order to benefit from God's saving grace. Both also suffered in that the mountain-top experience generated by revivalism was comparatively short-lived and missions were frequently repeated annually.

### **Nature of Catholic devotion**

The nature of Catholic devotion changed considerably between 1778 and 1992 partly due to the introduction of a more flamboyant devotional style from the continent in the mid nineteenth century and later the effect of Irish acculturation. Finally there was the watershed of the Second Vatican Council that changed the face of Catholicism in England and left some wondering whether it was still the same church. Catholicism at the start of the period was a restrained and cerebral affair centred upon making sure one passed the day walking with God in the manner of Gother or Challoner. The

gradual lifting of anti-Catholic legislation and the aftermath of the French Revolution that saw the return of both the religious and of English seminary training from the continent increased the confidence of the community and gave rise to the establishment of new missions and a slow but steady growth in numbers. The rising numbers of very poor and illiterate Irish immigrants: firstly as a result of industrialization and then because of the Irish famine, necessitated a less cerebral form of worship. It also coincided with the adoption of Ultramontane practices that sought to impose upon the Catholic world the religious practices of Rome. Itinerant Italian missionaries such as Luigi Gentili used the techniques of the Evangelical preachers to bring colour and this more flamboyant devotional life into English Catholicism. It not only affected devotional practice; churches too changed from resembling the plain chapels of the Dissenting tradition to embracing the extravagant baroque style or the later neo-Gothicism of A.W. Pugin. Perhaps the most overt demonstration of this new and confident Catholicism was the Middlesbrough Corpus Christi procession that was held annually from 1925-1972, but underlying it all was a faith that in both its Christology and Mariology emphasised the crucicentric and redemptive nature of Catholic belief and its power to revive and renew the faith of its adherents. Pilgrimage too became an important part of Catholic life for many, acting in the manner of the preached missions in bringing about a revival of faith inspired by the example of the saints and in particular Mary.

The Second Vatican Council was a break in the life of the Catholic Church. The formulaic manner in which the devotional norms of the Council were introduced in the diocese of Middlesbrough was unhelpful as it meant that while external observance was upheld, internal engagement with the changes did not take place

leaving a pre-conciliar mind-set inside a post-conciliar liturgical structure. What should have been an agent of revivalism and renewal was instead a more a source of contention and disarray in the Diocese of Middlesbrough.

However, there was one late flowering of a manifestation of revival and renewal in both local Protestantism and Catholicism and that was the rise of the Charismatic movement in the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies. With antecedents in nineteenth century Holiness movements, it is a late example of the close parallels that there are in Revivalism across the religious divide that makes it impossible to ignore the thesis offered in this study that revivalism and renewal in the Catholic church are integral elements of its faith and as a result Catholics and Evangelicals have more in common with each other than their adherents have been ready to acknowledge.



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