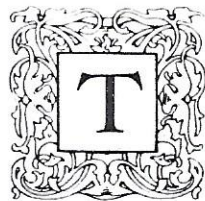




Sunday, August the seventeenth.



RT. REV. MATTHEW HARKINS, D. D.
BISHOP OF PROVIDENCE.



THE first land owned by the Catholic Congregation in Rhode Island was bought at Newport in 1828, and the first building called a Catholic Church was built here under the direction of Rev. Robert Woodley in that same year. The early Catholic history is very interesting, but limited space prevents our reviewing it at any length.

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IN 1780 and '81 large numbers of French troops belonging to Rochambeau's army were stationed in Newport and Providence. On December 15th Admiral Louis d'Arsac de Ternay, commander of the French fleet, died in the old Hunter house on Washington Street, and twelve Catholic priests belonging to the French army and fleet sang the funeral service over his grave in Trinity (Episcopal) Church yard. Father Thayer was the next priest to appear in Newport, where he visited from time to time from 1791 to 1798. Father Tissaud next appeared, and in 1803 Bishop Carroll of Baltimore stopped on his way from Boston to say an encouraging word to the Catholics of this locality. Father Byrne came to minister



REV. JAMES GIBSON.

to Catholics working on the fortifications at Fort Adams in January, 1827.



IN 1828 Newport became a part of Father Woodley's charge, and he then purchased the land on Barney Street. Bishop Fenwick called at Newport on the 2d of November, 1828, and confirmation was administered by him for the first time in this city. Two more lots of land were bought by Father Corry, who succeeded Father Woodley, and his parish at the time extended from Newport to Taunton. The priest resided at Taunton. In August, 1837, the new church built by Father Corry, and called St. Joseph's, was dedicated by Bishop Fenwick.



REV. EDMUND A. MCGONAGLE



REV. JAMES FITTON.

FATHER Lee of Providence succeeded Father Corry. His parochial charge was an extensive one, embracing Providence, Pawtucket, Newport, New Bedford and Sandwich. Hard work soon broke him down, as he was an aged man, and in 1839 Fr. James O'Reilly became his successor. Father Fitton, the venerable pioneer priest of New England, took charge of the Newport section of the diocese in July, 1844. In November, 1846, Newport was made a distinct parish and had mass once a month. The number of Catholics in the parish was 375 persons, all told. Father Fitton was only a short time in Newport when he saw the necessity of building a new church



REV.

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and on the 2d of February, 1847, he bought the land on Spring Street, where St. Mary's Church, the parochial residence, and the school now stand—the price paid for the land was \$4,000.

THE Harper family of Baltimore encouraged Father Fitton and helped him generously in his undertaking. The records state that then there were but 586 Catholics in Newport. The church was dedicated under the title of The Holy Name of Mary, Our Lady of the Isle. Work was begun on August 7th, 1848, and the corner-stone laid June 14th, 1849. Bishop Fitzpatrick of Boston presided at the ceremony, as Bishop Tyler, the head of the diocese, was then on his death-bed at Providence.



REV. THOMAS CLINTON.



GENERAL ROSECRANS, at that time a young lieutenant at Fort Adams, who was a practical engineer, superintended the erection of the church, and to-day there stands in St. Mary's a beautiful memorial window, the grateful gift of the people of the parish to show their appreciation of his great labors in their behalf. Rev. James Gibson was appointed assistant to Father Fitton in March, 1850. The building of the church went slowly on until July 25th, 1852, when the sacred edifice was opened and dedicated by Bishop O'Reilly, the Bishop of Providence. Bishop Fitzpatrick sang pontifical mass and Bishop O'Reilly preached the sermon.



Rev. Thomas Fitzpatrick



REV. WM. O'REILLY.

WHAT a rapid stride the church has made since then! The hundreds of Catholics have become thousands. The new parish of St. Joseph's has been founded—where many good old friends of St. Mary's are to-day to be found full of the zeal of the olden time—and here, where fifty years ago a priest came only once a month, to-day we find three resident priests in St. Mary's, the same number at St. Joseph's, and a Cardinal, prince of the Church, with four notable members of the hierarchy, present to do great honor to our celebration. Thanks be to Almighty God!



VERY REV. THOS. A. DORAN, V.G.

Father Fitton left Newport in 1855. A school had been opened in January, 1846, but the advent of the Sisters of Mercy



REV. PHILIP GRACE, D. D.

took place only on May 3d, 1854. Very Rev. William O'Reilly, V. G., a brother of Bishop O'Reilly, succeeded Father Fitton as pastor. There were neither pews nor gallery, organ nor tower, nor was there a bell porch, and there were very few vestments in the church when he took charge, but the church was finished and everything supplied by the first of January, 1859.

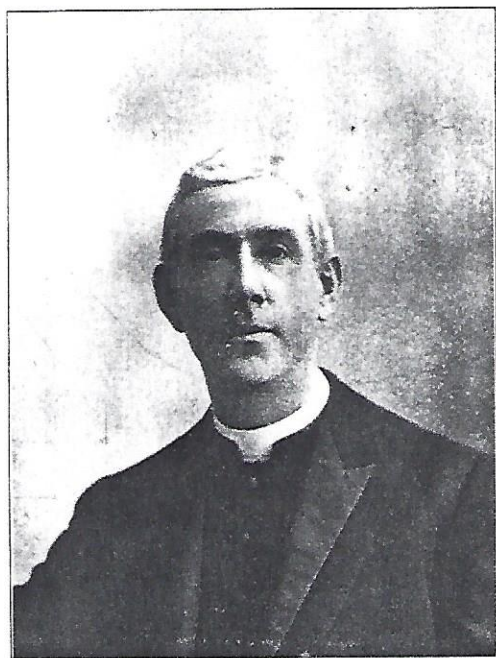


REV. WM. I. SIMMONS.

THE school, a fine granite building on the property running from William to Levin Street, was built just after the Civil War and opened in 1866. "Father William," as he was lovingly called, died in 1868, and Father



REV. JAMES MARION.



REV. WM. B. MEENAN.



REV. JAMES FOGARTY.

O'Connor, his assistant, remained in charge for a few months until the coming of the new pastor, Rev. Philip Grace, who afterwards had the honor conferred upon him of being the first Doctor of Divinity named by our present Holy Father,

Leo XIII. The "Doctor," as he

was familiarly called, took charge of the parish in 1869 and remained its zealous pastor for twenty-nine years, until his death in September, 1898. Rev. Dr. Grace

paid off the mortgage debt of \$60,000

and enlarged and improved the church

property. During Doctor Grace's ad-

ministration the following priests, whose

portraits appear in this sketch, were

his faithful and energetic assistants:



REV. M. P. CASSIDY.

Revs. Thomas Clinton and James Finnegan

(both now deceased); Very Rev. Thomas Doran, D. D., now the Vicar General of the diocese; Rev. Thomas P. Grace, brother of the Rev. Dr. Grace; Revs. William J. Simmons, M. P. Cassidy, James Mahon, James Fogarty and John Tully.



REV. JAMES LOOBY.

JANUARY 1st, 1899, Rev. William B. Meenan was appointed as successor to Doctor Grace.

He has made improvements and repairs on the church property, which had fallen into need of repair, as the Doctor, whose ambition it was to have the church free from debt and solemnly consecrated, sacrificed everything, himself included, to



REV. JOHN TULLY.



REV. PHILIP A. CRONAN.

achieve that honorable end. On August 15th, the feast of the church, 1884, he had the pleasure of seeing his desire gratified, and St. Mary's was solemnly consecrated, with great pomp amid a grand assemblage of the clergy of the diocese, by Rt. Rev. Thos. F.

Hendricken D. D., the late Bishop of the diocese. Rev. Philip A. Cronan, who was assistant to Doctor Grace for several years before the latter's death, has remained assistant to the present rector, and his brother assistant is Rev. Martin F. Reddy, S. T. L., who has been stationed at St. Mary's since April, 1899.



REV. MARTIN F. REDDY.

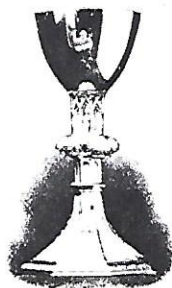


TO-DAY we celebrate St. Mary's GOLDEN JUBILEE, and, surrounded by a wealth of adornment, with sweet music, beautiful flowers and palms adding to the beauty of her architectural grace—honored by the presence of His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons and of our beloved Bishop, Matthew Harkins, the honored Bishop Tierney of Hartford and the learned rector of the Catholic University, Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Conaty, with Rt. Rev. John S. Foley of Detroit—we seem to hear the echo of the glad sounds of the first bell that called the

joyful worshippers of more than half a century ago to their humble House of God, and we seem to see them smile on the joyful festivities of to-day that crown with honor and glory the work their generous hearts, overflowing with faith, so nobly began.

All honor to *them*, and may we of to-day continue to add by our virtue and faith to their and our Mother's beauty and saintly record.

A. M. D. G.



CHALICE.

Made from gold, silver and precious stones,
the offerings of the people of the parish to commemorate
THE GOLDEN JUBILEE.